

# Commissioners' Message

Lackawanna County developed from a small settlement in Northeastern Pennsylvania to become one of the greatest industrial forces in the nation at the turn of the 20th Century. This region supplied over 80% of the anthracite coal that fueled the growth of American industry. We were uniquely labeled the "Land of Black Diamonds."

Today, Lackawanna County is facing the future by remembering its proud past. Historic, educational and recreational venues showcase the area. Our 40 communities offer a mix of urban, suburban and rural living, balancing economic development with environmental conservation and preservation. Our network of 58 public schools, 33 private schools and nine colleges and universities strive for academic excellence.

As Commissioners, we are striving to achieve the creation of county government suited to the needs of the 21st Century. This restructuring will allow for the consolidation of operations and the efficient utilization of resources. This plan will not only save taxpayers' money but also improve access to services. We are deeply committed to improving the quality of life in Lackawanna County through the stimulation of the local economy, preservation and appropriate use of our environment and natural resources, and continued improvement in our overall quality of life.

We are honored to represent the hardworking citizens of this county and to be given the opportunity to promote our prosperity with pride!

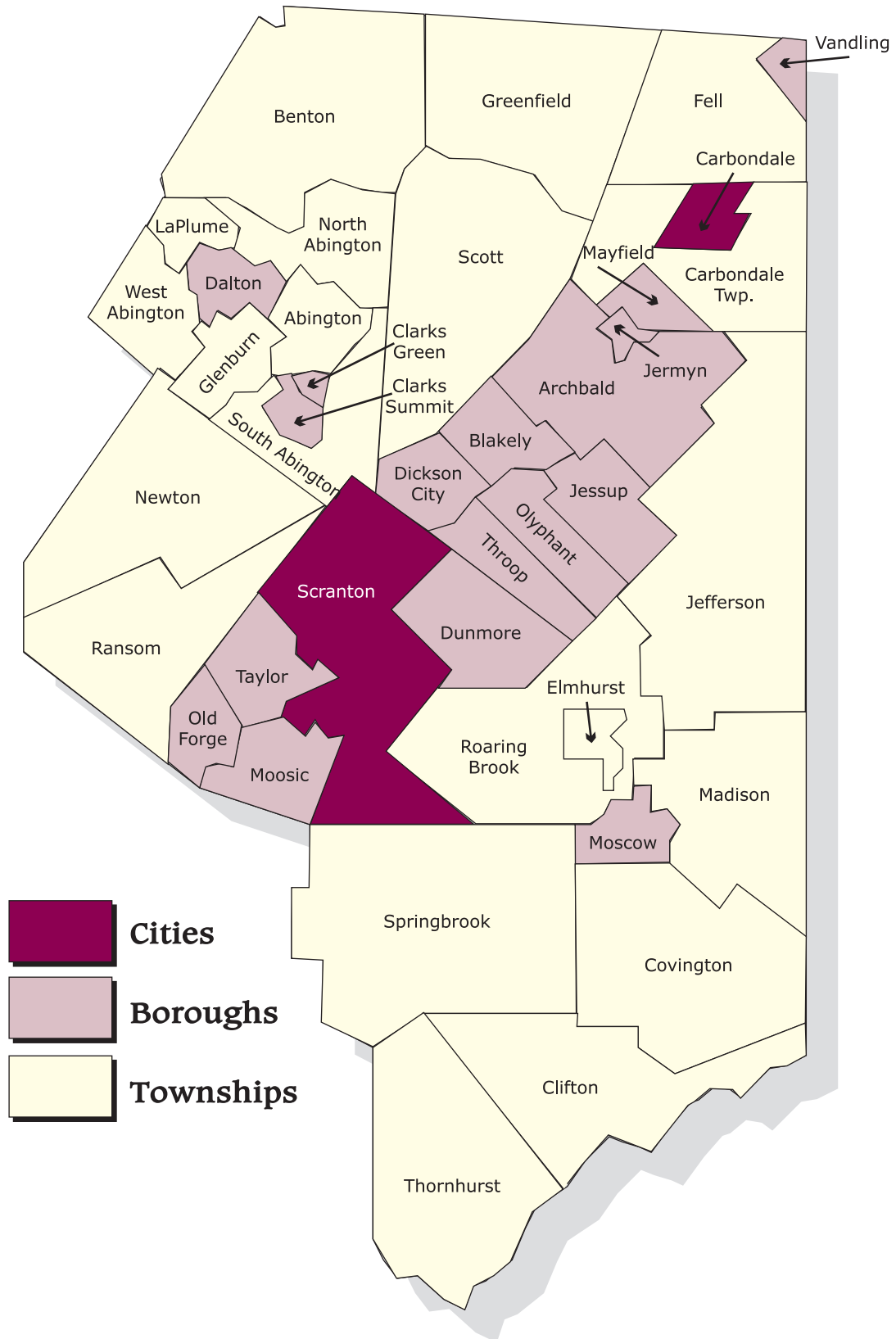
Sincerely yours,

**Lackawanna County Commissioners**

*Robert C. Cordaro*

*A. J. Munchak*

# Municipalities Map



# Brief Historical Facts on County Municipalities

**Abington Township**—created in 1806 from Tunkhannock Township. In the Connecticut claim and survey this township was called Ebbington, in honor of Colonel Ebbington, a Connecticut land agent who granted titles to settlers in the area in the late 1700s. Pennsylvania land holders changed the name to Abington. The village of Waverly at the center of the township was once an independent borough (incorporated in 1854) but gave up its charter in 1920 to revert back to the township. Waverly was named from the title of a popular novel by Sir Walter Scott.

**Archbald Borough**—incorporated in 1877 from Blakely Township and named for James Archbald, a senior mechanical engineer with the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, who was appointed as superintendent when the Carbondale coal mines opened. The village of Eynon in the borough is named after Thomas Eynon, a Welshman who developed coal mines in the area. Archbald is most famous for the Archbald Pothole, the largest glacial pothole known to man. Another claim-to-fame as the largest borough in the Commonwealth is a false one. No one knows the origin of this dubious distinction, but the borough's 16.8 square miles do not measure up to Venango County's Sugar Creek Borough, with 37.4 square miles. Statistical reference guides place Archbald as the eighth largest borough in the state.

**Benton Township**—created in 1838 from Nicholson Township and named in honor of Thomas H. Benton, a US Senator from Missouri. The township was first settled in 1810 by a Mr. Bassett, after whom Bassett Pond is named. The village of Fleetville at the center of the township was named after James VanFleet, an early landowner and farmer who invented a more effective plow and became popular with the other local farmers.

**Blakely Borough**—originally created as Blakely Township in 1818 from Providence and Greenfield townships, it was incorporated as a borough in 1867. Blakely is named in honor of Captain Johnston Blakely, a naval hero in the War of 1812, who was lost at sea. Timothy Stevens, a Revolutionary War soldier from New York, was the first settler. Peckville, the largest community within the borough, was named after Samuel Peck of Massachusetts. Mr. Peck opened the Peck Lumber Manufacturing Company in the area.

**Carbondale City**—incorporated in 1851 from Carbondale Township as the first city within the anthracite region of the Commonwealth. The area was acquired by William and Maurice Wurts of Philadelphia as partial payment for a government contract to supply army clothing during the War of 1812. The name Carbondale is derived from the presence of coal deposits in the area, "the dale or valley where coal is found." The first underground coal mine in the United States opened in Carbondale, known locally as the "Pioneer City." The Wurts brothers formed the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company to transport the coal to Honesdale via a gravity railroad and then to New York by canal.

**Carbondale Township**—created in 1831 from Blakely and Greenfield townships, the name Carbondale is derived from the presence of coal deposits in the area, "the dale or valley where coal is found." The pioneer settler of the township was David Ailsworth, who came from Rhode Island in 1802.

**Clarks Green Borough**—incorporated in 1914 from South Abington Township and named in honor of Deacon William Clark, an early settler and Revolutionary War soldier who fought with George Washington at the Battle of Trenton. Deacon Clark cleared a triangular plot of several acres called the "green."

**Clarks Summit Borough**—incorporated in 1911 from South Abington Township and, like its twin borough Clarks Green, named in honor of Deacon William Clark, an early settler and Revolutionary War soldier who fought with George Washington at the Battle of Trenton. Deacon Clark's cleared triangular plot known as the "green" went to the point being the "summit" of the grade on the northern division of the Lackawanna Railroad out of Scranton.

**Clifton Township**—created from Covington Township in 1875 and named in honor of prominent landowner Henry Drinker's son, Clifton. Jacob Gress, the township's first settler, located here in 1840.

**Covington Township**—created from Wilkes-Barre Township in 1818 and named after Brigadier General Leonard Covington of Maryland, who fought and died in the War of 1812 at Williamsburg in Canada. At the time of its creation, the township contained the whole of Henry Drinker's possessions in the southern part of old Luzerne County. The village of Daleville at the center of the township is named for David Dale, a man who arrived from England and bought land in the area from Mr. Drinker.

**Dalton Borough**—incorporated in 1895 from North Abington Township and named in honor of Dr. Edward Dalton, a Civil War surgeon and superintendent of the New York City Board of Health. The borough was originally known as Bailey Hollow from the predominance of families of that name who were pioneers in the area. Agriculture and lumbering were the only industries in the borough until the building of the Leggetts Gap, a division of the Lackawanna Railroad, in 1850.

**Dickson City Borough**—incorporated in 1875 from Blakely Township and named in honor of Thomas Dickson, president of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad at the time of the borough's creation. The borough's first inhabitants were the extended family of Timothy Stevens, a Revolutionary War veteran who moved from New York in 1786. Little transpired in the borough until collieries sprang up, with the village of Priceburg developing with homes for the local miners.

**Dunmore Borough**—incorporated in 1862 from Providence Township (now extinct) and named for the fifth Earl of Dunmore in England. The Earl's son, Sir Charles Augustus Murray, had an interest in the area and promised financial assistance to Henry Drinker to build a railroad over the Moosic Mountains to the Delaware River. In gratitude, Mr. Drinker urged the people of "Bucktown," the village's earliest name, to call the place Dunmore. Sir Charles Murray never set foot in Dunmore, nor did his financial help for Drinker's project ever materialize.

**Elmhurst Township**—incorporated as a borough in 1889 from Roaring Brook Township and named after the abundance of elm trees in the area. "Hurst" is a high German word meaning "forest." Elmhurst Borough gave up its charter and became a township in 1941. The original settler of the township, Gilbert Dunning, started a sawmill and other wood working plants and as a result the village grew. The area was known as Dunning until borough incorporation.

**Fell Township**—created in 1845 from Carbondale Township and named in honor of Judge Jesse Fell of Wilkes-Barre, the first person to successfully use anthracite coal in a domestic grade. The township was first settled in 1818 by Peter Ball of New York who built a log-house in the northwest part of the township. The first coal mine in the township opened in 1864 on Elk Creek and a breaker was built there in 1874. Simpson, the main village in the township, is named for C. D. Simpson, an independent coal operator in the northern anthracite region.

**Glenburn Township**—incorporated as a borough in 1877 from North and South Abington townships and named by George Humphrey of New York, its founder, who built a mill dam and flouring mill. The village was originally known as Humphreyville, but at the time of incorporation Mr. Humphrey created a new name by using novelist Sir Walter Scott's term for narrow valley, "glen," and the Scottish word for brook, "burn." Glenburn Borough gave up its charter and became a township in 1933.

**Greenfield Township**—created in 1816 from Abington Township and named for the lush, green fields that dominate the township's rolling landscape—even to this day. Pioneer settlers of the township were Elijah Hobb and James Sackett of Vermont. The first school-house in the township was built in 1820.

**Jefferson Township**—created in 1836 from Blakely and Providence townships (now extinct) and named in honor of President Thomas Jefferson. Early settlements date back to 1782 when John Somers made a clearing at the foot of Cobb's Mountain. In 1784 he sold the land to Asa Cobb, who became the township's first permanent settler. The village of Mount Cobb in the township was named in honor of Asa Cobb.

**Jermyn Borough**—incorporated as Gibsonburg in 1870 from Blakely Township but changed its name in 1874 in honor of John Jermyn, a wealthy Englishman with mining interests in the area. Jermyn's claim-to-fame as the Birthplace of First Aid came to be in 1899 when Dr. Matthew Shields of the borough developed a simple, but comprehensive method for treating injuries—the result of years of caring for injured miners.

**Jessup Borough**—incorporated as Winton in 1876 from Blakely Township and included both the village of Winton and the village of Jessup. In the 1960s the borough changed its name to Jessup, which was the larger of the two villages. Jessup is named in honor of William Jessup, a Montrose resident and President Judge of the 11th Judicial District, who became president of the Lackawanna Railroad. Jessup is most famous for its annual St. Ubaldo's Day Race of the Saints, a tradition originated in Gubbio, Italy, and dating back to 1914.

**LaPlume Township**—incorporated as a borough in 1885 from North Abington Township and named for the French phrase "nom de plume," which means "pen name." It was taken from writer Mrs. Isaac Tillinghast, who used the term LaPlume as the pen name for her various writings. Her husband had an extensive seed and plant nursery in the village. LaPlume Borough gave up its charter and became a township in 1932.

**Madison Township**—created in 1849 from Covington and Jefferson townships and named in honor of President James Madison. Henry Drinker was the first owner of much of the land in the township, and Thomas Beisecker and Richard Edwards were the pioneer residents. The township was originally heavily timbered with beech, hemlock, and ash trees, but much of the land was cleared for the establishment of many fine farms.

**Mayfield Borough**—incorporated in 1891 from Carbondale Township and named for Captain William May in recognition for the part he played in the village's development when he was manager of the Hillside Coal and Iron Company. The area was originally called Glenwood, then for a time was named Mayville until postal authorities suggested it be changed to Mayfield.

**Moosic Borough**—incorporated in 1890 from Lackawanna Township (now extinct) and named from the Algonquin word meaning "great herds of moose." Several coal and freight rail lines traversed the borough as well as the "Laurel Line," the passenger trolley route between Scranton and Wilkes-Barre.

**Moscow Borough**—incorporated in 1908 from Madison Township and named for the capital of Russia, from where many of its earlier settlers immigrated. The community owes its start to Reverend Peter Rupert, a Lutheran minister, who built a log home here. Lumbering and agriculture were the chief industries of the borough's early days.

**Newton Township**—created in 1844 from Falls Township and named after the town of Newton, New Jersey, from where many of its early settlers came. Richard Gardner was the township's pioneer settler.

**North Abington Township**—created in 1867 from Abington Township. In the Connecticut claim and survey this township was called Ebbington, in honor of Colonel Ebbington, a Connecticut land agent who granted titles to settlers in the area in the late 1700s. Pennsylvania land holders changed the name to Abington.

**Old Forge Borough**—incorporated in 1899 from Old Forge Township (now extinct) and named after an abandoned iron ore forge, deserted because of the mediocre quality of the iron ore. Dr. William Hooker Smith settled in this area in 1789 to practice medicine. Dr. Smith, along with James Sutton, built the "old forge." Today, Old Forge is most famous for the pizza shops that line its Main Street, and it has recently been designated as the "Pizza Capital of the World."

**Olyphant Borough**—incorporated in 1877 from Blakely Township and named in honor of George Talbot Olyphant, a president of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company. Known as the "Midway City" in early days, it is today referred to as the "Queen City." The oldest volunteer fire company in the valley, Excelsior #1, remains in existence in Olyphant.

**Ransom Township**—created in 1849 from Exeter and Newton townships and named in honor of Captain Samuel Ransom, who raised a company in 1777 for the defense of the Wyoming Valley and fell in the Wyoming Massacre of 1778. The township's pioneer settler, John Gardner, was also Lackawanna County's first settler. Milwaukee, a village in the township, is an Algonquin word meaning "good land."

**Roaring Brook Township**—created in 1871 from Dunmore Borough, Jefferson and Madison townships and named for the Roaring Brook, the major stream that passes through it. There had been no settlement in the township until Gilbert Dunning erected the first frame house around 1847. Prior to that only Barney Carney, the toll-gate keeper on the Drinker Turnpike, occupied the area.

**Scott Township**—created in 1846 from Greenfield Township and named for the Honorable David Scott, an associate judge of Luzerne County. Roger Orvis was the earliest settler, building a cabin in 1800 at Orvis Corners. A grist mill at the outlet of Chapman Lake was the township's first industry. Agriculture, with a market chiefly in the Mid Valley towns, became the township's chief occupation.

**Scranton City**—incorporated as a borough in 1856 from Providence Township (now extinct) and named for brothers George and Seldon Scranton, of Connecticut and New Jersey, respectfully, who came to the area in 1840 to smelt iron. In 1866, the City of Scranton was incorporated upon the merging of Scranton Borough with Hyde Park and Providence boroughs and parts of Providence Township. In 1950, the remaining portion of Lackawanna Township, including the village of Minooka, was disorganized and annexed to Scranton, completely wiping the township from the map. Scranton is known as the "Electric City," and was once referred to as the "Anthracite Capital of the World."

**South Abington Township**—created in 1867 from Abington Township and known locally as the "Gateway to the Abingtons." In the Connecticut claim and survey this township was called Ebbington, in honor of Colonel Ebbington, a Connecticut land agent who granted titles to settlers in the area in the late 1700s. Pennsylvania land holders changed the name to Abington. The village of Chinchilla, the main portion of the township, was named after a chinchilla shawl. Originally known as "Leach's Flats," the village's female postmaster renamed the town after her cherished shawl in the late 1800s.



***Spring Brook Township***—created in 1853 from Covington and Pittston townships and named for Spring Brook, a major stream that flows through the area. Abraham Turner, a Welsh farmer, was the township's pioneer settler. Lumbering and farming were of equal importance in the early days.

***Taylor Borough***—incorporated in 1893 from Lackawanna and Old Forge townships (both now extinct) and named for philanthropist Moses Taylor, a major financier of the Union cause during the Civil War. In 1901, the remaining portion of Old Forge township disorganized and was annexed to Taylor, completely wiping the township from the map. Taylor was the first settlement in Lackawanna County, settled by Timothy Keys, Solomon Hocksley and Andrew Hickman.

***Thornhurst Township***—created in 1878 when the incorporation of Lackawanna County from Luzerne County split Buck Township in half. The eastern portion of Buck Township, now in the new county, was named Lehigh in 1880, after the Lehigh River. The township officially changed its name to Thornhurst in 1996 to end years of confusion with neighboring Lehigh Township in Wayne County. Lumbering was the major industry, tree bark supplying tanneries at Gouldsboro. Isaac Lewis was the pioneer settler in 1842. Thornhurst remains the only village in the township.

***Throop Borough***—incorporated in 1894 from Dickson City Borough and named in honor of Benjamin Henry Throop, who came from New Jersey and supplied the area with a gas and water company and three banks. Before its incorporation, Throop was known as the village of Rough and Ready. Throop's history is marred by the Pancoast Mine Disaster of 1911, when a coal mine fire took the lives of 73 workers and one government official.

***Vandling Borough***—incorporated in 1899 from Fell Township and named after Abraham Vandling, a benevolent mine boss who donated money to build a church in the village. Vandling was originally called Clintonville, after the Clinton Coal Colliery. Lumbering was the first industry in the area until coal was discovered near the surface for easy mining.

***West Abington Township***—created in 1895 from North Abington Township. In the Connecticut claim and survey this township was called Ebbington, in honor of Colonel Ebbington, a Connecticut land agent who granted titles to settlers in the area in the late 1700s. Pennsylvania land holders changed the name to Abington. Since the 1980 Census, West Abington remains the least populated municipality in the county.

# Population Characteristics

LACKAWANNA COUNTY  
2000 TOTAL POPULATION — 213,295  
2003 ESTIMATE — 210,458

## Population Distribution

Urban Population: 173,680 — 81.4%  
Rural Population: 39,615 — 18.6%

### Marital Status (Pop. Age 15 & over)

Never Married: ..... 47,101  
Married: ..... 92,553  
Separated: ..... 3,012  
Widowed: ..... 18,862  
Divorced: ..... 13,703

### Ancestry (Top 25)

Irish ..... 54,246  
Italian ..... 49,695  
Polish ..... 39,336  
German ..... 32,715  
English ..... 15,827  
Welsh ..... 13,664  
Russian ..... 9,137  
Slovak ..... 7,369  
American ..... 5,632  
Ukrainian ..... 4,919  
Lithuanian ..... 4,550  
French ..... 2,271  
Dutch ..... 2,155  
Scottish ..... 2,129  
Hungarian ..... 1,614  
Scotch-Irish ..... 1,407  
Arab ..... 1,374  
Czech ..... 975  
Swedish ..... 735  
Swiss ..... 682  
Greek ..... 554  
French Canadian ..... 533  
Norwegian ..... 393  
Subsaharan African ..... 239  
Danish ..... 195

### Race

White: ..... 207,422 — 97.2%  
Black: ..... 3,445 — 1.6%  
Asian/  
Pacific Is: ..... 1,943 — 0.9%  
Am. Ind/  
Alaska Native: ..... 527 — 0.2%  
Other: ..... 1,467 — 0.7%

### Age/Sex Distribution

Male: ..... 100,614  
Female: ..... 112,681  
Under 5 years: ..... 11,213  
5-19: ..... 41,419  
20-44: ..... 69,103  
45-64: ..... 50,018  
65+: ..... 41,542  
Median Age: ..... 40.3 years

### Households and Families

Total Households: ..... 86,218  
Total Families: ..... 55,758  
Non-Family Households: ..... 30,460  
Persons Living Alone: ..... 26,966  
Living Alone over Age 65: ..... 13,529  
Married w/ Children under 18: ..... 17,920  
Married No Children: ..... 24,230  
Average Household Size: ..... 2.38 persons  
Average Family Size: ..... 3 persons

### Miscellaneous Social Characteristics

Veterans ..... 24,372  
Persons w/ a Disability ..... 42,956

#### Place of Birth

Native ..... 208,462  
Foreign Born ..... 4,833

#### Language Spoken at Home

English Only ..... 190,894  
Spanish ..... 3,156  
Other European ..... 6,955  
Asian/Pacific Island ..... 800