

living lackawanna

Official Newsletter and Report to Lackawanna County Taxpayers

Commissioners' Message

Looking Forward to a Banner Year



Corey D. O'Brien



Jim Wansacz



Patrick M. O'Malley

Lackawanna County enjoyed a ground-breaking year in 2014. We strengthened our commitment to bringing people together, improving infrastructure, collaborating to create jobs, diversifying the economy via nationally acclaimed programs and offering a variety of recreational activities.

COST EFFICIENCY

During the past year, we continued to fortify the financial stability of Lackawanna County. There is no tax increase for calendar year 2015. For the third straight year the audit was completed on time, our budget is balanced and the County is on course for an anticipated accumulated fund balance of \$8,435,000. All of this speaks volumes to bond rating companies, and it shows our commitment to the fiscal health of the County.

We are doing more with less, with no interruption or cuts in programs or services. The County is operating with a workforce that is at its lowest level since 1999.

We have implemented cost saving measures that have strengthened our overall economic health. In that vein, we entered into an Energy Savings Contract (ESCO) project at the prison to have the operating systems run more efficiently, saving valuable revenue. Similar measures will be undertaken at the courthouse.

Health care is another segment that has a significant impact on our budget. Annually, our health insurance premiums increase 7-10 percent. It is vitally important to secure the best possible coverage at the most affordable costs. To that end, we joined 18 other Pennsylvania counties in a health insurance consortium. This three-year agreement will reduce budgeted health insurance costs for this year by a minimum of \$240,000. This is another example of how the County strives to save valuable resources through innovative approaches.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At the start of our administration, Lackawanna County was faced with a 9.8% unemployment rate. Without assistance from state and federal authorities, we seized the opportunity to revitalize our economy by establishing a Department of Economic Development. Tasked with spurring job growth through the creation and retention of family-sustaining, private sector jobs, the department has played a key role in reducing the County's unemployment rate to 5.8%.

We created a range of programs to nurture economic growth. The nationally recognized SBA Loan Fee Waiver Program has saved 26 different businesses over \$249,000 and leveraged \$14.8 million worth of loans, while creating and retaining a combination of 420 jobs. The Community Re-Invest Program has awarded over \$900,000 to 57 community projects throughout the County, generating a total public-private investment of more than \$4.1 million in our neighborhoods.

LACKAWANNA COUNTY WIRELESS INITIATIVE

The network is designed to consolidate and secure Lackawanna County data as it travels from site to site. After the network went live, the County reached out to local businesses and governments to help them reduce spending. In addition to county sites, the following entities made the connection to the new Wireless Network - Lakeland School District, TekRidge Center, Scranton Enterprise Center, and Otrava.

Last spring, Lackawanna County started a project to work with local municipalities to provide public Wi-Fi. The first of these sponsored locations went live under a pilot program in the Borough of Jessup.

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lackawannacounty.org

INNOVATION STARTS HERESM
Lackawanna
County

'Message' Continued from page 1

The second sponsored site was in Dunmore for the Dunmore Community Center and the newly renovated McHale Park. The third location was in Covington Township at the Moffat Estate grounds and park.

Extending Wi-Fi into our parks provides a great service, allowing people to utilize a secure network. By the summer of 2014, all four County parks (Aylesworth, Covington, McDade, and Merli-Sarnoski) went online, joining Courthouse Square and the Entrepreneurial Launch Pad in the Scranton Electric Building as areas where free Wi-Fi is available.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Our award-winning Veterans Affairs Office easily surpassed its totals from the previous fiscal year. The Veterans Affairs Office secured a record \$3,836,656 in pension, disability and other benefits during the 2013-2014 program year for the over 28,000 veterans in Lackawanna County. In addition to benefit claims, the office also assists veterans with a range of services relating to military service by residents of Lackawanna County.

The Veterans Affairs Office is dedicated to providing the best service possible. Staff is open to meeting with veterans at times and places that are convenient for them, such as their homes, personal care homes or senior centers.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

We are committed to improving our County's infrastructure by rebuilding bridges and paving roads to make them more accessible and safer for our residents. Each year we replace a minimum of three bridges and put three bridges into the "design" phase for future construction.

In 2015, bridges in Dalton, Moosic, Jefferson Township, and LaPlume Township are on schedule to be completed. Bridges in Archbald, Elmhurst Township, North Abington Township, Newton Township, Greenfield Township, Madison Township, and Clifton Township will be in the "design" phase.

LIBRARY SYSTEM UPGRADES

The newly-constructed North Pocono Public Library marked a year of operations in 2014. The 8,000-square foot, \$3.2 million facility represents a major investment in the future of the North Pocono region. The Lackawanna County Library System also hosted a number of programs related to literacy, arts, and music at each of the eight member libraries, including hosting Pro Football Hall of Fame running back Emmitt Smith for the Matthew Flynn Lecture Series.

To learn how you can access the services of the Lackawanna County Library System, visit at www.lclshome.org.

In closing, what was achieved in 2014 could not have been attained without our partnerships with local businesses, civic organizations and the dedication of our local municipal officials and County employees. Lackawanna County is indeed growing. Our pledge for 2015 is to continue the momentum, progress and success that we have already demonstrated.

Cory J. Brin *J. Warming*
Pat M. O'Neil

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

9-1-1

Call if you can,
TEXT if you can't.

How to TEXT in an Emergency

- Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" field.
- The first text message to 911 should be brief, concise and contain in simple words the location of the emergency and type of help needed.
- Push the "Send" button.
- Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 call taker.
- Abbreviations should NOT be used.

TEXT 911 GUIDELINES

- Text location information is not equal to current location technology.
- As with all text messages, 911 messages can take longer to receive and can get out of order.
- Text to 9-1-1 is not available when you are roaming.
- A text or data plan is required to place a Text to 9-1-1.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 911 at the present time.
- Text to 9-1-1 cannot include more than one person.
- A crank or false text message is handled as if it were a voice call. Police will investigate.
- As always, you are encouraged to NEVER text and drive!

Judicial Sale Generates Funds for Schools, Municipalities



A check for \$3,685.90 was presented to Richard McDonald, Superintendent of the Dunmore School District, which represented its portion from the judicial sale of tax delinquent properties. The funds will be used for the district's overall operations. Dunmore was one of several school districts, municipalities, and authorities, to share in the funds generated by the judicial sale. The total amount disbursed was \$272,321.97. Pictured from left to right, Commissioner Jim Wansacz, Commissioner Corey D. O'Brien, Mr. McDonald and Commissioner Patrick M. O'Malley.

Contact Lackawanna County

Adult Probation	(570) 963-6876	Family Court	(570) 963-5692
Area Agency on Aging	(570) 963-6740	Housing Authority	(570) 342-7629
Arts & Culture	(570) 963-6590	Human Services	(570) 963-6790
Assessor's Office	(570) 963-6728	Juvenile Detention Center	(570) 963-6506
Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention	(570) 346-5741	Juvenile Probation	(570) 963-6887
Central Court	(570) 963-6436	Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour	(570) 963-6463
Child Care Information Services	(570) 963-6644	Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority	(570) 963-6730
Children & Youth Services	(570) 963-6781	Marriage License Bureau	(570) 963-6708
Collector of Taxes/Single Tax Office	(570) 963-6756	Parks & Recreation	(570) 963-6764
COLTS (Bus Service)	(570) 346-2061	Penn State Co-op Extension	(570) 963-6842
COLTS (Shared Ride)	(570) 963-6795	Planning Commission	(570) 963-6826
Commissioners' Office	(570) 963-6800	Prison	(570) 963-6639
Community Relations	(570) 963-6800	Public Defender's Office	(570) 963-6761
Court Administrator	(570) 963-6773	Scranton Lackawanna Human Development Agency	(570) 963-6836
Domestic Relations	(570) 963-6721	Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders	(570) 969-2255
Drug & Alcohol	(570) 963-6820	Tax Claim Bureau	(570) 963-6734
Drug Court	(570) 496-1736	Trolley Museum	(570) 963-6590
Economic Development	(570) 963-6830	Veterans Affairs	(570) 963-6778
Elections/Voter Registration	(570) 963-6737	Visitors Bureau/Visitors Center	(570) 496-1701
Emergency Management/Services	(570) 307-3700	Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport	(570) 602-2000
Environmental Sustainability	(570) 963-2017	Work Release Center	(570) 963-6509

Progress



Wireless Initiative

International Airport



Parks & Boundless Playgrounds



Keeping Our History Alive



Traditional Events



Trolley Museum



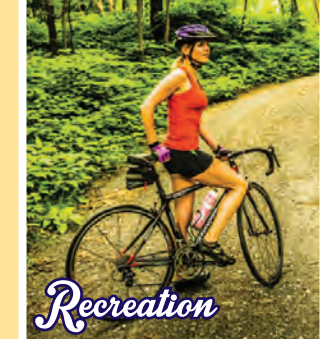
'Best New Ballpark'



Innovative Arts & Culture



Improved Roads & Bridges



Recreation



The Pavilion at Montage

Housing Rehabilitation Funds Available in Lackawanna County

Homeowners in Lackawanna County may qualify for need-based funding to be used for housing rehabilitation and emergency repair through the County's Department of Economic Development.

The Housing Rehabilitation Program allows homeowners to apply for up to \$24,999 in funding (per housing unit) to be used for housing rehabilitation and repair.

The Emergency Repair Assistance Program allows homeowners to apply for up to \$7,500 in funds (per housing unit) to be used for emergency home repair in the following areas: roofs, plumbing, electrical systems, and structural deficiencies.

To qualify for either program, participating households must have verified annual gross household incomes at or below 80% of median income for Lackawanna County. Properties must also be occupied by their current owners, must be covered by homeowner's/fire insurance (and flood insurance if the property is in a designated 100-year flood plain) and have all taxes (municipal, county, and school district) paid in full.

Additional conditions apply for both programs. For more information or to schedule a financial determination and eligibility interview, contact Laura McGowan in the Lackawanna County Department of Economic Development at (570) 963-6830.

Lackawanna County Elections: Important Dates to Remember

Last day to register for the Primary:	April 20
Last day to apply for absentee ballot:	May 12
Last day to submit absentee ballot:	May 15
MUNICIPAL PRIMARY ELECTION:	May 19
Last day to register for the General:	Oct. 5
Last day to apply for absentee ballot:	Oct. 27
Last day to submit absentee ballot:	Oct. 30
MUNICIPAL GENERAL ELECTION:	Nov. 3



Parks & Recreation

With Old Man Winter still in Lackawanna County, don't miss your opportunity to sleigh ride at McDade Park. It's free and open to the public. However, as we look forward to Spring, there will be plenty of events promoting bike safety, the arts, sports and a lot of family fun.

You can begin to "Think Spring" with the Lackawanna County Commissioners' 2015 Winter Golf Clinic, scheduled from February 23 through March 20. For more information, visit the Parks and Recreation page at lackawannacounty.org.

Our Spring and Summer schedule will have something for everyone, including the Commissioners' Bike Safety Fair on April 25 from 11 am - 1 pm to be held at PNC Field in Moosic. We will distribute free safety helmets to all children, hot dogs, beverages and more. Make sure to bring your bicycle and ride around the concourse inside PNC Field. There will also be fingerprinting by the District Attorney's Office, bicycle safety lessons and check-ups, a bike rodeo and additional giveaways. Children will also have an opportunity to win a bike with our *Design Your Own Helmet* coloring contest or by registering the day of the event.

Improving job growth in Lackawanna County has always been a priority of the Lackawanna County Commissioners, and it continues to be so with preparations for our third annual Job Fair to be held at PNC Field on Thursday, June 18. It is free and open to the public. Last year's event featured over 60 vendors offering more than 2,000 jobs.

Mark your calendar for Lackawanna County Day at PNC Field on June 22. Bring the whole family out to enjoy stadium tours, run the bases, meet and greet with CHAMP and friends, face painting and much more. Stay and enjoy the game for just \$5 per ticket.

We will also feature Family Fun Days at all of our County Parks starting with McDade Park, June 27; Covington Township Park, July 11; Aylesworth Park, July 25; and Merli-Sarnoski Park on August 8. Come and enjoy some free family fun on each day from 11 am to 2 pm.

One of Lackawanna County's hallmark programs, Art in the Park, will again be held every Tuesday from 10 am until noon throughout the month of July at our parks. It will begin at Merli-Sarnoski Park on July 7; followed by Covington Township Park on July 14; Aylesworth Park on July 21; and McDade Park on July 28. The program will feature free arts activities for kids, rain or shine!

The Lackawanna County Parks and Recreation Department is offering a host of clinics and events. They include a Women's Golf Clinic, Fishing Derbies, Gymnastics Clinics, a Bocce Tournament, Youth Tennis Clinics, an Adult Tennis League, Summer Basketball Clinics, a Junior Summer Golf Clinic, Youth Soccer Clinics and much more. For more details and dates visit lackawanacounty.org.

With so much to see and do this Spring and Summer, we hope to see you out and about in Lackawanna County.



COMMISSIONERS:

COREY D. O'BRIEN • JIM WANSACZ • PATRICK M. O'MALLEY

Commissioners' Office
 200 Adams Avenue, 6th Floor
 Scranton, PA 18503



**County Parks Have
 Something for Everyone**



McDade Park

Inclusive Boundless Playground
 Swimming pool with bath house
 Children's fishing pond stocked several times a year
 Basketball and tennis courts
 Softball field
 Two pavilions
 Outdoor picnic areas with charcoal grills
 Two-mile cross country running course and hiking trail system

Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour Complex with concession stand and gift shop
 Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum and gift shop
 Cancer Memorial Garden and arboretum

Bocce courts
 Multipurpose field for soccer and lacrosse
 Free sports equipment rentals
 Large, open fields for Frisbee or cross country skiing

Covington Park

Inclusive Boundless Playground
 Little League field
 Pavilion and charcoal grills
 Baseball and soccer fields
 Basketball and volleyball courts
 Fishing/Seven-acre lake

Merli-Sarnoski Park

35-acre lake stocked by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Two pavilions
 Large handicap accessible fishing pier

Beautiful sandy beach area with bath houses

Boat launch (electric motors only)
 15 miles of hiking, mountain bike and nature trails

Picnic areas with tables and charcoal grills
 Two playground areas with basketball and volleyball courts
 Regulation soccer fields
 Lackawanna County Sheriff's Department horse stables

Aylesworth Park

Four-acre lake with beach
 Fishing in lake stocked by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
 Playing fields

Inclusive Boundless Playground
 Pavilion complex that can be reserved for groups of up to 150 people
 Lake trail
 Numerous hiking trails
 Picnic tables and charcoal grills

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Feb. 23 - Mar. 20 | Winter Golf Clinic, South Scranton Intermediate |
| April 25 | Bike Safety Fair, PNC Field |
| April 28 | Women's Golf Clinic, Scott Greens Golf Club |
| May 9 | Fishing Derby, McDade Park |
| June 6 | Bocce Tournament, McDade Park |
| June 18 | Job Fair, PNC Field |
| June 22 | Lackawanna County Day, PNC Field |
| June 22-25 | Youth Soccer Clinic, Merli-Sarnoski Park |
| June 27 | Family Fun Day, McDade Park |
| July 7 | Art in the Park, Merli-Sarnoski Park |
| July 11 | Family Fun Day, Covington Park |
| July 14 | Art in the Park, Covington Park |
| July 21 | Art in the Park, Aylesworth Park |
| July 25 | Family Fun Day, Aylesworth Park |
| July 27-30 | Youth Soccer Clinic, Covington Park |
| July 28 | Art in the Park, McDade Park |
| August 8 | Family Fun Day, Merli-Sarnoski |

Lackawanna County Attractions



Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour

McDade Park, Scranton | 570-963-6463
 Open Daily 10am-3pm | April 1st - November 30th
 Closed Easter & Thanksgiving



Electric City Trolley Museum & Station

Cliff St. on the grounds of Steamtown
 National Historic Site, Scranton | 570-963-6590
 Open Daily 9am-4pm | May 1st - December 31st
 Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year's Day



Lackawanna County Visitors Center and Whistle Stop Shoppe

99 Glenmaura National Boulevard, Scranton
 1-800-22-WELCOME x5
 Open Daily 9am-5pm



Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau

For more information on area attractions, hotels and restaurants, please visit www.visitnepa.org or call 1-800-22-WELCOME

This newsletter is paid for by the Hotel Room Rental Tax.