

living lackawanna

Official Newsletter and Report to Lackawanna County Taxpayers

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Inclusive Boundless Playground Opens at McDade Park

Lackawanna County majority Commissioners Michael J. Washo and Corey D. O'Brien announce the completion of the county's first playground designed to serve children of all abilities and needs. The McDade Park Boundless Playground is the first of three that will be built this year in the county - others are in Dunmore and the Abingtons - with more scheduled for next year. Funding is from sources specifically devoted to public recreation.

The centerpiece of the playground is an apparatus full of swings, slides, places to twirl, games to explore and areas to climb. The main structure is surrounded by an outer path that includes elevated sand and water tables. Autistic children have two "quiet" areas designed with them in mind. Slides and swings are accessible to children in wheelchairs.

The playground is surrounded by a special rubber safety surface to cushion falls.



"When I saw the playground, I was speechless," said Debra Boston of Taylor, parent of two wheelchair-bound children. "For 10 years, I've been begging for a place like this so my children have a place to play."

"With this playground, we have established a new benchmark for recreation in Northeastern Pennsylvania," Commissioners O'Brien and Washo said. "It will allow every child to meet his or her highest potential."

Fred Leone, CEO of Boundless Playground Inc., which has over 140 Boundless Playgrounds in 28 states and Canada, said Lackawanna County's decision to construct multiple Boundless Playgrounds puts it at the forefront of the inclusive play movement.

Commissioners Washo and O'Brien believe the addition of the Boundless Playground at McDade Park turns the facility into a true destination spot for families. Besides the playground, the park features a pool, fishing pond, pavilions and picnic tables, and miles of trails that wind through the woods. The Coal Mine Tour and Anthracite Museum are also located on the property.

The majority Commissioners urge all county residents to stop in at McDade Park and see the joy that comes to the face of a child who, for the first time, can reach the highest height on a playground and then whoosh down on a slide!



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INNOVATION STARTS HERESM
Lackawanna
County

in your corner

Commissioners' Message



Michael J. Washo



Corey D. O'Brien



A.J. Munchak

Michael J. Washo *Corey D. O'Brien* *A. J. Munchak*

In September, teams of four students and a teacher from eight Lackawanna County high schools began to study the local watershed and its history. Throughout the school year, they will visit sites such as the Scranton Sewer Authority and the Lake Scranton Water Treatment facility, test water quality in the Lackawanna River, and learn about topics like acid mine drainage. The Lackawanna County Conservation District and the Lackawanna State Park have run the monthly Community Connections to the Watershed program since 1996 as a way to educate our area young people about the environment.

Community Connections is only one of many programs operated by the Conservation District as it works towards its mission of providing conservation opportunities within county boundaries. As we strive to heighten awareness of green issues among county residents and

seek to lower the county's carbon footprint, we hope to increase our partnerships with agencies like the Conservation District. We also want the public to know about the good work done by the Conservation District, which was established by the state in 1958.

Last year, for example, the Conservation District broadened its offerings to high school students through a one-day Acid Mine Drainage Education program. The program taught students about the history and environmental impact of acid mine drainage. Students toured the Lackawanna County Coal Mine and tested the water quality at the county's Aylesworth Park.

Public outreach is another important aspect. With natural gas drilling and its potential impact on drinking water raising concerns, the Conservation District worked with Penn State to provide free well water testing for close to

200 county property owners in November 2008 and April 2009. Additionally, storm water control and water conservation were recently highlighted through a program that distributed 100 rain barrels to county residents.

Next up, the Conservation District is sponsoring the cleanup of various illegal dump sites in late October. The cleanup will place a particular focus on illegal dump sites identified in a recent PA Cleanways Report, which identified 92 illegal dump sites in Lackawanna County containing an estimated 424.25 tons of trash. Volunteers for the cleanup will include high school students, watershed associations, community groups and municipalities. By working with agencies like the Conservation District, we hope to make an even "greener" impact on our environment and make Lackawanna County an even better place to live, work and play!



in the news

Human Services Outreach Center Opens in Dunmore



Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak, along with Lackawanna County Human Services Director Teresa Osborne, announce that the Lackawanna County Human Services Outreach Center in the Dunmore Community Center is now open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center, which will offer information on programs in the Area Agency on Aging, Children and Youth Services, Veterans' Affairs, Mental Health/ Mental Retardation and the Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, serves as a pilot project for the current administration's vision of placing similar centers in all areas of the county. The Center for Family Engagement is also housed in the new office.

"The Outreach Center is part of our commitment to make it easier for county residents to access the many county human services and get the help they need," Commissioners O'Brien and Washo said. "In one recent case, a senior citizen who needed hearing aids and was unable to drive to the Veterans' Affairs Office in Scranton was able to walk in and schedule an appointment to fill out the necessary paperwork at the Outreach Center. That is the type of success story we hope to see repeated as word of the center spreads through the community."

Annual Festival of Trees Promotes the Joy of Giving

Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak, along with Deputy Director for Arts and Culture Maureen McGuigan, announce that the Electric City Trolley Museum, 300 Cliff Street on the property of the Steamtown National Historic Site, will again host the annual Festival of Trees. Organizations and businesses decorate trees that will be on display during December. This year's theme is "The Joy of Giving." Proceeds raised from the event are donated to Toys for Tots.



The opening reception is Thursday, Dec. 3 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Cost for the reception is \$20. Viewing the trees is included with the price of museum admission.

For more information, contact the Trolley Museum at 570-963-6590.

New Information Available on County Web Site

Two recent additions to the Lackawanna County web site by Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak and by Recorder of Deeds Evie Rafalko-McNulty gives the public even greater access to public information.

The Legislative Research Center provides a searchable database of minutes, agendas and related documents, such as contracts, for various county meetings, including Board of Commissioners meetings, from 2008 to the present. Most Recorder of Deeds documents can be viewed for free on line using Landex Web Access. Title searchers and others requiring more detailed reports can sign up for Landex Remote Application, a paid service that charges a nominal fee. Visit www.lackawannacounty.org to access the new services.

did you know?

COLTS total ridership was 1,928,738 passengers for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 with an average weekday ridership of 7,074 and an average Saturday ridership of 2,983.



Rail Distribution Terminal Assists Economic Development

The Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority and Linde Corporation have partnered to open a Bulk Rail Distribution Terminal in Carbondale that will assist

industries without direct rail access, benefit the burgeoning natural gas drilling industry and create new jobs to stimulate the local economy. The terminal will be served by the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad.

"This facility will allow all of the many industries in northeastern Pennsylvania who are not directly served by rail to reap the benefits of low-cost rail transportation

savings in transporting their products in and out of our region," said Larry Malski, rail authority president.

"We will be able to provide seamless, one-stop shopping for all of the gas drilling industry's bulk transportation needs into and out of northeastern Pennsylvania with this partnership," said Chris Langel, Linde Corporation executive vice president.

innovation starts here

The Scranton Enterprise Center Business Incubator

In 1999, a study commissioned by the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce and CanDo Inc. recommended the development of technology centers as a way for the region to develop a knowledge-based economy. Four years later, the Scranton Lackawanna Industrial Building Company, the industrial arm of the Scranton Chamber, developed the Business Incubator in the Scranton Enterprise Center to accomplish that mission.

The incubator nurtures start-up and expanding small businesses that are technology-based and/or have a proprietary product or service by providing reduced rental rates, shared services, training and networking opportunities. So far, 10 companies have graduated from the incubator. Currently, the facility houses several software development firms, two venture capital firms and other complimentary service providers such as the Great Valley Technology Institute and SCORE.



The innovative program is so successful that SLIBCO plans to build a high-tech facility in the Jessup Small Business Center for incubator graduates and other technology-related businesses.

"The proposed project can serve as a national model where a Chamber of Commerce develops and operates a successful business incubator, a new KOZ office park and a high-tech business accelerator/technology facility," said Andrew C. Skrip, Scranton Chamber vice president, industrial. "The accelerator/technology building will encourage the growth of high-tech firms and will act as a catalyst for the creation of new products and services."

More information about the Scranton Enterprise Center and related projects is available at www.scrantonchamber.com.

in your parks County Recreation Programs Expanding

Participation in Lackawanna County Parks and Recreation programs is continuing to grow under the current administration in part because of expanded offerings developed by Bill Davis, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, and Maureen McGuigan, Deputy Director of Arts and Culture.

Last year, Mr. Davis started low-cost soccer clinics for children at McDade Park and Merli-Samoski Park that more than doubled in size this summer from 84 youngsters to 173. Participation in existing recreation programs increased as well. The number of children who attended the McDade Park Fishing Derby jumped from 102 in 2007 to 356 this year. Youth Tennis Clinics saw an increase of almost 100 children this summer over 2007 levels. While the numbers are not in yet, expectations are also high for the Youth Basketball Clinics held in September and October, which had over 100 more children participate in 2008 as compared to 2007. Fees for clinics ranged from only \$10 for tennis and basketball to \$35 for soccer.



A free Art in the Park program piloted last year by Ms. McGuigan in cooperation with parks and recreation brought over 200 children and their parents to McDade Park and Merli-Samoski Park this summer on four separate Wednesdays. Children learned juggling, made bird feeders, twisted into yoga positions and danced to music.

"In these hard economic times, parents are looking for high-quality, affordable recreation opportunities for their children, and we are providing just that in Lackawanna County," Commissioners O'Brien and Washo said. "We are making more programs available than ever before, and we will continue to explore ways to expand our recreation options."

in the spotlight

Poet & Playwright Expands County Arts Programs



Regular trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and listening to poetry readings were a natural part of growing up for Deputy Director of Arts and Culture Maureen McGuigan. The early exposure instilled a life-long appreciation for the arts that led her to seek a graduate degree in creative

writing and, later, use her talents to connect others to the arts world through various county programs.

"I enjoy administrating the arts grant programs and other opportunities for local artists because it allows me to bring people together on projects that can benefit the entire community," Ms. McGuigan said.

A former artist-in-residence at NEIU 19, Ms. McGuigan worked as an outreach manager for Girls Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania for over two years before

Commissioners Michael J. Washo and Corey D. O'Brien selected her to coordinate the county's arts programs and take them to a new level.

In addition to overseeing existing county arts, culture and education grants, Ms. McGuigan, along with Children and Youth Executive Director Bill Browning, helped to develop the new ARTS Engage! program. ARTS Engage! uses state grant money to fund youth arts programs that all county children are eligible to attend at low or no cost, although a particular emphasis is placed on including at-risk youth.

Ms. McGuigan has also grown the county's free outdoor concert program from weekly concerts at Courthouse Square to include strolling musicians at the Scranton Farmer's Market and musical performances as part of First Fridays. In addition, she began a summer Art in the Park program for children and their families that includes crafts, music and other activities. Her next project is a Wake Up with the Arts Breakfast designed to network artists with community leaders with the hope of bringing more arts experiences to county residents.

in your town

Progress Made on Long-Awaited Downvalley Projects

Work is completed on one Downvalley project and is gearing up on another.

The Montage Mountain Road widening project that expanded the number of lanes from three to five from the Interstate 81 ramp to the intersection of Glenmaura National Boulevard was finished this summer. The approximately \$790,000 project, jointly funded by Lackawanna County and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, will help ease congestion on the road.

In addition to the widening, the project included drainage improvements, new guide rails, and updated signs and pavement markings. Changes were also made to the timing and phasing of the existing signal at the I-81 ramp and



the Montage Mountain Road Intersection to improve traffic flow and reduce delays.

Meanwhile, work is slated to begin on a roadway that will pave the way for a new Lackawanna County bridge on Main Street in Taylor. The road off of Oak and Main Streets will divert traffic so that the bridge can be demolished and replaced. Once completed, truck traffic for the Stauffer Industrial Park will be able to use the bypass road rather than detouring around the bridge, which has a 10-ton weight limit because of deterioration. The project is funded with state and federal dollars. Work on the bypass road must be completed by June 2, 2010.

in our past



The Lackawanna County Historical Society, an organization dedicated to promoting and preserving our County's rich history through its collections and programs, operates from the Catlin House, a historical attraction in its own right that is open for tours Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m.

The Catlin House was built in 1912 for the prominent financier, banker, attorney and philanthropist George H. Catlin and his wife, Helen. The house was bequeathed to the Lackawanna Historical Society in 1942 through Mr. Catlin's will upon the death of his wife.

The three-story, 16-room home was designed by architect Edward Langley as an English Tudor-style residence. The rich interior of the house includes inlaid parquet floors of oak, molded plaster ceilings, black walnut woodwork and stained glass windows. Period furniture and décor give today's visitors a glimpse of life at the turn of the century. For more information regarding the historical society and its collections and programs, or to schedule group tours of the Catlin House, call 570-344-3841.

information

- :: Airport (570) 602-2000
- :: Adult Probation (570) 963-6876
- :: Area Agency on Aging (570) 963-6740
- :: Arts & Culture (570) 963-6590
- :: Assessors (570) 963-6728
- :: Child Care Information Services (570) 963-6644
- :: Children & Youth (570) 963-6781
- :: Coal Mine Tour (570) 963-6463
- :: COLTS (570) 346-2061
- :: Commissioners' Office (570) 963-6800
- :: Controller (570) 963-6726
- :: Coordinated Transportation (570) 963-6795
- :: Court Administrator (570) 963-6773
- :: District Attorney (570) 963-6717
- :: Domestic Relations (570) 963-6721
- :: Drug & Alcohol Commission (570) 963-6820
- :: Emergency Services 911
- :: Housing Authority (570) 342-7629
- :: Human Resources (570) 963-6771
- :: Judicial Records (570) 963-6723 - Civil (570) 963-6759 - Criminal
- :: Juvenile Probation (570) 963-6887
- :: Nursing Home (570) 489-8611
- :: Parks & Recreation (570) 963-6764
- :: Penn State Cooperative Extension (570) 963-6842
- :: Planning & Economic Development (570) 963-6830
- :: PNC Field (570) 969-2255
- :: Public Defender (570) 963-6761
- :: Purchasing (570) 963-6767
- :: Recorder of Deeds (570) 963-6775
- :: Recycling (570) 963-2017
- :: Register of Wills (570) 963-6702
- :: Roads & Bridges (570) 496-7733
- :: Sheriff (570) 963-6719
- :: Tax Claims (570) 963-6734
- :: Toyota Pavilion (570) 961-9000
- :: Treasurer (570) 963-6731
- :: Trolley Museum (570) 963-6590
- :: Veterans' Affairs (570) 963-6778
- :: Visitors' Bureau (570) 963-6363
- :: Voter Registration (570) 963-6737



WWW.REDISCOVERSCRANTON.COM




Lackawanna County Attraction Hours



Lackawanna County Visitors Center and Whistle Stop Shoppe
99 Glenmaura National Boulevard, Scranton
1-800-22-WELCOME
Open daily 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour
McDade Park, Scranton
570-963-6463
Tours daily 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. from April 1 through Nov. 30. Closed Thanksgiving Day.

Electric City Trolley Museum
Cliff Street on the grounds of the Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton
570-963-6590
Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through October 31. Open Wednesday through Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. after October 31. Closed Christmas, New Years Day and Thanksgiving.

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



Lackawanna County Convention & Visitors Bureau

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



LIVING LACKAWANNA IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2009 COMMUNICATION AWARD HONORING CREATIVE EXCELLENCE

AS JUDGED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF THE VISUAL ARTS

2009 Communicator Awards
"Living Lackawanna"
Lackawanna County Commissioners
Washo, O'Brien & Munchak