

living lackawanna

Official Newsletter and Report to Lackawanna County Taxpayers

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cool counties

Solving Global Warming One County at a Time

Lackawanna Becomes A Cool County

Local and state Sierra Club officials recently honored Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak for becoming the second county in Pennsylvania to join the Cool Counties campaign. The campaign seeks to conduct carbon emissions benchmark inventories, reduce emissions based on the benchmark and create climate action plans.

"We signed on to the Cool Counties program because we believe that it is important to lead by example," Commissioners Washo and O'Brien said. "We hope that our pledge to reduce the county's carbon footprint will bring us one step closer to reducing global warming."

"It's our little part to help improve the environment," Commissioner Munchak said.

In addition to reducing global warming, lowering carbon emissions and creating climate action plans stimulate the local economy, Sierra Club officials said. Reducing energy and fuel consumption will save taxpayers money, create green jobs and result in shovel-ready projects that are eligible for state and federal grants.

Since taking office, the county administration has installed sensors to shut off lights in unoccupied rooms and halls, mandated that employees shut off computers and lights at the end of the day, encouraged employee recycling and set thermostat thresholds to save energy. Recently, the county purchased ten new hybrid cars to replace gas-guzzling vehicles. Rainforest Alliance Certified paper and ink are used for the county newsletter.

As a continuation of those efforts and to further the Cool Counties campaign, the administration has created a new Office of Environmental Sustainability to address environmental concerns beyond recycling. New county construction will be done using best-practice green building techniques like the use of recycled materials and energy efficient fixtures. The county is investigating retrofitting all lights in county buildings to LED ballast and bulbs and retrofitting all existing county vehicles for alternate fuels. The administration will also seek funds to conduct the emissions benchmark inventory.

ARTS Engage! Strengthens Communities

ARTS Engage!, a new model for public youth programming developed by Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak, in cooperation with county Children and Youth Executive Director William Browning and Deputy Director for Arts and Culture Maureen McGuigan, is providing hundreds of young people with free or low cost arts experiences. The program uses state grant money to subsidize existing high-quality youth arts programs that were in danger of shutting down due to lack of funds. ARTS Engage! is for all children but especially targets at-risk youth by promoting positive social skills.

Twenty-four students recently participated in the ARTS Engage! program Youth4Art, in which artists-in-residence Doug Smith and Lucia Daily combined music, writing and the arts for an afterschool program at the Everhart Museum. The students' creations were displayed in the museum's Classroom Gallery and their original songs were performed for the display opening.

For more information about ARTS Engage! programs, contact ARTS Engage! coordinator Chris Calvey at 570-963-6590 or at artsengage@gmail.com.



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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*

This spring, we awarded \$564,500 in competitive recreation and conservation grants to 19 local communities and agencies to help fund 20 projects totaling over \$4.6 million. The money was taken from

the Landfill Trust so that no county taxpayer dollars were involved. Combined with \$3.6 million already allocated for improvements at county-owned parks and for construction of inclusive, boundless

playgrounds, the grants will take recreation in Lackawanna County to a new level. The investments have the added bonus of providing needed construction jobs during these hard economic times.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT RECIPIENTS

Aylesworth Creek Reservoir Park Authority, Archbald:

\$45,000 for construction of a \$276,232 pocket park at the site of the former Archbald High School including a gazebo, trails and Veterans Memorial Plaza.

Olyphant Borough:

\$45,000 for construction of a new \$266,686 Little League field at Condella Park.

South Abington Township:

\$42,000 for construction of a \$142,500 handicapped-accessible restroom at South Abington Community Park.

Greenfield Township:

\$13,000 for a \$43,025 project at the Slebodnik Sports Complex to include repairs of the existing fieldhouse and addition of playground equipment.

St. Anthony's Memorial Park, Dunmore:

\$12,500 for a \$42,020 project to expand the existing restroom facility and make it handicapped accessible.

Leadership Lackawanna:

\$9,000 for a \$34,500 project to revitalize the Cancer Survivor Park at McDade Park.

Moosic Borough:

\$9,000 to complete \$30,000 in improvements at Mercatili-Segilia, Smerdon and Quinlan parks including new playground equipment, benches, buffer trees and path resurfacing.

Dalton Borough:

\$7,000 for a \$60,000 project at Platt Park including upgrading the existing Little League field and playground equipment, resurfacing paths and adding new benches.

Clarks Green Borough:

\$45,000 for a \$160,000 project at the Abington Joint Recreation Board facility to construct handicapped-accessible parking, pedestrian access and restrooms to support the new county-funded Boundless Playground.

Covington Township:

\$45,000 for construction of the \$604,010, 5,000-square-foot Moffat Estate Pavilion, which will include kitchen facilities and restrooms.

Throop Borough:

\$45,000 for construction of a \$259,780 skateboard park, trail and ice skating rink at the Throop Recreation Complex.

Abington Township:

\$25,000 for \$85,762 in improvements at the Abington Township Recreation Area including a construction of a handicapped-accessible pavilion and placement of picnic tables, grills and benches along a township trail.

City of Scranton:

\$22,500 for a \$125,000 rehabilitation project at Billy Barrett Park in Minooka including replacing playground equipment, resurfacing a tennis court and a new picnic pavilion.

City of Scranton:

\$22,500 for development of a \$125,000 project at Connors Park to install new play equipment and a gazebo/picnic area.

City of Carbondale:

\$30,000 for a \$98,000 project to replace playground equipment at Russell Park, Dundaff Street Park and West Side Cerra Leo Park.

Countryside Conservancy:

\$37,000 for the \$130,650 acquisition of 42 acres for trail development and access to the Lackawanna State Park in Glenburn, La Plume and North Abington Townships.

The Nature Conservancy:

\$45,000 for the \$1.54 million acquisition of 277 acres in Jefferson Township that will be added to the Moosic Mountain Preserve.

Ransom Township:

\$10,000 for development of an \$85,000 park plan for 525 acres purchased by the township for recreational purposes.

Thornhurst Township:

\$10,000 for development of a \$35,000 park plan for 18 acres purchased by the township for a park and access to the Lehigh River.

Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority:

\$45,000 to fund three studies totaling \$490,000 for Heritage Trails and Lackawanna River Greenway projects.

in the news

County Backs Economic Development Efforts

Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak have joined with the Valley View School District, Jessup and Archbald to approve a seven-year extension of Keystone Opportunity Zones to benefit unoccupied sites within the Jessup Small Business Center and the Valley View Business Park.



"KOZ is one tool in our economic development arsenal to attract businesses and create jobs," Commissioners Washo and O'Brien said.

The KOZ designation was created in order to attract development where little or no activity existed beforehand. Since the program's inception in 1999, it has led to the creation of thousands of new jobs for the Greater Scranton area and produced significant capital investment in our local real estate market.

"The Keystone Opportunity Zone designation lets us meet our competition head-on to win jobs and companies," said Austin Burke, president of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce. "The extension is vital to the economic health of our community."

Lackawanna County Prison Receives 100 Percent State Rating

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections awarded the Lackawanna County Prison a 100 percent compliance grade for its regular 2009 inspection. This is the second time in its history that the facility has earned the prestigious rating. The last time was in 2007. The inspection evaluates all facets of the prison's operations from security to food quality to medical care.

2009

Summer Arts Programs

Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak, through the Lackawanna County Department of Arts and Culture, will offer new and existing programs this summer to provide affordable access to the arts for residents of all ages. Events planned by Deputy Director for Arts and Culture Maureen McGuigan include:

Art in the Park

A free, family-friendly program that features performances, arts activities and nature walks to be held Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon on July 8 and August 5 at McDade Park and on July 22 and August 12 at Merli Sarnoski Park.

The Noon-Time County Concert Series

Concerts on Courthouse Square will be held from noon to 1 p.m. starting Friday,

June 5 and running on subsequent Fridays through September featuring a range of music including pop, rock, jazz and classical.

First Friday Scranton

Lackawanna County will feature outdoor music in front of downtown Scranton galleries and businesses in June, July and August in conjunction with First Friday art walks.

Farmers Market, Scranton

Strolling musicians will perform at the Farmers Market on Mondays from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

For information on these and other arts events, contact Ms. McGuigan at **570-963-6590** or m McGuigan@lackawannacounty.org or check on line at www.lackawannacounty.org.



Commissioners Encourage Intergovernmental Cooperation

Seventy representatives from 28 Lackawanna County communities and eight school districts have participated so far in at least one of the four monthly Intergovernmental Forums that Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak have held since February. The forum meetings are designed to encourage our municipalities and school districts to develop ways to share services in order to save taxpayers money.

The commissioners have offered information on shared health insurance models, including presentations by Benecon Inc., a benefits group that offers municipal health insurance cooperatives, and by NEIU 19 Health Insurance Consortium Board Chairman and Valley View School District Superintendent Joseph Daley. In addition, the commissioners and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance are exploring development of a cooperative purchasing service. The goal is to secure better prices for municipalities and school districts through large volume purchases of common goods. In the coming months, we will continue to investigate innovative ways to obtain services at the lowest cost for county residents.

did you know?

The Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad's rail freight system handled 7,831 revenue freight carsloads in 2008, which was the 2nd highest year in its history, thereby taking 32,000 trucks off our local highway system which helped reduce highway congestion.



innovation starts here

TMG Health



Dunmore native John T. Tighe III lives in Montgomery County now, but the founder, president and CEO of TMG Health has not forgotten his home town. Started in 1998, TMG Health's two operations centers are in Scranton and Dunmore where most of the company's 1,200+ employees work. Its corporate headquarters is in King of Prussia.

"It's a good work force," Mr. Tighe said of Northeastern Pennsylvania. "There's a strong work ethic, and people have the types of talents that we need. The economic development assistance that we received has been excellent. Everyone works together."

TMG Health offers technology enabled Business Process Outsourcing services for insurers, employers, health plans and providers in the Medicare Advantage, Part D, Medicaid Managed Care and Group Retiree health plan markets. Mr. Tighe expects the business to continue to grow based on demographics – more and more older

adults enrolled in Medicare and Group Retiree plans—and potential health care reform, which could increase the types of government health programs that are TMG's focus.

TMG has also been an innovative leader in providing opportunities for home-based workers, with just over 300 employees working from home, almost all in the NEPA area.

"It's cost effective, and it opens up a whole different work force to us," Mr. Tighe said, noting many are women who are looking for flexible hours to mesh with their family schedules.

Serving over 40 separate health plans and insurers with members in all 50 states, TMG supports over 2.66 million Medicare and Medicaid members and handles over 20 million health claims, up to 1 million enrollments and 1.5 million Medicare service calls annually. To learn more about TMG Health, go to www.tmghealth.com.

in your parks Aylesworth Park Groundbreaking

Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak joined with Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation William Davis and local and state officials this spring to break ground at Aylesworth Park in Archbald for a new \$500,000 park office, maintenance and pavilion facility.

The facility is part of \$800,000 in enhancements at the park, which also include development of a new multipurpose field, softball field, volleyball court and Bocce court, and the creation of a walking trail around the park's lake. The park will also receive landscape improvements and new site furnishings including benches, message boards and graphic maps. Funds are from the Landfill Trust, the Growing Greener program and a state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Grant.

"We're happy to bring more recreation opportunities to Archbald, Jermyn, Mayfield and the entire upper valley," Commissioners Washo and O'Brien said. "Throughout Lackawanna County, residents will see more programs in recreation than ever before."



"This is the end result of input the county received from community leaders concerning upgrades to the park," Commissioner Munchak said.

Other park improvements and recreation initiatives that the Commissioners are undertaking this year include \$1.3 million in improvements at Covington Park; a \$500,000 steam rehabilitation project at McDade Park; \$564,500 in recreation and conservation grants for 20 projects across the county by 19 local communities and agencies; and \$1 million to construct three inclusive Boundless Playgrounds at McDade Park, McHale Park in Dunmore and at the Abington Joint Recreation Board facility. Funds for the projects are from state sources and the Landfill Trust. No property tax dollars are being used.

in the spotlight

Veterans' Advocate Heads County Office

Ten years ago at a Veteran's Day ceremony at St. Mary of Mount Carmel Cemetery, Dunmore resident and Korean War veteran Robert Tuffy was struck by the disrepair of the headstones belonging to World War I and World War II veterans. Many were worn and leaning askew.

"It was deplorable," Mr. Tuffy said. "The veterans deserve better than this."

He launched an effort to replace the headstones and plant geraniums for those who no longer have family to tend to the graves. So far, Mr. Tuffy has replaced 75 headstones.

That drive and

determination on behalf of our veterans led Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo and Corey D. O'Brien to select Mr. Tuffy as their Deputy Director for Veterans' Affairs.

Formerly a heavy equipment foreman at the Tobyhanna Army Depot for 30 years, Mr. Tuffy and his team, including Anissa Fetchen, Santina Carpenter and Steuart Bailey, have worked to enroll local veterans and their families in various government programs that earn county veterans a total of \$800,000 each month in benefits. The team holds veterans' benefits seminars at local nursing homes in addition to numerous other outreach efforts. The Veterans' Affairs Office also distributes flags to local cemeteries on Memorial Day to mark the graves of veterans.

More complete information on the types of benefits available to veterans can be found on the Veterans' Affairs Office page at www.lackawannacounty.org. Veterans can also call the office at 570-963-6778 or visit the office at the Steppacher Building, 224 Adams Ave., Scranton.

Lackawanna County salutes our veterans and the great sacrifices that they have made on behalf of our country.



in our past



The Scranton Cultural Center at the Masonic Temple on North Washington Avenue in downtown Scranton is a glorious reminder of our architectural past that remains relevant today as a regional performance and cultural hub. Originally built as a Masonic Temple and Scottish Rite Cathedral, the building is significant as an example of the work of Raymond M. Hood (1881-1934), a prominent architect of the 1920s and early 1930s, and as a unique example of Neo-Gothic architecture in Scranton.

The Masonic Temple and Scottish Rite Cathedral was inaugurated on January 2, 1930 when the first meeting was held in the building. At approximately 180,000 square feet, the building houses two theaters, meeting rooms, a grand ballroom and numerous other rooms and areas.

Today, the Center is undergoing a several phased, multi-million dollar restoration. Lackawanna County assists in the Center's mission of rejuvenating a national architectural treasure as a regional center for the arts, education and community activities by providing \$250,000 in annual operating funds. Tours of the building are held every Saturday at 1 p.m. or by arrangement. For more information, and to see a list of events, go to www.scrantonculturalcenter.org. Contact the Center's Box Office at 1-800-745-3000.

in your town

New Hybrid Vehicle Fleet Reduces Carbon Emissions

Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak have purchased a fleet of ten Chevrolet Malibu hybrid cars that will help lower air pollution in your towns and save taxpayer dollars through lower gas prices, reduced maintenance costs and higher resale values. The county will sell six to seven gas-guzzling traditional cars as a result of the purchase.

"Because hybrids are so fuel efficient, they release only a fraction of the global warming pollution emitted by conventional vehicles – approximately 43 fewer tons of global warming pollution over the lifetime of the car compared to an average sedan," Commissioners Washo and O'Brien said.



The state chapter and local Northeastern Pennsylvania chapter of the Sierra Club lauded the Commissioners' proactive leadership.

"This makes economic sense, it makes environmental sense and it is going to set an example for Lackawanna County residents," said Doug Heller, the Sierra Club's local chairman.

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



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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**

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