



2018
ANNUAL
REPORT

CLARION • CRAWFORD • ERIE • FOREST
LAWRENCE • MERCER • VENANGO • WARREN



Mission

To provide leadership and assistance as well as collaborate and cooperate with our partners in strengthening business and job growth and improving the environment for economic and community development across the Northwest Pennsylvania region.

Vision

Northwest Pennsylvania will grow in its business and economic vitality, its residents will become more prosperous and the quality of life will be enhanced in the region's counties and communities.

Our Organization

Established in 1967, the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (Northwest Commission) is an Oil City-based, public, non-profit regional resource for economic and business development as well as community development and planning.

Funding for the Northwest Commission comes from local, state and federal levels of government. We are pleased to provide quality services at little or no cost to our clients.

Team

The Northwest Commission is comprised of skilled professionals dedicated to sustaining economic vitality and growth in the Northwest Pennsylvania region by fostering local, state and federal partnerships across public and private sector lines.

The Board of Directors represents county governments, private businesses, county planners, tourism and economic development corporations throughout the region.

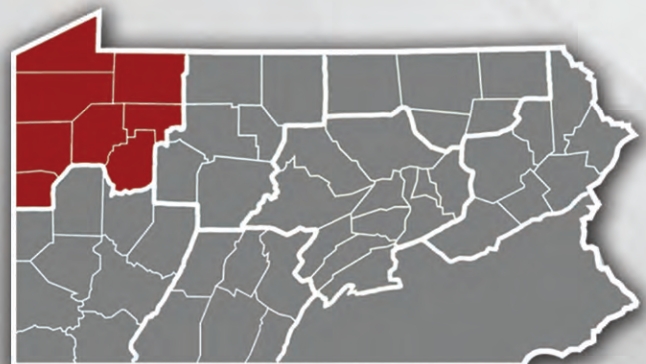
Our Services

The Northwest Commission strives to produce private sector job creation and retention through its business and economic development programs such as government contracting, business financing and international marketing assistance.

The Northwest Commission also provides community development and planning services such as grants, transportation, community revitalization and technology assistance to municipal governments to help communities stay progressive.

Our Region

The Northwest Commission is proud to serve eight counties in Northwest Pennsylvania: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren.





Jill Foys, Executive Director

A message from the
Executive Director

Thank you for all you do.

The Northwest Commission has begun its next fifty years. The Appalachian Region has made great progress in growth and development.

Issues such as insufficient potable water, high infant mortality rates and lack of basic infrastructure are no longer every day trials in the thirteen states. However, we are not without challenges that need to be met to advance the region and maintain the progress that has led us to today.

Technological infrastructure is as important to our success as water and sewage were in ARC's infancy. If we are not diligent in our quest for advancement, we will find ourselves behind the rest of the nation again. Connectivity is the great equalizer. With adequate broadband and cell coverage, you can live and work anywhere in the Appalachian Region and be a productive and competitive member of the global market.

The success of our region is because of the commitment and generosity of time and talent of our Board of Directors, staff, and partners. I always say "I don't know it all but I know who does". It's true. If we didn't have the expertise and willingness of those around us, the Commission would not be as successful as we are.

I am certain that our next fifty years will steer the region of Northwest Pennsylvania to be a vibrant leader in the Commonwealth and country.

Take care of yourself and one another,

International Marketing Program

The Northwest Commission serves as the Regional Export Network (REN) Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Office of International Business Development (OIBD). The REN partner acts as the gateway to Pennsylvania's Authorized Trade Representatives (ATRs) of 15 overseas trade consultants covering 52 countries.

The program offers a wide range of export assistance committed to preparing clients to enter and compete in the global marketplace by providing international opportunities that lead to increased jobs and sales. Services include export readiness assessment, target market research and identification, market entry strategy development, foreign agent/distributor search and trade event/mission assistance.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Since its inception in 1951, Finish Thompson, Inc. located in Erie, PA, went from a designer and builder of custom decorating equipment to its current position as a growing supplier of fluid transfer pumps and recycling systems for the fluid handling and environmental markets. This past June, employees of Finish Thompson visited Belgium and Germany on a market sales trip. Through the assistance of the Northwest Commission, Finish Thompson applied for and was granted GAP (Global Access Program) funding for their travels to these markets administered by DCED's Office of International Business Development (OIBD). The GAP grant program is funded in part through a grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

The company was met with successes from both markets during their visit. In Belgium, they were able to visit with a customer for their UC Series sealless centrifugal mag-drive pump, and as a result, were able to secure an immediate \$10,000 order with more orders anticipated in the future.

As for their visit to Germany, Finish Thompson exhibited their products at the SurfaceTechnology trade show in Stuttgart. They received multiple customer leads and already received an order for an FTI Air air-operated double diaphragm pump for their Germany subsidiary who ships goods produced in Erie to customers in Europe. In addition to exhibiting at the SurfaceTechnology trade show, Finish Thompson attended theACHEMA 2018 trade show in Frankfurt. While there, they also participated in a number of distributor meetings and hosted a dinner for about twenty customers and European partners.



72
Jobs
Created

453
Jobs
Retained

Over
\$162
Million
Total Export Sales

Business Financing Program

The Business Financing Program stimulates the creation and expansion of small businesses through the use of fixed low-interest loans, structured to allow companies the ability to borrow based on the number of jobs created and/or retained. The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is comprised of funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Economic Development Administration (EDA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). RLF loans can be used for land & building, machinery & equipment and working capital needs. In addition, as a Certified Economic Development Organization (CEDO), the Northwest Commission works with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to market and administer the loan financing programs available through the Commonwealth.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Nine Ships Company is a start-up corporation that purchased the business assets of Modular Engineering Company, a well-established Erie business with over 45 years of experience in the construction of modular buildings for industrial, commercial, public or institutional use. This includes electronic equipment and control rooms (standard and pressurized), remote electronic shelters, control towers, standard and bulletproof guard towers, crane cabs, steel mill pulpits, plant offices and booths.

The company currently competes in the permanent modular construction market and distributes buildings throughout North America. The buildings are shipped fully assembled with lighting, heating, air conditioning, and outlets. Nine Ships Company also offers customers options to customize each building to their unique specifications.

In July 2017, Nine Ships Company received funding from the Northwest Commission in the amount of \$400,000 as part of a \$1,085,000 project to purchase the business assets of an established modular building company. The company had two full-time employees at the time of application and will be creating another 10 jobs as a result of this project.

\$2,663,905
In Loans Closed

\$7,544,970
In Leveraged Private Investment

16
Loans Closed

37
Jobs Created

160
Jobs Retained

Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)

The Northwest Commission offers a free government contracting program known as the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC). The Northwest Commission's PTAC office is part of a larger network of nearly 100 PTACs located across the United States. The PTAC assists businesses large and small in understanding and navigating the government contracting market by providing counseling, instruction and bid opportunities. Through these activities, the PTAC increases qualified sources and competition and creates better value for government agencies and American taxpayers, while stimulating local economic activity as local businesses learn how to successfully navigate federal, state and local government contracting processes.

PTAC counseling is confidential, and because the Northwest Commission's program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and a match from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), services are offered at no cost. Over the past year, the Northwest Commission's PTAC office worked with over 200 clients by offering a dozen training and networking events and providing hundreds of hours of counseling and administrative support.

IMPACT IN ACTION

North Coast Sanitation, LLC began working with the Northwest Commission's PTAC program in 2017. They were pursuing a Pennsylvania statewide contract and sought the services of the PTAC in order to understand the solicitation package and bidding procedures. With the assistance of PTAC Manager Robyn Young, they successfully submitted their bid package and are now among other contractors on this multiple year, multiple award contract.

Alyssa Falkenhagen, Office Manager at North Coast Sanitation, had this to say about working with the PTAC: "We had a great experience working with PTAC. We had the pleasure of working with Robyn Young. She was very knowledgeable, professional, and extremely helpful when getting started. She was able to answer any questions and walked me through everything step by step... Thanks to this program and the help of Robyn, we were accepted to bid on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (statewide contract for our services)... Overall, this has been a good learning experience and I would recommend more people use this resource in the future."

137
Jobs Created

107
Jobs Retained

\$100,075,695
in Total Government Sales

Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP)

The Northwest Pennsylvania Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (NW PREP) is one of ten economic development regions designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As the regional coordinator, the Northwest Commission brings together local, county and regional economic and workforce developers, government offices and statewide organizations to work together on specific projects and proactively seek out new resources and opportunities to build a stronger and more prosperous Northwest region.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funds were awarded in May of 2017. The Trails at Jakes Rocks of Warren County was one of the award recipients for this round of funding. They were awarded \$225,000 to complete Phase 2 of the trail development.

This phase is being completed in two segments. Phase 2A includes roughly four miles of trail which opened in October of 2017, and Phase 2B construction activity commenced in June of 2018 with completion of an additional four miles of trail scheduled for September of 2018. The Northwest Commission provided technical assistance through the ARC application process.

96

Training Workshops

1,805

Attendees

643

New Clients

"The Trails at Jakes Rocks initiative which continues to expand in Warren County has been made possible through unique partnerships between public and private sector entities. The Northwest Commission has proven to be a critical resource to the project in facilitating and fostering a robust relationship with the Appalachian Regional Commission throughout the region. This relationship has been vital to gaining the financial support of the ARC for the project, funding which was utilized to leverage additional private sector investment in a significantly non-traditional economic development project."

- James Decker, President/CEO
Warren County Chamber of Business & Industry

Transportation

The Northwest Commission serves as the Northwest Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Planning Partner for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). In partnership with the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of local leaders from the five-county region of Clarion, Crawford, Forest, Venango and Warren, projects are prioritized to meet the current and future needs of the region.

IMPACT IN ACTION

This past year, the Transportation Program adopted the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for projects in the Northwest RPO. Also completed were the Crawford Area Transit Authority (CATA) Strategic Plan as well as a Northwest Transit Bus Stop Guidelines and Inventory document. Crawford County had a Route 27 Operational & Safety Improvement Study completed where information was collected along the Route 27 corridor. In addition, a Route 6 Bypass & Exit Ramp Feasibility Study was completed for Warren County.

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) provides local municipalities with technical training, technical assistance and other services.

Classes address topics such as roadway maintenance, safety, drainage and signage and are offered to municipalities in the counties of: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango and Warren.

LTAP classes are requested and scheduled throughout the year. In addition, if a municipality has a specific issue and would like one of LTAP's professionals to assist them, a technical assist can be done via telephone or an LTAP professional can offer on-site assistance. LTAP services are provided at no charge to the municipalities.



Over \$50 Million

Invested Last Year in NWPA Roads and Bridges

23

LTAP Trainings Held

328

Municipal Officials Trained

Greenways

The Northwest Commission's Greenways Block Grant (GBG) Program serves to implement the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, utilizing local capacity to advance the regional and statewide priorities of the program partners, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

This mini-grant program is open to the Northwest eight-county region and provides a funding opportunity at the local level for implementing smaller scoped projects with agility and purpose that may not be competitive for other funding opportunities when presented individually. The GBG Program is a great opportunity to continue established partnerships and create new ones between local, regional, and state entities, cooperatively working together to put mutual greenways plans into action.

IMPACT IN ACTION

A 2016 grant to the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development is currently funding water quality education and outreach workshops throughout the Northwest region, providing municipal officials with information on how proper water quality management can help reduce damage to property and infrastructure as well as help structure sustainable growth throughout communities. These workshops are reinforcing municipal and engineer training programs that were previously funded through another GBG Program grant in 2012 that helped to promote implementation practices of the recently developed model ordinance and stormwater plan under DEP's Act 167 Program.

Director of the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development, Amy McKinney stated, "Through the collaborative efforts of the partners involved, we are able to take proactive measures to implement stormwater best management practices, ensuring ordinances and water quality regulations are effective for the betterment of the region and our shared resources."

86

**Projects
Funded**

216

**Applications
Received**

69

**Participants
Since Inception**

2017 - 2018 Board of Directors

The Northwest Commission's Board of Directors is comprised of public and private citizens representing eight counties in Northwest Pennsylvania. The board contains an Executive Committee that oversees administrative duties, responsibilities and goals of the entire board.



Pictured L-R: Peter Frisina, Cindy Crytzer, Commissioner Ben Kafferlin, Debb Kapp, Commissioner Basil Huffman, John Stroup, Commissioner Francis Weiderspahn, Commissioner Scott Boyd, Dan Gracenin, Lizette Olsen

Commissioner Albert "Chip" Abramovic - Venango County
Jim Becker - Titusville Economic Development Corporation
Commissioner Scott Boyd - Mercer County
Councilman Jay Breneman, Erie County
Commissioner Steve Craig - Lawrence County
Cindy Crytzer, Tionesta Borough
County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper - Erie County
(Kristin Bowers, Erie County Alternate)
Jim Decker - Warren County Chamber of Business & Industry
Councilwoman Kathy Fatica, Erie County
(Carl Anderson, Erie County Council Alternate)
Peter Frisina, Erie County

Dan Gracenin - Mercer County Planning Commission
Alana Mastrian-Handman - Erie County
Commissioner Basil Huffman - Forest County
Commissioner Ben Kafferlin - Warren County
Debb Kapp - Action Auto Service, Inc.
Tom McKinley - McKinley Technical Services
Lizette Olsen - AWARE, Inc.
John Stroup - Clarion Hospital Foundation*
Commissioner Ted Tharan - Clarion County
Commissioner Francis Weiderspahn - Crawford County
Kim Zippie - Commodore Perry School District

Board Officers

Commissioner Francis Weiderspahn, Chair | Commissioner Basil Huffman, Vice Chair
Debb Kapp, Secretary | Lizette Olsen, Treasurer

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