

Planning Developments

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The 2008 Mifflin County Directory is available at the Planning and Development Department's office on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse, as well as at the Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce at the Historic Courthouse on the Square.

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Planning Commission Holds Annual Meeting

The Mifflin County Planning Commission held its Annual Dinner Meeting on March 19 at the Lewistown Country Club. Among those in attendance were Commissioners from Mifflin and Juniata Counties, municipal officials, local planning commission and committee members, State Representatives, local businesses and organizations and various consulting and engineering firms. There were approximately 100 people in attendance.

The featured speaker for the evening was Secretary Dennis Wolff of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture who presented *Planning for Pennsylvania's Agricultural Future*. Secretary Wolff spoke about the diversity of the agricultural industry and the importance of agri-business and the food processing industry. He said there was more than \$45 billion in gross revenue made each year through the agricultural industry. The Department of Agriculture has launched a program called PA Preferred, which is designed to encourage consumers to purchase agricultural products from Pennsylvania. Secretary Wolff mentioned a local business, the Waterfront Tavern and Restaurant, as one of the first businesses in the Commonwealth to participate in the program. The Secretary discussed the Farmland Preservation Program, which encourages



farmers to sell their development rights as a way of promoting farm preservation. Approximately 15 farms participate in the program in Mifflin County. Secretary Wolff mentioned other programs to assist the agricultural community, such as Clean and Green, which provides a lower assessed value in terms of property tax for 10 acres or more of agricultural or forestland, as well as the ACRE program, which helps farmers challenge local ordinances that could negatively impact the farming community. The Secretary also discussed the importance of local planning in rural areas in promoting farmland preservation.

Prior to Secretary Wolff's speech, awards were presented. The Community Planning Award is given to an individual, community, or organization for demonstrating leadership in community planning. Downtown Lewistown, Inc. received the Community Planning Award for initiating the Kish River Walk project. The overall project represents a great deal of collaboration, coordination, and leveraging of resources by the staff of Downtown Lewistown, Inc. Direct contributions were provided from Kish Bank, Omega Bank, Tim Havice, the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority, and the Borough of Lewistown. In-kind assistance was provided from



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Planning Commission's Annual Meeting (cont.)



The Planning Commission's annual meeting was well attended with approximately 100 attendees.

the Planning and Development Department, the Mifflin County GIS Department, and the Allegheny Ridge Corporation. The award was accepted by Jim Zubler, Executive Director of Downtown Lewistown, Inc.

The Special Award, a joint award from the Mifflin County Commissioners and Planning Commission, recognizes an individual for contributions to planning-related activities. John Pannizzo received the award for his years of service to the commu-

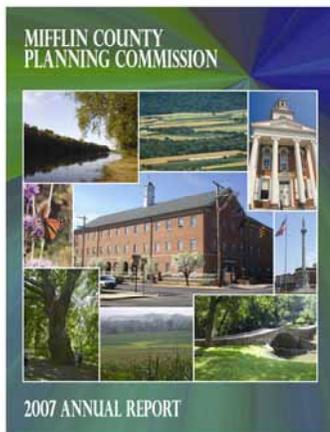


nity, assistance in improving and promoting downtown Lewistown, originating the Lewistown Festival of Ice, fundraising and support for the Monu-

ment Square Streetscape Project, and assistance to the Borough of Lewistown in procuring additional parking spaces in the downtown.

Staff awards were presented for years of service to the Planning and Development Department: William Gomes for 10 years of service in 2007, Doug Marks for 15 years of service in 2008, and Jodie Barger for 5 years with the department and 10 years with Mifflin County in 2008.

The Planning Commission's 2007 Annual Report is available at the department's office and on the web at www.co.mifflin.pa.us/planning.



Annual reports can be obtained at the Planning and Development Department's office or on the web at www.co.mifflin.pa.us.

Projects Approved for 2008 CDBG Funds

In February 2008, Mifflin County received its annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allotment from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). For the 2008 funding year, Mifflin County will receive \$250,406. The yearly allotment is based upon a formula calculated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

CDBG funds benefit low-moderate income citizens by alleviating serious and immediate threats to the health and welfare of community residents by improving neighborhood infrastructure. Projects typically funded are improvements to water and sewer systems, housing rehabilitation for qualified families, road resurfacing, and ADA modifications to public facilities. In addition, a portion of the funds may be spent on improving or adding new public services.

A "call for proposals" was mailed to every municipality in Mifflin County, as well as to several ser-

vice organizations, with a submission deadline of December 14, 2007. Four proposals totaling \$235,111 were received. At the first public hearing held on December 20, 2007, applicants were given the opportunity to present their proposal to the Mifflin County Planning Commission.

The CDBG Advisory Committee, which consists of two members of the Planning Commission and three members of the Planning and Development Department, met on January 15, 2008 to score and rank each proposal. The committee then made funding recommendations to the Mifflin County Board of Commissioners at the second CDBG public hearing held on January 31, 2008. The following projects were recommended for 2008 funding:

- Mifflin-Juniata Dental Clinic, Inc., \$14,611 – Fair sharing funding for the salary/fringe benefits of a full-time dental assistant;

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For information about the Mifflin County CDBG program, contact Melody Bratton at (717) 242-0887 or mbratton@co.mifflin.pa.us.

2008 CDBG Funds (cont.)

- Mount Union Municipal Authority, \$75,000 – Partial funding for the construction of a third water supply, Lempkelde Well, which benefits Mifflin County residents; and
- Newton-Wayne Joint Municipal Authority, \$100,000 – Partial funding for equipment purchase and installation of a pumping station, which benefits Mifflin County residents.

The Commissioners formally approved the recommendations via resolution on March 20, 2008. The remaining funds were allocated to the Mifflin County Housing Rehabilitation program and administration.

The deadline for the Mifflin County 2008 CDBG Program grant application to DCED was March 28, 2008. The application is currently under review by the Commonwealth.



The 2008 CDBG program grant application is under review by the Commonwealth.

LED Traffic Signal Conversion Program Initiated



SEDA-COG's Energy Resource Center has initiated a program in their 11-county region to convert existing, traditional (incandescent) traffic signals to Light Emitting Diode (LED) traffic signal technology. Megan Epler, of SEDA-COG, addressed the Mifflin County COG on February 21 to discuss the initiative. Interest in the project was stimulated by the possibility of reducing the amount of energy used by 85 to 90 percent over incandescent lighting, representing a decrease in cost by approximately 80 percent. Not only are energy costs lower with LED lighting, but the life of each unit is five to seven years. This extended lifetime could represent significantly lower maintenance and replacement costs versus the incandescent signals.

SEDA-COG has teamed up with PennDOT to provide overall project management and technical assistance for the project. On April 1, the Planning and Development Department helped with a workshop held by SEDA-COG for municipal officials and traffic signal installation contractors. The purpose of the workshop was to

provide a better understanding about LED traffic signal installation, a breakdown of the cost effectiveness of the new technology, and traffic signal maintenance and evaluation, as well as the traffic signal permit process. Representatives from Armagh, Brown, Derry, and Granville Townships and Burnham and Lewistown Boroughs attended the workshop.

A combination of grant funds, bulk purchase order savings, and equipment installation training will allow the 195 unconverted signals in the region to be converted to LED at a lower cost than if the local municipalities were to do the project themselves. Estimating an average of \$2,000 equipment capital cost per intersection with an estimated \$1,000 installation cost, savings on energy and maintenance would allow the conversion to pay for itself in approximately three years.

Mifflin County, on behalf of its municipalities, will act as the procurement agent to streamline the purchasing process for the project. The equipment purchase is scheduled for July 2008, with installation to be completed by September of 2008.

Details about the project can be obtained from Megan Epler SEDA-COG's Energy Resource Center, (570) 524-4491 or mepler@seda-cog.org.



SEDA-COG and PennDOT are partnering to complete the LED traffic signal conversion program.



LED traffic signal conversion details can be obtained from Megan Epler at (570) 524-4491 or mepler@seda-cog.org.



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Developing a Better Community

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Upcoming Events

- Mifflin County Planning Commission meetings for the second quarter of 2008 are scheduled for Thursdays, April 24, May 22, and June 26 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse.
- The Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) will hold the 2008 Community Development and Housing Practitioners Conference from April 27-29 at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College, PA. The registration deadline is April 18. For registration information, visit www.pahra.org.
- The American Planning Association (APA) will hold its National Conference from April 27 to May 1 in Las Vegas, Nevada. For conference information, visit www.planning.org.
- The Central Section of the American Planning Association's Pennsylvania Chapter will host a professional development workshop, *How Can Pennsylvania Effectively Address the Chesapeake Bay Strategy*, on Friday, May 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the C. Ted Lick Wildwood Conference Center at Harrisburg Area Community College in Harrisburg, PA. For registration information, contact Pam Shellenberger at (717) 771-9870 or pshellenberger@ycpc.org or visit www.planningpa.org.

Developing a Better Community