

# Planning Developments

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**Monument Square in downtown Lewistown.**

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## Phases I and II of the Monument Square Streetscape Project Completed

Phases I and II of the Monument Square Streetscape project were completed in July.

The project has evolved since its inception in May 2004 when

Mifflin County decided to apply for Home Streets and Safe Routes to School funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Interest was spurred when Secretary of Transportation Allen Biehler announced the program at the Mifflin County Planning Commission's 2004 Annual Meeting. The Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School Program was established to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment in downtown areas and to establish safe routes for children to walk to school.

Mifflin County's proposal initially sought to implement some of the recommendations in the Monument Square Development Plan completed by SEDA-COG in January 2004, but it became much more. The Monument

Square Streetscape Project is a three phase strategy to make downtown

Lewistown more inviting to people both in the daytime and at night, and will serve as a catalyst to enhance the

economic vitality in the downtown area. Phases I and II of the project were originally proposed

separately and were eventually combined between 2005 and 2006 with two Home Town Streets Program awards totaling more than \$1 million. Completed phases of

the project include new sidewalks

(continued on Page 2)



Before



After



After



Before



**Monument Square Streetscape Project construction.**

## Monument Square Streetscape Project (cont.)

*The Monument Square Streetscape Project is funded by the PennDOT Home Town Streets Program, DCED Community Revitalization and Growing Greener II grants, Mifflin County, Lewistown Borough, and local contributions.*



After

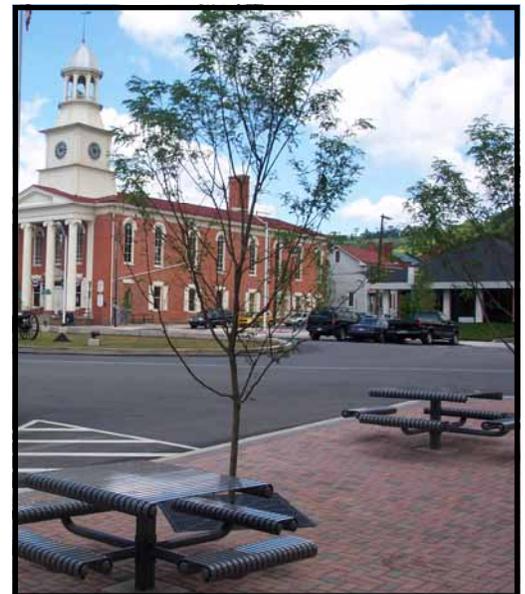
then proceeded to the southwest and southeastern quadrants of the Square. Work on the project continued until December 2007 and resumed in March 2008. During the project construction, a couple of changes took place with the replacement of individual planters with a second seat wall and the installation of underground conduit and underground wiring, eliminating overhead wires in the Monument Square area.



Before

stenciled concrete crosswalks and build out areas to improve pedestrian safety and to slow traffic around the Square, street trees, benches, litter receptacles, new lighting to make the area safer in the evening

hours, café areas to encourage community interaction, new curbing around Monument Island, and



This project has been a collaborative effort between Mifflin County, the Planning and Development Department, the Borough of Lewistown, Downtown Lewistown, Inc., the Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, and local contributors located both inside and outside the Monument Square area. The general contractor for the project was G & R Charles Excavating, LTD of Port Trevorton. The project designer is the EADS Architects, Inc. of Somerset. Phase III of the project along Market Street is being designed in preparation for a Transportation Enhancements application to be submitted to PennDOT in 2009.

*The general contractor for Phases I and II of the project is G&R Charles Excavating, Ltd. of Port Trevorton, PA.*

*The project designer is EADS Architects, Inc. of Somerset, PA.*



After

parking realignment to improve traffic safety and increase sight visibility.

Construction began in August 2007 with the replacement of the curb around Monument Island and



Before

## Stormwater Management Plan Progresses and Problem Areas Reviewed

by Doug Weikel, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc.

On June 17, the Watershed Plan Advisory Committee met to discuss Phase II of the Juniata River Watershed Stormwater Management Plan project. The committee reviewed the Stormwater Management Plan goals, the summary of Phase II tasks, and the schedule of the project. The main focus of the meeting was to review the stormwater problem areas that the municipalities identified during Phase I of the project. Prior to the meeting, the engineering firm of HRG conducted a field view of each problem area, documenting the conditions found, taking general measurements, and looking for potential solutions.

Municipal participation and support is crucial during the plan's preparation. Documentation of each problem area and conceptual solutions were provided to each of the municipal representatives on the committee for review and comment. This process ensures that the plan will reflect the needs of the local municipalities.

## Presentation Made to NAHB Local Chapter

On May 13, Bill Gomes made a presentation to members of the Mifflin-Juniata Chapter of the National Association of Home Builders.

Bill gave an overview of the Planning and Development Department's functions. He discussed the department's role in administering the Mifflin County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for Mifflin County and Derry and Granville Townships, and the Mifflin County Housing Rehabilitation Program.

During the discussion of the problem areas, many committee members noted similar causes of the problems. Common issues included debris, erosion, and capacity. These discussions are important when developing a strategy to address the problems on a watershed scale. Taking into account any comments, corrections, or additions provided by the municipal representatives, HRG will further develop the conceptual solutions utilizing runoff modeling. In addition, HRG completed and delivered the impervious GIS layer of Mifflin County. The county has procured GIS software to model and visualize anticipated growth.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 16. The project status will be discussed along with the review of technical aspects of the plan and technical standards. The focus of the meeting will be to receive comments and direction in developing the Model Ordinance.



*Doug Weikel of HRG is the project contact and can be reached at (814) 238-7117 or [dweikel@hrg-inc.com](mailto:dweikel@hrg-inc.com).*



*Stormwater problem identified at the railroad bridge near Victory Park in Lewistown.*

He reviewed department duties, such as maintaining the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan and coordinating with agencies in the areas of transportation, housing, economic development, municipal waste management, downtown revitalization, stormwater management, and tourism. Bill also discussed ongoing projects of the department, as well as new initiatives. He focused on the Housing Rehabilitation Program and provided information for potential contractors on how to get involved with the program.



*For contact information for the Mifflin-Juniata Chapter of the NAHB, visit [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org).*

# Recreational Opportunities in Mifflin County are Evaluated

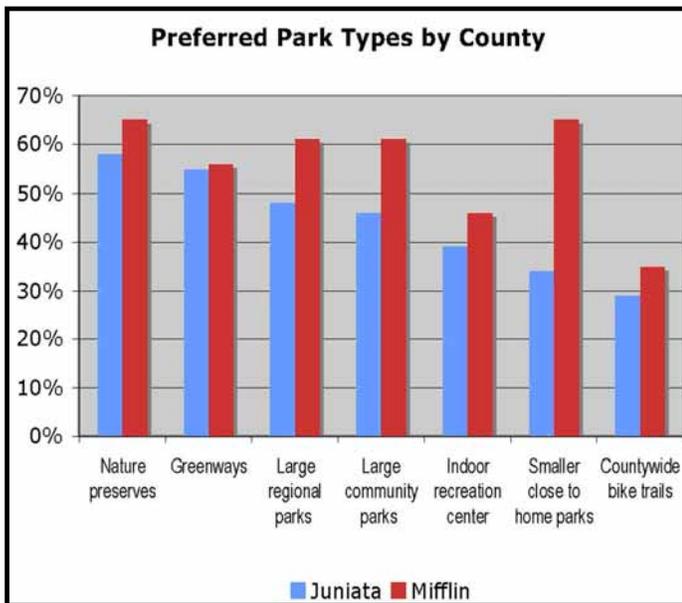
by Ann Yost, Yost, Stodoski, Mears (YSM)



*The Juniata River in Mifflin County.*

Mifflin County is participating with Juniata County to complete a Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan. When completed, each county will have its own plan. During the process, opportunities for enhancing recreation in the two counties is being explored. The recreation evaluation for Mifflin County determined the many recreational opportunities currently available to residents.

evaluated respondents' preferences for park type. Respondents were evenly split in their preferences for smaller close-to-home parks versus nature preserves. National standards for active parkland recommend 10 or more acres per 1,000 residents. Applying this standard to Mifflin County reveals that there is a deficit of parkland for active recreation pursuits, which equates to a need for an additional 264 acres of parkland by 2010 for close-to-home recreational opportunities.



Residents have long enjoyed Mifflin County's abundant forestlands, pristine streams, and easy access to the Juniata River. These natural recreational resources are complemented by close-to-home parks for play, picnics, athletic competitions, and community celebrations.

The park and recreation analysis is also considering local and national trends with regard to how people spend their leisure time. Walking and biking for health and fitness, spending time outdoors with families and friends, and participating in youth sports are all popular in Mifflin County and elsewhere. Local youth leagues, such as the Mifflin County Youth Baseball Association, cite the challenge of finding athletic fields to accommodate their programs. There are limited trails for biking in Mifflin County, and cyclists primarily use roads for biking. Easy access to recreational facilities for physical activity is critical for combating obesity and achieving health benefits.



*Reeds Gap State Park in Mifflin County.*

Mifflin County has 237 acres of municipal parkland for active recreation pursuits. The State Forests, State Gameland, Reeds Gap State Park, and Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission lands contribute approximately 57,800 acres for passive recreational activities.

The Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan will include strategies for enhancing recreation for all Mifflin County residents. Input on recreation in Mifflin County is still being gathered. Individuals' thoughts on parkland, recreational facilities, or other recreational needs are encouraged and can be provided to Bill Gomes via email at [wgomes@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:wgomes@co.mifflin.pa.us).

A random opinion survey was conducted of Mifflin County residents, and one of the questions

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

### School House Road Improvements Expected to be Completed by Early Fall

The Menno Township Supervisors have been diligently preparing for the widening and resurfacing of School House Road. After several requests, Menno Township was successful in obtaining grant funding from Mifflin County's Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for road improvements to the much utilized and deteriorated roadway. Menno Township was awarded \$6,000 in 2005 for engineering and \$130,100 in 2006 and 2007 for construction cost. These funds will be used in conjunction with funding provided by the Township to create a safe and sustainable roadway.

CDBG funds are used to benefit low-to-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.

School House Road functions as a main artery between SR 655 and Front Mountain Road, which runs parallel to SR 655. Being one of Menno Township's first roads paved in the 1960's, the majority of the road measures 14 feet in width.

Though efforts by the Township to reduce erosion of the road have been made, inclement weather and extensive weight on the road continues to undermine the progress made by the Township. Though deterioration is a driving force for the road improvements, the safety of Amish school children is the primary concern since there are two schools located along School House Road. In addition, there are several sawmills along Front Mountain Road. Consequently, logging trucks use School House Road as a thoroughfare. Many children walk the 1.5 miles stretch each day to and from school sharing the road with logging trucks, school buses, and Amish buggies.

In May 2007, Keller Engineers, Inc., was selected to provide professional services for this project. With direction from Ronald Samuel of Keller Engineers, Menno Township was able to complete a storm water drainage project that had to be completed before the road improvements could begin. With the storm water drainage project now complete, an invitation to bid for widening and resurfacing of School House Road was advertised on July 12 and 15. It is anticipated that a contractor will be selected on August 4, with completion slated by early fall.



*School House Road in Menno Township will be widened and resurfaced using 2005-2007 CDBG funds.*



*School House Road consists of several curves that will be addressed with the upcoming improvements.*



*Intersection of State Route 655 and School House Road.*



*Intersection of Front Mountain Road and School House Road.*

# PLANNING FOCUS



Chesapeake Bay.



For information about the Chesapeake Bay Strategy, visit [www.cbf.org](http://www.cbf.org).



For workshop presentations, visit [www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org).



The workshop provided information on the implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Strategy.

## Chesapeake Bay Strategy the Focus of Workshop

On May 2, the Central Section of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) sponsored a workshop entitled *How Can Pennsylvania Effectively Address the Chesapeake Bay Strategy?* Approximately 71 people representing planning organizations, municipalities, consulting firms, planning commissions, agencies, and municipal authorities attended the workshop. Bill Gomes, Director of the Planning and Development Department and Central Section Chair of the Pennsylvania Chapter of APA, helped organize and attended the workshop. The program built upon a session entitled *Nutrient Regulation and Trading and the Effects on Planning and Land Use* from the 2007 Annual Conference.

Nine speakers provided attendees with a wide perspective of the Chesapeake Bay Strategy and how it is being implemented in Pennsylvania, as well as in Virginia. The following topics were discussed at the workshop:

- The need for assistance to help local governments and authorities with implementation costs;
  - Non-point sources, such as trapped sediments, agriculture, and urban runoff accounting for 80 percent of the nitrogen and phosphorous pollution load to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed compared to 20 percent from point sources, such as sewage treatment plants, industrial dischargers, and permitted agricultural operations; and
  - Options available to municipalities and authorities beyond plant upgrades, including the nutrient credit trading program and the potential establishment of a credit bank.
- Presenters included Matthew Ehrhart of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, John Hines of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Ann Simonetti of the Marysville Borough Council, Scott Wyland of the Capital Regional Council of Governments, Gary Swan of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Peter Hughes of Red Barn Consulting and Red Barn Trading Company, John Kennedy of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Mark Ryan of State Senator Patricia Vance's office, and Alexandra Chiaruttini from the firm of Stock and Leader.
- Water resources in Pennsylvania and cuts in both Federal and State infrastructure programs for water;
  - Municipal lawsuit to delay the Chesapeake Bay Strategy implementation;
  - Nutrient trading experiences;
  - Virginia's grants and loans program for municipalities and the farming community to implement the Strategy;

Based on comments and completed evaluation forms, the workshop was well received. The presentations of four of the speakers can be found at [www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org).

# Mifflin County Survey Results are Compared

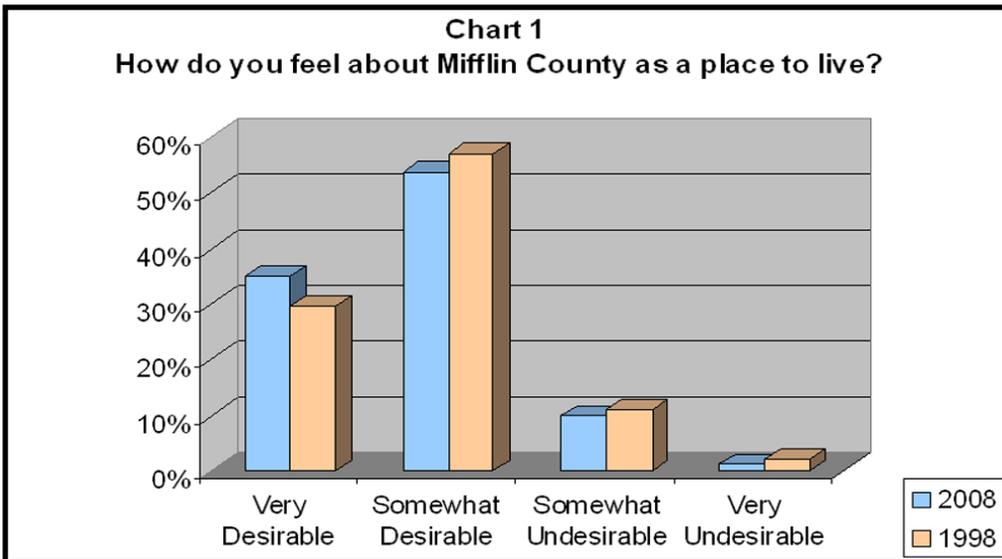
In 1998, 3,200 Quality of Life Surveys were sent to residents of Mifflin County, preparing for the update of the County Comprehensive Plan. Approximately 42 percent of the surveys were returned and tabulated for results, which were analyzed and used to craft the County Comprehensive Plan. In 2008, 2,500 Community Planning Surveys were sent to residents of Mifflin County, preparing for the County Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan. Approximately 25 percent of the surveys were returned. When compar-

ing the results of the two surveys, the sentiments of Mifflin County residents have somewhat changed.

Some of the problems identified in 1998 changed from those identified in 2008 as severe: Property taxes increased from 65.34 percent to 67.27 percent, while crime increased considerably from 15.07 percent to 56.09 percent, and unemployment increased from 42.28 percent to 60.69 percent. Based on the two surveys, the perception of crime as a severe problem has significantly increased.



*The Community Planning Survey results are important to the completion of the Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan.*



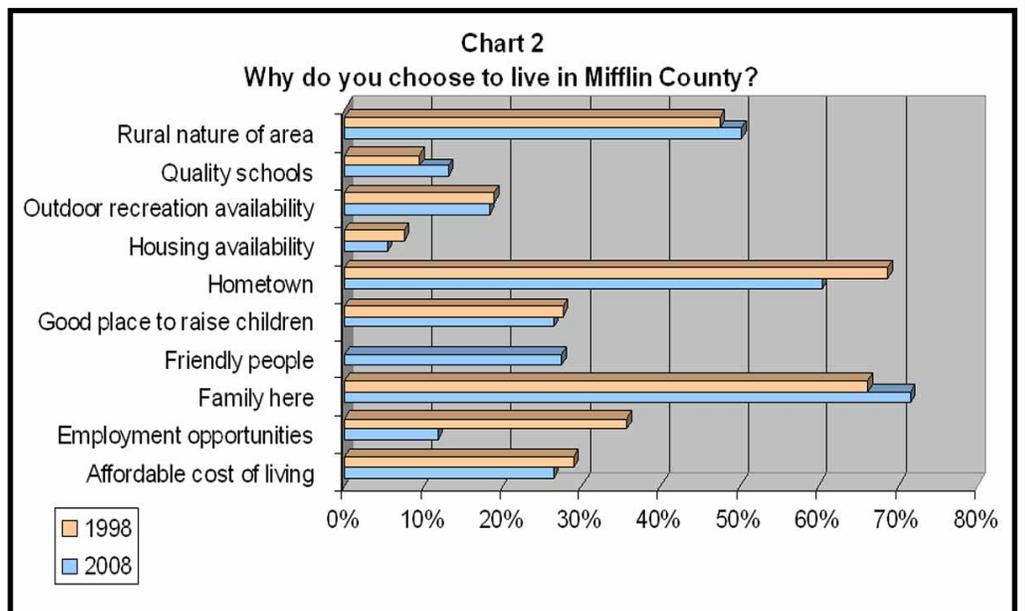
**Chart 1** shows the percentage of people that feel that Mifflin County is very desirable, somewhat desirable, somewhat undesirable, or very undesirable to live.

The percentages are very comparable, with a slight shift of people finding it more desirable to live in Mifflin County than undesirable.

**Chart 2** shows the reasons why people choose to live in Mifflin County.

Comparing 2008 to 1998, the numbers are very similar. The only noticeable change is that more people today are living in Mifflin County because it is their hometown. The only significant change is the percentage of people that choose to live in Mifflin County based on employment opportunities.

*(continued on Page 8)*



## Survey Results Compared (cont.)

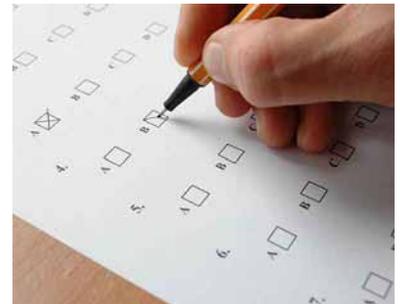


Contact Mark Colussy, Associate Planner, at [mcolussy@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:mcolussy@co.mifflin.pa.us) for more survey results.

**Table 1** shows the rankings of the top rated problems from the two surveys. The survey results show the top six ranked problems listed as a “Major Problem” on the 2008 survey or a “Severe Problem” on the 1998 survey. The results show the same problems on the list in a different order with the exception of downtown deterioration and lack of economic opportunities on the 2008 results versus post high school education and job training on the 1998 survey.

**Table 2** shows the ranking of the priorities that the residents have given for expanding or improving activities. The table shows the ranking of the top rated priorities, as listed on the survey as “High Priorities.” As you will see, police protection and physician recruitment were high on the 2008 list, where education and recreation were important on the 1998 list. Both business development and training appear to be high priorities on both surveys.

| Table 1<br>Top Ranked Problems |                                  |                               |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rank                           | 2008                             | 1998                          |
| 1                              | Drug and alcohol abuse           | Property taxes                |
| 2                              | Property taxes                   | Unemployment                  |
| 3                              | Economic opportunities (lack of) | Drug and alcohol abuse        |
| 4                              | Unemployment                     | Post high school education    |
| 5                              | Downtown deterioration           | Domestic violence             |
| 6                              | Domestic violence                | Post high school job training |



*Of the 2,500 surveys that were sent to Mifflin County residents, approximately 25% were completed and returned.*

| Table 2<br>Priorities for Expanding or Enhancing Services |                              |                                    |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Rank  | 2008                         | 1998                               |
| 1   | Business retention/expansion | Employment                         |
| 2   | Economic development         | Small & large business development |
| 3   | Police protection            | Education                          |
| 4   | Small business development   | Recreation                         |
| 5   | Physician recruitment        | Workforce training and retraining  |
| 6   | Job training                 | Improving the downtown             |



*Survey respondents ranked business retention/expansion a number one priority in 2008.*

For information on the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan, the Juniata-Mifflin Counties Greenway, Open Space and Rural

Recreation Plan, or the survey results, contact Mark Colussy at [mcolussy@co.mifflin.pa.us](mailto:mcolussy@co.mifflin.pa.us) or (717) 242-0887.

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT



DCED sponsored the CD&H Annual Conference in April and the Section 3 and MBE/WBE training in May.



Section 3 is a provision of HUD's Act of 1968.

## Pennsylvania Community Developers & Housing Practitioners (CD&H) Hold Annual Conference

On April 28 and 29, Melody Bratton, Doug Marks, and Jodie Barger attended the CD&H Annual Conference sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Several sessions were offered, such as *Federal Budget and State Programs Update*, *Trends in Housing that Affect Construction Methods, Costs, and Energy Consumption*, *Green Building Considerations for Rehab and Retrofit*, and *Stretching the Dollars*.

## Staff Members Attend Section 3 and MBE/WBE Compliance and Reporting Requirements Training

On May 8, Melody Bratton, Doug Marks, and Jodie Barger attended a mandatory training sponsored by DCED for all sub-grantees receiving federal funds under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program, and Emergency Services Grant (ESG) programs. Attendees of the training received instructions in developing effective Section 3 and Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) plans, cultivating partnerships to attract qualified residents, and addressing business concerns, as well as how to accurately complete annual reports as required in federal programs.

Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Develop-

ment (HUD) Act of 1968 that promotes local economic development, neighborhood economic improvement, and individual self-sufficiency. The program requires that recipients of certain HUD financial assistance, to the greatest extent possible, provide job training, employment, and contract opportunities for low or very low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods.

MBE/WBE is a provision to assure that minority business enterprises (MBE) and women business enterprises (WBE) are given the opportunity to participate in contract and procurement for supplies, construction, equipment, and services under federal funding programs.

## Kimball Technology Workshop Held

On June 5, Mark Colussy attended the Kimball Technology Workshop '08. The motto of the workshop was, "Be part of the next frontier." The technology workshop was broken into different "tracks", GIS, Communications, and Technology. Some of the various sessions held included emerging 9-1-1 technologies, improving GIS operational procedures, a demo and explanation on ESRI's (producer of GIS software) Joint Job Tracking, an industry roundtable with various GIS professionals, and closing the gap between GIS and CAD systems. The free workshop, held by the GIS consulting firm Kimball, was very helpful in seeing not only where GIS in general is leading to in the future, but the future of 9-1-1 as well.



Kimball Technology is a GIS consulting firm.



The technology workshop helped to show where GIS is leading in the future.

### Staff Members

William Gomes, AICP,  
*Director*

Melody Bratton,  
*Community Development  
Administrator*

Doug Marks,  
*Housing Rehabilitation  
Specialist/Construction  
Manager*

Mark Colussy,  
*Associate Planner*

Jodie Barger,  
*Community Development  
Bookkeeper/Secretary*

Millie Sunderland,  
*Office Manager/  
Grants Manager*

Donna Baer,  
*Fiscal Assistant*

## Upcoming Events

- **Mifflin County Planning Commission meetings for the third quarter of 2008 are scheduled for Thursdays, July 24, August 28, and September 25 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse.**
- **A program for municipal officials, staff, and planners, entitled *Natural Gas Exploration and Drilling: The Local Government Role in the Future Impacts of Underground Opportunities* will be held Thursday, August 21 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. For registration information and locations, visit [www.palocalgovtraining.org](http://www.palocalgovtraining.org).**
- **The next Watershed Plan Advisory Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, September 16 at 4:00 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse.**
- **A Professional Development Program for professional planners, municipal officials, and university and community representatives, entitled *Reinhabiting Campus Neighborhoods: A Statewide Symposium* will be held Wednesday, September 24 from 9:00a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Indiana University of Pennsylvania Crimson Event Center in Indiana, PA, and Thursday, November 6 from 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Franklin & Marshall College Alumni Sports & Fitness Center Woods Room in Lancaster, PA. For more information, visit [www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org) or contact the Pennsylvania Chapter of APA at (717) 671-4510.**
- **The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association will hold its 2008 Annual Conference from October 12-14 at the Sheraton Station Square in Pittsburgh, PA. Conference information can be obtained at [www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org).**

## Developing a Better Community



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Developing a Better Community