

Planning Developments

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October 2008



Mifflin County Courthouse Volunteer Team for the United Way Day of Caring

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Laura Simonetti and daughter Callie, Doug Marks, Lisa Brouillette, Donald Howell, Dana Parson, Mark Colussy, Jessica Wagner, Laura Espigh, and Melody Bratton and daughter Lily.

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FEMA Approves Hazard Mitigation Plan

by Nathan Garman and Troy Truax, AICP of Delta Development Group, Inc.

After a 12-month planning process of researching the natural and human made hazards that Mifflin County is most susceptible to and identifying mitigation project opportunities to address these hazard vulnerabilities, the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is complete. The HMP strives to provide each municipality with a thorough understanding of its vulnerability to various hazards, in addition to providing a blueprint for mitigating the damaging effects of those hazards.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan, spearheaded by the Planning and Development Department and Office of Public Safety and funded by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), is being conducted with Juniata and Perry Counties as part of a Tri-County HMP initiative. Through the 12-month planning process, the top three hazards affecting Mifflin County and its 16 municipalities were identi-

fied as flooding, severe winter weather, and drought. Transportation hazards were also identified as a concern for the County. The plan includes 27 mitigation projects submitted on behalf of the County and the municipalities, as well as more than 50 nonstructural policy recommendations and best management practices.

The Mifflin County HMP was accepted by PEMA on September 5, and was subsequently submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for approval. FEMA has since approved the Mifflin County HMP and is in the process of sending written notification to the

County's 16 municipalities that have adopted the plan. Approval of the HMP makes the County and each municipality eligible for disaster mitigation grant funds. The final approved version of the HMP will soon be available on Mifflin

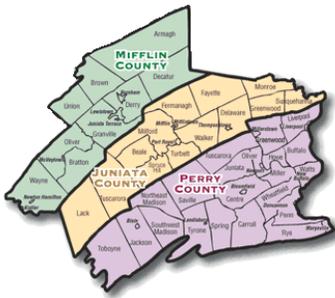
Hazard mitigation funding assistance is currently available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) 2009 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program. The PDM program is a 75 percent federal/25 percent local match program.

The grant program will be available to communities that have adopted the FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. **The application deadline is November 21, 2008.**

More information can be obtained by contacting Phil Lucas of the Mifflin County Office of Public Safety at (717) 248-9645 or plucas@co.mifflin.pa.us.

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FEMA Approves Hazard Mitigation Plan (cont.)



A Special Needs Assessment Survey and Evacuation Software tool will benefit Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry Counties by assisting special needs individuals during emergencies and/or evacuations.

County's website. An electronic version of the plan will be distributed to each municipality. An at-cost fee will apply to any municipality requesting a copy of the plan.

Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry Counties will also be deploying the Special Needs Assessment Survey and Evacuation Software tool, developed by Delta Development Group, Inc., as part of the planning process. The software tool will assist the Counties and local government officials with identifying and assisting individuals with special needs during an emergency or in need of evacuation.

Citizens and facility administrators (i.e., nursing homes, long-

term care facilities) will have the opportunity to voluntarily enter demographic and special needs information about themselves, family members, and/or associates. The data provided through this online survey tool is incorporated into the special needs database to help emergency managers respond during an emergency or an emergency requiring evacuation. In the coming months, as the software tool is deployed in each of the three Counties, training sessions will occur to further explain the software tool and its many applications.

The Special Needs software tool is expected to be available online through the County's website by the end of December 2008.



Belltown Run bridge in Decatur Township.

PennDOT Updates the Planning Commission on Area Projects

On June 26, at the Mifflin County Planning Commission's monthly meeting, Karen Michael, Assistant District Executive for Design, of PennDOT gave a presentation on projects in Mifflin County. PennDOT's District 2-0 covers nine counties: Mifflin, Juniata, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Cameron, Elk, McKean, and Potter Counties.

Ms. Michael gave an overview of projects under construction, which included the Monument Square Streetscape Project in Lewistown Borough, T-702 Schoolhouse Road bridge project in Oliver Township, curve flashing devices for Seven Mountains and Twin Bridges safety project, and SR 22-A09 Lewistown Narrows highway project. She also discussed upcoming projects, which include the SR 305-A01 Little Kish Creek bridge in Union Township scheduled to be let this

fall and SR 2002-A03 Belltown Run bridge in Decatur Township to be let late in 2008.

Future projects include the SR 2007-A01 Kish Creek bridge replacement in Lewistown Borough and SR 1005 Honey Creek bridge rehabilitation in Brown Township, both to be let in the spring of 2009, as well as the SR 3017 Beaver Dam Run bridge rehabilitation in Wayne Township to be let in the spring of 2010. Future projects to be let in 2011 are the US 22/322 Kish Creek and ConRail bridge rehabilitation in Lewistown Borough and the US 322 Twin Bridges rehabilitation in Brown Township. In the spring of 2012, PennDOT expects to let the SR 2001-A02 Jacks Creek bridge in Derry Township, SR 1002-A02 Honey Creek bridge in Armagh Township, and SR 1005-A03 Bucks Run bridge in Burnham Borough.



For information about transportation in this area, visit PennDOT's website at www.dot.state.pa.us.

Dedication Ceremony Held in Monument Square

On September 9, the Mifflin County Commissioners held a dedication ceremony for the revitalization of Monument Square in downtown Lewistown. Approximately 50 people in the community attended the ceremony. As part of the program, presentations were made by representatives from various organizations that participated in the redevelopment effort. County Commissioner Otis Riden, Jr. served as the master of ceremonies.

Following an invocation by Rev. John Walters of the Bible Baptist Church, Commissioner Riden reflected on his past experiences in Monument Square as he grew up in the community. Lewistown Mayor Deborah Bargo discussed the partnership among the organizations that participated in the Monument Square Streetscape Project. Mifflin County Historical Society President Steve Rynkewitz gave a brief history of the Square and spoke of its importance in the development of Mifflin County. Senator Jake Corman discussed the Commonwealth's role in the project and how the redevelopment would be a great asset to the community. Downtown Lewistown, Inc. President Jon Zimmerman talked about the project as one facet of the redevelopment plans for the downtown.

The Streetscape Project was made possible through funding by PennDOT's Home Town Streets Program, DCED's Community Revitalization and Growing Greener II Programs, the Mifflin County Commissioners, Lewistown Bor-

ough, and local contributions. Planning and Development Department Director Bill Gomes expressed his appreciation to the local contributors of the project and announced each one: Jose R. Acosta, M.D., P.C., Calkins Automotive, Downtown Lewistown, Inc., Downtown OIP & Grille, First Media Radio, Friends of the Embassy Theatre, Gates, Halbruner & Hatch, P.C., Glick's Shoe Fly, H.C. Kerstetter Company, Housing Authority of the County of Mifflin, Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau, Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, The Juniata Valley Bank, Kish Bank, Lewistown Hospital, Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation, Pannizzo Building of 2



East Market Street, Rotary Club of Lewistown, Wal-Mart, and Wilson's Gifts and Jewelry. Mr. Gomes summarized how the project came to fruition

with the support of the County Commissioners, as well as the work of the Lewistown Borough, EADS Architects, G&R Charles Excavating, Roth Surveying, Moon Brothers Landscaping, PP&L, Penelec, State Senator Jake Corman, and staff of the County Maintenance and Planning and Development Departments. Commissioner Riden offered closing remarks and encouraged attendees to view the Square's transformation.

Mifflin County is currently in the process of finalizing this phase of the project with sidewalk replacements on South Main Street towards Water Street. This portion of work is expected to be completed this fall, weather permitting.



Mifflin County Commissioner Otis Riden, Jr. at the dedication ceremony.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mifflin County Commissioners Bob Reck, Mark Sunderland, and Otis Riden, Jr., Jon Zimmerman, Mayor Deborah Bargo, Bill Gomes, Rep. Kerry Bennhngoff, and Senator Jake Corman.



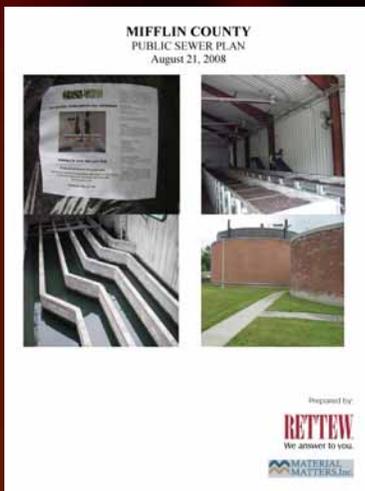
Members of the community attend the ceremony.

PLANNING FOCUS

Mifflin County Public Sewer Plan Adopted



The Public Sewer Plan was funded in part by a DCED LUPTAP grant.



The Mifflin County Public Sewer Plan is available online at www.co.mifflinpa.us/planning.



The Public Sewer Plan was prepared by RETTEW Associates, Inc. and Material Matters, Inc.

On August 21, the Mifflin County Commissioners adopted the Public Sewer Plan, which was a three-year project involving a comprehensive review of the County's sewer needs. The plan includes an inventory of existing sewage facilities, evaluates wastewater needs, encourages updating of Act 537 plans, and promotes orderly development by encouraging public sewage facility planning coordination.

The Public Sewer Plan was recommended in the County Comprehensive Plan and is an update to the sewer plan completed in 1979. The plan was prepared with many opportunities for public participation. In July, the plan was completed with the assistance of RETTEW Associates, Inc. and input from an advisory committee. Two public meetings were held during the process, one at the beginning of the process to determine the area's needs, and one at the end of the plan's development to review the recommendations. Prior to the plan's adoption, municipalities were provided a final draft for review.

The Public Sewer Plan provides insight into land development activity within the County. It shows land development activity continued to climb in the outlying townships, while most boroughs experienced losses in terms of population and tax base. Projections over the next 20 years depict the County increasing by over 3,800 residents and by a corresponding 1,550 dwelling units. Other findings indicate that 58 percent unused sewage capacity is available at municipal facilities, and an estimated \$75 million is needed to meet the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and/or other wastewater treatment facility expansion or maintenance needs. Plan recommen-

dations include the following:

- Update Act 537 plans to be consistent with the County and local planning documents;
- Adopt and implement the designated growth and rural area concept identified in the County Comprehensive Plan focusing on coordinating zoning districts, density, and intensity of uses, and public infrastructure improvements (sewer);
- Require secondary percs and probes for alternate on-lot sewage disposal sites and systems, and perpetual easements to reserve an on-lot area for a back-up or alternate disposal system;
- Establish a Countywide Sewer Committee to review municipal planning and sewer documents to determine consistency with long range planning;
- Complete the Mifflin County Economic Development Strategy to better understand where opportunities exist for development in the County within the next two years;
- Begin regional cost-sharing initiatives associated with wastewater treatment plant operations;
- Explore the feasibility of developing a regional septage facility; and
- Coordinate regional capital improvement plans to help offset costs associated with addressing the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy.

The project was funded in part by a DCED Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) grant and the Mifflin County Commissioners with contributions from Burnham Borough, Derry Township, and Lewistown Borough. The final plan will be distributed to each municipality and is available on the County's website at www.co.mifflin.pa.us/planning.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

First Phase of Street Improvements in Juniata Terrace Completed

The Borough of Juniata Terrace is a quaint community constructed by the American Viscose Company in the 1930's. Consisting of approximately 250 housing units, Juniata Terrace is an architecturally homogeneous development. It is a series of almost identical three-bedroom red brick row houses with front porches and distinctive green and white awnings. The Borough is adjacent to S.R. 103 and surrounded by Granville Township.

In 2004, a Borough-wide income survey revealed that the area was 60.12 percent low-to-moderate income. Based on these results, the Borough Council qualified to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds through Mifflin County. CDBG funds are available to areas that qualify at 51 percent low-to-moderate income. The CDBG funds can be used for a variety of projects that would benefit all Borough residents including sewer projects, recreation projects, and street repair.

After several previously successful CDBG projects, the Juniata Terrace Borough Council applied for funding in 2006 for street restoration and paving. They requested that cracks be sealed and potholes repaired. Some streets were also rising and some sinking, which was of increasing concern to the Juniata Terrace Borough Council.

Since funding was limited, staff of the Planning and Development Department met with Borough officials about the possibility of repairing and paving the areas that were most deteriorated. It was decided that repairs would occur at the

main entrance of the Borough, Viaduct Way, to the intersection of Terrace Boulevard North (base bid), the intersection of First Street and Terrace Boulevard (alternate 1), and the intersection of Henderson Way and Terrace Boulevard (alternate 2). It was also determined that approximately 100 feet of curbing along Viaduct Way needed to be replaced to alleviate storm water drainage issues before street repair could begin.

In collaboration with Granville Township's road crew, 100 feet of curbing was replaced with pre-cast curbing in July. The remainder of the project was bid in August. Jay Fulkroad & Sons was the lowest bidder at \$21,559 for the base bid and alternate 1. The work was completed in September and significantly improved storm water issues, ease of use, and the appearance of the Borough. Juniata Terrace plans to apply for funds in subsequent years to repair and pave the remainder of the deteriorated streets in the Borough.



Work on the Juniata Terrace Borough curbing progressed in May 2008.



Street paving in Juniata Terrace was completed in September.

Mifflin County Community Development Block Grant Program

The Planning and Development Department will soon be accepting proposals for the FFY 2009 Mifflin County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The 2009 CDBG application will be made available online, and applications will be mailed to local municipalities and organizations shortly. For information on the program guidelines, visit www.co.mifflin.pa.us/planning.

All proposals for FFY 2009 must be mailed or delivered to the Planning and Development Department before the deadline of Thursday, December 11, 2008 at 3:30 p.m. Fax transmissions will not be accepted. Applicants are required to present their proposals at the Mifflin County CDBG public hearing on Thursday, December 18.

Contact Melody Bratton, Community Development Administrator, at (717) 242-0887 or mmbratton@co.mifflin.pa.us with questions or to discuss proposed projects.

Public Outreach Program Conducted for the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan Project

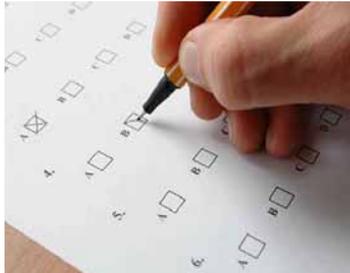
by Frank Chlebnikow, AICP, RETTEW Associates, Inc.



The Planning and Development Department oversees the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan project and administers the grant for the project.

The Juniata County Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion. The Advisory Committee has discussed aspects of the plan, and the consultants, RETTEW Associates and Shepstone Management, are in the process of finalizing the profile and plan sections.

Driving this community planning effort was a public outreach program that consisted of a community survey and two public participation meetings. A total of 2,000 surveys were randomly mailed to citizens of Juniata County, and two public participation meetings were conducted on October 22 and 25, 2007.



Of the 2,000 surveys that were sent to Juniata County residents, approximately 24% were completed and returned.

A total of 475 surveys were completed with a return rate of 24 percent. The results of the survey were compared to the results of a 1997 public survey and the 2004-2005 Human Needs Survey. The following are key findings from the review of the surveys:

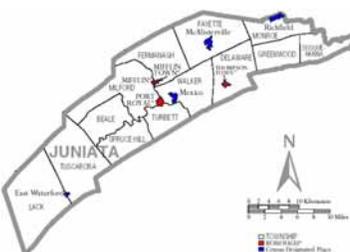
- Juniata County remains a “very desirable” place to live.
- Major problems that were consistent in all three surveys are drug and alcohol abuse, lack of employment training, lack of youth programs, quality of educational facilities, lack of post-secondary educational facilities, illegal trash dumping, and access to healthcare facilities.
- Several issues that were ranked among the highest priorities in all three surveys include: preservation of agricultural lands, economic development, public school system improvements, providing

post-secondary educational opportunities, and providing job training.

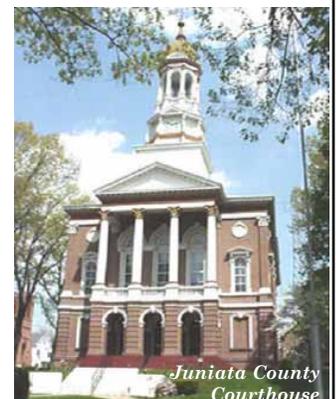
- In the 1997 survey, respondents felt that the lack of recreational opportunities was a “severe problem.” However, in the 2007 survey, the majority of respondents felt that this issue was no longer a problem. The change in public opinion is due to more park and recreational opportunities in and near the county that residents can easily access.
- In both the 1997 and 2007 surveys, a majority of respondents felt that “growth is inevitable, but it should be planned and controlled to limit impacts.”

Coming out of the public participation program, the Advisory Committee developed the following Mission Statement: *Comprehensively enrich, protect, develop, and preserve Juniata County.* This Mission Statement is at the forefront of all decision making that goes into the development of the Juniata County Comprehensive Plan.

A final draft of the plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2008. The plan will be offered to the local municipalities as a guide to initiate their own planning program or to adopt if so desired.



Juniata County's Comprehensive Plan is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2008.



Juniata County Courthouse

STAFF DEVELOPMENT



The Microsoft Excel seminar was a good opportunity for staff members to expand their Excel knowledge.

Microsoft Excel Training Attended

On September 11, Bill Gomes and Melody Bratton attended a *Microsoft Excel Basics One Day Seminar* hosted by Fred Pryor Seminars. The curriculum covered Excel Basics Building an Excel Worksheet from the “ground up”, Excel Formulas and Functions, Formatting Excel Spreadsheets, Excel Printing Options, and Charting and Graphing Excel Data. The seminar was an excellent program for individuals to expand their Excel knowledge.

On September 12, Melody Bratton attended the *Advanced Excel Training: Beyond the Basics* hosted by Fred Pryor Seminars. The advanced training curriculum built upon the Excel Basics seminar of the previous day. Topics included Microsoft Excel Setup and Editing, Advanced Excel Formulas and Functions, Making the Most of Excel Macros, Exchanging Data Between Excel and Other Applications, and Demystifying Excel Tables, Databases and Lists.



The grant writing workshop was held in conjunction with the PAHRA’s annual conference.

Housing and Urban Development Workshop Held

On September 15 and 16, Melody Bratton attended a special Housing and Urban Development (HUD) workshop entitled *The Art & Science of Grant Writing*. Co-sponsored by HUD and the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA), the training took place in conjunction with PAHRA’s Annual Conference. The presenter of the workshop was Cindy Haines of HUD’s Pittsburgh Field Office.



HUD co-sponsored the grant writing workshop.

The goal of the workshop was to provide participants with effective ideas and approaches for obtaining federal funds, information on how to compete for public and private grants, and strategies for developing partnerships and coalitions. Topics included Business Management Issues for Faith-Based and Nonprofit Groups, as well as Organizational Development, Board Development, Strategic Planning, Marketing, Budgeting, Grants Research, Outcomes Planning and Reporting, Sustainability Strategies, HUD Funding Factors for Awards, and Application Basics. Workshop attendees earned a Certificate of Completion.

Staff Volunteered on the United Way Day of Caring

On September 17, Melody Bratton, Doug Marks, and Mark Colussy of the Planning and Development Department, as well as staff of the Mifflin County Assessment Office, GIS Department, IT Department, and Office of Public Safety, volunteered on the United Way Day of Caring. The volunteers demolished an old concession stand, poured concrete, built benches, painted fences, and worked on lawn maintenance at the Rothrock Playground in Oliver Township near McVeytown.



LEFT: Doug Marks works on a fence at the Rothrock Playground.



RIGHT: Mark Colussy cuts weeds at the Rothrock Playground.



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Developing a Better Community

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Bookkeeper/Secretary*

Millie Sunderland,
*Office Manager/
Grants Manager*

Donna Baer,
Fiscal Assistant

Upcoming Events

- **Mifflin County Planning Commission meetings for the fourth quarter of 2008 are scheduled for Thursdays, October 23, November 20, and December 18 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse.**
- **Penn State Cooperative Extension will sponsor *Fundamentals of Natural Gas Exploration and Leasing* on Thursday, November 6 from 7:00-9:30 p.m. at the Decatur Township Fire Hall, Route 522, Lewistown. Seating is limited and is first come, first served. Call (717) 248-9618 for registration information.**
- **The submission deadline for proposals for the FFY 2009 Mifflin County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is Thursday, December 11 at 3:30 p.m. The Mifflin County CDBG public hearing for applicants to present proposals will be held at the Mifflin County Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, December 18 at 3:30 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse. Contact Melody Bratton at (717) 242-0887 for more information.**
- **The next Watershed Plan Advisory Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, December 16 at 4:00 p.m. in Meeting Room B on the second floor of the Mifflin County Courthouse.**

Developing a Better Community