



Centre County Economic Assessment Study

Town Hall Meeting – Centre County Courthouse Annex

October 25, 2017

Small Group Discussion Reports

Following the formal presentations (meeting agenda attached) describing the purpose and design of the economic assessment study; the demographic, economic and agricultural trends; and the focus topics identified during regional meetings, the nearly 45 people in attendance selected one of five focus topics for further discussion. The five focus areas were: Healthcare, Community Revitalization, Agriculture, High Technology, and Tourism. At the conclusion of the small group discussions, each focus group through their selected moderator, presented their top three approaches for expanding economic development opportunities related to their specific topic. The approaches presented by focus topic are listed below.

Healthcare

General Statements:

- Questions to PSU Extension Staff: Who is a healthcare worker? What is the definition of a healthcare worker? (In response and for purposes of this study, the definition is provided in the Economic Assessment Report on page 51.)
- Competitive healthcare model in Centre County is offered by four organizations, but residents still fall through the cracks and are uninsured. How do we make sure we service as many people as possible?

Growth areas:

1. Recruit and retain experienced physicians and specialist physicians via marketing and making Centre County a destination to live.
2. Increase behavioral health services so that they are available to everyone regardless of insurance (including substance abuse).
3. Aging population requires expansion of rehabilitation services (only one facility currently exists). How can we expand those services? Focus on increasing quality of life.

Community Revitalization

1. Develop a branding and marketing identity for rural communities and areas with coordination and collaboration in rural valleys (outside of Centre Region).
2. Centre County is a very diverse county – allocate resources to maintenance in rural areas.
3. Improve infrastructure for business development (energy grids, roads, capacity, and internet) in rural areas.

Agriculture

1. Need for marketing as a destination/producer for food products (shared identity) both to draw customers to County and to market products outside of Centre County.
2. Research markets – is there one? Where is it? Need for stable person/group/organization to identify opportunities and network with various stakeholders.
 - a. Start with successful industry leaders who are innovating.
3. Difficult to secure stable supply of perishable products. Need for centralized infrastructure. (processing, distribution, marketing).

High Technology – Advanced Manufacturing and Analytical Industries

1. Need for experienced c-level (CEO) individuals to serve as mentors to young emerging companies.
2. Need for early stage capital. Identify sources of funding for startups. Evaluate potential to tap local investors?
3. Collaboration is key. How can Centre County’s various organizations work together to increase and take advantage of opportunities?

Tourism

1. Expand outdoor recreation including trail linkages (i.e. complete Milesburg to Bellefonte rail trail and beyond).
2. Elevate current events – add “wow factor” to existing events, boost marketing beyond local community.
3. Volunteer support – buy in from more volunteers to support local events is needed.



CENTRE COUNTY
Board of Commissioners

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MARGARET N. GRAY

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NATALIE CORMAN

MICHAEL PIPE, *Chair*
MARK HIGGINS
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SOLICITOR
ELIZABETH A. DUPUIS

Centre County Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

7 – 9 P.M.

Centre County Courthouse Annex, East High Street, Bellefonte, PA

Welcome by Commissioners Pipe, Higgins and Dershem

Introduction of Leadership Advisory Committee Members: (5 minutes)
Commissioner Mike Pipe

Centre County Economic Assessment: Project Purpose and Design (10 minutes)
Penn State University: Walt Whitmer, Senior Extension Associate and
Tim Kelsey, Professor – Agricultural Economics

Centre County Demographic, Economic and Agricultural Trends: (15 minutes)
Sue Hannegan, Centre County Planning and Community Development Office

Outcomes and Focus Areas Identified: Commissioner Mark Higgins (20 minutes)

- Health Care, High Technology, Tourism, Agriculture and Place-based Community Revitalization
- Q & A

Small Group Discussion: Commissioner Mark Higgins (20 minutes)
Summary Reports and Large Group Discussion (20 minutes)

Next Steps (10 minutes)

Closing Remarks: Centre County Commissioners