



pennsylvania

GOVERNOR'S CENTER FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Annual Report

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

> ready > set > succeed

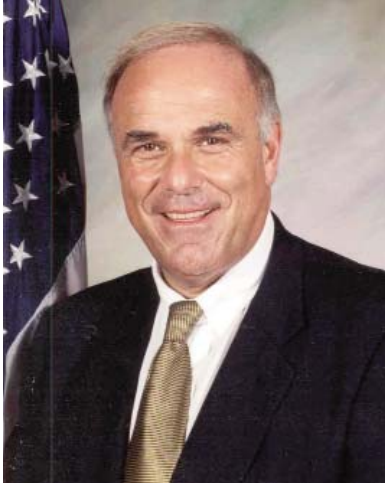


Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Edward G. Rendell, Governor
www.state.pa.us

Department of Community
& Economic Development
Austin J. Burke, Secretary

newPA.com

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR



When local leaders need an effective advocate that can cut through red tape and provide prompt assistance, the Governor's Center for Local Government Services is where they turn for help.

The agency's vital programs and efficient and effective service provide access to all state agencies operating under the executive branch. It coordinates resources to help solve local issues and uses a systematic approach to resolve problems that involve more than one agency. Throughout Pennsylvania, the Center's staff is recognized for its dedication and professionalism.

The Center also works with local governments to support the growth and development of businesses and communities throughout Pennsylvania. Nearly five years after enacting one of the largest and most ambitious economic stimulus packages in the country, we have committed more than \$3 billion in grants, loans and guarantees that are creating and retaining more than 200,000 jobs, bolstering business growth and revitalizing our communities. You can use the "Funding and Program Finder" on www.newPA.com to find the resource in our economic toolbox that best fits your community's needs.

This 2008-09 Annual Report highlights the programs and services the Center has provided to local governments, including local and regional police and volunteer fire services, budget and finance, as well as the Uniform Construction Code, planning and land use.

In an economy where providing vital services to residents is more challenging – and more essential -- than ever, I encourage you to call the Governor's Center for Local Government Services at 1-888-2CENTER, or visit www.newPA.com/Center. Working together, we can better serve our customers – the residents of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward G. Rendell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Edward G. Rendell
Governor

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY

Since 1996, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has set aside Local Government Day to honor the men and women who serve the citizens of their communities through dedicated service. During the Local Government Day ceremony, the Center presents the Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence to local governments that have developed and implemented programs and projects designed to improve the quality of life in their communities. Elected and appointed officials nominated by local government associations are also recognized for their selfless service to local government. For further details, visit www.newPA.com. On April 15, 2009, approximately 300 local government officials gathered at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Arena to recognize this year's award winners. Following remarks from Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary George Cornelius, the following local governments received awards:

2009 Local Government Day Recipients

Building Community Partnerships

- > City of Altoona, Blair County
- > Doylestown Township, New Britain Borough, Chalfont Borough and Doylestown Borough

Promoting Community and Economic Revitalization

- > Elizabethtown Borough, Lancaster County
- > City of Lock Haven, Clinton County

Innovative Community and Governmental Initiatives

- > Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
- > Lycoming County

Fiscal Accountability

- > Trafford Borough, Westmoreland County

Innovative Planning and Sound Land Use Practices

- > Mount Joy Borough, Lancaster County

Intergovernmental Cooperation

- > Clinton County Sewer Authority and Clinton County
- > Somerset County

Information Technology

- > Cambria County

Individual Award Winners

- > John Callahan, Mayor, City of Bethlehem
- > Dave Coder, Commissioner, Greene County
- > William B. Hawk, Chairman, Lower Paxton Township
- > Carl Hess, Director of the Planning Department for the Borough of State College
- > Ginnie Anderson Kane, Commissioner, Upper Allen Township
- > Thomas Kurtz, Assistant Manager, State College Borough
- > Frank Langianese, Council President, Lewis Run Borough
- > Dennis Wince, Municipality Authority of Borough of Belle Vernon

Dallas A. Dollase Award for Excellence in Planning

- > David Steil

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Local Government Advisory Committee was created by the Community and Economic Development Enhancement Act, Act 58 of 1996, as part of the merger of the Departments of Community Affairs and Commerce into the Department of Community and Economic Development. The Committee is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and serves as a link between the Commonwealth and its local governments. The Committee affords local governments the opportunity to provide input on a range of policy issues to the highest levels of state government. Communication between local officials and state officials is critical in providing services to our businesses and citizens. The Advisory Committee is designed to encourage that two-way communication as it allows State officials to brief local officials on important issues that affect local government. Committee members, as representatives of local governments throughout the state, use the forum to express their ideas on how state government can better assist local officials in meeting the needs of their residents. The Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) staffs the Committee.

The Committee met twice during FY 08-09. Meetings were held on November 13 and May 13.

GCLGS Executive Director Fred Reddig chaired the November 13 meeting and informed the Committee of the passing of Lieutenant Governor Catherine Baker Knoll the night before. He acknowledged her tremendous contributions and commitment to local government over her career and noted that she will be deeply missed. Director Reddig also informed the Board of the passing of Don Carman, Councilman from Elkland Borough who was the Borough Association's representative to the Board.

Lt. Governor Joseph Scarnati chaired the May 13 meeting in his new role. The Advisory Committee meetings afford the opportunity for DCED and other state agencies to provide Committee members with information and obtain their comments on recent legislation and state policy initiatives impacting local government.

At the November meeting, Barry Fox, Deputy Director, Commonwealth's Office of Open Records addressed the status of the Office of Open Records as local governments prepare for the January 1 effective date for the state's new Open Records Act. Mr. Fox stated their office had conducted training throughout the Commonwealth on the Right to Know law and has prepared various documents to assist with the implementation of the Act. The Office of Open Records emphasizes good records management and he encouraged officials to review and organize their records pursuant to the Records Retention Act. Jim Ritzman Deputy Secretary for Planning for PennDOT, reviewed PennDOT's Smart Transportation Initiative, noting that there has been considerable change in transportation planning over time. Because of improved technology, people no longer live close to where they work. The interstate system has had a major impact on travel and made mobility very easy. Smart transportation is transforming the way we think about what we do. The core message of smart transportation lies in linking land use and transportation decisions and creating lasting value with transportation investments.

Fred Reddig provided a summary of Act 32, the Earned Income Tax law that was enacted in June and the Center's steps in implementing the Act. The Act creates 69 Tax Collection Districts and will provide for uniform withholding, standard forms and procedures and strengthened enforcement and accountability. Jill Gaito, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Community Revitalization and Local Government Support (DEP) and Denise Brinley of her office provided a summary of the Marcellus Shale initiative highlighting the fact that it is the largest natural gas formation in the United States and could generate enough natural gas for U.S. consumption for three years. The State is focusing on balance between economic development opportunities and impact on the environment.

At the June 13 meeting, Tracey Vernon, Acting Deputy Secretary, DEP Office of Community Revitalization and Local Government Support, provided a review of funding available to local governments under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). She summarized the four different energy programs DEP is administering and provided information on the application process, timelines and funding levels. State Planning Board Chair Judy Schwank provided the Committee with a summary of the policy issues the Board has worked on. The areas of focus have been governance, transportation, infrastructure and economic development. All of the things that the Board has worked on and proposed are voluntary measures--nothing is a mandate. She reviewed the goals of the State Planning Board and gave an overview of some of its legislative initiatives. Mitch Hoffman provided an update on DCED's steps to implement Act 32, the Earned Income Tax legislation. There is a three-year period to transition to the new system. Last spring, the Center conducted 20 workshops across the state to further inform local officials of their responsibilities under the Act. DCED has published the listing of all Tax Collection Districts and will be providing the weighted vote calculation by September 1, prior to the initial meeting of each Tax Collection Committee, which will be held by November 15.

The Local Government Advisory Committee is comprised of six members representing the major local government associations, four at-large members appointed by the Governor, and four additional members appointed by the leaders of each of the legislative caucuses of the General Assembly. Committee members may serve no more than two two-year terms.

2008-09 Local Government Advisory Committee Members

- > **James Felmlee**
Borough of Lewistown,
Mifflin County
- > **Edward Cernic, Jr.**
Cambria County
- > **Percy Dougherty**
Lehigh County
- > **William Groves**
Cumberland Township,
Greene County
- > **James Hertzler**
East Pennsboro Township,
Cumberland County
- > **Bruce Hockersmith**
Borough of Shippensburg,
Cumberland/Franklin Counties
- > **Tim Horner**
Chapman Township,
Clinton County
- > **Lester Houck**
Salisbury Township,
Lancaster County
- > **Kathy Kane**
City of Wilkes Barre,
Luzerne County
- > **Ginnie Anderson Kane**
Upper Allen Township,
Cumberland County
- > **Stephen Prousi**
Montgomery Township,
Montgomery County
- > **Anthony A. Russo, Jr.**
Wilkesburg-Penn
Joint Water Authority
- > **Barry Smith**
Manor Township,
Lancaster County

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ANALYSIS

The Governor's Center tracks legislation affecting municipal codes, local taxes, the Uniform Construction Code, land use, municipal pensions, police, fire and emergency services, and other issues relating to local government. As of September 2009, there were 357 bills from the 2009-2010 Session of the General Assembly being monitored by the Center.

The Governor's Center consistently consults with many associations and organizations in order to identify concerns regarding bills, gather comments, and to propose amendments. The center confers with the following associations and organizations: the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities, the Pennsylvania Association of Township Supervisors, the Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, and the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association. The comments and analyses developed by the Governor's Center are provided to the Department of Community and Economic Development's Legislative Office, the Office of General Counsel and to the Governor's Office.

In the past fiscal year, the following acts relating to local government have been signed into law:

Act 32 - Local Income Tax Collection Reform - Act 32 of 2008 was one of the most impactful pieces of legislation for local governments enacted in recent years. It provides for the consolidation of the earned income tax collection system from over 560 collectors to 69 and will be phased in over the next 3 years with full implementation by January 2012. The Act will streamline tax collection for businesses, which will be able to remit taxes to just one tax collection district in the state. It will provide for mandatory withholding and uniformity in collection procedures and forms. For the tax payer it will result in having the correct amount withheld and transmitted to the correct location. In addition to a simplified process, the new collection system will capture significant lost revenues thus bolstering funds available to school districts and local governments without changing rates.

Act 76 of 2008 provides for the form of oaths of office, authorizes a 5% excise tax on hotel rooms in Allegheny County, to be used for the tourist promotion agency, for promotional programs in municipalities where convention centers are located, and for the operation and maintenance of convention centers. The law also authorizes a 3% sales tax to be imposed in second Class A counties to be used for convention centers.

Act 93 of 2008 created an intrastate system to provide mutual aid among participating political subdivisions to better coordinate the delivery of public safety services.

Act 105 of 2008 removes the authority of the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission to determine that a police officer has engaged in prohibited or campaign activity. Employers of police officers unable to attend in-service training due to military service or injury sustained in service as a police officer would request be required to apply for waivers from the requirement. Employers failing to request a waiver would not result in the decertification of the officer, provided that the officer participates in in-service training deemed appropriate by the commission.

Act 126 of 2008 amended the Second Class Township Code by adding that in any proceeding relating to public roads, any relevant oral or documentary evidence of public travel or maintenance and repairs by the township would be considered evidence that the road is an extension from a public road or a court order.

TRAINING

In 2005, the Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services established the Pennsylvania Local Government Training Partnership. Members of the partnership include the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities, the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association, the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors. The Center also entered into agreement with the Departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation, Conservation and Natural Resources, Labor and Industry, the PA Emergency Management Agency and the PA Rural Development Council to assist them with delivery of their training programs to local government. In fiscal year 2007-2008, the Center joined this agreement with the Departments of Agriculture and General Services.

The PA Local Government Training Partnership provides a more effective coordination and delivery of the comprehensive set of training opportunities for local officials, using the resources available from the private and public sectors. During fiscal year 2008-2009, the partnership offered 448 sessions to 9,221 participants all across the Commonwealth of PA. These courses included general government administration, code enforcement, and community development. The course participants completed evaluations in which they indicated the training was beneficial to them.

The Qualified Tax Collector Training as required by Act 2001-25 continues to be offered. This law assigned the Center the responsibility of establishing a basic training, continuing education, examination and qualification program for tax collectors throughout the state. In addition to the Basic Training & Examination course, Act 32 training, Trends in Tax Collection, Accounting for Municipal Tax Collectors, Intermediate Accounting, Document Retention, and Open Records were also made available

Pennsylvania Construction Codes Academy (PCCA)

As part of the PALGTP the **Pennsylvania Construction Codes Academy** trains, tests and provides certification for building codes officials. In FY2008-09, approximately 2,328 individuals received PCCA training. In April 2007, the grandfather provisions of the Uniform Construction Code expired, making certification necessary for all code officials.

> > > CENTER PUBLICATIONS

To keep Pennsylvania's local government officials informed on their responsibilities and on the latest legislation, the Center maintains both a **Law Library** and a collection of approximately 70 **publications** on local government issues. The publications serve as the basis for many of the Center's educational and training programs. Publications are updated approximately once every three years or upon the enactment of major legislation that affects a publication. In FY 2008-2009 the Center updated 21 publications. Most of the publications are provided in a PDF format on the Center's website. All publications on the website can be downloaded from the list at no charge, and are updated as needed to reflect changes in the law.

MUNICIPAL MERGER AND CONSOLIDATION

Act 1994-90, the Municipal Merger and Consolidation Act, provides the legislative authority for Pennsylvania municipalities to combine assets through consolidation or merger of governments. Throughout the Commonwealth, a growing number of municipalities and citizens have been demonstrating their interest in consolidation or merger to streamline and create more efficient governments.

Act 90 requires a simple majority vote in each of the participating municipalities for a merger or consolidation to succeed. Whether delivered to the ballot by citizen petition or government agreement, boundary change questions become sensitive, complicated and difficult issues for the general public and elected official alike! During FY 08-09 there was one successful boundary change.

Whether boundary change involves two small local governments, larger sized municipalities or a county-wide proposal, all assistance provided to local governments and citizens proves to be educational and challenging in numerous ways. The process of consolidation or merger can be complex and difficult, involving a significant investment of time and resources to prepare a question for the ballot. Center staff remains committed to providing technical and financial assistance to those municipalities interested in pursuing consolidation or merger through our regional and central offices.

> > > BOUNDARY CHANGE: DONEGAL TOWNSHIP, WASHINGTON COUNTY

Donegal Township and West Alexander Borough in Washington County overwhelmingly voted in November 2008 to consolidate into Donegal Township (a second class township) effective January 1, 2009. While the new municipality will be called Donegal Township, the “Village of West Alexander” neighborhood remains and the volunteer fire department and post office will remain “West Alexander”.

West Alexander was a tiny borough of .2 miles with a population of about 200 people, completely surrounded by Donegal Township with 2400 people. They shared the same school district and have been working co-operatively since the early 1990’s when West Alexander contracted with Donegal for police protection and public works. Earlier this year, the Donegal Township police department also started patrolling Claysville, another neighboring community. Tax collection responsibilities for both municipalities are also provided by Donegal Township. For all intents and purposes, West Alexander provided almost no services of its own and their FY 2008 budget was \$30,000.

An SMS grant award of \$48,750 provided support for the merger and was used for several transition expenses, including legal fees, re-codification, office equipment (especially for tax collection), and signage estimated at \$65,000.00. Washington County planned to use Local Share Account and/or CDBG money to fund the local match and further assist with the merger.

EMERGENCY SERVICES



Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) in Allegheny County. CIRT responds to critical or high-risk incidents that exceed the capabilities of any single municipality's police department in the South Hills Area.

Police

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services continues to be a strong advocate in providing technical assistance in matters of police administrative/management procedures and police regionalization. In FY 08-09, the Center conducted more than 18 regional police feasibility studies for 58 municipalities interested in consolidating their police services.

Assistance ranges from solving minor problems over the telephone to conducting in-depth management studies and studies to determine the feasibility of police consolidation. Regional policing is currently an alternative method to the provision of traditional police services in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The concept has proven to be successful for many Pennsylvania municipalities. It must be noted that Pennsylvania has, by far, more police departments than any other state in the union. Most of Pennsylvania's police departments are quite small and unable to provide a full range of police services.

The first regional department in Pennsylvania was established in 1972, and 34 more have followed over the next three decades. More and more, the concept of regional policing is gaining favor with municipal leaders who are faced with stagnant or declining sources of revenue. Most regional police departments have been created to strengthen existing police services, especially in the areas of administration, supervision, training, investigation, patrol and specialty services.

To assist in the start-up of regional police departments, the Center coordinates two grant programs: DCED's **Shared Municipal Services Grant Program** and the **Regional Police Assistance Grant Program** with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Fire and Emergency Services

The Center's staff provides technical assistance to fire and emergency service organizations across the Commonwealth through two primary methods of assistance: Fire and Emergency Services Regional Partnerships and the **Peer-to-Peer Program**.

Regional Partnerships can be formed with the help of fire and emergency service personnel, elected officials, community activists, and/or citizens from the communities represented. The purpose of a regional partnership is to provide the highest level of emergency services cost effectively. The first step in this process is the creation of a "steering committee." The committee's mission is to assist the emergency service organizations with determining their future direction and growth through better administration, financial accountability, recruitment and retention. Many times, these committees are tasked with providing direction for merging, consolidating or regionalizing two or more emergency service organizations. Currently, there are more than 150 emergency service organizations working towards regional partnerships throughout the state.

Over the last year, several organizations throughout Pennsylvania became leaders in improving fire and emergency services.

Organizations in Abbottstown and New Oxford in Adams County, Portage and Cassandra in Cambria County, and Minersville in Schuylkill County merged or consolidated in order to provide the best emergency services for their communities. The rank and file members recognized that the current system no longer worked well and took bold steps to improve it. As a result, they created emergency service organizations that are better poised to handle the demands of the commonwealth in the 21st Century.

The Peer-to-Peer Program objectively studies and evaluates emergency service organizations to recommend how to enhance, grow, and operate more efficiently. Through the Peer-to-Peer Program, the Center has completed ten volunteer fire consolidation studies during the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Much of this work for emergency service organizations follows the format and recommendations contained in the Senate Resolution 60 and House Resolution 148 reports. Released in November 2004 and June 2005 respectively, these reports document the challenges facing Pennsylvania's emergency services and provide strategies to allow them to grow and prosper. These reports describe a variety of "partnerships" that can be achieved through collaboration.



Consolidation of New Oxford and Abbottstown Fire Companies (Adams County) Ceremony Saturday, June 20, 2009



Goldsboro, York County

MUNICIPALITIES FINANCIAL RECOVERY ACT

Act 47

Nineteen municipalities, including Pittsburgh, Scranton, Chester and Johnstown, receive support and coordination from the GCLGS in the implementation of their recovery plans. In FY2008-09, DCED completed an update to the Act 47 plan for the City of Pittsburgh which was subsequently adopted by City officials. The amended plan maintains the progress achieved by the City during its first plan and also addresses the legacy issues of debt, pension and other post-employment benefits.

DCED also dealt with its first municipal bankruptcy and following the April 2009 filing of a Chapter 9 Federal Bankruptcy petition designated Westfall Township, Pike County as a distressed municipality. The Department and its Act 47 Coordinator are coordinating the development an Act 47 recovery plan with a municipal bankruptcy plan that will ultimately need the approval of the Federal Bankruptcy Court. Although efforts to avoid a bankruptcy filing were pursued the unique circumstances in Westfall Township called for the extraordinary authority of Act 47 to proceed with the bankruptcy process. It is anticipated that once resolution with the creditor is reached the Act 47 plan and bankruptcy plan will simultaneously be approved and the Township's stay in Act 47 will be short.

> > > CITY OF DUQUESNE

The City of Duquesne (Allegheny County), population 8,800, situated along the Monongahela River is one of seventeen Act 47 communities under the Municipalities Financial Recovery Program since 1993.

Since the demise of the basic steel-making facilities in the Monongahela River Valley in 1984, in which Duquesne played a major role with US Steel employing approximately 12,000 in three daily shifts, the city has suffered tremendous out-migration and decreased property values resulting in a remaining population of moderate- to low-income households.

However, over recent years the city has been able to 'reinvent' itself. The former US Steel property, now owned by the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC), has redeveloped this massive 340-acre site as a job-producing facility, increasing needed tax revenue for the city.

The following companies have located to the site over recent years, employing a combined 500 employees: Allegheny Recovery Corporation, American Textile Company, Angstrom Sciences, Fastenal Company, KU Resources, Professional Training Associates, Sarclad, Thermal Transfer Corporation, Thermo Systems, and US Steel Training Center. Additionally, located on this site are the Pittsburgh Food Bank and the PA Labor & Industry Unemployment Center, serving as regional hubs for southwestern Pennsylvania.

An additional 80 acres of land remains undeveloped. Barriers to development were remnants of the US Steel furnace and ovens and presented lack of access over CSX mainline railroad tracks. RIDC had the remnants removed and the ground remediated. Through a partnership between the City, Allegheny County and PennDOT, a 'Fly-Over Ramp' has been constructed to bypass the mainline railroad tracks. This newly improved facility will be completed by December 2009, opening direct access to the remaining acreage for future development and tax-producing properties for the city.

It is expected that with these recent developments and those anticipated with the 'Fly-Over Ramp,' Duquesne will begin the process to exit Act 47 and to once again become a viable, self-sustaining city.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Shared Municipal Services Grant Program

The **Shared Municipal Services Grant Program** (SMS) received a \$2.15 million-dollar appropriation for the 2008-09 fiscal year. The Center awarded 48 grants that impacted more than 1,300 municipalities across the Commonwealth. Several grants had far reaching impact and were of considerable size and scope, involving multiple counties. Shared municipal services grant funds supported projects involving joint public works projects, consolidation and/or expansion of police and fire services, a municipal merger, joint energy efficiency projects, and joint technology initiatives, to name a few.

> > > SMS SUCCESS STORY

Greater West Shore Tax Bureau, Cumberland County

The West Shore Tax Bureau, in partnership with the York-Adams and Lancaster Tax Bureaus serve 176 municipalities and school districts across four counties. An SMS grant award of \$165,000 was provided for the development and implementation of a more efficient and accurate on-line tax filing system that will provide both taxpayers and tax preparers of central Pennsylvania with the necessary tools to prepare and file accurate local income tax returns with a minimum of specialized knowledge or understanding of the intricacies of local income tax collection. In addition, the back end interface will allow the tax bureaus to upload correctly filed tax returns efficiently while focusing current manpower on taxpayer services, delinquent tax collections and the proper distribution of the local income tax revenues to participating municipalities and school districts. The consolidation of EIT collection offices under Act 32 will require the data input of vast quantities of tax information. A simple, user-friendly online filing system will greatly improve the processing of tax information while allowing for efficient and cost effective use of available manpower.

> > > SMS SUCCESS STORY

City of Lancaster, Lancaster County

The City of Lancaster and the County of Lancaster were awarded \$55,000 to fund a shared computer network system and staff training for all PC network users. Total project costs including match is \$110,000. The Mayor of Lancaster and the three County Commissioners are in agreement that the County will provide computer network services and related network training to the City. The arrangement will result in computer services being provided to the City as if the City were a Department of the County. The County currently provides similar services to the City and provides services to many municipal Police Departments. The City and County are logistically close in proximity thus making the arrangement a very workable solution. This joint venture is a recommendation from the Early Intervention Program study conducted one year ago.

Funds from the Shared Municipal Services Program Grant will be used for project management consultative services and for the purchase of hardware, software, and related training required to integrate the City and the County network systems.

> > > SMS SUCCESS STORY

LDD Assoc of PA, Venango County, PA Energy Future Program Project

The PA Energy Future Program is a 52-county effort which has been funded by grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Department of Community and Economic Development, and local funds. The Program is administered by the Local Development District Association of Pennsylvania (LDDAP) who provide full time Program staff in every Local Development District (LDD) region in Pennsylvania. Program efforts include technical assistance, project funding development, education and bulk purchase consortiums for energy efficient equipment for municipal, school, hospital and nonprofit clients. The Program enters its second year with the goal of helping clients achieve annual savings of \$500,000 on energy costs through recommendations and referrals, and \$325,000 in lifecycle energy and equipment costs through bulk purchase efforts.

> > > SMS SUCCESS STORY

City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County Energy Project

The City of Pittsburgh in cooperation with Allegheny County received an SMS grant to establish a Utility Manager program. The Utility Manager is the central architect of a City-wide energy cost and consumption reduction program and serves as the point person through which intergovernmental energy savings initiatives will be coordinated. Energy savings opportunities are achievable through cooperation with other governmental entities, including but not limited to: City authorities, Allegheny County, and the Pittsburgh School District who are participating in the program. The position will establish an energy management program for the City; teach energy management practices to City employees and implement energy management controls to reduce consumption. Savings under the program are achievable by, at a minimum, eliminating unnecessary or duplicative accounts, negotiating lower rates on the remaining accounts, joint competitive bidding of energy requirements and by implementing technology-based mechanisms and conservation measures to lower overall energy usage. The project anticipates a reduction in costs by a factor of at least 5-10%.

Local Government Capital Project Loan Program

Through the **Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program** small municipalities can receive secured funding to help finance important capital purchases and projects. Local governments with populations of 12,000, or less, are eligible to receive guaranteed fixed low-interest loans at an interest rate of 2 percent. The loans can be used for purchases of equipment and also the purchase, construction, renovation or rehabilitation of facilities. In FY 2008-09 the Center funded sixteen projects with \$378,821 in loans.

Early Intervention Program

The **Early Intervention Program** was initiated in 2004 as an element of the administration's Economic Stimulus program. The EIP was established to assist local governments in addressing financial management and fiscal difficulties in a timely and planned manner to avert fiscal crises that would have an adverse impact on health, safety and welfare of their residents. Prior to the development of this initiative, no state grant program was available to support this type of effort. The EIP was designed to be a preemptive step for counties and municipalities who, though not formally declared distressed, were realizing serious fiscal difficulties and sought to "right their financial ship" with a five-year financial plan and a management review provided by the EIP. These plans include short-term and long-term financial and managerial objectives that strengthen the fiscal capacity of county and municipal governments along with the integration of long-term community and economic development strategies that could strengthen the local government's tax base. This year, 4 counties and 9 municipalities participated in the program and received grants totaling \$740,000.

The EIP program is divided into two parts. Part I reviews and assesses the fiscal position, activities and functions of the local government. A series of recommendations follow to improve operations, including a proposed five-year plan to address fiscal stability and how to achieve and maintain it for the five-year period and beyond. This professional review is a service that most local governments do not have the resources to undertake otherwise.

Part II extends the original EIP program, by providing funds to implement Part I recommendations. The funds can provide for strengthened financial management systems related to accounting, personnel or other departmental operations. If local governments officially adopt the EIP report, they are eligible to apply for Part II funding.

The EIP program is available to all local governments in Pennsylvania. The Part I report provides an excellent fiscal and managerial tool for the local government and staff. It enables them to build local capacity for long-term fiscal stability and economic health. Early recognition of problem areas through the EIP program can help local government officials take the steps necessary for an improved quality of life for residents in their communities.

MUNICIPAL STATISTICS

Under various state statutes, the Center is the designated repository for a range of local government tax, financial and demographic data. As a result, the **Municipal Statistics** site is heavily accessed by legislators, employers (both statewide and national), researchers, government officials and the general public. In fiscal year 2008-2009, the remaining programming was completed on the Municipal Authorities Module which finalizes the re-engineering of the Municipal Statistics System. The anticipated release is scheduled for June 2010 after system testing and training are completed.

The Center uses the following forms to collect legally required local government data:

- > Tax Information Form
- > Annual Audit and Financial Report/Annual Financial Report
- > Report of Elected and Appointed Officials, Survey of Financial Condition
- > Annual Report of Municipal Authorities.

The Center continues to update and improve the web-based applications for electronic submission of required reports and encourages municipalities, counties and school districts to e-file their DCED forms. The site continues to be heavily used with the number of hits for the year climbing to more than 46 million.



ACT 32 EIT COLLECTION

Act 32 - Local Income Tax Collection Reform

Following the enactment of Act 32 of 2008 in the summer of 2008, GCLGS began work to implement the provisions of the Act. Phase in of Act 32 will require several years, with full implementation by January 2012. The Act will streamline tax collection for businesses, which will be able to remit taxes to just one tax collection district in the state. In addition to a simplified process, the new collection system will greatly bolster the funds available to local governments.

Since the Act's passage the Center has undertaken a number of activities in its role to facilitate the implementation of the new system. An Implementation Committee of Center staff was established to guide the transition process. In order to provide input in the development of the various documents to be used to establish the consolidated system, the Center also established an EIT Advisory Committee comprised of key stakeholders representing school districts, local governments, non-profit and third party tax collection agencies, CPAs and legislative officials. The Advisory Committee met bimonthly throughout 2009 and members have provided support, feedback and helped to further disseminate information on the Act.

The first duty for the Center was to create the Tax Collection Districts (TCD) and identify the TCD for each school district and municipality. This task was completed and published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin by January 28, 2009 as provided for in the Act. The Act required that the boundaries of the TCDs provide that all school districts remain whole. The list of the TCDs and an accompanying map were published by the required date and are available on the Act 32 website.

As part of the implementation activities, the Center has established an Act 32 page on its website. This page serves as the main reference for all of the information DCED has published on the Act. It includes a list of frequently asked questions, a timetable of key implementation deadlines, the identification of the Tax Collection Districts, the Weighted Vote calculation, sample by-laws and other relevant documents to be used by the Tax Collection Committees and others engaged in the implementation of the Act.



PA pennsylvania
STATE OF INNOVATION

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DCED's Act 32 EIT Collection System

Welcome to DCED's EIT collection system webpage.

Act 32 of 2008 provides for a restructuring of the Earned Income Tax Collection System for Pennsylvania local governments and school districts. This legislation is one of the most significant pieces of local tax legislation that has been enacted in recent years. The Act provides for a three year transition period and full implementation by January 2012. It is critical that all those involved in the system actively participate and fulfill their various responsibilities.

Since the passage of Act 32, the Governor's Center for Local Government Services has formed an advisory committee, provided training and continues to provide technical assistance and resource materials.



The Center conducted informational sessions across the Commonwealth to disseminate information for public officials relating to their duties under Act 32. The Center provided training sessions in May and June of 2009 in 22 locations across the Commonwealth through the Pennsylvania Local Government Training Partnership. It also conducted a webinar for County officials that focused on their responsibilities in convening the first meeting of the Tax Collection Committees.

The Center was also required to calculate the weighted vote for each municipality and school district levying the earned income tax to be used as the basis for voting within the Tax Collection Committee (TCC). The weighed voted is based 50% on EIT revenue and 50% on the population of each school district and municipality within the district. This calculation was completed by the statutory date of September 15, 2009 and provided to all TCCs prior to their initial meeting.

Act 32 also requires the Center to study the existing local earned income tax collection methods and practices within the Commonwealth including the practices and methods of current intergovernmental collection bureaus established by one or more political subdivisions as well as third party collectors, for the purpose of identifying and comparing those practices, methods, structures, procedures, regulations, software, information systems, governance alternatives, risk management strategies and other characteristics that appear to promote the greatest likelihood of effectiveness, cost efficiency, loss prevention and willing intergovernmental cooperation. This project represents one of the most extensive efforts the Center has undertaken. The report is well underway and scheduled for completion and distribution to all TCCs by December 31 to further assist the Tax Collection Committees with the implementation of the Act.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

As the one-stop shop for Pennsylvania's local governments, the Center provides a full range of technical help in a number of areas, including roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed officials, intergovernmental cooperation, police, volunteer fire companies, financial management, taxation, public administration, cooperative purchasing, code enforcement and risk management.

Local government officials are encouraged to call 1-888-223-6837 if they need assistance. Alternately, those who wish to request assistance may visit newPA.com and access the Letter of Intent under the Department of Community and Economic Development link for Assistance. In FY 2008-2009, the Center received more than 60 formal letters of intent, as well as hundreds of calls and correspondence requesting in-depth technical assistance from local governments. In response to a Letter of Intent, a scope of work is developed and the Center generally undertakes an extensive review of the issues related to the request and provides the municipality(ies) with a written report that contains recommendations for improvement.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE LETTERS OF INTENT

<u>Type of Assistance</u>	<u># of Assists</u>
Code Enforcement	1
Finance	7
General Administration	9
Intergovernmental Cooperation	1
Police Management	8
Police Regional	17
Public Works	2
Volunteer Fire	16
Total	61

Waynesboro Police & Fire Chiefs



COMMUNITY PLANNING & LAND USE

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services helps local governments with the important responsibility to plan for the future. Pennsylvania communities face many and diverse problems, needs, and opportunities:

- > Urban communities seek to revitalize downtowns and neighborhoods, attract economic development, and capitalize on historic and cultural heritage.
- > Suburban communities seek to accommodate growth and minimize traffic congestion, stormwater, and cost of new infrastructure.
- > Rural communities seek to preserve farmland, natural resources, and quieter, slower-paced lifestyle.

Planning is the “springboard” to successfully address these issues. Pennsylvania law – the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) – provides authority for comprehensive plans and for ordinances like zoning or subdivision and land development to move communities in good, new directions for the future.

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services is the lead agency in state government to assist local governments with community planning, land use issues, and the MPC. The Center assists in four areas: financial assistance, technical/education assistance, interagency coordination, and outreach.



Southside of Bethlehem

> > > COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES

- > **Perry and Northumberland Counties** – County plans for greenways and open space in partnership with funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.
- > **Zelienople and Harmony Boroughs, Butler County** – Multi-municipal comprehensive plan with emphasis on downtown revitalization and a Main Street approach. Plan is combined with an evaluation, funded by the Center's Shared Municipal Services Program, of both boroughs' finances and operations and opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation.
- > **North Coventry Township on behalf of 25 municipalities in the Schuylkill Highlands region, Berks, Chester & Montgomery Counties** – Plan for economic development and markets for businesses associated with recreation and nature/heritage tourism in the region.
- > **Bellefonte Borough, Centre County** – Revitalization and redevelopment plan for the Waterfront District, including underutilized brownfield sites, adjacent to the downtown and historic district.
- > **Plymouth Borough, Luzerne County** – Downtown revitalization plan, including identification of priority development projects and investments.

> > > IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES

- > **Cumberland County on behalf of 58 municipalities and 11 counties along the Appalachian Trail** – Guidebook and model provisions for zoning ordinances required by Act 24 of 2008 to protect the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values of the trail.
- > **East Buffalo Township, Union County** – Completion of a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) section of the township zoning ordinance to guide redevelopment of a brownfield site.
- > **Ohiopyle Borough, Fayette County** – Development of a revised zoning ordinance as part of a project to master plan conservation, recreation, and tourism improvements to the state park and community.

> > > TRID PLANNING SUCCESS STORY

- > **City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County** – TRID (Transit Revitalization Investment District) planning study to promote development opportunities and complementary transit and infrastructure improvements around light rail transit (“T”) stops at South Hills Junction and in the Beechview neighborhood.

Land Use Planning & Technical Assistance Program

The **Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program** (LUPTAP) administered by the Center, is the principle program in state government providing financial assistance for community planning. Grants are awarded to counties, cities, boroughs, townships, and partnerships of multiple municipalities for three purposes:

1) community planning, 2) plan implementation activities, and 3) Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) planning studies.

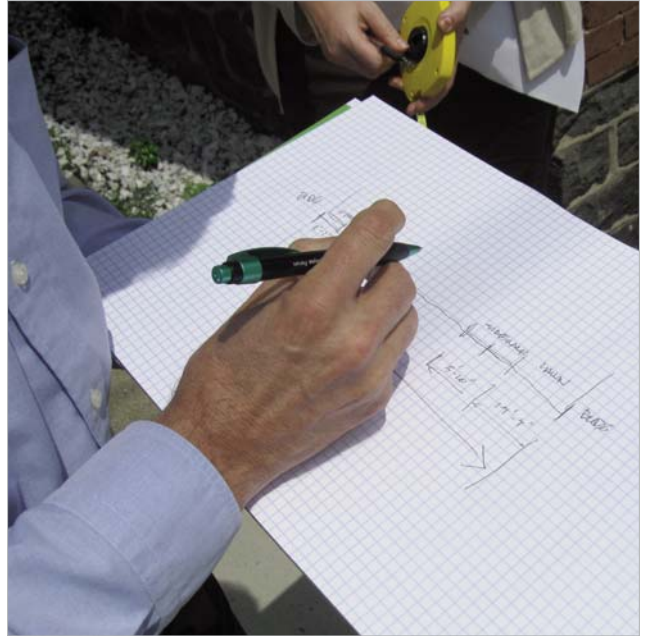
In FY 2008-09, LUPTAP provided 72 grants worth \$2.8 million benefiting 664 municipalities. Grants included county and single- and multi-municipality comprehensive plans. There was also priority to fund community revitalization strategies, downtown and neighborhood improvement plans, conceptual designs for better models for development, and creative approaches to development regulations. Several grants will help communities plan projects for a potential engagement with the DCED Community Action Team.

Educational/Technical Assistance

Grants represent only the tip of the iceberg of work. Center staff includes professional planners that provide hands-on technical assistance to local governments and their consultants to successfully complete LUPTAP-funded projects. Help is provided to ensure plans focus on priority community issues, propose creative solutions and best practices, and provide a practical course of action to implement community-improving projects and investments. The aim is to create county and community plans with impact that will not sit on the proverbial shelf.

The Center also provides municipal and county officials with information and answers to questions on comprehensive planning, land use, community and economic development, zoning, subdivision and land development, planning commission functions, and more. Help is provided on request from elected officials, municipal managers, planning commission members, zoning hearing board members, and zoning officers.

The Center publishes a series of ten planning publications renowned for their usefulness. Publications on planning commissions, zoning officers, and zoning hearing boards are a must for the desktop of those officials. All of these publications are available on the Center's web site – www.newpa.com/center on the **Publications page**. The Center's web site also provides a Land Use Law Library with summaries of land-use related case law and legislation. This library is being used everyday by municipal and county officials, professional planners and solicitors.



As a component of its training program for municipal officials, the Center via the **Pennsylvania Local Government Training Partnership** provides particular training for planning. In FY 2008-09 it included a wide range of topics delivered through open enrollment courses, requested on-site courses, and web-based video-downlink courses. In recent years, the Center has found success in on-demand, on-site programs in which a county and/or a group of municipalities request training at their site for a topic of particular local interest.

Planning training programs during the past year included:

- > Appalachian Trail Zoning
- > Duties of a Zoning Hearing Board
- > Duties of a Zoning Officer
- > Finding Hidden Opportunities – Promoting Infill, Redevelopment, and Replacement
- > Form Based Codes
- > How to Select and Work with a Consultant
- > Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Made Easy
- > Natural Gas Drilling (3 courses)
- > Plan Regionally, Implement Locally – Multi-municipal Planning
- > Subdivision and Land Development

The Center also contributed towards planning training offered by: Pennsylvania Basic Economic Development Course, Pennsylvania Land Use Institute and Pennsylvania Leadership Institute.

Interagency Coordination

Interagency Team

The Governor's Policy Office and the Center jointly chair the Commonwealth's Interagency Team on Land Use. This Team consists of 15 state agencies and seven offices of the Governor. The Team works with the Governor and commonwealth agencies to develop, coordinate, and integrate state agency policies, programs, and actions to promote economic development that fosters and sustains health, economic vitality, natural and historic resources, and enhanced quality of life in Pennsylvania's diverse urban, suburban, and rural communities.

During the past year, the Team continued work on incorporating the Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation into state agency funding programs in order to get more strategic impact from commonwealth investments. And, the Team held work sessions to improve collaboration in [PennDOT's Smart Transportation Initiative](#) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' various [Conservation Landscape Initiatives](#).

Transportation, Land Use and Economic Development Regional Action Plans

DCED and the Center have been working with the Departments of Transportation, Environmental Protection, Conservation and Natural Resources, and Agriculture, and the Governor's Policy Office to promote development of action plans in ten different regions across the commonwealth. Plans recognize economic and community development projects of greatest importance to the regions and identify ways to coordinate various investments for transportation, land use, and economic development to provide most beneficial impact to the regions. These efforts represent a major step toward more coordinated community and economic development policies and investments – AND more results and impact in improving the commonwealth's economy and overall quality of life.

Last year, regional action plans were completed by regional planning agencies in nine of the 10 regions. Two of the nine – Lehigh Valley and Southern Alleghenies – proposed specific community and economic development projects of high priority in their regions. State agencies are currently working on ways to help implement those projects. The remaining regions are similarly working to identify high-priority projects.

Outreach

County Planning Directors

The Center continues to strengthen its partnership with the state's county planning directors via their affiliation with the [County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania](#) (CCAP), holding quarterly meetings. During these meetings, Center staff report on various commonwealth initiatives, coordinate the Center's planning education program, provide help with planning related topics and issues, and receive feedback from the counties on highest-priority planning issues and needs.

Also, work was initiated through contract with CCAP and with input from the county planning directors to improve the quality and reliability of the E-library. The E-library is an online source of comprehensive plans and land use ordinances for all municipalities in Pennsylvania. Work will focus on ensuring available documents are those most current, accurate, and officially enacted or adopted.

Pennsylvania State Planning Board

The Center and the Governor's Policy Office provide staff support for the State Planning Board. The Board, which is by statute an advisory board in the Governor's Office, was reactivated by Governor Rendell in 2003 and 2004 with the appointment of 15 citizens representing diverse interests and regions of the state. By law, four legislative members appointed by the majority and minority parties in each house, as well as the Secretaries of Agriculture, Community and Economic Development, Environmental Protection, Conservation and Natural Resources, Transportation and Public Welfare are also members of the Board.

The Board in 2006 released its first **Report** which can be found at www.newPA.com/center on the Community Planning page. Since then and through 2008-09, the Board's efforts have focused on preparing specific legislative proposals that would implement the 2006 report recommendations:

- > Changes to the PA Municipalities Planning Code to promote more coordinated infrastructure planning and better consistency of community plans and their implementing zoning ordinances (currently HB 1036);
- > A package of legislative changes and new legislation providing more voluntary options for cooperation or consolidation of municipal services, such as police, fire, or public works, and for municipal boundary change where found locally worthy, particularly due to municipal fiscal or other distress.

The Board also last year began more in-depth analysis of development conflicts to identify obstacles faced by local governments and private builders and developers in achieving desired development, and what changes are needed in legislation, policies, or programs to overcome the obstacles. An issue of particular interest to the Board is promoting development of housing affordable to households of all incomes without restriction to location in Pennsylvania's communities.

Achieving Intergovernmental Cooperation: The Pennsylvania Wilds Planning Team

The largest regional intergovernmental cooperative effort undertaken in the commonwealth is still going strong in North Central Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Wilds Planning Team, which was formed in 2005 remains active and focused on its mission to:

“...empower and champion our local communities to leverage the Pennsylvania Wilds Initiative in order to enhance quality of life, respect cultural heritage, protect natural assets, and promote responsible and innovative economic opportunities in our 12-county region.”

Along the way, the Planning Team through its various sponsors, have availed themselves of funding from DCED and sister agency DCNR. Together, the two commonwealth agencies have leveraged public resources and enhanced inter-agency coordination to support local needs. DCED's Shared Municipal Services funding is increasing local capacity to support implementation for the Planning Team as well as for the Small Business Ombudsman who is working closely with the Outreach Specialist to capitalize upon the economic benefits associated with the Pennsylvania Wilds initiative.



Pennsylvania Grand Canyon

Specific outcomes realized by the PWPT include:

- > **Preparation of the Pennsylvania Wilds Planning Study** and its companion document the Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide: A Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship.
- > **The hiring of the Pennsylvania Wilds Outreach Specialist** and the development of a technical assistance program to implement the Design Guide.
- > **PA Wilds Trails Workshop** – over 55 trail enthusiasts from around the Pennsylvania Wilds region attended.
- > **Transportation Partners Forum** – convened first ever gathering of state, regional, and county transportation groups to present findings of the Planning Study.
- > **PA Wilds Resource Center website** (www.pawildsresources.org) - Created and launched the web site, which explains the initiative and its programs (Design Guide, logo use, state’s key investment areas, etc). The site also includes information and resources for tourism related businesses. More than 4,000 unique visitors have used the website. That number continues to grow by about 100 each week.
- > **Business Outreach:** Assisted 87 businesses or entrepreneurs in the region; made 97 referrals to existing loan, grant and technical assistance programs/agencies., and held 28 presentations to over 400 persons to highlight resources available to small businesses.

Finally, to ensure ongoing sustainability, the Planning Team adopted a Strategic Plan in 2009 that will guide future activities and ensure successful implementation of the Planning Study and Design Guide. With a successful past and a clearly defined path for the future, the Planning Team serves as a model for cooperative efforts in the commonwealth.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT REPORT

During the past year, the Center's floodplain management staff continued to be involved in a variety of activities, including technical and financial assistance, training and program administration.

Technical and Financial Assistance

The Center is the lead state agency to provide technical and financial assistance to Pennsylvania's flood prone municipalities and to ensure that they comply with federal regulations established in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). During the past year, the Center provided technical assistance to more than 250 public and private sector entities.

The Center continued to provide technical assistance to thirteen (13) municipalities who applied for the NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS) program. Through the CRS program, property owners will soon be eligible for discounts on their flood insurance ranging from 5 percent to 45 percent.

Financially, the Center continued to administer the state's floodplain management reimbursement program. Reimbursements under PA Act 166, The Pennsylvania Floodplain Management Act of 1978, pay up to 50 percent of the costs associated with preparing, administering and enforcing floodplain zoning ordinances and floodplain management ordinances which were necessary to comply with the NFIP and Act 166 requirements. Grants were provided to 27 municipalities for ordinance updates in FY 2008-09.

The Center prepared Floodplain Management (FPM) zoning amendments and conducted final reviews for two hundred and nine (209) municipalities in Centre, Cumberland, Perry, Adams and York Counties that needed to comply with FEMA regulatory mandates. Additionally, the Center was involved in a number of other ordinance reviews for compliance with NFIP regulations throughout the commonwealth.

Properties demonstrating a pattern of repetitive losses (i.e., having more than one claim in a 10-year period) continued to be a major issue in the commonwealth. As the state repository of data on repetitive loss properties, the Center played a key role in helping county and local municipal officials in developing mitigation plans concerning these properties.

Conservation District Flood Plain Monitoring Contract Program

A major focus of the Center was to continue to increase state capacity by enlisting increased participation in the Conservation District Flood Plain Monitoring Contract Program. Adams, Potter, Tioga and York County Conservation Districts joined the Program raising the number of Conservation Districts in the Program to twenty-four (24). Contracts are in place to have over 100 community assistance contacts and 15 community assistance visits performed in 2010. Also, the Districts have committed to performing over 80 floodplain management ordinance reviews and updates, as well as conducting floodplain management workshops in their counties.



Training

This past spring, the Center participated in two regional flood summits for Bradford/Sullivan and Lycoming/Tioga Counties. The summits focused on the water resource and ecological benefits of floodplains and strategies for empowering municipalities to exceed federal and state regulatory requirements on resource protection and restoration. The summits were designed to emphasize identifying flood hazards, and providing a higher level of protection, while at the same time preserving and restoring the natural functions of floodplains. On-site and regional training sessions were conducted that reached out to all twenty-four of the Centre's current County Conservation District contractors.

Map Modernization

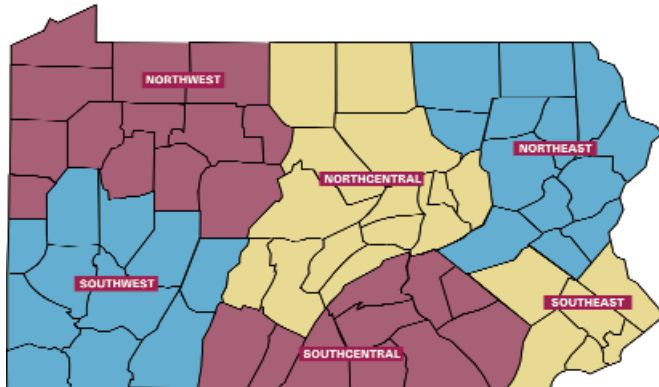
The Center in conjunction with FEMA and PAMAGIC continued its work in the development of recommendations for the enhancement of the commonwealth's role in FEMA's Map Modernization Program to address the unique floodplain mapping needs of the commonwealth. A meeting of the advisory group was held in March to further discuss floodplain data consistency and currency, increased communication between stakeholders, Commonwealth input into FEMA's Map Modernization Plan and flood mitigation coordination among and within levels of government. The group has evolved into the Technology Subcommittee of the Pennsylvania Association of Floodplain Managers.

The Pennsylvania Association of Flood Plain Managers

The Center was instrumental in the formalization of The Pennsylvania Association of Floodplain Managers (PAFPM). Current membership includes representatives of Federal, State, County government agencies, local government officials, as well as private sector firms and special interest groups. The group is dedicated to the formation of a statewide network of floodplain managers to disseminate, as well as, collect information, deliver training and promote sound floodplain management in general.

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

Staff as of 6/30/2009



400 North Street, 4th Floor
Commonwealth Keystone Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225

888-2CENTER (888-223-6837)
717-787-8169 | Fax: 717-783-1402
newPA.com

Frederick A. Reddig, Executive Director

Fred Banuelos, Deputy Director

Harry Krot, Local Government Policy Manager
Mitch Hoffman, Local Government Policy Manager
Denny Puko, Local Government Policy Manager

Local Government Staff

Sara Antel
Madra L. Clay
Brenda Israel
Karen O'Neill
Annette Steele

D. Robert Brady II
Dan Fitzpatrick
Marita Kelley
Sean E. Sanderson
Ron Stern

Fred Chapman
Ed Fosnaught
Kelly Morrison
Heather Saxelby
Sandra Wolfe

Governor's Center for Local Government Services Regional Offices

Southeast Regional Representatives

Marita Kelley, Local Government Services
Phone: 888-223-6837 | Fax: 717-783-1402

Ron Bednar, AICP, Community Planning
Phone: 215-560-2259 | Fax: 215-560-6722

Northeast Regional Representatives

Matt Domines, Local Government Services
Phone: 570-963-4166 | Fax: 570-963-3439

Cindy Campbell, Community Planning
Phone: 570-963-4574 | Fax: 570-963-3439

Southcentral Regional Representatives

Ed LeClear, Community Planning
888-223-6837 | Fax: 717-783-1402

Harry Krot, Local Government Services
888-223-6837 | Fax: 717-783-1402

Northcentral Regional Representative

Kim Wheeler, AICP, Community Planning
& Local Government Services
570-523-1054 | Fax: 570-523-0906

Southwest Regional Representatives

Michael S. Foreman, Local Government Services
Phone: 412-565-5199 | Fax: 412-565-2635

Brian Hayden, Local Government Services
Phone: 412-565-2552 | Fax: 412-565-2635

Joy Wilhelm, Local Government Services
Phone: 412-565-5005 | Fax: 412-565-2635

Northwest Regional Representatives

Chris Maras, Local Government Services
Phone: 814-871-4189 | Fax: 814-871-4896

Department of Community & Economic Development
Governor's Center for Local Government Services
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 4th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-0225

newPA.com | 888-223-6837