



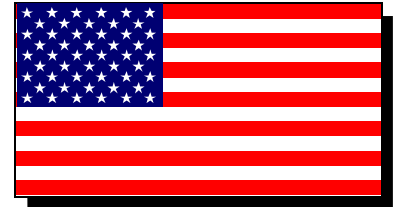
REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 1, Issue 4

Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission

October 2002

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR CITY OF WELLSBURG AND PROGRESS ALLIANCE



**United We Stand
Let Freedom Ring**

The BHI Full Commission welcomed two new members at the September 25 meeting. Margaret Metzger is the new Wellsburg city manager, and Holly Childs has assumed the duties of executive director for Progress Alliance.



Ms. Metzger, a native of Kentucky, has an impressive background, both academically and professionally. She received her bachelor's of

arts degree in paralegal science from Eastern Kentucky University in 1985 and her master's in public administration in 1993 from Northern Kentucky University. She has also completed several courses of studies through the U.S. Jaycees, Prime Training Course and Interactive Learning Systems.

Before coming to Wellsburg, Ms. Metzger was the city administrator for Shepherdsville, Kentucky. While in that position, she oversaw a \$9 million sewer rehabilitation and line extension project. She was responsible for writing most of the city's grant applications and assisted the mayor and economic development authority in attracting new business resulting in 1,500 new jobs. Through her efforts, Shepherdsville won the "Most Progressive City Award" two times.

Ms. Metzger is quoted as saying she is excited about the future in Wellsburg. Her goals include working for further business and economic development.

Working 11 years in economic development, Ms. Childs brings much experience to Progress Alliance. She has gained a reputation as a successful grant writer. In her previous position as executive director of the Preston County Economic Development Authority (West Virginia), she secured more than \$16.4 million in federal and state grants over a period of six years.

Her academic record is also noteworthy. Ms. Childs graduated with honors with a bachelor of arts degree in economics from Wake Forest University. She has also completed course work at West Virginia University and Oregon State University towards a doctoral degree in resource economics and economic development.



In the short time she has been here, Ms. Child's leadership qualities have already been seen. With a new logo and name change, Progress Alliance is moving forward. Ms. Child intends to further the quest for economic development by exploring opportunities west of the region.

In the meantime, she wants to get to know the area better and looks forward to her family joining her in the near future.

TRANSPORTATION FACT

The amount of cargo shipped by water is expected to triple by 2020. That means cargo on the nation's roads and railroads as well, since our waterways and ports link to 152,000 miles of rail and 45,000 miles to interstate highways.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the fall edition of BHJ's *Regional Review*.

The passing of leadership to chamber directors in Jefferson County and the city of Weirton, city managers for Steubenville and the city of Wellsburg, and an executive director for Jefferson County's economic development arm, Progress Alliance, has introduced a new wave of regional enthusiasm and cooperation.



With impressive credentials, and in several cases an acknowledged leadership record in the Upper Ohio Valley, we are fortunate to have these new voices. Their recommendations and the decisions of their boards and councils will set a regional foundation for commerce and infrastructure development in the future.

To this new line of leadership and established administrators, I suggest the following challenges as food for thought.

Steel Tariffs and Economic Diversification. A three year steel tariff is not forever. In July, some 6,000 applicants applied for 500 jobs at Weirton Steel. A long-term prognosis of more steel jobs is not in our future. Business parks like the Jefferson County Industrial Park and Three Springs Business Park, if appropriately planned and accompanied with regional infrastructure improvements, are our future.

Obtain More with Less. For road and infrastructure improvements, federal and state grants are increasingly competitive. Whether it's brownfields development, riverport development, water and sewer improvements, or road development, the "going alone" project application approach on an economic return basis is less and less viable.

Strength through Discussion and Consensus. BHJ is a proven forum for regionally significant projects. The determination of a new regional bridge crossing (s) certainly falls within this forum. Brownfield and riverport development have all the markings of a similar effort. Big dollar investments require strong local consensus. The adage "we have met the enemy and it is us" should not apply. Influential friends of the Valley with access to significant contributory funds will not step forward when local consensus is not present.

John Brown
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HIGHER EDUCATION FACTOR FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By Dr. Laura Meeks, President
Jefferson Community College

Higher education is a significant asset to the financial prosperity of the residents of the BHJ area. States with the highest public investment per student in higher education have a higher per capita income. Payroll growth is linked to the level of education. Associate degrees are increasingly important in a knowledge-and-idea based economy.

The economy of our region is increasingly dependent on knowledge and skill. The average community and technical college graduate can expect to earn at least \$250,000 more over his/her lifetime than individuals with a high school diploma.



other 20% require a four-year college degree.

Our region is rich with high quality higher education opportunities provided by technical schools, community colleges, as well as public and private colleges. Through reciprocity tuition agreements, barriers of state lines have been eliminated. Wider choices and access to higher education are provided to BHJ residents.

According to a recent report, it is estimated that 65% of all jobs now require an associate degree or advanced training and an-

When I worked in Kansas at Fort Scott Community College, students just 15 miles east living in Missouri paid out-of-state tuition at a cost three times the amount of Kansas residents. Luckily, state officials have approved tuition reciprocity agreements allowing Northern Panhandle residents to attend JCC at in-state rates while Jefferson County residents may attend WVNCC at West Virginia rates.

Our river is a divider at times, but when it comes to access to higher education our communities “cross over” finding opportunities for a variety of programs, job training courses and degrees.

Higher education is a significant factor to the successful economic development in Brooke, Hancock and Jefferson counties.

A NEW LOOK FOR THE VETERAN'S MEMORIAL BRIDGE

What took 29 years to build at a cost of \$64,424,599 and has become a local landmark? The answer is the Veterans Memorial Bridge.

Dedicated on May 4, 1990, the suspension bridge spans across the Ohio River connecting the cities of Steubenville, Ohio and Weirton, West Virginia. It is a cable-stayed structure made of concrete and steel with a 360 feet inverted Y-shaped concrete tower. Gaston Caperton, former Governor of West Virginia, remarked at the dedication that the completion of the bridge “necessitated unique financing and the efforts of hundreds of individuals, including members of local committees and the governors, congressional delegations and highway personnel of two states.”

The Community Foundation of Jefferson County and the Weirton Area Community Foundation are asking for that same type of support. The two groups recently announced they are joining forces to raise funds to light the Veterans Memorial Bridge. This estimated half-million dollar project would create the potential for economic and tourism opportunities as experi-

enced by other communities that have lighted their bridges.

According to Vicki Cummiskey, executive director of The Community Foundation of Jefferson County, the popularity of decorative bridge lighting has increased in recent years. One example is the Lake Robbins Bridge located at The Woodlands, Texas. What was once a drainage ditch that ran between a reservoir and the community is now being transformed into the Town Center Waterway, a new commercial and retail development.

Local leaders believe lighting the Veteran's Memorial Bridge can have the same positive effect in this area. Ms. Cummiskey is pleased with the support the project is getting. She said, “The support from local government officials on both sides of the river, and the excitement and positive word of mouth for the project will help us move forward as we now seek financial support.”

Using the Veteran's Memorial Bridge as an instrument for growth, is not a concept felt just locally. In fact, one website (www.glasssteelandstone.com) states that

while the industries that once kept the area alive and thriving are leaving, “the Veterans Memorial Bridge is a reminder that no



place is beyond hope, and that there may just be a future for this corner of the Ohio Valley.”

Donations may be sent to The Community Foundation of Jefferson County, Veterans Memorial Bridge Lighting, PO Box 1822, Steubenville, OH 43952.

SOLUTIONS SOUGHT FOR BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

A major problem facing many cities is what to do with abandoned industrial and commercial facilities commonly known as “brownfields.”. These areas encourage looting, vandalism, dumping and other abuses. If there is contamination, it can spread. Property value decreases and affects the economic potential of adjacent land. Taxpayers ultimately bear the burden.

Redevelopment of these areas is beneficial not only to the environment, but also for economic development. Environmentally, there are health benefits with the spread of contaminants eliminated. Dilapidated buildings are restored or replaced. Economically, jobs are created and the tax base increased.

A public hearing will be held October 25, 2002 at the Millsop Community Center Rose Room from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Topics to be discussed include brownfields redevelopment, brownfields liability insurance and the West Virginia Voluntary Remediation program. Property owners will learn how they can actively participate.

To further efforts in brownfield redevelopment, BHJ, in partnership with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC) and the City of Weirton, is applying for a \$200,000 Pilot Project Assessment Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. With a performance pe-

riod of two years, the grant will be used to inventory, characterize, assess and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfields. Initial proposals submission is due November 27, 2002.

Submission of final proposals, due March 5, 2003, is by invitation only. Threshold and ranking criteria must be met to be invited to submit. Those qualifying will be notified in January, 2003.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting Doris Davis, BHJ Economic Development Specialist at (740) 282-3685 or by email at ddavis@bhjmpc.org.



MORE SUNSET BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENTS ON THE WAY

Congressman Bob Ney’s office recently announced the City of Steubenville is the recipient of a \$200,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The grant money will be used for improvement of the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Johnson Road. In addition, the State of Ohio will contribute \$457,497 to the project along with the City of Steubenville providing \$67,500.

Plans call for the widening of Sunset Boulevard approximately .3 mile for the addition of a left turn lane as well as the construction of a left turn lane at the Johnson Road approach. Reconstruction of curbs, sidewalks, drainage and new pavement overlay will also be completed.

Congressman Ney stated, “This money will improve traffic in the city of Steubenville and help promote economic growth and development. This project will not only improve the quality of life, but also will make Steubenville a more attractive place for business.”

BDC AND BHJ JOIN FORCES

BHJ is taking advantage of yet another economic development tool. In partnership with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC), BHJ received a grant through the National Business Incubation Association and the Appalachian Regional Commission to establish a Business Incubator program.

A business incubator is designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies by providing client access to rental space and flexible leases, shared office services and equipment and technology support. An incubator is also an aid to obtain necessary financing. A business incubator creates jobs and revitalizes neighborhoods. Most importantly, it strengthens local and national economies.

Linda Clark, business incubator mentor and director of Ohio University Innovation Center will meet with a local task force from Brooke and Hancock counties December 4-6, 2002. Topics to be discussed include business incubator management and cash flow, success stories and how to secure funding among others.

Contact Doris Davis at BHJ for more information.

SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION EQUALS SAFETY

Mayor Bob Wilson is seeking public comment from residents in Toronto on the city's proposed minor rehabilitation project on Franklin Avenue. The \$456,500 project will allow for the construction of a sidewalk from Fernwood Drive to Dennis Way. During construction, which is anticipated for summer of 2003, traffic will be maintained.

Mayor Wilson said, "The road has been there since Route 7 came through in the 1970s. There has never been anything done. The

concrete is bad, and the road is in deplorable condition. The improvements will make it a safer place. With Issue 2 funding, there is relatively no cost to us."

Written comments are due by the end of November and should be mailed to the City of Toronto, Attention: The Honorable Robert Wilson, Mayor, P.O. Box 189, Toronto, OH 43964.

SEWER LINE EXPANSION WILL ADD 26 NEW CUSTOMERS

The Hancock County Public Service District has hired L. Robert-Kimball Engineers, Inc. to design and oversee construction of the Route 2 Sewer Extension Project which extends from Ergon to Newell. The projected cost is approximately \$834,180 with funding to come from the State Revolving Fund through the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

Construction is expected to begin by early fall of 2003 and be completed by the end of the year. The project will connect an additional 21 residential and 5 business customers to the system.

This project is the gateway to open the northern portion of Route 2 to further economic development. For instance, Riverside Technologies, a tire recycling plant, is in the process of relocating their operations to the area. An estimated 15-20 new jobs are expected

to be created with future expansion possible.

Mr. Chuck Svokas, Hancock County director of economic development says, "This is a good project with a lot of benefits. It is a very viable source to eliminate the growing problem of how to dispose of tires. Riverside Technologies has a unique system of providing much-needed tire by-products."

According to Mr. Svokas there are other potential business startups as well, including a housing project consisting of 90-110 units and a hotel.

CENSUS 2000 UPDATE

By John Brown, Executive Director

As a consortium library and clearinghouse for U.S. Census materials, BHJ provides a wealth of new economic and social trend information. Grant writers, market profilers, private investors and community decision makers will find location specific data on the BHJ website at www.bhjmpc.org and clicking on Census 2000. If further information is needed, please contact Shawn Price, BHJ Engineering Technician, sprice@bhjmpc.org.

The U.S. Census' Summary File 3 update consists of 813 detailed tables of Census 2000 social, economic and housing characteristics. The data was compiled from a sample of approximately 19 million households that received the Census 2000 long-form questionnaire.

Summary File 3 covers the United States, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 484 population tables and 329 housing tables, due to a growing demand for optional geographic breakdowns, several adjustments were made to Census 2000. While the data is enumerated on a traditional hierarchical block group and census tract basis, a new breakdown allows a configuration of data by Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTA's) and Congressional Districts.

Users may expect four further releases during the next year. Each release will be more geographically specific and provide further insight into the subdistricts of each community.

ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2002

VOTE

YES FOR

ALL FOR 1
Building West Virginia Together

Throughout the northern panhandle, signs are appearing encouraging West Virginia voters to say yes for Amendment One, a local economic development tool that can help create quality jobs in West Virginia. It is a financing option that counties and municipalities can use to attract and finance new job growth in the state without increasing property taxes.

Governor Bob Wise is traveling throughout the state attending rallies and gathering support for the passage of Amendment One. On October 15, the Governor saw a big display of the region's support at the Business After Hours event held at Mountaineer

Racetrack & Gaming Resort and sponsored by the Weirton Chamber of Commerce. Badges, signs and banners greeted the Governor when he walked through the doors. In a short speech, he encouraged continued participation in getting the word out and stressed again the benefits to West Virginia with passage of the amendment.

In another effort to gain support, the All For One Committee in Charleston is encouraging all municipalities, cities and organizations in West Virginia to pass resolutions for passage of Amendment One. In response, 17 local organizations have pledged resolutions in support for the amendment. Thus far, nine of those have been passed, including BHJ. On September 25, the Full Commission voted unanimously to support Amendment One.



STATE ROUTE 43 IN STORE FOR MAJOR CHANGES

Fall of 2004 could mark the beginning of construction on improvements to State Route 43, from U.S. Route 22 to Ross Ridge Alikanna Road (County Road 43) in Jefferson County. With a projected cost of \$3,520,000, several options are being considered:

- 1 Widen a portion of State Route 43 to five lanes
- 2 Upgrade the interchange of State Route 43 with U.S. 22
- 3 Improve the intersection of State Route 43 with Two Ridge Road and State Route 646
- 4 Install traffic signals to improve the flow of traffic and help alleviate congestion as well as improve safety

On Thursday, October 10, the Ohio Department of Transportation District 11 held a public meeting in the council chambers of the Village of Wintersville Municipal Building. The public viewed exhibits of the alternatives and were encouraged to comment about the potential social, environmental and economic impacts and benefits of this proposed project.

Representatives from ODOT and Parsons Brinckerhoff Ohio, Inc., study and design consultant for the project, were present to answer questions.

CITY OF WEIRTON AND BROOKE-HANCOCK VETERANS RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

by John Brown, Executive Director

On October 13th, the West Virginia Planning Association met in Morgantown to highlight outstanding planning efforts for the year. The City of Weirton's *Comprehensive Plan* and the Brooke-Hancock Veterans' Memorial Park project received outstanding program and project awards.

Funded by the United States Economic Development Administration, the *Comprehensive Plan* is a key jumping off point for economic diversification. The Veterans' Memorial Park, a privately funded project with over \$200,000 in outside contributions, is the first success story for Weirton's *Comprehensive Plan*. The park has created a key gateway entry and hopefully will lead to further identification points throughout Weirton.



Award recipients are left to right Bob Riccelli, Weirton Development Director, and Henry DeMasis, Brooke-Hancock Veterans' Chairman.

2002: FALL REGIONAL EVENTS

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| October 22—BHJ River Bridge System Advisory Committee Millsop Community Center, Weirton, WV | 1:30-3:30 p.m. |
| October 25 — Brooke-Hancock Brownsfield Public Information Meeting Millsop Community Center, Weirton, WV | Noon-1:00 p.m. |
| November 5 — Election Day November 6—BHJ Executive Committee Meeting, BHJ Conference Room | Noon-1:00 p.m. |
| November 11—Veteran's Day—BHJ Offices Closed November 20—BHJ Technical Advisory Meeting, BHJ Conference Room | 10:30 a.m. Noon |
| November 20—BHJ Full Commission Meeting, BHJ Conference Room November 28 & 29—Thanksgiving Holiday—BHJ Offices Closed | Noon-1:00 p.m. |
| December 3—BHJ Executive Committee Meeting, BHJ Conference Room December 25—Christmas—BHJ Offices Closed | Noon-1:00 p.m. |
| January 1—New Years—BHJ Offices Closed January 7—BHJ Executive Committee, BHJ Conference Room | Noon-1:00 p.m. |
| January 15 — BHJ Technical Advisory Committee; BHJ Conference Room January 15 — BHJ Full Commission; BHJ Conference Room; Steubenville | 10:30 a.m. Noon |



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Related Web Sites

Progress Alliance
www.alliance2000.org

State of Ohio Government Information
www.state.oh.us

Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.state.wv.us

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc
www.brookepioneertrail.org

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

Business Development Corporation of the
Northern Panhandle
www.bhbdc.org

U.S. Department of Transportation
www.dot.gov

CHANGE, Inc.
www.changeinc.org

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Hancock County Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.hancockcvb.com

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

Weirton Steel Corp.
www.weirton.com

Ohio Department of Transportation
www.dot.state.oh.us

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.wvdot.com

State Route 2 & Interstate 68 Authority
www.route2andi68.com

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org

City of Steubenville
www.ci.steubenville.oh.us