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NEW LEADERSHIP FOR BHJ

Michael J. Paprocki a 23-year employee of BHJ, was named executive director effective February 1. The announcement was made at the January 28 organizational meeting of the Full Commission by incoming chairman, Mark Henne.

Mike's selection follows an extensive search of two rounds of advertising. There were 28 applications for the job the first round but the Search Committee wasn't satisfied they had found the right person for the job. The position was advertised again after selecting Mike to serve as interim director in November. He was one of three to be interviewed and then determined to be the most qualified from a field of 19 in the second round.

Mike began his career in 1992 and has held the positions of Transportation Planner, Transportation Engineer, and Transportation Study Director. Over the course of his career he developed several transportation management systems for traffic counting surveillance, safety management, and roadway inventory. He created several land use forecast models for travel demand forecast modeling. He is quite knowledgeable in air quality conformity, environmental justice assessment, Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan administration, as well as mobility management for public transit and human service operations in the MPO area, and freight management. He successfully incorporated these elements, and many others, into a comprehensive Geographic Information System or GIS.

Mike has assumed the role as chairperson of several regionally significant organizations such as the Jefferson County Trails & Greenways Committee and the Regional Access Mobility Partnership. He served twice as Chairperson for the Transportation Committee of the Ohio Association Regional Councils (OARC) and currently is a member of the Ohio Bicycle Federation Executive Board. Throughout his tenure at the BHJ MPC, he has written and presented several projects and programs to the Ohio Transportation Review Advisory Council, the Ohio and West Virginia Transportation Planning conferences, the Annual Ohio Conference on Freight, and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Tools of the Trade Transportation Conference.

Mike is a graduate of Steubenville Catholic Central and received an Associate Degree of Applied Science in Electronic Technologies in 1989 from Jefferson Technical College. In 1991, he earned his Bachelors of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering Technologies from Point Park College, Pittsburgh, PA.

He resides with his wife, Nonie, in Mingo Junction. They are the parents of three daughters and grandparents to Rudy, Renee and Joey.



BHJ METROPOLITAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Marvin Six, Secretary
Tom Timmons, Treasurer

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's been a long road to arrive at this stage of my career. More than 23 years ago, on June 22, 1992 to be exact, I started this chapter of my life at the BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission as the Transportation Planner. In my often cluttered office at 814 Adams Street, surrounded by stacks of boxes and piles of dusty books, I did my job with a pencil, sheet of paper, and scientific calculator and no personal computer or smart phone. (The office phones were rotary dial refurbished from the 1950's.) With a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering in hand, I learned functional classification of highways, travel demand modeling, and principles of highway capacity. This was a "real world" job far from what I was doing for the previous 16 years of life. I had no idea how I would fit in, who the people were that I would associate with, and no concept that I could ever make even a small difference in this agency.



Push ahead to 2015 and I'm using a personal computer, using the worldwide web and social media and communicating with colleagues and co-workers through a smart phone. Yes, I have seven co-workers in this office and many others that have come and gone, but the real co-workers are those I've met on the outside, those of you reading this newsletter. Together we have had some failures but from those failures came success from lessons learned: the lighting of the Veterans Memorial Bridge, Coordinated Human Service Transportation, the Wellsburg Bridge and expansion of the SVRTA into Winterville. There certainly was success in the improvements to State Route 2 in Weirton and Follansbee as well as the major four-lane expansion and hillside removal in between.

Unless you make a long-term commitment to planning at one agency such as BHJ, you rarely have the chance to see a project come back around in full circle. I was reminded of one such project when I attended a meeting in New Philadelphia, OH of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (fka the Power of 32+). The topic was the long-term commitment to build an off-road recreational trail connecting Pittsburgh, PA to Cleveland, OH.

In 1998, I was asked to meet with a small group to discuss such a long-term vision. At the time, the Panhandle Trail was barely getting off the ground, the Great Allegheny Passage connecting Pittsburgh to Washington, DC was just being conceived and the Fort Steuben Bridge was still open to traffic. The vision was to use the Fort Steuben Bridge as a shared path for pedestrians and bicyclists and connect the dots between The Towpath Trail in Akron, OH to the Panhandle Trail in Weirton, WV. I was asked to create a map using GIS for a vision brochure called the Tri-State Trail Initiative that touted the phrase "Bridging Our Nation's Capital to the Great Midwest." When the brochure was finished, a co-worker in the group proclaimed and of course I paraphrase, "Mike, you should be proud of what you just created. This brochure is a major step in the right direction."

Flash ahead to 2015. The Fort Steuben Bridge is gone, but the Panhandle Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage are complete. The Towpath is moving south into Tuscarawas County, OH. Recently I heard from a young man in the Wheeling, WV area through social media showing me the map of the Tri-State Trail Initiative. I told him I created this map about 15 years ago and said that it's amazing how it stills lives on. He replied that he hoped developers would keep it on the back of their mind and then asked if there are any plans for pedestrian and cycling passage with the new Wellsburg Bridge. I replied that West Virginia DOT intends to build a shared use path across the bridge, 8-10 foot wide for pedestrians and bicyclists.

I am truly humbled to be the fifth Executive Director of the BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission. I look forward to working with my past present and future coworkers. There are still many of you I have yet to meet. Thank you to everyone, who through my father's voice, have offered "Congratulations". Oh, and maybe you're still wondering how that Electrical Engineering degree worked out as a Transportation Planner. I'd say it worked out just fine so far.

Looking ahead till spring,

Michael J. Paprocki

BHJ RECEIVES AUDITOR OF STATE AWARD

Ohio Auditor of State Dave Yost announced that a recent financial audit of BHJ by the Auditor of State's office has returned a clean audit report. BHJ's excellent record keeping has earned it the *Auditor of State Award*.

Rhonda Howell, BHJ finance manager, said, "BHJ staff works hard to ensure that Agency internal controls and policies and procedures are followed."

The *Auditor of State Award* is presented to local governments and school districts upon the completion of a financial audit. Entities that receive the award meet the following criteria of a "clean" audit report:

- ◆ The entity must file timely financial reports with the Auditor of State's office in accordance with GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles);
- ◆ The audit report does not contain any findings for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, Single Audit findings or questioned costs;
- ◆ The entity's management letter contains no comments related to:
 - ◇ Ethnic referrals
 - ◇ Questioned costs less than \$10,000
 - ◇ Lack of timely report submission
 - ◇ Reconciliation
 - ◇ Failure to obtain a timely Single Audit
 - ◇ Findings for recovery less than \$100
 - ◇ Public meetings or public records



WEIRTON TRANSIT HOPES TO PASS LEVY



For the first time ever, Weirton Transit is asking voters to pass a levy that will provide \$347,700 to match a federal grant. Passage of the levy will keep transit running and improve their services. If the levy fails, there could be a reduction and/or elimination of some services and routes.

Weirton Transit has a vital role in providing transportation for those who do not have access to other modes of travel. Approximately 58,000 riders took advantage of the service in Calendar Year 2014. This is a huge increase from the 20,000 that used the service just a few years ago.

For some, the service is crucial to get to work or attend school. Many would not be able to keep medical appointments if they couldn't rely on Weirton Transit. How much will it cost? A homeowner with a house appraised at \$100,000 would pay just \$34.60 yearly. The levy requires 60% voter approval to pass.

HELP WTC CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF OPERATION

THE EVENT WILL BE HELD MARCH 26 FROM 6:30 TO 8:30 AT THE WEIRTON MILLSOP COMMUNITY CENTER—WEIRTON ROOM. ENJOY AN EVENING OF FOOD, MUSIC AND MEMORIES.

MIKE PAPROCKI OUTLINES HIS GOALS

Following the announcement that he was named executive director, Mike Paprocki had the following to say:

To the Executive Committee, Transportation Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee, Thank you, I am truly humbled by this opportunity. In 1992, Robert Gordon and John Beck believed in my skills and presented the opportunity for a vocation in public service. This follows in footsteps of a man's shoes I will never fulfill, a person I called Dad who taught me how to be a true community leader. Be humble; go about your business with a positive work ethic, and above all listen without question.

I have faced many challenges at BHJ throughout these last 23 years, many very satisfying and others that may have met failure or resistance. But one lesson I have learned, be patient, pray to God, and believe in your faith. These three principals have always seemed to guide me in the right and proper direction. You have to shake a person's hand, look into their eyes, and be honest.

Let me share with you some of the administrative challenges I believe each of us as elected and appointed officials, interested citizens, and professional staff at BHJ MPC in the coming years.

First, we must sustain and expand Local Leadership on the Executive Board, as well as our Technical Advisory Committee, and Transportation Study Policy Committee. Through public outreach, the Executive Committee and staff has and will continue to seek participation of all elected officials to share in the regional decision-making process.

Second, engage our constituency with Public Involvement Techniques that create an environment for Effective Decision-Making. Effective communication of project planning not only improves accountability but the value of scarce dollars spent for construction or program implementation. Such techniques could range from working directly with a collaborative task force or involving interested citizens on decision and policy bodies. Other such methods may include creating substantive public information materials and media strategies through face to face interviews and briefings. We must maintain an up to date web site and effectively use other social media outlets such as Facebook[®] and LinkedIn[®].

Next we at BHJ must maintain a Skilled-Workforce through Training, Technology, and Advancement. We must create a working environment where staff is encouraged to share their individual skills and knowledge wherever possible. Be heard, be given the opportunity of ownership and walk away satisfied, that together, we accomplished a job well done. BHJ should continue working with the university "Coop" program and develop the planners and engineers of the future. The BHJ has always strived to acquire the newer computer hardware and software for specialized planning applications such as Geographic Information Systems, traffic counting and micro-simulation modeling tools. BHJ MPC must continue to present its workforce with training opportunities through online webinars and on-site workshops, as well as regional, statewide and national planning and training conferences when practical.

BHJ will continue to administer a Limited MPO Sub-Allocation for a Local Administered Transportation Construction Program. The BHJ MPO has a limited MPO sub-allocation budget for constructing and *planning West Virginia for Brooke and Hancock counties. Much of our construction and planning needs have surpassed available federal and state financial resources and as local governments, we face many challenges. First, we are transportation projects in Jefferson County, OH. Inversely, no such budget for transportation improvements exists in experiencing less local revenues due to the downturn in our local economies and population. Secondly, we are receiving less state and federal assistance for infrastructure improvements and the project selection processes in Ohio*

2015 FULL COMMISSION OFFICERS

The BHJ Technical Advisory Committee and Full Commission began the new year with the election of officers for 2015. Robert Laukert of Wintersville was re-elected chairman for TAC and Mike Dolak, City of Steubenville engineer, was elected vice-chairman.

At the noon meeting of the Full Commission, Mark Henne, city manager for Wellsburg, was elected chairman. Vice chairman is Dr. Thomas Graham, Jefferson County commissioner. Rounding out the slate of officers is Marvin Six, from the BDC of the Northern Panhandle and Hancock County Commission representative, secretary and Tom Timmons, representative for the City of Steubenville, is treasurer.



(From left to right) Mark Henne, newly elected chairman, and Mike Paprocki, BHJ executive director, present a plaque of appreciation to outgoing chairman, Dr. Thomas Graham.

and West Virginia are vastly different. All the while, the overall costs for project planning, engineering, and construction continue to increase. But yet, we must endure and deliver a program that meets our constituent's needs through partnership and collaboration and continue to build upon the personal and professional relationships we have fostered with the Ohio Department of Transportation and West Virginia Division of Highways.

Last of all, my personal challenge is to broaden my managerial, organization, and administrative skills. Learn new programs such as the West Virginia Planning and Development Services, Economic Development, Community Development, and Administrative Management. I look forward to these tasks.

Thank you.

Michael J. Paprocki, *Executive Director*
Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission

OUT OF THE PAST

If you travel north on State Route 7 and stop at the traffic light at the intersection of State Route 7 and 213, you are in the middle of what was once an artificial lake that was part of Stanton Park in the early 1900s. The park was constructed and opened around 1901 by the Steubenville and East Liverpool Traction & Light Company. The traction company knew the park would be a destination for people to use their streetcar service. The park was originally named Dehewahmis Park and later renamed Stanton Park for Edwin M. Stanton, a Steubenville native and Lincoln's Secretary of War.



The park covered over 85 acres of land consisting of dense woods and lowlands. A shaded ravine wound in and out through the large trees. There were paths leading from the lake across bridges and through the beauty of the undisturbed forest. People could hike to caves and cliffs amidst an array of wild flowers and fern and listen to the many songbirds. Then at the head of the ravine they reached a spectacular waterfall.



STANTON PARK IN JEFFERSON COUNTY



The roller skating rink was one of the most popular attractions. It was made of brick which was unique since at that time most parks had constructions made of wood. Skating contests were held beginning somewhere around 1915. Also known as Half Moon Roller Rink (and it was also later a casino) in later years, it remained open until the 1950s long after the rest of the park closed. It became a popular site with gamblers and dancers.

The merry-go-round building could hold 1,000. There was a huge Wurlitzer organ that played music all day long. The organ was the only one of its kind in the country. The 50-foot merry-go-round was operated by an electric motor and had large carved animals and chariots and three row wide seats. Dance contests were held in the evening.

Other attractions included a refreshment booth with the first of its kind popcorn machine that turned out 30,000 hot corn fritters a day. There was a soda fountain with a counter 30 feet long. A shooting gallery and photograph gallery and booths for movie picture machines, vending machines and souvenir booths provided entertainment as well.

During the winter, park goers could ice skate. In the summer they could swim in a pool that was spring fed. There was lots of activities for the kids. They could enjoy donkey rides and attend a variety of free shows such as aerial acts and dog and pony circuses.

The Fourth of July was celebrated with a brilliant display of fireworks. Unfortunately, most of the attractions were in decline by the 1930's. Cars replaced the need for the trolley and the park closed in the 1940s. The construction of the highway removed any traces of the park.

(All information obtained from various Internet sites.)



Stanton Park, Steubenville, Ohio.

CALENDAR

March 2	Executive Committee Meeting	Noon
March 11	Brooke-Hancock Brownfield Task Force Mary H. Weir Library	Noon
March 25	Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 Noon
March 26	Weirton Transit Corporation 25th Anniversary Weirton Room—Millsop Community Center	6:30-8:30
April 6	Executive Committee Meeting	Noon

Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

Brooke County Economic Development Authority
www.brookewv.org

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc
www.brookepioneertrail.org

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

CHANGE, Inc.
www.changeinc.org

City of Steubenville
www.cityofsteubenville.us

CommuterInfo
www.commuterinfo.org

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

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

State of Ohio Government Information
www.ohio.gov

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.wv.gov

Top of WV Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.topofwv.com

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

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

U.S. Economic Development Administration
www.commerce.gov

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.transportation.wv.gov

West Virginia Development Office
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