

REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 1, Issue 3

**Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission**

October 2003

DUFOUR AND ARMSTRONG: TWO NEW CITY MANAGERS WITH STRONG LOCAL TIES



Gary DuFour

A familiar face is back in the area. Mr. Gary DuFour, former Steubenville city manager from 1990 until last year, recently accepted that same position in the City of Weirton.

Mr. DuFour is ready for the challenges facing him. The loss of approximately \$1 million in the general fund as a result of Weirton Steel filing for bankruptcy is a major issue. However, he believes that by taking advantage of the city's many assets, such as Weirton's close proximity to U.S. Route 22, the Ohio River and Pittsburgh, there is "tremendous potential" to bring new people to the community, as well as new jobs.

For most of the Ohio Valley's history, the focus has been on heavy industry. Mr. DuFour said one way to grow the city's tax base would be to take advantage of newer technological developments and use some "thinking out of the box" strategies such as promoting telecommuting and other nontraditional kinds of work.

Mr. DuFour graduated from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. Prior to becoming Steubenville's urban projects director in 1985, he was employed by BHJ for 12 years. More recently, he was employed as a borough manager in Wilksburg, PA.

Mr. DuFour certainly brings a wealth of experience to his position. He is familiar with the challenges affecting the entire BHJ region. He knows the community and has a vision to help it grow. BHJ welcomes him back to the area and to the BHJ Full Commission.

The Wellsburg City Council recently appointed Mr. Howard Armstrong as the new city manager. A Wellsburg native, Mr. Armstrong is a local businessman with 28 years of experience in administration and sales. He is founder and president of Riverfront Development Corp. and Armstrong Carry Outs, Inc.

Mr. Armstrong believes his strong background in business gives him the knowledge and experience to tackle the issues facing the city. He knows the budget process and says that "running the city is like running a business." He has already presented city council with a five-part, 90-day outline that prioritizes financial matters including an analysis for overall budget, revenue and expense. Personnel and departmental issues, as well as strategic planning, are also addressed in the outline.

Mr. Armstrong's business experience is impressive. For 15 years, he was employed in the medical field working in California, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. He held vice presidencies of sales positions in the sale of medical equipment and disposable products. In 1999, he returned to Wellsburg and not only started his own businesses, but became involved in commercial real estate and small businesses, including Mark's Carry Out and Hudson House Saloon.

He also has a strong educational background.

He is a graduate of West Virginia University with a bachelor of arts degree in public relations, earned his executive master's in business administration from the University of Virginia Darden School. He also earned a degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Business specializing in Strategic Planning.

BHJ looks forward to working with him on both local and regional issues.



Howard Armstrong

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As Mark Twain, upon the erroneous wire service notice that he'd died, stated "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." So go the nay sayers of the Upper Ohio Valley.

Yes, the old news is the Wolf has arrived (*And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry. John Hoerr*). The new news is professionals like Erin Jel-lots, Evan Scurti, John Ravasio and Lou Gentile should have a future through the careful visioning and investment of the region. Erin, Evan, John and Lou are recent college graduates and BHJ interns with local roots at Brooke High and Catholic Central.

Every community has an impatience for tomorrow to arrive; however, given our limited resources and our challenging economy, a more detailed roadmap for the future will produce high dividends. A case in point is Jeff Pyle, mayor of Ford City, Pa. In mid-October, the Jefferson County Chamber sponsored a bus trip to see successful riverfront development in Pittsburgh. Jeff was a guest speaker on how to supplement brownfields redevelopment.

He unveiled a not dissimilar "end of the road" community scenario. Located 45 miles north of Pittsburgh on the Allegheny River, Ford City is far from a renaissance community. The city was once the center of the world for glass production through the local Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. Due to a total plant closure in 1988, their population dropped from 5,400 to 3,500. Their recovery is far from over; however, through a federal brownfields program they've economically created marketable sites near infrastructure. They've removed old rail spurs and created a rails to trails program. City council has bought, sold and profited through an aggressive land exchange program. This is not your community of the 1950's. It's a hopeful community.

So, to Erin in Pittsburgh, Evan in Ashland, John in Detroit and Lou in Des Moines, we at BHJ are committed to a similar vision for the region.

John C. Brown, AICP

THE CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Ever wonder about the interdependence that our Region has on each other? How the cities and counties interrelate and need each other to grow and survive? Well, the recent DETOUR has caused many of us to re-evaluate that interdependence and the need for effective infrastructure.

Whether you are a restaurant owner, manage a gas station, a clothing store or are part of local government that depends upon the region as a whole to

conduct your business--- you've felt the pinch!!

Families that moved to the country to avoid heavy traffic are now seeing long lines of vehicles travel by their homes continuously. What used to be a short jaunt from Wellsburg to Steubenville or vice versa for a routine meeting has now become a serious headache.

I for one am anxiously awaiting the re-opening of Route 2! Hopefully, we will all be a bit more

appreciative of the highway systems that we have and the need to improve connectivity throughout the Ohio Valley Region.

I had planned to add a few more issues in this article; however, I am late for a meeting in Steubenville and the DETOUR hasn't lifted YET!!

Norman Schwertfeger
Chairman



ROUTE 2 UPDATE



Route 2 Construction Site

They're gone! Shortly after the BHJ chairman submitted his newsletter article, the barrels were removed and traffic was flowing once again.

There will still be two periods of the day when blasting will take place near the Market Street Bridge. During that time, traffic will come to a standstill for approximately 15-20 minutes.

To motorists and business owners along Route 2, it's been a long, difficult time. The long-term benefits, however, will prove to be worth it. Not only will the road be widened to four lanes with extended turn lanes and updated signalization, it will be converted from a rolling route to a flat grade, thus improving visibility.

2004-2007 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The BHJ transportation staff produces a variety of reports and plans addressing both long and short-term transportation issues. The Transportation Improvement Plan is one such document. The latest plan covering Fiscal Years 2004-2007 was adopted by the Full Commission May 21, 2003. Michael Paprocki, BHJ's transportation study director, gives a brief overview of the document.

The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and biennial updates have been a prerequisite to federal assistance for certain federal-funded highway and public transit projects within metropolitan planning areas since 1976. As defined in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the TIP must be developed by the planning area's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in cooperation with the State Highway Agency and any affected public transit operator.

The TIP is a staged multi-year (three to five or more) program of transportation improvements including an annual element. TIP amendments may be initiated only for projects that are regionally significant or require federal approval or authorization action prior to the next scheduled biennial TIP update. For projects meeting this criteria, BHJ anticipates submitting TIP revisions on a quarterly basis.

The TIP is a fiscally constrained priority listing of proposed federally supported projects and strategies that will be carried out within the three-year period of the adopted program. In addition, the TIP must identify regionally significant projects that are consistent with the goals and objectives established

in the long-range element of the MPO's [2025 Plan](#). Furthermore, the proposed three-year transportation program can include only projects, or an identified phase of a project, if full funding can reasonably be available to implement or construct the strategy or program.

While developing the TIP, the MPO must provide citizens, public agencies, and other representatives of transportation services, a reasonable opportunity for comment and review of the proposed program. In order to fulfill the public involvement process requirements, the TIP is advertised and made available by public notice. The TIP is also circulated throughout the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Transportation Study (BHJTS) constituency. At a minimum, the TIP must be made available to the public for comment on both the highway and transit elements.

The program outlined in the document provides for improvement projects addressing the short-range (four-year) transportation needs for Brooke and Hancock counties in West Virginia and Jefferson County in Ohio. The TIP is consistent with all federal and state-funded highway projects, such as resurfacing, bridge replacement, bridge rehabilitation and transportation enhancement projects.

The TIP is available on the BHJ website, www.bhjmpc.org or by calling the BHJ office at (740) 282-3685. Other documents available are the *2025 Transportation Plan* and the *Transit Development Plan*.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE MAJOR SOURCE OF BHJ FUNDING

Community development plays a major role in BHJ's commitment to further economic development and growth in the region. Barbara Zimnox, BHJ's community development specialist says, "Infrastructure is vital to the area's economic development and growth. In the past few years, we've consistently made progress in providing a better quality of life to the residents of Brooke and Hancock counties."



Barb Zimnox
Community Development Specialist

Ms. Zimnox began her career at BHJ in 1999 on a personal service contract and became full-time in her current position a year later. Since then, she has seen first hand the positive effect on communities where water and sewer upgrades are made. She has assisted in applying for and administering funds for projects that have, and will have, definite economic impact.

One such project is the \$834,180 Route 2 Sewer Line Extension Project. Extending from Ergon to Newell, it is considered the gateway to open the northern portion of Route 2 to further economic development.

In 1999, Ghosh Engineers from Charleston, WV, developed a facilities plan for the Brooke-Hancock region. Costs for water and sewer projects outlined in the plan totaled \$60 million. Thus far, \$20,953,719 of that amount has been funded or already constructed. It should be noted that while most projects are listed in the facilities plan, other projects are developed that are not included.

Funding for projects are provided through the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Agency's SRF Program, West

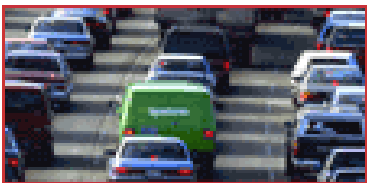
Virginia Development Office and the Infrastructure Council. In addition, BHJ receives 6.33% of the State of West Virginia's allocation from the Appalachian Regional Commission annually for project development.

Congressman Alan Mollohan has shown exceptional support for the Brooke-Hancock region. Funding for sewer extension in Brooke County was provided when the Congressman placed \$10.2 million in an appropriations bill with funding administered through the United States Environmental Protection Agency specifically for

this project. He also provided grant funds of more than \$500,000 to partially fund a water system upgrade and extension to the Village of Beech Bottom's existing system and \$5,000,000 for the Route 8 sewer extension.

The time span for any given project from the development stage to actual completion can be two-four years. Therefore, it is not unusual for Ms. Zimnox to be juggling several projects at once and all in different stages. Administration, meetings with elected officials, commissions and the public and monitoring work progression are ongoing to ensure all guidelines are followed for successful project completion.

Knowing that total project costs for community development amounted to \$24,897,569 for Brooke and Hancock counties in Fiscal Year 2003 (July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003), it is easy to understand the scope and depth of community development in the region. The standard of living for citizens is positively affected, and the base for economic development is established.



IMPROVE YOUR COMMUTE
Find Carpools and Vanpools in your area.

RIDES

There are some positive changes coming to the Rideshare Program. BHJ will join forces with the CommuteInfo program and their Southwestern PA-based partners in a cooperative effort to improve and further enhance regional ridesharing for our commuters traveling into Southwestern PA. CommuteInfo is a program of the Southwestern PA Commission.

This cooperation will provide continuity in services, expand the current commuter database, and most importantly, increase efficiency. Those interested in ridesharing will be directed to CommuteInfo's website, www.commuteinfo.org to fill out an application and be entered into a regional database. If the commuter does not have access to the Internet, the BHJ rideshare coordinator will take the information over the phone. From that point, CommuteInfo staff will attempt to place the commuter on transit, a van or in a carpool depending on the preference of the rider.

There are benefits for CommuteInfo also. By BHJ working as a part of the partner group, CommuteInfo will reach more commuters from the tri-county region through local marketing efforts. For both Southwestern PA and local areas, and more importantly, the Commuters traveling into Southwestern PA, it's a win-win situation.

EPA AWARDS \$200,000 FOR BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

On June 20th, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded BHJ with a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant, the only one of its kind given out in West Virginia. The funding will be used to identify and inventory sites throughout the region, inform and gather information from local citizens and property owners and perform Phase I and limited Phase II assessments on select sites to evaluate risks and estimate remediation costs.



Donald S. Welsh, EPA Regional Administrator presents Dr. Brown with a check for the \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant

Recently, eight environmental consulting firms submitted Request for Qualification statements to BHJ. Using a ranking system, seven members of the Brownfields Task Force se-

lected three applicants for final consideration.

The Task Force wants to encourage public involvement. Area residents will be able to learn more about the program at Information Stations that will be set up throughout the Brooke-Hancock region.

The following is a schedule for the brownfields program. It should be noted this schedule is subject to change.

October 2003

- Create E-mail distribution list for those interested in receiving information on brownfields redevelopment
- Doris Davis, BHJ Economic Development Specialist, will attend the EPA Brownfields Conference in Portland, OR
- Begin to develop a website focusing on brownfields redevelopment

November 2003

- Establish eight Information Stations at libraries, community centers, etc., where citizens can obtain brownfields information
- Form focus groups so that local citizens, landowners, and others can receive information and provide input
- Interviews and final selection of consultant

December 2003

- Identify sites

January 2004

- Task Force meeting to identify necessary information to be collected for each property; also, consultant will brief the

Task Force of the necessary steps to inventory brownfields sites

- Bankers Advisory Forum to provide information and gather input from local lenders and financial institutions
- Provide brownfields information to local school systems
- Provide fact sheets to elected and government officials and release periodic updates

February 2004

- Hold public meeting to distribute information and receive feedback from community residents

April-December 2004

- Inventory sites

January 2005

- Hold meeting to educate the public of the risks involved in conducting subsurface environmental assessments/excavation

January-September 2005

- Perform Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) on selected properties: Results will be used to develop scope of work for targeted Phase II ESA's at selected sites.

BHJ will apply to the EPA for additional assessment grant funding in the amount of \$350,000. These funds will be used specifically for assessment of Browns Island. It is believed that Browns Island has the most potential for development. However, once all the data is collected and assessed, other sites may prove to be as desirable.

BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS STORIES

Since Brownfield Redevelopment began in Pittsburgh, over 300 acres have been reclaimed. The reclaimed land has become everything from residential communities, to office parks, to recreational facilities. All of these uses have the ability to increase residents satisfaction. A lot of people identify very closely with where they live, and living next to a park is much better than living next to an abandoned factory.

Canal Place, a business park located in Akron Ohio, was developed by Covington Capital Corporation on land formerly owned by BF Goodrich. Akron's economy, threatened by the loss of this industrial giant, was bolstered when the site was redeveloped.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

by Dewey Guida

When appointed by Governor Wise to serve on the West Virginia Council for Community and Economic Development, I was honored to represent the Northern Panhandle. I thought it was a great opportunity to sit and discuss with business leaders across the state, the many problems that we share in common. We finally have action plans to try to put us on a level playing field, dealing with the issues of Workers' Compensation, Medical Malpractice and providing us with some of the tools that provide new tax incentives that we never had in the past. As we try to survive the old economy woes of the steel mills, coal mines and chemical plants, job retention is still paramount. But where do we go from here?



attractions. Each of these attractions will create exciting new opportunities. The new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) package for Cabellas will bring a world class company and distribution center to Wheeling, along with the necessary infrastructure to allow tourist the ease of travel.

The Northern Panhandle is in the middle of large population draw. We call it "One Tank Tourism." With just one tank of gas, visitors from Columbus, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and other surrounding communities can be at these locations within a 2-hour drive. We need to focus

The members of our council have created a plan call "Vision Shared." "Vision Shared" is a comprehensive economic development strategy that builds on West Virginia strengths and seeks solutions to challenging issues. It identifies initiatives that need to be strengthened and establishes performance measures to gauge the success in creating a new West Virginia economy. In the Northern Panhandle, alone, we are starting to see a new economy evolve. Mountaineer Park, Wheeling Downs and the new proposed Cabellas are well known tourist

on building and replacing the old out-dated bridges and roads. There are several thousand acres of pristine land that can be opened up for future tourist attractions and other businesses, as well. We need to encourage more public-private partnerships for various infrastructure projects and support the necessary legislation to do so. This is a new era with exciting new opportunities; however, we need to change our ways of thinking. It will take a lot of hard work, good leadership and a strong will to survive.

FALL 2003 EVENTS

November 5	BHJ Executive Committee BHJ Office	Noon
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November 11	Office Closed—Veteran's Day	
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November 19	BHJ Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 Noon
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November 27 November 28	Office Closed—Thanksgiving Holiday	
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December 25	Office Closed—Christmas	
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January 1	Office Closed—New Year's	
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January 1	BHJ Executive Committee BHJ Office	Noon
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January 21	BHJ Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission—Reorganization Meeting—Election of Officers	10:30 Noon
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Mid-January	BHJ Annual Open House	
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COMMUNITY PROFILE: CHESTER, WEST VIRGINIA

In the northern most part of West Virginia, sandwiched in between Pennsylvania and Ohio, is the city of Chester, West Virginia. With a population of 2,592 (2000 Census), the community offers its residents the benefits of small town living and the advantages of the close proximity to larger metropolitan areas. Pittsburgh is just 49 miles away, and Youngstown just 34 miles. Both areas have much to offer for shopping and recreation. Distance travel is made easier with the Pittsburgh International Airport just 26 miles from Chester.



The city has some interesting history as well. From the late 1800s until the 1970s, Rock Springs Park was a popular tourist attraction.

People from miles around would make their way to the amusement park for

the thrill of the old wooden roller coaster and the merry sounds of the carousel.

Another point of interest was the “Blue Lake.” Somewhat of a mystery, the lake is actually man-made and believed to have been created for the dumping of fly ash. As beautiful as it appears, no life exists in the lake. However, the lake has served an economic purpose. A process was developed to process the fly ash into synthetic gypsum used to make drywall at a plant in Shippingport, Pa. Today, however, the lake is disappearing. Within the past year it has started to solidify and is no longer a brilliant shade of blue, but rather a dull grey.



One tourist attraction still in existence is the Chester Teapot constructed in 1938 from a wooden hogshead barrel for a Hire's Root Beer advertising campaign. It was constructed by William Devon who had the barrel shipped from Pennsylvania and set up on Carolina Ave-



nue which is also State Route 2. Mr. Devon had the barrel covered with tin, added a spout and handle and placed a glass ball on top to make the knob of the lid. The Teapot became a concession and



souvenir stand in front of Devon's pottery outlet store.

The Teapot was sold twice and finally closed in the late 1970s. In 1984, the C&P Telephone Company purchased the land and donated the Teapot to the City of Chester. After much restoration, the Teapot was moved to a location adjacent to the Jennings Randolph Bridge Ramp at the junction of State Route 2 and U.S. Route 30 and dedicated on October 12, 1990. Mayor Ken Morris reported recently that a new West Virginia flag will soon be flying from the top of the Teapot thanks to the efforts of Randy Swartzmiller, West Virginia First District Delegate.

Today, Chester is experiencing economic development. Five new businesses opened this past summer including a dance studio and Curves (a fitness facility). A building owned by National Church Supply not only houses that business, but also the Chamber of Commerce and two additional businesses. The owner hopes it will become a business incubator according to Doug Arner, president of the local Chamber.

The City is also in the process of doing sidewalk renovation on Carolina Avenue. The first phase was recently completed and included lighting and handicap accessible corners. The next phase will be funded by a \$250,000 grant from the West Virginia Department of Transportation and \$26,000 from the West Virginia Budget Digest Council.

The City of Chester is small in size, big in history and strong on community pride. Take the drive along Route 2, which incidentally is the northern terminus of WV 2. Stop and talk to Mayor Morris, Doug Arner, Roy Cashdollar (former mayor)

or any one of its business owners or residents and you will see and hear the enthusiasm felt for their town!





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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Related Web Sites

Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

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.ci.steubenville.oh.us

Hancock County Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.hancockcvb.com

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

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

Progress Alliance
www.progressalliance.com

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

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

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

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

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

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

Weirton Steel Corp.
www.weirton.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.wvdot.com

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org