



REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 12, Issue 3

Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission

Fall 2011

FOLDEN, SIMONETTI-BECK & JONES RECEIVE AWARDS

The purpose of BHJ's Annual Awards dinner is to recognize and honor those individuals who have made a positive impact in the tri-county area. Three very deserving individuals were this year's award recipients at the annual dinner held at the Serbian-American Cultural Center in Weirton, WV, on October 5.



Gary Folden, shown above with Dr. Thomas Graham, received the Public Service Award. To the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission, he is the face of dedication and reliability. He has been a member of the Full Commission since 1999. In that time, he has held office and served on the Executive, Technical Advisory and Bridge Advisory committees. With all that he does for BHJ, it is but a small portion of his service to the people of Jefferson County.

Since at least 1992, Gary has availed

himself to many organizations. His professional activities include the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; Community Improvement Corporation of Jefferson County; Ohio Mid-eastern Governments Association, Eastern Ohio Development Alliance; Advisory Board member of the Ohio Technical Procurement Assistance Center; Jefferson County Regional Planning Commission, Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency Advisory Board; Region 10 representative to the Ohio Advisory Council of the Small Business Development Center; Community Improvement Corporation/Progress Alliance; Jefferson County Taxpayers Association Board of Directors; Jefferson Economic Development Council Board of Directors and the Jefferson County Civic Arena Operating Committee.

His community activities are numerous as well. He is a charter member of the Wintersville Area Betterment Association; the annual Holiday parade coordinator; Thunder in the Ville Fireworks Festival Committee (serving as coordinator from 2003-2007); the Civic League, Wells Township; Friends of Jefferson County airport; Jefferson County Republican Party Central Committee and Executive Committee. He is a member of the Brilliant Christian Church.

In his spare time, he does volunteer work. He previously served on the A.L.I.V.E., Inc. Board of Directors and also worked with the Jefferson County United Way Campaign for several years.



Ruby Greathouse presented the Special Recognition Award to Joan Simonetti-Beck from Follansbee, WV.

Continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Awards Dinner	1, 4-5
From the Executive Director	2
Chester TS& T Site Welcome and Goodbye	3
Weirton Projects	6
RAMPing UP	7
Calendar of Events	8

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Roads, bridges and waterways are the backbone of our economy. On a daily basis, with little thought, many residents cross Veterans Bridge to work. The pre-1991 memory of a 40 minute wait to cross the Ft. Steuben Bridge when the Veterans Bridge was under construction is long gone. Subsequent investments like the US 22 Weirton and Steubenville Bypass are a faint memory. However, the legacy of these investments are the Jefferson County Industrial Park and private investments like Wal-Mart on US 43 at 22. Without these infrastructure investments, estimated at \$150 million in 1995 dollars, our economy would be less competitive.

The push to maintain a healthy, safe and economically productive infrastructure backbone has become increasingly more demanding. The key highway funding resource, called SAFETEA-LU, is a six-year authorization for highways, transit, and highway safety. This federal funding bill expired October 1, 2009. Congress has extended this authorization multiple times without passing a new authorization. Without a new authorization, new projects and a more balanced stream of revenue toward priority projects has gone unheard. In sum, we are in a holding pattern.

The need is evident. Beyond regular maintenance and care, local projects include a new Ohio River Bridge, access improvements at the Veterans Bridge, the replacement of Colliers Bridge and a growing list of mandated sewer separation upgrades. State infrastructure need is best illustrated by the American Society of Civil Engineer's 2008 Report card for American Infrastructure.

	% Bridges Structurally Deficient or Obsolete	% of Major Roads in Poor/Mediocre Condition	% of High Hazard Dams with No Emergency Action Plan
Ohio	27%	25%	57%
West Virginia	39%	37%	8%

Source: 2008 Report Card for American Infrastructure. American Society of Civil Engineers

From the common citizen to professional associations to elected officials, there is a consensus that infrastructure is crucial; however, the twist is the sticker shock and the method to find investment dollars. While we wait for a movement out of this infrastructure purgatory, you may be assured BHJ is actively documenting need, pursuing funding options and requesting a fair share in this growing debate.

John C. Brown
Executive Director

CHESTER TS&T SITE FORGES AHEAD THROUGH A BROAD-BASED PARTNERSHIP



Pat Ford, Executive Director for the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle, (BDC), frequently comments that “brownfield projects require the partnership and continued communication of at least 14 public-private entities.” These entities include the BDC, property owners, potential investors, federal-state regulatory agencies, locally elected officials, concerned citizens and the Brooke-Hancock Regional Council. The recent awarding of a \$12,000 seed grant from the Northern West Virginia Brownfield Assistance Center/ Benedum Foundation to the Brooke-Hancock Council/City of Chester is one example of this guideline.

The \$12,000 grant will allow Chester residents to profile the preferred end use of the recently purchased mothballed property called the “Taylor, Smith and Taylor” site. Located at the foot of the Jennings Randolph Bridge, the site is strategic, visual and adjacent to housing and an elementary school. The grant is one significant step to move the site from a simple demolition project to a community asset with potential job creation, community revenue and health/safety improvements.

WELCOME BACK AND GOOD BYE OLD FRIEND

In late November, the Market Street Bridge will open after two year and a \$16 million improvement. In December, the Ft. Steuben Bridge, constructed in 1929 and an Ohio River workhorse bridge for connectivity in the BHJ region will be demolished. With these bridge openings and closings, the ability to provide adequate emergency response and encourage regional job creation has been sustained.

After closing the Market Street Bridge In late 2009, the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) sold a more than \$16 million contract for repairs. These repairs will extend the bridge’s lifetime for approximately ten years until WVDOT is able to build a new Ohio River bridge in a Brilliant, Ohio/ Wellsburg, WV locale.



Closed in January 2009, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in July awarded a \$2.2 million bid to demolish the Ft. Steuben Bridge. Bridge demolition will be initiated in December 2011. According to ODOT, “the 80 year old structure is at the end of its useful life and is functionally obsolete. Its lanes are narrow and cannot be redesigned to provide additional width. There is a continuing concern over the integrity of the structure. The travel demand for and use of the Ft. Steuben Bridge has decreased due to the weight restrictions on it.”

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL DINNER

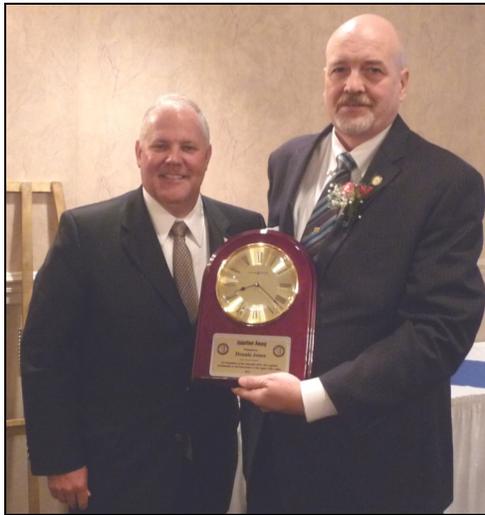
Ms. Beck is the Adult Education Instructor for the SPOKES Job Readiness Program sponsored by RESA-6, Wheeling, WV. The program offers workforce development training in job readiness, customer service and technology skills.

Ms. Beck is recognized for her formal and informal organizational leadership roles in both the public and private sectors. For 23 years she was the Business Unit Liaison, Operations Manager, Materials Manager, and Project Manager for Ethicon, Inc., a Johnson & Johnson Company with a strong emphasis in labor relations as well as empowered workforce development. She spent 10 years as a trainer of hourly and salaried personnel, workforce development consultant, and motivational speaker. She was a small business owner and personnel staffing specialist serving Fortune 500 Companies and recruiting professional, scientific, technical, administrative, trades, clerical, sales and marketing personnel for five years.

Ms. Beck has contributed numerous volunteer hours supporting professional, academic, public sector, as well as non-profit organizations, such as the Brooke County Parks & Recreation Commission and the Brooke County Economic Development Authority. She is the past secretary and co-writer of the Comprehensive Plan for the Brooke County Planning Commission. She is a member of the Bethany College Alumni Council, Education Committee of the Weirton Chamber of Commerce and the Lions Club. Joan is also the past president of the Society of Human Resource

Management (OH). She volunteers for Follansbee Christmas in the Park, the Feasibility Team for the Follansbee Park Relocation and the Brooke-Hancock County Community Development Coalition (OH/WV).

Commissioner Jeff Davis presented the Volunteer Award to Dennis Jones, who has been referred to as "Mr. Everything" to the Weirton Area Museum.



Mr. Jones joined the museum over five years ago and served as its first secretary from 2006 to 2009. He was elected as Museum President in 2009 and then was elected Museum Executive Director in 2011. Not only did Dennis contribute enormous amounts of his time to the Museum, he was one of the sponsors who contributed monetarily for the Museum office to move to a larger location. Dennis spearheaded the effort to purchase the former Home Furniture building at 3149 Main Street, Weirton.

His other contributions to the Museum are many. He writes, prints and circulates the Museum's monthly newsletter. He prepares the annual

report which is sent to local and state representatives apprising them of the Museum's progress. He created a website for the Museum.

Mr. Jones was instrumental in the preparations of the 2010 through 2013 Museum calendars. He worked with the prints to insure that the calendars would be a quality product. They are often purchased as gifts for family and friends living out of the Weirton area.

His talents are many, and he uses them to the benefit of the Museum and the City of Weirton.

Mr. Jones wrote a book titled "*Festival of Nations*" describing the original Festival which was held in Weirton from 1934-1944 and was sponsored by Weirton Steel Corporation. The book sells for \$6.00 and the proceeds benefit the Museum. He also prepared over 1100 large pictures of the Weirton area which were showcased at the Festival of Nations celebration.

He created and designed the Weirton History Game. He made the slide show for the Weir Avenue Reunion.

Not only was Mr. Jones instrumental in bringing Paramount Pictures to Weirton to film the movie Super 8, he designed the Super 8 pamphlet and worked on the committee to implement the Super 8 Festival.

Mr. Jones also serves on the Board of Directors for the Mary H. Weir Library and the Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitor Bureau.

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL DINNER

The dinner was made possible by the generous sponsorships of Wendel Energy Services LLC, Main Street Bank and WesBanco. In addition, prizes were donated by FROGGY Radio, DeeJay's BBQ & Grill, Infinity Hair Stylists and WTOV. Local artist, Dave Barnhouse, donated a print, "Home for the Holidays."



Dave Barnhouse poses with Andy Cocina, who won the Barnhouse print.



Prior to the dinner, guests enjoyed the social hour.

The award recipients from left to right: Joan Simonetti-Beck, Dennis Jones and Gary Folden.



BHJ staff, Barb Zimnox (l) and Joan Cresap (r) look on as Billy Niesslein makes comments before the drawing for a car care package donated by FROGGY Radio.



Prizes included gift cards and unique baskets filled with goodies. There was also a 50/50 drawing.



SOLVING WATER AND SEWER ISSUES

The City of Weirton has been experiencing some major issues with their water and sewer systems. Barb Zimnox, BHJ's community development specialist, is working with the City to find solutions and funding for those problems.

In early 2010, the City discovered that raw sewage from approximately 1,000 businesses and homes was flowing into the Ohio River. The source was found to be waste that flows out of Arcelor Mittlal. Apparently, in 1956 the City partnered with the former Weirton Steel to expand the water and sewer systems. According to City officials, there was a 50-70 feet long obstruction in the underground pipes going to the facility and blast furnaces causing the pipe to give.



Following the completion of a "temporary fix," the EPA inspected and mandated that a "permanent fix" be completed by the end of 2012. Thrasher Engineers was hired, and the City will be submitting an application to the Infrastructure & Job Development Council (IJDC) in November to fund the estimated \$5.8 million cost. Sewer rates are expected to increase by 40% once the project is completed.

This past summer the City experienced a major water outage that lasted as long as a week for many residents. The cause was a break on the main line out of the water treatment plant. The National Guard was called and water buffaloes were brought in. BHJ assisted in submitting an application to the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health for grant funds for a preliminary engineering study to construct a redundant water distribution system to prevent a reoccurrence. The application was approved for \$50,000, and BHJ will administer the funds.



Weirton's new City Manager, Valerie Means, visited the BHJ office earlier this month to meet the staff and discuss how BHJ can assist the City with several projects. Ms. Means said one of the issues she would like to address is the sidewalks downtown which are uneven and broken causing a safety issue. She asked for help find funds for repair and replacement. Ms. Zimnox will work with her to apply for funding through WVDOT's Transportation Enhancement funds. The application deadline is February 15, 2012.



UPDATED PHONE & E-MAIL DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

BHJ's recently updated directory is now available. Call Linda Taylor (740) 282-3685, ext. 202 if you would like a copy. The directory will also be accessible on-line at www.bhjmpc.org in the near future.

RAMPING UP WITH PUBLIC TRANSIT AND HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION

When President George W. Bush signed the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)*, the operational relationships between public transit and human service agencies changed forever. SAFETEA-LU is the current authorization bill that governs our national surface transportation spending. The bill requires the establishment of a locally developed, coordinated transportation for all human service transportation programs:

§5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program

§5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program

§5317 New Freedom Program

The transportation bill also defined the role of Mobility Management as consisting of short-range planning and management activities and projects to improve coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers, including personnel and technology activities



Beginning in 2008, with contractual assistance from Abrams & Cherwony of Philadelphia, PA and Wilbur Smith Associates of Columbus, OH, BHJ Metropolitan Planning along with funding provided by the Steel Valley Transit Authority and the Weirton Transit Corporation, developed the Coordination Plan for our three counties Brooke and Hancock, West Virginia and Jefferson, Ohio. The Plan's primary recommendation was to create an environment for joint service opportunities that will reduce existing redundancies in operations, and establish a forum for solving problems and sharing ideas and expertise. Strategies included establishing a regional Mobility Action Council and hiring a Mobility Manager. To move the plan forward, BHJ agreed to act as a part-time Mobility Manager and organize a regional Mobility Action Council. In a series of brainstorm sessions, the council first agreed to name itself the Regional Access Mobility Partnership otherwise known as RAMP and then establish goals and objectives.

The initial goal of RAMP was to draft and execute a Memorandum of Understanding to define the partnership's roles and responsibilities. The group agreed that its first objective was to create a single point of access for transportation, human services information, and referral needs on a regional level. The RAMP further recognized that to improve services, each agency could share cost and operation through regional coordination efforts for access to health and human service needs, employment opportunities, and general travel.

To achieve the objective, RAMP agreed to develop a common computer database file through a fixed-route and demand-response scheduling software package. After more than nine months of project planning and gathering information through surveys and site visits, BHJ with contractual assistance from TranSched Systems Limited, a Site Review & Design document was completed. The documentation recommended System Architecture, IT Implementation, and Data Management techniques to deploy the scheduling software. Software implementation is scheduled to begin in mid-November and be completed by February 2012.



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Planning Commission**

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FALL CALENDAR

November 7	Executive Committee	Noon
November 11	Veterans Day—Office Closed	
November 16	Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 Noon
November 24	Thanksgiving—Office Closed	
November 25	Day After Thanksgiving—Office Closed	
December 5	Executive Committee	Noon
December 14	Brooke-Hancock Council @ WesBanco, Weirton	4:30

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the image below.**



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

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.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 Area Port Authority
www.wapainc.org

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

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

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org

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