



# JOINT UrbanStudies CENTER

Volume 2, Issue 1

Fall 2005

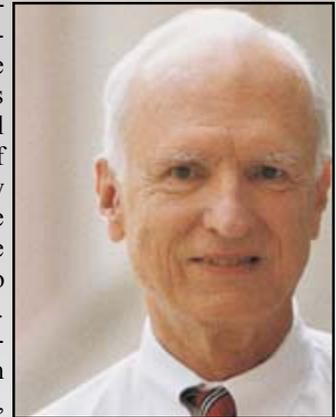
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## A Letter From The Executive Director

*JUSC Announces William Hudnut III as keynote speaker at Small Cities Conference.*

The Joint Urban Studies Center (JUSC) will host the Small Cities Conference on October 15-17, 2006 and is excited to announce the first major keynote speaker, William Hudnut III. He is most known for his 16-year tenure as Mayor of Indianapolis and is credited with the revitalization of that community, as well as a successful organizer of regional governance. As Mayor of Indianapolis from 1976 to 1991, Hudnut advanced the city's new "Unigov" form of merged governance with Marion County. He led the public-private partnership, which generated a remarkable revitalization of downtown Indianapolis. This partnership led to the emergence as Indianapolis as a major U.S. city in the 1980s. After ending his term as Mayor, Hudnut held positions at Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis, and the Civic Federation of Chicago. Since 1996, William Hudnut III has been a senior resident fellow for Public Policy at the Urban Land Institute (ULI) in Washington, D.C.

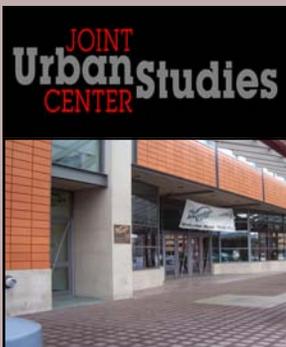


**William Hudnut III**

Hudnut has authored several books, including *Cities on the Rebound: A Vision for Urban America*. His latest book, *Halfway to Everywhere: A Portrait of America's First Tier Suburbs*, will be given to every paid attendee. Mr. Hudnut has graciously agreed to personally sign the copies for those interested attendees.

The conference theme is Downtown Development and will be held in downtown Wilkes-Barre with a bus tour of the area and a couple workshops in Scranton. The conference will offer workshops, panel discussions, and scholarly papers on a variety of topics. All of which are designed to raise questions and offer solutions to the problems that small cities face, particularly those that relate to revitalization and sustainability.

The two and one-half day long event expects to draw people from all over the United States. In addition to the theme of downtown development, there will be a wide range of issues important to small cities. These are designed to raise questions and offer solutions to the problems that small cities face.



\* Above photo of William Hudnut III, is courtesy of the Urban Land Institute ([www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org))

## Municipal Cooperation Commission

Today in Luzerne County, several municipalities face the difficulty of overcoming financial hardships. These hardships are prohibiting the municipalities from providing the best services possible to their residents. To combat this problem, Luzerne County decided to take action by creating the Municipal Cooperation Commission (MCC).



The MCC was created to put forth an effort to educate and encourage the 76 municipalities of Luzerne County, to participate in shared services. The commission, which became official on October 6, 2004, is led by Representative John Yudichak and Maryann Petrilla, who serve as Chairman and Vice-Chair respectively.

Under the guidance of Representative Yudichak, the Commission decided upon the creation of a county-wide "Toolbox." The Toolbox serves multiple purposes:

- Increase communication between municipalities and elected officials;
- Provide an up-to-date county-wide directory;
- Increase awareness of funding and grant programs available to municipalities; and
- Produce more shared service success stories.



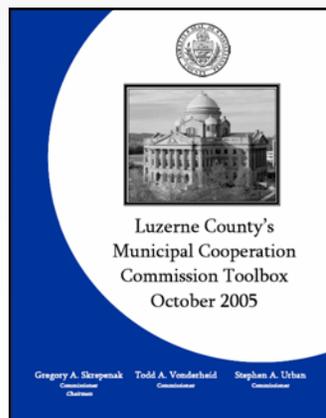
**The JUSC is happy to report that the October 21st kickoff event was a success, with more than 50% of the municipalities attending the event.**

In addition, the Commission decided to create an online Toolbox, to work in conjunction with the hard-copy Toolbox. The online version is located on the Luzerne County website homepage at [www.luzernecounty.org](http://www.luzernecounty.org). To coordinate both the online and hard copy versions of the Toolbox, the MCC decided to hold a kickoff event. The event was planned to coincide with Leadership Wilkes-Barre's annual luncheon on October 21, 2005.

The MCC hired the Pennsylvania Economy League to staff the event, which in turn, hired the JUSC to act as a consultant on the project. The job of the JUSC was to create both the hard-copy and online version of the Toolbox (both seen below), along with an unveiling of the website via a presentation at the kickoff event.

Through countless hours of research and design, the JUSC completed both versions of the Toolbox. The hard-copy version provided municipalities with the most vital information,

*Continued: See Municipal Cooperation Commission, page 3*



## Joint Urban Studies Center Happenings

### Recent projects

JUSC has been actively working with the Wilkes-Barre city mayor's office to provide technical assistance on two initiatives. The center has completed a Municipal Wi-fi Study for Implementing a City-Wide Wireless Network and a comprehensive housing strategy for the city, called *The Leighton Initiative*. Both initiatives have been embraced by the city and are moving forward with implementation taking place by late 2005.

JUSC is working on a strategic plan for the South Valley Partnership. This plan includes an asset mapping of several Nanticoke neighborhoods in the downtown and focus groups with residents and members of the business community. JUSC is compiling a final report with recommendations.

### Urban Studies Workshops

The Joint Urban Studies Center created a series of Urban Studies Workshops. The first presentation, held in October, was *Introduction to Urban Planning*. Featured presenters were Steve Barrouk, President/CEO Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, and Teri Ooms, Executive Director of the Joint Urban Studies Center.

The second seminar, Regional Housing Analysis, will be held in December. Guest speakers will be Larry Newman, Vice President, Economic & Community Development of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry, and Alex Rogers, Executive Director of CityVest. Housing analysis will be explored from a regional perspective within a framework of supply, demand, and population movement. Changes produced in neighborhoods and communities as a result of regional housing dynamics are considered, as well as the impact that public policies have on regional housing dynamics and community change.

Seminars are held in the Miller Conference Room in the Henry Student Center on the campus of Wilkes University. Cost for both seminars is \$45 in advance or \$65 at the door. For more information or to register, contact Wilkes University's Center for Continued Learning at 570-408-4235.

Additional workshops are expected to be held in early 2006.



## Municipal Cooperation Commission (continued from page 2)

including municipality contact information, Department of Community & Economic Development programs, and Luzerne County information. The online Toolbox, which was designed to provide more in-depth info, contained additional topics not located in the hard-copy, such as quality of life issues, a social service listing, and an education directory.

The JUSC is happy to report that the October 21<sup>st</sup> kickoff event was a success, with more than 50% of the municipalities attending the event.

The online toolbox went live for the first time on Monday, October 24. For more information regarding the Toolbox or the Municipal Cooperation Commission, please visit [www.luzernecounty.org](http://www.luzernecounty.org).

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## Joint Urban Studies Center Intern Update

This fall semester, JUSC has utilized the talents and expertise of five interns: four from our member institutions and one graduate student who has been displaced due to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.



Larry Deminski and Marty Healey are both from King's. Larry is a junior majoring in psychology and is involved in research on K-12 education in the region. Marty is a senior majoring in political science and is currently completing research on poverty and urbanization.

Megan Meehan is a senior from the University of Scranton majoring in political science. She is currently involved in planning the Small Cities Conference that JUSC will be hosting in October, 2006.

Chris Organek hails from Penn State Wilkes-Barre and is a senior business administration major. Chris has been involved with both an asset mapping project and is currently completing research on healthy communities.

Amber Elias, has joined us this fall as a graduate intern. She is a graduate student from the University of New Orleans. Her double major is in urban studies and anthropology. Amber has taken on the role of project coordinator for an asset mapping project.

All five of our interns have displayed excellent research skills and analytical abilities. We are very pleased to have them as part of our team.

**For additional  
information on  
internships,  
contact Marla**

**Doddo at**

**[doddo@urbanstudies.org](mailto:doddo@urbanstudies.org)**

**or**

**570-408-9850**



**Picture (above left): Marty Healey from King's College. Picture (above right): Amber Elias from the University of New Orleans and Chris Organek from Penn State Wilkes-Barre.**

## PSU Wilkes-Barre Class Taking on Downtown Collegetown



Penn State Wilkes-Barre faculty member Terry Clemente and her *Contemporary Skills for Business Professionals* class are examining one recommendation from the Downtown Collegetown initiative. The recommendation this class will explore is the concept of a "Downtown Business/Merchants and Campus Partnership." The partnership will assist merchants in understanding specific needs of students and adapt their offerings to this unique market.

To reach this market effectively, the concept of a "Downtown Collegetown Dollars" program was suggested, where pre-paid cards or dollars could be used to make purchases at local retailers. These pre-paid dollars cards could be marketed to parents and students for use as gift certificates, etc. The feasibility of this concept is the focus of the semester. Upon completion, the class will make a formal presentation to the staff at JUSC and interested community leaders.

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## JUSC Mission Statement

JUSC's mission is to assist in the revitalization of small to mid-sized cities through the utilization of the center's expertise and resources. These include its member university, colleges, and their respective faculties and students. JUSC serves as a resource and consultant for effective and efficient government, best practices, preparation of applied research, strategy development, and the process for its implementation. Based upon these efforts, we develop a model for replication by other small and mid-size cities confronting similar challenges.



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