



JOINT UrbanStudies CENTER

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A Letter from the Executive Director

JUSC update on the 16th Annual Conference on the Small City

The Joint Urban Studies Center (JUSC) is proud to announce that it has successfully secured its fifth keynote speaker for the 16th Annual Conference on the Small City—Owen F. Gutfreund, Ph.D.



Teaching history and urban studies at Barnard College, Gutfreund serves as director of the joint Barnard-Columbia undergraduate Urban Studies Program. His area of specialty is urban history in the United States and from a global perspective. His most recent book, *20th Century Sprawl: Cities, Highways, and the Decentralization of the United States* (Oxford University Press, 2004), discusses the overhaul of the U.S. over the last century, as government highway-building programs have encouraged automobile use and guided the citizenry towards the undeveloped countryside, away from crowded and congested urban areas, with devastating consequences for American cities.

Gutfreund is now working on *Cities Take Flight: Airports, Aviation, and Modern American Urbanism*, a book discussing the impact of airports and air travel on American cities and towns. He is also an associate editor for the 2nd Edition of the Encyclopedia of New York City. Gutfreund was formerly a vice president at the investment banking firm Lazard Freres & Company, where he worked in public finance, assisting states, cities, and public benefit corporations in raising funds for a wide range of purposes. He is active in civic affairs, serving as chairman of the New York Council for the Humanities, vice-chairman of Blythedale Children's Hospital, and as a founding member of the board of The Skyscraper Museum.

Other Conference Notes

- In conjunction with the conference, JUSC has announced the unveiling of the official conference website. To visit the site, simply click on the Conference on the Small City logo, on JUSC's homepage at www.urbanstudies.org. All conference information—including registration forms, hotel information, and schedules - is available.
- JUSC is still accepting workshop presentation proposals—but space is limited. To learn how to submit a workshop proposal, please contact JUSC, or visit the conference page located on JUSC's website.

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Excerpt from “Lackawanna/Luzerne County Indicators”

Student-Teacher Ratios

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures the number of students per teacher in one classroom at a particular time. The numbers highlight the overall Lackawanna/Luzerne County ratio, and measures each individual school district as well. A student-to-classroom ratio is also provided for Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.

Why is it Important?

Student-teacher interaction is very important in order to have an effective education. The average class size has a large impact on how well the students learn. This issue is a critical component to whether or not students receive the correct amount of one-on-one attention and help that is necessary to succeed. According to the United States Department of Education, results from the Tennessee Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio) study continually show that reducing class sizes in Grades K-3 will substantially increase children’s reading and mathematical scores—identifying the importance of student-to-teacher ratios.¹



Both Lackawanna County (14.5) and Luzerne County (15.6) have higher student-teacher ratios than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (14.1).



How is the Region Performing?

Luzerne County is above the statewide averages regarding both student-to-teacher and student-to-classroom ratios. The average student-to-teacher ratio for Luzerne County is 15.6:1, compared to the statewide average of 14.1:1. Lake Lehman School District has the best student-to-teacher ratio within Luzerne County (13.4:1), while Hazleton Area School District has the worst ratio (17.5:1). In comparison of student-to-classroom ratio, Luzerne County’s ratio is 18.9:1, versus the statewide average ratio of 16.2:1. Lake Lehman School District holds the best student-to-classroom ratio within Luzerne County at 15.5:1, while Hazleton Area School District has the worst ratio (25.8:1).²

Lackawanna County is above the statewide averages with the student-to-teacher and the average in student-to-classroom ratios. The average student-to-teacher ratio for Lackawanna County is 14.5:1, compared to the statewide average of 14.1:1. Abington Heights

2005 Lackawanna County			
School District	Students	Teachers	Classrooms
Abington Heights	3,654	280	216
Carbondale	1,506	113	111
Dunmore	1,426	92	81
Lakeland	1,683	99	90
Mid Valley	1,639	108	105
North Pocono	3,235	196	172
Old Forge	473	34	27
Riverside	1,487	112	108
Scranton	5,189	376	402
Valley View	2,601	167	148
TOTALS	22,893	1,577	1,460
AVERAGE	2,289.3	157.7	146.0
2005 Luzerne County			
School District	Students	Teachers	Classrooms
Crestwood	3,034	194	136
Dallas	2,591	160	152
Greater Nanticoke Area	2,141	135	124
Hanover Area	2,075	137	122
Hazleton Area	9,456	539	367
Lake-Lehman	2,214	165	143
Northwest Area	1,408	96	89
Pittston Area	3,201	193	202
Wilkes-Barre (Three)	6,903	491	420
Wyoming Area	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wyoming Valley West	5,123	339	263
TOTALS	38,146	2,449	2,018
AVERAGE	3,815.0	245.0	202.0

Continued on page 3

JUSC Continues Work on Luzerne County Tourism Study

JUSC, North Star Destination Strategies, and the Luzerne County Convention and Visitors Bureau recently conducted two community forums to discuss Luzerne County tourism. The forums were held on March 14 in Hazleton and March 16 in Wilkes-Barre. Residents and business leaders attended the interactive event and were provided the opportunity to voice opinions about tourism and offer insight on how Luzerne County should be marketed to visitors and residents. Both forums included presentations by Teri Ooms of JUSC and Malcom Noden of North Star Destinations Strategies.

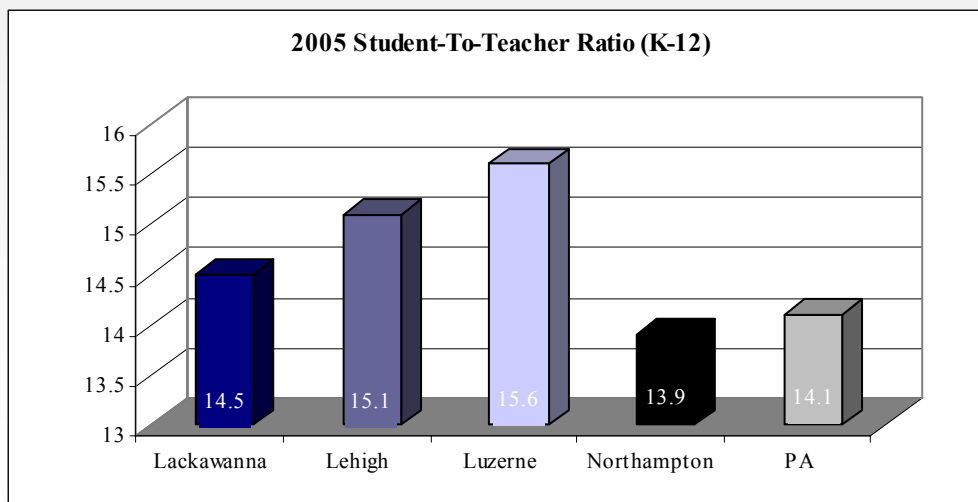
Noden spoke on broad ideas of tourism and how they can impact Luzerne County. In addition, he explained the role that North Star Destination Strategies plays in the development of the County’s tourism plan and how such involvement includes developing new ideas for attracting tourists – which encompasses short- and long-term tourism action plans.

Ooms’ presentation focused on the County’s tourism-related statistics. She discussed how increased tourism can lead to business growth, job creation, and tax revenue. Ooms directed the audience to an online survey that may be completed by any Luzerne County resident. The survey poses key questions concerning public perception on tourism and visitor attraction. The online survey is accessible through www.urbanstudies.org. Those completing the survey are eligible to enter a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Gelpia’s Restaurant & Manhattan Lounge, Kingston.



“Lackawanna/Luzerne County Indicators” Excerpt Continued

School District has the best student-to-teacher ratio within Lackawanna County (13.1:1), while Lakeland School District has the worst ratio (17.0:1). In comparison of student-to-classroom ratio, Lackawanna County’s ratio is 15.7:1, compared to the statewide average ratio of 16.2:1. Scranton School District holds the best student-to-classroom ratio within Luzerne County at 12.9:1, while North Pocono School District has the worst ratio (18.8:1).³



1. United States Department of Education. “Class-Size Reduction and Myths.” 29 October 2002
 2. On-Target Pennsylvania Department of Education. “Pennsylvania Technology Inventory Report 2004-2005.” <http://reportspa.ontargetus.com>
 3. On-Target Pennsylvania Department of Education. “Pennsylvania Technology Inventory Report 2004-2005.” <http://reportspa.ontargetus.com>

**For the
 comprehensive
 2006
 Lackawanna/
 Luzerne County
 Indicators
 Report, please
 visit our website
 at:
www.urbanstudies.org**

JUSC Hosts 2006 Regional Indicators Forum

In what is anticipated to be an annual effort, the 2006 Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties Indicators Report tracks data and trends critical to the region's future. The project measures the region's progress over time on key economic, education, public safety, health and human services, environmental, and infrastructure measures – all of which closely reflect quality of life.

In conjunction with development of the report, JUSC organized a Regional Indicators Forum on April 25 at Victoria Inns in Pittston. The forum provided the JUSC with the opportunity to introduce and release the report. Following the presentation, the forum broke into workshop sessions representing four of the report's featured indicators, including: Economic Development, Education & Workforce Development, Landuse & Transportation, and Housing.

The purpose of each breakout session was to provide a platform for facilitators, panelists, and forum attendees to discuss the region's strengths and weaknesses in their respective category. As a result, several short and long-term goals were identified and later presented to all forum attendees by the four workshop facilitators.

Currently, the JUSC is developing the post-event report—complete with all of the short and long-term goals identified in each workshop. The JUSC will distribute the report to all forum attendees and proceed with the next appropriate steps by convening stakeholder meetings, in order to draft strategies for accomplishing the goals identified in the sessions.

To view JUSC's comprehensive 2006 Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties Indicators Report, please visit our website at www.urbanstudies.org. The JUSC would personally like to thank the **Willary Foundation** and **Citizens Bank** for their sponsorship of report. The following is a breakdown of each workshop session, including participating facilitators and panelists:

Workshop Session One: Economic Development

Facilitator: Mr. Glen Pellino—*Lackawanna County Dept. of Econ. & Comm. Development*
 Panelist: Mayor Louis Barletta—*City of Hazleton*
 Panelist: Mayor Chris Doherty—*City of Scranton*
 Panelist: Mayor Thomas Leighton—*City of Wilkes-Barre*
 Panelist: Mayor Justin Taylor—*City of Carbondale*

Workshop Session Two: Education & Workforce Development

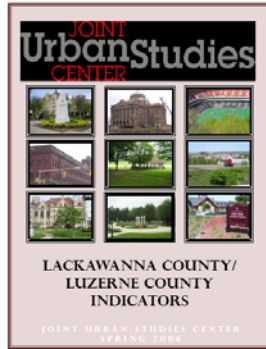
Facilitator: Dr. Tim Gilmour—*Wilkes University*
 Panelist: Dr. Peter Balsamo—*LCCC*
 Panelist: Ms. Nancy Tkatch—*Northwest Area School District*

Workshop Session Three: Landuse & Transportation

Facilitator: Mr. Tom Lawson—*Borton-Lawson*
 Panelist: Ms. Cindy Campbell—*Pennsylvania Planning Association*
 Panelist: Ms. Susan Hazleton—*Pennsylvania Department of Transportation*
 Panelist: Mr. Lew Sebia—*Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services*
 Panelist: Ms. Nancy Snee—*Luzerne County Planning Commission*

Workshop Session Four: Housing

Facilitator: Mr. Charles Kasko—*Luzerne County Housing Partnership/BIA*
 Panelist: Mr. Mike Hanley—*United Neighborhood Center*
 Panelist: Ms. Rhea Simms—*Lewith & Freeman*
 Panelist: Mr. Gerry Zaboski—*University of Scranton*



The JUSC would like to thank all of the facilitators and panelists for their participation in the forum.



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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 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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