

# The **INSTITUTE** for Public Policy & Economic Development

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### 2011 Northeastern Pennsylvania Housing Symposium

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development's Housing Task Force, in conjunction with the Building Industry Association of Northeast Pennsylvania and the Lackawanna Homebuilders Association, participated in the third annual Northeast Pennsylvania Housing Symposium on June 30, 2011. The symposium was supported by a grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Community Development and the Pennsylvania Economy League. Dr. David, Crowe, Chief Economist at the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), served again as the event's keynote speaker.

Dr. Crowe's presentation detailed national and state housing trends as they relate to our region. His speech revealed that:

- Housing prices in the majority of the U.S. have leveled out, while Pennsylvania's prices have remained higher.
- Housing prices in the Scranton and Philadelphia areas are less affordable than both state and national averages.
- The number of combined households in the U.S. has led to a pent up housing demand. This demand is estimated to be greater than the number of houses currently on the market.
- Pennsylvania has more than a one year deficit in housing production.
- Pennsylvania ranks greater the national average for its number of new, single-family households.
- A notable deviation from historical trends is that commercial construction is leading residential construction coming out of the recession.

Committed to  
research  
and analysis  
leading to  
economic  
development in  
Pennsylvania

(continued)

## 2011 Northeastern Pennsylvania Housing Symposium (Continued)

The Institute would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Crowe (pictured at right) for keynoting the symposium and for his generosity in allowing us to use his information herein.

Additionally, The Institute thanks Charles Kasko, Chairman of its Housing Task Force, for his continued support and commitment.

Finally, special thanks to the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development's Matt Domines for helping to make possible both the symposium and [www.nepahousing.org](http://www.nepahousing.org).



## 2011 Lackawanna & Luzerne County Indicators Forum

On May 19, 2011, the Institute's Annual Lackawanna & Luzerne County Indicators Forum was held at Mohegan Sun Casino at Pocono Downs, Wilkes-Barre. This year's event marked the sixth release of the Lackawanna & Luzerne County Indicators Report, which provides an analytical snapshot of key information gathered from dozens of data sources. Its purpose is to spark discussion and stimulate action to move the region forward. The report covers 120 plus critical county indicators. To view the 2011 Indicators Report, visit <http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/indicator2011.pdf>

The event included presentations from the Institute's five task forces on their respective policy agendas. A summary of their findings and recommendations may be found in the 2011 Task Force Policy Statements booklet. To view the booklet, visit <http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2011policybook.pdf>

This year's event sponsors included:

Frontier Communication Corp.

Luzerne County

Scranton Area Foundation

Sanofi Pasteur

PA Dept. of Community & Economic Development

Mohegan Sun

M&T Bank

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## Helping Students Navigate the Path to College

On Monday, September 26, 2011, The Institute's Public Policy & Economic Development's Education & Workforce Development Task Force and Regional Education Laboratories (REL) - Mid-Atlantic will host a program, entitled *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do*, at Wilkes University. The program provides practical advice for schools and school districts to help students increase access to higher education. The program will be presented by Dr. Nicole Farmer Hurd and Mr. Robert Freund.

**Dr. Nicole Farmer Hurd** co-authored the research base for this program and is the executive director of the National College Advising Corps (NCAC), headquartered at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. NCAC is a coalition of university-based college advisory programs serving more than 48,000 students in twelve states, including Pennsylvania. Dr. Hurd, who served as Assistant Dean and Director of the Center for Undergraduate Excellence at the University of Virginia, was the Founding Director of the College Guide Program—the model for NCAC.

**Mr. Robert Freund** is Program Director of NCAC at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. At Franklin and Marshall, he trains and coordinates the activities of college advisors who work with high school personnel in helping students and their families navigate the pathway to college.

**The event is free, however registration is required.** To register, please visit the *Events* section of the REL Mid-Atlantic website at [www.relmid-atlantic.org](http://www.relmid-atlantic.org), view upcoming events, and select *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do* scheduled for September 26, 2011.

## Regional SAT Scores

In 2010, both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties experienced improvements in SAT scores over 2009 to 2010. Lackawanna County students averaged a verbal score of 479, a math score of 488, and a writing score of 467. Luzerne County students performed similarly in each category, scoring 479, 485, and 470, respectively.

The charts on the following page detail scores by school district in both counties. In Lackawanna County, Abington School District achieved the highest all around scores, while in Luzerne County, high scores were split among three school districts. Lake Lehman School District achieved the highest average verbal average, Crestwood School District achieved the highest math average, while the Dallas School District achieved the highest writing average.

The final chart identifies the state averages for the same time period. Both counties need to improve reading and writing to be competitive with the state.

## SAT Scores (Continued)

**Lackawanna SAT Scores 2008-2010**

District	2008			2009			2010		
	Verbal	Math	Writing	Verbal	Math	Writing	Verbal	Math	Writing
Abington Heights SD	504	503	495	507	513	495	534	534	522
Carbondale Area SD	467	483	465	485	493	478	485	493	469
Dunmore SD	474	473	470	475	483	480	475	485	470
Lakeland SD	481	473	469	474	468	458	479	461	480
Mid Valley SD	457	457	440	446	471	433	464	488	451
North Pocono SD	489	503	484	490	486	495	477	497	477
Old Forge SD	455	465	437	473	480	451	487	524	458
Riverside SD	486	488	459	461	494	455	465	479	458
Scranton SD (Scranton HS)	466	471	448	458	464	446	470	472	450
Scranton SD (West Scranton HS)	474	470	456	460	454	442	463	454	444
Valley View SD	466	473	458	459	460	449	468	485	458
<b>County Average</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>467</b>

Source: PA Department of Education

**Luzerne SAT Scores 2008-2010**

District	2008			2009			2010		
	Verbal	Math	Writing	Verbal	Math	Writing	Verbal	Math	Writing
Crestwood SD	508	506	487	488	504	482	506	511	494
Dallas SD	500	509	486	491	514	492	503	507	506
Greater Nanticoke Area SD	476	480	447	482	484	463	469	480	463
Hanover Area SD	463	461	461	490	493	480	466	465	463
Hazleton Area SD	457	475	446	454	473	444	447	470	439
Lake-Lehman SD	500	503	484	487	480	462	511	498	493
Northwest Area SD	478	478	457	481	466	460	491	473	475
Pittston Area SD	469	495	476	474	496	467	487	503	480
Wilkes-Barre Area SD (Elmer L Meyers JSHS)	464	482	471	475	479	478	434	449	441
Wilkes-Barre Area SD (G.A.R Memorial JSHS)	440	448	411	412	397	386	465	467	437
Wilkes-Barre Area SD (James M Coughlin JSHS)	474	495	477	475	498	483	472	492	475
Wyoming Area SD	476	482	461	483	498	464	485	497	462
Wyoming Valley West SD	478	484	468	493	500	469	495	493	477
<b>County Average</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>470</b>

Source: PA Department of Education

**PA SAT Scores 2010**

	2008			2009			2010		
	Verbal	Math	Writing	Verbal	Math	Writing	Verbal	Math	Writing
Pennsylvania Average	471	478	458	472	481	460	490	485	486

Source: PA Department of Education

## Intern Update

This summer, the Institute was lucky to have a wonderful group of student interns. We thank them for their work and wish them the best in the coming semester!

### Summer 2011 Interns

Ilisha Sukaloski - Wilkes University  
Michael Brennan - York College  
Eric Swetts - University of Pittsburgh  
David Hovey - University of Scranton  
Mark Lechmanik - University of Scranton  
Erik Sandstrom - Misericordia University  
Samuel Calabrese - University of Scranton

The Institute is currently recruiting interns for the Spring 2012 semester. As students return to school this fall, we will begin visiting our member institutions and attending campus events.

If you know of an event we should attend or a student who would like to apply, please contact our Research Assistant, Kate Wassel, at [wassel@institutepea.org](mailto:wassel@institutepea.org) or (570) 408-9850.

## The Institute Welcomes Kate Wassel



At the end of June 2011, Kate Wassel joined the Institute's staff as a Research Assistant.

A Dunmore native, Kate graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2006 with a BA in Political Science. During her time there, she learned the principles of social science research and analysis using SPSS. She also completed several graduate credits in Politics and Policy at Florida State University, where she worked with data collection, interpretation and software, including SAS and GIS. Previously, Kate served as a Census Bureau Supervisor, a community organizer for a large political campaign, and Assistant to the Comptroller of a state political party. She received special recognition from state and local officials for her coordination of several significant grassroots events in Tallahassee, FL during the 2008 election season.

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**The Institute** provides research, technical assistance, and facilitation and convening services to:

- analyze components for regional prosperity
- create state and local government development strategies
- market studies
- feasibility studies
- impact reports

**Research areas include:**

- demographics
- economic development projects and planning
- community development
- education
- workforce development
- health and healthcare
- best practices
- innovation indicators
- economic indicators
- tourism and arts & culture

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