

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

Volume 8 Issue 1

Fall 2011



From the Institute:

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Committed to
research
and analysis
leading to
economic
development in
Pennsylvania

The Institute Task Forces

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development facilitates five task forces. The task forces formed six years ago at the first Indicators event focus on policy development. The five task forces are:

Education & Workforce Development
Housing
Planning, Land use, Transportation and Infrastructure
Housing
Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development

Excerpts from the policy statements are reprinted on the following page. The full text is available at:

http://institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html under 2011 policy book.

Upcoming Meeting:

Housing Task Force—November 9 8:30 AM Wilkes-Barre

The Institute would like to welcome the following new board members:

Dr. Lois Margaret Nora, MD, JD, MBA
Interim President & Dean
The Commonwealth Medical College

Kevin P. Quinn, S.J.
President
University of Scranton

John Ryan, C.S.C., Ph.D.
President
King’s College

The Institute would like to thank Sarah Zaka, Sarah donated her time to help The Institute on data analysis. Sarah has a Masters in Economics for Development from the University of Oxford, and a BS in Economic from Lahore University of Management Science.

Regional Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Curricula Policy Statement

Education & Workforce Development Task Force

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development has created a policy statement aimed to emphasize the need for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) curricula to be implemented throughout the region. Currently, STEM subjects are being taught in the region with great regularity. However, emphasizing the practical use of STEM will lead students to be more engaged in everyday life and look at the world around them in a different light. There are numerous in-demand job opportunities surrounding STEM subjects and skills, including, among others: alternative energy management, “green” architecture, electronics, medical research, etc. While many of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties’ school districts teach STEM-related subjects, the Institute believes that these districts must continue to explore options to further the development of their students in such subjects. Allowing local colleges, universities, school districts, businesses, and governments to become stakeholders in the push for STEM, adds stakeholder and community incentives to educate our students in the best way possible. Implementing community-based STEM partnerships at the K-12 level would allow students to gain an in-depth look into how STEM subjects may be applied to many careers in the changing global economy.

The full text is available at: http://institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html under 2011 policy book.

Regional Planning and Career Preparedness

Jobs, Economy & Economic Development Task Force

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development has created a policy statement focusing on regional planning with emphasis on career preparedness. Currently, the region’s plan for career preparedness involves projects in high school that help students identify strengths and possible career interests, as well as offering vocational courses. By working to ensure students are properly educated, this region has made a commitment to education and in turn, economic stability.

The full text is available at: http://institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html under 2011 policy book.

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Regional Housing Planning Policy Statement

Housing Task Force

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development's Housing Task Force has created a policy statement to focus on regional planning pertaining to housing. Currently, there is no regional plan in place and many communities lack their own plans. This results in both gaps and overlaps, with inconsistencies and a lack of coherence. Regional planning would provide an overarching framework that addresses appropriate land use, affordability and housing availability. Development occurring near transit centers and employments centers with higher densities and a desire to reuse, rebuild, reinvent, and reinvest is key to our region's future and the focal point of the statement.

The full text is available at: http://institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html under 2011 policy book.

Regional Health Care Delivery System Policy Statement

Health & Health Care Task Force

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties' health care delivery system is challenged. Publicly available statistics indicate that the northeast region's hospitals collectively posted over \$40 million in losses in 2009. Poor financial performance is compounded by an increasing number of residents seeing medical care elsewhere. In March 2010, the Patient Affordable and Accountable Care Act was enacted and calls for sweeping health care delivery system reform to include significant decreases in Medicare reimbursements. The purpose of this narrative is to provide detail on the health care delivery system's challenges, identify several reforms included in the Accountable Care Act and present a research study that will support health care system change within our community.

The full text is available at: http://institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html under 2011 policy book.

Bi-county Comprehensive Plan Statement

Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Task Force (PLuTI)

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development has created a policy statement on the Bi-County Comprehensive Plan (the "Plan"). The Plan will be a joint undertaking between Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, which involves key issues affecting county residents. Two of the most pressing issues facing the bi-county region are transportation and land use.

The full text is available at: http://institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html under 2011 policy book.

Reaction to Governor Corbett's Impact Fee Proposal

A policy brief examining Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett's proposed regulations of the state's Marcellus Shale gas industry calls for larger setbacks to safeguard water quality than the plan provides. It also compares the pros and cons of Corbett's proposed fees and suggests that part of the funds levied be spent on impartial research about the gas industry.

The brief, jointly issued this week by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research at Wilkes University (IEER) and The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development (The Institute), suggests improvements to the Corbett Plan based on comparisons with similar policies in other states.

The plan's authors, Teri Ooms of The Institute, and Kenneth M. Klemow of the IEER, note that "the establishment of setbacks is a critically important tool to protect natural features because they create buffer zones between the resource and the potential source of degradation" – in this case, gas drilling. The brief recommends larger setbacks than those suggested by Corbett.

The brief also examines the question of charging an impact fee versus taxing gas companies. The authors agree that gas companies should compensate individuals and counties for the financial burdens caused by drilling. They express concern that the fee is voluntary. The Corbett fee proposal also does not compensate counties outside of drilling areas for impacts that they may incur, the brief's authors state.

The full brief can be found at: <http://energy.wilkes.edu/PDFFiles/Issues/IEER-Corbett.planresponse.pdf>

Intern Updates

The Institute is currently recruiting interns for the spring and summer 2012 semester. Senior and graduate students may apply. The process is competitive in nature and only a limited number of students are accepted each semester,

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 or (570) 408-9850.

Fall 2011 Interns

Trina Alper, Marywood University
Megan Fleming, University of Scranton
Edili Lopez, Marywood University
Samantha Olson, King's College
Rachael Pompeii, King's College

2012 Faculty Research Symposium

April 4, 2012 at Marywood University. The call for papers has been released. Request an application at info@institutepea.org

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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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