

# The **INSTITUTE** for

Public Policy & Economic Development  
at Wilkes University

## **"TURNING INFORMATION INTO INSIGHT"**

*A collaboration among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Penn State Worthington Scranton, The Wright Center, University of Scranton, and Wilkes University*

### **Institute Works to Improve Transportation for All**

This summer, The Institute was asked to participate on the Equitable Transit Council, by Scranton Area Foundation President/CEO Laura Duccessi who spearheaded the initiative in northeastern Pennsylvania. Working with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, the group has harnessed a large volunteer network to address equity in transit. **The council is working to make transportation accessible, affordable, convenient, and safe for all people.**

The research will result in a joint publication with the Federal Reserve to be presented at the Equitable Transit Summit on October 17, 2017.

<http://citizensvoice.com/news/group-looking-to-fill-transit-gap-for-those-in-need-in-area-1.2223684>

### **Institute Research Impact**

Research from the Indicators event in May has been deployed and is sparking dialogue.

### **Institute in the News**

**Issue: Land Blight costing counties millions in lost tax revenue.**

Institute housing task force research on land blight presented at the 2017 Indicators event has received recent press from local news organizations. Lackawanna County's land bank has been a valuable resource in helping to arrest decline in challenged neighborhoods. Luzerne County's Blighted Properties Review Committee will begin accepting applications in September. The

Continued on page 3



# Summer 2017

## Vol. 13 Issue 4

### **IN THIS ISSUE...**

- >> Institute Impacts Transportation
- >> Institute Research in Action
- >> NET Credit Union as New Partner
- >> Welcome New Board Members
- >> 2018 Task Force Research Topics

**A special thank you**  
**To our newest**  
**sponsor!**



119 Mulberry Street  
Scranton

[www.netcreditunion.com](http://www.netcreditunion.com)

## Welcome to our new partner NET Credit Union

We would like to extend a special thank you to NET Credit Union's CEO, Clarence Baltrusaitis for becoming a Supporting Underwriter of The Institute in June.

Clarence shares the Institute's passion for helping others be successful in their missions. **This is most apparent in NET's commitment to educate the community on personal finances and help individuals improve their credit scores.**

Clarence believes that, "A little bit of education goes a long way." NET Credit Union's Credit Score Program has been a huge success in helping to advance financial literacy for residents of our region.

NET recently relocated their main office to a beautiful new building on 119 Mulberry Street, right in the heart of downtown Scranton.



## Seeking Fall & Spring Student Interns

The Institute is accepting applications for fall and spring 2017-18 sessions. Students of all majors may qualify for both academic credit and a stipend of up to \$599.

For more information or to apply, contact Erin McCormick at 570-408-9850 or [mccormick@institutepa.org](mailto:mccormick@institutepa.org).

## 2018 Research Topics Selected & Research is Underway

**Institute task force teams convened in June. Research topics to be presented at the 2018 Indicators event have been chosen and research is underway.**

This year the **Health and Health Care** Task Force will be addressing the Social Determinants of Health and Health Education & Literacy. Specifically, The Institute will gather information on health education and literacy and its impact on health status, community well-being, health care costs, and healthy behaviors. It will also help identify evidence based programs or initiatives aimed at improving health education, literacy levels and achieved outcomes.

The **Housing** Task Force will be examining the concept of "aging-in-place." This idea refers to older adults staying in their homes as they advance in age, rather than making different living arrangements such as moving to active adult or assisted living communities.

The **Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development (JEED)** Task Force will be researching the topic of the "unbanked," or those who do not use traditional banking services such as checking or savings accounts.

The **Education and Workforce Development** Task Force will explore local high priority occupations and workforce development challenges of some of the fastest growing occupations in the region.

The **Planning, Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure (PLUTI)** task force research will analyze local level policies that can be used to create transit friendly communities. A rider survey for all three public transportation authorities will focus on connectivity and assess whether residents are able to travel easily and efficiently using public transportation.

## **Institute Research Impact** continued from page 1

committee has been working on the project for about a year and Chair, Harry Haas, stated that Institute research validates that work.

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/taxpayers-bear-blight-s-costs-1.2218322>

<http://citizensvoice.com/news/county-blight-group-to-begin-accepting-property-applications-1.2227150>

## **Institute Research Addresses Psychiatry shortage in NEPA**

Geisinger School of Medicine and The Wright Center have partnered to create a psychiatry residency program to train new doctors in this needed specialty. **The Institute's Community Health Needs Assessment was integral in identifying and addressing the gap in mental health professionals in the region.**

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/new-program-to-stem-shortage-of-psychiatrists-1.2211055>

## **Institute Research Addresses Lack of Fluoridation in Area Water**

FOX 56 highlighted findings from the Institute's report on oral health that revealed that only Hazleton has fluorinated water. These findings help explain why the area has significant oral health issues for both the insured and uninsured.

<http://fox56.com/news/local/study-area-water-doesnt-contain-fluoride>

## **Institute Impact Study: Scranton Cultural Center is an Economic Driver**

An Institute impact study indicates that the Scranton Cultural Center is not only a community and cultural asset, but also an economic driver. The center is using the study to obtain grant funding.

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/scranton-cultural-center-making-economic-impact-1.2214168>

## **The Institute Contributes to National Magazine**

The Institute was recently called upon to contribute to an article in the Washington Monthly, a bimonthly nonprofit magazine of US politics and government based in Washington, D.C.

<http://washingtonmonthly.com/2017/08/14/this-county-was-a-democratic-stronghold-then-came-trump/>

**THE HOUSING ASSOCIATION OF  
PENNSYLVANIA DISTRIBUTED 2016  
INSTITUTE HOUSING TASK FORCE  
RESEARCH  
ON LAND BLIGHT STATEWIDE**

## **Welcome to our Newest Board Members**

The Institute would like to welcome Ron Beer of Geisinger Health System. Ron is replacing Connie Schintz who retired last year.

Also, Rev. Herbert Keller, S.J. Interim President of the University of Scranton joins us this fall to replace Fr. Kevin Quinn, S.J. who served as a board member for the past six years.

We would like to thank Connie and Father Quinn for their years of service and dedication.

## **Who We Are**

The Institute is a non-profit research organization dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with researched based strategies for informed decision making.

We conduct independent, empirical research to identify the opportunities, issues and challenges unique to our region and offer innovative solutions for the problems facing our communities. This research is funded by our generous academic partners and sponsors who share our vision for a strong regional economy and vibrant communities.

## **Be in the Know!**

Access the latest regional research on the Institute's website. [www.institutepa.org](http://www.institutepa.org)

### **Indicators Research**

Indicators data tracks the region's progress over time on the economy, healthcare, environment, education and infrastructure measures.

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/indicators17.pdf>.

### **Task Force Research**

Recent and archived topical research studies identify and address the region's challenges. This research has been a driving force behind many important economic development and community revitalization initiatives that have produced positive outcomes for our region.

[http://www.institutepa.org/Regional\\_Indicators.htm](http://www.institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.htm)

### **Quarterly Economic Tracker**

This quarterly electronic publication explores the region's economic and business trends.

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/EconomyTracker/getsp17.pdf>

### **Polling Program**

Better understand what our local college students and future leaders think is important, their perceptions of the region, and interest in civic engagement.

[http://institutepa.org/community\\_research\\_polls.html](http://institutepa.org/community_research_polls.html)

## **Thank you to our Research Sponsors!**

The Institute would like to sincerely thank our generous stakeholders who share our vision for a strong regional economy and healthy communities. Your support makes our work possible!

### **Signature Underwriters**

Andrew J. Sordoni Foundation  
Luzerne County  
Moses Taylor Foundation  
PPL Electric Utilities  
Sordoni Family Foundation  
The Willary Foundation

### **Contributing Underwriters**

BlackOut Design  
Borton-Lawson  
Commonwealth Health Systems  
Geisinger Health System  
Luzerne County Housing Partnership  
Mohegan Sun Pocono

### **Supporting Underwriters**

Berkshire Asset Management  
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield  
NET Credit Union  
OneSource Staffing  
PNC Foundation  
Prudential Retirement Services  
Sanofi Pasteur  
UGI Utilities  
Wells Fargo Foundation

### **Public Media Partner**

WVIA Public Media

## **Client Solutions**

The Institute also offers a wide array of research, consulting and support services to help organizations boost productivity, increase profitability and be successful in their missions.

Economic Development Strategies  
Economic Impact Studies  
Industry/Workforce/Housing/Education Studies  
Strategy Development  
Needs Assessments  
Policy Analysis

Surveys  
Market & Feasibility Studies  
Grant/Program Evaluation  
Site Selection Research  
Strategy Development/Planning  
Indicators/Indexes

## Locations in:

*Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, PA*

*Mailing Address:*

*85 South Main Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701*

*[www.institutepa.org](http://www.institutepa.org)*

*Follow us on Twitter and Facebook*



*Teri Ooms – Executive Director  
[ooms@institutepa.org](mailto:ooms@institutepa.org)*

*Andrew Chew – Research Analyst  
[chew@institutepa.org](mailto:chew@institutepa.org)*

*Erin McCormick – Research  
Assistant  
[mccormick@institutepa.org](mailto:mccormick@institutepa.org)*

*Susan Magnotta – Director of  
Community Outreach  
[magnotta@institutepa.org](mailto:magnotta@institutepa.org)*

*Christopher Ritter – Research  
Associate  
[ritter@institutepa.org](mailto:ritter@institutepa.org)*

*Saidat Sanni – Graduate Research  
Assistant- Statistician  
[saidat.sanni@wilkes.edu](mailto:saidat.sanni@wilkes.edu)*

## Advisory Board

**Patrick Leahy, Ed.D.**  
Chairman  
*Wilkes University*

**Frank Joanlanne**  
Vice-Chairman  
*Borton Lawson*

Heather Acker — Gentex Corporation  
Congressman Lou Barletta  
Ron Beer – Geisinger Health System  
Thomas Botzman, Ph.D. — Misericordia University  
Terry Casey — Chancellor Financial Group  
Cornelio Catena — Commonwealth Health Systems  
John Cefaly — Cushman & Wakefield  
David Coppola, Ph.D. — Keystone College  
Thomas Curra — WVIA Public Media  
Robert Durkin — Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce  
Pat Fricchione — Simplex Homes, Inc.  
Dale Jones, Ph.D. — Penn State University Wilkes-Barre  
Charles Kasko — Wyoming Valley Motors  
Rev. Herbert Keller, S.J. — University of Scranton  
Thomas E. Lawson — Borton-Lawson  
Thomas Leary — Luzerne County Community College  
Robert Luciani — Prudential Retirement Services  
Mary Ellen Monacelli — Sanofi Pasteur  
Mary Persico, IHM, Ph.D. — Marywood University  
Eugene Roth — Rosenn, Jenkins, & Greenwald  
John J. Ryan, C.S.C., Ph.D. — King's College  
Steven Scheinman, MD — Geisinger Commonwealth School of  
Medicine  
Bill Sordoni — Sordoni Construction  
Matthew Sordoni — Upland Corporation  
Marleen Troy, Ph.D., — Wilkes University  
Wico van Genderen—Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business  
& Industry  
Lucyann Vierling — Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance  
Mark Volk — Lackawanna College  
John T. Yudichak — Pennsylvania State Senate  
Marwan Wafa — Penn State University Worthington Scranton  
  
William B. Sordoni—Emeritus, Founding Member & Officer  
Sordoni Construction