

MOSHANNON VALLEY PROGRESS

Spring Issue

Volume 17 Issue 1

SPRING

MVEDP 30th Annual Awards Luncheon

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Ricotta Jewelry honored for 50 Years in Business



Left to right: Stan LaFuria, Cara Ricotta, Jared Ricotta, Joan Ricotta, James Ricotta, and Tiffany Ricotta

At a luncheon attended by approximately 100 local leaders and held Friday, April 27th, the Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership honored the Philipsburg-Osceola Area School District and four municipal governments that have been the MVEDP's special partners in economic development. The Partnership was also pleased to recognize Ricotta Jewelry for their 50th anniversary. Some facts about Ricotta Jewelry:

--The business has been located in downtown Philipsburg for the entire 50 years

--Jim's dad Joe opened the business at 105 N. Front Street in 1968

--Since the beginning, Jim has worked the business, leaving only briefly after high school to earn a degree in watchmaking and jewelry repair at Bowman's Technical School in Lancaster, PA

--All three of their children, Crystal, Tiffany, and Jared have spent many hours in the business doing lots of different jobs

--Son Jared took over as president of the Partnership in the same year as Ricotta Jewelry celebrated its 50th year in business

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Special points of interest:

- Free Advertising In The Spotlight
- Membership Renewals



MVEDP 30th Annual Awards Luncheon (Continued from Page 1)

P-O School, Rush Township, and Centre County Honored by MVEDP



Left to right: MVEDP Board President, Jared Ricotta, P-O Superintendent of Schools Gregg Paladina, Centre County Commissioners Mark Higgins, Steve Dershem, Michael Pipe, and Rush Township Supervisor Pat Romano

In 1998, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania created a new tax incentive program to spur economic development within the state. The Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) program was administered by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. The MVEDP staff and board knew that if other areas within the state had sites with the KOZ designation, and the MVEDP did not, then it would be more difficult to compete with those other areas for private investment.

KOZs are only created when three taxing bodies agree to have a site or sites designated as such: the local school district, the municipal government and the county government.

With the support of the Philipsburg Osceola Area School District, Rush Township and Centre County, the first KOZ was established in 1998 at the 71 acre site formerly of Wampum Hardware along Rt. 322 east of Philipsburg. The site is now the Moshannon Valley Regional Business Park.

The MVEDP has had the support of these three taxing bodies a total of six times since the first designation in 1998. In 2012, they approved designating the former Philipsburg Area Hospital site (now the Philipsburg Area Commerce Park) a KOZ site. Last year, they approved extending the KOZ for the four unsold lots at the Regional Business Park an additional seven years.

Partnership Award Presented to Philipsburg Borough and Decatur Township



From Left to Right: Philipsburg Mayor John Streno and Decatur Township Supervisor Andy Rebar

In 1996/97, the MVEDP wanted to bring a single-family, owner occupied housing rehabilitation program to the Philipsburg area. Federal HOME funding is available for housing rehab through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

The MVEDP staff approached the Philipsburg Borough Council and Borough manager with the proposal. To secure the funding, the MVEDP had to have a municipal government be the official applicant for the grants. In 1996/97, Philipsburg Borough council voted to approve pursuing the funding for a housing rehabilitation program within the borough. A grant of \$176,000 was secured and 14 families were assisted with bringing their homes up to code. Roofs, furnaces, electrical, plumbing and other work could be pursued. The Borough's leadership stepped up to the plate to make housing rehab happen here. The MVEDP administered all of the grant funding that was secured.

In 2000, the MVEDP discussed expanding the housing rehab program to other areas in the Moshannon Valley. The staff approached Decatur Township government leaders and asked that the township sponsor a new application for

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MVEDP 30th Annual Awards Luncheon (Continued from Page 2)

HOME funds to serve Decatur Township, Osceola Mills and Chester Hill Boroughs, Boggs Township, Morris Township and Wallaceton Borough. A grant of \$300,000 was approved and twenty families were assisted with housing rehab funding.

Through 2017, the MVEDP, working with its community development partners Philipsburg Borough and Decatur Township, secured a total of \$2,902,000 to help 172 eligible area families with improvements to their homes. The total grant funding to Philipsburg Borough was \$1,702,000 and the funding to Decatur Township was \$1,200,000.00. One-hundred and two (102) families benefitted from the Philipsburg/Rush Township projects and seventy (70) families in eastern-Clearfield County.

The MVEDP has always said that economic and community development happen when there are strong partnerships with elected officials, community leaders, and state/federal funding agencies. The housing rehabilitation programs and the availability of sites with the KOZ designation are two excellent examples of the positive community and economic development work that can be accomplished when local leaders work together.

State Loan Approved for MVEC

The Partnership was recently approved for a state loan for improvements at the Moshannon Valley Enterprise Center facility. The loan of \$77,500 was approved by the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) at their meeting in Harrisburg on May 2, 2018. The loan from PIDA will be the Partnership's share toward the total project cost of \$155,000.00.

The Partnership will soon be undertaking some important renovations at the Enterprise Center. It can be a daunting task at times to keep up with the

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A Message from the Executive Director



I have always said that our annual luncheon calendar dates are one of the best days of the year for the Partnership. The luncheons provide us with an opportunity to recognize local people for their commitment to the area.

Our 30th annual luncheon held on Friday, April 27th was a great experience for the staff and board of directors, and we want to thank again our four sponsors: CBT Bank, CNB, JVB Bank, and M&T Bank

It was just outstanding to hear from Dean McKnight, a member of the team that helped to create the Partnership back in 1988. To this day, Dean still has a big place in his heart for the Philipsburg region.

We were able to recognize some of our partners in economic and community development. Thanks again to Philipsburg Borough and Decatur Township for their support of the eight housing rehabilitation projects and \$2.9 million in grants that were received for those projects. And thanks again to the Philipsburg-Osceola Area School District, Rush Township Supervisors, and Centre County Commissioners for supporting the Keystone Opportunity Zone program over the past twenty years.

At the luncheon, I was pleased to speak about the terrific projects happening in our region that will have a positive impact on the economy here. When I say region, I am referring to the driving distance for someone to get to their job, so the projects located within a 30 minute drive from the Philipsburg area. A partial list of the projects include:

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State Loan Approved for MVEC

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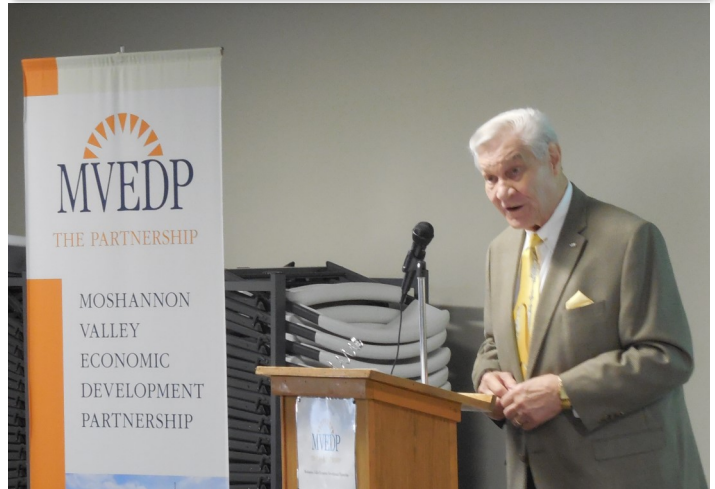
210,000 square feet of old rubber roof, three acres of asphalt driveways and parking lots, and the heating/air conditioning units.

Roof repairs, asphalt repairs, new light fixtures, a new 13,000 square foot concrete floor, and 275 lineal feet of sanitary sewer line repairs/replacement work will be completed. The new concrete floor is needed in the area previously rented by Diamond-back Automotive Accessories/Truck Covers. That area of the Enterprise Center is the oldest in the building dating back to 1950 when the General Cigar plant was first constructed. Without the replacement of the floor with new concrete, it is very difficult for the Partnership to rent that space to another company.

The Partnership has also applied for a grant of \$75,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through their Rural Business Development Grant program. USDA has helped the MVEDP with project funding three times since 1992: funding for a rubber roof replacement at the Enterprise Center, funds for the development of the Regional Business Park, and funding for the development of the Regional Business Center which is located at the Business Park.

First Energy/Penelec provided the MVEDP a small grant of \$2,500 which will be used to add new lighting in the same 13,000 square foot area that will get the new concrete floor. The Partnership is hopeful that with the addition of the new lighting and floor, the space will be more attractive to businesses that might locate to the Enterprise Center.

Dean McKnight Provides Remarks at MVEDP Annual Luncheon



Guest Speaker: Dean McKnight - M&T Bank Retired

Long-time friend of the Partnership Dean McKnight was the guest speaker at the annual luncheon on April 27th. Dean was a “founding father” of the Partnership as he worked with local leaders to create the organization back in 1988. He was a senior vice president at Mid-State Bank at the time and two other associates at the bank participated with him to help local leaders raise the money needed to create a full-time economic development organization. The Partnership was formed in late 1988.

Mr. McKnight shared the story of how bad the economy got in the Philipsburg region back in the mid-1980s. The General Cigar plant was shut down and 50 other businesses closed with the downturn in the coal-driven economy. Over 1000 jobs were lost at that time. There was despair everywhere and a writer with the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper came to the area to write about the economic and social problems that existed at that time.

Mr. McKnight shared that it is great to see the smiling faces of the people attending the luncheon. He said this area has good people and strong families that support one another when times get tough. He congratulated the board of directors and staff of the Partnership for their fine work to diversify the economy and put in place the tools needed to stimulate private investment.

New Members

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PO Box 613
 Philipsburg, PA 16866
 Phone: 814-343-1812
 Contact: Diane Switala
 Art and Theatre Group
 Non-Profit

Konecranes

200 Shady Lane, Suite #150
 Philipsburg, PA 16866
 Phone: 814-860-9310
 Contact: Wayne Longstreth

Spherion

2901 E. College Avenue
 Suite 969
 State College, PA 16801
 Phone: 814-238-4244
 Contact: Amanda Wright

New Economic Development Marketing Video

A new marketing video has been added to the Partnership's website. The website address for the Partnership is: www.mvedp.org. Once the website has been accessed, the video can be found front and center on the home page.

The web address of the new video is: <https://vimeo.com/254517438>

With the advent of the social media sites, and the younger people of today relying almost exclusively on their phones and computers to conduct business, it was important for the Partnership to consider updates to its website. Staff was attending training events and learning that videos were becoming more and more important to websites and for the marketing of organizations.

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Thank You!

The Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership thanks you for your support of our economic & community development efforts!

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Organic Climbing Starts Construction of New Manufacturing Facility at MVRBP



Organic Climbing, LLC is underway with the construction of their new manufacturing plant on Lot #5 in the Regional Business Park. This company is owned by Josh Helke who came to central Pennsylvania from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Organic Climbing has been located in the Partnership's Regional Business Center since October 2010. Mr. Helke started the company in Wyoming in 2004. The company manufactures high quality bouldering crash pads for rock climbing enthusiasts from around the world. Backpacks, clothing, and tote bags are also made by the employees of the company. Helke got into the industry because he was dissatisfied with the gear that was being made overseas. Mr. Helke has grown the company to 16 full-time employees.

The Partnership was able to help Mr. Helke secure a state loan of \$800,000 at 2% from the PA Industrial Development Authority in late 2017. The total project cost is estimated at \$1.6 million. This is the third time that a manufacturer that was renting space in one of the Partnership's multi-tenant buildings has gone on to construct their own manufacturing facility. Diamondback Truck Covers and Custom Castings NE are the others.

A Message from the Executive Director

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- Invent Penn State (Penn State's most organized entrepreneurial development effort ever)
- Happy Valley Launch Box (business start-up office facility in State College)
- Workforce development initiative of the CBICC office in State College
- CPI Science & Technology and their continued expansion of vocational programs, and now with four associate degree offerings: a new \$16.0 million health sciences building will soon be under construction
- Clearfield Fireman's Business Park – certified for food processing companies
- Clearly Ahead's efforts to secure Chinese investment in the county
- Clearfield County's marketing efforts are generating new leads
- Penn State Applied Research Lab securing \$1.2 billion in new federal contracts
- Philipsburg-Osceola School District work/grant to help students get focused on careers
- Clearfield County Career & Technology Center expansion of their machining program

These efforts will lead to new businesses being formed, a better trained workforce, and business retention. For example, we are hopeful that the Invent Penn State initiative will result in new entrepreneurs that need building space for their businesses. The best and lowest cost space available in the region can be found right here in the Moshannon Valley. When businesses within that 30 minute drive from Philipsburg prosper, that prosperity will spill over to the Philipsburg/Moshannon Valley region.

New Economic Development Marketing Video
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The Partnership first began working on the video with Seven Mountains Creative of State College in June of 2017. With the significant number of private investments that were made in the Moshannon Valley region in 2016 and in 2017, the Partnership thought it would be very beneficial to have a video identifying those investments. Any outside company that now checks out the website will have an opportunity to review a video that summarizes those investments.

The Partnership also used the video to identify for the viewer that this region is open arms to investment and it has the tools of land, building space, and financing to make those investments happen.

Thank you to our 30th Annual Awards Luncheon Sponsors!



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PHILIPSBURG, PA 16866

