

**Columbia-Montour Area Business & Education Partnership
of the Tri-Chamber Foundation**

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***Columbia-Montour Business & Education Partnership Steering Committee
Meeting Notes***

24 January 2007, 8:30 a.m.

Luzerne County Community College, Berwick Campus

Chairperson: Luanne Bittenbender(luanne.bittenbender@ccfnb.com)

Vice Chairperson: Bill Forsythe (wforsyth@centralcolumbia.k12.pa.us)

In Attendance: Luanne Bittenbender, Columbia County Farmers National Bank; Diane Bubb, PA CareerLink; Tim Carr, Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School; Mary Ann Christ, David J. Thompson Mailing Corporation; Tracy Gillespie, Partnership Workforce Development Coordinator; Rose Goin, Luzerne County Community College; Mark Hauck, PA CareerLink; Stephanie Kessler, Partnership Facilitator; Lorraine Kreischer, Press Enterprise; Kate Lomax, Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation; Greg Michael, Berwick Area High School; Steve Phillips, BIDA, BIP, & Spirit; Chris Young, Columbia County.

Agenda Items: Welcome; Approval of October 2006 Meeting Notes; Strategic Plan Update; Educator in the Workplace Subcommittee; Staff Report; New Business/Comments/Questions.

I. Welcome

Chairperson Bittenbender called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

II. Approval of October 2006 Meeting Notes

Mrs. Kreischer made the motion to approve the October 2006 Partnership Steering Committee meeting notes, and Mrs. Goin seconded this motion. An affirmative voice vote followed.

III. Strategic Plan Update

Ms. Kessler updated the group on the Tri-Chamber Foundation strategic planning process, which is being facilitated by Mr. Ken Roush of Long View Consultants, LLC. To this point, Mr. Roush has completed all his interviews with business representatives and educators, finished his focus group sessions, and led the two-day strategic planning sessions in late November and early December 2006. At the February 1 Tri-Chamber Foundation meeting, Mr. Roush will be presenting his recommendations to the group.

IV. Educator in the Workplace Subcommittee

Mrs. Gillespie reported that she had set up times and dates to meet with the faculties at the schools that participate in the Partnership in order to talk to them about Educator in the Workplace. Again this year, educators may choose to either receive Act 48 hours for

completing the summer program, or they may opt for a \$300.00 stipend. Mrs. Gillespie asked that anyone who was interested in helping to present Educator in the Workplace information to faculty members at the different schools please contact her as soon as possible.

V. Staff Report

Mrs. Gillespie and Ms. Kessler gave the following staff report:

1. **Educator in the Workplace** – Central Columbia School District received a grant this year for their guidance staff and teachers. They will be using some of the funds for the Educator in the Workplace program. They have approximately 35 teachers participating. Mrs. Gillespie is helping them to coordinate the program. Teachers will receive money from the awarded grant. Applications were given at a faculty meeting on 3 January 2007.
2. **School Counts / Alcoa Grant** – The School Counts Subcommittee met on December 13 to discuss potential ways to spend the \$8,000.00 Alcoa grant. The money from this grant must be spent by September 2007 and it must all be spent on School Counts. Their recommendations will be taken to the Partnership Steering Committee at its January 24 meeting, and then the final recommendations will be shared with the Tri-Chamber Foundation at its February 1 meeting.

Steering committee members discussed the suggestions on how to best spend the grant, as presented by the School Counts Subcommittee. Some of the subcommittee's suggestions included renting a billboard to advertise the School Counts program, running a large ad in the *Press Enterprise*, purchasing more promotional items (such as cups), purchasing prizes for drawings/raffles, giving out cash incentives to students earning School Counts certificates, giving out "School Counts" cards good for discounts on various local businesses for a year, and granting scholarships to students who receive their master certificate for meeting the program criteria for all four years of high school.

Other suggestions about how to spend the grant, as generated by the full Partnership Steering Committee, included: Radio advertising, gift cards to local businesses, contacting a company such as Pepsi to have them create a sign promoting School Counts (this would likely be free of charge), public service announcements on the radio and/or television stations (again, this would be free), and buying ads in high school sports programs. It was decided that in order to not set a precedent that might not be able to continue in the future, scholarships would not be awarded out of this funding.

Mr. Young made the motion to recommend to the Tri-Chamber Foundation that the Alcoa Grant be used as follows during the 2007-2008 school year: Not more than \$2,000.00 will be spent on advertising the School Counts program, and at least \$6,000.00 will be spent on incentives for students. Mr. Hauck seconded this motion, which then passed by an affirmative voice vote.

3. **Classroom in the Mall** – Dates for Classroom in the Mall have been scheduled as follows: February 21, March 14, and April 18. Three students from each of the eight public high schools in Columbia and Montour counties will be invited to attend, and two students from both Bloomsburg Christian School and Columbia County Christian School will also be invited.

4. **Classroom in the Hospital** – Classroom in the Hospital at Berwick Hospital Center has been scheduled for May 1. Three or four students from each of the eight public high schools in Columbia and Montour counties will be invited to attend, and two students from both Bloomsburg Christian School and Columbia County Christian School will be invited.

The Bloomsburg Hospital has confirmed it will be doing a Classroom in the Hospital program again this spring. A date for that is forthcoming.

5. **WorkKeys Ad Hoc Committee** – So far, Steve Keifer, Harry Mathias, and Bill Forsythe have volunteered to serve on this committee. If anyone else would like to be involved, please let Tracy or Stephanie know by the end of the week, as we would like to schedule a meeting for late January. Ms. Bubb said she would also like to serve on this ad hoc committee.

Ms. Lomax reported that there is \$100,000.00 available through a regional career awareness grant with CPWDC. She said this money would be divided into mini-grants to be awarded to regional business and education partnerships. The guidelines for these mini-grants will be available in March, and Ms. Lomax said she will forward this information to Mrs. Gillespie and Ms. Kessler once it becomes available.

6. **Business & Industry Visitations:**

Impress USA
Patriot Metals
CareerLink – discuss partnership

7. **Annual Holiday Breakfast Meeting** – There were 16 individuals present at the annual Columbia-Montour Area Business & Education Partnership holiday breakfast meeting held 7 December 2006 at Balzano's Corner Gatherings in Bloomsburg. Those in attendance heard a presentation from Ken Roush concerning the strategic planning process.
8. **Annual Spring Breakfast Meeting** – The Tri-Chamber Foundation has decided to again hold a spring full membership breakfast meeting, probably in April. Details are forthcoming.

VI. New Business/Comments/Questions

The next two Partnership Steering Committee meetings will be held at the PA CareerLink office in Bloomsburg, beginning at 8:30 a.m. on March 28 and May 23.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Bittenbender at 9:55 a.m.