

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

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

25 July 2007

Columbia County Farmers National Bank, Lightstreet

Chairperson: Luanne Bittenbender (luanne.bittenbender@ccfnb.com)
Vice Chairperson: Bill Forsythe (wforstyh@centralcolumbia.k12.pa.us)

In Attendance: Susan Adams, Columbia Mall; Luanne Bittenbender, Columbia County Farmers National Bank; Mary Ann Christ, David J. Thompson Mailing Corp.; Bill Forsythe, Central Columbia School District; Tracy Gillespie, Tri-Chamber Foundation Co-Facilitator; Rose Goin, Luzerne County Community College Berwick Center; Stephanie Kessler, Tri-Chamber Foundation Co-Facilitator; Lorraine Kreischer, Press Enterprise; Steve Phillips, BIP/SPIRIT; Amy Shortlidge, Berwick Area Chamber of Commerce; Chris Young, Columbia County Commissioner.

Agenda Items: Welcome; Approval of May 2007 Meeting Notes; TIP Program Update; School Counts Subcommittee Recruitment; Staff Report; New Business/Comments/Questions.

I. Welcome

Chairperson Bittenbender called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Approval of May 2007 Meeting Notes

Ms. Adams made the motion to approve the meeting notes from May 2007 and Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. The meeting notes were then approved by a unanimous voice vote.

III. TIP Program Update

Ms. Goin reported that another meeting about re-establishing the TIP program was held at Luzerne County Community College on July 9. She said that Sue Spry from LCCC is heading this initiative. Currently, the committee is looking for funding sources and considering using WorkKeys in conjunction with the program. Through this program, individuals would be receiving one-on-one mentoring support (which would probably be provided by LCCC), be given help with financial aid support, and they could enter into a credit program at LCCC. The objective of this program is to help individuals receive a two-year degree. The next meeting will be held on August 13. Ms. Goin and Mr. Young will present more information on the TIP program at the next Partnership Steering Committee meeting and will let the committee know what it can do to help this initiative.

IV. School Counts Subcommittee Recruitment

Mrs. Gillespie and Ms. Kessler reported that they are in need of individuals to volunteer their time to make School Counts presentations to the eight public high schools in Columbia and Montour counties. This will be done through new student orientations, parent nights, open houses, and during student lunch periods. Currently, the School Counts Subcommittee is comprised of Luanne Bittenbender, Mary Ann Christ, Tracy Gillespie, Tom Kapelewski, Stephanie Kessler, Lorraine Kreischer, Debbie Nevius, and Lou Sappe. Any Partnership Steering Committee member that would like to help with these presentations or help with setting up a booth is encourage to do so.

Mr. Forsythe said that Central Columbia High School's new student orientation is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on August 15, and that its open house is scheduled for 6:15 p.m. on September 19. Mrs. Bittenbender volunteered to attend the new student orientation at Central Columbia High School this year. Ms. Goin volunteered to help with Berwick Area High School and said that she is available to help during the day or evening. Mrs. Christ said she would also like to help, as long as it's in the evening and not during the workday. A complete list of the dates of the various open houses will be available after Mrs. Gillespie and Ms. Kessler meet with the local superintendents on August 17. The list will then be sent out via e-mail to all the members of the Partnership Steering Committee. Anyone who would like to make a presentation at a particular school should then let either Mrs. Gillespie or Ms. Kessler know. It would be ideal to have two individuals at each event, with the except of Berwick, which, because of its size, should have three to four volunteers.

In addition to recruiting volunteers to help with the presentations, any business that would like to donate a gift bag(s) to give out as door prizes at the various presentations is welcome to do so. Again, Mrs. Gillespie or Ms. Kessler should be contacted about this.

It was also reported that Mrs. Gillespie and Ms. Kessler met with Mount Carmel School District Superintendent Cheryl Latore earlier that month to discuss their district also participating in School Counts.

V. Staff Report

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

- 1) **Strategic Plan** – Ms. Kessler reported that at its June 21 meeting, the Tri-Chamber Foundation met with Ken Roush, who is facilitating the organization's strategic planning process, to go over an outline of what is to be contained within this document. Since that meeting, Mr. Roush has created a draft of the plan, which has been sent to Tri-Chamber Foundation directors for their review and input. The next step in this process will be for Mr. Roush to revise the strategic plan, as per the direction of the Foundation, and to create a final product. Once the Tri-Chamber Foundation has adopted this plan, it will be shared with the Steering Committee.
- 2) **Newsletters** – Ms. Kessler reported that the Summer 2007 "Partnership News" newsletters will be sent to members by the end of July. They will also be distributed to members of the Berwick Area Chamber of Commerce and the Columbia Montour Area Chamber of Commerce.
- 3) **Financial Program Through First Columbia Bank** – Mrs. Gillespie reported on a program being run through First Columbia Bank. The aim of this program is to help students, at all grade levels, better understand personal finance. Information about this program will be distributed to superintendents at their August 17 meeting. Mr. Fosite said Central Columbia School District would be interested in this program. Mrs. Bittenbender said that Columbia County Farmers National Bank runs a similar program, as well. Mrs. Gillespie suggested that bank representatives with such

programs meet with educators at some point to discuss the opportunities of these financial programs.

- 4) **Student in the Workplace Week Subcommittee Meeting** – Ms. Kessler reported that in the beginning of August, there will be a Student in the Workplace Week Subcommittee meeting to discuss plans for this year’s program.
- 5) **Educator in the Workplace** – Mrs. Gillespie reported that a total of 10 local educators are participating in this year’s Educator in the Workplace program. In addition to these 10 educators, she also helped with the coordination of summer workplace experiences for 25 educators from Central Columbia School District.
- 6) **Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week** – Mrs. Gillespie reported that the Tri-Chamber Foundation had made available scholarships for nine local students to attend Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week (PFEW) this summer.
- 7) **School Invoices** – Mrs. Gillespie reported that all the school invoices were sent out in the spring and that all school districts had sent a check to the Tri-Chamber Foundation.

V. New Business/Comments/Questions

Mr. Forsythe suggested Tri-Chamber Foundation staff should consider getting a cost on putting an ad about School Counts in the yellow pages.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Bittenbender at 9:21 a.m.