



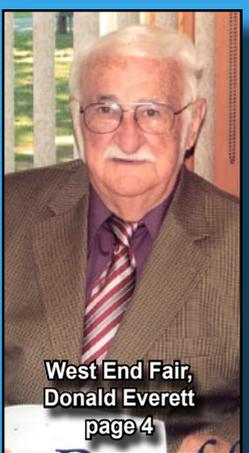
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Ten Municipalities Come Together in the Slate Belt for a Regional Plan

By Michael Ortoski



Becky Bradley, executive director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

PEN ARGYL - After years in the making, ten municipalities from the Slate Belt finally came to the table last Thursday for their first multi-municipal, comprehensive and economic development plan.

The new council includes representatives from Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, East Bangor, Roseto and Portland boroughs, and Upper Mount Bethel, Lower Mount Bethel, Plainfield and Washington townships.

Other partners that will be involved are: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission; Slate Belt Rising (a Committee of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley); Northampton County; Slate Belt Chamber; Slate Belt Council of Government; Lehigh Valley Transportation Study.

This regional plan will effect about 37,000 Slate Belt residents in Northampton County.

Funding for the Plan will come from the following sources: **Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC)** \$20,300; **Slate Belt Rising (SBR)** (a Committee of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley) \$45,000;

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"Roster's" 150 Mile Trek on Liberty-Water Gap Trail

By Russ Nee

PORTLAND – The sun's reflection off the Delaware River Saturday was blinding as township resident Steven Riecker walked across the pedestrian bridge into Portland, Pa.

That was a good thing, as it was one of the better days he encountered since starting his 150-trek on the Liberty-Water Gap Trail on Friday, March 1, a trek filled with sleet, rain and snow – lots of snow, forcing the professional trekker to at times complete his mission not just by foot, but by snowshoes and cross-country skis.

But those were small challenges, considering he was hiking not just to call attention to the trail, part of the National September 11th Memorial Trail. This was, in part, a labor of love, as he was hiking in the memory of his late buddy, Roger Pierson, who had suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, more commonly called Lou Gehrig's Disease, before succumbing to it in 2018.

Initially, Riecker had hoped to finish up on Friday, but bad weather forced a change of plans. As a result, hikes were cut short, and the bulk of the last section

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L-R Tom Edmunds, Russ Nee, Steven Riecker ("Rooster," as he's known on the trail), John Bermingham, chairman of Upper Mount Bethel, Portland Mayor Lance Prator

Bangor Residents to Be Part of Exhibit at Nurture Nature Center

By Michael Ortoski and Nurture Nature Center

BANGOR - Have you experienced a local natural hazard event such as flooding, a bad winter storm, sinkhole or even extreme temperatures? How did you prepare and respond? Nurture Nature Center is collecting these stories from residents of the Bangor Area School District on Tuesday, April 16th from 6- 8 pm at the Bangor Library. The event is free.

Local high school students, trained in story-gathering techniques, will collect resident stories about natural hazards in the local community. Residents are encouraged to bring photographs or other mementos to share that will help to tell the story. The community's stories will be displayed as part of an exhibit at Nurture Nature Center in September 2019 in Easton.

These stories will also help inform the **CREATE Resilience**, a four-year project running from October 2018 through 2022, is designed to engage rural, urban and suburban residents in the Lehigh Valley, facing shared and diverse hazards and risks, in a comprehensive education and action initiative, with two goals: 1) improved environmental hazards literacy, and 2) increased engagement in resiliency actions by youth and adults in the region.

CREATE Resilience will share the findings of a newly updated regional hazard mitigation plan to residents of three hazard-prone communities (Easton, Wilson, and Bangor School District Areas).

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L-R Bangor student Gulnur Avci, Rachel Hogan Nurture Nature Cntr., Bangor student Alexander Stout. The students will help to collect stories from residents of the Bangor Area School District for an exhibit at Nurture Nature Center

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GKEDC Scholarships Available

By Bob Cornman

PEN ARGYL - The Green Knights Economic Development Corp. (GKEDC) has awarded approximately \$200,000 in scholarships to over 50 high school seniors who live in the Pen Argyl School District. Any graduating high school senior who lives in the Pen Argyl School District and who will be continuing his/her education

in a college program is eligible to receive one of these awards. The scholarships are in the amount of \$4000, to be distributed in four segments over the course of a four-year college program. Students attending a two year college and continuing on to obtain their bachelor's degree will qualify for the entire scholarship award. Parents are urged to encourage their children to apply for one of the scholarships. Scholarship applications will be accepted from April 1 through May 15, 2019, and are available at www.GKEDC.org

Bangor Borough will be conducting Borough wide yard-waste collection from April 8th - April 12th.

Please place loose leaves at the curb in rows and **not in bags**. Bagged leaves and any leaf piles containing dog waste, stones, grass or sticks/branches will not be picked-up. Small branches cut to three-foot length may be put out at the curb separate of leaves. Pick-up will end on April 12th, no exceptions, so please place yard-waste out at the beginning of the week.



Be a Part of Minsi Lake Photo Documentary

By Michael Ortoski

UPPER MT. BETHEL - 'Friends of Minsi Lake' (FOML) has installed a 'Chronolog' on the East Shore at Minsi Lake for folks to take cellphone pics of the dam rehab project over the course of the year.

"Our Chronolog bracket is now installed. Instructions, including how to upload pics, are on the placard, which is also attached to the post that the bracket is mounted on said Jim Wilson, secretary of FOML.

The address for the East Shore Rec Area at Minsi Lake Park is 200 East Shore Drive, Upper Mount Bethel Township, PA. The bracket is in obvious plain view along the empty lake shoreline. The purpose is for the public to engage with FOML & photo-document the Minsi Lake Dam Rehabilitation & Spillway Construction Project throughout 2019.

Come out to the lake and help us make history!



Slate Belt Regional Plan Continued from page 2

Northampton County 62,500; **Ten Communities** \$62,500.

"Under the Municipal Planning Code, all municipalities are required to have a plan in place and update it every 10 years" said Becky Bradley, executive director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission who conducted the meeting.

Part of the difficulty in organizing a regional plan was getting all municipalities on the same page and reconciling where each municipality is in its individual planning process, Bradley said.

On the administrative side, a lot of municipal budgets are stretched pretty thin, and so if they do decide to do a plan, they want to make sure they have their interests covered. When planning costs are spread among multiple municipalities, each saves thousands of dollars. An individual comprehensive plan can cost up to \$100,000, Bradley said.

In addition to the plan itself, cooperative planning allows municipalities to explore sharing services, which could further reduce costs. Multi-municipal projects also are more likely to qualify for federal grant dollars for infrastructure projects such as repairs to major roadways that cross municipal lines.

This is the first of many articles too come about the exciting future of the Slate Belt. The next articles will be about how the 2 phase plan will work for each of the communities and how all the data will be collected from them.

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