North Central
Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission

Quarterly Report
January—March 2016
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MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

The Department has been charged with developing integrated strategies and policies for community development and regional planning activities that are consistent with the organizations Regional Action Strategy and Strategic Plan.

ORGANIZATIONAL/DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Promote cooperative efforts among community (county, city and municipal governments) and economic development agencies that advance individual and common interests in targeting commercial, industrial and infrastructure development that is data driven and supported
- Promote quality of life initiatives while safeguarding the region’s assets
- Assess and inventory regional infrastructure needs, including water, sewer, transportation, energy, utilities, recreation, education, healthcare, housing and site remediation
- Expand community outreach and engagement in a range of regional planning and development topics
- Establish and implement a communication plan to update stakeholders and the general public, share success stories, and promote community and regional planning
- Collect, compile, organize, analyze and disseminate data and data procedures needed for regional policy-setting and decision-making using the evolving capabilities of GIS
- Provide a desirable work environment and promote employee excellence

PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

- Appalachia Regional Commission/Economic Development Administration (ARC/EDA) - Provides assistance and support to public infrastructure such as water and wastewater system improvements, industrial parks, industrial multi-tenant buildings, access roads to industrial areas, and other similar projects that promote community/economic development and job creation.

- Energy Program – Provides assistance to business, local government agencies and communities to help reduce pollution and save energy.
• **Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP)** – Assists local governmental agencies with information technology, software and related training services.

• **Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)** – Promotes transportation technology through training, technical assistance and other customer services to elected municipal officials and their staff.

• **Transportation Planning** – Provides a forum where federal, state, regional and local decision makers identify issues/opportunities, conduct studies and make informed recommendations regarding the programming and implementation of transportation projects.

• **Geographic Information System (GIS)** – Collaborates with governmental agencies, community and business leaders as well as internal North Central departments to provide access to high quality geographic information.

• **Community Development/Regional Planning** – Encourages the exchange of meaningful strategies on how communities can soundly manage growth and development to efficiently and effectively link land use, transportation, and economic development decision making at a regional level (Greenway Planning, PA Wilds, etc.).

**KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS PERIOD**

The Community Development Department remains extremely active and during the quarter, staff continued to promote cooperative efforts between community and economic development agencies throughout the region. As the progress report will indicate, outreach and engagement in a range of regional planning, tourism, and municipal assistance took precedence, including the continued monitoring and participation in activities related to the Community Development, Municipal Assistance and infrastructure impacts.

Below you will find additional core program activities for this period:

**A. Appalachian Regional Commission**

During the January - March 2016 reporting period staff was involved in the preparation of five funding applications, continued assistance on one previously approved application, and initial development work on new projects seeking fiscal year 2017 ARC funding consideration. The five applications submitted included the following:

• **Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP)** - This project provides funding for the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission and its regional partners to pursue initiatives that will improve the business and economic climate of the region. (ARC request: $285,000 and other funds $285,000. Total project cost: $570,000.)
• Sandy Township Industrial Drive Interconnect Access Road - This project is a 2,580 foot long access road in Sandy Township, Clearfield County, to connect Industrial Drive with Shaffer Road. (ARC request: $880,000, other local funds $220,000. Total project cost: $1,100,000.)

• Elk County Community Recycling Center Expansion - This project involves new equipment at a new recycling center facility in St. Marys, Elk County. (ARC request: $140,250, other funds $163,194. Total project cost: $303,444.)

• Bradford Historic Streetscape Project - Funding is requested for engineering services for infrastructure improvements serving the downtown historic district in the City of Bradford, McKean County. (ARC request: $200,000, other funds $5,200,000. Total project cost: $5,400,000.)

• North Central Workforce Skill Gap Project - This project would provide funding for wages for disadvantaged youth introducing them to the world of work in approximately 10 communities in the region. (ARC request: $65,000, other funds $140,000. Total project cost: $205,000.)

Work also began on soliciting new projects for fiscal year 2017 ARC funding consideration. Initial inquiries and responses for information were made for two possible McKean County projects: an access road extension in Lewis Run Borough and a possible equipment project at the Bradford Regional Medical Center.

Previously funded ARC Project
Bradford Regional Airport Industrial Park Access Road - An initial meeting with staff from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation was held on March 9, 2016, to preview the possible lay-out of the new road design toward the initial three lots identified for new development at the airport. This 1,200 foot long road is funded by a $571,500 ARC grant. A project scoping meeting with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation officials is scheduled for May 5, 2016, at the airport.

Other Technical Assistance
Assistance was provided to several communities inquiring about possible ARC grant funding for infrastructure projects in the region. Information about funding requirements, matching funds, project eligibility, and implementation timetables was provided to these inquiries.

B. Economic Development Administration
During the January - March 2016 reporting period one Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee meeting was held, follow-up work on one previously approved EDA project, Jefferson County Business Park, was provided, and technical assistance to another community, Curwensville Borough, was initiated.
March 18, 2016 CEDS Meeting
The purpose of this meeting was to reconvene the committee after the winter recess, discuss EDA’s new application process, discuss a CEDS update, and listen to a presentation on the status of the natural gas industry. Agenda highlights included:

- CEDS Membership for 2016
- Jefferson County Business Park Update
- Regional Statistics/Information
- Appalachian Regional Commission Projects FY 2016
- New EDA Application Process.
- ARC Project Summaries for FY 2017
- POWER initiative
- Guest Speaker: Rob Boulware, Manager Stakeholder Relations, Seneca Resources Corporation, a National Fuel Gas Company. Mr. Boulware discussed the current conditions in the natural gas industry, provided a brief overview of how the industry has evolved over the years, and the outlook for the future.

Jefferson County Business Park - The project involves providing infrastructure to a 166 acre site north of Interstate 80 at the intersection of Interstate 80 and Pennsylvania Route 28 (exit 81) in Jefferson County. The project was funded by a $297,850 grant from the Economic Development Administration, a $250,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and $69,000 in local funds. Total project cost is estimated at $616,850. The project was essentially completed in late November 2015. Grading and seeding of surface irregularities from the construction work will be completed in the spring of 2016.

Curwensville Borough Municipal Authority - Technical assistance was provided to the Curwensville Borough Municipal Authority per a possible relocation of their office from the Curwensville Borough Municipal Building to another existing building in downtown Curwensville. This would serve two purposes. It would free up space at the Curwensville Borough Building for their internal use and enable the Curwensville Municipal Authority to have more space for their operations, records storage, public meeting space, and storing equipment. Financial assistance is being requested from both Pennsylvania State Representative Tom Sankey and Pennsylvania State Senator John Wozniak for renovation costs that would be incurred sometime in 2017 once the building is acquired.

Other Technical Assistance
Additional technical assistance was provided to various inquiries for state and federal funding for municipal economic development projects. Updated U.S. Census information and other pertinent data was provided to individuals, government institutions, non-profit organizations, and businesses during the period.
C. **Energy**

During the January through March reporting period, various work program activities for the Energy program involved the following:

- Met with and discussed with Bigler Township/Clearfield County regarding previously completed energy assessment and discussed/reviewed each area covered from previous assessment. Review included roofing, insulation, etc. Also included continued discussions regarding continued review of PUC website due to upcoming PUC decisions regarding updates to Act 129 eligible projects for municipal governments. Additional discussions regarding lighting and who current electrical provider is and how to look at quotes from those electrical companies that would provide quotes and information for submission to electric provider. Also discussed need for combustion analysis on furnace. Will check on ductwork at May 10, 2016, LTAP training for previous issues found/repaired.

- Continued promotion of:
  - North Central Energy Assistance Program
  - PA DEP Alternative Fuel Incentive Grant (AFIG) program
  - PennDOT programs:
    - Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) program
    - Green Light Go program

- Venues for promotion of all programs in discussions, workshops, seminars and/or meetings:
  - Greater Jefferson Area Council of Governments Meeting.
  - Clearfield County Secretary’s roundtable.
  - Moshannon Valley Council of Governments monthly meetings and the Moshannon Valley COG Annual Equipment Show.

D. **MTAP/LTAP**

During the January through March reporting period, various MTAP and LTAP training and technical assistance activities took place:

**MTAP:**

- Promoted the MTAP and LTAP programs at:
  - Greater Jefferson Area Council of Governments Meeting. Attended February 24, 2016, to update members of what is currently available through the Community Development program at North Central.
  - Met with 16 representatives of local governments from Clearfield County regarding the status of various programs as offered through North Central and the Community Development Program.
  - Moshannon Valley Council of Governments. Attended meeting on March 23, 2016, to update COG members on what is available currently with North Central and the Community Development Program.
  - Moshannon Valley Council of Governments Equipment Show, ongoing discussions.
• Technical Assistance provided to:
  - Heath Township/Jefferson County
  - Decatur Township/Clearfield County
  - Moshannon Valley Council of Governments
  - Coudersport Borough/Potter County
  - Curwensville Borough Police Department (ongoing)
  - Bigler Township/Clearfield County
  - Madera Volunteer Fire Department
  - Greater Jefferson Area Council of Governments
  - Lawrence Township/Clearfield County
  - Ulysses Township/Potter County
  - Jefferson County Commissioners/JCSWA-Brookville/Jefferson County
  - Ringgold Township/Jefferson County
  - Brady Township/Clearfield County
  - Bradford Township/McKean County
  - Kane Borough/McKean County

• Upgraded various pieces of technology via North Central reimbursement process to:
  - Brady Township/Clearfield County $670.00
  - Bradford Township/McKean County $703.70

LTAP:
Provides local government officials and employees technology transfer and technical assistance opportunities regarding safety and maintenance issues for their local road programs. Activities this past quarter included:

• No training scheduled during this quarter:
  - Worked on identifying six sites for upcoming training opportunities for:
    - Signs and Safety Features for Bridges and Culverts/Jefferson County
    - Promoted first three classes through June 30, 2016, and input registrations, reviewed LTAP signup, etc.

• Technical Assistance
  - Knox Township/Clearfield County

E. Transportation
During the January through March reporting period, primary activities for the Transportation Program involved working with PennDOT and the Rural Planning Organization’s Transportation Committee regarding the FY 2015 and 17 Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan.
• Participated on numerous PennDOT Work Group activities.
• Continued outreach to PennDOT District and project sponsors on the Knox Kane TAP project. Numerous phone and conference calls between project sponsor, PennDOT staff and FHWA.
• Coordination with Elk and Cameron Counties on the West Creek Trails Transportation Alternative Project.
• Finalized the Draft FY 16-18 Expenditure Plan and UPWP Narrative.
• Continued meeting with DuFAST transit on route re-evaluations and new timetables for their service area.
• Conducted a DBE assessments, reviewed criteria, and developed a statement on overall goals for new five year open end agreement.
• Researched possible Storm Water Management courses via LTAP and Conservation Districts.
• Developed a Safety Hot Spot Analysis with focus on Core Transportation System.
• Selected Michael Baker International as Prime Contractor for new North Central Open End Contract.
• PEMA HAZUS coordination of Hazard Mitigation Plan to ID critical infrastructure and response.
• Continued update of 2016 Public Participation Plan, Tracking worksheet and updated NC website.

F. GIS
During the January through March reporting period, various work activities that took place for the GIS program involved the following:

• Continued GIS support for McKean and Cameron County (Asset Management).
• Participated in PennDOT Next Generation Governance & Implementation Team Meetings.
• Participation in PEMA Regional GIS Task Force activities.
• Continued comprehensive asset management system for the Borough of Coudersport, Coudersport Water Authority and Coudersport Sewer Authority.
• Local Asset Data Coordination for Port Allegany and Bradford Township in McKean County.
• Cameron County Tax Parcel based Land Utilization for Plat book development.
• Continued Crisis Management Planning with Ridgway School District regarding emergency response and access management.
• Continued Coordination Activities for Regional Emergency Management Data Standardization with the PEMA Regional GIS Task Force.
• Continued working on Local Zoning data in Foster Township, McKean County.
G. Community Development/Regional Planning

During the January through March reporting period, various activities took place in regard to community outreach and engagement in a range of regional planning, tourism and municipal assistance:

- Continued regional discussion regarding integrating regional Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development strategies and project prioritization into regional planning processes.
- Continued implementation of the North Central Greenways Mini-Grant Program, including maintenance of Greenway website. Steering Committee is recommending seven projects for Greenways funding totaling approximately $150,000.
- Attended meetings and held discussions with various stakeholders regarding potential Greenway projects, to include project closeout field views.
- Continued working with stakeholders representing the development of the West Creek Trail in Cameron County.
- Continued coordination with Headwaters RC & D staff regarding proposal to develop the Knox and Kane Railroad. Numerous follow up telephone conversations on possible future grant applications through Multimodal Fund, TAP and DCED/ARC.
- Coordination with Reynoldsville Borough on lighting and funding questions.
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) webinars.
- PA Route 6 Infrastructure committee activities.
- Continued assistance with Elk County Recycling Center.
MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

The mission of the North Central Enterprise Development Program is to foster economic vitality of the six-county area through a comprehensive regional economic development strategy – a strategy that focuses upon needs and potential opportunities that will result in improving the existing economic base and creating opportunities for new growth to enhance the overall quality of life in the region.

To achieve this mission, a private sector-oriented program was developed to provide the opportunities for growth by way of direct assistance in increasing market share, low-interest loans, access to space, and access to technologies.

ORGANIZATIONAL/DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Promote the resources and assistance available to encourage and sustain economic growth
- Meet and exceed specific program compliance goals as identified in the various program contracts
- Collaborate and coordinate program activities with local and regional economic development entities
- Identify and pursue opportunities that will expand and/or enhance current programs to benefit growth
- Respond to private sector needs that encourage the creation or retention of family-sustaining jobs
- Disseminate information, provide training/education information and promote seminars to keep industry sectors current on relative data
- Provide a desirable work environment and promote employee excellence to address the goals and objectives of the Regional Action Strategy and Strategic Plan
PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

- **Loan Assistance Program** – Provide access to low-interest loans and packaging loan assistance to address capitalization requirements.

- **Export Program** – Provide assistance to companies that are new to exporting and new to export markets and access to overseas markets to expand customer base of existing businesses within the region.

- **Procurement Program** – Provide assistance to companies to capitalize on opportunities to sell goods and services to the Department of Defense, Federal and State governments.

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS PERIOD

**Loan/Finance Assistance** – Maintained active loan portfolio of 230 loans representing $24,941,192.36 in financing from all funds.

- One loan was closed totaling $220,000 in financing.
- Private sector leverage was $20,000 and public sector leverage was $200,000.
- Twenty-nine jobs were retained.
- We have initiated the drawdown on a per project basis on the newest Intermediary Relending Program contract from the USDA for $750,000. This is the seventh IRP contract that the USDA has approved for North Central. One project has been approved to be funded from this.
- Five loans were satisfied.
- Companies continue with the “At-Risk” Business Program. Four of these businesses have developed work-out strategies to bring their accounts current.
- We continue to monitor the foreclosure proceedings on two defaulted loans and two bankruptcy actions, of which one is a re-organization while the other is liquidation.
- 16 site visits were conducted. These site visits and interviews represent businesses in Elk, Jefferson, Clearfield, McKean and Potter counties.
- Approved applications pending closing include one acquisition of equipment project in McKean County. This pending loan closing involves a total project cost of $516,000. Representing $341,000 in private funds and $175,000 in public funds. The second project involves the purchase of equipment at a manufacturing business in Elk County. This project involves a total project cost of $441,175, representing $310,175 in private funds and $131,000 in public funds.
- Staff met with a representative from National Fuel Gas about the proposed loan client Interest Reduction program.
- Staff participated with Enterprise Development staff and the USDA in the coordination of hosting “Finding Funding Opportunities” event.
- Staff met with a representative from the Small Business Administration (SBA) Micro-loan program, and toured three businesses that have successfully participated with that program.
Staff also met with a representative of the Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 program, to discuss future projects eligible for participation in funding available from that program.

Upcoming events include:

- Loan Program Director, Pat Brennen is retiring from North Central on April 8.
- Staff is to attend the 2016 Pennsylvania Economic Development Association Spring Conference April 11-13.
- Staff is to attend the WEDnetPA Professional Development Conference, along with WEDnetPA staff, April 27-29. Including WEDnetPA with the loan programs client management process will streamline the entire department’s monitoring and reporting requirements.
- Loans closed during the quarter of January 1, 2016 thru March 31, 2016 reporting period:

  KMA Remarketing Corporation  Clearfield County  $100,000  IRP 5

**Export Marketing Program** – Provides value-added assistance to North Central clients who are interested or engaged in international trade. Reflective of the strategic goals established by North Central, the major objective of the Export Marketing Assistance Program is to assist in job and business creation through an economic development defined program that promotes diversification and advancement in regional growth at the international level.

- Work Orders for this reporting period totaled 30. Work Orders capture the counseling assistance that includes the services of the now reduced 15 Overseas Offices located Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Mexico, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Each request to an overseas office is tracked separately so a company may have multiple Work Orders. Due to budget cuts within the World Trade PA line item, the Commonwealth has closed the offices located in China, Brazil and France and have delayed plans for any reorganization previously discussed for Chile.
- Export Actions were tracked at 35. Export Actions are defined as counseling successes: traveling to market, participation in overseas trade shows or missions, meeting with prospective customers overseas and signing an agent or distributor. Export Actions for this reporting period were dominated by company participation in trade shows and inbound missions (9) and meetings with potential foreign buyers (22).
- Four Global Access Program Grants were awarded this quarter: Control Chief received a dual award, one for Expo Rail-Mexico and the second for the Hannover Messe Fair in Germany. Horizon Technology received a GAP for business travel to the United Kingdom and Germany. International Cartridge received a two-event award to include the IWA Show in Germany and business travel to Amsterdam. Wickett and Craig received the GAP for attendance at a Tannery Conference in Hong Kong.
- Active export companies for this reporting period – 90.
- Conducted 126 Counseling sessions including new client outreach regarding export assistance services, Export Compliance and Audit Procedures, Export Documentation,
and the Global Assistance (GAP) Program, follow-up of work orders/market research reports, trade show participation and international travel assistance.

- Additional counseling sessions logged included outreach to companies as part of a qualified supply chain catalog for the oil and gas, mining and construction sectors. A Supply Chain Catalog Listing was available as part of the Make It In America/Core PA Global presentation at the Australasian Oil and Gas Show February 24-26, 2016, Perth, Australia. The catalog highlighted 50 Pennsylvania Companies and three Universities that were interested in supporting Foreign Direct Investments. Nine North Central Companies were listed in the catalog.

- Counseling also included outreach to 10 mining-related companies regarding research related to the ARC Power Initiative.

- Export staff participated in the Australasian Oil and Gas Show in Perth, Australia, February 24-26, 2016. A preliminary review of leads: four potential journalist for the upcoming June FAM Tour, four specific referrals to REN partners for direct follow-up of pending investment/trade activities, 18 leads for direct/immediate follow-up by the PA Office located in Sydney, Australia, and 50 general leads for review, discussion and follow-up.

- Mark your calendars. North Central’s upcoming Export Seminars, Wednesday, May 4 - Export Documentation (all day event) and Thursday, May 5 - Incoterms (half-day event).

- Bringing the World to North Central Pennsylvania is scheduled for Friday, September 16, 2016. This event provides the opportunity for North Central to host one-to-one company meetings with Pennsylvania’s 15 Authorized Trade Representatives severing 55 countries.

**Procurement Technical Assistance Program** – The Procurement Technical Assistance Center’s mission is to maximize the number of capable companies participating in the government marketplace by determining contracting readiness and assisting business become contract ready. Services offered by the PTAC include: one-on-one counseling, free bid-match services, assistance with registrations and socio-economic certifications, solicitation/proposal and documentation reviews; provision of military specifications and standards, and the offering of training/workshops.

Procurement Program operates on calendar year – January through December 2015. Below is our first quarter report – January through March 2016:

- Professional development training:

  Donna attended 11.5 hours of professional development training including:
  - January 13: Neoserra – Filtering and Reports; webinar
  - January 13: Bid Match – Developing a Bid Match Profile; conference call w/ SAPDC
  - January 14: DOL Wage and Hour Investigations; webinar
  - January 21: Cybersecurity for Government Contractors: 5 Keys to Prepare for Cyber Incidents in 2016; webinar
  - January 21: Tips to Help GSA Schedule Contractors Comply with Small Business Subcontracting; webinar
  - January 28: Attributes of an Adequate Accounting System; webinar
February 3: Supporting Service Disabled Veterans with Federal Contracts; webinar
February 19: Demystifying DCAA Incurred Cost Submissions; webinar
February 23: Kingdomware SDVOSB/VOSB Case summary; webinar
March – 0 hours

- Ten new clients added:
  - 4 clients – January
  - 4 clients – February
  - 2 clients – March
  - Working with 70 active clients
- Provided 100.09 hours of counseling services to 30 businesses/169 sessions
- Sponsored two training events
  - February 8: USDA Rural Development – Finding Funding Opportunities
  - March 18: Veterans! Start or Expand Your Business

- Upcoming Events
  - April 2-8 – APTAC Spring Conference, St. Louis, MO
  - April 12 – Costars Workshop; open to all business, State College, PA
  - April 12 – SBA e-Chat series – Introduction to Federal Government; webinar
  - April 14 – Doing Business with Penn State; open to all business, State College, PA
  - April 27-29 – WEDnetPA Professional Development conference, Shippensburg, PA

KOZ

- Assisted new property owners with filing for benefits and explaining the program eligibility requirements and benefits.
- Closed out the 2015 applications and followed up with counties for those property owners that were not in compliance for their annual benefits.
- Processed 2016 KOZ applications as submitted for approval of benefits.
MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

To provide quality services, and support in employment, training, employee relations, benefits, compensation and safety. Create and maintain a foundation which will enable North Central to promote the development, the involvement, and the retention of its employees to ensure customer satisfaction.

ORGANIZATIONAL/DEPARTMENT GOAL

- Make quality a part of the way we work
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness and employ technology and methods which enhance service, communications and productivity
- Help make North Central a great place to work - professionally and personally

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS QUARTER

- We will be hiring two summer interns through Stackpole/Hall this year. The application process for the students will begin soon. PHEAA will be releasing the 2016 job application form sometime in March. The hourly rate for the summer job students will increase to $8.00 per hour.
- MassMutual requested a Census File and Plan Sponsor Questionnaire to be completed for our 403B compliance testing by February 10, 2016. This is the first step in the 5500 Audit for our 403B Retirement Plan.
- Jerry Stewart retired on January 8, 2016, from our Workforce Department. He worked in the Clearfield CareerLink as a Youth Employability Counselor for more than 20 years.
- We hired Kerri Button as an Adult Employability Counselor in our Workforce Development Department based in Clearfield County. Kerri started her employment with us on February 16, 2016.
- We have another new employee who started work on February 22, 2016. Amy Preston has been hired as a Career Counselor by the WDB based in Jefferson County.
- We sent a census report and employer application to Anderson and Kime for our medical coverage which will be coming up for renewal on July 1, 2016.
- Principal Life, AD&D, STD and LTD is up for renewal on April 1, 2016. We have negotiated with Principal for the most cost effective plan.
- We are in the process of hiring an Adult Employability Counselor/Instructor for the Workforce Development Department in Elk County. The applications have been received and will be reviewed.
MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

The Information Systems Department serves three major functions at North Central; Internet Service Provider, Information Technology (IT) development, and IT support. Each function is essential in enabling North Central to provide services to our six county region. Our goal is to maintain and enhance our current technology infrastructure, equipment, and software while continuing to develop improved processes for North Central staff and clients.

ORGANIZATIONAL/DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Provide Help Desk, networking, and training support for North Central staff
- Maintain and support Internet service
- Develop and maintain North Central software and data files
- Maintain and enhance Wireless Wide Area Network
- Provide Telecommunication and Media support
- Provide technology and telecommunication infrastructure support to outside entities
- Provide videoconferencing capacity for all North Central departments

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS PERIOD

- In order to meet the increased bandwidth needs of our CareerLink office located in Coudersport, PA, we have converted their entire network to a fiber based solution from Zito Media.
- The following offices have been successfully converted to the Online TABE system. TABE, which stands for “Tests of Adult Basic Education”, is used by educators to provide a solid foundation for effectively assessing the skills and knowledge of adult learners.
  - Clearfield
  - Coudersport
  - Cameron
  - Punxsutawney
- Installed VPN router and security to permit North Central staff secure remote access to their files located on NCP servers.
• A recent storm in Clinton County resulted in the outage at our Clin41 tower site. This site, which is part of our Wireless Wide-Area-Network, provides bandwidth for a rural radio station in that region. A replacement radio was installed.
• Installed new computers for staff at Clearfield and DuBois offices – Kerri Button and Amy Preston
• Installed Online TABE on nine computers in Bradford and provided brief training to staff and state employees
• Responded to network problem at Cameron County Courthouse
• Rebuilt one of our servers that houses web pages for many of our clients. Migrated this content to a Virtual Server that enhances security data replication.
MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

The North Central Workforce Development Board is one of 22 Boards across Pennsylvania. The mission of the NCWIB is to provide the leadership necessary to ensure we have an educated and skilled workforce that exceeds the workforce needs of local employers.

ORGANIZATIONAL/DEPARTMENT GOAL

The established One-Stop Pennsylvania CareerLink® continuously resulting in reduced bureaucracy and increased cost efficiency

- Employer and job seeker customers and the community at large will know about and use the Workforce Development System and will understand its strong ties to economic development
- The customer and market-driven Workforce Development System and the Pennsylvania CareerLink® Centers will have high and improving customer satisfaction rates from employer and job seeker customers
- A proactive and comprehensive portion of the workforce System will be developed that will identify and meet the emerging needs of employer organizations facing company survival and/or expansion
- The North Central Workforce Development System will meet and exceed the federally mandated performance measures, and will ensure that this does not negatively impact achievement of the other goals

PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

WDB Board

- On behalf of the NCWDB, staff provided comments on the WIOA Combined State Plan. Staff also participated in a public forum regarding the plan in Altoona in January.
- The NCWDB met on April 6 with a portion of the meeting dedicated to developing a new vision, mission, and goals. Susie led the session that was very fast-paced with plenty of good feedback to draft statements. A draft was sent out to board members for their review in order to include the final piece in our transition plan.
Planning

- The NCWDB through our Youth Standing Committee released our Request for Proposal for our Youth Program for next program year. We only received one response from North Central Workforce Development. This proposal was recommended by the Youth Standing Committee to the NCWDB and was approved.
- Submitted a grant to USDOL ETA for the provision of workforce services in our county jails as well as post release services at our PA CareerLink® centers. The grant, titled “Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release” if received, will reduce recidivism and provide some much needed services to this population.
- Linda, Pam and Susie participated in a project meeting with Central and Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Boards regarding the Pathways to Employment Initiative and the distribution of funds awarded through the Sector Partnership National Dislocated Worker Grant.
- Received notification of three grant awards for proposals submitted in November of 2015 to the PA Department of Labor and Industry. A summary of each follows:
  - **Community Based Initiative** – provide community access to workforce services via community-based organizations to help more people find jobs and manage their careers closer to home. Funds will be used to serve unemployed and underemployed individuals who require supportive services in a local environment to help them on the path to employment.” Our collaboration with Community Based Organizations (including Faith Based Organizations) will be increased.
  - **Non-Traditional Registered Apprenticeship Planning Grant** – Purpose is to increase the number of companies using the Registered Apprenticeship Program in non-traditional occupations with an emphasis on the healthcare industry.
  - **Strategic Innovation Grant** – project will support Governor Wolf’s vision of “jobs that pay, schools that teach, and government that works” by encouraging local creativity and innovation in achieving the five broad goals for workforce development depicted in the WIOA State Plan. Our proposal identifies a three-pronged approach to serving youth through work experience, industry-recognized short-term training, and leading to On-the-Job training all along an identified career pathway for each youth.
- We were one of four Workforce Development Boards that collaborated with the State WDB on a TechHire Grant. If awarded our area will receive funds for training of our young adults in CNC, Machining, and Engineering Technician fields.

Quality Assurance / Continuous Improvement

- Jim continues to review the Department of Labor and Industry’s directives for implementation and policy development. Examples include drafts of a revised Property Management Procedure, Training Provider Appeal Process and Procurement and Policies Procedures.
Workforce/PA CareerLink® Systems

- Linda is currently working with the CareerLink Operator to research and develop a policy for disruptive customers at our PA CareerLink® Centers as well as a standardized incident report. This is in response to two separate CareerLink customer issues prompting discussion with the Operator regarding safety of staff and management of customer behavior.
- Linda is aligning the new Desk Aid for WIOA Title I Statewide Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) with Workforce System Policy 04-2015, while providing technical assistance to providers in order to ensure consumer access to a variety of quality training programs and compliance with federal and state mandates.
- Linda continues to research and review various curriculums that are accessible, manageable, and measurable; address soft skills and employment skills, as well as academic refreshers; and the potential to lead to stackable credentials on various career pathways.

Career Counseling

- Joe taught Career Exploration classes to 9th & 10th graders in Moshannon Valley in January and February.
- Amy has agreed to sit on Jeff Tech’s Occupation Advisory Committee which met on March 10, 2106.
- Amy collaborated with Jamie Barger, Brookville Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Volpe, Guidance Counselor at Brookville High School, to organize Industry Day on March 18 from 7AM - 2 PM. Amy gained participation from the following businesses: Jefferson Manor, Brookville Equipment, Matson Lumber, Global Fabrication and Brookville Miller Welding. Jamie Barger gained participation from DCNR, Means & Lauf, Kelly’s Chrysler and Jeep, Mike’s Super Market, and a utility company. Mr. Volpe is in charge of Sheetz and the Brookville Hospital. Amy will be attending this event.
- Amy organized a post-secondary panel for the Chapter 339 IU6 training scheduled for April 7, 2016, in Clarion and was asked to be a panel member for the Chapter 339 IU6 training for the Comprehensive Guidance Plans that local schools must complete.
- Joe attended a Career Fair at Curwensville H.S. where there were approximately 20 businesses and all students from grades 5-12 attended.
- Joe also completed Drug and Alcohol Concealment Training hosted by OVR.

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Susie and Joe attended the PACTA (Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators) Conference in Hershey in February. Susie was part of a 14– person panel on “Developing Partners for Pathways to Career Readiness.”
- Pam participated in Leadership McKean as a panelist regarding education in our region. Pam spoke specifically about funding opportunities for employers and job seekers as well as our high priority occupation list.
• We are happy to share that we have a new staff that started on February 22 as a Career Counselor for Jefferson County-DuBois Area. Please join us in welcoming Amy Preston! Amy will be a great addition to our team!

• Susie, Pam and Linda participated in the National Association of Workforce Boards annual conference in Washington, DC, March 12 – 15. They heard from experts in the field as well as legislators and many other best practices as we continue to implement WIOA.

• The North Central Our Youth Our Future Team, led by Pam Streich, participated in the White House Learning Exchange with 10 other teams from throughout the country. Presenting at the learning exchange included Christopher Lu, Deputy Secretary of Labor; Portia Wu, Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and Leo Miller, Regional Administrator, Region 2.

• Staff are collaborating with workforce development, IU-9 Adult Education, the Community Education Center, and employers to develop a Fit 4 Healthcare program. This program will provide an overview of the opportunities in the industry as well as work readiness skills and entry-level health care skills. Participants will need to pass the drug test in order to participate.

• Susie presented on “STEM and the Workplace” to the Leadership McKean group at the Challenger Learning Center in Olean, NY.

• Linda and Susie are participating in various transportation meetings while researching alternative methods in an effort to reduce the ongoing transportation barriers to employment that low income customers in our area continually face.

• We have assembled a group of interested employers and partners to develop a Dream It. Do It. Project in the North Central Region. The Manufacturing Institute initially launched the Dream It. Do It. network in 2005. Dream It. Do It. works to change the perception of the manufacturing industry and inspire next-generation workers to pursue manufacturing careers. Members of the Dream It. Do It. program gain access to national support and resources to aid their pro-manufacturing efforts and join a network of industry leaders that implement activities to meet local, regional and statewide workforce needs.

• Re-Entry Employment Specialist training (RES) was held on March 21 and 22 at North Central. Pam collaborated with OVR and the PA Department of Corrections to bring this training to our region. There were 30 attendees representing probation and the judicial system, workforce, vocational rehabilitation, housing, outpatient and forensics programs from throughout the region. WDB staff also participated in the training.

• Susie and Pam attended “Youth Day” sponsored by the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association. This event provided an opportunity to hear best practices from across the state and network with other professionals. Pam had the opportunity to present our youth customer centered design project.
MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

The Workforce Development department is focused on four areas of quality service: 1) All customers will receive a needs assessment to determine the appropriate mix of services, 2) Job seekers and Employers will be provided with workshop opportunities to address training or information needs, 3) Job seekers will be provided financial aid to address technical training needs driven by employer demands and market needs, 4) All customers will have access to job placement services.

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS PERIOD  www.ncentral.com/workforce

• **PWDA Governor Achievement Nominations**: Staff nominated Adult, Youth, and Employers from the past year for the 2016 PWDA Governor Achievement Awards. As a result, Scott Caltagarone has been selected from our region. Scott is an Out-of-School Youth attending Penn State DuBois and is active by giving back to the Young Adult program by presenting at workshops and meetings when asked. Mr. Caltagarone will be attending the PWDA conference to accept his award with his parents. North Central staff have also submitted names for consideration under the Department of Human Services representing the EARN program. We have not received information to date on the selection for these nominations.

• **PA CareerLink®**: North Central, through the assistance of the I.T. Department staff, has installed on computers in each PA CareerLink® the software to conduct T.A.B.E. assessments to determine math and reading levels for all WIOA and EARN customers.

• **WIOA Youth Programs**: Blythe Brunner, Workforce Programs Director, presented the North Central Workforce Development Operations Report July 2015 – March 2016 to the Youth Standing Committee. The full report may be viewed on the website: www.ncentral.com/workforce; News and Events – Youth: Workforce Development staff stationed in each of the PA CareerLink® is preparing both In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth (Young Adults) for participation in the Summer Employment Experience to begin early June 2016. Workforce Development Operations has been awarded the PY16-FY17 NCWDB Youth funds of $325,000.
• **Job Driven NEG Funds**: North Central Workforce Development has received additional training dollars through the WDB targeted to long term Unemployed Dislocated Workers and Vets for OJT and ITAs. The new award of $100,158.86 provides employment training opportunities along with the $229,299 expended or obligated to date.

• **FIT 4 Manufacturing**: Job Seekers from across multiple counties and target groups completed the short term training program including hands on training in the Manufacturing industry. Eight customers completed the training, all received job interviews in February and presently four are employed.

• **FIT 4 Model Replication**: Success from the FIT 4 Manufacturing program and employer interest in the Healthcare Industry has prompted a collaborative effort to replicate the FIT 4 Model for Healthcare training. Collaborative meeting with IU-9, CEC Representatives, WDB staff, Workforce Development staff, Employers: Cathy Grove, Joy Bolling and Jen Agosti, Nurse/Instructor, met to review curriculum outline and feedback from employers on feasibility.
  o Consensus is to pursue the training with target of first training in the fall
  o Sub group of instructors and employers will finalize curriculum
  o Potential training sites: St. Marys and Port Allegany
  o Outreach and recruitment to be coordinated through the PA CareerLink® Centers

• **Rapid Response Funds**: Training funds targeting dislocated worker attending post-secondary training or On-the-Job training have been fully expended or obligated to training contracts. The total for training awards is $86,663.50 to date.

• [www.ncentral.com/workforce](http://www.ncentral.com/workforce)
  Workforce Development staff encourages everyone to visit the website for workshop updates, program information, and highlights of success stories. Staff directory for each county and directions to each PA CareerLink® office are available.
MISSION/PROGRAM CHARGE

The Pennsylvania WIC Program is committed to improving the health of eligible pregnant women, new mothers, and children by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods, and referrals to health and social programs during the critical stages of fetal and early childhood development.

ORGANIZATIONAL/DEPARTMENT GOAL

- Increase participant breastfeeding incidence rates and breastfeeding duration rates
- Advance WIC’s mission as the premier maternal and child nutrition education program within our communities
- Increase staff expertise in the fields of maternal/child feeding, breastfeeding and human relations
- Increase WIC enrollment by providing outreach services to those target areas where potential clients reside/frequent

PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

- WIC Program staff are qualified to provide breastfeeding promotion and support to eligible pregnant and breastfeeding applicants. North Central WIC strives to improve breastfeeding incidence and duration rates throughout our local service area. Breastfeeding statistics are released bi-annually (November/May). The November data shows that a higher number of women enrolled in the North Central WIC program initiate breastfeeding and breastfeed longer when compared to the Pennsylvania State WIC Agency over-all statistics.
- The Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program provides additional support that is crucial to help breastfeeding mothers overcome breastfeeding problems and barriers. Peer C staff accepts client phone calls/text messages/emails outside of the regularly scheduled work day. During this quarter, the Peer Counselors provided breastfeeding promotion and support 564 times. Contacts consist of either one on one conversations occurring in the clinic setting, email contacts, phone discussions, and text messaging.
- WIC Program staff participated in the following Outreach events this quarter:
  - Attended three local inter-agency coordinating council/program meetings.
• Met with several local area physicians’ staff to discuss the mission, eligibility and benefits offered to WIC Program participants.

• North Central WIC staff participate in the following State Agency Committees: MIS/EBT, Food Package, Retail Store Coordinator, Quality Assurance and Program Integrity. Conference calls are held monthly to quarterly.

• North Central WIC continues to collaborate with the IUP Nursing Program by allowing students to observe in our DuBois WIC Clinic setting. Our primary goals during this observation are to educate the nursing students on how to apply for WIC, enrollment requirements, benefits offered through the WIC Program and the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding.

• The following trainings were completed this quarter:
  o January 26, 2016: Civil Rights
  o February 9, 2016: appropriate staff attended the required new employee HemoCue training in Harrisburg, sponsored by the Pennsylvania State WIC Agency
  o February 25, 2016: Voter Registration requirements for the WIC Program
  o February 25, 2016: CIS (Client Information System) training for validating adjunct eligibility for Medical Assistance (on-line system)
  o March 31, 2016: Breastfeeding training
  o March 31, 2016: HemoCue training for local agency staff

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES FOR THIS PERIOD

• National Children’s Dental Health Month is celebrated in February of each year. The campaign slogan for February 2016 was “Sugar Wars.” North Central WIC staff routinely discuss optimal dental care with caregivers. During the month of February, staff promoted dental health by providing toothbrushes to individuals in need. A “Sugar Wars” poster was displayed prominently in each clinic site.

• North Central WIC observed National Nutrition Month in March by promoting the campaign “Savor the Flavor of Eating Right.” The North Central WIC Program employs seven professional staff members qualified to provide enhanced nutrition education and support in an effort to positively influence a participant’s health and nutrition behaviors.

• North Central staff recently met with Pennsylvania State WIC Agency staff to discuss the RFA for Service Area 15 (Elk, Cameron, Clearfield, Jefferson and Potter counties). A new budget for each year during the RFA time period, FFY 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, has been submitted.

• An average of 3,727 clients received WIC benefits each month between January and March 2016.