



Community Update

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LindenPointe Innovative Business Campus Positioned for Success with 2020 Vision

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At the turn of the century the City of Hermitage and the Hermitage Community & Economic Development Commission (HCEDC) transformed the way they approached community and economic development and initiated a new economic development strategy with LindenPointe as the nucleus. After many years of hard work, perseverance and support from project partners the expectations are high and the community effort is well positioned for success.

First, there was a philosophical change that took place. Community leaders realized that the City needed to take a regional approach to economic development and foster partnership relationships that would energize the city's initiatives and at the same time complement regional strategies. The city staff under the direction of the City Manager and with the support of the Board of Commissioners became more involved

in regional boards and developed strong working relationships on state, regional and federal levels.

The LindenPointe site readiness project was a direct result of creative, new collaborations. The partnership with Fred George, President, KAKE Development and the receipt of state funding assistance provided through support from Senator Bob Robbins was the catalyst to acquire the 115 acre site formerly known as the "Chadderton Airport" and to accomplish an initial task of creating a quality environment in a "Planned Technical Park" zoning district. The \$5.8M site acquisition and development project was made possible with a \$2.2M private investment and a \$2.5M Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant.

Although the community partners stay in close communication with the private developer, it was clear from the beginning that there were two (2) separate business

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The LindenPointe Technology Center Incubator site is cleared this summer after the City is awarded \$5.4M in federal and state funding. John Fernandez, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) visited the LindenPointe Innovative Business Campus for the joint ground-breaking event for the Tech Center and the Butler County Community College expansion projects. (related photos on pages 6 & 7) The recently completed Training & Workforce Development Center (top right) and Information Resource Technology (bottom) are an integral part of the emerging technology cluster.

models. Mr. George intended to continue his very successful professional, medical office development practice and the City's efforts would be focused on creating an atmosphere for high-tech industry development and related employment opportunities. The underlying objectives of the LindenPointe resources would be industry cluster business development and expansion, the attraction of private sector investment, the creation of higher-skill, high-wage employment opportunities, business incubation and entrepreneurship, regional competitiveness and ultimately a diversified and strengthened tax base.

It was obvious from the outset that an undertaking of this magnitude would require regional cooperation, collaboration and commitments, the vision was of a long-term nature and the outcomes would not be realized for years. As with any successful business venture the exposure to risk would be minimized and the chances for success increased by a thorough due diligence process. During a two (2) year process (from 2004 to 2006) a coordinating committee consisting of representatives from the City, Penn Northwest Development Corporation, Mercer-Lawrence Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the Mercer County CareerLink held key partner meetings, conducted regional site visits, undertook industry cluster analysis, worked with the electronics industry cluster partnership, developed conceptual designs and concluded that a Technology Center of Excellence approach was well suited for LindenPointe. The Tech Center was envisioned as a physical place for business development

and workforce training resources that would foster technology development, business incubation and workforce and training partnerships for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) related industries.

The City staff, with the support of the HCEDC and a growing number of regional partner agencies, embarked on an effort to identify and secure "bricks and mortar" funding for the Training & Workforce Development Center and the Tech Center Incubator projects.

The Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission is the responsible agency for developing the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). CEDS was created to guide the strategic development of the region's growth and includes the identification and prioritization of projects which are consistent with the outlined strategies. The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides the guidelines for CEDS development and requires that projects meet the identified economic development needs and addresses the related goals and objects.



Congresswoman Dahlkemper attends a check presentation at the LindenPointe Training & Workforce Development Center. The City received a \$100,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant to assist with the equipage of the Tech Center testing lab.



Assistant Secretary Fernandez takes time to visit with Hickory High School students interested in design, technology and construction related fields. The students will be monitoring and reporting on the green building construction progress of the Tech Center.



The Butler County Community College (BC3) 20,000 square foot facility at LindenPointe nears completion.

The LindenPointe projects were consistent with the CEDS Vision Statement to “Assist the residents, businesses and industries of Northwest Pennsylvania with the development and retention of a vibrant and sustainable economy by improving the capacity and availability of infrastructure, educational, capital and work force resources”.

Another key, regional partnership has been the five (5) county, Oh-Penn Interstate Regional Collaboration. Several members of the Oh-Penn competitiveness council actively participated in the EDA pre-application meetings providing invaluable support for the LindenPointe projects.

Subsequently, the City was the recipient of two (2) EDA grants totaling over \$5M and a state RACP grant for \$1.25M to provide funding assistance for the technology facility projects. The Training & Workforce Development Center project was completed

in 2010 and the Tech Center Incubator project construction was initiated in the summer of 2010 with an anticipated completion date of August 2011. The City most recently received an additional \$100,000 of federal assistance through the Appalachian Regional Commission to assist with equipage for the testing lab in the Tech Center.

The Tech Center building was designed under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program, features green characteristics and requires extensive documentation during construction. Building upon the green initiatives, the City linked the project to a couple of creative opportunities. The construction site will serve as a “Green Learning Laboratory” and the Green Building Alliance (GBA) will train contractors, construction trades and project designers on-site in conjunction with the building and construction industry partnership and the West Central Workforce

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Paul Young, Coordinator, Training & Workforce Development Center discusses the facility resources available for local business with Representative Longietti.



John Zidansek, Sharon Regional Health System (SRHS) CEO points out the site next to the emerging technology cluster at the LindenPointe Innovative Business Campus where the SRHS Information Technology Center will house IT support for the main campus in Sharon and its 19 satellite facilities in the region.



Assistant Secretary Fernandez looks on with Dan Wallace and Jennifer Barborak as Josh Kelly examines a dragon fly nymph in the Wallace and Pancher Macroinvertebrate Laboratory at LindenPointe.



Hermitage School District Summer Academy Students review their robotics program with Congresswoman Dahlkemper at the LindenPointe Training & Workforce Development Center.

Investment Board. The construction project will also serve as a training workshop for a group of Hickory High School students with interests in architecture, engineering and construction. The students will participate in a year long process following the facility construction and documenting the activities through written reports and photography.

Although the outcomes and benefits of the LindenPointe Innovative Campus cannot be measured for many years to come, the initial successes are encouraging:

- \$5.8M economic development site readiness project
- The emergence of a STEM cluster – Information Resource Technology, Novocell Semiconductor, Wallace & Pancher, SRHS IT Center
- Training & Workforce Development Center

- Butler County Community College (BC3) \$3.2M facility investment
- \$5.5M Technology Center of Excellence / Incubator & Green Skills Learning Lab
- 6 additional professional office buildings
- 130+ higher-skill, higher-wage jobs created
- An expanded real estate and income tax base

As the LindenPointe initiatives move forward into the new decade there are many challenges that will present themselves in order to sustain the momentum, but the potential for local and regional economic rewards are great and will continue to justify the investment. There is a heightened level of energy with the community partners and a level of confidence that the region will look back on the project at the end of the decade with 2020 Vision.