



## Progress Update

### **Vol. 46 No. 03-04 March/April 2010**

Gubernatorial candidates and their representatives express support for the Mon Valley/Fayette Expressway at the Progress Council's March 25<sup>th</sup> annual event // Elliott Support Services receives Frank Irey Jr. Progress Award for plant expansion and job gains // Pittsburgh based government relations consultant firm GSP and Mackin Engineering awarded contract for a cluster analysis to increase local business-to-business purchasing // Smart Government Initiative Saturday work session sets course for greater intergovernmental cooperation in the Mid Mon Valley // State House Commerce Committee, chaired by State Representative Peter J. Daley, receives testimony at an April 8<sup>th</sup> Mid Mon Valley hearing from the Progress Council and local firms on economic conditions and area business needs

#### **PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS**

**Gubernatorial candidates and their representatives express support for the Mon Valley/Fayette Expressway** – The Progress Council's March 25<sup>th</sup> annual event held at the Willowroom featured a Gubernatorial candidates' forum. The five major Democratic and Republican candidates were represented at the event and all stated their support for the Expressway and Southern Beltway projects.

**Elliott Support Services receives Frank Irey Jr. Progress Award for plant expansion and job gains** - An expansion into the I-70 Commerce Center combined with retention of jobs in Donora made the selection of Elliot Support Services an easy choice for the annual Frank Irey Jr. Progress Award.

**Pittsburgh based government relations consultant firm GSP and Mackin Engineering awarded contract for a cluster analysis to increase local business-to-business purchasing** – Manufacturers located in the nine community Mid Mon Valley Regional Enterprise zone will receive assistance in promoting B-to-B sales to promote the local economy.

**Smart Government Initiative Saturday work session sets course** - A Saturday April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of area elected officials at the Loins Club in North Belle Vernon marked an important milestone for the Progress Council's Smart Government Initiative. Local elected officials selected several municipal services for potential cooperative effort. The meeting also included discussion of expanding a regional police study currently underway in Charleroi to include several other communities.

**State House Commerce Committee, chaired by State Representative Peter J. Daley, receives local testimony** - Two Progress Council Executive Committee Executive Committee members and the Progress Council Executive Director provide testimony on local economic conditions and strategies for future development at an April 8<sup>th</sup> held at the Mon Valley Career and Technology Center in Speers.

## **Gubernatorial candidates and their representatives express support for the Mon Valley/Fayette Expressway**

The Progress Council's March 25<sup>th</sup> annual event held at the Willowroom featured a Gubernatorial candidates' forum. The five major candidates were represented at the event and all stated their support for the Expressway and Southern Beltway projects. The primary will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Democratic gubernatorial candidates Jack Wagner, Joe Hoeffel and Anthony Williams were in attendance with Democratic candidate Dan Onorato represented by Washington County Commission Chairman Bracken Burns and Washington County District Attorney Steve Toprani representing Republican candidate Tom Corbett.

Toprani focused on efforts to secure additional federal funding for the Expressway project. Burns cited Onorato's leadership on the Expressway including convening a special panel of expressways advocates to develop funding strategies. Hoeffel cited his support for the Expressway along with the need to work with communities along the Expressway PA Route 51 to I-376 corridor. Williams emphasized the need to pursue a public /private partnership for the Expressway Wagner noted that his estimate of one billion dollars for the transit extension to the north shore would do a lot to advance the Expressway and Southern Beltway. Wagner noted his opposition to the transit project.

A second question regarding improvement of the business climate yielded positive responses ranging from reducing the Corporate Net Income Tax, regulatory reform to closing the so-called "Delaware loophole". The loophole permits corporations located in Pennsylvania that incorporate in Delaware from paying the PA corporate tax.

For the first time ever the Progress Council annual event was covered by PCN TV, which did a delay-broadcast of the event.

The Progress Council would like to express appreciate to the event sponsors and attendees.

## **Elliott Support Services receives Frank Irey Jr. Progress Award for plant expansion and job gains**

An expansion into the I-70 Commerce Center combined with retention of jobs in Donora made the selection of Elliot Support Services an easy choice for the annual Frank Irey Jr. Progress Award.

Elliot, which services turbines for the oil, natural gas and chemical industries, expanded into the I-70 Commerce Center leasing 147,000 square feet. They will keep the Donora site open, relocating some 40 people from Donora to the I-70 site. And they plan to hire 20 more.

Bob Irey, son of the late Progress Council President Frank Irey Jr., applauded the leadership of Elliot Support Services noting that their commitment reflects his father's positive spirit. Elliot Support Services, Donora Plant was the thirteenth recipient of the Frank Irey Jr. Progress Award.

## **Pittsburgh based government relations consultant firm GSP and Mackin Engineering awarded contract for a cluster analysis**

Manufacturers located in the nine-community Mid Mon Valley Regional Enterprise zone will receive assistance in promoting B-to-B sales to promote the local economy.

A progress Council led effort to promote economic growth in distressed communities took another step forward with the retention of GSP Consulting Mackin Engineering in a joint effort to conduct a economic cluster analysis study. The cluster analysis will include a study of so called industrial clusters in the Mid Mon Valley to promote business growth. A unique feature of the Mid Mon Valley project is that it will also include the identification of industrial supply chains to promote local business-to-business sales.

A steering committee comprised of representative of the Mid Mon Valley Regional Enterprise zone reviewed several proposals for the \$25,000 contract. The selection of the GSP/Mackin Engineering

proposal was based on the quality of the proposal, their background in conducting similar studies and their knowledge of region.

Area firms will be soon be asked to participate in a brief survey to assist in developing the report and providing B-to-B assistance.

### **Smart Government Initiative Saturday work session sets course for greater cooperation in the Mid Mon Valley**

A Saturday April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of area elected officials at the Loins Club in North Belle Vernon marked an important milestone for the Progress Council's Smart Government Initiative.

Local elected from eight Mid Mon Valley communities participated in the three-hour session that included presentations from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs Innovation Clinic (GSPIA) and Progress Council consultant PA Futures.

The Alan Kugler of PA Futures presented forms of cooperation ranging from informal agreements to establishment of a regional municipal service district.

George Dougherty, a professor at GSPIA, reviewed standards for selected municipal services and how cooperative effort can help to meet such standards.

Local elected officials selected several municipal services for potential cooperative effort. The meeting also included discussion of expanding a regional police study currently underway in Charleroi to include several other communities.

### **State House Commerce Committee, chaired by State Representative Peter J. Daley, receives local testimony**

Two Progress Council Executive Committee Executive Committee members and the Progress Council Executive Director provide testimony on local economic conditions and strategies for future development at an April 8<sup>th</sup> held at Mon Valley Career and Technology Center in Speers.

Progress Council vice president Bob Burke discussed using the assets of the region to promote tourism and creating destinations. He cited Augusta Georgia as an example of community leadership. Council Executive Committee member Bill Lee focused on improving the attractiveness of the region for new business including lowering the Corporate Net Income Tax, selling assets including the rivers and low utility costs and efforts to improve the workforce.

Progress Council Executive Director Joe Kirk emphasized that the Expressway and Southern Beltway are the cornerstone projects for revitalization of the region. He also cited the need to create more flexible state community and business programs and improvement of the business climate.

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