

CARBON COUNTY PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

Minutes—May 16, 2008



Those in attendance: Pat Reilly, Kristin Simmons, Wayne Nothstein, Ron Blisard, Peter Kern, Christopher Mena, Larry Evans, Elissa Thorne, Jonathan Johnson, Susan Tyler, and Michael Heery.

Pat Reilly welcomed all members and called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Treasurer's Report:

Susan Tyler paid \$10 membership dues.

MOTION: A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Ron Blisard and seconded by Larry Evans. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Minutes: The minutes of the April 18, 2008 meeting were reviewed.

MOTION: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Joe Guardiani and seconded by Peter Kern. Motion carried.

Survey Update: 2,000 surveys were mailed on May 12, 2008. The news release went out on Tuesday. A press conference will be held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 in the Lehighton Borough Annex auditorium. Channel 16 and TV-13 have been invited. Representative McCall, Michael Heery, Pat Reilly, Wayne Nothstein, and Elissa Thorne will be attending. Elissa will put together the talking points for the press conference. Jeanne requested permission to have all the Right From the Start and SHINE After-school parents participate in the survey. The consensus was to stick to the random survey. Response rate has been great. Currently, 122 surveys have been completed and returned. Jonathan Johnson, the Center for Rural PA, will create an EXCEL spreadsheet to tabulate the results. The data and results will be available for the Executive Board in July. A public presentation will be given in August.

Task Forces

Education: Bill Allison is pulling together a Focus Group of 20 people for the Education Task Force. Where do they go from here and help to identify other issues. Half the group will be composed of education establishments and the other half will be those who are interested & articulate their viewpoints. They would break into small groups and then come back together. Cyndi Zimmerman spoke about the business and education component. It is ongoing and has served over 2,000 students. Many businesses are looking for readiness skills and soft skills for new employees. There is a career pathways consortium in Lehigh County and they have agreed to allow Carbon County to join. The five school districts and CCTI are on board and putting together portfolios. One weakness identified is the middle school piece with grades 5th, 6th, and 7th. Parents have greater aspirations for their children. Also, more exploration on entrepreneurship is needed.

Economic Development & Heritage: The Carbon County Chamber of Commerce Business Expo was a great success. Attendance was increased by 16%. Penn's Peak is a wonderful venue. CCCC membership is 504. The initial goal was to reach 500 within five years instead they reached it within three years. Awards will be given to seniors in the

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school districts. During the first round, 28 grant applications have been received for the “hotel tax” for approximately \$40,000 to be granted by June 30th. The award announcement will be made on June 15th and the checks will be mailed by June 30th. Seven members have been selected to serve on a committee to review the applications. The next round deadline is September 30th. A marketing workshop will be held at 9:30 a.m. on June 10th.

Health & Human Services: A watershed meeting was held. The dental van was the focus. The management of the van was turned over to Blue Mountain Health System with a two-year commitment. It has been operating for two years now and coming to the end of the school year. The last four months they have been working on an accounting system. They are running a small deficit of \$10,000. There are 900 children enrolled out of the 3,000 that are eligible. The van is working at capacity. However, they do lose some time for snow days or PSSA testing. Blue Mountain Health System is committed to another year. The Blue Ribbon Foundation has requested & encouraged the Healthy Smiles, Happy Kids campaign to submit another \$15,000 grant application for the program. The dental van staff will step into the leadership role and AHEC will step back. The summer dental treatments pose challenges regarding transportation since the children are not being transported to school.

Leadership Carbon: The program will be transitioned to the Carbon County Chamber of Commerce after graduation. The announcement will be made at graduation. The current steering committee will remain intact and continue to serve for another year. A new grant application will need to be submitted. Rick Forgay will be the keynote speaker for graduation. Reservations are being accepted until May 1st.

MOTION: Ron Blisard made a motion to approve the transition of Leadership Carbon from Carbon County Partner for Progress to the Carbon County Chamber of Commerce starting on July 1, 2008

Family Collaborative: Copies of the State of the Child & Family in Carbon County are available. Sue Tyler reported that the Safe Kids program presented the “Coconut Crusher” at the last meeting. A 1.5 million dollar grant for five years was received between Palmerton, CCTI, and LCCC. The SHINE After-school program evaluation will be completed very shortly and will be distributed. The program is being modeled in Schuylkill County and Beaver County. The Lehigh Area School District received a “safety” grant to educate teachers and staff regarding conflict resolution.

Carbon County Partners for Progress will meet on Friday, June 20th at 8:30 a.m. The board is looking for program suggestions. Suggested speakers were Carl Wilgus, Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau or Representative Keith McCall. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: *Kristin Simmons*