

Planning Developments

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Dr. Wil Del Pilar, our Keynote Speaker for the Annual Dinner.

SAVE THE DATE...

The Mifflin County Planning Commission will hold its Annual Meeting on **Thursday, April 5, 2018**

Planning Commission Holds Annual Meeting

The Mifflin County Planning Commission held its annual dinner meeting on April 6, 2017 with approximately 96 people in attendance. Attendees included Mifflin County Commissioners, municipal officials, local planning commission members, and individuals from local businesses, organizations and various engineering firms.

The featured speaker for the evening was Dr. Wil Del Pilar, Deputy Secretary Postsecondary and Higher Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education. Dr. Del Pilar spoke on the access of postsecondary education in rural communities. His office believes that, through research, 63% of the jobs in Pennsylvania will require a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025. This does not necessarily have to be a four-year college degree, but could be a certificate, license or associate's degree. He also said a majority of the jobs will be in science, technology, engineering and machinery fields.

Currently across the state, only 12% of students are enrolled in career technology education programs. One of the goals of Dr. Del Pilar's office is to increase the number of students enrolled in these programs. His goal is to see 60% of residents or students receiving these certifications. In Pennsylvania, 44% of residents have some kind of postsecondary education. In Mifflin County, approximately 21% of residents have some kind of postsecondary education.

Dr. Del Pilar spoke to the group as to how the school district and the state can work together to close the gap between Mifflin County and the rest of the state. The Department of Education is working to implement a program that requires school districts to develop and implement career/ occupational exploration plans for students in grades K-12 that are aligned with the state's Career Education and Work Standards.

Prior to Dr. Del Pilar's presentation, Mr. William Gomes, Director of the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department, presented the 2016 Annual Report. The report highlighted the different committees that have been active in 2016, as well as the various projects and services that took place in 2016. The 2016 Annual Report also highlighted the projects of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the plans that have been reviewed for subdivision and development and the programs that were offered this year for the members of the Commission.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Community Planning Award. This joint award is presented by the Mifflin County Planning Commission and the Mifflin County Commissioners to an individual, organization, or community that has demonstrated leadership in community planning. The award is given annually to recognize the efforts and talents of an individual or organization to improve

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) SPOTLIGHT

Brown Township



ADA Ramps, truncated domes and related sidewalk project in Reedsville

This project took place in September and October of 2017 and is now complete. A total of 11 new ADA ramps were installed at various intersections throughout Reedsville to eliminate architectural barriers in the area and to improve access for handicapped or elderly individuals. The low bidder and contractor for the project was Mid-State Paving, LLC of Middleburg, PA. The engineer for the project was Nittany Engineering and Associates, LLC of Centre Hall, PA. The construction cost was \$49,980.00. This project was funded with Federal Fiscal Years (FFY'S) 2013 & 2014 funds.

Woodland Road and East Back Mountain Road waterline extension project in Reedsville

Currently, six families in this area are not served by a nearby public water line. Some of their wells are contaminated by the close proximity of neighbors' septic systems. In late 2016 and early 2017, an income survey was conducted in the area to determine eligibility and following the survey, it was determined that 70% of the residents within the service benefit area had low/moderate incomes. The piping and related fittings will be purchased through COSTARS dealer: L/B Water Service, Inc. of Selinsgrove, PA. The stone for the project will be purchased through COSTARS dealer: Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc., Milroy quarry. The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Lewistown will complete the installation of the line and will provide manpower and equipment for the project. The funds will be used for materials and equipment rental costs. This project began in November of 2017. This project is being funded with FFY's 2014 & 2015 funds.



Following completion and testing of the main line, the residents may connect their private laterals to the main line and begin using the public water. CDBG funding reimbursement is available to qualifying residents for their lateral connection. Income interviews need to be completed to determine qualification of residents. This project is being funded with FFY 2015 funds.



Demolition of a blighted structure (145 Franklin Street) in Lumber City, Reedsville

In late summer of 2017, Brown Township gained a temporary conservatorship of the property. An asbestos inspection has been completed and results determined the presence of asbestos. A request for proposal was then completed for the demolition of the house, foundation and related outbuildings, including the asbestos removal. Mike's Landscaping and Excavating, Inc. of Reedsville was the successful contractor. A contract will be signed in late December and demolition will follow. Final site work dressing may need to be completed in the spring of 2018. This project is being funded with FFY 2015 funds.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) SPOTLIGHT

Derry Township

Pinewood and Sawmill Roads and Rosemont Avenue Street Reconstruction in Yeagertown

In August, 2017, two bids were received for these road projects. The project consists of storm water improvements and road reconstruction. Jay Fulkroad & Sons, Inc. of McAlisterville was the low bidder in the amount of \$112,723.19. Work began in late October and was completed by late November. Engineering was completed by Buchart-Horn, Inc. of State College. This project is being funded with FFY's 2014 & 2015 funds.



Habitat for Humanity Land Acquisition

In June, 2017, Habitat for Humanity of Mifflin County acquired property along Lindy Lane in Derry Township. Construction of the new single family house started shortly thereafter and was completed in mid-December. The total cost of the property acquisition was \$36,000.00. This project was funded from FFY's 2013, 2014 & 2015 funds.

Granville Township

Snook's Hill Bridge Replacement in Granville

In July, two bids were received for the replacement of the deteriorated bridge with a new pre-cast concrete box culvert near the intersection of Snook's Hill and Granville Roads in the village of Granville. Construction is anticipated to take place in the winter or early spring, weather depending, with final restoration taking place as soon as weather permits in the spring. The low bidder was Kevin E. Raker Construction, LLC of Sunbury in the amount of \$281,866.76. The engineer for the project is The EADS Group, Inc. of Lewistown. This project is being funded with FFY's, 2013, 2014, 2015 & 2016 CDBG funds.



Lewistown Borough

Ridge Road and Marble Street Reconstruction

In August, 2017, two bids were received for the road projects listed above. The projects consisted of milling of Ridge Road and Marble Street and road reconstruction. Jay Fulkroad & Sons, Inc. of McAlisterville was the low bidder in the amount of \$44,054.16. Work began in late October and was completed by late November. This project is being funded with FFY's 2014 & 2015 funds.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) SPOTLIGHT

HOME 2015

This HOME program consisted of a local target area of Juniata Terrace, Lewistown and Kistler Boroughs. These three boroughs have the highest concentrations of low/moderate income residents in Mifflin County. Currently, nine clients are at some point throughout the rehabilitation process of their homes, ranging from initial interview, inspection, lead based paint risk assessment, asbestos and radon testing, electrical inspection, bidding and contracting. We will have several projects under construction in the coming year. The Department of Labor and Industry has recently required a hybrid version of the PA State Prevailing Wages to be included in rehab projects exceeding \$25,000.00 in costs. This, along with other factors, has diminished the total number of houses we can assist with funds.

Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program

One house has currently been inspected and is in the process of the Lead Based Paint Risk Assessment, Asbestos and Radon Testing and the electrical inspection. Following all of these processes, the project will go out for bid. This project will be funded with CDBG FFY's 2014 & 2015 funds.

SEDA-COG Mann Edge Terrace 2

This project was recently completed and is currently in the process of being occupied by the new residents. A ribbon cutting and open house ceremony was held in early October of 2017. It is currently fully occupied. Mifflin County used \$140,000.00 of their CDBG funds to assist in acquiring the property. Funds came from FFY's 2013 & 2014 funds.

Mifflin County



McVeytown Borough Authority Sewer Rehabilitation

This project consists of open cut trench repairs and cured in place pipe (CIPP), public lateral replacement, as needed, throughout areas of McVeytown Borough and a small portion of Oliver Township. The existing line was videoed and areas needing repair/replacement were identified by the engineer, Gwin, Dobson & Foreman, Inc. of Altoona. Bids were due in early-August, 2017 and a total of four were received. The low bidder was State Pipe Services, Inc. of Cranberry Township, PA with a bid amount was \$846,375.00. A contract was signed in early October and the Notice to Proceed was issued on October 16, 2017. Work began in late October and will be completed by the spring of 2018. This project, including engineering, is funded in FFY's 2014, 2015 & 2015 competitive funds.

Part of this grant also assists income eligible homeowners with reimbursement for repairs/replacement of their private lateral costs. Two homeowners qualified for this assistance.



Annual Meeting (*continued from front page*)

our community. This award is a way for our municipalities to recognize positive planning efforts. This year, James Tunall was recognized for his past contributions to planning and improving the quality of life in Mifflin County.

Mr. Tunall worked and was active in Mifflin County for 47 years and served as the Executive Director of the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau from 2005-2016 to promote tourism and business development throughout the Juniata Valley. Mr. Tunall was active on many boards including the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation, Downtown Lewistown, Inc., the Lewistown Rotary Club, the Community Garden Club, and St. John's Lutheran Church. He was an active member of the Mifflin County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee and Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee from 2012-2014 that resulted in a plan to create a vision for the county. He was a big supporter and active participant in the work of the Mifflin County Academy of Science and Technology, serving on two of their advisory committees.

Mr. Tunall worked tirelessly to find solutions to problems in our community, such as his work with the Biggest Loser program to help cut down obesity issues in the county and provided a clear leadership role to help with community projects such as the Fourth of July Fireworks fundraiser, Goose Day festivities and the annual Festival of Ice project. Mr. Tunall was the recipient of the 2015 Good Scout Award from the Shawnee District Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America. James Tunall was an invaluable asset to Mifflin County and is sorely missed.



Juniata River Trail Update

In December 2017, the Borough of Lewistown was awarded \$250,000 from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to develop the Juniata River Trail. These funds will complement funds Mifflin County received in 2016 for the trail. The funds from these two funding sources will match each other to help complete this phase of the project.

This project will develop the first segment of the Juniata River Trail, a multipurpose recreation trail along the north bank of the Juniata River. The trail will provide residents and visitors a facility for walking, jogging and cycling. Phase I of the trail will develop a trail approximately 3/4 of a mile in length, extending from Victory Park, west along the north shore of the river to Crystal Springs Avenue. The trail will be located on the towpath of the old Juniata Canal. The trail corridor area and Victory Park are currently owned by the Borough of Lewistown. The trail will have a positive economic impact on the community by encouraging healthful activity, providing access to the river, and drawing visitors to the area. A 10 foot wide multipurpose paved trail will be developed and Victory Park will be enhanced to serve as the eastern trailhead. The existing parking area in Victory Park will be upgraded to ensure ADA accessibility and connections to the existing boat launch and proposed trail. The improvements will include signage, solar lighting around the parking area, a guiderail to separate trail users from vehicles at the boat launch, benches and trash receptacles. The project is consistent with the Juniata/Mifflin County Greenways and Open Space Rural Recreation Plan, which led to the development of the Juniata River Feasibility Study. This Juniata River Feasibility Study was completed in 2015 and recommends this section of the Juniata River Trail as the first phase for development.

Mifflin County Applies for Funds for a Streetscape Project in Reedsville

For the past two years, Brown Township and a local citizens group, the Reedsville Community Association, have been working to improve the appearance and restore the vitality of downtown Reedsville. This effort has resulted in the mini-park, Brown's Mills Square, and ADA improvements along Main Street. However, a complete, unobstructed sidewalk system is missing, and is important in the township's effort to improve pedestrian access. Main Street has overgrown trees in some places that are heaving up sidewalks, while the rest of the corridor has either deteriorating sidewalks, or no sidewalks other than gravel areas. One of the main attractions in downtown Reedsville is the Reedsville Youth Park where the annual youth fair for the county takes place, as well other community events during the year. Easy access to the facility is difficult for pedestrians, forcing most to drive even for what would normally be considered an easy walking distance. These unsafe conditions pose potential problems for pedestrians. The existing conditions can likewise make travel quite difficult for disabled pedestrians.



Considering this situation, Brown Township requested that Mifflin County assist them with an application to PennDOT through the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds to assist with this project. The application was submitted in September 2017, requesting \$834,610 with the township being responsible for all engineering design costs.

The primary goal of this project is to replace deteriorated sidewalks along North and South Main Streets and install new sidewalk where none exists. The Reedsville Streetscape project will improve the pedestrian access and walking experience for area residents with the proposed improvements. Aside from sidewalk replacement or installation, the project will also include trees, pedestrian level lighting, improve stormwater facilities and better delineate crosswalks where appropriate.

This is a very competitive application process with 172 applications submitted across the state and only \$55 million dollars available. A decision on successful applications is anticipated in the Spring of 2018.

Electric Avenue/Mill Road Study Underway

In December of 2016, Mifflin County submitted an application to PennDOT for Supplemental Planning funds as part of SEDA-COG's Unified Planning Work Program to develop a study of the Electric Avenue/Mill Road intersection. PennDOT approved Mifflin County's proposal in February of 2017.

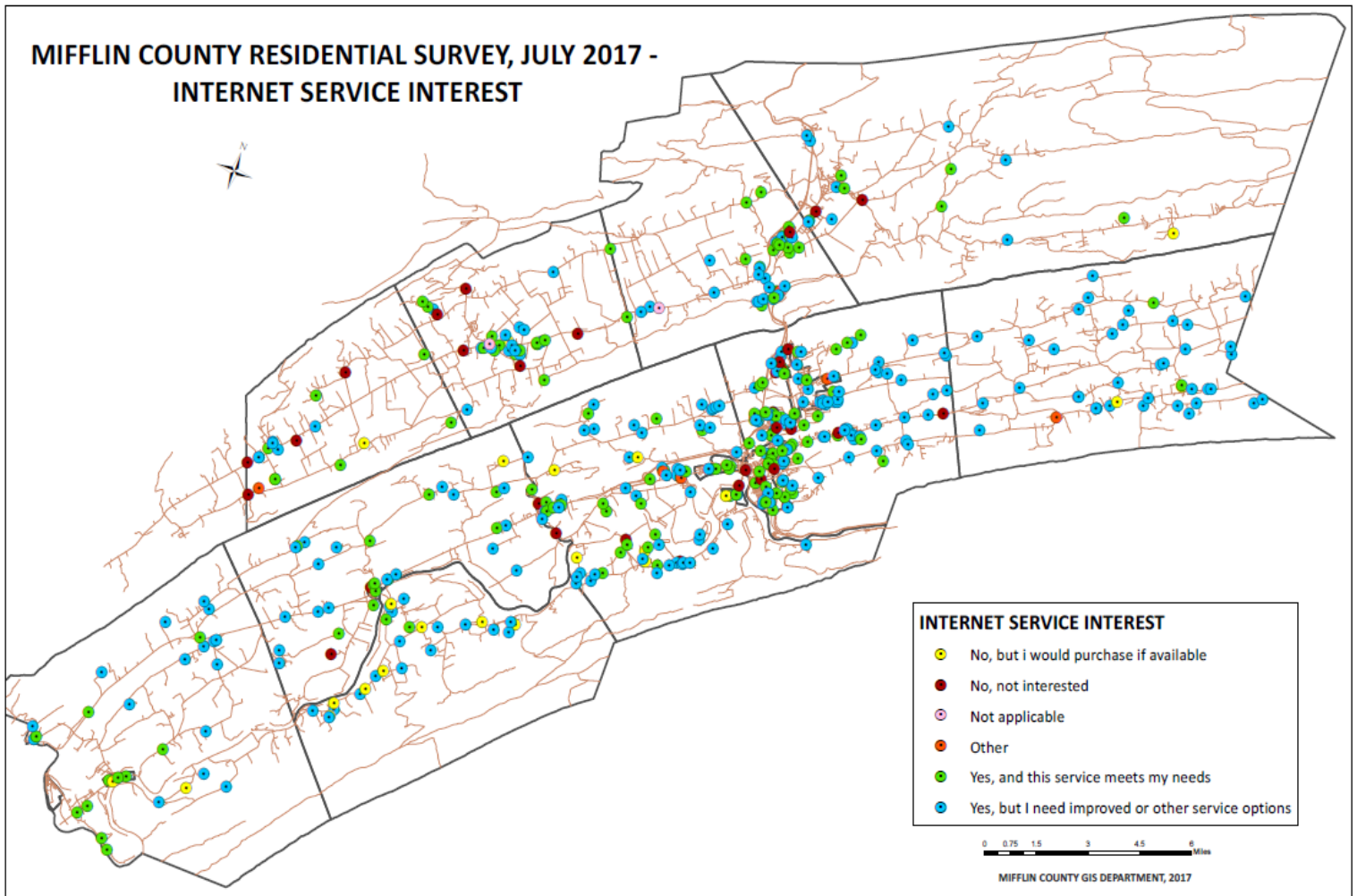
The overall purpose of the Electric Avenue/Mill Road Interchange Improvement Study is to undertake a transportation and land use study to address an interchange deficiency, conflicts and safety issues just off of the U.S. Route 322 corridor, as well as develop an action strategy for implementation. This proposal was recommended in the Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan in 2000, the updated Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan of 2014 and the SEDA-COG Long Range Transportation Plan. The focus of the study will evaluate current and future transportation needs and deficiencies, ways to improve safety, capacity constraints, land use conflicts and approaches to address these needs, including improved access management. An advisory committee representing major stakeholders was established in August of 2017 and has been meeting over the past few months. The study will be completed in early 2018 with recommendations on ways to improve the intersection. Matching funds for this study were provided by Mifflin County and Derry Township. The consulting team for this project is The EADS Group, Inc. and Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Mifflin County Internet Survey

During the Summer of 2017, the Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee completed a residential survey of some 2,000 households in Mifflin County. The response rate was approximately 28% with a margin of error of less than 4%. Approximately 54% of the respondents stated that they need service or improved serviced while 34% of the households responding were satisfied with their current service. As a result of the survey, the Committee, with the help of the Mifflin County GIS Department, was able to map internet service throughout the county. One of the maps clearly delineates where service problems exist in the county while another map produced depicts service provider information for the main carriers, including Century Link, Verizon, Comcast and Nittany Media. The survey also showed that the primary reasons for using the internet was for accessing the general web and email followed by social media. As a result of the survey and the work of the Committee, this information was shared with providers and some have already starting improving service, including Atlantic Broadband and Nittany Media. Copies of the maps and survey results are available at the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department. This survey has been recognized by state agencies as a good vehicle to better determine broadband needs in a rural area. Further, the Committee has become a vehicle to help with contacting providers by being more responsive to resident needs.

A smaller survey was also sent to local businesses first through a broadcast email submitted through the Juniata Valley Chamber of Commerce and later through a postcard outreach. Although responses were more limited, most businesses felt that their current internet service was adequate, but raised concern about the adequacy for future service.

The Committee is currently working with both the Mifflin and Juniata County School Districts to survey the needs of students in the area with results anticipated in early 2018. Also, the Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis and is working in conjunction with SEDA-COG and four other counties to secure funding to conduct an overall feasibility study on how to improve broadband service in our area.



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Developing a Better Community

*Contact the Planning and
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Upcoming Events:

Planning Commission Meetings - January 25, February 22,
March 22, April 26, May 24, June 28

Subdivision Review Meetings - January 18, February 15,
March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21

**Save the date! - Mifflin County
Planning Commission
Annual Dinner
Thursday, April 5, 2018**