

THE MONROE 2030 ACTION TEAM

Summary of Recent Activities #1: February 2016

This note serves as the first of what will be a regular update on the activities of the Monroe 2030 Action Team. You can learn more about the initiative at: <http://www.monroecountypa.gov/Dept/2030Action/Pages/default.aspx>

We officially began our work in December 2015, when we held several meetings of our executive committee¹ and kicked off the work of three task force groups designed to address key elements related to Monroe County's economic future. These task force focus areas emerged as high priorities from past studies of the Monroe County economy and from input provided at the 2015 Monroe County Economic Summit and elsewhere.

- *Small Business & Entrepreneurship*: What can we do to make it easier to start and grow a business? (Task Force Chair-Mary Frances Postupack, East Stroudsburg University)
- *Community Collaboration*: How can our 4 boroughs and 20 townships work better together to support economic development? (Task Force Chair: Annie Lamberton, Tobyhanna Township Supervisor)
- *Workforce Development*: How can we help local people build successful careers and develop a local talent base that employers need? (Task Force Chair: Rachel Frick Cardelle, Northampton Community College)

Each of the task forces is composed of a group of citizens and community leaders interested in enhancing the future of our community. The task forces are now engaged in what we might call the "research and discovery" phase of their work. They are identifying the most pressing challenges facing the Monroe County economy and seeking to learn more about potential solutions.

The groups will continue their research over the coming months and intend to meet every 2-3 weeks to dig deeper into the issues. This work is ongoing, but we can present a few highlights. The Small Business and Entrepreneurship group has noted that Monroe County has poor reputation as a place to start a business. At the same time, new entrepreneurs don't know where to go for help or how they can network with or learn from other business owners. The group is seeking to develop better local business networks and to provide better guidance on how to run a successful business in the County.

The Community Collaboration team is seeking ways to make local government more business friendly by identifying new rules and procedures to simplify the development and business start-up processes. They are considering the creation of model regulations and testing these ideas with a few local pilot projects.

¹ Member are listed at: <http://www.monroecountypa.gov/Dept/2030Action/Pages/ExecutiveTeam.aspx>

Finally, the workforce development group has two leading priorities. First, how can we do a better job of helping local residents find good jobs in growing local sectors like hospitality/tourism and health care? Second, the group is looking at ways to improve the provision of career counseling services to local youth so that they are better prepared for the world of work.

We welcome your input and interest in the work of the Monroe 2030 Action Team and we will continue to provide updates on our efforts. To learn more, visit the 2030 Action Team link at <http://www.monroecountypa.gov/>.