



A Pennsylvania Local Development District

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Optical Filters Awarded at Northwest Commission's 2009 Annual Dinner

The Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission celebrated 42 years of service to the region at the 2009 Annual Dinner held April 1, at Cross Creek Resort in Titusville. One hundred eighty-seven people attended the event. The night began with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner, a program, and an awards presentation. One of the awards given that evening was the 2008 Business of the Year Award, which was presented to Optical Filters.

The Northwest Commission's Business and Economic Development staff works with a variety of companies located throughout the region. The Commission provides assistance in exporting, government contracting, loans, business attraction, and coordinates the Northwest PA Keystone Innovation Zone. Each year the Business and Economic Development staff members nominate companies that are working with the Northwest Commission to expand their business and provide quality job opportunities for the people living in the region.

The Northwest has provided a number of services to Optical Filters. In a period of four years, the company has received two loans from the Northwest Commission's and increased employees by twenty-five persons. Through assistance from the Commission's Government Contracting Program, Optical Filters received a government contract in the amount of \$1.4 million. This business is also located in the Northwest Pennsylvania Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ). As a KIZ registered company, there are a number of benefits that are available to companies for research and development. Optical Filters has submitted a request for a micro-grant, which is currently under review by the KIZ board. In addition, the company is interviewing students from regional universities for potential internship opportunities, another advantage of the Keystone Innovation Zone designation.

Michael and Clare Dent, the owners of Optical Filters, are not only active with the Northwest Commission Programs, but they are always willing to help the Commission. A few examples include their help with a quality of life marketing piece used to promote the region to potential businesses looking to relocate or expand here. When asked, this company enthusiastically agreed to provide a testimonial as they are truly proud to be located in the northwest Pennsylvania region. They have also promoted the northwest region and its benefits to foreign investors. They are experts on showing the benefits of relocating to do business in Northwest Pennsylvania as they relocated here from the United Kingdom.

Denise McCloskey, Executive Director of the Northwest Commission, said, "In these tough economic times, it is refreshing to watch a new company flourish in the region and an industry develop. It is even more rewarding when the company is run by warm, friendly people, who are not only proud of their business, but the entire region and all that it offers."



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Other nominees in the category of Business of the Year included Ron Jones Hardwood and American Cap Company. The Commission also recognized three other awards at the Annual Dinner, these included: Clarion County Commissioner Donna Hartle as Board Member of the Year, the city of Oil City as Local Government of the Year, and the Penn-Northwest Development Corporation as Partner of the Year.

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Established in 1967, the Northwest Commission is a regional resource for business and economic development as well as community development and planning. The non-profit agency is composed of a team of skilled professionals dedicated to sustaining economic vitality and growth in the northwest Pennsylvania region by fostering local, state, and federal partnerships across public and private sector lines. The Northwest Commission provides programs such as business financing, government contracting, international marketing, grants, transportation, and technology assistance to eight counties in northwest Pennsylvania including: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren.

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