



*A Pennsylvania Local Development District*

## PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

### **Fourth Annual Connect 2 Communities Builds Partnerships and Awareness**

The Northwest Commission hosted the fourth annual Connect 2 Communities Conference at Cross Creek Resort in Titusville on Wednesday, May 5, 2010. Over 145 community leaders, industry professionals, and local government officials attended the event. The conference provided educational sessions to spread awareness of municipal programs and funding opportunities that are available to assist the region's local governments and communities. The Connect 2 Communities Conference is integral to the continuing development of northwest Pennsylvania in light of the challenging economic climate.

Attendees chose between eleven different training sessions. The sessions included: USDA Rural Development Programs and Grants; Technology and Broadband; Storm water Management; Energy-Act 129; Understanding Pennsylvania Development Agencies; Greenways, a discussion of Block Grant opportunities for Pennsylvania Green and Open Space Districts; The PA Wilds, regarding the artisan trail, signage grant opportunities, and the Design Guide; Marcellus Shale as an energy resource; Your Bridge Systems; Joint Purchasing for municipalities, a how to session on working with COSTARS; and Dealing with Blight.

During the lunch session, everyone in attendance heard from Keynote Speaker, Bill Petit, District Executive of PennDOT Engineering District 1-0. Petit's speech, titled, "Connect 2 Communities, A Bold, New Frontier," provided information on the sustainability of transportation routes, and best practices in light of budgetary deficits.

State agency representatives from DCED, DEP, DCNR, PennDOT, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and USDA Rural Development attended the event. Participation by these agencies offered the local governments and municipalities an open forum to ask questions and gather information on the resources available to them.

For additional information on the Northwest Commission's Community Development Programs, please visit the Commission's website at [www.nwcommission.org](http://www.nwcommission.org). The website provides information on Technology, Energy, Transportation, Geographic Information Systems, and Community Revitalization.

Northwest Pennsylvania community organizations and municipal leaders who are interested in bringing revitalization information and training to your central business districts and neighborhoods can contact Suzanne Gagliardo, CMSM, Manager of Community Development for the Northwest Commission at 814.677.4800 x122 or at [suzanneg@nwcommission.org](mailto:suzanneg@nwcommission.org).

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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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