

ANNUAL REPORT

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DLI is funded in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community & Economic Development and contributions from local businesses, organizations, and property owners.

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITY

The new reality for Downtown Lewistown, Inc. and organizations like it across the state is to cultivate local interest and support for local community revitalization and development efforts. Unveiled as a part of the 2011 state Budget, significant reductions are forecast for funding support of Downtown and Neighborhood Programs going forward.

Funding decisions will be based on the community addressing three main focal points: partnership, performance based results, and competition. Local leaders, while concerned about the effects this reduction may cause, are viewing this development as a potential opportunity to showcase the already strong partnerships and cooperative ventures that are occurring in the County and region.

As an illustration of this partnership, DLI, the Borough, County and the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation, among others, are partnering in the development of the former Mann Edge Tool Company site. A further example of this cooperation relates to working with key downtown anchors to expand their facilities and utilize underdeveloped spaces to accommodate this welcome growth. Additionally, DLI is working with a local investor to rehabilitate a substantial currently vacant mixed-use building into quality upscale living quarters in the downtown and Neighborhood. DLI is assisting the Friends of the Embassy Theatre to secure loan guarantee assistance through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) facilitating the utilization of significant public funds to effect the exterior rehabilitation of the historic structure. With the establishment of the Lewistown Police Department, DLI is facilitating the continued Downtown-East End Neighborhood Community Watch effort and is expecting to provide input into a host of Borough ordinance and property development strategies.

As a part of securing additional funding for local initiatives, the State will be implementing a host of performance measures tied into tax benefits, return on investment and other direct impacts on base improvements to revenue. The final piece is competition where each community will match up with other regions of the Commonwealth, Country and world to produce results for its citizens.

Currently DLI is supported in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community & Economic Development and contributions from local businesses, organizations and property owners, including the Borough of Lewistown and MCIDC.

In addition to this monetary support, the in-kind volunteer efforts of Directors, Committee members, community leaders and private individuals are invaluable in advancing both these investments and actions set forth in the Charter Plan for Downtown Lewistown and the Five Points/East End Neighborhood Strategy in combination with efforts to improve the region as a whole.



PA Department of Community & Economic Development Elm Street Program Community Designation Logo

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIONS HIGHLIGHTED

Residents and community leaders continue to implement the collective vision for the designated Five Points/East End Neighborhood Elm Street area. The Neighborhood encompasses properties east of Dorcas Street to Walnut Street with the southern edge following Rec Park. The Neighborhood also encompasses properties on the north side of East Third Street to North Main Street. The Neighborhood also includes the site of the former Mann Edge Tool Company Complex.

Neighborhood residents and community leaders continue planning work at the Fountain Square Park site. Consistent with the planned improvements, the Committee has secured the services of an engineer to design supports related to the placement of the proposed fountain at the site. Other committees have developed specific projects or supported activities based upon the feedback of resident responses received through the Annual Quality of Life survey of the Neighborhood conducted each fall. In an attempt to reach Neighborhood residents and property owners, a communications network is being initiated to engage residents and help them become more involved. Additionally, the Residential Reinvestment Program has continued to facilitate improvements to residential or mixed-use properties that are intended "to preserve and maintain the historic qualities and to foster image-making improvements to all designated/awarded residential properties". The Program is designed to work with other funding sources to leverage coordinated improvement to meet four specific objectives: Reduce or eliminate vacancies in the Neighborhood and promote the adaptive conversion to single family ownership; Bring substandard building conditions into compliance with basic health, safety, and building codes and enhance the visual appeal of the Neighborhood; Facilitate compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access requirements; and Assist with the preservation of historic residential and mixed-use buildings and assure such buildings are rehabilitated in an appropriate manner. A maximum \$5,000 Residential Reinvestment Reimbursement Grant may be available for projects costing \$10,000 or more. All Residential Reinvestment Grant reimbursements must be matched. Some applicants may be eligible for a reduced matching requirement based upon applicable income guidelines. (See the specific breakout of the Program elsewhere in this Report).



Beginning in 2011, the Neighborhood Clean, Safe & Green Committee has partnered with the newly formed Lewistown Police Department and the Mifflin County Communities That Care Prevention Board, to implement the Five Points/East End Neighborhood Community Watch Program. Mifflin County Communities That Care Community Watch Coordinator, Chuck Dicken, has been engaged to actively recruit and reconstitute Neighborhood Watch Groups throughout the County. Additionally, Officer Bill Roberts of the Lewistown Police Department has been assigned to coordinate Department interactions with local Watch Groups. In a demonstration of further cooperation, the Mifflin County Housing Authority hosts the Five Points/East End Neighborhood Community Watch Group the second Thursday of the month at Authority owned and managed Burgard Apartments, at 120 Chestnut Street. Additionally, the Clean Safe & Green Committee has overseen maintenance and clean-up projects in the Neighborhood. The Neighbors & Economy Committee has been working with a number of partners to develop a community garden in the Neighborhood. (See the specific details of these efforts elsewhere in this Report) Additionally, the Neighborhood Coordinator works with residents and property owners on a grass roots level to plan and develop improvements that are of benefit to both the property owner & Neighborhood. Residents and community supporters are invited to take an active role in leading the effort through participation in the four established Committees implementing the Neighborhood strategy. These are listed below with their respective Committee Chair/Vice Chair.

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Image & Identity Committee	— Rhonda Walters, Chair
Neighbors & Economy Committee	— Jim Tunall, Chair
Character & Design Committee	— Bill Gomes, Chair
Clean, Safe & Green Committee	— Ron Napikoski, Vice Chair—Safety Geoff Burke, Vice Chair—Green Adam Barkett, Vice Chair—Clean

Call the Downtown Lewistown, Inc.-Five Points/East End Neighborhood Office at 248-9606 for more information.

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS—DEVELOPMENTS

A partnership of organizations and businesses have been working in earnest to develop a community garden in the Neighborhood. Initiated by the Rotary Club of Lewistown, representatives of Lewistown Borough, Community Partnerships RC&D and Mifflin County Master Gardeners have met and discussed details related to the siting of a garden available for residents and community members to potentially raise their own produce in a town environment. Possible locations and issues related to use, governance, etc. are being considered at this time.

An enhancement of the current location of the Tri-Valley Farmers Market was implemented this past fall, at the conclusion of Market, with the Borough of Lewistown securing bids to replace deteriorated or missing sections of the South Mall roof structure. The resulting improvement was so well received that the Borough is planning a similar enhancement to the north mall area.

Frank & Joe Pannizzo, owners of property on East Market Street worked with the Borough to develop parking spaces along North Dorcas Street adjacent to the Five Points intersection. Nine spaces were placed with several spaces designated for use by tenants of the facility, or a net gain of five spaces. The replacement of the SEDACOG Joint Rail Authority line on Water Street in summer 2010 encompassed the replacement of railroad infrastructure combined with utility upgrades. The railroad project was the catalyst for action by the Municipal Authority to replace the aging water line and for road base and asphalt overlayment improvements. Through the project, three separate utilities were upgraded, as well as two railroad crossings taking advantage of timing for the significant rehabilitation effort.

EMBASSY THEATRE DEVELOPMENTS

DLI is assisting the Friends of the Embassy Theatre to secure financing for an exterior rehabilitation project to “seal the envelope” of the 1927 National Register listed Theatre Building and provide minimal fire and panic infrastructure allowing for limited use of the building at the conclusion of the rehabilitation project. Grant funds in the form of an \$85,000 Keystone Preservation grant from the PA Historical & Museum Commission, a \$246,000 appropriation from former Congressman John Peterson secured through the Save America’s Treasures Program, and a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant allocation from Lewistown Borough, are secure but require matching reimbursement commitments. The Friends have made application to USDA for Loan Guarantee assistance through the Community Facilities Program and are working with USDA personnel to secure the financing needed to allow the project to move ahead. The Friends have engaged the services of local architect, Denson Groenendaal & Associates, who have prepared the construction estimate and will be managing the project during construction. The work will entail the replacement of damaged or missing bricks, selective repointing of mortar, installation and replacement of exterior doors and emergency lighting fixtures, replacement of the main & marquee roof, and rehabilitation/replacement of the marble wainscoting. This rehabilitation work is supported by both a Historic Structures Report and Development Plan completed previously by the SEDACOG Community Resource Center and Architect Ray Goodman, retired, outlining needed phased improvements to rehabilitate the structure for adaptive reuse.

Upon receiving the needed loan guarantee financing through USDA, The Friends will be in a position to let the project for bid later this summer and see construction commence shortly thereafter.

RESIDENTIAL REINVESTMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Through a \$50,000 allocation of Residential Reinvestment funds from the PA Department of Community & Economic Development, residents are eligible for direct reimbursement grant assistance to fund improvements to residential and mixed-use properties in the designated Elm Street Five Points/East End Neighborhood. Property owners are eligible for up to \$5,000 in assistance for qualified projects that meet four specific rehabilitation objectives: 1) Reduce or eliminate vacancies, encourage persons to remain in the Neighborhood, and promote the adaptive conversion to single-family ownership; 2) bring substandard building conditions into compliance with basic health, safety, and building codes and enhance the visual appeal of the Neighborhood; 3) facilitate compliance with federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access requirements; and 4) assist with the preservation of historic residential and mixed-use buildings and assure that such buildings are rehabilitated in an appropriate manner. In all cases, an exterior inspection identifying code compliance items and objectives will be performed with the completed project having to meet exterior code approval. All Residential Reinvestment Grant Projects must be matched. Some applicants may be eligible for a reduced matching requirement based upon applicable income guidelines.

Since the Program was launched, six projects have been completed, with another two receiving reimbursement grant commitments. Additionally, three applications are under review and will be brought to the Board of Directors for approval in the near future. To date, a minimum amount of \$756 was expended for a minor project to a major rehabilitation of a formerly vacant residence carrying a maximum allocation of \$4,217. Total commitments as of May 25, 2011 stands at \$16,371.00.

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DOWNTOWN STEWARDSHIP

The Mifflin County Historical Society, DLI and the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau continued the program to recognize owners of significant historical properties and the care they have taken to maintain and preserve landmark buildings. Each property was represented with plaques, manufactured by local entrepreneur Bryson Wagner of Bryson's Stuff, characterizing the site's contribution to the heritage of Mifflin County, and the date of the property's significance. This year the Committee and Society recognized the 1875 McFadden House, currently housing Clear Concepts Counseling, on North Main Street, the 1908 Taylor House and current location of the offices of Community Partnerships RC&D, also located on North Main Street and the 1919 Ohev Sholom Synagogue on East Third Street. With the addition of these three buildings, the properties so honored now numbers thirty with additional sites slated for recognition this summer.



ANNUAL MEETING HELD

The Downtown Lewistown, Inc. Board of Directors held the Annual Meeting May 26, 2011 electing Officers & Directors for the 2011-2012 year in addition to a review of the past year of Downtown and Neighborhood Development, synopsis of programs, projects and services advanced during the past year and a summary of various business developments and improvements that occurred in the downtown and Five Points/East End Neighborhood. A listing of the current Officers and Directors is provided on page 1.

DOWNTOWN-NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS UPDATE

A proposal to redevelop a portion of the former Mann Edge Tool Company site for elderly housing was resubmitted for PA Housing & Finance Agency (PHFA) funding consideration by the Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation partnering with the SEDA-COG Housing Development Corporation. The \$5 million project leverages local investment of \$100,000 from both Lewistown Borough and Mifflin County to support the construction of 31 units of elderly housing at the corner of Water & South Dorcas Streets. With the potential receipt of these funds, this former Brownfield location will see new life as residential living quarters tagged as Mann Edge Terrace, in recognition of its past heritage and unique location overlooking Kishacoquillas Creek. A similar project to redevelop the former Hotel Lewistown property into elderly and transitional living quarters is seeking funding from PHFA as well and could help stimulate additional development at a key gateway into the downtown.

During the past year GME Communications, LLC and G Man Entertainment relocated their business to the Regional Business Center on East Market Street. Arbogast Crafts N Such & Video opened at 29 West Market Street, the Chestnut Street Superette reopened at 44 Chestnut Street and Skills opened additional facilities while Broponics, Paisley Bride, and Patrice's Boutique discontinued operations in the downtown.

DLI continued business development services to private business owners by offering direct assistance on a one to one basis on a wide range of issues/concerns including expanding product offerings, exploring new business opportunities, information regarding current programs and trends, and review of trade area and customer base research. DLI continued maintenance of comprehensive business directory listings, enhanced web presence and exploration of funding opportunities and programs to address reinvestment options in the Downtown and adjacent Neighborhood. DLI works with MCIDC to assist with retention and expansion opportunities for existing businesses and maintains a strong working relationship with the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce & Visitor's Bureau to actively improve the quality of life for employees and residents of the Juniata Valley.