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# 2010 A year of positive change.

*Change. It's a point of  
difference from what  
has gone before.*

In the year 2010, our community changed a great deal. At the Chamber, we certainly had our share of challenges. The economy...Regional issues...Attracting revenue and controlling expenses...Building and retaining membership...And the list goes on...

However, despite the challenges, I am proud to report that our staff and volunteers have not missed a step. We have worked hard, designing and implementing programs that brought about—and will continue to generate—positive results.

**Our focus included an emphasis on these positive action areas:**

- + Promoting Entrepreneurial Development and a Culture of Innovation
- + Recruiting and Retaining Targeted Businesses
- + Linking Businesses to a Skilled Workforce
- + Building Our Community's Strengths
- + Providing Compelling Member Programs and Services
- + Maintaining Quality Administration and Asset Management

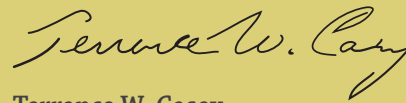
In addition, this annual report is also a time to say thanks.

This progress would not be possible without the hundreds of volunteers who serve the Chamber through our committees, our boards of directors, or on a project or initiative basis.

I would also like to thank our investors for your continued support of the Chamber over the past year. We know the economy remains challenging for the business community. We understand that you are watching every dollar very closely. We think about this continuously, and are driven to provide you with a positive return on your investment. Nothing less is acceptable to us.

As always, thank you for your continued support for this organization and for the Greater Wilkes-Barre area. Let's now move fast forward to 2011 with a momentum for even more positive results. Because when it comes to Greater Wilkes-Barre and our region, the future is here!

Sincerely,



Terrance W. Casey,

**Immediate Past Chairman**


**Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry**



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# FastForward

*Our Goals:*

- + Make Greater Wilkes-Barre a preferred business alternative to tri-state metro markets.
  - + Rank in the Top 75 Best Places to Do Business & Live, by 2020 (*currently 139 of 272*).
  - + Move initiatives forward through the success of the “Bringing Home the American Dream” campaign. Sixty area businesses and foundations helped meet the first stage goal of \$2 million for phase one. The total campaign goal is \$2.5 million.
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# + A change in culture.

## *Promoting Entrepreneurial Development and a Culture of Innovation*

- a) With the support of our state and federal legislators, we raised \$4.3 million of grant funds from the US EDA (Economic Development Administration) and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The funds will assist in the creation of the Innovation Center @ Wilkes-Barre II project. Completed demolition work on the site and awarded the Architecture and Engineering Contract for the facility design.
- b) Created an Accelerator Growth Fund to provide funding to early stage technology companies. The organization was awarded \$750,000 for that Fund. Economic Development agencies in Scranton and Hazleton are also participating in the Fund.
- c) Helped to connect businesses with needed Higher Education resources.
- d) Screened over 100 companies and recommended investment in three firms as a participant in the MidAtlantic Angel Group.



▲ A) Elected officials toured the current incubator facility. B-C) The Chamber was awarded funding for a new incubator facility to continue to foster entrepreneurial growth in the region.

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# +A change in business climate.

## *Recruiting & Retaining Business*

- a) Provided business assistance services that supported companies that have committed to create 986 jobs in the region. Companies that located or expanded operations in our area included: Sallie Mae, Genpact, the Lion Brewery, Federal Review Services, Medico Industries, Optimo Tech, and Guardian Warranty.
- b) Completed sixty Business Retention visits with local employers to better understand regional business issues and provide proactive assistance and support.
- c) Worked with TrippUmbach to complete a regional study on creating a regional Bioscience Research Institute in the area. A more detailed analysis is now underway with the Commonwealth Medical College, Wilkes University, Misericordia University, King's College, the University of Scranton, Keystone College, Marywood University, and East Stroudsburg University. The project is funded in part by The Appleseed Foundation.



← The Chamber assisted with over 30 ribbon cuttings and business openings in 2010. Pictured here are just a few of those events.

+ Spreading a new,  
more positive view  
across our region.  
*Together.*





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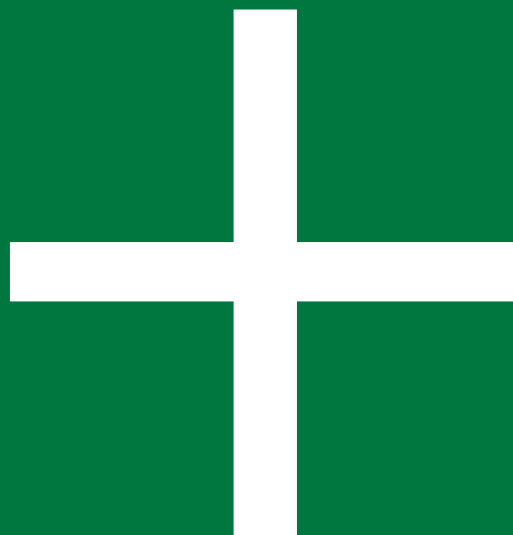
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A) The Chamber's Health Walk emphasized the importance of workplace wellness to area companies. B) Martz Trailways was honored with the 2010 "I Believe" award for their belief in and commitment to the future of Downtown Wilkes-Barre. C) Myra Golden, author of "Beyond Wow Customer Service," was the keynote speaker for THE Conference. D) Chamber members and guests share their views at one of the 2010 Chamber information seminars. E) Customer service was a key focus for the year as the Chamber hosted this seminar and promoted best practices through the NEPA Customer Service Consortium. F) Special events for businesses and nonprofits was one of the topics covered at THE Conference. G) The Chamber hosted a series of business networking events and showcases to increase awareness of area business products and services and to emphasize the importance of buying local. H) The Chamber's Awards Luncheon included the presentation of the ATHENA honor to Donna Sedor and the presentation of the Pride of Place and I Believe awards. I) The University Corners/Elevations Lofts on Main mixed-use development in Downtown Wilkes-Barre, developed by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Development Corporation in partnership with Susquehanna Real Estate, recently received the highest award possible - the Gold Award - from 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania as part of that organization's 2010 Commonwealth Awards. Pictured at the Award Presentation, are, from left to right, Jack Machek, President/CEO of 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, Larry Newman, Vice President of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber, Todd Vonderheid, President/CEO of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber, Phil Briddell - Project Manager for Elevations Lofts on Main/Susquehanna Real Estate, Jack Kay, President/CEO of Susquehanna Real Estate, and Don Carter, FAIA, FAICP, LEED AP, Carnegie Mellon University - Jury Chair. J) The 2010 Pride of Place Awards were presented to King's College for the Gateway Commons Building, Wyoming Seminary for Fleck/Swetland/Darte Halls, KNBT Bank for its new facility in Kingston and the City of Wilkes-Barre for the Coal Street Park Revitalization Project. K) The Chamber hosted CEO-to-CEO forums throughout the year. Guest speakers included Dr. Heather Rayle of Schott Glass (Pictured Here).

# + Changing workforce.

*Linking Business to a Skilled Workforce*

- a) Gathered partners and support for a formal intern placement program for Chamber member businesses. A pilot program will be launched in 2011.
- b) Created the Customer Service Consortium and hosted quarterly development seminars with 30 member businesses.
- c) Assessed interest of the Latino community in forming a Business Council and played a leading role in regional diversity initiatives.



A) Chamber members and guests had an opportunity to tour the campus of Wyoming Seminary in Kingston, learn about the school, and network to build business at a Membership Meeting in April. B) Linking employers and the employees with needed training is another part of the Chamber's Workforce Development efforts. C) The Chamber hosted a Business Showcase/Wellness Fair at Genetti's. The highlight of the event was the presentation of the Healthy Workplace Awards to Luzerne Bank and Benco Dental.



# +Changing to be even stronger.

*Building our Community's Strengths*

- a) Supported the sale of 16 lofts at Elevations Lofts on Main and the leasing of 2,471 square feet of space at the University Corners project.
- b) Completed updates to the Downtown Action Plan to ensure that project and market analysis reflects current data.
- c) Initiated a dialogue among Downtown nonprofits to assess potential collaborative programming and space utilization.
- d) Organized a collaborative effort to manage programming at the River Common. Held fifty events along the new Downtown riverfront which attracted 4,500 attendees during the 2010 season.
- e) Signed a solar land lease at Hanover Industrial Estates for the development of a 3 megawatt to 4 megawatt solar farm.
- f) Received a \$1 million grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for demolition and site preparation work at the Poseidon property at Crestwood Industrial Park and awarded the demolition contract.



**A** A-B-C-D) The River Common was the site for over 50 events in 2010. **E**) The new streetscape in Downtown Wilkes-Barre further enhanced the heart of the region. **F**) Elevations Lofts in what is known as the theatre complex are providing new housing options right in Downtown Wilkes-Barre. **G**) The opening of the Intermodal Transportation Center had a significant positive impact on Downtown Wilkes-Barre and the region.



# + A change in technology.

## Focusing on the Future

- Evaluated and selected an enhanced financial and customer service software package for the organization in order to better serve our members. The new software system will be operational by mid 2011.
- Created a Chamber presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Also designed a Chamber blog for members.
- Introduced new email communications products for members – e-blast, e-newsletter, benefit emailers, a workforce development e-newsletter, event listing emails and an Innovation Center email – which reached an average 22% open rate.

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A) Technology topics were a key focus for members at educational events and for the Chamber, which now has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. B-C) Since 2000, more than 650 students participated in the Great Valley Computer Contest – a joint project between the Great Valley Technology Alliance and the Greater Wilkes-Barre, Scranton and Hazleton Chambers of Commerce. The event has grown significantly over the past decade. For the 2010 competition, students researched, designed and developed web sites for northeastern Pennsylvania businesses or community nonprofit organizations.



# +A change in programming and services.

## *Providing Compelling Member Programs, Services and Outreach*

- a) Enhanced programs and services to 1050 Chamber member businesses.
- b) Created a new Ambassador program. 20 Ambassadors made 55 calls to businesses to assess needs and provide information about Chamber programs and services. The group also visited 12 member facilities.
- c) Assisted area businesses with 31 ribbon cuttings/special events (working with the Ambassador Committee).
- d) Over 2000 businesspeople attended Chamber programs, which included the Legislative Breakfast, the Annual Dinner, the Awards Luncheon, the Golf Tournament, CEO-to-CEO Forums, Meet the Gubernatorial Candidate sessions, information programs on the state of the economy and on home rule, Women in Business luncheons, THE Conference – a multitrack, one day educational event, networking mixers, membership meetings and more.
- e) Exceeded goal for the Chamber's Total Resources Campaign – an initiative where volunteers match companies with Chamber membership, sponsorships and marketing opportunities.
- f) Surveyed members and evaluated key business issues and took positions:
  - Supporting: The Community Restoration and Revitalization Act
  - Supporting: Balanced regulations for railroads and the Freight Rail Capacity Expansion Act
  - Supporting: Amending Existing Merger or Consolidation Act and establishment of a Boundary Review Commission, and
  - Opposing: The Sale of the Triple A Baseball Franchise in our region and urging regional communication and cooperation



2010 was a year filled with learning, networking and celebrating business success. (Photos from top) A) The Chamber's Legislative Breakfast brought over 300 members and guests together to ask our State Legislative Delegation key questions about business and community issues. The Chamber also presented the Community Progress Award, to Dupont Borough/ Pittston Township/The Greater Pittston Chamber for the reconstruction of Commerce Road. B) Employees of Maslow Lumia Bartorillo Advertising celebrate their success as they are presented the Chamber's 2010 Small Business of the Year Award. C) The Chamber's Distinguished Citizen Awards were presented to Father Tom O'Hara (President, King's College) and Dr. Tim Gilmour (President, Wilkes University) at the 126th Annual Dinner.

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