

Franklin County is poised to rebound from recession



2009 YTD Projects	
Total projects	33
Total project investment	\$34,105,737
Total low interest financing	\$5,697,500
New jobs created	165
Existing jobs retained	224

By

ADVERTISEMENT

SEARCH ENGINE?
OR DECISION ENGINE?

IT'S TIME TO
BING & DECIDE.

bing

Click to learn more

By Lauren McLane
The Record Herald

[NEW!](#) Wed Aug 19, 2009, 11:24 AM EDT

Greencastle, Pa. -

Despite the gloomy national economic picture, Franklin County is doing well, according to Mike Ross, executive director of the Franklin County Area Development Corp.

"In spite of what is a difficult economy, there is reason for optimism. As the economy starts to recover, Franklin County's economy is going to re-emerge as one of the strongest in the state and I think we're going to be talking about labor availability as an issue in 2010. I think once it starts to recover, I think there's going to be a number of job opportunities. I think good things are happening that are cause for optimism in the future," Ross said.

"With the recent JLG contract from the federal government, they're recalling employees, which benefits both Franklin and Fulton counties," Ross said Tuesday morning at a monthly breakfast sponsored by the

Greencastle-Antrim Chamber of Commerce.

By the numbers

So far in 2009, the FCADC has been involved in 33 projects, with a total investment of \$34,105,737. The FCADC has provided \$5,697,500 in low-interest financing and the 2009 year-to-date projects have created 165 new jobs and retained another 224.

Year-to-date labor data for the county shows an estimated population of 141,665, with a civilian labor force of 83,300. Some 76,300 are employed and 7,000 are unemployed, giving the county an unemployment rate of 8.4 percent, slightly above the state average of 8.3 percent, but below the national average of 9.5 percent.

According to Ross, the county's major employers are Letterkenny Army Depot, with 3,572 employees; Summit Health, 2,800; Manitowoc Crane Group and Chambersburg Area School District with 1,400 each; Franklin County government with 950; Volvo Construction Equipment with 700; Target Distribution Center with 600; Johnson Controls/Frick Co. with 560; Food Lion with 550; and Waynesboro Area School District with 500.

Funding secured by U.S. Rep Bill Shuster, a Republican whose district includes Franklin County, is being divided between Interstate 81's Exit 3 and Exit 24, where the United Business Park is being developed.

At the Cumberland Valley Business Park, which is adjacent to Letterkenny Army Depot, there are 47 existing companies and about 800 acres still to be developed.

"That seems like a lot, but it really isn't," Ross said, adding that most companies want a minimum of 50 acres for buildings and parking.

Antrim Township

In July, Shuster announced \$3.4 million is earmarked for exits along Interstate 81, including Exit 3 in Antrim Township.

U.S. Sens. Arlen Specter and Robert Casey, both Democrats, later announced an additional \$1 million in funding for the exit.

The money will be used to improve access for vehicles getting on and off the interstate at Exit 3, as well as major economic enhancements to the area, including upcoming work at Antrim Commons Business Park.

The realignment of the intersection will allow for the development of about 440 acres on the east side of Interstate 81 near Exit 3.

Ross also pointed to the recent announcement by Norfolk Southern that it will build a \$95-million shipping hub at Exit 3.

The addition of the 200-acre facility, which will be adjacent to the future site of the Antrim Commons Business Park near Interstate 81's Exit 3 at U.S. 11, is part of a multi-state effort to create a Crescent Corridor for the transportation of freight as far south as Louisiana and east of Pennsylvania in New Jersey.

At the Antrim Township site, freight will be transferred from truck to high-speed train.

The facility should initially create more than 200 jobs to the area. By 2016, 600 additional jobs could be added to Franklin County.

Gov. Edward G. Rendell has promised an estimated \$45 million in funding for the Franklin County site, which will be used in \$15-million increments over three years.

Unseen, but important

In other development news, Ross said that Sheetz is planning to build a new store on Wayne Avenue in Chambersburg.

"It's one of five projects Sheetz has in Franklin County right now. They like Franklin County," he added.

Ross noted that, with all the on-going economic development, FCADC remains mindful of the quality of life of

Franklin County residents.

"We're looking for economic development that does not screw up the quality of life here," Ross said.

He pointed to "two places where millions of dollars have been spent in the county — Whitetail and Letterkenny. The problem is, we don't see it. It's not evident to the community at large. If you have traffic patterns that drive by, like at Exit 17 near Norland Park, people see it and that has a tendency to generate inquiries and people feeling good about what's going on in the community.

"It's off the beaten path and people simply don't see it. It's important and it's helping to sustain the viability of those businesses," he added.

In addition, a private-company computer science corporation at Letterkenny recently spent \$65 million in a hardware upgrade and \$15 million in renovations to support those upgrades, Ross said.

"It's a huge investment that has taken place in the last year that again, we don't see. We had a Department of Community and Economic Development official down here probably six or nine months ago who toured Letterkenny and he was taken aback by what was going on," Ross said.

"These are investments that aren't getting captured in any statistic," he added. "These are huge investments creating really high-level employment positions. We're talking salaries in the neighborhood of \$80,000 year. It's sustaining an industry sector most people don't believe is here.

"It's not only happening in Franklin County, but around Franklin County. We're working with Corporate Office Properties Trust at Fort Ritchie, and that's going to impact Washington Township, Quincy Township, Waynesboro, Zullinger into Antrim Township," he said.

FCADC

FCADC is a non-profit corporation "charged with formulating, implementing, and promoting a comprehensive county-wide economic development strategy," according to its mission statement.

Its services include advanced site location assistance; financing real estate, machinery and equipment, construction and related activities; socio-economic and demographic information for site selection; facilitation and leadership in identifying issues that impact the economic vitality of the county; and serve as a liaison to economic development service providers and federal, state and local governments.

On the Net

www.fcadc.com

Comments (0)

Login or register to post a comment:

Login

Username:

Password:

[Forgot password](#)

Register

Email:

First Name:

Last Name:

I agree to the [terms of use](#)

I am over 13 years of age

NOTE: Your inbox must accept emails from "no-reply@gatehousemedia.com"

[Register](#)

How To Make Electricity

Don't ever pay for electricity, you can make it simple & cheap at home →

[Waynesboro City Content](#)

WEB BROWSING REDEFINED  FIREFOX