



# BUSINESS BRIEFS

Economic Development News from Central Pennsylvania

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## 2010 International Hardwood Buyers Mission a Success!

On May 10, the SEDA-COG Export Development Program and Pennsylvania Hardwoods Development Council (HDC) hosted international hardwood buyers at the Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce in Shamokin Dam, Snyder County.

Six buyers representing five companies from China and Mexico participated in this year's Hardwood Buyers Mission.

Five companies from the SEDA-COG region had business meetings with the international hardwood buyers, resulting in over twenty meetings taking place during the day.

The buyers also went on site visits to five companies in the region, allowing them to see the potential of Pennsylvania hardwood companies. The buyers enjoyed visiting different PA suppliers, seeing the volume of forest products and knowing they are able to buy sustainable forestry products from Pennsylvania.

Annie Wu, Authorized Trade Representative from the [Beijing Office](#) also participated and Larry Nelson from The Center for Trade Development (CTD) traveled with the buyers as they were a sponsor of the event. Also, thanks to [AgChoice Farm Credit](#) for their sponsorship.

Hardwoods  
Development  
Council

Energy Resource  
Center (ERC)

City of Sunbury

Community  
Resource Center  
(CRC)



**Save the Date!**

The 12th Annual Central Pennsylvania International Trade Conference, during Pennsylvania International Week (PIW) is scheduled for Tuesday, September 21 at Celebration Hall in State College.

Registration will soon be underway to meet one-on-one with 21 of our PA Authorized Trade Representatives.

[Check out the Export Website for more](#)



Pictured are the international hardwood buyers from China and Mexico as well as Wayne Bender: HDC, Noelle Long and Amanda Latsha: SEDA-COG, and Annie Wu: Beijing Office.



## Customer Screening Solution

Can your company afford to pay \$120,000 in administrative penalties for selling to a denied party? Could your company survive with the complete loss of export privileges; how would that affect your bottom line? Customer screening can help to lessen the risks, fines, and penalties associated with selling to a denied party. It is a vital component of export compliance and should be viewed as a best business practice for all potential transactions.

The SEDA-COG Export Development Program has also created a short online tutorial, highlighting important aspects of customer screening for exporters, including due diligence and recordkeeping requirements as outlined in the Export Administration Regulations (EAR).

[View the Customer Screening Solution Online Tutorial.](#)

The Customer Screening Solution provides an easy to read compilation of any potential matches for a provided entity in report format. A fee of \$20 per entity screening will be billed to your company, regardless as to the outcome of the screening. The screening will take place within two business days of being received at SEDA-COG. Download [this form](#) and email it to [export@seda-cog.org](mailto:export@seda-cog.org) to submit your customer screening request.



Click for more  
information about the

[information!](#)

Interested in Energy  
Financial  
Assistance?

Need technical  
assistance with a  
particular energy-  
related loan or grant?

SEDA-COG now offers  
assistance to  
businesses interested  
in pursuing grant and  
loan opportunities for  
renewable energy and  
energy efficiency and  
conservation projects.

For more information  
about the types of  
financial assistance  
services SEDA-COG  
can provide, contact  
Betsy Lockwood at  
[elockwood@seda-  
cog.org](mailto:elockwood@seda-cog.org) or Ray Haden  
at [rhaden@seda-  
cog.org](mailto:rhaden@seda-cog.org) or by phone  
at  
570-524-4491.

Customer Screening  
Solution!



## New Berlin Energy Independence Project

Barriers exist throughout the Appalachian region which prevents many small communities, including the community of New Berlin, from undertaking energy conservation measures which can result in significant energy and cost savings. These barriers include a lack of understanding of how and how much energy is currently being used; lack of awareness of opportunities and cost benefits offered through various energy conservation measures; a lack of knowledge about and connection with the technical expertise available to assist in the implementation of energy conservation measures; and a lack of financial resources to invest in these energy conservation measures. New Berlin seeks to address these barriers through a groundbreaking, community-wide initiative known as the New Berlin Energy Independence (NBEI) Project. In addition, SEDA-COG, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and PPL Electric Utilities (PPLEU) are financial partners to the project.

The community of New Berlin, located in Union County, is working with SEDA-COG's Energy Resource Center to implement, document and share a community-wide energy reduction model replicable for other communities within the Appalachian region for their use in achieving energy independence results. This community-scale project is being implemented in a manner that will provide a replicable blueprint for other Appalachian communities to reduce their dependence on costly fossil fuels, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, attain greater energy security, retain wealth within the region and create new businesses and living wage jobs to provide products and services focused on energy independence.

New Berlin is home to 848 residents and is representative of many small, rural communities throughout Appalachia. The community-wide energy audit, completed in Phase I of the NBEI project, revealed that the small community spends approximately \$2 million on residential energy consumption annually and \$3 million on its total annual energy consumption. Additionally, the audit revealed that residents spend 15 percent of their net household income on energy. Information gleaned from the audit will enable the community to set thresholds to reduce its energy use and provides the necessary information to enable the development of an action plan toward greater energy independence. With the information provided by the audit, we can identify opportunities where technology, materials and/or behavioral changes can reduce the community's energy consumption and associated costs.

Phase I of the NBEI Project was focused on engaging all sectors of the community in the project, eliciting the involvement of outside partners and creating project communication and management tools to leverage resources and implement energy reductions in Phases II and III consistent with a community-wide action plan which is currently being circulated throughout the community to solicit members' input, feedback and buy-in. Phase II of the project will primarily focus on assisting each sector of New Berlin to achieve greater energy independence through the implementation of the activities contained in the community-wide action plan. The strategic plan will focus on energy conservation and opportunities for local ownership and local use of alternative energy from feedstocks within and surrounding the Borough. The project will provide significant short and long term benefits for the residents, businesses, schools and other members of the community.

The NBEI Committee recently announced that through the NBEI Project, residential Walk-Through Energy Surveys are being offered to New Berlin residents at no cost, thanks to funding provided by a grant from the ARC to waive the \$50 fee to all residents who schedule a Walk-Through Energy Survey prior to October 1, 2010 done by SEDA-COG's Weatherization Department. As a partner to the NBEI project, PPLEU is committed to helping the public understand how to use energy wisely. The Walk-Through Energy Survey is one of two residential energy assessment programs being offered by PPL EU.

For more information about the project, contact project manager Megan Epler, at (570) 524.4491 or [mepler@seda-cog.org](mailto:mepler@seda-cog.org). Additionally, please visit the NBEI project website <http://erc.sedacog.org/newberlin> which provides information about the purpose and progress of this project.



## Sharing Their "Vision" for Sunbury's Future

In the words of American poet Carl Sandburg, "Nothing happens unless first a dream." So says Tom Grbenick, Director of SEDACOG's Community Resource Center which is preparing Sunbury's new comprehensive plan. The plan - *Coming Together: Sunbury's Plan for the New City* - will establish goals and action strategies to shape the future City - land use, housing, transportation, the economy, facilities and services, and the environment.

With background research nearing completion, the planners have engaged a cross section of City residents in home-based small group meetings to share their future visions for their neighborhoods and the City. Nine sessions were held throughout the community with over 85 people participating. Grbenick views this as a strong indication of the responsibility citizens accept for forming new direction for the City.

The discussions covered a gamut of topics and have provided the planners with the ingredients of a future City vision which will be discussed with the plan steering committee at its meeting in late July. Some agreement seems to be emerging from the initial review of individual discussions. Many participating residents value the City's rich history and cultural heritage and wish that more people would come to know the City in this light. According to Alison Stevenson, also with the SEDACOG Community Resource Center, "Sunbury's place in the Middle Susquehanna Valley is unique and it occupies an equally important place in the broader annals of Pennsylvania's heritage."

Transportation was a theme running throughout Sunbury's past and it would appear to occupy an important place in its future vision as well. The City is located at a transportation crossroads at the confluence of the Susquehanna River's West and North branches with its main stem. Beyond canals, railroading, and motor vehicles, an emerging focus on walking and bicycling connected to the Susquehanna riverfront and the larger Susquehanna Greenway is also vying for a place in the City's future vision according to many participants in the Sunbury Visioning Week discussions.

Linked to the riverfront vision, residents also place much value in the City's parks and diverse recreational facilities, and see the potential for its ball field and ice rink investments to attract recreational users from beyond the City. The continued development of Lake Augusta for river sports such as fishing, boating, and sightseeing seems also to be part of what citizens value and wish to see enhanced as part of the City's future vision - a vision that also links Sunbury more closely with its neighboring municipalities to undertake future action towards implementation.

Education was also cited as something that is important to the City's future. Already home to business and technology schools like McCann School of Business and Technology, and closely linked to a branch of Triangle Tech, a contingent of Sunburians would also like to see the establishment of a community college within the City to bring new residents and visitors to the City and to create new opportunities for related business development.

According to Grbenick, some of the key words and phrases used to describe Sunbury today include "a small city with a big small town feel,"

"rebuilding" and "cultural diversity." Looking ahead, some of the things that residents don't want to lose include "parks and recreation facilities," "Sunbury Community Hospital," "Weis Markets corporate offices," and "the county seat." This is just a small sampling of Sunbury's assets that were identified.

City image, housing conditions, property maintenance, citizen participation and volunteerism are high on the list of things which participants in Sunbury Visioning Week want to see addressed. While the discussion of these topics gravitated toward common perceptions and realities, Grbenick feels that these topics also provide grist for shaping the City's future vision. According to Grbenick, "Dreams may be born of idle, accidental or wishful thinking, but the meaning of vision is more direct and purposeful. Vision and visioning are sometimes overused and overworked words and ideas, but they remain fundamental to understanding the roots required for revitalization. Vision anchors the process for shaping neighborhood change and City betterment."

A formal vision statement will be prepared as a philosophical underpinning to Sunbury's Plan for the New City. According to Brian Auman with SEDA-COG's Community Resource Center, "The City vision will establish the ground from which agreements can be shaped on future development principles and action plans". When completed, the vision statement will set the tone for the plan. It may suggest themes for promoting the City's image and identity - themes capable of building new interest in City neighborhoods, attracting new residents and businesses, and stimulating needed reinvestment in its people and its places.

"The vision statement must inspire and motivate people to engage in work to reshape the City as an attractive and desired place for living, playing, working, socializing, and educating" said Grbenick.

