BUSINESS BRIEFS

SEDA COG

Economic Development News from Central Pennsylvania

SEDA-COG Ventures into Social Networking

SEDA-COG has recently entered the world of social networking with a blog and accounts on Twitter and Facebook.

Helping PA Grow, at www.sedablogs.org encompasses the full range of SEDA-COG's business-related services, and touches on many other activities with which the organization is involved. The purpose of *Helping PA Grow* is similar to that of any organization's blog — provide clear, succinct information that's easy to find. Web sites are an excellent means of presenting comprehensive views of an organization, e.g., the staff, history, services, policies, and relevant data, in addition to current and archived news releases. SEDA-COG's blog is strictly news and commentary, generally no more than three or four

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paragraphs. Lengthier, more detailed pieces are found on our web site, www.seda-cog.org.

While *Helping PA Grow* is managed through SEDA-COG's Public Information office, information may be posted by any of the organization's programs, so blog entries can be quite diverse. Already there have been pieces about procurement technical assistance, information technology, river towns, broadband deployment efforts, and special transportation funding. There is generally a new entry each week. Older entries are maintained on the site and categorized, allowing visitors to *Helping PA Grow* easily find all that's been written on a particular topic.

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SBA Opens Up Refinancing Guidelines

Small business owners with eligible commercial real estate mortgages maturing after Dec. 31, 2012, will be able to secure more stable, long-term financing through the U.S. Small Business Administration's temporary 504 refinancing program as a result of a change that was published in the *Federal Register* on April 6.

In February, SBA implemented a temporary refinancing program enacted under the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, which allowed small businesses facing maturing commercial real estate mortgages or balloon payments before Dec. 31, 2012, to refinance with an SBA 504 loan. The SBA change will lift the date limitation and will allow more small businesses to secure stable, long-term financing and avoid potential foreclosure on mortgages approved before and during the recession that were based on inflated real estate values.

"With the collapse of the real estate bubble, many small business owners have found themselves unable to refinance as a result of inflated real estate values at the time they took out their mortgage," SBA Administrator Karen Mills said.

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.
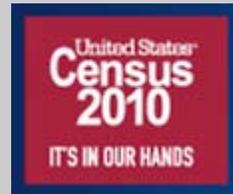
For more information about the types of financial assistance services SEDA-COG

"SBA's temporary 504 refinancing program was first made available to those small businesses with the most immediate need. Today's step opens this critical assistance to more small businesses, giving them the opportunity to restructure their debt and free up capital that will be essential to keeping their doors open and also their future ability to grow and create jobs."

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Growth Reported in Nine SEDA-COG Counties

On March 9, 2011 the United States Census Bureau released the first local 2010 Census results for Pennsylvania. The population data have revealed a growth in 9 of SEDA-COG's 11 counties from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census. The data comes from the 2010 Census Redistricting Data which is the first set of population data available from the 2010 Census for Pennsylvania counties, municipalities, and other geographies down to the census block level. These local-level census data are used by state officials to realign congressional and state legislative districts in Pennsylvania.

The table below, *"Population of SEDA-COG Counties...,"* shows the total Census population as of April 1, 2000 compared to the population as of April 1, 2010 for each county in the SEDA-COG region, for the SEDA-COG region as a whole, and for the state.

Lycoming County experienced a decline in population while Northumberland, Montour, and Mifflin remained relatively unchanged. Lycoming lost 3,933 people, a 3.3% decline. Northumberland lost 28 people, a 0.0% decline while Montour and Mifflin saw only a slight increase of 31 (0.2%) and 196 people (0.4%) respectively. The SEDA-COG region as a whole, as well as Pennsylvania, experienced growth with 4.3% and 3.4%, respectively.

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can provide, contact Betsy Lockwood at elockwood@seda-cog.org or Ray Haden at rhaden@seda-cog.org or by phone at 570-524-4491.

Municipal Training Classes Scheduled For Spring 2011

SEDA-COG partners with PennDOT to provide municipalities in the SEDA-COG region with free training through the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). LTAP offers various training courses dealing with roadway maintenance and safety. Technical assistance on road maintenance and safety issues is available from an LTAP engineer free of charge in person, over the phone, or by email. Library materials and technical information sheets are also available. PennDOT has been providing LTAP services to Pennsylvania municipalities since 1983. LTAP is based on the premise that new technologies and procedures developed at the state and federal level should be transferred to local municipal officials and employees for the purpose of improving the overall transportation system.

LTAP goals include: increase municipal expertise; improve safety for client and public; increase professional communication; disseminate information; promote the implementation of research; provide tailored training materials; and meet municipal government needs.

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New Berlin: Achieving Energy Independence Community-wide

Through a unique partnership, the New Berlin Borough Council, the federal Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), PPL Electric Utilities (PPL EU) and the SEDA-Council of Governments are reducing an entire community's reliance on fossil fuels first through energy conservation and then through the use of renewable energy from local sources. The groundbreaking New Berlin Energy Independence (NBEI) Project is an initiative designed to be replicated by other Appalachian communities.

As a community New Berlin is collectively accelerating toward its goal of 20% community-wide energy reduction by October 2012.. Data provided by PPL EU shows that New Berlin is making progress - the non-residential sector is seeing a significant 12.5% decrease in its electricity usage. The residential sector is beginning to contribute, but there is much work to be done. To assist New Berlin's residents, the NBEI Committee and SEDA-COG's Energy Resource Center staff will be conducting door-to-door surveys of the 127 New Berlin households that were provided with a walkthrough energy survey. Beginning in May, 20 additional walkthrough energy surveys will be conducted by SEDA-COG's Weatherization department.

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Annual Average Unemployment Rate

12 Months Ending Month Shown

Legend: ◆ SEDA-COG ■ PENNSYLVANIA ▲ U.S.