



# COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

WINTER 2011



Photo by Tom Straw, SPC

Today's buildings consume more energy than any other sector of the U.S. economy, including transportation and industry.

## Congratulations to our two new LEED Green Associates:

SPC Community Development staff members Jill Byers and Ryan Falcone recently received the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED Green Associate credential. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an internationally recognized green building certification system.

Both Jill and Ryan attended a three part workshop in preparation for the exam that covered various topics including water efficiency, energy management, and site selection factors.

## Grant Opportunities

### Historic Preservation Grants

**Deadline:** January 31, 2011

**Funding:** Historic preservation grants are available in two different amounts to support projects in the categories of community preservation and archaeology. Community preservation activities include cultural resource surveys, national register and historic district nominations, municipal planning, and development assistance. Grant awards below \$10,000 do not require matching local funds. If state funding is between \$10,001 and \$25,000, an equal local match is required.

**For more information:** Contact Karen Arnold at the state Bureau for Historic Preservation by e-mail at [kaarnold@state.pa.us](mailto:kaarnold@state.pa.us) or by calling (717) 783-9927.

### For Alternative Energy Projects

**Deadline:** Ongoing

**Funding:** Municipalities are eligible for grants and low-interest loans for projects that use, develop, or construct alternative or clean energy equipment or facilities. The funding is available through the state Department of Community and Economic Development and the Commonwealth Financing Agency. Projects may include the installation of energy-efficient equipment; the construction or renovation of high-performance, energy-efficient buildings; and the installation of alternative energy-producing systems such as wind, geothermal, and biomass. There is a dollar-for-dollar matching requirement for program funds.

**For more information:** log onto [www.newpa.com](http://www.newpa.com), choose "Find Incentives and Apply for Funding" on the right side of the page, and then choose "Alternative Energy Funding," or call DCED toll-free at (866) 466-3972.

## Zoning and Permitting Renewable Energy Technologies

As the price of energy escalates, more and more people will want to install renewable or alternative energy technologies in their homes and businesses. Municipalities can expect increased applications for zoning approvals and permits to build alternative energy technologies in existing communities.

### Why are these technologies important?

Renewable energy technologies produce sustainable, clean energy from sources such as the sun, the wind, plants, and water. According to the Energy Information Administration, in 2007, renewable sources of energy accounted for about 7% of total energy consumption and 9.4% of total electricity generation in the United States. Renewable energy technologies have the potential to strengthen our nation's energy security, improve environmental quality, and contribute to a strong energy economy. (US EPA December 2010)

### What are the key issues for zoning and permitting?

Energy is an important business for Southwestern Pennsylvania. It means jobs, manufacturing products and the potential for growth. Cutting edge research is being done at our universities. We need to make sure that local governments do their part to nurture the energy cluster by ensuring that local policies and procedures allow the use of new energy technologies. Have you received zoning or permit requests for solar or wind applications? Are you unsure how to proceed? Plan to attend the workshop: Building a Toolbox for Renewable Energy: Tools for Municipalities.

**WORKSHOP DATE:** Building a Toolbox for Renewable Energy - Tools for Municipalities **March 10, 2011** Watch for announcements.

### What is renewable energy?

"Renewable energy is energy that is ..., for all practical purposes, virtually inexhaustible. It includes solar energy, wind energy, hydro-power, biomass (derived from plants), geothermal energy (heat from the earth), and ocean energy. The increased use of renewable energy could reduce the burning of fossil fuels (coal, petroleum, and natural gas), eliminating associated air-pollution and carbon dioxide emissions, and contributing to national energy independence and economic and political security." (<http://www.pollutionissues.com/PI-Re/Renewable-Energy.html>) Dec 2010.



## The importance of broadband

*The number of devices connected to the Internet is expected to hit 5 billion by September 2010 and 22 billion by 2020, according to IMS Research.*

### Are you prepared ?

Why is broadband important in the SPC region?  
 According to Blair Levin of the Aspen Institute:

- ▶ Everyone is becoming a knowledge worker
  - Basic task for all involves collecting, assembling, analyzing and making decisions based on data
  - Economic growth depends on accuracy and speed of decisions and speed of corrections
- ▶ In emerging economy, the most important factor for success is the process of knowledge exchange
- ▶ Knowledge exchange is driven by the interplay of networks, devices and applications as utilized by people

( Source: Presentation by Blair Levin, Aspen Institute, September, 2010 )

### How do broadband and the Internet work for local governments?

Offers Improved Services to Citizens and Other Constituents

- ▶ Improved Efficiency and Accuracy of Government
  - Facilitate the regulatory processes required for doing business in a community
- ▶ Fosters Democratic Principles
- ▶ Encourages Economic Development
  - Promote the beauty, benefits, historic and recreational assets of the area to potential businesses
  - Act as a provider of information and services that facilitate businesses in the community

( Source: Jack Pond, Montgomery County, presentation 9/2010 )

## The Pennsylvania Broadband Program

If you reside in the service territory of Verizon, Embarq (formerly Sprint), or Windstream (formerly Alltel), and advanced services are not currently available, the Bona Fide Retail Request Program (BFRR) allows you to submit a written request for services.

Generally speaking, the BFRR program provides that if:

- 50 retail customers or 25% of retail access lines in a "community" as defined in Act 183, whichever is less, request same or comparable service; and
- Commit to at least one year of service from the participating provider, then service must be provided within 365 days. For further information on BFRR process, please contact your participating service provider.

Make sure that your community is participating in the emerging economy by ensuring that your community has high speed broadband connections to allow businesses to grow and citizens to prosper.

If you need help tapping into the Pennsylvania Broadband program, please contact Laura Mundell at SPC 412 -391-5590 x317 or [lmundell@spcregion.org](mailto:lmundell@spcregion.org)

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