

Community developer CDC reviews progress, purpose

Article published March 29, 2014
By David Means

CRANBERRY TWP — The Community Development Corporation of Butler County acknowledged a successful 2013 and recognized that its role as the county's lead economic development organization will continue to evolve.

That was outlined to more than 200 people Friday morning at the nonprofit organization's annual meeting at the Regional Learning Alliance.

The theme of “People, Purpose & Passion” related to a renewed call for cooperation among community partners.

“The CDC was formed by people with the passion to create opportunities for economic growth in Butler County,” said Ken Raybuck, the CDC's executive director.

“Our purpose is more than buying land and building buildings,” he added, “And although we've been successful with that — and we need to continue that — Butler County must also be attractive as a place to live.”

In the past year, the CDC sold office space in Butler to the United Autoworkers Local No. 3303, warehouse space in Butler to Johnstone Supply and more than 7 acres in Clinton Township to the Kerry Co. to develop a new manufacturing facility.

Also, Raybuck said Aldi and Synergy Health, both in the Victory Road Business Park in Clinton Township, are planning to expand.

However, he said, “Much work has to be done to stay competitive in today's economic development market, and we must work together as a community to attract business.”



Here are the board of directors of the Community Development Corporation of Butler County. First row, from left, Bill McCarrier, individual member and Butler County commissioners chairman; Nicole Duncan, Stantec; Janice Pakozdi-Luffy, Bear Metallurgical; Nadine Tripodi, Butler Technologies; Dale Pinkerton, individual member and Butler County commissioner; and Scott Docherty, CID Associates. Second row, from left, Ken Raybuck, CDC; Jerry Andree, Cranberry Township; Joe Gray, Gray Consulting; and Jeff Elser, FirstEnergy. Third row, from left, Mike Cully, United Plate Glass; Josh Fye, Farmers National Bank of Emlenton; and John McCarrier, individual member. Fourth row, from left, Jim Saeler, Butler and Venango County Building Trades Council; Dan Santoro, Delta Development Group; Stan Kosciuszko, Butler County Chamber of Commerce; Jack Cohen, Butler County Tourism and Convention Bureau. Fifth row, from left, Chuck Boory, Boory's Business Machines; Nish Vartanian, MSA; and Nick Neupauer, Butler County Community College. Sixth row, from left, Vernon “Chip” Wise III, Butler Eagle; and Chris Panian, Central Electric Cooperative.

Raybuck said one of the major factors businesses evaluate when considering choosing the county for investment is the quality of the work force, with solid education being the foundation.

Nick Neupauer, president of **Butler County Community College** and a CDC board member, also spoke on the importance of partnerships.

“Today, the key for survival is collaboration and diversification,” he said.

During the past decade, BC3 has expanded to Lawrence, Mercer and Jefferson counties, and Neupauer said the key has been partnering with the state, local governments, businesses, schools and donors.

He highlighted his school's collaborative efforts with Slippery Rock University, including a soon-to-be finalized dual-admissions agreement.

Many organizations are working together to ensure the county can supply quality workers, he said.

BC3 works with the Butler County Vocational-Technical School on welding and heating and cooling programs, and it also is building onto an existing automotive technology program with the vo-tech that is supported by a group of regional automotive dealerships.

To prepare workers for the booming energy industry, BC3 partnered with XTO Energy, which has helped to develop new curriculum and expand facilities.

“We are better as an institution of higher learning because of these partnerships and collaborations,” Neupauer said.

“We have an opportunity to go from good to great in Butler County, and we'll roll up our sleeves to do the dirty work and get the job done.”

Tim Morgus of Maher Duessel gave a brief presentation on the CDC's financial report.

“We have a lot of happy news this year, as the financial condition of the CDC significantly improved,” he said.

According to the organization's annual report, liabilities decreased by nearly \$3 million, from \$8.43 million to \$5.45 million, and net assets increased by nearly \$179,000, from \$5.09 million to \$5.27 million.

Morgus said it was the first time since 2009 the CDC has had positive change. A lot of the good news could be attributed to the organization's three property sales in 2013, which was the first time it sold property since 2006.

“It's a pretty significant accomplishment not only to have one sale, but to have three sales,” he said.

Jerry Andree, Cranberry Township manager and the CDC board president, recognized Dennis Zeitler, a retired officer from MSA in Cranberry Township, with emeritus director status for his contributions in economic development.

Zeitler, who now lives in Florida, was one of the visionaries behind the Cranberry Woods Office Park, which is home to thousands of employees, including the global headquarters of MSA and the Westinghouse Electric.

Also speaking was renowned businessman, motivational speaker, author and Butler County native Steve Gilliland.