

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Pottstown pep rally

About 160 Pottstown business and civic leaders attended an economic pep rally last week at Sunny Brook Ballroom sponsored by the Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce and its partner, Pottstown Area Industrial Development Inc. (PAID).



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

Headlining the good news was the continuing renovation and occupation of the long-vacant upper floors of the BB&T Bank building at High and Hanover streets by Cedarville Engineering Group, a woman-owned

small business.

Peggy Lee-Clark, director of PAID, also highlighted a government-sponsored plan to redevelop 255 acres along the Schuylkill River in Pottstown and West Pottsgrove for residential, industrial and commercial use that would, theoretically, add \$117 million to Pottstown's tax base.

But a road extension connecting Keystone Boulevard in Pottstown to Grosstown Road in West Pottsgrove will be needed. No one's sure how that's going to be funded.

Lee-Clark touted some new small businesses coming to town, ranging from an ice cream shop to a motorcycle parts supplier, and pointed out several other businesses that have been thriving here for years.

Because the focus was on the positive, no one brought up the continuing decline in Pottstown's tax

base, from \$802 million a year ago to \$772 million today, mostly because Pottstown's hospital became tax-exempt when it was acquired by Tower Health.

In fact, two of Pottstown's five largest employers — Pottstown Hospital and the Hill School — operate exempt from real estate taxes. Everyone else has to pick up the slack.

Pottstown has about 10,000 jobs and roughly the same number of resident workers. But 70 percent of our residents travel outside the borough to their jobs, and most of those working here don't live here.

While it's important to create more jobs in the borough, it's just as important to focus on our quality of life — which is high, despite our tax base woes.

The borough has historic houses that people have used and loved for generations.

It boasts a traditional downtown.

Pottstown's interconnected streets link homes, stores, offices and parks in close proximity for walking and biking.

The Schuylkill River Greenway is one of the finest recreational amenities in the region. The Montgomery County Community College West Campus offers nearby residents a world of opportunity.

Pottstown is easily accessible by highway and, for business, by rail. It's got a hospital and excellent emergency services coming right to your door.

They're reason enough to say, "I pick Pottstown."



Peggy Lee-Clark



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS Ken Lawrence, left, and Joe Gale lead the shade parade at last week's Pottstown Progress luncheon at Sunny Brook Ballroom. Onlookers were provided sunglasses to wear as they heard about Pottstown's bright future.