

BASICS

Businesses and Schools Investing in Cooperative Solutions



2019



ANNUAL REPORT

BASICS

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS



Leslie Estep
Acting Superintendent
Tyrone Area Schools



Neil Hollander
Chief Commercial Officer
Altoona Pipe & Steel

We look back on 2019 as a very successful year moving forward on our strategic goals: fostering a strong partnership between our schools and the business community and communicating career choices to students, parents and educators so they can prepare themselves today for the challenges of tomorrow. In this report, we are pleased to detail how each BASICS subcommittee advanced its programs to achieve these goals and make a difference for young people, businesses and educators throughout Blair County. We're grateful to our subcommittee chairs and the many volunteers who make this success possible and encourage you to continue reading to learn the details of their efforts for Blair County in 2019 and hear from those who benefitted from these efforts.

Along with the success of our subcommittees, this past year saw a change in leadership for the BASICS Steering Committee. Two co-chairs lead the committee, one from business and one from education, and this year Alex Seltzer, CEO of Manpower Inc. of Altoona, was succeeded by Neil Hollander, Chief Commercial Officer of Altoona Pipe and Steel. We thank Alex for his leadership and continuing service to BASICS and Blair County and we welcome Neil to the role of Business Co-chair. A key element to our success is having a strong voice sharing the perspective of Blair County's business community.

As the graphic below makes clear, BASICS provides programs supporting the county's youth from early childhood through post-secondary. These programs are only made possible through the Blair County Chamber of Commerce and the many volunteers, schools and businesses that support them through charitable giving to the Blair County Chamber Foundation. We thank you all! Please read on to learn how your support and BASICS made a difference in lives across Blair County in 2019.

- ◆ Increased student participation in BASICS/Rotary Career Fair and BASICS Career Shadowing program
- ◆ Launched Business Advisory Sessions
- ◆ Worked to our Strategic Plan

Student Development and Career Awareness

Pre-K	Grades 6-12	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12 & Post Secondary
Early Childhood Education	Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)	Eighth Grade Career Exploration	Leadership Blair County Youth	BASICS/Rotary Career Fair	Career Shadowing	Industry Tours for Career Guidance Professionals

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RESULTS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



RODNEY GREEN
Retired Superintendent
Education Consultant

The BASICS Early Childhood Subcommittee is a subcommittee with three goals: Advocate the benefits of investing in high quality early learning programs; Educate the community about the workforce development outcomes and return on investment (ROI) in high-quality early learning programs; and Identify the strategies that will expand the number of high-quality learning programs in Blair County.

A significant partner and supporter of the subcommittee is the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC). ELIC provided a \$20,000 grant to conduct the Blair County Early Childhood Needs Assessment, and armed with the results of this assessment, the subcommittee has been quite successful in moving our local business community from asking “Why is this important?” to “How can we help?”

Recognizing that significant state funding could be obtained through the leveraging effect of private investment, we initiated in 2018 a campaign to create an Early Learning Impact Fund, with the goal of raising \$100,000 over a period of three years. In 2019 we received commitments of \$27,000 for the fund. There is no doubt that this private investment strategy will create more high-quality early learning capacity in our region.



Ann Benzel of Benzel's Bretzel Bakery visits a local program to learn about the benefits of high quality early learning.



Educating young people in our community at the time they're at the height of brain development makes incredible sense. I joined the BASICS Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education to help make a difference and to get these young people off to a good start educationally and socially. It's a battle that we can't afford to lose.

PA State Representative Lou Schmitt



BLAIR COUNTY WORKFORCE FACTS

23% of workers ages 14-24 in Blair County work in Retail Trade while 39% of workers in the Accommodations and Foods Services Industry are ages 14-24.

(EMSI, 2018.4)

Youth ages 18 to 24 comprise 8% of the Blair County population (population total of 123,842).

(U.S. Census 5 year estimate 2014-18)

7,227 children in Blair County are at moderate-high risk of school failure

(PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning Reach and Risk Report)

14.4% of young adults ages 16-24 in Blair County are neither in school nor working

(Measure of America: Youth Disconnection in America [March 2017])

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RESULTS

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ACADEMY



ROYCE BOYD
YEA! Program Director

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy, or YEA!, is a program that teaches students how to start and run their own business or non-profit organization. The goal of YEA! is to bring the next generation of entrepreneurs into Blair County. Offered locally at Penn State Altoona's Sheetz Entrepreneurial Center, the class begins in October and continues for 26 weeks until the end of April. While any student from any school in Blair County is eligible to participate, our 2019 class had 16 members, grades 9 through 12, from five different Blair County schools.

YEA! offers a different approach to "learning by doing" within the business world and it's popular with students because they feel personally invested in the learning process. We provide introductions to local entrepreneurs and business leaders; exciting field trips to businesses for a behind-the-scenes experience; and meetings with attorneys, accountants, marketing professionals, graphic designers, manufacturers, internet specialists, and more. All of the resources that students need to start their own businesses are provided. The class culminates with students preparing a real business plan and pitching their plan to investors for funding. New for 2019 was the offering of 3 Dual Enrollment credits from Saint Francis and Mount Aloysius. Eight students took advantage of this opportunity.



Mike Burgmeier, owner, Chick-fil-A Altoona, talks with YEA! students during a tour.

“Our association with YEA! has helped us establish relationships with some really exceptional students. Our future business leaders will no doubt emerge from programs like YEA!.”

*Donna Bon, Executive Director
Sheetz Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence*

EIGHTH-GRADE CAREER EXPLORATION



JOE HURD
President/CEO
Blair County Chamber of Commerce

Previously known as the Eighth-Grade Career Fair, the new name will be officially launched in 2020 to reflect the desire on the part of the BASICS Steering Committee to involve students from all Blair County Schools. In 2019, only Hollidaysburg, Claysburg-Kimmel and Williamsburg participated because they were the only schools that still held an 8th Grade Career Fair. The winners at those schools for 2019 were: Tyler Schutt (Hollidaysburg), Rachel Kauffman (Claysburg-Kimmel) and Mallory Deters (Williamsburg).

The new format will allow eighth grade students from all schools to write essays about a particular career they have heard about and then to submit their essay to their guidance counselor. The counselors at each school rate the essays and then submit the best three to the Chamber. The BASICS Steering Committee selects the best overall essay and prizes are awarded.



Winners of the 8th Grade Career Fair Essay Contest receive a certificate and a \$50 gift card.

“The 8th Grade Career Fair has been a great opportunity for our students. It's a significant step on the career path and one that resonates loud and clear at a critical time of decision-making for eighth graders.”

*Carrie Loose - Guidance Counselor
Williamsburg Community School District*

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RESULTS

LEADERSHIP BLAIR COUNTY YOUTH



JUDY JUDA
LBCY Program Manager

The Leadership Blair County Youth (LBCY) program provides high school sophomores the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, self-confidence, and public speaking skills while learning more about Blair County and ways to make a difference in their communities. Students from Blair County's seven public school districts and Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School participate, and they are chosen through an application process in the spring of their freshman year. Class size is limited to twenty-four. Each class begins with an overnight retreat and continues with monthly sessions throughout a nine-month period. The program concludes with a graduation ceremony.

The curriculum is based on the S.E.R.V.E. model of leadership and the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens model. The program is funded through the generosity of the Blair County Chamber Foundation, and there has never been any cost to participating students or school districts. Funding is made possible through continued sponsorships and grant monies.



Developing leadership skills and self confidence is part of the core curriculum of Leadership Blair County Youth.



LBC Youth has made an impact on my life! Just a few improvements among the many that I've noticed in myself include my professional standards. There is no doubt in my mind that those have improved with the help of the multiple techniques we learned throughout the sessions.

*Marcus Osmolinski, Altoona Area High School
LBCY Class of 2018*



My son, Jacob, is a young man who is somewhat introverted and quiet. While his personality remains reserved, this experience has helped him communicate easier with others, becoming more self-confident in the way he carries himself and communicates with others. He has definitely matured immensely during this past year. Thank you for the difference you are making in the lives of today's local youth.

LeeAnn Price



BLAIR COUNTY WORKFORCE FACTS

11.8% of the labor force ages 16-24 in Blair County is unemployed, 6.6% higher than the total population (16+)

(2013-17 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau)

Based on unemployment rates for those ages 25 to 64 with median earnings (ages 25 and over), unemployment rates in Blair County decrease from 10.7% (less than high school graduate) to 5.3% for high school graduates (includes equivalency), then drops to 4.1% with some college or Associates degree.

(2013-17 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau)

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RESULTS

BASICS/ROTARY CAREER FAIR



PAT MILES
Chair
Career Fair Subcommittee

BASICS/Rotary Career Fair provides all Blair County 10th graders a first-hand opportunity to learn about interesting careers and enables employers to showcase the great opportunities

available in Blair County. A collaborative effort by Rotarians, the Blair Chamber of Commerce, school districts and local employers, the annual Career Fair opens students' eyes to what careers are possible and what preparation is required to be successful. The 10th grade students choose four career fields of interest. Rotarians from the six Blair County Rotary Clubs (Rotary Club of Altoona, Sunrise Rotary Club of Altoona, Tyrone Rotary, Hollidaysburg Rotary, Morrisons Cove Rotary, Claysburg Rotary) then work to identify and secure representatives from each field based on the demand from the students. And finally the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center gathers all of the student information and develops a Career Fair schedule for each student.

Gathering on the day of the fair at the Blair County Convention Center, students are scheduled in small groups to learn about each of their four career fields of interest from a representative of that career field. In 2019 more than 1,000 students met with career representatives to discuss what a typical day is like in that career field; the skills, education, training and experience needed; what employers are looking for in a prospective new employee; and what opportunities are available within Blair County. Many students who attend the BASICS/Rotary Career Fair in 10th grade go on to learn more about a potential career during their Junior year by participating in the BASICS Career Shadowing program.



Students attending the Career Fair have the opportunity to learn about career fields of interest.

“ Having the Chamber's BASICS Committee partnering with Blair County's six Rotary Clubs on a project like this Career Fair not only benefits an incredible number of high school students in our area but also sends an important message to our community. That message is that we all have an obligation to do whatever we can to help young people be successful!

Steve Dalecki
Altoona Sunrise Rotary Club

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BLAIR COUNTY WORKFORCE FACTS

The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry employ 38% of Blair County youth.

Based on unemployment rates for those ages 25 to 64 with median earnings (ages 25 and over), Median earnings increase from \$19,600 (less than high school graduate) to \$26,700 for high school graduates (includes equivalency), to then \$35,000 with some college or Associates degree.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RESULTS

CAREER SHADOWING



JUDY ROSSI
Subcommittee Co-chair

Career Shadowing Week provides all Blair County high school juniors the opportunity to shadow local businesses for part of a day, observing and learning about career interests. This program, initiated in 2009, succeeds through the effective collaboration

between several volunteer groups consisting of Chamber members, school contacts, and the business community. Chamber members, as well as a few school personnel, volunteer to find host employers and coordinate the shadowing opportunities between the employers and the students. School contacts from each of the seven Blair County public schools help the students apply for the experience and guide them from beginning to end. And the business community agrees to host more than 400 students. The entire process is accomplished through phone calls, emails, and an interactive database website. The 2019 Career Shadowing Week saw 420 students shadowing different careers across 136 businesses, our highest numbers yet!



Students had the opportunity to observe a dental check-up during Career Shadowing Week.



This shadowing made me realize that I want to work with children and I also want to be in the medical field. I want to go in this field because I want to help children feel better.

*Hannah Brenneman
Williamsburg Community Senior High School
Shadowed at Children's Community Pediatrics*



I was already considering a job in accounting and now that I have seen a person who actually works in a job like that, I can see how much I would enjoy that.

*Ian DiPangrazio
Holidaysburg Area Senior High School
Shadowed at Sheetz Corporation*



Yes. I would consider a career in this field. I say this because I really love to bake and it was a really great experience to see how things run in a professional setting. And seeing this helped me to know it would be a great career to pursue

*Halee Cassidy
Bellwood-Antis Senior High School
Shadowed at Maddie Cakes*



BLAIR COUNTY WORKFORCE FACTS

Total Occupational Employment for 2016 – 2026 Long term projections for All Occupations in the Southern Alleghenies Region that includes Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset counties: Estimated 2016: 63,550; Projected 2026: 65,840; a Percent Change of 3.6%

The Top 5 Blair County employers in Q2 of 2019 are: 1. UPMC Altoona 2. Sheetz, Inc. 3. State Government 4. Federal Government 5. Altoona Area School District.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RESULTS

REGIONAL INDUSTRY TOURS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER TECHNOLOGY CENTER CAREER SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS



LARRY BRUGH
Industry Tour Facilitator

Better known by the abbreviated title, "Industry Tours," our program's goal is three-fold: To better connect with companies in the region; To generate jobs and internships for students; And to get creative about other ways to make connections that make people more career-ready and better prepared to fill jobs in the area. We bring together Career Services Administrators from regional career technology centers, two-year and four-year colleges to collaborate with employers committed to hiring local students for jobs and internships.

Our company and education participants tour job sites and engage in roundtable discussions to review and improve existing partnerships including: online and on-campus recruiting methods for jobs and internships, faculty led classroom/company projects, job shadowing, employer panel discussions, mock interview fairs and industry tours for students. The roundtables are also conducive to promoting out of the box thinking and ideas to create new ways to collaborate to best prepare and match students with employer needs. This was the program's fourth year and during 2019 we held nine industry tours in Blair County hosting Career Educators from Penn Highlands, Penn State/Altoona, Greater Altoona CTC, Juniata College, Saint Francis University, Mount Aloysius College, and the University of Pitt-Johnstown. In total, forty-four companies across the Southern Alleghenies hosted tours for area educators.



College and Career Tech Center representatives visited Smith Transport as part of the Regional Industry Tours program.



Students and educators enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the healthcare industry during a tour of UPMC Altoona.



Blair is a huge supporter of the local STEM initiatives and truly appreciates the time, effort and expertise our educators bring to our students. Visiting and working with local businesses is the best way to ensure education is optimized to support available careers, maximizing value for the students, schools and businesses in the process. Thanks for the excellent program.

Philip Devorris
Blair Companies



The tours provide a great opportunity to learn about all of the opportunities available to our students. This information helps keep them in the area.

Kimberly Shook
University of Pittsburgh – Johnstown



Employers want top talent but also want to minimize costs if possible. Hosting a tour may lead to future interns or employment. It also offers participating companies like New Pig the opportunity to clarify their views on what kind of character, skills and behaviors they look for in a potential employee. We find this exchange increases our brand exposure in the community, increasing our chances of finding high quality employees. It's a true win-win.

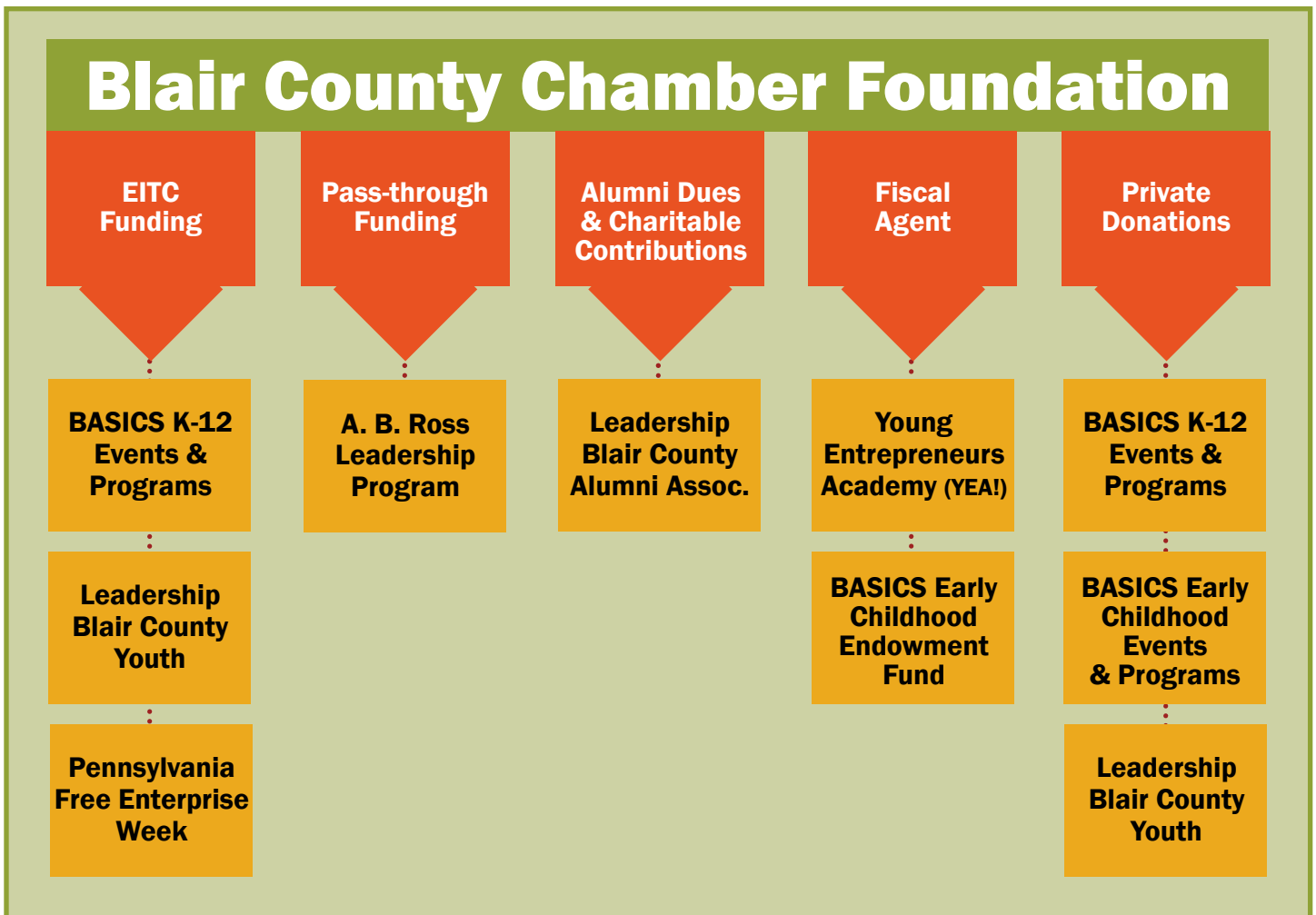
Karen Maul, Vice President Human Resources
New Pig



FUNDING FROM THE

BLAIR COUNTY CHAMBER FOUNDATION

The Blair County Chamber Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity that funds various educational programs and is an approved Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) organization. The majority of the funding for BASICS is provided by the Blair County Chamber Foundation. As the graphic below shows, BASICS, the Leadership Blair County Youth Program (LBCY) and the Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week (PFEW) are eligible to receive EITC contributions. The Foundation also applies for community grants and seeks donor support to fund its programs.



BASICS 2020



CALL TO ACTION

In 2020 we're continuing to work toward our four Strategic Goals:

- Understand the success potential of students through market metrics and evaluate the effectiveness of BASICS programs.
- Grow the awareness of career identification/preparation choices through vital and interesting programs.
- Enhance our marketing communication for these programs to increase participation.
- Seek additional funding to further develop BASICS programs such as the Early Learning Impact Fund.

And here is how you can help:

- Spread the word about BASICS throughout Blair County.
- Volunteer with a BASICS program subcommittee.
- Learn more about how your business or organization can support BASICS. Contact us to schedule a presentation.
- Donate to the Blair County Chamber Foundation.

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

■ CHUCK BICKLE

Ace fix-it Hardware

■ RODNEY GREEN

Retired Educator

■ ALEX SELTZER

Manpower

■ SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

There is much work to do. And working together, Blair County's businesses, schools and communities are addressing the task of preparing Blair County today for the challenges of tomorrow.

Come join us!

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