



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Recognizes Recipients of 2022 Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence

Harrisburg, PA – On behalf of Governor Tom Wolf, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Acting Secretary Neil Weaver recognized municipalities and local government officials for their dedication and commitment to strengthen their communities and better serve their residents.

“It’s an honor to recognize all of these local officials, governments and organizations for their achievements over the past year,” said Acting Sec. Weaver. “More than any other level of government, local government has the greatest impact on our day-to-day lives. The projects and individuals recognized today help continue to make Pennsylvania the best place in the world to live, work and play.”

Eleven communities, two organizations, and eight individuals from across the commonwealth were recognized for excellent service as part of the 26th Annual Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence.

The following local government officials were recognized for their dedication to public service and their communities:

- **Kevin Boozel**, County Commissioner, Butler County (*nominated by County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania*)
- **Charles Guttenplan**, Whitemarsh Township Directing of Planning & Zoning/Zoning Officer, Montgomery County (*nominated by PA American Planning Association*)
- **Michael Lombardo**, Mayor, City of Pittston and First Vice President, PA Municipal League, Luzerne County (*nominated by Pennsylvania Municipal League*)
- **Mark E. Nickerson**, Council President, Blooming Valley Borough, Crawford County (*nominated by Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs*)
- **David R. Nyman**, Township Supervisor, East Rockhill Township Board of Supervisors, Upper Makefield Township Manager, Bucks County (*nominated by Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors*)
- **Bradley D. Shaffer**, President, PA Council of Governments, Wayne County (*nominated by PA Council of Governments*)
- **R. Samuel "Sam" Valenza**, Upper Moreland Township Commissioner, President of the PA State Association on Township Commissioners, Montgomery County (*nominated by Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners*)
- **Thomas Zeuner**, Immediate Past President of the Pennsylvania Municipal Authority Association, Bucks County (*nominated by Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association*)

The following municipalities, organizations, and counties were recognized:

Building Community Partnerships

Borough of Conshohocken, Montgomery County

Conshohocken Borough has made community partnerships a priority since Mayor Yaniv Aronson took office in 2018. Whether it's with a local nonprofit, a local business, a school group or even a neighboring municipality, nearly every event that occurs within the borders of Conshohocken Borough features elected leadership and a strong community partner. These events have ranged from a bi-annual Community Neighborhood Cleanup to the Conshy Strong fundraising and community spirit initiative for victims of COVID-19 and flooding.

Fiscal Accountability and Best Management Practices

Worcester Township, Montgomery County

Over the past year, Worcester Township rescued its Sewer Fund from insolvency, with the result that it fully provides for the operational and capital needs of the township's sanitary sewer system. Through sound financial decisions, the township kept operating costs way down managing an increase in its annual sewer rates of only 2.3 percent since 2015 and successfully building capital reserves totaling more than \$1.5 million.

Health and Wellness Initiatives

Delaware County

The measure of success for Delaware County Emergency Rental Assistance (Delco ERA) Program has always been more than just the expenditure of the funds. Success for Delco ERA is about serving the most marginalized residents with dignity and respect. Through an array of partnerships, Delco ERA has successfully served nearly 2,500 of the most vulnerable households in the county. Building community partnerships has been instrumental in the deployment of the Delco ERA Program and it is now one of the top performing rental assistance programs in the country.

Information Technology

Dauphin County Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphans' Court

When the COVID-19 global pandemic threatened to close courthouse offices indefinitely, the Dauphin County Register of Wills and Clerk of the Orphans' Court, Jean Marfizo King, recognized the need to continue operations by going virtual. Innovative cloud-based software that can accept and process marriage license applications, probate applications, and e-filing for both existing and new cases in both of her offices were the first of their kind in the United States. Productivity and efficiency increased. The development of this technology has truly changed the landscape of how a local government office can function and deliver services.

Innovative Community/Governmental Initiatives

East Goshen Township, Chester County

East Goshen Township and the Movie Tavern Exton have created a community event that celebrates teenagers in a unique way. Complete with red carpets and limousines, the Southeast PA Teen Filmmakers Showcase challenges teenagers to speak up, celebrate their talents and face the difficulties of teenage life head on. Since 2019, teenage filmmakers from across the commonwealth visit East Goshen to share a love of creating original films. The entire experience is free of charge and the result has been a highly successful event for teenagers. Women and minorities make up more than 50 percent of the Official Selections nearly every year.

Innovative Planning & Sound Land Use Practices

Middletown Township, Bucks County

In September 2021, Middletown Township became the first township in southeastern Pennsylvania and the first municipality in Bucks County to adopt a Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan serves to coordinate the township's sustainability efforts and recommends initiatives and strategies for community-wide greenhouse gas reduction. The plan was developed in partnership with the Board of Supervisors, the Township's Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), and the Department of Environmental Protection's Local Climate Action Program. As a result of the partnership, residents now know how to reduce the carbon footprint of their home or business - and sustainability and energy efficiency top the list of conversations between the township, the community, and developers.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Lower Allen Township Development Authority, Cumberland County

The Lower Allen Township Development Authority (LATDA) and the township partnered to bring the stability of government and the flexibility of an authority to help guide development. As part of their 2018 comprehensive plan implementation, Lower Allen purchased and redeveloped a vacant and strategic site in the township's business district to ensure economic vitality. With no state or federal funding, just the backing of the township, LATDA secured a loan and purchased the site with the goal to create an economic anchor and remove a blighted space. Now, with Marriott developing a hotel onsite and Trader Joe's set to open in the township, this development has brought new life to an old property.

Municipal Leadership

The Honorable Ross Swords, Jr., Borough of Brownsville, Fayette County

Mayor Ross Swords, Jr. has been serving his community since he was 21 years old. He was first elected constable, then moved through the ranks of the volunteer fire company, serving as Fire Police Captain, Vice President, and currently Fire Police Lieutenant. Swords has also been involved in local government, at 27 becoming the youngest person ever elected to the position of Councilman in the Borough of Brownsville. He chaired the Public Safety and the Buildings and Grounds Committees managing to keep the police department in the borough and adding a K-9 unit to its ranks. Six years ago, he successfully ran for Mayor and still holds the office today. Swords rounds out his time with a growing family and as president of the Brownsville Area High School football booster organization.

Promoting Community/Economic Revitalization

Borough of Bellefonte, Centre County

The Borough of Bellefonte has been working to redevelop its waterfront properties along Spring Creek for nearly twenty years through the historic Match Factory revitalization, the expansion of Talleyrand Park, and the most recent Gamble Mill restoration and re-opening. The waterfront redevelopment provides an opportunity for outdoor recreation and serves as a community gathering space for events, making it an ideal location for tourists and residents. The Gamble Mill project both strengthens the tax base with the development of a hotel and condominiums and enhances the quality of life for the current residents of Bellefonte.

Promoting Community and Economic Development

Cranberry Township, Butler County

When discussions began in the mid-1990s about building a connector from Interstate 79 to points north of Route 228 in Cranberry Township, it seemed to be a monumental task. After 20 years and thousands of hours of community collaboration, the MSA Thruway is a reality, improving traffic at the intersection of three major transportation arteries. Thanks to support from the commonwealth and a donation of private land from MSA Safety Inc, the MSA Thruway

features two roundabouts and a dedicated off-ramp from I-79 to improve traffic flow and provide better access. This infrastructure improvement allows for major economic drivers to benefit from better highways while adding features that enhance the community like bike and pedestrian lanes.

Promoting Community/Economic Revitalization

City of Warren, Warren County

Opened in December 2021, the Innovault Coworking project is a triumph of organization and community spirit that involves the redevelopment of one floor of the former National Bank Building in Warren from a blighted vacant structure into a vibrant and productive coworking space. The project involved many partners, and fundraising resulted in over \$100,000 in grants and donations to redevelop the space, including its vault (hence the “Innovault name”). Now a building that was 95 percent vacant has become a driver of economic growth for both Warren City and the surrounding area.

Responding to Adversity

Mansfield Borough, Tioga County

During the summer of 2021, Mansfield Borough experienced a series of flooding events in the south end of the municipality which caused severe private property damages. After extensive investigation, borough officials discovered that the cause of the flooding was a failing storm sewer main pipe. The partnering of the chairs of the borough’s Public Safety and Finance Committees were instrumental in assessing the problem and finding solutions. So quick was their action, that the main storm water drainage pipe was repaired within a month of discovering the problem.

Responding to Adversity

Modena Borough, Chester County

Despite development pressures on a historic site, severe flooding, and the passing of its mayor, Modena Borough both persevered and thrived in tough times. Much success has been attributed to the leadership of Jennifer Daywalt, the current mayor and former borough council president. Daywalt quickly stepped-up to fill the void left by the prior mayor’s passing. Daywalt saved threatened historic structures, worked to enhance local parks, and faced down two massive flooding events in 2021, all while dedicating time to her constituents.

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services sponsors Local Government Day annually to honor local governments and officials who serve their communities and improve their quality of life. For more information about the Governor's Center for Local Government Services, visit the [DCED website](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#).

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