

GOOD AFTERNOON. THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH YOU ON THIS SUBJECT. MY NAME IS JASON FINK AND I'M THE PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE WILLIAMSPORT/LYCOMING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

WILLIAMSPORT AND LYCOMING COUNTY HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING SOLID BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL RECENT WINS FOR THE COMMUNITY WITH MORE ANTICIPATED.

DIGGER SPECIALTIES OPENED A 157,000 SF MANUFACTURING PLANT IN JUNE OF 2022. THEY ARE A MANUFACTURER OF SPECIALTY FENCE PRODUCT MADE FROM POWDER COATED ALUMINUM AND PLASTIC. THEIR THREE YEAR PROJECTION FOR EMPLOYMENT IS TARGETED AT 150 FULLTIME PEOPLE.

MIELE MANUFACTURING PURCHASED THE FORMER GANDER MOUNTAIN RETAIL STORE IN 2020 WHICH IS ADJACENT TO THE LYCOMING MALL. THEY ARE NEARING COMPLETION OF THE RENOVATIONS TO THE BUILDING AND HAVE SEEN SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT GROWTH. THEIR EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO THE ACQUISITION OF THIS BUILDING WAS APPROXIMATELY 25 PEOPLE. AT THIS TIME THEY ARE OVER 100 AND ARE STILL HIRING.

LYCOMING ENGINES EMPLOYS OVER 500 PEOPLE HERE IN THE CITY. THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING TO RESHORE CERTAIN AIRPLANE ENGINE COMPONENTS TO MINIMIZE PRODUCTION DISRUPTIONS. THREE YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR THEIR EMPLOYMENT ANTICIPATES ADDING OVER ANOTHER 100 PEOPLE TO THEIR OPERATIONS.

WEST PHARMACEUTICALS HAD TWO MANUFACTURING PLANTS HERE IN LYCOMING COUNTY. LAST YEAR, THE WEST WILLIAMSPORT PLANT BROKE GROUND ON A 9K SF EXPANSION THAT WILL ADD ANOTHER 50 JOBS UPON COMPLETION. THIS YEAR, THE WEST JERSEY SHORE PLANT IS EXPECTED TO BREAK GROUND ON A 50K SF ADDITION WHICH UPON COMPLETION WILL ADD ANOTHER 125 JOBS.

LATE LAST MONTH, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT PRYSMIAN GROUP, WHICH IS AN ALUMINUM CABLING MANUFACTURER, WILL BE EXPANDING THEIR PLANT HERE IN WILLIAMSPORT IN ADDING 51KSF TO THEIR PLANT. THIS EXPANSION WILL ADD ANOTHER 27 JOBS.

LATER THIS SUMMER, WE WILL BE WELCOMING PREMIER TECH TO WILLIAMSPORT. THIS IS A BILLION DOLLAR CANADIAN FIRM THAT MANUFACTURES A VARIETY OF PRODUCTS. THE PRODUCTION FACILITY THEY WILL BE PUTTING HERE IS FOR RESIDENTIAL SEPTIC SYSTEMS. ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THEIR CHOOSING LYCOMING COUNTY WAS BECAUSE OF PENN COLLEGE AND THE PLASTIC PROGRAM, IN PARTICULAR THE ROTATIONAL MOLDING PROGRAM. THIS IS A KEY ELEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF THESE SEPTIC SYSTEMS BY PREMIER TECH. THEY HAVE SHARED THAT THEIR 5 YEAR PLAN IS TO BUILD THE DIVISION HEADQUARTERS FOR THIS PRODUCT LINE HERE IN LYCOMING COUNTY. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN ENGAGED WITH THEM ON A PROPERTY THEY ARE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING FOR THE FUTURE CONSTRUCTION OF

THIS PLANT. THEIR INITIAL HIRING WILL BE 15 PEOPLE BUT THEY ANTICIPATE THAT THIS NUMBER WILL SURPASS 50 BY THE TIME THEY BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR NEW FACILITY.

THESE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE EXPANSIONS AND ASSOCIATED HIRING WE'RE SEEING IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR. THERE ARE MORE AND WE'RE WORKING TO BRING IN MORE AS WELL. THERE'S ALSO SIMILAR JOB CREATION IN OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS HEALTHCARE WITH BOTH UPMC AND GEISINGER BEING AMONG THE KEY DRIVERS IN THIS ARENA.

WE'RE VERY EXCITED TO SEE THIS LEVEL OF JOB CREATION TAKING PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, WE'RE ALSO VERY COGNIZANT OF THE CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS UPON US. POPULATION DECLINE IS A REAL FACTOR HERE IN LYCOMING COUNTY AND IN NEIGHBORING COUNTIES.

HOUSING IS ANOTHER MAJOR FACTOR AFFECTING US. WE HAVE SOLID JOB CREATION, WITH FAMILY SUSTAINING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ALL OF THE COMPANIES THAT WERE CITED.

ONE OF THE KEY THINGS THAT WE ARE LACKING THOUGH IS HOUSING. HISTORICALLY DURING THIS TIME OF YEAR, YOU WOULD EXPECT TO SEE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 700 TO 800 HOMES AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET. HOWEVER, IN TALKING WITH THOSE IN THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS, THERE'S ONLY ABOUT 125 TO 150 HOMES UP FOR SALE.

THIS IS PROVING TO BE A CHALLENGE FOR US IN ATTRACTING THE LABOR POOL HERE FOR THE JOBS AVAILABLE IN THE MARKET. WE'RE HEARING NOT ONLY FROM THE HOSPITALS AND COLLEGES ABOUT THIS BUT ALSO OUR MANUFACTURERS HAVE ADDRESSED THE ISSUE WITH US.

THE CHAMBER HAS ENGAGED IN TRYING TO COME UP WITH SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING ISSUE. WE'VE WORKED WITH THE LYCOMING COUNTY COMMISSIONERS IN HAVING THEM ESTABLISH \$4M IN GRANTS TO ASSIST IN ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.

IN A REPORT PROVIDED BY THE LYCOMING COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT, WE HAVE SEEN ONLY 165 NEW HOMES COME ONTO THE MARKET IN THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS. THERE'S ONLY A PROJECTED 558 NEW ONES BEING PROPOSED BY DEVELOPERS.

WHILE THAT'S A NICE START, IT WON'T ADDRESS THE DEMAND THAT WE SEE HERE IN THE COUNTY FOR MARKET RATE HOUSING. ALSO HITTING US AT THIS POINT IN THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FRONT IS THE COST FOR CAPITAL TO UNDERTAKE NEW HOUSING. WITH THE RISING INTEREST RATES, IT HAS ADDED ANOTHER LAYER OF CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS A CRITICAL NEED FOR US IF WE'RE TO REVERSE THE DECLINING POPULATION IN OUR AREA. THE CHAMBER IS HOPEFUL THAT FORUMS LIKE THESE WILL BRING GREATER ATTENTION TO THIS

ISSUE. THANK YOU AND I'D BE HAPPY TO ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE OF ME AT THIS TIME.