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### Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region

Shaunna Barnhart  
*Bucknell University*

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# Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region

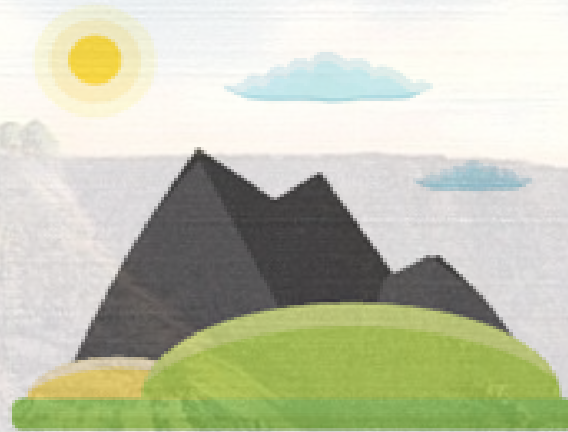
*A convening sponsored by Campus Compact of New York and Pennsylvania in partnership with the Members Choice Anthracite Economic Summit*

May 7, 2019

Sponsored by:



Coal Mining in the Anthracite Region, Pennsylvania



## ANTHRACITE ECONOMIC SUMMIT

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROGRESS

*Organized in collaboration with Bucknell University, Bloomsburg University, Susquehanna University, Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce, Anthracite Region for Progress, Mother Maria Kaupas Center, Shamokin Area Businesses for Economic Revitalization, and the City of Shamokin*



# ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION IN THE LOWER ANTHRACITE COAL REGION

*A convening sponsored by Campus Compact of New York and Pennsylvania  
in partnership with the Members Choice Anthracite Economic Summit*

May 7, 2019

- \* Learn about best practices in similar towns
- \* Develop strategic goals for revitalization
- \* Build collaborative partnerships for the future success of the Lower Anthracite Coal Region, including with:  
local businesses, government, area universities, and community organizations

Independence Street, Shamokin, Pa.

## Agenda

- 8:30 **Check in, Breakfast & Networking**
- 9:00 **Welcoming Remarks**
- 9:30 **Redevelopment Success & Strategy in Lehigh Valley, PA**  
Andrew Kleiner  
Director of Community Outreach & Redevelopment, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp
- 9:55 **The Path to Progress – Revitalizing Downtown Reading**  
Aaron Gantz  
Executive Director of Downtown Revitalization, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance
- 10:30 **Break**
- 10:45 **Panel: Community-University Collaborations for Community-Identified Needs**
  - \* Rich Kisner, Community Strategies Group
  - \* Heather Feldhaus, Bloomsburg University
  - \* Jake Betz, Mother Maria Kaupas Center
  - \* Shaunna Barnhart, Bucknell University
  - \* Stephanie Reitmeyer, United Way
  - \* Sarah Farbo, Susquehanna University
- 11:45 **Networking Lunch**
- 12:30 **Breakout Sessions 1: SWOT Analysis**
- 1:15 **Breakout Sessions 2: SWOT Themes and Next Steps**
- 2:15 **Breakout Reports & Synthesis**
- 2:30 **Next Steps & Adjournment**

Hosted at The Springfield  
Banquet Hall & Catering

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# Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region

## Keynote Speakers

### **Aaron C. Gantz, MPA**

*Executive Director of Downtown Revitalization  
Greater Reading Chamber Alliance*

Aaron Gantz is a self-motivated, dynamic, passionate professional committed to enhancing the community through inclusive community and economic development. She uses her expansive and growing personal and professional skills to align with the community's vision to enhance her position as an up and coming leader in the field of economic development. As the Executive Director of Downtown Revitalization at the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, Aaron works with both the public and private sector to enhance and facilitate economic development opportunities in downtown Reading, PA. Not only does she possess passion for her work, she brings over nine years of professional economic development experience to the table. Aaron is the Immediate Past Chair of the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association's communication and membership committee; Vice Chair of the Smart Growth Alliance of Berks County; a former United Way of Berks County Focus Area Panel member; and a member of the West Reading Economic Development Committee.

Aaron is a native of the City of Reading. She graduated from West Virginia University where she earned both her B.A. in Political Science and MPA, Master of Public Administration degree. She is a member of Pi Alpha Alpha, the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. She is a recipient of the 2011 Rising Star Award from the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce and the Reading Eagle's "40 under 40" in 2018.

### **Andrew Kleiner**

*Director of Community Outreach and Redevelopment  
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation*

Mr. Kleiner is responsible for community outreach and the management of redevelopment priorities, which include the coordination of the region's Keystone Opportunity Zone program, the Lehigh Valley Land Recycling Initiative, and the city and urban revitalization focus of LVEDC's strategic plan. Mr. Kleiner seeks to remove impediments to redevelopment across the Lehigh Valley and assists partners in their redevelopment and revitalization efforts. Through his community outreach work, he supports the LVEDC's mission to engage in a permanent and sustained campaign of visitation, connection, and conversation with all 62 of the sovereign municipalities in Lehigh and Northampton counties. Mr. Kleiner is a graduate of Muhlenberg College's Environmental Science program and has a multi-year background in environmental chemistry & toxicology research.

# Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region

## Panel Speakers

### **Shaunna Barnhart, Ph.D.**

*Director, Place Studies Program*

*Bucknell University, Center for Sustainability and the Environment*

As director of the Place Studies Program at Bucknell University's Center for Sustainability and the Environment, Dr. Barnhart supports and conducts teaching and research related to sustainable communities and environmental history. This includes coordinating Bucknell's Coal Region Field Station, a university-community collaboration begun in 2015 that engages Bucknell students, faculty, and staff with communities in the anthracite coal region by linking together and building upon collaborative projects in community-identified needs for revitalization, explorations of local histories and heritage, and envisioning future possibilities in the common goal of developing sustainable communities. She earned her PhD in Geography from Penn State University (2012), a Masters in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences from the University of Illinois (2005), and her Bachelor's degree in International Relations and South Asian Studies from Carleton College (2000).

### **Jake Betz**

*Director, Mother Maria Kaupas Center*

Jake Betz's role in the operation and advancement of the Mount Carmel-Bucknell partnership through the Coal Region Field Station is that of a facilitator. He works with 12-15 partner organizations to identify community needs that could benefit from service learning projects by Bucknell students, helps local partners prioritize those needs and works closely with the Field Station to identify appropriate class or independent research opportunities. He oversees logistics, from the community side, in bringing Mount Carmel and university stakeholders together to advance accepted projects from start to finish. Jake Betz, a lifelong resident of the Mount Carmel area, has a bachelor of arts degree from Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, PA. He joined the Mother Maria Kaupas Center in 2015 after he retired from a 40-year career in community journalism at The (Shamokin) News-Item. He is active in the community as a member of the Mount Carmel Area Public Library Board of Directors, director of the Mount Carmel Area Food Pantry, member of the annual Deppen Day planning committee and co-organizer of a planned diaper bank, scheduled to open in summer 2019.

### **Sarah E. Farbo**

*Assistant Director for Service Leaders Program & Career Development Center*

*Susquehanna University*

Sarah manages and leads the Susquehanna University Service Leaders (SUSL) program, a four year transformational leadership and community engagement program for students to engage in professional development and community work to impact youth development in the region. The core components of the program focus on *reflection*, *reciprocity* and *relationships*. As a career advisor, she empowers students to put learning into practice and achieve professional goals. Sarah worked in the non-profit education field for 17 years before returning to her alma mater of Susquehanna University in 2017. She believes in the power of mutually

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## **Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region**

beneficial partnerships and collaborations to build and strengthen vibrant and inclusive communities. Sarah sits on the Regional Engagement Board, the United Way's Diversity and Inclusion Impact Council, the Communities That Care Coalition, and SU's University Council. Sarah enjoys reading, hikes, good food, learning from others, exploring Pennsylvania, and the Susquehanna River.

### **Heather Feldhaus**

*Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Community Research and Consulting  
Bloomsburg University*

Heather Feldhaus received her B.A. (1995) and M.A. (1997) from the University of South Alabama and her Ph.D. (2002) from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Her research interests center on the ways that communities think about and attempt to solve social problems. The importance of collecting accurate social science data and presenting it in accessible ways so that stakeholders can use to guide their efforts is another area that Dr. Feldhaus is passionate about. This interest has led to her involvement in multiple methodological explorations of the most effective ways to collect, analyze, and present useful data and also to conduct multiple seminars for regional social service providers to help them learn to effectively use data within their own organization. She has authored multiple professional papers and book chapters on these issues. Within the regional community, Dr. Feldhaus has served on the boards of directors on multiple groups including the Bloomsburg Downtown Business Inc., the Criminal Justice Advisory Board, and the United Way of Columbia County. She has served two terms as Board Chairperson for United Way as well as Vice-Chair for Strategic Planning, and as a member of the allocations committee. She has served as a volunteer consultant for other regional United Ways, Human Service Coalitions, Aging Offices, Specialty Courts, Medical Centers, Housing Authorities, arts, community, and economic development organizations.

### **Rich Kisner**

*Executive Director  
Community Strategies Group*

Rich Kisner is the Executive Director of Community Strategies Group, a nonprofit affordable housing and community development organization. He has been with the agency for 24 years and has administered over 20 projects that have included the demolition of over 30 blighted structures and the construction and rehab of almost 300 affordable housing units resulting in \$50 million dollars in public and private investment.

### **Stephanie Reitmeyer**

*Associate Director of Education  
Greater Susquehanna Valley United Way*

Stephanie supervises the Parents as Teachers home visiting program and manages the After School programming in conjunction with the Susquehanna University Service Leader (SUSL) students. She also mobilizes the Shikellamy Pride Communities that Care Youth Coalition and is a trained facilitator for the Strengthening Families Program 10-14. Stephanie believes in empowering families to be the best they can be. Stephanie enjoys playing the piano, camping, crocheting and spending time with family.

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# Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region

## Collaborative Partners

*This convening has been organized as a collaborative effort between the following organizations and universities:*

### **Anthracite Region for Progress**

Inspired in part by Franciscan ideals, the mission of the Anthracite Region for Progress (ARP) is dedicated to providing a better quality of life for the people of Shamokin and Coal Township through economic and environmental development. ARP collaborates with the local universities and the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP) in addition to working with local, county, state and federal agencies. Anthracite Region for Progress is located at the Franciscan Center, 817 W. Chestnut Street, Coal Township.

### **Bloomsburg University**

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania is the largest comprehensive university in Northeastern and Northcentral Pennsylvania, offering 57 undergraduate degree programs and more than 66 minors and 19 graduate degree programs. Our alumni base of more than 69,000 enables students to network and gain professional experiences throughout the eastern United States and beyond, giving them the best possible preparation for careers in their field. A recipient of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, Bloomsburg University is likewise committed to teaching students the importance of community and civic participation, with more than 73,000 hours dedicated to volunteerism each year.

### **Bucknell University**

Bucknell is a unique national university where liberal arts and professional programs complement each other. With more than 50 majors and 65 minors across arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, management, and engineering, Bucknell seeks to prepare students for informed and engaged citizenship. Bucknell recently completed a new university-wide Civic Action Plan as part of its commitment to signing the Campus Compact's 30th Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors. This plan seeks to foster and grow an Engaged Bucknell ethos that supports community engaged learning, including opportunities for collaboration in the Susquehanna River Valley.

### **Bucknell University - Center for Sustainability and the Environment**

Bucknell's Center for Sustainability and the Environment creates impactful, interdisciplinary, experiential opportunities for learning and research that address global environmental and sustainability challenges through its three programs in Place Studies, Sustainable Technology, and Watershed Sciences and Engineering. The Center is also home to Bucknell's Coal Region Field Station, a university-community collaboration established in partnership with the Mother Maria Kaupas Center which supports collaborative projects with a range of community partners in the lower anthracite coal region.

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# **Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region**

## **City of Shamokin**

The City of Shamokin is an Act 47 Distressed Community that has been hindered by a collapsing economic base due to the decline of the coal industry. The City is currently positioning itself for the beginning of an economic revitalization with the designation of an Opportunity Zone. Two new organizations for economic development were formed in the city last year, Shamokin Area Businesses for Economic Revitalization (SABER) and the Anthracite Region for Progress (ARP). Both of these groups are positioned to play a role in the city's economic recovery process.

## **Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce**

The 'chamber of choice' serving Union, Snyder, Northumberland and Montour Counties, the Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce advances the prosperity of its communities, culture, fellow citizens, and their businesses in the region through the leadership of its members. The Chamber engages its members to serve as an engine of growth that drives the region's jobs, businesses and opportunities through economic development, collaborative partnering, strategic technology and resource training.

## **Mother Maria Kaupas Center**

The Mother Maria Kaupas Center in Mount Carmel, which opened in 2015, is inspired by the life and legacy of Venerable Maria Kaupas, foundress of the Sisters of Saint Casimir. The Center, a ministry of Divine Redeemer Church, seeks to identify and respond to needs in the Mount Carmel area. Through a robust and continually evolving partnership with Bucknell University's Coal Region Field Station, the Kaupas Center supports community improvement efforts by local organizations. Additionally, the Center works to build a stronger community through faith-based volunteer service projects conducted mostly by young Catholics who are college students.

## **Shamokin Area Businesses for Economic Revitalization**

Shamokin Area Businesses for Economic Revitalization's mission is to improve the economy of the Shamokin area, including the surrounding communities, to promote and endorse those businesses in our community, to encourage the retention and growth of our existing businesses, and, as well, to attract new, sustainable businesses.

## **Susquehanna University**

Susquehanna University is a four-year liberal arts institution with a mission to educate students for productive, creative and reflective lives of achievement, leadership and service in a diverse, dynamic and interdependent world. With over 100 majors and minors, an accredited business school and a nationally recognized cross-cultural Global Opportunities (GO) study abroad program that every student participates in, SU is a place where students thrive and are prepared to become civic leaders in their communities. SU collaborates with and serves the region through multiple programs, initiatives and partnerships.



## Special Thanks to Our Sponsors



Campus Compact is a national coalition of 1,000+ colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education to build democracy through civic education and community development. This event is co-sponsored by a Campus Compact of New York and Pennsylvania (CCNYPA) Regional Consortia Mini-Grant for Community Engagement to build higher education's capacity to deepen civic and community engagement and strengthen regional communities.



Members Choice Financial Credit Union is a regional credit union committed to being the best full service financial institution in the Valley. Their motto, "building lifelong relationships, one member at a time" informs their consistent growth and their commitment to community engagement, especially through good corporate citizenship. Members Choice FCU has six branch locations including Riverside, Danville, Bloomsburg, Lewisburg, Evangelical Community Hospital and Mount Carmel, and serves as the Founding Sponsor of this event.



The Northumberland County AOAA Authority leases approximately 7,500 acres of coal lands in lower Northumberland County for the purposes of actively managing a family-friendly motorized and non-motorized recreation facility. Officially opened in May 2014, the AOAA is a great success story for the region, having granted more than 26,000 passes in 2018 alone. AOAA is an Executive Sponsor for this event.



A hot-spot in Coal Township, Brewser's Sportsgrille and their parent company, GDK Development are committed to growth in the Anthracite region. Brewser's is a cut above the average American sports bar, offering an outstanding menu, generous portions, the finest selection and coldest draft beer, and the best and clearest HDTV's to watch your favorite teams! GDK Development is an Executive Sponsor of this event.



A coordinated intersection of services and providers, including primary care and specialists, hospitals and trauma centers, insurance, medical education and research, Geisinger is working to improve health care, to test and share innovation that works, and is focused on its patients and communities, who are the focus of everything they do. Geisinger is an Executive Sponsor of this event.