

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

Chapter X - Economic Analysis

Sector Analysis

Table X-1 compares employment by industry for Wayne County residents in 2023 compared to adjoining Pennsylvania counties and the state as a whole. It measures the employment of workers 16 years or more in age who **resided** within the County. Manufacturing in Wayne County employs only about two-thirds the state average on a relative basis. Susquehanna County, where Marcellus Shale development has had a major impact, does better. Construction, by contrast, is much larger in Wayne than average, which may reflect considerable new investment in the County's summer camps, for example. Retail trade is also stronger in Wayne, probably due to general tourism impacts.

Table X-1: Employed Persons 16 Years and Over by Industry

	Pennsylvania	Pike	Monroe	Lackawanna	Susquehanna	Wayne
Agriculture/Mining	1.1%	1.3%	0.6%	0.7%	6.9%	2.2%
Construction	6.0%	6.5%	6.3%	5.5%	8.3%	10.5%
Manufacturing	11.8%	6.8%	10.6%	9.9%	11.3%	7.5%
Wholesale Trade	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%	2.5%	2.0%	1.3%
Retail Trade	10.6%	13.3%	11.6%	12.2%	12.6%	12.3%
Transportation/Utilities	6.3%	6.6%	9.5%	7.2%	8.1%	7.4%
Information	1.7%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%	2.2%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	6.6%	6.8%	6.6%	6.0%	4.2%	5.4%
Services	49.3%	49.8%	47.5%	48.9%	40.7%	45.8%
Public Administration	4.3%	5.8%	4.3%	5.4%	4.1%	5.5%
Totals	99.7%	100.0%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	100.1%

Source: ESRI

Employment in agriculture (including forestry) and mining is small but favorable in comparison to the Commonwealth. New niche agricultural ventures such as "Good Find Farm" depicted below may be a factor. Importantly, though, many farms fall into the category of non-employer businesses, providing important income to their owners, although not identified as employers.



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Self-employment is also typical with many forestry and logging enterprises. Importantly, Susquehanna County, has the highest employment in the agriculture and mining category and the lowest with respect to general services, once again reflecting Marcellus Shale development in that County.

Employment by occupation is also revealing of the particular nature of Wayne County's economy, as the following table shows. The County has above average employment in transportation and material moving occupations. Professional and management occupations are much lower than average, though.

Table X-2: Employed Persons 16 Years and Over by Occupation

	Pennsylvania	Pike	Monroe	Lackawanna	Susquehanna	Wayne
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	0.6%
Construction/Extraction	4.4%	5.5%	5.4%	4.5%	7.4%	7.8%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	2.9%	4.2%	3.5%	3.0%	4.6%	4.2%
Production	5.8%	4.8%	5.7%	5.6%	8.0%	5.0%
Transportation/Material Moving	8.6%	8.8%	11.1%	10.5%	9.9%	11.5%
Total Blue Collar	22.0%	23.9%	25.7%	23.8%	30.7%	29.1%
Management/Business/Financial	17.6%	14.5%	14.5%	13.4%	16.0%	15.2%
Professional	26.1%	20.1%	21.8%	25.3%	17.2%	16.0%
Sales	8.3%	9.4%	9.8%	9.3%	9.5%	8.2%
Administrative Support	10.1%	11.3%	10.5%	10.7%	10.3%	11.1%
Total White Collar	62.2%	55.3%	56.5%	58.7%	53.0%	50.5%
Services	15.9%	20.8%	17.8%	17.4%	16.3%	20.4%

Source: ESRI

Looking at the picture as a whole, Wayne County residents are in need of economic development that goes beyond tourism. The economy lacks essential balance in many respects and would benefit by more manufacturing and related businesses that would also stimulate growth in the professional and business management categories. Development of better broadband services would also lead to more remote work opportunities and could possibly have a positive secondary impact on the construction industry as housing demand, from workers intent on moving to Wayne County to work remotely, increases.

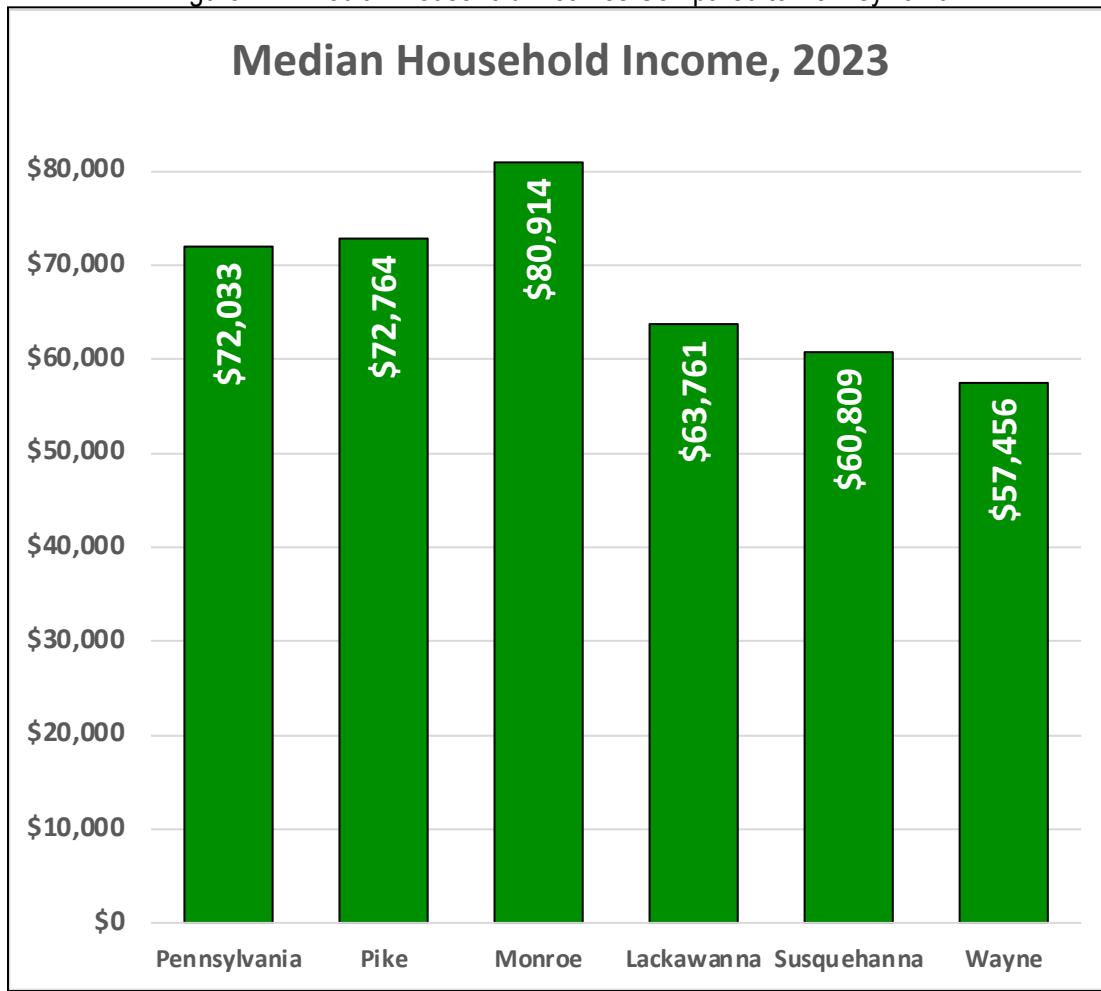
Economic Trends

Wayne County had, in 1999, a median household income that was 85% of the Commonwealth figure. This was down slightly from 86% in 1989. By 2009, it had risen to 91% but it slipped back to 87% in 2019 and as of 2021 it had fallen again to 84%. ESRI estimates it is currently only 80%, the lowest figure among itself and adjoining counties. Lackawanna and Susquehanna County both do significantly better and Pike and Monroe are above the Commonwealth average. This is probably, in the latter case, due to the fact many of the residents of these counties work in the New York metro area. Figure X-1 depicts the relationships of these selected County median household incomes to that for the Commonwealth as a whole.

The County also had a relatively low proportion of workers finding employment in Wayne County (62% versus a 72% average for Pennsylvania as a whole). Pike County, by contrast provided only 40% of residents' jobs. Susquehanna County was at 53%, Monroe at 64% and Lackawanna at 78%. This is another indicator of the need for more local jobs in good wage industries such as manufacturing to balance lower-paying retail and service jobs.

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Figure X-1: Median Household Incomes Compared to Pennsylvania



Source: ESRI

Wayne County has lost ground economically since 2010. Median household income went up \$11,526 or 25% over the last 13 years but, after adjusting for inflation, it went down \$9,912 in constant 2010 dollars. This represents a decline of 22%.

The Commonwealth as a whole grew by \$21,605 or 43%. Adjusting for inflation the state median household grew by \$1,083 or 2%, indicating Wayne County experienced a 20% gap in household income growth compared to Pennsylvania as a whole. There are numerous possible reasons for this, including rapid aging of the population, loss of manufacturing, severe inflation impacts in recent years and a disproportionate share of the economy being tourism or service industry related. Again, there is abundant evidence of a need to better balance Wayne County's economic base with new industry as well as revived entrepreneurship with respect to agriculture, for example.

Major Industries

Wayne County's major industries, in terms of businesses located within the County and not simply employing residents, encompassed the following categories of employers in 2021:

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Table X-3: Wayne County Business Patterns, 2021

Industry Description	Total Establishments	Total Employees	Annual Payroll	Average Payroll	% of Average Payroll
Health care and social assistance	128	2,331	\$110,515,000	\$47,411	117%
Retail trade	200	3,082	\$100,208,000	\$32,514	80%
Construction	183	1,133	\$73,172,000	\$64,583	159%
Accommodation & food services	158	1,491	\$53,357,000	\$35,786	88%
Finance & insurance	55	451	\$33,313,000	\$73,865	182%
Manufacturing	46	660	\$30,377,000	\$46,026	113%
Other services (except public administration)	155	888	\$25,591,000	\$28,819	71%
Administrative support	69	723	\$24,195,000	\$33,465	82%
Wholesale trade	26	345	\$21,813,000	\$63,226	156%
Professional, scientific & technical services	79	325	\$17,371,000	\$53,449	132%
Transportation & warehousing	70	337	\$8,595,000	\$25,504	63%
Real estate & rental & leasing	43	174	\$7,952,000	\$45,701	113%
Utilities	10	78	\$7,326,000	\$93,923	231%
Arts, entertainment & recreation	29	142	\$5,931,000	\$41,768	103%
Mining, quarrying and oil and gas	8	72	\$5,899,000	\$81,931	202%
Educational services	12	117	\$4,874,000	\$41,658	103%
Management of companies & enterprises	3	65	\$3,397,000	\$52,262	129%
Information	21	60	\$2,963,000	\$49,383	122%
Agriculture and forestry	7	9	\$350,000	\$38,889	96%
Totals	1,302	12,483	\$506,459,000	\$40,572	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Health care and social assistance generates the most payroll (22%). Retail trade, which is impacted by tourism, represents 20%. Construction produces 14%, demonstrating the contributions of development to the Wayne County economy. Accommodation and food service enterprises (the heart of the tourism industry) account for another 11% of payroll. Visitors are obviously important to Wayne County's economic health, but they generate salaries and wages that are typically below average while Finance & Insurance (7% of payroll) generates more than twice the average in salaries and wages.

This tourism dynamic is yet another illustration of the need for more balance and, specifically, more jobs in those categories of industries that produce higher salaries and wages (e.g., real estate services, finance/insurance, professional/scientific/technical services, manufacturing, wholesale trade, mining, information). Construction will, of course, also benefit from all these.

Critical to several of these is high-quality broadband service. Taking advantage of the Sterling Business Park and other industrial sites in Honesdale, Waymart and other locations is also important in diversifying Wayne County's economy. The Hamlin area also has much potential due to proximity to the highway network, as does the Gouldsboro area, although both lack central sewage and water.

There are also numerous examples of what the Census Bureau describes as "self-employed individuals operating very small unincorporated businesses, which may or may not be the owner's principal source of income." Data on these businesses is collected in the form of "nonemployer" statistics, which represent a relatively large share of the Wayne County economy based on gross receipts, which exceeded \$200 million. Included in the data is information on the number of establishments and sales or receipts of businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax.

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The table following summarizes:

Table X-4: Wayne County Nonemployer Statistics, 2019

Nonemployer Description	Total Establishments	Annual Receipts
Construction	738	\$52,161,000
Professional, scientific, and technical services	480	\$21,670,000
Real estate and rental and leasing	429	\$32,512,000
Administrative, support & waste management & remediation services	399	\$11,720,000
Retail trade	396	\$18,670,000
Other services (except public administration)	356	\$13,958,000
Transportation and warehousing	230	\$18,543,000
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	213	\$3,317,000
Health care and social assistance	199	\$6,002,000
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	94	\$4,900,000
Finance and insurance	94	\$6,014,000
Educational services	92	\$1,543,000
Manufacturing	80	\$3,066,000
Accommodation and food services	74	\$4,636,000
Wholesale trade	58	\$3,532,000
Information	40	\$1,751,000
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	11	\$744,000
Totals	3,983	\$204,739,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

These nonemployer businesses generated sales of \$204.7 million in 2019. Wayne County businesses as a whole generated approximately \$1 billion of sales receipts according to the 2002 Economic Census, suggesting nonemployers represent approximately 20% of the total County economy today. Contractors, truckers, small retailers and various services are among the principal non-employers.

Competitive Position of Wayne County

Wayne County, like every other jurisdiction, must compete for economic development with surrounding states, regions and even counties. This can only be accomplished effectively by documenting and promoting Wayne County's marketable comparative advantages, especially those that distinguish it from New York State and adjoining urban areas, even though it may also market itself as part of the broader region it occupies. Many of those advantages have to do with quality of life issues and natural or geographic factors discussed elsewhere in this *Comprehensive Plan*. Others are, themselves, economic in nature.

Among the marketable comparative advantages of Wayne County are the following:

- Excellent highway access provided by I-81, I-84, I-86 and I-380.
- A large new high-quality business park that takes advantage of this highway access.
- An appealing living environment for workers.

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- Rail service available into the center of the County and parallels U.S. Route 6, the principal commercial corridor through the County (Hawley, White Mills and Honesdale).
- A large visitor and second home population that offers a large additional market for retail and service providers.
- Extensive outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River).
- A location on the edge of a high tax state (New York State) that invites prospective businesses to locate on the Wayne County side of the border.
- Easy access to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, as well as the Lehigh Valley, Binghamton and the New York City metro area, for technical expertise, cultural events and support services.
- Easy access to a remarkable array of quality higher education institutions, including over 30 colleges and universities within one-hour of the County.
- Access to a labor force of potential workers who are currently living and working in metro areas, underemployed members of which can be tapped by incentivizing the relocation of these workers and metro area industries themselves to Wayne County based on quality of life.

Agriculture Industry

Farming, though not a large employer per se, is, nonetheless, an important industry within Wayne County for several reasons, including its cultural and open space value as well as its ability to attract young entrepreneurs and bring tourism to the County. Calkins Creamery, a cheese producer from Damascus Township that markets to all 50 states and Creamworks, a producer of fresh milk, flavored milk, ice cream and butter provide two excellent examples of innovative agriculture that serve to attract visitors and brand the County for tourism and retail sales purposes. There are also meat and vegetable producers.



***Products from Creamworks (l) and Calkins Creamery (r)
Two of Wayne County's Niche Dairy Farms***

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The agriculture industry generated \$27,114,000 sales in 2022, down from \$29,371,000 in 2017, according to the U.S. Census of Agriculture. Table X-5 below highlights key aspects of this industry.

Table X-5: Wayne County Agricultural Statistics, 2017-2022

Agricultural Characteristic	2017	2022	Change
Farms	640	523	-117
Land in farms (acres)	100,696	90,504	-10,192
Average size of farm (acres)	157	173	16
Average estimated market value of land and buildings per farm	\$675,611	\$1,099,617	\$424,006
Average estimated market value of all machinery and equipment per farm	\$82,875	\$99,625	\$16,750
Farms by size - 1 to 9 acres	42	29	-13
Farms by size - 10 to 49 acres	133	115	-18
Farms by size - 50 to 179 acres	267	196	-71
Farms by size - 180 to 499 acres	168	154	-14
Farms by size - to 999 acres	24	24	0
Farms by size - 1,000 acres or more	6	5	-1
Crop farms	567	479	-88
Total acres of cropland	46,257	39,545	-6,712
Total acres of harvested cropland	37,496	31,949	-5,547
Total market value of agricultural products sold	\$29,371,000	\$27,114,000	-\$2,257,000
Total market value of crops sold	\$9,281,000	\$11,188,000	\$1,907,000
Total market value of livestock, poultry and related products sold	\$20,090,000	\$15,926,000	-\$4,164,000
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm	\$45,892	\$57,843	\$11,951
Farms by value of sales - Less than \$2,500	177	128	-49
Farms by value of sales - \$2,500 to \$4,999	72	43	-29
Farms by value of sales - \$5,000 to \$9,999	93	68	-25
Farms by value of sales - \$10,000 to \$24,999	110	106	-4
Farms by value of sales - \$25,000 to \$49,999	65	75	10
Farms by value of sales - \$50,000 to \$99,999	50	41	-9
Farms by value of sales - \$100,000 or more	73	62	-11
Net cash farm income	\$5,893,000	\$4,339,000	-\$1,554,000
Average net cash farm income	\$9,208	\$8,297	-\$911
Farms where farming is primary occupation of principal	461	409	-52
Cattle and calves farms	308	214	-94
Cattle and calves inventory	13,956	9,130	-4,826
Beef cows farms	220	176	-44
Beef cows inventory	3,482	9,130	5,648
Dairy farms	75	43	-32
Dairy cow inventory	4,000	2,179	-1,821
Hog farms	31	36	5
Hogs and pigs inventory	340	644	304
Sheep farms	38	26	-12
Sheep and lambs inventory	996	347	-649
Poultry farms (layers)	139	86	-53
Poultry inventory (layers 20 weeks old and older)	3,286	3,447	161
Corn for grain farms	20	19	-1
Corn for grain acres	709	399	-310
Corn for grain bushels	72,342	31,875	-40,467
Corn for silage or greenchop farms	55	30	-25
Corn for silage or greenchop acres	1,893	801	-1,092
Corn for silage or greenchop tons	35,739	9,221	-26,518
Forage - land used for all hay and all haylage, grass silage, and greenchop, farms	428	360	-68
Forage - land used for all hay and all haylage, grass silage, and greenchop, acres	33,760	29,855	-3,905
Forage - land used for all hay and all haylage, grass silage, and greenchop, tons	75,313	59,716	-15,597
Vegetables harvested for sale farms	77	63	-14
Vegetables harvested for sale acres	262	386	124
Land in orchards farms	33	50	17
Land in orchards acres	136	165	29
Ag tourism/recreational farms	21	17	-4
Ag tourism/recreational sales	\$263,000	\$1,144,000	\$881,000

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2017 and 2022

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The industry is heavily oriented toward livestock sectors, with dairy cows representing less than 25% of the inventory. There are beef, hog, sheep and poultry operations throughout the County. Indeed, there are roughly four times as many beef farms as dairy and beef cow numbers are now also roughly quadruple dairy cow numbers.

Net farm income for the County as a whole was \$4,339,000 in 2022 or only \$8,297 per farm, with 409 farmers having this as their primary occupation. This suggests many of the farms were effectively retirement enterprises or experiencing low returns, forcing many into off-farm employment.

Notwithstanding this, the average farm was 173 acres in size and had \$1.2 million in assets, meaning the agriculture industry represented a \$639 million investment in Wayne County in 2022.

There is significant niche farming taking place, including vegetable and nursery enterprises, as well as 84 farms with horses and ponies and 29 with other equines for a total of 920 equines although a 2003 Penn State study says the County had 1,977 altogether. More of this can and should be promoted by Penn State Cooperative Extension. There were also alpacas, bison, deer, llamas, goats, rabbits and other species being raised commercially in Wayne County in 2022.

Importantly, the Census of Agriculture also indicated there were 236 new and beginning farm operations that year that occupied some 26,401 acres of Wayne County land, suggesting great interest in reinventing the local agriculture industry.

Not coincidentally, the Wayne Highland School District has revived its agricultural curriculum and has a very active Future Farmers of America chapter in which both young men and women participate.

Wayne County was also the subject of an Agriculture Economic Development Plan in 2018, followed by a Dairy Processing Feasibility Study (and Business Plan) and later a proposal for an Agricultural Innovation Center. It has also initiated a local AgroLegacy branding program.

Tourism Industry

Tourism continues to be a major industry within Wayne County. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development periodically examines the economic impact of tourism on counties within the Commonwealth.

Data from their 2021 (latest) report follows:



*Certifies agricultural products
from Wayne County*

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Table X-6: Wayne County Tourism Statistics, 2021

Tourism Spending and Economic Impact Category	2021 Impacts
Lodging	\$67,400,000
Food and Beverage	\$123,100,000
Retail	\$92,800,000
Recreation	\$103,800,000
Transportation	\$171,300,000
Direct Vistor Spending	\$558,400,000
Indirect and Induced Impacts	\$35,900,000
Total Tourism Impacts	\$594,300,000
Total Employment Impact in Jobs	4,939
Total Labor Income	\$229,000,000
Total Local/State/Federal Taxes Paid	\$113,000,000

Source: Pennsylvania Tourism Office

The data indicates the primary tourism impacts are with respect to transportation (gasoline purchases, for example), with secondary but large impacts on food and beverage purchases, recreation expenditures, retail and lodging. Tourism also continues to exhibit many growth opportunities, given the appeal of Lake Wallenpaupack, the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River and the County's tremendous hunting and fishing resources as well as its second-home industry. Moreover, as the above table illustrates, the multiplier effects on other industry sectors are widespread.

The summer camp industry is especially strong in Wayne County as a recent study done for the Pennsylvania Camp Association and Wayne County Camp Alliance indicates. This study found the following:

- Wayne County is home to 30 active summer camps throughout 11 different municipalities.
- The average camp has been a mainstay of the regional economy for more than 69 years.
- The average camp is approximately 385 acres in size.
- The average camp spends over \$4.2 million on operations, some 23% of it regionally.
- The total direct and indirect impact of summer camps on the regional economy (including 38 additional camps in nearby counties) is an estimated \$250.7 million annually.
- Regional summer camps invested an average of \$2.5 million each to improve their facilities over the last five years.
- The average taxpaying camp paid over \$133,000 in local property taxes in 2022. They pay as much as 25% of all taxes in some communities.

Mining Industry

Mining is a long-standing industry in the area with numerous bluestone, hard rock and red shale quarries

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found throughout the County and especially in Northern Wayne. The County's natural resources in this regard are directly related to its bedrock geology.

The bluestone, for example, is found in a band extending from Northeastern Pennsylvania into the Catskills and is distinguished by its quality and coloring which can range from green to blue to purplish hues. The sand-sized grains from which bluestone is constituted were deposited in the "Catskill Delta" during the Middle to Upper Devonian Period of the Paleozoic Era, approximately 370 to 345 million years ago. The Catskill Delta was created from run-off from the Acadian Mountains ("Ancestral Appalachians") which covered the area where New York City now exists.

This Delta ran in a narrow band from southwest to northeast. It provides the base material for the high-quality bluestone quarried in Northern Wayne County. It is a high quality product due to its silica content, compact nature and fine grains. It is used for patios, architectural facings, fireplaces, sills, sidewalks, and other features as well as a basic building material for churches, institutions, homes and businesses.

Many sidewalks in New York City were paved with Catskill and Pennsylvania bluestone. It is also extremely durable. The product quarried regionally is of the highest quality in North America. It is a unique commodity of special value and niche manufacturers of bluestone products in the County have enjoyed great success.

This same bedrock geology is also now creating another mining sector generated great additional personal income for the County in the form of land leases for natural gas drilling. The Catskill Delta is underlain by various levels of shale at depths of up to 10,000 feet below the surface. These shales (e.g., the Marcellus) are yielding good supplies of natural gas in other areas of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York and studies by Penn State University and others suggest Northern Wayne County is a particularly good area for exploration.

Several natural gas companies leased large acreages for prices of \$2,000+ per acre and up with significant test drilling having already taken place in the County. Northern Wayne County is also positioned between the Tennessee Gas and Millennium Pipelines, providing a good outlet for the gas. This mining sector promised to have major economic impacts on the County, during the lease-up, construction and production phases, which could last several decades. The experience of neighboring Susquehanna County is instructive in that regard.

Notwithstanding this, most of Wayne County is within the Delaware River watershed and the Delaware River Basin Commission has, in contrast to the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) where the same majority of members governs, has prohibited natural gas development in Wayne County, the only area of Pennsylvania with significant natural gas resources that cannot utilize them.

This matter has been subject to litigation in which Wayne County participated but has not yet been resolved in a way that would allow development, except in those portions of the County within the Susquehanna River Basin. Notably, the SRBC has found thousands of gas wells developed in the Susquehanna River Basin have had "no discernible impact" on stream water quality.

Renewable Energy

There is already wind energy development in the County along the Moosic Mountain range. Construction of

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this project many years ago produced much construction activity. There is also limited economic activity associated with maintenance and upgrades and, presumably, considerable royalties paid to owners of land beneath the wind turbines.

Future wind energy development is possible in higher locations further north along this same ridge and in the southernmost part of the County where some of the higher elevations in the County exist.

More recently, there has been considerable interest in Wayne County from solar energy developers. There are leases signed (rates can exceed \$1,200/acre) and construction has either begun or is imminent with respect to several projects ranging somewhat in size. The County would benefit by programs to educate landowners with respect to leasing and municipalities in regard to regulation of such facilities.

Many of the concerns that need to be addressed are similar to those for cell tower and wind energy projects. Guaranteeing the removal of equipment and structures upon the end of their useful life is important to both communities and landowners and, therefore, is a typical feature of most regulations. The County should consider doing education and developing model language]. Preston Township's version may be useful for this purpose.

There is also potential for small scale hydroelectric and geothermal energy in the County but these are unlikely to have significant economic impact. Rather, they are more appropriate as accessory uses in connection with other activities.

Commutation

There is an ebb and flow of employment with respect to other areas to which Wayne County residents commute for employment opportunities and others come to Wayne County for employment.

Tables X-7 and X-8 below provide the details:

Figure X-7

Residency of Workers Commuting TO Wayne County	Commuters
Other Counties in Pennsylvania	5,453
New York State	261
New Jersey	52
Maryland	38
Other States	76
Sub-Total	5,880
Place of Work of Workers Commuting FROM Wayne County	Commuters
Other Counties in Pennsylvania	6,528
New York State	1,258
New Jersey	357
Connecticut	23
Other States	31
Sub-Total	8,197
Net Commutation Out of Wayne County	2,317

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Figure X-8

Residency of Workers Commuting TO/FROM Wayne County	In to Work	Out to Work
Broome County, NY	0	66
Delaware County, NY	94	191
Sullivan County, NY	134	466
Pike County, PA	1,487	1,334
Monroe County, PA	512	690
Lackawanna County, PA	2,413	3,166
Susquehanna County, PA	374	497
Sub-Totals	5,014	6,410
Net Commutation Out of Wayne County		1,396

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Some 26.5% of Wayne County commuters travel less than 30 minutes to work, 4.8% travel 60 to 89 minutes to work and an incredible 5.0% travel over 90 minutes.

Labor Force

According to the Economic Development Administration, Wayne County has, among Pennsylvania counties, the highest single county deficit in prime age (25-54 years of age) labor force participation at 11.8%, a fact that needs some further investigation. It is difficult to attract skilled workers when 35% of wages go to housing costs, which is standard upper limit guideline used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This is the cost of gentrification in many instances and industry cannot be effectively incentivized to locate in Wayne County without also incentivizing relocation of at least some workers associated with that particular industry, putting even further pressure on an already tight housing market and resulting in housing price increases that consume more income.

Job training is critical in this respect and community colleges serving Wayne County need to be partners in this endeavor. The Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance has been and must continue to provide leadership in making it happen.