



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – OPINION PAGE**  
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**CHAIRMAN, CPWDC**

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As Chairman of the Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation (CPWDC), I would like to provide readers with information regarding the recent decision to consolidate PA CareerLink® facilities. CPWDC is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of a majority of private-sector business leaders representing companies necessary to the growth of our local economy. The Board is charged with setting strategic workforce priorities and making decisions about the funding used to operate workforce development programs, including seven PA CareerLink facilities, in the nine counties of Centre, Columbia, Clinton, Snyder, Union, Mifflin, Northumberland, Lycoming and Montour.

We believe that the PA CareerLink services are vital to the communities, especially during the current economic climate with thousands of people seeking employment. We are responsible for providing services in a manner that allows us to reach the greatest number of employers and job seekers as possible. Since 2008, the PA CareerLink offices in Central Pennsylvania have served more adults and dislocated workers than any of the 22 workforce investment areas in the state, even Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Unfortunately, funding levels are not based on the number of facilities in operation or the number of customers served.

As a result of a \$1 million decrease in federal funding specifically targeted for services in the PA CareerLink facilities, the anticipation of further decline in coming years, and the reality that operating costs continue to increase, the Board realized that a thorough review of infrastructure costs was necessary in order to continue to provide valuable services.

In August 2010, the Board appointed a Committee to review the current facility leases and examine alternatives that would provide a 20% decrease in costs related to PA CareerLink facility operations. The target reduction was derived from the decrease CPWDC has experienced since the 2007 funding year. The 10 member Committee provided representation from across our region, the majority being local business representatives. This was an open and transparent process that involved a careful review of customer data and infrastructure costs. It quickly became clear that the best business decision would involve a consolidation of two facilities.

With a shrinking operating budget, PA CareerLink programs and CPWDC holding leases for six facilities, a decision was made to renegotiate leases in Columbia and Clinton Counties, issue requests for proposals for locations in Centre and Lycoming Counties and to not renew leases for locations in Selinsgrove and Shamokin. Given the population and the approximate geographic center it represents for residents of Northumberland, Union, and Snyder Counties, the decision was made to explore locating a facility in Sunbury.

Prior to the November 2010 Board meeting, CPWDC Executive Director, Shannon Miller, and I met with both Boards of Commissioners for Northumberland and Snyder County, as these entities are also the landlords for the facilities in Shamokin and Selinsgrove.

The Board's decisions have been made well before the end of the leases, providing these landlords with ample lead time to address the issue any landlord faces when any tenant decides to not renew a rental agreement.

These are Board decisions not motivated by politics or mired in bureaucracy. These decisions were not made in haste or without a thorough analysis of potential impact on customer service. These prudent but necessary business decisions were made proactively in response to fiscal issues and in preparation for coming years. The Board was provided with a wealth of information in order to make informed decisions

to benefit the entire workforce system in Central Pennsylvania. The decisions of the Board have obviously upset some people and they have directed comments to our Executive Director and staff. Unfortunately, the continued engagement regarding these decisions is a distraction from our mission to support quality services for job seekers and employers.