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VIEWS & VISIONS

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Diana Irey Vaughan
Washington County Board
of Commissioners

First elected in 1995 and currently serving as Chair of the Washington County Board of Directors, Diana Irey Vaughan is the longest serving Commissioner – and the only woman to have ever served – in Southwestern Pennsylvania’s Washington County. Vaughan is a leader in economic development. She established a public-private partnership with the Washington County Chamber of Commerce to develop a “one-stop shop,” creating a unified delivery system for economic development efforts. Through her insistence on long-range planning, low tax rates, and a unified economic delivery plan, she has helped to foster job creation in the region.

A Strong State of the County

During the first half of 2022, Washington County continued to observe positive economic indicators in terms of real estate demand, business expansion and job creation/retention.

This continued positive outlook was highlighted at the 10th Annual Washington County: State of the Economy event hosted by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce in February. During the event, the Washington County Commissioners highlighted 69 projects, accounting for more than \$679.8 million in capital investment in Washington County. These projects were also complemented by over \$7.2 million

retailer’s second largest location in the region and provides customers with a convenient pickup location.

In May, Mingo Creek Craft Distillers, purveyors of Liberty Pole Spirits, broke ground on their new, nearly 15,000 square foot distillery, tasting room, and barrel storage rack house. Mingo Creek Craft Distillers is a family-owned business that was launched in 2016 and is known for its award-winning brands of small batch whiskeys. This new destination distillery will attract visitors to the county and provide another entertainment option on the Racetrack Road corridor.

“Washington County continues to cultivate a diverse economy across several industry sectors to maintain stability and encourage continued growth.”

in investments the county recently made through the Washington County Local Share Account (LSA) – a fund capitalized by gaming revenues. These LSA investments were leveraged by \$8.8 million in public and private resources.

Washington County continues to cultivate a diverse economy across several industry sectors to maintain stability and encourage continued growth. M@C Discount, an online auction company, announced a new location in Washington County – a 150,000 square foot expansion at the former Macy’s in the Crown Center Mall. This is the online auction

Manufacturing has long been a leading industry in Washington County, and Perryman Company has announced a major expansion at their California location. The company plans to install an open die forge press at their Coal Center melt campus in California Technology Park. They also plan to add additional furnaces at the same location to increase titanium melting capacity by more than 60 percent. Both projects are expected to be underway this summer and will be completed by 2024. This dual expansion project marks a significant investment in Washington County and will support additional jobs at the plant.



In the Mon Valley, Bakery Barn, a protein bar manufacturer, has announced plans to occupy a 55,000 square foot manufacturing facility in the Alta Vista Business Park. The company will have 50 employees at the facility and is expected to open this year.

Another truly transformational project for Washington County is the Fort Cherry Development District – led by Imperial Land Company – which will redevelop more than 200 acres of previously strip-mined property in Robinson Township. The development will feature 25-to-75-acre sites for industrial, flex and distribution. Site and infrastructure development is currently underway on the first phase of the project, with lots expected to be available in late 2022.

Washington County continues to prioritize infrastructure development and invest in the future through new roads, utilities, and broadband. One of the most significant infrastructure projects for Washington County last year was the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's opening of the Southern Beltway, linking the Pittsburgh International Airport to Washington County communities. This delivers another main interstate to Washington County's front door and will be a

major catalyst for development across the northern portion of Washington County, as evidenced by the Fort Cherry Development District project.

Broadband development has also been a major area of focus for the county. The Washington County Commissioners have unanimously approved several projects to increase high speed internet service accessibility to unserved and underserved residents and businesses in the county. The initial pilot projects in the county have been awarded for Avella and Scenery Hill, with additional locations to be announced. The Washington County Authority is implementing this countywide project, which is expected to take

approximately three years and has an initial budget of \$30 million, funding made available through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

In Washington County, many of our successes have highlighted the strategic diversification of our economy, the maximization of opportunities presented to (and by) our businesses, and our unique public/private partnership initiatives. This approach has allowed Washington County to be nimble and respond to the market quickly, provide our partners with stability and a predictable environment, and help to assure that their projects will be a success. ▾

