

LindenPointe Project Positions Region for Growth

Tech center is under construction, BC3 opens.

The city of Hermitage, Pa., and the region stand to get a significant boost in 2011 with the completion of the Technology Center of Excellence and other projects at LindenPointe, says Gary Gulla, economic development director. The LindenPointe Tech Center is under construction and stands to complement the Training & Workforce Development Center, which opened last year, Gulla says.

"These facilities are integral components of the interstate work-force and economic development strategies geared at providing opportunities to improve regional competitiveness," he says.

Nearly 10 years ago, the city of Hermitage and the Hermitage Community & Economic Development Commission transformed the way they approached development with LindenPointe as the nucleus, Gulla says.

"We realized that the city needed to take a regional approach and foster relationships," he says. "After many years of hard work, perseverance and support from project partners, the community efforts are well-positioned for success."

The Mercer-Lawrence Workforce Investment Board and the Mercer County CareerLink worked with the electronics industry cluster to develop conceptual designs of the technology center, and

concluded that this approach was well-suited for LindenPointe. The new center will foster technology development, business incubation and work-force and training partnerships for science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, related industries.

Also in 2010, the five-county "Oh-Penn" Interstate Regional Collaboration emerged as a nationally recognized model for work-force and economic development cooperation, Gulla continues.

Hermitage used the Oh-Penn platform to secure \$4.2 million in federal funding for the Technology Center Incubator last year. Several members of the Oh-Penn competitiveness council actively participated in the EDA pre-application meetings providing invaluable support for the LindenPointe projects.

The tech center was designed under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, or LEED, featuring green characteristics and requiring extensive documentation.

The construction site serves as a "Green Learning Laboratory," while The Green Building Alliance in conjunction with the building and construction industry partnership and the West Central Workforce Investment Board is training contractors, construc-

tion trades and project designers on-site.

The construction project also serves as a training workshop for a group of Hickory High School students with interests in architecture, engineering and construction. The students are participating in

a year-long process monitoring the tech center's construction and documenting the activities through written reports and photography.

This month Butler County Community College opened its new

20,000-square-foot operation in LindenPointe, a \$3.2 million investment that will provide another regional resource for development.

"We are extremely excited about the BC3 investment in the LindenPointe campus and the school's long-term vision," says Rex Knisley, chairman, Hermitage Community and Economic Development Committee.

"As the LindenPointe initiatives move forward, the potential for regional rewards is great," Gulla says. "There is a heightened level of energy among the partners and a high level of confidence that these projects will enhance the regional, entrepreneurial and innovation-based economic development strategies."

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