

Northwest

Your Source for Everything Northwest Commission!

NEWS

April

2018

Business Financing

The Northwest Commission Loan Review Committee closed a loan for the following client:

- Moody and Associates, Inc. of Crawford County closed on a \$180,000 loan to purchase the real estate and existing business. The company will retain 68 jobs.

Loan Funds Available

The Business Financing Program currently has funds available for land and building acquisition, construction and renovation projects, as well as new or used machinery and equipment purchases and working capital. Loan interest rates are fixed for the term of the loan and are currently as low as 3.75%. For more information, contact Lisa Beach, Loan Closing Coordinator, at (814) 677-4800 x121 or lisab@northwestpa.org.

Government Contracting (PTAC)

Understanding Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certifications for Government Contracting

The Northwest Commission Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) will present a free training seminar entitled "Understanding Woman-Owned Small Business Certifications for Government Contracting" on Thursday, April 19, from 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. at the William Douglass Conference Center, 764 Bessemer Street, Meadville. Co-sponsors of the event are the Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County, Meadville-Western Crawford County Chamber of Commerce and Gannon University Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

This workshop will provide attendees a better understanding of Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Woman Business Enterprise (WBE) certifications as they apply in the government marketplace.

Melissa Becker of the PTAC will discuss aspects of WOSB and WBE to help businesses determine if certification is right for them, including eligibility requirements, how these certifications fit into state and federal contracting, and the options for certifying.

For more information or to register for this free seminar, please contact Melissa Becker at melissab@northwestpa.org, 814-677-4800 x124 or register online at www.northwestpa.org/calendar-of-events.

Northwest Commission, State Representative James Partner to Offer PA COSTARS Training Event

On May 4, the Northwest Commission Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) in partnership with State Representative R. Lee James will sponsor a free workshop covering aspects of the COSTARS program for Members.

The seminar entitled "Understanding and Utilizing the COSTARS Purchasing Program" will be held from 9:30a to 11:30a at the Northwest Commission located at 395 Seneca Street, Oil City. Guest speaker for the session is Ms. Kimberly Bullivant, Department of General Services COSTARS Marketing Manager.

The upcoming workshop complements a previous event held last year with Representative James for small businesses interested in becoming COSTAR Suppliers. The target audience on May 4 are the local public procurement units (LPPUs) and state-funded organizations that utilize, or are interested in utilizing, the COSTARS program for their procurements. LPPUs and state-affiliated organizations include groups such as municipalities, townships, cities, school districts, commissions, fire departments and the like.

Representative James said of the COSTARS program and the upcoming May 4 workshop, "Municipalities can save real money for taxpayers by placing procurement orders through the COSTARS program and enjoying lower pricing. The Dept. of General Services can deliver a real benefit to even the smaller municipalities. Attendees can gain valuable insight to this process."

For more information or to register for this FREE seminar, contact Kelly Weaver at kellyw@northwestpa.org, 814-677-4800 x108 or register online at <https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events>. Space for the event is limited; those interested are asked to register in advance.

Some quick notes from the PTAC:

- For government contracting news, updates & events, check out "PTAC TALK", our PTAC's quarterly newsletter. Latest issues are posted at www.northwestpa.org/government-contracting. This month, we're providing a special issue highlighting the many upcoming government contracting events, tradeshow & networking opportunities. Remember to contact a PTAC Counselor for help preparing for special events, like developing a Capabilities Statement, preparing an "elevator speech", and researching potential customers.

- Attention Business Resource Partners: Would you like to learn more about PTAC services so you better understand what we do & how we can assist businesses in your community? Contact a PTAC Counselor & we'd be happy to talk with you and provide a copy of our new desk reference.

International Marketing

2017-2018 Global Access Program Updates

The Pennsylvania Global Access Program (GAP) is designed to enhance the capability of small to mid-sized Pennsylvania companies to increase export sales. GAP is administered by the Pennsylvania Office of International Business (OIBD) and provides up to \$5,000 per award period to qualifying Pennsylvania companies to reimburse 75% of eligible expenses associated with specific export promotion activities. The program is funded in part through a grant with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

As of April 10, 2018, 17 applications from the Northwest region have been approved for GAP funding, totaling \$53,510. Funds are limited and subject to availability. Once submitted, applications are reviewed by a panel that convenes weekly. Funding decisions are rendered on a first-come, first-served basis.

As a reminder, companies must submit their applications for consideration 45 days prior to the event. Once GAP funding is approved, the approved amount will be held for a company even if the event is taking place later in the year.

For more information and guidelines to the GAP, please click [here](#).

Pepro Finds Great Success in GAP-funded Domestic Trade Show

Pepro, LLC, a veteran-owned, small business in Oil City, PA has been providing state-of-the-art deployable radio sites without loss or failure since 1992.

In 1992, Engineers from National Fuel Gas approached Pioneer Energy Supply to supply or develop an enclosure that would protect equipment from conditions that were disrupting use and measurement of natural gas being bought and sold. Unable to find an enclosure to meet these needs Pepro decided to design and manufacture their own. Victor Garmong, President of the newly formed Pioneer Energy Products applied for a U.S. patent for his design which was issued in May 1998. In December 1998, the first shelter was designed, manufactured and delivered to the public safety industry.

Pepro continues to engineer products to meet the needs of public utilities, public safety, the National Park Service, Homeland Security, and many others.

In March of this year, Pepro exhibited at the International Wireless Communications Expo in Orlando, FL. They were able to exhibit at the domestic trade show with the help of funding through the Global Access Program.

Kelly Lander, President of Pepro shared some of the successes of their participation in the trade show:

"Thank you again for making us aware of the GAP Funding for this year and assisting with our application. We had a very successful show. In addition to taking two new products,

we were also invited to present in one of the conference sessions. Vic Garmong, CEO of Pepero, presented on 'Portable Infrastructure for Public Safety Broadband.'

He provided a demonstration of our new "Nano Site" to Donny Jackson, Editor of Urgent Communications. The video was featured in Urgent's online newsletter as well as on their [website](#). We had six representatives from the company attend, including the CEO and Vice President, two engineers, and two sales managers. They obtained 176 leads through the lead retrieval app, which converted the information to a spreadsheet.

We would like to thank the PA Department of Community and Economic Developments Office of International Business Development, Northwest Commission and the SBA for making this grant possible. As a small manufacturing business, opportunities like the GAP grant enable us to maximize our presence at trade shows like IWCE by reducing our costs."

Export Controls under the International Traffic in Arms (ITAR) & the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) with a Focus on the Changes in 2018

April 25 & 26, 2018

Park Inn by Radisson Sharon | West Middlesex, PA

Export controls and compliance with the regulations has long been a complex issue for exporters. Determining agency jurisdiction and classification under the appropriate regulations is difficult and requires a comprehensive understanding of the regulations.

The classification and compliance process has only become more complex under various new regulations and interpretations. Non-compliance can be costly and even lead to loss of export privileges.

This program will help you identify what has changed and the steps necessary to be in full compliance. Through a review of the regulations as they currently exist and particular examples, the participant will gain an understanding of how to navigate the ITAR & EAR, properly classifying their exports and obtaining the necessary licensing and permission to export. They will learn about the new license procedures and other changes.

This program is designed to meet initial and recurring training requirements. Learn how to use compliance as a competitive advantage!

Who Should Attend:

- Anyone responsible for export compliance
- Logistics, Shipping, Purchasing Personnel
- International Trade Supervisors and Managers
- Engineering, Research & Development Personnel

This two-day training will be eligible for 10 CE credit hours through NASBITE. Certifications of Completion will be provided at the end of the program.

TEAM WORLDWIDE

Presenter for this conference is **Mr. Robert Imbriani CGBP**, Executive Vice President, International at Team Worldwide (Corporate). Mr. Imbriani is a recognized expert in the fields of export and import compliance, logistics, international business and finance. His articles have been published in various trade journals and he has provided expert testimonial in legal actions. Mr. Imbriani also serves as an Adjunct Professor at Baruch College and Pace University in New York. His experience also includes training services for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center as well as training, compliance, and logistics projects worldwide.

Ohio and Pennsylvania companies are invited to participate in this event. Registration fee for this two day conference is **\$175 per person**, or a reduced fee of **\$150 per person** when two or more persons attend from one company. **Continental breakfast and hot lunch will be provided on both days.**

Participating Partners:



Evening Reception Sponsor:



PNC BANK

Gold Sponsors:



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SleepPhones® at CES – A Success Story As Told by AcousticSheep LLC

AcousticSheep LLC attended the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas with the help of the Global Access Program made available by DCED's Office of International Business Development with SBA STEP Grant funding. Domestic Trade Shows are eligible for funding through the GAP program.

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is all business. It is the world's largest single event of its kind and the largest trade show at which AcousticSheep LLC exhibits each year. Attendees do not receive giveaways like stress-balls or pens and exhibitors are not allowed to sell products on the floor. CES is a showcase for innovation, discussion, inspiration, information gathering, and potential for collaboration and for igniting partnerships.

This was the show's 50th year and it marked AcousticSheep LLC's 6th year in attendance. We were one of more than 4,000 exhibitors and our booth was located in the "Sleep Tech" section of the gigantic 4 building, 2.6 million square foot exhibition.

Foot-traffic was steady throughout the week, aside from a noticeable increase when the power went out in the main hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center for 2 hours. We utilized a team of four to work the show and we each often found ourselves talking to large groups of visitors. That made for a lively week and some really great questions and conversation. We scanned more than 850 attendee badges from visitors to our booth. We estimate that we only scanned 1/3 of our visitors which means our 4 employees spoke to over 2500+ people in 4 days (that's an average of nearly 22 people an hour for each person).

Visitors to our booth represented a variety of industries and a cross-section of roles within the business world. Along with current partners, we spoke with new people from larger companies, competitors trying to learn more about our products, a number of buyers and several potential distributors. The largest group of visitors were from small-to-midsize companies. They were interested in potential partnerships and retail opportunities. A number of media and bloggers stopped by to do interviews and to request samples so they could reviews on their websites.

The most gratifying group of visitors was that of our current customers. Several stopped to talk at length about how SleepPhones has had a positive impact on their lives. One

cancer survivor gave us a big hug and told us we helped her get through chemo. Some made it a point to share that they had started with our original wired product and have now upgraded to our Wireless or Effortless models. Others did a quick walk-by to say hello and to thank us for making such a great product. It was invigorating to meet a few of the people we have helped with SleepPhones.

Our next generation of products are currently in development with plans for launch later this year and formal introduction at CES 2019. For this year's show, we decided to raise awareness for our premiere product, the SleepPhones® Effortless, rather than to rush a new product to completion just for CES. Reception to our entire product line was good, but hands down, visitors liked our Effortless model for the convenience of induction charging.

The overall impact on sales from our experience at CES will reverberate throughout the entirety of 2018. Conversations with many of the people we met will result in product reviews, new retail and distributor partnerships, and will lead to introductions with a variety of new contacts, some who did not even attend the show. For us, CES is our premier trade show and it is a fabulous networking event.

Transportation

Transportation Advisory Committee March Meeting

The next meeting of the Northwest TAC is scheduled for 1:00 PM on June 26th at the PennDOT District 1-0 office in Oil City. The public is encouraged to attend. Anyone interested in being placed on the agenda or mailing list for the Transportation Committee meetings should contact Sue at sues@northwestpa.org or by phone at 814-677-4800 x131.

2019-2022 Draft TIP

A copy of the 2019-2022 Draft TIP project listing for both the Highway & Bridge and Transit projects may be viewed on the Northwest Commission's website by clicking [here](#). A public meeting for the review of the TIP is scheduled at 1:00 PM on June 11th at the Northwest Commission.

Route 8 Asset Management and Corridor Improvement Study

PennDOT announced that the that is currently in progress to best manage and improve Route 8 (Richard Frame Memorial Highway) in Venango County between the intersection with Georgetown Road in Irwin Township and DeBence Drive in Sandycreek Township, a distance of about 10.5 miles will focus only on four-lane options for the roadway. The decision was made after compiling input before, during and after an initial public meeting in February, and considering the costs of proposed alternatives for the highway.

The final stage of the study will focus on rebuilding the four-lane section of the highway in a manner that minimizes costs, maintains open lanes of traffic during construction, offers an effective pavement design, and supports the economic initiatives of the region.

A final public meeting on the results of the study will be held in early June 2018.

Contact Information - State Roadway Concerns

PennDOT reminds motorists that they can report pothole and other roadway concerns on state roads by calling 1-800-FIX-ROAD or by visiting www.penndot.gov and clicking on "Submit Roadway Feedback" near the bottom of the page.

Northwest Rail Freight Improvement Project Awards

Governor Tom Wolf announced the approval of 27 statewide rail freight improvement projects that will help sustain more than 400 jobs across Pennsylvania.

The State Transportation Commission voted to approve \$32 million for the projects through the Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Rail Freight Assistance Program (RFAP). The following were approved within the northwest region:

Crawford County

- Oil Creek Titusville Lines, Inc., rehabilitate Oil Creek Titusville's railroad bridge over Church Run including structural and bridge deck, \$40,425.

Erie County

- W J Beitler Co., construct a rail siding from Pittsburgh and Ohio Central Railroad to W J Beitler's facility, which will provide new freight rail service, \$250,000.

Western New York PA RR Co. LLC, rehabilitate approximately seven miles of track between Concord and Union City, including the replacement of ties and rail, track surfacing, and repairing an at-grade crossing, which will improve safety, \$697,909.

Entire 2018 LTAP Schedule Available

The Local Technical Assistance Program is underway and the complete 2018 schedule has been finalized. Classes that will be held in Northwest PA include:

- 4-19-18 | Safe Driver | 8am-12pm | Hermitage, PA
- 5-04-18 | Traffic Safety Development Plan For Local Roads | 8am-3pm | Meadville, PA
- 5-17-18 | Engineering and Traffic Studies | 8am-3pm | Clarion, PA
- 5-24-18 | Stop Signs and Intersection Traffic Control | 8am-12pm | Meadville, PA
- 6-14-18 | Roadside Vegetation Control | 8am-3pm | Saegertown, PA
- 9-6-18 | Asphalt Roads: Common Maintenance Problems | 8am-12pm | Scandia, PA
- 9-27-18 | Salt & Snow Management | 8am-3pm | Meadville, PA
- 10-3-18 | Warm Mix Asphalt | 8am-12pm | Hermitage, PA
- 10-4-18 | Salt & Snow Management | 8am-3pm | Scandia, PA
- 11-2-18 | Project Overview: Monitor Quality by Asking the Right Questions | 8am-12pm | Clarion, PA

- 11-5-18 | Drainage: The Keys to Roads That Last | 8am-3pm | Meadville, PA
- 11-20-18 | Speed Limits & Speed Management | 8am-12pm | Clarion, PA
- 11-29-18 | Road Safety Audit | 8am-11pm | Erie, PA

As always, these classes are free of charge but pre-registration is required. To register, please contact Travis Siegel at traviss@northwestpa.org or by phone at 814.677.4800 x123.

Regional Planning

Regional Planners' Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Planners' is scheduled for 10:00 AM on Friday, May 18th, at the Northwest Commission office in Oil City. A training is scheduled for that day on ARC's Local Access Road Program.

Greenways, Trails Recreation Program Seeking Applicants

The Commonwealth Financing Authority is seeking grant applicants for its Greenways, Trails and Recreation program. Grants must not exceed \$250,000 and require a 15% match of the total project cost.

Act 13 establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects.

Applications are being accepted through May 31st. Click [here](#) for more information & to apply.

Update to Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

PennDOT announced that the updating of the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan has begun and they are seeking public input to the plan through an [online survey](#).

Once completed, the Pennsylvania Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan will be a resource for Municipal Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs), and municipalities throughout Pennsylvania, providing guidance to local governments on best practices for developing and implementing regional and local bicycle and pedestrian plans. The plan also will develop a set of goals, objectives and performance measures to guide PennDOT's efforts to support a complete multimodal network.



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