

# V I S I O N I N G



## The Upper Delaware River Corridor

### We need a vision

By TOM KANE

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**BEACH LAKE** — Over 70 people from a cross section of governments, businesses, environmental groups and communities along the Delaware River corridor met last Friday, April 12, to talk about developing a vision for the river corridor in the face of coming growth.

The meeting, which brought together people from the three counties bordering the river — Sullivan, Wayne and Pike—was organized by **The River Reporter**.

Communication between the states and the counties along the river has historically been interrupted by the river," said Laurie Stuart, publisher of **The River Reporter**. "We wanted to get folks together in the same room to talk about the frontier border that we share."

The dialogue showed itself to be practical as Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development president Michael Sullivan tipped Paul Meagher of Wayne County's Wayne Industrial Development Corporation (WIDCO) about a manufacturer who was looking for rail supply, which Sullivan County couldn't offer, but Wayne County could.

Tom Shepstone, of Shepstone Management Company of Honesdale, who has wide experience advising municipalities and businesses in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, gave the only presentation of the day and outlined the inexorable patterns of population and economic growth that are in the future. "We need only look at the patterns of growth in the communities south of us to see what's going to happen in a relatively short time," he said.

Shepstone pointed to the two performing arts centers, in Bethel at the 1969 Woodstock Festival site and in Bushkill at the Mountain Laurel Performing Arts Center, the two or maybe three casinos planned in eastern Sullivan County, and the growing interest in the area as a result of the September 11 tragedy, as reasons for the ground-swell coming north, east and west.

"If we do not take charge of these trends, they will take charge of us," Shepstone said.

During the four discussion topics that followed, the group repeatedly returned to the concept that the environment must be preserved for the area to have a viable future.

"We need to develop a sensitivity towards what is being called 'sustainable' growth," said Grace Defina, a Pennsylvania activist who has been working on developmental projects such as the federal prison in Waymart and the wind farm in Clinton and Canaan Townships.

"We should try to agree on what we want the area to be. We should develop an icon that says it best and a brand that expresses who and what we are," said Dick Snyder of the Milford Enhancement Committee. "Then, and only then, should we attempt joint marketing."

Roberta Byron Lockwood, Executive Director of the Sullivan County Visitors Association, said she would consider some joint tourism advertising with her counterpart Bob Ugucioni at the Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau, but was skeptical about confusing the labels of the Catskills and Poconos by the addition of a new Upper Delaware brand.

Other topics of discussion included jobs and spin-off business that can develop around new growth, the need for higher education in the area, the desirability of passenger rail service and the promotion of agriculture.

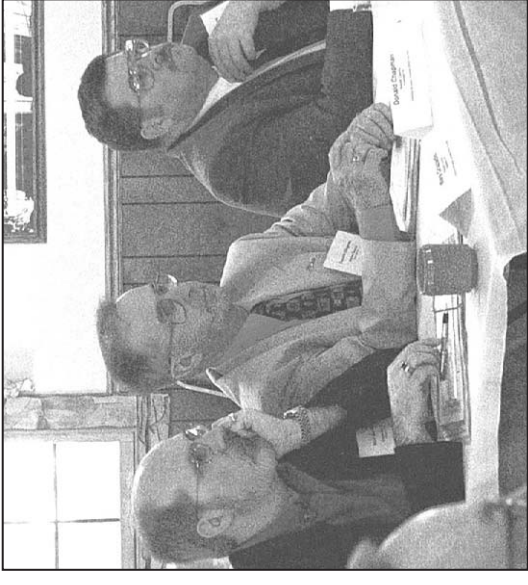
A crucial factor that must be faced, several said, was the need to prepare for the swell of traffic through Pennsylvania and western Sullivan County, which will be caused by the development of casinos in eastern Sullivan County.

In the final discussion session, "What happens next?" the group agreed that partnering with established projects like the Scenic Byway and the Route 6 Heritage Committee would be preferable to forming a new organization, and that encouraging town and township boards on both sides of the river to discuss innovative growth strategies would be beneficial.

"We've had a very good beginning here at this meeting," said Joseph Murray, Dime Bank President. "But the dialogue has to continue."



Bankers Joseph Murray, left, President of Dime Bank and John Riley, Executive Vice President of the First National Bank of Jeffersonville, lead a discussion on jobs and spin-off businesses that can come with growth.



Wayne County Commissioners, from left, Mark Graziadio, Donald Chapman and Tony Herzog, were in attendance.



Sullivan County Commissioner of Planning Alan Sorensen, left, and Pike County Director of Planning Michael Mirozinski lead a discussion on infrastructure issues.

## A FORUM ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DELAWARE RIVER

FRIDAY  
APRIL 12, 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

CENTRAL HOUSE  
BEACH LAKE, PA

Presented by THE RIVER REPORTER  
Narrowsburg, NY



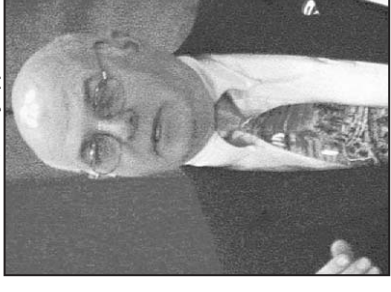
Tom Shepstone sets the conversation in motion.

### Photos by David Hulse

TWO STATES,  
THREE COUN-  
TIES, FIFTEEN  
COMMUNITIES  
AND ONE  
RIVER



Port Jervis Mayor Ross Decker joins the conversation. George Buccì, newly appointed Empire Zone coordinator, looks on.



Paul Meagher, President of the Wayne Industrial Development Corporation (WIDCO) leads a discussion on joint marketing of the Upper Delaware River.



Michael Sullivan, Executive Director of Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development, warns of the need to prepare for the growth that is clearly coming.



Barbara Yeaman, left, of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Jonathan Drapkin of the Gerry Foundation, Sandra Schuitz, Interim Superintendent of the National Park Service and Donald Downs of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy listen to the conversation.

Richard Snyder of the Milford Enhancement Committee advocated for a clear vision and a "brand" before joint marketing of the area.