

**2015  
Project/Program  
Summary**

**Oil Region Alliance  
Of Business, Industry & Tourism**



**Heritage**



**Industry**



**Tourism**



**Recreation**



**Entrepreneurship**

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## Mission

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The Mission of the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism is to increase the prosperity and population of the Oil Region by enticing people to live, work, learn and play in “the valley that changed the world” through the preservation, promotion, development and support of historical, educational, natural, recreational, residential, commercial and industrial destinations.

## Photo Credits

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Thank you to the following photographers.

- Marilyn Black
- Kathy Bailey
- Kimberly Copley-Harris
- Michael Henderson
- Scott Wilson

# Organization



## Board of Directors (January 1, 2015)

**Janet Aaron**  
*Executive, Retired*

**Barbara Crudo**  
*City of Oil City*

**Terry Danko**  
*Marquette Savings Bank*

**Rodney Griffin**  
*Specialty Fabrication & Powder Coating*

**Rina Nerlich-Irwin**  
*Child Development Centers*

**Betsy Kellner**  
*Venango Museum of Art, Science & Industry*

**James Krellner**  
*Joy Global*

**Neil McElwee**  
*Oil Creek Press*

**Marcia Miller**  
*Bank Executive, Retired*

**John Peterson**  
*U. S. Congress, Retired*

**Linda Routzhan**  
*First Energy*

**Deb Sobina**  
*Venango College*

**Vincent Witherup**  
*County of Venango*

**Executive Committee**

- Rodney Griffin  
Chair
- Terry Danko  
Vice Chair
- Betsy Kellner  
Treasurer
- Neil McElwee  
Secretary
- Rina Nerlich-Irwin  
Asst. Secretary-  
Treasurer
- Vincent Witherup

## Staff

(in alphabetical order)



**Marilyn Black**  
Vice President,  
Heritage Development



**Mary Cochran**  
Project Manager




**Chris Coxson**  
Office Administrator




**Kim Copely-Harris**  
Project Manager




**Toni Kresinski**  
Project Manager



**Deb Lutz**  
Vice President,  
Economic Development




**John Phillips**  
President/CEO



**Dan Twombly**  
Executive Vice  
President

**Kathy Bailey**  
Oil City Main Street  
Manager



**Debra Frawley**  
Greenways & Trails  
Coordinator



### Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism

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Oil City, PA 16301-1412  
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www.oilregion.org





## Sandycreek Industrial Park

The Sandycreek Industrial Park offers new industrial building lots on 64 acres in Sandycreek Township, easily accessible from I-80 by way of the Route 8 Expressway. In 2014, with partners Sandycreek Township and the County of Venango, the Alliance completed a critical utility and roadway infrastructure project using a state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant and making the park immediately available. An



Ribbon cutting ceremony at Sandycreek Industrial Park in October, 2014.

added incentive for prospective tenants is the park's Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) status. In 2015, a major Alliance project will market the park through various channels including the "Help Us Grow Venango" incentive program, which provides cash incentives for leads resulting in a property sale.

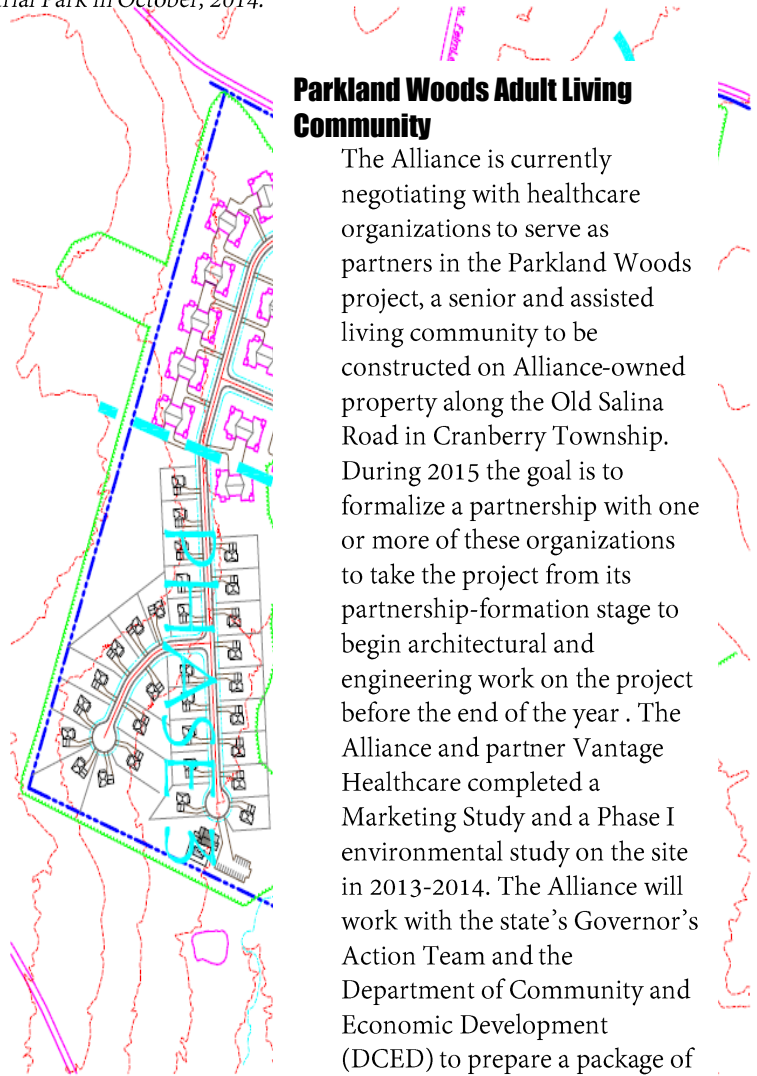
## Get on the Trail Entrepreneurial Business Plan Contest

This is the third year for this successful contest that provides cash assistance to the top three trail-related entrepreneurial business plans submitted in each contest cycle. The project also includes substantial business training and puts entrepreneurs in contact with program partners such as SCORE and Clarion University's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to help make solid business dreams a reality. For more information, visit the contest site at [getonthetrail.org](http://getonthetrail.org).



## Parkland Woods Adult Living Community

The Alliance is currently negotiating with healthcare organizations to serve as partners in the Parkland Woods project, a senior and assisted living community to be constructed on Alliance-owned property along the Old Salina Road in Cranberry Township. During 2015 the goal is to formalize a partnership with one or more of these organizations to take the project from its partnership-formation stage to begin architectural and engineering work on the project before the end of the year. The Alliance and partner Vantage Healthcare completed a Marketing Study and a Phase I environmental study on the site in 2013-2014. The Alliance will work with the state's Governor's Action Team and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to prepare a package of incentives for the project.



## 2015 Projects



### Tarbell House

This Alliance property at 324 East Main Street, Titusville demonstrates best practices in preservation and stewardship and preserves the Italianate two-story home built by famed journalist Ida Tarbell's family in 1870. Interior rehabilitation will be completed in early 2015 making a second floor apartment available for rental in the spring. First floor museum work will progress with a growing inventory of furnishings and exhibits and will add a reading nook to the stair landing. The final phase of construction, adding a cupola similar to the original one, will be engineered in 2015 with construction slated for 2016. Tours are held during an annual Open House in August, as well as by appointment throughout the year. The first floor is available for special event rental.



### Downs Building

In 2013 the Alliance acquired the three-story Downs building at 201 Center Street, across from Oil City's emerging town square. Struxures LLC completed an adaptive reuse study in 2014. Construction for a multi-year rehabilitation project will begin in 2015. The project will serve as a demonstration of how concentrated preservation, revitalization, and entrepreneurship can convert older structures into active venues. During 2015 construction will focus on exterior restoration and readying the first floor for two incubator retail spaces. Its location adjacent to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail makes it ideal for trail-related entrepreneurial businesses. Future phases add four apartments to the second and third floors. HHS DR of Sharon, PA provides architectural and engineering services. *(Note: the illustration to the left is an artist rendering and may not represent the final product.)*



### Sustainability Plan for the Oil Region National Heritage Area

The Alliance will coordinate the preparation of a National Park Service and PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) funded Sustainability Plan for the Oil Region National Heritage Area. The Plan will address methods of combining, managing, and building the Alliance's resources for future sustainability of the organization and the Heritage Area.

### National Transit Building Historic Designation

The National Park Service is funding consultation services to reclassify the National Transit Building and Annex in Oil City to become a National Historic Landmark, the highest category on the National Register of Historic Places. The Alliance will coordinate the designation efforts.



### Brownfields Development Projects

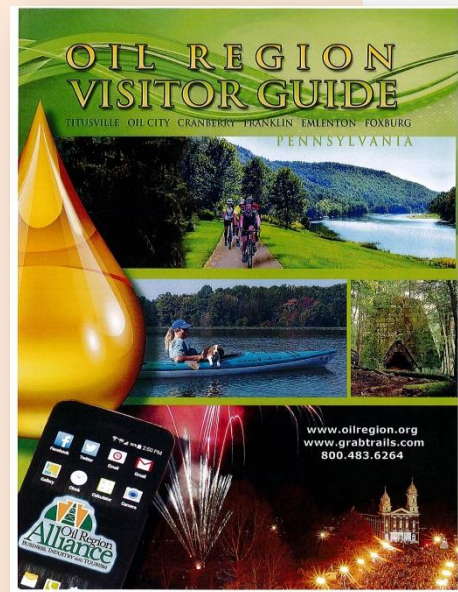
There are multiple Brownfield sites in the region—former industrial and commercial sites with potential or known environmental concerns that restrict development. Many of these sites are in prime locations and are important to asset reclamation. The Alliance, as a nonprofit corporation and certified Economic Development Agency, is in a unique position to assist with the reclamation of Brownfield sites due to grant opportunities and exemptions from certain aspects of reclamation that are not available to businesses and municipalities. Much of the Brownfield work this year will depend on whether or not the Alliance is successful in receiving a U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Area-wide Planning Grant applied for in 2014. Receiving this highly competitive grant would provide funding for reuse planning of brownfields and related infrastructure along the significant Allegheny/Oil Creek corridor through Rouseville, Oil City, Franklin, and Emlenton in Venango County, and on to Foxburg in Clarion County. Whether or not the Alliance receives the grant, the organization will continue to pursue acquisition of key Brownfields in Oil City and Southern Venango County for industrial, educational and/or recreation development and further expansion of the Oil Region’s portion of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

### Oil Creek Memorial Landing

In 2012 the Alliance acquired property on the east side of Route 8 in Oil City to be developed into a free public recreational venue and rest area for travelers including Erie to Pittsburgh Trail users. Located immediately upstream of the Dollar General retail store and stretching to the west bank of Oil Creek, the landing park will become an inviting green space where anglers can access the water, kayaks/canoes can be launched and bicyclists and waterways users can park their vehicles. Construction will begin in the spring of 2015 and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the summer. Amenities will include paved access and parking, landscaping, recycling bins, benches, an information kiosk tying the landing park to the immediately adjacent McClintock hiking and biking trail, and a memorial wall with bronze plaques.



Site of Oil Creek Memorial Landing (left half of photo)



### Oil Region Visitor Guide

The new Oil Region Visitor Guide will be available in February of 2015. This exciting 48-page publication provides a comprehensive view of destination attractions available in the Oil Region and includes new features such as a fold-out regional map, hunting information and expanded waterways information. An online version is available at [www.oilregion.org](http://www.oilregion.org) and [grabtrails.com](http://grabtrails.com).

## 2015 Projects



### New Alliance and Destination Marketing Websites

The oilregion.org website will be revamped in 2015 to make information more accessible with less clicking and will feature a new interface to guide site visitors to their area of interest more quickly. Alongside the oilregion.org rollout will be a new, comprehensive version of grabtrails.com with considerably more information and features than the current site in place since 2013. It will include interactive features such as trip planning and trail maps and will require fewer clicks outside of the site for additional information. Both sites will also feature mobile apps specifically designed for smart phones and tablets while on the trails. The region's premier destination marketing website and the Oil Region Visitor Guide are designed specifically to complement one another and the Oil Region's destination brand "Grab Life By The Trails." The new sites will be online by the end of March.



### Natural Gas Industry History Traveling Exhibit

The Alliance will unveil and activate the first in a series of portable indoor 100 sq. ft. traveling exhibits to display items from the Alliance's Natural Gas History Artifact collection as well as the region's role in the industry. "Walking the Line" will be introduced in 2015, focusing on how the linesman occupation changed over the decades and throughout the seasons.

### Victorian Architecture Conference

The Alliance is hosting the Victorian Architecture Conference to be held September 18-19, 2015 in Franklin.

### E-books Project

Two additional print books from the Alliance's library will be published electronically bringing the total available e-books to six. These e-books will be available for sale later in 2015.



### Neilltown Exterior Renovations

The County of Forest has approved a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant to ORA to conduct exterior rehabilitation of the historic Neilltown Church building. The work includes repair of exterior wood and complete exterior painting.

### Interpretive Panels

Interpretive signage will be researched, designed, produced and installed at various outdoor locations along the Queen City and Allegheny River Trails and the Coal Oil Johnny House.



### Allegheny-Clarion River Valley Blueprint Communities Project

Blueprint Communities is a catalyst to revitalize older communities and neighborhoods. ORA staff serve on the Core Committee for the Allegheny-Clarion River Valley team (comprised of Emlenton, Foxburg and Parker). The initiative is run by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. Funding is through the FHLBank of Pittsburgh, with Farmers National Bank in Emlenton as an FHL member bank.

## Ongoing Programs



Along with the special projects already described in the 2015 Project/Program Summary, the Oil Region Alliance runs continuous programs to help accomplish its mission.

### **Oil & Gas Industry Development**

Through its Economic Development/Energy Advisory Council and partnership with the Northwest PA Oil & Gas Hub group, the Alliance monitors the shale gas industry to determine future opportunities for the region's businesses and provides training and special events relating to the industry.

### **Local Business Expansion and Retention Program**

The Alliance meets regularly with regional businesses to determine investment and workforce needs, offering information about state programs along with the Alliance's own revolving loan funds and other resources.

### **PEDA Certification Program**

The Pennsylvania Economic Development Association provides training and certification for economic development agencies in PA. The Alliance attends required training classes and events to maintain its certification for the region's benefit, which includes the ability to offer PIDA/VIDA loans.

### **Workforce Development Program**

The Alliance works with regional partners such as Careerlink and Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) to provide training opportunities to meet workforce needs and assist displaced workers. The *School Counts! In The Oil Region* program encourages employers to use high school performance records as job application criteria and demonstrate to students the value of building a strong work ethic.

### **New Industry Recruitment Program**

Using its network of contacts, asset-based economic development tools, and state resources, the Alliance continually searches for new industries to locate in the region.

### **IP Development Program**

Over the last 10 years, the Alliance developed and marketed both the Barkeyville and Sandycreek industrial parks. The goal of the development program is to always have a park available for prospective industries.



### **Municipal Assistance Program**

Alliance staff advises and assists municipalities on a variety of issues including nature-based place making, Trail Town® activities, and preservation issues.

### **History and Cultural Education for Students and Adults**

These programs vary from year-to-year in content. In 2015, the Alliance plans to print the expanded version of the "Exploring Venango County" booklet.

### **Educational Mini-Grant Program**

The 2015 mini-grant program will offer multiple grants up to \$2,000 for educational and/or preservation projects involving oil and gas industry history.

## Ongoing Programs



### **www.oil150.com**

The oil150.com website continues to provide oil industry related educational material. Its e-store is current and active, providing most of the book sales revenue for the organization.

### **Historic Marker Program**

The region is rich in blue and gold historical markers. This program continues to preserve the memory of special individuals and sites related to the Oil Region National Heritage Area.

### **Historic House Plaque Program**

The Oil Region National Heritage Area Historic House Plaques program increases awareness of history and architecture, encourages good stewardship of historic properties, encourages curiosity about earlier generations and develops a file of historic houses and buildings within the Oil Region.

### **Historic Preservation Awards Program**

This program, with multiple co-sponsors, recognizes regional preservation projects with an annual awards event.

### **Neilltown Concert Series**

The popular Neilltown Concert Series brings local musical talent and fans to the Neilltown Church for several days each summer.



### **Partner Interaction**

The Alliance maintains close relationships with multiple partner and grantor organizations including the National Park Service, Association of National Heritage Areas, Heritage PA, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Department of Community and Economic Development, Petroleum History Institute, Pennsylvania Great Lakes Region, PA Association of Travel and Tourism, and others. These relationships continue to provide opportunities and funding that would not otherwise be available to the region.

### **Recreational Development**

The Alliance works closely with partners such as Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Allegheny Valley Trails Association and others to build and maintain the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and connecting trails. It specifically manages and maintains the McClintock portion of the trail.



### **Geocaching**

The Alliance remains the primary administrator of the ten-county Allegheny Geotrail geocaching program.

### **Destination Marketing Promotional Programs**

As the designated Tourism Promotion group of Venango County, the Alliance places tourism advertising in strategic publications. In cooperation with professional angler, Darl Black, the Alliance produces a regional fishing report year round.

### **Literature Distribution**

Scores of brochures from regional attractions, as well as the Oil Region Visitor Guide, are distributed to local venues and mailed around the world by Alliance staff and partners. Contracts with larger service providers place the literature at strategic locations such as visitor centers throughout the state.

## Strategic Partnerships



The Alliance partners with many fine organizations throughout the region and state to manage the projects and programs in this Summary. The Alliance provides a higher level of service for Strategic Partners, housing their programs and staff in its offices and serving as fiscal agent for the both the Council on Greenways and Trails and Oil City's Main Street Program. The staff of these partner organizations interact daily with Alliance staff and cooperate closely on developing and implementing collaborative projects and programs.



### **Council on Greenways and Trails, Inc.**

The Greenways and Trails program fits well with the Alliance's recreation and destination marketing programs providing leadership and professional technical assistance with trail and open space development and operation in the Oil Region and areas with contiguous greenways to the north and south. The Council brings the appropriate agencies and organizations together to maximize planning and provide the coordination necessary to maintain and operate a premier greenways system in the region.



### **Oil City's Main Street Program**

The Alliance's Partnership with Oil City's Main Street Program creates an opportunity for the two organizations to work closely together for community and economic development in Oil City's Main Street area through multiple programs including Trail Town®, Oil & Gas Murals, and others. The Main Street programs offers a Façade Improvement Grant program and coordinates the city's Christmas Past celebration. For more information, visit Oil City's Main Street program website at [www.oilcitymainstreet.org](http://www.oilcitymainstreet.org).



### **Venango SCORE**

SCORE is America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs and small businesses. It is a nonprofit association dedicated to entrepreneur education and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. SCORE mentors provide free, confidential mentoring to help people start and operate a successful small business. SCORE's services complement the Alliance's Local Business Expansion and Entrepreneurship programs. For more information, visit the Northwest PA Erie SCORE website at [erie.score.org](http://erie.score.org).



### **Volunteers**

Volunteers provide input and labor for nearly all projects and programs of the ORA. ORA will continue to honor volunteers with awards and articles in the monthly newsletter.

# 2015 Budget



## Revenue

Grants	\$ 1,661,891	74%	<div style="width: 74%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>
Property Management	234,000	10%	<div style="width: 10%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>
Memberships	110,000	5%	<div style="width: 5%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>
Service Fees	204,220	9%	<div style="width: 9%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>
Contributions	4,400	<1%	<div style="width: 1%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>
Sales	6,400	<1%	<div style="width: 1%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>
Other	10,386	<1%	<div style="width: 1%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>

**Total Revenue**            \$ 2,231,297

## Expense

Program	\$ 1,379,187	62%	<div style="width: 62%; height: 10px; background-color: red;"></div>
Management	513,751	23%	<div style="width: 23%; height: 10px; background-color: red;"></div>
Fundraising	64,521	3%	<div style="width: 3%; height: 10px; background-color: red;"></div>
Property Management	260,540	12%	<div style="width: 12%; height: 10px; background-color: red;"></div>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 2,217,999</b>		
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$13,298</b>		<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: green;"></div>

## Membership (January 1, 2015)

Janet Aaron	Clarion County Economic	First Energy
Jim Aaron	Development Corp.	First National Bank of PA
Paul Adomites	Clarion Univ. Small Bus. Dev. Cntr.	First United National Bank
Allegheny Valley Trails Assoc., Inc.	Classy Catering	Forest Glen Alpacas LLC
AlturnaMats, Inc.	Glenn & Martha Cochran	Foxburg Inn Hotel
Titusville Council on the Arts	Mary Cochran	Franklin Area Chamber of
Kathy Bailey	Community Ambulance Service,	Commerce
Douglas Baker	Inc.	Franklin Fine Arts Council
Mary & Richard Balas	Cornplanter Township	Franklin Industrial & Commercial
Judith Barrett	County of Venango	Development Authority
Barrow Civic Theatre	Christina M. Coxson	Friedhaber's
Barr's Insurance, Inc.	Cranberry Fireworks Spectacular	Friends of Drake Well, Inc.
John Bartlett	Cranberry Pennzoil 10 Minute Oil	Galaxy Federal Credit Union
Baytree Farm	Change	Mark Gammello, DMD
Beith Associates	Cranberry Township	Gardner Optical
Belles Lettres Club	Dr. Barry E. Cressman	Gibbons Business Solutions
Benson Memorial Library	Cubbon Lumber & Land Co.	Gustafson General Contracting
Blackwolfe Communications LLC	Current, LLC	H & R Block
Blair LLC	Dale Woodard Gent	Frank Hajduk
William Brice, Ph. D.	Danco Industries	Carole & Clark Hall
Bridge Builders Community	Dart Financial Planning	Jim & Betty Hammerlee
Foundations	Days Inn - Oil City	Hepler Roofing & Siding
Timothy Brooks, DPM	DCNR/Bureau of Forestry	Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites
Caboose Motel, Inc.	DeBence Antique Music World	Senator Scott Hutchinson
Caldwell Printing Services	Kyle Dickey	Idlewood Motel
Capital Associates Inc.	Donna Rapp, Edward Jones	IPEG, Inc.
Career Concepts	Investments	R. Lee James
Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.	Sharon & GeorgeDorogy	Joy Global
Child Development Centers, Inc.	Double Bloom Flower Shop	Kapp Alloy & Wire Co., Inc.
Christopher Rakow, Edward Jones	ERA Richmond Real Estate Service	Keystone Community Education
Investments	Exelon/Handsome Lake Energy	Council
City of Franklin	Farmers National Bank	
City of Oil City	Fine Line Design	

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King's Family Landscaping, Inc.  
Klapec Auto Body  
Klapec Trucking Company  
Kozy Rest Kampground LLC  
Toni E. Kresinski  
Larry M. Geibel  
Law Office of McFate & Merkel  
Leech Carbide  
Liberty Electronics, Inc.  
Lori Sibble  
Deb Lutz  
Melissa Mann  
Marquette Savings Bank  
Masterson Enterprises  
Matric Limited  
Maurer's Trading Post  
May & Company  
Betty McElhattan  
McElwee Associates/Oil Creek  
Press  
Lois McElwee  
Meadville KOA  
Carolee Michener  
Marcia Miller  
Moody & Associates, Inc.  
Morrison II Sporting Goods /  
Builders Supply  
MPC Studios  
Aaron Nagy  
National Fuel Gas  
NW PA Regional Planning &  
Development Commission  
OCP Warehouse  
Ohio Oil and Gas Energy Education  
Program  
Oil City Civic Center

Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad  
Oil Creek Family Campground  
Oil Creek State Park  
Oil Region Realty, LLC  
Old Emlenton Mill Foundation  
O'Polka and Company, Inc.  
Outdoor Allegheny River Services  
PA Independent Oil & Gas  
Association  
Patrick Pelletier  
Penn State Cooperative Extension  
John Peterson  
Petroleum History Institute  
John R. Phillips, II  
Dr. Robert Pilewski  
Pleasantville Borough  
PNC Bank  
Pumping Jack Museum &  
Historical Association  
Quality Inn - Barkeyville  
Quality Inn & Conference Center -  
Franklin  
Rapid Reaction, Inc.  
Red Brick Inn Bed & Breakfast  
RenovEx, Inc.  
Sandy Creek Township  
Schiffer Excavating, Inc.  
Scrubgrass Generating  
Seneca Printing Express, Inc.  
Ron Shoup  
Susan Smith  
Specialty Fabrication & Powder  
Coating, LLC  
Betty M. Squire  
Cecile Stelter  
Stifel Nicolaus  
Stubler Drive-Thru Beverage, Inc.  
Svetz Consulting Services, LLC

The Barnard House Bed &  
Breakfast  
The Country Store  
The DayDia Building  
The EADS Group  
The Latonia Ballroom  
The Movies at Meadville  
The Witherup House  
George Thompson, Esq.  
Titusville Area Chamber of  
Commerce  
Titusville Area School District  
Titusville Historical Society  
Titusville Renaissance, Inc.  
Venango Area Chamber of  
Commerce  
Venango Catholic Preparatory  
Schools  
Venango College of Clarion  
University  
Venango County Fair, Inc.  
Venango Machine Products  
Venango Museum of Art, Science &  
Industry  
Venango Steel, Inc.  
Venango Training & Development .  
Center., Inc.  
Voyten Electric & Electronics  
Webco Industries, Inc.  
Welch and Welch  
Welding Technologies, Inc.  
Wiegel Brothers Marine, Inc.  
Williams Insurance & Travel  
Vincent Witherup  
Joanne Wolfe  
Quentin Wood  
YMCA Oil City  
James & Janet Zehner

For membership information,  
please contact  
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