Monroe County, Pennsylvania
ECONOMIC SCORECARD

2016

PREPARED BY:

Business and Economic Research Group (BERG) of East Stroudsburg University

Todd Behr | *associate professor of economics and finance*

Constantinos Christofides, Ph.D. | *distinguished professor emeritus of economics*

Pattabiraman Neelakantan, Ph.D. | *professor and chair of economics and finance*

Special thanks to the ESU Office of University Relations

Monroe County, Pennsylvania, has been the home of East Stroudsburg University (ESU) since 1893. For more than 120 years, ESU has served as a leader in education, culture and economic development. Today, with close to 7,000 students, ESU has a total economic impact of nearly $310M in the Commonwealth. As ESU plans for the future, our Strategic Plan is guiding the way with four goals including A Strong Sense of Community which reaffirms our commitment to community engagement, workforce readiness, and entrepreneurship.

That's why ESU is proud to present the **2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard**, which is prepared by the University's Business and Economic Research Group (BERG). Featured in this year's Scorecard is "Re-Energizing Our Economy," the Version 1.0 Work Plan of the Monroe 2030 Action Team. The Work Plan outlines preliminary actions for revitalizing economic development in Monroe County through the work of the Community Collaboration, Workforce Development, and Small Business and Entrepreneurship Task Forces of Monroe 2030. The Scorecard also includes the results of the ESU survey that assessed the business climate in Monroe County. More than 100 businesses candidly shared their perceptions of the challenges they face doing business in our county.

In my role as president of ESU, I am honored to share a commitment to investing in the economic development of the Poconos with so many great community partners. Our common vision is to make Monroe County a better place to live, learn, work and play. The Economic Outlook Summit and Scorecard demonstrate ESU's investment in the plans to move us forward, make us great. My hope is that the data and work plan shared with you today will enable us all to implement action measures that will transform our community. Additionally, our academic programs are preparing a 21st century workforce that will compete in an increasingly diverse economy here in Monroe County and across the globe.

While the 2016 Economic Scorecard serves as an unbiased assessment tool to measure our region's economic health, my hope is that all of us will use this information to make smart decisions that will guide the county's future and position Monroe County as the best place to do business in Pennsylvania. Read on!

The Economic Scorecard of Monroe County 2016 re-examines the economy of the county and compares it to the economies of seven neighboring counties and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Northampton, Pike and Wayne.

The Scorecard focuses on six key indicators: Employment, Earnings, Business Climate, Healthcare, Housing, and Education.

The counties are ranked based on their historical performance during the last decade and their rankings are re-examined based on the most recently available data.
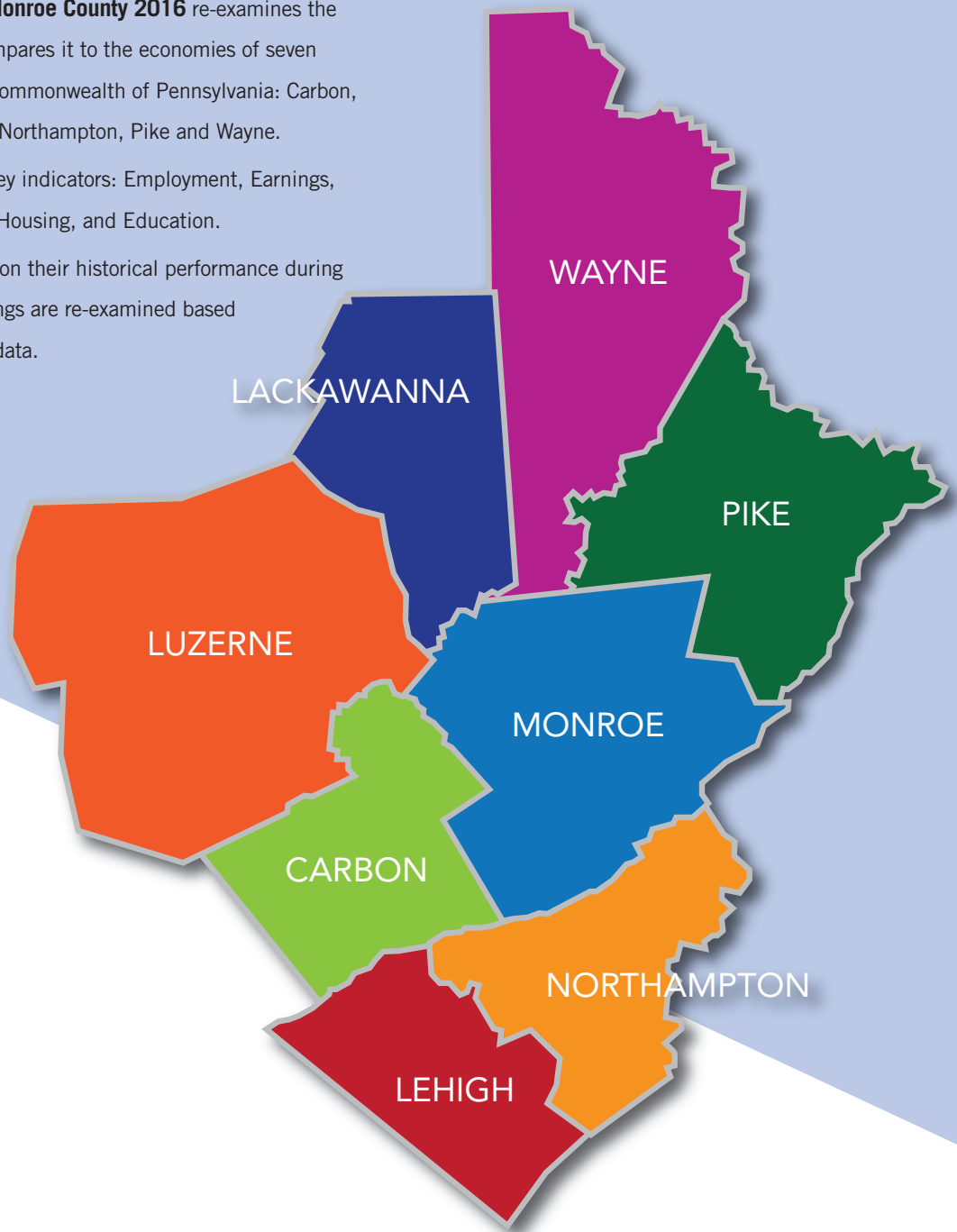
WAYNE

LACKAWANNA

PIKE

LUZERNE

MONROE

CARBON

NORTHAMPTON

LEHIGH

OVERVIEW
OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC SCORECARD OF MONROE COUNTY 2016

The 2016 Economic Scorecard of Monroe County represents an update of the 2015 Scorecard, compares the same eight counties in Northeast Pennsylvania and ranks the eight counties based on updated statistics in the areas of Employment, Earnings, Business Climate, Healthcare, Housing and Education.

The comparison periods for the various indicators may be slightly different depending on data availability and the new rankings are determined by the most recent data available.

EMPLOYMENT

The Employment rankings for the eight counties were based on newly available statistics of four indicators: Labor Force Growth, Job Growth, Employment Growth and the Employment-to-Civilian Labor Force Ratio. Except Job Growth, which is based on place of employment, the remaining three indicators are by place of residence.

The leading county in each of the employment indicators was assigned eight points, the second seven, third six and so on and the sum of the assigned points determined the overall scores.

Monroe County's Employment score improved considerably. In the 2015 Scorecard Monroe County placed last among the eight counties but improved to fourth because of the fastest labor force growth and the fastest resident employment growth which caused the employment/labor force ratio to increase from 92.6% to 93.7%.

Labor Force Growth

Labor Force Growth improved in Pennsylvania as the economy of the state grew fueling expansion in the labor market.

Five of the eight counties compared in this report had positive growth in their labor force but Monroe County's labor force growth exceeded all others by posting a 1.1% annual growth rate in 2015.

Job Creation

Job growth within Monroe County showed a slight decline of -0.7%.

The fastest growth for the period was recorded by Pike County (2.3%) followed by Northampton (1.6%) and Lehigh (1.5%).

All other counties reported positive growth in the number of jobs by place of employment except for Monroe.

Employment by Place of Residence

Employment growth of Monroe County residents for the period 2014-2015 was 2.4% which was the highest growth rate reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry for the eight counties, equaled only by Northampton County.

Lehigh, Carbon and Pike tied for second place with employment growth rates of 1.7%.

Lackawanna and Luzerne County employment growth was 0.8% and Wayne placed last among the eight counties with a 0.5% growth rate.

The Employment-to-Civilian Labor Force Ratio

The percentage of the labor force actually employed is calculated as the ratio of the employment of the County divided by its labor force. The general economic conditions prevailing in the region determine the labor-force-utilization rate.

Northampton County had the highest Employment-to-Labor Force ratio in 2015 with 94.9% followed closely by Lehigh County's 94.8% rate.

Monroe County scored sixth with a 93.7% employment-to-labor force ratio.

Overall Employment Rankings

Monroe County improved from the last place ranking in the 2015 Economic Scorecard to fourth place behind last year's leading counties, Northampton and Lehigh. Pike County moved to third place improving from its fifth place in the 2015 Scorecard.

TABLE 1: EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Total Civilian Labor Force Growth 2014-2015									
	0.5%	0.3%	-0.3%	0.7%	-0.4%	**1.1%**	0.8%	0.4%	-0.4%
SCORE		4	3	6	2	8	7	5	2

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry LAUS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Total Full-time and Part-time Employment (number of jobs) Growth 2013-2014 (Job Creation)									
	1.0%	1.4%	0.9%	1.5%	1.1%	**-0.7%**	1.6%	2.3%	0.3%
SCORE		5	3	6	4	1	7	8	2

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Total Employment Growth 2014-2015 (Employment by Place of Residence)									
	1.3%	1.7%	0.8%	1.7%	0.8%	**2.4%**	2.4%	1.7%	0.5%
SCORE		7	6	7	6	8	8	7	5

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry LAUS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Employment/Civilian Labor Force 2015									
	94.9%	94.0%	94.4%	94.8%	93.7%	**93.7%**	94.9%	93.7%	94.6%
SCORE		4	5	7	3	3	8	3	6

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry LAUS

FIGURE 1: EMPLOYMENT RANKINGS
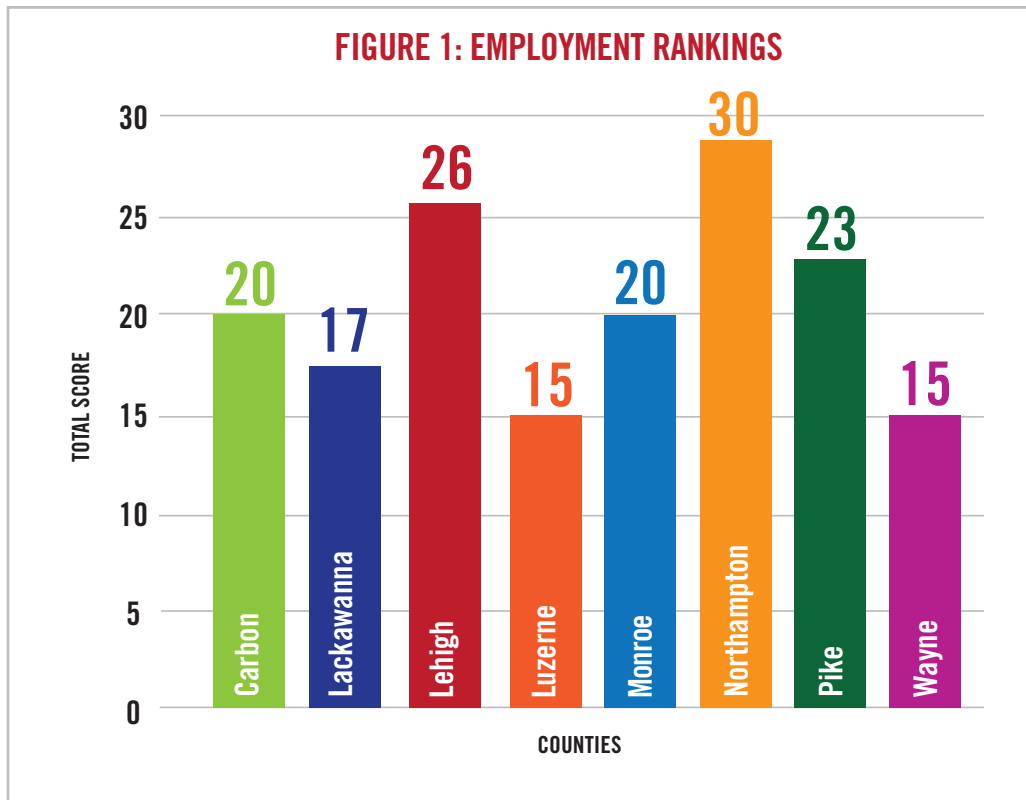
EARNINGS

The Earnings section of the 2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard used the same five indicators to compare the eight counties in Northeast Pennsylvania. The five indicators used were:

- County per capita Personal Income as a Percentage of the per capita Personal Income of Pennsylvania
- County per capita Income Growth
- Average Earnings per Job as a Percentage of the Pennsylvania Average
- Growth in Average Earnings per Job
- Percentage of County Population Living in Poverty

All indicators were updated from the 2015 Scorecard using the most recently available data.

Per Capita Personal Income

Lehigh and Northampton Counties registered the highest per capita income among the eight counties tied for first in this category with per capita income of $45,295 in 2014.

Monroe County per capita Income improved to 76% of the state average, up from 73% in the previous year.

Per Capita Income Growth

The fastest growing per capita income was recorded by Pike County, 5.1%, followed by Monroe County (4.7%) and Carbon (4.6%).

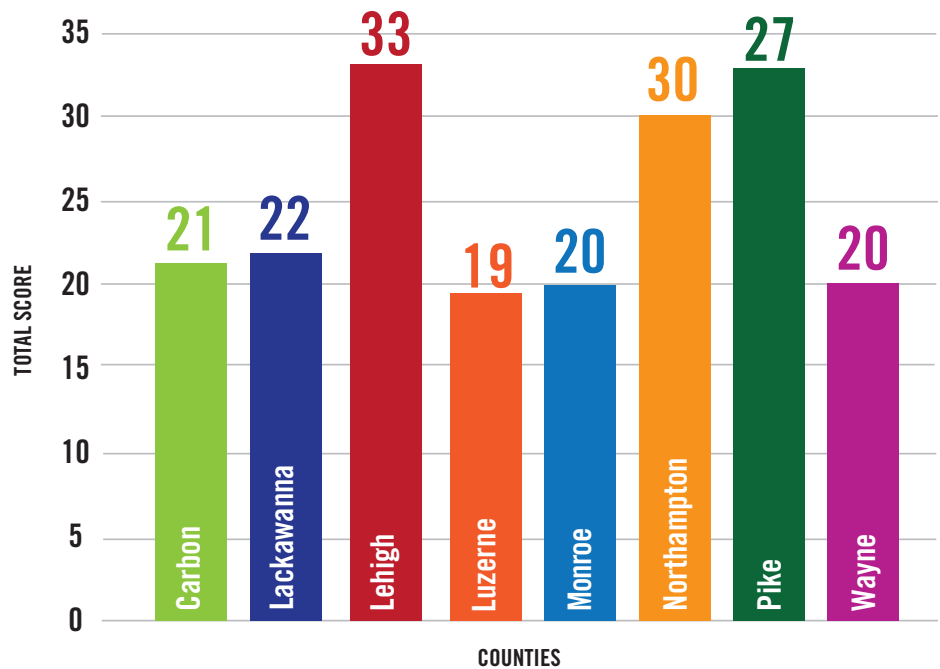The slowest per capita income growth for occurred in Luzerne County.

Average Earnings per Job

Average earnings per job is an indicator that reflects worker productivity, education and training and the industries prevailing in the county. The average earnings per job in Pennsylvania were $57,929 in 2014 up from a state average of $56,559 in the previous year.

Lehigh County repeated as the leader among the eight counties with county earnings per job of $57,350, followed by Northampton and Luzerne.

Monroe County's average earnings per job were 76% of the state average.

FIGURE 2: EARNINGS RANKINGS

County	Total Score
Carbon	21
Lackawanna	22
Lehigh	33
Luzerne	19
Monroe	20
Northampton	30
Pike	27
Wayne	20

TABLE 2: EARNINGS INDICATORS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Per Capita Personal Income as a % of PA - 2014									
	$47,679	82%	86%	95%	83%	**76%**	95%	82%	73%
SCORE		5	7	8	6	4	8	5	3

Source: BEA CA30 Regional Economic Profiles

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Per Capita Personal Income Growth 2013 - 2014									
	3.6%	4.6%	3.9%	4.3%	3.7%	**4.7%**	4.4%	5.1%	3.9%
SCORE		6	3	4	2	7	5	8	3

Source: BEA CA30 Regional Economic Profiles

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Average Earnings per Job (dollars) as a % of PA - 2014									
	$57,929	72%	78%	99%	82%	**76%**	86%	60%	74%
SCORE		2	5	8	6	4	7	1	3

Source: BEA CA30 Regional Economic Profiles

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Growth in Average Earnings per Job (dollars) 2013 - 2014									
	2.7%	2.5%	2.8%	3.3%	2.7%	**0.7%**	2.3%	3.2%	3.4%
SCORE		3	5	7	4	1	2	6	8

Source: BEA CA30 Regional Economic Profiles

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
All Ages in Poverty (%) - 2014									
	13.6%	13%	15.4%	12.8%	15.8%	**13.3%**	10%	10.6%	13.9%
SCORE		5	2	6	1	4	8	7	3

Source: Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

Growth in Average Earnings per Job

The fastest growth in earnings per job occurred in Wayne County (3.4%).

Lehigh County's earnings per job grew by 3.3% and Monroe County scored last in this category with a growth rate of 0.7%.

Poverty Rates

The lowest poverty rate in 2014 was reported in Northampton County (10%) and the highest in Luzerne County (15.8%).

Monroe County had a poverty rate of 13.3% in 2014, slightly higher than the 12% in the previous year but still lower than the state average of 13.6%.

Overall Earnings Rankings

The leading county in each of the earnings indicators was assigned a score of eight points, the second seven, third six and so on and the sum of the assigned points determined the overall rankings.

Based on the above scoring, Lehigh County emerged as the top county in the earnings section of the 2016 Scorecard, surpassing Northampton County, which was the top ranked county in 2015.

Monroe County was ranked sixth overall in the earnings section.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

The 2015 Monroe County Economic Scorecard used six indicators to evaluate factors that contribute to a region's economic development by establishing favorable conditions for business creation and growth.

The same six indicators were used in the 2016 Scorecard with newly available data to compare the business climate in the eight counties of Northeast Pennsylvania: Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike and Wayne.

The first two indicators attempt to determine whether small businesses have a significant presence in a county because small and medium size firms are considered important contributors to regional economic development.

The first indicator is Proprietors' Income as a Percentage of Total County Personal Income. This is a measure of the relative share of small and medium size firms in the area's total income.

The second indicator is Small Firm Employment as a Percentage of Total County Private Employment. It is an estimate of the relative importance of employment in small and medium size firms.

The existence of certain industries and certain worker skills serve as drivers of business growth and innovation and also attract new business in the area.

Two indicators were used to determine the extent to which such skills and industries prevail in each county. The first of these indicators is the "creative class" and the second is usually referred to as the "technical employment skills".

The "creative class" is just a phrase used to describe employees in the industrial sector: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. To determine the extent of these industries in the various counties the Scorecard derived the number of people employed in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation as a percentage of total county employment.

The percentage of the county workforce employed in Architecture, Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Occupations reflects the existence of "technical employment skills" in an area. These skills may be important to modern technology firms, and may help attract such firms to locate in the county.

Proprietors' Income as a Percentage of County Personal Income

The 2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard estimated that Carbon County had the highest percentage of Proprietor's Income and since this is usually considered the income of small businesses, Carbon County scored highest in this category. Lehigh and Lackawanna counties scored second and third and Northampton County was last with the smallest ratio of proprietors' income.

Employment in Small Firms (0-49 employees) as a Percentage of Total Private Employment

The largest percentage of small firm employment was reported in Pike County, where more than half of all workers were employed by small firms. Wayne County was second in this category with 49% and Carbon County was third with 43% small business employees.

Monroe County had 35% small-firm employees and Lehigh County was last in this category with only 22% of the county workforce employed by small business firms.

Employment in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation as a Percentage of Total Employment

Carbon, Pike and Monroe counties had the largest percentages of employees in this "creative class" category in 2015. The creative class serves as an attraction to both businesses and families who are in the process of re-locating since these industries contribute desirable quality-of-life amenities.

Wayne County scored last in this category.

Employment in Technical Occupations (Architecture-Engineering-Computer-Mathematical) as a Percentage of Total Employment

Lehigh, Monroe and Northampton counties were the leaders in the "technical employment skills" category.

Lehigh County had 4.1% of total employment in technical occupations, Monroe 3.9% and Northampton County 3.2%.

Last in this category was Pike with less than one percent of workers in technical occupations.

Top Four-Industry Employment Share

This indicator measures the degree of business diversity that exists in a county by estimating the percentage of total employment working in the four largest industries. The larger the percentage, the greater the concentration and the smaller the degree of diversity in the county.

Business diversity is a desirable characteristic in county growth and development, by reducing the county's economic dependence on just a few industries thus reducing the risk of business and seasonal cycles.

FIGURE 3: BUSINESS CLIMATE RANKINGS
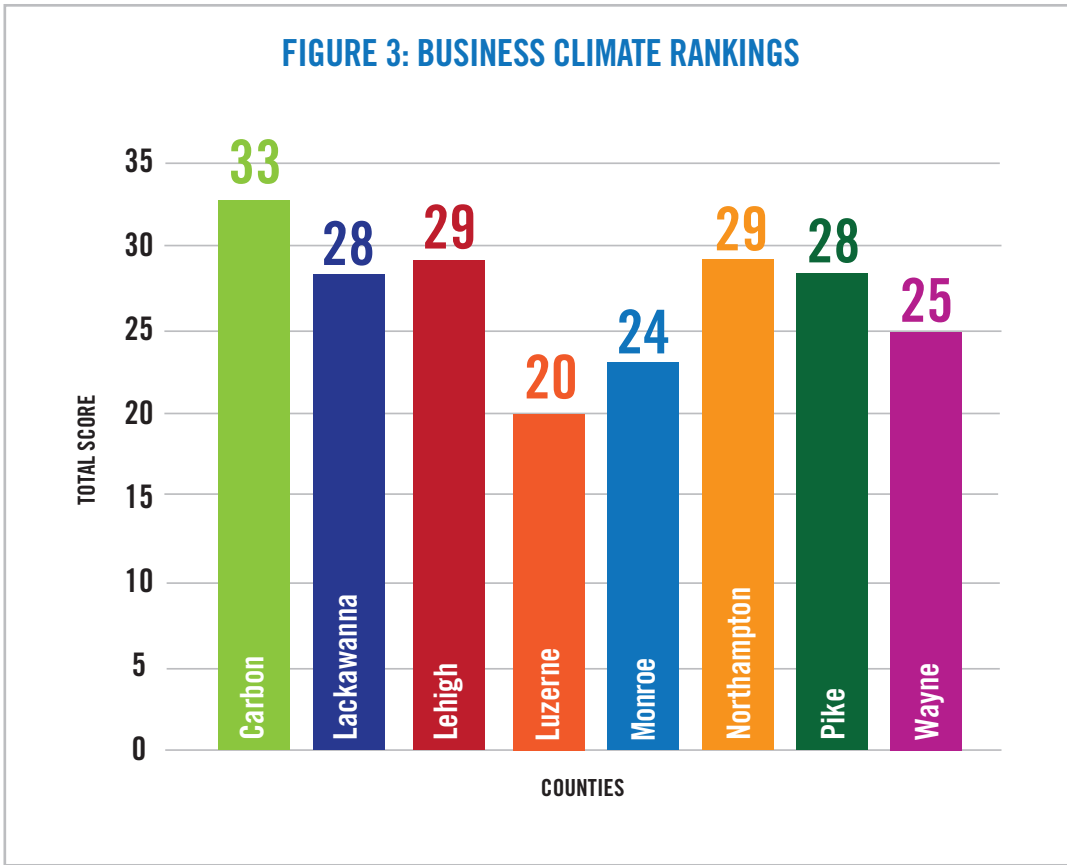
The most diverse county was Northampton with 45.5% of total employment concentrated in the top four industries and the least diverse was Wayne County with 57.3% of county workers employed in the four largest industries.

Serious Crime Rate (Part 1 Offenses) per 100,000 Population

Businesses and families prefer a safe low-crime area to work and live. Therefore the county crime rate is an important factor affecting the quality of the business climate.

The county with the lowest crime rate was Wayne, followed by Pike, Northampton, Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lehigh and Monroe in that order.

Business Climate Overall Rankings

Carbon County was ranked first in terms of business climate because of a significant number of small businesses and the largest percentage of workers in the Arts and Entertainment industries.

Northampton County had the second highest rank in the business climate category because of the great diversity of its economy, relatively low crime rate and a large percentage of technical skill occupations.

Lehigh County was tied with Northampton for second place primarily because of the largest number of technical occupations, a diverse economy and a significant number of small and medium size firms.

Lackawanna and Pike tied for third for different reasons; Lackawanna had a very diverse economy, while Pike had very low crime rates and a very large number of small firms.

Wayne had the lowest crime rate but its rural economy lacked diversity, skills and high tech industries.

Monroe County was ranked next-to-last in business climate in spite of a relatively large technical occupation ratio, a relatively large creative class and relatively large number of small and medium size businesses. Monroe County's low-ranked business environment in the 2016 Scorecard was due to the relatively high crime rate and lack of a diversified economy.

Luzerne County had the lowest ranked business climate because of a high crime rate, small creative class and a low ratio of small-business employment.

TABLE 3: BUSINESS CLIMATE INDICATORS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Proprietors' Income as a % of Personal Income 2014									
	9.1%	10.2%	6.9%	7.1%	5.9%	**4.7%**	4.1%	5.6%	6.1%
SCORE		8	6	7	4	2	1	3	5
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis									
Small Firms (0-49 employees) as a % of Total Private Employment 2015 Q3									
	28%	43%	29%	22%	27%	**35%**	30%	56%	49%
SCORE		6	3	1	2	5	4	8	7
Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators									
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation as a % of Total Employment 2015									
	1.7%	6.7%	1.3%	1.8%	1.0%	**3.6%**	1.4%	4.3%	0.9%
SCORE		8	3	5	2	6	4	7	1
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages									
Employment in Technical (Architecture, Engineering, Computer and Mathematical) Occupations as a % of Total Employment - 2014									
	4.2%	1.1%	2.7%	4.1%	2.4%	**3.9%**	3.2%	0.8%	1.2%
SCORE		2	5	8	4	7	6	1	3
Source: Occupational Employment Survey (OES)									
Top 4 Industry % Employment Share 2014									
	44.5%	49.0%	46.4%	46.9%	47.8%	**52.4%**	45.5%	52.7%	57.3%
SCORE		4	7	6	5	3	8	2	1
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis									
Serious Crime Rate (Part I Offenses) Per 100,000 Population, 2014									
	2,258	1,990	2,038	2,567	2,552	**2,654**	1,986	1,661	1,430
SCORE		5	4	2	3	1	6	7	8
Source: Pennsylvania Annual Uniform Crime Report									

HEALTHCARE

The 2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard examined the same five healthcare indicators used in previous years and ranked the eight counties in terms of healthcare facilities, and trained healthcare professionals in relation to the population of each county.

The intention of the 2016 Scorecard was to determine the degree of healthcare available in each of the eight counties and rank them accordingly.

The five indicators used were:

• General Hospital Beds per 1,000 People

• Nursing Home Beds per 1,000 People over 65 Years Old

• Ambulatory Surgery Centers Employees per Operating Room

• Number of Physicians per 1,000 People

• Number of Registered Nurses per 1,000 People

The rankings in all these indicators were essentially unchanged in the 2016 Scorecard with Lehigh County leading in practically all the indicators repeating the rankings it had achieved in the 2015 Scorecard.

General Hospital Beds per 1,000 People (7/12-6/13)

Lehigh County had 4.8 hospital beds per 1,000 people, more than all the other counties and significantly exceeded the state average of 2.6. Monroe County had 1.4 hospital beds per 1,000 residents which was the same number reported in the 2015 Scorecard.

Licensed/Approved Nursing Home Beds per 1,000 Population Age 65 and Older

Lackawanna County had 59.8 nursing home beds per 1,000 people over 65 years of age followed by Lehigh County with 48.8 and Luzerne with 46.3.
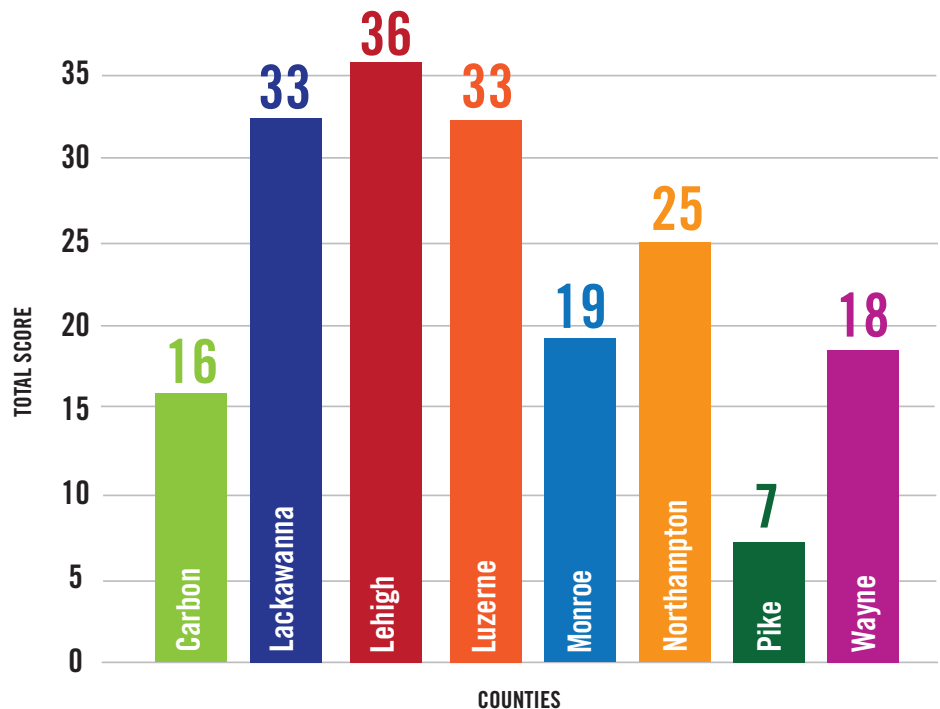
Monroe County reported 21.0 beds per 1,000 residents over 65 years old.

Ambulatory Surgery Centers Total Employees per Operating Room

The Pennsylvania average number of employees per operating room was 13.8 for the most recent period. Luzerne and Northampton exceeded the state average with 17.1 and 14.3 respectively.

Monroe County ranked third in this category with 11.3 employees per operating room.

FIGURE 4: HEALTHCARE RANKINGS

TOTAL SCORE

County	Score
Carbon	16
Lackawanna	33
Lehigh	36
Luzerne	33
Monroe	19
Northampton	25
Pike	7
Wayne	18

COUNTIES

TABLE 4: HEALTHCARE INDICATORS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
General Hospital Beds per 1,000 People (7/12-6/13)									
	2.6	2.3	2.9	4.8	2.4	**1.4**	1.0	**	1.9
SCORE		5	7	8	6	3	2	1	4
Licensed/Approved Nursing Home Beds per 1,000 Population Age 65 and Older (2013)									
	42.2	34.8	59.8	48.8	46.3	**21**	40.5	9.9	35.7
SCORE		3	8	7	6	2	5	1	4
Ambulatory Surgery Centers - Total Employees per Operating Room (7/12-6/13)									
	13.8	**	9.2	11.2	17.1	**11.3**	14.3	**	7.3
SCORE		2	4	5	8	6	7	2	3
Number of Physicians per 1,000 People (2012) #									
	2.7	1.2	2.2	3.9	2.2	**1.4**	1.8	0.4	1.1
SCORE		4	7	8	7	5	6	2	3
Number of Registered Nurses per 1,000 People (2012/2013)									
	12.1	5.6	13.3	17.8	12.4	**6.2**	8.2	1.6	7.7
SCORE		2	7	8	6	3	5	1	4

Source: Pennsylvania and County Health Profiles 2015
*Note 1: ** Missing Data*
Note 2: # PA Health Profiles 2014 did not update these numbers from last year

Number of Physicians per 1,000 People

This indicator measures the relative availability of physicians for the residents of a county. The greatest number of physicians relative to the population of the region was recorded in Lehigh County. There were 3.9 physicians per 1,000 residents of Lehigh County.

Lehigh County was followed by Lackawanna and Luzerne with 2.2 physicians per 1,000 people.

Monroe had 1.4 physicians per 1,000 people in the most recent data.

Number of Registered Nurses per 1,000 People

Lehigh, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties had a larger number of registered nurses per 1,000 residents than the Pennsylvania State average of 12.1.

Lehigh County reported 17.8 registered nurses per 1,000 county residents followed by Lackawanna with 13.3 and Luzerne with 12.4.

Healthcare Overall Rankings

The overall rankings in the Healthcare area were similar in the 2016 Scorecard to the rankings computed in the 2015 Scorecard.

Lehigh County repeated as the leader in the Healthcare category followed by Lackawanna, Luzerne and Northampton.

HOUSING

The 2016 Economic Scorecard of Monroe County examined and updated housing conditions in the county. The 2016 Scorecard compared housing affordability among the eight counties of Northeastern Pennsylvania and also examined and compared building permits and growth in the building permits to identify growth trends in housing among the eight counties.

To determine housing affordability the current Scorecard relied on the house value to income ratio and average rent to income ratio for the eight counties.

The number of building permits issued in each county is considered a reliable leading indicator of future construction activity. The 2016 Scorecard compared the most recent annual growth rates in building permits and also the total annual building permits issued compared to the population of each county.

Median House Value as a Percentage of Median Income

This ratio measures housing affordability by comparing county house values to the average income of county residents. The lower the ratio the greater the housing affordability.

Luzerne County had the lowest house value to income ratio in the 2016 Scorecard indicating that housing is most affordable in Luzerne than in any of the other eight counties. Luzerne had the lowest house value to income ratio in the 2015 Scorecard as well.

Wayne County had the highest house value to income ratio in both the 2015 and 2016 Scorecards.

Median Annual Gross Rent as a Percentage of Median Income

The lowest rent to income ratio was recorded in Carbon County for the 2010-2014 period followed by Lackawanna and Northampton counties.

The highest rent to income ratio in the 2016 Scorecard was reported by Pike and Monroe counties. These counties had the least affordable rental housing in the 2015 Scorecard also.
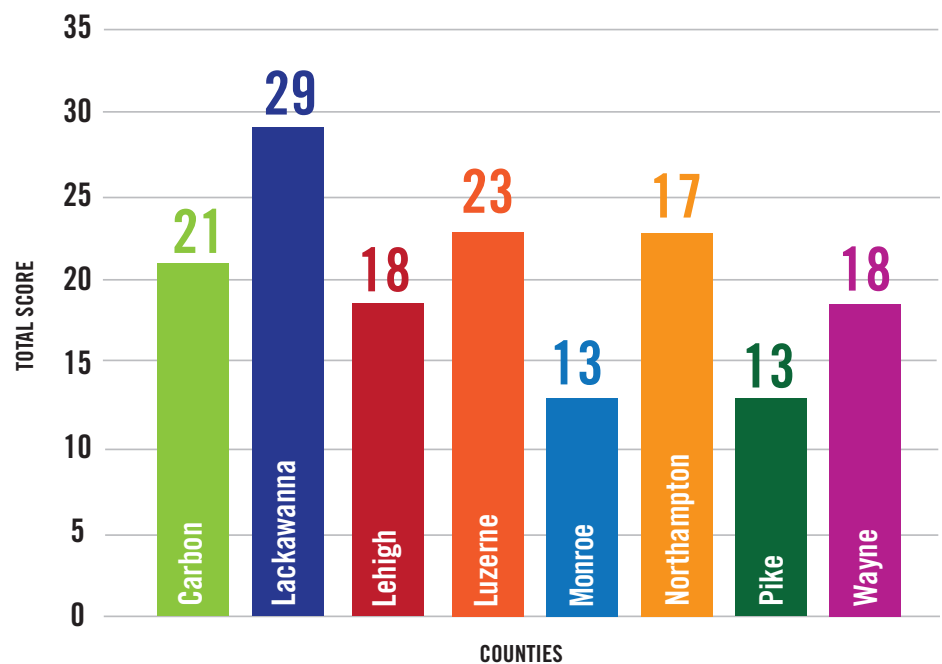
Single Family Building Permits in 2015 as a Percentage of 2005

This indicator measures the relative growth in the supply of housing in each county during the last decade.

The highest growth during the 2005-2015 decade appeared in Lackawanna County and the lowest growth in Pike County.

Lehigh and Luzerne also showed high growth in building activity during the last decade while Pike and Monroe had the lowest growth rates.

FIGURE 5: HOUSING RANKINGS

County	Total Score
Carbon	21
Lackawanna	29
Lehigh	18
Luzerne	23
Monroe	13
Northampton	17
Pike	13
Wayne	18

TABLE 5: HOUSING INDICATORS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Median House Value as a % of Median Income (2010-2014)									
	310.5%	290.9%	316.8%	348.2%	269.7%	**317.1%**	342.2%	321.2%	362.4%
SCORE		7	6	2	8	5	3	4	1
Median Annual Gross Rent as a % of Median Income (2010-2014)									
	18.8%	18.0%	18.3%	19.9%	18.3%	**21.6%**	18.7%	22.4%	19.1%
SCORE		8	7	4	7	3	6	2	5
Single Family Building Permits in 2015 as a % of 2005									
	51.3%	9.7%	123.8%	30.0%	26.1%	**9.4%**	16.4%	7.4%	20.4%
SCORE		3	8	7	6	2	4	1	5
Single Family Building Permit per 1,000 People - 2015**									
	1.8	0.9	2.7	1.2	0.6	**0.9**	1.0	1.4	1.8
SCORE		3	8	5	2	3	4	6	7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*Note: ** Population numbers are based on Census Population Estimates for 2015*

Single Family Building Permits per 1,000 People

The number of new building permits issued in 2015 was compared to the population of the county in the same year to adjust for population differences among counties.

Lackawanna, Wayne and Pike counties had the highest ratios of building permits to population indicating higher growth rates for their construction industries in the near future.

The lowest number of building permits per 1,000 people were recorded in Luzerne, Carbon and Monroe counties in 2015.

Overall Housing Rankings

Assigning eight points to the county with the highest affordability and greatest housing growth, seven to the second, six to the third and so on, the counties with the greatest housing affordability and housing growth were Lackawanna, Luzerne and Carbon.

Monroe and Pike counties were ranked last in terms of housing affordability and housing growth.

EDUCATION

The 2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard performed a comparison among the eight Northeast Pennsylvania Counties to determine the educational status of county residents using the latest available statistical data.

The four education indicators used were the same indicators used in the two previous Scorecards:

• Percentage of Population 25 and Over with No High School Degree

• Percentage of Population 25 and Over with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

• Change in % of Population 25 Years and Over With A Bachelor's Degree Or Higher

• K-12 School Expenditures per Student

The last indicator is considered a measure of the investment in human capital that is intended to enhance the educational experience of students through improvements in technology, educational facilities, infrastructure and personnel.

Percentage of Population 25 Years and Older with No High School Degree

Pike, Monroe and Lackawanna had the lowest percentage of residents without high school degrees and were therefore ranked the highest in this category.

Lehigh, Wayne and Luzerne counties had the highest percentage of county residents without high school degrees.

Percentage of Population 25 years and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Lehigh and Northampton counties had the greatest percentage of college-educated residents. The same counties led in this category in the 2015 Scorecard.

The lowest percentage of college-educated population resided in Carbon and Wayne counties.

Change in % of Population 25 Years and Over With A Bachelor's Degree or Higher

The highest growth in the number of college-educated residents occurred in Northampton, Pike and Luzerne counties.

Carbon and Monroe actually experienced a decrease in the percentage of college-educated county residents.

K-12 School Expenditures per Student

The average annual expenditures per student in the state of Pennsylvania were $15,855 in 2015.

Monroe, Wayne and Carbon counties exceeded the state average expenditures per student.

Luzerne, Lackawanna and Lehigh had the lowest expenditures per student.

FIGURE 6: EDUCATION RANKINGS
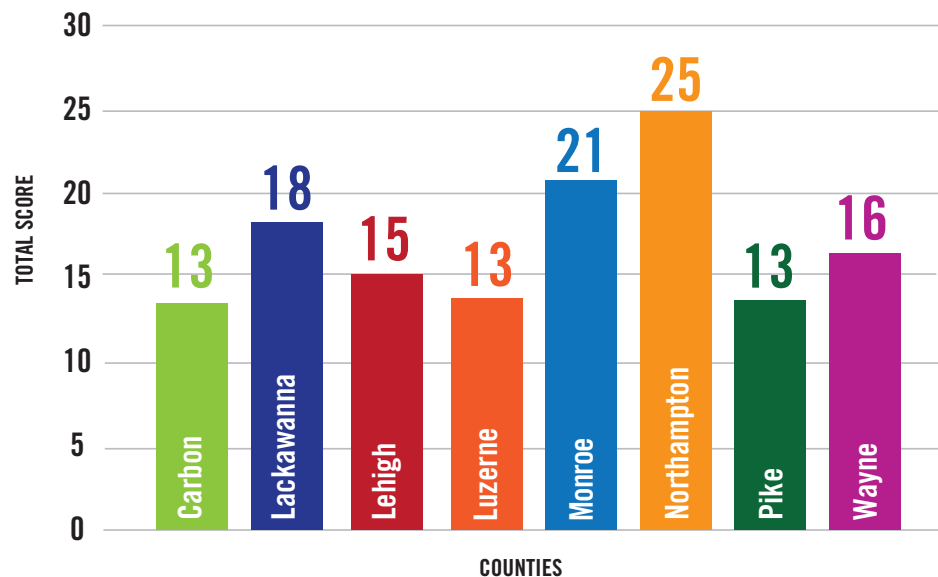
TABLE 6: EDUCATION INDICATORS

	Pennsylvania	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
% of Population 25 Years and Over with No High School Degree or Equivalency Degree (2010-2014)									
	11.0%	11.1%	10.4%	13.0%	11.3%	**10.2%**	10.5%	9.5%	11.7%
SCORE	4	6	1	3		7	5	8	2
Source: American Community Survey									
% of Population 25 Years and Over with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2010-2014)									
	28.1%	14.9%	25.7%	28.0%	21.4%	**23.2%**	27.2%	22.9%	19.5%
SCORE		1	6	8	3	5	7	4	2
Source: American Community Survey									
Change in % of Population 25 Years and Over With A Bachelor's Degree Or Higher between (2009-2013) & (2010-2014) Surveys									
	0.5%	-0.3%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.4%	**-0.7%**	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%
SCORE		2	4	3	6	1	8	7	5
Source: American Community Survey									
K-12 School Expenditures Per Student (Average Daily Membership) 2014-2015 (in dollars)									
	$15,855	$17,893	$13,576	$14,658	$13,209	**$20,390**	$15,680	$15,339	$19,314
SCORE		6	2	3	1	8	5	4	7

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education

Note: ** Population numbers are based on Census Population Estimates for 2014

Overall Education Rankings

Northampton County received the highest ranking in the education area because of the high percentage of college-educated residents and the fast growth of that group.

Pike County was ranked second in the education category because it had the lowest percentage of residents without high school diplomas and the second highest growth rate in college-educated population.

Monroe County was ranked third because of the second lowest percent of residents without high school diplomas and the highest investment in education.

The lowest ranked counties in the education category were Carbon and Luzerne.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The 2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard ranked Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike and Wayne counties in six different categories:

- Employment
- Earnings
- Business Climate
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Education

Lehigh County was ranked first overall because of the highest rankings received in the Earnings and Healthcare categories and the second highest scores in Business Climate and Employment.

Northampton was the second highest ranked county overall because it received the highest scores in Employment and Education and the second highest among the eight counties in the Earnings and Business Climate areas.

Lackawanna County was ranked third overall because of the highest scores in Housing affordability but also high scores in the Healthcare, Business Climate, Education and Earnings categories.

Carbon County moved up to fourth place in the overall rankings dropping Luzerne to fifth. The rise of Carbon County may be attributed to the continued lead in "Creative Class" employment and housing affordability.

Luzerne was in fifth place in spite of high marks in Healthcare and Housing affordability. Luzerne County declined from fourth in the 2015 Scorecard to fifth place in the 2016 Scorecard because of lower scores in the Business Climate and Education categories.

Pike County climbed to sixth in 2016 from eighth last year surpassing Wayne and Monroe counties because of slight improvements in Employment, Earnings and Education.

Monroe County maintained seventh place for the second year in a row in spite of significant gains in Employment, Earnings, Business Climate and Housing.

Wayne County was ranked last in the 2016 Monroe County Economic Scorecard because of lower scores in Earnings and Education.

FIGURE 7: SUMMARY RANKING OF COUNTIES
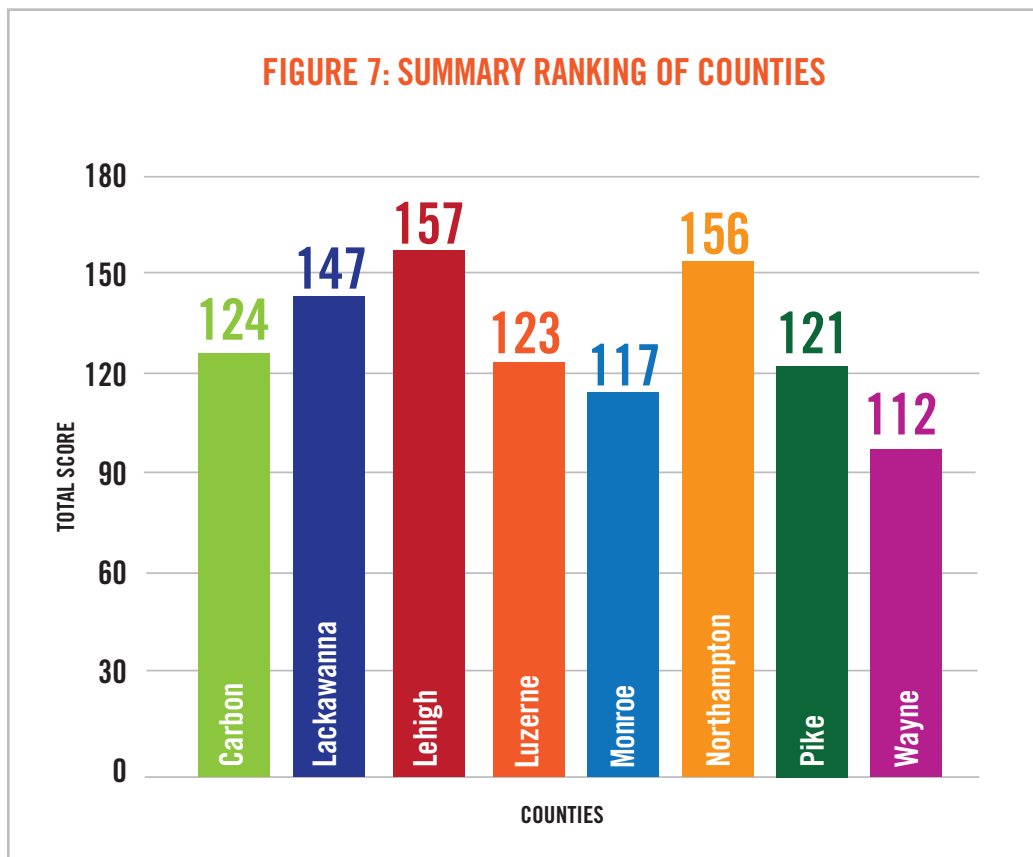
TABLE 7: SUMMARY RANKING OF COUNTIES

Total Score	Carbon	Lackawanna	Lehigh	Luzerne	Monroe	Northampton	Pike	Wayne
Employment	20	17	26	15	20	30	23	15
Earnings	21	22	33	19	20	30	27	20
Business Climate	33	28	29	20	24	29	28	25
Healthcare	16	33	36	33	19	25	7	18
Housing	21	29	18	23	13	17	13	18
Education	13	18	15	13	21	25	23	16
Overall Score	124	147	157	123	117	156	121	112
Overall Rank	4	3	1	5	7	2	6	8

TABLE 8: OVERALL SUMMARY RANKING

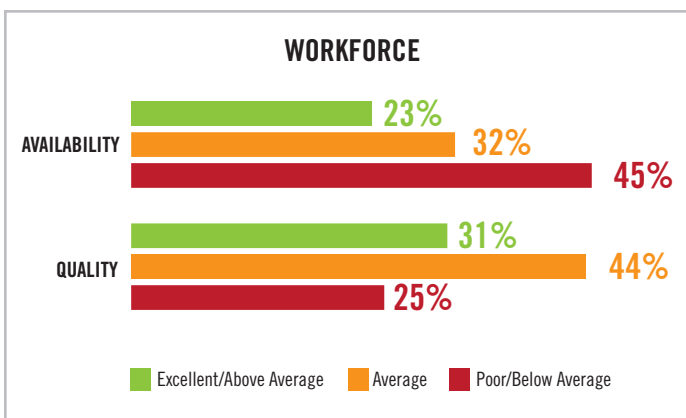|	
Lehigh	1
Northampton	2
Lackawanna	3
Carbon	4
Luzerne	5
Pike	6
Monroe	7
Wayne	8
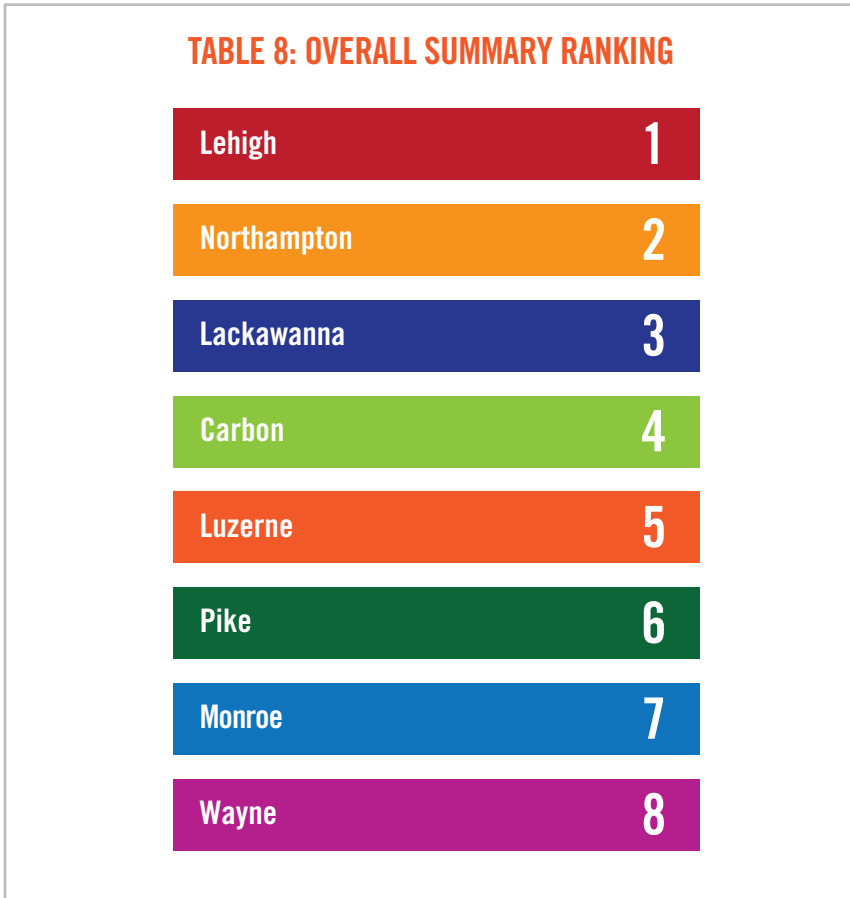
MONROE COUNTY 2016 ECONOMIC SCORECARD
SURVEY

During July-August 2016, a survey was designed to ascertain the perceptions of Monroe County Business leaders as to how attractive our county is for new businesses. It was distributed through Survey Monkey, and more than one hundred respondents participated in the survey. The following paragraphs discuss some of the key findings.
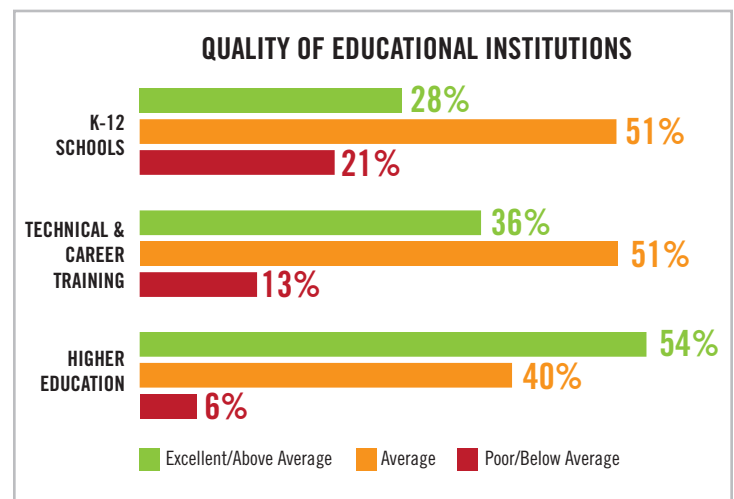
The respondents covered a wide variety of industries such as Arts & Entertainment, Banking, Construction/Real Estate, Education, Government, Healthcare, IT, Manufacturing, Non-profit, Pharmaceutical, Retail, Tourism & Hospitality and Transportation & Distribution.

Number of Employees in Respondent's Firm	Number of Responses
Less than 50	70
51-100	9
101-200	4
201-500	6
501 or above	9
Total Responses	**98**

The respondents represented businesses – both big and small.

WORKFORCE

AVAILABILITY
- Excellent/Above Average: 23%
- Average: 32%
- Poor/Below Average: 45%

QUALITY
- Excellent/Above Average: 31%
- Average: 44%
- Poor/Below Average: 25%

Legend: Excellent/Above Average | Average | Poor/Below Average

Though our business leaders seem to be reasonably happy with the quality of Monroe County workforce, they are clearly unhappy with the availability of suitable workforce.

QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

K-12 SCHOOLS
- Excellent/Above Average: 28%
- Average: 51%
- Poor/Below Average: 21%

TECHNICAL & CAREER TRAINING
- Excellent/Above Average: 36%
- Average: 51%
- Poor/Below Average: 13%

HIGHER EDUCATION
- Excellent/Above Average: 54%
- Average: 40%
- Poor/Below Average: 6%

Legend: Excellent/Above Average | Average | Poor/Below Average

In terms of the quality of educational institutions that serve our county, respondents are extremely happy with our Higher Educational institutions, and not so satisfied with our K-12 schools.

HEALTHCARE

AVAILABILITY
- Excellent/Above Average: 48%
- Average: 34%
- Poor/Below Average: 17%

QUALITY
- Excellent/Above Average: 41%
- Average: 41%
- Poor/Below Average: 18%

Legend: ■ Excellent/Above Average ■ Average ■ Poor/Below Average
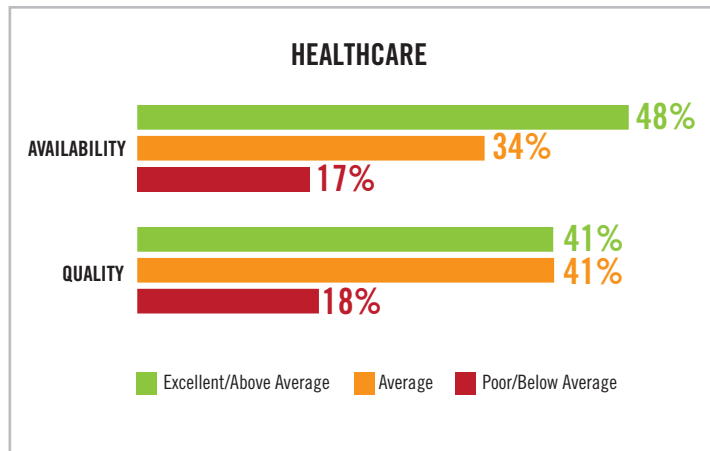
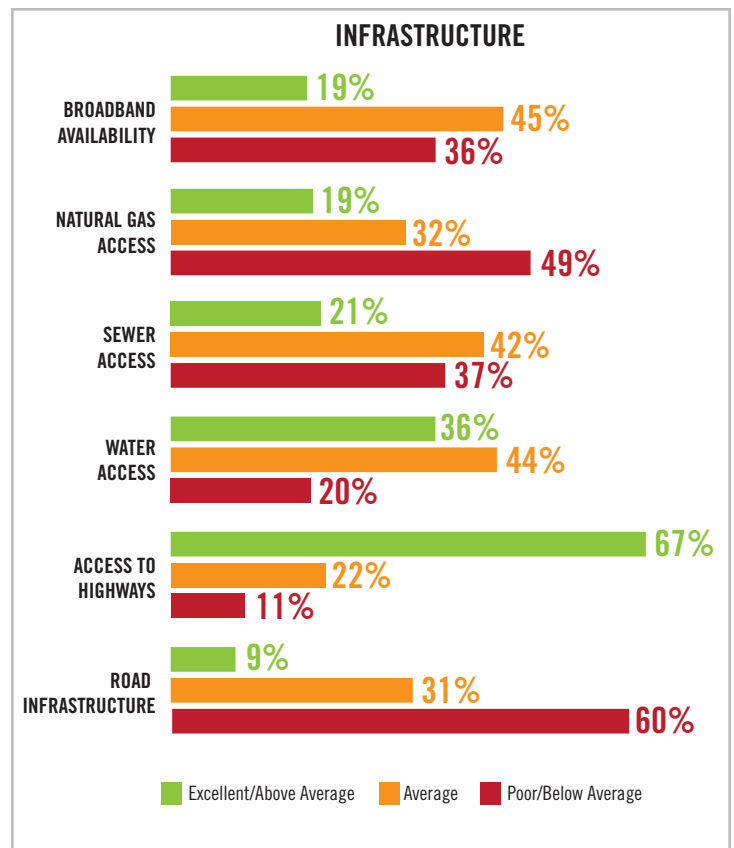Healthcare is a big attraction for our region. The respondents are extremely satisfied with both the quality and availability of healthcare in Monroe County.

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY SAFETY
- Excellent/Above Average: 27%
- Average: 51%
- Poor/Below Average: 22%

HOUSING AVAILABILITY
- Excellent/Above Average: 30%
- Average: 37%
- Poor/Below Average: 33%

CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES
- Excellent/Above Average: 30%
- Average: 35%
- Poor/Below Average: 36%

OUTDOOR RECREATION
- Excellent/Above Average: 88%
- Average: 9%
- Poor/Below Average: 3%

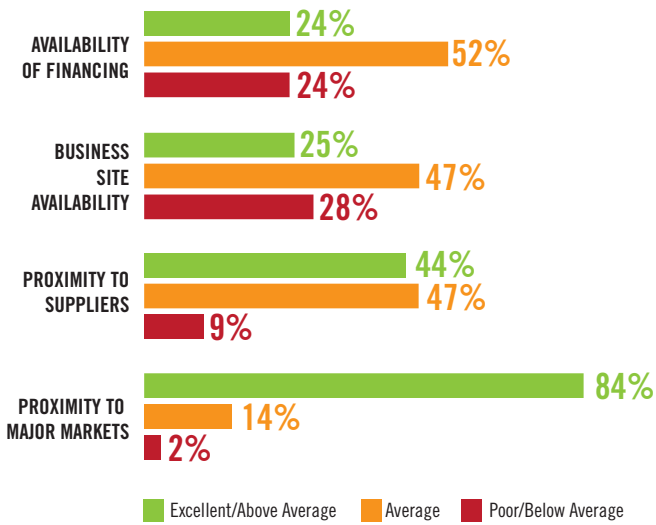Legend: ■ Excellent/Above Average ■ Average ■ Poor/Below Average

Community living brings a mixed bag. Outdoor recreational opportunities were rated as excellent, arts & cultural opportunities seem to be limited in our area. Also, community safety and suitable housing requires some improvement.

INFRASTRUCTURE

BROADBAND AVAILABILITY
- Excellent/Above Average: 19%
- Average: 45%
- Poor/Below Average: 36%

NATURAL GAS ACCESS
- Excellent/Above Average: 19%
- Average: 32%
- Poor/Below Average: 49%

SEWER ACCESS
- Excellent/Above Average: 21%
- Average: 42%
- Poor/Below Average: 37%

WATER ACCESS
- Excellent/Above Average: 36%
- Average: 44%
- Poor/Below Average: 20%

ACCESS TO HIGHWAYS
- Excellent/Above Average: 67%
- Average: 22%
- Poor/Below Average: 11%

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE
- Excellent/Above Average: 9%
- Average: 31%
- Poor/Below Average: 60%

Legend: ■ Excellent/Above Average ■ Average ■ Poor/Below Average

One of the most important criteria for new business location is the local infrastructure. It is clear that the respondents to our survey are truly unhappy with our local roads, though they are very happy with access to highways.

Similarly, they are also unhappy with the broadband availability, access to natural gas and sewer facilities. Improvements in these areas are vital if Monroe Country wants to be a thriving place for future businesses.
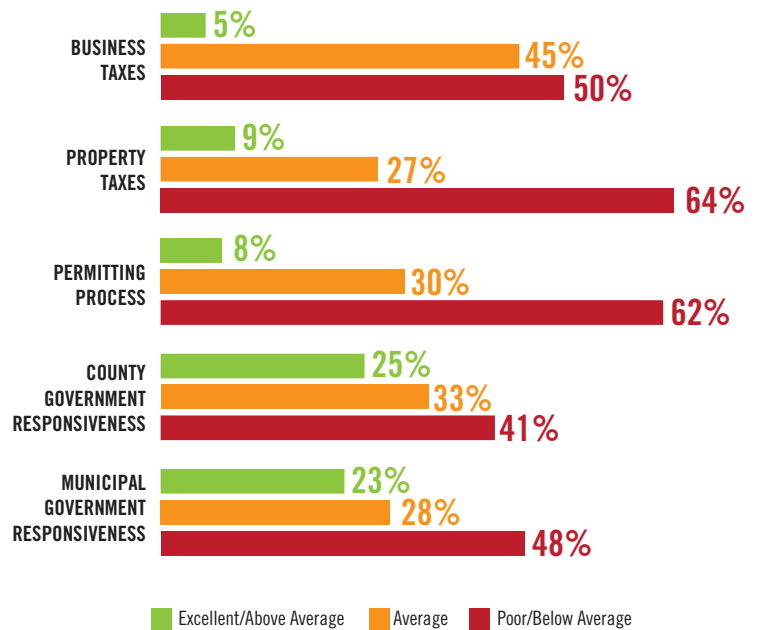
BUSINESS CONDITIONS

AVAILABILITY OF FINANCING
- 24%
- 52%
- 24%

BUSINESS SITE AVAILABILITY
- 25%
- 47%
- 28%

PROXIMITY TO SUPPLIERS
- 44%
- 47%
- 9%

PROXIMITY TO MAJOR MARKETS
- 84%
- 14%
- 2%

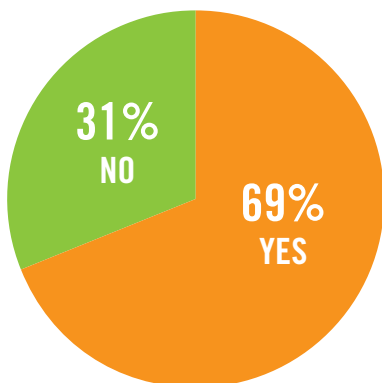■ Excellent/Above Average ■ Average ■ Poor/Below Average

One of the major attractions for businesses to our region is the proximity to major markets such as New York City and Philadelphia. Our survey clearly confirms that strength.

However, there is still work to be done in terms of improving business site availability and financing.

Given that states and regions compete hard to attract and retain businesses in their region, it is very important how business leaders perceive the support from local government and the tax rates. Unfortunately, our survey brings no good news here. Respondents very strongly feel that both municipal and county governments are not responsive to business needs, and both business and property taxes seem to be a big drag when attracting new businesses.
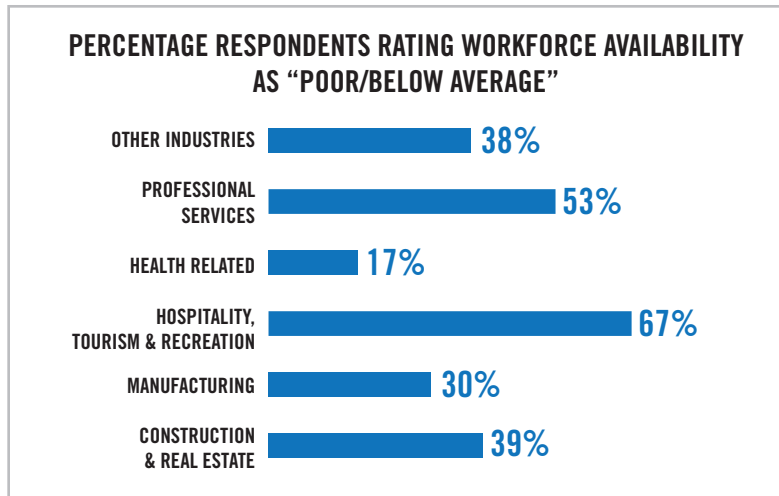
GOVERNMENT & TAXES

BUSINESS TAXES
- 5%
- 45%
- 50%

PROPERTY TAXES
- 9%
- 27%
- 64%

PERMITTING PROCESS
- 8%
- 30%
- 62%

COUNTY GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS
- 25%
- 33%
- 41%

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS
- 23%
- 28%
- 48%

■ Excellent/Above Average ■ Average ■ Poor/Below Average

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND MONROE COUNTY AS A BUSINESS LOCATION?
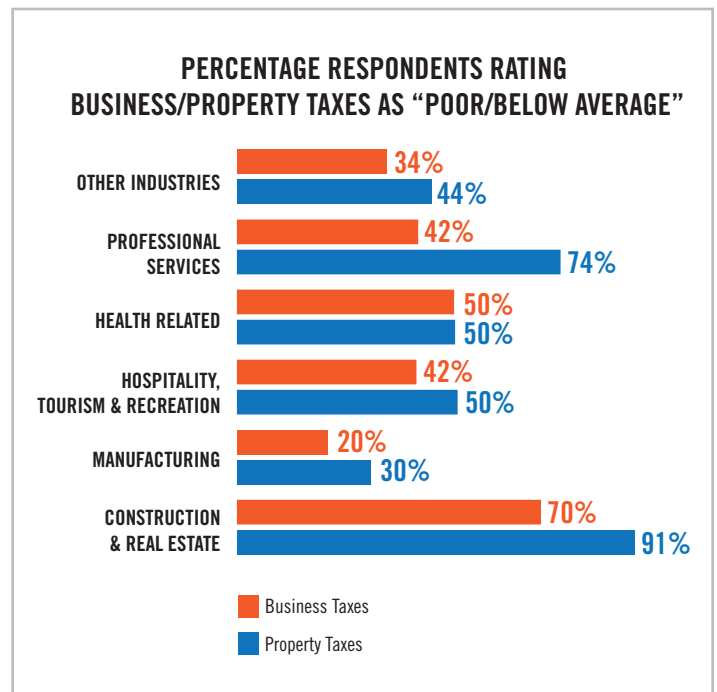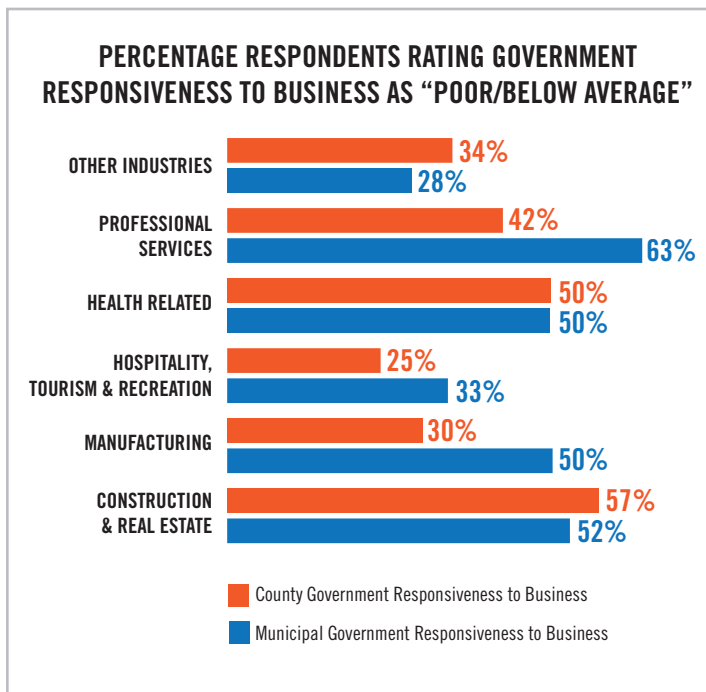
- 31% NO
- 69% YES

Finally, for the most important question of whether they would recommend Monroe County as a business location, a significant majority answered affirmatively. This is great news! The fact that our business leaders strongly support our region in spite of some dissatisfaction with certain business conditions shows their commitment to the region.

Given that many respondents are dissatisfied with certain aspects of business conditions in Monroe County, the researchers were curious to see if there are significant differences among industries. The following charts reveal some interesting insights.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY AS "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE"

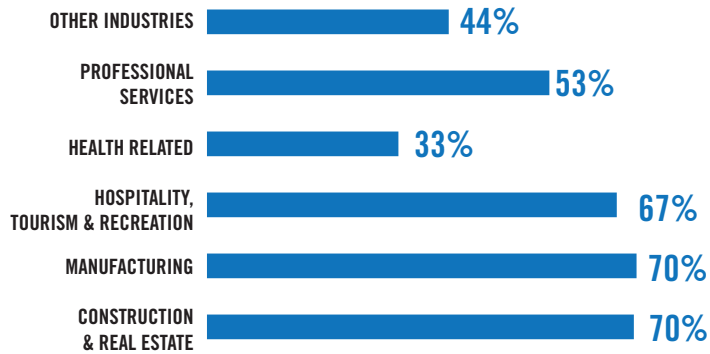| Industry	Percentage
OTHER INDUSTRIES	38%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	53%
HEALTH RELATED	17%
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & RECREATION	67%
MANUFACTURING	30%
CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE	39%

It is interesting to note that though relatively high skilled sectors like Health and Manufacturing are satisfied, Hospitality, Tourism & Recreation industry seems to have the highest difficulty in attracting the right kind of workforce probably because of the seasonal nature of their business.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS AS "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE"

Industry	County Government Responsiveness to Business	Municipal Government Responsiveness to Business
OTHER INDUSTRIES	34%	28%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	42%	63%
HEALTH RELATED	50%	50%
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & RECREATION	25%	33%
MANUFACTURING	30%	50%
CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE	57%	52%

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING BUSINESS/PROPERTY TAXES AS "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE"

Industry	Business Taxes	Property Taxes
OTHER INDUSTRIES	34%	44%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	42%	74%
HEALTH RELATED	50%	50%
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & RECREATION	42%	50%
MANUFACTURING	20%	30%
CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE	70%	91%

Though respondents from all industries are unhappy with the level of support from the municipal/county governments and with the business/property taxes in Monroe County, Construction, Real Estate, Professional Services and Health industries are the most dissatisfied.
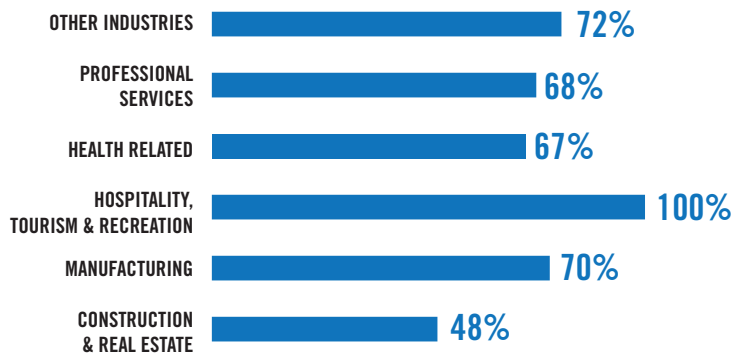
Generally speaking, the municipal government support is rated below that of the county government and the level of dissatisfaction with the property taxes is more than that of the business taxes.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING GOVERNMENT PERMITTING PROCESS AS "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE"

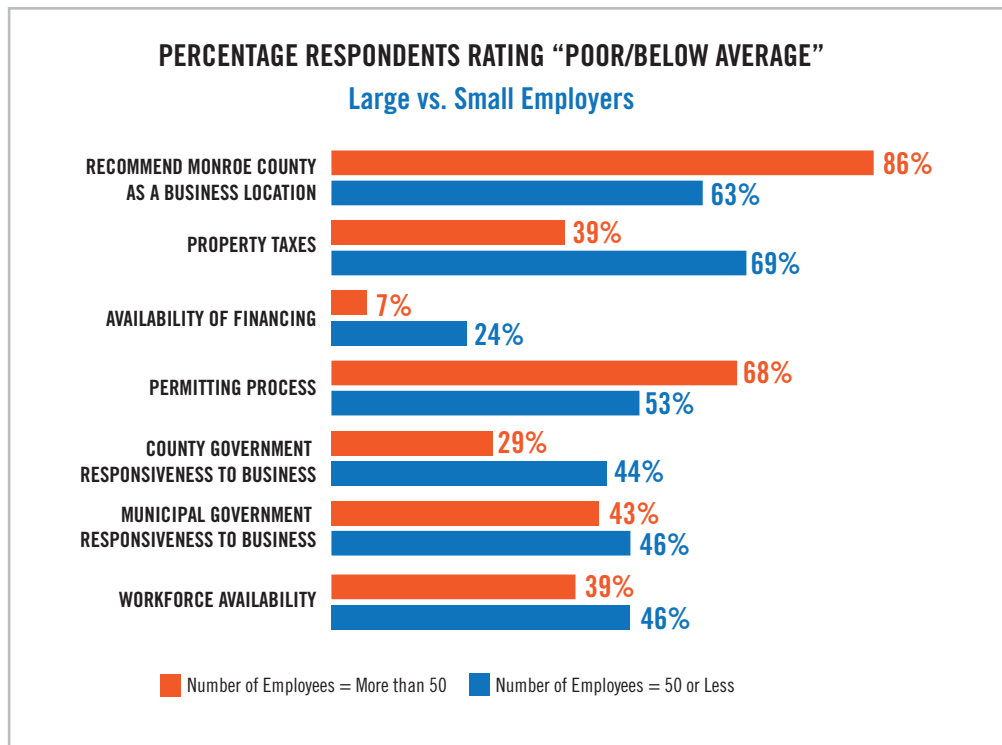| Industry	
OTHER INDUSTRIES	44%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	53%
HEALTH RELATED	33%
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & RECREATION	67%
MANUFACTURING	70%
CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE	70%

Similarly, all industries are very dissatisfied with the government permitting process. The level of dissatisfaction is less in the health industry.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RECOMMENDING MONROE COUNTY AS BUSINESS LOCATION

Industry	
OTHER INDUSTRIES	72%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	68%
HEALTH RELATED	67%
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & RECREATION	100%
MANUFACTURING	70%
CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE	48%

Finally, for the question of whether they would recommend Monroe County for a business location, respondents from the Hospitality, Tourism & Recreation industries responded the most emphatically, whereas the Construction & Real Estate industry was less willing to recommend our region for future businesses, partly reflecting that industry's lackluster performance in recent times.

Equally important is to find out if dissatisfaction among respondents systematically differs among small/large employers, newer/established firms, and by location of the municipality. The following charts shed some light on key differences.
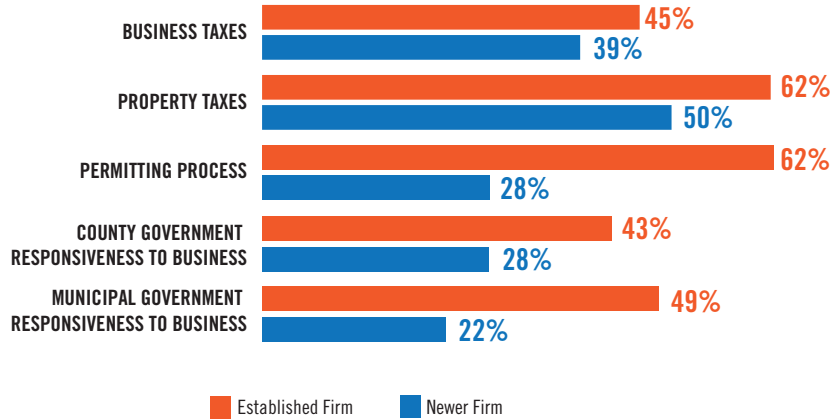
PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE"
Large vs. Small Employers

Category	More than 50	50 or Less
RECOMMEND MONROE COUNTY AS A BUSINESS LOCATION	86%	63%
PROPERTY TAXES	39%	69%
AVAILABILITY OF FINANCING	7%	24%
PERMITTING PROCESS	68%	53%
COUNTY GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS	29%	44%
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS	43%	46%
WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY	39%	46%

■ Number of Employees = More than 50   ■ Number of Employees = 50 or Less

In general, small employers with 50 or less employees are more dissatisfied than large employers on several key issues; they are more dissatisfied with workforce availability, county/municipal support, financing and property taxes. The only exception is the permitting process, where the large employers are more dissatisfied. However, it is worth noting that more than half the respondents from small and large employers are unhappy with the permitting process.

Not surprisingly, only 63% of respondents from small employers would recommend Monroe County as opposed to 86% of respondents with large employers. Given that it is the small businesses that create the most jobs, our county leaders need to pay special attention to their concerns.

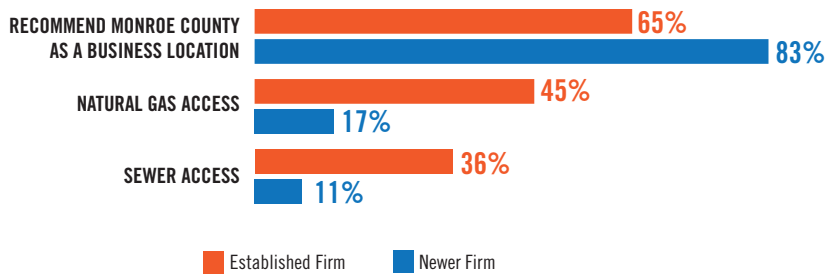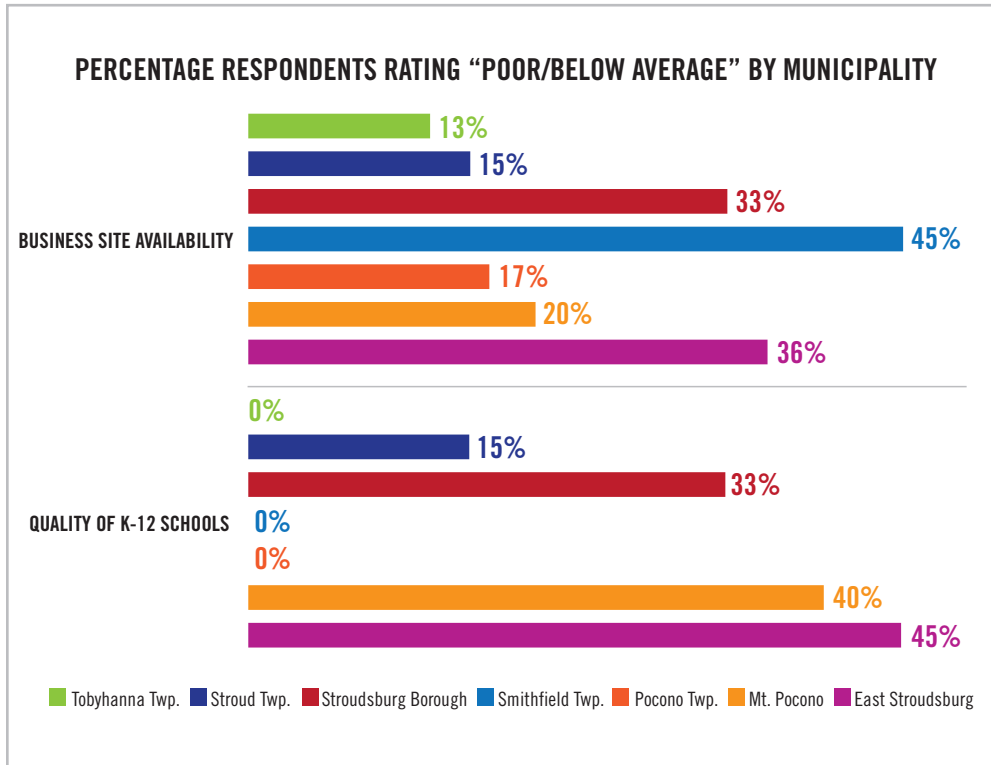## PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE" BY FIRM LONGEVITY

Newer Firm: 10 Years or Younger
Established Firm: More than 10 Years

	Established Firm	Newer Firm
BUSINESS TAXES	45%	39%
PROPERTY TAXES	62%	50%
PERMITTING PROCESS	62%	28%
COUNTY GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS	43%	28%
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS	49%	22%

■ Established Firm   ■ Newer Firm

It is interesting to note that respondents from newer firms are less dissatisfied than respondents from established firms on questions dealing with government and taxes; for example, roughly 25% of respondents from newer firms rated government responsiveness as Poor/Below Average as opposed to almost 50% from established firms.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE" BY FIRM LONGEVITY

Newer Firm: 10 Years or Younger
Established Firm: More than 10 Years

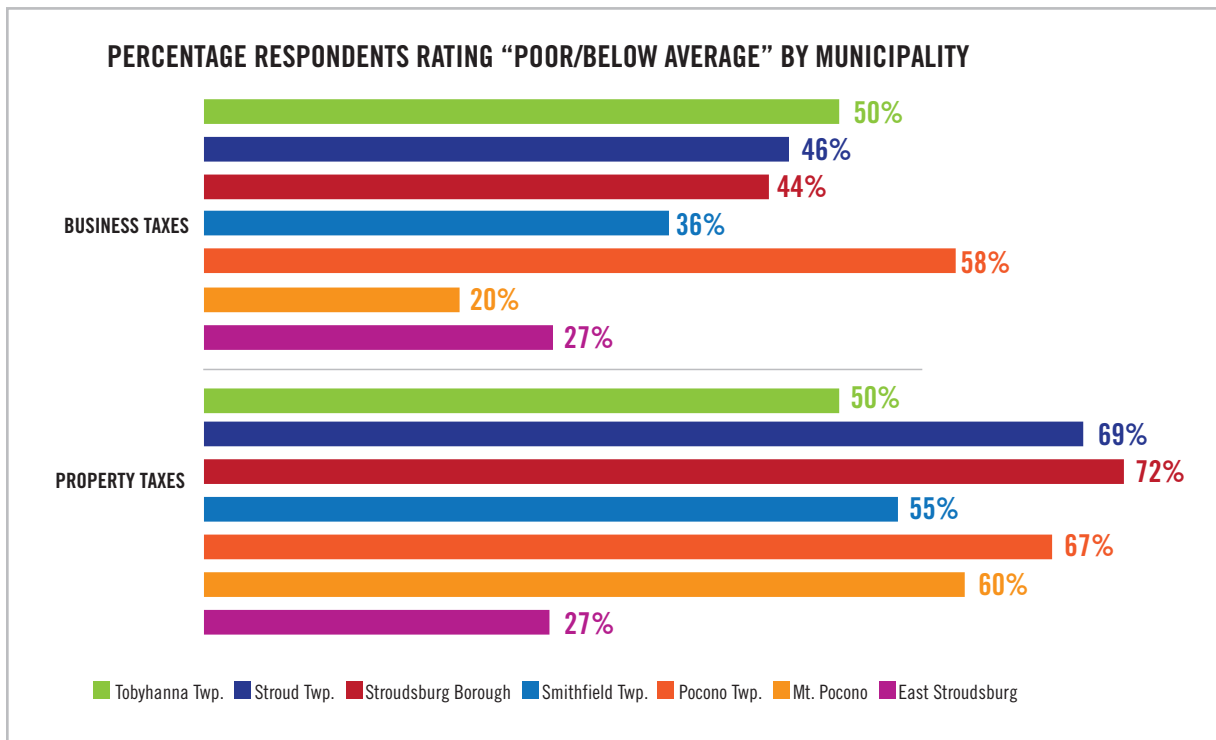|	Established Firm	Newer Firm
RECOMMEND MONROE COUNTY AS A BUSINESS LOCATION	65%	83%
NATURAL GAS ACCESS	45%	17%
SEWER ACCESS	36%	11%

■ Established Firm   ■ Newer Firm

Also, on the question of Sewer/Natural Gas Access, a much smaller percentage of respondents from newer firms rated Poor/Below Average compared to established firms. With the result, 83% of respondents from newer firms recommend Monroe County as a business location as compared to only 65% from established firms, which is good news because these newer firms can be good ambassadors to market our region.

Since many municipalities had very few respondents, the authors of the report looked only at those municipalities that had 5 or more responses.
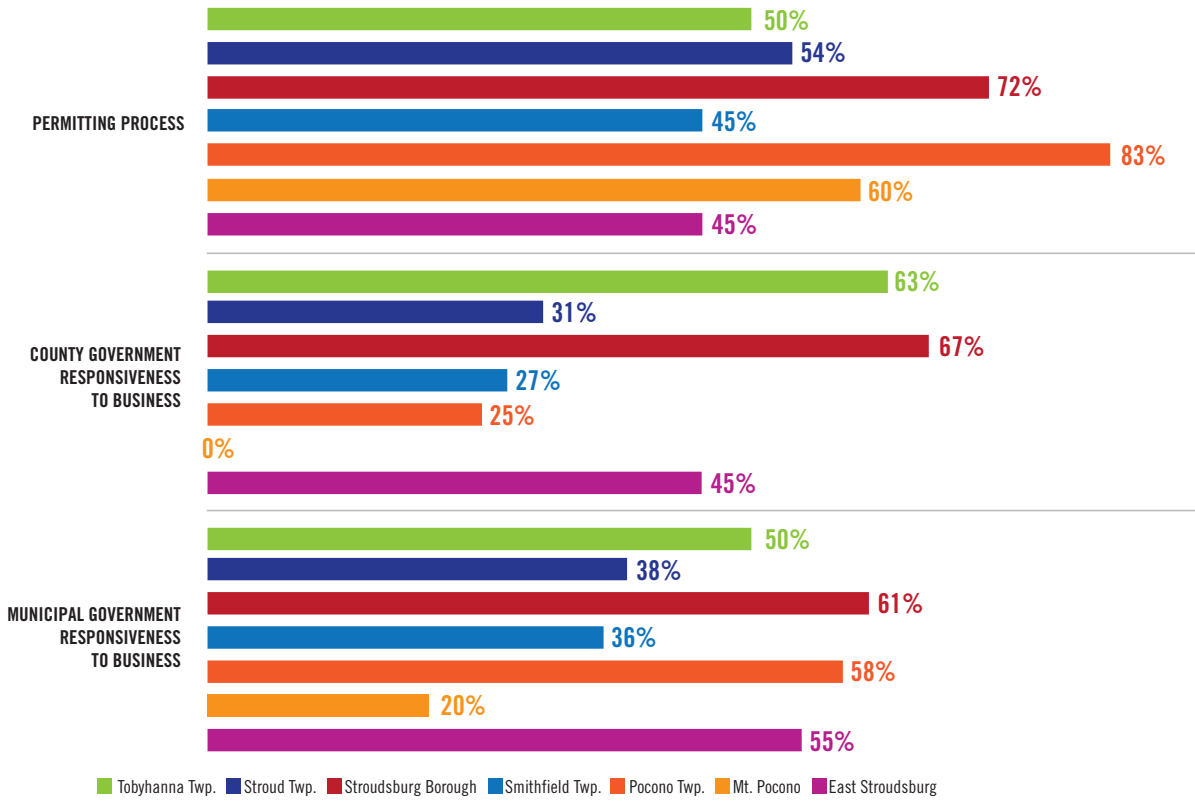

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE" BY MUNICIPALITY

BUSINESS SITE AVAILABILITY
- 13%
- 15%
- 33%
- 45%
- 17%
- 20%
- 36%

QUALITY OF K-12 SCHOOLS
- 0%
- 15%
- 33%
- 0%
- 0%
- 40%
- 45%

■ Tobyhanna Twp. ■ Stroud Twp. ■ Stroudsburg Borough ■ Smithfield Twp. ■ Pocono Twp. ■ Mt. Pocono ■ East Stroudsburg

Interestingly, no respondent from Tobyhanna, Smithfield or Pocono Townships ranked K-12 school quality as Poor/Below Average. On the contrary, a very large percentage of respondents from East Stroudsburg, Mt. Pocono and Stroudsburg rated their K-12 schools Poor/Below Average.

Availability of suitable business sites seems to be worse in Smithfield Twp., Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg Boroughs.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE" BY MUNICIPALITY

BUSINESS TAXES
- 50%
- 46%
- 44%
- 36%
- 58%
- 20%
- 27%

PROPERTY TAXES
- 50%
- 69%
- 72%
- 55%
- 67%
- 60%
- 27%

■ Tobyhanna Twp. ■ Stroud Twp. ■ Stroudsburg Borough ■ Smithfield Twp. ■ Pocono Twp. ■ Mt. Pocono ■ East Stroudsburg

50% or more respondents from Pocono and Tobyhanna Townships rated their Property and Business taxes as too high. Whereas, respondents from Stroud/Smithfield Townships, Stroudsburg and Mt. Pocono Boroughs rated their property taxes as worse than Business taxes. The only exception is East Stroudsburg, whose respondents did not rate their Property or Business taxes as worse.
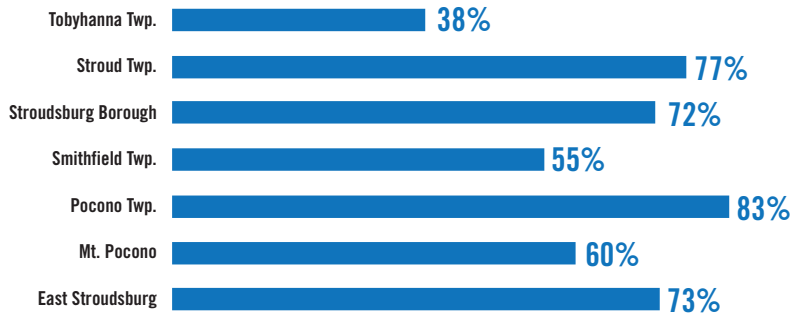
PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS RATING "POOR/BELOW AVERAGE" BY MUNICIPALITY

PERMITTING PROCESS
- Tobyhanna Twp.: 50%
- Stroud Twp.: 54%
- Stroudsburg Borough: 72%
- Smithfield Twp.: 45%
- Pocono Twp.: 83%
- Mt. Pocono: 60%
- East Stroudsburg: 45%

COUNTY GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS
- Tobyhanna Twp.: 63%
- Stroud Twp.: 31%
- Stroudsburg Borough: 67%
- Smithfield Twp.: 27%
- Pocono Twp.: 25%
- Mt. Pocono: 0%
- East Stroudsburg: 45%

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO BUSINESS
- Tobyhanna Twp.: 50%
- Stroud Twp.: 38%
- Stroudsburg Borough: 61%
- Smithfield Twp.: 36%
- Pocono Twp.: 58%
- Mt. Pocono: 20%
- East Stroudsburg: 55%

Legend: ■ Tobyhanna Twp. ■ Stroud Twp. ■ Stroudsburg Borough ■ Smithfield Twp. ■ Pocono Twp. ■ Mt. Pocono ■ East Stroudsburg

Though a very large percentage of respondents from all locations rated their Permitting Process as Poor/Below Average, the problem seems to be more acute in Pocono Township and Stroudsburg Borough.

More than 50% of respondents from Tobyhanna Township and Stroudsburg Borough rated County and Municipal Government Responsiveness to Business as Poor/Below Average, whereas Municipal Government Responsiveness is rated worse in Pocono Township and East Stroudsburg. The only exception is that respondents from Mt. Pocono seem to be more satisfied with both County and Municipal Responsiveness to Business.

PERCENTAGE RECOMMENDING MONROE COUNTY AS A PREMIER BUSINESS LOCATION

- Tobyhanna Twp.: 38%
- Stroud Twp.: 77%
- Stroudsburg Borough: 72%
- Smithfield Twp.: 55%
- Pocono Twp.: 83%
- Mt. Pocono: 60%
- East Stroudsburg: 73%

Finally, more than 50% of respondents from all areas recommended Monroe County as a Premier Business location. The only exception is Tobyhanna Township, where only 38% recommended our county as a top business location.

One of the open-ended questions asked was 'what recommendations do you have to make Monroe County a premier business location'. The following are some highlights of survey respondents' comments.

Key Recommendations by Survey Respondents To Make Monroe County a Premier Business Location

- Make use of the natural beauty of the area, quality of life, proximity to population, highway access, and availability of land.

- Target businesses that benefit from our natural resources.

- Offer tax incentives for businesses, especially small businesses, to locate in Monroe County.

- Establish 'Business Parks' near Sanofi Pasteur to promote county development.

- Improve efficiency of county government, and make it more business friendly.

- Consolidate municipal and school districts for increased efficiency, economies of scale and more homogeneous zoning and building codes.

- Streamline and simplify the permitting process, especially for small businesses.

- Reduce local taxes, especially property taxes.

- Improve the quality of local schools.

- Improve the infrastructure of local roads.

- Improve sewer line throughout the county.

- Increase more affordable housing options.

- Reduce brain drain – retain younger people.

- Improve affordable public transportation throughout the day.

- More active and supportive Chamber of Commerce.

Finally, for the question of 'what gets you excited about the future of Monroe County', the following are some of the key comments from respondents.

What Gets You Excited about the Future of Monroe County?

- **Proximity** to major cities.

- Tremendous **highway access**.

- A high speed **train to NYC**.

- Possibility of the **Light Rail** from Scranton to NJ.

- Access to **open space**. **Natural beauty**. Part of the **Green Backdrop** to the Metropolitan Region, and a **Four Season Vacation Area**.

- **Location** adjacent to states that have the highest taxes, largest populations and their inherent challenges.

- **Population growth** and **diversity**.

- ESU and the new Northampton campus provide **solid educational training** for our residents as well as **expanded cultural opportunities**.

- Great **quality of life**.

- Growth in the **medical, tourism and hospitality industries**.

- The new **Kalahari Resort** and the **growth of Camelback, St. Luke's and Sanofi**.

- This county is an excellent location for **back office operations, server farms**, and development of **renewable energy**.

- **The strength and growth of the Lehigh Valley**. It would be nice to work more collaboratively with them. Route 33 makes this a great corridor to leverage the workforce talent there.

RE-ENERGIZING OUR ECONOMY:
MONROE 2030 ACTION TEAM: OUR WORK PLAN (VERSION 1.0)

Monroe County needs a new approach to economic development. For the past decade or so, we've been stuck in a rut. Our local economic performance could best be described as "average." We took a big hit in the Great Recession, but the downturn was not as bad as other communities in our region. We have had some good news lately, with the arrival of new businesses and a steady, albeit slow, economic recovery. We're doing OK, but not thriving.

We can do better, and we can create a more vibrant economy here in Monroe County. That's the purpose of our Monroe County 2030 Action Team. We believe that smart decisions today can create a more vibrant future economy for Monroe County. We don't seek economic growth for its own sake. We've come together because we believe that we have no other choice. If we want to build a

community where our children and grandchildren can live, learn, work, and play, we need to rethink how we support and promote economic development in Monroe County.

This report presents our preliminary ideas for moving forward—what we are calling the Monroe 2030 Action Plan, Version 1.0. We don't have all the answers; hence, the use of Version 1.0. But, we do know that we cannot continue with the status quo. We have not tried to address every economic challenge facing Monroe County, but have instead picked a few areas of high importance and where we believe that new policies and programs can make a difference. This action plan is not the last word. It is the first installment of what we hope will be a county wide conversation and commitment to a more prosperous local and regional economy.

Where Have We Been? What's Happening with Monroe's Economy?

Economic data paint a mixed picture for Monroe County. We are blessed with a great location, a beautiful natural setting, attractive small towns, and several strong anchor industries, including tourism, healthcare, and manufacturing. Yet, in recent years, we've been less successful in building on these important competitive advantages. Some numbers from the annual Monroe County Economic Scorecard and other sources tell the story:

• **We Aren't Creating Good Jobs:** Jobs in Monroe County don't pay well. Our average wage is only 75% of the state average and is the lowest among all neighboring counties.

• **We Aren't Creating New Wealth:** Within our region, Monroe County has the lowest rate of per capita personal income growth. This is the most important measure of wealth generation.

• **We Aren't Creating New Economic Engines:** Between 2010 and 2013, the number of businesses and start-ups in Monroe declined and new job creation rates were significantly lower than statewide averages.

This lagging performance is no secret. Monroe County's community leaders and elected officials have recognized the challenges facing the region and have sought to change our economic trajectory. State and regional partners, such as the Northeast Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance and the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board, have also been engaged. These efforts have produced some useful analysis and research. For example, the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan, its related Economic Development Implementation Plan, and the wider regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, prepared by the NEPA Alliance, all contain strong assessments of our economic challenges and some potential solutions. Our work builds on these analyses.

These reports offer a strong foundation, but, unfortunately, they have not generated action. We have good research and ideas on hand, but the studies languish on the shelf. That's where the Monroe 2030 Action Team comes in. We are a group of committed community volunteers seeking to generate excitement and enthusiasm about a new economic future for Monroe County. We want to change the conversation, the mindset, and most importantly, the direction of our economy.

The Monroe 2030 Action Team

By focusing on action as opposed to more research, we hope to pioneer a new approach via the Monroe Action Team effort. We recognize that good data and analysis are essential, but much of this work has already been done. We don't need more studies; we expect results!

It is this shared commitment to results that brought our team together (see Figure 1 for a listing of our leadership). Many of us lead local businesses or other local institutions, and volunteer for various local, county, regional and state organizations. Over time, we have become frustrated about the state of economic development in Monroe County and the impact on those living and working here. We came together to see if we could try a new approach. Fortunately, we found a sympathetic ear in County Commissioner John Moyer who also wanted to see a new approach to countywide economic development. He and his fellow Commissioners encouraged us and supported the creation of a privately-led effort which became the Monroe 2030 Action Team. Our work was also supported by Erik R. Pages of EntreWorks Consulting, an economic development consulting firm based in Arlington ,VA.

We have consciously sought to bring a different perspective to promoting economic development in Monroe County. How are we different? First, we are a privately-led group. We are all volunteers and we do not have any formal connection to local or state governments. Second, we are inclusive. We have sought to engage a

FIGURE 1:
Monroe 2030 Action Team Executive Committee Members

MATTHEW J. CONNELL (CHAIR)
Dean, Monroe Campus, Northampton Community College

RACHEL FRICK CARDELLE
Associate Dean, Northampton Community College

PHIL HOSBACH
Vice President, Sanofi Pasteur

ANNE LAMBERTON
Supervisor, Tobyhanna Township

SHARON LAVERDURE
Former Superintendent, East Stroudsburg Schools

TROY NAUMAN
Owner, Nauman Contracting

GARY OLSON
President/CEO, ESSA Bank & Trust

MARY FRANCES POSTUPACK
Vice President, East Stroudsburg University

STEVE SOMERS
President, Vigon International

MICHAEL TUKEVA
Executive Director, Pocono Alliance

MARCIA G. WELSH
President, East Stroudsburg University

diverse mix of local residents and community leaders. In addition to our Executive Committee (noted in Figure 1), we have organized three working task forces that engage dozens of other County residents who support our mission. Finally, we have opted to pursue a limited set of objectives in Version 1.0 of the Monroe 2030 Action Plan. We need big changes in Monroe County, but we can begin the effort with smaller and well-targeted reform efforts.

Our initial focus areas emerged from past research, citizen input, and discussions at community events such as the annual Monroe County Economic Outlook Summit. Based on these discussions and input, we selected three topics for our early work.

• **Small Business & Entrepreneurship:** What can we do to make it easier to start and grow a business?

• **Community Collaboration:** How can our 20 townships and boroughs work better together to support economic development?

• **Workforce Development:** How can we help local people build successful careers and develop a local talent base that employers need?

We selected these targets because they are not only important to Monroe's future prosperity, but they are also areas where we felt a committed group of community volunteers could make a difference and produce tangible results. We chose workforce development because this issue is now among the most important in the field of economic development. In today's economy, companies seek talent (i.e. a skilled and resourceful workforce) as the most important ingredient in their location decisions. If we want existing firms to grow and expand and new firms to locate or start in Monroe County, we must first ensure that we are building and nurturing a talented and skilled workforce.

The Community Collaboration Task Force is assessing how we can make Monroe County into a more attractive location for business. The sad reality is that, at present, Monroe County is not business friendly. In many townships and boroughs, it is difficult, costly, and complex to start a new business or to support new development. A complicated mix of local and state rules creates needless frustration and higher costs for local business owners. We need to change this mindset and build business friendly communities across Monroe County while still preserving the rich culture of our community.

Finally, we must create new economic engines for Monroe County. Some of this new activity will come from outside investments, such as the new Kalahari Resort facility in Tobyhanna Township. But, the vast majority of new jobs and new wealth will come from new businesses that start and grow here in Monroe. We don't have enough entrepreneurs in Monroe County, and Small Business and Entrepreneurship Task Force seeks to change this pattern.

Each of the task forces includes a group of committed volunteers who have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss how to improve Monroe County's performance in their specific focus areas. In addition to examining past research and learning from topic experts, the groups have each developed a menu of action items.

These work plans are detailed in the next section of this report.

The task force groups have specifically embraced a new approach. Instead of addressing all of the economic development challenges facing Monroe County, they have sought to develop a short term menu of action items that can be implemented relatively quickly and without a major new infusion of money. We recognize that this approach will not "solve" Monroe County's economic development challenges on its own. However, we also believe that, as the old adage states, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Version 1.0 of the Monroe 2030 Action Plan seeks to begin this journey by generating early results and building momentum. Along the way, we hope to change the conversation about economic development in Monroe County. We want to rebrand Monroe as the best place to do business in Pennsylvania.

Our Work Plan

Version 1.0 of the Monroe 2030 Action Plan is presented below with a focus on the work of our three task force groups. Each of the groups pursued its own agenda, but all of them brought a similar perspective to their work. The groups developed action items that met several criteria:

• **Significant:** The action item addresses a pressing economic development challenge.

• **Feasible:** Strategies could be pursued without requiring major new investments, and could generate results within one to three years.

• **Tangible:** We can track our progress on these action items. We have identified lead individuals and organizations for each item, and we intend to track our progress. Most importantly, we intend to hold ourselves accountable and will share our successes—or lack thereof—with the wider community.

Below, we present a general review of the work plans and action items developed by each of three task force groups. In addition to the summaries presented below, Appendix A includes more detailed work plans for each of the action items. These plans provide a summary of potential costs and provide milestones and timelines for implementation of each action item.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Task Force, chaired by East Stroudsburg University's Mary Frances Postupack, began its work by highlighting a simple and compelling fact: the vast majority of new jobs in America are created by fast-growing new businesses. Places with high start-up rates and with higher concentrations of fast growing companies tend to be more prosperous and more successful. The future prosperity of Monroe County will greatly depend on our ability to support new local start-ups today.

To date, we're not doing very well on this front. Between 2010 and 2013, the number of business establishments in Monroe County

Figure 2:
Ingredients for an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Source: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2016

actually declined by six percent. This decline was biggest among the smallest and newest companies, with an overall 17% decline in the number of new startups according to data from YourEconomy.com. Fortunately, job growth performance was not so dire. Overall, Monroe businesses saw a 0.9% increase in jobs between 2010 and 2013. However, the number of jobs at new companies declined by 1%. The 2010-2013 time period was challenging for many parts of the US, but Monroe's performance lagged behind both the US and statewide average. Larger and more established firms were able to hold steady, but Monroe's engines of new job creation remain weak.

Faced with such daunting statistics, task force members brainstormed about how to reverse these trends. Early on, the group noted that Monroe County's business reputation could be strengthened. Monroe County and the wider Poconos region have a good reputation as a beautiful place to visit and a nice place to raise a family. But, our region is not generally viewed as a good place to start or grow a business. The task force set a mission of starting to change that perception and the business culture in Monroe County.

Our discussions centered on how to build a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Monroe County and the wider region. The term "entrepreneurial ecosystem" is being used in many regions of the world; it refers to the mix of capabilities and ingredients that make a region "entrepreneur-friendly" and an easy place to start and grow companies. There is no single recipe for an entrepreneurial ecosystem and every community will have different capacities and capabilities. An ecosystem in Monroe County will look different from one in Silicon Valley or New York or elsewhere.

Figure 2 shows some of the ingredients for entrepreneurial success. The broader Monroe 2030 effort is addressing many of these factors, especially issues like responsive regulatory policies and a talented and skilled workforce. The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Task Force opted to focus its attention on fostering a more supportive culture for entrepreneurs in Monroe County. This work has largely

taken the form of identifying new tools and approaches that make it easier to start and grow a company here.

In its efforts to make Monroe County more "entrepreneur-friendly," the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Task Force has recommended three sets of priority action items:

- Create a Monroe County Small Business Guide
- Expand the Availability of Business Coaching Services
- Promote Youth Entrepreneurship

A Guide to Starting a Business in Monroe County

The numbers tell us that hundreds of Monroe County residents start businesses every year, but we also know that many people dream about entrepreneurship. Yet they don't take the leap. They may opt out for many reasons, but we believe that a lack of needed information and support plays a role. Many people tell us that they have no idea who to contact if they have a business idea or where to go if they want to start a business in Monroe County.

In an effort to address this information gap, we have developed a new Guide to Starting a Business in Monroe County. Our guide is designed to welcome new businesses to our County and provides guidance on where to go for help. A new business owner will be busy with developing a business plan, seeking financing, marketing her company, and a host of other start-up issues. Our guide is designed to be an initial support tool that offers tips and providers for most of the issues that face new companies in Monroe County. We intend for the guide to be available on-line and on site at a host of locations across Monroe County.

We recognize that our small business guide is only a first step, but we hope that it can help encourage more local people to start businesses. We also want the guide to be the first in a series of initiatives to make it easier to start and grow a new business in Monroe County.

Expanded Business Consulting Services

Successful start-ups rarely go it alone. They rely on networking with fellow entrepreneurs and coaching, mentoring, and a consulting services that help them address business challenges and achieve rapid growth. Today, these essential business support services can be hard to find in Monroe County. They exist, but are often difficult to identify and access.

Our new business guide will help many start-ups find needed support tools, but we also believe that we need to expand the overall availability of services to Monroe County's new and growing businesses. This will be a long process and much will depend on our ability to build stronger local entrepreneur networks where business owners can meet and collaborate with fellow entrepreneurs. This is the real secret to a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In addition, we are seeking to expand the availability of basic business counseling services in Monroe County. As a first step, the University of Scranton Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has agreed to expand its footprint in Monroe. The SBDC team already operates here, but we believe that more business owners would benefit from their services. Since 2005, the SBDC team has worked with 459 clients in Monroe County. They have done good work, but we believe that more business would benefit from SBDC coaching and services.

Expansion of the SBDC will be further bolstered by the creation of a local SCORE chapter. SCORE is national network of business executives who provide coaching and mentoring to business owners. SCORE is a major force around the US and even in nearby regions like the Lehigh Valley. In 2014, for example, SCORE counselors assisted more than 56,000 businesses across the US. We intend to expand SCORE's operations in Monroe County so we enjoy these benefits as well.

Youth Entrepreneurship

The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Task Force's final set of recommendations focus on youth entrepreneurship: how can we get more local young people interested in starting a new business? This is an important and achievable goal. We know from national surveys that as many as 70% of all high schoolers have interest in starting their own business. Very few actually follow up on these wishes, because, as young people note in survey responses, they lack the skills and knowledge about how to start a business.

Youth entrepreneurship training is needed to help more local young people pursue this dream. Fortunately, Monroe County has many excellent initiatives in place. FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) chapters operate at many local high schools, and the Monroe Career Technical Institute has a chapter of DECA, another organization focused on youth business. These resources are great assets, but we need to expand the availability of these opportunities for all youth in Monroe County. This is especially important for young people who are not thriving in schools as entrepreneurship education, and its focus on experiential learning, has been shown to be effective in engaging at-risk youth and in improving their performance in school.

We also need to find venues where young entrepreneurs can interact and learn from business owners and community leaders. Local role models and mentors can help youth understand the realities of entrepreneurship and also help existing businesses with new ideas and new energy.

As an initial first step in this work, we are sponsoring a partnership between local high school FBLA chapters and the Made in the Poconos initiative. Made in the Poconos is a regional marketing effort, spearheaded by ESU, to support and promote local crafts and other products made by local residents. Starting in fall 2016, high school students will be partnering with regional firms to address pressing business challenges, like building a social media presence or expanding marketing. These student projects will then be part of a countywide competition to honor and support our budding youth entrepreneurs. Along the way, area youth will learn key skills while also helping to strengthen our local business capacity at the same time.

Community Collaboration

The Community Collaboration Task Force's mission emerged out of both frustration and hope. On the frustration side, many business owners and developers expressed serious concerns about the amount of regulation and red tape that accompanies any new development activity in Monroe County. These concerns have also been a regular issue raised by PMEDC and were a core area discussed in the Monroe 2030 Economic Development Implementation Plan.

On the hope side, our leadership group agreed that the process can work well even if only on rare occasions. The development of the new Kalahari Resort facility in Tobyhanna Township suggests that Monroe County has the capacity to recruit and attract major new businesses to our region. This was a complicated and large deal that proceeded from concept to completion via a relatively smooth and highly successful process.

The Community Collaboration Task Force sought to better understand what worked in this case and how we might apply these lessons learned to other projects across Monroe County. The group, chaired by Tobyhanna Township Supervisor Anne Lamberton, also includes representatives from Kalahari Resorts and other developers who are active in Monroe County.

The task force's primary goals were to improve collaboration between the County's boroughs and townships and to promote a business-friendly atmosphere and development processes that are less complex and costly. Building on these core objectives, the task force is pursuing the following action items:

- Update and Revise our Current Planning and Project Review Processes

- Support Local Pilot Projects that Test Cross-Township Collaboration

- Advocate for a new Regional Infrastructure Investment Fund

The complexity and cost of the local development process in Monroe County was, without a doubt, the number one concern raised throughout the work of the Monroe 2030 Action Team. There are few clear guidelines for how the process works, it takes too much time, and it adds significant costs for new and growing businesses. In addition, the process differs depending on locality, so that, at present, Monroe County has twenty different sets of rules and regulations related to planning and development.

We believe that current processes can and must be improved. As a series of first steps, the task force is recommending a number of reforms. First, we intend to develop a basic checklist of items and issues that can be shared with new businesses and those seeking new development across the county. This effort will align closely with our small business guide (discussed above) but will include a heavy emphasis on local and state rules related to planning, zoning, and environmental compliance. Tobyhanna Township now uses a checklist of this type and we intend to develop a sample development checklist that other townships could adopt. By providing clearer guidance and timelines for key decisions, the checklist can reduce uncertainty and complexity surrounding new development projects.

Second, we intend to create a new standing body—the Monroe County Pre-Application Review Team—that will be available to meet with all new businesses or those considering new development before they formally file a development application. This team will be composed of key personnel from countywide and local planning offices, the Monroe County Conservation District, and key state agencies such as PENNDOT and DEP. The team will be available to meet with any and all interested parties—from new home-based businesses to large new development like those at Kalahari or Camelback. These reviews will be informal and are designed to share ideas and expectations and to discuss potential problem areas in advance. We believe that this informal review process can have a huge impact in terms of reducing the time, cost, and complexity of new development projects.

Finally, we intend to work with the County Commissioners to review and update the role of the Monroe County Planning Commission. This effort will focus on how the Planning Commission staff can better support and promote local economic development. One concept under consideration is the creation of a county-wide Business Ombudsman, who will be available to assist the development process and trouble-shoot in cases where problems arise. This type of business support capacity has proved to be helpful and successful in communities around the US and overseas.

These tweaks to the local development process should improve local performance, but we also need to think bigger and find ways to promote better partnerships across Monroe's twenty local governments. As such, the task force recommends that Monroe County help support and sponsor a county wide competition where townships can partner and compete to win assistance to deal with a pressing shared challenge, such as issues related to water and sewer development. We believe that a multi-township project that tests new

models and approaches is the best approach to promoting community collaboration in Monroe County. We are presently in the process of developing the plan for this project.

Streamlined and improved development processes are much needed, but we also need to expand the pool of resources available to Monroe County localities. For this reason, the Task Force is recommending that we develop new mechanisms to fund infrastructure in the County. We intend to create a separate Monroe 2030 Infrastructure Task Force to dig deeper into this issue, but the community collaboration task force is developing its own ideas as well.

The task force's initial recommendation is that Monroe County's leadership consider advocating for creation of a new Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund that is focused on generating new revenues for communities, like Monroe County, that are home to major resort facilities or other large tourism destinations. This Fund would initially be capitalized via a small increase (perhaps 0.5%) in the local sales tax on purchases at local resorts and tourism-related activities. These additional funds could be used only at the local level to fund new infrastructure and other community improvements such as expanded police, fire, or ambulance services.

We believe that this type of new financing mechanism is essential to helping our local governments cope with the impact of large resort and tourism operations. We are grateful for the new jobs and investments generated by these operations, but, as these companies themselves acknowledge, their operations can place a heavy strain on our small local governments. To give one example, the Kalahari Resort will be able to accommodate several thousand guests when it is completed. This large influx of people must be served and protected by a local police force that was originally designed to serve a township of only 8,000 people.

The Community Infrastructure Investment Fund is modeled on a similar financing tool that has been used in the Kalahari Resort's original home region in Wisconsin. Thanks to new revenues generated by the fund and paid for by resort visitors and users, the small Wisconsin Dells communities have been able to make major new investments in infrastructure, downtown improvements, and also bolster the capacity of local police, fire, and medical operations.

The task force recognizes that this concept is a big idea that will require additional research as well as a commitment to advocate for new legislation in Harrisburg. In an effort to get the ball rolling, we are creating a task force to help develop and advocate for the idea in Monroe County and across Pennsylvania.

Workforce Development

The Monroe 2030 Action Team's Workforce Development task force addressed the most pressing economic development challenge facing any community today: how to groom, retain, and attract talent. America's most prosperous and successful communities are chock full of talent. In other words, they are home to workers, entrepreneurs and community leaders who are skilled, creative, and innovative.

In some regions, these talented individuals have Ph.D.s or other advanced degrees. In others, they work in manufacturing facilities, teach school, or run Main Street businesses. There is no one single recipe for building a regional talent pool, but we do know that we can and should do better here in Monroe County.

Monroe County has many talent assets. We are home to high quality schools, along with two college campuses at ESU and NCC's Monroe campus. Business owners regularly speak of a good work ethic among County residents. But, we also know that problem areas exist. Employers in growing sectors like healthcare and hospitality report troubles in finding and keeping workers. In other sectors, like manufacturing and the trades, new employees may lack critical soft skills like collaborating in teams or providing high quality customer service. Data also indicate that Monroe can do better in terms of both retaining local young people and in attracting more highly educated newcomers to consider relocating here.

Originally chaired by Rachel Frick Cardelle of Northampton Community College, this task force is now led by Sharon Laverdure, former Superintendent of East Stroudsburg schools. The Workforce Development Task Force quickly recognized that it could not tackle all of these issues at once. Instead, they opted to identify a few high priority areas where small tweaks or new investments could have larger catalytic impacts. They also opted to rethink the "brand" for talent development in Monroe County through a new concept: Community Monroe.

COMMUNITY MONROE: HOW IT MIGHT WORK?

Let's take a look at the hypothetical case of Judy. She is graduating from high school and considering her options. By tapping into Community Monroe, she notes that local demand in the health care sector will boom, with major hiring from PMC, St. Luke's and others. In particular, they face a shortage of clinical nurse specialists and dieticians. She also finds that training in these fields is now available at NCC's Monroe Campus, and further education past an associate's degree can be found at ESU. She can also tap into Community Monroe's calendar to learn about local job fairs and internship opportunities and find resources to help pay for her education. Finally, once she has tapped into these education resources, she can use Community Monroe to find local employers and get out in the job market.

Community Monroe is a concept to help County residents get a better understanding of the exciting job and career opportunities here. It will operate as a clearinghouse with a user-friendly web interface and staff to help work with local residents and with numerous partner organizations among employers, educators and workforce development organizations. Unlike typical economic development websites, which encourage people to relocate or visit as tourists, Community Monroe will look inward and market new opportunities to current Monroe residents.

What kind of information will be available via Community Monroe? It will provide a community calendar of events (modeled on the Pocono Community Calendar), but its real focus will be on local career and job opportunities. In addition to publicizing open jobs, it will provide information on exciting careers in Monroe. This will include information on which industries and occupations are growing, and what job seekers need to do to prepare for and capture these opportunities. Our target market will be area youth and college students, but the resources will be open to all.
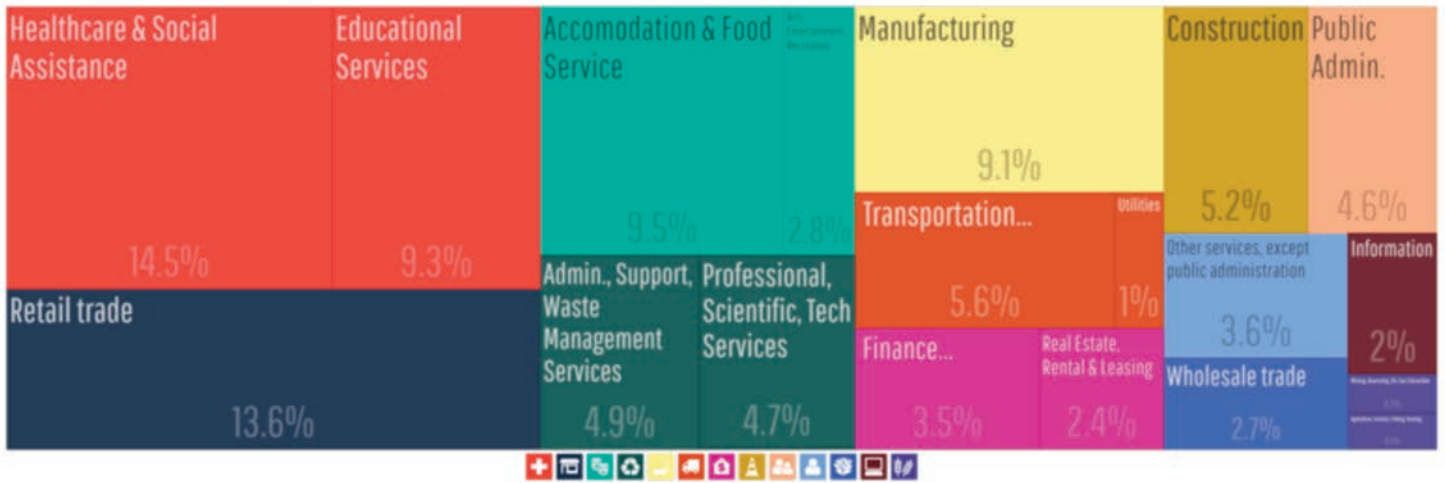
As an on-line tool, Community Monroe can help address a number of local workforce challenges. Young people don't know about local jobs and the many career and training opportunities that exist close to home. At the same time, employers need better venues to spread the word about the kinds of employees they need. Finally, all of us in Monroe County need a better understanding of the many exciting opportunities that are here right now and are emerging every day.

As a community clearinghouse, Community Monroe can have a big impact. But, we believe that this effort must be bigger than just a website. We also recommend that the Community Monroe effort spearhead several other big changes in how Monroe County supports workforce development. First, we intend to organize countywide employer councils to work with education and training providers to identify workforce needs in advance and to fund the necessary training and infrastructure to support workforce growth. These kinds of councils are common across the US, and they presently exist to serve individual schools or organizations. Our plan is different because it will unite major employers in a given sector with educators at all levels of the system, from K-12 through to advanced training for adult workers.

We propose to jump start this effort by convening three councils, focused on healthcare, manufacturing, and hospitality/tourism. As Figure 3 indicates, these sectors are among the largest and most important employers in Monroe County. We will test the council idea with these pilot projects, and then expand the effort to include other important employer groups like manufacturers. Each group will define its own agenda and identify common challenges and potential solutions. For example, in hospitality/tourism, we know that soft skills training is in high demand. Not enough entry level employees are ready to work, and they often lack the capacity and skills to provide high quality customer service. In the health sector, several different challenges are emerging. One important issue concerns the recruitment of doctors and other highly skilled medical personnel.

FIGURE 3: TOP INDUSTRIES IN MONROE COUNTY

Industries by Share in Monroe County, Pa

Healthcare & Social Assistance — 14.5%
Retail trade — 13.6%
Educational Services — 9.3%
Accomodation & Food Service — 9.5%
2.8%
Admin., Support, Waste Management Services — 4.9%
Professional, Scientific, Tech Services — 4.7%
Manufacturing — 9.1%
Transportation... — 5.6%
Utilities — 1%
Finance... — 3.5%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing — 2.4%
Construction — 5.2%
Public Admin. — 4.6%
Other services, except public administration — 3.6%
Wholesale trade — 2.7%
Information — 2%

Dataset: 2016 ACS 5-year Estimate
Source: Census Bureau

DATA USA:

Challenges with finding gainful employment for a spouse or partner often forces new recruits to look elsewhere for jobs. If we can develop a capacity to help these partners identify good jobs and careers, our overall capacity to recruit talent will improve.

We also propose the introduction of a community wide career awareness initiative that will include several components. Expanded programs for local internships via Community Monroe will be developed. In addition, we want to develop and promote career pathways at the K-12 level. This effort will involve a major new engagement initiative with particular focus on school guidance counselors, students, and their parents.

What's Next?

This work plan is Version 1.0 and that title was no accident. We expect—and hope—to see many more versions on new thinking about economic development in Monroe County. We want this effort to be viewed as the beginning of a countywide conversation about our economic future.

We specifically avoided adopting or promoting a new vision or mission statement for the Monroe 2030 Action Team's work. This choice arose from our belief that past studies and research had generated many good ideas, but also from a sense that more people need to be engaged in these conversations. Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds from across Monroe County, but we are a small group. We want to see more people engaged in the mission of making Monroe County into a good place to live, learn, work, and play.

We intend to move forward and work to implement the ideas presented in Version 1.0 of the Monroe 2030 Action Plan. More specific work plans are presented in Appendix A. This material

includes our best assessments of who will lead the effort, what it will cost, and how much time it will take. We do not expect to achieve success on every action item, but we intend to aggressively pursue success in every case. We also intend to be accountable and will provide a regular public report card on our work; this report card will be available at the Monroe County website at: http://www.monroecount ypa.gov/Dept/2030Action/Pages/default.aspx.

Finally, we intend to continue this work. Three task forces have made preliminary recommendations and are starting the harder work of implementation and execution. They will also be continuing to identify other opportunities related to their focus areas. Other groups and focus areas are under consideration. In particular, we expect a new Infrastructure Task Force to kick off its work in coming weeks.

We encourage you to join us and we look forward to your thoughts and ideas on these proposals.

MONROE 2030
Task Force Committees

Workforce Development	Small Business and Entrepreneurship	Community Collaboration
Chair: Sharon Laverdure	**Chair: Mary Frances Postupack**	**Chair: Anne Lamberton**
Past-Chair: Rachel Frick Cardelle	Linda Rice	Steve Pine
Alberto Cardelle	Michael Gildea	Ricky Durst
John Casella	Connie Merwine	Ken Brown
Tom Grayuski	Troy Nauman	Alex Grum
Todd Behr	Steve Harper	Michelle Bisbing
Sherry Rex	Dave Moyer	Craig Todd
Greg Sherill	Richard John	
Nitza Desire	John Holohan	
Michelle Pinnock Harper	Lisa Hutchins	
Cosmas Curry	Don Hannig	
Merlyn Clarke	Denise Burdge	
Geoffrey Roche	John DeCusatis	
	Joshua De La Mata	
	Amy Polmounter	
	Spiros Bilianis	

36

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

SANOFI PASTEUR

POCONO MEDICAL CENTER

St Luke's
MONROE CAMPUS

POCONO MOUNTAINS℠
VISITORS BUREAU

Met-Ed
A FirstEnergy Company

PNC

Aquatopia

CAMELBACK RESORT
THE MOUNTAIN MOVES YOU

THE INN
AT POCONO MANOR

Michael Baxter & Associates
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
& PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Monroe County Bar Association

Kalahari
RESORTS & CONVENTIONS

Pennsylvania
CareerLink
MONROE COUNTY

Pocono Mountains
Economic Development
CORPORATION

GREATER POCONO
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
The Voice of Business since 1910

KEYSTONE
INNOVATION
ZONE
POCONO MOUNTAINS

For more information about the Monroe County Economic Scorecard
or the East Stroudsburg University Economic Outlook Summit,
please contact ESU Research and Economic Development at 570-422-7920.