



Press Release

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Announcing Grow Westmoreland: A New Not for Profit Organization serving Westmoreland County, PA.

North Huntingdon, PA, July 1st 2021 – As the Chairman of Grow Westmoreland I am proud to announce our official launch as of July 1st, 2021 and our official recognition by the IRS as a Tax Exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization. This new non-profit entity will focus on partnering local employers with trade schools and community leaders to provide education and scholarship opportunities for young adults in Westmoreland County aged 18-25 who are interested in careers in the trades and agriculture.

Westmoreland County Commissioner Sean Kertes, Grow Westmoreland's Vice Chairman and one of the institution's six new board members stated:

"As a Westmoreland County Commissioner, one of my most important goals is to promote careers in agriculture and the trades in an effort to create a prosperous local job market that will entice young adults to stay in our county. There is a large disparity in Westmoreland between the jobs that are available and the jobs that young people are being trained to perform. Grow Westmoreland is the perfect vehicle to bridge that gap and realign our young workforce with our available job market. I am honored and excited to be a part of this new initiative."

The 2018 Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan identified a large disparity in Westmoreland County between the jobs that are available and those our current labor force is trained to perform. Grow Westmoreland will attempt to bridge this gap between area employers and young adults entering the work force. The primary focus of the program will be to partner employers together with trade schools to create scholarship programs. These programs will provide county employers with skilled labor while simultaneously creating a pathway for the youth of Westmoreland County to seamlessly transition into the local workforce.

Grow Westmoreland plans to hold various fundraisers throughout 2021 and develop local partnerships with area trade schools and employers, with the intention of awarding the first round of scholarships in late 2021 for the following school year. Joining Westmoreland County Commissioner Kertes on the newly elected Board of Directors is his current Chief of Staff, Jon Wian. Serving as Chairman of Grow Westmoreland, Wian is also a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Real Estate Services. Serving as Secretary of the Board is local attorney Matthew Schimizzi of Schimizzi Law. Aimee Dempsey, Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices and former President of the Westmoreland Builders Association, will serve as Fundraising Chair. Retired Business Manager and President of the Laborers Local 1451 Union out of Latrobe, Denis Mazzoni, will serve as Union Liaison. Westmoreland County Treasurer and Owner of Elite Settlement Services, Jared Squires, will serve as the boards Treasurer. Dante DeCario, former Chief of Staff to County Commissioner Ted Kopas and current Assistant Director of Public Works for Westmoreland County will serve as the communication director for the board.

"It is imperative that we take steps to ensure that our young people have the resources and opportunities to be successful in Westmoreland County. I am confident that Grow Westmoreland will be a resource for our community that will provide opportunities for our youth for years to come." – Chairman Jon Wian

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