



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT FUNDING HAS BIG IMPACT ON FAYETTE

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County Commissioners are in the final phase of awarding the 2019 Local Share Account (LSA) funding for various projects countywide.

About 50 project proposals were submitted to commissioners Vincent Vicites, Dave Lohr and Angela Zimmerlink for committee review last fall.

“The LSA project funds provide many municipalities with funding to help with a project that will improve their communities,” Chairman Vicites said. “We receive numerous, worthy proposals for projects, and the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority does a great job overseeing the process.”

Commissioner Zimmerlink said the county’s share fluctuates annually and there are always many applicants.

“Great care must be taken to make certain the project outcomes are reachable and meet the county’s overall needs. The disbursement process should be reviewed before the next round of funding,” she said. “We have many projects that were approved which will benefit Fayette County. There were also some projects not selected that should have been, so hopefully, next grant year, the applicants will be approved.”

Commissioner Lohr said commissioners use LSA funds for the betterment of Fayette County through economic development, community improvement and public interest projects.

“One of the more interesting projects involves upgrades to a fish hatchery. With those improvements, the goal is for the hatchery to be able to produce more trout, which will be used for stocking the Youghiogheny River, benefiting both industry and tourism,” Lohr said. “This is also part of an initiative to reinstate ‘Kids Fish Day’ in Connellsville, a great event for families and kids of all ages to enjoy the outdoors. This is my idea of a win-win, where one project has an effect across the board.”

Redevelopment authority Executive Director Andrew French said this year’s requests totaled more than \$2.5 million in funding requests.

“The number of applications has been pretty consistent from year to year, which shows that there’s a great demand out there for funding,” French said. “The commissioners took those requests and narrowed them down, ultimately choosing 25 projects to receive some level of assistance.”

As a result, French added, more than \$650,000 in LSA funding was recommended for county projects. That funding will be leveraged by more than \$3.2 million from other funding sources secured by the project applicants, creating a total impact of nearly \$4 million.

The funding is generated annually through the county's share of gaming revenues derived from Nemacolin's Lady Luck Casino in Wharton Township. It is regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

"Because there are a lot of worthwhile projects, we always try to work with other funding entities if we can't grant certain projects funding through LSA," French said. "Some projects might fit better with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program or the hotel tax funding for tourism-related grants, so we try to steer those that aren't chosen to another source for assistance."

French said commissioners try to identify "high impact" projects which will have a broad impact on various municipalities when making their decisions.

"This particular funding source is pretty flexible in what we can use it for, too, so you'll always see a wide variety of projects on the recommendation list," he said. "That's one of the benefits of the LSA program, so we try to capitalize on that by not funding the same projects year after year."

This year's projects cover everything from economic development projects, job training, workforce education, marketing and public relations, waterline extensions, police support and more.

A full list of projects and details can be found at <http://racfpa.org/documents/LSA2018LocalApplications-Final.pdf>.

"It really runs the gamut in terms of different types of projects," French said. "Of course, there are state rules and regulations that we have to abide by, but they give us a pretty broad discretion of what the county can fund."

As a relatively new funding source in Fayette County, the LSA program "fills a gap" left by state budget cuts to other grant programs, including CDBG. Additionally, French said, Wharton Township receives the same amount of funding as the county annually, directly benefiting that municipality.

The state recently returned its initial comments on the county's funding recommendations and French said he expects to receive a contract from DCED within the next 45 days.

"Once we receive that contract, we can start dispersing those funds, et cetera," French said. "We will then send out formal notifications of approval to all recipients."

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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