

# The ADVOCATE

## for Business & Community

A quarterly publication of the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry

As we look forward to the New Year, the Chamber remains committed to being your advocate. The Chamber's Greater Reading Voice Advocacy Network will continue to promote business, government and community related issues to help sustain and grow our economy and enhance our quality of place.

In developing **Advocacy & Community Leadership Priorities for 2015**, we must consider the election and its subsequent impacts on business and the community. We must also build relationships with newly elected officials and leaders within Congress, the PA General Assembly, Committees and Caucuses as we continue to foster existing relationships.

Our **Business & Community Advocacy Council** will continue to demonstrate the powers of a unified collation. The Council represents a vibrant cross section of members involved in a variety of focus areas, including Budgets/Spending/Taxes, Workforce/Benefits (Health Care & labor Law), Infrastructure/Energy Resources/Transportation and Business/Community Development.

To ensure we identify key issues impacting business, we will continue to reach out to you, our membership, for input. We are excited to partner with a group of Penn State Berks students on a special project that will assess communication effectiveness, priority issues, and engagement opportunities.

Finally, we would like to offer a special thank you to our Partners in Advocacy & Community Leadership, Council members and our engaged network. When a coalition of business and community members convene around an issue, real change and impact occur.

Gail A. Landis, C.P.M.  
V.P. Government & Community Relations

### CONGRESS IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR: FEDERAL BUSINESS TAX REFORM WITH CONGRESSMAN JIM GERLACH

Congressman Jim Gerlach made one of his final appearances as a U.S. Rep. on December 8, at the Chamber's Center for Business Excellence to discuss federal tax code reform. The Chamber presented Congressman Gerlach with the Distinguished Civic Service Award in recognition of his commitment, guidance and advocacy support to GRCCI, Berks County businesses and the community. During his 12 years as representative of the 6th District, he has been influential in tax reform as well as health care, transportation funding, labor, regulatory and trade policies. A member of the Ways and Means

Committee, Congressman Gerlach was influential in drafting a House Resolution 5771 proposing to reduce the



number of tax brackets, corporate rate, and individual rates. Read section-by-section summary on the '[Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014](#).'

## MEET YOUR NEW BERKS LAWMAKERS

### U.S. CONGRESS

#### **Ryan Costello - Republican**

##### **6th Congressional District: Berks, Chester, Lebanon and Montgomery Counties**

A life-long resident of Chester County, Costello is a practicing land use and real estate attorney at the Phoenixville firm of O'Donnell, Weiss & Mattei, P.C. He earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Ursinus College and Villanova University School of Law. Prior to his election, Costello served as County Commissioner while volunteering his expertise at the Chester County Open Space Advisory Council, the Pottstown Police Athletic League, the Schuylkill River Heritage Center, and the Phoenixville Main Street Community Development Corporation. Ryan, his wife Christine, and their son Ryan live in West Chester.



Ryan Costello

### PA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

#### **Barry Jozwiak - Republican**

##### **'New' 5th House District: Berks County**

A life-long Berks County resident, Jozwiak is a small business owner, running an orchard and Christmas tree farm in Berks County. Prior to serving as Bern Township Supervisor, Jozwiak served as a PA state trooper for 25 years until he was elected as Sheriff of Berks County, a position he held for 12 years. Jozwiak earned both his Associate's Degree in Community Services and his B.S. in Law Enforcement and Corrections from Penn State University after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy. He currently resides in Berks County with his wife Margie, their daughter, and two grandchildren.



Barry Jozwiak

### BUSINESS ADVOCACY

**Transportation Funding** - While PA Act 89 will increase funding from about \$330 million (2014) to \$2.3 billion (2019), we are still at a crossroads regarding federal funding. The Highway and Transportation Funding Act ([H.R. 5021](#)) created only a short term funding solution that will end May 31, 2015. Had this bill not been passed the Federal Highway and Transportation Fund (HTF) would have run out of money in August 2014. We must continue to advocate for a long-term solution in order to ensure safe and efficient travel. **Take Action** contact your Congressman on this issue.

**Proposed EPA Regulations** - After thousands of PA residents, dozens of lawmakers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection voiced opposition, the open comment period on Environmental Protection

Agency's (EPA) 'Clean Power Plan' has come to an end. The 'Clean Power Plan' is one of the largest, most expensive regulations in American history, with little benefit to the environment. Fundamentally transforming our nation's electricity system, these new carbon regulations will impact our entire economy as they place massive stress on the electricity grid, damage America's diverse energy portfolio, and increase electricity rates by 12%. Before the plan can be adopted, however, Act 175 stipulates that the EPA must review and consider all submitted comments. A revised plan is set to be released in June 2015.

**Greater Reading Chamber Political Action Committee** - One of the strengths of the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce and Industry is its tradition of speaking with one voice to all of our local, state and federal officials as we advocate our pro-business policy agenda. In order to communicate our support not only to our members, but also the general public, we need resources for our Political Action Committee (PAC). The Greater Reading Chamber PAC will help you **make your voice heard!** For more information on the Greater Reading Chamber PAC, you may contact **Gail Landis** at 610.898.7773.

## COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

**Reading Bridge Projects** - This is a public private partnership between the Greater Reading Chamber and the Berks County Commissioners to ensure the Greater Reading community is kept informed during major bridge construction projects in Reading. Restrictions on the Bingaman Street Bridge will soon be lifted, but will remain on the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge due to unforeseen challenges. Construction and repairs will close the Buttonwood Street Bridge completely this spring. Once Buttonwood reopens, construction on the Penn Street Bridge will begin. To view more information, go to [Reading Bridges.net](http://ReadingBridges.net).

**Route 222 North** - Berks County's #1 priority road project, Route222 North has still not received adequate federal funding despite its role as a critical connector and economic driver for the region. The aging road is not only a traffic stopper, but a safety concern as well. With the possibility of a new Secretary of Transportation, it will become even more critical to speak with one voice and continue to advocate for a modern, safe expanded roadway. [Read more.](#)

## ENGAGE & CONNECT

**State of Community Breakfast | February 03, 2015 | Crowne Plaza | 7:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.**  
Join us for breakfast to discuss Berks County's alignment with the newly released '**PA Competitiveness Score Card**,' developed by the PA Business Council. We will focus on eight factors based on metrics of economic competitiveness validated by research with Pennsylvania business leaders. [Register now.](#)

**Be Engaged in Shaping our Future Workforce** - Our future business leaders and entrepreneurs are in the classroom right now! The guidance and tools they receive in school can have a huge impact on their futures. We are looking for volunteers who are enthusiastic about making a difference and guiding these young men and women into meaningful careers. From the Business Idea Challenge, to the Young Leaders Conference, to the Career Prep Fair to the JOBS1st Stem competition, there are countless opportunities to share your insights and wisdom with these bright students. [Volunteer today!](#)

## THANK YOU

Thank you to the following volunteers who generously shared their insight with almost 900 students concerning career paths, resume writing, interviewing and factors employers consider when hiring at **Reading High School Career Prep Workshop!** We hope to see you again in the spring for the high school's Career Fair!

Auria Bradley  
Betty Compress  
Kim Farinelli  
Alayne Galley  
Terri Gerber

Phyllis Leonard  
Nicole Mathias  
Mike McCarthy  
Tim Meade  
Joe Murphy

Misaraim Perez  
Paul Pinchak  
Debbie Ramsey  
Lynn Schlegel  
Edwin Velazques

Faye Warmkessel  
Matthew Wieda  
Cathy Weist  
Steve Weltman



## NEWSBYTES

**Follow Us** - You can now follow Greater Reading Voice on Twitter using our handle [@VoiceofReading](#) or the Chamber at [@ReadingChamber](#). Look to Twitter for news and updates, as well as live tweeting during Chamber events. Use #bizissues when tweeting about the latest business issues impacting Greater Reading.

**Read Up** - The Chamber is excited to share our inaugural issue of [Commerce Quarterly](#) with our members! This publication is packed with business and industry trends, member stories, and news impacting the Greater Reading region. Be sure to check out articles on transportation; small business and government; and the November Election Debrief.

## PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Title Partner



Leadership Partners



Advocacy Partners



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

**BEST WISHES FOR A HEALTHY, HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**



**STAY CONNECTED ~ TAKE ACTION AT [GREATERREADINGVOICE.COM](http://GREATERREADINGVOICE.COM)**

**Greater Reading's number one business resource.**

**Connecting you to elected officials, priority issues, volunteer initiatives, and advocacy events.**

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