

The ADVOCATE

for Business & Community

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

When a coalition of business & community members convene around an issue, real change and impact occurs. The Chamber's Greater Reading Voice Advocacy Network promotes business, government and community related issues that will sustain and grow our economy and enhance our quality of place.

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

Partners in Advocacy & Community Leadership 2014-15

We have expanded our Grassroots Issues Series to provide better opportunities for members and the community-at-large to engage in discussions promoting policies and issues that enable resident businesses to thrive and expand, attract new business and advance our community. This series of events offers access to officials and the area's most influential decision makers. To learn more about the benefits of participating in the forums and partnership opportunities, [click here](#).

2014 ELECTION

The 2014 general election is just around the corner, are you ready to vote for governor, among other important legislative races? The Chamber is in the process of interviewing and possibly endorsing candidates that represent the Greater Reading Area. Be prepared to make an informed vote on **Election Day, November 4, 2014**. Go to our website, [Greater Reading Voice](#), to find information on the candidates and how to participate in the voting process.

BUSINESS ADVOCACY

Federal Transportation - H.R. 5021 has passed creating a short term solution for the federal transportation funding through May 2015. The Federal Highway and Transportation Fund (HTF) would have run out of money in August 2014. This funding will help to ensure the completion of many transportation projects in the Greater Reading Area. The HTF is part of the surface transportation authorization bill know as MAP-21. We urge Congress to come up with a sustainable funding plan. [Read more](#).

Pension Reform - The pension problems facing cities, boroughs and townships threaten taxpayers who could take a hit in the coming years as the legacy costs of pensions increasingly impact municipal budgets and their ability to provide services. The Chamber is one of the founders of the Coalition for Sustainable Communities which has been advocating for legislation to address this issue. [Read more](#).

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 the major bridge construction projects in Reading. Construction on the Buttonwood Street Bridge is scheduled to begin soon followed by the Penn Street Bridge. With the discovery of unsteady support beams this August, Bingaman Street Bridge will also go under construction. To look at diagrams of the projects, dates, and more information, go to [Reading Bridges.net](#).

ACTION ALERTS

Physician Dispensing - Physicians in Pennsylvania are charging highly inflated rates (50-800% more than average wholesale price) on prescription drugs they prescribe and dispense to patients within the Workers' Compensation system. Employers' cost for worker's compensation claims are inflated by this practice. H.B. 1846 would limit the reimbursement price for the drugs to 110% and is expected to reduce worker's compensation costs by \$300-400 million annually. [Read more](#).

Project Labor Agreements (PLA) - The Chamber Board of Directors approved a position opposing the proposed City of Reading Project Labor Agreement. We believe PLAs would create an unnecessary burden on businesses in Reading and inhibit economic development at a time we can least afford it. [Read more](#).

ENGAGE & CONNECT

Washington D.C. Fly-In - The Greater Reading Chamber and other chambers in the region head to Washington D.C. on September 17, 2014 to discuss hot-topic issues (health care, transportation and taxes) with our Senators and Congressmen. If you would like to join us contact [Gail Landis](#). Check out the **flyer** for the event.

Making a Difference - The Chamber's Workforce Pipeline Career Awareness Task Force brings together committed partners to identify and create initiatives for businesses and educators to work together. The Task Force works to align community resources to tackle both educational and workforce related challenges. The Business Idea Challenge, Career Prep, CHOICES and 9th Grade Students Interacting with Business and our Business & Educators Symposium are just some of the initiatives in Berks that build on business/education partnerships to develop a competitive workforce. Watch for upcoming opportunities to participate in our workforce pipeline initiatives. [Read more](#).

Call for Volunteers! - The 9th Grade Students Interacting with Business program will take place the week of September 22 - 26, 2014. The program is reliant on community and business volunteers to present 'Workforce 101,' a turnkey morning assembly presentation about workforce expectations and the world of work. We are also seeking afternoon session volunteers to facilitate a review of the day. To sign up for a session with the district of your choice, please [click here](#) for more information and to access the sign-up form.

Transportation Luncheon - October 10, 2014 with PA Secretary of Transportation Barry Schoch, P.E. and invited Congressman to discuss state and federal transportation funding and priorities.

Business & Community Advocacy Council - If you would like to be more involved in representing the interests of the Greater Reading area join the Chamber's BCA council. Email [Gail Landis](mailto:Gail.Landis@greaterreadingchamber.com) to join or to find out more information.

NEWS BITES

Recognition - The Chamber recognized Ed McCann Jr for his contributions to the Business & Community Advocacy Council and his workforce pipeline initiatives. After 40 years overseeing efforts to promote a skilled, job-ready workforce, Ed will be retiring as chief operating officer at the Berks County Workforce Investment Board. Best wishes for a long and happy retirement!



Perspective - I am Rebecca Perkins, a Communications major and Political Science minor at Alvernia University, and also the Business & Community Advocacy intern at the Chamber. This summer I learned skills and information that cannot be taught in the classroom. My time at the Chamber has been a unique opportunity that was eye-opening as far as learning about public policy, and useful for utilizing and refining my writing skills. As I continue on to graduate from college and find a career, I will always carry with me the unforgettable skills and the new perspectives I learned from the Chamber.



Follow the Voice - at GreaterReadingVoice.com. The Chamber's advocacy website has been updated so make sure you **STAY CONNECTED ~ TAKE ACTION** on key issues and opportunities to be engaged!

Partners in Advocacy & Community Leadership
Community Priorities ~ Economy ~ Legislation/Regulations ~ Local Business Issues ~ Workforce Pipeline

