

## Welcome . . .

Thank you for joining us at the **Economic Revitalization in the Lower Anthracite Coal Region Convening**. Today's gathering is a partnership between the chamber's third annual Members Choice Anthracite Economic Summit and a Convening made possible through a Campus Compact of New York and Pennsylvania (CCNYPA) Regional Consortia Mini-Grant for Community Engagement. The Members Choice Anthracite Economic Summit seeks to create partnerships for progress. The Campus Compact Convening grants are intended to build higher education's capacity to deepen civic and community engagement and strengthen regional communities. By co-hosting this event, it is our goal to foster conversations that will allow us to build cross-sector partnerships between businesses; non-profit organizations; local, state, and federal government; and universities for the purposes of downtown economic revitalization.

To that end, today's time will be split between hearing from invited speakers and panelists in the morning and group discussions in the afternoon. We will learn about revitalization efforts in towns with similar histories of industrial growth and decline and then hear a sample of university-community partnerships as examples of the types of projects and revitalization that such partnerships can foster. By hearing from our out of town speakers and a selection of how local universities have partnered with local communities to further community-identified needs and programs, we aim to spark conversations around new and creative ways to create partnerships to attain our common goals.

Much has been happening in the Shamokin-Coal Township-Mount Carmel-Kulpmont area that is moving the needle on revitalization; AOAA brings in 26,000 visitors a year, new restaurants are opening, state and federal agencies are taking an interest in what happens here, and local organizations focused on downtown development and community revitalization are actively working for change. These include organizations such as the Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber, the Susquehanna River Valley Visitor's Bureau, SEDA-COG, Anthracite Region for Progress, Shamokin Area Businesses for Economic Revitalization, Mount Carmel Downtown Inc, and the Mother Maria Kaupas Center.

After lunch, we will focus our efforts on two break-out sessions. Our hope is that in the breakout sessions this afternoon, you will learn more about regional success stories from your fellow colleagues here today. The first break out will be a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat analysis (also known as SWOT) related to downtown revitalization in the lower anthracite coal region (i.e. Shamokin, Mount Carmel, Kulpmont, etc.) with a focus on cross-sector partnerships for downtown revitalization. The second session will focus on the themes which emerge from the SWOT analysis, with the goal of identifying an action item, possible partnerships, and next steps for each theme.

**Thank you for joining us, and we look forward to seeing what partnerships can develop . . .**