



All can join Metro-York

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Article Last Updated: 11/11/2007 02:24:48 AM EST

Nov 11, 2007 — This month is a busy one for YorkCounts. At 10 a.m. Thursday, YorkCounts will roll out the recommendations formulated as part of the Metro-York project, in a public event at the York Jewish Community Center. The Metro-York project has been nearly two years in the making. Countless volunteers have spent hours attending meetings, education sessions, community forums and hearings to come up with a solid set of recommendations to address the core, root problems that are blocking municipal and educational prosperity within the municipalities at the heart of York County.

When the recommendations are presented to the public, it will be the beginning of a new process. It will offer up these ideas for everyone in York County to discuss, debate and ponder, and ultimately, assist in their implementation in some shape or form.

YorkCounts is well aware that the recommendations that will be released this week might not be exactly what every person out there thinks are the best ideas for how to strengthen the economy, improve our educational system, and create greater opportunities for the people

who are served by the municipalities and school districts in the Metro-York region. But they are a set of ideas that a broad group of citizen volunteers put a great deal of thought into, and they believe will make conditions in the city, townships and boroughs, as well as the school districts much better than they are today.

Some YorkCounts volunteers have been asked on occasion by a few members of the greater York community why they should care about these issues. The simple reply that I've heard time and time again is that they believe people are only kidding themselves if they don't think these current municipal and educational challenges aren't eventually coming to their particular geographic area.

We can all work now to address these problems and eliminate the root causes, or we can continue to pay more and more in tax dollars to treat the symptoms of these root problems if we do not seek to find a cure. We can either work to create a system where there are more productive, active citizen participants contributing to the greater good of this community or we can look the other way and try to hide until these problems arrive on our doorsteps.

This is not just the opinion of your fellow citizens who have volunteered for the Metro-York effort, this is also the well-researched opinion of highly respected organizations such as the Pennsylvania Economy League (PEL). The researchers at PEL, who are funded by business and foundation interests from across

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Pennsylvania, have stated that because of how local governments and school districts in Pennsylvania are structured, and because of how they are forced to function within those confines, they are all heading toward the same set of fiscal and educational challenges that we see having an impact on our cities, boroughs and older townships in York County.

So, in the spirit of the Thanksgiving season, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the countless volunteers and citizens from across York County who have supported YorkCounts and the Metro-York project over the past year.

On behalf of the YorkCounts Board, I would like to extend an invitation to everyone in York County to come to the table of public discourse in the weeks and months ahead and give the Metro-York recommendations the thorough going over and inspection I believe they will need. In the end, I hope that we can all find ways to come together in order to make York County an economically and educationally stronger and more vibrant community for the benefit of all. For that, I will be truly thankful.

James Debord is director of YorkCounts. To learn more about YorkCounts and the Metro-York project visit www.yorkcounts.org.

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