

Consolidation eyed in York

Sunday News
Dec 06, 2009 00:11 EST
York

Article [Map](#) [Related](#)

[Don't Link Tags](#)

By GIL SMART, Associate Editor

Related Topics

- [Rick Gray](#) (630)
- [Pennsylvania state police](#) (470)
- [Keith Sadler](#) (103)
- [Northwest Regional Police](#) (73)
- [Lancaster police](#) (71)
- [Susquehanna Regional P...](#) (62)
- [Manheim Township Police](#) (61)
- [Lancaster County Drug ...](#) (54)
- [Leo Lutz](#) (53)
- [Southern Regional Poli...](#) (49)
- [Lancaster City police](#) (40)
- [John Fiorill](#) (16)
- [John May](#) (14)
- [municipality](#) (13)
- [Mike Flanagan](#) (9)
- [Lancaster Township Police](#) (9)
- [police](#) (2)

Related Stories

- [Pooling police force](#)
- [Man cited for climbing the wall](#)
- [Be a part of Project Blue Light](#)
- [Man stabbed in argument on Nort...](#)
- [City finances near the brink](#)



For James DeBord, the defining moment in York County's push for a Metro-York regional police department came at a summit of police chiefs who liked the idea of pooling resources to better fight crime.

But regionalization can have costs as well as benefits. "And we asked those chiefs, 'Would you support consolidation even if it means that you, personally, could lose your job?'" said DeBord.

The answer: A unanimous yes.

"They said it's what we should do — this is what's right," said DeBord, director of YorkCounts, the nonprofit coalition working to "assess, sustain and enhance the quality of life in York County." Creating a Metro-York police department is among the organization's biggest goals.

YorkCounts convened four years ago to focus on the "municipal and educational decline" of the city of York and its surrounding inner-ring suburbs. DeBord said the consensus among participants was that public safety was the critical factor to address: "You can build new stadiums or living space, but when muggings and stabbings are front-page news, it reinforces the impression" that the city and its environs are unsafe.

So the idea of a regional police department serving the city and several neighboring municipalities was hatched. It's still in the process of being assessed; York City, Spring Garden, Springettsbury, York Area Regional and West Manchester Township police departments are interested in the idea.

"It's a fiscal issue," said DeBord, "when you have X number of departments with X number of booking facilities. It definitely becomes an issue of cost efficiencies."

But it's also an issue of continuity. Crime knows no municipal boundaries, he said, and while police departments do cooperate with one another, "A truly regional department with access to computerized data [on the entire region] could put up to 40 officers on duty at one time and do a better job of suppressing crime before it occurs."

He cautions, though, that regionalization is easier discussed than accomplished. "There aren't really a lot of short-term cost savings," he said. Most savings are long-term, and that can discourage some municipal officials looking to save money right now.

In York, the idea of a separate public-safety tax, not tied to property values, has been floated as a way to pay for the initiative. "People are going to say, 'My God, my taxes are going to go up,'" said DeBord, "but in theory, municipal taxes could actually be decreased."

YorkCounts is trying come up with a way to fund a comprehensive study on regionalization, after state funding fell through. Meanwhile, he's spreading the gospel, talking to the Lancaster Rotary last week about the effort. "There was an overwhelming amount of interest," he said, "with people coming up to me after the presentation and saying, 'We need to be doing this.'"

His message: You will be, maybe sooner than you think. "The cities are in trouble, and the first-tier suburbs are built out, with no more room to grow. People are fleeing to the second-tier suburbs," but the need for and cost of services in the urban core continues to rise, even as the ability to pay for it declines, DeBord said.

"Whether you want to recognize it or not," he said, "this is coming to a city near you."

Gil Smart is associate editor of the Sunday News. E-mail him at gsmart@lnnews.com, or phone 291-8817.

Recent Posts

TalkBack comments about this article

[Comment on this article](#)

No comments currently in TalkBack, be the first one to post!

[Comment on this article](#)

DudasDental
DENTISTRY with a difference.

717-656-3051
www.DudasDentalGroup.com
Most dental insurance plans accepted

Featured Jobs

More Jobs

Local Video



Pet of the Week:
Waddles
0:00:40



Sports Minute: Placi...
0:00:57



Joseph and the Amaz...
0:02:39



SMART REMARKS:
Dick ...
0:03:04



What's your Answer?
0:03:21



All eyes on Tiger
0:03:36

End energy confusion.

[Learn more](#)

Direct Energy
Simple. Friendly. Direct.

© 2009 Direct Energy Marketing Limited, a subsidiary of Centrica plc. Direct Energy and the Lightning Bolt Design are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Direct Energy Marketing Limited in the United States and/or Canada. Use of such trademarks has been licensed by Direct Energy Marketing Limited to its various subsidiaries and affiliates.

Top Ads

Make Your Holiday Reservations Today At The Iron Horse Inn!

The Perfect Family Holiday Gift! Lancaster Airport NON-STOP to Orlando, Florida. [Click Here For Details.](#)

Ebersole's Vacuum Cleaner Sales & Service. New Vacuums from \$19.95 and up. Over 80 Models to Choose from! www.ebersolesvacuum.com



· [Ads by Google](#) · [Self Defense](#) · [Ademco Home Security](#) · [Home Security Safety](#) · [Self Defense Books](#) · [Personal Security](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Homes](#) | [Autos](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Ephrata Review](#) | [Lititz Record](#) | [Lancaster Farming](#)

Lancaster
ONLINE.com

Copyright 2004-2009