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YorkCounts releases 2009 Indicators Report at Community Summit

York, March 20, 2009 – YorkCounts released its latest report on quality-of-life indicators for York County today, and the results offer a glimpse of how the county has changed in the past 10 years. Bob Woods, executive director of the United Way of York County and chairman of YorkCounts' Indicators Committee, presented the report during the YorkCounts annual summit Friday at the Yorktowne Hotel in York. The summit, YorkCounts' biggest annual community event, drew more than 250 attendees.

Clarence Page, nationally syndicated columnist for the Chicago Tribune, delivered the keynote address. Page, who writes about government and public policy and has won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary, talked about how decisions in Washington, D.C., will affect York County in the months and years ahead.

In the 2009 YorkCounts Indicators report, 38 indicators compare statistics from school districts, state databases and other sources to build a multi-faceted picture of the county, with data on diversity, poverty, education, employment, workforce, public health and arts and entertainment.

Relative diversity, which measures the percentage of minority students, increased at every school district in the county from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007. The biggest gains came in Northeastern School District (which increased 7.7 percentage points from 3.1 percent to 10.8 percent), West York (up 7.3 percentage points to 16.1 percent) and Hanover (up 7.0 percentage points to 16.2 percent). Northeastern effectively tripled its minority student population, while West York's nearly doubled. York City remains the most diverse district, with minority students making up more than 80 percent of the total.

Here are a few other key findings from the report:

- As of 2006 and 2007, respectively, the periods of time where the most recent data is available, the percentage of people owning homes versus renting was going up and the unemployment rate was going down, beating the state rates in both categories. These are both signs of a healthy local economy. The numbers don't reflect changes in the local economy as a result of the recession.
- York County gained 4,800 jobs between 2002 and 2006, with gains in wholesale and retail trade, transport and warehousing and education, health care and social service offsetting losses in manufacturing.

- Most of the county's school districts improved their graduation rates from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007, with Central York and York Suburban still the only districts surpassing 97 percent. Northeastern showed the most improvement, increasing by nearly 8 percentage points.
- Charitable giving went up every year, both in total dollars and in per capita dollars
- The number of children born to unwed teen mothers went down between 2001 and 2005, even as the total county population went up.
- Substantiated cases of child abuse rose steadily each year from 2004 to 2007, one of the most disturbing trends in the report.
- Bias-related incidents are down, but they are still more than double the state average.
- The proportion of poor people as a part of the total population increased for all of York County, and 13 of 16 school districts reported a higher percentage of students from poor families in 2005 compared to 2001.

The full text of the report and all related data can be found on the YorkCounts Web site, www.yorkcounts.org.

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YorkCounts is a community-based coalition working to assess, sustain and enhance York County's quality of life – building alliances, introducing partners, spotlighting issues and facilitating conversations on education, economic development, health and safety and diversity. Partners include Better York, the United Way of York County, WellSpan Health, York College of Pennsylvania, the York County Chamber of Commerce, the York County Commissioners, the York County Community Foundation and the York County Economic Development Corp. Learn more at yorkcounts.org.
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