



# NEWS RELEASE

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

James DeBord, 815-6436, jdebord@ycp.edu; Beau Boughamer, 815-6430, dbougham@ycp.edu

## YorkCounts marks steady progress on Metro-York community improvement agenda

York, Pa., Feb. 20, 2008 – Progress has exceeded expectations for volunteers advancing the **Metro-York** recommendations, **YorkCounts** announced today, a short three months after the presentation of the agenda to the community. YorkCounts is York County's community-wide quality-of-life coalition; the Metro-York recommendations are eight forward-thinking ideas for improving municipal prosperity and education in the heart of York County. Snapshots of activity:

- Addressing Education recommendation #1, a task force to establish a York County Schools Consortium formed (December) and is meeting regularly (next meeting in March).
  - York College of Pennsylvania agreed to host the Consortium (December).
  - YCP President Dr. George Waldner agreed to co-chair the task force (December) along with Glenn Kaufman, who heads the York County Alliance for Learning; and YCP assistant professor and Dr. Michael McGough agreed to serve as one of its experts (December).
  
- Addressing Education recommendation #2, an Educational Opportunities committee formed (December) and is meeting regularly (next meetings in February and March).
  - The committee's members include the superintendents of Central York, Dallastown Area, West York Area, York City and York Suburban schools and members of each district's school board, as well as community leaders and several recent area high school graduates.
  - The committee, co-chaired by Sue Krebs and Denny Baughman, is receiving presentations by current York County high schoolers about their experiences in the classroom (February).
  - State Education Secretary Dr. Gerald Zahorchak agreed to address and meet with the group (scheduled for March).
  
- Addressing Education recommendation #4, **the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) has been created** (February) under the umbrella of the York County Economic Development Corporation (YCEDC).
  - An advisory committee has been formed with key partners from economic development, workforce development, education and business being actively recruited. Darrell Auterson, who heads the YCEDC, is chairing this committee.
  - Community leader Leo Cooper has agreed to co-chair the advisory committee.
  - YCEDC is currently negotiating with a candidate to assume the role of Vice President of Workforce Development to lead the OWD; OWD will be operational in March.
  
- Addressing Municipal recommendation #1, Dave Meckley and Carl Anderson, who are co-chairing a task force on regional police consolidation, are meeting with area police chiefs (ongoing); met with

officials with the state Department of Community and Economic Development (February); and are working to identify a national-level consulting firm that can determine the feasibility of a combined metropolitan York force (ongoing).

- DCED officials said state funding is available to support such a study.
- Addressing Municipal recommendation #2, YorkCounts accepted an invitation to present information to the York County Planning Commission. Metro-York Co-Chair Eric Menzer and YorkCounts Director James DeBord made a presentation during a public meeting (February). Members of the Planning Commission indicated their willingness to involve YorkCounts volunteers in various activities.
- Addressing Municipal recommendation #4, the YorkCounts Board of Directors – aware of the ongoing discussion in Lancaster County about Home Rule government – voted (January) to watch that process carefully and decide how to proceed in York County only after Lancaster County’s process has concluded.

“Nobody said this would be easy, and we predicted back in the fall that some ideas might advance more quickly than the others. I’m not sure anybody expected movement in so many areas right away, and that’s a testament to the enthusiasm of the community and to the dedication of YorkCounts volunteers,” said Eric Menzer, the co-chair of the Metro-York project.

“Especially considering that the holidays made getting together difficult in late November, December and early January, we’re very pleased with progress so far,” said YorkCounts Director James DeBord. The Metro-York recommendations were announced at a press conference November 15.

\* \* \*

YorkCounts launched Metro-York in 2006 to address core concerns in the heart of the county, including a concentration of poverty, rising crime, tax burdens and inequities, a lack of job opportunities and challenges within our schools. Primary obstacles to success were identified as the “small box” divisions between school and governmental entities that make for inflexible systems, so the recommendations urge a breaking down of these divisions.

Members of the community participated in Metro-York in 2006 and 2007 through three committees. These panels listened to testimony and analysis from experts and leaders, then met numerous times to discuss and debate key concerns and formulate proposals. The results were presented to the YorkCounts Board, which adopted the recommendations.

The Metro-York recommendations are (Municipal, #1) to establish a consolidated Metro-York police department, (#2) to engage in additional meaningful regional planning, (#3) to reform taxation through a local tax study commission and (#4) to study ideas for modernizing York County’s form of government; and (Education #1) to establish a York County Schools Consortium, (#2) to attack the root problem that a school district can’t succeed when poverty and its related problems are concentrated the way they are in the York City schools, (#3) to invest \$3 million per year in each of the next ten years in “intensive care” for at-risk students and (#4) to use the soon-to-be-established Office of Workforce Development as a catalyst to strengthen relationships between employers and the Metro-York workforce.

The full text of the recommendations, background documents on each, lists of Metro-York participants, a hi-res YorkCounts logo and more can be found at [yorkcounts.org/metro](http://yorkcounts.org/metro).

###

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, diversity and more. 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 Corporation. Learn more at [yorkcounts.org](http://yorkcounts.org).

YorkCounts · 605 South George Street, Suite 160 · York, PA 17401-3161 · phone 717/815-6430

*Count me in*