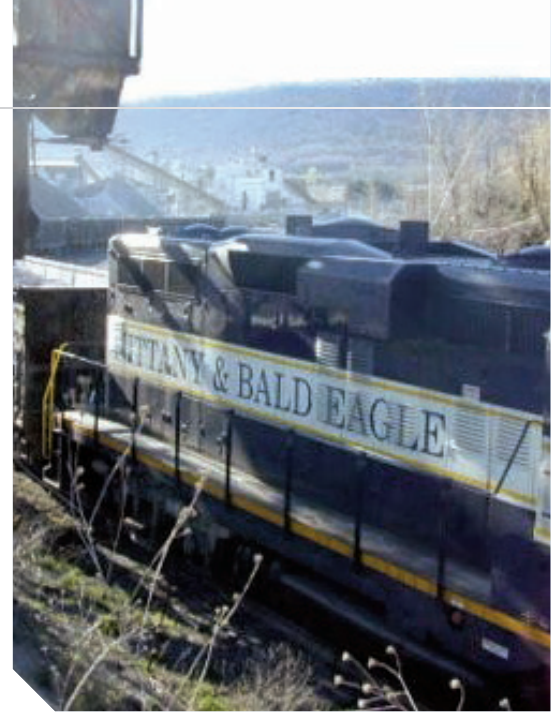


Central

Natural resources fuel job growth in an advantageous location



The region is located within a 360-mile radius of all major population centers in the Northeastern United States, a radius that encompasses about 50 percent of the nation's population. This region also has an abundance of land potentially available for development, seven institutions of higher education, a large amount of recoverable anthracite coal and significant deposits of other mineral resources. Additionally, portions of the SEDA-COG region are home to the Marcellus and Utica Shale, geological formations that contain high concentrations of natural gas deposits. Forest resources are extensive and increasing, providing timber for an expanding wood industry as well as a natural setting that favors the increasingly important tourism and recreation sectors of the economy.

Another valuable natural resource in the region is farmland. Agriculture continues to be one of the largest industries in the region, and agricultural and farming activities historically have been an important part of the culture and economy of Central Pennsylvania.

A number of major transportation corridors pass through or near the region, further enhancing its strategic location in relation to the eastern seaboard and Midwest markets. In addition, Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific and the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority (SCJRA) provide rail freight service to the region.

Business Demographics

The region is nearly back to pre-recession levels for total employment. The face of the local economy has shifted toward service, a change not uncommon in other areas. While manufacturing employment has decreased overall, during the past year it has been on the rise. Health care employment is also growing, increasing by 5,100.

The economy was 22 percent service goods-producing and 78 percent service employment in 2007; it now shows a distribution of 19 percent goods-producing and 81 percent service employment.

Success Story: Discovery Machine

Artificial intelligence and “knowledge capture” are among the cutting-edge technologies advanced by Williamsport-based Discovery Machine. This small, growing business develops software for training, simulation and behavior modeling for commercial and military enterprises, both domestic and international.

Discovery Machine works with several members of the Central PREP region, including the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Lock Haven University and the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce, which presented Discovery Machine with an Emerging Business of the Year Award several years ago. More recently, the company was nominated for the Governor's ImPAct Awards.

The business has used funding secured through the Central PREP region to work with a local company and improve its efficiency measures, partner with interns from local universities and develop a marketing and revenue growth project.

In 2012, SEDA-COG enabled Discovery Machine to attend its first international conference and secure its first international customer. The company has since established relationships with other potential customers around the world. In spring 2015, company representatives expect to participate in a conference in Italy.

Discovery Machine also utilizes programs that are outside the Central PREP region, but it has close working relationships with members of the network. Ben Franklin Technology Partners was instrumental in the company's early efforts, and

WEDnet enabled the company's employees to continue their education.

“PREP programs and other state resources have played a key role in our growth and development during these harsh economic times,” said Jim McAssey, vice president for business development. Since 2009, Discovery Machine has more than doubled in size and today employs 16 employees in two states.

Success Story: Videon

Videon is in the middle of today's cutting-edge technology, helping companies move their digital media initiatives from concept to market. More than 30 million devices are using the State College firm's streaming media, DVD and Blu-ray Disc technologies.

In the mid-1990s, Videon quickly became an expert in optical disc technology. It evolved with the market, working in industries ranging from consumer electronics to aviation, and developing relationships with business assistance providers in the Central PREP region. The Williamsport Innovative Manufacturers Center conducted training sessions at Videon and helped it pursue a quick response manufacturing initiative — improving quality, eliminating waste and reducing cost and lead time.

Benjamin Franklin Technology Partners (BFTP) awarded Videon funds for Avia, a type of “middleware” for optical and streaming media that has been a tremendous success. The company has pursued international sales with SEDA-COG's Export Development program and participated in a state-sponsored trade mission to India in February 2013. Program research allowed company representatives to meet key staff at Indian companies and establish partnerships that have significantly increased Videon's employment and revenue projections.



REGIONS



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