

North Central

New distilleries are part of an expanding business community

The communities, employers and workforce of the North Central region collaborate to streamline state, federal and regional services — including community, economic and workforce development as well as transportation planning. The core partners of this PREP region include the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, the Northwest Industrial Resource Center, the Clarion Small Business Assistance Center and the industrial and economic development corporations of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter counties. Beyond the core service, the North Central PREP region has reached out to allied organizations to develop a referral and partner network to lend support to overall activities and initiatives. North Central PREP services are focused toward a series of strategic economic development priorities, which include:

- Providing business assistance to new enterprises
- Providing assistance to existing businesses
- Providing assistance to developing economic clusters and high-growth businesses
- Facilitating real estate development and site development and selection
- Facilitating capital formation and business financing
- Leveraging resources
- Providing educational programming opportunities
- Addressing workforce development needs
- Facilitating partner systems coordination

Business Demographics

Manufacturing has always been a strong employer in the region, and it maintains the largest percentage of employment at 26 percent. Health care has and will continue to be a strong creator of jobs in North Central Pennsylvania, with 15 percent of the region's jobs being in the health care services sector. Additionally, the lumber, wood and paper industry maintains an employment rate that is 3.4 times higher than the statewide average.

The biggest growth potential for the region lies in the area of oil and gas exploration. With the discovery and exploration of the Marcellus and Utica Shale, many opportunities are being presented to the region's landowners, businesses and workforce. New opportunities are being recognized for existing businesses that can provide ancillary services to the industry, and businesses are expanding capacity to meet those needs. Entrepreneurs are taking advantage of the increased need for goods and services. Landowners are benefiting from leasing agreements, providing a wealth generation that has not been seen since coal was removed from this area 30 years ago. From this wealth, there are philanthropic opportunities that provide multipliers to the benefits recognized by the region, including improvements that add value to the community as a whole.

North Central's convenient location — sandwiched between the two most active Marcellus Shale gas sites in the state and close to three interstate highways and major routes — offers prime business growth opportunities to manufacturers, as well as support and maintenance service providers who want to take advantage of burgeoning natural gas activity.

Success Story: CJ Spirits

CJ Spirits, one of Northwest Pennsylvania's craft distilleries, celebrated its grand opening on June 14, 2014. CJ Spirits is located in Kane along the famous Route 6 Corridor in the heart of the Pennsylvania Wilds.

The distillery currently produces two vodkas: Rocksov made from rye grain and Wilds crafted from corn. It also produces a Wilds gin, utilizing only fresh, local ingredients and pure Allegheny Mountain spring water.

The business offers tours and tastings of its products, as well as a bar and table area where lunch and appetizers are served. There is also a retail area with gift items and several outdoor events scheduled throughout the year. Clarion University SBDC representatives assisted with the grand opening celebrations. Visit www.cjspirits.com for more information.

Success Story: Blackbird Distillery

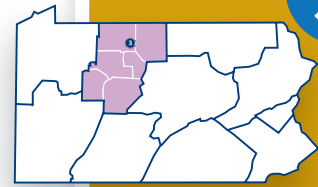
Blackbird Distillery, located outside of Brookville, Jefferson County, celebrated its grand opening with family, friends and fellow business owners on March 26, 2014. Blackbird Distillery uses corn and honey from the Finger Lakes region of New York for its products. The "shine" is completely handcrafted each day, creating old-fashioned moonshine.

The distillery is one of the few in the United States to actually make all of its liquor on the premises from start to finish. It currently offers nine flavors, with more debuting soon. In addition, it offers homemade canned goods, and smoked meats and cheese — all of them made on-site. Visit www.blackbirddistillery.com for more information.





3



Success Story: Penn Pallet Inc.

Penn Pallet Inc. was established in 1976 in St. Marys, Elk County, by Dan, John and Paul Cunningham as a wood pallet manufacturer. Today, this business is still owned and operated by the Cunningham family but it has diversified to include pallets, crates and boxes, top frames, stringers, bolsters and cradles.

Penn Pallet has 93 full-time employees at its two locations. In 2014, the company was one of 50 companies statewide to receive the Entrepreneur ImPAct Award at the Governor's

ImPAct Awards.

Dan Cunningham has served as the president of Penn Pallet since its inception, and he has also served with the Business and Education Connect Initiative, sponsored by the North Central Workforce Investment Board. The board's mission is to reach out to students to make them aware of local employers, job opportunities and the local economy. Cunningham has also served as the commander of Elkland Search and Rescue for the past 15 years.



COUNTIES:

- Cameron
- Clearfield
- Elk
- Jefferson
- McKean
- Potter

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Top Industries

- Manufacturing
- Health Care & Social Assistance
- Government
- Retail Trade
- Other Services (except Public Administration)



Major Regional Employers

- GKN Sinter Metals, LLC
- DuBois Regional Medical Center
- Owens-Brockway Glass Container
- Bradford Regional Medical Center
- Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.



Incentive Programs & Resources

- Foreign Trade Zone No. 254
- Keystone Opportunity Zone
- Keystone Innovation Zone
- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Regional Export Network
- Business Finance
- Certified Provider



Building/Site Availability

- PASiteSearch.com
- RigMonkeyApp.com
- Jefferson County Real Estate and Properties
- McKean County Building and Sites