

**Northwest**

# Collaboration helps small businesses make a bigger impact

**T**he economic development partners in the Northwest PREP region, which include eight county economic development corporations, an incubator association, two industrial resource centers, three small business development centers, a local development district, a PennTAP office, one Benjamin Franklin Technology Partners (BFTP) office and two Workforce Investment Boards, have a long history of collaboration. This effort is strengthened by the fact that several partners are located in the same offices, allowing easy access to services.

The Northwest PREP partners are working more closely than ever through an effective information- and referral-sharing process facilitated by Executive Pulse. The region's economic and workforce development agencies are also engaged in multiple collaborative projects that will provide better service to businesses looking to expand operations or to relocate to Northwest Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the partnership is exploring new ways to involve social media promotion of the region in an effort to enhance client services.

**Business Demographics**

Small businesses dominate the Northwest region, with 84 percent having fewer than 10 employees and 94 percent having fewer than 100 employees. The various components of the services sector have the most business establishments and employ the most people in Northwest Pennsylvania, with

health care and social assistance being the largest service employer group.

Retail businesses and manufacturing are also significant employers in the region, with 10 percent of the business establishments in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing is still a significant source of employment. Approximately 18 percent of the region's employment is in the manufacturing sector. Existing manufacturing clusters include primary metals, machinery, fabricated metals, plastics and oil and gas extraction.

**Success Story: Deerfield Farms Services Inc.**

Deerfield Farms Services Inc., is in the process of constructing a unit train rail loop in Greenwood Township, Crawford County. This new rail loop will allow Deerfield to create a large agricultural storage and distribution site to facilitate the effective distribution of nearly 3 million bushels of corn and soybeans per year.

The project was spearheaded by the Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County (a Northwest PREP partner) in conjunction with private investment and a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The rail loop will benefit Deerfield farms, and it will also serve as a critical piece of infrastructure that will create exciting new economic development and business expansion opportunities throughout Northwest Pennsylvania.

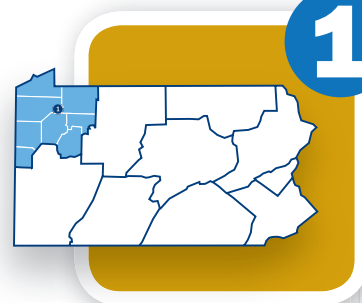




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**COUNTIES:**

Clarion  
Crawford  
Erie  
Forest  
Lawrence  
Mercer  
Venango  
Warren



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**Top Industries**

Health Care & Social Assistance  
Manufacturing  
Retail & Hospitality  
Education Services  
Finance & Insurance



**Major Regional Employers**

General Electric  
Erie Insurance  
Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education  
UPMC Health Services  
Lord Corp.



**Incentive Programs & Resources**

Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ)  
Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)  
Regional Export Network (REN)  
Business Financing  
Enterprise Zone  
Northwest Pennsylvania Incubator Association



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