

Penn-Northwest **DIGEST**

**Sharon Regional
Medical Center**



Sharon Health Foundation Sharon

**EMERGENCY →
EXPRESS CARE**

**→ OUTPATIENT SURGERY
→ PATIENT SERVICES
→ VISITOR PARKING**

From the Desk of Jane Goniea



Welcome to the Spring-Summer 2025 edition of the *Penn-Northwest Digest*, our quarterly digital publication dedicated to keeping our region informed about the progress and momentum driving Mercer County forward! In each issue, we highlight what makes Mercer County, PA a great place to live, learn, work, and play, while providing updates on key economic development initiatives across the county.

This edition features one of the largest single investments in economic development in Mercer County: the loan to Tenor Health Foundation Sharon LLC. Access to quality healthcare is a cornerstone of economic stability, and Penn-Northwest, along with the broader community, recognizes the critical value of Sharon Regional Hospital. As Mercer County's Certified Economic Development Organization (CEDO), Penn-Northwest is uniquely positioned to lead transformational projects like this—because the health of our community and the health of our economy go hand in hand. From healthcare to workforce to relocation, Penn-Northwest is working toward a happier, healthier, more prosperous future.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the *Penn-Northwest Digest*. If you have a story idea or feature suggestion for a future issue, we'd love to hear from you! There are so many great stories to tell about this place we call home.

Jane Goniea, Editor-in-Chief

Penn-Northwest Digest

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Penn-Northwest
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Affordable Solutions For Corporate Expansion

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About Penn-Northwest

We are the lead economic development organization that assists Mercer County's plans for growth. We envision an economically diverse, self-sustaining group of communities where business and employment opportunities exist, all types of education and recreational opportunities are present, and economic prosperity can be reached by all residents of Mercer County.

Sharon Regional Reopens with Help from the Community



By Jane Goniea
Photography by Clever
Marketing

A loan goal of \$11 million to Tenor Health Foundation – Sharon LLC was finalized in a public check presentation on Thursday, May 16th at Sharon Regional Medical Center. The loan, administered by Penn-Northwest Development Corp., is a collection of funds from seven funders:

- Buhl Regional Health Foundation – \$6 million
- The City of Sharon and the Sharon Industrial Development Authority – \$500,000 of grant

money and \$350,000 of loan funds

- Community Foundation of Eastern OH and Western PA – \$1.5 million
- Penn-Northwest Development Corp. – \$350,000
- Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone – \$350,000
- The City of Hermitage – \$250,000
- The City of Farrell – \$350,000

So far, \$9.2 million of the \$11 million fundraising goal has been secured. Funds are being released in tranches, with the first disbursement issued just days before the recent event. These funds will sup-

port payroll, utilities, vendor payments, and equipment loans for the hospital as Tenor Health Foundation completes the Change of Ownership (CHOW) processes required for Medicaid and Medicare billing. The Medicaid CHOW was finalized earlier this week, while the Medicare transition is still in progress.

The long-term goal is to restore Sharon Regional as a self-sustaining, nonprofit hospital that delivers quality healthcare to the residents of Mercer County. This includes eventually acquiring the real estate currently owned by Medical Properties Trust,

which has already contributed \$10 million toward the hospital's reopening.

Short-term goals include replacing the hospital's roof and water pipes, supported by \$2 million in RACP funds from the Commonwealth.

Since reopening on March 18, Sharon Regional has served 2,030 patients in its emergency department. Current services include emergency care, wound care, surgery, therapeutic radiology, fluoroscopy, behavioral health for adults and children, laboratory services, and occupational, physical, and speech therapy. The cardiac catheterization lab is awaiting state licensure before reopening.

Officer John Collins and Chief Nursing Officer Valerie Hennessey spoke at the event, highlighting efforts to streamline billing, reduce unnecessary expenses, and rebuild the hospital's patient base by spreading the word that Sharon Regional is open.

The hospital currently employs 575 employees, many of whom worked at Sharon Regional before its closure. The hospital has also recruited employees from other nearby hospitals that were owned by Steward Health and were forced to close. Additionally, the hospital houses 72 students from the Western Re-

serve Residency Program, allowing the students to continue their education while also introducing them to Mercer County and hopefully grow a connection that lasts past their graduation.

Rod Wilt, Executive Director of Penn-Northwest Development Corp., emphasized the importance of healthcare to the economic health of the community. At \$11 million, the loan to Tenor Health is the largest package ever presented for economic development in Mercer County.

"If we didn't do anything and Sharon Regional fails, we all carry a bit of that blame," said Wilt. "But if we did everything we could, and it fails, we can say that we tried our absolute best."

Q: Why Sharon Regional?

A: "Although hospitals, particularly those in rural areas of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, are facing financial difficulties, the distinct characteristics of Sharon Regional made it an attractive candidate for acquisition and reopening. The hospital has a higher rate of Medicare patients and the full range of services make it a unique opportunity. Sharon Regional's employees are dedicated to the community and returned to serve their patients. The hospital was stable financially a couple of years ago and

it is our goal to return to that financial state soon."

Q: What is in Sharon Regional's future?

A: "Tenor Health Foundation is looking to have the residency program rotate through our hospital (they are currently occupying space on our campus); we would like to bring back the primary care services which were interrupted at Sharon Regional during the closure; and we are also looking forward to further conversations about oncology program's return to the community. We are deep in conversations about bringing back tele-neurology which would allow Sharon Regional to become a certified stroke center again. We are investing in the physical structure of the facility as well as equipment because we see a long and stable future in this community."

Introducing the Leadership team of Tenor Health Foundation – Sharon LLC

Radha Savitala, Founder of Tenor Health Foundation

Ms. Savitala, founder of Tenor Health Foundation, is a seasoned legal and business executive with over 20 years of experience in healthcare operations, transactions, and regulatory matters. She has led the successful turnaround of more than 30 hospitals, primarily during her tenure



at Prime Healthcare, and has worked with major healthcare systems, community hospitals, FQHCs, and start-ups. Known for her strategic insight, integrity, and relationship-building skills, she has also served as General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer for a large FQHC and ran her own law practice. At Tenor Health Foundation, she leads a team of experienced healthcare executives focused on acquiring and revitalizing distressed hospitals. Her leadership was instrumental in the swift reopening of Sharon Regional Medical Center, the Foundation's first acquisition, which resumed full inpatient and outpatient services within two months.

Butch Eavenson, Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Eavenson brings over 25 years of healthcare leadership experience across acute care

hospitals, outpatient surgery centers, and large physician practices. Having served as both Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive Officer, he has a deep understanding of healthcare finance, strategy, and operations, and is known for leading organizations to improved quality outcomes and financial performance. Recognized for his collaborative leadership style and problem-solving abilities, he fosters alignment among stakeholders to drive success. A nationally sought-after advisor and expert in business development, Mr. Eavenson has played a key role in launching numerous healthcare facilities, with a focus on service line growth and physician engagement. His personalized, community-centered approach builds trust and partnerships, reinforcing his commitment to delivering compassionate, high-quality care.

John Collins, Chief Financial Officer

John R. Collins is the Chief Financial Officer of Sharon Regional Medical Center, bringing over 30 years of financial leadership in both investor-owned and nonprofit healthcare organizations. Prior to joining Sharon Regional, he served as CFO for KPC Global, overseeing seven acute care hospitals, and held senior financial roles at Vanguard Health System, where he achieved key operational improvements, including reduced length-of-stay and supply costs. Mr. Collins has extensive experience in financial reporting, revenue cycle management, performance assessment, and IT system development. He also played a key role in the transition of three California hospitals to Prime Healthcare. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from San Diego

State University.

Bryan Burklow, Chief Transformation Officer

Mr. Burklow is a veteran healthcare executive with extensive experience in hospital growth, acquisitions, and operational transformation. Appointed as a hospital CEO at just 27, he quickly advanced to Regional Vice President for Summit Health's seven California hospitals by age 35. He has led mergers and acquisitions involving hospitals, nursing centers, and physician practices, and has syndicated imaging and surgery center joint ventures. As Northeast Regional CEO for Prime Healthcare, he oversaw seven hospitals generating \$720M in annual net revenue. His diverse background spans acute and post-acute care, labs, and behavioral health. Most recently, he has served in executive transformation roles for underperforming healthcare companies and now leads strategic repositioning efforts as Chief Transformation Officer for Tenor Health Foundation.

Janardan Tallam, M.D., Chief Medical Officer

Dr. Janardan Tallam joined Sharon Regional Medical Center as Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Emergency Department in March 2025. A seasoned physician,

he completed his General Surgical Residency at Atlantic City Medical Center and transitioned to Emergency Medicine in 1975, spending most of his career at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Youngstown, Ohio. There, he held key leadership roles including Vice President of the Medical Staff, Chair of the Credentials Committee, and President of the Mahoning County Medical Society. Dr. Tallam played a vital role in developing a Level I Trauma Center, Stroke Center, and Chest Pain Center, significantly advancing emergency and critical care services. His deep clinical expertise and administrative leadership continue to strengthen patient care at Sharon Regional.

Carol Novelli, Director for Human Resources

Carol Novelli is the Director of Human Resources at Sharon Regional Medical Center, where she has served since 1985. She oversees Human Resources, Corporate Health, and Employee Health Services, and also serves as the Title IX Coordinator for the Sharon Regional School of Nursing. With a background in Business Administration from Youngstown State University, Carol previously held roles as HR Manager and Claims Administrator for the Self-Insured Workers' Compensation program. Actively involved in the community,

she serves on the Advisory Board of the Hope Center for Arts and Technology and has contributed to several local initiatives, including Mercer County Vo Tech. She is also a member of the Society for Human Resource Management.

Valerie Hennessy, MSN, CNS-BC, CPHQ, ABF, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer/Chief Quality Officer

Valerie Hennessy serves as the Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Quality Officer at Sharon Regional Medical Center. A graduate of the Sharon Regional School of Nursing, she earned her BSN from Penn State University and her MSN as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) from Youngstown State University. Valerie has held leadership roles in nursing, education, and quality, including her most recent role as Director of Quality and Risk since 2021. She is board certified by the ANCC as a CNS, a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality, and a fellow of the Advisory Board, bringing a strong commitment to clinical excellence and patient safety.

Introducing Doniele Russell, New Director of the MCRPC



By Jane Goniea

Doniele Russell is the Executive Director of the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, bringing over 24 years of extensive planning experience to her role. Her career includes seven years as a planner for Butler County, as well as six years working jointly for Lawrence and Beaver counties. Additionally, Doniele spent seven years with Lawrence County and four years in private consulting, contributing to various regional planning projects.

Can you speak a bit about the new comprehensive plan? Why is it important to update it?

The new comprehensive plan is a critical tool for guiding the long-term growth and development of Mercer County. It

helps set clear goals, policies, and actions for future planning, ensuring that the county can grow sustainably while maintaining the quality of life for its residents. Updating the comprehensive plan is essential because communities evolve, and the needs of residents, businesses, and infrastructure change over time. Regular updates allow the plan to reflect current realities, emerging trends, and best practices. This ensures that the county stays adaptable and responsive to challenges like population shifts, economic changes, and environmental considerations.

What areas will the new plan focus on?

The plan will cover all the traditional areas including Economic Development, Infrastructure, Land use (Present and future), and Community Health and Well-being (recreation, cultural, historical, social services). The plan will have a special focus on Housing and the Transportation will be the County's Long Rant Transportation Plan which will start in June.

In your opinion, what are Mercer County's strengths? How can we capitalize on them?

In my opinion, people and location! We must actively engage our residents and empower them to have a voice in shaping our future. This means meeting folks where they are in their neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and homes and working together to create real, lasting change. Our location is full of potential. But it's not enough to just plan. We must implement. We must build. We must move forward with purpose. It's time to strengthen our communities, together.

How can community leaders collaborate with the MCRPC to strengthen the county?

I'd love the opportunity to connect with you. Whether it's at your home, business, a local park, or in your community, I'm ready to listen, collaborate, and work alongside you. Our team is committed to building a stronger future for Mercer and that starts with you. Reach out today: www.mcrpc.com.

Shenango Valley Mall Redevelopment Plans Unveiled

By Anna Kavulla
Photography by the City of
Hermitage

When driving down East State Street, one cannot help but notice the empty lot where the Shenango Valley Mall once stood. The demolition process, beginning in January of this year, has made way for roughly 54 acres of commercial property. While the mall was a landmark to Mercer County for almost 60 years, the space will not remain vacant for long. Flicore LLC, the parent company of Butterfli Holdings LLC, which owns the 54 acres, unveiled their plans for the western half of the property at the City of Hermitage's Planning Commission's monthly meeting on January 13th.

The plan revealed on January 13th includes constructing new restaurants and retail businesses and is just a subset of the much larger plan that encompasses a community, residential, and recreational redevelopment under the name "Hickory Fields". The plans presented include the restaurant chains Chick-fil-A, Chili's, and LongHorn Steakhouse, in addition to a 130,000 sq ft building for a national retailer whose identity has yet to be announced. The plans for the second half of the lot have yet to be revealed.

Additionally, the City of Hermitage plans to complement this outdoor shopping outlet by creating a City Center on the northern plot above the mall property, which is owned by the City. This center will feature spaces to encourage

outdoor recreation and host events that will benefit residents and visitors of all ages, as well as a possible housing component.

This redevelopment project is expected to create over 900 jobs in the area and will ultimately encourage economic growth and improvement within the community. The construction for this project is planned to begin before the winter of 2025 with hopes of openings beginning in 2026.

The land will be divided into nine spaces for buildings and two other lots for recreation and other uses. New roads are also planned for the development and to connect the Hickory Fields property to the City Center, creating a localized hub of living, working, and playing in Hermitage.



Catching Up With The Homegrown Initiative

By Jane Goniea, Finn Butcher, and Ellen Pardee
Photography by Penn-Northwest Development Corp.

While Penn-Northwest is committed to providing value and expertise to its members, the Homegrown Initiative is tackling the challenges facing Mercer County head-on—through innovation, partnership, and collaboration.

One standout effort is the "What's So Cool About Manufacturing?" program, a dynamic collaboration between the Homegrown Initiative, NWIRC, the Lawrence Mercer Manufacturing Coalition, and West Central Job Partnership. The program introduces middle school students to local manufacturing careers by pairing each school with a manufacturing partner. Students tour the facilities, interview employees, and create videos showcasing "what's so cool about manufacturing." These videos are then showcased at an awards ceremony, where schools compete in multiple categories.

The regional awards ceremony for What's So Cool About Manufacturing was April 9th, and three schools came away with

awards: Hickory High School for Most Creative, Farrell HS for Viewer's Choice, and Lakeview Middle School for Best Overall and Best Career Pathways. Lakeview, as the overall winner, advanced to Harrisburg for the statewide awards ceremony, competing against 22 other school districts throughout Pennsylvania. The Homegrown Initiative is excited to partner with other schools and manufacturers to expand the program in the coming year with the hope that more students get to learn "what's so cool about manufacturing?"

Beyond expanding K-12 programming, the Homegrown Initiative is also working to attract

new residents to Mercer County. Through the online platform MakeMyMove, the initiative connects with remote workers and families interested in relocating to the region—highlighting the area's affordability, amenities, and quality of life.

Participating communities on MakeMyMove can offer relocation incentive packages and promote their area to remote workers. Once a mover selects a location, they go through a screening process and, if eligible, receive a relocation offer.

Mercer County currently has three active profiles on MakeMyMove—Hermitage, Sharon, and Greenville—each offer-

Program(s) in Mercer County, Pennsylvania



Live, Work, and Thrive in Beautiful Sharon, PA

\$5,000 cash

A Space to Focus & Create – Enjoy 6 Months of Co-Working!

3 month Buhl Club Fitness membership

Stay fit with a six months Valley YMCA membership

Plus 5 more benefits

Apply Now



Put Down Roots in Greenville, PA

\$5,000 Cash

Hit the links with a gift card to Pine Hill Golf Course

Sip, savor, and enjoy with a gift card to Majestic Bar and Grille

Get a credit to spend at Lisa's General Store

Plus 8 more benefits

Apply Now



Discover Your Next Chapter in Hermitage, PA

\$5,000 Cash

A Space to Focus & Create – Enjoy 6 Months of Co-Working!

Perfect Your Swing at Buhl Driving Range! FREE access to this stunning course anytime, 1 hour of FREE Golf Simulator use every month for 6 months, 1 large bucket of balls every month for 6 months

Get active and stay fit with a FREE 6-month membership to Valley YMCA

Plus 8 more benefits

Apply Now

Example of Mercer County profiles on makemymove.com

ing unique incentive packages and highlighting the area's attractions. Since March 3, the Mercer County listings have received 150 qualified applications, 1,100 likes, and more than 86,000 impressions. The first three movers to Sharon and Hermitage are now in the final stages of house hunting, and we look forward to welcoming them to our community.

In addition to attracting new residents, the Homegrown Initiative continues to support and celebrate local talent. Most recently, the Future Leaders of Mercer County hosted the Under 40 Distinguished Impact Awards—formerly the 30 Under 40 Awards—in partnership with the Greenville Area, Shenango Valley, Grove City Area, and Mercer Area Chambers of Commerce. This expanded regional collaboration helped turn the event into something truly special. From a pool of 33 outstanding applicants, past honorees and Future Leaders selected this year's class, highlighting the energy and innovation of Mercer County's next generation of leaders.

This year's winners were:

- Greg Acre, Mercer Area School District
- Jordan Batt, Baughman Family Center
- Randell Burnett II, Thiel College
- Nicholas Hanahan, Farrell Area School District



Under 40 Distinguished Impact Awardees

- Katie Nowland, Buhl Park Corporation
- Reganne O'Brien, Kennedy Catholic Family of Schools and Warrior in HER
- Ryan Polichena
- Andy Puleo, PSU Shenango
- Justin Reynolds, Hope Center Ministries
- Leah Rouse, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services
- Bailey Shepard, Mercer County Food Bank
- Matt Smeltzer, Diversified Family Services
- Alexis Spence-Locke, Mercer County Food Bank
- Paige Stewart, St. Paul's Senior Living Community
- Meagan Sutton, Medi Hospice
- Hilary Walczak, Grove City College

To keep the momentum going, the Future Leaders program also hosts Morning Brew and Networking Crew, a monthly event held in partnership with the [eCenter@LindenPointe](mailto:ecenter@LindenPointe.com).

The event provides young professionals with a space to connect, learn from guest speakers on timely topics, and enjoy fresh coffee from Giavonna's Gourmet Coffee.

Whether it's attracting new families, empowering future leaders, or building impactful partnerships, the Homegrown Initiative remains committed to solving the challenges Mercer County faces with innovation, collaboration, and dedication. We're proud to continue spreading the message: you can Make It In! Mercer County.



SAVE THE DATE

**4TH ANNUAL
MERCER COUNTY
BUSINESS &
INDUSTRY DAY
PRO-AM**

August 13th, 2025
Avalon Country Club

contact: ellen@penn-northwest.com