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### **Grant Recipient Receives Funding to Strengthen Business, Provide Workers Advanced Training**

**(Wilkes-Barre, PA)** – The commonwealth of Pennsylvania has awarded the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, Inc. \$1,206,652 to help key industries develop partnerships in which employers and workers will cooperate to collectively improve their competitive position in the marketplace.

“This is a regional effort to support businesses throughout the Northeastern region,” said Paul E. O’Malia, Executive Director of Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, Inc. “These funds will benefit employers and employees in the Luzerne, Schuylkill, Pocono, Lackawanna and Northern Tier Workforce Investment Areas. This is a joint effort of the Luzerne, Schuylkill, Pocono, Lackawanna and Northern Tier Workforce Investment Boards.”

Industry partnerships can identify specific training needs and skill gaps, help connect young people to careers, help educational and training institutions align curriculum with industry demand, address recruiting and retention of workers, develop career ladders within and across companies, highlight best practices and promote communications among companies.

Industry partnerships are a particular kind of “workforce intermediary,” a so-called dual customer institution that helps connect and meet the needs of both workers and businesses. Industry partnerships bring together multiple employers, and workers or worker representatives when appropriate, in the same industry cluster to address common or overlapping human capital needs.

These grants are part of a \$20 million Job Ready PA investment included in the state’s 2007-08 budget. Currently 5,900 Pennsylvania companies participate in more than 86 industry partnerships to increase worker skills and training opportunities that will improve their bottom line competitive advantage

Applications and eligibility guidelines for Industry Partnerships and Industry Partnership Worker Training Program grants are available online at [www.paworkforce.state.pa.us](http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us) under the “Governor Rendell’s Strategy for Building a Skilled Workforce” quick link.

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Within the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, Inc. region, these Industry Partnerships were awarded additional funding including monies for worker training grants:

-Food Processing - \$322,350

-Energy - \$75,000

-Logistics & Transportation - \$509,302

The NEPA Logistics & Transportation Industry Partnership received \$150,000 in funding for its Career Pathway Pilot Program which hopes to commence early next year. The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, Inc. was also awarded \$150,000 for a Pre-Apprenticeship Program for work within the Building & Construction Industry Partnership.

For more information, contact Paul E. O'Malia, Executive Director at the Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, Inc. at (570) 822-1101 ext. 255 or [Paul.Omalia@luzernecounty.org](mailto:Paul.Omalia@luzernecounty.org) or Jane Ashton, Director of Workforce Development at the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber at (570) 823-2101 or [jashton@wilkes-barre.org](mailto:jashton@wilkes-barre.org).

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