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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CBICC announces formation of Business and Industry Partnership Committee will aid local business retention and expansion**

STATE COLLEGE, PA, Jan. 12, 2016 –The Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County announced the launch of a new Business and Industry Partnership, which will focus on ensuring that Centre County businesses at all stages of operation and from all industry sectors have awareness of and access to information, services, resources and connections necessary to support competitiveness and growth.

“CBICC members are committed to strengthening Centre County’s private sector economy. A critical component of that mission is taking care of our own; helping local companies succeed and grow,” said CBICC President and CEO Vern Squier. “The purpose of the partnership is to work more closely with individual businesses in order to determine unmet needs, address obstacles to growth or identify untapped opportunities.”

Partnership member Jeff Stachowski, Community Outreach Director for South Hills School of Business and Technology, said other examples of how the committee can potentially assist beyond identifying common needs is aggregating demand for products and services that can then be provided at lower costs for all; directing grant funding or helping negotiate contracts to help keep businesses competitive and operating in central Pennsylvania.

AmeriServ Senior Vice President Ted McDowell, who will co-chair the Business and Industry Partnership Committee along with Bellefonte Area School District Superintendent Cheryl Potteiger, said the partnership comprises individuals from Centre County’s business, education, government and financial sectors.

“This diverse expertise means that the committee will be well prepared to help address a broad range of business needs,” he said.

The partnership is split up into five teams, which, through personalized visits with local companies, will reach beyond CBICC’s membership to the entire business community, including emerging companies and those poised for growth, as well as established companies.

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Specifically, the BIP hopes to:

- Understand more about a company's operations and learn of any potential impediments to growth
- Serve as a conduit to other businesses within related industries facing similar challenges
- Provide guidance on where businesses can go for assistance with concerns, or to realize new opportunities for growth, product development, etc.
- Identify mutually beneficial business partnership where appropriate
- Ensure that the specialized workforce training needs of employers are being met, and that the county is prepared to provide the necessary workforce training for those employers.

"The work of the partnership is an important step to retaining and growing businesses in the Centre County region," said Dr. Richard Makin, president, Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology. "I look forward to hearing what business partners have to say about their plans and workforce development needs, tailoring programs and services at CPI that will meet those needs and help drive economic growth."

Squier said in the economic development world, one community's retention project could be another community's recruitment project.

"We want our companies to not only stay here, but thrive here," he said. "The members of the Business and Industry Partnership Committee are ready to get to work and ready to assist private industry in Centre County."

Companies interested in learning more about the Business and Industry Partnership Committee or interested in meeting with a BIP team should contact Jennifer Myers, CBICC Vice President of Economic Development, at [jennifer@cbicc.org](mailto:jennifer@cbicc.org), 814 234-1829, ext. 4.

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Members of the Business and Industry Partnership Committee are:

- Dr. Cheryl Potteiger, Bellefonte Area School District
- Ted McDowell, AmeriServ Bank
- Dr. Richard Makin, Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology
- Jeffrey Stachowski, South Hills School of Business and Technology
- Dr. Robert O'Donnell, State College Area School District
- Cheryl Johnson, Private Industry Council of the Central Corridor
- Craig Morrow, First National Bank
- Jean Galliano, Fulton Bank
- Jeff Krauss, The HR Office Inc.
- John Moore, Moore Power Sales
- Todd Taylor, Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology
- Sharon Perry, State College Area School District
- Patrick Knobloch, Innate Management, Inc.
- Mark Maggs, South Hills School of Business & Technology
- Mark Higgins, Centre County Commissioner

- Laura Chapman, Lacher Insurance
- Cher Harpster, PA Careerlink
- Adam Brumbaugh, College Township
- Jennifer Myers, CBICC