

# ERIE COUNTY *connection*



## Community Focus: Planting the Seed for Economic Growth in Corry

Corry’s downtown transformation is in full bloom, thanks to local development organization Impact Corry and the Mission Main Street initiative. The Erie County Planning Department is contributing to the city’s initiative with the Erie County Greenways Program, a program aimed at improving the quality of life in Erie County through the preservation and enhancement of the region’s natural, scenic and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment.

The first phase of downtown Corry’s Greenway Plan began with removing concrete and bricks from the sidewalks of Center Street and Main Street to make room for 22 trees, a mixture of autumn blaze maples, European hornbeams, ivory silk tree lilacs, bloodgood London planes and American hophornbeams. The removed bricks will be repurposed to fill around the newly planted trees and to fill where the concrete was located.

The vision of the Greenway Plan is to create a cohesive business district on Center and Main Streets that is separated by rail road



*A local preschool class poses for a photo with one of the newly planted trees.*

### Inside this issue

- Community Focus ..... 1
- #Erie366 ..... 2
- Did You Know?: Med Return Units in Erie County..... 3
- Department of Health Welcomes Cooperative Extension ..... 3
- Department of Planning moves to collaborative space in Blasco Building ..... 4
- Employee Spotlight ..... 5
- ECDH hosts *Great American Smokeout* with Erie Otters... 6
- In Memory of Erie County Councilman Phil Fatica..... 6



*Another tree purchased with the CDBG funds sits outside the Corner Bar and Grill on East Main Street.*

tracks. Creating visual continuity with the trees is intended to draw more businesses and shoppers to Corry's business district.

In addition to the Greenway Plan, Impact Corry installed four tourism directional signs to guide motorists to the downtown area. Corry City Council also approved Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds, provided by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, to be utilized for the construction of accessible ramps for people with disabilities at various intersections throughout the city.

Steve Bishop, president of Impact Corry, says the organization is in the process of applying for grants to fund the second phase of the project, which includes planting more trees along Main Street. The first phase is funded in part by the Erie County Planning Department, as well as the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and the Arlene H. Smith Charitable Foundation of Corry.



## Historical Highlight

The Corry Post Office celebrated 100 years in 2015. The building, constructed of Indiana limestone and fitted with marble, bronze and tile mosaics, was built for a cost of about \$100,000 in 1915. The building is worth some \$2.8 million today. According to local newspapers in 1915, the impressive building was an indicator to surrounding towns of the forthcoming growth for Corry. While the post office thrived in the early years, business has declined in recent years due to advancements in technology, such as stamps.com and, of course, email. Nonetheless, the Corry Post Office still operates and has maintained its integrity and significance to the community. Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Corry Post Office!



*Exterior construction of the Corry Post Office near completion in late 1914.*

## Viewing Erie County through the lenses of locals

For each day of the 2016 leap year, the Erie Times News will publish photos captured by local residents. The #Erie366 project is a daily look at people, places and moments in and around Erie. Be part of the project by tagging your photos #erie366 on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook or sharing them [here](#).

The snapshots shared by the Erie Community will be published in the Times-News on page 2A, online, on the GoErie app in the e-edition, and on the GoErie Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. You can follow the project on the [#Erie366 webpage](#).

# #ERIE366

# MedReturn

## Drug Collection Unit



## Did you Know?

There are 12 MedReturn Unit locations in Erie County. The following can be turned in for safe disposal: prescription medications and patches, prescription ointments and cough syrups, over the counter medications, vitamins, medication samples, and pet medications.

Please note that the following items are not accepted: needles/lancets/syringes, aerosol cans and inhalers, alcohol, peroxide, clinic or medical waste, and personal care products. For more information, [click here](#).

Find your nearest MedReturn from the following list:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Albion Police Department           | 7. Lake City Police Department              |
| 2. Corry City Police Department       | 8. Lawrence Park Police Department          |
| 3. Edinboro Borough Police Department | 9. Mercyhurst University Main Police        |
| 4. Edinboro University Campus         | 10. Mercyhurst University North East Police |
| 5. Erie County Courthouse Lobby       | 11. North East Borough Police               |
| 6. Girard borough Police Department   | 12. Wesleyville Borough Police              |

## On the Move: Community Engagement

### *ECDH Welcomes Cooperative Extension*

Community engagement and collaboration are more than buzz words. They are strategies that embody the work of local government, civic, social, and educational organizations across the region. The growing awareness of the need to work together and meet the changing needs of citizens and constituents

requires astute planning and communication.

The Erie County Cooperative Extension relocated to office space within the Erie County Department of Health (ECDH) in November. The co-location has the potential to create a number of opportunities where both agencies can benefit from the synergy of working together on larger health and environmental priorities. For example, the Cooperative Extension hosts cooking and food preparation classes and the master



*County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper speaks at a press conference for the Cooperative Extension alongside Melissa Lyon, Director of Erie County Department of Health, and Jonathon Laughner, District Director of the Cooperative Extension..*

gardeners program while the health department has nutrition related programs such as the healthy corner store initiative, community gardens, and workplace breastfeeding support programs. In addition, the Cooperative Extension manages the youth 4-H programs and the health department coordinates youth advocacy and prevention programs to address teen smoking rates.

Melissa Lyon, Director of ECDH, and Jonathan Laughner, District Director of the Cooperative Extension, both agree that the relationship between the two agencies is a natural progression. The collaboration may present opportunities for grant awards and the pursuit of new approaches in resolving community needs. This new endeavor is exciting for both agencies and is poised to extend local networks, enhance relationships, leverage assets, and increase community engagement across the county.



## Erie County Department of Planning relocates to collaborative space with regional agencies

The Erie County Department of Planning has been busy relocating to a new office space in the Blasco Library complex, shared with regional committees and organizations. The open space concept and additional room will allow for informal and collaborative meetings and group work sessions to occur among staff and the people they support. The collaborative layout of the office will not only benefit the many committees and community peers that work with our program administrators but will increase our coordination with agencies that will be co-located with the Department of Planning.

“The move will allow the Planning Department to have better access to the public by providing open and direct access for developers, residents and municipal leaders needing assistance,” says Kathy Wyrosdick, director of the Erie County Planning Department. “The bringing together of economic, regional and municipal service agencies into one location will create a dynamic support system that should benefit all of Erie County.”

So far Emerge 2040 and the Erie Area Council of Governments (EACOG) have confirmed the relocation of their offices to the shared space. The organizations reflect Wyrosdick’s enthusiasm for the move. Here’s what they have to say:



*“I’m looking forward to having Emerge 2040 co-locate with the Erie County Department of Planning and the EACOG because it will help to solidify partnerships with all organizations on initiatives that will benefit our region. Working side by side with the knowledgeable, passionate and creative staff from these groups will help to accelerate some of the projects that we’re already working on together and spark new ideas”*

*- Anna Frantz, Executive Director for Emerge 2040*

*“I am excited to have the opportunity to co-locate with the progressive and dynamic professionals from County Planning and Emerge 2040. Each of these entities and the COG are working hard to ensure that our region has a bright and prosperous future. Sharing the office space will enable us to create and implement exciting projects and initiatives. The COG member municipalities will benefit immensely from the strengthening of these relationships and partnerships. Additionally, the COG will provide a mechanism for communication with and a forum for assembly of the municipalities in Erie County that will provide great opportunity for all involved.”*

*-Jessica A. Horan-Kunco, Executive Director of the Erie Area Council of Governments*



**ERIE AREA COUNCIL  
OF GOVERNMENTS**

# Employee SPOTLIGHT

**Q:** What is your job title?

**A:** Youth Services Manager at Blasco Library.

**Q:** Describe a few highlights of your job and why you enjoy them.

**A:** Creating and conducting programs is a major highlight for me. From storytime to STEM activities, it's rewarding to spark children's interest in learning and discovery. I also enjoy talking with young people and finding out what the library can do to improve their lives. As the manager of the youth services department, I can use my voice to make sure their needs are respected and met. It's also a perk to be one of the first librarians to learn about new books and resources for youth.

**Q:** What do you think is the most important quality needed for success as a librarian?

**A:** Enthusiasm! Librarians are continually meeting new people and discovering new ideas and resources. Our jobs are always evolving, and we need to actively embrace new opportunities and challenges.

**Q:** What is your most proud moment from your career?

**A:** When I was working as a children's librarian in Titusville, there was a young girl who signed up for our 2015 summer reading program. She was a bit of a reluctant reader, but she loved coming to library events and playing our summer reading game. She ended up completing more book logs than almost any other participant. At the end of the summer, she gave me a handwritten sign that read, "Reading rocks, just like you do!" Highest compliment I think I've ever received!

**Q:** Top three favorite authors?

**A:** This may be cheating, but...for adults: Neil Gaiman, Barbara Kingsolver, and Alice Hoffman. For young adults: Laurie Halse Anderson, Jacqueline Woodson, and John Green. For children: Roald Dahl, Kate DiCamillo, and Mo Willems.

**Q:** Favorite pastime other than reading?

**A:** I enjoy writing, acting, and spending time with friends and family.

**Q:** If you could have dinner with one famous author, living or from history, who would it be and what would you ask them?

**A:** Zora Neale Hurston. I would just like to hear about her life and tell her what a celebrated author she has become despite being unappreciated in her time. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is one of the most powerful books I've ever read.

**Q:** What's one goal you strive to accomplish daily?

**A:** I always try to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. It's easy to judge people, but it's harder to recognize that no one's situation is as simple as it seems. We all have a story.

**Q:** Favorite quote and why?

**A:** My favorite quote is the epigraph of Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*: "Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten." There are a lot of "dragons" in this world—poverty, violence, inequality, grief—and though we like to think that we can shield children from them, the unfortunate fact is that we can't. Young people feel powerless far too often, and I think it's incredibly important to validate their experiences and celebrate their ability to overcome hardships. That's why I believe in the magic of a good fairy tale.



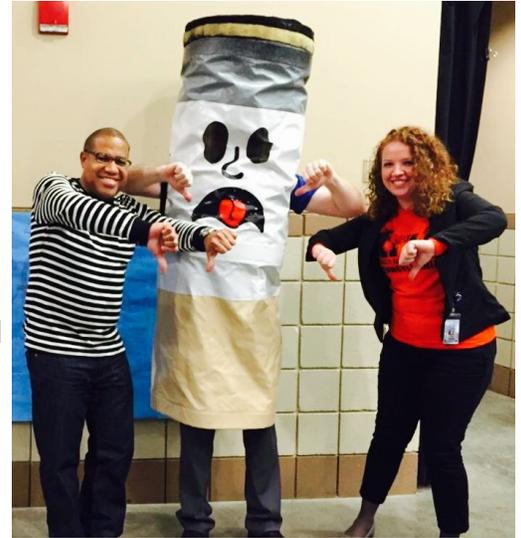
**Meet Amberlee!**

# ECDH and the Erie Otters faceoff with Tobacco Control during the Great American Smokeout

On Friday, November 13th, the Erie Otters hosted Great American Smokeout night at the Erie Insurance Arena. Director of Administration, Gary Lee, dropped the ceremonial first puck to lead the Otters to victory with a 6 – 4 win against the Oshawa Generals, and fans had an opportunity to learn more about free tobacco programming. Tobacco Resistance Unit (TRU) groups across both Erie and Crawford Counties were in attendance.

These groups participated in several activities including a T-shirt toss and a #TRUgraffiti wall where Otters fans of all ages were encouraged to write why they pledged to be tobacco-free for life. The Northwest PA Tobacco Control Program was also on hand to promote this year's theme for Great American Smokeout, "Quit like a Champion!" Videos of TRU youth and Otters Players were featured on the scoreboard to tell the fans why they chose a tobacco-free lifestyle.

We are pleased to announce that Great American Smokeout night will be an annual event with the Otters. For more information on how to quit using tobacco, call the Erie County Department of Health at 814-451-6700 or visit the [Department of Health webpage](#). Check out the [Erie County Department of Health Facebook page](#) for photos and videos from the event.



*Director of Administration Gary N. Lee, Ciggy Buttz and the Department of Health's Sarah Morgan give a thumbs down to tobacco use.*

## *In Memory of Phil Fatica*



Erie County celebrates the life of County Councilman Phil Fatica, who passed away on Sunday, December 6, 2015. Phil was first elected to serve as the District 1 councilman in 2008 and was recently reelected to serve his third term. Phil's love of his native Erie County was clear in his commitment to the community; as a teacher, a local TV and radio personality, an Erie County councilman and a friend. He will be remembered for the enthusiasm for every role he took on, notably to the County of Erie as a dedicated civil servant who sought to serve the best interests of the public.

In honor of Phil's passing, the County of Erie has planted an Ivory Silk Tree Lilac at the southwest end of the Courthouse, near where Phil parked his car. A dedication ceremony will be held this spring when his tree is in bloom. The tree will be a constant reminder of Mr. Fatica and his good work.

