

OUR VIEW

EXPIRES
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River Town' forum a chance to engage

Community engagement. The level and quality of that engagement is a pulse for any community ... the involvement of elected leaders and citizens working together - beyond geographical or political boundaries - to improve where they live.

And that's the basis for a public forum this coming Thursday evening at the Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center on the campus of Lock Haven University.

Lock Haven City Council has voted unanimously to have the city designated as a "River Town" under a program of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership.

Lock Haven University has wholeheartedly embraced the idea.

Part of Susquehanna Greenway Partnership's River Town Program mission is to "offer recognition and assistance to Greenway communities that value the Susquehanna River as an asset for sustainable economic development and healthy living."

Assistance is a key word. What communities do in terms of investing in the greenway is up to those communities, the elected leaders and constituents/residents.

Lock Haven is blessed ... blessed with a flood protection system that allows a floating stage, that allows a public swimming beach, that allows a scenic walkway ... that makes the river so much more enjoyable for everyone.

And across the river, Woodward Township has given priority to its investment in its public boat launch and Riverview Park.

Amenities such as these along our West Branch of the Susquehanna River are typically only found in big cities.

IFYOUGO:

WHAT: River Town community forum.

WHEN: 6 p.m. March 27.

WHERE: Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center, Lock Haven University.

We've often felt that Lock Haven and Woodward Township have built this wonderful greenway infrastructure separately, but yet, in partnership as each side of the river really cannot do without the other. Dozens of boaters access the river via the township to watch city-sponsored concerts on the floating stage or to just simply recreate. Both sides help the Lock Haven Area Jaycees host the annual Labor Day Regatta that brings hundreds of powerboat racers here. The township holds its Riverfest fundraiser annually to raise money for upkeep, and also to benefit the Dunnstown Volunteer Fire Co.

Both sides work to maintain and enhance their greenway facilities for all to use and enjoy.

This summer, the SGP is organizing a five-day, 55-mile sojourn on the river here from Renovo to Jersey Shore. This will bring people in kayaks and canoes through this beautiful valley. (Go to www.susquehannagreenway.org for more information.)

And, it'll come during the United States Canoe Association's National Kayak & Canoe Championship (www.uscanoe.com) on the river at Lock Haven-Woodward Township ... thanks to a dedicated group of area residents associated with the Tiadaghton Canoe Classic and others.

Together, these events will highlight this area's cultural and natural history, its scenic beauty, it's outstanding water quality, all the while celebrating local efforts to connect the river to the people.

The forum is about community engagement ... citizen input. It will ask, among other questions:

■ What do you like best about living in Lock Haven? What are you most proud of?

■ What places-businesses-social events-amenities or other community assets make a community pleasurable and memorable to you?

■ What are your feelings about the celebrations/events currently held in Lock Haven?

■ What types of community events are needed to bring residents together here in Lock Haven?

■ If you were to bring people here what would you promote as the attraction? How?

■ Thinking about Lock Haven together with the other River Towns of the region, what ideas do you have for collaboration or collective marketing?

■ Citizen involvement is important for creating a vital community. What percentage of your community do you think is actively involved in making Lock Haven a great place?

■ How would you engage more people?

So get up and from out in front of your computer, or off of your couch, and come to the Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center at LHU this Thursday evening starting at 6 p.m.

Engage your community.