



The SEDA-COG Report

News from the Counties and Communities of Central Pennsylvania
March 2013

Table of Contents

[Railroad Traffic Reflects Economy](#)

[Flood Protection Projects Announced](#)

[Developing River-based Opportunities](#)

[Financing News](#)

[Byte-sized News](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

SEDA-COG is a publicly funded development organization based in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and serving an 11-county region. We help the counties – and the communities and citizens within them – address challenges related to their economies and infrastructure, and we assist them in responding to new opportunities in such areas as energy, technology, market development, transportation, and locally-based resources.

Quick Links

www.seda-cog.org

Like us on Facebook 

Follow us on  twitter

Production Changes, Product Mix are Key Factors in Rail Lines' Carload Totals

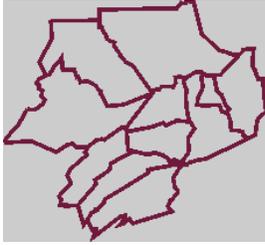
Few businesses better reflect the nation's economic trends than the railroad industry, and that is as true for Central Pennsylvania's five short line railroads as it is for America's big Class I carriers. "It's a very fluid business," says Todd Hunter, Director of Marketing for the **North Shore Railroad Company**, which provides service on the five short lines. The **SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority** is the lines' owner.

Hunter and his colleague, Brigid Rich, Manager of Marketing and Car Hire, have seen several changes in their combined 29 years of rail-related marketing. For instance, there's significantly more traffic today in inbound raw material than outbound finished goods.

On the North Shore line, which runs between Northumberland and Berwick, inbound traffic is nearly 70% of the business. "That's because of 'just in time' inventory," said Rich, "Companies don't want finished products until they know they can sell them."



The industrial complex in Berwick is served by the North Shore Railroad.



SEDA-COG primarily serves the 11 Central Pennsylvania counties of Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, and Union.

Historic Factoid

1994 – The Manufacturers Marketing Network, an industrial matchmaker program developed by SEDA-COG, expands to encompass 52 Pennsylvania counties. In subsequent years it is turned over to the Team Pennsylvania Foundation and is known as **PA SourceNet**.

The region's five lines vary in terms of product mix and the North Shore line, according to Hunter, is particularly tied to consumer goods. "Shippers on the line make things Americans love," said Rich, "Snack food, pet food, and auto parts." Traffic on the North Shore saw a 27% increase in 2012, the second biggest increase ever for any of the five lines.

The Shamokin Valley Railroad (SVRR), another of the five short lines, continues to be a challenge. Business on the line, running between Sunbury and Mount Carmel, was disappointing in 2012, although Hunter expects it to be much better this year. "Anthracite coal is the main product on the SVRR," says Hunter, "and anthracite's fortunes are linked to the steel industry. While slow growth is anticipated in steel, it's not expected to accelerate for a few years."

Meanwhile, the North Shore Company itself remains a steady regional business, with employment nearing one hundred by the end of 2012. According to Hunter, "We haven't experienced layoffs, another indication of the strong health of the area's rail-related businesses."

Flood Protection Projects are Announced at Two Companies in Bloomsburg

A \$30 million flood protection project which will help preserve over 900 jobs in Bloomsburg was announced in late February. Half the funds will be provided by the federal **Economic Development Administration (EDA)**. SEDA-COG prepared the grant application on behalf of the Columbia County Commissioners, and will administer the grant and oversee construction of the project.

The project received full support from Congressman Lou Barletta as well as Senators Pat Toomey and Bob Casey. Additionally State Senator John Gordner and Representative David Millard worked tirelessly to secure \$11.8 million in Commonwealth funds for the project through the **H2O PA program**. The project consists of two flood protection systems, the first involving 5,300 linear feet of flood wall protecting **Autoneum North America, Inc.**, which manufactures automotive floor and auxiliary mat carpeting. The system will include locations for rail

and vehicular access and an internal storm drainage system. The second flood protection system will be located at **Windsor Foods**, which manufactures pasta products. It will involve a 2,800 ft. flood wall and pump stations to control storm water and sewage. The two firms are contributing a total of \$3.2 million to the project.



Congressman Lou Barletta announcing flood protection projects in Bloomsburg.

One-question Quiz

America's oldest gas station is in Pennsylvania.

Where is it?

[Click here for the answer](#)

In September 2011, the companies were severely impacted by historic flooding resulting from **Tropical Storm Lee**. They were initially hit by flooding from Fishing Creek, and then again from the Susquehanna River. Autoneum had over five feet of water on its production floor, and sustained over \$60 million in losses. Flood damage at Windsor Foods exceeded \$7 million with over six feet of water in the plant and over 13 feet in the warehouse. Without flood control systems in place, the companies are in jeopardy of shifting production to facilities outside of Pennsylvania or, in some cases, outside the United States.

Excessive and repeated flooding in the Bloomsburg area has limited Autoneum's and Windsor's expansion efforts and their ability to increase production. By reducing the downtime during a flood event and the threat of damage caused by floods, the two plants will have the ability to bid on more jobs and increase production output.

These will be the second and third flood protection projects in Bloomsburg. A \$7.5 million dike and flood wall project, sponsored and coordinated by the Columbia County Commissioners, was recently completed at the **Kawneer Company** along Route 487.

[Read more](#) about Bloomsburg's flood protection projects.

Featured Link

[FoodSafety.gov](#)

Clean, separate, cook, and chill – the four steps to

Our Changing Attitudes about the Susquehanna River

The relationship between the Susquehanna River and those connected to it has rarely been as positive as it appears today. In the past our River was primarily viewed

food safety. Maybe you'd like to learn more about salmonella or arsenic levels in rice. You'll find it at FoodSafety.gov along with recalls, alerts, and seasonal food tips.

Information is clear, concise, and attractively presented. The site is a collaborative effort, managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Join Our Mailing List!

"We need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices... Speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home."

in terms of expensive bridges and harmful floods. Communities now, however, see it as a resource providing them an identity as "river towns," and offering opportunities for economic development and active, healthy lifestyles. The **Susquehanna Greenway Partnership** (SGP) continues to encourage this recognition of the River's potential, helping communities develop river-based programs and projects, and coordinating clean-up efforts to maintain the environmental health and quality of the River.



According to SGP's 2012 Progress Report, 19 communities

received the SGP's assistance last year for a wide variety of projects in the planning or development stage. Among them, riverfront parks in Shickshinny and Curwensville, river access in Jersey Shore, tree planting in Montgomery, and a riverbank protection study in Millersburg. In addition to technical assistance, SGP awarded grants ranging from \$500 to \$8,000 for planning and developing parks, trails, public river access, and water quality protection projects. The mini-grant program was financed in part through the **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**.

Working with local residents and municipal officials, SGP helps them assess their communities, create a vision for it, and plan and implement projects to improve the community. Trish Carothers, Executive Director, SGP, said, "Our intent is to help communities protect and enhance the cultural and natural resources of the Susquehanna and use these assets for sustainable economic development and healthy living."



A \$2,500 mini-grant was awarded to Millersburg for a river bank protection study. The bank and community park are threatened by severe erosion.

Through these and related efforts carried out by the SGP

Through these and related efforts carried out by the SGP

Memo announcing that, starting in June, Yahoo employees will **no longer be permitted to work from home.**

and the four Regional Lead Organizations it works with, a Greenway "community" is developing along the River's 500 miles in Pennsylvania. Members of this community took part in a host of clean-up efforts coordinated through SGP in 2012:

- 1,180 hours of volunteer time were contributed for flood clean-up
- A mile of flood damaged rail-trail were repaired
- 17 miles of River were cleaned
- 150 acres of public parks were cleaned and improved

The results of 2012's volunteer efforts can be seen today, while community planning activities will bear fruit in the months and years to come, and in that time, the bond and connection will grow between the Susquehanna River and the counties and towns that line its shores.

Financing News . . .

The **Small Business Administration** (SBA) has completed the financing of a \$2.1 million **SBA 504** loan for construction of a new 80-room **La Quinta Inn** in Harrisburg, near Interstate 81. Financing was also provided through **Centric Bank** and owners' equity. The loan was approved by the SEDA-COG Local Development Corporation before submission to SBA for final action. Materials used in the construction of the hotel will provide a 15-20% energy cost savings, enabling the project to qualify for financing under SBA's **Energy Efficiency Public Policy Goal**. The project is expected to create 34 full-time jobs over the next two years.

\$ \$ \$

Financing to expand a plastics company in State College has been approved by SEDA-COG's Board. **Polymics, Ltd.** requested two loans of \$68,600 each to purchase additional machinery and equipment. Company equity will complete the financing. Polymics plans to purchase equipment for a new extrusion division. The company was founded in 1991 as H2K Instrument, selling specialized test equipment for plastics. Today it manufactures and develops high performance polymer compounds and compression molds. This is the company's fifth project with which SEDA-COG's financing programs have been involved. As a result of this project, Polymics expects to create ten full-time jobs within the next two years.

For more information on SEDA-COG's **Business Development Financing** program, contact John Reichard at 570-524-4491, ext. 7251; e-mail reichard@seda-cog.org; or visit us on the web.

Byte-sized News . . .

Approximately 375 people toured Mann Edge Terrace, Lewistown's new apartment building for the elderly, at an open house last month. The building is a collaborative effort involving the [SEDA-COG Housing Development Corporation](#) and several local entities. As of mid-February, 25 of the building's 31 units were filled, just two months after it opened.

#

Design plans to extend Union County's [Buffalo Valley Rail Trail](#) are being prepared, and a conceptual plan for a segment across the Susquehanna River is under development. That plan, which would extend the Trail from North Fifth Street in Lewisburg east across the River, is funded under a \$5,000 grant from the [Susquehanna Greenway Partnership](#) (SGP). Trish Carothers, Executive Director, SGP, said, "We're very excited to help move this project forward, which will connect the Rail Trail to the Susquehanna."

#

SEDA-COG's [Export Development program](#) is planning an Ask the Expert roundtable session on Tuesday, May 7 in State College. Representatives of area firms can brainstorm with individuals who have expertise on particular trade topics. The May 7 session will focus on the legal landscape of international business, offering a look at agreements, intellectual property protection, and general legal concerns. For more information contact members of our [Export Development staff](#).

#

Upcoming training courses through the [Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs](#) include training and skills development for municipal officials, which will be held in four counties; the course in community planning, which will be held in three counties, and the course in zoning, which will be held in Chester County. Details can be found on the [training schedule](#) at the Association's web site.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Government Contracting Seminars

Bellefonte – Apr. 4
 Harrisburg – Apr. 17 & 24
 Lewistown – Apr. 16
 Shippensburg – Mar. 20
 State College – Mar. 7
 Williamsport – Apr. 11

**Roadway Maintenance & Safety Training
for Municipalities**

North Bend – Mar. 13

Yeagertown – Mar. 15

SEDA-COG Board of Directors

Lewisburg – Mar. 27

SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority

Lewisburg – Mar. 13

SEDA-COG Rural Planning Organization

Lewisburg – Apr. 12

Transportation Alternatives Program

Pre-application Workshop

Lewisburg – Mar. 12

For further information or questions about
The SEDA-COG Report, contact Steve Kusheloff,
Manager, Public Information, tel. 570-524-4491, ext. 7217;
or e-mail skusheloff@seda-cog.org.

