

## **Allegheny Conference leaders mark organization's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, say next big challenge is sustaining region's population and workforce as Baby Boomers retire and competition for talent grows**

*Annual Meeting highlights 2012-2014 community development investments, economic development deals, transportation funding success and accelerating efforts to connect workers to jobs*

**(PITTSBURGH – November 5, 2014)** - Allegheny Conference on Community Development leaders will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization – a pioneer in building public-private partnerships and collaboration among business, civic and community leaders – at its 2014 Annual Meeting this evening at Oakland's Carnegie Music Hall. The Conference will highlight achievements across its 2012-2014 agenda, including almost \$10 million in focused investment to strengthen five regional communities.

We've made real progress over the past three years, capping a generation of transformation of our economy. More people are employed today in our region than ever before, our population is growing and it's beginning to get younger. This region is well positioned for real economic growth. There is reason to celebrate and for optimism, but we can't afford to become complacent. We must prepare for the next generation of transformation," said Allegheny Conference Chair Morgan O'Brien, president and CEO, Peoples Natural Gas.

The Allegheny Conference was incorporated in 1944 and provided private sector leadership through two generations of transformation. From 1944 to 1979, the focus was largely on the environment – improving air and water quality, taming annual spring floods and redeveloping urban areas. From 1980 to 2014 the region responded to the collapse of its industrial economy by transforming the economy.

"Today, we are entering a period of increasing competition inside and outside our region for skilled, educated and properly trained workers as Baby Boomers retire. Meeting this challenge will require a new generation of transformation," said O'Brien.

The Annual Meeting program will highlight recent accomplishments in the Conference's 2012-2014 Agenda, its current three-year work plan, which focused on three strategic priorities, Strengthening Communities, Energizing Tomorrow's Economy, and Enhancing Opportunity for individuals and employers. Among the highlights:

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- Nearly \$10 million in funding directed by Allegheny Conference members to five communities in need: Connellsville, McKees Rocks, Mt. Oliver, Washington and Wilkinsburg through the [Strengthening Communities Partnership](#)
- 120 regional economic development deals or – business attractions and expansions – landed over the past three years with assistance from the [Pittsburgh Regional Alliance](#). These are linked to 11,289 jobs expected to be gained and retained and \$1.5 billion in capital investment, leading the region to be named in the top 10 nationwide for economic development projects and number one in the Northeast
- Passage of comprehensive state transportation funding legislation (Act 89) critical to the future of the region; the annual \$2.4 billion in funding also secures the future of public transit
- Investment in a unique regional job portal – [ImaginePittsburgh.com](#) – that hosts more than 25,000 open positions on average daily with more than 600,000 job searches in the past year, and
- Creation of [ShaleNET](#), a \$20 million, five state initiative to train workers for hard-to-fill jobs in the natural gas industry, with 3,400 graduates now employed

Other highlights include: the continued preservation of the Capital Stock & Franchise Tax; structural changes to the Corporate Net Income tax, making it more competitive with other states; and the launch of an initiative to regionalize wastewater management through changes in governance, pipeline transfers and implementation of green infrastructure efforts.

Looking ahead to its 2015-2017 Agenda, Conference leaders outlined three strategies – focused on People, Economy & Community, and Infrastructure – to advance the 10-county Pittsburgh region. “It’s clear that our region will be experiencing a third generation of transformation. Our diverse economy is strong, but a wave of demographic changes is coming that will challenge that strength. We can let it happen to us, or we can take the lead. If we are proactive and become a magnet for talent, we have the opportunity to have the youngest, best-skilled population in the country,” said Allegheny Conference CEO Dennis Yablonsky.

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**The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its Affiliates** – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work in collaboration with public and private sector partners improving the economy and the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more at [AlleghenyConference.org](#).

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