

**For immediate release**

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**Barbara McNees to Retire as President of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and Executive Vice President of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development**

**Dewitt Peart, President of the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, to Assume Chamber Role**

(PITTSBURGH - July 16, 2013) – Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce President Barbara McNees has informed the Allegheny Conference on Community Development that she will retire on August 15, 2013 as president of the Chamber and as a member of the Conference executive team. The Chamber is an affiliate organization of the Conference.

“Barbara McNees has played a critical role in the transformation of the Pittsburgh region’s economy over the past two decades,” said Dennis Yablonsky, chief executive officer of the Conference. “A tireless advocate on behalf of our region’s competitiveness, she has been a valued member of the executive team of the Allegheny Conference during a time of transition for the organization itself. A decade ago, Barbara helped to engineer the affiliation of the Chamber with the Conference, the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance and the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh, creating a unique and globally recognized model for civic improvement.”

During McNees’ stewardship, Yablonsky said, the Chamber played a key role in achieving a number of objectives critical to improving the economy and quality of life of the Pittsburgh region. Among them:

- Major new investment in the region’s urban core, including two new stadiums and a new convention center.

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- Streamlined and modernized the governance structure in Allegheny County through home rule and row office reform.
  - Significant improvement in the business climate in Pennsylvania, reducing the business tax burden and fostering job creation in the Pittsburgh region.
  - Helped to guide the City of Pittsburgh to greater fiscal health through her leadership of such community initiatives as “Save Our Summer” and as chair of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority.
  - Helped guide the development of state policy to promote brownfield redevelopment, opening the door to new investment throughout the region.
  - Supported the creation of thousands of acres of pad-ready sites for business investment through her service on the Commonwealth Financing Authority.
  - Instituted ATHENA Award in Pittsburgh recognizing the impact of women as leaders and mentors within the region; the Pittsburgh ATHENA award event has grown to be one of the largest of its kind in the world.

“My past 16 years at the Chamber and the Conference have been incredibly rewarding,” said McNees. “I have been given the opportunity to work to improve the region where I was born and raised. And I’ve had the opportunity to work closely with numerous public and private sector leaders who have cared as deeply about the future of our region as I do. We have reason to be proud of everything we have accomplished together and I am pleased to have been able to have played a part.”

The Allegheny Conference Board has endorsed Conference Executive Vice President Dewitt Peart, president of the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (PRA) to serve as president pending final Chamber board approval in September. Peart will continue to supervise the business investment and marketing activities of the PRA.

“There is no better choice than De Peart to fill Barbara’s shoes,” said Morgan O’Brien, chair of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber and vice chair of the Conference. “Barbara has developed long and trusting relationships with key government leaders based on her deep

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knowledge of the issues and the ability to clearly represent the position developed by the Chamber. De's knowledge and experience will allow him to continue that same approach."

"De has built a nationally-recognized economic development organization in the PRA," said David Malone, chair of the PRA and vice chair of the Conference. "He has also represented the region as co-chair of the tri-state Tech Belt and on the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition. De is well positioned to maintain and strengthen these relationships."

"I'm excited about this new opportunity," said Peart. "We have made great progress as a region and as an organization over the past 10 years thanks to strong public and private sector leadership and a dedicated and highly skilled team of economic development professionals. Our region's best days are ahead, and I'm looking forward to advocating for the improvements to our economy and quality of life that will enable us to build on the strong foundation that's been created here."

Peart will assume his new role effective August 15, 2013.

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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 to improve the economy and the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more at [www.alleghenyconference.org](http://www.alleghenyconference.org).