

For Immediate Release
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ELEVATE LAWRENCE COUNTY

New Castle, PA— 12/1/21 — On Wednesday, Lawrence County welcomed back Jay Garner, President & Founder of Garner Economics, LLC. Garner, along with his colleague and Research Director, Cyndi Dancy, delivered *ELEVATE LAWRENCE COUNTY: An Economic Development Action Plan Focused on People, Product, and Place* to an audience of community stakeholders. The lunch event held at The Villa at Medure's, hosted by the Forward Lawrence Steering Committee and arranged on their behalf by the Lawrence County Regional Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC), informed more than 70 attendees of the recommendations derived from Garner's local information gathering, extensive research, and vast knowledge of the economic development process. Steering Committee Chairman, Eric Karmecy, welcomed the day's presenters and an invocation was delivered by Alex McCoy, C.E.O. of the Lawrence County Regional Chamber & LCEDC. Garner's report offered a realistic view of the county's strengths and challenges.

Economic development recommendations included the identification of target industries. As Jay Garner notes, "Lawrence County has a foundation of resources upon which it can enhance its assets of people, product and place. As a site location advisor, geographic location is a key component of the site selection process and Lawrence County is within 400 miles of nearly 109 million people. This is a strength to capitalize upon. Attraction of companies in distribution and supply chain is one of five business sectors that we identified in our report as a targeted business sector for the economic development team".

The Forward Lawrence initiative has emphasized the need for a collective approach to economic development. “In order to enhance the economic vitality of Lawrence County, a holistic approach to achieve success is recommended. It is based on a three-pillar method of recruitment, business retention and entrepreneurship. The team of Forward Lawrence including business and government must be proactive in driving the County’s economic future and setting it apart from peers and competitors. We’ve recommended that Lawrence County take a more targeted approach that leverages its proximity to the Pittsburgh and Cleveland MSA’s.” stated Mr. Garner.

While challenges exist, a variety of recommendations to face those challenges were shared including: increase the focus on entrepreneurial development, development a local scholarship to retain talent, improve local housing options, enhance the efforts and communications and processes among the county’s municipalities, better educate community leaders on economic development, merge the three local chambers of commerce into one unit, investigate the feasibility for a capital campaign, rebrand and improve external marketing efforts, and more.

“There is economic potential in Lawrence County. Our first step was to assess the County’s strengths and weaknesses as any potential business investor would do. Additionally, over 155 local stakeholders contributed to the rigor of this action plan, which sets the stage for future growth. Now, it’s up to the Lawrence County community to rally behind their Forward Lawrence team of community and business leaders, and government officials who can set the stage by prioritizing and putting into motion the next actionable steps,” concluded Garner.

In closing, Karmecy emphasized that the time is now to put new plans into motion. He called on the stakeholders in the room, and those referenced in Garner’s report to take the

necessary next steps to improve the county's future. He asked those in attendance to visit the www.forwardlawrence.com home page and identify which areas they can best make an impact. Karmecy stated that the status quo is unacceptable and the time is now to enact change. A positive future starts here in Lawrence County.

A video of the full event will be available on the Lawrence County Regional Chamber's YouTube channel by December 15th.

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