

MOSHANNON VALLEY PROGRESS

Summer Issue

Volume 24 Issue 3



Executive Director's Message



I read with great interest an article that appeared recently in an area publication that focused on a certain group's pro-

posal to have the GEO Moshannon Valley facility shut down. An outside organization called "Indivisible" is scheduled to be in Philipsburg on August 24th to protest the operations of GEO. Imagine that, a rally to promote the closure of a facility that employs over 400 people now, not including the 22 federal ICE employees that work at the GEO facility too. Our area is scheduled to lose over 700 jobs with the impending closure of the Quehanna Boot Camp and the Rockview State Corrections facility. Is the closure of GEO what is best for our country and our region, the loss of another employer and the 400+ jobs there?

So who is this group Indivisible that will be here in our region on the 24th? A Google search took me to a Wikipedia site. "Indivisible is a progressive movement and organization in the United States initiated in 2016 as a reaction to the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States." According to American urban policy analyst Peter Dreier, the goal of Indivisible is to "save American democracy" and "resume the

MVEDP Re-Certified by State DCED/PIDA Office

The MVEDP was recently notified by an official with the PA Department of Community & Economic Development that we have been re-certified which maintains the MVEDP as one of the sixty or so Certified Economic Development Organizations (CEDO) in the state. The CEDO designation provides the MVEDP with the opportunity to assist area businesses with low-interest loans through the PA Industrial Development Authority.

PIDA provides matching low interest loan financing to companies

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MVEDP Provides Loan Financing to Fred Grauch/ Grauch Enterprises

The MVEDP's Revolving Loan Fund Committee approved a loan of \$100,000 to Fred Grauch of Grauch Enterprises for the installation of a solar panel system on the buildings at his Port Matilda Highway property.

Mr. Grauch will provide funding, and the project is also supported by CNB Bank. The MVEDP always works to partner with the banking community on the projects that it gets involved with.

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MVEDP Re-Certified

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that are involved in land and building projects and machinery and equipment purchases. The lower interest rates are meant to save the loan recipients money over the term of the loans. Loans can be up to a maximum of 15 years. Bank financing for a portion of total project costs is required and bank commitment letters are required if projects are to be considered by the PIDA staff and board.. In exchange for the lower interest rate on loans, businesses are expected to either retain or create jobs depending upon the structure of the loan financing.

Fred Grauch/Grauch Enterprises

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The MVEDP staff was pleased to work with Fred, and Eric White of CNB to get the financing together for this solar project. Total cost of the project is \$250,000.00. A federal grant through USDA will be available too. Envinity Inc. of the State College region will install the new solar panel system.

Brett Stewart hired by MVEDP



On Monday, August 4th, Brett Stewart began his new employment with the MVEDP. Brett is a longtime resident of Philipsburg borough. For the past year and a half he has been the code enforcement officer for Clearfield

Borough. Brett served our country for eight years in the U.S. Marines. He worked for twenty-one years for the State Correctional Institute at Houtzdale and retired from there in March 2022.

MVEDP Assists Houtzdale Revitalization Association



Pictured Left to Right: Ann Berenbrok, Susan Stodart, Elsie Harchak, Marjann Young, Gene Wardo of the MVEDP Board, Rusty Christoff, MVEDP board member, and Sarah Jo. Young of the HRA

On Tuesday, June 10, 2025, two officials of the MVEDP met with the leadership of the Houtzdale Revitalization Association in Houtzdale. The gathering took place at the new David Wulderk pavilion located within Houtzdale Borough. Rusty Christoff and Gene Wardo, both long-time members of the MVEDP board of directors, and life-long Houtzdale area residents, represented the MVEDP that evening.

For the second time, the MVEDP provided funding to the HRA for their work in Houtzdale. The pavilion has been completed, as well as a much-needed sidewalk construction project. The facility is a welcome addition to the Borough and is available to groups that need a place to gather.

The MVEDP has supported other organizations over the years including the Philipsburg Revitalization Corporation, and the Moshannon Valley YMCA. Since 1996, the MVEDP has allocated just over \$600,000 to the downtown revitalization effort in Philipsburg Borough.

Executive Director's Message

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project of creating a humane America that is more like social democracy than corporate plutocracy.”

How bad it was in 2021 when newly elected president Joe Biden mandated that the federal government end its contracts with private corrections companies like GEO Group. The GEO facility was closed and over 240 people were out of a job.

The accusations by Indivisible against the GEO Group are completely unfounded. The claims include detainees being kept in isolation, receiving substandard medical care after long waits, and that there is a long record of human rights violations against detainees.

I have spoken to employees of GEO and attended quarterly meetings of GEO's Community Relations Committee. I have asked the question, is there inhumane treatment of immigrants at the GEO facility? The answers that I have received have been direct and to the point, there are no violations of immigrant's human rights at GEO. It was said that all immigrants are treated humanely and with respect. But, it was also said that a disruptive immigrant that doesn't follow the rules and stirs up trouble must be managed properly.

There are immigrants from 80 different countries being processed by the GEO team. Over 50% of the immigrants are rated high risk meaning that they have a track record of crime, gang and/or drug trade involvement. The GEO staff must work diligently to keep order at the facility when there are many highly questionable immigrants passing through their doors.

There was an incorrect statement made in that recent article about the GEO Moshannon Valley facility. The written statement was: “community members were not thrilled with the idea of having an immigration facility in the area.” Never was the MVEDP ever contacted by a community member expressing their concern about the reopening of the GEO facility as an immigrant processing center. There were no citizens in attendance at local government meetings within the Moshannon Valley expressing their opposition to the proposed facility. Instead, all the people that we encountered were

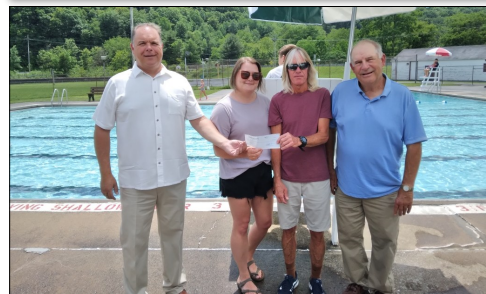
pleased that people would be back to work at GEO, earning living wage incomes to support their families located throughout the central-PA region.

Some current facts about the GEO Moshannon Valley facility:

# of employees	407
Gross wages paid	\$32,025,000
Value of benefits paid	\$2,186,587
# of Federal ICE employees	22
Taxes paid to local gov't/school dist.	\$711,000

GEO Moshannon Valley has made a tremendous positive impact on the economy of the entire Moshannon Valley region. The \$32 million paid annually to the workforce can buy a lot of homes, cars and trucks, and products sold by area businesses. The numbers above do not include the millions of dollars that GEO spends annually with area vendors. There was a reason that the MVEDP pursued the recruitment of GEO's predecessor Cornell Companies to our region: the jobs, and at that time there were 225 jobs that were to be created by Cornell. The fact that GEO now has over 400 employees is a very positive thing for the greater Moshannon Valley economy.

Clear Centre Pool Association Received Grant Funding From the MVEDP



Pictured: Rusty Christoff, MVEDP Board Member, Mallory Emigh, Asst. Manager Clear Centre Pool, Brett Albert, Manager Clear Centre Pool, and Gene Wardo, MVEDP Board Member

On Wednesday, June 18th, representatives of the MVEDP provided a check to the leadership of the Clear Centre Pool Association in Osceola Mills.

MVEDP board members Gene Wardo and Rusty Christoff presented a check in the amount of \$3,000.00 the Pool Association.

The Clear Centre pool is an important asset to the Osceola Mills/Moshannon Valley region. There are

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Spotlight on Business: SurferQuest, NCMEC & Darkness2Hope Technology with Heart, Born in Central PA

From the quiet hills of Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, a powerful vision is reaching hotel guests, vulnerable communities, and survivors across the nation. For 25 years, Global Software Applications, LLC (GSA)—a Woman-Owned Small Business—has built more than software. It's built trust, awareness, and hope.

Innovative Roots, Silicon Valley Spirit

GSA's story began in nearby State College, PA, during the early days of the cybercafé boom. The goal? Give the public easy, safe, and reliable access to technology. But as demand evolved, so did the company's focus. Much like the origin stories of Apple and Google, GSA was born from a garage-era mentality—solving real-world problems with scalable, intuitive software.

What started as a cybercafé concept quickly became a full-stack development firm focused on hospitality technology. The team began crafting advanced algorithms and smart interfaces tailored to the operational needs of hotels. That ethos—*solve real problems, serve real people*—still drives GSA today.

A Suite of Solutions, Designed for Guests and Staff

Over the decades, GSA has become a trusted partner to major hospitality brands like Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, Best Western, and Choice Hotels, and collaborates with Samsung to power guest-facing displays and signage.

Flagship products include:

- SurferQuest® – Secure, guest-use business center computers and printing
- QRconneX™ – A contactless platform for mobile check-ins, concierge access, and local info
- Here2There™ & Wayfinding Pro™ – Interactive, ADA-compliant digital wayfinding for large venues

- Self Check-In Kiosks – Seamless, PMS-integrated solutions for efficient guest arrival.

All platforms are fully customizable and built with both hotel operations and user experience in mind.

From Hotel Lobbies to Humanitarian Impact

Beyond the front desk, GSA's technology quietly does something remarkable: it helps find missing children.

Through a long-standing partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), the SurferQuest® platform displays missing child alerts across hotel business centers nationwide—leveraging screen time into a powerful tool for awareness and recovery.

That spirit of impact led to the founding of Darkness2Hope, a nonprofit organization born from GSA's leadership and compassion. Based in Central PA, Darkness2Hope works to combat human trafficking and support survivors. Through trauma-informed education, outreach, and safe housing, the organization brings its mission to life: *from darkness to hope, one life at a time.*

A People-First Philosophy in a Tech-First World

What truly sets GSA apart isn't just its platforms—it's its people.

In an industry where automation often replaces connection, GSA maintains 24/7 in-house customer support. No call centers. No bots. Just real, responsive people who know your system and care about your success.

"Anyone can develop software," says the team. "But not everyone listens. We listen, we solve, and we stay connected."

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MVEDP Board Member Election will be Held Soon

The MVEDP's annual board of directors election will be held in October. The board member election process takes place as follows:

August: MVEDP board members up for re-election (5) they must decide if they want to run for a seat again; MVEDP solicits the business community for names of people that would like to run for a seat on the board

September: The MVEDP's Nominating Committee and Board of Directors reviews the list of candidates and approves an election ballot

October: The election ballot is sent to the MVEDP's members

November: The Board of Directors reviews the ballot voting results and the top five vote-getters are elected to the board

December: The board members officially take their seats on the board and the new fiscal year of the MVEDP begins

Five MVEDP board members must decide if they want to run for re-election and keep their seat on the board. Board members up for re-election this year include: President Karen Blair, Bill Jones, Jeff Herr, John Shimko, and Gene Wardo. The staff recently learned that 21-year board member John Shimko will retire from the board in November.

The MVEDP is seeking names of people who would be interested in running for a seat on the board. Please submit your name or the name of a candidate by September 12th.

Clear Centre Pool Association

Continued from Page 3

no other public or school district pools throughout the entire Valley. The MVEDP believes it very important that this community pool be kept in operation. The MVEDP board of directors was unanimous in its support of both the Clear Centre Pool Association, and the Houtzdale Revitalization Association and their community revitalization work.

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MVEDP Board of Directors FY 2025

	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Tenure Thru Nov. 30, 2025</u>
Bill Jones	1988	37 Years
Robert Steward, Jr.	1991	34 Years
Jeff Herr	1999	26 Years
John Shimko	2004	21 Years
Gene Wardo	1998-2011	13 Years
	2019	6 Years
Karen Blair	2007	18 Years
Rusty Christoff	2011	14 Years
Steve Lyncha	2012	13 Years
Bryan Bennett	2014	11 Years
Dustin Minarchick	2016	9 Years
Wanda Ryen	2018	7 Years
Eric White	2023	2 Years
Robert Maltais	2023	2 Years
Jerry Lese	2024	1 Year
Ryan Scaife	2024	1 Year

MVEDP Revolving Loan Fund Program a Cost-Saving Alternative

The MVEDP continues to market its Revolving Loan Fund program that is available to assist businesses located throughout the Moshannon Valley region. The RLF program was first started in 1991. It was capitalized with \$200,000 of local MVEDP funds, and a \$200,000 federal grant from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

All types of businesses are eligible to seek loan financing through the MVEDP's loan program. Manufacturing, service, and retail businesses are eligible. The MVEDP will provide up to 50% of the financing for a project and most often works with local banks that provide the balance of the funding needed to make the projects happen. Company equity participation is also required.

Some interesting facts about the MVEDP's Revolving Loan Fund Program through June 30, 2025:

Total loans approved:	74
Total RLF \$ loaned:	\$4,012,850
Total private and other financing:	\$12,265,501
Jobs created:	266
Jobs retained:	147
Current # loans on the books:	5
Total # loans that went delinquent	2**

**Both loans were to new startup manufacturing companies that had partnerships in their corporate structures. The partnerships went bad, and the businesses folded.

The MVEDP is very fortunate to have some great expertise on the Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Committee members include: Chairman Jeff Herr, Bill Jones, Rusty Christoff, Dustin Minarchick, Robert Maltais, Bryan Bennett, and Gary Turner.

Thank You Members

The Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership thanks you for your support of our economic & community development efforts!

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M&T Bank
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Moshannon Valley Pharmacy
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Philipsburg Kiwanis Club
Philipsburg Marble & Granite

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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From Central PA to the World

For GSA, every product is an opportunity to create not just efficiency, but empathy. Whether it's helping a hotel guest print a boarding pass or helping a survivor find safety, this is technology with heart—engineered in the Moshannon Valley and deployed across the nation.

Learn more or support the mission:

www.surferquest.com

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www.darkness2hope.org

Thank You Members

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 PMG Pennsylvania
 Rusty's Oil & Propane
 Ryen Realty, LLC
 The EADS Group
 Thompson Law Office
 Walter Hopkins & Company

**Thank You Happy Valley
Adventure Bureau**

The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau recently approved grants to five area organizations: BPOE 1173, MVEMS, Friends of Black Moshannon, PRC, and the Rowland Theatre. Thank you to HVAB for your support of other non-profit organizations in this area.



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