

# Residents urged to act and cooperate on growth concerns

By CHARLOT M. DENMON  
Staff Writer

"It's easy to identify what is wrong but it is not easy to identify how to correct it," Ed Schechter told 120 residents who attended the second meeting on managing Back Mountain development, held at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus last week.

Schechter spoke briefly to the group following presentations by speakers invited to present suggestions and recommendations that might be valuable to managing growth in the area.

He referred to the Smith report, which had been mentioned earlier by Howard Grossman, which Schechter said was a very good report and should have had some impact on the community.

"It had none," Schechter said. "It wasn't acted upon because it was done by outsiders and did not involve local affected officials. Let's stop talking and start doing something." Schechter recommended that the attendees form into small groups by community and that those groups steer the discussion in each municipality by meeting with elected officials and others.

Earlier in the meeting, Bill Browning, president of Greater Wilkes-Barre Partnership, spoke on the growth in the Wyoming Valley Area over the past five years.

"From the second quarter in 1983 to the second quarter in 1988, there were 15,700 new jobs in the area," Browning said.

Browning said that since 1987 the CEG was contacted by 644 companies; in the first six months of this year, there have been 522 companies interested. Back Mountain is the hot spot, according to him, but there is a shortage of homes in the \$60,000 to \$99,000 range that many workers are interested in. Browning said that CEG is now concerned about planned growth and is researching housing, transportation, water, solid waste management and controlled development so the area is offered the best advantages.

"We can't back off and quit sharing our area. New people bring in new ideas, new opportunities. We are looking at the Back Mountain growth very seriously," Browning stated.

David Wauls of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, an area

that has experienced many concerns now those of Back Mountain residents, said the input of all views and open communication is needed to solve many of the problems. "It's not easy," Waul advised. "We must put down the barriers between municipalities. Municipal officials, county commissioners, planners and developers must come together and look at new ways to solve our problems," Wauls told the Back Mountain group.

He stated that his area has 20 privately owned industrial parks that invest money in maintaining their own parks. He also said that when PennDOT was unable to supply the money needed for additional roads, local governments and the private sector combined to fund needed expansions.

Nancy Eckert, former Dallas Borough council member and on the board of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, explained that she is a member of a task force, studying the influx of growth in Monroe County.

"Most of these people are second home owners or year-round residents from New York or New Jersey. Land costs have become prohibitive," she said. "There is no place for the young people or senior citizens, no affordable housing."

Eckert asked the group to consider affordable housing for young couples and for senior citizens. She also urged attendance at municipal meetings and cited as an example that when she was on the Dallas Borough council, people came out only when they had a problem.

Howard Grossman spoke about the Wyoming Valley Appearance and Image study and report after the flood and listed some of the recommendations it made for the Back Mountain, such as trash and junk ordinances, comprehensive building and zoning code enforcement, zoning review, building and sign removal, land use, restriction of commercial property, park planning.

"We need an area planning council to get together and devise a plan workable for all municipalities. We have to start at the local level," Grossman stated.

Fred Potzer, Kingston Township manager, spoke extensively on the cooperation that is already occurring among the various levels of

government, such as the Dallas Area Municipal Authority. First combining the waste treatment services of Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Kingston Township, DAMA's treatment plant later added Harveys Lake Borough, Jackson and Lehman Townships. Potzer said the Authority handled its extensive operations with a staff of five and manager Tom Bagley.

Harveys Lake, Dallas, Kingston Township and Dallas Township now have the Back Mountain Control Center for police, fire and ambulance, with a board of directors and an annual budget of \$100,000.

Dallas Borough, Dallas Township, Kingston Township, Lehman and Franklin Township, have a joint purchasing program whereby they save thousands of dollars annually.

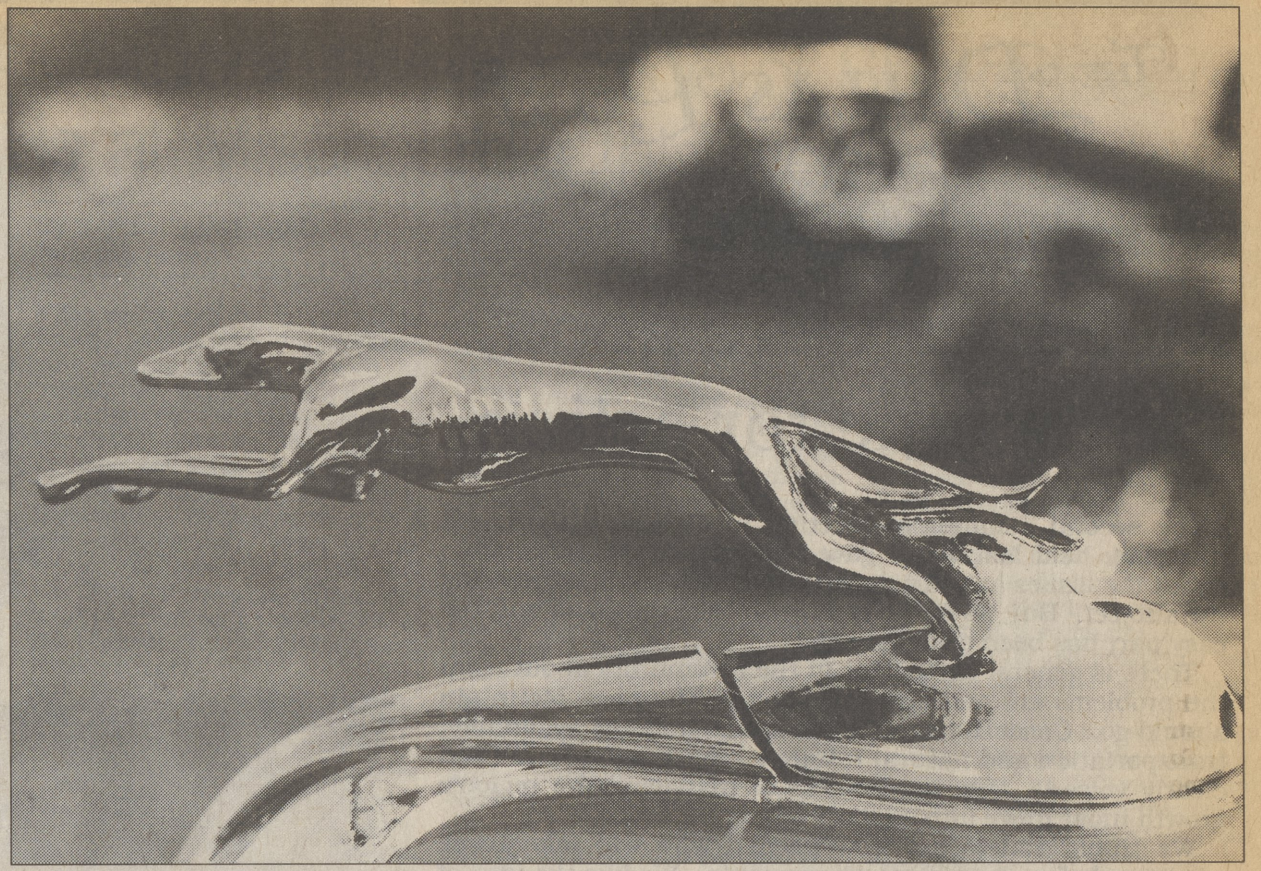
The road departments of Kingston Township, Dallas Township and Dallas Borough now cooperate with one another, and for 12 years, Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Kingston Township have been working under a mutual aid plan. They have a regional DUI Processing Center, one of the first areas to have it.

"Can we do anything else?" he asked. "We can do something about control of development in one of three ways - intermunicipal agreements, forming a Back Mountain authority or initiating a Council of Governments," Potzer stated, and explained all three.

"Our communities work together closer and better than any other area in Luzerne County. They are not afraid to work together," Potzer stated in closing.

Dr. James Ryan, Penn State president, stated that he did not plan to set a date for another community meeting but asked what members of the group wanted to do next. He asked for their comments and recommendations and said that they would be discussed at a meeting of a smaller group acting as a steering committee.

"Our next step is that something should be done, not just discussions. Turn in your comments and we will be in touch with all of you. We will probably break into groups with a leader to discuss our concerns," Ryan said.



**At the car show**

Hundreds of show cars, old and new, were on display at last weekend's event in Lehman. Among them were; top, the hood ornament on Dallas resident Jerry Schmid's 1934 Ford; bottom, a 1948 Packard owned by Charles Bartlett, Dallas.

## One subdivision okayed, two tabled in Harveys Lake

The Harvey's Lake Planning Commission approved a minor subdivision Monday of 230 feet of lake front property owned by Guy Giordano.

The Lakeside Drive property will be subdivided into three lots of 60, 80, and 90 feet, for the purpose of selling two of the lots.

In other business, a request by George Taylor to subdivide a property on Cook Street into two lots was tabled, pending review by the building inspector, Ron DeBalko.

A major subdivision request by Marvin Hughes was tabled. Hughes requested permission to subdivide 300 feet of lake front property into seven lots. The Commission decided to table the application pending the scheduling of a public hearing.

The expected discussion of a townhouse development on Barnum Street never materialized as the developer, whose first plan was rejected, did not appear with a new proposal.

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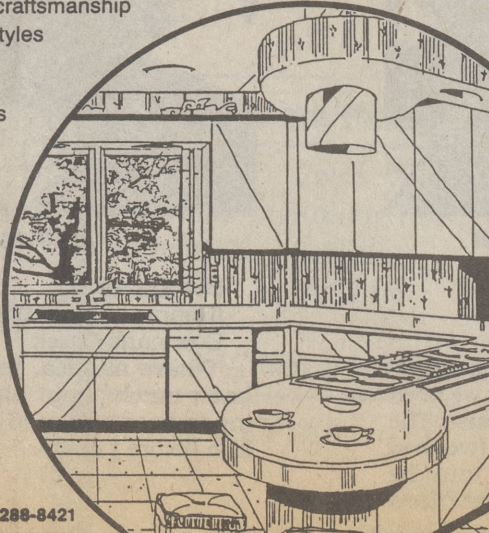
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