

2007... a year of

# Change



2007 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# Change

## always a part of CAN DO

CAN DO was founded on change... a change in thinking to attract new businesses and new jobs to Greater Hazleton.

Even spare change played a role in CAN DO's beginning, helping its founders purchase the first piece of property which later became Valmont Industrial Park.

Change in CAN DO's focus in the 1990s was the impetus for developing the CAN DO Corporate Center as a "white-collar" business park, now home to technology-based companies like Network Solutions.

Change is being seen in our landscape as areas that were once blighted by mining are continually being reclaimed and transformed into green spaces.

And today, change is still a part of CAN DO's core philosophy.

This past year saw changes occur on many levels in our communities and in our industrial parks.

Regionally, a recent report by the Joint Urban Studies Center indicates that, for the first time in nearly a century, Luzerne County has stopped seeing a decline in population and in fact we're on the grow.

In our industrial parks, new companies like Gonnella Frozen Products, U.S. Cold Storage and Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) are moving in, bringing with them new employment opportunities.

Many of the businesses already located in our industrial parks and corporate center are thriving, highlighted most notably in 2007 by the success of PetsUnited, a company in Humboldt which was recently named one of the fastest growing companies in the country by Inc.com.

Change took place during the past year in the infrastructure of our parks. New roads were created and dedicated in Humboldt Industrial Park North to reach more sites that will be the future home to new businesses. Sewer systems are being upgraded and expanded, and rail lines now serve more industrial parcels.

The infrastructure for Humboldt Station was completed and, in May, we helped break ground for the first project - a 92-room Residence Inn by Marriott. Since that day, work has continued almost nonstop, and the hotel expects to be welcoming both business and leisure guests sometime this spring.

Change is taking place in the lands surrounding our communities. CAN DO is working together with municipal officials on the reclamation of 22 acres of mine-scarred land in Harwood. Also, CAN DO and the Greater Hazleton

Chamber of Commerce are working together on the Cranberry Creek Gateway Project. These projects are converting mine-scarred lands at the gateways to our communities into usable green space, helping to make a positive impression on guests to our area.

This summer, CAN DO was chosen to host an economic development delegation from Wendeng City, China. These delegates toured our industrial parks and exchanged ideas for future growth.

The Community Association for New Business Entrepreneurship, better known as CAN BE, also witnessed change this past year, as more area entrepreneurs became part of our growing business incubator program.

One thing that has not changed, however, is our communities' dedication to recognizing the bravery of our service men and women protecting our freedom in the Middle East. For the third year, "Operation: CAN DO" was a tremendous success. Many soldiers received care packages from home thanks to this important venture.

As we look forward to more positive change in the coming years, we want to pause and, on behalf of our Board of Directors, thank all of the volunteers whose efforts have helped make CAN DO's mission a success for more than 50 years. It is their dedication that continues to help change our area for the better.



CAN DO President Kevin O'Donnell and Chairman E. Thomas Sandrock.

## Helping grow 10 new businesses

For many years, CAN DO primarily focused on bringing new businesses and industries into the area from other parts of the United States and the world. However, CAN DO recognized that with more and more manufacturing companies moving overseas, it was vital to explore new and innovative ways of creating jobs in today's new economy.

In response, CAN DO partnered with Penn State Hazleton, PPL and Ben Franklin Technology Partners to found CAN BE, the Community Association for New Business Entrepreneurship, in the fall of 2005.

CAN BE – a division of CAN DO, Inc. – operates the Greater Hazleton Business Innovation Center in the Valmont Industrial Park, West Hazleton, as a nurturing business incubator.

The incubator program helps local entrepreneurs turn their ideas into ventures that will become successful businesses, capable of functioning on their own. Once established, these new businesses have the potential to create new jobs in Greater Hazleton.

The Greater Hazleton Business Innovation Center is now home to 10 new start-up companies with more on the horizon. In less than three years, CAN BE has grown to become one of northeast Pennsylvania's premier business incubator programs.

“With the amazing success of CAN BE and the Greater Hazleton Business

Innovation Center, it's easy to see that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Greater Hazleton,” said CAN DO President Kevin O'Donnell.

Among the benefits the incubator program offers new start-ups are management guidance

and technical assistance; marketing, business law and financial consulting; affordable rental space and flexible leases; shared basic business services and equipment; technology support; and assistance in obtaining the financing necessary for growth.

Other resources utilized by CAN BE to assist new businesses include the Luzerne County Office of Community Development, the Great Valley Technology Alliance, the Northeast Pennsylvania Technology Institute, Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP), Wilkes College Small Business Development Center, angel investor networks, which make investments in new business ventures, and other governmental agencies.

“Anyone can start a new business. All it takes is an idea and the determination to make it succeed,” says CAN BE Executive Director Jack St. Pierre. “Of course, it helps to surround yourself with experienced entrepreneurs and business mentors to help you get past any bumps in the road, which is what makes CAN BE so valuable.”

St. Pierre is no stranger to building a business, having founded his own in the mid 1980s. He routinely offers his nearly 40 years of manufacturing, sales, marketing and business experience to entrepreneurs.

CAN BE hosts several seminars throughout the year to provide information for area entrepreneurs. The “Start Your Own Business Seminar Series” presents topics important to launching a successful new start-up such as finances, developing a business plan, marketing and protecting intellectual property.

Various guest speakers have headlined these seminars, bringing even more talent and insight to the local entrepreneurial community.



NSB Trainers offers a Certified Nursing Assistant training program.



CAN BE Executive Director Jack St. Pierre, right, introduces CAN BE Seminar Series guest speaker Rob McAnally.

### AeroSolutions, LLC.

The first new businesses tenant at the CAN BE incubator, AeroSolutions designs, builds and installs upgrades for cellular towers, increasing their structural integrity and efficiency.

### CDE

The “anchor” tenant for CAN BE, CDE offers computer-based workforce development training in a number of fields, including medical office assistant and office computer assistant as well as Certified Driver's License training.

### Concrete Alternatives & More

Concrete Alternatives & More provides decorative and functional concrete and asphalt resurfacing for residential and commercial applications. The company can duplicate brick, stone and faux-terrazzo finishes for patios, garage floors and similar work areas.

### Corporate Buyers Guide

A web-driven business that provides solutions to purchasers of industrial equipment. Corporate Buyers Guide offers equipment buyers a single portal of access to volumes of unbiased information on a variety of industrial equipment.

### Interactive Media Marketing Group

Interactive Media Marketing Group (IMMG) has developed a business model to produce and market a personal safety device for residents of assisted living facilities. The fall sensor location and communication device allows the facility's staff to know if a resident fell, where they fell and open a line of communication with the resident to immediately determine their condition.

### Internet Data Services

A sister company to IMMG, Internet Data Services (IDS) provides fiber optic Internet service to office

buildings where fiber optic lines already exist through hardware and software applications proprietary to IDS, dramatically increasing their Internet speed at a significantly lower cost.

### NSB Trainers

NSB Trainers offers a Certified Nursing Assistant training program that provides practical and classroom training to individuals pursuing a career in a personal care or hospital setting.

### Shirtificates® LLC

The winner of the 2007 Great Valley Technology Alliance's Business Plan

Competition, Shirtificates® has a unique fund raising product for schools and organizations where customer selected artwork is printed on tee shirts using proprietary color and art transfer techniques.

### United Business Solutions

United Business Solutions is a full service business support company specializing in office supplies, office furniture and bookkeeping. UBS offers bookkeeping and financial support services; office furniture configuration and installation services; and office supplies sales and service.

### WashDog Progressive Laundry LLC

WashDog applies patent pending technology to new commercial laundry machines, reducing energy and detergent consumption while increasing cleaning efficiency.

For more information on CAN BE and the Greater Hazleton Business Innovation Center, visit [www.canbe.biz](http://www.canbe.biz) or call 570-455-8334.

# 2007 in review

## A year of change and growth...

### *Change.*

It's more evident than ever by simply taking a drive along Route 924 from Hazleton towards Sheppton.

At first, you'll notice that much of the abandoned strip mining pits and mounds of black culm, which for years bordered both sides of this highway, have been replaced with sloping hills of green grass.

Then, a short distance farther, you'll approach the interstate ramps and see the added highway lanes and spacious intersections which make up the recently completed first phase of PennDOT's Route 924 expansion project which is needed to accommodate the continued growth of Humboldt Industrial Park.

On your left, construction of a new hotel adds beauty to our gateway and is the first project in the newly created Humboldt Station, which will be home to another hotel, restaurants and a gas station/convenience store.

As you continue your drive just a little farther along Route 924, some of the most notable change appears on the northern horizon as the first buildings in Humboldt Industrial Park North rise from the ground with promises of new jobs for area residents.

In just a little more than a year, construction has begun or has been completed on more than 2.5 million square feet of industrial buildings that will be home to world class companies like Archer Daniels Midland, Gonnella Frozen Products, U.S. Cold Storage, Vita-Line Products, Pioneer Distribution, and more.



### **Gonnella Frozen Products**

In November, Chicago-based Gonnella Baking Company began producing some of its 150 different varieties of frozen bread and roll dough at its new 100,000-square foot manufacturing and warehouse facility in Humboldt North.

"This is a milestone in CAN DO's history as this company is the first to open its doors in Humboldt North, our newest addition to Humboldt Industrial Park," said Kevin O'Donnell, CAN DO's president during the company's ribbon cutting ceremonies held recently.

Prior to the ribbon cutting, Gonnella's president, Ken Gonnella, spoke about the early success of finding qualified workers in the Hazleton area. "We had absolutely no problems finding candidates who possess the skill sets we were seeking. I've been very impressed with the people our company has hired here in Hazle Township and with the number of applicants who applied for positions. All of the candidates have been fast learners and took to the training quickly. It's a very good group we have here in the Hazleton area," he said.

Gonnella's frozen dough products are used by in-store baking facilities in grocery stores and restaurants nationwide. The company is already employing nearly 40 people and expects to eventually have up to 100 people working at its Hazleton plant.



Guests help with the ribbon cutting ceremony at Gonnella's Humboldt facility.

### **Archer Daniels Midland**

Archer Daniels Midland, or ADM as the company is more commonly known, has been working for months now on the construction of its 500,000-square foot cocoa processing plant in Humboldt North and expects to begin operations there sometime this year.

ADM employs more than 27,000 people worldwide at its 240 processing plants and had net sales of \$44 billion for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007.

The company is constructing two buildings on a 76-acre tract.

The Cranberry Creek area near Humboldt is being beautified and mine lands reclaimed.



ADM's 500,000-square foot cocoa processing facility in Humboldt North is under construction.



**Equilibrium Equities' 240,000-square foot Humboldt East building.**

our area to companies looking for new homes, we also don't forget about those companies that are already here," O'Donnell said.

"CAN DO is always willing to assist existing tenants with projects that work to expand or retain existing jobs and tenant profitability," he said. "We often help companies find funding for expansions, equipment purchases, employee training and much more."

Just some of the expansions that took place in 2007 include a 166,400-square foot addition to Michael's Handcrafts in Humboldt West; a 103,000-square foot expansion at E&B Giftware in Humboldt, and a 43,600-square foot expansion at Penn Summit Tubular in Valmont Industrial Park.



**George Weston Bakeries**

Production at the new George Weston Bakeries in Humboldt, a plant which was formerly operated by Boboli until it closed more than a year ago, began in November.

The company, which produces baked goods under the brand name Entenmanns, currently employs 115 people in the Humboldt Industrial Park bakery.

"We were very happy when George Weston Bakeries came in and took over the former Boboli plant since the company brought back some of the workers who were displaced when Boboli closed its operations here," O'Donnell said.

George Weston Bakeries also owns and operates the Stroehmann's plant in Valmont Industrial Park.

**U.S. Cold Storage**

Another new company moving into Humboldt North is United States Cold Storage.

This company operates a network of refrigerated warehouses across the country and is touting its Hazleton facility as an ultra-modern distribution center that will serve the metro hubs of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

The company states that its new center in Humboldt North will feature 4.7 million cubic feet of refrigerated warehousing with rail and truck service.

**Other Humboldt North projects**

Construction is well underway for a 600,000-square foot distribution center which will be operated by Pioneer Distribution, LLC, while work is nearing completion on the 175,000-square foot Vita-Line Products manufacturing facility that will produce pet food products.

**Commercial developer activity**

Not all projects underway in Humboldt North are

being done with a tenant in hand.

In fact, speculative commercial real estate developers have taken a strong interest in Greater Hazleton over the past several years.

Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services, based in Wilkes-Barre, has been a long-time developer throughout the region and has built several of the large manufacturing and distribution centers in the Humboldt parks. Currently, Mericle has a 500,000-square foot building in Humboldt ready for occupancy and is well underway with construction of a 410,000-square foot building in Humboldt North.

Equilibrium Equities is another developer investing in Humboldt. The company recently completed construction of a 240,000 square foot building in Humboldt East and is marketing that property while beginning the planning stages for a second building in Humboldt North.

Another developer, Chicago-based Higgins Development Partners, has completed work on a 400,260-square foot speculative building in Humboldt West and is currently marketing that building nationwide.

"The amount of activity we are seeing in our parks with commercial speculative

building developers attests to the attractiveness of Greater Hazleton for business and industry in the Northeast," O'Donnell said. "This really improves our marketing efforts as these companies have invested in our area and are promoting our location and great workforce across the nation and around the world."

**Other success stories**

Not all of CAN DO's successes involve new projects, however.

"While we obviously are always trying to promote



**U.S. Cold Storage under construction in Humboldt North.**

**Workers erect Mericle's new speculative building in Humboldt North.**

# Humboldt Station

## First tenant welcomed



The future of Humboldt Station began to take shape in 2007 as several infrastructure projects were completed and a groundbreaking was held for the first tenant.

Early in the year, CAN DO completed the installation of utilities to Humboldt Station's 11 sites, finished roadways and sidewalks, and added architectural streetlighting throughout the project.

Then, in May, ground was broken for the construction of a 92-room Residence Inn by Marriott, Humboldt Station's first tenant.

"This is an historic day for Greater Hazleton. Humboldt

Station will provide a wonderful dining and lodging addition to our region while also capturing revenue from Interstate 81 travelers. Equally important is that this center will provide restaurants and hotels for industries in our ever-growing Humboldt Industrial Park," CAN DO Chairman of the Board E. Thomas Sandrock said at the groundbreaking.

Construction of the hotel has continued almost nonstop since that day, and officials are targeting the grand opening for this spring.

Located just off Interstate 81 and adjacent to the Humboldt Industrial Park on Route 924, Humboldt Station is CAN DO's first commercial land development project. Once completed, Humboldt Station will include another hotel as well as several restaurants and a gas station/convenience store.

The Residence Inn is being developed by J&J Inn Partners of Williamsport, which also owns and manages the local Hampton Inn and Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott, as well as five other hotel properties in Wilkes-Barre and Williamsport.

CAN DO President Kevin O'Donnell thanked everyone who has worked on the Humboldt Station project. "We need to thank Hazle Township, the Luzerne County Commissioners, the Hazleton Area School District, PPL Utilities and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for all their support. In fact, it was nearly a year and a half ago when Governor Rendell was standing here presenting us with a loan for \$2.77 million to help fund the infrastructure needed for the Humboldt Station project."



Less than a year after groundbreaking ceremonies were held, top, construction of the new 92-room Residence Inn nears completion.

# A legacy of caring



For more than 15 years now, the CAN DO Community Foundation has been working to improve Greater Hazleton through its core mission of 'Conservation, Preservation and Reclamation.'

As the non-profit philanthropic arm of Greater Hazleton's economic development agency, CAN DO, the foundation has played a role in projects like the restoration of the Ferrwood music camp near Drums; restoration of abandoned coal lands at the gateway to our city as well as historic buildings, and through the awarding of student scholarships.

"We're very proud of our accomplishments over the first 15 years the organization is in existence. The hard work of our many volunteers ensures that these efforts will continue for many years to come," said Gary F. Lamont, foundation president.

Over the past several years, the Ferrwood restoration project has seen more than \$600,000 committed through grants and contributions from many



Students take part in music camp at Ferrwood

businesses, foundations and individuals.

Ferrwood is home to several weeks of music camp each summer for children throughout the area.

The foundation is working with officials from the Hazleton Public Library to raise funds for the restoration of the library building at Green and Church Streets. The library is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

Several years ago, the foundation made a contribution to the campus expansion project

at MMI Preparatory School, and several foundation members are currently serving on a committee to restore the auditorium in the 'Castle on the Hill' for the school and community to use.

Then there are the scholarships the foundation provides. Each year, five high school juniors are chosen as the Edgar L. Dessen Scholars and are funded to attend the Hazleton Junior Leadership program. A scholarship is also awarded each year to a Penn State Hazleton student.

# Delegation visits from China

Hazleton played host on a global stage this summer as China visited our area as part of a United Nations program. CAN DO was one of only a few economic development agencies asked by the International Economic Development Council to host a delegation of municipal and economic development officials from Wendeng City, a county-level city located on the eastern tip of Shandong Province, China, with a population of more than 643,000 people.

The delegation toured and met with several successful economic development organizations during a two-week tour across the United States coordinated through the (IEDC) as part of a United Nations Industrial Development initiative.

The visit included an explanation of CAN DO's history and operations, a tour of Humboldt Industrial Park and Bemis Company's Valmont plant, followed by a dinner reception at the Valley Country Club, including guests from Penn's Northeast, the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, CAN BE, and Rep. Todd Eachus D-PA (116).

A special ceremony was held where O'Donnell and Sandrock joined Executive Mayor of Wendeng Municipal Government Luan Bo in signing a letter of introduction and strategic partnership, recognizing the value of a long-term strategic relationship.



CAN DO Chairman E. Thomas Sandrock shakes hands with Executive Mayor of Wendeng Municipal Government Luan Bo. CAN DO President Kevin O'Donnell is at far right.

## CAN DO thanks its volunteer board of directors and representatives

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# Thanking area servicemen and women



Above: U.S. Army First Lieutenant Christopher Morgan visited students at Freeland Elementary/Middle School to express his thanks for the care packages and share stories of his time in Iraq and Kuwait. Below: Students prepare care packages for soldiers overseas.



For the third consecutive year, the CAN DO Student Action Subcommittee held "Operation: CAN DO," a philanthropic drive to thank servicemen and women stationed in the Middle East with ties to Greater Hazleton.

Donations of goods and funds were received throughout October from more than 30 area businesses, schools, organizations and individuals, which were used to create the care packages and ship them overseas.

Hazleton Area High School students and Student Action Subcommittee members Donna Chen and Alba Espinosa co-chaired the event, which was coordinated through the American Legion Home Association Post 473 in Freeland.

"Operation: CAN DO" is our way of saying, 'Thank you,' to the men and women protecting our freedom who cannot be home for the holidays," said Chen. "This is our opportunity to send them something from home to remind them that they are missed and appreciated."

In November, U.S. Army First Lieutenant Christopher Morgan (on leave after a 15-month deployment in Iraq and Kuwait) visited students at Freeland Elementary/Middle School.

"Speaking from my experience, it meant a lot to receive the 'Operation: CAN DO' package. I can't tell you how nice it was to know that the community was thinking of me," he told the students. "When I received the care package, I opened it up in front of all of the troops I was

stationed with. There was so much in the package that we all shared it. For one of the soldiers in our troop, it was his first care package from home, so it meant even more."

The Student Action Subcommittee also received a letter from U.S. Air Force Captain Nokomie Welsh, PharmD, who is stationed at Balad Air Base in Iraq and was a recipient of one of the "Operation: CAN DO" care packages in November.

"Thank you so much for the care package. That was so thoughtful of you. I can't tell you how good it feels to get mail when you are deployed; it's the highlight of the week to that you are gone from home, but not forgotten," Capt. Welsh wrote.

In all, 33 members of the armed forces received care packages through "Operation: CAN DO" this holiday season.

Led by advisors Nancy Stasko and Charles Burkhardt, the 2007-2008 Student Action Subcommittee committee included Drew Samoyedny, Holly Schoch, Joseph Tombasco, Donna Chen and Alba Espinosa from Hazleton Area High School; Ashley Huttenstine from Marian Catholic High School (former Bishop Hafey representative); Dante Palermo and Kimberly Gatski of Weatherly Area High School; Josi Gula and David Lopez from MMI Preparatory School; and Kimberly Hoffman and Robert Weldon of Immanuel Christian High School.

## CAN DO hires three, promotes two

**Brian Hansbury** was hired as an Economic Development Specialist. Hansbury will assist CAN DO in the development, refinement and maintenance of an effective grant/loan administration system.



staff with projects while maintaining correspondence and various committee calendars.

**Bernadette DeBias** has been hired as the director of economic development. As director of economic development, DeBias will be responsible for obtaining public and private funds to stimulate the growth of CAN DO as well as the industries in CAN DO's industrial



parks and the CAN DO Corporate Center.

**Melissa Wesgaites** was promoted to Marketing Specialist. Wesgaites' responsibilities include assisting in the creation and preparation of an aggressive marketing program; responding to leads for the available real estate in the CAN DO service area, including the organization's three industrial parks and the CAN



DO Corporate Center business park; and maintaining a database of all available industrial/office properties within the CAN DO service area.

**Tiffany Miller** has been promoted to the position of Accounting Specialist at CAN DO. Prior to this position, Miller was an administrative assistant for both CAN DO and CAN BE.

