


Developing viable workforce
and professional solutions
that inspire a region's
economic growth.




Regional
**Learning
Alliance**
at Cranberry Woods



The Regional Learning Alliance Overview

The Regional Learning Alliance redefines the delivery of education within an entire enterprise region by bringing together under one roof technical institutions; community colleges; baccalaureate and graduate, public and private universities.

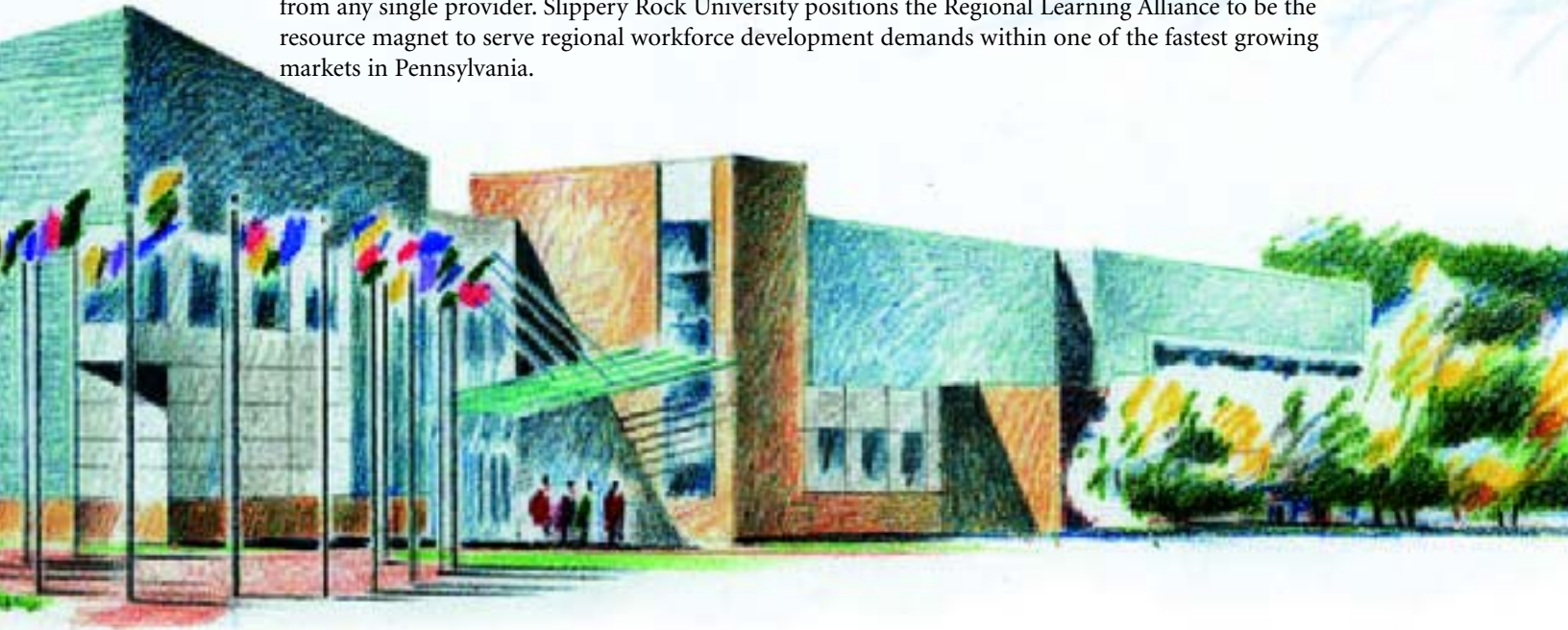


Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania proposes the establishment of an “educational alliance” with other education institutions to broker the training and educational needs of business and industry within the Western Pennsylvania region. Known as the Regional Learning Alliance, this unique partnership will operate out of a single comprehensive facility as an independent 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the regional educational alliance is to efficiently and effectively meet the training and educational needs of the businesses and industries within a two hour radius of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Slippery Rock University will serve as the facility manager and broker educational services to match business, industry and community needs with the best available educational provider.

By collaborating rather than competing, educational providers can better utilize their talents and resources. By consolidating rather than fragmenting, business and industry can save time and resources in finding the best answer to their workforce needs. By offering a comprehensive set of services under one roof, both providers and clients have available a range of services and options otherwise impossible from any single provider. Slippery Rock University positions the Regional Learning Alliance to be the resource magnet to serve regional workforce development demands within one of the fastest growing markets in Pennsylvania.



The facility for the Regional Learning Alliance will be an “educational mall”: a highly adaptive multifunctional full-service training facility providing auxiliary services such as career center, conference center, child-development center, manufacturing development center, and other needed support services. The center will operate on an extended schedule – days, evenings, and weekends. Most importantly, the educational alliance will operate on a principle of customer service that promotes rapid response to community and business needs. For example, a classroom space may serve as a laboratory for a tool and die company for six weeks, an instructional center for software engineers for the next six months, and an exposition facility for another two weeks.

Priorities

Driven by business and industry needs, the Regional Learning Alliance has set the following priorities:

- **Respond to industry demands for education and training;**
- **Increase retention of employees;**
- **Improve labor market skills;**
- **Provide employers with skilled and knowledgeable employees**
- **Enhance regional economic viability and stability;**
- **Promote high-tech partnerships with educational providers; and**
- **Advance research for business and industry.**

The Southwest Pennsylvania Workforce Needs¹

Pennsylvania's economic competitiveness has been a source of concern for years. Slow growth in employment and population are the twin indicators of our malaise. Economists and demographers can argue whether people follow jobs or jobs follow people, but it is clear that neither jobs nor people have been coming to Pennsylvania. We cannot have a growing, healthy economy that creates good jobs without a growing and educated workforce.

In the Pittsburgh region, employment growth since 1990 ranks 244th out of 319 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

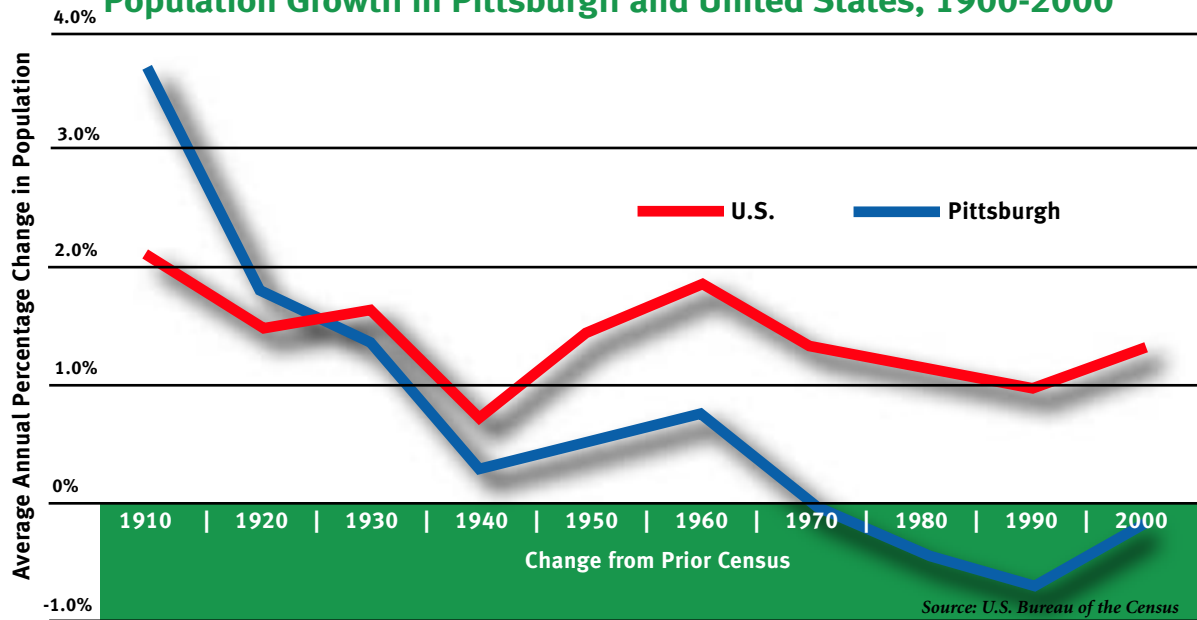
Since 1930 the rate of population growth in the Pittsburgh MSA has lagged the U.S. growth rate. Beginning in 1970 and continuing through every decennial census to 2000, the Pittsburgh MSA has lost population. This is not one of the cases where consistency is a good thing. The rate of decline hit bottom in the 1990 census, but it remained negative in 2000.

Compared to competitor states and the nation since 1990, Pennsylvania's:

- Employment grew by 10% – half the national rate.
- Population grew by less than 4% – the nation grew at over 3 times as fast.
- Job creation rate was in the lowest 10% of all states.
- Workforce is expected to grow by only 0.3% in the next 20 years while the nation's will grow by over 11%.

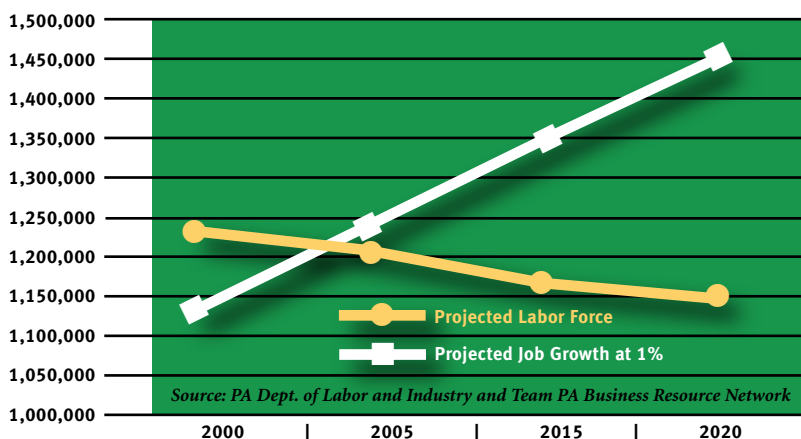
Excerpted from IssuesPA E-Alert, April 3, 2003

Population Growth in Pittsburgh and United States, 1900-2000



While our population is shrinking, the regional labor market is not as tight as other metropolitan areas. Pittsburgh's unemployment rate is in the middle of most comparable MSAs.

Projected Labor Force and Job Growth

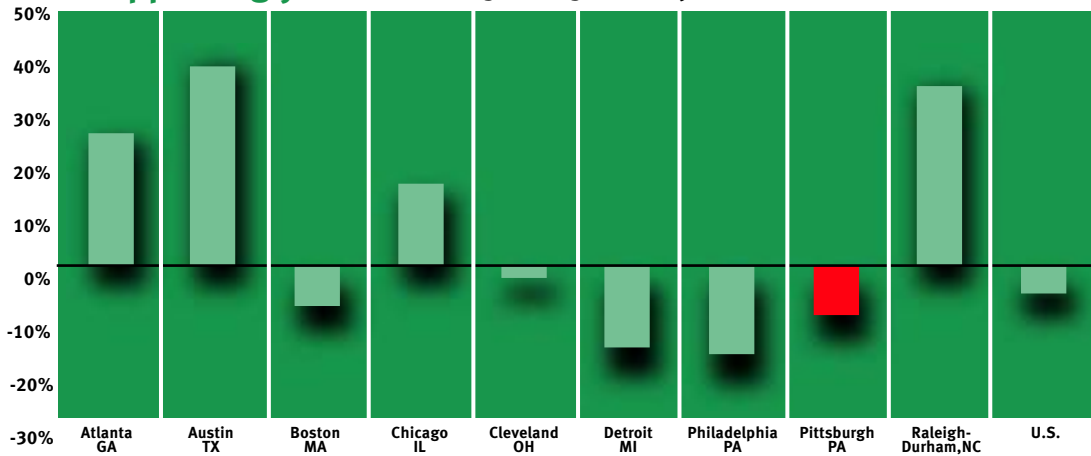


Our economic and demographic trends combine in unfavorable ways. If employment continues to grow at even a modest growth of one percent, there will not be enough people to fill the approximately 12,000 jobs created annually. Jobs available could exceed the regional labor force by 2005.

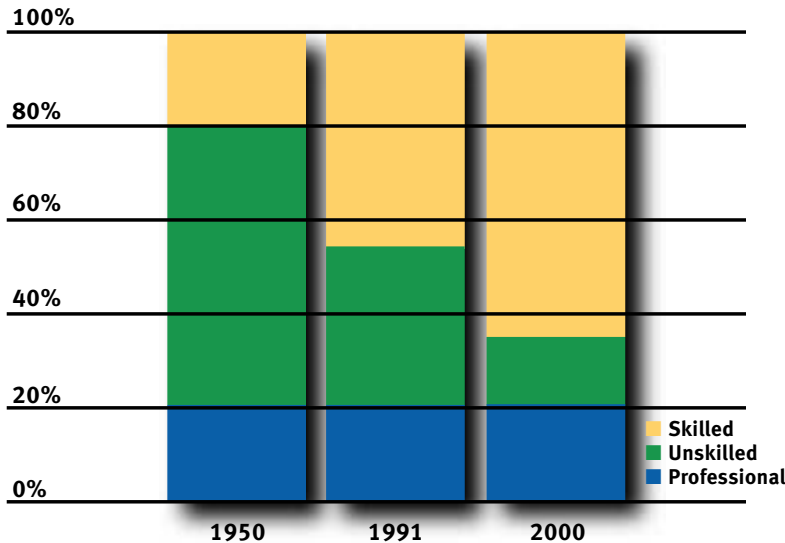
Unfortunately, without a growing employment base, it is difficult to attract and retain the labor force. Even during a period of growth in the regional economy, Pittsburgh had a

negative rate of net migration. It will not be easy to plug our migration deficit because the most mobile segments of the population are shrinking nationally. Nationwide in 2000 there were five percent fewer persons aged 20-34 than there were in 1990. Pittsburgh and a number of other areas have been losing the competition for this increasingly scarce pool of youth.

Disappearing youth Percentage Change, 20-34 year olds, 1990-2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



Percent of jobs

Maintaining our productivity may be difficult. Against comparable markets, we don't offer as large a pool of highly educated workers. We have more people with at least a high school degree, but fewer with at least a bachelor's degree. With 372,000 people with at least a bachelor's degree, the region ranks 15th of the 19 MSAs. The result is that the region is at a disadvantage versus comparable MSAs in competing for high-wage "knowledge economy" jobs.

Supply of highly educated workers in competitive markets

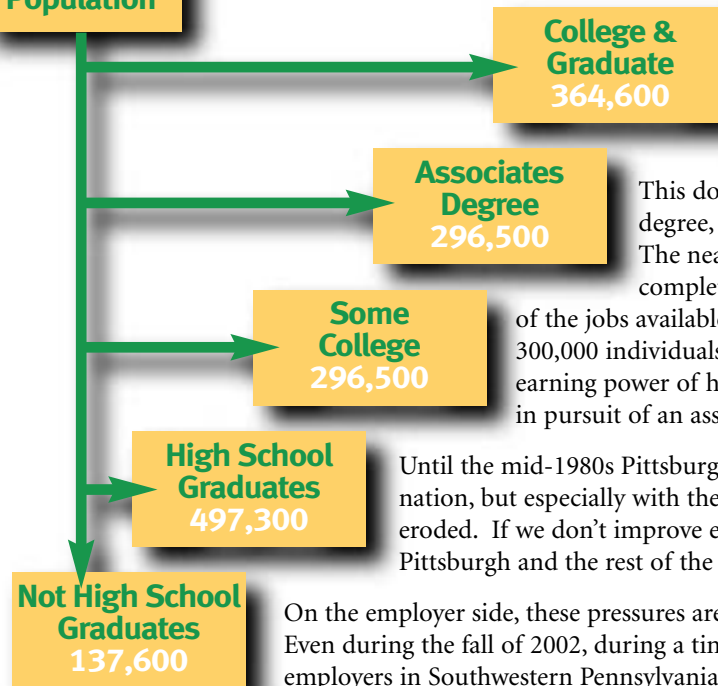
Metropolitan Area	Population (thousands), 25 and older	Percentage with high school degree	Percentage with bachelors degree or higher
Denver-Boulder-Greeley CO CMSA	1,689	89.3	38.7
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	1,772	94.0	38.4
Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	1,204	90.6	34.7
San Diego, CA MSA	1,803	85.3	34.0
Seattle-Tacoma-Brem., WA CMSA	2,169	93.2	33.8
Atlanta, GA MSA	2,620	89.0	31.4
Sacramento-Yolo, CA CMSA	1,144	90.6	31.4
Portland-Salem, OR-WA CMSA	1,513	90.0	29.4
Cleveland-Akron, OH CMSA	2,020	89.6	28.7
Cincinnati-Hamil., OH-KY-IN CMSA	1,207	86.4	27.7
Milwaukee-Racine, WI CMSA	1,251	87.3	26.9
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	1,683	85.5	24.5
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	1,537	87.5	24.2
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clrwtr, FL MSA	1,642	83.2	18.6

¹ The Southwest Pennsylvania Workforce Needs
Data provided for this section are from a special report, "New Economy, Old Workforce" prepared for the Regional Learning Alliance by the Carnegie Mellon Center for Economic Development, April, 2003, as an independent analysis of regional workforce needs. Dr. Jerry Paytas, Acting Director, was the author of the report.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Age 18-64
1.4 Million
60% of
Total
Population

931,000 people need to move up the ladder to prepare for the jobs of the future!



There are no precise estimates on the number of jobs being created for each education level, but higher skills are required to compete; therefore more people have to move up the education ladder.

This does not suggest that everyone needs a college degree, but most need to climb a rung or two. The nearly 140,000 working-age persons should complete at least a high-school education for many of the jobs available in manufacturing and IT. Meanwhile, the 300,000 individuals with some college education have the earning power of high school and might have been better served in pursuit of an associate's degree.

Until the mid-1980s Pittsburgh maintained higher average wages than the nation, but especially with the loss of jobs in manufacturing this advantage eroded. If we don't improve education and skills, the wage gap between Pittsburgh and the rest of the nation will worsen.

On the employer side, these pressures are felt in the difficulty in filling positions. Even during the fall of 2002, during a time of national and regional recession, employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania experienced high levels of difficulty in filling skilled production jobs, and professional and managerial jobs.

Difficulty of Filling a Vacancy by Type of Position, Fall 2002

Part of the difficulty in filling these positions is that many of the region's employers are small firms. Due to their size and lack of specialized resources, small firms lack the capability to manage training programs. Throughout southwestern Pennsylvania, outside training providers are not widely used by industry.

	Not Difficult	Somewhat or very difficult
Skilled Production Jobs	9%	90%
Unskilled Production Jobs	46%	54%
Professional and Managerial Jobs	37%	63%

Source: The Center for Competitive Workforce Development, Duquesne University, Job Vacancy Survey Report, February 2003

Less than one-third of the firms in manufacturing (31%) and information-technology (28%) use external training providers. Most rely on informal, on-the-job training.

Addressing the training and skill needs of the regional workforce will require a more flexible approach to the development and delivery of training services. Our schools and institutions will have to learn how to deliver more customized and "just-in-time" training, much like businesses have had to do with their products and services.

"I get a lot of people who are not qualified and on top of that they want to make big money to learn. They want me to teach them, and they want me to pay them, too."
Small machine shop owner in Export, PA - Post-Gazette, Feb 11, 2003.

The first steps to bringing about these changes are to involve industry in the training arena – to identify skill demands, develop curriculum, and advise on the delivery of training services. Furthermore, as employers are more involved with training providers, we may be more able to offer more opportunities to inject real-world experience into the training environment.

Conclusion: An effort that integrates demand and supply is required...

- Prospective employers need access to customized training, delivered quickly and cost-effectively
- Uniting a variety of providers can offer a more flexible modular approach
- Potential employees need access to training
- Provide services on-site that enable more people to help themselves

Establishments in the Pittsburgh MSA:

69% have less than 20 employees

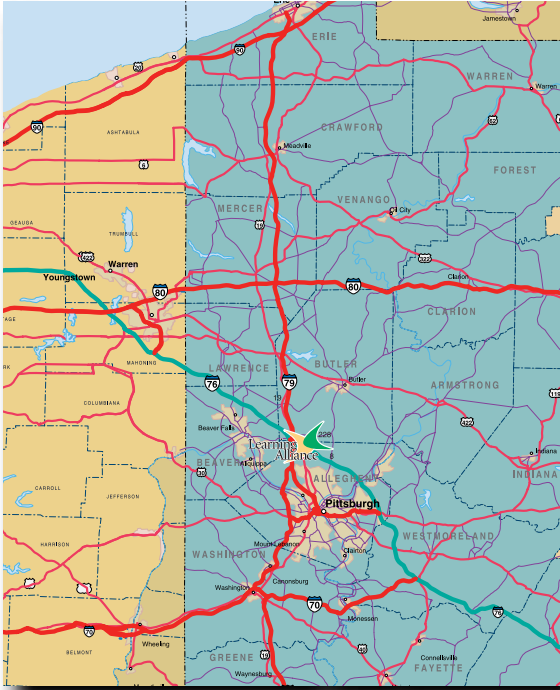
84% have less than 500 employees

Only 16% have more than 500 employees

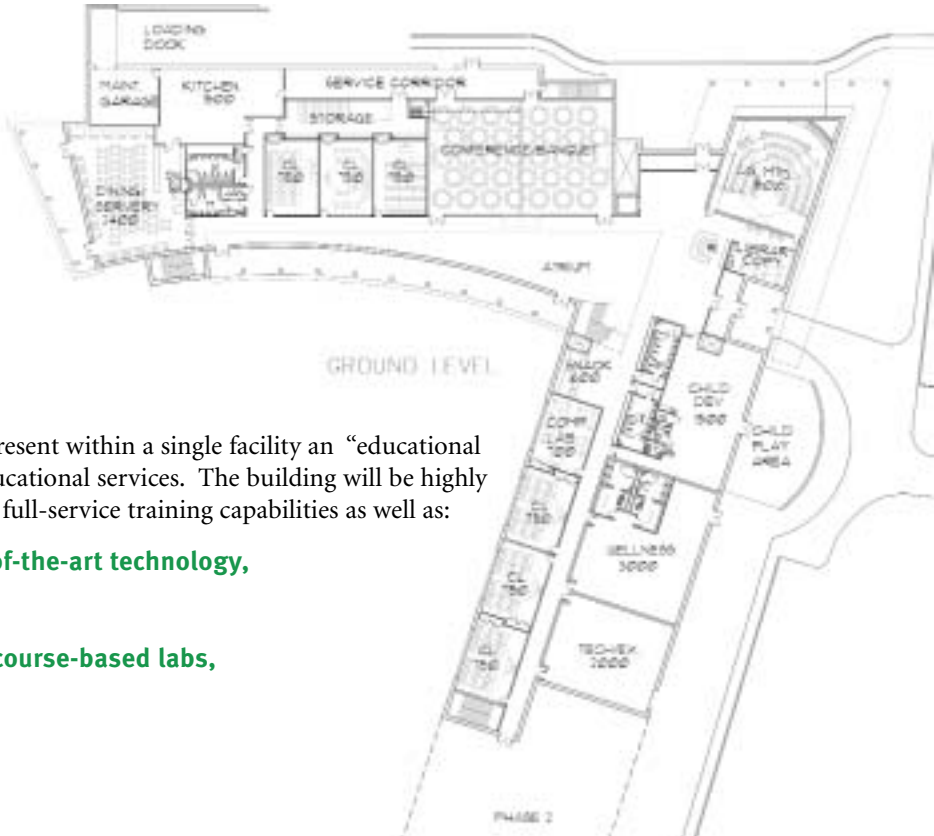
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Directorate

The Solution

Located centrally to nine office and industrial parks, Slippery Rock University will establish the Regional Learning Alliance at Cranberry Woods Executive Park.



The Regional Learning Alliance facility will be located on a 20-acre site on Freeport Road in Marshall Township, northern Allegheny County. The property also borders Butler County and is included on the site plan of Cranberry Woods Executive Park. The location can be reached from State Routes 19, and 228. Both Routes 19 and 228 can be accessed from Interstate 79 (north and south) and Interstate 76 (Pennsylvania Turnpike). Both interstate highways are within a three-minute drive of the Alliance location. From Route 228 area in Butler County, access is directly through the Cranberry Woods Executive Park and from Route 19 area, access is directly from Freeport Road.



Building Services

The Regional Learning Alliance will present within a single facility an “educational mall” offering a complete range of educational services. The building will be highly adaptive and multifunctional offering full-service training capabilities as well as:

- Modern classrooms with state-of-the-art technology,
- Media support services,
- Open computer labs as well as course-based labs,
- Faculty workspace and storage,
- Student study spaces,
- Document and copy facilities,
- Support staff and security,
- Child development for parents who are students.

An educational resource center will serve as a combination library, bookstore, media production center, with available food services and child development. An executive wellness development center is also included in the building.

The conference center will be unique to Western Pennsylvania, offering services not provided to the immediate area. The center will seek accreditation with the International Association of Conference Centers in order to assure users that the highest standards of service are offered. Only two accredited centers exist in Western Pennsylvania, one in Erie and one in Hidden Valley. Interviews with local business, industry, and community leaders suggest the center will satisfy a high demand for conference and training space not currently met through existing facilities.



The Benefactors



The Benefactors: Business and Industry

- The service area of the Regional Learning Alliance is the home for 13,070 businesses employing over 195,000 people.

- Five of Pennsylvania's nine fastest growing market segments surround the proposed site. The service area encompasses 22 of the 50 fastest growing communities in the region as reported in the May 12-16, 2002, *Pittsburgh Business Times*.

- Business and industry need a source for training and education that is responsive to their specific requirements: Southwestern Pennsylvania manufacturing firms reported that nothing was more critical to their success than the productivity, trainability, and availability of regional workers.

- Business and industry need a reliable and flexible response to their immediate training needs. "The great variety of training options and providers represents a challenge for the region. With such enormous choice in the market, it is important that customers (employers) have adequate information in order to make appropriate choices, and it is important to be able to understand the full field of opportunities. Unfortunately, no single source provides a full listing of all training available in the region. Further, there is little information available about the quality of programs." [*Working Together to Connect Workers to the Jobs of the Future*, Oversight Committee of the Regional Workforce Development Initiative]

- Business and industry need someone who understands how to deliver to the specialized needs of the employer. There is a current mismatch between the needs of Southwestern Pennsylvania employers and potential employees.

The Benefactors: Adult Learners

- A significant number of adults have stepped out of their formal education to pursue jobs or to raise a family. We need to aggressively support initiatives where individuals can gain the skills needed for a quality job that supports the family. The Alliance will offer degree and professional certification options including undergraduate and graduate programs. Adult learners will be able to pursue their education from a number of providers under the same roof. By utilizing a range of education providers, the Regional Learning Alliance will be able to maximize choices for degree completion.



- As adults develop their skills, they need connections to careers. A one-stop career center utilizing state-of-the-art career services will be available on-site and through on-line technology. Adults will have a resource for job assistance and career direction. Services will be available to counsel adults in a range of work skill assessments, pre-employment testing, and outcome assessments as they develop their education plan.

- Adults need educational options to match their immediate needs and grow with them as they build their skills. One feature of the alliance unmatched anywhere is the range of educational providers working together. Technical schools, community colleges, baccalaureate and graduate universities, and public and private providers are all represented in the alliance.

- Distance education and on-line services will be available to expand the curriculum opportunities for adults using the facility. This use of technology breaks the geographic barrier by connecting the facility with programs and opportunities across the nation. Ideally, no student is abandoned in his or her effort to advance their skills, even specialized ones.

- Most off-campus educational sites fail to provide the range of services adults need to successfully complete their course work. The target area is saturated with educational providers utilizing abandoned store fronts and evening classrooms in K-12 schools. Without support, staff, or even decent student services, students have to fend for themselves to take care of basic needs. By consolidating providers in one place, the Regional Learning Alliance gains an economy of scale that will provide for much needed on-site services such as a day care center, a safe environment, computer laboratories, and many other special benefits.

The Regional Learning Alliance intends to be a national demonstration model for how business, education, and government comes together to actually improve a region's workforce and quality of life.

The Benefactors: Regional Workforce Consortiums, Economic Developers, and Taxpayers

■ By partnering with local and regional initiatives, the Regional Learning Alliance supports the economic development of the Southwest Pennsylvania region and helps fulfill recommendations developed by a number of state and regional consortiums such as: WedNet PA, Pennsylvania Governor's Action Team, The Pennsylvania Economy League, and Workforce Connections.



■ By collaborating and consolidating the efforts of a number of public and private educational providers, the taxpayers of Pennsylvania are major benefactors. Instead of funding a number of small, inadequately capitalized projects, many educational providers can consolidate their operations in a single multipurpose facility adaptable to the many challenges of the future. By stressing the concept of an *alliance*, the facility will provide the highest level of collaborative services in a cost-efficient manner.

■ The facility expects to be the operational home for the workforce development plans of the Regional Learning Network, a program sponsored by Workforce Connections. By providing a specific facility to address the recommenda-

tions of Workforce Connections, the Regional Learning Alliance becomes an incubator for action on those educational priorities important to the region.

■ The workforce development plan for the Regional Learning Alliance is to enhance the jobs within the industry clusters identified by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Industry Cluster Analysis. Those clusters and goals are:

Healthcare: This cluster employs approximately 160,000 people in the ten county region. Health jobs are expected to expand by an additional 21% between 1998 and 2008. Industry employers report high staff vacancies and turnover rates. Shortages exist in RNs, LPNs, nursing assistants, and direct care staff. Turnover rates are often as high as 33%. The Regional Learning Alliance has already established alliances with medical providers and health councils to provide both non-degree and degree completion programs to this cluster. The Regional Learning Alliance career center as well as programs for health care administrators will focus on job retention and satisfaction as well as creative solutions to the unique attributes of this sector.

Information Technology: Information technology has been the growth engine of the region. The cluster contains more than 1,400 firms and nearly 39,000 employees. The location for the Regional Learning Alliance is in the vibrant center of the technology industry in the region. With state-of-the-art technology constructed into the facility, IT business will find all of their training and presentation needs met.

Manufacturing: With a payroll of \$7.1 billion and employment close to 170,000, manufacturing is a critical part of the region. The Regional Learning Alliance provides a consolidated approach for meeting the needs of these businesses. A special feature of the facility is a manufacturing room for hosting large equipment off site to allow for specialized training of employees or customers without utilizing equipment needed in production or requiring space for training inside of the plant where safety might be jeopardized.

Business and Finance: More than 58,000 financial services employees are employed in the ten county region. A diverse industry, financial services includes jobs in the commercial banks, savings and loan institutions, securities brokerages, insurance, accounting, and real estate. An estimated 1,000+ job postings remain open and unfilled in this sector. The Regional Learning Alliance offers a unique method for increasing the educated workforce necessary to address job shortages in this sector.

The Benefactors: Educational Providers

As many as eighteen post-secondary educational providers offer some level of formal programming in the immediate area. None offers a full service facility. None offers a range of comprehensive programming to specifically address the complex workforce needs of the region.

The genius of the Regional Learning Alliance is consolidating the fragmented nature of current educational programming into a coherent vision focused on meeting the needs of the clients.

Following the principal that “no one can be all things to all people,” the concept of the *alliance* is that each will contribute strengths that mitigate weaknesses and create benefactors across a range of constituents.

■ The Regional Learning Alliance staff will be trained brokers serving the surrounding business and industry needs thereby eliminating the need to continually conduct fragmented assessment studies and market analyses.

The Regional Learning Alliance will bring training from industry to the providers and assist in the marketing of programs to prospective students.

■ Providers gain the additional advantage of creating collaborations that help increase critical mass for small enrolled programs or for specialized courses. For example, one statistics course offered for all providers would create substantial savings over separately offered sections by each provider.

Educational partners along with Slippery Rock University will offer the following programs:

Carnegie Mellon University

Center for Economic Development – Regional Workshops and Seminars on SWPA Economic Development Issues

Robert Morris University

Graduate MBA Program
Undergraduate Non-Traditional Degree Program
Certificate Programs in Information Technology, Healthcare, and Business and Finance

Carlow College

Undergraduate and Graduate Management and Technology Degree
Healthcare Degrees- Undergraduate and Graduate
Education Degrees – Undergraduate and Graduate
Early Child Development

Triangle Tech

Automated Manufacturing Technology
Industrial Electronics
Trades Training in Electrical Maintenance and CADD (Both Architectural and Mechanical)

Pittsburgh Technical Institute

Information Technology A.S. Degree and IT Certification Programs
Web/E-Commerce Programs
Small Business Management Programs

University of Pittsburgh

College of General Studies:
Business and Finance – Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
Healthcare - Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

Penn State University – Beaver and New Kensington Campuses

Engineering Technology - Undergraduate Programs
Business and Finance - Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
Graduate Degree Programs

La Roche College

M.S. in Human Resources
M.A. in International Business Language

Community College Partnership

Certificates and Associate Degrees in Business and Finance, Manufacturing, Information Technology and Healthcare

Geneva College

M.S. Organizational Leadership Program
Degree Completion Program for Bachelor's Degree

Clarion University

Paralegal Certificate Program
Library Science Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs

Current waiting list for new partners:

Point Park College

St. Francis University

Westminster University

Gannon University

Waynesburg College

The Benefactors: Communities

Interviews with local chambers, economic development agencies, as well as business leaders confirm the need for a range of medium to large training and conference spaces, exhibition space, and executive meeting spaces for hosting visitors, customers, and dignitaries. Areas chambers especially need a place where groups can gather for community roundtables, meetings, and special events such as community award presentations and banquets.

Currently, the Four Points by Sheraton and the Marriott at Cranberry provide meeting and conference space. Both Sheraton and Marriott facilities will provide for some of the needs but, according to interview data collected, not the range of services planned by the Regional Learning Alliance. The intent of the Regional Learning Alliance is to assure a positive relationship with these properties and collaborate on referrals and joint business opportunities where all can benefit.

The Regional Learning Alliance will be the only state-of-the-art, full service conference center between Pittsburgh and Erie. Because it is designed to cater to the special needs of business meetings, training sessions, conferences, and workshops, it represents a unique segment of the conference center market. Since it does not provide housing, it will compliment the development of the area's hotel and motel businesses.

Marshall Township
Allegheny County, PA



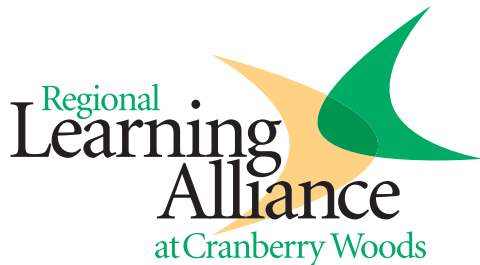
Welcome to
Cranberry Township
Butler County, Pennsylvania



The Regional Learning Alliance
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