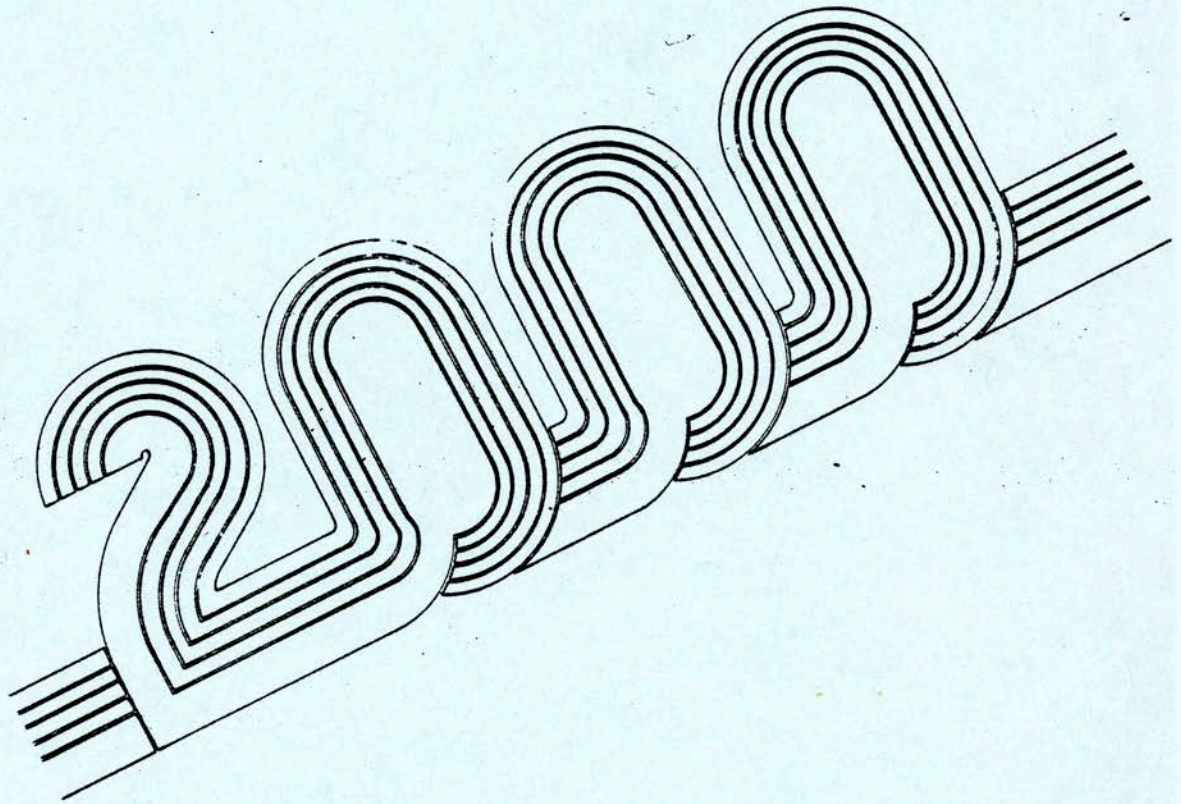


**CHESTER COUNTY IN THE YEAR 2000 :**



**THE COUNTY OF THE FUTURE**

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by  
Earl M. Baker, Chairman  
Chester County Commissioners

November, 1984

CHESTER COUNTY IN THE YEAR 2000:  
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A century ago, it was also a time of peace and resurgence in patriotism. We live in a time like that right now. That was also a time when there was a foreboding of war and in our generation we've come to accept that as part of the way we live; all the more reason we can appreciate the peace that we have as we look at the challenges that we at the county level face.

The Chester County Tricentennial celebration was a time when we looked back 300 years and we also looked forward 100 years. We looked through a long telescope -- into the past and into the future and thought about what that meant to us.

Our purpose now, in our administration and in the Year 2000 Symposium, is to direct our thoughts to the more immediate road in front of us, to look at the 20 years that are going to bring us into the next century. Twenty years is a long time in some ways; from a historical point of view, it is a short time. Recently, at the President's Unemployment Conference in Pittsburgh, it became obvious from the discussion by economists and engineers that if we think of the whole course of the 20th century, more will happen to change our lives and the world in which we live in the coming 20 years than has happened in the entire 80 years leading up to this point. It is a very exciting time in which to live. We are on the threshold of a period that when we look back at the end of the century, we are going to say that it was a truly critical period in our nation's history. We will say the same thing in terms of the challenges that we face here in our county. It is going to be a special 20 years. It is not only the end of the century; it is the end of the millenium. As we approach that bench mark, we will begin to hear more from people who are going to ask us to think what that means. Maybe we can prepare ourselves for those questions. We can imagine what today will mean to us in our past. Its not just an intellectual curiosity. We need to know.

We need to know now if there is something that we can do to prevent the problems of our future. We must concern ourselves not only with our immediate problems, but we must search for the things that we can do this year that will help us 20 years from now, and even beyond. That is our challenge today.

THE CHALLENGES IN CHESTER COUNTY'S FUTURE

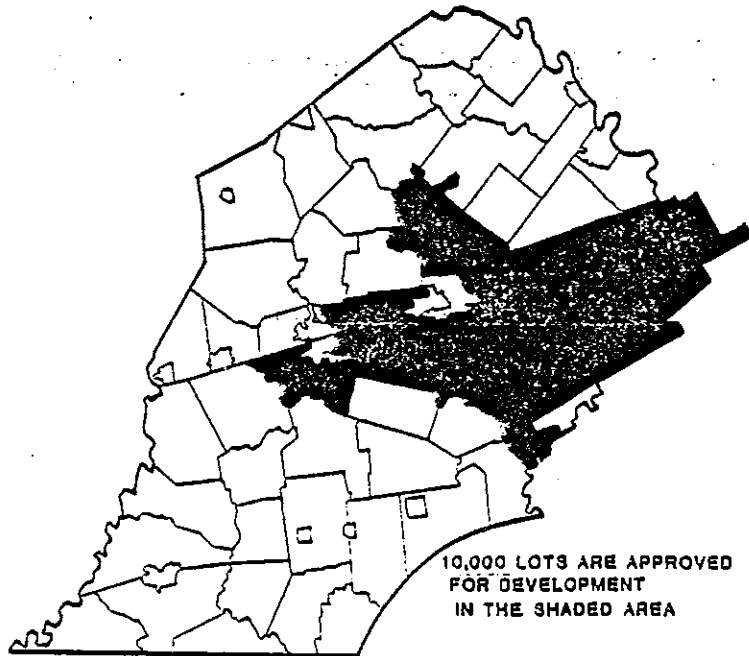
The major issues we will face in the coming years can be partly known by observing the trends and conditions which exist today.

FACT ONE:

There are over 10,000 lots of land in the eastern and central sections of the County that are approved for development, are as yet unbuilt, but can be built at anytime. There are about 5,000 other lots in the rest of the County which are in the same developmental holding pattern. This is suggestive of the very real development pressures that Chester County is under and will continue to be. These figures don't include the new applications and the new approvals that will be sought.

**IN CHESTER COUNTY**

**A GREAT AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT  
IS READY TO OCCUR**



10,000 LOTS ARE APPROVED  
FOR DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE SHADED AREA

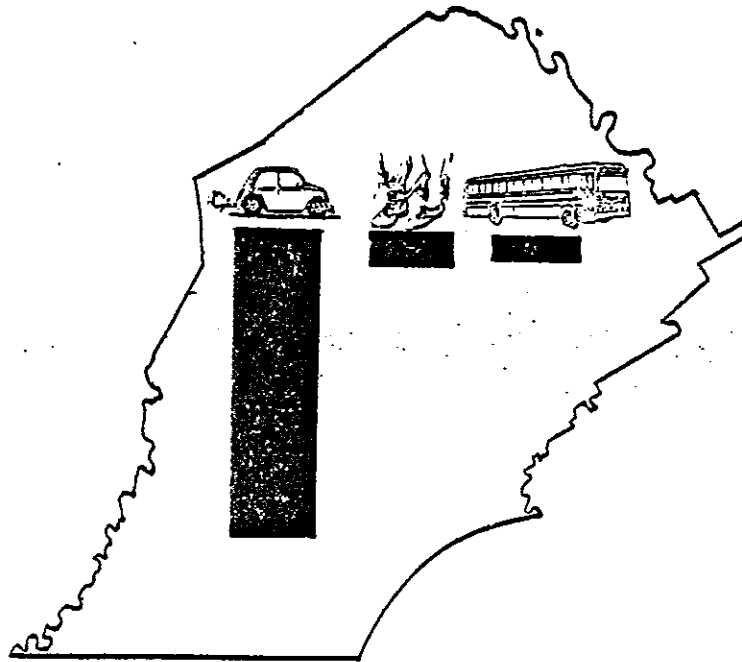
5,000 LOTS ARE APPROVED FOR  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE REST OF THE COUNTY

**FACT TWO:**

Eighty-seven percent of all workers in Chester County drive to work in a private car. Think how important our highway systems is in light of that fact and just as noteworthy, of the remaining 13% -- more people walk to work, 6%, than any other method including all forms of public transportation; 4%.

**IN CHESTER COUNTY**

**MOST PEOPLE DRIVE TO WORK**



87 % Drive in private Automobiles

6% Walk to work

4% Take public transportation

**FACT THREE:**

We generate 1,000 tons per day of trash in the County. The cost of disposing of this trash continues to rise as disposal locations diminish and as the technology of handling trash becomes more complicated.

## CHESTER COUNTY IN THE YEAR 2000: THE COUNTY OF THE FUTURE

### Chester County Exemplifies a Post-Industrial Society

One of the most pervasive aspects of life for the residents of Chester County is the simple fact that it is a wonderful place to live.

The great diversity of landscapes, lifestyles, and opportunities has helped to make Chester County a vital and stable place to live.

Yet there are specific challenges to our way of life as we look to the next century.

It is our challenge and our responsibility to preserve, promote and strengthen the character of our County.

We are living in a "County of the Future". A county that has the human and material resources necessary to continue to build a strong community. Through efforts such as the Year 2000 Symposium we have a chance to examine and plan our own destiny.

Chester County's modern commerce, high technology and spacious lifestyle are examples of the "post-industrial society" that is emerging today. We have sprung from the pre-industrial world of small towns and agriculture. We can maintain the best parts of our agricultural heritage even as we enter the "next society".

We have a chance to guide the changeable elements of our community that make this a County of the future in will as well as circumstance.

We may learn something about our future by looking back into our past.

About a century ago, in 1883, there were floods in the Brandywine that destroyed the steel industry in Chester County--at least temporarily. It was never really built back the way it had been; it was built back in a new way, in a new era of steelmaking.

Today steel is threatened by a flood, but it's a flood of foreign imports. And the flood deters not only steel in our county, but the mushroom and flower industries as well; two areas in which we lead all other counties in the Commonwealth.

So there are always challenges which occurred in the past which are repeated in our present and will occur in our future. There are things which might have saved the steel industry from the floods a hundred years ago, if they had been perceived, planned and acted upon.

...  
The decade from 1880 to 1890 was a time when more schools were built than any time before and perhaps since. Many of the schools that were built at that time have recently been closed. Today our problem is not how to open new schools, but what to do with the schools that we have. That leads us to a challenge we can face now. How might we use those schools tomorrow in light of the very real financial problems that face our school boards because of the drop in student enrollments?





**FACT SEVEN:**

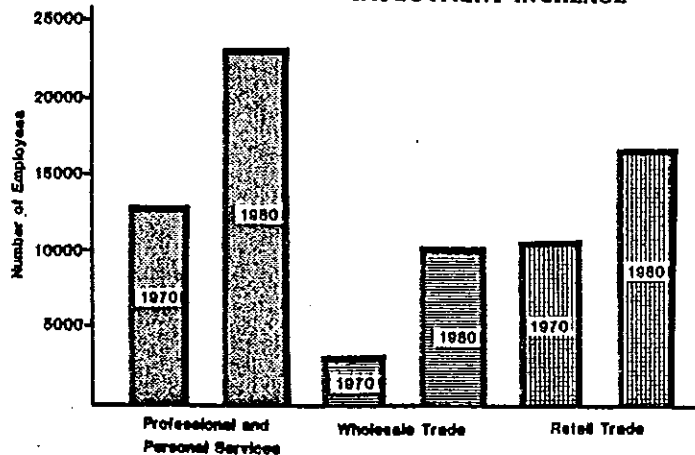
Chester County's population increased 13% from 277,746 in 1970 to 316,660 in 1980. As important as the increase, is the manner in which the population changed. The average family income in Chester County has risen to over \$25,000, second highest in Pennsylvania.

But along with the increase in average family income, the County has had a corresponding increase in persons living below the poverty level. Among others, this group includes a growing number of households headed by women who must support a family on a single income. The increased elderly population will create a need for more long term care facilities. The fluctuations in school age children will create a need for flexibility in the school systems.

**FACT EIGHT:**

The number of persons employed in Chester County rose 36% between 1970 and 1980 and we are now at our highest point in history; 143,000 people are working in Chester County. The notable thing about this is the shift in the types of employment during the period. We now dominate in professional and personal services, retail and wholesale trade. Manufacturing jobs in Chester County decreased during this same period by 6%. In 1983 for the first time, suburban counties had more than half the finance, real estate and service jobs in the region. Except for Montgomery County, Chester County gained more jobs in the professional and financial sector than any other County in Pennsylvania and we are taking a large share of the new professional and technical jobs in the entire region.

**THE THREE AREAS OF CHESTER COUNTY'S  
GREATEST EMPLOYMENT INCREASE**



All of these factors represent challenges that we will face during the next twenty years, and which we can address through a strategy of careful identification, consideration of the best and most efficient techniques for dealing with this, and a willingness to act decisively and timely. Just as important is our ability to inform our public of their choices and involve them in solutions. Many future decisions will need individual, family and community action and support if we are to avoid the over-dependence on higher levels of government and inefficient solutions of the past generation.

## A COUNTY GOVERNMENT FOR THE FUTURE:

### Excellence in Administration and Responsiveness

The challenges which the people of Chester County must deal with are, inherently, challenges which County Government must also face. This is a major reason why the Chester County Commissioners have taken such an active role in the production of the Year 2000 Symposium. We know government cannot solve every problem, but our role requires a comprehensive awareness to help us all decide whether public or private; local or county; state or federal action is needed.

### County Government's Recent Past: Setting the Stage for Its Effective Role In the Future

It is helpful to examine some of the many changes and activities the County Government has undertaken in the last several years.

The next few pages provide a brief but comprehensive review of what we have done over the past four years. This review will help to illustrate the strong conviction by the County Commissioners that a well organized and positively directed government is absolutely essential if it is to serve the complex needs of the community in years to come.

One of the things that we did four years ago was to reorganize the structure of administration in county government.

The reorganization consolidated the personnel, data processing, engineering, and finance operations under the direction of the Director of Finance and Administration.

This consolidated the essential elements of our organization under a single director and has resulted in improved communications and cohesive administrative direction, based on overall policy setting by the Board of Commissioners.

Looking back at that structure it is fair to say that it has done what it was supposed to do. To bring the administrative functions of the commissioners into a high focus within our own responsibility, to make administrative services available directly to the commissioners functions, and also to make an effective administration available to all the rest of the officials whom we service: the courts, the row officers and the related agencies who are part of the county structure. We have monitored this organizational structure since its creation.

Whether it be Data Processing, Personnel, Finance or Engineering, the highly professional quality of service that the Director of Finance and his staff have tried to give and have tried to bring, and the constant reassessment and re-evaluation of those services, has really improved our ability to serve the County Government and the rest of the County as a whole. We intend to continue that success.

The consolidation of the administrative offices was part of an eight year trend of clustering agencies with related functions. This clustering promotes essential communications and creates a more positive and effective total impact in our service to the county community. The clustering process was initiated with Emergency Services, continued with Human Services, progressed through the Administrative Services as described, and has most recently led to the Economic Development Consortium. (Discussed in more detail later). In addition to clustered services, we are also proud of our institutions, the Prison, the Pocopson Home, the Library and Health Department for their well-deserved reputations as the best-run in the state.

Another major initiative in cost savings and technical improvement has been the recent privatization of the Data Processing Department. SCT Corporation, a private computer consulting firm, has been contracted by the Commissioners to prepare a comprehensive five year data processing plan for the county government. This plan provides the organizational framework for developing a technically superior data processing system that will be responsive and efficient in handling the wide range of computer capabilities needed to be a County of the Future. To insure that all actions and recommendations of the computer consultant fall within the guidelines of confidentiality and necessity, a governance committee appointed by the Commissioners must approve all aspects of the five year plan and its implementation. Privatization, whether for specific services or for broader administrative functions, should be a constant option for careful analysis on a current basis.

During the past several years, we have developed a strong reputation as a hard working, forward-thinking County government.

We want to be able to keep up our reputation for not just adequate public service but for award-winning government. As evidence of this, the county received this year and last year the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Conformance for governmental accounting. We are one of only three counties in Pennsylvania to receive this designation and its one we are very proud of. Over the past three years we have received 50 National Association of Counties Achievement Awards for the excellence of our Administration. This is clear testimony to the hard working attitudes of the departments and the department heads that have engaged in those saving and cost cutting techniques, and each and every person who has engaged in that level of effort is to be congratulated.

A major test of the effectiveness of county government is not just what we do in terms of our relationships with the outside world, but what have we done to try to help our own employees. What have we done specifically with respect to our own employees deserves mention. The employee credit union now has over 200 members, who take advantage of I.R.A. accounts, travel discounts and savings rates. Two programs are offered to all employees to defer taxable income. Discounts are provided to county employees on various items: C.P.R. courses, car pooling, recreational sports programs, and retirement seminars all indicate attention to employee needs. Employee orientation programs are now being conducted which orient new employees to the government. It is hoped that every employee of the county will have had a chance to participate by the end of 1985.

Each of us needs, as a part of the whole county government, some understanding of the entire organization that we are part of. Since June, 1980, over 200 people have participated in work related training, for their productivity and for their professional advancement. The Employees Suggestion Program rewards employees who have fresh ideas which save tax dollars. The annual Health Fair is a success with many have participated in. An HMO is now available to employees for comprehensive medical care. Tax deferral is now applied to employee retirement fund contributions. We now conduct regular exit interviews and Executive I evaluations, and intend to extend and strengthen our evaluative process down through the ranks as well. As for the retirement system; from 1981 to 1983 there was an \$8,000,000 increase in the value of our retirement fund of which \$6,000,000 was realized, not through new contributions, but through improved management of that retirement fund. We think that is an impressive figure stemming from the ability to manage those funds.

We have also been able to realize approximately \$1,000,000 a year in interest earnings.

This is indicative of the way the reorganization has affected the manner in which we can keep taxes down by enhancing the cash flow earnings of the county government. With a MIG-1 rating, the County has a tax anticipation note that also saves us about \$125,000. The MIG-1 rating is the highest rating the financial community can give to any government.

We have also been able to achieve savings through centralized purchasing. For example: in printing and duplicating paper, a 24% savings; medical supplies, a 12% savings; janitorial supplies, a 35% savings. Impressive savings. Through professionalized purchasing and the cooperation of each department, we get whatever it is that is needed to make our county government function, but we want to get it at the most competitive rate, the most economical rate for our taxpayers. We have also been able to achieve savings through reorganizing the county legal departments. The savings there is above \$75,000. It is impossible to try to review every cost savings that has occurred in the County government over the last few years, but the number of cost saving items that have been implemented in county government is literally in the millions.

In discussing where the County has been, an important topic that has received great attention by the Commissioners is our productivity. The one great challenge to strive for excellence as public officials is how to be productive. How can we, with the people we have and with the resources we have, service increasing demands on our county government and serve increasing numbers of people who expect the county to serve them?

As an example of how the demands for service have risen, the following items identify some sample increases in the past year: in the Voter Registration Office the number of new registrations increased 43%; in Weights and Measures, consumer complaints increased 13%; in Tax Claim and Tax Lien, receipts for payment increased 17%; in Recorder of Deeds, deeds and mortgages increased 22%; in Public Defender's Office cases increased 4%; in Juvenile Probation, intake and referral cases increased 2%; at the Correctional Center, an increase

in the number of residents served; in Public Health Nursing, patient conferences increased 5%; at the Library, circulation increased 41%; information requests at the Tourist Bureau increased 21%; in Parks and Recreation program attendance increased 96%.

We could go on and on and still not mention every function of county government. Some of the functions that we perform do not lend themselves quite as easily to analysis as those mentioned, but it is plain to see that the demands placed on County Government are not static. The demands increase each year and it is going to continue. The demands cost a great deal in terms of finances and man hours and it is extremely difficult to meet the demand while keeping the tax rate steady at the same time. One major strategy for delivering more services while keeping the tax rate down has been the promotion of efficiency and productivity in our government. This strategy has been an important part of our county policy in the last four years and it will continue to be in the future.

Another aspect of our planning responsibility is for our own County's future needs in the areas of space, technology, equipment and people. Constant self-study, and the appropriate use of private consultants and resources is essential now and in the future. Using "matrix management" in which we try to avoid the inefficiencies of the traditional hierarchical form of organization is difficult to implement in government. But we must continue to reduce the "turf battles", slow communications and status quo inertia which so easily besets governments. Instead we need to stress performance-based evaluation of people and projects in government, and place emphasis on results and the willingness to work across seemingly fixed boundary lines.

The creative use of financing techniques has been one of the mainstays of Chester County's reputation as a County of the Future. We must continue to press our financial advisors to implement such concepts as user fees, to maintain our strong credit rating, to improve collection techniques and capital planning. All of the following areas are being, or soon must be addressed by every professional means at our disposal:

- transportation infrastructure
- emergency communications
- the intermediate and long range building and space needs of county government
- human resource ideas for encouraging people to develop and advance themselves
- computer literacy and use on a 100% basis
- risk management

A spirit of entrepreneurship by public agencies may seem anomalous, but we know the way it can harness the drive of people and organizations, and we should take advantage of it. The idea that government is a "second face" of management should be shown not to be an inherent limitation on innovation and efficiency.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT TODAY AND TOMORROW: ANSWERING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

Policies and programs are already in place or will soon be enacted to help Chester County stride into the next century. To provide a perspective on the activities, they are discussed as they relate to the eight primary facts about Chester County that were presented at the beginning of this paper.

**FACT ONE:**           **There are over 10,000 lots of land approved for development but as yet unbuilt in the eastern and central portions of the County.**

**MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

Traditionally, and from a legislative standpoint, controlling land use and development is the responsibility of the local municipality; the townships and boroughs. While this precludes the County government from any direct involvement in the future development, we are prepared to provide assistance to the local municipalities wherever we can.

We have an important reservoir of talented professionals within the County government that we will continue to promote for their ability to assist, advise, and coordinate local land use control efforts. Such efforts as Local Planning Assistance and Planning Workshops administered by the Chester County Planning Commission are excellent resources to local governments and we will continue to emphasize their continuance in the future.

In the interest of preserving our pastoral landscape. We will continue to support the many ongoing activities in this realm which place Chester County in the vanguard of land preservation proponents.

We will continue to support the historic preservation efforts of private and public groups within the County and will match those efforts through strategies of our own, such as our County Historic Preservation Office and the County Tourist Bureau.

We look with pride and admiration at the successful efforts of local groups and County agencies who helped bring about the recent Scenic River designations for the Schuylkill River and French and Octorara Creeks. We will continue to consider future efforts to obtain similar designations for other County streams such as the West Branch Brandywine, to build up a fine greenway system.

The most obvious burden that will arise from increased development is a strain on existing infrastructure.

There have been many proposals on how to deal with infrastructure problems. One of the most direct methods to tackle the needs of infrastructure maintenance and renewal is through capital spending by the responsible jurisdictions. That doesn't require national industrial policy: it just requires common sense. In a way, keeping up our infrastructure is like keeping up our house; if we don't maintain it on a regular basis then sooner or later it will cost a lot more to repair.

Unfortunately, many public officials in the past were content to follow what is called "breakdown maintenance": when something starts to fall apart then you repair it. That won't do for us.

In Chester County we have decided to take an active role and not a passive role in looking at our county's capital needs.

In fact, we even have an "Infrastructure Bank" in place if it is needed by our local governments. This means that the county's borrowing capacity can be put together with the municipal government's capacity, whether it is for equipment or for renovation of buildings, to make sure money is available at competitive rates. Municipalities may or may not avail themselves of this service but it is an example of how the county has tried to think ahead about its future needs. A County Improvement Authority may be needed to work with localities and business to ensure the financial needs for future projects will be met.

**FACT TWO: Eighty seven percent of all workers in Chester County drive to work in a private car. Think how important our highway system is in light of that fact. And just as noteworthy, of the remaining thirteen percent, six percent walk to work while only four percent use any form of public transportation.**

#### **MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

Increased land use activities in recent years have heightened the challenges to provide adequate transportation services.

If the County is to maintain its present position and continue to grow with the economy of Southeastern Pennsylvania and our surrounding states, one of the resources that it needs is effective and adequate transportation of all types.

We are in the position at this time to anticipate a new bench mark in the progress of a critical missing link in our County circulation system. When the Exton By-Pass is completed, it will be possible to cross the "divide" that now exists in Exton, and to go from Vine Street in downtown Philadelphia all the way to Lancaster County without a red light. The sense of freedom of transportation and ease of access that this will bring is critical to total development within the County and in particular to having the western part of the County tied more cohesively to the rest of the County.

In light of that statement it is important to realize that the Exton By-Pass will be built, and the County is doing everything in its power to push that through to a successful conclusion by 1988. In addition, we look to the imminent completion of the Pottstown Expressway for its positive influence on the economy of the northeastern County.

The Northern Chester County-Montgomery County Connector, historically referred to as the "Phoenixville Spur", has moved rapidly over the past year. As recently as three years ago the Department of Transportation in Pennsylvania was recommending removing this particular link from the map for future planning. Two years ago we were able to keep the project on the map by having a new category of corridors created for study. Because of Senator Stauffer's direct interest in this project, PennDOT has continued to move it up from the planning category to active planning stage.

Although transportation efforts in the larger road category have tended to focus on the Exton By-Pass and the retention of the plan for the Northern Chester County Connector, we must also keep in mind the state of the links that we have.

Development activity along the Route 202 corridor from King Prussia to Exton and possibly to West Chester indicate that the expansion of the existing road network to additional lanes may be a logical suggestion. We need a study to determine the financial, engineering and statistical basis for making a six lane highway out of a four lane one. This includes improving access from 202 to the Expressway. This study will begin soon. We should also consider roadway signs within the corridor to identify its role as an economic growth area.

Looking at the development along along the corridor makes it essential that this happen. Anyone who has traveled Route 128 in Massachusetts recognizes that easy access for firms and workers (and even through-travelers) means that substantial capacity is needed, not only for overall daily use, but for the rush hours.

The County's commitment to the redevelopment of the rail service to southern Chester County with the Octoraro Railway will continue. In the near future it is hoped that we may resolve with SEPTA a long-term future with respect to the ownership of the track to ensure its continued availability for rail freight. Knowing that this future is ensured gives the opportunity for the Chester County Development Council and the Industrial Development Authority to encourage projects and attract rail-oriented industries to the County.

Our recent development and creation of a para-transit system has fulfilled an important need in the lives of hundreds of residents of the County. In July, 1984 the para-transit system carried 5,485 riders in 14 vehicles. By the end of 1984, both the ridership and number of vehicles will double.

We will continue to provide and improve that service and will promote the expansion of such a service if needed.

In the transportation strategy, rail passenger transportation is still an important element of the transportation picture. The County continues to support SEPTA in providing railroad commuter service to Paoli and the recently restored service to West Chester. As funds become available, additional service may be extended to Exton, Downingtown and Coatesville in the next decade. At the same time, we must continue to weigh the cost/benefit ratio of our support for SEPTA in view of the comparatively few Chester Countians who use the system.



The Commissioner's continue to support the creation and maintenance of bus service where appropriate and viable. An excellent example of how public and private partnerships can produce beneficial results is the SEPTA Route 126 bus from Paoli train station to the Great Valley Corporate Center. The Chester County Commissioners have joined with Rouse Associates to split the bill for that portion of the operating cost of this experimental route that is not funded from state or federal sources or rider fares.

We are currently engaged in a fifteen year, twenty million dollar bridge renovation program. This is the kind of program that attracts little attention and yet it is so critical for those who live near our county bridges or use them for their business needs. Today we have accomplished renovation of 15 bridges at a cost of \$2.6 million. (Underway are 10, at \$8.5 million). Fortunately, much of this is in federal funds, yet it must be pointed out that when bridges are built to federal standards, they are "overbuilt".

With respect to air transportation, the County has access to the rest of the world through the facilities at Philadelphia International Airport. We will continue to encourage public transportation services in the sense of adequate taxi-cab and limousine service to and from the Airport for the residents of the County. Similarly, we will encourage further use of air freight to get the high-valued, time-sensitive commodities to and from the County. A privately operated air freight terminal should be one of our development goals. Additionally, specialized air freight as well as passenger access will continue through the facilities of the Chester County Airport, which we would like to make grow with the economy of the County.

Transportation will continue to play an ever-increasing role in providing mobility for goods and people that make the economy of this County viable. We will meet the challenge of transportation.

**FACT THREE:** We generate 1,000 tons per day of trash in the County.

#### **MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

There are four primary disposal sites in Chester County which we have relied upon or will rely on in the near future.

Strasburg Landfill is closed. Knickerbocker Landfill is open temporarily but will be filled and closed by the Summer of 1985. AAK Landfill is under agreement to be operated by the Southeastern Chester County Refuse Authority (SECCRA). It seems to be proceeding but it needs to be pointed out very specifically that only 14 townships of our 73 municipalities will be served. That is quite proper because they are the ones who are making the investment and they are to be praised for their foresight on behalf of their residents and their future trash needs. That still leaves most of the rest of the county.

Lanchester Landfill has recently been purchased by Chester County and will be administered by the new Chester County Solid Waste Authority. After all the near misses in the past attempts to preserve this landfill for our use, we are extremely fortunate to have acquired it. This landfill may be our saving grace in coming years, especially as our neighboring Counties find they have run out of space.

In general terms, we are addressing solid waste through the efforts of our County Solid Waste Coordinator and our Solid Waste Task Force. Both of these are working to quickly identify current disposal capacities and to evaluate possible alternatives to landfilling such as waste-to-energy facilities, resource recovery, and recycling. Such alternatives may become extremely important in the near future as disposal capacity diminishes.

We have started the new update of the county solid waste plan. This is not just a county's solid waste plan; it is a solid waste plan that must be signed by both the county and each municipality. It will give us a chance to work with the local officials to try to determine together what our best course of action will be.

One other spot on the horizon which may turn out to be a bright spot is the whole idea of resource recovery. If we can discover means by which trash can be converted into energy, it will perhaps solve two problems at the same time. One of the exciting things that is going on right now is a regional study. The five counties of the southeastern region will be working together to try to grapple with the solid waste problem, rather than being competitive. Regional efforts are growing stronger in this as in other areas, and voluntary cooperation is in each county's interests.

**FACT FOUR:**        **Chester County loses agricultural land to development activities at the rate of 5 acres per day. That may not sound like much, but that represents 15 average sized Chester County farms in a year's time. Remember also that agriculture is currently the largest single revenue-producing industry in the County.**

#### **MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

We have in place a group whose task is to enhance the vitality of the farming community: the Chester County Agricultural Development Council.

While many counties across the United States have focused their agricultural preservation efforts on land retention techniques, the Chester County approach has been different, and unique. Rather than encumber the farmer with additional regulations and restrictions, the Chester County Commissioners, through the CCADC, are promoting the economic improvement of the farm community. Zoning and other regulatory efforts are doomed to failure unless the farmer is given the flexibility to operate his farm in his best interest. By providing financial and other economic benefit to the agricultural community, and by promoting cooperative educational resources offered by the Agricultural Extension Service, we are attempting to retain the only farm resource more valuable than Chester County farmland—the Chester County farmer.

The CCADC is responding to one of many land use challenges that our communities face now and in the future.

To further promote agricultural preservation in coming years, we want to evaluate the concept of an agricultural bond issue that would lend capital financial support to our County's farming community. Is that a method of preservation that would be viable in Chester County? Is it one that would meet with the success that it has in some other places or is it the best option for us to follow? We must seriously consider that question because one thing we have discovered is that rhetoric is not sufficient to preserve agricultural land. The problem at root is a financial one, as are many areas of public policy. If that is true, both from the government's point of view and from the farmer's point of view, than both interests must be represented.

We will continue to explore the possible use of innovative land preservation techniques such as Transfer of Development Rights, a strategy which has received attention locally but has not yet been tried in Chester County, although some municipalities such as Birmingham Township have provided the framework for Transfer of Development Rights to occur. Further, the Commissioners continue to support the possible creation of an Agricultural District in Chester County. We renew our offer to provide County-owned land as an anchor for the development of an Agricultural District in the northwestern part of the County.

**FACT FIVE:** Over 200,000 Chester County residents are completely dependent upon water sources within the County, whether from springs, surface water and reservoirs, or wells. That's over two thirds of our population. Chester County's residents and businesses use over 40 million gallons of water every day. All of these figures will only increase as the County's population increases. As population and business needs increase, can we match these needs with an adequate distribution system?

**MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

The ability of our current water reserves to fulfill the needs of the future is a challenge which we must deal with immediately, before those reserves are squandered, polluted or misallocated. Current groundwater reserves in all of Chester County is estimated at 300 billion gallons, with over a billion gallons flowing through the natural system each day. This is our bounty; we have the water needed for the future. But it is also our challenge; we must protect and manage both the quantity and quality of this reserve if it is to support our most basic needs in the twenty first century. As important as quantity and quality are, we must also be concerned with distribution and institutional arrangements. With this in mind, the Chester County Commissioners have authorized the development of a County Water Supply Plan to be created through the combined effort of the Chester County Water Resources Authority and the Chester County Planning Commission.

Among the goals of the plan will be a specific assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of our water supply system and an evaluation of the most reliable aquifers and surface supplies. In addition, we will promote further cooperation and assistance from the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company which maintains a highly qualified and imaginative professional staff.

**FACT SIX:** Chester County farms are robbed of anywhere from three to eight tons of soil per year by the forces of erosion.

**MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

Un-sung heroes of the effort to improve natural resources in Chester County are the local office of the USDA Soil Conservation Service and our own County Conservation District Board. An awareness of the great threats posed by erosion is slowly leading to an advanced understanding by the farming community of effective erosion prevention techniques. In view of the importance of good soils for high crop yields, it is vital that our agricultural community avail itself of the important resource provided by the partnership of these two agencies.

These are agencies that work together in partnership exemplifying what is best about our federal system.

The fact is that we need to deal with the 50 to 60% of our farmland that is not being conserved properly. We have the resources to do it and we have the willingness to do it. The Conservation District Board has recently taken an active step to increase its effectiveness by going to Level Five of its enforcement power to engage in erosion and sedimentation control. It's another small step, but it's indicative of the fact that the County is looking into the future and trying to use the resources that are there to help meet tomorrow's challenges.

**FACT SEVEN:** From 1970 to 1980, Chester County's population increased by thirteen percent. In 2000, our population is projected to be 376,000. But much more important than the increase in our population is the manner in which it is changing.

**MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

More babies were born to Chester County families in 1982 than any year since 1964. The average Chester Countian is over 30 years old as opposed to the average of 27 years in 1970. Along with this increase in age, the volume of elderly citizens has increased dramatically: while the whole County population was increasing by 13 percent the elderly portion increased by 33 percent.

The increased elderly population will create a need for more long-term care facilities. Fluctuations in school age children creates a need for flexibility in the school system. Certainly we expect more responsibility to come to us in the human services area.

We also need to also keep in mind the needy population. Along with the increase in overall wealth in the county, there has been an increase in those who fall below the welfare line.

The Governor's Block Grant Advisory Committee, which recently reported to the governor, strongly recommended that the block grant technique be used as a way to increase the authority and accountability of local and particularly county agencies in dealing with human services needs.

We are firmly committed to block grants in the human services area. Counties can accept responsibility if we are given the tools to act effectively.

One of the areas in which we are most anxious to be helpful is an area that cries out for assistance and innovation; Domestic Relations. This office obtains and processes support for children who are protected by court orders. All too often it has been possible for individuals to evade legitimate court orders. In fact, it is estimated that 30-40% of children who should be receiving support are not because of various evasive tactics from those responsible.

In cooperation with the court, the Domestic Relations Office has recently been restructured to maximize our system of collection using data processing. We will try to upgrade this system continuously.

It is popular today to talk about "women's issues." Here indeed, is a "woman's issue." Not because it is symbolic, but because it is an issue that pervades our society and, in particular, the life of female-headed households where support has been ordered. These are women who deserve our praise and our admiration, and certainly, as much support as society can give them in the critical task of bringing up future generations.

It is hard to realize this, but as recent senate hearings point out, more than half of the children born in 1983 in our nation are projected to be on welfare during their childhood.

Many of the mothers of these children want to work and, in fact, are working. Often their wages are insufficient to support themselves and their children without child support payments to which they are legally and morally due.

It is always easy in a discussion that centers on administrative matters that fall within the direct purview of the County Commissioners, for it to appear that many of the main functions of county government involving the function of justice are being overlooked. That is not the case. Our function of support of judiciary, in fulfilling its constitutional role, is one of our most important tasks.

Responsibility for legal decisions is the proper sphere of the members of the bench, which has a very distinguished history in Chester County. Many of the administrative techniques which we have undertaken in the last few years, are available for the administrative service of the courts under its authority.

**FACT EIGHT:**     **The number of persons employed in Chester County rose 36 percent between 1970 and 1980 and we are now at our highest point in history, 143,000.**

#### **MEETING THE CHALLENGE:**

The leading industries in this employment growth were professional and personal services and retail and wholesale trade. During all of this increase, manufacturing employment in the county decreased by 6% relative to the other industries. This is indicative of the County's shifting industrial base. Chester County is on the cutting edge of a national trend away from manufacturing and towards service and trade.

A brief review of some unemployment figures will provide some idea of the impact economic shifts have had on Chester County. Ten years ago today the unemployment rate in Chester County was 3.6%. Early in 1983, the unemployment rate was 9.5%. Fortunately, since that time we have seen some decrease in unemployment. Now our latest figures indicate that the unemployment rate is 6.5%. During this ten year period we have seen a decline in manufacturing, particularly in the steel towns of Coatesville and Phoenixville, and we have also seen rapid growth in the 202 corridor, particularly in the so-called high tech area. One of our problems is how to match these two things together. Even though we may see high tech development coming and we may foster it and promote it as best we can, we have to make sure that there is a blue-tech outreach. We must make sure that the high-tech corridors can include within their sphere of employment the trained pool of workers who are willing to work but who have not been able to match their talents to the jobs needed in today's economy.

Our shifting industrial base provides us with exciting new challenges for promoting and assisting the growth of new employers in the County. Businesses which have seen a new start in Chester County include electronics, computer management, national and international wholesaling, retailing, and professional services. All of these employers are at the forefront of a national trend toward high technology and personal services. The challenge is to find ways of helping Chester County to ride the crest of that trend into a healthy economic future.

As we look at these changes, it becomes evident that public policy initiatives are necessary to diversify and stabilize the economies of the older urban areas of the county and, at the same time, take advantage of the economic growth in the more prosperous areas of the county. It also becomes evident that public policy initiatives alone will not ensure success in the area of economic development. We have to join in a partnership with the private sector in order to bring the full range of public and private resources to the small businessman in the county.

At the level of County Government, we have in place an active program specifically charged with meeting today's economic challenge: The Economic Development Consortium, established in 1983. The EDC is one among many active sources of guidance and promotion of the future development of Chester County. Other important groups and programs include the Ben Franklin Partnership Program sponsored by our State government and the Philadelphia First Corporation's Regional Economic Development Consortium sponsored by private enterprise. We have all seen the positive results of consolidation of functional areas, particularly in emergency services and human services. Using this model, we hope to encourage the development of a strong inflation-proof economy, stabilized tax base, and full employment while retaining the rural and suburban character of the county that has attracted businesses and people in the past.

Looking back on the past year we find that in the three areas of business needs-- financing, labor and information--the Consortium has effected significant accomplishments.

In the area of financing the EDC has established an economic development Revolving Loan Fund which, in essence, is a creative use of Community Development Block Grant money, combining job generation activities with other public policy objectives. The first two projects approved by the Industrial Development Authority were in Coatesville and Phoenixville.

The Chester County Development Council has established a Small Business Administration 503 program, which gives small businessmen access to low-interest money, especially when used in conjunction with other programs like the Revolving Loan Fund and the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority program.

In the area of labor, the Industrial Development Authority has for the first time in 1983 established linkages with the county's jobs program. When a developer projects a certain number of jobs on the Industrial Development Authority application, he is encouraged to use the Office of Economic Development to meet those job projections. Last year, in 1983, \$209 million in Industrial Development Authority projects were approved and this will mean 7,300 jobs over the following three years.

One of the negative impacts of changing industrial makeup is something the federal government has called a "dislocated" worker. In essence, this is someone that has been unemployed and is unlikely to return to their job in that industry. Coatesville and Phoenixville, where there is strong dependence on the steel industry, have many dislocated workers, and we have established two programs, one in each community, to serve laid off steel workers and return them to the job market.

In the area of information, we have been very active. While finding jobs for unemployed people is important, we must also stimulate the "supply side" of the jobs market. This is a primary purpose of economic development activities and for the small businessman and potential entrepreneur, access to information is essential. It reflects our belief in the "human capital" concept of our investment of resources.

The Office of Economic Development has been designated as a Small Business Administration Resource Center and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) program operates out of this office. This is a good example of the role that government can play in providing information and linkages with the small business by using volunteers or retired executives and providing the small businessman access to the years of experience that these people have gained in the business community. Since January 1983, 389 businesses were counseled in the SCORE office and this represents over 490 hours of counseling time.

SCORE has participated in a series of Be Your Own Boss (BYOB) workshops in the county, which is an effort to educate potential entrepreneurs on the variety of services available that will help them be successful. Over 600 people have attended the five workshops and there are plans to conduct these workshops on a regular basis in all parts of the County.

We have also established a formal communications network about the Consortium through the publication of the Economic Development News. This newsletter keeps the business community abreast of economic development activities on a county-wide basis.

We also participate in the Defense Information Contract Clearinghouse with the Greater Philadelphia Area Chamber of Commerce. This is an effort to increase business awareness of the defense market. Chester County and the Philadelphia region has lost a significant share of the defense market over the past five years and it is our hope to increase sales to the Department of Defense by county businesses, particularly in the metal fabricating, electronic semiconductor, and commodities areas. Specific figures available.

We are also developing an overall strategy for economic development in the county with the help of expert consultants from such companies as Latimer and Buck. We are at an important juncture in this effort, and it may well be fine to consider fostering a private-based comprehensive partnership for future development and coordination.

The Agricultural Development Council is part of the Consortium. Not everyone associates economic development with agriculture, and it often seems that these two industries are conflicting, however, the publication of the Chester County Cookbook proved that these are compatible goals. By promoting our products on a region-wide basis, we hope to increase and stimulate the agriculture business in Chester County.

Each of the components of economic development is important: planning department, redevelopment authority, agricultural and development councils, industrial financing authority, tourism, as well as the water authority, the airport authority and agricultural extension.

Through the active and aggressive development of such economic development strategies as these, the County government is eager to be a part of the economic growth of the County into the next century. We are answering the economic challenge.



CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBLIGATIONS IN THE  
COUNTY OF THE FUTURE

Chester County, as we have seen, has a number of challenges facing it.

But, as we also have seen, there are things we can do to prepare for the future.

Chester County is on the "cutting edge" of the type of society we will have in the future. In a very real sense, Chester County is making the transition from pre-industrial setting to a post-industrial setting, without going through the industrial phase of urban expansion, the concentration of population and jobs.

What is the most basic challenge we face?

It is the opportunity and obligation that people have to be involved in the shaping of these varied choices we have outlined.

One of the most notable things about county government is the fact that its power to do things are often limited by law, yet the county's responsibilities seem potentially far broader. The result is a government which must place a premium on leadership and planning, not a government which simply expands. There may well be areas where we should consciously retract or reshape.

The major role we have is identifying problems, helping mobilize resources, and working cooperatively with others (whether public or private) to solve the problems.

That means we must emphasize our ability to help people recognize their strengths in grappling with these challenges and help them make the choice that will affect them and their community in the future.

In the broadest sense, we can say this is a responsibility that each individual, each family, each group, and each community has.

That motivation in itself may not be sufficient. Certainly people should recognize their own self-interest in such decisions. Ultimately our society depends on people engaging in the process of decision-making for it to work. Unfortunately, in our society it has become too easy to "let somebody else do it." As a nation we have been too prone to feel that responsibility for confronting the tough problems that face us will be borne by some other group, some other municipality, some other level of government.

What will keep the character of our county intact, even with the challenges that face us, is for each one of us to accept these challenges and to learn the facts, review the choices, and then take the appropriate actions.

It is a challenge we all share. Let us accept it for ourselves and make it our purpose to help others understand at every opportunity that we have a common set of challenges and choices.

