

Alan Jennings

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laid off seven of its 16 employees and shut down its ineffective programs. Its budget of just \$500,000 came almost entirely from public sources.

The first new initiative he created was the Lehigh Valley Food Bank, which was renamed Second Harvest Food Bank in the early 1990's. Jennings was 24 when it made its first distribution. The program now serves six counties and has distributed more than 200 million

pounds of food to its network of 200 nonprofits that collectively serve more than 100,000 people per month. When Jennings left the organization, its budget exceeded \$30 million, with barely 20% coming from government sources, unprecedented in the Community

Action world.

Today, the agency operates the Sixth Street Shelter, one of the largest shelters for homeless families in Pennsylvania, which includes a long-term transitional housing program.

The agency has done extensive work revitalizing neighborhoods in the downtown neighborhoods and the commercial districts they surround in all three cities and in the Slate Belt boroughs of Pen Argyl, Bangor, Wind Gap and Portland.

Extensive work has been done revitalizing and weatherizing the housing stock, helping families buy their first home, saving families from foreclosure and fighting predatory lending.

The agency has also provided entrepreneurial training to prospective and existing entrepreneurs and its federally-certified community development financial institution, the Rising Tide Community Loan Fund, has lent more than \$12.75 million to businesses that

were ineligible for bank financing.

Under Jennings' leadership, the agency had an extensive portfolio of advocacy success, including the referenda that led to the creation of the Green Future Fund and Allentown's rental licensing, the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program, the State

Food Purchase Program, breaking up a mortgage fraud conspiracy, increases in the minimum wage, pressing banks to extend more credit to low-income families and their neighborhoods, and challenging Realtors to stop discriminatory practices in the City of Allentown.

"There is a culture in this community that is receptive to understanding its weaknesses and finding solutions. We had thousands of donors, volunteers and hardworking staff as well as allies in government who contributed to those efforts. Without them, nothing

would have happened," Jennings said.

Jennings has been quoted in news stories from all over the world, including Japan, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Scotland and France. He was also used by such news organizations as the Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, the Wall Street Journal, American Banker

and Al Jazeera in addition to the Lehigh Valley's news outlets. He has been honored with dozens of awards at the local, state and national level. Jennings will receive his latest honor at a ceremony in the Regency Ballroom in the Hyatt Regency on New Jersey

Avenue in Washington, DC, at 9:15 AM, on Thursday, March 13.

Rt 80

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There will never be a perfect time for a project of this scale, nor will it be perfect in every aspect, but maintaining and improving our infrastructure is essential.

Since its construction in the 1960s, I-80 has deteriorated significantly and no longer meets modern design standards. Originally built to carry 10,000 vehicles per day, the highway now handles 80,000 vehicles daily, with 22% of that being truck traffic. By 2030-2040, daily traffic is projected to reach 90,000 to 100,000 vehicles.

Safety concerns also make this project critical. Crash studies between Exit 303 and Exit 307 show accident rates exceeding the statewide average, with the most hazardous section being Exit 304 in Stroudsburg Borough. This stretch has been designated a Safety Corridor, requiring reduced speed limits. Many of us are familiar with the frequent and devastating crashes near the Main Street and Park Avenue exits in recent years. Studies link these high crash rates to congestion and outdated highway design.

The first public meeting on the expansion was held in February 2014, with several additional meetings leading up to the final public session in November 2019. The final design was approved in January 2023, and construction will proceed in three phases, starting west to east at Exit 303, with bidding anticipated in June 2025.

The project will expand I-80 to three lanes in each direction between Exit 303 and Exit 308, while also reconstructing interchanges, improving ramp access, and adding retention basins. The design includes raising bridges, removing and adding ramps, creating flyover lanes, and extending existing ramps to enhance safety and traffic flow. You can view the detailed design plans here.

While many of us may have personal opinions on this expansion, and in an ideal world, we wouldn't need such extensive upgrades, federal and state governments have an obligation to maintain infrastructure that meets modern safety and efficiency standards. The increase in traffic volume—both current and projected—demands action. Fortunately, the federal government has allocated over half a billion dollars to ensure this corridor meets necessary criteria and provides a safer, more effective roadway for residents and travelers alike.

Friends of the Bangor Public Library Spring Book Sale.

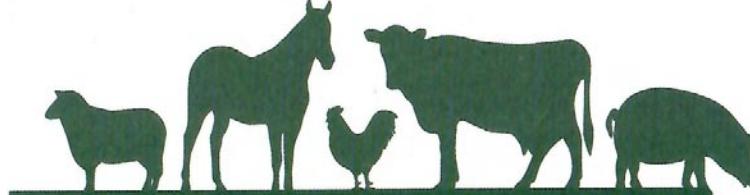
The Friends of the Bangor Public Library will hold their Annual Spring Book Sale, at the Bee Hive Community Center, 197 Penna. Avenue, Bangor PA on the following dates and times:

Friday May 2nd: 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday May 3rd: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday May 4th: 1:00 PM-4:00 PM (Bag Day)

This event will feature thousands of gently used and like new Books, DVD's, Audio Books, and Puzzles for adults and children. Non Fiction books will be organized according to genres' and Fiction will be organized according to author for easy selection. For additional information please contact: Karen Brewer @ 484-894-5661.



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