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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cumberland County Hosted a Workforce Development Forum

Cumberland County, PA –Cumberland County hosted a Workforce Development Forum as part of its Community Support Program (CSP) initiative at its Ritner Highway facility Friday. The forum included a moderator led panel discussion with representatives from Ross Stores, Inc., Members 1st Credit Union, Tuckey Mechanical and Carlisle Syntec. Panelists were asked to discuss topics such as key skills their industry/business require in their workforce, availability of these workers, workforce development programs and demands in our area, and much more.

Panelists identified several key concepts. Employers:

- Are facing challenges in finding the quantity and quality of workers they need in this area
- Identified the importance of and need to develop “soft skills” in prospective employees (communications, team work, conflict resolution, problem solving, etc.)
- Are interested in building relationships with vocational technical schools in an effort to expand the workforce needed in this area
- Identified generational changes as the concept of career has changed. Average working stays in a career path for 7 years
- Need to improve engagement with kids and parents at early ages on opportunities in trade professions

The Community Support Program (CSP) seeks to identify and help in the development of programs to address major community needs within Cumberland County. Workforce Development and Transportation are two areas of focus identified for 2016 as part of a community-based needs assessment. CSP uses this community-based needs assessment

methodology to define priority areas of need and apply best practices to administer the program and provide essential resources, either in the form of financial or in-kind contributions to enhance positive outcomes for the community.

Cumberland County is the fastest growing County in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and maintains a relatively low unemployment rate. Local employers and stakeholders participating in this forum discussed these and other important topics to support the development of family sustaining jobs and overall economic growth in Cumberland County. This new initiative is an ongoing priority for the County's leadership and a collaborative effort with the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation, area business leaders, and other stakeholders.

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