



CBICC Legislative Breakfast with Representative Kerry Benninghoff

*Presenting Sponsor Bellefonte Waterfront Associates –
Update on Bellefonte Waterfront Project*

A capacity crowd filled the Garden Ballroom at the Mountain View Country Club in Boalsburg this morning for breakfast and a tour d'horizon from Pennsylvania State Representative Kerry Benninghoff. Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County (CBICC) President Vern Squier welcomed the record number of attendees and joked that Benninghoff shouldn't "feel any pressure" because of the size of the crowd.

Squier thanked the Presenting Sponsor for the event, Bellefonte Waterfront Associates, and introduced partner Tom Songer. Songer reviewed the project which encompasses the property along Spring Creek in Bellefonte, between High and Lamb streets. The area was previously occupied by the Bush House and an old silk mill which has been demolished. Bellefonte Borough, in conjunction with the state, undertook a project to put the property above the flood plain, which Songer noted was key to proceeding with the development.

The development will include three buildings that are specifically designed to integrate with Bellefonte's historical architecture. The first building will be a hotel that includes commercial space. BWA partner Mark Morath explained that the hotel would have a building-long balcony coming off the second floor meeting rooms facing Spring Creek. Songer noted that there would be an outside promenade along the waterfront that would serve as a community gathering space and provide easy access to the other buildings. The second building, connected to the hotel, would be a parking deck with first floor commercial space. The third building would again feature commercial space on the first floor with one and two-bedroom condominiums occupying the upper floors.

Songer praised the cooperation between local and state government and the Bellefonte business community in advancing the project. He said they were projecting the completion of the hotel (which will have a national brand) in 2021. Noting that business is growing in Bellefonte, he said that the Waterfront Project would be the beginning of a renaissance for Bellefonte.

Following these remarks, Representative Benninghoff addressed the attendees. He noted a number of technological advances from electric cars to regenerative tissue research as representative of the sea change in how businesses and individuals are going to be influenced by developing technology. The question he posed was, "Are we ready?"

As policy makers, Benninghoff noted, it was the legislature's job to facilitate this economic growth through education that trains workers for emerging technologies, providing needed infrastructure (both electronic and concrete) and by eliminating outdated regulations that unnecessarily hamper

development. Strategic planning for the future and broadening the commonwealth's appeal as business-welcoming environment were keys to growth and he noted that, "we can't tax our way out of problems." Benninghoff says he sees the potential for unlimited growth in Pennsylvania and Centre County, with a developed work force, educational opportunities and expertise and abundant natural resources.