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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEDA Announces 2023 Economic Development Awards

Reading, PA (October 17, 2023) – During its annual fall conference, held this year at the *DoubleTree by Hilton Reading*, the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA) honored a number of recipients for their demonstration of outstanding accomplishments in economic development.

On behalf of the PEDA Awards Committee, Executive Director Joshua Skopp congratulated recipients of 2023 PEDA Membership Awards, thanking them for shining a bright light on the meaningful work being done by economic development professionals across the Commonwealth.

A summary of awards presented is as follows:

- **Program of the Year Award – *York County Trail Towns Program***

The York County Trail Towns Program, established by the York County Economic Alliance (YCEA), is one of the first forays by an economic development organization in Pennsylvania to leverage outdoor recreational assets as a driver for economic growth. The initial pilot program was made possible through \$300K in funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, while an additional \$700K secured allowed for an expansion of the program's activities and coverage of additional towns. Throughout its first three years, the Trail Towns Program has invested in infrastructure, made strategic investments, and created and implemented action plans that are guiding a series of transformational projects in seven participating trail towns. Through the Trail Towns Program and the partnership with the BLOOM Business Empowerment Center, businesses have been supported with technical assistance, access to capital, and marketing and promotional support, which has facilitated the launch of 16 new businesses. Learn more at www.yceapa.org.

- **Project of the Year Award – *River's Landing & Clearfield Riverwalk Project***

Clearly Ahead Development recently announced the completion of the Clearfield Riverwalk & River's Landing facility. Phase 1 of the project consisted of land acquisition, environmental remediation and construction of a 1-mile Clearfield Riverwalk and a public park - the Raftsman Memorial Park. Phase 1 consisted of approximately \$3M in total project costs, while leveraging \$5M in other funds for streetscape improvements in the downtown district.

Phase 2 consisted of the construction of River's Landing – a \$5M project that leveraged nearly \$2M in direct, private investment. The 11,500 sf facility is now fully occupied and

hosts approximately 75 employees – across three businesses. The site provides coworking, special event, and training areas to accommodate over 130 guests for community and private events. River's Landing serves as strategic training grounds for local private businesses, startups, and domestic and international remotely operated businesses.

Both phases represent part of a \$20M Downtown Clearfield Renaissance to leverage other public and private sector investments within the Main Street District. Learn more at www.ClearlyAhead.com.

- **Young Professional to Watch Award – *Jake Rickert, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation***

Jake Rickert, Director of Workforce Development with Penn-Northwest Development Corporation is the recipient of this year's award. Nominated by his organization and endorsed by stakeholders from his region, he was recognized as an exceptional member of his community who has played a key role in successful economic development initiatives, advocated for the economic development profession and exhibited leadership qualities that have distinguished him as a future leader within the industry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Learn more at www.penn-northwest.com/our-people.

- **Developer of the Year Award – *Pamela Shupp Menet, County of Berks***

Supporters say one would be hard pressed to name someone who has had more of an impact on economic development projects in her community in recent years than Pamela Shupp Menet. With projects her organizations have directly touched having resulted in the retention and creation of seemingly countless jobs, over the years, Shupp Menet's impact is unquestioned. Shupp Menet is being recognized for the significant role she plays in economic development across multiple sectors throughout Berks County. Learn more at www.countyofberks.com/departments/economic-development.

About Pennsylvania Economic Development Association

PEDA's mission is to promote sound economic development policies, provide leading-edge economic development education and nurture an effective statewide economic development network to foster the economic growth of the Commonwealth.

PEDA's membership is comprised of county and regional economic developers, state government economic development employees, workforce development professionals, utility and transportation executives, industrial development authority directors, industrial and technology incubator operators, chamber of commerce executives, municipal directors of community and economic development, engineering and construction executives, economic development finance professionals, commercial and industrial developers, and local, county and state elected officials. For further information, visit www.peda.org.

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