

Good afternoon. My name is Bonni Dunlap and I represent Indiana County and the health and human services organizations that serve the community members in our county.

Indiana County is a scenic, rural county of 88,880 residents in southwest PA and we are fortunate to have many resources available to those in need in our county. In fact, because of recent activities targeted to helping children in our county succeed in school, we were designated as one of America's Promise "100 Best Communities in the Nation for Young People".

But, for all the many good attributes about our county, we have residents who struggle with basic needs, such as food and housing. We rank 26th in the state in unemployment (8.5%) and our poverty rate is 18.6% versus the state's rate of 12.4%. For those reasons, we welcome economic development, including the expansion of gas exploration and drilling. However, the development of the wells and pipelines means an increased demand on housing.

Every five years, we conduct a survey of needs in the county; we just completed an analysis of "Indiana County Speaks Up 2012" results. The majority of respondents indicated they own their home (73%), but this number has decreased from 85% in 2002. The number of those renting units increased from 8% to 16% and those renting mobile homes from 5% to 9% in the same time period.

Almost one third of the respondents answered that affordable housing for low and moderate income, elderly and homeless individuals should be a top priority for funding. Higher rental or home purchasing costs and poor housing stock were indicated as problems for over thirty percent of the respondents.

Indiana County also recently completed and approved their Comprehensive Plan, "Where We Live". Input for the plan was sought from community leaders, businesses and residents. According to the chapter on housing, housing stock is being depleted due to

factors including growth in student population at Indiana University of PA and Wyotech (automotive, diesel, motorcycle, watercraft, and collision/refinishing school) and the influx of employees working in the gas industry. The report projects our county will need 6,838 new housing units to accommodate growth over the next twenty years.

Even with planned housing units, we struggle to help our most needy. We have one homeless shelter for families or individuals with a limited capacity of 7 to 13 people. The shelter serves approximately 150 people in a year, but has 45 to 50 on the waiting list. In addition, our domestic violence shelter houses four families at any one time and served over 30 adults and 25 children in a year, but their clients struggle to find permanent housing. A new program, Interfaith Hospitality Network, started early this year and over fifteen adults and twenty-five children have been sheltered at church sites on a weekly basis.

Our Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) program is closed, with over 200 on the waiting list, and the public housing units are usually at capacity.

Funds for the state-funded programs have been decreased throughout the past five years, and were reduced ten percent in the current fiscal budget. The service providers attempt to help people find and maintain housing with less money and they meet regularly to discuss ways to collaborate and coordinate more efficiently. We are hampered by our efforts though because the realtor community is taking advantage of garnering increased rents from the students and drilling company employees. The average cost of rent in the county was \$400 to \$500 a month and now is \$600 to \$700 a month. Low and moderate income families have difficulty paying those amounts, in addition to utilities and other costs of living. Individuals lucky enough to receive a housing voucher or participating in other housing programs based on HUD's Fair Market Rate must adhere to the ceilings, which are between \$493 and \$610 for a one to three person household. According to the Self Sufficiency Standards for PA (2010-2011), one adult with one child would need to be employed in a job making \$15.60/hour or \$32,946 a year.

So, while we are blessed with higher income employment opportunities and business growth to meet the needs of the temporary workers, we have the double bind of the impact on housing.

I appreciate the chance to communicate to you the effects of the Marcellus Shale industry on our sixth class county.