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## **Warren County Working to Implement Economic Development Action Plan**

(BELVIDERE, NJ, July 12, 2017) - The Warren County Economic Development Committee is working to implement an action plan intended to boost the area’s commercial, industrial and agricultural opportunities.

The EDC recently completed a one-year engagement with Tetra Tech, Inc. and Camoin Associates after the consultants developed the economic blueprint and the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted the Economic Development Action Plan Matrix it contained.

“The plan helps to build on existing resources and harness new economic development opportunities,” said Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski, who established the county’s ad hoc Economic Development Advisory Council in 2011 and spearheaded its transition into the EDC in 2016. “The freeholders, in collaboration with the county’s Economic Development Committee, will use this Action Plan matrix to guide their economic development activities,” Sarnoski added.

Among the strategies recommended in the plan are to:

- Create and maintain a streamlined and consistent development process to help encourage economic development.
- Redefine what it means to do business in Warren County, and develop and maintain an environment that demonstrates Warren County is “open for business.”
- Build on existing tourism assets and work to maintain quality visitor experiences within the county.

The consultants developed the strategies through stakeholder focus groups; an analysis of development processes, practices and procedures at the county and municipal levels; and discussions with the freeholders, county departments, and the EDC members.

“In order to be most successful we need to ‘brand’ ourselves as a county and have municipal economic development plans that mesh with other municipal economic development plans, so that we are all pulling together to take advantage of our collective strengths and attributes,” said EDC Chairwoman Betty Schultheis. “Each member of the County EDC will be working with two municipalities to help accomplish this goal,” she added.

As another step toward increasing municipal coordination and participation in the county's economic development efforts, EDC members decided midway through the study to implement quarterly evening meetings held at locations throughout the county. The EDC customarily meets the second Thursday of each month at 8 a.m. in the county's Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building, but held its March meeting in Mansfield Township and its June meeting in Oxford Township.

The evening meetings are intended to encourage more municipal input and sharing of information on the local level, and the Oxford meeting attracted the largest crowd of any EDC session.

The EDC will hold a regular, morning meeting on July 13 at 8 a.m., while the next traveling meeting will be held in the Blairstown Municipal Building at 7:30 p.m. on August 10.

Meeting dates, locations and agendas are available on the EDC website at [www.warrenecdev.com](http://www.warrenecdev.com).