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On April 23 the 2013 Lackawanna County Workshop series kicked off with the “What’s the Big Idea Party at the Radisson Hotel. The public was invited to attend and share any ideas they had for arts and culture in Lackawanna County. Over 50 people attended and a great discussion was held and many great ideas shared. A list was created of these ideas with tips on how to make them happen as well as if some of them were already happening in the county and how to get more involved. If you have questions about anything or to find out about future workshops and events please contact Maureen McGuigan, Deputy Director of Arts and Culture at 570.963.6590 x012 or [mcguiganm@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:mcguiganm@lackawannacounty.org)

## 4/23/2013 BIG IDEA LIST

### Create Destinations

An amusement park like Rocky Glen  
A Space Needle or other Tourist Attraction  
A Skate Park

### Develop Events

An “Arts and the City” Conference  
Arts & Music Festival  
Arts & Humanities Festival  
Community Dinners  
Dance Festival  
Diversity Celebrations or other culture and heritage celebrations  
Dog Friendly Happy Hours  
Electric City Weekends- extend First Fri. into a weekend  
Expand County Art in the Park program  
Free Movies at Parks (county, city)  
Grafitti Mural Project  
Intergenerational Projects –college students interviewing senior citizens  
Lackawanna County Fair  
Old Forge Pizza Tour  
“Pop-Up” Visual History event with dance and arts

### Market & Promote Area Better

Brand Scranton/Lackawanna County – a lot already happening promote better  
“It’s My Town” writing contest-representing all municipalities in county i.e. have citizens tell why they love their town and publish them  
Better Cohesive Web Presence



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“Look At Me” type up projects that would showcase the arts community better

## Improve the Built Environment (Buildings, Transportation, Trails, Pedestrians, Bikes)

Lower garage prices

Make better use of empty spaces- more infrastructure for arts businesses, groups

Make city more pedestrian friendly

Better transportation system throughout Lackawanna County

Train to Newark

Fix mistakes and Translate Piazza del Arte and include other heritages

## WE HAVE THE IDEA...NOW WHAT?

Ideas and Brainstorming are an important part of making something happen. Humans are imaginative creatures, and we need to have vision, hope, passion and creativity to survive. The idea stage is energizing and keeps people invested in seeing change.

Implementing is the more difficult stage. That old cliché “easier said than done” holds true in this situation. With this said, it doesn’t have to be perceived as negative. It can be interesting, fun and a great challenge for those who wish to take part and contribute to our bright future. If you have passion, patience and a commitment to your vision it is truly amazing what can be accomplished from just starting with the smallest action. A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. It starts with a vision and then we roll up our sleeves. The following pages include a few thoughts on how to possibly take some of the ideas discussed to the next step or build upon what is already happening.

## Destinations

Bigger Ideas like building an amusement park, space needle or a skate park take a long term commitment. They involve many levels of public, private and government sectors working together. A good place to start with such large projects is to

- research other communities to find out how they have accomplished it
- Talk to community leaders, representatives, local government, non-profits and other attractions to see if it has been thought of or attempted
- Form a task force of people interested in the idea. The group would work on determining feasibility of the idea
- Conduct surveys with the community. Determine the level of interest, participation/contribution; and whether or not they could benefit from this idea.



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## Events

Events can simply start with a small group of committee members who want to see something happen. Sometimes they come together when larger organizations who have the same vision work together to create a bigger event. Making an event happen- no matter the size- always comes down to giving yourself a long enough timeline for creating a solid action plan, finding partners to help you build the event, ensuring tasks are getting done and keeping volunteers and partners motivated.

### Arts Festivals

Several people mentioned arts, humanities, music and dance festivals. Lackawanna County currently has ongoing opportunities for community members to become involved as an artist, performer or volunteer.

Arts on Fire – First weekend of June every year (this year June 7, 8 & 9) -a three day festival at the Scranton Iron Furnaces celebrating industrial arts with performances and a community iron pour.  
[www.artsonfirefestival.com](http://www.artsonfirefestival.com)

Contact: Chester Kulesa, Site Administrator for the Anthracite Heritage Museum & Iron Furnaces  
[ckulesa@pa.gov](mailto:ckulesa@pa.gov) or 570.963.4804

Arts on the Square – This year July 27. 12-8:00 p.m.- a visual and performing arts on Courthouse Square in Downtown Scranton. [www.artsonthesquare.net](http://www.artsonthesquare.net)

Contacts: ScrantonMade- [scrantonmade@gmail.com](mailto:scrantonmade@gmail.com)

Maureen McGuigan, Lackawanna County Deputy Director of Arts&Culture  
[mcguiganm@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:mcguiganm@lackawannacounty.org) or 570.963.6590 x102

There are also other developing festivals around the County which you may want to be involved in that feature art, music and vendors such as:

Clarks Summit Festival of Ice - [www.theabingtons.org/CSFestivalOfIce](http://www.theabingtons.org/CSFestivalOfIce)

Pioneer Heritage Days in Carbondale- [www.carbondale-pa.gov](http://www.carbondale-pa.gov)

Scranton Celtic Festival – [www.scrantoncelticfestival.com](http://www.scrantoncelticfestival.com)

### Free Movies

There are free movies on Courthouse Square sponsored by Scranton Tomorrow, an organization that manages downtown revitalization projects. They welcome volunteers or sponsors.

Contact: Leslie Collins, Scranton Tomorrow Executive Director [leslie@scrantontomorrow.org](mailto:leslie@scrantontomorrow.org) or 570.963.7901



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## First Friday Scranton

First Friday Scranton continues to be a huge success. There has been discussion of expanding it to an "Electric City Weekend". To accomplish this, it would require additional partnerships; volunteers; and resources. If you would like to get involved: [www.firstfridayscranton.com](http://www.firstfridayscranton.com)

Contact: Jeff Boris, First Friday Scranton Executive Director

[jeff@firstfridayscranton.com](mailto:jeff@firstfridayscranton.com)

## Market & Promote Area Better

Start spreading the word about how great Lackawanna County is! Most of the attendees to the Big Idea Party came because they heard about it through social media. So use your own page, blog, create a Tumblr account, tweet, post on Linked In to rave about all of the great stuff to experience!

Join the Lackawanna County Marketing and Outreach Committee, a new committee trying to develop tactics to promote the area better.

Join the Scranton Tomorrow Promotion Committee, a committee working to promote the Electric City.

Contact: Leslie Collins, Scranton Tomorrow Executive Director

[leslis@scrantontomorrow.org](mailto:leslis@scrantontomorrow.org) or 570.963.7901 or

Find out what groups are doing events; what programs are in your municipality, and contact them contact them to help promote what they are doing. Contact the Lackawanna County Arts and Culture Department if you need help.

Volunteer to coordinate "My Town" writing idea that was mentioned and get people to write about what's great about all 40 of our municipalities.

Contact: Maureen McGuigan, Lackawanna County Deputy Director of Arts and Culture

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## Improve the Built Environment

Better transportation as well as creating pedestrian and bike friendly environments often involves working with a number of individuals and organizations such as municipalities, PennDot, non-profits and state representatives. But gathering information is a good first step to find out about road, land and building management, what ideas may already be planned, and the process used to develop the project or projects.

Transforming spaces can be as simple as working with the building owner of a vacant space and seeing if he/she will let you decorate the space, or even offer low rent until they have a lease. Usually, what are called adaptive reuse projects where a space that was formerly used for something





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is transformed typically involves more partners and planning. An example of this would be the proposed Iron Furnaces project as part of the Iron District Task Force would be an example of this.

There are many groups throughout the County dedicated to working on improvements in their area. If you would like to see change a good place to start would be with the borough or township, or local business association to learn about any projects that may already be started. In Scranton each neighborhood has a neighborhood group that's involved in improving their community.

### **Lackawanna County Public Transit**

Talk to COLTS-write letters, attend meetings, find out how you can make what you want to see happen. An intermodal center will be built in the future downtown. [www.coltsbus.com](http://www.coltsbus.com).

Train from Scranton to Hoboken/New York City

This has been in the works for awhile. New Jersey Transit has been a leader in making this happen. "The Lackawanna Cut Off" as the route was known. Pennsylvania has been slow to commit but the hope is they will have rail to the Delaware Water Gap by 2016.

[http://www.njtransit.com/tm/tm\\_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=Project019To](http://www.njtransit.com/tm/tm_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=Project019To)

### **Rails-to-Trails**

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA) is a great resource on rails-to-trails projects and other quality of life projects in the Lackawanna Valley. The LHVA is always seeking volunteers. [www.lhva.org](http://www.lhva.org).

### **The Iron District Steering Committee**

This is a group led by the Lackawanna County Arts and Culture Department that meets regularly to improve the corridor between South Scranton and the downtown and revitalizing the Scranton Iron Furnaces from the 500 Block of Lackawanna to the 700 block of Cedar. The group is currently seeking programming ideas from the community and always welcomes new members.

### **Fixing up Vacant Spaces**

Lackawanna County is trying to develop a program to have artists decorate the vacant downtown spaces for the holidays. A big step is getting building owners on board with permission to let artists visually improve the space. If you know any building owners or are a building owner and would like to get involved please contact Maureen McGuigan, Lackawanna County Deputy Director of Arts & Culture at [mcguiganm@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:mcguiganm@lackawannacounty.org) or 570.963.6590 x102

The County Economic Development Department and Arts and Culture Department are also looking to develop an arts incubator or collaborative work space program where artists could have rent subsidized for a period or work in a shared space with services. This a long-term project with many



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steps such as identifying appropriate spaces, surveying artists, finding a company to potentially offer services and manage space.

## Have an Idea?

If you have an idea you can apply for a Lackawanna County Arts and Culture Community Project Grant. You may apply for up to \$3,000 and applications are due in October with awards in January. You do not need to be a non-profit to apply. Email [arts-culture@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:arts-culture@lackawannacounty.org) to be included on the mailing list. 2014 applications will be out in June and trainings scheduled at local libraries around the county.