Mission Statement
The mission of the Albright College Center for Excellence in Local Government is to maintain and enhance the quality of life in Berks County by assisting municipal leaders in addressing the changing needs of their communities.

Unique Community Partnership
The Center is a unique partnership among the academic, public and private sectors in the community. A list of the Center’s sponsors, partners and program speakers can be found elsewhere in this report.

Programs and Services
In order to accomplish its mission, the Center assists local government officials in fostering intergovernmental cooperation, developing skills for effective leadership, and enhancing citizen understanding of local government. This report summarizes the activities of the Center in each of these areas.
Message from the Board President

With the announcement that John Kramer is retiring as director—the one and only director the center has ever had—after 18 years, 2012 has been a very interesting and exciting year.

The center is and will continue to be the gold standard for community involvement, municipal training and cooperative purchasing. John’s efforts will never be forgotten, and we owe it to him to carry the torch and keep the center viable and relevant in these ever-changing times. We all recognize the stresses on municipalities and we need to re-double our efforts to keep them engaged, informed and most of all, trained and encouraged to continue in a cooperative spirit.

In anticipation of John’s departure, Albright College organized a search committee and as a result, nearly 75 resumes were received from candidates throughout the United States. Numerous phone and face-to-face interviews were conducted, and I am pleased to report that we have been successful in filling the director position. It was the College’s goal to find someone who complements and has the potential to build on John’s accomplishments, as well as to have that individual’s start date overlap with John’s departure in order to ensure a smooth transition.

In 2012, the board received three new members: Kevin Conrad, West Reading Borough Council president; Vaughn Spencer, Reading mayor; and Joni Naugle of Focused LLC as director-at-large. We welcomed them as well as their new ideas and energy.

Educational training and technical assistance continued to be core components of the center’s activities. During the 2011-2012 program year, 1,120 municipal officials and citizens received training or technical assistance.

The Berks County Cooperative Purchasing Council continues to lend support to members through joint bids and piggybacking arrangements for composting services, line striping services, rock salt, bond paper, office furniture, fire extinguishers, gasoline, heating oil, diesel fuel and road signage.

The Berks Municipal Partnership continues to foster dialogue among municipalities on issues of local and county concern through their quarterly meetings and breakfast meetings with the Berks County Commissioners. Topics discussed this year included joint initiatives on the new emergency radio system, trash collection, sludge drying and sewage treatment facilities, conservation projects and storm water.

The center assisted the five communities and the school district in the Governor Mifflin area in developing the Governor Mifflin Area Citizens Academy and Coordinating Council. The academy will be recorded through the Governor Mifflin High School A/V Department and, when completed, local residents will be able to access the information on each municipal and school website. In addition, the material will be available for use in the classroom. The center also assisted representatives from each community, the school district, and the YMCA to form a regional committee to explore opportunities to coordinate recreation services and facilities in the area through a Peer-Peer Study funded by PA DCNR.

John facilitated the first public meeting for the Lower Alsace-Mt. Penn merger in May. The two communities have contacted the Pennsylvania Economy League to request a proposal to estimate the financial impact of a merger/consolidation.

The center stands ready to continue the great work that John started and led for 18 years. We encourage your continued support of these efforts to keep our elected and appointed officials educated and informed.

Sincerely,

Kevin S. Barnhardt, 2011-2012 Board President
Communities Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities Served</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berks County municipalities served</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including City of Reading and County of Berks)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% of communities in Berks County served</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including City of Reading and County of Berks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berks County townships served</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Berks County townships served</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berks County boroughs served</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Berks County boroughs served</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communities outside Berks County served</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berks County school districts served</td>
<td>3</td>
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Developing Skills for Effective Leadership

“Zoning Matters” Workshop
Twenty-eight municipal officials were informed of the legal issues related to the PA Municipalities Planning Code and specific provisions of a local zoning ordinance that can create legal hazards for a municipality.

“Budgeting Basics” Workshop
Seven local officials were introduced to the different types of budgets, budgeting procedures and techniques, accounting and auditing issues to consider, factors affecting budget development and the estimation of revenues and expenditures, benchmarking and out-year budgeting.

“Rental Inspection Programs” Workshop
Thirty-one local officials learned ordinance drafting principles, the legal framework for property ordinances, the contents of an ordinance (including model ordinances), and potential pitfalls and errors.

“Zoning Basics” Course
Seventeen local officials became more familiar with the relationship of zoning to comprehensive plans and the need for consistency, the terms used in zoning, key issues in drafting the zoning ordinance and map, procedures for adopting and amending ordinances, zoning ordinance administration, and joint municipal zoning, planned residential development and traditional neighborhood development options in ordinances.

“New Tools to Address Blight and Abandonment” Workshop
Twenty-eight municipal officials were informed of new legislative tools, including two recently enacted laws (Act 90 of 2010 and Act 135 of 2008) available for each type of jurisdiction (townships, boroughs, cities), the key legal terms in the new laws, what the new tools in the laws allow municipal officials to do, and the legal citation in the laws so officials can obtain more details on each tool.

“The Importance of Business Retention in Local Communities” Workshop
The 11 participants learned how municipal officials have developed new communication strategies for better understanding the needs of their local business community, modified local land use regulations to become more business-friendly, provided financial incentives for business expansion, and supported the promotion of events to foster more business activity. The second part of the workshop provided officials with information on local economic development agencies who can provide assistance for fostering business retention and expansion in their communities.

Center Director, John Kramer and Administrative Assistant, Andrea Weist want to express their sincere appreciation to all the municipal officials who participated in this year's programs. It was a pleasure serving you, and based on your comments, you found the programs to be very helpful in fulfilling your municipal responsibilities.

Center Director John Kramer received the first annual Richard C. Trostle Award for intergovernmental cooperation.
PA Land Use Institute
The focus of the program attended by 22 officials dealt with court decisions and creative financing of economic development projects. The participants learned about recent court decisions on planning, zoning, and other land-use issues and innovative ways to approach project funding.

Community Planning Course
Nine officials participated in the course, which included in-depth instruction on the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and the technical components of land-use planning and regulation to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities and understanding the land-use planning process.

Flexible Zoning Techniques for Achieving Community Goals
Fourteen local officials attended the workshop, which discussed how a municipality can use its zoning ordinance to build more flexibility into the use and development or redevelopment of its land and buildings through provisions regarding design, density, transition of uses, performance standards, siting location and adaptive reuse.

Determining Community Character
Twenty-one officials learned that while growth and change in their communities is inevitable, the destruction of their community character is not. The workshop focused on approaches to not only preserving community character but also restoring character and upgrading the community’s sense of place—by design. The issues and considerations addressed in West Bradford Township’s Manual of General Design Guidelines were shared with the participants.

How to Effectively Coordinate Land Use and Transportation
Twenty-one local officials participated in this workshop that focused on PennDOT’s smart transportation initiative and the land-use planning tools available to municipal officials to address local transportation issues.

Fostering Intergovernmental Cooperation
Berks Municipal Partnership
The partnership helped to facilitate two breakfast meetings for 108 local officials with the Berks County Commissioners to discuss issues of local and county concern. During their quarterly meetings, the partnership met with the director of the county’s Department of Emergency Services to discuss the proposed new emergency radio system, learned about the successful joint trash collection service in western Berks, and received an update on the new sludge drying facility in Exeter Township and the plans for upgrading the Reading Sewage Treatment Plant. In addition, the partnership discussed opportunities for cooperation in conservation projects and storm water management.

Berks County Sewer and Water Regionalization Study
The updating of the study was initially encouraged by the Berks Municipal Partnership and conducted under the direction of the Berks County Planning Commission. The study was accepted by the Commission and presented to municipal officials at five regional meetings.

Berks County Cooperative Purchasing Council
Council members entered into new contracts to jointly purchase gasoline, composting services, line striping, heating oil, diesel fuel, rock salt, furniture, bond paper, road signage and fire extinguishers.

Municipal Roundtable on Zoning Overlay Districts
Fifteen municipal officials attended the session to discuss the overlay district technique and how it is being used successfully in Berks County.

Municipal Roundtable on Zoning for Alternative Energy Sources
Fifteen officials participated in this session to discuss the growing interest in using alternative sources of energy (wind, solar, geothermal, bio-mass) and the regulatory implications for local communities.

Municipal Roundtable on Group Homes
Six officials participated in a roundtable that discussed how local communities provide for group homes and their compliance with the requirements of the Federal Fair Housing Act. The discussion focused on the elements of local zoning ordinances that address the definitions of family and group homes, the siting of the homes and other procedural requirements.

Municipal Roundtable on Multi-Year Financial Planning
Eleven officials discussed the importance of multi-year financial planning, the approaches used by the County of Berks and Bern Township to develop multi-year plans, and the challenges faced in preparing multi-year projections.

Governor Mifflin Area Coordinating Council
The Council’s five municipalities and school district jointly undertook a project to reconstruct one of the school district’s parking lots, initiated a Peer-to-Peer study to identify regional recreation opportunities, developed a citizens academy for local residents, and discussed opportunities for cooperation on regional economic development.

Enhancing Citizen Involvement
“Local Government in Berks” Program on BCTV
Center Director John Kramer produced and hosted discussions on the following: progress in implementing the city’s Act 47 Plan, the importance of business retention and the formation of the Exeter Township Economic Development Committee, the updated Berks County Sewer and Water Regionalization Study, a citizen education program on local government in the Governor Mifflin area, plans to revitalize the Fifth Street Highway Corridor in Muhlenberg Township, and the future of local government in Berks County.

Governor Mifflin Area Citizens Academy
Center Director John Kramer assisted officials from the five communities and school district in the Governor Mifflin area in developing an educational program for local residents on the organization and operation of local units of government. The information will be available on the municipal and school district web sites in the area.
Albright College Mayoral Debate
More than 100 Albright students participated in the City of Reading’s Mayoral Debate held at the college, which was planned and conducted by history professor Ian Wendt, Ph.D., and Director Kramer.

Albright College Community Conversations
Director Kramer participated on a panel of college officials that involved 85 students in a discussion on citizenship.

Leadership Berks Presentation on Changing Demographics
Center Director John Kramer discussed changing demographic and socioeconomic trends with the 30 members of the Leadership Berks Class of 2012.

Discussion Series
Director Kramer facilitated a discussion group of 16 persons sponsored by the World Affairs Council on promoting democracy.

Center Director John Kramer and Administrative Assistant Andrea Weist want to express their sincere appreciation to all the individuals who served as program instructors and speakers this year. Based on the comments of the participants they found the programs to be very helpful in fulfilling their municipal responsibilities.

Program Instructors and Speakers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dan Becker</th>
<th>Jeff Weidner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Conrad</td>
<td>Jay Vaughan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Golembiewski</td>
<td>Angela Watson</td>
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<td>Brian Hare</td>
<td>David Beane</td>
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<td>Christopher Hartman</td>
<td>Ellen Horan</td>
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<td>Jack Hines</td>
<td>Randy Haag</td>
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<td>Dean Kaplan</td>
<td>Gordon Mann</td>
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<td>Glenn Knoblauch</td>
<td>Jeri Diesinger</td>
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<td>John Kramer</td>
<td>Jeff Fiant</td>
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<td>Steve Landes</td>
<td>Francis Acosta</td>
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<td>Joan London</td>
<td>Kurt Bellemann</td>
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<td>Tom McKeon</td>
<td>David Argall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas McMahon</td>
<td>Kerry Moyer</td>
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<td>Alan Piper</td>
<td>Jeff Waltman</td>
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<td>Shannon Rossman</td>
<td>Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz</td>
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<td>Vaughn Spencer</td>
<td>Michael Crotty</td>
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<td>Tim Steinrock</td>
<td>Tina Fackler</td>
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<td>Mark Vasoli</td>
<td>Rick Roseberry</td>
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<td>Jon Scott</td>
<td>Andrew Bellwoar</td>
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<td>Troy Bingaman</td>
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<td>Jerone Skrincosky</td>
<td>Cheryl Auchenbach</td>
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<td>David Paulus</td>
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<td>Bob Patrizio</td>
<td>Bradford Bentz</td>
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<td>Brian Potts</td>
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<td>Bradley Bentz</td>
<td>Colleen Terry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerone Skrincosky</td>
<td>Bonnie Wilkinson-Mark</td>
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Local Government Advisory Council

Jack Bittig
Planning Commissioner
Exeter Township

Frank Deery
Planning Commissioner
Boyertown

Edward Evans
Mayor
Wernersville

Sandy Green
Mayor, Kutztown Borough

Barbara Hartford
School Board Director
Boyertown Area School District

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City of Reading
Spring Township

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Exeter Township
Laureldale Borough
Muhlenberg Township
Wyomissing Borough

Local Government Advisory Council

Frank Schnee
Planning Commissioner
Robesonia Borough

Mark Stitzel
Supervisor
Perry Township

Kevin Tobias
Manager
Wyomissing Borough

Sandy Weiser-Pascavage
Manager
Leesport Borough

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Planning Commissioner
West Reading Borough

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Heidelberg Township
Lyons Borough Mun. Authority
Maidencreek Township
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Topton Borough
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Womelsdorf Borough

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Fidelity Technologies Corp.
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Stevens & Lee

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Linton, Distasio, Adams
& Edwards
LTL Consultants, Ltd.
Ludgate Engineering
St. Joseph Medical Center
Thank You for Your Support
The Center expresses its sincere appreciation to all of the individuals and organizations on these pages who provided financial and program support over the past year.

Center for Excellence in Local Government - Contact Information

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John Kramer
Former Director