

Winter 2020

Hourglass Quarterly



OPPORTUNITY ZONES

HOURGLASS FALL FORUM

WILL AI TAKE YOUR JOB?

THE LANCASTER PUZZLE

FIRST FRIDAY FORUMS

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Letter from the Executive Director

Hello,

I am pleased to welcome you to our new Hourglass Quarterly! This publication has historically been one of our key methods of presenting Lancaster County's leaders with relevant, exciting and important articles from a variety of sources. This new Quarterly reaffirms our commitment to keeping you informed by providing more in depth summaries of our First Friday Forums, increasing the number of articles we showcase, and relating these featured articles to Lancaster County when possible.



In this edition, we first highlight the reporting done by PA Post's Ed Mahon on the City of Erie's use of Opportunity Zones to spur economic growth. We also include a summary of our highly successful forum "The Future Ain't What It Used To Be". This forum featured eight presentations from leaders from Lancaster and York Counties on innovative ideas and practices that will influence our future. Following this summary, we have included two articles which relate to two topics covered in the forum: Artificial Intelligence and Immigration and Refugees.

If you enjoy reading the Hourglass Quarterly, please sign up to receive our bi-weekly email publication "Keeping Lancaster Current" which includes recommendations of articles to read from across the web. You can do so by visiting our website (www.hourglassfoundation.org) and entering your email address on our homepage.

This Quarterly is part of our commitment to educate Lancaster's leaders and to champion and facilitate sound decision-making in order to assure prosperity while maintaining the county's unique character and enviable quality of life.

Happy reading!

Jonathan Russell
Executive Director

THE LANCASTER PUZZLE

Why is Lancaster's Economy Special?

Lancaster County presents a unique economic circumstance. It is a heavily rural county with a lot of manufacturing jobs and a low share of college-educated workers. These are economic traits that have been devastating to the economies of other similar counties, including a lot of other counties in Pennsylvania. And yet, Lancaster County is doing well. It is thriving. Why is that? What makes its economy special? In order to find out, the team from NPR's "The Indicator from Planet Money" podcast headed to Lancaster County.

In many ways, Lancaster County faces the same economic pressures that much of the rest of the country does. Three decades ago, more than 30% of the jobs in the county were in manufacturing. Two decades ago, those jobs started disappearing. But even now, 15% of all jobs in Lancaster are still in manufacturing, which is almost double the percentage for the U.S. as a whole. Another unique characteristic of the County's economy is that it has a much smaller share of college-educated adults than the rest of the country.

And yet, Lancaster County is doing well. The average County household income is higher than the average United States household income and a higher share of the adults in the county have jobs than in the rest of the U.S.

So how did Lancaster County pull off this economic miracle? Part of the answer is that there are other industries that have helped to cushion the blow of lost manufacturing jobs. For instance, two-thirds of the land in the county is farmland. In addition, the county includes dozens of small towns and villages that are themselves tourist attractions.

The other part of the answer is the County's population growth. The size of Lancaster County's population has been growing steadily for dec-

ades, which is the exact opposite of what's happening in most Pennsylvanian counties whose populations have been falling, especially rural counties. This population growth is due to a variety of reasons including large family size and large numbers of immigrants and refugees. Lancaster County and especially Lancaster City have a reputation for being welcoming to immigrants and refugees from all over the world.

The NPR team met with Mustafa Nuur, a refugee from Somalia. Mustafa is a perfect example of the powerful role immigrants and refugees play in the Lancaster County economy. Mustafa's family left Somalia when his father was killed. They found their way to Lancaster City in 2014. Since then, Mustafa has found work in a variety of fields including construction and marketing.

With a desire to have an impact on the community, he started a company called Bridge, which provides an opportunity for people to sign up to have dinner in the home of a refugee family in the Lancaster area. The refugee family cooks a meal and shares their story. The family also sets a fee for the dinner, which they keep.

Mustafa came to Lancaster County with nothing and has been able to start his own business. Mustafa's story shows the symbiotic relationship between the Lancaster economy and its refugees. The success of the economy makes it possible for the city to offer resources to these refugees so that they can prosper, and their prospering feeds right back into the success of the Lancaster economy. Clearly, one of the solutions to Lancaster's economic puzzle, lies with the County's welcoming relationship with immigrants and refugees.

Summarized from two NPR "The Indicator from Planet Money" podcasts: "The Lancaster, PA, Puzzle" (11/8/2019) and "Lancaster Spotlight, Part 2: A Refugee's Tale" (11/20/2019). Hosted by: Cardiff Garcia and Stacy Vanek Smith.

