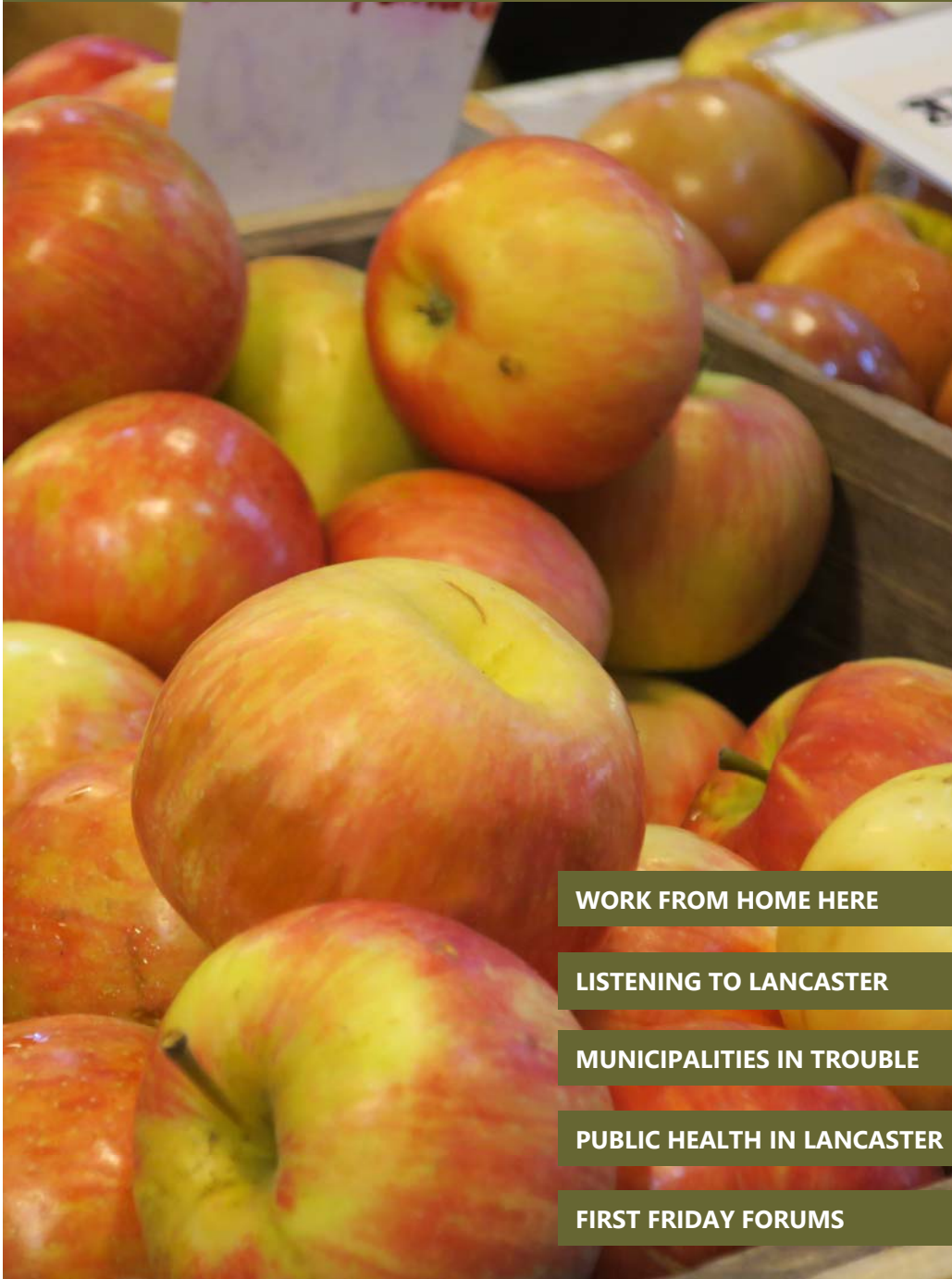


Fall 2020

Hourglass Quarterly



WORK FROM HOME HERE

LISTENING TO LANCASTER

MUNICIPALITIES IN TROUBLE

PUBLIC HEALTH IN LANCASTER

FIRST FRIDAY FORUMS

Thank you to the sponsor of this edition of the Hourglass Quarterly:



(717) 397-8282
777 East Ross Street
Lancaster, PA 17602

Wickersham Construction and
Engineering, Inc. is a Proud
Sponsor of the Hourglass

If you are interested in sponsoring this publication,
please contact the Hourglass at
(717) 295-0755 or at Hourglass@HourglassLancaster.org

WORK FROM HOME IN LANCASTER

Can Lancaster Attract Remote Workers?

The Coronavirus Pandemic has affected how we work in dramatic ways. At the beginning of the pandemic, many employers encouraged or required their employees to work remotely. In fact, prior to the pandemic only 4% of employees worked from home (NPR), a number that shot up to over 40% during the first wave of the pandemic according to the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research.



Remote Work Here to Stay?

While not all of those remotely working employees will stay away from the office, many employers have signaled that an increasing number of employees will have the option or be required to work from home. For those employees, this eliminates the geographic constraints that in-office work requires. With the need to be geographically close to the office eliminated, paying exorbitant rents in New York City or San Francisco becomes much less attractive. When employees

are working from home, home can be anywhere with a high speed internet connection and a video conferencing camera.

Thankfully, we have high speed internet here in Lancaster County. We also have a fantastic quality of life, a burgeoning restaurant scene, and easy access to New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. According to rent aggregator "Rent Jungle", the average rent for an apartment in Lancaster County (\$918) is significantly cheaper than that of San Francisco (\$3,811) and New York (\$3,431) or even Philadelphia (\$1,941).

Attracting Remote Workers

So what can we do to attract workers from cities like New York to a place the New York Post called "the new Brooklyn"? The most important component to attracting remote workers is access to high speed broadband internet. While the Federal Communications Commission indicates that





broadband internet is available to every part of Lancaster County, a study conducted by Lancaster Newspapers reveals there is still work to be done. Improving our broadband internet capacity should be a priority.

Remote workers are also drawn to alternative work spaces. A study conducted by EMSI found that 37% of remote workers choose to work from coffee shops and another 14% opt to work in coworking spaces. Having these amenities can certainly help attract people to this area.

Those who might choose to relocate to Lancaster from a large metropolitan area, would not be shortchanged on the cultural and culinary offerings to which they are accustomed. While Lancaster might not have the volume of restaurants and theaters large cities enjoy, plenty of world-class options are available here. We have big city amenities at small/mid-sized city prices.

Unintended Consequences

Are there downsides to having a large population of remote workers? The same study from EMSI notes that adding remote workers from outside the area can put an increased demand on a community's housing supply, driving the price of housing upward. Putting

energy into attracting remote workers needs to be a part of a broader strategy of attracting jobs of all kinds to the community.

"So much of this is anecdotal at this point, so we are really waiting for the data that backs this up" said Ben Leshner, developer of the Stadium Row Apartments on Prince



Pictured: Ben Leshner

Street. "If you could work anywhere and presumably make the same wage, why wouldn't you live in a City like Lancaster?" This is part of the demographic Leshner is hoping to attract when the 104 unit Stadium Row Apartments come on line in the middle of 2021. "I think Stadium Row will attract folks from both within and outside Lancaster, including those from larger metropolitan areas."

Remote working appears to be a growing part of our employment landscape. For those remote employees looking to relocate, Lancaster County might just be the attractive alternative they are looking for.

