



2026 Business Summit: Mark Perna Challenges Community to Rethink Workforce Development and Youth Engagement



Recently over 125 educators, employers, workforce professionals, and community leaders gathered for an engaging presentation by nationally recognized speaker, author, and workforce development expert Mark Perna. Through a dynamic and thought-provoking discussion, Perna challenged attendees to rethink traditional approaches to education, career readiness, and workforce development.

A central theme of the presentation was the importance of understanding what motivates today's younger generations. Rather than focusing solely on careers or academic achievement, young people are increasingly driven by the lifestyle they hope to achieve. Perna emphasized that helping students connect their personal goals and aspirations to educational and career

pathways can create stronger engagement, motivation, and long-term success.

Many participants described the presentation as eye-opening and inspiring, noting that it challenged long-held assumptions about today's youth. Several attendees shared that they gained a better understanding of generational differences and left with practical strategies for connecting with students, employees, and young adults more effectively.

Overall, attendees left with a renewed sense of hope and optimism about the future workforce. The presentation served as a powerful reminder that by understanding what motivates young people and by building stronger connections between education, careers, and lifestyle goals, communities can better prepare the next generation for success.

To learn more about Mark Perna and his work in education and workforce development, visit MarkCPerna.com.

Rural & Rooted Entrepreneur Summit and Pitch Competition



The Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission recently hosted its Rural & Rooted Entrepreneur Summit and Pitch Competition. In partnership with a presenter from the Small Business Development Center of Wilkes University, entrepreneurs learned about social media and utilizing AI in their business. Following the half day summit, a pitch competition was held providing local entrepreneurs with an opportunity to showcase their businesses and compete for funding to support future growth. Applicants presented how a \$3,000 reimbursable grant would help strengthen or expand their business. Finalists presented five-minute pitches before a panel of judges, highlighting innovative ideas, business goals, and the impact the funding would have on their operations and local communities. Following the competition, six businesses were selected to receive \$3,000 reimbursable grants:

- Dushore Hardware & Co. – Sullivan County
- Forksville Inn – Sullivan County
- Higher Ground Welding & Art – Tioga County

- Jump Start Training – Wyoming County
- Kat's Knots & Pots – Bradford County
- Oakley Farmstead – Susquehanna County

The Rural & Rooted Pitch Competition reflects Northern Tier's continued commitment to supporting small businesses and fostering entrepreneurship. Congratulations to all of the winners and participants for their dedication, creativity, and contributions to the region's economy.

FFA Roundtable and Pitch Competition



As part of engaging youth for the Agriculture Industry Partnership (IP), an inaugural Future Farmers of America (FFA) roundtable and pitch competition was held. Three chapters attended an in-depth discussion focused on the future of ag and opportunities for the IP to support initiatives. Afterwards, chapters and individuals had the opportunity to pitch to panelists ideas for chapter projects and individual Supervised Agriculture Experiences (SAE).

Two chapters received reimbursable grants of \$2,000 for their chapter project:

- Troy – to create a chapter show box club members can borrow material from to offset the cost of showing animals
- Wellsboro – to purchase equipment to expand products students can make in their sugar shack

Four individuals won \$500 each reimbursable grants for their SAE. The individual projects focused on a variety of animals including: horses, rabbits, sheep, and chickens. Congratulations to all the winners for their hard work and creativity.

This opportunity to hear from youth on their view on agriculture was insightful and instrumental for future planning and we appreciate their input and participation.

LAUNCH! Your Success Newsletter



The LAUNCH! Your Success program is a federally funded program for young adults that provides assistance in achieving academic and employment success. LAUNCH! can help with obtaining a GED, providing year-round education and employment opportunities, including summer work experiences. For more information go to [LAUNCH! Your Success](#). You can also check out the [Spring 2026 Newsletter here](#).

BST Employer Newsletter



The Northern Tier Business Services Team distributes a monthly employer newsletter. Click on the link below to read information on local PA CareerLink® events and other employer specific topics.

June 2026 Employer Newsletter

Empowering People. Developing Businesses. Strengthening Communities.

The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC) is the Local Development District (LDD) serving the Pennsylvania counties of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming. We provide business financing, international trade counseling, government contract assistance, grant writing, transportation planning and workforce development services.

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