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Program helps meet needs of businesses

To the Editor:

Since July 2006, 44 Schuylkill County companies have been visited by representatives from the Pennsylvania Business Retention and Expansion Program, a statewide business calling program sponsored by the Department of Community and Economic Development.

The purpose of the program is to encourage businesses to stay, grow and create jobs in the state. The program is targeted at a number of key industries, including manufacturing, health care, transportation, warehousing, education and construction.

Business liaisons conduct visits to local businesses and assess their needs. If a business requests assistance, a Customer Action Plan is generated. Follow up is then completed by an extensive network of service providers throughout Pennsylvania.

The program is able to meet a range of our local businesses' needs — from capital and new site location to purchasing new equipment to workforce training and recruitment.

To date, more than 600 businesses have participated in this program, with 11 CAPs generated between October and December 2006 alone. CAPs are either information or project driven.

How can BREP help your business?

A local warehousing company in need of customized training was able to connect with a local organization that provides the training they were looking for.

A local manufacturer has obtained funding options for a major equipment purchase.

These companies are receiving assistance to help them stay competitive.

I encourage all area businesses within the BREP industry groups to meet with one of the business liaisons when contacted. You may be able to receive assistance for your company.

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