

The logo for Pennsylvania Potter County. It features a blue shield on the left containing a green pine tree and several white stars. To the right of the shield, the word "Pennsylvania" is written in a cursive script, and "POTTER COUNTY" is written in large, bold, blue-outlined capital letters.

Pennsylvania
POTTER COUNTY

Annual Report 2025



POTTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Mission Statement - *To protect the health, safety and welfare of our residents, provide leadership in management of growth and change in the County and balance the desire to preserve the uniqueness and value of Potter County with the need to develop the economy, ecology, and community.*

POTTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

2025 MEMBERS

The Potter County Planning Commission was created on May 29, 1961 and the first Potter County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) was adopted January 12, 1971. An updated / revised SALDO was adopted January 12, 2023. The goal was to provide for clearer, more concise language and to promote and sustain the unique and exceptional character of Potter County, Pennsylvania.

The Planning Commission consists of seven members, which are appointed by the County Commissioners. Commission members serve four year terms and are appointed based on their willingness and commitment to participate effectively in fulfilling the responsibilities of the Planning Commission.

Charles Bob Wicker, Chairman 2025
(Term Expires 1/1/2028)

Katie Sasala, Vice Chair 2025
(Term Expires 1/1/2026 Reappointed)

Candace Hillyard, Secretary/
Treasurer (Term Expires 1/1/2026
Reappointed)

Michael Callahan (Term Expires
1/1/2026 Reappointed)

Kyle Miller (Term Expires 1/1/2027)

Mark Lewis (Term Expires 1/1/2028)

*Traci Bretz (Term Expires 1/1/2029)
(Appointed on 3/6/2025)

***Newly Appointed 2025 Members**

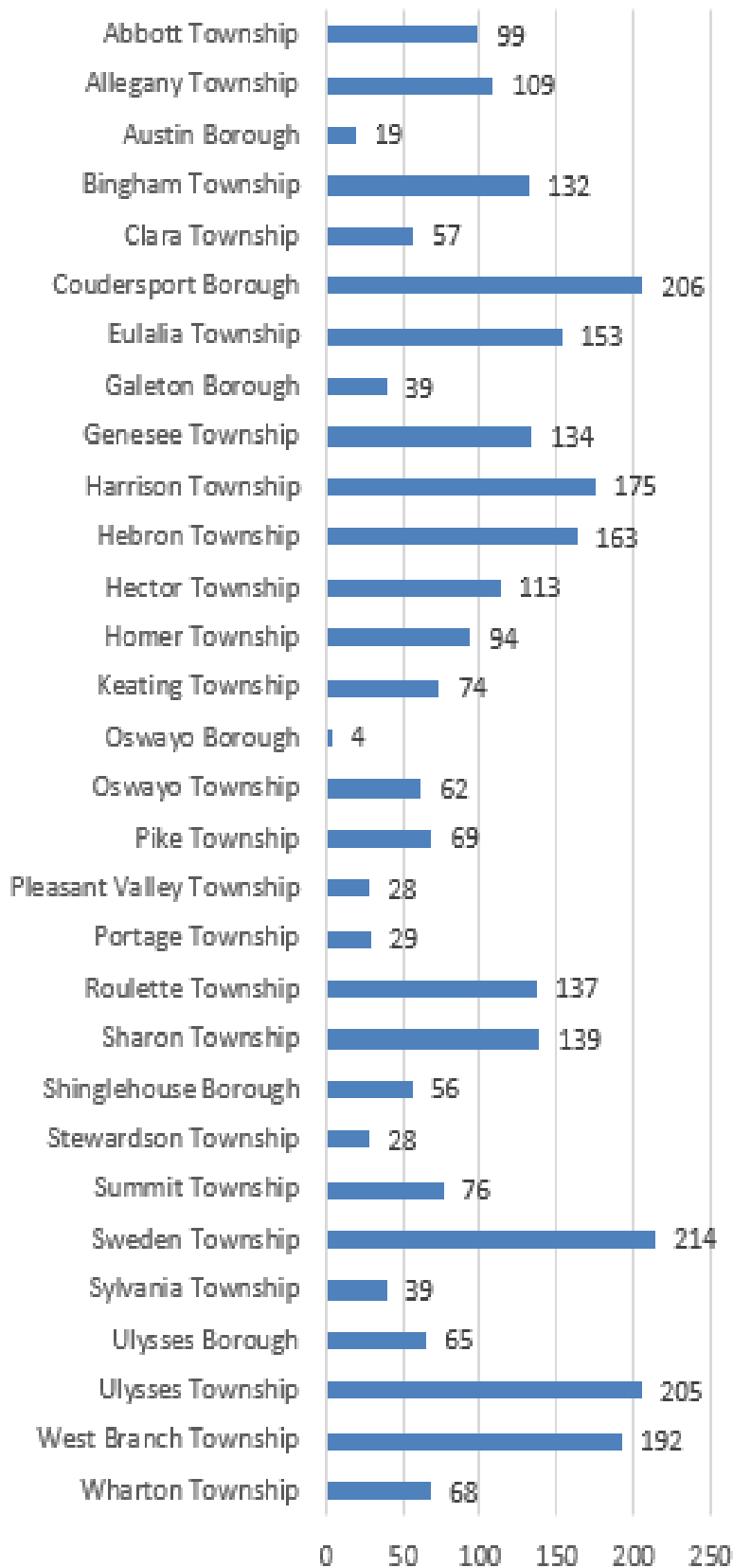
Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Katie Sasala	P	P	P	P	V	P	P	P	P	P	P	E
Mark Lewis	P	P	V	P	V	P	P	P	V	P	P	V
Kyle Miller	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	V	E	P
Candace Hillyard	V	P	P	P	E	P	V	V	E	P	P	P
Traci Bretz			P	P	P	V	P	P	P	V	P	P
Charles Bob Wicker	P	P	V	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P
Michael Callahan	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P
P=Present A=Absent without notice E=Excused Absence V=Virtual												

2025 Potter County Subdivision Activity

55 Subdivision Plans Submitted
 44 Minor Subdivisions
 1 Major Subdivisions
 10 Land Developments
 Total Fees Collected: **\$5,640.00**

Municipality	Land Development		Major Subdivision		Minor Subdivision		Total Counts	Total Fees
		Fees		Fees		Fees		
Abbott Township								
Allegheny Township					5	\$380.00	5	\$380.00
Austin Borough					1	\$80.00	1	\$80.00
Bingham Township					5	\$370.00	5	\$370.00
Clara Township					2	\$140.00	2	\$140.00
Coudersport Boro							0	\$0.00
Eulalia Township	1	150.00	1	\$240.00	2	\$150.00	4	\$540.00
Galeton Boro							0	\$0.00
Genesee Twp	1	\$150.00					1	\$150.00
Harrison Township	2	\$150.00			6	\$440.00	8	\$590.00
Hebron Township							0	\$0.00
Hector Township					1	\$0.00	1	\$0.00
Homer Township					1	\$80.00	1	\$80.00
Keating Township							0	\$0.00
Oswayo Township	1	\$150.00					1	\$150.00
Oswayo Borough					1	\$70.00	1	\$70.00
Pleasant Valley Twp							0	\$0.00
Pike Township	1	\$250.00					1	\$250.00
Portage Township							0	\$0.00
Roulette Township	2	\$300.00			3	\$210.00	5	\$510.00
Sharon Township					4	\$300.00	4	\$300.00
Shinglehouse Boro	1	\$400.00			2	\$150.00	3	\$550.00
Stewardson Township					1	\$80.00	1	\$80.00
Summit Twp					1	\$80.00	1	\$80.00
Sweden Township					1	\$100.00	1	\$100.00
Sylvania Township					1	\$80.00	1	\$80.00
Ulysses Twp	1	\$600.00			5	\$390.00	6	\$990.00
Ulysess Borough					1	\$70.00	1	\$70.00
West Branch Twp							0	\$0.00
Wharton Township					1	\$80.00	1	\$80.00
Total	10	\$ 2,150.00	1	\$ 240.00	44	\$3,250.00	55	\$ 5,640.00
*Currently remains in Preliminary Status								

Potter County Historical Totals by Municipality



A historical record scanning project has been providing quick access to information and cross-referencing for nearly 3,000 subdivisions throughout the county. Due to this accomplished project, we have been able to quickly assist surveyors and land owners who are looking to accurately depict or understand parcel changes over time.

A digital database project created through ArcGIS—using Survey 123 applications—has been completed as well. The Planning and GIS Staff have worked together to provide a service that has allowed for the County’s subdivision application records and survey maps to be visible online through the Public Tax Parcel Viewer.

As of 2024, nearly 3,000 subdivision maps throughout Potter County have been digitized and continue to be updated as new ones are created.

Potter County Planning/GIS Department Activity

2025 PRIORITIES AND GOALS

1. **Revitalize Potter County** — Economic development to better our county, decrease youth retention, and expand community infrastructure to support local access
 - A. Build strong relationships with civic groups through networking and meetings so we can collaborate and achieve more for our community.
 - B. Outdoor Rec/Tourism — Gravel Route Biking Program
 - C. Continue to promote programs such as LERTA & IDERPA

2. **SALDO Revisions** –Collaborate with the SALDO/Plan Committee and subject matter experts to strengthen and refine our ordinances, specifically regarding solar.

3. **God’s Country Village and Farmer’s Market** – Work with consultants, county staff, and partner agencies to complete park improvement projects and close out DCNR C2P2.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Conferences, Trainings and Boards

In 2025, the Community Development Department, in collaboration with Planning and GIS, experienced a year marked by increased collaboration, community outreach, and innovative planning. Early in the year, the Revitalize Potter County initiative began taking shape, laying the groundwork for a community-led-bottom-up approach to county-wide economic development. Over the course of the year, this initiative grew into a full-scale planning effort, engaging multiple stakeholders and fostering a shared vision for revitalization. At the same time, existing CDBG projects continued to move forward, demonstrating the department's commitment to supporting essential community infrastructure and services. Additionally, the Commissioners selected a new CDBG project, expanding opportunities for investment in the county's growth and long-term sustainability. Through these efforts, 2025 was a year of progress, planning, and partnership, strengthening the foundation for continued community development in Potter County.

Projects and Plans

Revitalize Potter County

The transition from the end of 2024 into 2025 brought continued primary focus on the Revitalize Potter County initiative as a primary objective. The effort began with the national distribution of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an economic development consultant. The RFP attracted interest from firms across the country, from the West Coast to the East Coast, and ultimately resulted in six formal proposals. The review, interview, and selection process began early 2025.

The decision was made through a thoughtful and collaborative process. Multiple discussions were held with a selection committee that included the three County Commissioners, Planning Commission SALDO/Plan Committee members, all five Potter County School District Superintendents, and staff from the Planning, GIS, and Community Development Department. After careful consideration, the committee selected Alchemy Accompanied as the economic development consultant.

Alchemy Accompanied is a small economic development firm based in West Virginia with a focus on rural Appalachia communities. Their proposal stood out for its emphasis on a community-led, bottom-up approach, with the plan shaped directly by input from residents and stakeholders throughout Potter County. Their strategy also included innovative methods for engaging youth across the county, introducing outreach efforts that had not previously been implemented as part of a county-wide planning initiative.

Following contract discussions, work began on establishing expectations, deliverables, and an overall project timeline. Over the next several months, efforts focused on planning and coordinating a series of community engagement opportunities. This included eight community meetings and five school-based sessions with students in grades 6 through 12, resulting in a total of 13 community input meetings.

Projects and Plans continued...

The first three community meetings were held during summer evenings in Genesee, Roulette, and Germania. An additional five meetings took place in the fall and were coordinated with school district schedules, with sessions held in Austin, Coudersport, Galeton, Northern Potter, and Oswayo Valley. These meetings provided opportunities for residents, students, and stakeholders to share feedback, identify priorities, and discuss ideas for the future of Potter County.

To further expand outreach, an online survey was developed to gather input from individuals who were unable to attend in person or who preferred to provide feedback outside of a public setting. Through this combined outreach effort, approximately 270 survey responses were received, nearly 300 community members attended the in-person meetings, and just under 1,000 students participated in the school sessions.

The volume of feedback, project ideas, and both positive and constructive concerns provided valuable insight for development of the Revitalize Potter County plan. This robust community engagement process created a strong foundation for the initiative and supplied Alchemy with extensive data to evaluate and use in developing implementation strategies. During the latter part of 2025, Alchemy reviewed the collected data, conducted additional research, and began drafting the plan.

Just prior to Christmas, an in-person SALDO/Plan Committee meeting was held with Alchemy staff to review the proposed economic strategies developed from community input. Over the course of two full days, each individual strategy was discussed in detail, including feasibility and potential implementation. This working session allowed Alchemy to continue refining the draft, with plans to have it ready for review at the beginning of 2026.

In addition to the community meetings and data collection efforts, the initiative produced several unanticipated benefits that were not originally included in the RFP. These included a professional rebranding of the Revitalize Potter County initiative, as well as updates to the Potter County logo and color palette to create a more cohesive and recognizable identity.

As part of the rebranding effort, the need for a Revitalize Potter County Facebook page was identified to establish a social media presence and provide a platform for sharing updates, announcements, and engagement opportunities. The process also highlighted the value of creating a dedicated website for the initiative. As a result, the domain revitalizepotter.com was secured, and a formal website was developed by a professional web designer contracted through Alchemy.

These additional enhancements strengthened the overall initiative by improving communication, branding, and public engagement. All of these additions were completed within the existing project budget and did not result in any additional costs.

ARC READY Local Government

Following participation in the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Local Government Ready training course in summer 2024, Kal, along with Commissioner Rossman, helped position Potter County for consideration in Phase 2 of the program. Potter County was subsequently selected to advance, making the County eligible to apply for a match-free \$50,000 capacity-building grant. The Commissioners identified the Potter County Courthouse Sound System Upgrade as the preferred project. A grant application was prepared and submitted, and in May 2025 Potter County was selected as one of 69 local governments across the Appalachian Region to receive funding.

Following the award, a committee of stakeholders with a vested interest in the project was established to guide implementation. The committee worked with technical consultants to obtain two quotes for the purchase and installation of the equipment. Due to scheduling conflicts involving both the selected contractor and the Potter County court system, the original installation timeframe of October was postponed. Installation was subsequently rescheduled for January or February 2026.

God's Country Market Village

The God's Country Market Village project experienced several challenges during Phase 1, which focuses on improvements to property owned by Potter County. Throughout 2025, progress on construction was slowed by a combination of unforeseen circumstances, as well as minor oversights and evolving program guidelines.

One key issue addressed during the year was the need for an official survey of the property. The survey was completed with plans for formal recording at the beginning of 2026. A bid opening was also held, and while several bids were received, the submitted costs were significantly outside of the available budget and were determined to be non-responsible. Following this outcome, confirmation was received from DCNR allowing the County to solicit its own quotes for materials.

Additional challenges arose when a potential materials vendor lost COSTARS' eligibility, requiring further coordination and guidance on approved purchasing options. Toward the end of 2025, the project received a grant extension, although a new grant manager was assigned during this time, which required additional coordination while they became familiar with the project and its history.

With the approved extension in place and outstanding issues addressed, Phase 1 of the God's Country Market Village project is now scheduled for completion in spring 2026.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a federally funded program that provides annual allocations to low-to-moderate income (LMI) communities across the country. Potter County receives around \$220,000 each year, and the Commissioners have the discretion to determine which projects receive funding based on community needs, regulations, and project readiness. To be eligible for CDBG funding, projects must meet at least one of the following national objectives: Benefit Low/Moderate Income Households (LMI), Address Urgent and Immediate Needs, or Eliminate Slums or Blight. Since many communities in Potter County are LMI, there is strong interest in applying for these funds, resulting in multiple projects being carried out simultaneously. Each project must have a 3-to-5-year plan from application to completion, and costs may vary during that time, allowing for flexibility in reallocating funds based on project readiness and changing circumstances.

The 2025 CDBG construction season got off to a strong start with the construction completion of the Galeton Phase II project in March. The FFY24 projects benefiting the residents of Austin, including the Water Plant Electrical Upgrade and the Wastewater Treatment Plant Generator Procurement and Installation, were not ready for construction in 2025. The generator is currently in the purchasing process and is on back-order, with work expected to begin sometime in 2026.

For the 2025 CDBG allocation of \$221,086.00, funds have been designated for the Galeton Borough Authority's Beach Flats Booster Station Resiliency project. The project includes replacing the generator to ensure the pumps can operate during periods of high demand or power outages. Additionally, soft starters for the booster pumps and pump monitoring equipment will be installed. An automatic isolation valve will also be added to support remote operation through the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. This valve will enable operators to switch from gravity-fed to pumped flow remotely during emergencies when site access is not possible.

During the project preparation stage, we assisted with a community-wide demographic income survey in Galeton to confirm that the population met the Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) threshold, which was successfully verified.

Toward the end of 2025, Kal, with the support of Pete, utilized GIS tools to meticulously track all hours spent on CDBG-related activities since the start of his employment. This detailed accounting allowed the County to accurately calculate eligible administrative time and successfully draw down a total of \$11,402.66 from the CDBG program. These funds were returned to the County as administrative cost reimbursements, providing additional resources to support ongoing community development activities and ensuring proper utilization of federal funding. This effort highlights the importance of careful documentation, technology integration, and strong departmental collaboration in maximizing program benefits for Potter County.

Conferences, Trainings and Boards

Throughout the year, the Community Development Department participated in a variety of conferences, board meetings, and training opportunities focused on strengthening skills, building partnerships, and promoting initiatives within Potter County. In the spring, staff attended the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA) Spring Legislative Conference in Harrisburg, followed by participation in the annual Fall Conference held in Scranton. In April, Kal attended a Fair Housing Fundamentals training facilitated by DCED and sponsored by SEDA-COG at the Union County Government Center.

In addition to these conferences and trainings, the Community Development Department remained actively involved in numerous boards, associations, and committees throughout the year. These included participation in the North Central CEDS, Housing Committee, and Rural Planning Organization (RPO); PA Route 6 Alliance; Potter County Education Council Leadership; PEDA Young Professionals Committee; Potter County ATV Taskforce; creation of the NRAT; and the Potter County Planning Commission. This continued involvement supported regional collaboration, information sharing, and advancement of community and economic development efforts across Potter County.

Potter County Economic Plan Revitalize Potter County



Revitalize Potter County is an economic development project designed to help our community grow and make it a better place to live. In partnership with Alchemy Accompanied, the initiative has already seen strong progress. After meeting with all five school districts and three additional municipalities, we gathered input from across the county, including nearly 1,000 students and more than 300 other community members. While each area expressed unique needs in certain aspects, healthcare, trades, and housing consistently emerged as top priorities. Alchemy also conducted one-on-one interviews with local residents who are actively working to strengthen Potter County. The information collected from these meetings and interviews have been analyzed and are now being shaped into a comprehensive final plan. Together, this effort is creating a clear path forward for the future of Potter County.

Boards and Committees we Serve on or Lead

- Regional Transportation Board RPO
- PA Wilds Planning Team - Chair of Planning Team
- Potter County Water Quality Working Group
 - PA Route 6 Alliance - Board Secretary
 - NRAT Regional Development
 - CEDS Committee - Vice Chair
 - PA GIS Professionals
 - PA Planning Directors Association
 - Potter County Youth Leadership
 - Pine Creek Watershed Council
- SEDA – Council of Governments (SEDA-COG)
- Pennsylvania Economic Development Association
(PEDA)



Welcome to Our New Staff!

Traci Bretz was born and raised in Potter County, where she developed a deep appreciation for nature and small-town community life. She graduated from Gannon University with a background in Integrated Marketing and Communication and majored in economics. She gained experience in integrated marketing at Arnold Worldwide in D.C., before returning home where she and her husband now operate a specialty crop farm.

In addition to farming, Traci has been actively involved in her community, having worked at Penn-York Camp and previously serving as a school bus driver. She values hard work, local connections, and the natural beauty of the area she's proud to call home.

