



Chester County leaders to focus on jobs and transportation

LAST UPDATED: Thursday, March 20, 2014, 1:08 AM

MALVERN: At the annual State of the County address Wednesday, the Chester County commissioners gave updates on employment and transportation.

Improvements in both areas, they said, are critical to ensuring the county can handle the influx of people and jobs they expect will lower the 5.1 percent unemployment rate.

The county's jobless rate is below the state's rate of about 6 percent but still above the 3.7 percent of county residents out of work before the recession, said Commissioner Kathi Cozzone.

The county is also dealing with a skills gap and underemployment, Cozzone told about 200 business and community leaders.

But by 2040, the county will create an estimated 76,000 jobs, Cozzone said.

And the county wants to be ready. Chester County will receive \$100 million from the state in the second half of 2014 for its transportation improvements, which include mitigating traffic congestion and working on infrastructure, said County Commissioner Terence Farrell.

The Keystone Corridor - made up of SEPTA and Amtrak lines that run through Parkesburg, Coatesville, Downingtown, Exton, and Paoli - is the "spine of Chester County" and presents opportunities for economic growth and revitalization in the areas surrounding it, said County Commissioner Ryan Costello.

Michaëlle Bond

source: philly.com