

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: District New Facility is Open to the Public
Indiana County Conservation District
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On February 1, 2021, the Indiana County Conservation District took occupancy of their new 7,377 sqft office and education center. Throughout the last few months, the District has been working with contractors to finish various components of the project to make it fully functional for the community.

The facility houses a 50-person capacity education center, conference room, and eight staff offices. In addition, the property has significant space to bolster outdoor learning opportunities for county residents across a six-acre campus. Energy savings components for the new facility were made possible in part by a \$10,000 grant from the Met-Ed/Penelec Sustainable Energy Fund at the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. Overall funding for this project was in-part provided by the Indiana County Board of Commissioners as well as a Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Assistance Capital Program grant supported by former State Senator Don White and State Representative Dave Reed.

The District is currently working with UpStreet Architects, Inc. to develop a master plan for the exterior educational components that will include edible community gardens, woodland nature trails, cover crop demonstration plots, and other outdoor learning components.

District Manager, Douglas Beri Jr. stated “This building will serve as a great catalyst for advancing conservation and agricultural programs and projects. It will also allow our staff to fill educational gaps in the community in the subjects of conservation, natural resource management, and agriculture.”

To help raise funding for the landscaping and education center, the District has worked to establish the Friends of the Indiana County Conservation District supporting 501c3 non-profit organization. Adriene Smochek, chairperson, said “Our organization is eager to get to work opening up new sources of financial support for the district and to help highlight its work so residents of Indiana County are aware of the great programs and services available to them and why they are worthy of investment. This new location will be a wonderful resource for educating people of all ages on the value of conservation and how to apply best practices in their own lives. District Manager Doug Beri has inspiring vision for the education center and the future of the district, so the sky is really the limit for the possibilities of fun and informative programs, not only for local residents, but even positioning the facility as a destination for visitors to the area and as a model for other county conservation districts.”

Individuals interested in contributing funds to help develop educational components at the new District facility can do so by donating to the Indiana County Conservation District Education Center fund at the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The direct link is:
https://cfalleghenies.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create?funit_id=4465

