



# THE REGIONAL CENTER

Winter  
2011-2012

BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A partnership for a better tomorrow

IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

[www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org)

## RAIN BARREL REBATES TO RESUME IN MARCH

The Somerset County Regional Center Partnership, in cooperation with the New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA), will continue the successful Peters Brook Rain Barrel Rebate program in March of 2012.

With the success of the 2011 program, residents who installed rain barrels for the first time are reminded to disconnect the units from the downspouts and store barrels for the winter to preserve their useful life. Information regarding proper maintenance may be found in the program documents posted on the Rain Barrel Program web page at [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org). (See 'Residential Rain Barrel Rebate Program Overview'.)

Rain barrels conserve water for household use, ease stream erosion by reducing the amount of water going to streams and rivers, and reduce pollutants accumulated from the impervious surfaces. Installing a rain barrel is one of the best ways residential homeowners can help to manage the effects of urban storm water.

"Though the season for installing a new rain barrel has come to an end as winter approaches, any resident residing in the Peters Brook Watershed who purchased and installed a rain barrel since July 1 and not applied for a rebate is still eligible to apply and may do so when the program resumes in March of 2012," commented Rose Evans, Chair of the Regional Center Partnership.

Detailed information on the Rain

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## 2011 SUMMIT IMPARTS IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REGIONAL CENTER MUNICIPALITIES & BUSINESSES

The 4th Annual Regional Center Summit, "Connecting Companies & Government: Collaborative Strategies for Economic Recovery & Competitiveness," took place on Friday, September 23, 2011 at the Bridgewater Marriott, 700 Commons Way in Bridgewater.

The morning-long session included keynote addresses from Lauren Moore, Director, Business Advocacy at the Business Action Center, and Lucy Vandenberg, Executive Director of PlanSmartNJ, an independent, non-profit civic planning and research organization committed to the advancement of sound land use planning and regional cooperation.

Mr. Moore discussed "Short-term Realities of the NJ Business Climate & the Role of the Christie Administration in Business Assistance Strategies," focusing on the activities

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Panelists include (seated l to r) Bob Bzik, Michael Metzger, Janet Perantoni, Tim Touhey, and Dan Kennedy. Moderator Mike Kerwin is standing.



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## PARTNERSHIP APPROVES MUNICIPAL CHALLENGE GRANTS

The Board of Trustees of the Somerset County Regional Center Partnership recently approved the 2011 Challenge Grants for the participating municipalities of Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville.

The goal of the annual Regional Center Challenge Grant Program is to help achieve the broadly accepted Regional Center Partnership Vision that includes downtown redevelopment, neighborhood revitalization, connecting the three sub-centers, and using natural resources to shape development consistent with community planning initiatives. The program annually provides matching grants of \$20,000 per project for each municipality.

“Challenge Grants allow the municipalities the opportunity to pursue programs that enhance livability within the community,” stated Regional Center Chair Rose Evans. “The projects serve the public good, save the taxpayers money, and enhance the quality of life in the three municipalities and the Regional Center.”

The approved Challenge Grants for 2011 are:

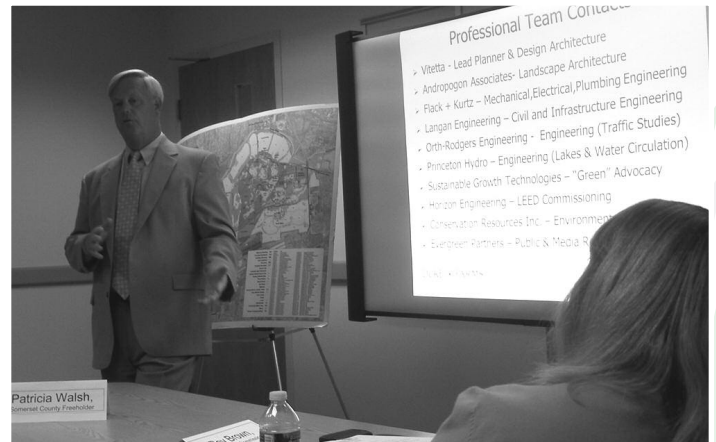
**BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP – Adamsville School Pathway Funding** will be used to construct a walking path connecting the Mount Pleasant Villas and Schindler Terrace apartment complexes to Adamsville Elementary School in the Finderne section of Bridgewater. The apartment complexes are located on East Main Street just west of Finderne Avenue and behind Adamsville School, located on Union Avenue (Route 28). This walkway connection will eliminate the need for Bridgewater to provide school busing for the 28 students that live in the apartments and attend Adamsville School.

**RARITAN BOROUGH -Orlando Drive/Raritan Greenway Implementation Plan.** Funds will be used to partner with Rutgers University to host a “Raritan River Brownfields Studio” that will take the 2009 Orlando Drive Vision Plan and Corridor Design Study to a level of implementation by developing a “regenerative” urban design plan for the corridor. The Borough, in concert with Rutgers, will engage such tasks including information gathering and analysis and development of a detailed plan and preparation of an Implementation Matrix identifying specific actions, responsibilities and milestones.

**SOMERVILLE BOROUGH - Par Course Fitness System to Clarks Woods.** Funds will be used to install a series of fitness exercise stations (Par Course) at periodic intervals along a pedestrian pathway currently under construction in the

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DUKE FOUNDATION VISITS REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP

Timothy Taylor, Executive Director of the Duke Foundation, visited the Regional Center Partnership to describe the details of the Duke Foundation’s environmental sustainability initiatives for the Duke Farms in Hillsborough Township. Duke Farms borders the Regional Center and serves as a growing tourist attraction for the region.



Mr. Taylor illustrated how the efforts of the Foundation are facilitating Duke Farms’ transformation into a model for environmental sustainability. He discussed the history and uniqueness of Duke Farms, its connection to the Raritan River, its relationship to the broader regional area, and how the Duke Foundation has been fulfilling the late Doris Duke’s wishes. Ms. Duke was strongly supportive of the preservation of endangered species and maintenance of Duke Farms as a center for agricultural and horticultural education and public enjoyment.

Among the goals for Duke Farms are projects including retrofitting the 110-year-old thoroughbred horse stable to achieve LEED® Platinum design status; the “regeneration” of the site’s landscape for wildlife purposes; and to re-open Duke Farms to the public for tours and passive recreation. The Foundation plans also include encouraging and educating visitors on environmental stewardship initiatives. Mr. Taylor also described The Duke Foundation’s plans to create a community garden and opening up a plot program that will initially be offered to anyone who lives or works in Bridgewater.

Other Foundation initiatives under discussion include working with RideWise of Somerset County to explore the potential for shuttle interconnections with the Raritan and Somerville train stations, remediation of the regional impact of flooding from major storms, use of Duke Farms as an outdoor science laboratory for the region’s schools, the impact of the removal of the Raritan River dams, and the entertaining wildlife webcams on site at Duke Farms.

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## CHALLENGE GRANTS (CONT.)

Clarks Woods section of the Peters Brook Greenway. The project will be similar to the Par Course fitness equipment recently installed by Somerville along the Peters Brook Greenway in the middle of Somerville that was funded by the 2010 Challenge Grant. As with the central Somerville Par Course fitness system project, the Clarks Woods par course fitness project will help fulfill the bicycle and pedestrian objectives of the Regional Center Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenways Systems Connection Plan.

Recent Challenge Grants include:

2010 Grant Awards

Bridgewater Township: Finderne Sidewalk

Raritan Borough: Environmental

Sustainability and Master Plan Element

Somerville Borough: Par Course Fitness

System

2009 Grant Awards

Bridgewater Township: Driver Feedback Signage

Raritan Borough: Sanitary Sewer Assessment & mapping

Somerville Borough: Re-examination of Residential Zoning

## RAIN BARREL REBATES (CONT.)

Barrel Rebate program can be found on the Regional Center website at [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org), the NJWSA website at [www.raritanbasin.org](http://www.raritanbasin.org), by calling 908-685-0315. x234, or sending an email to [rainbarrel@raritanbasin.org](mailto:rainbarrel@raritanbasin.org).

The Peters Brook Watershed, which encompasses parts of the Regional Center communities of Bridgewater Township, Somerville and Raritan Boroughs, is a highly urbanized and integral natural resource in the Regional Center. There are approximately 6,000 homes in the watershed resulting in approximately 30% of the land being covered by pavement, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces. In older urban areas, rainwater runoff from these hard surfaces flows directly into streams, picking up pollutants along the way.

## REGIONAL CENTER SUMMIT IMPARTS VALUABLE GROWTH INFORMATION FOR MUNICIPALITIES & BUSINESSES

of the Business Action Center, the Economic Development Authority, and Choose NJ. Ms. Vandenberg presented “A Long-range View of the Interrelationship Between Land Use & Economic Competitiveness.”

A panel discussion moderated by Mike Kerwin, President/CEO of the Somerset County Business Partnership, included:

Dan Kennedy, AICP/PP, Deputy Director, Office of Planning Advocacy

Timothy J. Touhey, CEO/Executive Vice President, New Jersey Builders Association  
Janet Luton Perantoni, Dean, Continuing Education, Raritan Valley Community College  
Michael Metzger, Executive Director, Workforce Development, Raritan Valley

Community College

Robert Bzik, AICP/PP, Director of Planning, Somerset County Planning Board

The panel discussion focused the direction that New Jersey is taking in terms of strategic planning and how the Regional Center communities may benefit; how the building industry is addressing the current economic issues and how the industry can implement recovery strategies; and an examination of the role that Raritan



*Moderator Mike Kerwin supports information presented by the panelists with a PowerPoint*

Valley Community College plays in enhancing the economic competitiveness of the Regional Center communities and Somerset County.

The annual Regional Center Summit is an educational forum addressing the advantages of the Regional Center designation to municipal leaders, business leaders, and residents of Raritan, Somerville, and the portion of Bridgewater included in the Center. Everyone working, living, and serving as an elected or appointed municipal official within the Regional Center is encouraged to attend.

“Among the many advantages of the Regional Center designation is the open dialogue among the three communities that serves to facilitate smart planning,” commented Rose Evans, Chair of the Regional Center Partnership. “With the importance of being at the forefront of the upcoming economic recovery, the Regional Center communities and the business owners and residents within the borders can maximize their success with an awareness of the opportunities at their disposal.”



*Lauren Moore addresses the attendees at the 2011 Regional Center Summit*

## PROJECT UPDATES

### SOMERSET COUNTY VO-TECH MULTIPURPOSE ATHLETIC FACILITY STEWARDSHIP GROUP

The Vo-Tech Multipurpose Athletic Facility Stewardship Group consists of representatives from Somerset County Vo-Tech, the Park Commission, Regional Center Partnership, County government, and Bridgewater, Raritan and Somerville. The Group will explore non-traditional funding possibilities for implementing the multipurpose athletic facility Master Plan described in the Vo-Tech Multipurpose Athletic Facility Final Report. Outreach has begun to various foundations with the potential to support the project with funding.

### REGIONAL CENTER WORKING GROUP

The Regional Center Working Group is focusing on tailoring economic strategies for the Regional Center. With the Somerset County Business Partnership developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), each Regional Center municipality has been asked to begin preparing to participate in the Community Visioning Workshops. The workshops are expected to begin early in 2012. The municipal input and that from the Regional Center should stress the economic vision for the communities and should identify municipal capital improvement projects and economic development initiatives of regional significance.

### PUBLIC WORKSHOPS PLANNED FOR 2012 TO HELP DEVELOP CEDS

Three Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) community visioning workshops are scheduled for the first half of 2012. The sessions will be hosted by the Somerset County Business Partnership and the Municipal Land Use Center. A special community workshop focusing on the Regional Center has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 14, 2012 beginning at 5:00 P.M. at 27 Warren Street in Somerville, New Jersey. Additional information about CEDS may be found at [www.scbp.org](http://www.scbp.org). When established, the date, time and location of the Regional Center visioning workshop will be available at [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org).

Somerset County is engaging the public and private sectors in an effort to produce a set of economic strategies that will further job growth and private sector economic investment in our region. The primary goal of the effort is to identify projects of regional significance that will further job creation and private sector economic investment in our region.

## SHOP RITE OPENS IN SOMERVILLE



Somerville's \$28 million, 70,000-square-foot ShopRite opened in early October, 2011. The supermarket is part of a \$100 million retail and residential development project launched a decade ago by Edgewood Properties and JSM developer Jack Morris.

### AT-LARGE PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS & OFFICERS APPROVED FOR TWO-YEAR TERM

Rose Evans of Levin Management, Troy Fischer of Bridgewater Commons, Jennifer Reilly of Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics, and Glenn McCreesh of Somerset Medical Center have unanimously been nominated as At-Large Private/Institutional Sector Representatives to the Regional Center Partnership for the two-year term of January 2012-January 2014.

In addition, the Partnership unanimously supported the nomination of the following officers for the two-year term of January 2012-January 2014:

- Chairperson Rose Evans, Levin Management Corp.
- Vice-Chairperson Troy Fischer, Bridgewater Commons
- Treasurer Peter Palmer, Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders
- Secretary James Ruggieri, Somerset County Planning Division

### REGIONAL CENTER 2012 MEETING DATES

January 18th @ 5:00 PM  
March 21th @ 5:00 PM  
May 16th @ 5:00 PM  
July 18st @ 5:00 PM  
September 19th @ 5:00 PM  
Thursday, November 8th @ 5:00 PM  
January 16, 2013 @ 5:00 PM

All meetings take place in the County Administration Building Engineering Conference Room, Second Floor, 20 Grove Street, Somerville, New Jersey.

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