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## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **COMMUNITY GROUP SEEKS POSITIVE CHANGE**

#### **‘New Visions’ Works to Improve New Castle, Lawrence County**

(NEW CASTLE, PA) - "You can't always wait for Superman. Sometimes you have to become him."

That is the idea behind a new group of local citizens and leaders, which seeks to spark positive, lasting change in New Castle and Lawrence County.

New Visions for Lawrence County was created out of a concern for the community's well-being and a desire to make Lawrence County a place that generations to come will be proud to call home. According to Dave Copper, Executive Director of Cray Youth & Family Services and New Visions President, the group has been slowly assembling over the past year.

"I was having lunch with Larry Haynes [Executive Director of Shenango Valley Community Foundation]," says Copper, "and I began to express some of the frustrations I have about the lack of a logical and coordinated approach to deal with the issues driving the deterioration in our community. We talked about the urgency of the situation, and agreed that if a new approach was not initiated soon, we might really be in trouble."

Mr. Copper says past attempts to help the area have been fragmented, reactionary, and basically ineffective. He and Mr. Haynes agreed that the community needed strong leadership to address the serious and complex issues it faced. So they asked for help, approaching local business and civic leaders, as well as ordinary citizens with a passion for the area.

"I truly believe we live in a great community that is oftentimes undervalued and under-appreciated," says Josh Lamancusa, Lawrence County District Attorney and Vice-President of New Visions. "I found in New Visions a group of passionate men and women who shared a similar desire to promote and actively work to make our community a better place to live."

Currently, New Visions members include President Copper, Vice-President Lamancusa, Secretary/Treasurer Angie Mohr, Melissa Barnes, Larry Corvi, Chris DeVivo, Kathy Graziani, Robin Kirkwood, Kim Koller-Jones, Hon. Dominick Motto, Dayna Sear, Joe Seminara, Dan Vogler, and Gayle Young.

What sets New Visions apart is that it is not a typical a community-action group. Instead, it works to bring together other civic-minded groups and ideas, to help coordinate and focus their efforts. Members believe New Visions' strength is that it does not represent any particular group or politics so it does not have any hidden agenda.

"I hope we can set a tone of win-win, with our community being the winner, and not win-lose, with different factions fighting for personal power or gain. I hope we can all start working together for the common good of our home," says Melissa Barnes, Assistant Director at Cray Youth and Family Services. "Waiting and hoping for the Big Thing that will make everything better is not going to happen. If we want life to be better here, we have to make it happen - personal responsibility."

New Visions members agree that moving forward will require the community to think and act differently than it has in the past.

"Too many good people have been elected for office to try to help our community and only found there was no beating the 'powers that be,' or what is referred to as the 'New Castle Mentality,'" says Kathy Graziani, of Carbis Walker. "If we don't take 'no' for an answer and bring the community together, we can make the change. We are not one person, but many."

So far, New Visions has obtained non-profit status and completed a Diamond Clean-Up in downtown New Castle. It has also hosted a variety of forums aimed at connecting disjointed plans which share similar goals. These forums have included discussions about growth opportunities in downtown New Castle, beautification efforts throughout the city, and services for the county's at-risk youth.

New Visions hopes to create a growing and vibrant community. But members agree: a lot of work must be done to achieve that goal.

"We must move ahead by addressing issues that hold us back today, such as our appearance (we look old and stodgy), our politics (too much taking care of family members, little vision), crime (higher than it should be for our size) and the need for more jobs (we need more skilled workers)," says Larry Corvi, Publisher of New Castle News,

In the end, the entire group agrees that Lawrence County is an area worth fighting for.

"We sit in the middle of everything a residential and business community needs," says Joe Seminara, founder of Pizza Joe's. "It's a beautiful landscape, slower pace, and affordable community waiting for motivated ideas to make it a great example of taking an old town and bringing it into the 21st century, linking together its past and present to renew the future of New Castle."

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