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With a welcoming address by Wilkes University President Tim Gilmour, the 2005 "Conserving our Future" conference (April 13 at the Wilkes Student Center) celebrates downtown revitalization with a Breakfast Mayors Panel "Downtown Revitalization: blending conservation and economic growth." Featured presenters at the breakfast include Mayor Tom Leighton of Wilkes Barre, Mayor Lou Barletta of Hazleton, and Larry Newman of the Greater W-B Chamber of Business and Industry.

Following this plenary session, NBLT plans twelve 90-minute seminars on such topics as:
FREE Act 48 continuing education for Teachers and Homeschool Parents
Development topics that protect the watershed
Community planning, conservation and economic growth
Community Success Stories - individuals and groups who have used conservation to improve our region's quality of life
Legal & Tax strategies of conservation
Sustainable Business Strategies: Rural and Agriculture business strategies
Economic Benefits of conservation and low impact development
The community forest: a valuable landscape
And much more!

SPECIAL SESSION - JUST ADDED!

During the lunch break, NBLT staff and board members will discuss the substantial negative impact recent sessions of Joint Committee on Taxation may have on landowner rights. For more information, please visit <http://lta.org/publicpolicy/ppc.htm>.

Speakers for this fun, information-packed conference include:

John Burkavage, General Manager of Entercom Communications (Community Conservation Success Stories)

Gil Hirschel, Susquehanna River Basin Commission

Dr. Bill Elmendorf, Penn State Univ.

Diane Madl and Estelle Rupert

Bob Anderson, Sustainable Strategies

And other great professionals!

Funded in part by DEP and the NEPA Urban Forestry Program, the conference is being coordinated by the North Branch Land Trust (NBLT.org) and is free to the public. Those interested in attending should call NBLT at 570 696 5545 or email conference@nblt.org

This event is a great opportunity to learn about conservation, conservation can improve your business and personal life, methods and opportunities for conservation easement and tax planning and much more. Other topics include sustainable backyard gardening, brownfields redevelopment, community forestry, development techniques that promote watershed protection and how to improve farm/rural community incomes through sustainable business.

Community leaders and municipal supervisors are invited to learn about best practices for planning and zoning, as well as how to access more than \$600,000 in community forestry and conservation grant programs. The event will kick-off with a panel of regional mayors talking about downtown revitalization and its impact on conservation in the region. A free lunch will be provided for registered attendees, and each attendee will receive a free gift pack.

For more information, visit <http://www.nblt.org/conference> or email conference@nblt.org