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**Community Exploration Program Gives Senior-level Executives
Taste of Region's Business and Cultural Resources**
Leadership Harrisburg Area Recruits Participants

HARRISBURG, PA. August 4, 2008. MSN this year ranked the Harrisburg/Carlisle area third on its real estate most-livable bargain list, just behind Wichita, Kan. and Omaha, Neb. The ranking released in June is a national recognition of the area's business, social and cultural strengths.

But communities don't prosper by accident and those that succeed all have a common asset: a core group of men and women whose work determines the face and character of an area. These leaders run the businesses that power the economic engine and sit on the community and volunteer boards necessary to foster and maintain safe, vibrant neighborhoods.

For more than two decades, Leadership Harrisburg Area (LHA) has supported and enhanced the abilities of those leaders through several programs including its Executive Leadership Series. Jim Nulton, Regional Community Relations Director for PPL, completed the program as a new arrival to the area in 2002 and says the six-week program delivered much more than it promised. "A job transfer brought me here six years ago. It was all new faces, all new people," he says. "But in my job, contacts are vital and it's important to hit the ground running when given important responsibilities in unfamiliar surroundings."

Nulton added that developing effective community relations—like other executive duties—requires personal connections and friendships within the community; contacts that the leadership series provided in just a few weeks.

"The ELS program introduced me to key people; people that make things happen," he says. "And I still work with contacts I developed through attending those sessions. The program provided all the vital information, connections and background to help me do my job."

Nulton admits he signed up for the course reluctantly. He was busy with a new position, selling one house, buying another and relocating a family. He wasn't eager to spend time in dry workshops.

"But it wasn't like that," he remembers. "We visited landmarks, got out in the community and explored regional assets." One of those local assets is Harrisburg's National Civil War Museum.

“I had no interest in that meeting at all. I expected an old building full of dusty relics. And I wasn’t particularly interested in history or the Civil War.” He was surprised when he arrived at a “magnificent, modern building” and realized the museum is another important regional asset. He later joined the museum’s board at the request of Harrisburg Mayor Stephen Reed and now serves as board president and interim CEO.

“I joke that I have two 60-hour a week jobs,” he says, One paid at PPL and one volunteer at the museum.” He adds that his involvement with the museum is one of the many unanticipated benefits he gained through the leadership program.

“To best use corporate resources and your own talents—whatever the job—executives need to get involved with the community because the health of the community, the region and the businesses that reside there are all interdependent.” Those connections, he notes, are established and enhanced through participation in the Executive Leadership Series.

LHA continues its effort to foster the region’s progress through its support of community and business leaders like Jim Nulton with a six-session executive leadership program this fall.

Una Martone, LHA President, says Nulton’s experience is not unique—it is shared by all those who complete the program. She adds that fostering existing and potential leaders benefits both the participants and the larger community.

“A healthy and vibrant community makes good sense for businesses seeking growth, employers recruiting excellent employees and individuals who want the best for themselves and their families,” she says. “Our Executive Leadership Series, the only program of its kind in Central PA, improves our quality of life by educating business and community leaders about the challenges unique to the region while providing networks, connections and resources necessary for them to succeed.”

“This one-of-a-kind experience works because it promotes connections between community leaders and community needs; local executives and their peers; busy professionals and instant networks,” she adds.

This year’s series begins in September with an examination of the area’s history, arts, culture and local resources. It continues with seminars on specific topics designed to help build the strategies and relationships required to translate those resources into benefits for area businesses and residents.

For more information on the Executive Leadership Series, contact Una Martone, Leadership Harrisburg Area President; umartone@leadershipharrisburg.org, 717-213-5035 or visit www.leadershipharrisburg.org.

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Leadership Harrisburg Area is a private, non-profit organization serving Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry Counties. It began in 1986 as a Capital Region Chamber of Commerce initiative to provide a forum for leaders from all segments of the community to address common concerns and implement shared goals.