

Building a College Town



IN KEEPING WITH WILKES UNIVERSITY'S HISTORY OF HELPING build the economic prosperity of our region, I began service as chair of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry in January. This is a wonderful opportunity for our university to integrate more fully its strategic and master plans into the economic revitalization of our region and help lead an organization that has done so much to facilitate that revitalization.

The outstanding results the region enjoyed last year are a tribute to many dedicated and talented people who work to bring our region economic growth: Gov. Ed Rendell, the county commissioners, Mayor Tom Leighton, the chamber and colleges in the Wyoming Valley. One headline after another extolled the economic progress of our downtown business district: Barnes & Noble Booksellers, the purchase of 10 E. South (University Towers) for student apartments, Movies 14, new restaurants and businesses, and creation of a downtown Business Improvement District. We have a great opportunity to challenge the business community to accelerate this progress even more.

Many leaders, including me, believe the key to our region's future is promoting Wilkes-Barre as a college town, with the additional richness of a vibrant arts community and a strong business and retail presence.

Success at making Wilkes-Barre a college town will be good for Wilkes University and good for all of Wilkes-Barre. If we have learned anything from the past, it is that working together to find new solutions to old problems produces exciting results from which everyone can benefit.

Movies 14, located on Northampton Street, is just one of the recent downtown improvements in Wilkes' neighborhood.

PHOTO BY MARK GOLASZEWSKI

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