



2021

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (NEPA)

WHITE PAPER



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INTRODUCTION

Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA), consisting of Northern I-81 Corridor communities such as Scranton, Pittston, Wilkes-Barre, and Hazleton, has long been a magnet for food and beverage manufacturing and distribution operations.

Several factors have combined to grow the food industry in NEPA. These include quick access to raw materials and the Northeast's consumption zones, an available, quality, and affordable labor supply, abundant and reliable utilities, and a wide variety of available ReadyToGo!™ Sites and Buildings with room for expansion.

COMPANIES WITH FOOD OR BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OPERATIONS IN NEPA

- Americold
- Banko Beverage
- Bimbo Bakeries
- Campbell's/Snyder's Lance
- Chewy.com
- Clover Farms
- Coca Cola
- Core-Mark
- Crowds Cow
- Flowers Foods
- Gress Refrigerated Services & Logistics
- Henningsen Cold Storage
- Herr's Food Products
- igourmet.com
- Kane is Able
- McLane Co.
- Nature's Bounty (NBTY)
- Pepsi Bottling Group
- Pero Family Farms
- Red Bull
- Romark Logistics
- Tyson Foods
- U.S. Cold Storage
- US Foods
- Walmart
- Wegmans Food Markets

COMPANIES WITH FOOD OR BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING PLANTS IN NEPA

- Aspire Bakeries
- Ateco (Mrs. T's Pierogies)
- Bakkavor
- Barry Callebaut
- Bimbo Bakeries
- BC Bundt
- Cargill Cocoa & Chocolates
- Citterio USA
- D.G. Yuengling & Son
- Gertrude Hawk Chocolates
- Gonnella Frozen Products
- The Hershey Company
- J&J Snack Foods
- J.M. Smucker Company
- Lion Brewery
- Maid-Rite Specialty Foods
- Michael Foods Egg Products
- Mission Foods (GRUMA)
- Nardone Brothers Baking
- National Bakery
- USHydrations
- Pasqualichio Brothers
- Preferred Meal Systems
- Quaker Oats (Gatorade)
- Sky Organics
- Topps Company, Inc.
- Vita-Line
- Wise Foods







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INTERSTATES MEET IN NEPA

LOCATION & TRANSPORTATION

NEPA is in the center of the Boston/Washington Corridor and is at the confluence of five major highways. Interstates 81, 80, 84, 380, and 476 meet here and provide excellent access to firms wishing to serve Maine to Virginia and west to Ohio. I-78 can be reached in just one hour.

Interstates 81, 80, 84, and 380 are toll-free. There are no major bridges or tunnels in the region to delay truck departures or arrivals.

The region's main highway, I-81, runs from the US/Canadian border in the North to Knoxville, Tennessee in the South. I-81 intersects several major East-West highways, which include I-80 (access to New York City), I-78 (access to the Lehigh Valley and New Jersey), I-84/I-90 (access to Boston), I-76 (access to Pittsburgh and Philadelphia), I-70/I-270 (access to Washington DC), and I-83 (access to Baltimore).

The drive time from the Center of NEPA to the Port of Philadelphia is two hours. The drive from NEPA to the Port of New York/New Jersey takes just over 2.5 hours.

More than 100 million people, about one third of the nation's population, live within a 500 mile radius of NEPA, and close to 53 million people live within 200 miles. New York City, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Syracuse can all be reached in about two hours. Close to 48 million people live within a four-hour drive from the center of NEPA.

Numerous nationally-known truckload and less than truckload firms are active in NEPA including ABF Freight, A. Duie Pyle, Central Transport International, Estes Express Lines, FedEx, J.B. Hunt Transport Services, New Penn Motor Express, NFI Logistics, Old Dominion Freight Line, Pitt Ohio Transportation Group, Prime, Inc., R+L Carriers, Schneider National, SAIA Motor Freight Line, UPS, Ward Trucking, Western Express, XPO Logistics, and YRC Freight. Dozens of locally-owned trucking companies also serve the market.

FedEx Ground, FedEx Authorized Ship Center, UPS, and DHL have multiple facilities in NEPA. FedEx SmartPost and UPS have operations near the main entrances of CenterPoint Commerce & Trade Park East, near Pittston, PA, while FedEx Ground, FedEx Authorized Ship Center, and DHL are located in an adjacent business park.

Several rail freight carriers serve the region, including Class One railroad Norfolk Southern Railway and short line railroads Luzerne and Susquehanna Railroad, Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad, and Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority.

CITIES WITHIN A 4 HOUR DRIVE FROM NEPA

CITY	DRIVE TIME	CITY	DRIVE TIME
Allentown, PA	1:09	Syracuse, NY	2:17
Binghamton, NY	1:15	Altoona, PA	2:45
Newburgh, NY	1:46	Waterbury, CT	2:47
Philadelphia, PA	1:47	Dover, DE	2:52
Harrisburg, PA	1:48	Albany, NY	2:54
Reading, PA	1:55	Bridgeport, CT	2:58
Trenton, NJ	2:04	Baltimore, MD	2:59
Edison, NJ	2:09	Hartford, CT	3:14
Wilmington, DE	2:09	Rochester, NY	3:40
State College, PA	2:11	Arlington, VA	3:46
New York City, NY	2:12	Washington D.C.	3:59
White Plains, NY	2:15		

NEPA is served by two main airports, the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport (AVP) and the Lehigh Valley Airport (ABE).

The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport provides direct daily flights to Charlotte, Chicago, and Washington DC. Carriers include United and American Airlines. AVP is also served by Aviation Technologies, one of the finest fixed base operators in the Northeastern United States. Learn more at flyavp.com.

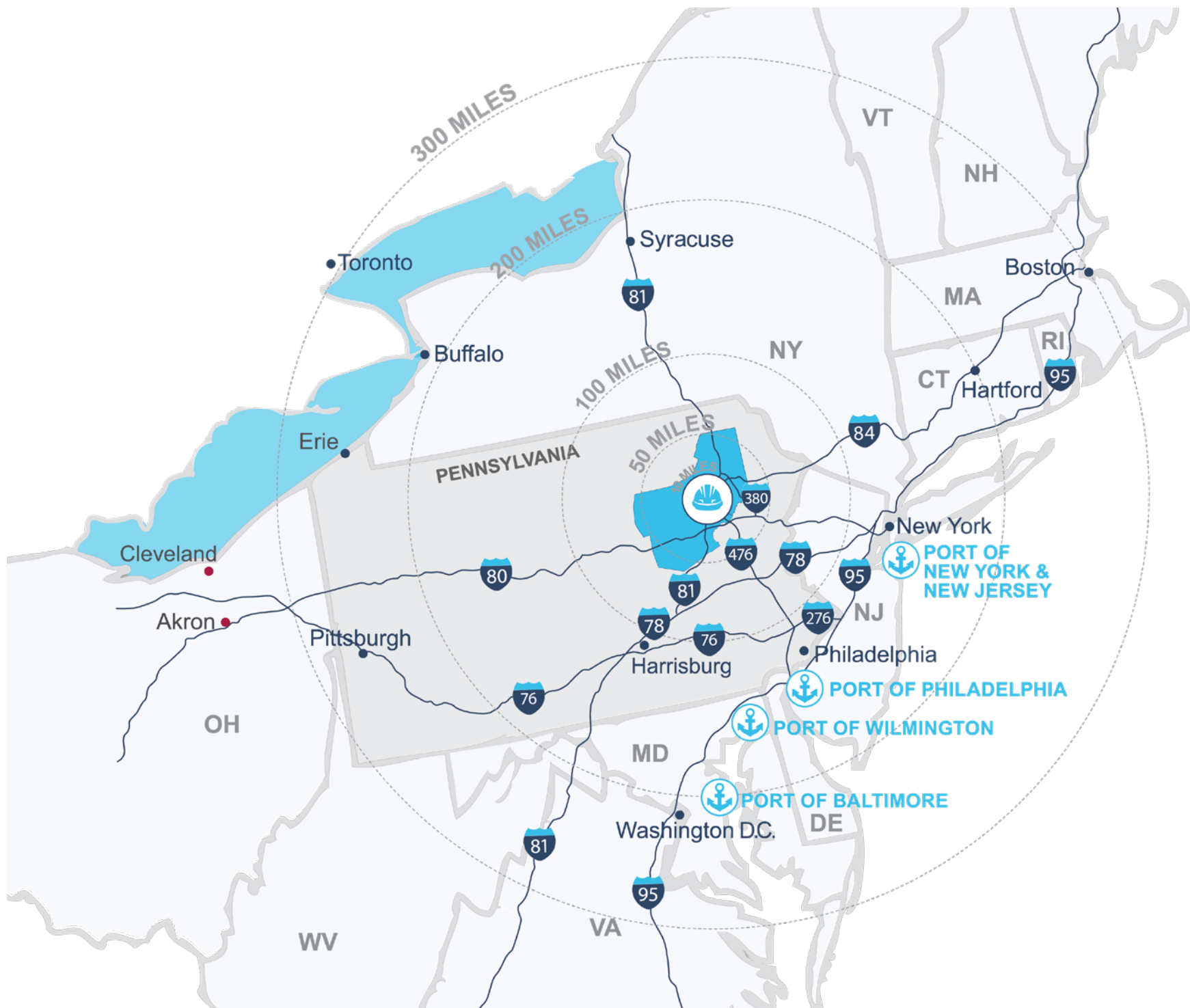
The Lehigh Valley International Airport (flyabe.org) provides direct daily flights to Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Ft. Lauderdale, Myrtle Beach, Newark, Detroit, Orlando, Punta Gorda, St. Petersburg, and Washington D.C.

ACCESS TO CONSUMPTION ZONES FROM CENTER OF NEPA

RADIUS	POPULATION
100 MILES	16,244,489
200 MILES	52,949,344
300 MILES	72,254,189
400 MILES	82,866,386
500 MILES	100,379,037

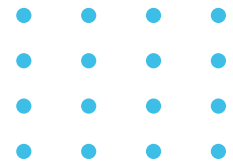
Source: Esri







REAL ESTATE



Food and beverage companies that move to NEPA from major Northeast metro areas enjoy significant savings. In 2021, NEPA developer Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services reviewed market reports prepared by national real estate firms CBRE, Cushman & Wakefield, JLL, Colliers, and others as well as information available on [LoopNet.com](https://www.loopnet.com), and determined that lease rates and real estate taxes for bulk industrial space are much lower in NEPA than in nearby metro areas. For example, NEPA's triple net lease prices plus annual real estate taxes, on average, are just 36% of those costs on Long Island, New York, 48% of the costs in Northern New Jersey, and 53% of the costs in Central New Jersey.

In the late 1980s, Mericle became the first private developer to construct industrial shell buildings on speculation in NEPA. Mericle purchased land that had been developed by area chambers of commerce and constructed speculative buildings ranging from 40,000 square feet to 100,000 square feet. Since that time, Mericle has developed more than 26 million square feet of industrial, office, and flex space in NEPA, including numerous bulk industrial buildings. More than 20,000 people work in Mericle-developed properties.

Today, Mericle owns and maintains approximately 17 million square feet in NEPA. Mericle is a vertically integrated builder that self-performs its development projects. The company's 300+ employees design, construct, and maintain all of its facilities.

Among its in-house team are several Leadership Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professionals who obtained Silver LEED status for Mericle buildings occupied by Amazon.com, Kimberly Clark, and Benco Dental.

By constructing tight building envelopes, installing energy-efficient LED lighting and HVAC systems, improving ventilation and indoor air quality, and by using native and adaptive landscaping and recycled/regional materials, Mericle is making a concerted effort to "go green."

In addition to regularly constructing buildings on speculation, Mericle also prepares sites in advance for new construction.

In fact, through its ReadyToGo!™ Program, Mericle is fully preparing dozens of sites in business parks throughout NEPA.

Mericle's Design Department obtains all necessary permits and approvals, and its in-house Excavation Division, considered to be one of the largest of its kind in the US, clears, grades, and compacts the ReadyToGo!™ Sites and makes them ready for the immediate construction of building foundations. These sites also have all permits and approvals in hand, all utilities in place, and can accommodate buildings ranging from as small as 10,000 square feet to as large as 1 million square feet.



20,000 +

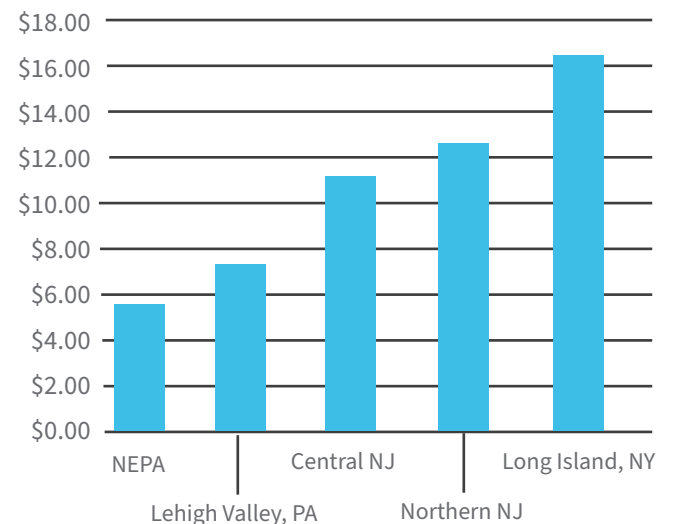
PEOPLE WORK IN MERICLE-DEVELOPED PROPERTIES

Mericle lists food and beverage companies such as Bakkavor, Banko Beverage, Bimbo Bakeries, Campbell's Soup/Snyder's Lance, Chewy.com, Core-Mark, Flowers Foods, Mission Foods (GRUMA), Nature's Bounty (NBTY), Pepsi Bottling Group, PepsiCo, Red Bull, USHydrations, Wegmans, and Vita-Line, among its many tenants and clients.

Mericle's vertically integrated "one-stop-shop" structure and its aggressive development of speculative industrial buildings and ReadyToGo!™ Sites are very helpful to food manufacturers and distributors operating under compressed timeframes wishing to deal with a single source.

All of Mericle's available buildings and sites can be reviewed at [mericle.com](https://www.mericle.com).

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE NNN BULK INDUSTRIAL LEASE RATES + ANNUAL REAL ESTATE TAXES



Source: Loopnet.com and brokerage market reports

UTILITIES

The region is utility strong with natural gas, public water and sewer, abundant power, and fiber service readily available to business parks.

High pressure gas mains owned and maintained by UGI Utilities provide service to area business parks.

The discovery of an estimated 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the rock located under a 22.4 million acre area that covers much of NEPA, the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, and Upstate New York, has had an enormous impact on the regional economy. The Marcellus Shale region has been recognized as the “largest unconventional natural gas reserve in the world.”

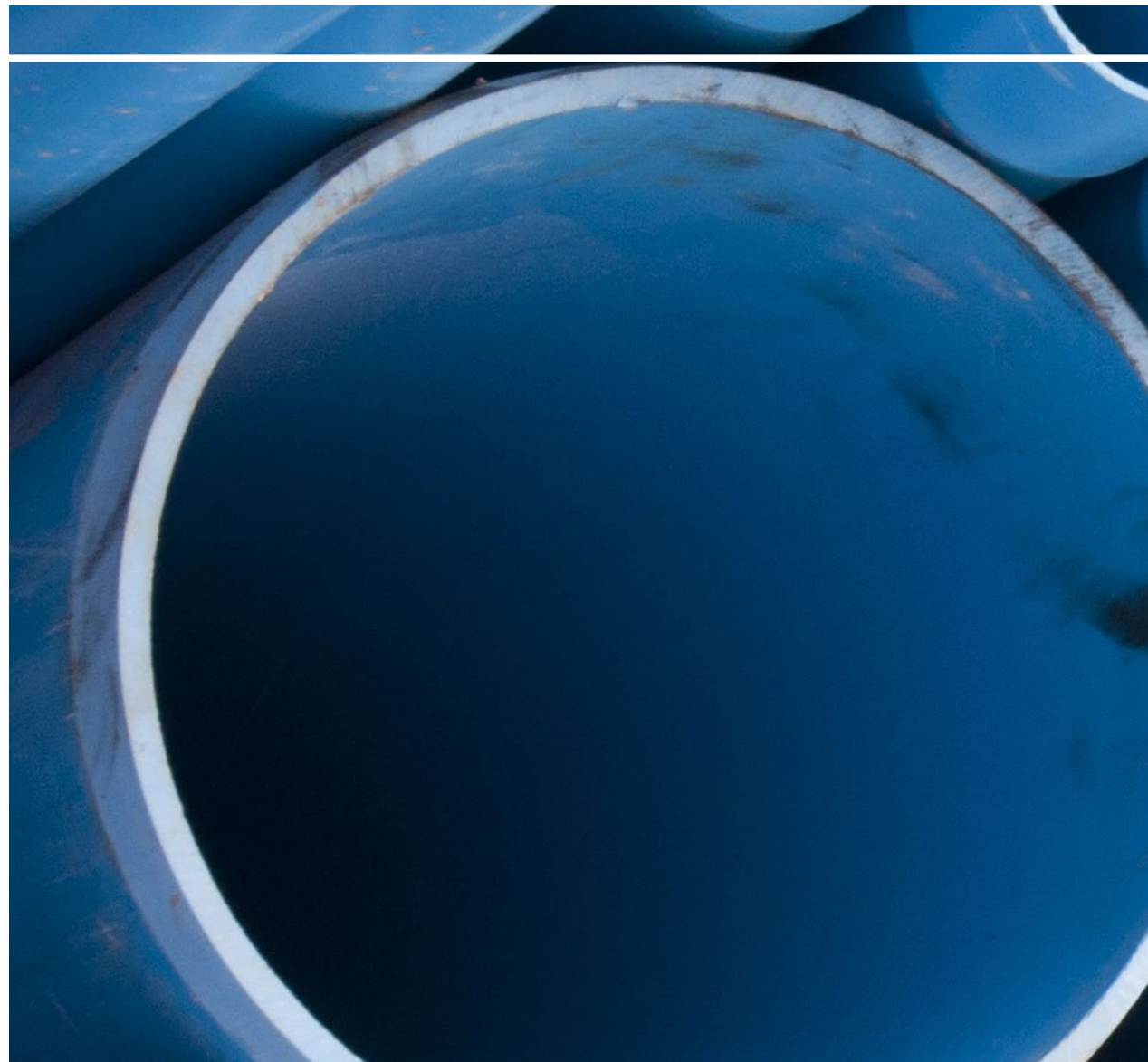
Thousands of acres in NEPA and the Northern Tier have been leased by natural gas companies. Billions of dollars have been invested here by Southwest US energy companies. Because of this investment in Marcellus Shale, NEPA is expected to have access to abundant and affordable natural gas for decades to come.

Water quality is good and pressures are very strong. In fact, in some business parks, companies choose to install pressure reducers to control water pressure to their buildings.

The primary water supplier in NEPA is Pennsylvania American Water Company (PAWC). Because PAWC is part of American Water, it benefits from the company’s central laboratory in Belleville, Illinois, one of the most advanced water quality laboratories in the US.

“Serving Northeastern Pennsylvania, UGI Penn Natural Gas Inc. is uniquely situated in the heart of the Marcellus Shale region. Our large commercial and industrial transportation customers have access to some of the most favorably priced natural gas in the country. Further, the abundance of supply in the region is expected to provide long term price stability, making the region a prime target for growth.”

**DON BROMINSKI, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
UGI PENN NATURAL GAS, WILKES-BARRE, PA**





LOCATION

ANNUAL NATURAL GAS COST ⁽¹⁾

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, PA
Lehigh Valley, PA
Northern New Jersey
Long Island, NY
Poughkeepsie/Hudson Valley, NY

\$120,000
\$190,800
\$236,700
\$268,200
\$316,800

⁽¹⁾ Annual cost reflects estimated monthly use of 75,000 therms of natural gas, with gas prices that reflect two-year annual averages for 2015 and 2016. Does not include city gate to plant site meter charge. (Source: "Food & Beverage Processing Industry Operating Costs", The Boyd Company, Inc. May 2017)



There, the company performs tests to monitor for about 100 regulated contaminants and other "emerging contaminants" that are not currently regulated. Additionally, PAWC provides input to the US Environmental Protection Agency as new testing regulations are developed.

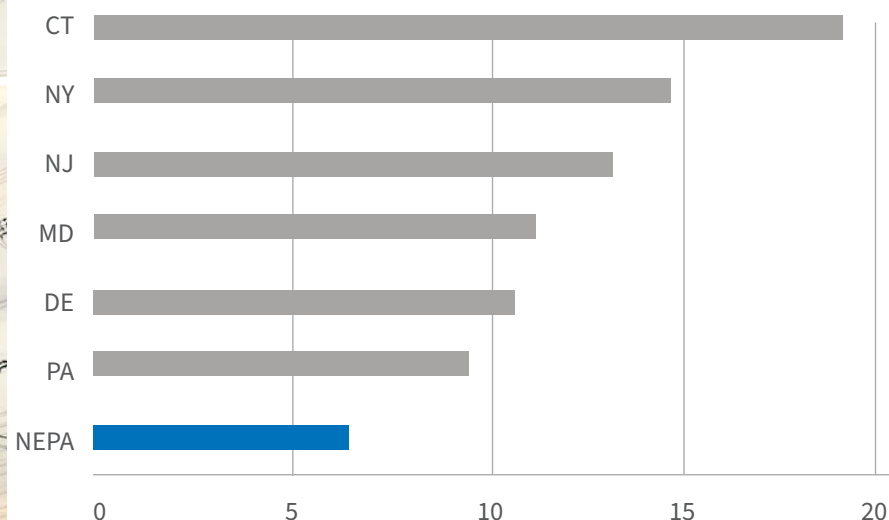
Since 1993, the American Water research team has won nearly two dozen awards for best research, received more than \$31 million in research grants, and been granted four patents for water and wastewater research.

Several local sewage treatment facilities can accept large amounts of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and suspended solids without requiring businesses to pretreat their effluent.

Redundant power is supplied to several local industrial and office parks via PPL Electric Utilities and UGI Utilities. In most parks, 4000 Amp service is offered.

Multiple telecom vendors, including Verizon, Frontier Communications, Level 3, and Comcast serve the area and provide fiber, copper, and cable service to local business parks.

AVERAGE 2020 RETAIL PRICE (CENTS PER KWH) FOR NEPA, PA, AND SURROUNDING STATES Source: Global Energy Institute



FOREIGN TRADE ZONES

There are more than 2,000 acres of **Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ)** land located in six NEPA business parks. These lands are part of FTZ #24 under the auspices of the Eastern Distribution Center. Much of Mericle's CenterPoint Commerce & Trade Park near Pittston, PA is in an FTZ. Mericle also owns properties in the Jessup Small Business Center and Valley View Business Park near Scranton, which have FTZ status.

FTZs encourage and expedite import/export cargo movements. These specially designated zones are considered outside the Customs territory of the US, which means that merchandise can be stored, exhibited, assembled, manufactured, and processed without being subject to formal Customs entry procedures and payment of duties - unless and until the merchandise enters the Customs territory for domestic consumption. FTZs offer a variety of benefits including duty deferral, relief from inverted tariffs, duty elimination on waste and scrap, duty exemption on re-exports, and no duties on domestic content, added value, and rejected or defective parts.





THIRD PARTY LOGISTICS

In addition to the dozens of truckload and less than truckload companies with operations in NEPA, there are also numerous national and local **third party logistics (3PL)** companies here. These include Calex Logistics, DHL, FedEx Supply Chain, J.B. Hunt, Karchner Logistics, LeSaint Logistics, Neovia, NFI, Penske Logistics, The Patton Logistics Group, Romark Logistics, Saddle Creek Logistics Services, Valley Distributing and Storage, and XPO Logistics.

COLD CHAIN SPACE

Some of the nation's largest **cold storage** companies have major industrial facilities in NEPA. For example, Henningsen Cold Storage Company, United States Cold Storage, Inc., Americold, and RLS Logistics, together operate about 1 million square feet of cold chain space here. In addition, Prime Inc., one of North America's largest refrigerated trucking companies, has a large terminal in NEPA.



WORKFORCE

LABOR AVAILABILITY

Local employers report that most non-skilled workers will commute up to 20 miles to work, while skilled workers will commute more than 30 miles. Local commutes are enhanced by an excellent interstate and local road network. For example, a 20 mile commute can typically be made in less than 30 minutes. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, average daily commutes to work range from 20 to 25 minutes throughout NEPA.

Recent unemployment information for 20, 30, and 40 miles from the center of NEPA:

20 MILES FROM CENTER OF NEPA TOTAL POPULATION = 463,506			
YEAR	CIV. LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
2021	225,938	210,846	15,092 (6.7%)
30 MILES FROM CENTER OF NEPA TOTAL POPULATION = 699,744			
YEAR	CIV. LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
2021	337,796	313,306	24,490 (7.2%)
40 MILES FROM CENTER OF NEPA TOTAL POPULATION = 990,170			
YEAR	CIV. LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
2021	480,575	445,581	34,994 (7.3%)

Source: Esri



Despite its strong industrial growth since 2000, NEPA's unemployment rate continues to run higher than state and national averages.

The following statistics, released by The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, demonstrate how the region has compared to the state and nation in recent years. These are seasonally adjusted rates that have been rounded:

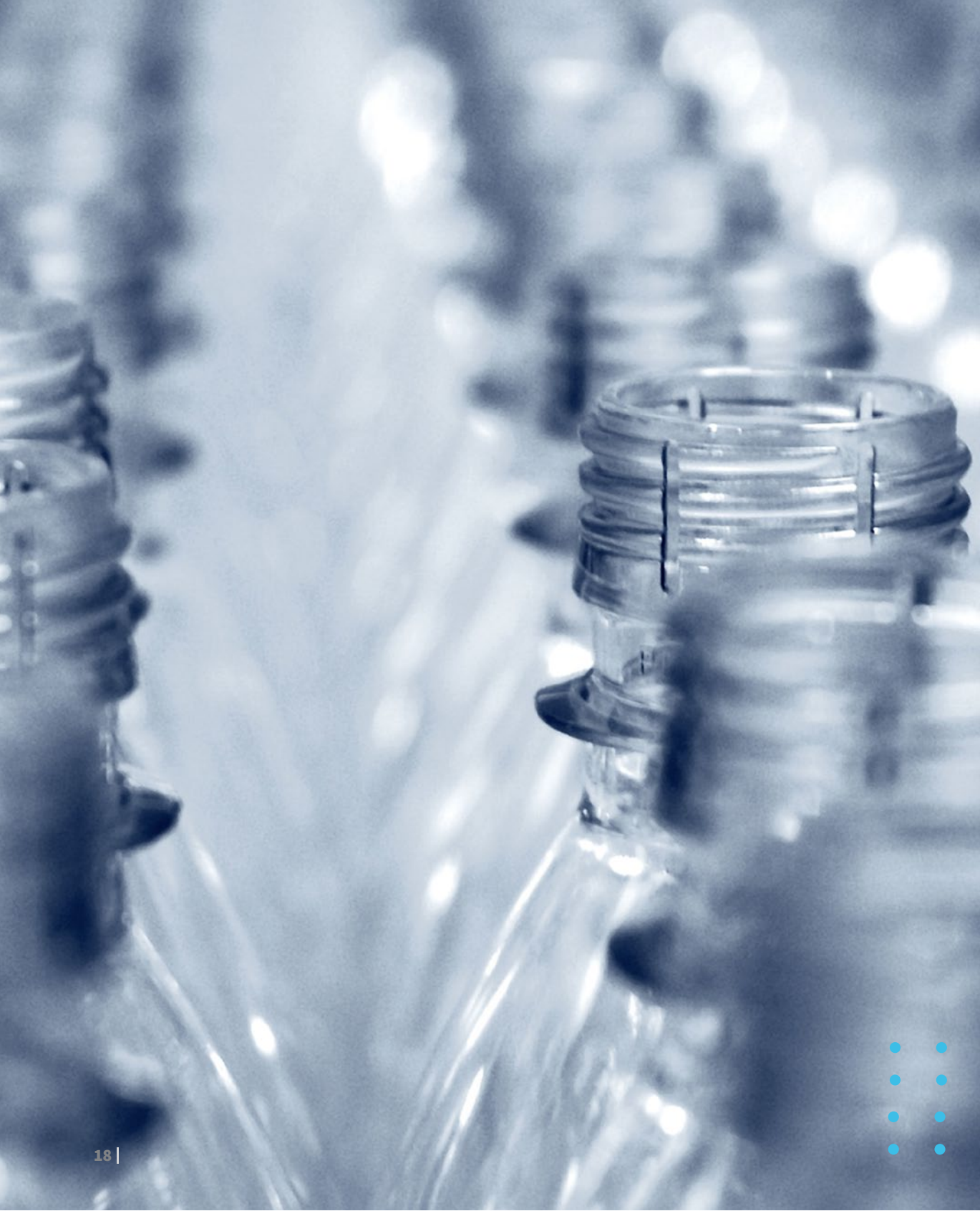
YEAR	NEPA REGION CIV. LABOR FORCE	EMP.	UNEMP.	NEPA RATE %	PA RATE %	U.S. RATE %
2021	267,300	247,500	19,800	7.4%	6.9%	5.8%
2020	274,400	246,200	28,200	10.3%	9.1%	8.1%
2019	277,300	262,200	15,100	5.4%	4.5%	3.7%

Source: PA Department of Labor and Industry

Labor availability for companies needing seasonal help is enhanced by the fact that there are more than 50,000 college students in the immediate NEPA area, many of whom often seek part-time employment.

LABOR MANAGEMENT

According to unionstats.com, the rate of unionization of private employers in NEPA has been steadily declining since the 1980s. In 1986, 18.4% of the private workforce in NEPA was unionized. By 2020, the percentage had dropped to 9.6%.



LABOR COST

In addition to being readily available, NEPA's labor force is also cost competitive compared to major metro areas in the Northeast US.

According to 4th quarter of 2020 data supplied by the Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey Departments of Labor & Industry, wage rates in NEPA compare favorably to those in competing areas, as seen on the next page.





MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT

LOCATION	AVERAGE T&W WEEKLY WAGE	AVERAGE T&W ANNUAL WAGE	STATE
Scranton/ Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton	\$1,370	\$71,240	PA
PA Average	\$1,396	\$72,592	PA
NY Average	\$1,510	\$78,520	NY
Essex County	\$1,545	\$80,340	NJ
Long Island	\$1,554	\$80,808	NY
NJ Average	\$1,754	\$91,208	NJ
Middlesex County	\$1,825	\$94,900	NJ
Union County	\$2,068	\$107,536	NJ
Morris County	\$2,075	\$107,900	NJ
Somerset County	\$2,347	\$122,044	NJ

TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING EMPLOYMENT

LOCATION	AVERAGE T&W WEEKLY WAGE	AVERAGE T&W ANNUAL WAGE	STATE
Scranton/ Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton	\$965	\$50,180	PA
PA Average	\$1,011	\$52,572	PA
Middlesex County	\$1,051	\$54,652	NJ
Somerset County	\$1,077	\$56,004	NJ
NY Average	\$1,099	\$57,148	NY
Long Island	\$1,140	\$59,280	NJ
NJ Average	\$1,145	\$59,540	NJ
Morris County	\$1,182	\$61,464	NJ
Essex County	\$1,589	\$82,628	NJ
Union County	\$1,739	\$90,376	NJ

Source: PA, NJ, NY Departments of Labor and Industry, Quarter 4 2020

LABOR QUALITY

NEPA is nationally known for its highly productive and dependable workforce. Here are testimonials from a few employers:

“Even though we own and operate 73 retail stores from Pennsylvania to New Jersey and upstate New York...I can tell you that the very best people we have working for us can be found right here in Northeast PA.”

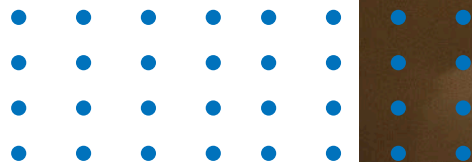
DAVID HAWK, CHAIRMAN, GERTRUDE HAWK CHOCOLATES

“We have a tremendous group of dedicated, hardworking people who helped us pull together a triumphant year. We have a very, very productive team. We moved to Northeastern Pennsylvania from Yorktown Heights, which is about 45 minutes north of Manhattan, and we’ve found this to be a very cost effective area to find intelligent, skilled people.”

JESSICA CHESMAN, PRESIDENT, IGOURMET.COM

“We’ve been really happy with the talent pool we’ve found here (Northeast PA) and the individuals we’ve hired to join our team. We’ve received hundreds of applications for most of our positions. We still have a very healthy candidate pipeline of individuals trying to find positions with American Eagle Outfitters.”

**SANDY SOLA, SENIOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER,
AMERICAN EAGLE OUTFITTERS**





"Since relocating our US based call center to Wilkes-Barre in November of 2007, C3i has had the opportunity to recruit and train more than 175 technical people to support our pharmaceutical clients. The workforce in NEPA is very strong, and we are continually able to obtain excellent people who are qualified, professional and dedicated to quality. Our customer satisfaction scores, which are a direct evaluation of our call center personnel, average 96%."

ROBERT JONES, FORMER CFO, C3I

"We searched the entire eastern seaboard for the best location for our regional distribution center and in the end, the fact that I-81, I-80, and I-84 converge in Northeastern Pennsylvania and the region's exceptional and dedicated workforce were major factors in our decision."

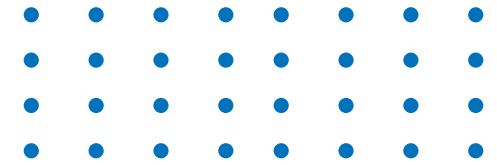
MIKE KOMENSKY, GENERAL MANAGER, BIMBO BAKERIES

"We have a great workforce. We have capable people who are passionate about achieving their goals. We are in a low-cost area yet we have people with the skills you might think you would find only in a high-cost area. Everything in Northeast PA is just right. It's the Goldilocks theory of doing business."

SCOTT MEUSER, CHAIRMAN & CEO, PRIDE MOBILITY PRODUCTS CORPORATION

"We had absolutely no problem finding candidates who possess the skill sets we were seeking. I've been very impressed with the people our company has hired in Hazleton and with the number of applicants who applied for positions."

KEN GONNELLA, PRESIDENT, GONNELLA FROZEN PRODUCTS, HAZLETON



"The labor market here (Northeast PA) is phenomenal. We've been really happy with the market here. That's how we figure out where we are going to put a building."

GREG WALSH, VP OF HUMAN RESOURCES, CHEWY.COM

"In 1930, our grandfather Benjamin Cohen opened a small dental depot in downtown Wilkes-Barre. Since then, Benco Dental has become the nation's largest independent dental distributor, with operations in 35 states. Key to our growth has been the excellent and dedicated team of Benco associates who deliver success, smile after smile, to thousands of dental customers every day. When we outgrew our previous facility, the quality and loyalty of our people made it an easy decision to stay and invest right here in Northeastern PA."

CHARLES COHEN & RICHARD COHEN, PRESIDENT & SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT BENCO DENTAL SUPPLY CO., INC

"The workforce here is very strong. The work ethic is fantastic. We feel a lot of our success as a company is due to the fact that our associates have a genuine concern about doing a great job for our customers. That's what makes us successful in Northeastern Pennsylvania."

DICK KANE, BOARD MEMBER, KANE IS ABLE

EDUCATION & TRAINING

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

NEPA is home to 18 college campuses with a combined 50,000 students. Several of these local colleges offer degree and certificate programs that may be of interest to companies that manufacture or distribute food and beverage products. These schools and some of their key programs include:

Luzerne County Community College:

- Culinary Arts
- Hospitality Business Management
- Pastry Arts Management
- Building Maintenance Technology
- Industrial Maintenance

Keystone College:

- Hospitality Management

Lackawanna College:

- Baking & Pastry
- Culinary Arts
- Hospitality Management
- Restaurant & Foodservice Management

Johnson College:

- Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- Diesel Truck Technology
- Diesel Preventative Maintenance Technology
- Advanced Manufacturing Technology

The Pennsylvania State University:

- Agribusiness Management
- Food Science
- Hospitality Management
- Nutritional Sciences
- Project and Supply Chain Management

Bloomsburg University

bloomu.edu

Clarks Summit University

clarkssummitu.edu

East Stroudsburg University

esu.edu

Geisinger Commonwealth Medical College

geisinger.edu/education

Johnson College

johnson.edu

Keystone College

keystone.edu

King's College

kings.edu

Lackawanna College

lackawanna.edu

Luzerne County Community College

luzerne.edu

Marywood University

marywood.edu

Misericordia University

misericordia.edu

Northampton Community College

northampton.edu

Penn State - Hazleton

hazleton.psu.edu

Penn State- Schuylkill

schuylkill.psu.edu

Penn State - Scranton

scranton.psu.edu

Penn State - Wilkes-Barre

wilkesbarre.psu.edu

University of Scranton

scranton.edu

Wilkes University

wilkes.edu





TRAINING PROGRAMS

GUARANTEED FREE TRAINING PROGRAM (WEDnetPA)

This program provides grants through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for essential skills and advanced technology training. The maximum amount that can be provided is up to \$2,000 per eligible employee, not to exceed \$100,000 per company per eligible fiscal year. To be eligible, employees must be full-time and earn at least \$12 per hour.

Training costs must be “reasonable” as defined by market rates and/or other criteria. Regardless of how it is conducted (classroom, online, etc.), each training session must be a minimum of 30 minutes in length. Training can be provided by a WEDnetPA partner institution, the company’s in-house staff, or any third-party provider.

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT

This federal program, which is administered by local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), provides grants to train individuals who meet certain eligibility requirements such as those who recently lost their job or are underemployed, were formerly self-employed, are a displaced homemaker, or are the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces. The On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program can reimburse employers a portion of the salary of new hires in high priority occupations. Other programs may provide full or partial funding for classroom training to help individuals learn skills.

Please visit dced.pa.gov for more information.



INCENTIVES

SQUARE FEET

50,000
100,000
250,000

EST. SAVINGS

\$355,866
\$711,732
\$1,779,330

LOCAL ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION TAX ASSISTANCE (LERTA)

Mericle's CenterPoint Commerce & Trade Park offers industrial sites and buildings located in Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Zones. In CenterPoint, all of the local taxing bodies – the county, the municipality, and the school district – have approved the zone status.

Real estate taxes on improvements are abated 100% for 10 years for buildings constructed in CenterPoint. The table to the left gives estimates of total savings that will be realized for various building sizes via LERTA. Actual savings may vary depending upon the cost of construction required to meet a tenant's specifications.



OTHER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

PENNSYLVANIA FIRST PROGRAM

This Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) program provides funding to companies that create/retain a substantial number of jobs. Businesses can receive support in the form of grants, loans and loan guarantees for job training, property acquisition, site preparation, land and building improvements, purchasing and/or upgrading machinery and equipment, infrastructure, environmental assessments and remediation, and working capital. The company must pay at least 150% of the federal minimum wage. A \$10 to \$1 private investment match is required. The max assistance is \$5,000 per job (discretionary).

The program requires participants to commit to operating at the approved project site for a minimum of eight years.

Businesses must achieve one of the following standards within three years of receiving Pennsylvania First Program funding: (1) create or retain a minimum of 100 full time jobs at the project site; (2) increase their full time employment within the commonwealth by at least 20%; (3) provide a substantial number of new, full time employment opportunities within a high growth industry; or (4) create or retain fewer than 100 full time jobs at project sites that are located in counties or communities suffering from high unemployment.

PENNSYLVANIA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PIDA)

This state program provides low interest, fixed rate loans for real estate (max 15 years) and machinery and equipment (max 10 years), for manufacturing, industrial, office, and R&D firms and others. Companies must apply through a certified economic development organization. A typical interest rate in Pennsylvania in mid 2021 was 2.5%, but the rate is subject to change quarterly. Companies must retain/create jobs (up to \$35,000 per job can be made available for retained jobs and up to \$50,000 per job for created jobs). The max loan for real estate is \$2.25 million and the max loan for M&E is \$400,000.

Please visit dced.pa.gov for more specific details and guidelines for all of Pennsylvania's incentive programs.



AVERAGE COST OF A TYPICAL FOUR BEDROOM HOME

Lackawanna and Luzerne counties include the cities
Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Pittston, and Hazleton.



COUNTY	STATE	AVG. SALES PRICE	AVG. PRICE/SF	AVG. ANNUAL R.E. TAXES
Lackawanna	PA	\$241,265.00	\$91.00	\$4,530.00
Luzerne	PA	\$242,419.00	\$94.00	\$4,533.00
Dauphin	PA	\$335,142.00	\$111.00	\$5,786.00
Cumberland	PA	\$345,621.00	\$117.00	\$4,577.00
Gloucester	NJ	\$313,629.00	\$118.00	\$9,828.00
Lancaster	PA	\$310,855.00	\$126.00	\$5,020.00
Northampton	PA	\$337,460.00	\$133.00	\$7,413.00
Orange	NY	\$333,853.00	\$141.00	\$10,912.00
Lehigh	PA	\$349,688.00	\$142.00	\$6,277.00
Burlington	MJ	\$372,417.00	\$142.00	\$9,398.00
Dutchess	NY	\$363,320.00	\$146.00	\$10,169.00
Camden	NJ	\$411,461.00	\$152.00	\$11,851.00
Hartford	CT	\$404,088.00	\$155.00	\$9,707.00
Montgomery	PA	\$408,373.00	\$156.00	\$6,849.00
Chester	PA	\$495,201.00	\$160.00	\$7,403.00
New Castle	DE	\$380,077.00	\$167.00	\$3,294.00
Bucks	PA	\$476,822.00	\$181.00	\$7,283.00
Prince George's	MD	\$418,025.00	\$194.00	\$5,312.00
Delaware	PA	\$492,627.00	\$195.00	\$8,953.00
Howard	MD	\$565,370.00	\$204.00	\$6,954.00
Morrisw	NJ	\$497,086.00	\$206.00	\$10,862.00
Passiac	NJ	\$464,147.00	\$211.00	\$14,298.00
Anne Arundel	MD	\$512,739.00	\$219.00	\$4,611.00
Fairfield	CT	\$611,283.00	\$220.00	\$12,171.00
Middlesex	NJ	\$555,844.00	\$225.00	\$11,689.00
Somerset	NJ	\$561,610.00	\$228.00	\$12,350.00
Suffolk	NY	\$538,539.00	\$233.00	\$11,372.00
Rockland	NY	\$525,006.00	\$234.00	\$13,450.00
Montgomery	MD	\$716,033.00	\$256.00	\$6,492.00
Bergen	NJ	\$633,385.00	\$281.00	\$13,086.00
Union	NJ	\$760,781.00	\$291.00	\$15,792.00

Source: Realtor.com 2020



COST ADVANTAGES & HOUSING COSTS

A little buys you a lot here.

Average sales prices of single family homes in Northeastern Pennsylvania are much lower than prices in most major metro areas in the Northeast US. Real estate taxes on your NEPA home are lower by comparison too.



DISCOVER NEPA

Ten counties. One region. DiscoverNEPA™.

Why is Mericle, a real estate developer, promoting Northeastern Pennsylvania's (NEPA's) quality of life? Mericle has been very fortunate to provide commercial space to 200+ companies since 1985 and we are especially proud that more than 20,000 people work in the buildings we've developed in NEPA. However, when companies are going through the site selection process, more factors come into play than just the availability of a certain type of building or site.



**Arts, Culture,
& Entertainment**



**Leisure, Shopping,
Sports & Adventure**



**Skilled Workers
& Low Costs of Living**

Skilled workers are drawn to communities known as great places to live. Northeastern Pennsylvania offers quick access to big city amenities and offers huge advantages when it comes to affordable living, safe neighborhoods, access to recreation, and the opportunity to be heard and make a difference. NEPA is the Northeast's best bet if you are seeking a stress-free, healthy lifestyle complete with thousands of world-class amenities.

We created DiscoverNEPA™ to show this region's best and brightest that Northeastern Pennsylvania's quality of life does compare favorably with the Austins and the Madisons, that they can do just about everything here, and that they should chose NEPA as the place to start and grow their careers. We hope our tenants and other area businesses will use DiscoverNEPA™ as a tool to recruit talented people and their families to this region.

We invite you to visit DiscoverNEPA.com and to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Mericle is Northeastern Pennsylvania proud.

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