

TAKING ACTION

WWW.METROACTION.ORG

DECEMBER 2007



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MetroAction, Inc. is a non-profit community development organization dedicated to providing financing and business development assistance to businesses throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania.

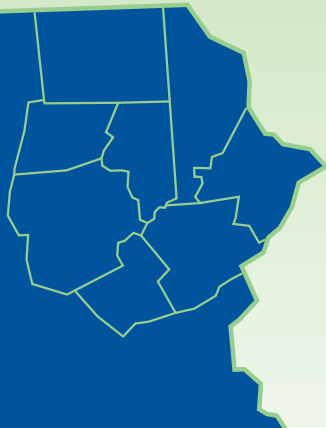
Formed in 1977 to revitalize the local community, MetroAction is now a leading Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that has provided more than \$2.5 million to help build small businesses throughout eight counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Since 1997, MetroAction has been providing loans and business development assistance to small businesses. MetroAction finances small businesses that, for many reasons, may not qualify for traditional bank financing.

Many of the entrepreneurs that utilize our programs lack start-up capital and cannot save money fast enough to acquire the funding they need to finance their business. MetroAction is an alternative, yet successful and comprehensive, resource for financing and business development assistance.

Serving:

- Carbon
- Lackawanna
- Luzerne
- Monroe
- Pike
- Susquehanna
- Wayne
- Wyoming




METROACTION, INC. NOW CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS!



In the upcoming year, MetroAction, Inc. will be featuring many articles on their 30th Anniversary.

MetroAction, Inc. has helped projects such as Steamtown National Historic Site, The Mall at Steamtown, the Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, and the Federal Courthouse Expansion Project just to name a few. Each day, MetroAction, Inc. works hard to assist local small businesses open their doors and grow into success stories.

Look in the 2008 TakingAction e-Newsletter for more information on the many accomplishments from the past 30 years of MetroAction, Inc. 

METROACTION, INC. RECEIVES FUNDING FROM THE CDFI FUND

MetroAction, Inc. announced that it has received notification from the U.S. Department of Treasury that it has been awarded a technical assistance grant totaling \$52,535 by the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) fund.

The funding provided will be used to support MetroAction, Inc.'s operating budget by providing funding for marketing analysis and outreach, training and peer coaching for MetroAction, Inc. staff and board members, and the development of an impact and data collection mechanism.

The CDFI Fund's mission is to promote local growth and access to capital by directly investing in and supporting all CDFI's and by expanding traditional financial institutions' lending, investment and services within under-served markets. Since 1996, the CDFI Fund has provided monetary awards for Financial and Technical Assistance. The CDFI program has assisted in promoting economic development and encourages private sector investment to under-served markets.

MetroAction, Inc., the community development arm of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, provides financing, training and development services to support start-up and expanding small businesses in Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming counties. Over the past nine years, MetroAction has provided more than \$2.5 million in financing to over 168 small businesses throughout the region.

Contact Desiree Ranella at dranella@metroaction.org or at (570) 342-7711 for more information or visit www.metroaction.org. 

NOVEMBER SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT AWARDED TO NEARRA'S PIZZERIA

MetroAction, Inc., The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the Northeast Pennsylvania Business Journal and First Liberty Bank and Trust Company announce that Nearra's Pizzeria has received the November 2007 Small Business Spotlight Award.

The Small Business Spotlight is an award given by the MetroAction, Inc. that recognizes local businesses for their contributions to our community. The Small Business Spotlight Committee chose Nearra's Pizzeria for their commitment to improving the local dining in our area.



L to R David Lejcincki, First Liberty Bank and Trust; Neil Fiorillo, Nearra's Pizzeria; Tony Piraino, Nearra's Pizzeria; Desiree Ranella, Scranton Chamber/MetroAction.

Nearra's Pizzeria was opened by cousins Neil Fiorillo and Antonio Piraino in 2004. Nearra's is a family run Pizzeria, and at any given day you can find one of their

seven children helping out their dads or enjoying a slice. The name itself is an acronym for each of their children; Nico, Elisa, Alison, Ryan, Rebecca, Avery & Ava.

Neil had previously worked as a salesman for a local beer distributor, while Antonio was working for his father's pizzeria, Domenick's Pizza in Carbondale. Both decided to roll the dice and take a chance on this new endeavor, and they are grateful for the response they have received from the local community.

Nearra's specializes in traditional Italian cooking like Baked Manicotti, chicken parmesan to name a few. Their specialty of course is hand tossed pizza with fresh dough being made daily in their kitchen. Nearra's offers dine in and take out as well as delivery throughout the city of Scranton and surrounding cities.

Nearra's Pizzeria is proud to give back to the local community by sponsoring various Little Leagues in the area. They also provide students at the local universities discounted prices on their food. They donate to many local charities whenever possible. Owners Tony and Neil state, "Doing business in Scranton is remarkable because everyone is like family. People drop by our pizzeria about their families or about their jobs and it's just great. We know many of our customers by their first names."

Stop by Nearra's Pizzeria today at 1439 Capouse Avenue in Scranton or call (570) 207-4992.

BORROWER PROFILE FEEL GOOD MOTORS




When it comes to used vehicles, Feel Good Motors has the selection you need. Unlike other car dealerships, Feel Good Motors provides a niche for high quality, newer pre-owned vehicles. With a focus on sales, service, and selection, Feel Good Motors works for their customer's best interests.

In July 2001, owner Frank Ross opened the doors to Feel Good Motors in Olyphant. "I had worked my whole life for other car dealerships, and I wanted to open a dealership of my own with a focus on great customer service," stated Mr. Ross. With a focus on being dedicated to their customer's vehicle satisfaction, presentation of high quality vehicles that are only a few years old and lots of local advertising, Feel Good Motors is booming.

Since its beginning, Feel Good Motors has opened a brand new full service facility and expanded its office space due to the growing staff in its sales and service departments. What began as one lot now includes three, including extra office space, a larger car lot, as well as the brand new service department right next door to the auto dealership.

"I couldn't have done this without help from MetroAction," said Mr. Ross. "The extra funding acted as peace of mind when I started the business and helped me purchase the things needed to get my doors open."

Mr. Ross is now giving back to the community, being involved in many local charitable organizations. With the growing success of Feel Good Motors, he continues to grow his business and building upon his reputation by providing customers with exceptional service and high quality vehicles.

Stop by Feel Good Motors today on the Burke Bypass or call (570) 487-3335. 

DECEMBER SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT AWARDED TO UNITED SPORTS ACADEMY



From L to R Back Row: Colleen Dunne, United Sports Academy; Ivan Raynova, United Sports Academy; Brad Epple, United Sports Academy; Michelle Lynch, United Sports Academy. Front Row: Desiree Ranella, Scranton Chamber/MetroAction; Dima Raynova, United Sports Academy; Mary Beth D'Andrea, First Liberty Bank and Trust.

MetroAction, Inc., The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the Northeast Pennsylvania Business Journal and First Liberty Bank and Trust Company announce that United Sports Academy has received the December 2007 Small Business Spotlight Award.

The Small Business Spotlight is an award given by MetroAction, Inc. that recognizes local businesses for their contributions to our community. The Small

Business Spotlight Committee chose United Sports Academy for their involvement with various organizations.

Located in Dunmore, United Sports Academy is a service business that provides fun and fitness programs, such as its Junior Olympic Team Program, for hundreds of children in the community. For the past 13 years, their mission has been to provide students with the finest gymnastics experience that raises each child's self-esteem and self-confidence, while making fitness fun!

United Sports Academy provides fun and free social events for families such as a Halloween dance party, an Easter egg hunt and breakfast with Santa. Over the past year, they have participated in The Breath of Life Walk, Toys for Tots, The Italian Festival and the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees opening.

They also offer programs for children with special needs. This past summer, United Sports Academy hosted the Friendship House of Scranton at their facility twice a week for fun and fitness. In January, they will hold their 2nd annual Janet Rothenberg Memorial Meet. This event pays tribute to a previous gymnast from United Sports Academy.

For more information on the United Sports Academy, contact them at (570) 96-FLIPS or visit them at 1035 Reeves Street in Dunmore.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR PROFILE




Since 1995, **Edward Kowalczyk** has been employed at the Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) where he started as a part-time business consultant. Throughout his career as a consultant, he has assisted hundreds of clients in obtaining financing, starting their businesses, and helping stagnant and struggling businesses right themselves.

He was promoted to Assistant Director in 1999 and has since accepted duties ranging from consulting management and legislative relationships to marketing the SBDC to both clients and stake holders. He is also the

outreach office manager for Carbon and Sullivan Counties and serves as a member of the Carbon County Economic Development Corporation.

Edward Kowalczyk has been a MetroAction board member since 2005. During that time he has also served as a loan review committee member.

In addition to his role at the Small Business Development Center, Ed has strong interests in both photography and environmental concerns. Ed has always had a strong interest in the vitality of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He is an active member of the Dupont Lions Club and has been involved in aspects of family businesses for many years. He has lived the majority of his life in Dupont, PA until recently moving to Suscon with his wife Susan and stepson Tommy. 

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TENANT PROFILE

Tidgewell Associates, Inc.

In August 2007, the Scranton Enterprise Center welcomed a new tenant to its facility. Tidgewell Associates, Inc. (TAI Software) is a firm that designs and implements custom software solutions that support the business processes and information requirements of public and private sector organizations. The TAI Software product is customized to work with clients' existing data, leveraging existing technology investments.



TAI Software was founded in 2002 by Mark Tidgewell. A thirty-year veteran of the behavioral health and human service industries, Mark became acutely aware of obstacles faced by many of these businesses. He launched TAI Software to develop software solutions for organizations that were unable to meet the external demands for data from their business partners. TAI Software's products build on the organization's existing capabilities to improve efficiency and quality of services delivered.

Today, TAI Software works primarily with public sector organizations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The firm currently employs 16 highly skilled software developers and analysts in Scranton, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

The Scranton Office is managed by Scranton native, Todd J. Gattens.

For more information on Tidgewell Associates, please log onto www.taisoftware.com or call 877-899-1110 or 570-504-8636.

METROACTION, INC. AWARDS MICROGRANTS TO IMPROVE CHILDCARE IN NEPA

MetroAction, Inc. recently awarded five micro-grants totaling \$2,500 to improve the quality of childcare in northeastern Pennsylvania.

MetroAction's MicroGrant program, funded by Opportunity Finance Network, Philadelphia, aims to increase the supply of quality, affordable childcare available in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The centers will use the funds in the following manner:

- Little People Daycare School West, Scranton – purchase "The Creative Curriculum" for infants and toddlers.
- Stepping Stones Play and Learning Center, Gouldsboro – provide non-traditional supplemental activities such as field trips to enhance their relationship with the children's parents and families.
- The Ann Street School, Milford – purchase age-appropriate portable gross motor equipment to enhance their physical education curriculum.
- The Sutton Playhouse, Scranton – purchase "The Creative Curriculum" to assist in focusing on the individual needs of each child.
- United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA - Bellevue Center, Scranton – establish and maintain a science program for children.

The MicroGrant recipients received a grant of \$500 as well as one year subscription to Highlights High Five Magazine, compliments of Highlights Magazine.



From L to R: Michael McHale-United Neighborhood Centers-Bellevue Center; Dianina Thatcher, The Ann Street School; Lindsay Kulenich, The Sutton Playhouse; Kris Bossart, Stepping Stones Play and Learning Center; Phil Condon, President of MetroAction.