

Pennsylvania has opportunity to be a leader of alternative fuels development in nation, according to experts speaking at briefing at the Chester County Economic Development Council

EXTON _ Economic opportunities exist for Pennsylvania companies involved in the production of alternative fuels, according to two area experts.

Tom Tuffey, Director of PennFuture's Center for Energy, Enterprise and the Environment, and John Urbanchuk, Director of LECG, LLC, spoke on Friday at the Chester County Economic Development Council's breakfast briefing on the need for alternative fuels in Pennsylvania. More than 50 area business executives attended the briefing.

Tuffey said the United States is past the "tipping point" for the need for alternative fuels. A number of drivers, including national security, are pushing the development of alternative fuels to lessen the nation's dependence on foreign oil. Climate changes and damage to the environment are also key reasons for the interest in developing the alternate energy sources, he said.

The cost of development and production of the fuels will be in the trillions of dollars, according to Tuffey. Pointing to President Bush's State of the Union address last week and Governor Rendell's upcoming budget address, Tuffey said he believes governmental funding is needed and will be available to fuel the industry.

Urbanchuk said, "The PennSecurity Fuels Initiative would replace 600-700 million gallons of petroleum-based transportation fuel with domestically produced renewables within 10 years." He said the renewable fuel sources include ethanol, biodiesel, coal-derived liquid transportation fuels and methane from landfills and coal mines.

On biofuels, Urbanchuk said they improve air quality; increase demand for grain and oilseeds and improves farm revenues and reduce the cost of government programs; and reduce America's dependence on important oil, expand the economy, create jobs and generate income.

Pennsylvania could realize a large economic impact through direct and indirect spending, according to Urbanchuk. He said the industry could add \$1.4 billion annually to the Pennsylvania economy over a 10-year period; put an additional \$590 million annually in the pockets of Pennsylvania households over the same period; create as many as 19,200 jobs; and generate \$890 million in new tax revenue for the state and local governments.

The Chester County Economic Development Council is a private, non-profit economic development organization that has been nurturing economic growth in Chester County and the surrounding region for more than 40 years. The Council's portfolio of business growth services includes: low-interest financing, small business lending, workforce training, retention and expansion, customized international business assistance, land and building site selection, brownfields consultation and remediation, urban redevelopment, and agricultural economic development. The Council also offers state-of-the art conference and training facilities at its brand new facility in Eagleview. For more information, see www.cceconomicdevelopment.com.