



Tri-State Unity Coalition

P.O. Box 752

Milford, PA 18337

tristateunity@veneziale.net

<http://tristateunity.org>

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Three Pike Residents on Regional Advisory Council to Improve Opportunities for Minorities

Minorities face many challenges for equal access to opportunities and services such as employment and housing. The rapid growth and changing demographics of the Pocono Region has further exasperated these challenges. The civil rights enforcement agency in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC). Their mission is to administer and enforce the PA Human Relations Act and PA Fair Educational Opportunities Act, which strive to eliminate discrimination and provide equal opportunity for all persons. The PHRC formed the Monroe County Advisory Council to better serve the Pocono Region and assist them in ascertaining and improving opportunities in employment, housing, public accommodations and education. The Monroe County Advisory Council, sworn in by the PHRC on October 23rd, is the seventh council in the Commonwealth, and was the first council formed in the past 20 years. The other councils are in Blair, Centre, Johnstown, Montgomery, Northampton and York counties.

The Monroe County Advisory Council consists of 16 members throughout Monroe and 3 members from Pike. The Pike County members of the Council are Perry Gower, Cindy Stine and Robert Veneziale. Perry Gower and Robert Veneziale are from the Tri-State Unity Coalition which celebrates diversity and enhances community harmony. Mr. Gower is also a founding member and director of the Pocono Action Lambda Society (PALS) and a director of Rainbow Youth NEPA. These organizations provide support for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community in our region. Dr. Veneziale is also a board member of the Pike United Way and oversees the county Information and Referral System. Ms. Stine is an educational outreach coordinator/child advocate with Survivors' Resources, a domestic violence and sexual assault crisis center. She is also a facilitator for the teen support group, RYOT against Rape (Rallying Youths Organizers), which focuses on prevention and awareness of social problems such as dating violence, diversity, and sexual abuse. "Pike and Monroe Counties share a border, school district, various social services and face many of the same issues," says Perry Gower, "The Advisory Council will be the eyes and ears in our region for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and improve compliance with the PA Human Relations Act". Meetings of the Tri-State Unity Coalition are a forum to learn more about the PA Human Relations Act and also to address diversity issues in the community. They will hold the next public meeting on Thursday, November 9th at 6 PM in the Dingman Township Branch of the Pike County Public Library. Normally, public meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month. For more information, call 570-686-5555 or visit <http://www.tristateunity.org>. If you feel that you have been the victim of discrimination and want to file a complaint with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, contact their regional office serving Monroe and Pike Counties at the Riverfront Office Center, 1101-1125 S. Front Street, 5th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17104-2515, Voice: (717) 787-9784 / Text Telephone (TT/TTY): (717) 787-7279. Visit the PHRC website at http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/PHRC for more information.

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**Celebrating Diversity
Promoting Human Rights
Creating a Moral Barrier to Hate
Enhancing Community Harmony**