



County of Berks

COUNTY OF BERKS

PENNSYLVANIA

County of Berks
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For Immediate Release: Tuesday, March 17th, 2015

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Commissioners to officially open new Berks County Department of Agriculture

For immediate release: The new Berks County Department of Agriculture will be officially unveiled to the public tomorrow morning, March 18, at the Berks County Ag Center, 1238 County Welfare Road.

The event gets under way at 10:30 a.m. with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Immediately after the ceremony, the public is encouraged to visit the agricultural offices in the center including the new department led by Tami Hildebrand; and the USDA Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Services, Penn State Extension, and the Berks County Conservation District. Staff members will be available to greet individuals and field questions.

“Berks County's agricultural future is green and growing and the Department of Agriculture is committed to helping its number one industry, agriculture, to continue to thrive,” said Hildebrand. “Berks County's agriculture represents the entire food industry chain from farm to consumer and we want that chain to remain linked and strong..... for the seeds of opportunities that we plant today will reap a prosperous harvest in the future.”

The new agriculture department was formed in 2014 and Hildebrand was selected by the commissioners in December to serve as executive director.

"The Berks County Department of Agriculture provides the leadership needed to assist our county with important agriculture issues and is working to support agricultural economic development," said Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach. "Tami has the personality, experience, and skills needed to lead this department and work with our AG partners here in the county and across the Commonwealth."

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt concurred and anticipates new partnerships.

“I am excited for the opportunities that this new structure will bring to the agriculture community in Berks County,” he said. “Hopefully it will assist in streamlining processes and creating a one-stop shop for farmers who need information or answers to their questions.”

“I am looking forward to the possibilities that can result from the Department of Agriculture and the Greater Reading Economic Partnership to assist and expand Ag business in Berks.”

Barnhardt said Hildebrand has already proven to be a good leader and is open to new ideas and has some innovative suggestions.

Hildebrand encourages the public to attend and notes that light refreshments will be available.

About the department: The mission of the Berks County Department of Agriculture is to encourage, promote and assist agricultural and related industries in Berks County. The new department will work towards expanding economic opportunities, promoting agricultural production, and preserving Berks County's farmland and traditions. The department will develop and implement a micro-grant program for agricultural projects based upon need and will be awarded through a competitive process.