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LVPC LAUNCHING DATA EFFORT

Sixteenth century philosopher Sir Francis Bacon is credited with coining the phrase “Knowledge is Power”, but a 21st century update of that might very well say “Data is Knowledge”.

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission is launching a data project aimed at giving Lehigh Valley residents more of both. DataLV is envisioned as a statistical snapshot of the Lehigh Valley that can be updated as new data arrives, and married to the LVPC’s ArcGIS Online mapping database to provide people with a one-stop shop for information on everything from housing to transportation to healthcare to education.

DataLV is scheduled to go live December 6 as part of the LVPC’s “FutureLV” event at Lehigh University, but the long-term goal is to build a single data repository that can be bolstered by data from LVPC partners, such as PennDOT and the Lehigh Valley Workforce Board, and accessed by anyone.

As a federal and state-designated data partner, the LVPC has long been the regional repository for such development, housing, transportation and U.S. Census data, but the goal for the future is to add to that data and display it in a way people can more easily use it, according to LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley.

“A central part of our mission has long been to collect and distribute useful regional data, and our target audience has always been the people and municipalities of the Lehigh Valley,” Bradley said. “The goal here is to build something that people can use and present it in a way that gives them 24-hour access.”

DataLV will be available at LVPC.ORG, featuring a display of the most relevant statistics describing the region in nine basic categories, ranging from agriculture to health to who we are demographically. That will serve as a jumping-off point toward a new Regional Comprehensive Plan, to be completed in 2018, that will help guide the region into the future.

“This is about a lot more than land use. We are in the midst of tremendous change that is going to affect how we do just about everything,” Bradley said. “We have to prepare for a future that includes driverless vehicles, people living a lot longer and climate change.”

The daylong event at Lehigh University’s Iacocca Hall will feature a series of panel discussions by experts on such topics as Economy, Energy, Transportation and Resiliency. Some of the information collected at the event will be used to help draft the Regional Comprehensive Plan.