

On the offense with defense

Busy year for Johnstown Area Regional Industries

By Melissa Ann Maynard

It has been a busy and productive year thus far for Johnstown Area Regional Industries, according to the organization's president. "There is a lot going on here with expansions and start-ups," says Linda Thomson.

The organization, which takes a leadership role in the annual Showcase for Commerce, witnessed one of the largest, best attended shows in the event's 18-year history.

In addition, JARI is fulfilling its mission, in part, by working with many businesses on future expansions.

According to Thomson, JARI has been working with a number of companies on relocation and expansion plans. A not-for-profit company, JARI has been integral in encouraging future economic development in the Johnstown region, working with such companies as Kongsberg Defense & Aerospace and Lockheed Martin Global Supply Chain Services.

With JARI's help, Kongsberg, a Norwegian-based supplier of defense and space systems, has both developed and expanded its state-of-the-art Manufacturing Operation Center, which is used for

Kongsberg's Protector Remote Weapons System. The facility, located at the Johnstown Industrial Park, includes more than 100,000 square feet. There, the company works with the U.S. Army's Common Remotely Operated Weapons Station (CROWS).

"Kongsberg has landed some large contracts for weapons systems, bringing new jobs and investment into the region," said Thomson. "In addition, Kongsberg is subcontracting to other local entities for components. We are excit-

ed about the work Kongsberg is doing in Johnstown and will continue to assist them as much as possible."

Along with assisting Kongsberg, JARI is currently working with Lockheed Martin on the company's relocation to Richland Township from Greenville, S.C. Slated to begin in September and take a total of three

months, the move will bring around 100 new jobs to the area after the company relocates 32 current employees from South Carolina.

"Kongsberg has landed some large contracts for weapons systems, bringing new jobs and investment into the region."

**Linda Thomson
President
JARI**

Kongsberg and Lockheed Martin are only two out of a number of companies that developed contracts over the past year, including those developed at the "Showcase for Commerce" held in May. JARI and the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce, Inc. sponsor the showcase, which is held annually.

"Our exhibit space has been sold out each year for the past eight years, at least," says Thomson.

This year was no exception. All events

were sold out with 25 new companies included in the exhibition. More than \$100 million in contracts was announced as a result of the networking at the showcase. Developed in 1991, the showcase now claims to be the largest business show in the region with special focus on defense contracting. The agenda not only includes the exhibition, but a number of special events, from breakfast with Congressman John Murtha, who helped start the showcase, to educational workshops.

Due to space limitations at the War Memorial and Conference Center in Johnstown, next year's showcase will have to stay the same size. Despite this fact, Thomson feels that the contracts generated there will grow in number and size. There is a growth trend in the number of industries looking for development in the central Pennsylvania region and JARI's influence has actively encouraged that growth.