



**JARI** ⚡

# *Producing Results*

**FOR A POSITIVE  
ECONOMIC CLIMATE**

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



# ***A SPECIAL THANKS*** ***to our 2018 contributors***

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## ***JARI STAFF***

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Linda Thomson President/CEO	Michele Clapper Vice President, Economic Development	Cindy Saylor Executive Assistant	Joette Watson Chief Financial Officer
Debi Balog Director, Workforce Development	Lenora Leasure Program Manager, JARI PTAC	Jenn Seese Communication/ Administrative Professional	Wally Burlack Vision2025 Development Consultant
Holly Bodolosky Staff Accountant	José Luis Otero Entrepreneurial and Procurement Specialist	Lauren Thompson Technical Assistance Advisor	Ryan Kieta Vision2025 Development Consultant

# JARI

## *produces results*

Dear Friends,

JARI is all about producing results...and the past year was especially significant when you look at our metrics. Seventeen new companies created; 8,000 + retained jobs and over 170 new jobs; hundreds of millions of new contracting dollars and over \$10 million of financing and tax credits awarded to our clients. Our skilled team of economic development professionals worked with 538 business clients and countless other individuals to contribute to the overall positive economy that we are experiencing today.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who are responsible for the results that you see in the following pages. The JARI team is, hands down, the best! Each person is responsible for a significant portion of this report and together, the ball moves down the field. New capital investments, technical assistance to small businesses, training incumbent workers as well as the unemployed, and the implementation of Vision2025 initiatives are truly making an impact.

We are grateful for the support of our corporate and individual contributors as well as our partners. There is a reason that our mission

***JARI is the collaborative force that enhances all aspects of our region to grow a diverse economy and build vibrant communities.***

specifically calls out the word “collaborative,” for without it, we are ineffective. Working together with our municipal and government officials, our workforce and economic development partners, and our stakeholders, we can accomplish much.

Special thanks to our boards of directors: JARI, JIDC and JARI Growth Fund, including the chairs of these groups respectively: Bill Polacek, Jeff Cramer and Steve Howsare, for their outstanding commitment to our organization’s strategic focus

and sustainability. I would also like to thank Ed Sheehan for chairing our Defense Business Council and the Showcase for Commerce, and also commend the many individuals who lead the way for our industry partnerships: Shawn Kaufman, Lindsey Hilbrecht, Linda Fox, Dave Johnson, Paul Seitz, Michele Bonerigo, and Carole Kakabar.

Please take a few moments to hear the stories contained in these pages. They are just a few of the hundreds of stories unfolding each year from people who have been impacted in some personal way from JARI’s commitment to the people and businesses in our region.



Linda Thomson  
JARI President/CEO

## *2018 results*

**172**

jobs created

**8,672**

jobs retained

**17**

new start-ups

**538**

clients assisted

**\$176,763,592**

reported government  
contracts awarded

**\$10,121,394**

financing/tax credits



# Partnering with industry to move the economy forward

Formal industry partnerships facilitated by JARI make a major impact in recruitment and training, youth engagement, and re-connecting displaced workers and other special populations with resources that assist individuals with obtaining employment in career pathways with long-term earning potential.

“There are just 20 industry partnerships across Pennsylvania, and JARI has four of those,” said Debi Balog, JARI Director of Workforce Development. “Almost all of the major events you see JARI involved with – like job fairs, discussion forums, and training programs – come out of the partnerships.”

These partnerships meet four times a year, with special projects teams meeting as needed. The partners discuss critical issues such as labor shortages and strategies to address the issue. Currently, there are an average 1,000 job openings a month, and employers are challenged to find qualified workers. JARI held recruitment events to help connect job seekers to these positions, while offering training programs to help workers obtain the skills needed to become employed in these positions.

“JARI is consistently at the top of the list of agencies we look to for assistance,” said Shawn Kaufman, Director of Human Resources for Riggs Industries, Inc.

“I have been involved with the Safety Consortium with JARI for the last eight years, serving as co-chair. The event is attended by well over 120 annually,” said Paul Seitz, Employer Relations Specialist for PHOENIX Rehabilitation and Health Services, Inc.

The partnerships have helped identify barriers to employment, such as child care and transportation, and have set these as priorities for future planning. The partnerships also cooperate to share resources and lower costs with initiatives such as marketing together to attract applicants for in-demand positions like certified nursing assistants or welders, rather than in competition with each other.

In some instances, short term training programs can be launched to help increase the pool of qualified workers. Members of the partnerships also work together to combine resources to offer incumbent worker training for programs not covered with grant funds.

JARI participates with the U.S. Probation’s Transitional Re-Entry Advisory Committee (TRAC), which helps formerly incarcerated people transition successfully back into the community and employment.

“Debi Balog of JARI was a big asset in helping TRAC set up a job fair for people who have been incarcerated -- it’s an annual event, and with

help from Debi, gets bigger every year,” said Suzanne Babik, Community Resource Specialist for the U.S. Probation Office. “Our people feel comfortable going because the employers know they may have a record. The fair is now also open to veterans and the general population, as well as those on supervision, and it’s been a great thing.”

The partnerships also help engage youth in the workforce, finding ways to introduce them to career opportunities and training.

“JARI is an integral component to CareerLink Youth Services for both networking and information sharing,” said Sarah N. Helman, Tri-County Coordinator for CareerLink Youth Services. “The partnership between our agencies allows the collaboration and support needed to provide quality services.

At the same time, JARI’s partnerships help educators in the region ensure schools prepare young people for entry into the workforce.

“JARI is recognized as a model of what a Business and Education partnership can be,” said Carole Kakabar, Superintendent of Ferndale Area School District and Education Chair of the Business and Education partnership. “Over the next decade, 7 in 10 new jobs in Pennsylvania will require workers to use a computer, and close to 300,000 STEM jobs will become available by 2026. We’re working to make sure we incorporate the relevant skills and knowledge sets into high school curricula.”

In fact, JARI’s Business and Education Partnership was recognized as a Best Practice at the 2018 Pennsylvania Department of Education SAS Institute Conference in Hershey, which attracts about 200 school district superintendents and educators from across the commonwealth.

JARI works with schools at the post-secondary level as well, helping to ensure that available training is in sync with what area employers need.

“JARI has played an integral role as a partner in the Southern Alleghenies-wide Regional Industry Tours for College and Career Tech Administrators,” said Larry Brugh, Dean of Career Services and Workforce Development for Pennsylvania Highlands Community College. “The tours involve many post-secondary education facilities and companies across all sectors, helping to better connect the mutual needs of post-secondary students with employers’ recruitment and hiring needs for regional jobs and internships.”

# Supporting and developing the region's entrepreneurs

JARI continues to support entrepreneurial activity in our region through a variety of programs designed to help entrepreneurs develop their ideas into viable businesses.

"In 2018, entrepreneurs in many different industries were identified. We were able to provide technical assistance and help with finding capital to fund their projects," said José Otero, Entrepreneurial and Procurement Specialist for JARI. Otero also assisted with the development of 40 business plans for potential new businesses. "The goal with our programs is to help people prepare a viable plan, so that they're able to obtain financing and move forward."

JARI is now in the second year of the Startup Alleghenies initiative, a 3-year, \$2.4 million project that began in 2017 to support entrepreneurial activity in Cambria, Blair and Somerset Counties and has since expanded into Bedford, Fulton and Huntington Counties. JARI is responsible for Cambria County through this program and this year 95 entrepreneurs were enrolled.

JARI helped to facilitate the Ben Franklin TechCelerator, an eight-week program that served as a business startup accelerator for budding entrepreneurs developing an innovative product, process or software application. The program was free for participants who had the opportunity to develop a viable business model – and three winners received prizes totaling \$12,000 to help them further their business models.

Other programs included the Thought Leader Summit on Entrepreneurship, a free one-day presentation at Seven Springs Mountain Resort for aspiring and established entrepreneurs.

"It is one thing to make it to ribbon-cutting day, but what's more important is what comes after," Otero said. "Our goal is to help



entrepreneurs make sure those doors stay open."

Camillya Taylor is an example of a Johnstown entrepreneur who has benefited from JARI's programs.

Originally, Taylor was operating a hair salon that was open for appointments only. After the entrepreneur class, she has been able to grow Camille's House of Styles Salon and Boutique into two locations with regular business hours, offering clothing and fashion styling as well as salon services.

"I started with an entrepreneur class at Pitt-Johnstown and from the start everyone was so open and helpful," Taylor said. "The experience connected me with so many people and

networking really helped me grow my business."

JARI's entrepreneur program works with young people through CareerLink's YouthCorps services and through Cambria County schools.

"We work with individuals through the Department of Public Welfare. One has a business doing lawn care and snow removal and a few others are still developing their business plans," Otero said. "We have worked with them through a tier method, helping them step-by-step in understanding financial literacy and other resources that exist."

"It's amazing what some of the people on probation are coming up with in terms of business ideas," Otero said. "Because of their history, it isn't always easy for them to secure employment – but through self-hustle, some can create their own jobs."

"A lot of momentum has been gained overall in letting people know that JARI is the central hub for startups," Otero said. "We are even hearing from people from out of town who are excited about what we're doing and want to get involved."





# JARI's

## *growing financing portfolio helps build business*

In 2018, JARI surpassed the \$1.5 million mark in loans in the current financing portfolio, putting that money to work building the local economy.

The JARI Growth Fund was capitalized with over \$1 million, making funds available in Bedford, Blair, Somerset, Fulton, Huntington, and Cambria Counties.

“We’re continuing to focus on companies of all sizes in our financing efforts, but we’re seeing much more activity with start-ups and small businesses,” said Michele Clapper, JARI Vice President of Economic Development. “We’re also seeing repeat loan clients who have successfully financed a business start-up and then come back to us when they have an opportunity to buy their building, or otherwise take the next step in their business development.”

B.J. Opett’s business, Johnstown Safety Services LLC, offers a range of fire safety services, and has used JARI services to help him expand – and for assistance with federal contracting.

“We used JARI financing to acquire a Hornerstown location, and then again to acquire a business and expand the services we offer,” said B.J. Opett. “We also use their PTAC anytime we have questions about federal bids. JARI is a multifaceted agency – anything your business might need, you can get help and direction from them.”

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J.P. Skelley is another example of a repeat client. He came to JARI in 2018 with an idea, and worked with José Otero, JARI’s Entrepreneurial and Procurement Specialist, on a business plan that enabled him to



leverage JARI funding. Skelley's business, CrossFit Excursion, has done so well that it's already time to expand.

"José and I would meet once a week or so for a period of time to refine my business plan for CrossFit Excursion so that I could qualify for JARI funding," Skelley explained. "We're talking again right now about more financing so that I can acquire a new and bigger location. JARI has been a fantastic resource for me, every step of the way."

JARI's technical assistance for loan clients has become an increasingly important piece of its operation as the portfolio has grown – so JARI now has a staff member, Lauren Thompson, who is dedicated to providing this valuable service.

"Clients are required to get technical assistance from us, with experts who provide one-on-one or classroom instruction in areas like marketing, human resources, legal, accounting, insurance – all customized to clients' individual needs," Clapper said. "This hands-on support makes their business more successful, and enables them to repay that loan. Then as loans are re-paid, JARI and its subsidiaries can help others."

# *HUBZone*

## *opens opportunities in Cambria and Somerset Counties*

HUBZone is a U.S. Small Business Administration program that helps direct government contracting opportunities to small companies that operate and employ people living in Historically Underutilized Business Zones.

"Being HUBZone-certified basically shrinks the competition pool for government contracting," Lenora Leasure, JARI PTAC Program Manager, explained. "It helps level the playing field so that smaller companies can more effectively compete for that business."

Parts of Cambria County have been certified as a HUBZone for years, but in late 2017 all of Somerset County was added to the program – and in 2018, this designation began to garner results.

"We now have three HUBZone-certified businesses in Somerset County," said Leasure. "We are starting to see more opportunities come through for these companies."

Augustine Die & Mold is one of the businesses in Somerset County that has gained its HUBZone certification. That, along with its AS9100 quality management standard for aerospace, has narrowed the field of competition significantly for certain types of work, according to James Brown, President of Augustine Die & Mold, Inc.

"Opportunities in aerospace contracting are becoming more frequent for us because we are HUBZone and AS9100 certified," Brown said. "Lenora at JARI has been a godsend in navigating these waters. JARI is always at the ready whenever we have a question or need assistance."

"Businesses who are interested in this certification should get in touch with us," Leasure said. "Small businesses in the appropriate location who have a certain percentage of employees living in that area are eligible, and we can walk them through the process."



# Changing lives by connecting people to the workforce

JARI facilitates tuition free training programs that allow qualifying individuals to go from unemployment to careers with family-sustaining wages in as little as six weeks.

“These are life-changing programs that provide training, workforce readiness tips, professional development and more,” said Debi Balog, Director of Workforce Development for JARI. “Our employers were hiring participants before they even graduated.”

All 19 program graduates obtained full-time employment.

JARI’s short-term training programs allow participants to obtain “hands on” welding experience and an understanding of the welding environment.

2018 marked the fourth year of JARI’s participation in the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program (NAP Tax). Businesses with state tax liability can donate to JARI’s workforce program and receive 55% in tax credits. JARI uses this funding to offer in-demand, occupation-specific training for unemployed/underemployed individuals residing in the City of Johnstown.

“The JARI program gave me a good foundation to get my certifications,” said Luke Samay, program graduate and production welder at JWF Industries (JWFI). “After 8 months of employment, I applied, tested and was accepted in to the welding apprenticeship program.

The NAP program has been so successful that it helped JARI leverage a \$150,000 grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development for the Manufacturer Training-to-Careers Program, which opens the welding program to residents of Cambria and Somerset Counties. The grant is providing JARI the ability to train and place an additional 40 people.

The NAP training was provided by the Greater Johnstown Career & Technology Center. “GJCTC has been pleased to partner with JARI on these programs, which allow people to move into careers with family-sustaining wages, while local businesses benefit from a skilled labor force,” said Tricia Rummel, Supervisor of Adult Education for GJCTC.

The NAP graduates contributed a total of 102 service hours completing community projects. The West End Skate Park was one of the most notable – the participants repaired broken wooden skate ramps with maintenance-free, durable metal.

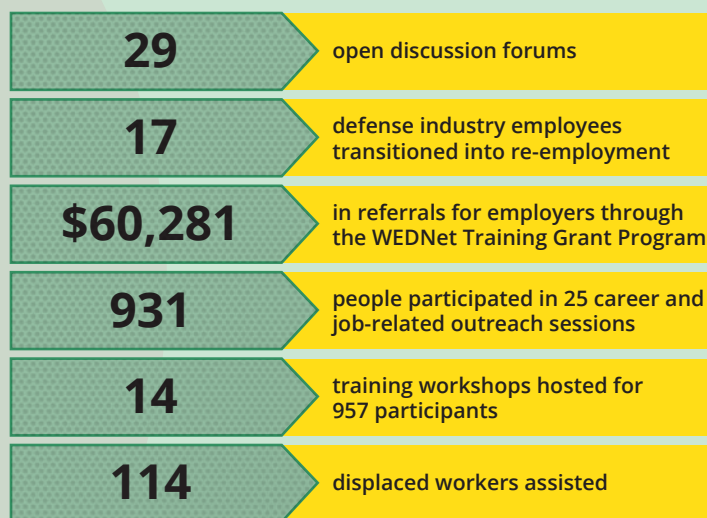
“The West End is where I grew up and I drive past the park every day. It was a pretty cool project. The kids can use it now and extend play time for years to come,” said Ron Allison, Production Welder and an apprenticeship participant at JWFI.

“When JWFI found out the participants were required to complete a service project, they donated the materials and equipment needed for it,” Balog said. “It’s a comprehensive program that integrates the

participants into the community with employer support.”

“We’re proud to have hired several 2018 graduates that live in our neighborhood,” said Roni Hartman, Director of Human Resources at JWF Industries. “We learned that they had great attendance and positive attitudes, two things that can never be underestimated but hard to establish through an interview process.”

“The local businesses that contribute to the NAP program enable JARI to make this happen,” Balog concluded. “They are helping change the lives of the participants and their families.”







# *Leading new companies to procurement success*

JARI's PTAC assists small business compete for federal, state, and local government contracting, and related subcontracting.

"In 2018 we talked to a number of companies that had been active in PTAC in the past, and reintroduced them to governmental

Owner of DirecTec LLC. "Lenora was able to show me how to access the information I needed, and helped me understand the process so we could get it done."

The COSTARS contract has helped DirecTec do more business within the educational sector.

"A lot of my customers are K-12 agencies," Gearhart explained. "I've gotten a modest amount of new work from having the COSTARS contract, but it's even more important for retaining customers who have big contracts to award."

In addition to COSTARS, JARI provided in-depth assistance

## *Highlights from 2018 Showcase for Commerce*

- *\$103.5 million in new contracts announced*
- *Hosted BAE Systems Supplier Briefing*

contracting," said Lenora Leasure, Program Manager for JARI PTAC. "We were also able to help many completely new clients."

In 2018 JARI PTAC assisted 159 clients, 31 of which were new – including DirecTec LLC, which provides and services a broad range of security systems, including card access, video surveillance, and fire and security. JARI assisted DirecTec in becoming a COSTARS vendor, which is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's cooperative purchasing program.

"The state's certification process can be quite cumbersome with the policies, procedures, and the information required," said Eli Gearhart,

with GSA federal supplier registration, System for Award Management (SAM), and others.

"People tend to think of the PTAC as being defense-focused, but it's so much more than that," Leasure explained. "In addition to defense contracts, there are local and state government contracts seeking a wide variety of products and services."

"We learn what a client needs, complete any research that might be required, and then provide customized support to that client," Leasure concluded. "Success in government contracting does not happen overnight, but these efforts do pay off."

# *Moving from planning to implementation with the Johnstown Redevelopment Strategy*



A great deal of planning for city revitalization has been done in this area in the recent past, much of it through Vision2025, and the new Johnstown Redevelopment Strategy will unify all the stakeholders and move from planning toward implementation.

“The best part of where we are is that everyone is working together in the community – the capture teams, along with high-level civic, government, and business leaders, all with the same goal of deliberately planning our future together for a vibrant, safe and clean Johnstown,” said Bill Polacek, Chair of the Vision2025 Steering Committee.

“The Johnstown Redevelopment Strategy is a recognition on the part of the state government that Johnstown has been working hard on its future through grassroots efforts, and they wanted to put some resources behind it,” explained Ryan Kieta, Vision2025 Development Consultant.

The strategy, which is a Department of Transportation initiative, began over the summer with developing key priorities as well as an implementation framework.

“This is the next step for implementation, which will bring with it an investment strategy,” said Wally Burlack, Vision 2025 Development Consultant. “We’ve been working from the grassroots up, and this strategy is coming from 40,000 feet up, and we’re meeting in the middle.”

“Vision has been incredibly successful in moving projects, plans, and people forward, but the process has never had this type of resource available to really advance some of these projects in a meaningful way,” Kieta added.

The effort builds on Vision2025, which has leveraged over \$4 million in funding in three years, including \$1.4 million in grants, \$3.2 million in federal support, and \$187,000 in local donations to work on three key priorities: this area’s economy, community, and environment.

“Thanks in large part to the Commonwealth, community leaders now have the opportunity and responsibility to develop a comprehensive strategy for community redevelopment – and quite possibly an economic renaissance,” said Susan Mann, President of 1889 Foundation.

“There’s more happening than ever,” Burlack added. “We will continue to work in a grassroots way, and engaging people in making change in their community is what Vision2025 is all about.”

“Our focus, in part, is how we can best leverage the efforts, energy, and resources of private, public, non-profit, and education sectors to improve Johnstown and Cambria County,” Mann explained. “We must do this in a way that will attract investment from private, public, non-profits, foundations, and other funding sources.”



# *Finding ways to retain and recruit companies to our area*

JARI continues to take the lead in recruiting new companies to our region, while taking steps to retain those who are already here.

A new initiative is Engage, a statewide, two-year program designed to retain companies. Through this program JARI is responsible for visiting 97 companies in Cambria County to gauge issues, talk about challenges and successes, and find ways in which JARI and its partners can support them.

“In our first year with Engage, we visited 62 of the companies in the manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, and business services,” said Linda Thomson, JARI President. “This initiative is giving us the opportunity to get to know companies that we may not have served recently, giving us a better feel for their current and future needs.”

***Company recruitment is a strategy that  
requires patience, and you have to be  
consistent and stay the course.***

One of the companies JARI reached out to was SpillTech, a manufacturer of sorbent products for industrial maintenance and spill cleanup. Located in Hastings Industrial Park, the company is anticipating growth, according to Chris Hoover, Logistics & Warehouse Manager.

“I didn’t have much experience with JARI when they came to meet with me,” Hoover said. “But it was good to share with them some of the things that I see as being challenges for my company and all companies in the northern part of Cambria County -- things like improvements in infrastructure and roads, and better communication technologies.”

“Having visited one-on-one with CEOs across the county has been really important to JARI as an organization. For example, the information about job openings and needed training helps cement our workforce policies and educational programs, and how important they are,” Thomson added. “What’s more, the information from across the wider region will be very worthwhile in aggregate form to support policy and other decision-making on the state level.”

JARI also visited Dale Oxygen, Inc. to learn more about their challenges and opportunities.

“We have challenges finding CDL drivers that can meet minimum requirements,” explained Evan D. Bennear, Sales Manager for Dale Oxygen. “JARI brought to my attention that a portion of new hires’ wages can be temporarily reimbursed if they need training for a new role, and if deemed an advancement for the individual’s career. This PA program is something we anticipate taking advantage of for CDL drivers and in our manufacturing operations.”

At the same time, JARI is continuing to work to recruit new businesses to this region. In particular, JARI is building relationships with a range of international companies, especially in Scandinavia. In 2018, six members of JARI’s Defense Business Council completed a trade mission to Norway and Denmark to meet with companies, the US embassy in Copenhagen, and others who are instrumental in business development.

“We are working closely with JARI to further strengthen Johnstown’s already impactful record of attracting foreign direct investment. Companies such as Martin-Baker, Kitron, Höganäs and others have created hundreds of jobs in the region

but we—both regionally and statewide—need to continue the effort to bring in more foreign investors,” said David Briel, Executive Director of International Investment for the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. “We’re excited to be working together to showcase Pennsylvania and Johnstown at the Select USA Summit in Washington, DC in June 2019 – and to continue to work to bring additional companies here in the years ahead.”

In addition, JARI participated in several conferences: Danish Defence & Aerospace Conference, Norwegian-American Defense and Homeland Security Industry Council, and Select USA.

“Company recruitment is a strategy that requires patience, and you have to be consistent and stay the course,” Thomson said. “But over time, we are building relationships with service providers and consultants, as well as with international concerns, that will pay off in the long term as we seek to bring new companies and new investment to our area.”

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