

CSIU planning to move LPN center to Milton

BY KEVIN MERTZ
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MILTON — The Central Susquehanna LPN Career Center will be relocating to Milton as the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) has unveiled plans designed to set the organization up for future expansion.

CSIU Executive Director Dr. Kevin Singer said the organization was “disappointed” it did not place the winning bid to purchase the former Montandon Elementary School property when it was for sale. T-Ross Brothers has since purchased the building from the Milton Area School District.

Singer said CSIU had hoped to relocate the LPN center from its current Lewisburg location to the former elementary school. He said that location would’ve been ideal as the center would’ve been closer to CSIU’s main campus on Lawton Lane.

It would’ve also placed the facility closer to the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation (CSVV) project. The northern section of the highway is expected to be completed in 2022.

While examining the future of the LPN center, Singer said CSIU has also been evaluating teleworking.

“We’ve been teleworking for a long time, but it’s only been with certain depart-

ments,” he said. “In the ‘90s, we started teleworking with computer services.”

Two years ago, the CSIU board passed a resolution allowing telework to be expanded to various departments.

“We thought we would expand it a little at a time,” Singer said, of telework. “Then the pandemic hit us. The middle of March, we were closed down.”

The experience of shifting virtually all employees to telework turned out to be a positive one for CSIU.

“That showed us a lot of things,” Singer said. “Telework was working really well for a lot of people.

“I told the board several times, I really don’t know of an area that we’ve missed a beat,” he continued. “Everyone has clicked along really well, our programs are functioning... some of them are expanding. It’s worked out well and it’s taught us some lessons about use of facility.”

As a result, Singer said CSIU started to “rethink” how its buildings could be configured.

He said administrative personnel work in an annex building which CSIU operates along Lawton Lane, near its main headquarters.

“Our intent is to combine all of the employees in that (annex) building with all of the employees in our main building,” Singer said. “Hopefully, soon (the annex)



DR. KEVIN SINGER

will become the LPN center.”

He said some CSIU employees will shift to telework, while others will transfer from the annex to the main building. Both spaces will be renovated.

The CSIU board recently approved contracting HUNT Engineers, Architects and Surveyors, of Towanda, to provide engineering and architectural services, as well as project management, for an office reorganization of the CSIU headquarters.

The services were contracted at a cost not to exceed \$92,500, which will be drawn from the capital reserve budget.

In addition to project management, the firm will be handling construction and permit drawing, bidding and construction.

“I asked the board if we could use the money set aside to buy Montandon to refurbish the main facility,” Singer said, noting that approximately \$900,000 was

set aside.

“One of the things we’re doing is creating what we’re referring to as hoteling spaces,” he explained. “That’s a small cubicle that’s not assigned to a single person.”

Singer said various employees could use the cubicles if they have to work at the main headquarters for a day, rather than working remotely as they would normally do.

“We think it will work out pretty well,” he said.

“There’s a lot of studies on hoteling spaces. They say you, basically, need one hoteling space for every two people, some will say for every three people.”

In addition to the cubicles, Singer said other office space will be reconfigured.

“There are some people that will need offices,” he said. “If you are a manager in special education, you are dealing with employees and students that have a lot of confidentiality. You really can’t work in an open space. “We’re putting in some office spaces, but a lot of the spaces will be open spaces, with cubicles.”

The annex building will also be reconfigured to accommodate the nursing center.

“We are going to increase the size of the bathrooms,” Singer said. “We will also need to take out a few walls between spaces that were previously divided.”

He noted that the Lewisburg location has been a good one for the center.

“We had discussions for years, ‘could the LPN center ever move to the annex?’” Singer said. “That’s a question that we’ve wondered about but we never saw a way to make it feasible. Telework and not having everybody in the office at the same time made it more feasible.

“Having the program right on our site, and being right next to the new highway, we will really be able to expand what we can do.”

He said the annex building has additional land available on site which could allow for an expansion to be built should the nursing program grow to a point which requires additional space.

In addition to the potential for future expansion, Singer said there are also other benefits to the reconfiguration.

“We’re going to save a lot of money that we’re currently using in rent for a lot of facility,” he said. “Long term, I think the move will pay for itself for anything that we do... Long term, I don’t mean over a year, I mean over 10 years.”

Singer said there is an air of anticipation at CSIU over the planned changes.

“I think it’s exciting,” he said. “I think our employees are excited about it.”

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