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New members join Mountain Council of Governments

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The Mountain Council of Governments has some new members and will be hearing speakers on topics of interest to local government officials soon.

Dan Guydish, the M-COG's executive director, told members at the organization's monthly meeting last week about the new members and future plans which will for the first time include an annual meeting.

Guydish introduced Linda Szoke, a White Haven Borough Council member, representing the borough, which has just joined M-COG.

Guydish said MMI Preparatory School followed suit with the area's other educational entities - the Hazleton Area School District and Bishop Hafey High School - and joined M-COG.

David Sosar, a member of the Hazleton City Authority -

another new member - was also introduced at the meeting.

The three new members brings the number of members to 22, Guydish said.

Guydish proposed that instead of having a July meeting - which in recent years had been eliminated anyway - the organization establish its annual meeting, which he described as "a social get-together in which we can summarize the accomplishments of the previous year."

M-COG members voted to

amend the organization's by-laws to establish the July meeting and also to allow election of officers at the July meeting for a period of one year.

Guydish said the exact day and time of the annual meeting, which he said will be an evening meeting, will be announced soon.

M-COG normally meets the

first Thursday of each month at 8 a.m. in the community room of the CAN DO Renaissance Center at Broad and Church streets.

Looking ahead to August, Guydish suggested M-COG hear two speakers, one on the new Uniform Construction Codes (UCC) and one on grants.

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So Guydish said he will line up the two speakers for the August meeting and suggested that the September meeting be used to hear a speaker on regional police. He said arrangements are being made for that speaker.

He also discussed the recent demonstration of the Asphalt Zipper, a piece of equipment that mills asphalt roads and manufactures road fill from what it mills.

Guydish asked which municipalities would be interested in participating in the joint purchase of the machine. He explained there are two models - one with a 3-foot cut that costs \$69,950 and the more popular model, with a 4-foot-wide cut, for \$82,950.

The Asphalt Zipper is attached to the bucket of a backhoe or loader to be used. The only drawback to the 4-foot version is that a very heavy loader is needed, as opposed to a backhoe for the smaller version.

A grant would be sought by the M-COG to help purchase the machine, but Guydish said in all likelihood the grant would be a matching grant that would require local funds.

"But the more that participate in it, the cheaper it becomes for each one," Guydish said.

Guydish said M-COG's abandoned vehicle program is progressing. Since the deadline passed for getting vehicles off the street and making money with them,

Guydish said municipalities are active in tagging abandoned autos that owners can take to any local salvage yard or junkyard to dispose of.

White Haven indicated an interest - some of its municipal workers were at the demonstration. The City of Hazleton and Freeland Borough also showed interest.

White Haven also asked if there was interest in the joint purchase of a wood chipper, but other member municipalities have them and there was an indication White Haven could use one of them.

The same discussion ensued when Freeland asked if there was interest in the joint purchase of a sign-making machine.