

CAN DO getting ready for 50th anniversary celebration

By **JIM DINO**

jimdino@standardspeaker.com

CAN DO, Inc., the area's industrial and economic development organization, will mark its 50th anniversary later this year with a gala.

For several months, a special committee has been planning the event, which has been scheduled for Friday, June 16 at the Genetti Best Western Motor Lodge.

The organization holds its annual meeting and banquet each June.

CAN DO Chairman of the Board Robert Moisey noted this year, the annual meeting and banquet will be separate. The annual meeting will be held at its regular time – the second Tuesday in June, which is June 13 this year.

"This will be a party," Moisey said.

The noted local band The Mudflaps will perform.

A special, commemorative video and book are also being produced to

note the anniversary.

The celebration will actually begin two weeks earlier, when CAN DO sponsors the fireworks display at the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life at the Hazleton Municipal Airport.

The cancer society's Greater Hazleton Unit will hold the annual relay the weekend of June 2-3.

Dan Guydish said local municipalities are approving resolutions congratulating CAN DO on its anniversary, and its accomplishments.

The organization dates back to the mid-1950s when the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce formed a committee to find a way to deal with the area's 27 percent unemployment rate – the highest in the country at that time. Thousands lost jobs when the region's deep coal mines closed down.

In 1956, the efforts of Dr. Edgar L. Dessen, a local radiologist, to form a new industrial development

organization, came to fruition with the incorporation of the Community Area New Development Organization. The non-profit agency got its

name after local bankers told Dessen his goal of raising \$500,000 in 1956 was impossible.

Dessen simply said "we

can do."

Local businesses were solicited, and indenture bonds were sold. Instead of raising 500,000, the drive raised

\$750,000, which was used to purchase land for the area's first industrial parks, as well as help pay for infrastructure for the parks.



ERIC CONOVER/Standard-Speaker

Members of the committee planning the 50th anniversary of CAN DO, Inc., are, seated from left: E. Thomas Sandrock; Bill Genetti, committee co-chairman; CAN DO Chairman of the Board Robert Moisey; Deb Conway, the committee's other co-chair; Nancy Stasko and CAN DO President W. Kevin O'Donnell. Standing from left: David C. Haupt, Donald Pachence, Gordon Bigelow, Joseph DeBias, Dan Guydish, Charles Burkhardt and David Schwartz.