

Guydish is new M-COG executive director

By **JIM DINO**

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A former local official will soon be working with other local officials on common projects and problems.

Former West Hazleton mayor Dan Guydish has been appointed the new executive director of the Mountain Council of Governments (M-COG).

Guydish replaces Bob Skulsky, who will remain director of the M-COG's sister organization, the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership.

Skulsky's duties with the partnership – particularly the Rails-To-Trails project – and new duties related to the trail with the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor led him to resign the M-COG post.

The council has been involved in many topics which have common interest among local governments, such as the new building codes in Pennsylvania and joint bidding for gasoline, oil and other supplies.

Guydish has a long resume of community service with most of it coming in his native West Hazleton Borough.

He served on the borough planning commission and then as a councilman from 1987 to 1993, four of those years as council president. He then served two terms as borough mayor,



**Daniel
Guydish**

from 1993 to 2001.

Before his career in government, he taught government and civics as a social studies teacher in the Hazleton Area School District from 1967 to 1997.

He is now an adjunct professor of political science and history at Luzerne County Community College.

He and his wife, Keri, and their daughter, Kayla, a third-grade student, live in the borough.

Guydish said his absence from civic affairs caused him to miss it and he saw the COG opportunity as a way to become involved.

"It gave me a chance to become involved in the community again," Guydish said. "After my hiatus, I got the itch again to be involved. It seemed like an excellent opportunity because the position is apolitical in nature, and gives me the chance to be involved without being a political figure."

Guydish said he looks forward to taking the COG to the next level of accomplishment.

"I'm hoping to convince the COG members to bring a synergism that we can work together and understand that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts," Guydish said.

"There are a lot of programs available to joint efforts by communities. Hopefully, we can take advantage of them."

Guydish thanked Skulsky for his help during the transition.

Guydish will preside over his first meeting Thursday at 8 a.m. in the conference room of the CAN DO Renaissance Center, 1 S. Church St.