

Partnership scholarship popular with HS seniors

By JIM DINO

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More Hazleton-area college and trade students are becoming more aware of the scholarship program offered by the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership, its executive director says.

Bob Skulsky told the Partnership board this week he and Jack St. Pierre, chairman of the scholarship committee, handed out about 50 applications for the Partnership's scholarship during the recent Career/College Night at Hazleton Area High School.

"We had one student who came to our booth looking for our scholarship," Skulsky said. "It's getting to be a popular scholarship."

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We passed out 50 applications. That's a lot better than last year. The good news is that word is getting out that we have a scholarship."

The Partnership began the scholarship program in an effort to keep local students from leaving the area.

The program offers scholarships of \$3,000 per year, renewable for two years, to any student taking a course in a field where there are jobs available in this area.

"We are trying to satisfy the needs of manufacturers and companies in this area," Skulsky said. "We are trying to keep our young professionals in the community."

Another project the Part-

nership has undertaken is the Gateway project, in which entrances to the Hazleton area are beautified.

The first of these projects was along Route 924, where shrubbery and other landscaping were planted, along with a sign welcoming visitors to Hazleton. Skulsky said he is waiting to hear about a small grant the Partnership applied for to extend the project further down Route 924.

The Partnership was successful in obtaining a \$28,000 state grant to expand the program.

Each of the Mountain Council of Government's 14 municipalities were each asked to propose a project

within their municipality. If all 14 municipalities had a project, each would get \$2,000.

Skulsky said four new projects have been proposed - unspecified projects in West Hazleton and Freeland, and one near the intersection of Route 309 and the Heights Beltway - near the Tri-Area Recreation Authority proposed project, and across Route 309 from a project similar to Route 924.

The last of the four, Skulsky said, is to beautify a railroad trestle that spans South Church Street, near the Beech Street Playground.

The Partnership is doing another grant, from state Rep. Todd Eachus, D-116.

The \$5,000 grant will be used for operating funds for the Partnership.

Skulsky said the Partnership is looking for volunteers to help out with the First Night New Year's celebration.

Alice Kender, executive director of the local Volunteers of America chapter and director of the Greater Hazleton Area Volunteer Center, said all volunteers for First Night will be coordinated by her office at 453-0426.

The Partnership also welcomed new member.

Captain Tom Babbitt of the Salvation Army joined the Partnership as a representative of the area clergy community.