John Powers, Jr. Chief Executive Officer Ash/Tec, Inc.

The basic premise of what I believe needs to be tackled by State and Federal Government, is that funding and support must be directed toward strengthening our workforce. There is no doubt that a well-trained, and therefore well paid workforce, will be the key to the economic success of our County, State, and Nation.

I will discuss the importance of continued early education through STEM programs, Vocational Technology Training, and making sure students know all of their options when leaving high school.

I would also like to address the method of economic stimulus being used on a regular basis by all levels of government that does not address any kind of improvement to the future quality of life for the recipient. Cash payments, with no expected outcomes, simply add to our debt, and now our inflationary environment. By using funds to build up our populace with appropriate training and education, we are investing in the future. We are also giving our citizens a sense of pride and accomplishment for reaching new goals that they may not have thought possible. Whether the funds are directed to the unemployed/underemployed directly, or if they flow through at the business level, there must be expected and required positive outcomes. The end game must be a top notch, educated, skilled workforce, that can keep Pennsylvania thriving.