

## **FORMER SHANNOCK VALLEY SCHOOL ADMIN BUILDING DEMOLISHED**

The demolition of a vacant and deteriorated building in Rural Valley Borough marks the latest collaborative move by the county, the borough and the state to address blighted properties in Armstrong County.

The borough-owned building, located at the corner of Kime Road and West School Street, was the former Shannock Valley High School Administration Building.

In late November 2019, officials met in front of a structure that for so many local residents had been a reminder of by-gone school days. Over the years, the cost of possible rehabilitation of the building continued to increase. Evidence of vandalism was visible everywhere – from the shattered glass littering the interior floor to the spray-painted graffiti along the exterior walls.

State Senator Joe Pittman (41<sup>st</sup> District) who had discussed the building's deteriorated state with Rural Valley's Mayor Lou Bartosiewicz, noted:

“While tearing down buildings and the removal of blight is not always viewed as a positive, the reality is these buildings have no useful life and decrease the land value of neighboring properties. By removing these properties, it allows them to be returned to the tax rolls, making them attractive for purchase by neighboring land owners – which increases the overall property values of the community.”

Pat Fabian, Armstrong County Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, reiterated that sentiment as he discussed the demolition project with Mayor Bartosiewicz and with the Senator's District Director Jeremy Dias.

“It needed to come down. Hopefully the property can get back on the tax rolls – it's a nice lot,” Commissioner Fabian said. “This is a great example of why the blight program was created.”

While speaking about the project, Commissioner Jason Renshaw noted the importance of collaboration between county, state and local levels.

“Transforming communities, one blighted property at a time, becomes more possible when we all work together,” Commissioner Renshaw said.

Commissioner George Skamai agreed.

“We all want the same thing, to see revitalization in our neighborhoods and to live in a safe, thriving community,” Commissioner Skamai said.

Commissioner Fabian extended his thanks on behalf of the Board of Commissioners to Senator Pittman and his staff for assistance in securing grant funding for blight remediation. The project is being paid for through a combination of state grant funds and the county's Act 152 demolition funds.

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