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Winning the Battle for Energy Independence in New Berlin | Brad Bower

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Junior Achievement of Northeast PA helping to prepare high school students for high-tech careers

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[Junior Achievement of Northeast PA](#), one of only two JA's in the U.S. able to run either JA BizTown or JA Finance Parks in the same space, has formed a \$374,000 partnership with [Wilkes University](#) for a new addition to curriculum for high school students.

JA-NEPA offers one of the most complete menus of elementary, middle and high school programs anywhere in the JA movement, served to a 13-county region around its headquarters in Pittston Township, Luzerne County, and reaching into 88 school districts. The group provides some 10,000 school children with highly interactive study programs that emphasize the relevance of education to the workplace.



The nonprofit also welcomes busloads of students from schools all over the region to the 15,000 square-foot JA Mericle Family Center for Enterprise Education, which houses JA Biz Town and JA Finance Park. Students come throughout the year to play at the practical side of creating an enterprise and managing wealth.

The catalyst for the addition--as well as the source of the revenue--is [Wall Street West](#), the massive infrastructure plan to create in the Northeastern corner of Pennsylvania a full-scale replication of the financial data information systems in Manhattan as a safeguard against catastrophic loss. As that plan evolves, the region is focusing more resources on workforce development, and JA-NEPA is carving out a role for itself in supporting the region's economic development goals.

The proposed JA Career Exploration Odyssey--or JA CEO-- will launch in a pilot phase this spring ahead of full launch in the next school year. It will offer high school students insight into career opportunities in fields of high-growth employment, particularly financial services and information technology, which will require workers in the region for the Wall Street West.

"It will also give students an opportunity to go through a simulation where they actually conduct a job search, go to a job fair and start a fictitious job," says Kathleen Matthews, President of JA-NEPA. As part of that experience, they will also make decisions based on the fictitious roles, as individuals and members of teams.

Source: *Junior Achievement of Northeastern PA*, Kathleen Matthews, Barbara Vitcosky

Writer: **Joseph Plummer**

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