

WITF News

Regionalization gains ground in midstate 02/26/2007

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(Harrisburg) -- An advocacy group that touts the benefits of regionalization in the Commonwealth says it's having more success lobbying lawmakers and the governor on the issue. The "Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania" -- or RenewPA -- calls for the expansion of services across boundaries or doing away with those border lines altogether. Merging governments and public safety departments has long been a tough sell in the state with more local government units than any other. Renew PA's Todd Vonderheid, a Luzerne County commissioner, says a current goal of the movement is to attract the attention of the emboldened reform crowd in Harrisburg.

The group is now armed with back-to-back surveys suggesting strong public support. A poll it commissioned in December mirrors one from May. In the latest version, 95-percent of voters thought municipalities should make economic development, transportation and open space plans together. Some 84-percent said they liked the idea of regional police departments.