

# Lackawanna connection

## Redesigned website is portal to county government services

**L**ackawanna County is a nice place to live. There's a nice mix of urban, suburban and rural experiences. The population is becoming ever more diverse, with festivals of all kinds throughout the year where you can sample the music, culture and food of different ethnicities. We have four seasons, each featuring activities that appeal to a variety of interests. It's a relatively safe area to live in with a reasonable cost of living.



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*InSites*

Of course, a county is more than just a geographic area. It's also a government that serves the people who live there. Most of the physical operations of the government are located in Scranton. But many of the interactions with the county government can be initiated or completed

online at [lackawannacounty.org](http://lackawannacounty.org).

The county's website was recently redesigned in an effort to make it more user-friendly. The site is full of links to county departments and useful information. The main navigation bar across the top of the page has four main sections: About, Government, Public Records and How Do I. Each one has a drop-down menu with subcategories.

The About section has three subcategories that feature information on the county, things to do here and notable community organizations. The history and facts about Lackawanna County make for interesting reading. There are links to other sites with information on things to see and do around the county. Other links take you to information on local colleges and universities, school districts, libraries and municipalities. An interactive map of the county connects you to information

on all of the municipalities, including brief histories, contact information, meeting times and more.

The Government section has links to all of the county departments, including courts and elected officials. If you have personal business to conduct with the county, this is a good place to start. The links for each department include names and contact information for department heads and descriptions of what the department does. There's also additional information for many, depending on the department's function. There may be forms, applications, payment options, maps, calendars, events, videos or other information.

The Public Records section is especially useful for organizations looking to do business with the county, lawyers, people involved in real estate transactions and news organizations. Here you can review requests for proposals and qualifications, property records, court records, archives of meetings and more.

The How Do I section is basically a guide to accessing various county services. It provides instructions for accessing many county services, such as marriage licenses, grant applications, voting and more.

The design of the site is fine on the surface. Redesigning a site of this size is a complex undertaking. You have to take hundreds of existing pages from many different departments, make sure they are up to date and try to unify them visually. Then you have to make sure the design works on desktops, tablets and, especially, phones. Inevitably you will end up with some dated information and a lack of visual unity on some of the deeper pages. So, the site's not perfect, but it is a good resource for citizens.

**KEVIN O'NEILL** is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites with him at [koneill@timeshamrock.com](mailto:koneill@timeshamrock.com).

