



Photo: L-R, Bruno Mediate, Judge Debra Pezze, Paul Kuntz

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### Westmoreland County Criminal Justice Advisory Board Recognized for Excellence

The Westmoreland County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) was honored in State College, Pennsylvania on June 20, 2011 by the County Commissioners' Association of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency with the presentation of the 2011 Criminal Justice Advisory Board Best Practices Award. The Honorable Debra Ann Pezze, Committee Chair, received the Award on behalf of the Committee. Judge Pezze stated, "I am grateful to the hard working and visionary members of this committee and sub committees. They have anticipated and responded to the ever-changing challenges we face."

The Criminal Justice Advisory Board was founded more than 20 years ago by then President Judge Gilfert M. Milhalich as the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee. The Committee was instrumental in the development of a Prison Population Monitor, planning for the County Prison, developing the Intermediate Punishment Program and Community Based Sanctions, developing the Fast Track Program, and providing the methodology for district attorney appearances at preliminary hearings.

The current CJAB consists of more than 40 members including criminal justice, mental health, drug and alcohol, juvenile, community, county, and court personnel, practitioners and citizens. The committee, which meets quarterly, does the bulk of its work through its

14 subcommittees specializing in various disciplines and issues. The Westmoreland CJAB has an on going planning process and a dynamic plan which reflects the needs of our changing community.

Most recently, the Committee has helped develop four self-sustaining booking centers; has worked with Veteran Groups in developing a list of available services; opened a Day Reporting Center where treatment, job training and educational services are provided for defendants who would otherwise be housed in the county jail; has provided treatment services through the McKeesport Veterans' Center in White Oak; assisted in the start up of a criminal liaison program; and participated in the first state-wide Cross Systems' Mapping Project.

Also present in State College on behalf of the CJAB at the Award Ceremony were President Judge John E. Blahovec, District Court Administrator Paul Kuntz, and Chief Probation Officer Bruno Mediate.