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LRR Focus: Steel Valley Authority

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LRR Focus: Steel Valley Authority

Abstract
[Excerpt] The Steel Valley Authority was founded in 1986 after town hall meetings organized by the Tri-State Conference on Steel demonstrated the need for a regional economic development organization. The SVA, modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority, is a state-chartered agency with powers of eminent domain.

Keywords
Steel Valley Authority, SVA

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LRR FOCUS: Steel Valley Authority

The Steel Valley Authority was founded in 1986 after town hall meetings organized by the Tri-State Conference on Steel demonstrated the need for a regional economic development organization. The SVA, modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority, is a state-chartered agency with powers of eminent domain.

As SVA founder Mike Stout explained in "Reindustrialization from the Ground Up" (LRR #9), the SVA was created "to give workers and communities a direct say in how capital should be invested in the Pittsburgh area. . . the power of eminent domain opens up the door to the political arena for working people and their allies in the communities and churches." This "public power" is used to prevent the destruction of a common good—jobs and factories.

The Authority has consistently focused on direct intervention on behalf of workers and dislocated workers, along with the development of institutional vehicles to empower workers and prevent layoffs, such as the Pittsburgh Early Warning Network. Staffing capability includes financial and economic analysis, economic development, and financing.

With its early eminent domain actions and leadership in lobbying the state and federal governments for economic revitalization funds, the SVA is an instrument of the Commonwealth on the side of the people.