

Press Release from Charleroi Borough Council President regarding Donald Trump's statements about Charleroi, PA

In response to Donald Trump's mention of Charleroi, PA during his recent address in Tucson, Arizona, the Borough of Charleroi and the Mon Valley Alliance express deep concern over the representation of our community's challenges. Instead of focusing on the real issues facing Charleroi, such as widespread job losses due to corporate closures. Trump chose to exploit our town for political purposes, using divisive rhetoric to unfairly target the Haitian immigrant community.

Charleroi, a borough steeped in a rich history of immigration, has seen its population rise for the first time in decades, thanks to the arrival of Haitian immigrants. Fleeing persecution and devastating conditions in their homeland, these new residents came seeking freedom and happiness, much like the town's early European immigrants. Yet unlike their predecessors, they've faced a markedly less welcoming reception. Haitian immigrants have been unjustly scapegoated for many of Charleroi's problems. Rather than acknowledging the real economic issues the town is facing, some have chosen to unfairly target the Haitian community, judging the entire group based on misinformation and fear of outsiders.

Charleroi has recently suffered major economic blows. Anchor Hocking, a glassmaking company with deep roots in the area, purchased the local glass factory only to shut it down shortly after, eliminating over 300 jobs. Around the same time, another local employer, Quality Pasta, also closed its doors, resulting in an additional 80 job losses.

A net loss of 380 jobs in just a few weeks is devastating for an already struggling community. If Trump feels strongly about helping Charleroi, he has ample opportunity to do so. Instead of casting blame on immigrants, he could have spoken against the greed of companies like Anchor Hocking, who disregarded the livelihoods they destroyed, or he could have called for stronger protections against monopolies. Instead of offering solutions, he chose to exploit the town's challenges for political gain.

Charleroi's legacy as a hub for glassmaking is at risk, and the community is in dire need of support—support to revitalize its industries and create new job opportunities, not to address a so-called "Haitian problem." Welcoming immigrants has long been a part of Charleroi's story, and that tradition of openness should not be lost amid divisive rhetoric.

"For Charleroi to move forward, investment and resources are needed to combat the economic challenges it faces. Borough officials and other key stakeholders have

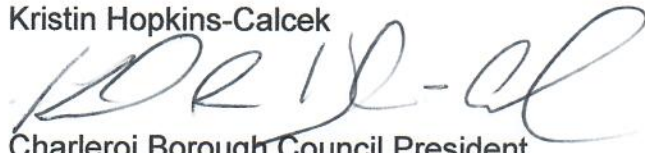
repeatedly submitted funding requests to both the State and Federal governments to address a multitude of community concerns, however, those critical resources have not come to fruition” said Kristin Hopkins-Calcek, Charleroi Borough Council President.

Today is the day to seize the opportunity left behind by the closures, reclaim precious and valuable industrial property; that can be primed for immediate redevelopment. Today is a call for our leaders in government to give due attention to a region that has been grossly underserved for decades. The Mon Valley Alliance and Borough of Charleroi invite stakeholders to take a proactive approach to solving the problems that ultimately affect towns such as Charleroi, PA and the greater Middle Monongahela Valley.

“There is a significant 50-acres of riverfront opportunity with prime access to rail and Interstate 70 and PA Turnpike 43. We have an industrious workforce seeking gainful employment in our region. This is a viable, desirable property for investors to build anew in Charleroi” said Jamie Colecchi, CEO of the Mon Valley Alliance. “It’s devastating that our community’s legacy as a world-renowned glassmaker is coming to an end, but we can’t give up and stop here. We are looking forward to building a better future together.”

The Borough of Charleroi welcomes the visibility this platform has provided and, more importantly, the new partnerships and opportunities it can bring to our region.

Kristin Hopkins-Calcek

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KRISTIN CALCEK', written over a horizontal line.

Charleroi Borough Council President