



## Jo Ellen Litz **People Above Politics**

### - **Taking Action, Getting Results.**

- Accessible – Transparent – Fiscally Conservative
- From a rural county in south-central PA
- A remarkable Democrat & Leader
- A tireless Public Servant brings a working knowledge of local government to the table.
- A Successful Business Woman
- An Active Community Volunteer and Conservationist

Born & raised in Lebanon County, a small rural community in south-central Pennsylvania; Jo Ellen & her husband of 54 years, Jon "Rick," have two grown children & two grandchildren.

She is a leader who understands that hard work and character serve as the foundation for working families. As a successful businesswoman, for decades she owned Lebanon Body Shop and Litz Company commercial rentals, which she lost to a fire in 2011. She also served as a former substitute teacher. Jo Ellen knows how hard our families work to build a strong future for our children and our community. She has a deeply rooted loyalty to the land, agriculture, and water related issues, and served as president of the Swatara Watershed Association for over 30 years. She grew up learning how to turn obstacles into opportunities. She has the ability, time, volunteer resources, & a broad - based bi-partisan coalition behind her.

She has Run and Won--In 1995, she won her first bid for Lebanon County Commissioner, and was re-elected in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023. She **serves** on the **Prison board, Election board**, chaired the **Metropolitan Planning Organization MPO board** responsible for Transportation Planning, served on the board of Cedar Haven (which was sold), and by virtue of her longevity chairs the **Assessment board**. Adding to her breadth and depth of experience, she has also served or **serves** on the boards of the Area Agency on Aging, Lebanon Transit, Children and Youth, **the Conservation District**, Emergency Management, **GIS**, Management Information Systems, Penn State Extension, **Communities Organizing After Disasters COAD**, MHIDEI, MIS now IT, Renova Center, Planning, **The South Central Employment Corporation**, Tourist Promotion Agency, the Drug and Alcohol Commission, **Lebanon County Commission for Women**, the **Chamber of Commerce**, LV Economic Development Corporation, **Housing and Redevelopment Authority**, United Way, **Veterans Affairs** and the viability of Fort Indiantown Gap; and worked with volunteers, House Representatives, Senators, and Governors on business development and preservation of over 20,000 acres of farmland, Camp Rocky Creek, Swatara Watershed Park and Water Trail, Lebanon Valley Rails-to-Trails, the Union Canal Tunnel Park, Krall Barn, Monument Park, and Governor Dick/Clarence Shock Memorial Park.

On the **Swatara Water Trail**, along with a team of volunteers, DCNR, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission, Jo Ellen Litz helped to develop and establish around 20 public access points. She researched the history & visited points of interest throughout the region. This information was the basis for publishing Swatara Water Trail maps distributed to first responders, municipalities, Visit Lebanon Valley, Lebanon Valley Exposition Center, the public, and for signs along the 60-mile Trail running from Pine Grove, Schuylkill County, through Lebanon County, and ending at the Susquehanna River between Middleton and Royalton, Dauphin County. She also helped to preserve the Bordner Cabin, a hand-hewn oak log cabin with local trees and stone for a fireplace that runs from floor to ceiling. The Cabin is of Rustic Architecture. Horsehair chinking for insulation remains between the beveled logs that sit snugly on top of each other. Located on Rattling Run in Swatara State Park, the Bordner Cabin has a cantilevered porch similar to Falling Water. Bordner studied Frank Lloyd Wright and

the National Park Services for his design.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZKOIJ5vZ2KLbCwv1E1MuilkQOx5kwx8I>

A graduate of both Lebanon Valley College and Kennedy Western University, now Phoenix University, when it comes to technology, she earned a reputation as a hardworking, knowledgeable member of the commissioners by **developing the first web site** that kept both employees and the public informed of County business--on topics from droughts to foster parents- [www.JoEllenLitz.net](http://www.JoEllenLitz.net) . In 2009, she added **YouTube** videos to Meeting Highlights. She has posted over 3,200 videos, which have almost 900,000 views, and 1,920 subscribers; then Jo Ellen added Facebook **Live Streaming videos** from meetings. She also earned a reputation as a commissioner who can be counted on to tirelessly serve the working people of this community. In summary, her experience as a county commissioner is invaluable. **Litz Takes Action, and Gets Results.**

She is sometimes asked to participate in cooking contests or to provide a favorite recipe for a newspaper or magazine article. Over the years, she has even won a few contests. So, she decided to tape some **PA Dutch dishes** to share with her family and on her YouTube channel, "Jo Ellen's Kitchen." She has over 100 PA Dutch dishes posted. Follow her to see the latest recipe, released the beginning of each month.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/joellenlitz> Little did she know when she started these videos that we'd end up in a Pandemic known as the Coronavirus, and later CoVid 19. People found an escape in watching homemade recipes being made, and often trying or modifying their current recipe. They were able to reminisce about a favorite dish made by their mother or grandmother, and feel good, if only for a few minutes. She also tries to tell stories about our Pennsylvania German heritage, share antique items, and promote local products like Swiss Premium Dairy, Hershey's Cocoa, or her garden vegetables. Her cooking is done on an antique Wincroft gas stove and oven. It doesn't have a thermometer. She adjusts the flames by sight for temperature. Concurrently, she's writing a book, and people asked her to include these recipes. Between the written word and videos, this is a great way to preserve and share our **PA Dutch heritage focusing on the foods prepared by our forefathers.** Kum Esse (come eat), Enjoy!

Her leadership during times of crisis, like the pandemic, included organizing and working with 81 seamstresses to sew and distribute 10,000 masks to first responders at a time when personal protective equipment PPE was in short supply; voting against suing the State; and then **voting to end the lawsuit, which allowed over \$12.8 million in CARES funding to flow to Lebanon County businesses and nonprofits.**

As an **active community volunteer, tireless public servant, conservationist, and successful businesswoman,** for her leadership and diligent work in the community, small business, & the environment, she was: Honored as the Conservationist of the Year from the Lebanon County Conservation District, received the Woman of Influence award from Central Penn Business Journal, was named a PA Ambassador by Team Pennsylvania, chosen as both Woman of the Year and Outstanding Business Woman by the LV American Business Women's Association ABWA, presented with the Athena Award by the Chamber of Commerce & Oldsmobile, recognized as a Woman of Distinction by Penn Laurel Girl Scout Council, awarded national honors by the Daughters of the American Revolution, & given the Anna Estes Strawbridge award by the PA League of Women Voters.

As a remarkable Democrat and leader, she received the Democrat of the Year award. Also, the PA Federation of Democratic Women awarded Jo Ellen the Outstanding Woman in Government for her District. She also received honors as 1st runner-up in the 2013 Ms PA Senior America Pageant; and in 2017 named Ms Pennsylvania Senior America Ambassador.

Lebanon Valley College honored her with a feature article in the President's Report, in part reflecting the fact that Jo Ellen has given of her time and energy to preserving our land and water.

Upon completion of the Academy of Excellence in County Government, former Governor Tom Ridge recognized Jo Ellen Litz's leadership on behalf of the people of Lebanon County. In 2006, Litz completed CCAPs Advanced Academy Certification. In 2007-08, Litz was appointed to chair the Academy for Excellence in County Government Advisory Board to establish and review the academy's curriculum, faculty, administration, and marketing in regard to meeting the educational needs of the greater CCAP membership.

Litz also serves on CCAP's Energy, Environment and Land Use Committee, board of DEP's Storage Tank Advisory Committee, and serves on the Low Level Radioactive Waste Advisory board. In March 2008, Governor Rendell appointed her to the State Conservation Program on farmland preservation. In 2010, Litz was elected to serve as CCAPs 2nd VP; and in 2011 as 1st VP. Litz served as **CCAPs 2012 president**, and in 2013 as the Chairman of the Board. Jo Ellen also served as a peer-to-peer presenter for the National Association of Counties. She chaired the Lebanon County commissioner Board in 2014.

She **spoke at the dedication of the Veteran's Memorial at Fort Indiantown Gap**; Watershed Awareness month in the State Capital; Q Commons with Soledad O'Brien, at Watershed Conferences, training sessions, and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, and in 1991 at the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment for the United Nations in Miami Florida.

Finally, Jo Ellen served as **Emcee and delivers Proclamations at local events**. Examples include:

- Lebanon Dancing with the Stars benefiting Domestic Violence Intervention;
- Fashion Shows for Lebanon County Commission for Women's Glass Slipper Project,
- A group raising money to fight cancer; and
- Boy Scouts of America Lebanon Valley Mall Show.