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THE WEEKLY ALMANAC

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Wednesday, FEB 13, 2008

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March 1 forum to address Pike gang activity

Several local community organizations and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission will host a forum on Saturday, March 1, to address discrimination and gang activity in Pike County.

The forum, which is open to the public, will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Pocono Environmental Education Center in Dingmans Ferry off Route 209 (signs between mile markers 8 and 9). Refreshments will be provided.

Speakers include representatives from the Tri-State Unity Coalition, Unity Coalition of the Poconos and Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Also speaking will be Michael Leonard Sr., a criminal justice consultant and gang expert, and Dr. Letitia Lladoc, a multicultural instructor and educator.

Gang activity is increasing in the region, according to the Tri-State Unity Coalition, a non-profit, volunteer organization that promotes community harmony and addresses diversity issues.

Gangs are a business and like any business they are looking to expand their territory to increase their profit and bottom line, the Coalition said. Their business is criminal activity such as drugs, prostitution and robbery.

Gangs look for communities that think they don't happen there. They also flourish in communities that are not prepared or organized to deal with them. The rapid growth of our region makes us a prime area for such activities, the Coalition said. Furthermore, limited police and other resources hamper our ability to address and combat these problems.

For more information, contact the Tri-State Unity Coalition at 686-5555 or www.tristateunity.org and tristateunity@gmail.com.

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