

Chairman's Message

BY GARY STOCKBRIDGE

>> With more than half the year behind us, Chamber staff, board members, and committees are hard at work making progress on the priorities our members care about. Our Spring Survey showed that economic development and the quality of our schools remain at the top of the list. I believe these two issues

are inseparable. Schools are the foundation for developing the next generation of employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders who will drive economic activity. We continue to focus our efforts on advancing policies and initiatives that will address these concerns.

Delaware Pathways is as an important part of the solution to these issues and we continue to support the program's growth. Our support provides students with the skills and experience they need to establish successful careers in critical sectors, while giving local businesses new employees who are ready for the job on day one. Delaware Pathways now boasts programs in Manufacturing Production & Logistics and Manufacturing Engineering Technology, as well as a growing list of other in-demand sectors.

We also continue to focus our resources and efforts in Dover. Each year, the legislature considers policies that directly impact economic development and education in the state. Coming out of session this year, I was pleased to see funding for early learning strengthened, an area that continues to offer the best return for every dollar invested. Some inroads were also made to increase transparency on spending in our schools, which will hope-



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fully lead to a better funding mechanism for the State. As we move into 2019, I am optimistic that we can also develop a consistent and timely method to address poor performing schools, so our students do not suffer year after year with the same poor outcomes.

This recent activity underscores the need for us to be engaged and participate effectively in the political process, which requires all of us to know what is going on in the state. When we know what is going on, we can be vocal about what matters to us. To help you keep your finger on the pulse of Dover, we share important updates on legislative issues through our website, email list, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube channel. Not only do we have more impact when all our members are engaged, but also when we work together with other chambers and business organizations across the state. You will continue to see us increasingly collaborate with those partners to make our voice heard. To that end, our new leader, Mike Quaranta, will be embarking on developing a common business agenda to align the business community going into 2019.

Our Spring Survey also showed that member satisfaction is strong, at 86 percent. While most members are satisfied, we are always striving to make sure we are serving the needs of every single member. Whether it's education, economic development, or a new opportunity, we are here to serve our members and work with you to carry our momentum into the second half of the year and into 2019.