

The Delaware Prosperity Partnership

BUILDING COMMUNITIES ONE JOB AT A TIME

»» Some people think economic development is an impersonal, data-driven exercise, but not so in Delaware. In Delaware, economic development at all levels incorporates a critical element — access.

I was honored to be asked to chair Governor John Carney's Economic Development Transition team as he prepared for office. I crisscrossed the state and listened to many employers

and employees. As I listened, it became apparent that the private sector was eager to be more broadly involved in supporting economic prosperity for Delaware.

economic development. The charter includes enhancing the state's ability to attract, grow and retain companies; building a stronger entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem; and supporting employers in identifying, recruiting and developing talent. Each word in the name telegraphs a focus to advance prosperity for all Delawareans and it is the DPP's approach to attaining this goal that leverages Delaware's value in access.

the public sector to advance prosperity in Delaware made a lot of sense. Who better to inform and advise than the very leaders on the front line of business every day?

After all, the competition for business growth is fierce. DPP is only one of thousands of economic development entities in North America. Delaware has many distinctive advantages, including the expertise that the private sector brings to the table.

Access – Means more in Delaware

Access in Delaware has value on many levels. The most obvious is Delaware's enviable central location. Delaware is within easy access to the rest of the world; you can get just about anywhere from Delaware. Access has an even more significant value in Delaware — it speaks to a style and approach that represents a way of life and a way of doing business. Many business people point to access to public officials — at all levels; in other words, people see people.

Delawareans know each other; working together is a tradition. "Newcomers" don't remain



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The Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP) is a 501(c)3 public-private partnership created by legislation and signed by Governor Carney in 2017. For Delaware, it's a new mode to advance

To be clear: the public-private model is not unique to Delaware, but it is especially well-suited to a state like Delaware — a place noted for its emphasis on collegiality and partnerships. What better way to engage the private sector than to invite them into the process? As I conducted my listening tour, it became clear that inviting the private sector to engage with

newcomers for long. It's not unusual to run into elected officials, business leaders and the occasional movie star or professional athlete in the course of a routine trip to the supermarket.

At DPP, we say to prospects and our in-state partners: "There is no wrong door in Delaware." If a business comes to us and it needs support from the Kent County

Economic Partnership, the Division of Small Business or any number of partners focused on growing jobs in Delaware, we will connect it to the right resource. Some places may promise this, but we deliver, and we do our best to make it easy.

Certainly, Delawareans have their differences and but how we handle differences is also a part of our tradition. Delaware is the only state that hosts Return Day, which dates to the 1700s and speaks to a rich tradition of civility and collaboration. It is the power of authentic relationships throughout Delaware that makes Delaware's public-private partnership especially distinctive and effective.

Delaware's Key Sectors:

In the DPP's first year of existence, 39 private investors, many of them Delaware businesses, contributed \$1.3 million to support the organization and that total is growing. Those funds, coupled with state dollars, allow DPP to serve as the lead resource for site selection consultants and business decision-makers to explore and assess the benefits of establishing, expanding or relocating businesses in Delaware.

Based on extensive research supported by the Delaware Business RoundTable – yet another example of the power of partnerships in Delaware - DPP's work is strategically targeted at specific business clusters including:

- Food & Agriculture
- Logistics & Manufacturing
- Healthcare & Education
- Business and Financial Services
- Science & Technology

Promising Launch

The DPP board of directors is co-chaired by Governor Carney and Rod Ward, President of the highly regarded Corporation Service Company (CSC). DPP's diverse board is a cross-section of leaders of Delaware colleges and universities, the legal community,

bankers, a bi-partisan group from the state legislature, non-profit agencies and business people.

Though our journey and dialogue are just beginning, the signs are encouraging with a growing list of prospects, start-ups and current companies looking for support to get to the next level of growth.

At DPP, we believe that economic development not only improves the economy; it serves as a catalyst to advance the well-being of all Delawareans and our communities. That's our job: transforming lives and our communities one job at a time.



Doneene Damon, member of the board of Delaware Prosperity Partnership, is the president-elect of Richards, Layton & Finger, Delaware's largest law firm. She is co-chair of the firm's Business Department and chair of the Corporate Trust and Agency Services Group, in which she conducts a thriving legal practice. Ms. Damon has held numerous leadership positions in legal and community organizations and has served on many boards, including as the current chair of the board of directors of Christiana Care Health System. She earned a B.S. in accounting, cum laude, from St. Joseph's University and a J.D., cum laude, from Temple University School of Law.

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