

# DELAWARE BUSINESS

November/December 2020 \$3.00

SPECIAL EDITION  
COVER 1 OF 4

2020 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

## Preston's March for Energy



A PUBLICATION OF THE

DELAWARE STATE  
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# DELAWARE BUSINESS

SPECIAL EDITION  
COVER 2 OF 4

November/December 2020 \$3.00

2020 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

# AlphaGraphics



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# DELAWARE BUSINESS

November/December 2020 \$3.00

SPECIAL EDITION  
COVER 3 OF 4

2020 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

## Whisman Giordano & Associates, LLC



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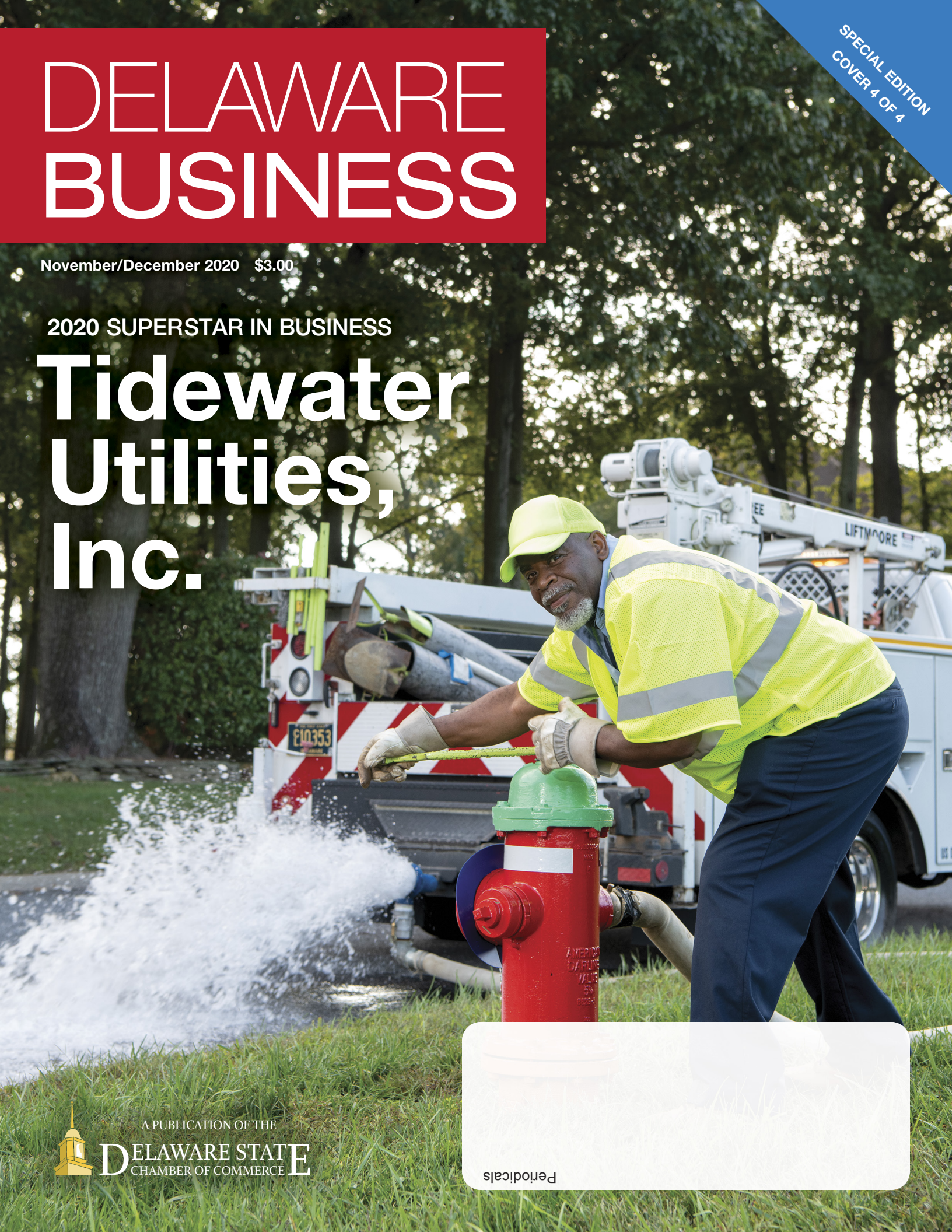
# DELAWARE BUSINESS

November/December 2020 \$3.00

2020 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

## Tidewater Utilities, Inc.

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*Behind the scenes filming with Preston's March for Energy, a 2020 Superstars in Business winner*

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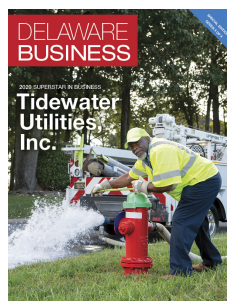
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*On the Cover:* 2020 Superstars in Business *Photos by Dick Dubroff/Final Focus*

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# Message from the President



Michael J. Quaranta

Delaware has approximately 57,000 licensed businesses that operate in our state. There are millions of other businesses incorporated here and operating elsewhere, but within the boundaries, let's just go with the 57k number. About 850 of the 57,000 have 50 or more employees, thus, leaving about 56,000 small businesses in the state.

The people that start businesses are many things: creative, entrepreneurial, motivated, and more. They oftentimes risk their own money, time, and energy taking a vision and turning it into a reality. This is an incredible undertaking under normal circumstances. Consider this: you're a great cook and make outstanding food, but to open a successful restaurant you now have to lease space, buy equipment, hire and train employees, obtain appropriate licenses, keep a ready stock of fresh products, manage employees, market your establishment, the list goes on and on. Now consider this: very few of us have any experience with pandemics. This is just not something you cover in "B-School" or learn about while attending the "School of Hard Knocks" for that matter. As a small business, you may be the only person that can figure out what to do, how to comply, how to pivot, and how to keep your staff and yourself during incredibly dynamic circumstances.

In good times and troubled times, some businesses just stand out. They succeed and continue to pivot, prosper, and manage to be flexible! These people really do deserve our respect and admiration, and that's why we celebrate their incredible achievements with our Superstars in Business program. This year, even we must show flexibility and pivot to make this marquee event a success. Therefore, we'll gather virtually on November 4 to celebrate the accomplishments of our 2020 award winners. History may record this year as perhaps one of the most (non-war) challenging years on record. Please join us in recognizing an incredible group of small businesses, our Superstars in Business.



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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

# New Faces in the General Assembly in January

BY JAMES DECHENE AND VERITY WATSON

THE RESULTS of the Delaware primary election in September will be sending new faces to Dover to start the 151st General Assembly session in January. By the time this article is published the November election may have produced even more freshman legislators. The impact will be felt in both chambers as there will be a new President Pro Tempore in the Senate and a potential shake up in the House. Adding to the theme of change, there will be new chairs of the powerful Joint Finance Committee and potentially the Joint Capital Improvement Committee. Throw in the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how the General Assembly will meet, virtually or in-person, and it's clear that plenty of changes are in store.

We expect numerous pieces of legislation to be introduced impacting the business community, from old chestnuts like minimum wage increases to potentially new property tax reassessment due to the ACLU case on education funding decided in 2020, but still pending a finalized reassessment plan. On top of the new faces and ideas entering the hall in January, COVID-19 will force a new spin to many policy discussions. It's worth reviewing some of these issues in advance of legislators taking their oaths.

### Minimum Wage

Currently Delaware's minimum wage is \$9.50 per hour, and many advocates support raising it to \$15, or even to \$22. It is important to note that such an increase impacts not only those making below \$15, but for those who make above as well. Those higher paid employees will expect a raise that will keep them making as much above other lower paid workers as they were prior to the new mandate, causing wage compression. Wage compression is where companies struggle to cover large increases to labor costs while remaining profitable, or in the case of nonprofits, solvent.

The vast majority of State Chamber members, over 75%, are in the small business category. For most of them, the product they make or the service they provide has a relative fixed price point for their customer base. In the case where a business cannot raise their prices to cover their increased labor costs, a business is left with few



choices, including reducing hours or the number of employees. For many small businesses, where the owner is the last to be paid there exists few positive scenarios keeping their business alive. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had an incredible, sometimes horrific, impact on businesses with some industries experiencing 20-30% closure rates.

The impact that a mandated minimum wage increase would have on our nonprofit community cannot be understated. Legislation introduced to increase the minimum wage has never included a fiscal note that captures the contractual relationship between the State and the nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable Delawareans. Many services provided by nonprofits, including caring for adults with disabilities and those suffering from substance use disorders and mental health issues, were once provided by the State. Transitioning these services to the nonprofit sector is more efficient but providers are often forgotten as contractual partners who are often reimbursed at levels that do not support their activities. These wage increases, as proposed, would put the burden of the increase solely on the nonprofit. It is a fallacy to assume that fundraising and creativity will always balance budgets, especially when critical services are at stake.

### Education Equity and Funding

Perhaps no other sector has been impacted by COVID-19, and the fallout will take years to measure. Governor Carney allowed



## Legislative Priority

schools to formulate reopening plans that best fit their unique nature, populations they serve, and feedback from their teachers and parents. Our state will learn a lot of lessons through the next few months and beyond and it would be wise to survey the struggles and successes before implementing drastic, one size fits all policy changes. COVID-19 has changed every aspect of our lives and education is no different. Chamber members have heard loud cries for accessible childcare and reliable internet access by employees who are working from home, assisting their children with online learning, or are reporting for essential jobs while trying to piece together a puzzle of childcare options.

On top of the realizations brought on by COVID-19, Delaware's education funding mechanism is due for a major revamp due to the aforementioned ACLU case. Legislators will have a slew of education issues specific to funding to address in 2021, including early education and childhood development, increased focus on the needs of those students with special needs, and the overall way money flows into and throughout our educational system.

### Environment & Manufacturing

Many campaign slogans have referenced environmental justice and specifically call out one of Delaware's "big Cs" – chem-

istry. Delaware's manufacturing and chemical industry provides thousands of Delawareans with good paying jobs while creating technology and materials that make our world more efficient and safer. Policies that include broad bans on specific chemistry almost always have unexpected and negative consequences. At a time when economic development and job creation are desperately needed, and assist in funding state government, reverting measures such as the expansion of the Coastal Zone Act would be a mistake.

Change is inherently uncomfortable, but it is coming. The Chamber community stands ready to work for common sense solutions to new and old challenges. ■



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# Member news & Notes

## NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

### Delaware AeroSpace Education Foundation

BY COLIN HEFFINGER

» Wisdom begins with wonder. At DASEF, the Delaware AeroSpace Education Foundation, there is more than just understanding the Earth and its role in our universe that ignites imaginations. Space science, earth science, and STEM make up the intellectual enrichment shaping the foundation of futures for beyond the 600,000 students, their families, and instructors involved. The defining cornerstone of DASEF's impact on the regional community is their dedicated efforts to provide extraordinary experiences and knowledge to shape future generations.

For over 31 years, DASEF has provided its resources to K-12 schools, state-wide libraries, youth groups, and families throughout Delaware and five surrounding states. DASEF also maintains higher learning affiliations with NASA Space Grant, the Delaware Environmental Observing System at the University of Delaware, and Georgia Institute of Technology, to mention a few. DASEF has awarded over \$274,957 in scholarships to 1,433 cadets within its summer destination academies and provided recommendation letters to help push students skyward into their future careers.

Max Classen, a prior attendee and current counselor, states, "DASEF was instrumental in giving me the desire to work in the aerospace industry. With

that desire and a strong recommendation from Dr. Wright, I have taken a leadership position in a multicultural Polaris Engineering project designing a buoyancy controlled hovering rover."

Dr. Stephanie Wright, president and CEO of DASEF, with the assistance of a dedicated staff, has continued to focus on educating others about the science and technology of earth and space since its founding in 1989. "Our mission is to increase the motivation and ability of K-12 students and teachers to meet current and future intellectual/workplace demands," Stephanie elaborates. "DASEF strives to improve the quality of life through its advocacy of education, the environment, and strengthening the workforce."

Even as the pandemic rippled across the globe, DASEF remains dedicated to providing uniquely exciting and educational experiences remotely and throughout its beautiful campus in Smyrna. Visitors are welcomed to safely explore the extensive outdoor exhibits, featuring a variety of representations of the Earth and space.

Wandering through DASEF's 39-acre site is an out of this world experience. Upon starting, visitors are captivated by the Wisdom Begins with Wonder sculp-



ture, a work of art constructed and envisioned by Stephanie and Charles Parks. The Scaled Planetary Walk spanning the length of the campus showcases stones that represent the Sun and each planet at a scale of 2.333 million miles per foot to portray the accurate distance between each on a relatable level. Onward is the Mountjoy Observatory, which provides a way to safely view the sky in high detail. The Galaxy Garden is a half-acre spiral garden with different plants that represent parts of the Milky Way Galaxy, portraying various points and clusters in the sky as well as the arms that make up our entire galaxy. Most of these outdoor exhibits are available to the public for experiencing during business hours. View DASEF's website at [www.dasef.org](http://www.dasef.org) for more information.

"DASEF is focused on the vision of educational and community impact in the long run," Stephanie reflects. "As we continue to finish our Innovation Technology Exploration Center (ITEC), we look forward to enriching the lives of many generations to come."



# Member news & Notes



## DIVERSE SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT:

### Blue Blaze Associates

BY CHARLES ZOELLER

» If you specialize in marketing and branding, the best way to show clients your potential is by how well you market yourself. For instance, if you're looking for cooking advice, you'd ask someone who's a good cook.

The logo for Blue Blaze Associates makes a strong first impression, and their galloping blue horse is a memorable brand. The design also suggests some of the qualities of horses embodied in the marketing services they deliver for well-established as well as growing businesses – work grounded in loyalty, versatility, and perseverance.

Blue Blaze has developed a reputation for creating marketing solutions



that are customized to the specific needs of their clients. Their designs and integrated campaigns have won numerous awards. In 2018, they were the only Delaware business to be selected for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program. And in October of this year, the Entrepreneurs' Forum of Greater Philadelphia honored Blue Blaze by naming them to the Philadelphia100® list.

Sandy Taccone and Wendy Scott decided to start Blue Blaze in Newark back in 2001 while they sat atop a shady hillside along the aptly named Blue Ridge Parkway discussing next steps in their careers. "Both of us had experience running businesses," according to

Taccone, the company's CEO, "and we were energized by the entrepreneurial idea of combining our skills to build a marketing and design agency of our own."

Since then, what has grown to set Blue Blaze apart is their personalized and interdisciplinary approach to marketing strategy. A certified diverse supplier on two counts – for being both women-owned and LGBT-owned – the leaders of Blue Blaze understand the importance of keeping a mix of talents and personalities on their team. Their multifaceted team brings the fresh creativity, technical expertise, and marketing chops they believe their clients deserve.

"We are known for listening deeply and doing our research to truly understand our clients – their needs, their products, their goals, their industry" says Chief Strategic Officer Wendy Scott. One area of expertise where Blue Blaze has begun to garner a special reputation with science and technology clients is their ability "to distill highly complex concepts into accessible and compelling messages," according to Scott.

While it is easy for any company to say they are innovative, Blue Blaze Associates has the case studies to back it up. One recent project was for White Horse Village, an active senior living community in Pennsylvania. In addition to designing the community's new brand, the new website Blue Blaze created includes functionality for 360° virtual tours,





which was launched when in-person visits became no longer possible.

While the coronavirus pandemic has obviously presented some setbacks, Blue Blaze Associates, just like the horse in their logo, has persevered. The tight-knit team behind the logo continues to innovate marketing strategies to help their clients succeed, and to help Blue Blaze bring home the roses.

### Conversations with Women Making a Difference

In addition to the marketing services they provide to their clients, Blue Blaze Associates has also been putting on a series of panels since 2019 called “Conversations with Women Making a Difference”. Produced pro bono, these events feature women from a variety of industries, ages, and ethnicities who share their experiences in leadership, community service, or breaking boundaries. These unscripted conversations provide valuable insight into life’s successes and challenges. To learn more about these events, visit [BlueBlaze.org](http://BlueBlaze.org).



## Incyte's Commitment: Advancing Scientific Innovation in Delaware and Beyond

» Incyte is a global biopharmaceutical company committed to the relentless pursuit of science that can improve the lives of patients.

We have been headquartered in Wilmington since 2002 and actively contributing to the growth of Delaware's life sciences and healthcare ecosystem.

As our portfolio grows, our team has grown with it. Today, Incyte is home to a talented team of approximately 1,600 people in North America, Europe and

Japan, including over 800 world-class scientists who are leading the field of biopharmaceutical research.

In addition to making a difference in the lives of patients, giving back to our communities is an integral part of the Incyte culture. We are proud to work in partnership with stakeholders across the state of Delaware on initiatives intended to support local innovation, continuing education, economic development and talent recruitment.



## Collaborative Group Targets Systemic Racism in Delaware

BY MICHELLE A. TAYLOR, PRESIDENT & CEO, UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE & RICK DEADWYLER, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS LEADER, CORTEVA AGRISCIENCE & CHAIR-ELECT, UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE

» More than 380 years after “Black Anthony” became the first African to arrive in Delaware, and 52 years after the National Guard occupied Wilmington for nine months following MLK’s assassination, racial equity remains elusive for black and brown Delawareans. More recently, COVID-19 has highlighted racial disparities in education, employment, wealth accumulation, health care, and housing, separating Delaware’s majority white community (roughly 65%) from the black and brown communities that are now about 25% of Delaware’s population.

According to the Delaware Black Community Research Project at the University of Delaware (*Racial Disparities in Delaware Remain Deep: Fifty Years After the Kerner Commission Report and the Wilmington Riot*), the poverty gap between blacks and whites in Delaware has not narrowed since the 1970s. And according to the *Racial Wealth Divide in Wilmington* report from Prosperity Now & JP Morgan Chase, the median income for whites in Delaware (\$60,000) is double that of blacks (\$30,034), fostering a racial-economic divide that is “deeply enmeshed” in the city’s culture.

These and other data are the byproducts of policies and practices that have enabled systemic racism in Delaware for generations. Left unaddressed, systemic racism will stifle the individual potential of every black and brown Delawarean, limit our state’s ability to compete in the



global marketplace, and compromise the quality of life for *everyone*. Recognizing this, and in the wake of the George Floyd murder, United Way of Delaware (UWDE) recently formed the Delaware Racial Equity & Social Justice Collaborative (the Collaborative) with the goal of engaging all Delawareans in the struggle to eliminate systemic racism in our state.

The Collaborative includes more than 200 leaders (and counting) from grassroots, civic, business, and nonprofit groups across all three counties. For administrative and fiduciary purposes, the Collaborative (and its related fundraising arm, the Delaware Racial Equity & Social Justice Fund) operates under the aegis of UWDE but is governed by its own members. The group’s strategic objective is to drive transformative gains in racial equity and social justice across Delaware; some specific goals are to:

- Close the academic achievement gap in minority communities
- Promote financial empowerment and wealth creation

- Advocate for Community Policing
- Promote safer, healthier environments in minority communities
- Foster courageous conversations and actions regarding racial equity and social justice to include governments, police, foundations, boards, and corporations

To achieve its goals, the Collaborative is leveraging the work of its grassroots members; serving as a statewide platform to amplify the voices of those organizations; empowering community-based leaders across the state, especially young leaders, with the resources necessary to drive local action, and advocating for immediate and long-term changes in the policies, practices and legislation that enable systemic racism.

Through the summer of 2020, the Collaborative has seen remarkable success in establishing county-level subcommittees, creating a statewide racial equity database, launching a social justice volunteer corps, establishing the Racial Equity & Social Justice Fund, and



completing the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, an online awareness campaign that attracted more than 8,000 participants.

Systemic racism is not new, nor is it unique to Delaware. But across our nation, there is an undeniable outcry to

finally resolve America's long struggle with racial inequity. Here in the First State, the Delaware Racial Equity & Social Justice Collaborative is a giant step in answering that call. Delaware's business community, which have been supportive of UWDE for nearly 75 years,

has a vital role to play in securing meaningful, sustainable gains in racial equity and social justice. To get involved in this work, contact Michelle Taylor, President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Delaware, at [mtaylor@uwde.org](mailto:mtaylor@uwde.org) or 302-983-1643.

## Chair Message

BY KATIE K. WILKINSON

As I sit writing this note in September, I can't help but wonder what the social, political and economic landscapes in Delaware – and across the country – will look like when this issue is published. There is so much uncertainty about what this fall and winter will mean for the spread of COVID-19 and our response to rising positive test rates, hospitalizations and sadly, potentially rising rates of death. We simply do not know. With so many months of living with this virus behind us, it is easy to find ourselves slipping back into our old “normal”. But we must remain diligent in our efforts to mitigate any chance of a dramatic resurgence until a vaccine becomes available.

On June 1, Governor Carney announced the creation of the Pandemic Resurgence Advisory Committee (PRAC). This committee was comprised of 3 subcommittees: Health, Business, and Equity. As the chair of the business subcommittee, I had the opportunity to work with a concerned and engaged group of legislators and business representatives to formulate a set of recommendations for moving Delaware forward as well as develop responses to a potential resurgence with a few critical goals in mind:

- Support small businesses
- Keep Delawareans working
- Invest in the long-term economic health of Delaware

The final PRAC report will be published on September 30. Since our interim report in July, there have already been several initiatives rolled out to support the achievement of these goals. They include:

- \$100 Million in the Delaware Relief Grant Program



supporting small businesses with an emphasis on those companies and industries who suffered a disproportionate negative impact of the shutdown – offered through the Delaware Division of Small Business.

- \$25 Million in the Nonprofit Support Fund providing financial support to nonprofits across the state who played critical community support roles during the pandemic – administered by United Way and the Delaware Community Foundation, in partnership with Philanthropy Delaware and the Delaware Alliance For Nonprofit Advancement.

- \$10 Million for the Rapid Workforce Training and Redeployment Training Initiative to assist Delaware workers who have lost jobs and income due to the COVID-19 crisis – offered through a partnership between the Delaware Department of Labor and the Workforce Development Board.

- \$20 Million towards Broadband Infrastructure to build out additional needed infrastructure across the state, gather data on statewide speed, and acquire equipment and services for families in financial need.

The work of the PRAC's business subcommittee aligned well with recommendations sent to the Governor in early April from the State Chamber board and the Delaware Business Roundtable. They stressed the need to clearly prioritize these items with speed and commitment to move through and past the pandemic's impacts while keeping an eye on the future of the health of Delaware's communities and economy.

I remain hopeful about what will happen this fall relative to our containment and mitigation of the virus. I am encouraged by the community collaboration demonstrated in the development of these programs – as evidenced by the many partnerships outlined above. I am optimistic about our ability to execute these initiatives with speed and accuracy for the benefit of all of Delaware.





## IDShield Wins 2020 Cybersecurity Award for ID Theft Resolution Service

» “Congrats to IDShield for being recognized as the Gold Award Winner in the ID Theft Resolution Service category of the 2020 Cybersecurity Excellence Awards” said Holger Schultze, CEO of Cybersecurity Insiders and founder of the 400,000-member information Security Community on LinkedIn that jointly produce the awards program. “With over 500 entries in more than 90 categories, the 2020 awards are highly competitive. All winners truly reflect the very best in today’s cybersecurity industry.”

The Cybersecurity Excellence Awards is an annual competition honoring individuals and companies that demonstrate excellence, innovation, and leadership in information security.

“This recognition of IDShield and the work we are doing to provide best-in-class ID theft resolution is an honor,” said Scott

Grissom, SVP and Chief Product Officer for LegalShield and IDShield. We pride ourselves on providing our members with top-of-the-line monitoring and service, including a robust resolution & recovery offering. This process combines the use of a propriety monitoring & a scanning platform that alerts our members if any personal identifiable information is ever compromised or used nefariously. Along with this monitoring platform, we are able to leverage the resources of lawyers, accountants, and our in-house licensed investigators to restore our member’s identity to pre-theft status if any of their identifiable information is ever compromised.

IDShield’s protection policy provides reimbursement coverage for events

related to fraud, forgery, data breaches and stolen identify — all with zero deductibles. A \$1 million protection insurance policy is included.

### LEGALSHIELD & IDSHIELD

A trailblazer in the democratization of affordable access to legal protection, LegalShield is one of North America’s largest providers of online legal subscription plans covering more than 4.375 million people. IDShield’s identity theft solution for individuals & families has over 1 million members.

LegalShield & IDShield serve more than 141,000 businesses and over 40,000 companies offer these plans to their employees as a voluntary benefit.

Both LegalShield & IDShield are approved and endorsed by the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and we are an Affinity Partner. LegalShield has been a member of the State Chamber for 22 years.

LegalShield’s legal plans provide access to qualified law firms and their attorneys with an average of 22 years of experience in family matters, estate planning, financial & business issues, consumer protection, tax, real estate, benefits dispute, and auto/driving issues. Unlike other legal plans or do-it-yourself online services, LegalShield has dedicated law firms in 50 states & all provinces and territories in Canada that members can access a fraction of typical hourly rates.

IDShield provides identity monitoring & restoration services and is the only identity theft protection program company armed with a team of Licensed Fraud Investigators to restore a member’s identity.

For more information, contact Mike Schwartz, LegalShield, Independent Associate at 302-275-8898, [mssrvp@comcast.net](mailto:mssrvp@comcast.net), or go [wearelegalshield.com/info/dscc](http://wearelegalshield.com/info/dscc).



# Leadership Delaware Board of Directors Elect Next Chief Executive Officer

Leadership Delaware, Inc. (LDI) announced that Jennifer Cohan has been elected by its Board of Directors as incoming Chief Executive Officer. Jennifer will join LDI on November 1, 2020 as CEO-Elect and will assume the position of CEO on January 1, 2021.

“We are thrilled to introduce Jennifer Cohan as our next CEO. We know that she will bring energy to Leadership Delaware, preserve and honor all that makes it a special organization, while also leveraging her vast network and entrepreneurial spirit to deliver innovative concepts to the program’s second decade of developing young leaders. Her passion for leading in the community, driving change, and developing others, have earned her the unanimous support of our Board. We are excited to hire someone of her caliber, experience and proven track record,” said Penny Saridakis, chair of the Board of Directors.

Jennifer has had a distinguished career with the State of Delaware, serving in a variety of leadership roles. Most recently, she served under Governors John Carney and Jack Markell as Secretary of Transportation from 2015 through 2020. Previously, she was director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Jennifer has spent the last twelve years as an adjunct professor at Wilmington University, teaching leadership and public policy in the master’s program. Jennifer has also been a popular speaker at LDI for five years.

“Secretary Cohan has been a tremendous asset to our team and to the State of Delaware for more than 30 years,” said



Governor John Carney. “Jen modernized the Division of Motor Vehicles as the first woman to ever lead the division and oversaw the development of the state’s largest-ever public infrastructure program as DelDOT secretary. Her experience, intellect, and depth of knowledge about how state government works will not easily be replaced. Jen also has a unique ability to lift the spirits of those around her and rally a team around a common cause. We will miss her in state government. But I’m positive she will continue to do great work on behalf of the people of Delaware.”

“I am honored to have been elected as LDI’s next CEO. It is a privilege to join an organization which develops leaders who will make a positive difference through-

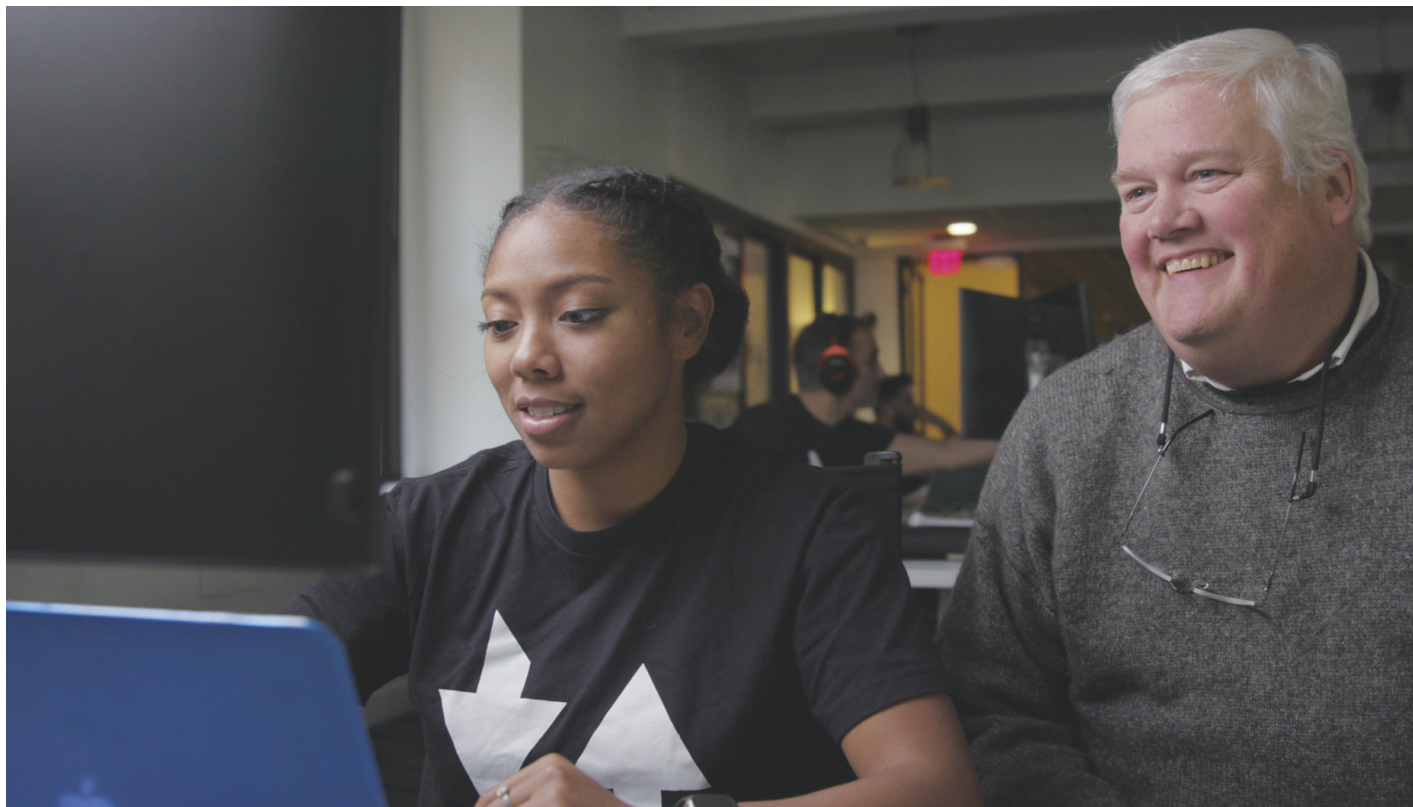
*“I am honored to have been elected as LDI’s next CEO. It is a privilege to join an organization which develops leaders who will make a positive difference throughout our State. I am a lifelong learner of leadership and I believe strongly in giving back to the amazing Delaware community, which makes this a perfect fit for me.”*

– Jennifer Cohan

out our State. I am a lifelong learner of leadership and I believe strongly in giving back to the amazing Delaware community, which makes this a perfect fit for me,” said Cohan.

Cohan succeeds Co-Founder and CEO, Terry Strine. After twelve years of building and leading the program through growth and tremendous success that has resulted in over 300 young Delaware leaders making important contributions to Delaware’s communities, Strine will retire from management of the Leadership Delaware organization and program. “I can think of no one better to lead Leadership Delaware. Jennifer’s experience, coupled with her enthusiasm and creativity, make her the perfect choice to lead LDI,” said Strine.





## Delaware Focuses on Creating a Diverse Tech Talent Pipeline with JPMorgan Chase Foundation Grant

» Delaware Prosperity Partnership has completed the first step in developing an intentional strategy to support a more diverse tech talent pipeline across an array of industry sectors for IT jobs at all levels in Delaware.

Delaware Prosperity Partnership was awarded a workforce readiness grant during the State Chamber's Developing Delaware conference in October 2019 by JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The goal of the grant is to help improve the state's tech talent pipeline by offering recommendations to support a more diverse pool of highly qualified tech candidates. Although launched pre-COVID-19, the findings of the analysis are particularly relevant as

Delaware businesses are facing an unprecedented demand for well-prepared IT talent throughout the pandemic and beyond.

Here's what the tech talent profile revealed about Delaware's tech talent pipeline:

- IT needs remain a key concern for Delaware employers, with IT jobs needed at all levels (entry to highly specialized) across IT domains (software, networks, cyber security, data management and tech support).
- Bottlenecks in IT hiring are exacerbated by changing skills and the accelerated digitization of our economy in the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Addressing IT talent needs will

require significantly more focus on upskilling those already in the workforce, as well as continuing to expand educational pathways.

In 2019, Delaware employed 17,429 IT workers. About 10% of those positions are filled by workers commuting to Delaware. Two-thirds of IT jobs are found outside the traditional "tech" sector in areas of finance, healthcare, manufacturing, education and more.

Delaware Prosperity Partnership commissioned the Austin-based firm TIP Strategies to conduct the tech talent profile — assessing the current and anticipated tech job market in Delaware, the state's supply of qualified applicants and



the current educational and non-profit capacity to meet the demand. The analysis included roundtables, interviews, and work sessions, with more than 50 participants from Delaware businesses, nonprofits, education and workforce development in all three counties.

From December 2019 to February 2020 alone, approximately 5,300 IT job openings were posted by Delaware companies. Since then, in addition to sustaining tech needs in Delaware's robust business and financial sectors, the pandemic has accelerated the deployment of IT strategies in sectors like healthcare and education and even redefined digital needs in industries such as manufacturing and agriculture.

"The demand for tech talent in Delaware has never been stronger," said Kurt Foreman, President and CEO of Delaware Prosperity Partnership, the public-private resource that leads the state of Delaware's economic development efforts to attract, grow and retain businesses.

"With this program, Delaware distinguishes itself as one of the first states in the nation to bring stakeholders together to strategically envision how a diverse tech talent pipeline will advance our economy," said Foreman, who noted that Delaware stakeholders are grateful for JPMorgan Chase's leadership in investing in Delaware's workforce and excited by the potential the analysis reveals.

DPP and TIP are working collaboratively with stakeholders statewide and aim to present a plan in early fall. The plan will provide the foundation for a diverse IT talent strategy that enhances the competitiveness of Delaware industries while creating career opportunities for people of all backgrounds. The plan also is expected to build upon several successful, innovative community-based working models

already helping to feed Delaware's tech talent pipeline, including those at Delaware Technical Community College, TechHire Delaware, Zip Code Wilmington, Code Differently and Year Up Wilmington, as well as the Delaware Pathways IT career programs currently offered through Delaware public schools and the new FinTech Center at the University of Delaware.

"Delaware is distinguished by the depth

and breadth of its businesses, and we're ideally positioned to be thought leaders in developing an intentional strategy to bring more diversity into the tech talent pipeline," says Tom Horne, Delaware Market Director at JPMorgan Chase. "JPMorgan Chase is proud to partner with Delaware Prosperity Partnership to advance career pathways in tech and promote inclusive economic growth."

### **The Port of Wilmington Strengthens Operational Efficiency with the Addition of New, Eco-friendly Equipment**

GT USA Wilmington, partnering with KoneCranes, has taken delivery of five new Rubber Tired Gantry (RTG) cranes at the Port of Wilmington in Delaware, which will significantly strengthen the terminal's operational efficiency and increase overall productivity.

As part of an initial investment of US\$100 million, the Kone RTG cranes are all electric, making them eco-friendly to benefit the environment. Spanning 7 containers wide

and 5 high, these cranes will transform the yard space from a previously wheeled operation into an efficient stacking system to benefit gate and vessel operations.

Eric Casey, CEO of GT USA Wilmington, said: "The addition of these advanced crane systems at the Port of Wilmington underlines our commitment to further strengthen our operations at the terminal. Since taking over operations at the port it has been our key goal to significantly improve performance for the benefit of our partners and customers. We continuously review our operational procedures to enhance the investment we are making in our facility and to strengthen the efficiency of operations and maximize productivity. The new RTG cranes will provide greater flexibility in their operations. This will help speed up the terminal operations and create even better value for our customers."

This equipment is the first part of a phased delivery to develop an identified container yard. The cranes will be delivered on site fully assembled by KoneCranes ready to be commissioned to enter operations once the yard densification project is complete. This project, scheduled to be completed in late Fall 2020, will effectively double the current yard capacity.







## Shaping a More Competitive Delaware for Post-Pandemic New Normal

BY TED ABERNATHY

» Very few businesses entered 2020 with scenario plans that included a contingency for an unprecedented global pandemic and a deep, medically induced, global recession. This is not a year soon forgotten. Our economic and health recovery continues to be slow and challenging, but at some point, we will all be facing another new normal.

Everyone's crystal ball is a bit hazy, but the 2021 reset is likely to include some of these emerging trends.

**Remote Rules!** More people will work remotely, shop remotely, get their health, entertainment, and banking services remotely. We have all endured six months of mandatory reprogramming of our personal and professional norms. It is a safe bet that many of these shifts will become

permanent. Most communities' commercial real estate needs will change, our home design requirements will change, and we will be even more dependent on continuous internet connectivity.

### **Relocations could be more common.**

The trend of some Americans moving from high-priced urban centers to more affordable metros has been accelerating over the past decade. Mid-sized city centers prospered following the Great Recession with reimagined suburbia growing over the past five years. News reports this summer have chronicled more movement, pandemic-induced, from density to less dense living options. Nobody knows where the new hot spots will be, but they will likely be affordable, have high-speed broadband, and include access to amenities and housing choices.

**Reshoring accelerates.** COVID-19 has shone a bright light on the advantages of having some industries and their supply chains within our borders. Over the next few years, we should see growth in biopharmaceutical, medical devices, defense components, and food processing. Efficiency will still be important, but redundancy will be a new corporate watchword.

### **Expect more state competition, data analytics and scenario planning.**

Pre-pandemic many states, including Delaware, were experiencing economic transformations. Changes in demographics, technology, and consumer behavior continuously disrupt the status quo and confound both business and state economic planning. Businesses' new investment decisions are now mostly driven by sophisticated data analytics that easily allow comparisons between "place" options.

Three categories usually top the list for consideration.

- Business climate, including taxes, regulatory practices, and legal environment.
- Workforce availability and cost, with the skills in demand, and the ability to attract new residents.
- Infrastructure including roads, rail, ports, broadband, air service, affordable and reliable power, and water and sewer.

In a time of mass disruption, the pandemic has acted as an accelerant. Trends we expected are impacting us sooner, with a few unexpected tangents thrown in to upend the best plans. States recognize that they are in competition for new investments and have begun to develop new ideas for the next new normal.



The first step is understanding your competitive strengths and weaknesses. Delaware has many positive competitive factors, and each is important to maintain and cultivate. But there are also worrisome headwinds. The state's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth has been among the slowest over the past five years. GDP per capita remains above the national average but the advantage has dwindled. Delaware has prospered from one of the nation's most productive workforces, but over the past few years real productivity has declined. These results are probably due to shifts in industry and occupational concentrations and can be improved, but improvement will require specific actions.

Step two is to scenario plan for the businesses and jobs of the future. Over the past few years, the state has lost jobs in advanced industries. Parts of the technology sector have also experienced job losses. The population is aging, and new ideas and efforts are needed to take advantage of the new opportunities.

Mike Tyson is often quoted, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." 2020 certainly feels like a punch. We entered the year concerned about accelerating technology change, global trade uneasiness, and labor shortages due to full employment. Then we added a pandemic, a recession, and a national election. Another ex-boxer, Ed Latimore, is credited with the quote "The future is coming, whether you're ready or not. The past is gone, whether you're over it or not."

It is time to look ahead. Delaware has a strong foundation on which to build. In last year's Area Development site selection consultants survey, the top factors for new investment decisions included access to highways, availability of labor, and quality of life. Delaware has good infrastructure, a productive workforce supported by strong educational institutions, and a high quality of life with strong healthcare institutions and reasonable housing costs.

Serendipity is rarely a successful model for future success. Now is the time for the state's business leaders to reimagine Delaware's economic future and to be intentional about the actions needed to be more competitive.

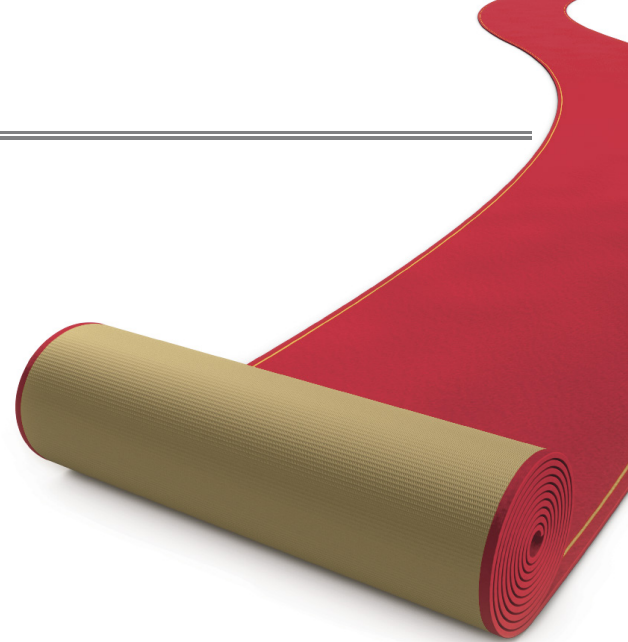


**Ted Abernathy** is managing partner at Economic Leadership.

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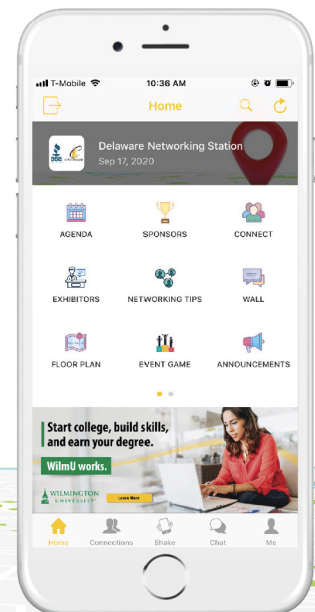
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MARVIN S. GILMAN  
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**IN BUSINESS**

Making up more than 85 percent of our membership, small businesses are the backbone of the Delaware economy. Every year, The Delaware State Chamber of Commerce (DSCC) and the Small Business Alliance (SBA) honor businesses that not only display effective business models with demonstrable results but make positive impact in their communities. All these honorees have been in business for at least three years, are small businesses based on number of full-time employees, and are members of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce. Awards of Excellence are also granted to deserving companies. Superstars in Business has recognized outstanding organizations throughout the state since 1998.



## 2020 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS

### Preston's March for Energy (Nonprofit category)

Preston's March provides adaptive bikes across the country to children living with special needs. Their mission is to provide children with special needs access to freedom, fun, and physical exercise, to promote inclusion, and to educate on the importance of physical fitness in the special needs population.

### AlphaGraphics (1-24 employee category)

AlphaGraphics is a locally-owned, full-service print and marketing services company, offering services that cover design, print, sign production and installation, mailing, marketing services and promotional products.

### Whisman, Giordano & Associates, LLC (25-59 employee category)

Whisman Giordano & Associates, LLC is a certified public accounting and business consulting firm with a regional concentration on serving clients throughout Delaware, Chester County, PA, and northern Maryland. The firm provides accounting, auditing, bookkeeping, tax, and business advisory services.

### Tidewater Utilities, Inc. (60-150 employee category)

Tidewater Utilities, Inc. is the largest private water and wastewater utility in Delaware south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal. Water service is provided to approximately 50,000 domestic and commercial customers throughout the state of Delaware in approximately 415 separate communities in New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties.

### Award of Excellence

Jobs for Delaware Graduates, Inc. (Nonprofit category)

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MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
IN BUSINESS



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# THE POWER OF A SMILE, THE POWER OF A BIKE

**Nonprofit: Preston's March for Energy**

BY KELLY BASILE | PHOTOS BY DICK DUBROFF/FINAL FOCUS





WHAT CREATES A SENSE OF FREEDOM for you? For a young man named Preston, freedom is achieved when he rides his bike. But Preston isn't just any young man and his bike isn't just a bike. Preston has Mitochondrial Disease, which causes low muscle tone, fatigue, and balance issues. His adaptive bike is designed to allow him to keep up with his friends and family.

"It was August 10, 2011. That was the day of Preston's first bike ride," shares Deb Buenaga, Preston's mother. "I will never forget that day."

The bike was donated to him through a local fundraiser. "The smile that was brought on through this bike made us determined to 'pay it forward' by raising money for more children to realize their dream of riding their own bike," explains Buenaga. With this goal in mind, she and her husband went on to create Preston's March for Energy.

The mission of Preston's March is to transform the lives of children, living with physical or mental disabilities across the country, who are deprived of the many health, emotional, and social benefits of physical fitness. The nonprofit raises both awareness and funds to purchase and deliver special adaptive bikes – each bike costs between \$1,400 and \$2,500 – directly to the children in need.

Nine years later, Preston's March for Energy has created and shared smiles through the gift of a bike 473 times in 35 states.

"There is an overwhelming need for adaptive, recreational equipment for children with disabilities," says Buenaga, "and the pandemic has shown it's

more important than ever for children to have the ability to go outside into the fresh air and exercise."

With most therapies cut or cancelled, the bikes Preston's March for Energy present help children achieve needed cardio and strengthening exercise, and in some cases, they can temporarily replace their physical therapy sessions. Moreover, the bikes provide an outlet and a way to connect with family and friends.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit earlier this year, decisions were quickly made in order for the organization to survive. With 63 children on their waiting list, it was decided to close applications and focus on finding a way to continue delivering bikes to those on the waiting list. With the help of a friend to Preston's March who is also a state representative, the organization received the Governor's "blessing" to visit each child's home and present the bikes while adhering to all safety and health protocols. With great pride, Deb and her team of volunteers presented 40 bikes to date during the pandemic.

When asked what it means to be a superstar, Buenaga reflects, "To me, I believe a superstar in business is one that goes out of its way to help the community, that goes above and beyond to fill a need. We strive to do this each and every day."

When asked how proud he is of Preston's March for Energy and their work in the community, Preston brags, "I like to see all the smiles and seeing all the kids ride their bikes!" ■





MARVIN S. GILMAN  
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# CUSTOMER SOLUTIONS COME FIRST

**1-24 Employees: AlphaGraphics**

BY COLIN HEFFINGER | PHOTOS BY DICK DUBROFF/FINAL FOCUS

**GET NOTICED. GET BUSINESS.** For AlphaGraphics, a print and marketing services company, these words solidify the foundation that empowers day-to-day efforts in ensuring customer satisfaction. These words aren't just their tagline, but a symbol emphasizing the reality that their success is defined by the success of their clients. Putting forth the extra time, effort, and expertise into project solutions to ensure that the customer is completely satisfied plays a critical and undeniable role in the long-term business impact for both AlphaGraphics and their clients.

AlphaGraphics operates in over 250 locally owned franchise locations across the United States. Ancar Enterprises LLC is the franchise operator for AlphaGraphics in Wilmington and Newark, which began in 1977 and has built 33 years of track record serving clients throughout Delaware and beyond. Clients span across a plethora of industries including health care, financial, education, construction, and manufacturing to name a few. Specializing in a variety of printing projects, content management, promotional products, graphic design services, technology solutions and much more, AlphaGraphics prioritizes customer solutions above all else.

Atul Chugh, owner of the AlphaGraphics sites in Wilmington and Newark, reflects on the role of the customer in their daily work. "Our jobs are all customer-focused," Atul explains. "The customer is the reason we're here. All our processes are done with the customer in mind. We offer free delivery in our area to best serve our customers. We always want our employees to be ambassadors of the firm and focus on solving issues for our clients. The customer simply comes first."

At AlphaGraphics, customers can choose to come in with a fully designed project or one that has only just been started. Whether in the creation of brochures, business cards, signs, or so forth, AlphaGraphics can assist in the creative process from scratch or improve an existing project. By providing a consultative approach, the team at AlphaGraphics helps clients achieve their goals and better prepare them for the final production process.

The goal at AlphaGraphics is to be a one-stop shop for all client needs. With two digital production printers, offset printers, a latex printer, plotter and other finishing equipment, AlphaGraphics is well-equipped to create captivating and professionally designed customer solutions. Recent investments include advanced booklet and bookbinding technology as well as Digital 5th color, which allows added embellishments on regular print for

cutting-edge visual enhancements that "pop." Windows, wall graphics, and signage, as well as installation are also available locally. Combined with the team's extensive technical expertise, AlphaGraphics can provide unique client solutions that have a larger impact on business success.

Another uniquely empowering capability that AlphaGraphics offers to clients is customized web portals for their businesses. These web-to-print portals allow the ability for employees of clients to input information needed to design their marketing and business collateral seamlessly, even



across multiple locations. This option is secure and allows users the ability to design and manage their brand standards online.

Another key tool that AlphaGraphics utilizes to gauge customer satisfaction is their Loyalty Loop program. This program has played a critical role in their 95% approval rating as well as their 80+ Google reviews, all with five-star ratings. "Each month, we survey all of our customers within from that month and evaluate the results," Atul explains. "We reach back to customers who did not have as positive of an experience and discuss what we could have done better. This gives us good insight on where our customers stand and what they would like to know more about. These discussions also provide us the opportunity to acquire new marketing ideas."

Atul reflects on the impact of his team's long-term dedication to client needs in the First State. "Our focus on Delaware for the past 33 years has played a huge role in our success," Atul states. "Customer needs will always change. We will continue to define ourselves through customer solutions. It will remain a key determinant of our success going forward." ■





MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
**IN BUSINESS**



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# BUILDING EXTRAORDINARY RELATIONSHIPS BY PLACING PEOPLE BEFORE NUMBERS

**25-59 Employees: Whisman Giordano & Associates, LLC**

BY TYLER MICIK | PHOTOS BY DICK DUBROFF/FINAL FOCUS





SINCE 1973, Whisman Giordano & Associates, located in Newark, DE, has served the community as a certified public accounting firm by providing accounting, auditing, bookkeeping, tax, and business advisory services.

The firm's story began when James Whisman started the practice with only three employees. In 1993, Joseph A. Giordano joined Whisman as a partner. Today, Joseph A., along with his son, Joseph V. Giordano, the president and managing partner of Whisman Giordano, and their entire team, work to provide superior technical services while "Building Extraordinary Relationships."

"Building Extraordinary Relationships" is more than just a motto; it's the firm's heart. "Delaware is a close community, and your reputation matters. We treat others as we want to be treated," said Joseph V.

Forty-seven years after its founding, Whisman Giordano employs 28 full-time employees and is nationally ranked as a "Best Accounting Firm to Work For" by Accounting Today magazine.

Whisman Giordano is as fully committed to their team as they are to their clients. The leadership works to prepare younger team members to rise to senior positions. As Joseph V. says, "We believe in investing in our people simply because it's the right thing to do for them and for our clients. We function like a family that just happens to be excellent with numbers." Currently, the firm is supporting multiple team members to complete their CPA certification.

Whisman Giordano stands apart from their peers because of their empathy, service, and understanding. In these uncertain times, they show their clients they're not alone. Throughout the pandemic, their team has continued to check-in with clients, discuss their financial worries, and share the latest regulations coming from the government. In June, the firm hosted its first virtual webinars on the Payroll Protection Program. Both sessions were free and open to the public.

The firm hosts food drives, sponsors families during the holidays, and supports numerous nonprofits throughout Delaware. Joseph V. says, "As a firm, we believe in community involvement because this is our home too. You get out of the community what you put into it." However, there's one fund in particular that holds significant meaning for Joseph V., and that is the Amy Giordano Fund of the Boys & Girls Club of Delaware. This fund was established by the Giordano family to honor the memory of Amy Giordano. It helps low-income youth and their families participate in educational programs at the Boys & Girls Club.

Whisman Giordano & Associates is a second-generation, family-owned business, driven by the desire to make their team and clients feel like family. Their employees commit each day to not lose the humanity behind the numbers. They recognize that each account has a mission, a dream, and a person behind it. Whisman Giordano is not your ordinary accounting firm. They will always place the people behind the numbers first, client, or not. ■





MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
**IN BUSINESS**



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# DOING RIGHT BY ITS PEOPLE

**60-150 Employees: Tidewater Utilities, Inc.**

BY COLIN HEFFINGER | PHOTOS BY DICK DUBROFF / FINAL FOCUS

**DOING RIGHT FOR COMMUNITIES** when disaster strikes isn't easy. When COVID-19 began to spread across Delaware, ensuring uninterrupted water service to support public health protection became Tidewater's primary focus. As essential workers, they continued to operate plants, monitor water quality, and maintain infrastructure.

Tidewater Utilities also leapt into action by providing support to Delawareans who became unemployed and relying on food pantries to support their families. By double-matching employee contributions to nonprofits, Tidewater was able to donate funds that helped provide critical equipment for first responders and support replenishing food banks.

The company's reaction to the pandemic is not new for Tidewater, it is consistent with Tidewater's ongoing commitment to support its community and involve employees in volunteering initiatives that play a role in maintaining and shaping the future of Delaware.

Tidewater Utilities, Inc., was established in 1964 and today is the largest private water and wastewater utility in Delaware south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal. Water service is provided to approximately 50,000 domestic and commercial customers throughout the state of Delaware in roughly 415 separate communities in New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties. Tidewater owns and maintains 171 groundwater wells, 47 storage tanks, and over 765 miles of water main. Last year alone, Tidewater produced over 2.4 billion gallons of water.

Tidewater, whose mission is to provide service in the water and related fields in a safe, reliable and efficient manner, views itself as a provider of a life sustaining service, vital to quality of life, public health protection, and essential to support economic development. Its operations, business decisions, and community service are based on their "Do Right" value system of doing right by their customers, their shareholders, and by each other. Tidewater employees respect each other, their stakeholders, and the environment by seeking value in other's perspectives, listening with empathy, and making conscious decisions to reduce the impact of their operations on the environment.

Bruce O'Connor, president of Tidewater Utilities, discusses the role of being environmentally responsible for Tidewater. "By our nature, we are environmentally driven," O'Connor explains. "We must meet state and federal regulations to ensure the water we provide is safe and clean. Even residuals, a by-product of the treatment process, must be properly and environmentally disposed. All our processes are environmentally regulated. We comply with them to make sure that what goes into the ground is void of contaminants. We work closely with and are strong advocates of environmental agencies throughout Delaware."

Tidewater attributes its success in maintaining or in some cases, exceeding, standards for environmental, social, and governance to their dedicated workforce. The management team understands the importance of show-



ing their employees that they are valued, and their role plays a significant impact on delivering a life-sustaining service. Benefits and pay rates are regularly compared against industry standards to provide employees with equitable compensation for their work efforts. Consistently monitoring the employee turnover rate, which currently sits below three percent, provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of the management team and the overall success of the business.

Looking forward, Tidewater aims to continuously attract and retain talented individuals to become a part of their team. A comprehensive benefit package, a strong focus on safety in the workplace, personal and professional development opportunities and additional career support help create the backbone of what draws in skilled professionals.

"An aging workforce is a particular challenge in our industry," O'Connor explains. "Many of our jobs require technical licensing and as experienced professionals retire and enjoy the fruits of their labor, we're always focused on ways to make the water industry appealing to the next generation of talented workers. We think that our small company environment can offer benefits and training to acquire the best talent for the future."

As O'Connor reflects on receiving the Superstars in Business award, he added, "It's really about the people who work for Tidewater and are out there every day. They make us who we are. I've worked with Tidewater since 1992 and our employees consistently go above and beyond to do meet customers' needs." ■



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# Committed to Delaware's Small Businesses

Artisans' Bank uses expertise and teamwork for customer success

CONTRIBUTED BY ARTISANS' BANK

*David Ferguson,  
Senior Vice President/  
Chief Lending Officer*



ARTISANS' BANK has been serving Delaware's small businesses and craftspeople—our local artisans—since 1861. While some banks seem to continually grow bigger and more impersonal, Artisans' has stayed smaller and nimble, resulting in a more customer-oriented banking style that strives to focus on what the individual customers want and need.

This customer-oriented, small business friendly culture has contributed to the success of Artisans' Bank's Commercial Lending team. That approach, coupled with collaborative teamwork has contributed to Artisans' Bank and their customers' success.

According to Senior Vice President/Chief Lending Officer David Ferguson, Artisans' Bank has worked hard to curate a team of exceptional relationship managers with years of experience and community know-how to head up Artisans' all-star lending team.

"What we have is a cohesive team of really experienced relationship managers," said Ferguson. "Our message is we've got the all-star team of commercial relationship managers serving the communities in which we live. We're committed to helping our customers succeed."

"Our hybrid approach of team development has worked well for our existing and prospective customer base," Ferguson said. "We're able to ask, what does our community need in terms of business banking, and then we go after someone to fit that need. Attracting quality talent to join the Artisans' Bank team has been an enjoyable experience. What we've found is that those who align with our mission of engaged customer focus embrace the opportunity to join our all-star team."

According to Ferguson, Artisans' Bank has made a commitment to helping the small business community in Delaware, with an emphasis on small business lending. Artisans' has had success by working closely with Delaware's business owners, building relationships and providing them with guidance.

"With more manageable portfolios, our relationship managers appreciate the opportunity to create one-on-one time/Zoom-time with their existing and prospective customers, allowing us to get to know them, both on a personal and

business level. To me, that creates a long-term relationship. It's really a great thing for us that we're able to do," said Ferguson.

Because Artisans' Bank is a small community bank, they also have the ability to be adaptive and quickly come up with innovative solutions for their customers. Artisans' has the ability to be flexible and work with customers to get them the loan that they need and that fits with their business model. And all loan decisions are made locally, in the community.

During the recent COVID outbreak, Artisans' Bank has been able to help small business in ways other banks have not. As some banks are overwhelmed with the required portfolio administrative responsibilities, the relationship managers at Artisan's Bank are aggressively seeking new business opportunities within their communities. For example, when one established business operator was looking at an expansion opportunity, their banking institution was unable to deliver. The Artisans' team looked at the business and saw immediately that the expansion could work. They turned the loan around in a two-week period, earning a new customer in the process.

Artisans' Bank works with a wide range of small businesses, including those in the professional fields, custom homebuilding, non-profits and religious institutions, to name a few.

When you are ready to share your business success story and hear more about ours, contact David Ferguson at [DFerguson@artisansbank.com](mailto:DFerguson@artisansbank.com), or by calling 302-858-3312. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender. ■

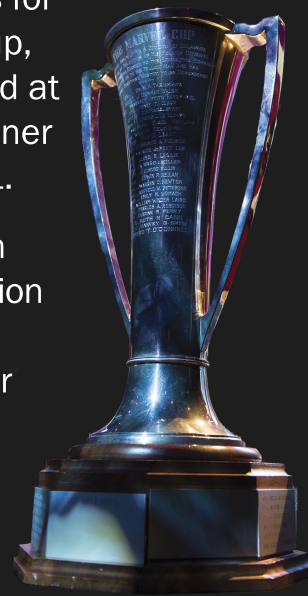
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# Barclays Steps Up to Support Small Business in Delaware

CONTRIBUTED BY BARCLAYS US CONSUMER BANK

AS THE IMPACT of the COVID-19 pandemic began to take hold earlier this year, the citizenship team at Barclays US Consumer Bank started to hear from community partners that a new, crisis-related storm was looming on the horizon. Across Delaware, small businesses were starting to feel the impact from a statewide move to stem the tide of the pandemic. For years, Barclays has provided budding entrepreneurs with the skills and resources they need to succeed in business, but COVID-19 presented a challenge that would require the bank's employees to respond as never before to support Delaware's small business community.

"When word started filtering in about the true impact of the pandemic

on small businesses in Delaware, we began to work the phones to see what Barclays could do to help," said Jenn Cho, Head of Citizenship, Barclays US Consumer Bank. "Our goal was to reach out to our partners and other community organizations to learn how we could maximize our support in the wake of an unprecedented economic event in the lives of Delawareans."

As the impact of COVID-19 began to take hold around the world, London-based Barclays PLC stepped-up to announce the formation of the Barclays COVID-19 Community Aid Package, a \$125 million (£100 million) fund to support the communities where Barclays has a presence globally. The aim of the fund was to support those on the front line of



the pandemic and to help provide relief to small businesses and vulnerable individuals impacted by COVID-19 – including in Delaware, the US headquarters of Barclays US Consumer Bank.

“Across Delaware we were seeing countless small businesses that didn’t qualify for government aid,” Cho commented. “One of our first projects was to partner with the Wilmington Alliance and Cornerstone West CDC to establish the Wilmington Strong Small Business Fund, which distributes microgrants to struggling small businesses to help them make ends meet.”

“The City of Wilmington has an estimated 1,500 small businesses, and business owners were reporting an average 60 percent decrease in sales revenue since the stay-at-home orders took place,” said Renata B. Kowalczyk, CEO of the Wilmington Alliance. “Barclays and other community partners quickly stepped up to the plate to help these businesses survive during this incredibly difficult time.”

Barclays’ commitment to the community continued through the summer to support the Delaware COVID-19 Strategic Response Fund launched by the Delaware Community Foundation and Philanthropy Delaware, which provided nearly 350,000



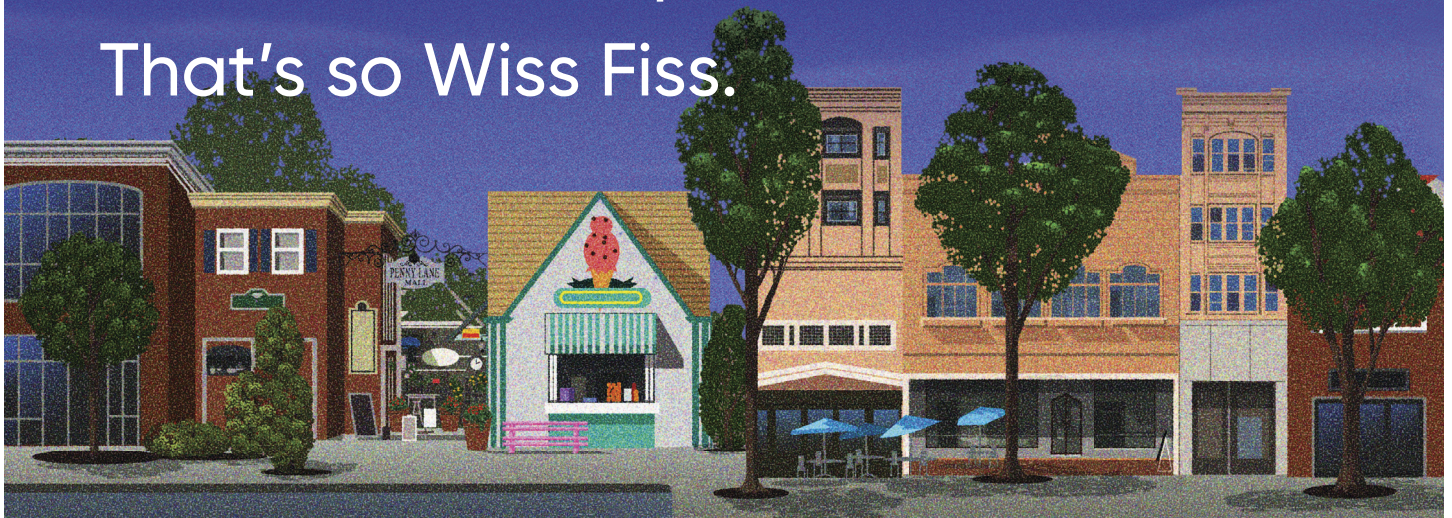
meals to Delawareans, and aid to more than 23,000 families to help meet the growing and evolving needs of families impacted by the virus.

Among the Delaware entities supported by the Barclays Community Aid Package was the Wilmington is Working Technology Equity Fund in partnership with tech startup NERDiT NOW, which supplies impacted businesses with computer hardware and software. Barclays also directed funds to the United Way of Delaware’s Delaware Does More: COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund, The Food Bank of Delaware, REACH Riverside, West End Neighborhood House, and The Challenge Program – to name a few.

In addition to funding local organizations, Barclays’ colleagues continue their tradition of volunteering in the community to virtually support small business, providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to hone their skills and empowering them to expand and grow their business during the pandemic.

“Our job is not yet done,” Cho concluded. “2020 has been a year like no other, and I couldn’t be more proud of Barclays and our partners here in Delaware who have shown steadfast support for the communities in which we live and work.” ■

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# Looking Forward

End-of-year money moves  
for businesses **BY KATIE WILKINSON**

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ONE YEAR AGO, none of us would have predicted the challenges we have faced in 2020. Many businesses may have spent much of this year focused on managing one day at a time. With the end of the year almost upon us, it's a good idea to re-examine your business finances. Here are some tips from Fulton Bank:

### Evaluate your profitability

Start by looking at your income, profit and loss statement, and financial bottom line, which may have changed dramatically in the past year.

This will help you make better strategic choices for the year ahead. For example, if you have one product line that is outperforming the others, you could consider putting more marketing resources into that product. Or if there is an area where you currently have a small percentage of market share but that has potential for growth, you could make that a focus for the year ahead.

### Clean up your accounting and reporting

Take a look at your books and balance sheet, and watch out for any issues in your accounting such as:

- Errors or incorrect amounts — Have all your business income and expenses been tracked and counted?
- Business expenses not getting tracked correctly or being assigned to the wrong category.
- Outstanding invoices — In these challenging times you may have more customers past-due on their payments. Send them a reminder or see if it is possible to establish a payment plan that is realistic given their situation.
- Missed payments — Do you owe money to any of your contractors or vendors?

### Boost your cash flow

Cash flow is the lifeblood of small business. There are various strategies that business owners can use to make sure they get paid faster and maximize the cash in their bank accounts:

Ask for better payment terms from your customers. Slow payment terms

could be putting a pinch on your cash flow. Consider renegotiating your payment terms or offering a slight discount for early payment.

Accept payments via multiple methods. Are you still waiting for checks to arrive in the mail, or are you taking electronic, credit card, and mobile payments? Fulton Bank can work with you to recommend payment solutions.

Schedule payments in advance. Are you paying your bills too soon? Hold on to your cash for a little while longer by scheduling payments so that your bills get paid on time, but not too early.

### Review your retirement savings

Many small business owners get so busy with the day-to-day details that they don't take time to think about their long-term financial future. Particularly challenging times like this past year can also make it hard to keep retirement finances on track. The end of the year is a good time to revisit your plan:

- How much have you saved for retirement?
  - Are you on track to be able to retire, and at what age?
  - How much retirement income do you expect to have?
  - Are you participating in tax-advantaged retirement plans for your business, like a 401(k) or Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) IRA plan?
- Fulton Financial Advisors can help with retirement plans, for you or your employees.

One thing this year has taught us is that sound planning now can help position us to navigate future challenges. Know that your banking partner stands ready to assist you. ■



**Katie Wilkinson** is the senior vice president and commercial market executive at Fulton Bank.



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# ExporTech™: *Strategy for Success*



GROWING | CONNECTING | BUILDING



# ExporTech™: *Strategy for Success*

*By Allison Hayes*

When Delaware's manufacturers are looking to grow their business, they often think about expanding outside the state or region to focus on a national market. But some want to expand even further – into global markets. And sorting through new and unfamiliar rules and regulations to navigate that process can be intimidating. That's when they reach out to ExporTech™, a national export assistance program that helps companies enter or expand into global markets.

ExporTech™ is jointly offered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and the U.S. Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Manufacturing competitiveness in global markets is the nexus between MEPs and U.S. Commercial Service that drives continuous improvement concepts through the ExporTech program to help companies develop a winning export strategy. It is the only national program where each company develops a written export plan that is vetted by a panel of experts upon completion. ExporTech™ efficiently connects companies with a wide range of world-class experts to help navigate the export sales process. The result is that companies rapidly expand global sales and save countless hours of effort.

Since 2006, 233 ExporTech™ programs have been delivered in 36 states and Puerto Rico with over 1,180 participating companies.

In Delaware, ExporTech™ is offered through the Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership (DEMPEP) and facilitated by numerous regional resource partners such as the U.S. Commercial Service – Philadelphia, Export Delaware, the MidAtlantic District Export Council, U.S. Small Business Administration, World Trade Center – Delaware, and Fulton Bank. DEMPEP is the official representative of the MEP National Network in Delaware. The MEP National Network™ is a unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to U.S. manufacturers, fueling growth and advancing U.S. manufacturing.

DEMPEP is administered through Delaware Technical Community College in partnership with the United

States Department of Commerce, NIST, the Delaware Division of Small Business, and the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce. Through these partnerships, DEMPEP draws its resources from local and national universities, community colleges, research institutions, private consultants, and a network of 51 MEP Centers located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. With these unique relationships, DEMPEP can provide its clients with confidential access to their industries' best practices, processes, and business improvement methodologies.

DEMPEP has offered the ExporTech™ program for several years, and this fall will offer it in a virtual format because of the current coronavirus pandemic.

"ExporTech™ is one of the best solutions for companies to create a strategic exporting plan and align it with support resources such as trade missions offered at both the state and federal levels," said Beth Pomper, director of international business development at Export Delaware.

She added that many companies are not prepared for international sales prior to completing the ExporTech™ program.

"Without a good strategy, they are unable to take advantage of business opportunities even when the market is ready for their product," she said.

Tony Cebalos, Director of U.S. Commercial Service - Philadelphia at the International Trade Association agrees.

"So often the opportunities are available in international markets, but the business is not properly prepared to close the deal," he said. "ExporTech™ strengthens the company's processes in shipping, trade compliance, international marketing, legal, and financial aspects to reduce risk and increase export sales growth in the long run."

Cebalos added, "To help exporters adapt to doing business virtually we've incorporated website globalization into the ExporTech™ curriculum to strengthen companies' digital marketing strategies. That's why ExporTech™ graduates are more confident



This graphic highlights the impacts of the ExporTech™ program. Exports are critical to the American economy: they stimulate economic growth, help to balance the trade deficit, and create jobs. For manufacturers, they open up new markets: 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside of the U.S. and while increasing sales is a top priority for many manufacturers, exporting also helps businesses to be more competitive and successful. Diversifying globally protects firms from slow-downs in any one country. International networking can lead to the development of new processes, technologies, skills, and product applications and engaging with customers overseas also spurs innovation.

to venture internationally; not only are they equipped with a customized export plan, they're also backed by a team of ExporTech™ coaches at the local, state, and federal level that will guide them through the market entry process."

So how does ExporTech™ teach businesses what they need to succeed in these global markets? The program combines group workshops with individual coaching for each company, leading to an export plan in a matter of weeks. The peer group model, limited to leaders from four to eight companies, maximizes impact and propels action. The program also helps to build connections with a team of export organizations that help participating companies go to market and implement their export growth plans.

One local company that took advantage of ExporTech™ is Advanced Materials Technology (AMT), a product development and manufacturing company located in Wilmington, Delaware. The company was already trading in India prior to attending ExporTech™, but said after attending they realized they were missing a substantial part of the market.





*“ExporTech™ allowed us to align our strategy with available opportunity to produce significant results.”*

~ Neeraj Batta, Vice President , Batta Environmental

“Implementing the ExporTech™ program learnings have yielded significant improvement in that market,” said Tim Langlois, president. Business is looking up for AMT. In fact, they recently hired three new staff members.

Another ExporTech™ client, Batta Environmental Associates, provides environmental engineering, consulting, products, and laboratory services to clients ranging from one-man firms to Fortune 500 companies. The company was recently recognized with a Delaware Small Business Association Exporter of the Year Award because of its growth and impact.

“ExporTech™ allowed us to align our strategy with available opportunity to produce significant results,” Vice President Neeraj Batta said.

LiteCure, LLC, which designs and manufactures medical devices for medical and veterinary healthcare professionals, was looking to make stronger sales growth in international markets and learned of ExporTech™ after participating in an Export Roadshow facilitated by various export resources throughout Delaware. After participating in ExporTech™, LiteCure developed a new strategy for significant market penetration in South Korea, and implemented improvements that increased the company’s sales growth in Denmark and Korea.

“We were already in other countries, but we were underperforming,” said Andy Wood, vice president of international sales. “ExporTech™ allowed us to improve on those results and realize so much more through developing contracts to protect us, creating compliance controls to eliminate delivery issues, and accessing the large amount of resources that are available to support U.S. exporters.”

ExporTech™ offers an intensive program that delivers concrete benefits beyond traditional export education and training. Companies that have gone through the program report significant impacts to their bottom lines, including:

- An average of \$500,000 – \$700,000 in new export sales
- Export sales generated within six months of completing the program
- Cost and investment savings averaging \$91,000
- The creation of five new jobs per company on average
- Total program impact of nearly \$500 million in increased or retained sales since 2006



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# A Well Executed Strategy Trumps Technology

BY GREG GUREV

YES, I AM AN IT PROFESSIONAL running a technology support company, and I think technology is fantastic. However, a well-executed business strategy trumps technology all day long.

Take Amazon as an example. They are a world-class technology company, but their strategy and execution on a confluence of offerings: Prime, Video, Music, Alexa, and one-day delivery, constitute a comprehensive and well-executed business strategy. They have done such an excellent job that Amazon stands apart from their competition, including Walmart and Target. Amazon is impossible to copy.

A well-executed plan is foundational to thriving. Most have goals, but execution may be inconsistent, poorly communicated, or confusing. If this sounds like you, it is OK. Everyone must start somewhere. Amazon started by just selling books. They learned to walk before running. No matter where you are on your business journey, there are opportunities ahead.

We all want to start fast out of the gate, whether it is a new endeavor, product, or service. However, after a series of face plants, you realize there is more to a business strategy than sprinting. If you want to run fast, run alone. If you are going to run far, you need a team. What is the best way to communicate what “good” looks like in a concise and actionable way?

One way of measuring and communicating what good looks like to your team is through key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs are a succinct means to share how the company is tracking against metrics that mean the most. By steering activity towards meaningful progress, you are more likely to affect significant change over time. Your staff wants to know if they are doing a good job and that their contributions align with what is most vital to the business.

Identifying the right set of KPIs takes work. It requires insight to identify the right knobs to turn and levers to affect the change you desire. But the good news is you can always correct mistakes down the road. We are not shooting for perfect, just better. A good rule of thumb is to measure ten or fewer performance measures. Your strategy, performance measures, and staff communication are the cornerstones of success. After you master these fundamentals, then layer in technology to speed up cycles.

If you are not using KPIs now, I suggest that you start with a simple system to track your progress. Perhaps post to a whiteboard or print and



share a simple document. For distributed workers, you may use emails, Teams, or Slack to communicate. If you are further along the journey, you can implement automated dashboards using gauges that update with real-time data and are accessible via your Intranet or similar secure portal.

For those ready for the real-time data and gauges, seek out your line of business software consultant, in conjunction with your managed service provider to connect your data into a dashboarding system. These systems are great because they pull data from your line of business systems and correlate the data to show trends, values, and alert and warn when crossing thresholds.

For best results, only add IT system complexity after you planned your strategy and identified the handful of variables that are important to measure and communicate. For those ready to take the next step in integrating your information technology, speak with your internal team or managed service provider. If you do not have a managed service provider at the ready, we are here to help. ■



CEO and Head Sherpa **Greg Gurev** is a 20+ year business professional and who has consulted with hundreds of business owners to guide, implement, and manage their technology with exceptional results. MySherpa was a Superstars in Business winner in 2014.



# Empowering Innovative Women

UD Horn Entrepreneurship launches WE Hatch **BY DAN FREEMAN**

WOMEN START THE MAJORITY of new businesses in the US; however, few find meaningful, outside capital to fuel their growth. Just two percent of all venture capital goes to female founding teams and 12 percent in total goes to founding teams with at least one woman, despite multiple well-formed studies in academia and industry that prove that diverse teams produce better performance than all male-led teams.

Statistics like these are not just cause for outrage, they have adverse economic consequences. A 2015 report by the McKinsey Global Institute quantified this impact, finding that that \$12 trillion could be incrementally added to the global GDP by 2025 through advancing women's equality, promoting participation, and closing gender gaps in work and society.

Importantly, the systemic obstacles (less capital, less mentorship and community network support) experienced by female founders are also experienced by innovative women working in established companies. To address these disadvantages head on by both exposing them and offering new content to build skills and tools to address them, growing a supportive network and community, and creating new capacity/funding and thereby unleashing this tremendous pent up potential, Horn Entrepreneurship has recently launched its latest initiative, called "WE Hatch" to empower women in innovation and entrepreneurship.

"Women entrepreneurs are a sizable community in Delaware and the surrounding region," said Gail Ball, who has long sought to advance innovative women and now serves as the programming lead for WE Hatch. "But they are a community that experiences the entrepreneurial journey differently than men experience it. And many of those differences are also significant disadvantages."

Disadvantages have been documented in how investors and other supporters respond to a woman's idea with prevention questions versus promotion questions. Documented differences in how women build, use, and contribute to their personal and professional networks compared to men means different and less access to business referrals, business counsel/mentorship, and capital. WE Hatch offerings will address these and other gaps with new programs for students and the greater community.



Leveraging Horn Entrepreneurship's nationally recognized programming and deep expertise, WE Hatch's inaugural year offerings (2020-21) include a networking and insights series aimed at supporting student innovators and a professional development workshop series for alumni and community members.

The professional development series, which is open to startup founders and corporate innovators, kicked off in October with a session focused on "How to Handle Q&A to Get the Yes." Research showing that women innovators are more likely to be asked risk-focused PREVENTION questions while male innovators founders are more likely to be asked opportunity-focused PROMOTION questions served as the impetus for the session. Simply put, women learned how to and practiced providing promotion answers to prevention questions to get the resources they need for their ideas/ventures to flourish.

Registration is now open for WE Hatch's spring 2021 professional development workshop sessions, which will include:

- Using Customer Discovery to Improve Your Product...and Yourself! This session addresses how to ask for feedback, help others be comfortable giving you feedback, open meetings/conversations, share what you're working on, and more.
- Going to Market with your Innovations to Disrupt the Status Quo...

and Managing Change. This session focuses on techniques and tools for confidently creating and executing go-to-market plans that apply equally to the ideas, process – and technology – changes you’re bringing to workplace associates and your customers.

- Choosing and Expanding your Team, including Co-Founders, Allies/Advisors, Investors and Early Hires. This session addresses how and when to grow your team and find those who believe in you, are willing to deliver tough messages, remain authentic, get the right things done and stop doing the work that doesn’t align with the team’s goals for its stakeholders.

- Ditch the Pitch! Storytelling to Get the Resources you Want and Need. This session challenges participants to know their own story and learn to read the ‘room’ to most effectively find their allies and inspire those allies to contribute the resources needed to bring the story/product to life.

Horn Entrepreneurship encourages those who are interested in participating in, supporting and learning more about WE Hatch to visit: [www.udel.edu/WEHatch](http://www.udel.edu/WEHatch). Group rates are available for the professional development series by contacting [gailball@udel.edu](mailto:gailball@udel.edu). Please also



reach out to Gail to talk about supporting student participation through scholarship underwriting. ■

**Dan Freeman** is the founding director of Horn Entrepreneurship.

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# The Relentless Pursuit of Innovation

DuPont is empowering the world with the essential innovations to thrive **BY ALEXA DEMBEK**



AT DUPONT, our culture has always been about the relentless pursuit of innovation. This is deeply embedded in all we do to act with speed and agility to deliver innovative products and technologies to our customers and the marketplace.

Last year, we created a new DuPont with a clear purpose – to empower the world with the essential innovations to thrive. Today, DuPont is a high-value, multi-industrial company designed to address customer needs with science-based solutions that create competitive advantage.

To deliver on our purpose, we constantly work to strengthen our innovation engine, and ensure it is connected to our customers, as well as applied to meet global needs. Innovation is not a static thing – it is

dynamic and evolves and must be supported with sustainability at its core. That is why every day, our global team of scientists, engineers and business leaders lean into our purpose to innovate new solutions to global challenges, adapting our approach to best meet the urgency of our times and the changing needs of our customers and vulnerable populations around the world. As a result, our teams are providing entrepreneurial insights to keep us agile, nimble, and ahead of the curve.

While our mission is clear, we continue to ask ourselves, what is its practical application, and how do we deliver on that innovation promise? For global innovation, we have aligned and found inspiration from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to identify big



problems that need to be solved now. Then we asked ourselves, what can DuPont contribute to this effort?

The SDGs give us a roadmap where we are investing for growth to address critically important challenges. By aligning science and innovation to these goals, we see a clear path to filling some of the world's greatest needs in the years ahead and for decades to come. We have identified seven of the 17 SDGs where we believe we can make a significant contribution to challenges that are both important and valuable. Think global megatrends like climate change, circular economy, water stewardship, product safety and transparency and health and wellness, and you will begin to understand our why.

Areas such as our innovations in clean water to promote health and sanitation; investments in the AHEAD™ Automotive Electrification program which will transform the automobile industry, increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emission; and our work in 5G high-speed connectivity will enable more connected, sustainable communities. We are also seeking beneficial uses for production byproducts to reduce waste, water use, electricity consumption, and ground transportation.

Still, the best is yet to come. The biggest technology trends allowing us to solve for these issues are across electronics convergence and biotechnology acceleration, using big data to help innovate faster and make products smarter. And clearly, there is a need for advanced materials to enable the connectivity and mobility explosion, including 5G and A.I. The bottom line – we're investing to leverage and position our underlying technology capabilities to enable our strategic innovation focus areas.

Sustainable innovation is at the very heart of DuPont and we're proud

to honor a more than two century-old tradition of calling Delaware home. Over the decades it has been positively inspiring to see the State propel innovation forward by becoming a portal for scientific startups.

We are proud to foster future generations of innovators through our collaboration with the State of Delaware and University of Delaware. The Delaware Innovation Space, based at DuPont's Experimental Station in Wilmington, is an innovation ecosystem that opens new doors for collaborations with global entrepreneurs and offers best-in-class technology and interactions with scientists to transform start-ups into industry-leading companies. Also, the Wilmington Global Innovation Center, opened in 2019, is a place where our scientists and engineers meet with customers, partners and all others who support co-creation and collaboration. The Center has become a true melting pot for innovators from DuPont and the external world working together.

At DuPont, advancing science is and has always been in our DNA. The Delaware Innovation Space is one way we get to engage our community of startups and show our love for the First State. ■



**Alexa Dembek** is the chief technology & sustainability officer at DuPont.

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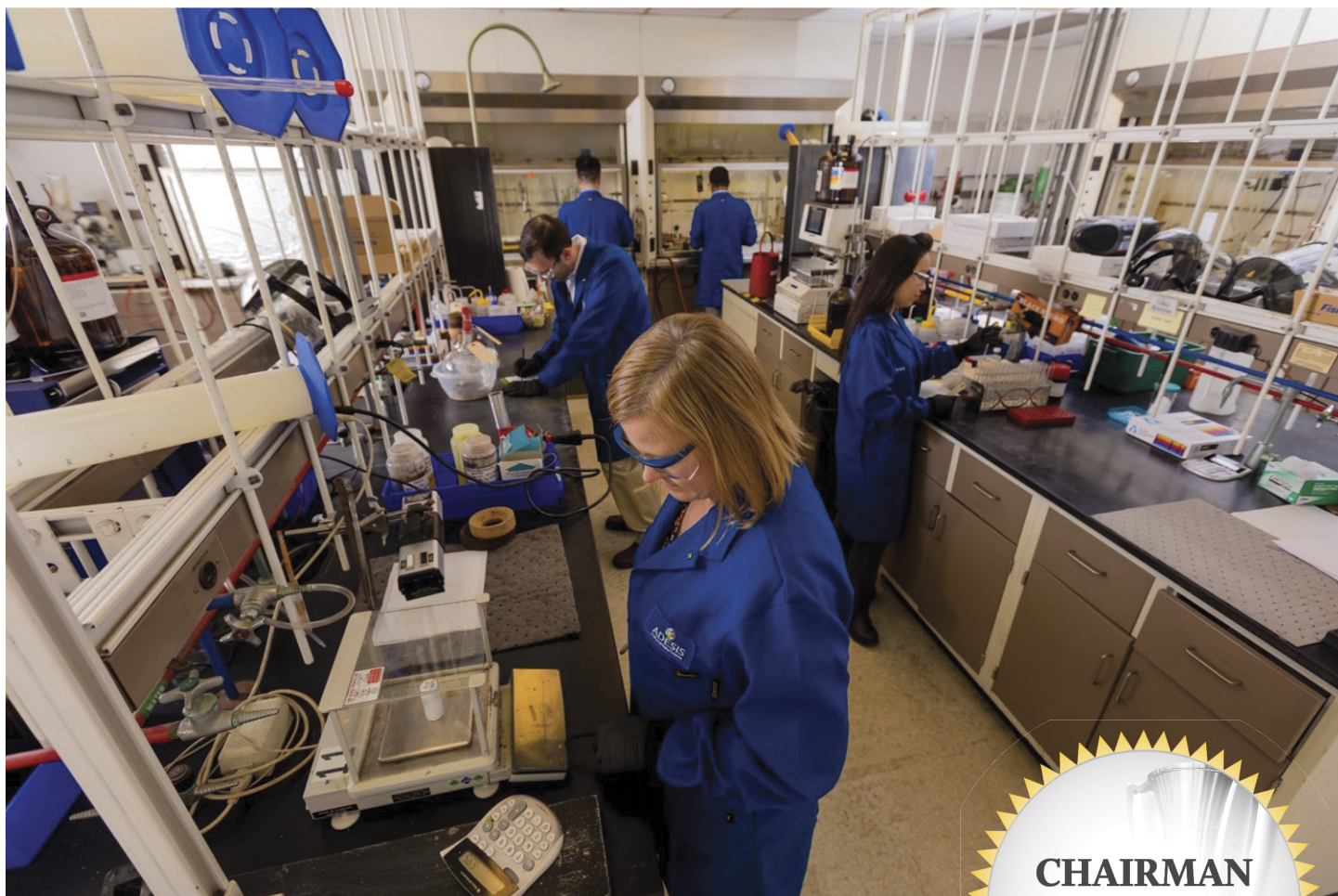
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# Communication. Collaboration. Chemistry.

Meet Adesis, the small molecule chemist experts

BY HELEN STIMSON

RELIABLY AND SAFELY SOLVING the toughest, most complex chemistry problems in partnership with our clients is the core purpose of Adesis. We specialize in organic and organometallic synthesis – in milligrams to multikilogram quantities – and provide expertise in early stage research, scale-up and development, and specialty manufacturing. We help clients accelerate their research and manufacturing goals.

The vision began in 2004. Chemist Andrew Cottone, PhD, now leads Adesis with 110 highly qualified chemists, known and respected for their brilliance and an openness to collaborate and adapt. Through

a 17-year strategic expansion, the company has retained its original culture, anchored in ethics, integrity, values, family, transparency, speed, safety and trust.

### Responding to COVID

We've also kept our operation based in Delaware. Adesis is a proud corporate citizen of The First State. During the COVID pandemic, our chemistry teams made and distributed hand-sanitizer, and donated personal protective equipment to those providing essential services

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beyond hospitals, such as food banks, homeless shelters and senior homes. Our chemists also made sure that all client R&D projects continued, uninterrupted.

"The Adesis team's efficient, customer-focused response during the pandemic has been remarkable," said Christopher Kulp, chief commercial officer at Richman Chemical Inc. "Using a staggered resource and consistent communication approach, disruptions to on-going development and scale-up projects were prevented from the very onset of the crisis. Rather than 'throwing their hands up,' it was obvious that leadership at Adesis had implemented a plan to handle such a scenario, and the buy-in from business development, project management, and scientific personnel is clearly evident!"

### Speed and Safety – Trust Us with Your Chemistry

Adesis is one of the few companies that can turn a difficult whiteboard chemistry concept into a physical product. Unlike other labs that require lead time or put projects in a queue, our turnaround times are recognized as being among the fastest in the industry. If a client needs more chemists, expertise or equipment, we pivot quickly to provide the necessary facilities and specialist brainpower to address any challenge and keep the project moving. When clients say 'let's begin,' we have already started.

The companion to this remarkable speed is our commitment to safety.

The Adesis Facility Safety Program is designed to constantly raise the level of awareness of safe work practices, from the Emergency Action Plan to the Chemical Hygiene Plan. This vigilance extends to the protection of client patents and intellectual property. Backed by the effective use of systems, security and formalized processes, client confidentiality is always a priority.

### Expanding R&D Capacity

The innovative compounds developed for clients by Adesis have found use in life-enhancing oncology, anti-infective, animal treatment, central nervous system, immunotherapy, therapeutic, ophthalmic, biomarkers, skin care, catalysts and other applications.

Chemists rarely leave Adesis. This high retention rate translates into a huge benefit for clients – a long institutional memory. Our teams develop an understanding of a client's chemistry or process, eliminating lengthy project on-boarding. Our chemists function as an extension of our clients' own R&D teams, sometimes working together for decades.

We offer true collaboration with exceptional chemistry teams. In Adesis' hands, the science is not complicated. ■



**Helen Stimson** is the chief operating officer at Adesis, Inc.

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# CULTIVATING TECH TALENT

As Delaware tackles  
unemployment,  
business leads on tech

BY PATRICK CALLIHAN

THIS SUMMER, a group of business leaders joined Governor John Carney and Delaware Technical Community College president, Mark Brainard virtually, to kick off a newly formed IT Industry Council.

The Council was formed to play the important role of bridging information and opportunity between education and industry. The competition for tech talent is fierce and this Council is meant to help Delaware build on its reputation as an emerging tech hub.

Part of this is building the “farm system.” One idea behind forming this, and other councils, is to build career pathways. In this case, pathways to careers in technology. Not only will the council help to inform educators and workforce development providers with the requirements from industry, but it will also work to provide work-based learning opportunities for youth through internships, apprenticeships, and jobs.

Governor Carney, who kicked off the first meeting of the IT Industry Council, shared why this is so important: “Building a coordinated strategy to strengthen our tech talent pipeline is critical. We have most of the elements in place to be a national leader, but we need deliberate efforts to ensure a diverse supply of skilled IT specialists right here in Delaware. I look forward to this IT Industry Council collaborating with companies, higher education institutions, training organizations and the K-12 system to develop the next generation of IT professionals, engineers, and leaders to fuel innovation in our State.”

The concept behind industry councils is not new. In partnership with Paul Herdman, CEO of Rodel, a nonprofit that partners with public and private-sector leaders to drive educational improvements — Delaware leaders connected with national experts like Jobs For the Future in Boston and got a chance to learn from peers in countries like Switzerland and Germany that have been doing versions of this for decades. As part of developing

career pathways for students to explore in the secondary education system, the Office of Work-Based Learning was established at Delaware Technical Community College, under the leadership of Bryan Horsey. It is this office that is responsible for launching industry councils statewide.

The timing couldn't be better. As Delaware's Pathways efforts have grown from 27 to nearly 20,000 students — or half of Delaware's high schoolers, the Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP) worked with a national consulting firm to develop a coordinated statewide strategy to build an inclusive tech talent pipeline. That report and Charles Madden of DPP shared, “DPP has worked closely with Tech Impact Delaware during this research project and is excited to see a group of leaders is coming together to help implement this plan to nurture and support the tech sector. We look forward to partnering with the Council and others to grow a more vibrant Delaware economy.”

Now that the Council has been established, the work is just beginning. The executive committee will be working to develop a governance structure, leadership for the Council itself, and a vision for the broader Council that may include subcommittees, programming, and advocacy. The importance of this work was highlighted last fall through the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's forum, Developing Delaware, and the State Chamber continues to highlight the need for this and other workforce development initiatives in our state.

The ultimate success of the Council will be in the ability of our state to build a pipeline of tech talent. This will take some fresh thinking. We cannot fill all the jobs available here by just relying on our colleges and universities. While we need them, and all our training partners to reskill and upskill thousands of adults already in the workforce, we also need to start as early as middle school in helping young people explore their

*While our higher education system plays an important role, we will need to embrace alternative pathways to meet the growing demand.*

passions. Our high schools have built new computer science pathways that allow students to gain professional certifications prior to leaving high school – and they need to expand.

While our higher education system plays an important role, we will need to embrace alternative pathways to meet the growing demand. To get people the training they need quickly, we need more bootcamps where a candidate can learn some high-demand skills in 3-6 months.

Nationally recognized certifications in areas of need should be expanded so that a student can gain a certification in a marketable skill and then “earn and learn.” That is, be able to use that training to get a job while they continue their education. And apprenticeships, which have been around for centuries, should be re-imagined for the information technology age.

Governor Carney signed an executive order in August that will infuse millions of dollars of CARES Act funding into a Rapid Workforce Training and Deployment Initiative. Through the leadership of Delaware’s Workforce Development Board, under Gary Stockbridge’s leadership, and the Department of Labor, Secretary Cerron Cade is authorizing up to \$2 million dollars toward strategic training in IT. The Industry Council will play an important role in helping to frame the most strategic training initiatives that will result in filling the needs of Delaware’s employers and building a robust pipeline of talent.

To be successful, the Council will need continued partnership from government, community partners, higher education, Delaware Pathways, and employers.

All Delawareans are poised to benefit from Delaware’s tech economy as business leaders see the wisdom in developing a diverse talent pool, including more people of color, women, and learning differences. And with thousands of dislocated workers in the current economy needing to upskill or reskill, the timing could not be better. You can help. As we build out the tech talent pipeline in Delaware, you can play an important role. Become an employer, advisor, mentor or become one of the new recruits into a certificate program or apprenticeship. Help us find and grow the talent that is already here and help Delaware become a destination point for tech talent across the U.S. As a first step, join the movement by being a member of the IT Industry Council. Learn more at: [www.techhiredelaware.org](http://www.techhiredelaware.org). ■



**Patrick Callihan** is the executive director of Tech Impact, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower communities and nonprofits to use technology to better serve our world.

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# Economic Circularity

## Creating Energy with Waste: The RNG Story

BY STEVE BACCINO

A CIRCULAR ECONOMY (often referred to simply as circularity) is an economic system aimed at the continual new use of resources and the elimination of waste. This regenerative approach is in contrast to the traditional economy, which has a linear model of production.

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation, working together with local governments and industry, has been looking for a good solution that would create a sustainable, environmentally-friendly supply of renewable natural gas (RNG) while also finding a sustainable solution to local waste management.

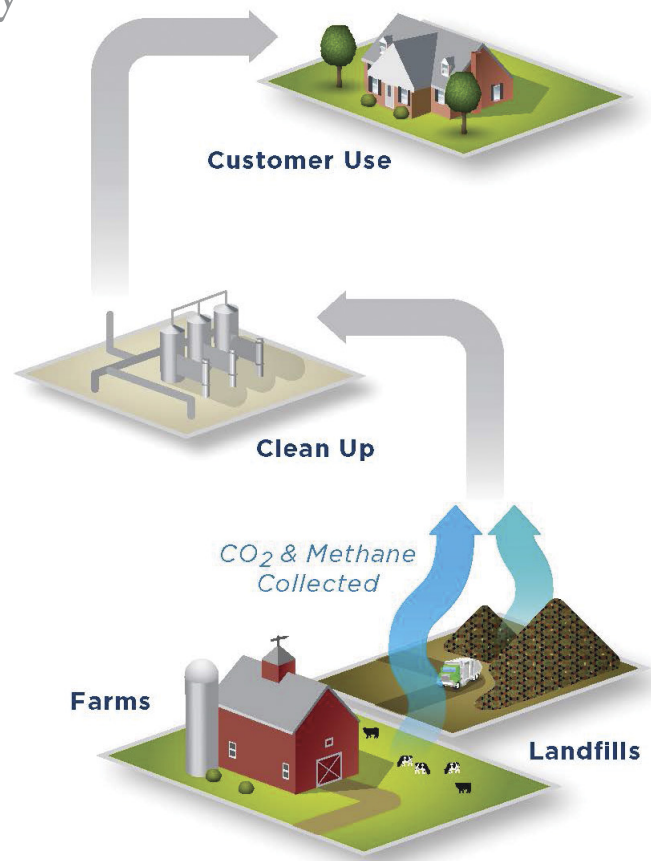
Across the globe and in several U.S. states, turning organic waste, like agricultural waste from farms; excess organics from animal processing industries; and landfills into a carbon-negative energy source, known as RNG, is a reality. The process, anaerobic digesting, uses naturally occurring microbes to break down organic waste into two products: methane and an organic fertilizer product. The fertilizer product, which contains much less phosphate and sulfur than other fertilizers, can be used by farmers or sold to external consumers. Once the methane is cleaned, it can be utilized seamlessly in natural gas utility systems as RNG, creating a circular economic system here on the Delmarva Peninsula.

Waste streams, such as food waste from casinos and restaurants can also be used in the process. Landfill gas that would otherwise be flared into the atmosphere is another source of methane to be treated. Instead of the gas being released or flared, it is processed and reused.

Earlier this summer, Chesapeake Utilities Corporation's affiliates, Eastern Shore Natural Gas Company, Chesapeake Utilities and Marlin Gas Services, entered into agreements to bring an anaerobic digester system to Delaware and an additional one to Somerset County, Maryland. Beyond the environmental and energy benefits, these projects will also support the economy by producing jobs in the Delmarva region. Chesapeake Utilities Corporation is working across the organization to support and promote the emergence of the renewable fuels market and is doing its part to assist with repurposing agricultural and other organic wastes.

These projects represent sustainable growth investments across the Corporation's value chain – natural gas transmission (Eastern Shore Natural Gas Company); natural gas distribution (Chesapeake Utilities); and mobile natural gas transportation (Marlin Gas Services).

Through this collaboration, Chesapeake Utilities Corporation has an immediate and scalable opportunity to further reduce the impact current



wastes have on our surface waters and mitigate climate change forces in our region. The process of transforming organic waste into RNG is a sustainable and environmentally beneficial way to positively influence our region's agricultural ecosystem.

In addition, these projects will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Company is supporting the economy of the Delmarva region by reusing and converting organic waste into a sustainable, renewable energy source.

Applying circularity by supporting RNG is an ecological solution for our region. Turning organic waste, such as excess poultry organics, into RNG provides an alternative to applying that waste directly onto farm fields as fertilizer, which contains high phosphate and sulfur contents that eventually run off into the local water supply.

Through the RNG process, gas is extracted, and then purified to be delivered and used as clean-burning RNG in many homes and businesses on the Delmarva Peninsula and the organic fertilizers are less harmful to our water supply.

It is an innovative idea, an energy resource from waste: clean-burning, renewable natural gas. ■



**Steve Baccino** is director of government affairs at Chesapeake Utilities Corporation and directs the legislative and governmental strategy for state and local initiatives, as well as provides support for the Company's business unit strategies and projects. He also serves on the Board of Governors for the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.



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# Support Your Workforce

Work-from-home productivity depends upon  
responsive IT support **BY LISA DETWILER**

THE TRANSITION TO WORK-FROM-HOME operations has been remarkably successful. About 80 percent of businesses have implemented or expanded remote work strategies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a 451 Research study. Most found that employees can be just as productive working from home as in the office.

Employees have risen to the occasion. In an Enterprise Strategy Group study of more than 1,000 knowledge workers, 38 percent said their productivity has increased while working from home.

It's important to remember, however, that work-from-home productivity depends upon an array of technology tools. Employees need access to collaboration platforms, corporate IT resources, cloud-based applications, and more in order to work remotely. If any of those things stop working, employees will be hard-pressed to do their jobs.

Organizations should provide remote workers with the same level of IT support they would receive while in the office. Managed services programs are ideally suited to fill that need.

### The Remote Support Challenge

While most organizations have some sort of IT support structure, few small to midsize businesses (SMBs) have the tools needed to

troubleshoot IT issues remotely. What's more, most IT support processes are designed for traditional end-user computing models, with employees using company-owned PCs that are controlled by the IT team. Unless the company supplies laptops, remote workers will be using an array of personally-owned devices with different operating systems and applications. That makes support more difficult.

Devices need to be patched and updated no matter who owns them, and patches should be applied within 72 hours after they're released. However, a recent study conducted by AimPoint Group found that just 41 percent of enterprises meet the 72-hour standard.

Almost 60 percent of survey respondents said they update endpoints only monthly or annually, with 15 percent of systems remaining unpatched after 30 days. Survey respondents are less confident in their ability to update remote PCs and laptops compared to on-premises systems. Poorly managed remote systems put the organization at significant risk of cyberattack.

### How Managed Services Can Help

By partnering with a managed services provider (MSP), organizations can ensure that work-from-home employees get the help they need, and

systems are kept up to date and secure. MSPs have a team of engineers and technicians who provide rapid response to support requests. Best-in-class MSPs allow the client to set the priority of each request — and respond accordingly.

MSPs are well-positioned to support a remote workforce. They use sophisticated tools to monitor systems and troubleshoot problems remotely.

But managed services are more than reactive support. MSPs proactively manage end-user devices to optimize performance. They also stay on top of emerging security threats, applying patches and updates to minimize the risk that a hacker will exploit a known vulnerability. If a security incident does occur, the MSP can quickly take steps to contain it.

Remote work is a whole new ballgame when it comes to end-user support. A managed services provider can ensure that your stay-at-home workers have the responsive support they need to stay productive. ■



**Lisa Detwiler** is the president of SSD Technology Partners, a Superstars in Business winner in 2005 and 2010.



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# Best Practices for a Modern Workplace

BY CHRIS BUCCINI

ON MONDAY, June 15, all 110 women and men of The Buccini/Pollin Group returned to our Downtown Wilmington office, after nearly 90 days of working from home. Like many other businesses in our region, we walked out of the doors with our laptops in hand on a March afternoon expecting to shortly return. And like so many other leading businesses in Northern Delaware and Southeastern Pennsylvania, we were able to run our businesses from home, having already moved towards a paperless office with such technology as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

But as one of the largest office landlords in the region, with over six million square feet of office space occupied by 600 of the most prominent businesses and their 10,000 employees, and as a company built on the backs of entrepreneurs, we quickly started focusing on the task of responsibly bringing our BPG associates back to the office, as well as the welfare of the employees of our office tenants. And with so many of our associates on the “front lines” of our business at the properties, it didn’t seem equitable to have certain employees at home while others at work. So we created a task force comprised of professionals from our Facilities, HVAC, Asset Management, Human Resources, IT, Design, Security, and Senior Management teams to gather all best practices from around the globe as well as federal and state guidance, to guide our tenants as they bring their employees safely back into the office.

Studying best in class ideas being implemented in Asia, and being proposed in the United States, we began the multi-faceted work of creating back-to-work plans for all our buildings. The BPG “Back at Work” task force was created to bring together these protocols. Dealing with the issues of how to create a touchless experience from the parking lot, into the office lobby, up the elevator and into and around the office suite throughout the day proved more difficult than expected. Our design team was tasked with designing and installing [3,000] signs and [300] bottles of hand sanitizer; facilities/property management/HR had to critically think about how best to handle office worker’s usage of the office pantry, the use of meeting space, the appropriate physical protection between work stations, the pedestrian circulation throughout the space; IT led research on the usage of technologies, including the text every employee receives in the morning

checking in on their health; our president was personally responsible for figuring out the protocols and most efficient means of testing employees; and most recently HR partnered with a local nonprofit to create learning Pods for associates to have their children attend virtual school from a location near their workplace.

So after nearly three months of having our entire office back to work, in addition to our 1,000 employees at our office, residential, hotel, and sports and entertainment properties, we have had the opportunity to stress test our protocols and have been fortunate to not have a single case of COVID-



19 contracted from being in the office. With over 700 daily construction workers in the field, who never stopped working throughout the pandemic, we have had minimal issues, all of which were quickly contained. We have worked tirelessly to keep our 76ers Fieldhouse open, providing a safe place for over 1,000 young people to play sports every day; the Queen theater, one of the only live music venues in America to be re-opened, offering live music in a safe environment Wednesday through Saturday every week; restaurants such as De.Co food hall, Makers Alley, Constitution Yards Beer Garden, Bardea and IM Coffee, offering food, drinks and mental breaks; and seven hotels. The opening of Le Cavalier at the Green Room was one of a small handful of new restaurants to be opened throughout the entire

pandemic. And most important is the over [1,000] jobs that were saved.

As Labor Day, came and went, we find ourselves to be one of the only businesses back to work in Downtown Wilmington, or the surrounding New Castle County suburbs. Like J.P. Morgan, who recently announced that all senior sales and traders will be back by the end of September, we experienced firsthand the importance of being back in the office. While most companies would agree that they can keep their businesses functioning from the living rooms of their employees, those that I speak with share the difficulty of growing a business, and the very real challenges of fostering a corporate culture that attracts and retains employees. Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan, was reported to say that “the WFH lifestyle seems to have impacted younger employees, and overall productivity and ‘creative combustion’ has taken a hit”. This is why Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos wrote in a note to employees that “much of the essential work we do cannot be done from home,” as they purchased 900,000 sq.ft. of office space in six cities in the United States last month.

At BPG’s Downtown Wilmington headquarters, we have been very focused on safety, COVID education, communication, and more safety. We pride ourselves in having always led from the front and serving as a resource to help all of our office tenants think about how best to bring their employees back to work. I have urged tenants to start bringing back

employees to the office – why not bring back 20, 30 or 40 percent of your workforce? There are not significant elevator issues or social distance limitations when so few are in the office. And at some point, you have to start implementing a back to work strategy.

Being back in the office certainly isn’t easy. We are vigilant about wearing masks, respecting social distancing, and the many protocols that are in place. But our state needs us to get back to work in a safe and reasonable way. We need to keep our local economy going. The pandemic has had a devastating effect on small businesses. Our staying home is destroying the sandwich shop, the dry cleaner, and the shoemaker. So put your mask on, continue to wash your hands, socially distance, and join BPG in getting back to work. Our city, our state, and our small businesses need you. We miss seeing you! ■



**Chris Buccini** is co-president of The Buccini/Pollin Group, Inc. (“BPG”), and founder and president of BPG Real Estate Services, LLC, the entity responsible for BPG’s office, residential, retail, and parking management and leasing efforts.

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# Forging a New Future

Delaware is in prime position to capitalize on the wide-ranging economic shifts spurred by COVID-19 **BY THOMAS J. HANNA**

AS DELAWARE and the rest of the U.S. continues to battle through the challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves in a world changing more rapidly than ever. After shutdowns that carried into early summer, our economy is showing tremendous resilience as we move closer to a full reopening and an eventual return to normalcy.

However, we cannot pretend that we will be reverting to the same economic environment that we left earlier this year. Through the rise of remote work culture, online shopping and the apparent flight of many city dwellers back to more suburban environments, the pandemic has already set in motion a number of shifts that will have lasting effects on the way we do business.

It has often been said that the willingness to adapt is among the most crucial ingredients for lasting success, and accordingly our state must ensure it is equipped to successfully navigate these rapidly evolving changes. Fortunately, Delaware is home to a deep and diverse list of executives, developers, politicians, and policymakers that have already laid much of the groundwork to ensure we can continue to be competitive in the years to come.

Perhaps the most powerful change to emerge as a result of the pandemic has been the acceleration of e-commerce adoption. According to an August report from IBM's U.S. Retail Index, total online retail sales are on track to grow by 20 percent in 2020 alone – advancing its already fast-growing



share of the market ahead by roughly five years.

This momentum shows no signs of slowing after the pandemic and is already causing a fierce race to create the infrastructure to support these booming supply chains. In late 2017, Harvey Hanna & Associates began laying the groundwork for this transformation with our acquisition of the former General Motors plant in Wilmington, which had been left vacant for nearly a decade and become a dispiriting symbol of the state's bygone manufacturing era. Shortly after the acquisition, we began remediating the site and taking steps to transform the 3-million square foot property into a modern business and distribution center – one that could attract the thousands of growing businesses producing, processing and fulfilling orders for a rapidly growing base of online customers.

Today, the very same property (now owned by national developer Dermody Properties) is set to become the home of a five-story, 3.8-million square foot Amazon fulfillment center – the company's third such facility in Delaware, and the company's second-largest warehouse in the entire U.S. The scale of this investment, which includes the hiring of an estimated 1,000 full-time workers, speaks to the state's incredible appeal as a distribution hub – a fact that also worked to its benefit during its manufacturing heyday.

Delaware is within just a few hours' drive of major metropolitan markets, including Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Boston, and within a day's drive of nearly every major city in the eastern U.S. and even Canada. It is also home to a dense population, advanced highway system and a growing seaport that allows for the easy transport of international goods onto our shores – not to mention attractive tax rates compared to most of our immediate neighbors.

Of course, COVID-19 has already resulted in many economic casualties. Many large department stores have already declared their intentions to shut down as the retail climate shifts, and the increased prevalence of remote work is likely to cause long-term disruptions for many office owners and tenants. While a booming industrial sector can help offset some of those losses, it is still vital for the public and private sector to cooperate and continue investing in modern, highly walkable and multi modal environments that will be attractive to new residents, and keep more of our young people in the state.

One such plan is emerging in our native Newport, where our plan for a revitalized downtown is aimed at attracting new workers and their families – most of whom are millennials or members of the emerging "Gen-Z". While these Delawareans will be navigating a new economic climate post-pandemic, we do not believe their desire for modern residences, restaurants, outdoor space and arts and culture will be drastically altered. Through our plan, which includes a new network of biking and walking trails and the reactivation of the town's commuter rail station, we can ensure that we're providing the kinds of environments that will help us attract new residents



Newport-to-Wilmington River Trail

and keep our young people in the state, but also a more advantageous environment for businesses looking to attract and retain a well-educated workforce.

The pandemic has created nearly unprecedented upheaval across the business world and society at-large, but with such massive shifts also comes significant opportunity. Our economy continues to evolve around us, and we as Delawareans must

employ careful planning, policymaking, and investments from both our public and private sectors that will help us adapt. As always, Delaware finds itself in excellent position to navigate these new challenges and emerge from this period stronger than ever. ■



Thomas J. Hanna is president of Harvey, Hanna & Associates.

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## Reinforcing the value of Wilmington as a great place to do business

BY SCOTT MALFITANO

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, our CEO Rod Ward asked how CSC could invest in the community and growth of the city of Wilmington. Although our global headquarters and campus has been located outside the city limits for 30-plus years, we wanted to make an investment to demonstrate our support for Wilmington and its redevelopment efforts.

CSC's business is international, but we were founded in Delaware and want to help highlight that Wilmington is the gateway for state visitors, as well as a great place to live, work, and raise a family. It's also a great location for small businesses, for those looking to establish their careers, and people looking to plant their roots in a place where we can all make a difference.

With that in mind, we purchased the PA Railroad Building at 112 S. French Street in the city of Wilmington and will open a coworking space and innovation hub at the end of October. It's a 43,000-square-foot historic building with six floors built in 1905 along the Christina riverfront and stands adjacent to the Wilmington train station served by Amtrak and SEPTA.

We named it CSC Station, extending our brand into the city, and providing convenience to our customers, employees, and local businesses by being next door to the train station and close to downtown attractions. We look to appeal to young entrepreneurs and invite our clients from New York, Philadelphia, and Washington to use the facilities as a destination meeting and collaboration spot to conduct business. To date, CSC Station has attracted several exciting companies to set up shop, including multi-city CompassRed and Aegis (from Philadelphia), Social Contract, and Intern Delaware.

Our vision is way beyond real estate. We re-imagine collaboration by connecting people, ideas and resources to impact our community and surroundings.

CSC Station will help us bring additional employment talent to Delaware and serve as a central location for our teams to work on projects and host offsite meetings—which we anticipate other companies will use the same way.

Discussions to invest in Wilmington took place before the pandemic changed the way we work. Many companies are evaluating whether they are getting the same or better productivity from employees working from home. Others are looking for smaller space, shorter agreements, and a safe environment. All that affected our decisions on features and amenities we'll offer.

But these changes didn't modify the vision we laid out last January. We've been able to create a bright, spacious location and dynamic workplace. It includes a new open-air staircase cut into the building that visually and physically connects the space; high-speed internet; an upgraded air filtration system; a new variable refrigerant flow HVAC system; and state-of-the-art security upgrades that enable our members to use their mobile device to access the building, their offices, conference rooms and more.

Visitors and tenants will be able to visit the Wilmington Riverfront, collaborate on an open-air patio, and access numerous concierge services.

This investment brings us into the heart of the city and enhances our ability to attract new employees from neighboring cities while reinforcing to college seniors in Delaware and elsewhere that Wilmington is a great place to work.

The Riverfront is a different place today than it was 25 years ago when the Riverfront Development Corporation was established to create economic vitality along the Brandywine and Christina rivers. All of us at CSC are proud that CSC Station will be the first building thousands of people see when they get off the train, adding to one of the most exciting redevelopment stories in the nation. ■



**Scott Malfitano** is a vice president at CSC, vice chairman of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, and chair of both Intern Delaware and the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation. Learn more at [cscstation.com](http://cscstation.com).



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# From Workplace to Social Space

The office building of the future should be an essential part of its community

BY DARREL FULLBRIGHT AND DUNCAN LYONS

OVER THE PAST 70 YEARS, the workplace has evolved slowly but surely. In the past 5 months, that evolution has accelerated far more dramatically because of the health, social, and economic upheavals we're currently experiencing. When the dust settles, the office is going to look and feel like a different place than the one we left in March.

### Better than Home

Today we recognize that office buildings are no longer just containers for people but rather an experience supercharger. Office performance should be less about maximizing workplace density and more about the quality of the space and the experience it delivers.

Many companies, including Gensler, have been reporting high productivity from home-based employees, but are we working well? Are we learning, mentoring, and building expertise while we are apart from our colleagues?

Working at the office provides one thing we have been craving during the pandemic: in-person, human connection. Once we feel it's safe to go back, we will seek out the spaces that celebrate and support the

ways we work together: social spaces that help to build community and allow real-time collaboration.

Being remote, we can also lose touch with the shared purpose behind our daily tasks. When we return, the office will need to offer more meaningful and immersive experiences to reconnect individuals and teams with their company culture. Like attending a company retreat or spending a day at a theme park, these shared experiences rejuvenate us and elevate us from our home-based work routine.

### The Free-Range Workplace

How many people have their best ideas in the shower? Or on a hike? The human brain is at its most creative when we are standing, moving, and mildly distracted by a physical activity. So how do we expect to innovate while we are sitting at a desk?

To spark creativity, we should think of the office less as a single destination and more as a journey of discovery. Our buildings need to resemble the natural settings that we are best adapted to and prioritize



shared ownership of the space and varied, heightened experiences.

Moving between a variety of work settings or between floors gives more opportunities for interaction and engagement. And moving our work easily into all-season outdoor spaces can literally provide a breath of fresh air.

Rather than open plan floors, the future office will be “open section” — providing multi-level settings where our views, movements, and ideas are not constrained by windows and walls. That’s better for our health and well-being and better for the environment.

### The New Ground Floor

Nowhere is a new design approach more necessary than

the ground level of an office building. These spaces have typically been dedicated to building security, support functions, and some incidental or “convenience” retail. All of these spaces are dark and empty when the building is not fully occupied, like evenings, weekends, and — of course — during a health crisis. So, when the branch bank or deli struggles for patronage and reduces its hours, the surrounding neighborhood gets no benefit from an empty building.

We believe that with new ground floor programs, office buildings can extend their operating hours and become a more integral part of the community in the 18-hour city.

Destination retail is also undergoing a paradigm shift, but community-oriented programs like health centers, tool libraries, classrooms, and co-working spaces can serve both populations — office tenants and neighbors — at different times.

When office buildings give back space at the ground plane, they also help to evolve the model of the polycentric city. In a mixed-use environment, the ground level of an office building could act as the community center and an anchor for the “20-minute community” that forms around it. After all, we want our office back, but we’d prefer to skip the commute.

Likewise, a highly regional design language and locally sourced materials will also provide a clear identity, a sense of authenticity, and further reinforce the connection to the community. The future office will be site-specific, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the local climate. It will not be a generic glass box that could be dropped in multiple cities or countries.

### Smart Buildings and Smarter Metrics

Beyond the ground floor interface, the next-generation office building will be smarter and ready to respond to our needs: it will tell us about the indoor and outdoor air quality that day, which workspaces are open, who else is there, and even where to get drinks and snacks. It can call us a private elevator or map a path to other amenities and create interactive displays for us along the journey. Carbon emissions or energy and water-use will be measured in real time and reported to tenants.

Using tools like Graph by Gensler, these building metrics and spatial analytics can be collected, reported, and compared across portfolios, companies, or the real estate industry at large. With a standardized set of data, this information can then be used to make occupancy and space utilization more dynamic and flexible.

Traditionally in office buildings, shared common areas like lobbies, amenities, and outdoor spaces are counted as rentable but not usable areas, and thus contribute to lower efficiency and the building’s “loss factor.” But these are exactly the kind of spaces that can enrich the experience for occupants and attract a community of tenants to the office. In the future, they will be part of the “gain factor” that adds value for tenants.

### The New “Class A”

At the intersection of all these ideas is the need for fresh performance metrics that define this new “Class A.” By adding real-time user ratings, community input, or Experience Index scores to our existing metrics, we can begin to analyze these spaces not just as a series of mechanical systems for supporting work, but as a holistic engine for the community and a space that promotes wellness and social belonging.

The current climate of health, social, and economic upheavals has rapidly accelerated many trends in building design and urban planning, but once we are able to truly measure “performance” in terms of the quality of the space and the human experience it inspires, we can shed the old image of the office building as a hermetically sealed container and begin to realize a new generation of buildings that provide value for the city at large. ■

*This piece was originally published on Gensler’s Dialogue Blog. It can be found at <https://bit.ly/2QGULWK>.*



**Darrel Fullbright** is a principal and design director who helps lead Gensler’s Office Buildings Development practice.

**Duncan Lyons** is a design director and a leader in Gensler’s Office Buildings Development practice.





# Should Yahoo Call Us Back to Work Again?

BY AMANDA BUCK

IN 2013, Marissa Mayer—newly appointed as CEO of Yahoo—called for a return to the office from an uptick in remote work. Although it is not 2013 and the circumstances of 2020 are quite different from that of the 2012 recession, there is much that can be learned in the way industry and economy bounced back from that time in our not so distant history.

It is not a secret that the question keeping business owners up at night is whether to return to the office post-COVID-19. Many top companies were surprised to find that the transition to working from home not only went smoother but was more successful than originally thought. This leaves many pondering whether or not to bring non-essential workers back to a physical office. So, should the C-Suites of America make like Yahoo and call us back to the office—with proper safety requirements in place, of course?

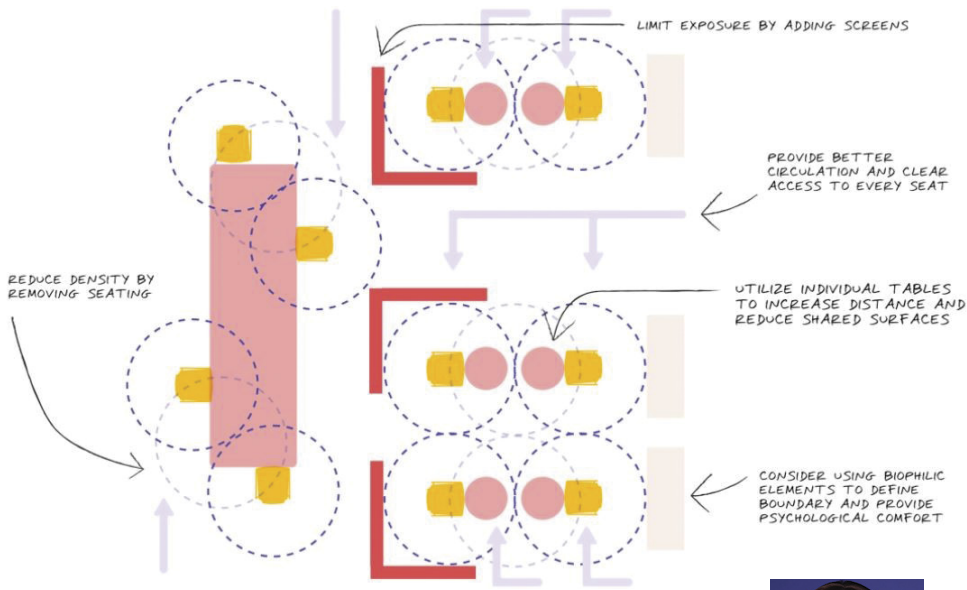
Health safety aside, many thought leaders feel the answer is yes. At the end of the day, or rather the pandemic, the office still very much mat-

ters. According to a recent article by Steelcase 360 author Allan Smith, “COVID-19 has proven resilience is more important than ever. Having a strong cultural foundation and spaces outfitted to promote in-person decision making is key to an organization’s ability to shift gears and resources to support unexpected disruptions. Strong, decisive leadership and healthy teams are the backbone to an innovative, flexible, and resilient workplace that can bend but not break.”

Steelcase is not only the largest furniture manufacturer worldwide, but also an initiator of cutting-edge research on how we work. The belief that they, among others, posit is that the very ability for companies to transition to remote work is attributed to strengths fostered as part of their core office culture.

So, how does this connect to physical space? Space drives behavior and behavior over time is culture. For top companies to continue to attract and retain talent, this culture must be nourished and the physical





office, specifically its proximity to tools and resources, is what will do that above all else.

Experts feel that ultimately a safe return to work is what is best for employees as well. Humans are social creatures and emotional wellbeing depends largely on the ability to connect and collaborate. To safely

accomplish this post-pandemic, there will need to be major shifts in the way we imagine offices. The road to return will require thoughtful planning.

The open office and the spontaneous collaboration as well as socialization it once posited will now need a high-level focus on increased cleanability, proper distancing, and capacity planning for the foreseeable future. Corporate Interiors, the local Steelcase Premier Dealer, is currently partnering with local businesses in the tri-state area to do just that through technology, manufactured solutions, wayfinding, and a diverse platform of products and services. If you have not already, it is important to start this conversation today! ■



**Amanda Buck** is the design portfolio consultant at Corporate Interiors, Inc.

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# Office Air Distribution During COVID-19

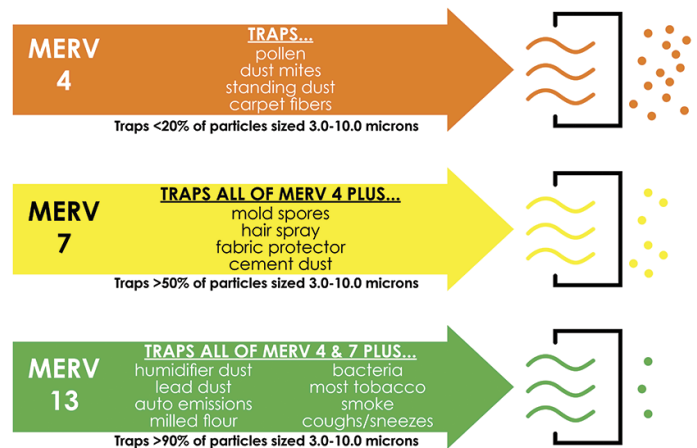
BY BRIAN REESE AND JOHN FARINA, PE

AS MORE EMPLOYEES RETURN to the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding the role office environments play is extremely important. A critical element to any office/workspace is air circulation within the space, and how it can be designed, constructed, and controlled to reduce the risk of spreading contaminated aerosols.

DEDC, LLC, a leading consulting engineering firm with offices in Delaware and Philadelphia, and Wohlsen Construction, a leading construction services firm in Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic region, have collaborated on projects that involve sophisticated solutions to the distribution of air and the control of infectious airborne pathogens within an office building that meaningfully contribute to worker safety during this challenging time.

One of the most important tools to help control the spread of pathogens is by disrupting the transmission pathways of infectious aerosols through a building's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Ventilation, filtration, and air distribution technologies have the potential to limit airborne pathogen transmission. Limiting airborne pathogen transmission can help break the chain of transmission. Methods and procedures to address airborne transmission include 1) source control, 2) source removal, and 3) dilution ventilation. Source control includes the tools we are all aware of, such as wearing face coverings and social distancing. Source removal includes using tools such as local exhaust, increased filtering of room air, or utilizing air purification technology. Dilution ventilation involves increasing the outdoor airflow to the HVAC system and increasing the air change rate within a space.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) developed a measurement scale to report the effectiveness of air filters. Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (commonly known as MERV) ratings are on a scale of 1 to 20 depending on the minimum size of the particles a filter can capture. For example, a filter with a MERV rating of one to four captures particles greater than 10 microns. Typical code-compliant commercial buildings utilize MERV 4 or MERV 7 filtration and are designed with four to eight air changes an hour. ASHRAE has indicated that a minimum filtration level of MERV 13 and an air change rate of six air changes per hour are required to help reduce the spread of airborne pathogens. These criteria have been utilized in the medical field for many years. Additionally, the use of Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) has been found to inactivate microorganisms by damaging the structure of nucleic acids and proteins. DEDC is active in helping local commercial properties evaluate their existing systems and upgrade these systems to achieve the ASHRAE recommend criteria.



Wohlsen Construction is actively working with organizations to construct office environments that limit the transmission of infectious pathogens and meet heightened filtration. Before construction even starts, Wohlsen's Preconstruction Services Team works with the Design Team to discuss strategies to provide for space planning and systems that address source control, source removal, and dilution ventilation. Wohlsen's construction professionals are very effective in helping clients achieve optimal people density in their spaces by working closely with the Design Team to provide careful consideration for workstation configuration and placement. During this time, Wohlsen's in-house mechanical, electrical, and plumbing teams work closely with design engineers to address strategies for source removal and dilution as well as study airflow patterns and air distribution techniques to reduce the potential for cross-contamination. This effort in preconstruction helps establish realistic budgets before construction starts.

Together, DEDC and Wohlsen Construction Company are leading the way in designing and constructing state-of-the-art office environments that help to address the increased scrutiny being placed on the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. ■





**Brian Reese**, Director of Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing, Wohlsen Construction



**John Farina**, PE, Director of Engineering, DEDC, LLC

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# ICYMI

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



**Preston's March For Energy:** This is what your office looks like when converted into a video studio! Thanks to **1440 Film Co** for capturing our story to share at the Delaware State Chamber Superstars in Business event on November 4th! Thank you also to superstars Patty and her dad Chuck Cronmiller for sharing their story about Patty and her bike! We are still head over hills about being chosen as a 2020 Superstars In Business Winner!!



   You and 44 others 3 Comments 1 Share

Check out this golf outing foursome! Mark Baffone (Father of James Baffone '23), our Athletic Director, Matt Smith, Principal Tom Fertal, and Director of Advancement and Alumni, Peter Curcio, represented the Saint Mark's Spartans today at the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's** annual golf outing in Rehoboth Beach, DE! **Saint Mark's High School** is a proud event sponsor of the 27th Annual Chamber Chase Golf Tournament! **#SaintMarksHS** **#AllThingsPossible** **#SpartanStrong**



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"We need to get universal **#broadband** in each and every Delaware community, and get every home to actually sign up. It's critical for us to compete globally, to grow our local economy, and to address longstanding social and economic inequities."

Broadband is a 'must' for economic rebound after COVID-19 - DBT  
Delaware state and federal officials must do more to help bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots regarding broadband internet.  
[delawarebusinesstimes.com](https://delawarebusinesstimes.com)

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**#MemberNews:**  
**@DelawareTourism** launches new statewide interactive street art trail. <https://bit.ly/3hQvvsp>  
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According to a 2018 study by **@TheMfgInstitute** & Deloitte, we still may need to fill 4.6M job openings by 2028. <https://conta.cc/3jcYQ> **@MfgDay** is 10/2. Join us in celebrating this vital piece of Delaware's **#workforce** & **#economy!** **#MFGDay20**



We just held our Quick Pitch Contest at the **#DENetworkingStation** event with judges Mac Macleod and Chris Kenny. Our big winner Amy Johnson of **Action Unlimited Resources, Inc.** just won \$1,000 for her winning **#elevatorpitch!!** **#DNS2020** **Better Business Bureau Serving Delaware**







## DEMEC donates quarter million dollars to member communities for COVID customer relief

The Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC) Board of Directors voted to donate a quarter of a million dollars to provide additional relief to customers facing hardship during the COVID pandemic. DEMEC's member communities unanimously decided at the beginning of the pandemic to avoid shut offs and late fees for customers struggling to pay their utility bills.

"This is another step we can take to help customers during their greatest time of need," stated Patrick McCullar, DEMEC President and CEO, "It is a great example of the power of community joint action, coming together to help customers meet their essential needs during this difficult time."

The \$250,000 donation will be split among DEMEC's eight member communities to enhance their current customer assistance funds. As members of Delaware's only joint action agency, DEMEC members benefit from shared resources that help keep costs low and more money in their communities to enhance customers' quality of life.

"We know many customers are struggling to make ends meet," stated Morris Deputy, DEMEC Board Chair, "Every community wants to help their customers as much as possible. This donation allows us to assist more customers facing hardships during this pandemic."

## Best Lawyers® Recognizes 36 Morris James Lawyers

Thirty-six Morris James lawyers in 28 practice areas were recognized by The Best Lawyers in America® 2021. Inclusion in Best Lawyers is based

exclusively on peer review. The methodology, utilized for more than 30 years, was designed to accurately capture the unanimity opinion of leading lawyers about the professional abilities of their colleagues within the same geographical area and legal practice area.

## Highmark donates Back-to-School Toolkits to over 400 school districts in Delaware and Pennsylvania

Back-to-school kits contain face coverings and shields, disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, signage, and resources with best practices

Highmark Inc. is helping schools navigate the new, uncharted school year by donating Back-to-School Toolkits containing personal protective equipment and resources to school districts across Delaware and Pennsylvania.

"With the 2020-21 academic year presenting unprecedented challenges, we are stepping up our efforts to help schools create a positive and safe learning environment—whether virtually, in-person or a mix of both," shared Deb Rice-Johnson, president of Highmark Inc. "Schools play a vital role in our communities as they prepare today's students to become the leaders of tomorrow. At Highmark, we want to show our unwavering support and gratitude for all that they do, especially under the current, ever-changing circumstances."

School districts across Delaware will receive adjustable face coverings to fit a wide age range of students, face shields for teachers and staff members, disinfectant hand wipes, large one-gallon pumps of hand sanitizer, signage containing best practices, and resource guides to assist with the transition to the new school year, courtesy of Highmark. Signage and resource guides are also available to the public at no charge on the Highmark Employer Back-to-School Toolkit website. School districts eligible to request kits will be contacted and given the option to schedule when and where they receive the kits to align with their individual reopening plans.

## Forbes ranks ChristianaCare No. 1 employer in Delaware

*Forbes*, the popular American business magazine, has ranked ChristianaCare as the No. 1 employer in the State of Delaware in its second annual list of America's best employers by state. ChristianaCare also was ranked the No. 1 employer in Delaware in 2019.

"This honor from *Forbes* is all the more meaningful as our caregivers have courageously served together to help each other and our patients during this COVID-19 pandemic," said Chief People Officer Neil Jasani, M.D., MBA, FACEP. "Our caregivers bring our values of love and excellence to life every day, and we actively listen to our caregivers to ensure that we can provide them with the resources they need to help themselves and our community achieve optimal health."

## Cinnaire Launches First Jumpstart Wilmington Cohort

Cinnaire, in partnership with the University of Delaware, launched Jumpstart Wilmington, a program designed to help Wilmington residents become developers of their own neighborhoods through quality, community-focused real estate development training and financing options. Cinnaire's program is modeled after the original Jumpstart Germantown Program, which was created by Ken Weinstein to facilitate the revitalization of the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia through high-quality residential renovations.

"Jumpstart was created to reduce blight and increase investment in our communities," said Ken Weinstein, Founder of Jumpstart Germantown and President of Philly Office Retail. "By offering opportunities for local entrepreneurs, we can keep wealth local. With Jumpstart, everyone wins – aspiring developers, longtime residents, and other



## Perdue Farms named to Forbes' "America's Best-In-State Employers 2020" list

Perdue Farms was named to the Forbes 2nd annual list of "America's Best-in-State Employers" in Delaware and Virginia. The list, which Forbes released today in partnership with online statistics firm Statista, is based on an independent survey of 80,000 employees working for companies employing at least 500 in their U.S. operations.

"As a company that is celebrating 100 years in business this year, this recognition from Forbes is a reflection of our decades-long commitment to ensuring we provide a safe and inclusive work culture that allows our associates to be successful," said CEO Randy Day. "As evidenced by our ongoing efforts to support and protect our associates throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to putting them first as they continue to serve as frontline heroes in America's food supply chain."

The survey included companies from 25 different industry sectors. The 307 companies ranked among the top employers were awarded as "America's Best-in State Employers 2020."

community partners all benefit from additional investment in their neighborhood."

Cinnaire raised funding to launch Jumpstart Wilmington to promote the growth of local developer capacity through training and development to support neighborhood revitalization and community development solutions throughout the City of Wilmington. Following an intensive search for a

community partner, the University of Delaware's Biden School of Public Policy and Administration was selected to join Cinnaire in managing the program.

"The Biden School's Center for Community Research and Service is excited to partner with Cinnaire in administering Jumpstart Wilmington and together bringing a new tool to revitalize communities through housing



development solutions in Wilmington,” said Roger Hesketh, University of Delaware Director of Community Revitalization, Center for Community Research and Service.

Jumpstart Wilmington will introduce trainees to a community-oriented approach to real estate development. The program components include a 12-hour training program, finding development opportunities, assessing the economics of a deal, putting together financing, strategies to sell or lease, mentoring, access to capital and more. The first Jumpstart Wilmington Cohort began in October 2020.

## Cover & Rossiter announced promotion for Myunghee Geerts



*Myunghee Geerts*

Cover & Rossiter, P.A. announces that Myunghee Geerts has been appointed a Director in the firm. Recognizing her contributions, Marie Holliday said, “In the short time Myunghee has been with us, she has become a highly valued and integral part of our firm’s present and future success.”

## Wheeler Wolfenden And Dwares, CPAs Named a Best of the Best Firm by INSIDE Public Accounting

Wheeler Wolfenden and Dwares, CPAs (WW&D) recently received top honors as one of only ten firms across the country designated “Best of the Best Under \$5 Million” as a result of INSIDE Public Accounting’s (IPA) Annual Survey and Analysis of Firms. This is the third year in a row WW&D has earned this

## Brandon Harvath Named Saint Francis Healthcare President and COO



Saint Francis Healthcare, part of Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic, announced Brandon Harvath as president and chief operating officer.

Harvath oversees all operating functions of the hospital, physician practices and out-patient services. He also serves as the executive director of the Delaware Care Collaboration, Saint Francis’ Accountable Care Organization.

“I am honored to be named president of Saint Francis Healthcare and excited to continue our long-standing tradition of being a transforming, healing presence for the Wilmington community,” said Harvath. “We are committed to leading Delaware through the COVID-19 pandemic and strive to emerge stronger than ever as a trusted healthcare provider in our state.”

Among Harvath’s goals for the future of Saint Francis Healthcare, he aims to build upon recent growth at the hospital while preserving the traditions of the hospital’s faith-based, community-focused mission.

prestigious accolade, also honored in 2018 and 2019. The 2020 Best of the Best firms produce superior financial results while planning for long-term, sustainable growth.

WW&D earned this distinction by delivering top-notch client service, sought-after benefits and professional development across the firm – hallmarks of the Best of the Best.

## Department of Finance and The Precisionists, Inc. launch Autism at Work employment program

The State of Delaware Department of Finance recently began collaborating with The Precisionists (TPI), a Wilmington, Del.-based organization focused on employment for adults with disabilities. The pilot program, about to celebrate its first anniversary, uses the talents of a team of autistic adults from TPI’s workforce to tackle critical business needs within the Department of Finance’s Division of Revenue.

“When properly assessed and trained, people with autism are extremely high-performing employees working in critical and challenging jobs such as administrative business functions, including scanning documents and data entry, software testing, website QA, and data analytics,” said Ernie Dianastasis, CEO of The Precisionists. “When you consider that more than 80 percent of people with autism in the country are either unemployed or underemployed, we are making a true difference in engaging a significant, untapped labor force. We are thrilled to partner on this project with the State of Delaware Department of Finance, which continues to demonstrate leadership and commitment to the community.”

Those participating in the pilot go through a comprehensive four-week training program. As part of the pilot program, the State of Delaware hopes to identify additional opportunities to expand this employment model to other parts of the business, further supporting

The Precisionists' goal of employing 10,000 people with diverse abilities in the United States by 2025.

## Delaware Art Museum receives grant from Bank of America

The Delaware Art Museum (DelArt) received a \$20,000 grant from Bank of America to support the arts in our community. This generous contribution will help the Museum connect people with the arts and each other through virtual and hybrid programs.

Bank of America's gift along with donations from DuPont and the National Endowment for the Arts' CARES Act are supporting DelArt as they provide invaluable, community-centered programs during this pandemic. "Bank of America has been advancing the arts in our community for over 20 years," says Molly Giordano, Interim Executive Director at DelArt. "We really appreciate Bank of America's continued support—especially during this difficult year."

"The coronavirus pandemic has put a strain on many cultural organizations, and it is important to provide our support to ensure their continued viability," said Chip Rossi, Delaware market president for Bank of America. "The Delaware Art Museum plays a significant role in our community and we are committed to assisting their mission of connecting people to culturally enriching experiences."



## Nanticoke Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program certified by industry leader

Nanticoke Memorial Hospital announced the recertification of its pulmonary rehabilitation program by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR). This certification is recognition of Nanticoke's commitment to improving the quality of life of patients by enhancing standards of care.

Cardiovascular and pulmonary rehabilitation programs are designed to help people with cardiovascular problems (e.g., heart attacks, coronary artery bypass graft surgery) and pulmonary problems (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD], respiratory symptoms) recover faster and live healthier. Both programs include exercise, education, counseling and support for patients and their families.

To earn accreditation, Nanticoke participated in an application process that requires extensive documentation of the program's practices. AACVPR Program Certification is the only peer-review accreditation process designed to review individual programs for adherence to standards and guidelines developed and published by AACVPR and other related professional societies. Each program's application is reviewed by the AACVPR Program Certification Committee, and certification is awarded by the AACVPR Board of Directors.

## Dr. Janice Nevin named Citizen of the Year

The Del-Mar-Va Council, Boy Scouts of America honored Dr. Janice E. Nevin, President & Chief Executive Officer of ChristianaCare, as the recipient of the 2020 Citizen of the Year Award, the BSA's flagship fundraising event in Delmarva. The event is chaired by Katie Wilkinson, Senior Vice President and Commercial Market Executive of Fulton Bank. Dr. Nevin was recognized on Tuesday, October 13th. The Eagle Scout speaker was Erin Pyle from Scouts BSA Girl Troop 1111, Middletown, which made the event the first ever Citizen of the Year program with an all-female honoree, chairperson, and Scout speaker team!

Dr. Nevin was presented the Citizen of the Year Award in recognition of her extraordinary community leadership and service as an exemplary role model for our community's youth. This awards ceremony, in its 16th year, has honored many notable community leaders including Chip Rossi, Paul McConnell, Gary Stockbridge, Rob Buccini, Brian DiSabatino, Alan Levin, Fred Sears, Connie Bond Stuart, and many others.





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# CALL THE CHAMBER

The State Chamber of Commerce staff works for you, serving our member companies and organizations statewide. This State Chamber staff directory lists phone numbers and email addresses, as well as individual areas of responsibility. If you need business assistance or information, please don't hesitate to call.



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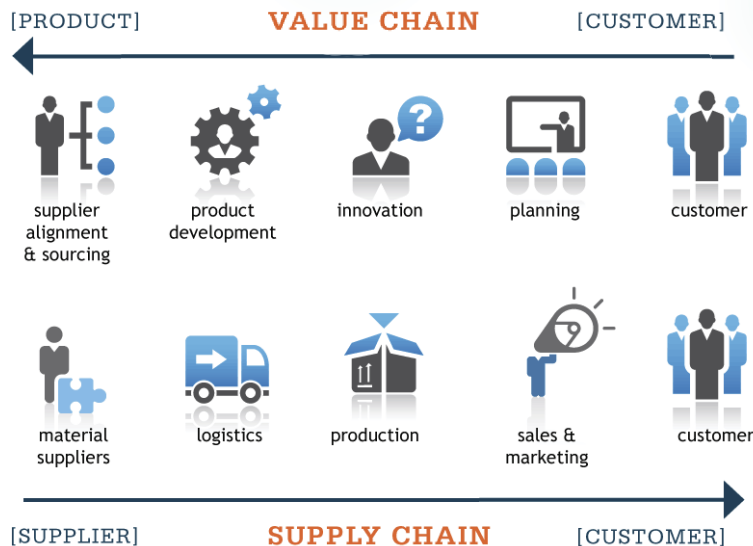
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The mission of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce is to promote an economic climate that strengthens the competitiveness of Delaware businesses and benefits citizens of the state. The Chamber will provide services members want; it will serve and be recognized as the primary resource on matters affecting companies of all sizes; and it will be the leading advocate for business with government in Delaware.

## WHAT ARE YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN WEAKNESSES?

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