

# DELAWARE BUSINESS

SPECIAL EDITION  
COVER 1 OF 4

November/December 2021 \$3.00



2021 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

# Harvey, Hanna & Associates

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
 DELAWARE STATE  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Periodicals

# DELAWARE BUSINESS

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2021 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

# Faithful Friends Animal Society

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2021 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

# Weiner Benefits Group, LLC

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November/December 2021 \$3.00

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2021 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

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*This past September, nearly 100 exhibitors and more than 300 attendees joined the Delaware State Chamber and the Better Business Bureau Serving Delaware at the Chase Center for the Delaware Networking Station.*

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*On the Cover:* 2021 Superstars in Business Photos by Nick Wallace Photography

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# Message from the President



**Michael J. Quaranta**

This November will mark the 23rd Annual Superstars in Business event and we are thrilled to recognize these notable organizations. A lot has been said and documented about the challenges all businesses experienced during the last two years.

However, for small businesses—and in particular those with small headcounts and little redundancy—the challenges have been immense. In a good year, it's hard to succeed. In times like this, there are more wild cards and hurdles than ever.

Here is a rundown of the 2021 Superstars in Businesses winners: Weiner Benefits Group, LLC; Harvey, Hanna & Associates; Adesis, Inc.; and Faithful Friends Animal Society. The Award of Excellence recipients this year include, First State Elevator, Delmarva Central Railroad, Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, CPAs, and the Down Syndrome Association of Delaware. We congratulate every one of the award recipients and appreciate all who submitted applications.

It takes time to review the many diverse applications and weigh them carefully against one another. The selection process is rigorous, but the application is designed to help businesses take a step back, highlight the things they are doing well, and evaluate areas of improvement. There are many deserving businesses around Delaware, so please help us identify candidates throughout the year.

In closing, let me thank the Superstars in Business Planning and Section Committees and our dedicated staff who together make this experience and event a success. Make your plans now to attend one of our favorite events of the year—our sellout awards luncheon at the Hotel du Pont. You can obtain your tickets at [www.DSCC.com](http://www.DSCC.com)!



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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

# Challenges and Opportunities

BY JAMES DECHENE



AS 2021 DRAWS TO A CLOSE, it seems like a good time to reflect on what the past year has brought, and what to watch for in 2022. For many, this year was a continuation of last. Many are still working from home and figuring out where their kids need to be and when—along with (re)learning dreaded programs like Schoology. For others, especially if you are a beach business, it was learning how to handle record breaking crowds with about half staff. While it seems like 2021 was significantly better than 2020 in terms of learning how to deal with COVID-19, we still have a long way to go back to normal.

Of note is the continuing worker shortage. As noted, many businesses in the restaurant and hospitality sector were—and continue to be—forced to rely on fewer staff to continue operating. Stories from the summer described staffs banding together to cover for a vacant head chef position and learning on the fly how to work both the front and back of the house. Some restaurants were forced to limit menu choices and amounts due to lack of sourcing, and some were forced to significantly reduce hours—even close—because there just wasn't enough staff to remain open.

This issue doesn't appear to be going away anytime soon, and businesses must keep thinking creatively to hire and retain

employees. Employers offering significant sign bonuses and pay well above minimum wage are still struggling to find help, which may mean a faster adoption of cost-cutting measures such as automation to replace frontline positions, such as cashiers, along with an even greater shift to online shopping as retail stores struggle to balance keeping costs low with rising wages.

Another impacted industry is construction. Facing similar worker shortages, the industry is soon to be awash in federal stimulus dollars focused on improving the nation's infrastructure. While it will be a boon to many, the fights now begin to secure soon-to-be scarce resources and materials. For example, there are only so many hot-mix plants providing road paving material. With a race to put fiber in the ground for broadband expansion, production of conduit and fiber lines must be scaled up significantly to handle the demand. The cost of steel quadrupled since pre-pandemic levels. The tightrope walk to success will be balancing a labor and materials shortage against the deadline to spend the stimulus money.

Commercial real estate continues to be impacted by COVID-19 and the work-from-home phenomenon. With many large employers, especially in the City of Wilmington, continuing to allow their employees to work from home for the foreseeable

# Legislative Priority

future, the impact on real estate remains to be seen long term. In the short term, the City isn't receiving its top revenue sources—a wage tax on those who work in the City—and may face significant vacancies as companies realize they don't need as much office space.

Lastly, child care remains an issue for both employers and employees. The Chamber is working with the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia on ways to creatively increase access and quality, as it's been shown that reduced child care options result in increased employee turnover and absenteeism—and in the worst-case scenario, withdrawal from the workforce.

While the above may read like the equivalent of a long walk off a short pier, there remains many positive aspects for businesses in Delaware and across the country. The stock market is still operating at near historic levels, and interest rates remain low and look like they will stay low for the foreseeable future. Federal unemployment has ended, meaning workers will be incentivized to reenter the workforce.

Perhaps the most important takeaway is that by and large, businesses learned to pivot to remain successful. Distilleries made hand sanitizer. Some companies shifted to making PPE and have been able to resume normal operations of making their own products again. Restaurants made the carryout, outdoor seating, and takeout alcohol (hopefully made permanent in Delaware next year) a workable business model. There are success stories like these in each

issue of this magazine, including the State Chamber's Superstars in Business winners featured in this issue.

Times will continue to change in the face of COVID-19 and our collective emergence out the other side. Businesses will continue to be creative to keep their doors open, and the State Chamber will continue to carry the message down to Dover on what the General Assembly can work on to help both businesses and their employees be successful.

For the members of the General Assembly, as you're out in your districts eating at a restaurant, getting gas, picking up a bottle of wine, or just out and about in your business districts, ask about the challenges these businesses face. In addition, keep in mind there remain significant headwinds for many businesses to survive, and that those facing the largest obstacles are predominantly small businesses. For State Chamber members, reach out

to your legislators to tell them your story and how they can help. 2022 can be a year of recovery for Delaware if we all work together to address these important issues.



**James DeChene**, Armitage DeChene & Associates

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# Member news & Notes

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### NextHome Tomorrow Realty

BY TYLER MICIK

» HUMANS OVER HOUSES— That's the NextHome Tomorrow Realty difference and the reason Craig and ErinAnn Beebe chose to partner with NextHome in June 2020. Family owned and operated, Craig and ErinAnn founded their brokerage on the same values their family founded Beebe Healthcare, on client service and giving back to the community.

The company's client-centered and friendly approach to real estate is evident in their team and mascot named Luke, an orange dog which you may have seen on signage throughout Sussex County. Luke embodies the company's mission and spirit. Like the NextHome Tomorrow Realty team, Luke is a friend and brings energy and a smile to everyone he meets.

Today, NextHome Tomorrow Realty has 18 team members, and the average agent has over 12 years of industry experience in Sussex County. Their team doesn't just know the area, they are part of the local community.

Whether you're selling or buying, the NextHome team has the knowledge and experience to help individuals find their dream home, acquire a business, or help current business owners position their business for sale at retirement.

NextHome Tomorrow Realty offers a human approach to the selling and buying process by focusing on the client's



transition, not the transaction. “We don’t stop working for our clients at under contract. We hold their hand throughout the entire process whether you’re selling or buying,” said Owner Craig Beebe.

Everyone remembers the home they grew up in—perhaps that’s why they say there’s no place like home. It’s no surprise that many homeowners, especially residential, hold an emotional connection or attachment to a place where they’ve likely grown up. “Our team understand this. It helps our agents place themselves in clients shoes and provides a human aspect to the transaction,” said Craig.

This applies to commercial proprietaries as well. “In most cases we’re selling more than just a business, we’re selling part of the owner’s identity, and the sale is usually part of their retirement plan,”

he explained. “We want owners to be paid for more than the sticks and bricks. A new owner needs to feel confident the business’ cash flow will continue after the owner retires.”

Helping business owners prepare to sell is one of the areas Craig enjoys most and requires significant planning. Craig works with business owners two to three years in advance of when he or she plans to sell. The relationship begins this early to not only ensure the business is sellable but also assure the owner can transition to their next passion with the knowledge that their company has its best chance—even after they step away.

NextHome Tomorrow Realty is about more than just buying or selling homes. They’re dedicated to helping you find your NextHome.



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

CONTRIBUTED BY INCYTE

» Incyte is a global biopharmaceutical company committed to the relentless pursuit of science that can improve the lives of patients, make a difference in health care, and build sustainable value for our stakeholders. Our unique expertise in medicinal chemistry and biology have enabled us to create diversified clinical candidates, the majority of which were discovered by Incyte scientists. We strive to discover and develop first-in-class and best-in-class medicines, and we are advancing a growing portfolio of medicines across Oncology and Inflammation & Autoimmunity.

Our drug discovery and development efforts were founded in 2002 in Wilmington, Delaware, by a team of 23 research scientists, chemists, and biologists. We have since been actively

contributing to the growth of Delaware's science and health care ecosystem. As our portfolio grows, our team has grown with it. Today, Incyte is home to a talented team of more than 2,000 people, including more than 800 world-class scientists who are leading the field of biopharmaceutical research.

We have taken the best talent from both academia and industry to support our growing portfolio, and we currently have operations in North America, Europe, and Asia. Our size and approach enable every Incyte employee to contribute to the success of the company and to deliver on our goal of finding solutions for patients with serious unmet medical needs.

In 2020, three new products from the Incyte portfolio were approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Additionally, Incyte Dermatology was

established in 2020 as a new Commercial franchise in the U.S. and includes a dedicated team of leading dermatology specialists for the development and commercialization of our dermatology portfolio. We are working to leverage our cross-program knowledge of the JAK-STAT pathway to explore the potential of JAK inhibition in a number of immune-mediated dermatologic conditions including atopic dermatitis, vitiligo, and hidradenitis suppurativa.

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.

## DIVERSE SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: **Corexcel** BY COLIN HEFFINGER

» As the innovative world around us continues to grow, so too do the needs of businesses. Businesses are constantly flowing with new, emerging career opportunities in exciting fields from medical to engineering to entrepreneurship and beyond. Many of these jobs require prerequisite courses or certificate programs that better equip the applicant to do their job. Corexcel, a Wilmington-based assessment-based learning business, offers a wide variety of medical and business courses, as well as world-class hiring and selection tools, employee assessments, and certificate programs to serve the growing employment needs of both businesses and individuals.

Corexcel is a family-owned business and was originally purchased by Susan Bowlby in 1997 with a focus to provide course options to individuals working in the health services field. Today, Corexcel offers courses in a wide variety of fields including entrepreneurship, finance, project management, and medical specialties to name a few. The priority of Corexcel is to provide individuals with access to the courses and certificates they need to attend schools and acquire career opportunities that best fit their future goals.

“We get a lot of clients who are closed out of a course or need specific course content to attend a particular school,” explained Don Bowlby, president and CEO of Corexcel. “The courses we offer help people get into the schools and careers they are pursuing. We also offer

hiring assessments to match candidates to specific job requirements across 150 different roles. While these assessments help with selection, they are focused on providing the opportunity for hiring managers to understand candidates better through custom interview questions and tendencies to watch for during the interview process.”

“We’re excited for a new online learning system we are launching called Catalyst,” Don continued. “It provides assessment-based learning opportunities



credit for their Annual Breast Cancer Update. Throughout the pandemic, Corexcel has dedicated time and resources to assist in bringing this event to a virtual capacity.

“The work environment impact of COVID-19 is different for smaller companies,” Don explained. “It wasn’t too cumbersome for us to adopt the recommendations. We eventually switched to the three-day hybrid work environment. Our employees are happy with being able to work from home and having the flexibility of not being tied to a nine-to-five schedule. This has contributed to our productivity and overall employee satisfaction.”

“I was born and raised here in Delaware,” Don continued, citing what makes growing and maintaining a business in Delaware unique. “Delaware has the small community feel where everyone seems to know everyone. This is especially useful in the business world and is important as we continue to serve the needs of our customers and leave a bigger impact on our surrounding businesses.”

“Corexcel will continue to develop innovative products and solutions aimed to exceed our customers’ needs and expectations,” Don reflected. “We focus on one customer at a time and do everything we can to assist them. Our organization will implement world class systems, facilities, and product delivery mechanisms. Our employees will be engaged, knowledgeable, and cross-trained to broaden their skills and to enrich the company. This is the vision that guides us in our daily endeavors.”



where clients can access a web portal to compare themselves against coworkers, learn about their behavioral tendencies, and learn how to better serve the needs of customers—all in one location.”

Corexcel won the Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business award in both 2001 and 2011 from the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, Corexcel has been contributing to the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition since 2008 to provide continuing educational



## Top-Quality Investments Are Key to Our Future

BY MICHAEL J. QUARANTA

» The economic damage brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has been well documented. In response, the federal government has done several things, among them is economic assistance to states and municipalities around the country to stimulate the economy and support businesses. The State of Delaware has received unprecedented stimulus aid that if invested wisely, could have meaningful economic impacts for years.

It is important to note that, not surprisingly, the federal aid came with parameters that largely dictate the options of permitted expenditures. Other federal funding could be headed

our way, so the State Chamber believes it is important to identify investment ideas that could benefit the state for the long term. With that in mind, we asked our Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to meet and discuss ideas we could forward on to Governor Carney as his team deliberates over how best to spend these taxpayer dollars. The Committee met several times and discussed ideas amongst themselves and guests, including the economic development directors from the three counties and City of Wilmington, a representative of the Governor's office, and Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki.

Among the ideas proposed by the Committee include (not a complete list):

### **Making Delaware Route 1 an Interstate Highway**

Many prospective new businesses from out of state inquire about sites in proximity to interstate highways, so changing Route 1 from a state to federal highway could help with development along that corridor.

### **Building a Bypass Road in Sussex County**

The beach area is interested in a bypass road that could divert through-traffic from congesting downtown areas of the region.

### Creating a Brownfield Cleanup Fund

The Committee also recommended funds be set aside to clean up Brownfields so that redevelopment could occur without plowing under as many Greenfields.

### Establishing a Multi-Flag University and Training Center in Downtown Wilmington

In addition to expanding broadband and upgrading water infrastructure, the Committee discussed the idea of a multi-flagged university and training center in downtown Wilmington. By looping in a wide range of college and university programs from different schools, a center like this could provide evening classes for career professionals as well as serving daytime students. A hub like this could also include certificate training program providers and serve as a single destination for area high school students enrolled in dual-enrollment classes. What we do know is that every great city in the world has a center of excellence within its downtown and something like this could be an “idea factory” for employers and employees for decades to come.

In closing, it’s important for decision makers to invest in infrastructure that is both physical and human. We have before us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the course of events in meaningful and positive ways. With careful thought and planning, we can do just that.



**Michael J. Quaranta** is president of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

## Kevin P. Kelly Inducted into National Housing Hall of Fame

» The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) inducted Kevin P. Kelly, chairman and managing principal of Leon N. Weiner & Associates, Inc. in Wilmington, Del., into its National Housing Hall



of Fame during the association’s fall leadership meeting in Houston in October.

The National Housing Hall of Fame recognizes individuals whose spirit, ingenuity, and determination have changed the nation’s housing for the better, making the United States one of the best housed nations in the world.

“Kevin has made significant and lasting contributions to the home building industry throughout his impressive 40-year career,” said NAHB Chairman Chuck Fowke, a custom home builder from Tampa, Fla. “His dedication to our industry is immeasurable and we are proud to name him a recipient of this prestigious honor.”

Kelly, an industry veteran with four decades of experience, served as NAHB chairman in 2014. Mentored in his career by two NAHB Hall of Fame members, Leon Weiner and Joseph Singer, Kelly’s NAHB chairmanship was marked with the development and implementation of training and orientation programs for state and local association professionals and membership initiatives to foster greater participation by young members.

Throughout his career, Kelly has been active in the NAHB leadership structure at the local, state, and national levels. A life director of the Home Builders Association of Delaware, he served two terms as its president—1998 and 1999—and was named

Builder of the Year in 1999. In 2008, the Delaware association honored him with its distinguished service award. Kelly is only the third person to receive the award since the association was chartered in 1947.

His passion for housing affordability policy and production earned him spots on various housing, land use, and advocacy organizations across his home state. Kelly is also president and co-founder of the Leon N. Weiner Education Foundation and served on the board of governors of the National Housing Conference and the board of directors of Home Innovation Research Labs, among other nonprofit and charitable interests.

“Kevin Kelly has been an incredible advocate for the affordable housing needs of Americans and has done an excellent job of building quality housing in Delaware,” said U.S. Senator Chris Coons. “Kevin was a vital connection to NAHB when I was executive of New Castle County, even more so during my decade in the Senate. I am thrilled he is being inducted into the National Housing Hall of Fame with my dear friend, Senator Johnny Isakson.”



## Supplier Diversity: The Key to Sustaining Your DE&I Efforts

BY CHRISTINE PROFFITT

» While more companies are investing internally in DE&I, they also need to prioritize diversity in their external business relationships.

In the last year, corporate attention toward diversity, equity and inclusion has skyrocketed alongside the national reckoning on racial inequality. Organizations rolled out new C-suite positions focused on DE&I, created aggressive diversity hiring goals, and made significant strides toward diversifying the talent pipeline. In fact, according to a recent survey of HR executives by Future Workplace, DE&I is now considered their second most important priority—after the topic didn't even break the top five list in the first half of 2020.

While many companies are making impressive progress toward raising the profile of DE&I among the C-suite and business leaders, the ensuing strategies often focus on employees—ensuring diversity is top of mind when hiring new talent, promoting existing employees into leadership positions, and cultivating

tomorrow's leaders. All are essential elements of a successful DE&I program but there is one important population of stakeholders that also needs to be considered: suppliers.

The vendors a company works with are often an integral part of what drives business success. They can make the difference between a project that's completed on time and one that fails, or be the driver behind getting a product from point A to point B. Even though suppliers may not be as visible as the employees in your workplaces, in today's ever-expanding and increasingly distributed ecosystem of contributors, these external partners are undoubtedly key to your success. And, if your company is truly committed to a DE&I agenda that advances diversity among your stakeholders, shouldn't who these businesses are be just as important as what they do for your bottom line?

That's where supplier diversity programs come in. A business that is at least half owned and operated by one or more individuals from a traditionally

underrepresented minority—such as people of color, women, or LGBTQ people—can earn certification as a diverse supplier, making it a potentially attractive partner for companies looking to work with more diverse businesses.

There is a multitude of benefits associated with doing so. For companies looking to solidify their commitment to DE&I, supplier diversity can send a strong message—to employees, candidates, investors, and the wider communities they serve. New DE&I training or listening sessions on the topic are valuable tools to show your internal stakeholders that you value diversity—but putting those words into action by elevating diverse businesses demonstrates that the company is ready to do more than pay lip service to DE&I.

It's also a means of staying competitive. Diversity and business success are inextricably linked. A 2019 McKinsey study found that the more gender and racial diversity companies built into their ranks, the more likely they were to experience above-average

*About 97 percent of Fortune 500 companies have a supplier diversity initiative in place.*

profitability. When an organization partners with businesses led by those of differing backgrounds, experiences, skill sets, viewpoints and more, they are inviting innovation into the future of their company. It's a reality recognized by nearly all leading businesses today: About 97 percent of Fortune 500 companies have a supplier diversity initiative in place.

As employees around the globe become more attuned to the realities of issues like systemic racism and unconscious bias, they are expecting more from their employers when it comes to DE&I. Couple that with the labor market conditions—the “Great Resignation” that is causing so many business leaders to lose sleep over recruiting and retention and fueling an increased emphasis on employer branding—and employers have a clear mandate: Investing in supplier diversity is a business imperative that can propel companies through to a brighter future.



**Christine Proffitt**

is vice president of sales and operations of Integrity Staffing Solutions, a LGBTBE-

certified national staffing agency specializing in serving large, high-volume fulfillment facilities of leading online and traditional retailers.



## Committee Spotlight: Delaware Retail Council

 BY TYLER MICIK

» According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), 61 percent of consumers say they depend on physical stores being open to meet the shopping needs of themselves and their families. At the beginning of the pandemic, many businesses proved their resiliency by springing into action to continue creatively and safely serving their customers and community.

Not only are retailers economic first responders but they also provide many people with their first experience in the workforce. The NRF reports that one in three people's first job is in retail and 71 percent of managers across all industries value retail experience. A job in retail helps teach soft skills that aid in personal and professional development.

The State Chamber's committees bring people together to solve problems, and one thing couldn't be clearer—retail, like many other industries, is struggling to find workers. Despite

offering increased hourly wages, sign-on bonuses, and other incentives, many retailers are still seriously understaffed and facing decisions like reducing operating hours.

The Delaware Retail Council, an affiliate of the Delaware State Chamber and National Retail Federation, is renewing its focus to support and advocate for retail in Delaware. The group met over the summer to discuss issues in the industry and share the challenges they're facing on the ground. Best Buy, Christiana Mall, Dogfish Head, Goodwill, Meoli Companies, Target, T-Mobile, and Verizon are just a few of the companies actively participating in these conversations.

If you're a retailer, we want to hear from you! If you'd like to join the Delaware Retail Council and shape the future of the industry in the First State, please contact Tyler Micik at [tmicik@dsc.com](mailto:tmicik@dsc.com) or (302) 576-6590.

## NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT:

### Bike Delaware BY REGINA DONATO

» Since it opened in 2018, many people in eastern New Castle County have enjoyed the beautiful Markell Trail—a safe, direct, paved, and flat connection for people walking and cycling between the Wilmington Riverfront and New Castle that includes a new football field-long bridge over the Christina River. James Wilson, executive director of Bike Delaware, reflected on the first time he encountered the “Markell

of qualities. You have to be impatient enough to really want the world to change, but patient enough to deal with the slow pace of infrastructure.”

Bike Delaware started advocating for the completion of the Markell Trail in 2010 when the project was dead in the water. Eight years would pass before the trail was finally completed. “That’s like going to college. Twice!” noted Wilson.

Better infrastructure for cycling is at

Act, an innovative state law that created a mechanism for state and local governments to jointly put in place the interdependent policies needed to spur the development of mixed-use, walkable, bikeable, and transit-served communities.

“The goal is to make it practical for there to be households in Delaware where not every adult worker is forced to buy a car,” explained Wilson. “Reducing the cost of transportation is not only beneficial for working-class households in all kinds of ways, it’s also an incredibly powerful strategy for local economic development. The thousands of dollars a year that those households

save becomes discretionary income that they can instead spend with local Delaware businesses—creating local jobs.”

Given the glacial pace of most infrastructure improvements, Bike Delaware will stay busy improving Delaware’s infrastructure for cycling for at least the next 20 years. Looking towards the future, the organization hopes to also focus on advocacy for better transit. While cycling is a realistic choice for trips under

three miles, solid transit options must also be in place for longer trips to ensure confidence in Delawareans to opt not to buy their own vehicle.

You can become a member of Bike Delaware, make a gift, or just reach out with ideas or questions, through their website, [www.bikedelaware.org](http://www.bikedelaware.org). “Anyone who is passionate about better cycling or improved transit, or local and sustainable economic development is someone we really want to talk to,” said Wilson. “We need their help.”



Trail” (which wasn’t called that then) in 2005. He was delighted to discover a bike path in New Castle, only to be quickly disappointed to find out it was only three blocks long.

Six years later, Wilson left his job as an engineer to take a job at Bike Delaware and work on projects like the Markell Trail. “Advocacy for infrastructure is unusual because of the long-time scale involved,” Wilson explained. “To be an effective advocate for new infrastructure requires a paradoxical combination

the heart of Bike Delaware’s mission. The organization continues to push for investments in connected and seamless “low-stress” bicycle network infrastructure that enables people—no matter their age or ability—to safely get where they want to go using bicycles.

However, the organization’s vision is surprisingly ambitious and extends further to include transit and development. Bike Delaware worked closely with the State Chamber in 2016 to advocate for the Healthy and Transit-Friendly Development

# Christiana Mall: Evolving To Meet Customer Needs

BY STEVE CHAMBLISS

» Step inside Christiana Mall on a Saturday afternoon and you'll find a shopping center that's bustling with shoppers from around the region. It's a hub. It's a place for families to spend time together, a meeting spot for friends, a community gathering place and a one-stop-shop for all needs. Christiana Mall continues to thrive and serve as an economic powerhouse for the state of Delaware.

As the senior general manager, I can proudly say that our traffic quickly rebounded from the 2020 pandemic impact. When speaking with our retailers, it's incredible to hear that their sales are meeting, if not exceeding pre-pandemic sales volumes. Demand for in-person experiences was pent up during the height of the pandemic and it's clear that our shoppers are making up for lost time.

Located just outside of Wilmington, the 1.3 million square-foot mall is home to over 130 stores and restaurants, and welcomes over 11 million visitors annually. An economic driver on several fronts, over 2,000 year-round associates and nearly 3,400 part-time associates rely on Christiana Mall for their employment. We certainly benefit from the tax-free shopping and welcome out-of-state shoppers from Philadelphia, Baltimore and beyond, fueling tourism from across the Northeast.

One of the only constants in the retail industry is change. Our management company, Brookfield Properties, continues to invest in the property to



evolve to meet the wants and needs of our communities and tenants. For example, when Christiana Mall shut down due to COVID-19 restrictions last year, we implemented a curbside pick-up program that allowed our tenants and their shoppers to reconnect and make their purchases. Now that Christiana Mall is back to normal operations, this program has grown and is an additional, convenient method for those on the go.

We have also seen an increased demand for brands that were once only available online to have an in-person, "real" retail presence—what we call r-commerce. Several of these brands, including Casper, Fabletics, Peloton, and Purple Mattress have opened stores within Christiana Mall.

Looking to the future, we are

welcoming 12 new tenants between Q4 2021 and Q1 2022, including two restaurants. Ahead of the 2021 holiday season, the food court will be renovated to reflect a food hall-style dining option with upgraded amenities and furniture.

We are proud to serve our tenants, our shoppers and our community. We are committed to meeting their ever-changing needs and look forward to evolving with them into the future of retail and beyond.



**Steve Chambliss** is the senior general manager of Christiana Mall, managed by Brookfield Properties.



## Morris James LLP Celebrates 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Gift to Delaware State University

CONTRIBUTED BY MORRIS JAMES LLP

» Morris James commemorated its 90th anniversary by partnering with the Delaware State University's (DSU) Law Studies, Bachelor of Arts program, and gifting \$10,000 to underwrite Law School Admission Test (LSAT) fees and prep course tuition. Along with this monetary gift, Morris James will offer mentorship and social engagement opportunities to DSU Law Studies students throughout their collegiate career.

"I often think about the small collection of attorneys and professionals whose collective vision and fortitude expanded a law firm from its infancy to the 90-year milestone that we are celebrating today," said Keith Donovan, managing partner of Morris James LLP. "Our founders

built a law firm based on values that we continue to uphold today. These core cultural values center on client service, hard work, collaboration, and diversity. As we look to the future, it is imperative that Morris James seeks out opportunities, such as this partnership with Delaware State University, to support aspiring Delaware lawyers on the pathway to the Delaware bar. In doing so, we can reduce barriers to success and create a stronger, more diverse talent pool for Morris James and the Delaware legal community."

"In commemorating the firm's 90th anniversary, Morris James reflected on the lack of historically underrepresented individuals in the Delaware legal

community and sought out an opportunity to help in the diversification of the Delaware bar," said Patricia A. Winston, chair of the Morris James Diversity and Inclusion Committee. "We engaged in extensive conversations with Delaware educators from all of the state's institutions of higher education and learned of two critical barriers to success: lack of meaningful mentoring opportunities and fees for LSAT applications and prep courses. Through these conversations, Morris James selected Delaware State University as a recipient of this partnership and gift based on its newly formed Bachelor of Arts program in Law Studies and status as a HBCU. We are excited for this partnership and the possibilities it brings to the DSU students and Delaware legal community."

Law Studies Director Kimeu Boynton of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at DSU said, "This is huge for our students. Fees and prep courses can easily cost them as much as \$500, which is a steep ask for young people from low-resource families, many of whom are already working one or two jobs to stay in college. Knowing those fees will be paid for them provides a critical breathing space that can be devoted to their studies rather than trying to acquire money for those additional costs."

The LSAT is the critical standardized test which all students applying to law school are required to take to enter law school. Approximately 60 percent of all students successfully complete the LSAT. Only 39 percent of students who take the LSAT are students of color, and they currently constitute only 11 percent of all law school admissions.

"There is a critical need for more diversity in law schools and greater representation of attorneys

from historically underrepresented backgrounds in practice,” said Dawn Sheiker, director of client relations at Morris James. “We’ve been committed to expanding those numbers for a long time, and this year as we considered options for celebrating our anniversary by giving back to our community, the Law Studies program at Delaware State University seemed like a perfect fit.”

The Law Studies program at the University began as an undergraduate minor, with approximately seventy students enrolled, and recently became an independent major with the acquisition of Wesley College. The

program provides a variety of courses and early field experiences to prepare students to apply to law school. In 2018, Delaware State University partnered with Mitchell Hamline Law School of St. Paul, Minnesota, to provide students with free access to that institution’s online undergraduate law courses. “We are constantly looking for ways to broaden the resources available to our students,” Boynton said.

“This kind of outreach is exactly what Delaware has come to expect from Morris James,” remarked University President Tony Allen. “From the Greater Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League

to CAMP Rehoboth, the Links, and many other organizations that support increased access for ALL to the legal profession, Morris James has been a major player for decades. We’re deeply appreciative that they have recognized and chosen to support our own efforts in this regard.”

Senior Political Science major and Law Studies minor Emily Campanelli noted that she often hears Law Studies students worrying about how to pay for the LSAT: “For way too many students the cost can be a huge barrier to continuing on to law school, sometimes serious enough to make them give up their dreams. This is huge win for all of us.”



## Offit Kurman, Attorneys at Law Continues to Grow Both Nationally and in Delaware

Offit Kurman, one of the fastest-growing, full-service law firms in the United States, serves dynamic businesses, individuals, and families. With 15 offices from New York to South Carolina, and nearly 250 lawyers who counsel clients across more than 30 areas of practice, Offit Kurman helps clients maximize and protect business value and personal wealth. The firm was recently recognized as an Am Law 200 firm—among the top 200 law firms in the United States based upon revenue—and is committed to strategic

growth in order to fully serve local and national clients.

Offit Kurman’s Wilmington Office mirrors the firm’s growth pattern as attorneys continue to join in the region. The Wilmington attorneys have extensive experience in Labor & Employment, Construction, Real Estate, Bankruptcy, Intellectual Property, Education, Civil Rights, Constitutional Law, Business Law, Commercial Litigation, and more. The office is an active supporter of the State Chamber with attorneys serving in leadership

roles on the Employer Advocacy, Joint Military Affairs, and Small Business Alliance Committees, and the Chamber’s Board of Governors. The firm regularly sponsors Chamber events, including the Annual Dinner and the Chamber Chase Golf Outing. For more information, visit [www.offitkurman.com](http://www.offitkurman.com).



## Tech Impact and Barclays Breathe New Life into Historic B&O Station

### NONPROFIT UNVEILS NEW TECH IMPACT OPPORTUNITY CENTER

#### SUPPORTED BY BARCLAYS BY PATRICK CALLIHAN

» A historic property on the Riverfront in Wilmington is getting a second chance. With support from Barclays US Consumer Bank, Tech Impact has revived the old B&O station on South Market Street into a hub for underserved, diverse young individuals to commence their careers in information technology. The 'Tech Impact Opportunity Center supported by Barclays,' is now a permanent training facility for ITWorks, Tech Impact's workforce development program that has helped more than 700 people kick-start their careers in IT in Wilmington and beyond—at no cost to the students. The new hub will also act as an administrative office for the workforce development staff.

"We have seen an increase in demand for IT jobs as a result of the shift to virtual and hybrid work and learning," said Becca Johnson, managing director of philanthropy and programs at Tech Impact. "Creating a permanent home for one of our most impactful programs will allow us to bring our classes back in person and ultimately support more students and staff than we ever have before."

The nonprofit purchased the centuries-old property with support from part of a two-year \$1.25 million grant from Barclays as well as funding from other donors including The Longwood

Foundation, The Welfare Foundation, Crystal Trust, and Crestlea Foundation. The investments enabled Tech Impact to refresh the interior, outfit the building with new carpet, paint, and place signage as well as new student desks and tables crafted by the local nonprofit, Challenge Program trainees.



"We are proud to support ITWorks with the new 'Tech Impact Opportunity Center' in Wilmington," said Mona Jantzi, managing director of Barclays US Consumer Bank and Tech Impact board member. "Since 2014, Barclays has worked hand in hand with Tech Impact to support its workforce development programs in Delaware and are committed to continuing to work with organizations like them to provide pathways to employment around the world—with the ambition to help connect 250,000 people into work by 2022."

Originally designed by esteemed architect and Civil War leader Frank Furness in 1887, the property was vacant for much of the 20th century until ING Direct (now Capital One) refurbished it in 2004 to be an executive conference center. Tech Impact, headquartered in Philadelphia with a presence in Wilmington for the last several years, felt the property's Riverfront location was ideal for the new hub due to its proximity to the train station, bus routes, and the Riverfront—all within walking distance. Staff and students can access convenient parking, restaurants, and outdoor experiences.

Tech Impact is a nonprofit on a mission to empower communities and nonprofits to use technology to better serve the world. The organization is a leading provider of technology education and solutions for nonprofits and operates award-winning IT and customer experience training programs and workforce intermediary services that are designed to help individuals launch careers.

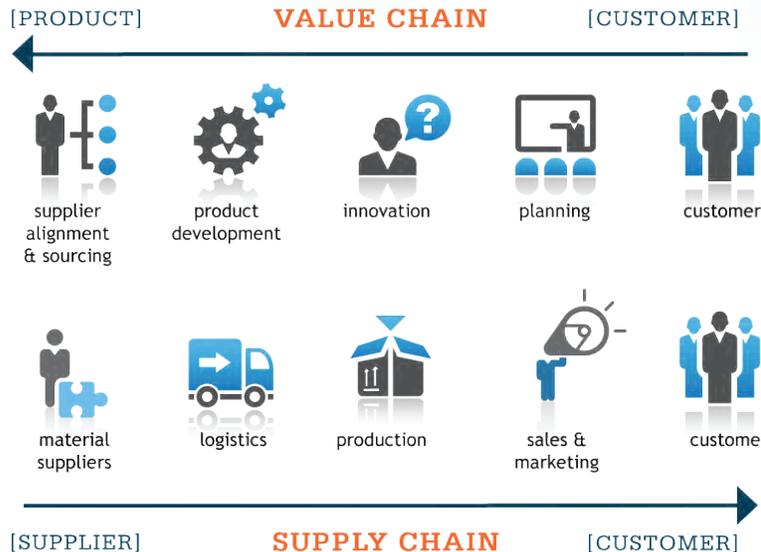


**Patrick Callihan** is the executive director of Tech Impact.

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# CHAMBER SCENE



**Goldie-Beacom College's Janine Sorbello with Brian DiSabatino of EDiS Company during August's Networking Breakfast at Goldie-Beacom College.**



**The Delaware Young Professionals Network volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House.**



**Delmarva Power's foursome at the 28th Annual Chamber Chase Golf Tournament.**



**Attendees were surprised by some special Brandywine Zoo residents during September's Networking Breakfast.**



**Kristen Deptula and Jessica Atwood of the Canalside Inn won BIG at the Delaware Networking Station!**



**Delaware Art Museum staff led guided tours of their art galleries during our October Networking Breakfast.**



**Chris Baker of George & Lynch, DSCC's Mike Quaranta, and Mike Meoli of The Meoli Companies share a laugh during our Evening Mixer at the Canalside Inn.**



**We set sail in August for our Evening Mixer on the Kalmar Nyckel!**



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# WELCOME

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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.



## 2021 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS

### Faithful Friends Animal Society Nonprofit Category

Faithful Friends was founded by Jane Pierantozzi in 2000 to fight for better outcomes for animals that end up in shelters. Their mission is to end the neglect, abandonment, and killing of pets in Delaware and enrich the lives of people by promoting and providing compassionate animal-related welfare and social services.

### Weiner Benefits Group, LLC 1-20 Employee Category

From humble beginnings in 1938, Weiner Benefits Group has grown to become a full-service employee benefits and financial services firm with the goal of creating long-lasting relationships to best serve the needs of companies and their employees.

### Harvey, Hanna & Associates 21-60 Employee Category

Harvey, Hanna & Associates (HHA)—a full-service commercial real estate development company established in 1998—is a leader in providing the most unique and creative commercial real estate solutions in the mid-Atlantic region. Featuring a unique mix of business experience, market expertise, and sense of community, HHA provides custom solutions for companies seeking a competitive advantage in today's marketplace.

### Adesis, Inc. 61-150 Employee Category

Adesis is a contract research organization (CRO) that specializes in all sizes of chemical synthesis, which enables their clients to achieve their research milestones and accelerate their new products to market faster. Put simply, Adesis offers some of the world's best chemists "for hire" to solve complex chemistry problems and turn whiteboard concepts into reality.

### Award Of Excellence Recipients:

- Down Syndrome Association of Delaware (Nonprofit Category)
- First State Elevator (1-20 Employee Category)
- Delmarva Central Railroad (21-60 Employee Category)
- Belfint, Lyons & Shuman, P.A. (61-150 Employee Category)

## 2021 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD PLANNING COMMITTEE

### Pam Cornforth

Ronald McDonald House  
of Delaware

### Kevin DiSabatino

DiSabatino Construction  
Company

### Anne Eidschun

Griswold Home Care

### Joseph Farley, Jr.

Associates International, Inc.

### Martha S. Gilman

Cornell Property Management  
Corp.

### Mark R. Hutton

M&T Bank

### Joseph Nadel \*\*Chair

Colonial Parking, Inc.

### Chip Rankin

milliCare Floor & Textile Care

### Michael Reath

Delaware Today

### Christopher L. Scarpitti

WSFS Bank

### Brett Gilman Smith

Cornell Property Management  
Corp.

### Grace Stockley

FideliTrade, Incorporated

### Michael F. Vanderslice

Environmental Alliance, Inc.

### Shawn P. Williams

Bryn Mawr Trust Company of  
Delaware

## 2021 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

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Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit  
Advancement

### Pam Cornforth

Ronald McDonald House of  
Delaware

### Kevin DiSabatino

DiSabatino Construction  
Company

### Anne Eidschun

Griswold Home Care

### Joseph Farley, Jr.

Associates International, Inc.

### Martha S. Gilman

Cornell Property Management  
Corp.

### Mark R. Hutton

M&T Bank

### Rev. Thomas Laymon

Sunday Breakfast Mission

### Christa McLaughlin

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Associates, LLC

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### Chip Rankin

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### Michael Reath

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### Don Russell

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### Christopher L. Scarpitti

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### Michael F. Vanderslice

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### Shavonne White

Delaware Division of Small  
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SMALL  
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BY  
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# GIVING A NEW LEASH ON LIFE

**Nonprofit: Faithful Friends Animal Society**

BY REGINA DONATO | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY



THERE ARE VERY FEW PHENOMENA that match the unconditional love a pet has for its person. Unfortunately, many animals in shelters never get the opportunity to find and love someone. Delaware has made leaps and bounds in recent years as the only no-kill state in the country, but it wasn't always this way. Just two decades ago, 90 percent of pets were being killed in the state's publicly funded shelters. Shocking statistics like this are what led Executive Director Jane Pierantozzi to found Faithful Friends Animal Society and fight for better outcomes for these animals.

Over the last 21 years, Faithful Friends Animal Society has led the way for better protection for companion animals in Delaware. Their work started with advocacy and the initiation of several critical state policy reforms that ended the mass killing of pets in publicly funded shelters in Delaware.

"Today, we impact 17,000 pets and 24,000 people annually through programs such as sheltering, adoption, foster care, pet-care help line; low-cost veterinary care; free pet food bank, and pet therapy programs," emphasized Pierantozzi. "Every day, more than 300 animals are cared for at our animal shelter and over 200 animals are in foster homes."

Faithful Friends' services do not simply apply to animals in need, but to people too. "Our key constituents include anyone from board members, donors, volunteers, staff, and also any pet or pet owner including cat colony caretakers in need of help. There are no qualifying factors," explained Pierantozzi. "We think of ourselves as a social service agency—not just an animal shelter. Keeping pets out of shelter and with those who love them by providing support services is a key part of our mission."

The high cost of veterinary care is a large factor as to why so many pets are relinquished or neglected. Not only do low-cost veterinary programs help alleviate financial stress on pet owners and cat colony caretakers but they also alleviate stress on local shelters facing overwhelming care needs and intake numbers.

The scope of Faithful Friends' lifesaving mission has grown exponentially since their foundation—so much so that the need for a new facility became a pressing issue. "The deteriorating condition of our current leased space, along with our limited capacity, made it increasingly difficult to maintain the high standard of care for our pets and services," said Pierantozzi.

Through their \$7 million Building Compassion Capital Campaign, Faithful Friends plans to build a new shelter at Churchman's and Airport Roads in New Castle on 20 acres of open land. This facility will house 60 dogs and 250 cats in a 18,941 square-foot facility—nearly 40 percent larger than their current warehouse. Ample trails and outdoor space will also be available on the premises.

Jeff Bross, Faithful Friends board member and Capital Campaign co-chair explained, "Thanks to generous donors and foundations, we have raised \$6.7 million for the new building. We achieved a tremendous milestone, and we continue our focused fundraising efforts



while we build. The pandemic has driven construction costs up due to interruptions in labor and the supply chain. To reduce the need for debt we continue to seek philanthropic leadership from foundations, corporations, and individuals to meet our goal."

Construction of the new center began in August 2021. Faithful Friends hopes to move in their new facility by fall 2022, and the future couldn't look brighter. Their passion and dedication for their community—both humans and animal friends alike—is why they are a Superstar in Business.

"Being recognized as a Superstar in Business is a true honor," concluded Pierantozzi. "It's rewarding to know that our work in the community, specifically in the state of Delaware, is valued and recognized. Recognition at this level makes a big difference in our journey to make Delaware a supportive community for all pets and people." ■



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# FROM HIRE TO RETIRE, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

**1-20 Employees: Weiner Benefits Group, LLC**

BY COLIN HEFFINGER | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

**WE WORK FOR YOUR BENEFIT.** Businesses of all sizes put forth the effort to serve their customers' needs, but Weiner Benefits Group, a full-service employee and financial benefits firm, built its history upon the endeavors of providing a growing array of benefit options to aid businesses and their employees in acquiring financial security and peace of mind throughout their lifetime. Weiner Benefits

Group recently received the 2021 Superstar in Business award in recognition of their continuous dedication to providing personal services to best satisfy the needs of their customers.

Weiner Benefits Group is the evolution of a firm originally started in 1938 by George J. Weiner, who constructed his foundation by selling life insurance door to door, collecting premiums by the penny. Today,

Weiner Benefits Group is only on its third generation of ownership. The professional team offers an extensive variety of financial products and services such as group medical insurance, human resource consulting, medigap, retirement planning, and long-term care, to name a few.

Louis Memmolo, a partner at Weiner Benefits Group with over 35 years of experience in the employee benefits, insurance, and financial services industry, explained what makes Weiner Benefits Group exceptional. “The personal service we provide to our clients is what makes us stand out,” he said. “We aim to serve the needs of companies and their employees as best as possible. Our experience, trust, innovation, and knowledge are important to have the proper resources and solutions for our customers. Providing passion and expertise is what we bring to the table.”

“We try to put ourselves in the place of the user and participant,” Memmolo continued. “The employers ask us to design a plan for a benefits program that provides security and peace of mind. When we bring these things together, they meet the employer’s basic needs to maintain and acquire employees. They’re looking to attract the talent they need, and us designing the program creates great value. We bring that security and peace of mind to the employer and their employees by meeting their basic needs. We’re very passionate about that—it’s what drives us to understanding and serving those needs as best as we can.”

In the process of effectively and efficiently providing the best products and services, Weiner Benefits Group interacts with the owners, HR departments, and employees on a regular basis. This creates the consistent opportunity to understand problems and actively create solutions as they occur. By anticipating and addressing potential issues proactively, Weiner Benefits group can maintain a high level of customer satisfaction and minimize future challenges.

“When creating a benefits program for our clients, we think outside the box,” explained Debbie Shears, a partner in the firm. “We come up with alternative options to fill the needs of each employer and its employees. By taking a holistic approach, we create options that fulfill all areas of need. We like to say we take an employee from hire to retire and take care of everything they need in between.”

“We constantly look to expand our knowledge, resources, and partners needed to serve our clients at the highest level,” explained Partner Mike Reckner. “We search for the next best solution for our clients—whether it’s a new vendor, insurance company, or adopting new regulations. We’re not held down by one vendor or team—we’re always increasing the palette of choices

and options to better serve our clients. We help our clients stay on top of all the regulatory concerns. We’re expanding exponentially in the retirement side of things and the clients are benefiting greatly from this service. We’re always looking for these kinds of things to continue growing.”

Louis continued: “When a business owner has certain needs for individuals, financial planning, or security to group benefits and wellness programs, and you think about what you might need—how am I going to be retirement ready? How does Medicare work? How should I look at my benefits regarding new family members or a divorce? All these life changes impact us and must be effectively handled at different levels. We provide numerous products and services to meet these needs. All of these needs at individual levels are important, and we try to listen to our clients and their employees to meet these needs to the best of our ability.”



“We’re humbled and amazed that we were chosen by our peers and selectors who are top employers in our state and community,” Louis reflected about winning the Superstar in Business award. “To be chosen is a huge honor for us. It is very uplifting and affirming that we were chosen for what we do. To speak to others out there—we are eager, ready, and passionate about finding out their needs to provide the services that satisfy those needs. We’re looking to continue fulfilling the promises that we make.” ■



**Colin Heffinger** is a communications writer for the College of Health Sciences at the University of Delaware as well as a freelance writing and marketing professional.



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# STRENGTHENING A COMMUNITY THROUGH WORLD-CLASS REDEVELOPMENT

**21-60 Employees: Harvey, Hanna & Associates**

BY HARVEY, HANNA & ASSOCIATES | PHOTO BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

ONE CAN TELL QUITE A BIT about a community by the state of its buildings, which are both a foundation for its history and a powerful indicator of its future. Newport-based Harvey, Hanna & Associates (HHA) develops, owns, and manages over 3 million square feet of real estate across Delaware. HHA remains engaged in what is powering the local, regional, and national economies and, in turn, strengthening the future of its communities. It is HHA's hope that they can help attract and retain thousands of jobs in Delaware.

Founded by partners Thomas J. Hanna (president) and E. Thomas Harvey, III (chairman), the HHA team has experienced the transformation of the state's economy over the last two decades. As a full-service commercial real estate redevelopment company, HHA delivers customized solutions to suit long-term business requirements, ranging from 3,000 square feet short-term facilities to 1 million square feet permanent locations. Their commercial business campuses in Delaware include the Twin Spans Business Park in New Castle—formerly an obsolete Chicago Bridge and Iron site; Delaware River Industrial Park near the Port of Wilmington; Creekwood Corporate Center near I-95 and Corporate Commons; Newport Industrial Park and extensive holdings in downtown Newport.

HHA was also instrumental in redeveloping the Boxwood Road site—the former General Motors Wilmington Assembly Plant—now home to a world-class Amazon facility. HHA was also recognized for redeveloping the award-winning Lighthouse Cove (formerly Ruddertowne) residential and commercial “mixed use” resort destination in Dewey Beach, which includes Delaware's first Hyatt branded hotel—Hyatt Place Dewey Beach.

“We really enjoy making our community stronger through sound planning and execution of responsible redevelopment projects here in Delaware—a stronger community through a stronger economy is a philosophy in which we believe,” stated Thomas J. Hanna, president of Harvey, Hanna & Associates. “We have had the good fortune of being able to collaborate with many of our local, county, and state officials towards helping to transform various landmark sites throughout Delaware to higher and better uses—from the General Motors Boxwood Road facility to our coastal towns and in-between.”

“As proud as we are about the transformation of the defunct former General Motors facility on Boxwood Road, we are equally as proud of creating the first-of-its-kind food assist closet at Richey Elementary School, where 65 percent of the children live at or below the poverty level and one in four kids do not know from where they may find their next meal, he continued. “We very rarely celebrate our successes without acknowledging those around us who can benefit from our support.”

## COMMUNITY STRONG

The HHA commitment to community is a core company value. From generation to generation, philanthropy consistently played a pivotal role

throughout the company's evolution. Each member of the HHA leadership team serves on various nonprofit boards, including but not limited to: American Heart Association, Cancer Support Community Delaware, SL24-UnLocke the Light, The Independence School, and Theatre N.

To help consolidate and propel the company's charitable efforts, the HHA team created an in-house 501(c)3 charitable organization, The Delaware KIDS Fund, in 2008. The Delaware KIDS Fund (Kids In Distressed Situations) was established to help provide essential goods and services for at-risk children in Delaware. The Delaware KIDS Fund provides support to assist in overcoming these challenges and offers children new opportunities to succeed. The Delaware KIDS Fund is a grassroots, volunteer-driven initiative with 100 percent of all fundraising dollars designated to assist programs and services that directly impact at-risk children in Delaware.



*Image contributed by Harvey, Hanna & Associates*

The Delaware KIDS Fund has manifested its success over the past decade through “Operation Warm Newport” in which the team has worked with the local community to help purchase new coats for 8,600 elementary school students at 15 different schools located in areas of need. The KIDS Fund also operates two school food pantries at local elementary schools as part of the KIDS Fund Hunger Initiative. Three additional pantries are planned for opening in 2022, and HHA/Delaware KIDS Fund will help address food security challenges in Delaware in the decade to come.

“These initiatives inspire confidence, boost self-esteem, improve peer acceptance, and empower young minds,” said Ryan Kennedy, executive director the Delaware KIDS Fund. “As business leaders and community advocates, we hope to inspire the entire community to get involved and to continue to strengthen the future of our community—our children.”

World-class redevelopment, superior property management, creative solutions, and sense of community: these are the hallmarks of HHA for today, tomorrow, and beyond. ■



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# BUILDING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

**61-150 Employees: Adesis, Inc.**

BY KELLY BASILE | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

WHEN ASKED WHAT MAKES ADESIS a Superstar in Business, president and founder, Andrew Cottone simply replied, “Our people.”

Founded in 2005, Adesis has grown to more than 140 employees—90 percent of which are chemists. “Think of us as some of the best chemists in the world for hire,” explained Cottone of Adesis—a contract research organization (CRO) that provides top-tier chemical research, development, and manufacturing to its clients. “We are one of few companies that can take a chemistry whiteboard concept and make it a reality.”

Specializing in chemical synthesis in all sizes, Adesis enables its clients to achieve their research milestones and accelerate their new products to market faster. For example, Adesis expands clients’ chemical R&D capacity by discovering new molecules, developing processes to efficiently scale-up chemical production, and manufacturing larger quantities of chemicals. Their chemistry can be found in cancer drugs, electronic devices, plastics, specialized materials, and even contact lenses to name a few.

“We are not a supplier or vendor; we are a strategic technical partner,” said Cottone.

Adesis’ ability to safely resolve complex chemistry problems is due to a group of tenacious problem solvers committed to the common goal of driving the business forward by offering innovative solutions to clients—from start to finish.

As the company’s leader, Cottone has a goal to retain his employees from the beginning to the end of their careers. “We nurture longevity. Our goal is to hire and retire them!”

To accomplish this goal, cultivating positive employee morale is important to Cottone because he sees how it impacts overall performance and success. The company offers many training and leadership development opportunities but also builds employee kinship and camaraderie by hosting regular social events like happy hours, family picnics, and company softball games.

“Our people are the heart of our success, so we strive to nurture an environment focused on continuous growth,” said Cottone. “Ultimately, we want our team to be proud of the company we are building together, and we work hard to make sure our culture fosters that pride.”

And the proof is in the numbers—a quarter of Adesis’ people have been with the company for more than ten years.

When asked why grow his business in Delaware, Cottone shared that “Adesis could locate anywhere, but there’s nowhere in the world that offers the resources to do high-level research, the talent, and the speed

*“Why Adesis? Absolute trust and reliability—I have full faith in their chemistry skills.”*

— Client Testimonial

to get things done like in Delaware.” Proving that point, the company recently expanded its research and innovation capabilities with new lab space at Wilmington’s Experimental Station.

Cottone believes that Delaware moves at the speed of an entrepreneur. Its central location also allows Adesis to be close to many of its clients. “Delaware is the epicenter of our industry.”

Delaware has one of the highest Ph.D.’s per capita in the country, a vibrant science community, and state-of-the-art laboratories. All of this combined offers a company like Adesis the perfect climate to thrive.

“We attract chemists from around the world to work for Adesis here in Delaware,” explained Cottone. “But we also seek to hire skilled Delawareans from diverse talent pools to bring new ideas to the table.”

Having grown up in Philadelphia’s inner-city, Cottone has a focus on communities that are under-represented in the science labor pool such as African Americans, Latinx, and women. He also believes the success of



*“Adesis’ high staff retention is telling—it matters. They must love their work. It’s indicative of a certain culture and trust.”*

— Client Testimonial

STEM-based companies is dependent on the next generation of emerging talent; this led him to be a founding member of Intern Delaware, support area high school science projects and tours of Adesis, build a strong internship program at Adesis, and create a proprietary program to nurture and encourage a love of science among Delaware’s kindergarten students.

“Adesis is a team of talented scientists and chemists respected for their brilliance in innovation. They are grounded in an environment of collaboration toward the goal of delivering remarkable solutions for our clients,” Cottone concluded. “I’m proud to say the work they do makes a difference in people’s lives.” ■

# WHAT IT TAKES ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ TO BE A SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS



## ★ The Organization

- ★ Must be a member of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, in business for a minimum of three years and employ 150 or less
- ★ Illustrate that the organization has a clear mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles or strategies for success that is demonstrated to not only business and community partners but also to those within the organization
- ★ A company that is always searching for strategies to continue to grow, prosper and foster a better community for its employees and Delawareans

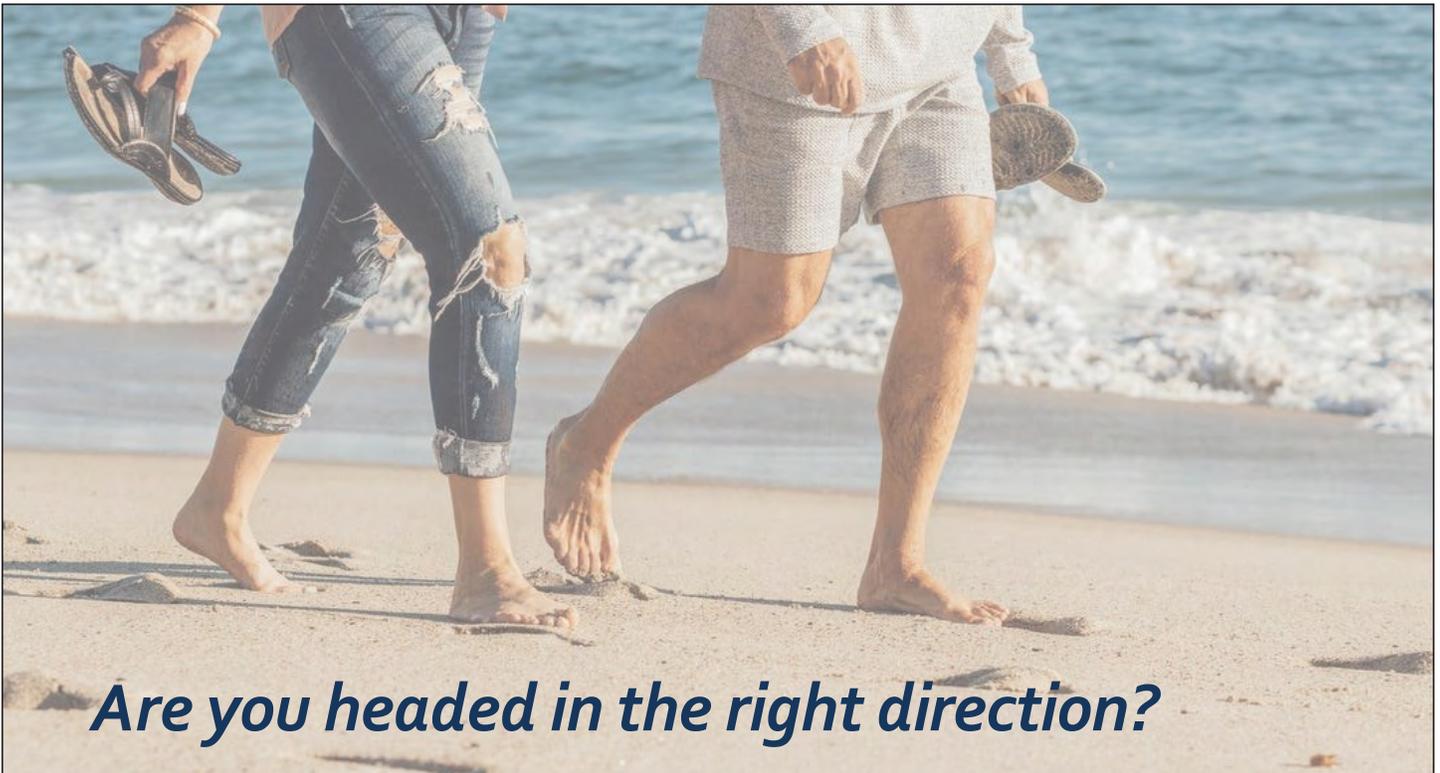
## ★ The Application

- ★ Tell a story of passion and how the organization came to be
- ★ Provide detailed examples of how the organization has continued to sustain and grow through recent economic challenges
- ★ Show profitability and viability of the organization
- ★ Explain why the organization stands apart from the rest
- ★ Present challenges and demonstrate how the organization solved those issues
- ★ Prove a commitment to the community
- ★ Share customer, employee and community partner testimonials

## ★ The Selection

- ★ Withstand a review process comprised of 15-20 prominent leaders in the community
- ★ Tell a compelling story that stands out from the rest





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# 23<sup>RD</sup> Annual Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business Awards



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Dick Dubroff / Final Focus

\*As of 10/19/2021



# Stepping up when it matters most

Last year, we committed \$1.25 billion over five years to build on our long-standing work in support of driving racial equality and economic opportunity. To date, we've directly funded or invested nearly \$400 million of this commitment, in addition to other ways we continue to make an impact in our communities.

**Our actions include:**

- \$36 million to 21 Minority Deposit Institutions (MDIs) and Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) banks that support minority-owned businesses. This is in addition to our approximately \$100 million in deposits to MDIs and our existing \$1.8 billion CDFI portfolio.
- \$300 million to 100 equity funds to provide capital to diverse entrepreneurs and small business owners
- \$10 million grant to fund the Center for Black Entrepreneurship (CBE), in partnership with Spelman and Morehouse colleges
- \$25 million to 21 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) and community colleges in support of job skilling and placement
- Establishing new partnerships and coalitions focused on building skills and creating job opportunities for people of color
- \$60 million to increase access to capital and career opportunities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) affordable housing developers
- 33 million+ masks, more than 272,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and 8 million gloves to communities in need
- \$1.35 million in grants to support mental health initiatives for young people of color
- \$25 million founding partnership in the Smithsonian's new initiative on race, Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past

These are just some examples of how we're working with community partners, business leaders, experts and academics across the public and private sectors to continue to drive progress.

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Chip Rossi  
President, Bank of America Delaware



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# Differentiating Your Business

The role of financial wellness **BY KATIE K. WILKINSON**

ACQUIRING AND MAINTAINING ENGAGED, satisfied employees is key to any business's success. In today's labor environment, with top talent in high demand, employers are dealing with increased turnover while struggling to attract qualified candidates. In addition to competitive compensation and a medical package, implementing benefits like financial wellness and education programs can have a positive impact—on employees' lives, on customer care and service, and ultimately, on the stability of a company's bottom line. Your bank can be a key partner in developing financial programs and education.

Employees experiencing monetary stress and anxiety are more likely to have health issues, impacting attendance and customer service. According to the Society for Human Resource



Management, financial stress results in a 34 percent increase in absenteeism and tardiness. Employees who worry about money miss nearly twice as many days per year as their unstressed colleagues.

Financial uncertainty not only affects attendance and productivity at work but can also result in lower 401(k) participation, increased requests for payroll advances and loans, and resignations driven by competitive offers of attractive sign-on bonuses and raises. These are just a few examples of how financial anxiety and stress impact employees, customer service, and operational costs.

While employees often bring specialized education or training to their roles, many have taken little or no coursework in financial literacy. Offering employees personal

*While employees often bring specialized education or training to their roles, many have taken little or no coursework in financial literacy.*

financial education and development in such areas as budgeting, loan management, investment strategies, and retirement planning can offer significant long-term benefits.

Here are a few practical steps to consider:

**Assess your current benefit offerings.** Start by making a list of the specific benefits and incentives you offer—big and small. Then seek out information on what competitors offer and look for gaps and/or areas of opportunity to enhance your total compensation package.

**Survey your employees.** Whether you create a formal survey for employees or meet with individuals one-on-one, take the time to understand the unique needs of your employees. What are they looking for in your workplace? What type of benefits or services are important to them?

**Leverage the resources of your financial institution.** Fulton Bank offers a variety of resources including discounted employee banking programs and financial education, cash flow tools, and retirement service planning to help you attract and retain great employees.

**Implement a comprehensive financial wellness program.** Provide resources, products, and services that can illustrate the additional value your business offers employees, such as financial workshops and events, digital tools, a 401(k) retirement plan, and investment management services. Create ways for employees to easily participate in financial education programs by making them accessible and flexible, such as lunch-and-learn sessions.

The most effective financial wellness and education programs are based on a thorough understanding of the unique financial needs of employees at all levels of your business. Such programs can help build strong financial habits and improve employee financial security by providing solutions targeted to each situation and life stage. For a business, this ultimately supports employee recruitment and retention, as well as the customer experience. ■

*Fulton Bank, N.A. Member FDIC. This article references source material created by third parties. Fulton Bank is not affiliated with any of the parties mentioned in this article.*



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

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# We Are Delaware

Building prosperity through partnership

CONTRIBUTED BY BARCLAYS US CONSUMER BANK | PHOTO BY TONY HOFFER

AT BARCLAYS, we are a partner-first organization, and we believe in building partnerships that make us all stronger as Delawareans. During these trying times, we are reinforcing our commitment to our customers, our partners, and the state we call home through investments in our people, our infrastructure, and community-building initiatives that will lead to greater prosperity for all.

Barclays recently demonstrated our long-term commitment to Delaware with news that we are purchasing our headquarters building in Wilmington. This investment, along with major renovations, will provide our colleagues with a state-of-the-art workplace and solidifies our place as a dedicated contributor to the Delaware economy.

We are also hiring in Wilmington. As part of a nationwide initiative to hire more than 1,000 new colleagues across the U.S., we plan to welcome hundreds more Delawareans into our office over the next few years.

“Through our many strategic partnerships, we aim to build more prosperous and inclusive communities,” said Denny Nealon, CEO of Barclays US Consumer Bank. “At this moment in time, we recognize that we need to support each other now more than ever.”

Good corporate citizenship is a driving force at Barclays. We believe in supporting community partners that help create a stronger and more prepared workforce while also providing resources that create opportunities for those who live and work in Delaware.

Recently, through our Community Reinvestment Act program (CRA), we announced a \$1 million commitment to Delaware State University to support its Global Institute for Equity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights. The

Institute is a network designed to develop and share proven pathways for transforming communities of color and closing the gap to an inclusive economy. Our CRA program objective is to meet the needs of low- to moderate-income communities and the businesses that support them.

In 2021, Barclays also provided a \$400,000 grant to Delaware Technical Community College for vital workforce training initiatives. We’ve committed \$1.25 million to help launch the Tech Impact Opportunity Center supported by Barclays, a refurbished space in the historic B&O Station building in Wilmington to serve as a training facility for the nonprofit’s ITWorks program, which has helped more than 700 people kickstart their careers in IT.

We are also engaged with several Delaware-based organizations that provide support to those who need resources the most, including the Challenge Program, Food Bank of Delaware, NERDiT Foundation, REACH Riverside, YMCA of Delaware, and many more.

This commitment to partnership is a direct extension of our business approach: In business, we put our partners first, tailoring our approach to clients’ needs to make their offerings stand out. This ensures we help create experiences that drive greater loyalty and increased sales for our partners, while providing more ways for consumers to unlock value with the brands they love.

We need to rely on each other now more than ever, and we will continue to build partnerships that demonstrate our commitment to our communities, our customers and clients, and the state we call home.

We are committed. We are Delaware. ■



# We Are Delaware: Building Prosperity Through Partnership

*"Through our partnerships, we aim to build more prosperous and inclusive communities. At this moment in time, we recognize that we need to support each other now more than ever."*

— DENNY NEALON, CEO BARCLAYS US CONSUMER BANK





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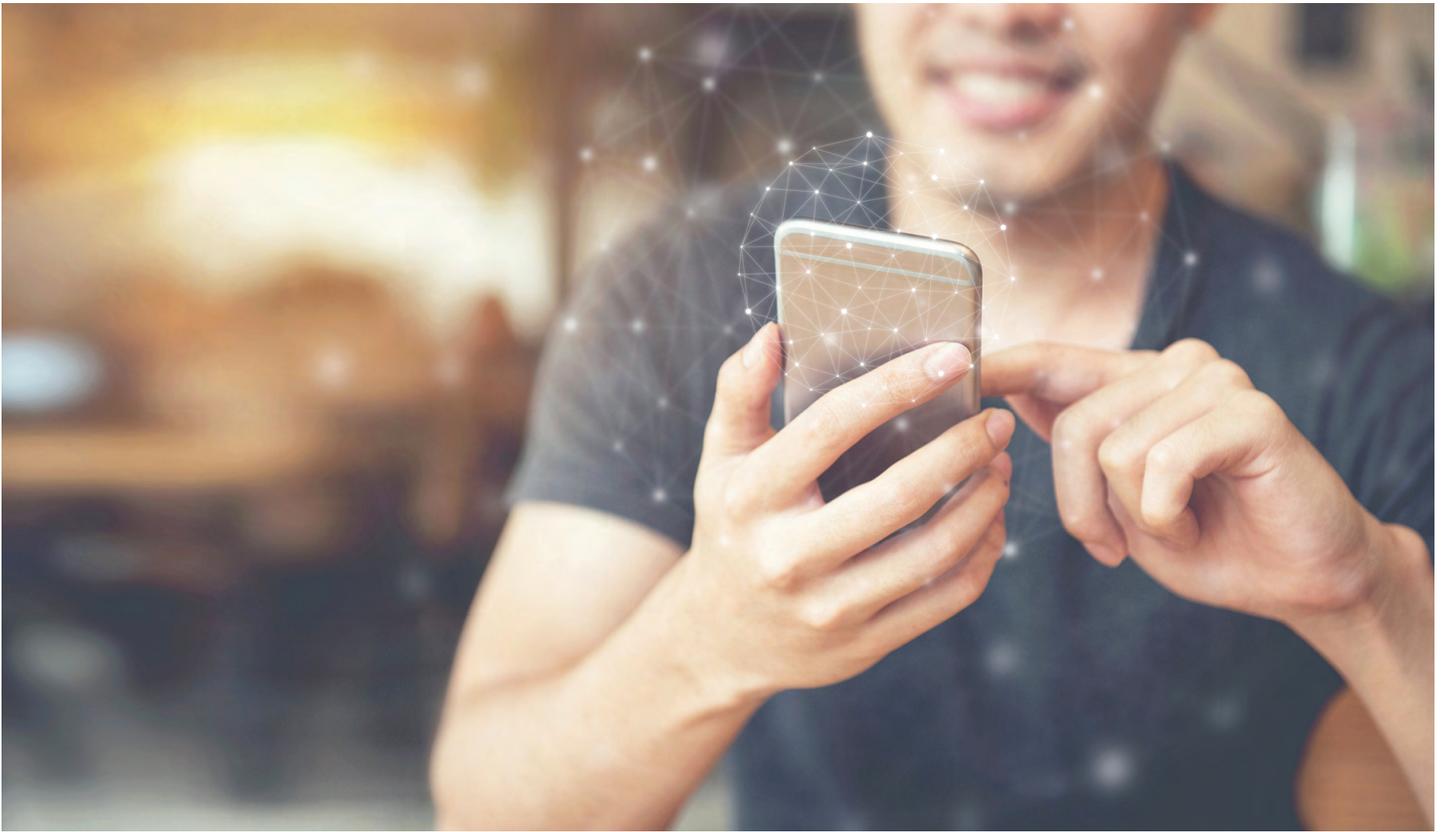
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# Pandemic Fuels Latest Tech Revolution

Bank customers have more options than ever at their fingertips—and more is on the way

BY NICK LAMBROW

WHEN THE PANDEMIC STRUCK in March 2020, the world froze. Business as usual ceased to exist. Travel halted. Commerce slowed. Schools closed their doors and opened their laptops.

Banks, however, were open. M&T Bank branches have remained open throughout the pandemic because our customers need us.

What took place during the ensuing weeks and months was predictable, considering the culture shock we were all experiencing: Activity inside bank branches dropped precipitously. At some M&T branches, foot traffic fell by more than half of what was typical before the pandemic began.

Meanwhile, online transactions with the bank shot up. More people downloaded the M&T mobile app and visited the bank's website to conduct their routine transactions such as transferring funds and paying bills.

Neither trend was unexpected. Advances in technology and awareness of customers' changing behaviors were already guiding us toward providing a

more digitally focused experience for our customers.

Before the pandemic, we started down a path to alleviate sticking points between bank branches, customer call centers, and our online banking services so our customers could bank with us in ways that were more convenient to them.

The pandemic added rocket fuel to the trip we had planned to take. Our customers—in particular, small-business owners struggling to stay in business—needed to interact with us, and they wanted to do it from the safety of their kitchen table or makeshift home office.

The pandemic showed us that we had to take the bank to our customers—and we had to do it as quickly, efficiently, and effectively as possible. We couldn't rely on our customers to seek us out inside a bank branch.

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# Banking

*The pandemic showed us that we had to take the bank to our customers—and we had to do it as quickly, efficiently, and effectively as possible.*

We organized our work around three objectives:

**1. Expand the number of ways our customers can connect with us.** For example, we began offering digital appointment instructions in six different languages and held virtual appointments via Cisco's Webex platform. Through the first eight months of 2021, more than 85,000 appointments were scheduled online—6,000 of them in Delaware. More than 13,000 of those customer interactions took place on Webex from January through August, with 1,000 of the virtual meetings with customers in Delaware.

**2. Offer more information online to help our customers manage their finances.** One way we did this was to partner with a fintech company to build digital demonstrations of transactions such as depositing a check using M&T's mobile app and sending a Zelle payment. We now have more than 40—and counting—digital transaction demonstrations on our website that can be shared with customers online or shown in our branches.

So far this year, more than 380,000 digital demonstrations have been viewed by M&T customers—about 21,000 of them in Delaware. Not surprisingly, our most-viewed videos cover how to enroll in online/mobile banking, how to deposit a check using M&T's mobile app, and how to transfer funds within an account.

**3. Modernize our existing capabilities to make banking easier.** We updated our mobile account opening platform and launched M&T Money Smart, an online dashboard that allows customers to track all their finances (even those numbers in M&T accounts), customize a budget, set savings goals, track spending, and more.

We also evaluated the services we offer to our customers inside our branches and added the capability to access many of these online tools while working with one of our branch employees. The face-to-face interaction is still relevant and important to many M&T customers, so we sought to enhance our offerings within our branches to meet the needs of those customers too.

In planning for a post-pandemic future, our mission remains the same: Understand what's important to our community of customers to create simple and intuitive solutions, enhanced by the care of our team, so they can make the best financial decisions. ■



**Nick Lambrow** is the Delaware regional president of M&T Bank.

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# 5 Tips to Help Grow Your Small Business

Learn about business growth and the techniques to help your business continue to thrive

CONTRIBUTED BY CHASE FOR BUSINESS

AS A SMART BUSINESS OWNER, you're likely often thinking about new ways to make your business grow. There are many ways to achieve growth, from adding and better managing customers to expanding products and services. Here are five tips for how to help grow your business without sacrificing the hard work you've put in to get to this point.

**1. Set up a sales funnel.** Maybe you're lucky enough that you can succeed by responding only to your incoming customers. But more likely, you need some kind of process for bringing in leads and closing sales. That process should be repeatable, efficient, and well-tested. A sales funnel is one of the most reliable tools for setting up this type of process.





*Carefully questioning top customers can uncover problems you weren't aware of or provide ideas for new products and services to offer.*

**4. Explore your customers' pain points.** Top businesses use focus groups and other forms of audience research to learn the truth about what customers think of them. Carefully questioning top customers can uncover problems you weren't aware of or provide ideas for new products and services to offer. But you don't need the resources of a major focus group or survey to gather this kind of intel.

Try getting in touch with a handful of long-time, outstanding customers. Find a few who are willing to offer a few minutes of their time to discuss your business. Ask them about not only what went well but also what they wish had gone better with their recent shopping experience. The more honest they are, the more helpful the information will be.

**5. Increase your marketing activity.** You want your business to be top-of-mind for customers in your community. Brand awareness can set you apart from your competitors—a crucial part of growing your business. You can increase awareness through marketing efforts such as digital communication with potential customers.

- Utilize social media. Consider advertising with sponsored posts that can be targeted to show up on the feeds of customers who most need your products.
- Set up an email newsletter. Email marketing gives you an opportunity to speak directly to your prospective customers about new products or promotions. Email is a top-performing channel with high engagement and open rates.
- Add to your educational resources. Consider hosting a webinar or other virtual events to teach customers more about what you do, in a way that benefits them and addresses their needs.

Of course, growing your business requires stable and secure business banking options. Talk to a Chase business banker today or learn more about the business banking products and services we offer. Learn more at [www.business.chase.com/resources](http://www.business.chase.com/resources). ■

### Did You know?

Locally in Delaware, through Small Business Forward, we have made a \$75 million commitment over three years to support underserved small business owners by connecting them to critical resources that help them grow faster, create jobs, and strengthen local economies. Chase contributed \$100 thousand to nonprofits in support of Business development in the state. Nationally, we provided \$20 million in COVID-19 relief through JPMorgan Chase's Small Business Forward.

The sales funnel—which is designed to turn potential customers into buyers—starts larger at the top and moves prospects through the steps of forming a trusted relationship with you. This might start with attracting a lead through a social media post, guiding them to your website for an educational article about your industry or niche, collecting their email address for a special offer, and following up with an invitation to an online demo.

**2. Review your customer service.** It's especially important for small businesses to provide a good customer experience. Treat a customer well, and they're more likely to remember you and recommend you to others. Word-of-mouth marketing becomes one of the best tools in the business toolbox.

A complete audit of your customer service processes can help you fine-tune. You may decide to implement customer relationship management software to more easily track and integrate all your interactions with a customer. Or you could institute a loyalty program that rewards your key customers with bonuses for making purchases more often. Both can help you stay at the top of your customers' minds and lead to increased sales.

**3. Form a strategic partnership.** Look for other small businesses whose services complement what you offer and propose setting up a package deal. Maybe that promotion could target an entirely new demographic. For example, your landscaping firm could partner with a painting and home maintenance provider to offer real estate agents a deal on preparing residential properties for sale. The important thing is to consider other businesses that share your ethics and could pair nicely with the products and services you provide. Remember to seek professional advice before you form a strategic partnership.

# Getting Real About Infrastructure

Our future depends on it

BY BRIAN DISABATINO

I WISH I COULD SAY the topic of race wasn't difficult to discuss openly, it'd be disingenuous if I did. I need to begin this message by saying that I hope you will give me a chance to take a risk, to break open a conversation that is long overdue. I ask you to allow me some grace where I may not use the right words or may not share your perspective. I'm willing to take that risk because I'm not willing to give up on making this industry better.

The bottom line is that the industry has come a long way, but there are still not enough African Americans in it. There is no shortage of talent in the Black community. We are missing a vital voice and perspective that can make our projects better. I, for one, have had the generosity of family and friends paving the way for me to enter this field, so I know my view may be slightly skewed. But in the end, I hope you will add your voice so that together we can change the course—we can build that missing infrastructure.

When my grandfather would discuss the early days of our company—and the overt discrimination he experienced as an Italian during his tenure in the business—he'd also discuss the overwhelming discrimination against Delaware's Black workers, making sure I knew their plight was incomparably worse. I think he, like many of his and other generations, felt stuck in the norm of the day and the gut that they could do better. But sadly, in his day, individuals in the industry often settled for status quo and although weren't, they felt stuck. I think it is important to recognize that "stuckness"—albeit wrong—and challenge it so we can achieve our full potential as an industry, as a company, and as people.

When I met Frank Hanson, an African-born carpentry instructor at St. George's Technical High School, I shared my frustration about the inability to figure out why the bright and enthusiastic Black kids I was meeting in our trade schools were not ending up in our industry and on our job sites. His response, "Brian, they can't see themselves in this career until they see themselves in this career."

Perhaps, with the best of intentions, many of us are not the role models kids need to see in order to project themselves into a career rich with tradition. Perhaps the key is in discovering better role models and putting them in a position to succeed.



*Perhaps the key is in discovering better role models and putting them in a position to succeed.*

I was fortunate enough to have the support of EDiS and the Delaware Contractors Association to begin an initiative to build *The Missing Infrastructure*. Identifying role models who can demonstrate to communities of color that ours is an industry filled with joy, tradition, and the opportunity to build families' abilities to prosper is essential.

We are committed to changing the outcomes of the past, but we can't do this alone. If you know anyone from these communities who you think would be a good role model, please share with me their name. With your help, we will recruit them to help tell their stories, identify barriers to our industry, and support them in becoming roles models for our youth. The sheer presence of their smile and joy for our industry in front of a young person could change the trajectory of our tomorrow. Let's help these young people see themselves in this business so that they can see themselves in

this business. Let's build *The Missing Infrastructure* of our industry. ■



**Brian DiSabatino** is the chief executive officer of EDiS Company.

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# Innovation Breeds Success

## Why Delaware can compete and win on the national level

BY SHAWN CROWLEY, AIA

CAN THE LESSONS LEARNED from distributed workforces be applied to distributed business opportunities?

Remote work is now as ubiquitous as the corner office once was. Many business professionals can accomplish a large percentage of their professional responsibilities from anywhere with a stable internet connection, only coming together for in-person meetings on an as-needed basis. So how can businesses develop these same concepts to pursue new opportunities outside of their traditional markets and regions?

One of the keys to this approach of pursuing remote work is developing a time-tested business process that has yielded successful results, time after time, despite being faced with significant competition, disadvantages, or difficulties.

Delaware businesses are uniquely prepared to take advantage of distributed business opportunities far beyond our immediate region. Bloomberg ranks Delaware in the top ten of their 2020 U.S. State Innovation Index, while Wallethub ranks Delaware eighth in their 2021 list of most innovative states.

So what makes one of the least populous states in the country one of the most innovative? It could be argued that it is the concentration of

successful businesses here in Delaware that results in higher competition, a more capable workforce, with a need for innovation and superior results. With this understanding, the Delaware business community is already uniquely positioned to compete in markets throughout the country.

The practice of architecture is no exception. Our firm, Tevebaugh Architecture, has worked with one of our national clients, Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care (Seasons), throughout the country to develop a time-tested process honed here at home in Delaware.

Our project development process has yielded successful hospice and palliative care projects throughout the country, from Miami to Ft. Lauderdale, Houston to St. Louis, Phoenix to Phoenixville.

One of the keys to our project development process is our openness to collaborate with other companies on items that require local relationships. In our professional service of architecture, it is important to have resources on our team that include existing relationships with government contacts in the planning, public works, and building departments. We remain engaged throughout the entire project lifecycle to ensure the quality of service is provided that our client expects, but it avoids having to “re-invent the wheel” and start from scratch.

# Construction & Real Estate



After demonstrating our ability to provide the same level of service on a local and national level, it greatly increased the number of potential prospects considering us for their project. At this time, we now have 15 unique projects across seven different states. Two examples of these projects include:

## Seasons at Wilmington Hospital, DE

The renovation of the third floor of ChristianaCare's Wilmington Hospital North Tower strengthens the partnership that Seasons provides to the local health care service providers with a hospice unit embedded within the hospital itself. By repurposing a former behavioral health unit into a vibrant and contemporary fit out, the team found efficiency in the design by refreshing the existing patient rooms and nurse station layout with new finishes and services focused on hospice operations.

## Seasons in Phoenix, AZ

The new 14-bed Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care in Phoenix, Arizona takes into consideration patient privacy while mitigating the significant solar heat gain of the region, and balancing that with the zoning requirements for shading and contextual building elevations. The reserved street front elevation creates an architecturally contextual solution that aligns with the desert-contemporary modern aesthetic of the neighborhood. Patient rooms are oriented along a single loaded

corridor allowing each room to have a connection to the outdoors through a glass facade that opens onto private, shaded outdoor patios on the rear elevations.

## About Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care

Seasons focuses on providing residents and their families with an environment that is a welcome escape from typical health care environments, providing hospitality-like amenities for patients and families while fulfilling Seasons' mission of providing compassionate care. Most recently, Seasons completed its merger with post-acute care company, AccentCare. The combined company will provide a full continuum of home-based health care services, including hospice, palliative care, home health care, and personal care. ■



**Shawn Crowley, AIA** is a principal and an owner of Tevebaugh Architecture. With more than a decade of experience in health care design, project management, construction, and marketing, Shawn continues to promote the firm's development and growth in all sectors.

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## Josiah Marvel Cup

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The Delaware State Chamber is seeking nominations for the Josiah Marvel Cup, which will be awarded at the 185<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner on January 10, 2022.

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## Cash at the Table

Delaware has the nation's highest state realty transfer tax

BY WESLEY T. STEFANICK

POTENTIAL HOMEBUYERS in Delaware are being held hostage by a state realty transfer tax that is the highest in the nation, requiring a bundle of cash at the settlement table that cannot be rolled into their mortgage.

Realty transfer taxes are not unique. The tax is assessed on property when ownership is transferred from one party to another, typically amounting to a specific percentage of the value of the property. Realty transfer taxes are usually shared equally by the buyer and the seller at settlement.

In Delaware, both the state, counties, and most municipalities assess a realty transfer tax. In 2017, the Delaware General Assembly passed HB279, raising the state's portion from 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent and eclipsing the rate levied by any other state in the nation.

When the state's share of 2.5 percent of the price of the home is combined with the local transfer tax, individuals can pay as much as four percent of the property's value at the time of settlement on realty transfer tax alone.

Realty transfer taxes and fees are a major burden on anyone buying or selling a property, including a home, land, or commercial business facility. This includes first-time buyers, seniors downsizing, civic groups, churches, and military families who must sell their homes when being transferred to another community. Those without enough savings or a ready source for the cash can't move forward—a situation particularly affecting minority homebuyers. The result is a negative impact on housing costs and, therefore, economic development.

Realty transfer taxes are inequitable, placing a greater financial burden on lower-income households and on a smaller share of the population. They are discriminatory because they are assessed against one type of

asset—real estate—while similar taxes are rarely applied to financial assets such as stocks and bonds.

The amount paid in taxes for property transfer is arbitrary, far outweighing any government administrative costs associated with the purchase. No good or service is provided to the payer of a realty transfer tax, and it is neither systematically related to a household's ability to pay nor to the benefits that movers derive from public services.

Higher realty transfer taxes are restrictive, discouraging potential buyers from entering the market and current property owners from moving to another property.

Realty transfer taxes are volatile and unreliable revenue sources that are sensitive to downturns in the market. In Delaware, revenue from the realty transfer tax fell 116 percent from FY2006 to FY2009 (the recession), demonstrating the sensitivity to market contraction.

The Delaware Association of REALTORS® supports legislation lowering the state's portion of the realty transfer tax to 1.5 percent, returning it to the level it was before the increase in 2017 was enacted to close a temporary budget gap.

What can consumers do about it? Join us. Let your voice be heard! This is your time to effect change that impacts you, your family, your neighbors, your communities, and Delaware's economy. Learn more about the realty transfer tax and take action at [www.delawaretransfertax.com](http://www.delawaretransfertax.com). ■



**Wesley T. Stefanick** is the chief executive officer of the Delaware Association of REALTORS®.



**CYBERSECURITY:**  
**The Next Must-Have to Business Growth**

Neal Crosley poses with members of his family who will be the next generation of leadership for the company.

# CYBERSECURITY: The Next Must-Have to Business Growth

*By Allison Hayes*

A local machine shop has seen one of its best years ever, in the midst of a pandemic, due in part to a diversified business model and a good quality management system.

High-Tech Machine Co. Inc. (HTM) was started in 1991 by Neal Crosley. The precision CNC and Wire EDM machine company, located in Wilmington, Delaware, began operating out of a 1,000-square-foot facility with three manual machines. Thirty years later, the business has grown into a 10,000-square-foot space with 20 CNC machines and more than 20 employees. The company manufactures high-precision parts to customer requirements, with every job being custom. Crosley, founder and president, said his business remains focused on quality improvement and family.

“We try to keep that competitive edge, and keep the cost down for customers,” he said. “Continuous improvement is key.”

To help with improving business capabilities, Crosley began working with the Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership (DEMPEP), a federally and state-funded non-profit organization committed to helping manufacturers improve their global competitiveness. 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.

DEMPEP operates as a recipient through Delaware Technical Community College in partnership with the United States Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Delaware Division of Small Business, and the Delaware State and local Chambers 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, the Delaware MEP can

provide its clients confidential access to their industries best practices, processes and business improvement methodologies.

Crosley first connected with DEMPEP in 2007 to get help with the company’s ISO 9001 certification. ISO 9001 is the internationally recognized Quality Management System standard, designed to be a powerful business improvement tool. DEMPEP helped to develop HTM-specific procedures and processes and conducted extensive training with Crosley and his employees. The company earned its ISO 9001 certification in 2008. HTM then worked with DEMPEP for 5S training, which helped the company organize its spaces so work could be performed more efficiently, effectively, and safely. The 5S system focuses on putting everything where it belongs, making it easier for people to do their jobs without wasting time or risking injury.

Over the past several years, Crosley began hearing more and more about cybersecurity and good cyber hygiene, which refers to fundamental cybersecurity best practices that an organization’s users can implement to protect the security of customers digital information. They include not only hardware and software, but configuration and rigorously managed maintenance of who has access to those systems. In addition, employees learn about the risks of violating policy and management of all protocols.

To remain competitive and continue as a Department of Defense (DoD) supply chain partner, Crosley knew he needed to be ready to meet the latest cybersecurity measures recommended by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (called publication SP 800-171). DoD has already announced the next iteration in cybersecurity requirements - Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) - which is built around the previous SP 800-171 publications for anyone handling Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI). The CMMC is targeted for full adoption by 2025.

“Cybersecurity and best practices are no longer a nice to have,” said Kelly McKeown, DEMEP specialist who works with HTM, “It’s a requirement for doing business and it’s not going away. Some companies are intimidated by the process of getting their company certified and are no longer willing to go after government contracts.”

Implementing a comprehensive cybersecurity compliant system will involve more than just potentially upgrading hardware and software. A compliant system will require training and engagement by staff at all levels, and the implementation of business practices that ensure adherence to the practices and procedures adopted to meet compliance with the CMMC controls.

“Only then will you have what it takes to be successful during your certification audit and adequately maintain your obligations between certification audits,” said McKeown,

Given the similarity between ISO 9001 standards and the updated SP 800-171 controls, Crosley again turned to DEMEP for assistance. HTM is one of several Delaware companies that has decided to reach for this level of certification. It allows HTM to bid on work that many competitors cannot.

“We did this work during the pandemic,” he said. “We got through it with our key employees receiving the training to keep us in compliance with the controls.”

Crosley said, “It was challenging, but DEMEP made the process manageable by breaking it down into steps with training and organization.”



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HTM Quality Manager Larry Parks inspecting parts.

*“DEMEP made the process manageable by breaking it down into steps with training and organization.”*

~ Neal Crosley

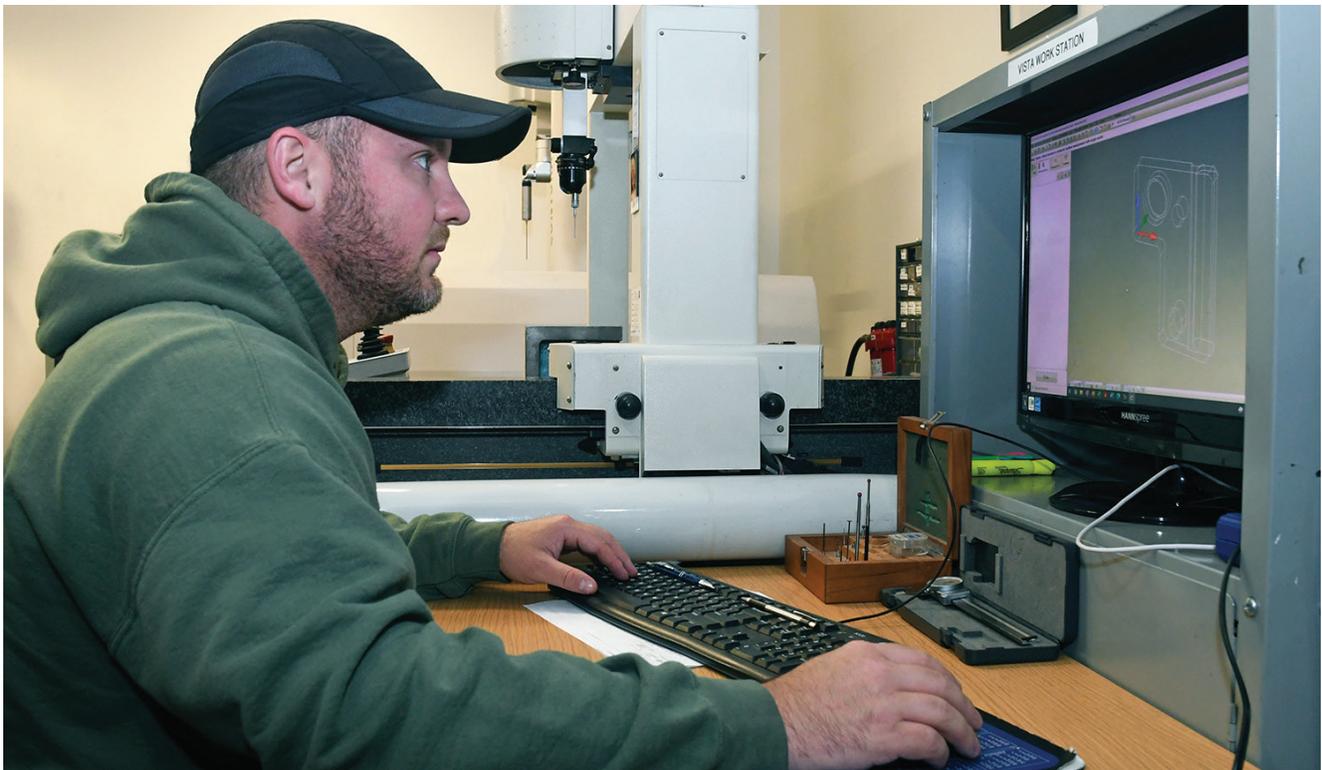
“Once you understand it, you just have to put processes in place and do what you say you’re going to do,” he said.

Crosley said becoming compliant has created opportunities for more work.

“Our customers want to know how their information such as blueprints, 3D models, and classified specifications are controlled,” he said. “Everyone understands what needs to be done and how it is done. Everything is documented and in a certain place and our customers are confident their information is safe. And DEMEP helped us do all that.”

Crosley said he is constantly working to improve. On the horizon is the AS9100 quality certification, which will allow HTM to further expand their customer base in the aerospace industry.

“With the Crosleys’ focus on family and customer satisfaction,” said McKeown, “they have developed a very successful business model that will allow HTM to maintain stability and growth well into the future and continue to be a leader in a very competitive industry.”



Quality control is a keystone of HTM.

# The Drive to Digital

More than ever, a solid technology foundation is essential for an increasingly digital world **BY ED ROWAN**



BUSINESSES TODAY are more reliant on technology to advance digital transformation as part of their IT planning. This strategic direction, according to 84 percent of executives polled for a 2020 Harvard Business Review study, is a basis for new business opportunities and growth.

For some, digital transformation is a direct result of a simple need to upgrade infrastructure. For others, customer expectations—internal and external—drive change and operational efficiencies that can outpace competitors.

However, current and future achievements stemming from digital transformation can't be accomplished without a solid foundation of flexibility, performance, and affordability. Equally important are the right technologies that make this foundation work, and businesses that understand and adopt this approach will have greater opportunity for success.

## Technologies Driving Digital Transformation

For any business, the cloud has become an essential element to any digital transformation strategy, providing the power to handle more compute-intensive operations—helping reduce on-premise systems and services. Services-based cloud offerings have become the de facto standard for companies looking to increase efficiencies and reduce infrastructure costs while keeping up with the demands of their business.

Software-defined networking (SDN) also adds a layer of visibility and intelligence to help organizations manage their networks more effectively. Together with software-defined networking in a wide area network (SD-WAN), SDN adds flexibility through centralized and integrated management of network functions.

SDN, SD-WAN, and the cloud are technologies that together bring intelligence, flexibility, and power to network-edge, the area where a device or local network interfaces with the internet and where most customer-focused activity occurs. Network-edge applications have the potential

to empower employees to make impactful decisions and enable greater interaction between customers and organizations.

Data is another important asset, and harnessing analytics can help uncover upside opportunities, areas needing improvement, and assist in deciphering and understanding feedback within the data.

Increasingly, businesses already are turning to the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning (ML) to not only provide intelligence but enable new opportunities or lines of business. These data-intensive applications can be a boon to companies aiming to improve internal processes, enhance customer experiences and more.

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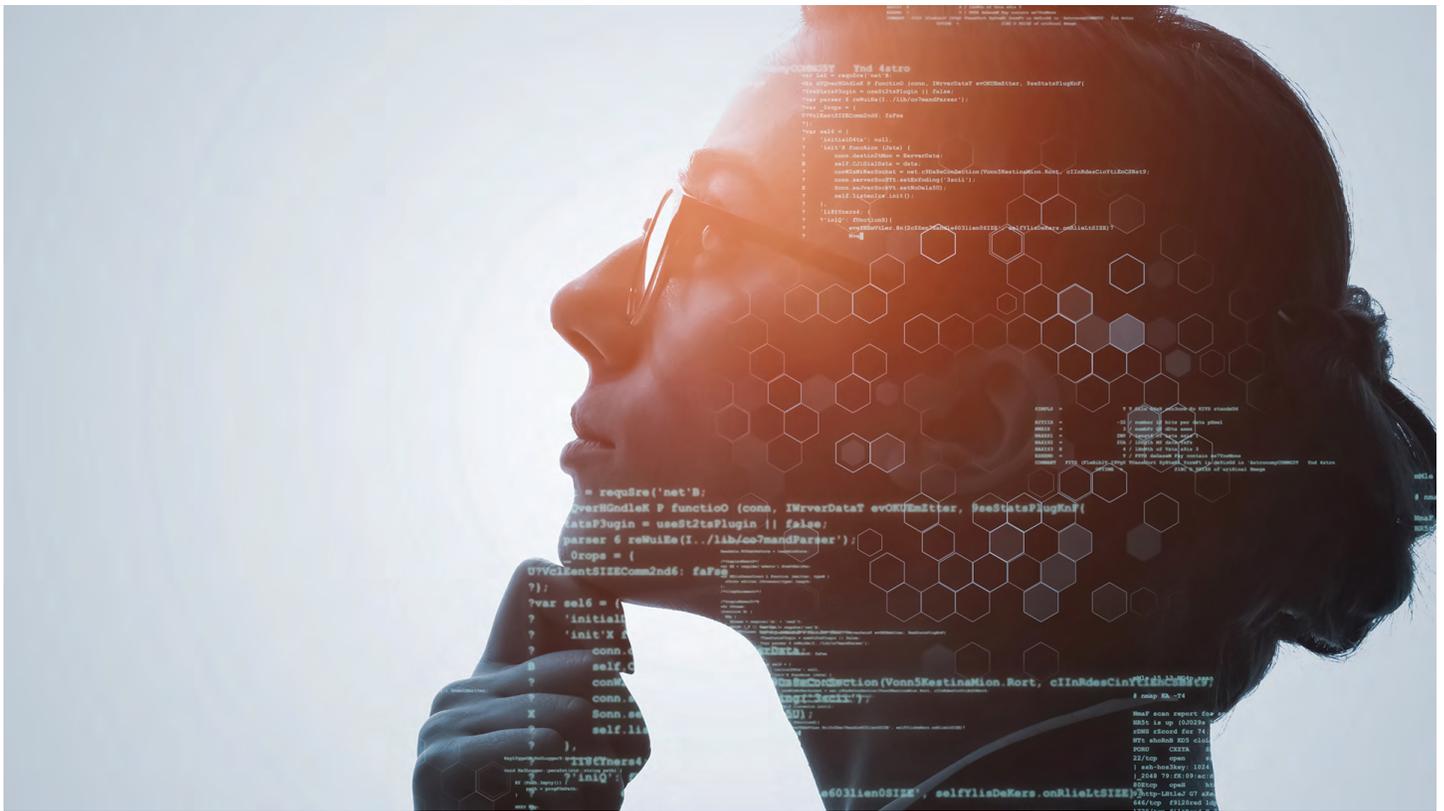
## A Solid Foundation Powers Digital Transformation

Whether working to streamline internal operations, providing new services to exceed customer expectations, or exploring new opportunities, companies need technology to advance their business. However, the promise of digital transformation cannot be realized without a solid foundation. In building this foundation of performance, flexibility and affordability, companies will benefit from a greater chance of success in digital business.

Of course, aligning with a proven partner to establish a sound foundation for today and the future is critical, and Comcast Business offers a suite of connectivity, communications, networking, cybersecurity, wireless, and managed solutions to help organizations of different sizes prepare for what's next. ■



**Ed Rowan** is senior director of Comcast Business sales operations.



# Let's Develop the Code to Our Future

BY PATRICK CALLAHAN

RECENTLY, the World Economic Forum declared a reskilling emergency as the world faces the reality that one billion jobs will likely be transformed by technology. The Forum explained this is due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power in production, the Second electric power, the Third employed electronics and information technology to automate processes, and now the Fourth builds on the Third, and “is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres.” We in the Delaware region have had front row seats to all of these shifts, which started on the Brandywine River and now envelope our state.

## The Change

Emblematic of this dire need, over the past four months, I have had several conversations with leaders of data and technology businesses in our own backyard in Delaware, in our region, and on both coasts about both the need and competition for talent. It seems that prior to COVID-19, the unicorns of our space were already in high demand.

The pandemic added fuel to the fire as more companies began to not only understand the impact of data and technology on their organizations but also see it as the lifeblood of their business operations. It provides businesses insight into their customers and serves as an essential element into knowing how their employees are communicating, producing, and delivering essential products and services. Today, after nearly two years of our new normal, many companies in banking and consumer product sales would simply cease operations if it not for a reliance on new advances in data and technology.

## The Development of Data and Technology

There is a graph that hangs in my office that shows the progress of how people get their news since the early 1800s. At first, a measurement of a news organizations' success could be represented by the number of people standing in the city square listening to the speaker on a soap box. When newspapers became the mainstream, subscription counts and very basic demographics were the measure. Broadcast radio and television brought in another level of complexity, but the world of collecting information changed dramatically in the 1990s when the internet took off.

At the outset, we collected “hits and clicks”, but we quickly started collecting more details: “Who clicked?”, “What site did they come from?”, “Where did they go afterwards?”, “Do we know anything about them?” and so much more. With improvements in technology, we began receiving that information instantaneously, storing it, and with some advanced mathematical techniques, we began predicting behaviors and acting on it. This information became ingrained into our business models, support services, and sales channels.

### Where We Are Now

In today’s world, we’re applying these practices and technologies to every part of our lives: health care, banking, travel, education, social services, and so much more. The core basic approaches are ingrained in our primitive self-driving cars, in the Alexa we speak to at an ever-increasing frequency, in our Zoom meetings, and in every application and tracking feature on our mobile devices.

The new way of not only doing business but literally living is influenced by many elements of technology. The impact of new technology goes well beyond Silicon Valley and reaches into the smallest communities across the globe. I do not see the adoption of technology slowing at any point and black swan events—such as the pandemic—only seem to increase our dependency on such advances.

### Where is This All Heading and its Importance to Delaware’s Future

To support this growth and adoption, our citizenry will need to grow and develop with it at a dizzying pace. As many have said: We will either develop the code or the code will develop us. As a community, we cannot depend on the small number of computer graduates coming out of our universities alone—growth will need more of a seismic change. The place to begin this tectonic shift in our community will be at the earliest points in education—first grade and up.

The World Economic Forum’s finding is not just an observation, it’s a call for a new way of thinking and education. Our community is on the frontline of this change and can seize this opportunity. We must grasp the moment to take advantage and embrace all the good and potential these life altering advances have to offer. We as a small state and region have the capability to realize this and chart our path towards the next generation of

Delawareans by investing in a new way of thinking and approach to education. ■



**Patrick Callahan** is founder and CEO of CompassRed.

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# Tapping into Talent

Delaware aims to be the regional leader for modern tech careers

BY GREG GUREV

I TAKE GREAT PRIDE in owning MySherpa, managed IT services. We have been fortunate to support several Delaware-based technology startups that experience rapid growth. The growing process is exciting. As our clients' needs evolve quickly, we are integral to implementing technologies to keep pace with their rapid change.

In our experience, these technology growth companies attract talented individuals because they have the budget and leadership for those seeking rewarding, high-paying, modern tech careers. We also benefit by working alongside these quality people. For these reasons, MySherpa joined the Delaware IT Industry Council, which was formed in 2020.

The IT Industry Council consists of 30 employers from across the state, representing multiple financial, health care, utilities, and IT sectors. We coalesced around three key goals:

1. Create a robust tech ecosystem in Delaware
2. Strengthen Delaware's position and perception as a tech hub
3. Build and expand an inclusive tech talent pipeline in Delaware

The IT Industry Council launch timing is perfect. It comes in succession to Delaware's Prosperity Partnership (DPP) March 8, 2021, *Inclusive Tech Talent Pipeline Report*. The DPP report states that career opportunities in IT will help more Delawareans create the lives they seek.

In addition, the Delaware Workforce Development Board published its Five-Year Strategic Plan. This plan enhances responsiveness and workforce agility to provide more Delaware residents economic self-sufficiency via targeted business sectors fueling Delaware's economy.

## Where do we go from here?

I'm excited to announce the new IT Industry Council website launch, [www.delawareitic.com](http://www.delawareitic.com). This site is a hub for connecting employers, training providers, and job seekers. Additionally, it provides:

- Current labor market trends to help employers and training providers
- A resource for all things IT in Delaware
- A network for the mentorship and development of people coming into the IT space

We are bringing on an experienced leader to move this vital work forward. As a state, we must be proactive and intentional when thinking



about our future talent needs. The IT Industry Council is ready for this responsibility.

There is a technology renaissance happening right now in Wilmington, and collectively, we are capitalizing on this fact. The city is more than ready. Take a look around. Cool living spaces and entertainment are popping up throughout the city. Take notice, Wilmington is the place to live and work proudly—especially if you are a technologist.

If you or your company are interested in learning more, please reach out. ■



**Greg Gurev** is chief executive officer and head sherpa at MySherpa.

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OVER 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE



# Data: The Driver of Innovation and Decision Making

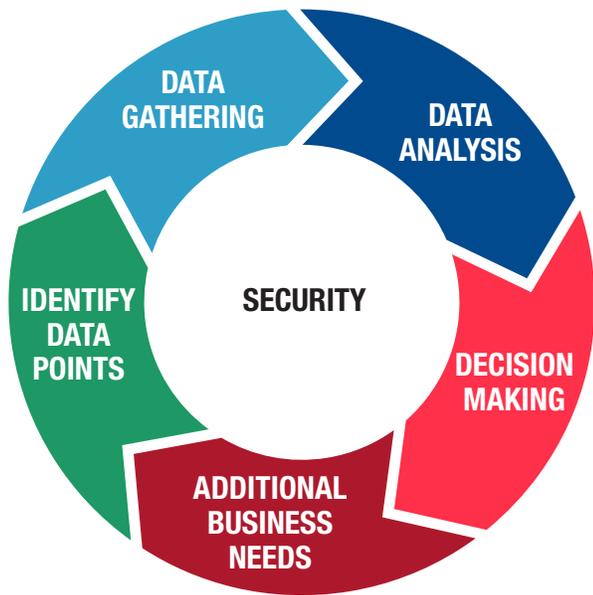
BY MUNEEB AHMED

EVERYONE USES DATA to make day-to-day decisions. At its simplest form, think of an online shopper who checks on the reviews, ratings of similar items, or does a price comparison between stores before deciding on a purchase. Data-based decision making has existed long before the technology revolution, but it has enhanced with the advent of new technology and tools.

A prime example of a recent data tool that has touched every person is information on COVID-19 and its spread. Nearly every federal, state, and county government across the world is gathering and reporting information to collectively advise people about the virus. Moreover, this data is used by scientists to understand the virus' impact in different segments of the world's population. Compared to previous pandemics, we are certainly better informed and prepared due to the availability of such data.

Data is now one of the biggest assets for any organization regardless of the size. Data-driven companies can quickly become industry leaders when they make investments to not only collect relevant data but also make strategic decisions based on what the data tells them. Data-driven decision making when effectively analyzed and implemented will provide a business an edge in a constantly evolving and competitive market.

Companies who are striving to become data-driven organizations should invest in both data gathering and data analysis. The first step is to identify data points that are relevant to your industry and business and will help drive decisions. Companies can hire professionals or use internal resources to identify data points that are key to the business needs. It is important to determine what data should be collected—whether it's information on customers, products, services, or other relevant information. A good



subject matter expert can help with identifying the relevant data.

Once the “what” has been determined, companies should invest in the “how”. There are several resources for gathering data like websites, mobile apps, online stores, physical stores, surveys, online ads, physical interviews, social media, and CRMs. Successful companies use many methods to gather a diverse dataset over periods of time.

After the relevant data is collected, it’s time to focus on analyzing the data to extract sensible and usable information for decision making. There are hundreds of data analysis tools available on the market. Companies can use tools as simple as a spreadsheet or as complex as enterprise-wide business intelligence tools. Again, subject matter experts can help with defining the performance indicators and how the information can be packaged and presented to a company’s decision makers. The right information technology partner can help with both identifying the appropriate data analysis tool and configuring that tool to generate the intended results.

In order to perform trend and complex data analysis, a business needs to collect data over a length of time. Data-driven decision making is often a cyclical process where the data collected influences the decision making and the information extracted from data analysis influences future data collection—thus, enhancing the quality of data.

Finally, it is important to invest in the right information security tools to protect your data and the data analytics derived from the information you collect. Companies can spend millions of dollars on IT infrastructure, but ultimately, it’s important that a big part of that investment goes towards protecting the data. Always keep security in mind. ■



**Muneer Ahamed** is the senior project manager at CNT Infotech.

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**SERVING DELAWARE AND THE TRI-STATE AREA FOR OVER 20 YEARS**

## Doneene Damon Honored as a Diversity Leader in Business

Doneene K. Damon, president of Richards, Layton & Finger, has been named among the Philadelphia Business Journal's 2021 Diversity Leaders in Business. Shining a light on the breadth of diversity and the wealth of talent in the Greater Philadelphia business community, the Diversity Leaders in Business awards showcase individuals who have made a significant impact through their professional accomplishments, philanthropic contributions, and community leadership.

Doneene's leadership within Richards Layton, the legal profession, and the community at large sets the standard for community involvement and professional excellence. In addition to serving as Richards Layton's president, she is co-chair of the firm's Business Department and chair of the Corporate Trust and Agency Services Group. Doneene focuses her legal practice on the use of Delaware and New York trusts in a wide range of commercial transactions, and represents banks and trust companies in connection with their trust and agency services under Delaware and New York law.



*Doneene Damon*

locations as they move toward construction of new facilities in the coming years, and he will oversee all aquatic operations across the YMCA of Delaware.

"We are thrilled to have such a dedicated and passionate YMCA veteran joining our Y of Delaware family," says Deborah Bagatta-Bowles, CEO. "He is ready to jump right in and is excited to grow membership and programs while welcoming everyone in the community to the Dover Y."

## GillespieHall COO Clara Mattucci Named Partner

Behaviorist Clara Mattucci has been named partner at the strategic communication firm GillespieHall, a BGP Publicity Inc., business. Mattucci joined GillespieHall as a social media strategist in 2011. Her previous position at the firm before making partner was chief operating officer.

Mattucci, a social scientist and marketing strategist, leads the discovery and metrics initiatives at GillespieHall.

Actions and results are analyzed by in-house researchers, with the findings used to inform client strategies moving forward.



*Clara Mattucci*

"Clara really showed her strength as a leader during the pandemic," says GillespieHall Founding Partner Bridget Paverd. "As we were all forced to retreat to home offices, Clara worked with our employees to keep engagement and creativity high at a very confusing time for the world. We had to look after ourselves and assist our amazing clients to pivot and adjust. There was a lot going on, and as many floundered in the confusion, we managed to keep going and continued

## Easterseals Receives Investment from DuPont

Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore recently received a grant from DuPont to support its Supported Employment program – a program which opens the door to meaningful work and competitive wages in the community for adults with intellectual disabilities, while providing employers with dedicated, productive employees. Each year, Easterseals partners with over 60 businesses around Delaware to recruit and train individuals with disabilities for their workplace.

"We are proud of our long-term partnership with Easterseals," said Patrick McCrummen, Global Community Impact Leader at DuPont. "Investing in programs that drive equity and inclusion is just one example of how DuPont combines a commitment to our communities with the passion of our employees to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people around the world."

"This grant from DuPont helps further

our mission of providing services to increase independence for people with disabilities. Our Supported Employment Program is such a success thanks to our community partners and to the hard-working employees who fill these essential roles," Easterseals President/CEO, Kenan Sklenar, said. "We are grateful for the continued generous support of DuPont for believing in our mission, our services and, above all, the people we serve. We could not do it without our supporters!"

## YMCA of Delaware Welcomes New Leadership

The YMCA of Delaware is pleased to welcome John Rappaport as the group vice president and Dover YMCA executive director. As the executive director, John will help the branch reach its tremendous potential to grow membership and programs while advancing the mission of the Y. Additionally, he will support the expansion of the Sussex and Middletown

to communicate purposefully on behalf of our clients. I am always energized to see young women move into senior leadership positions.”

## Action Unlimited Resources Named to *Inc. 5000* List

*Inc.* magazine named Action Unlimited Resources as No. 1656 on its annual *Inc. 5000 List*, the most prestigious ranking of the nation’s fastest-growing private companies. The list represents a unique look at the most successful companies within the American economy’s most dynamic segment—its independent small businesses. Intuit, Zappos, Under Armour, Microsoft, Patagonia, and many other well-known names gained their first national exposure as honorees on the *Inc. 5000*.

“Action Unlimited Resources is honored to be recognized by *Inc. 5000* as one of the fastest-growing companies in the nation, and it is directly attributed to our hard-working team and the loyal customers that we have the honor of serving,” said President and CEO Aaron D. Glazar.

## Nemours Children’s Health Partners with Beebe Healthcare

Nemours Children’s Health and Beebe Healthcare have teamed up to provide pediatric services to the infants, children, and adolescents of Sussex County. This includes:

- Joining the Beebe Women’s and Children’s Services team to provide care to infants in the Newborn Nursery and at the time of high-risk deliveries in collaboration with Beebe’s neonatal nurse practitioners.
- Providing consultation and care in

Beebe’s inpatient pediatric unit

- Providing pediatric consultations in Beebe’s Emergency Department in Lewes, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“We know how important it is to have easy access to expert care, and we couldn’t be more excited about expanding our services for patients and families in Sussex County,” said Pauline Corso, senior vice president of Nemours Children’s Health and chief

operating officer in the Delaware Valley.

“We are so pleased Beebe Healthcare has entrusted us to care for children in their communities. Combining the quality and patient service experiences of our great organizations exemplifies the Nemours promise of redefining children’s health, and our goal of helping children, everywhere, grow into healthy adults.”

“Beebe Healthcare is creating an integrated healthcare delivery system for our community so that your needs



## Local McDonald’s® Owner/Operator Michael Meoli, Elected Officials Break Ground

Local McDonald’s® Owner/Operator Michael Meoli and distinguished guests broke ground at the site of Delaware’s newest McDonald’s in Camden. Located at 60 East St. near the corner of US Rt. 13 and Voshell Mill Road, Meoli’s McDonald’s will be the 25th in his portfolio of restaurants throughout Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

“For nearly 30 years I have been honored to provide the best that McDonald’s has to offer to communities across Delmarva,” Michael Meoli said. “This new restaurant in Camden will allow us to treat more customers to delicious, high-quality menu items with fast, friendly, accurate service.”

The Camden McDonald’s is the first new-construction McDonald’s restaurant in Kent County in more than twenty years. When open later this year, the restaurant is expected to employ more than 60 people in all positions from crew members to management.



# Newsbites

can be addressed right here in Sussex County,” said David A. Tam, MD, MBA, FACHE, president and CEO of Beebe Healthcare. “Beebe is growing with this community, and as more and more families make Sussex their home, this partnership with Nemours ensures the highest quality pediatric care. As a pediatrician myself, I am excited to continue working with Nemours and our pediatric partners in the community to provide care for our families.”

## Wohlsen Welcomes Delaware Valley Project Executive

Wohlsen welcomed Mark Grunza to the team in August as a project executive in the Delaware Valley region. In this role, he is responsible for improving the vision of project leaders, driving job planning, providing



Mark Grunza

education to the project leaders on critical and strategic decision making, and fostering client retention.

Mark brings extensive knowledge and experience to Wohlsen. Throughout his 29 years in the construction industry, he has grown from a carpenter to a project executive and completed work on several notable projects including PSU Brandywine Campus, the Arch Diocese of Philadelphia’s PJP2 High School, Appoquinimink School District’s Lorewood Grove Elementary, and Goldey-Beacom College Facility Expansion & Master Plan.

## AAA Mid-Atlantic Wins National Award for DEI

AAA Club Alliance (ACA), operating as AAA Mid-Atlantic in Delaware and throughout the Mid-Atlantic, received the Ragan’s 2021 CSR & Diversity Award. The award is given to organizations throughout the country with powerful campaigns, initiatives, and programs

that make the world safe, healthier, more equitable, and sustainable.

One of the largest AAA motor clubs in the nation, ACA was chosen for its multifaceted Allyship DE&I campaign from June through October of last year following the death of George Floyd. To drive internal allyship among associates and foster a culture where all associates could feel a sense of belonging, ACA introduced a series of virtual, facilitated learning programs focused on actively supporting marginalized communities and working together to prioritize equity



and inclusion.

“We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion

and our Allyship work is an important way to foster a culture of inclusivity for our associates.” said Christin Joyner, executive vice president and chief Human resources officer at AAA Club Alliance.

“Engagement in the campaign exceeded our expectations and we continue to build upon that success to ensure all associates feel welcomed, respected and appreciated,” said Joyner.

## ChristianaCare to Open New Location in Rehoboth Beach

Residents in the Lewes and Rehoboth communities will soon have convenient access to primary care and specialty health care services provided by ChristianaCare at a new location at 18742 Coastal Highway, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware that will open in spring 2022.

“We are on a mission to deliver the right care, at the right place for everyone – to make a positive impact on the health of every person in every community we serve,” said Lisa Maxwell, M.D., MHCDS, president of the Medical Group of ChristianaCare.

## Better Business Bureau Serving Delaware Honors 2021 Award Winners

The Better Business Bureau serving Delaware has announced the 2021 winners for their Torch and Thrive Award programs. These awards recognize organizations that demonstrate a solid commitment to doing things right, not only in their companies, but within their entire industry and community.

2021 marks the first year for the Thrive Award for Community Impact. This award celebrates leaders that embrace diversity in their business. The BBB Thrive Award is given to an organization that demonstrates a commitment to inclusion in our community. The winner of the first ever Thrive Award for Community Impact is Easterseals Delaware Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

The BBB Torch Awards for Ethics competition recognizes exemplary businesses that strive to go above and beyond in their dealings with customers, employees, vendors, and their community. BBB Delaware presents the Torch Awards for Ethics each year to businesses that exemplify ethical behavior and display integrity in all aspects of its operations. Three Delaware companies were selected as 2021 recipients of the Torch Awards for Ethics. Those businesses are Valor Construction, Silver Lining Home Healthcare, and Boulden Brothers.

Winners were recognized on October 7th at the DuPont Country Club.

The approximately 10,000-square-foot facility (previously occupied by Pier 1) is located minutes from the Tanger Outlet stores and Delaware beaches. It will house a traditional primary care  **ChristianaCare** practice, specialty services, and an innovative new model of care for people aged 65 and over.

There is a growing need for primary and specialty care services in Sussex County. According to state projections, the population of Sussex County is expected to increase by 12 percent by 2025. The 65 and older population expected to grow by 16 percent over the same period. Residents of Sussex County have higher rates of blood pressure, high cholesterol, osteoarthritis and other chronic conditions than the state average, according to 2019 data from the Delaware Health Tracker.

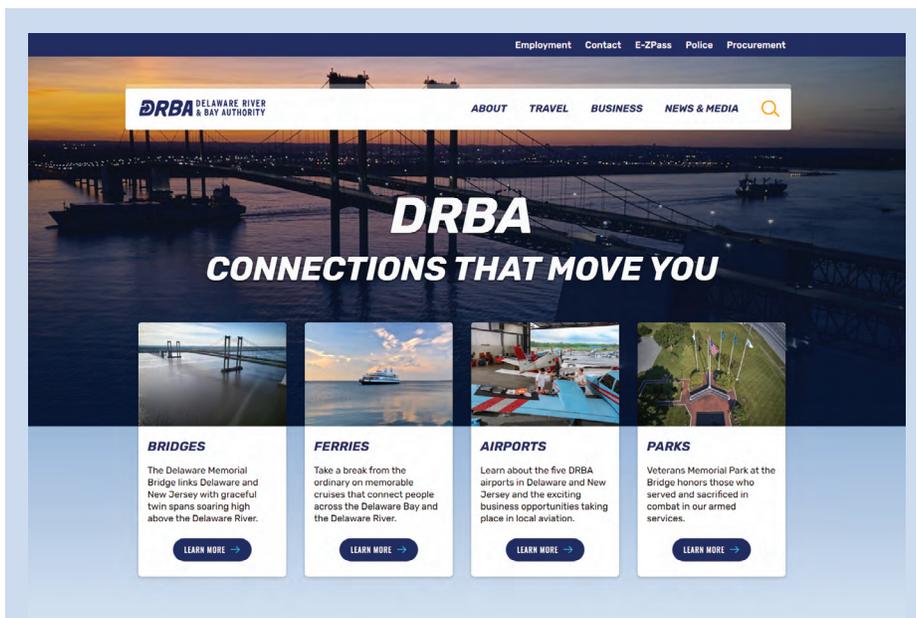
“ChristianaCare’s new location in Sussex County fills a need for expanded primary and specialty care in Southern Delaware, which is rapidly growing with an aging population,” said Cydney T. Teal, M.D., CPE, FAAP, FACP, chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at ChristianaCare.

## BVSPCA-Wings Rescues 100<sup>th</sup> Flight of At-Risk Animals

The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) received 90 homeless dogs and cats from shelters in Louisiana in October. The Wings of Rescue airlift of at-risk shelter animals was the 100th rescue flight in the BVSPCA-Wings partnership.

The ASPCA-sponsored flight brought the animals to Georgetown, Delaware, and Coatesville, Pennsylvania. Most of the animals went to BVSPCA’s campuses to become available for adoption.

The four-year BVSPCA-Wings partnership has resulted in more than 7,000 at-risk cats and dogs being



## DRBA Launches New Websites

Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) officials introduced the Authority’s new main website, [www.drba.net](http://www.drba.net) and a brand-new site for the Delaware Memorial Bridge, [www.delawarememorialbridge.com](http://www.delawarememorialbridge.com). These new sites are better organized, easier to navigate, and designed to be more user-friendly. Like the Cape May – Lewes Ferry, the Delaware Memorial Bridge now has its own domain name, complete with more information on the iconic Twin Spans and provides travelers with easy access to traffic and toll information.

“Both new sites are designed to be in sync with best practices including ADA compliance and offer a user-friendly experience with improved navigation and functionality,” said Rhona Bronson, director of marketing for the DRBA. “The sites are more visual, mobile optimized, and render on newer browser platforms that didn’t exist when the original DRBA site was created.”

Bronson added that the four top visited pages on the old site—toll rate schedule, current traffic conditions, E-ZPass information, and employment—were positioned front and center on the new site for users to easily find. In addition, police and general contact information were also positioned for quick access. “We realize people are frequently trying to reach us while in transit on mobile devices, and we wanted to make sure the new sites helped them get the information they need while they’re already en-route,” Bronson added.

relocated from overcrowded shelters and communities facing natural disasters. Most of the pets saved have gone to BVSPCA locations, but the BVSPCA also connected many of the pets with partner shelters in their region as well as in New England and the Midwest.

“Animals in need know no borders,” said Adam Lamb, BVSPCA CEO. “Our collaboration with Wings of Rescue has been so successful based on the core values we share to help animals, organizations and communities in need agilely and without judgement.”

## Port of Wilmington Celebrates First Phase of Upgrades

Governor John Carney joined state and local officials today along with port partners, the labor union representatives, customers and vendors, and executives of GT USA Wilmington (GTW) in celebrating the completion of the first phase of the Port of Wilmington's electrification project that brings a cleaner, greener, safer environment to the port.

The opening of the new container yard project featured a demonstration of five all Electric Rubber Tyred Gantry Cranes. The yard project was completed at a cost of \$37 million and is part of an



\$88 million investment in improvements by GT Wilmington since taking over operations at the Port in 2018. The port company is committed to investing up to \$600 million at the current port site and in building a new facility at the nearby Edgemoor site on the Delaware River.

## DPP Receives Highest Economic Development Honors

Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP) received the highest honors in the International Economic Development Council's 2021 Excellence in Economic Development Awards. With more than 500 entries from four countries, the IEDC awards are among the most competitive for excellence in economic development. The DPP team was recognized for Delaware Summit 2020: A Virtual Familiarization Tour in the Special Event category of the annual competition.

"The COVID-19 pandemic precluded most in-person activity last year, but the

DPP team was determined to continue building relationships with site selectors," explained DPP President and CEO Kurt Foreman. "So we created a virtual familiarization tour for site selectors interested in Delaware's key industry sectors in Central and Southern Delaware."

"The winners of IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards represent the best of economic development and exemplify the leadership that our profession strives for every day," said 2021 IEDC Board Chair and Invest Buffalo Niagara President and CEO Tom Kucharski. "We're honored to recognize the more than 100 communities whose marketing submissions, projects and partnerships have improved regional quality of life."

## Easterseals Receives Grant from Discover Bank

Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore received a \$25,000 grant from Discover Bank to support its Supported Employment program—a program which opens the door to meaningful work and competitive wages in the community for adults with intellectual disabilities, while providing employers with dedicated, productive employees. Each year, Easterseals partners with over 60 businesses around Delaware to recruit and train individuals with disabilities for their workplace.

"We are thrilled to partner with Discover Bank to provide the Supported Employment program that makes such a huge impact in the lives of people with disabilities in our community," Easterseals President/CEO, Kenan Sklenar, said. "We are grateful to have community partners, like Discover Bank, who believe in our mission and services. We could not provide the incredible services that make the greatest impact in people's lives without their support."

## Dr. Michelle L. Burroughs Joins WSFS

WSFS Bank welcomed Dr. Michelle L. Burroughs as its new vice president, director of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I), reporting to Michael L. Conklin, executive vice president and chief human resources officer. Dr. Burroughs will support WSFS in creating and delivering a work environment designed to foster a culture of inclusion and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Company's DE&I efforts.

"WSFS is committed to building an inclusive and diverse workforce through education, understanding, and promoting a culture that represents the communities we serve," said Conklin. "Dr. Burroughs brings nearly two decades of experience as a results-driven leader in banking and DE&I. Her addition is part of our continued and deliberate efforts to build a deep bench of leaders, and we look forward to the impact she will have on our ongoing efforts to foster a culture of excellence through respect, diversity, inclusivity, equity and opportunity."

"WSFS has a strong culture of collaboration and openness, and I am looking forward to continuing to build upon the foundational efforts of its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey," said Dr. Burroughs. "I'm honored by the confidence the leadership team has bestowed upon me to lead such critical initiatives."



*Dr. Michelle L. Burroughs*

Did you miss the Chamber Chatter online? Here are our most popular posts on social media...

# ICYMI

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



@Delaware State Chamber of Commerce



@DelawareStateChamber



@DEStateChamber



**Leah B. Coles:** The team at the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** hosted a great #networking event last night. They've got the coolest, most engaging event app I've seen/used. It was [Goodwill of Delaware & Delaware County, Inc.'s] first time attending, and won't be our last!



**@FideliTrade:** We had a great time at **@BBBdelaware** & **@DEStateChamber's** Delaware Networking Station on Tuesday. Thanks to all who stopped by to visit our booth during the event! #NetDE



**EDiS Company:** EDiS Company is honored to have had many veterans who played a vital role in building our company, and we have several veterans now who help us flourish. Consider hiring a veteran. Make their lives, and your company, better. #BuildingWhatMatters #SupportVeterans

**Dot Foods:** "The outreach, support, and cooperation from the state of Delaware during the last 16 months has just been outstanding."—Joe Little, General Manager of Dot Foods Delaware

Dot Foods is grateful for the warm welcome we've received since opening our latest location in Bear, Delaware.

#DotFoods #DelawareBusiness



**Adesis, Inc.:** Thank you to the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** for recognizing us for our outstanding accomplishments and model approach to business. <https://lnkd.in/ebcDei84>



**Christine Fenimore Kubik:** On October 6, 2021, members of the DSCC and NCCCC Joint Military Affairs Committee and Delaware National Guard joined Governor John Carney to celebrate the 2021 recipients of Delaware's own Warrior Friendly Business Award with a plaque unveiling in the Governor's Wilmington office. Businesses were recognized for their support of military service of their employees, along with their supportive initiatives the benefit service members, veterans and their families in Delaware.

The current nomination season for the 2022 Award is open now. Anyone may nominate a Delaware company at – <https://lnkd.in/euzsBHK9>



# WHAT'S NEXT? Chamber Calendar



**NOVEMBER 9, 2021**

## Networking Breakfast at CSC Station

Join us for a morning of in-person networking at CSC Station, the newest state-of-the-art coworking space on the Riverfront in Wilmington, Delaware.

**FREE** to attend



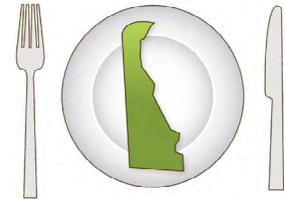
**JANUARY 10, 2022**

## 185th Annual Dinner

Delaware's premier business event has always been the place to be in January for high-level networking. It is an opportunity to mingle with your colleagues, friends, and new acquaintances. We look forward to bringing everyone together in person this year, including added features through the integration of our mobile event app that will also allow virtual attendees to participate. We are pleased to announce Dr. Kathleen Shelton, vice president and chief technology officer of FMC Corporation, as this year's distinguished keynote speaker.

**\$275** Member | **\$350** Future Member

**\$125** Member Livestream | **\$200** Future Member Livestream



## TASTE of Delaware

**DECEMBER 13, 2021**

## The Taste of Delaware

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Signature: Kelly Basile  
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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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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.

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