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2022 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

# Jewish Family Services of Delaware

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*DSCC's Kelly Basile was surprised by her teammates, board members, and members at her ten-year work anniversary party at Tonic Seafood & Steak.*

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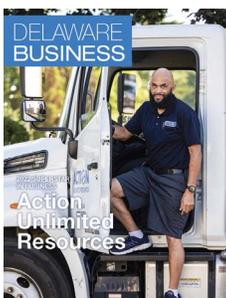
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*On the Cover:* 2022 Superstars in Business Photos by Nick Wallace Photography

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# Message from the President



Michael J. Quaranta

To say the residential housing market has been on a tear would, until recently, been an understatement. According to the Federal Housing Finance Agency, from 2019 (Q4) to 2021 (Q1) the price of single-family homes in Delaware increased from 25% to 32.9%. That increase, while substantial, placed us in the

lower third of the increase ladder nationwide. Ten states experienced increases of over 40% during that same period. Today, with higher mortgage interest rates, we are seeing some cooling effects. For perspective, the average sales price of a single-family home in July 2020 was \$266,022 at an average mortgage rate of 2.98%. The monthly principal and interest payment, after putting 5% down, would have cost you \$1,063 per month. Fast forward two years later to July 2022, your interest rate would average 5.22%, the average sales price would be \$363,762, and your principal and interest payment, after a 5% down payment, would be \$1,902. That's a 79% jump in payment costs each month!

For a historical perspective, I purchased my first home back in 1987, put down 5% and had an interest rate of 10.5%. I was very happy with that rate given that many of my "older" friends who bought homes six or seven years earlier, had mortgages of 17-18%! Today, rents are also up and housing affordability for many people is a growing issue. At the same time, wages and hourly earnings have increased sharply, so where exactly are we? Forbes Senior Contributor Jack Kelly authored an article titled, "We Need to Talk About the Worker Wage-price Spiral Before It's Too Late." As wages increase and labor costs rise, businesses charge more for their goods and services. As the theory goes, this is like a dog chasing its own tail. Others from Forbes and The Cato Institute say the wage-price spiral explanation of inflation is "a dangerous myth."

In comparison to surrounding states, we are quite affordable and, in some cases, an outright bargain. We do have a need for more affordable housing and even seasonal housing so that temporary workers have options within proximity to transportation and places of employment. So while prices are higher and borrowing costs have ticked up, wages—for now—seem to have addressed this challenge for many. However, this all deserves our attention. Our workforce needs are growing rapidly, and most businesses need more workers. As greater numbers of people figure out that the First State is an affordable option to "live, work and play", we'll feel even more pressure in the housing market. To meet demand, our partners in local government might consider zoning changes that open more opportunities for everyone to call Delaware home.

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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

# What New Faces in Dover Could Mean for Delaware

BY TYLER MICIK

JOHN F. KENNEDY ONCE SAID, “Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer.”

At the time of writing this article, six weeks remain before the General Election. While we may not be able to accurately predict the outcomes on November 8, the primary election results continued a movement towards Democrats nominating more progressive candidates.

Of note, progressive Representatives Eric Morrison and Madinah Wilson-Anton defeated their opponents. In four open seats, a more progressive Democrat won against a more moderate challenger. Kyra Hoffner (SD 14), Sophie Phillips (RD 18), Cyndie Romer (RD 25), and Kerri Evelyn Harris (RD 32) all won their races. Moderate Democrats won too. Representatives Debra Heffernan, Nnamdi Chukwuocha, and Stephanie Bolden successfully defended their seats. Lastly, DeShanna Neal beat House Majority Whip Larry Mitchell by 44 votes. The big question now is what does this mean for businesses and their employees?

In January, we expect to see at least eight new legislators in the General Assembly and possibly more after the General Election. Add to that possible changes in leadership and committee assignments and that means significant changes in policy choices impacting Delawareans. New legislators bring fresh perspectives and a sense of eagerness, but many have limited business experience and institutional knowledge of Legislative Hall. Expect for many of these new legislators to promote issues such as police reform, organized labor’s agenda, environmental justice, and paid time off.

Although well-intended, these policy proposals could have negative impacts on Delaware’s economy and harm the very people they’re intended to help. Now more than ever it’s vital for business leaders to develop relationships with new and incumbent legislators.

Meet with them, give them a tour of your facility, and show them first-hand the impacts their policy choices will have on employees and customers. Similarly, we hope more legislators will engage in conversations and be open to incorporating feedback from all stakeholders in their policy proposals. After all, that’s the “Delaware Way”; I like to quote Bob Byrd who once said the “Delaware Way” is the idea that as a state, we can get all the right decision makers in one room to have a conversation and reach an agreement.



Whatever the outcome of the November elections, the General Assembly will be different, and the State Chamber will continue to advocate not for the “Republican or Democratic answer”, but the Delaware answer—the one that positions Delaware employers, their employees, and all Delawareans for success. New legislators and business leaders can learn a lot from one another, and we will do our part to help bridge both sides so we understand each other’s point of view and create a shared vision for Delaware’s future.

To learn more about the election results and implications or to hear about the State Chamber’s policy priorities for 2023, please reach out to me at [tmicik@dsc.com](mailto:tmicik@dsc.com).

# SUSSEX COUNTY

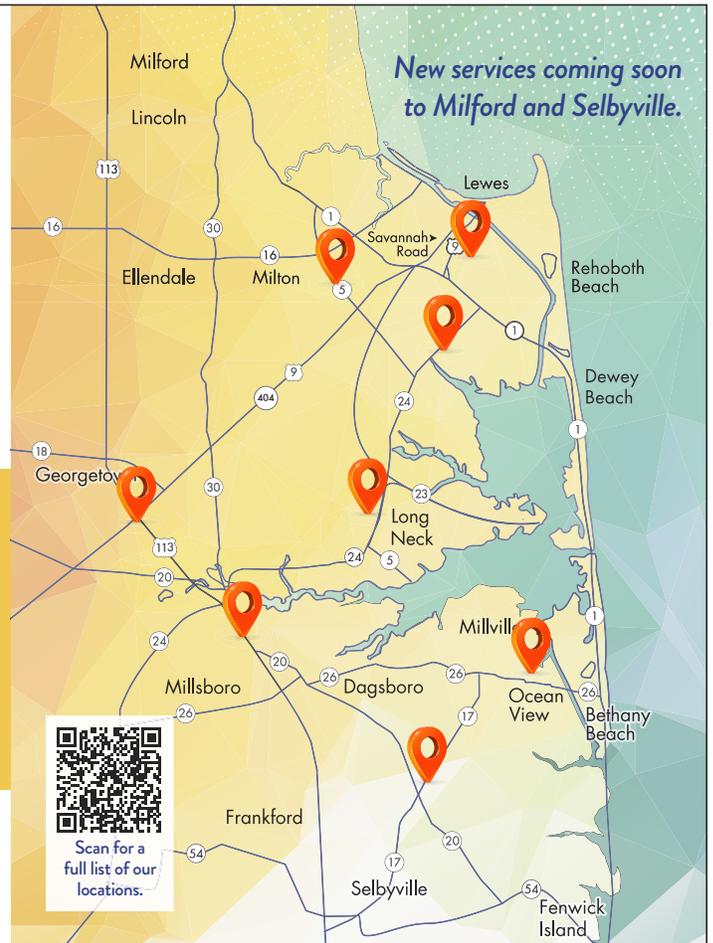
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# Member news & Notes

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT Buff City Soap

BY REGINA DONATO

» Plant-based, all-natural, and hand-crafted—that is what Buff City Soap is all about. Founded in 2013 by now-CEO Brad Kellum, he set out on the mission to help his son with eczema find soaps and body care products that wouldn't irritate his sensitive skin. Normal household detergents, cleaning products, and even lotions and body wash contain harsh chemicals and animal fats that leave skin feeling dry and irritated. What started as a garage experiment has since expanded to include over 200 stores in 30 states, with two brand-new locations in Delaware—one on Concord Pike in North Wilmington and the second in Pike Creek.

Delaware is no stranger to body care stores, but Buff City Soap has a corner of the market very few can touch due to the personalized nature of their products and the ingredients they use. "We carry everything from laundry soaps, dryer balls, body butters, shower oils, bath bombs, fizzy sugar scrubs, facial cleaning products, charcoal bars—you name it, we have it," explains Steve Reid, store owner of the two Delaware Buff City Soap locations.

If you have a certain skin issue you need to account for or are seeking a certain scent for your products, that is also something they can easily customize for you in-store. "Buff City Soap is an extremely unique environment due to the fact that we make all products in complete view of



our guests. We call this 'retail theatre,'" explains Christine Hartpence, director of operations. "It gives us the opportunity to show our guests that we do actually make every product in-store. Our parties range from birthday celebrations, to girls night out, to couples nights, and team building. To book a party, all you need to do is call the store and speak to anyone on our team."

Buff City Soap has taken the First State by storm. "Right now, the Wilmington is in the top 25 percent of all of the stores nationwide, which I feel really good about considering we've only been open for a year," remarks Reid. "And even better, during our grand opening at Pike Creek in late August, we doubled our opening sales at Wilmington, which means there were a lot of people interested in it coming down to this area of the state."

With the success of the first two Delaware locations, Reid, Hartpence,

and team are looking to further expand Buff City Soap's presence in the First State. All eyes are looking forward to beginning the process of opening a Middletown location to account for the growing population in that area, as well as a store down in Sussex County.

Every person is unique, and your body care should be too. Nourishing ingredients and handcrafted goodness can go a long way in self-care. Buff City Soap has succeeded in bringing plant-based and handmade products that are free of harsh ingredients to the First State, allowing hundreds of thousands of Delawareans to be happy, healthy, and treat their body right!

Feel passionately about the Buff City Soap mission? They are hiring for the holiday season! Apply on their website at [www.buffcitysoap.com/pages/careers](http://www.buffcitysoap.com/pages/careers).

## NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT: **Energize Delaware** BY COLIN HEFFINGER

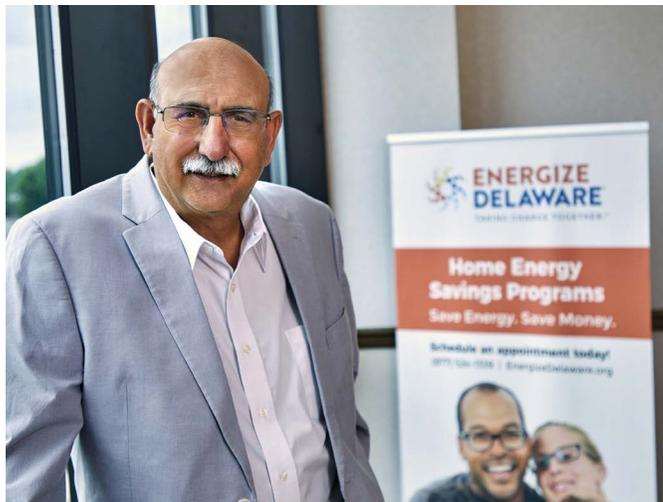
» For residents and businesses varying from farms to nonprofits to corporations, navigating the challenges of understanding and implementing an effective plan to reduce energy consumption is no easy task. Fortunately, a unique nonprofit known as Energize Delaware was specifically created to target this problem—to help confront the issues faced by both homeowners and businesses looking to reduce their carbon footprints throughout the First State.

Energize Delaware was produced by Delaware legislation in 2007 and is funded by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The nonprofit is written into Delaware Code to educate and help Delawareans become more energy-efficient through a variety of programs. Their main office is in Dover, providing a convenient midpoint to access businesses and households throughout all three counties.

Executive Director Tony DePrima explains how their programs make a difference in the overall goal of increasing energy efficiency. “We’re a one-stop resource,” DePrima states. “We focus on all measures of energy-efficiency and offer programs to serve residents, businesses, nonprofits, schools, the government, and much more. We have several collaborative programs with other nonprofits like Habitat for Humanity and Roofs from the Heart to help empower low-income household projects. Our board is focused on correcting the

energy inequity issue in Delaware.”

Energize Delaware’s programs consist of free or low-cost energy assessments, grants, rebates, and low-interest loans for households, congregations, nonprofits, or businesses both large and small that install recommended energy efficiency measures. The loan programs are designed to help ease the



financial burden of paying to install solar energy systems, weatherization, HVAC, water heating, or high energy-efficient technology and more.

“Recently, we realized there is no one place in Delaware where people can learn about solar energy,” DePrima states. “We’ve been working on building a comprehensive website, called Solar Delaware, which will be broken down into different categories such as homeowner, renter, educator, farmer, and more to provide the best information to fit each visitor’s unique approach to solar energy. The website recently launched in October.”

In addition, Energize Delaware provides an online marketplace where Delawareans can buy energy efficient lightbulbs, smart thermostats, and other tools to improve home efficiency. The costs are subsidized by Energize Delaware. Interested consumers can explore this resource at [www.energizedelawaremarketplace.com](http://www.energizedelawaremarketplace.com).

DePrima highlights his recent award as CEO of the Year for medium nonprofit organization by Delaware Business Times, as well as his sixth Partner of the Year award for Sustained Excellence and the Zero Energy Ready Home awards from the Department of Energy. Looking ahead, DePrima reflects on a variety of new programs slated for an upcoming release to continue best serving all Delawareans.

“We’re excited to introduce a couple of solar specific programs,” DePrima states.

“We’re also looking to prepare a program for electric vehicles used in municipal and county governments for their fleets—such as police cars and building trucks. As a relatively young organization, we are thrilled to see how we have grown from just two programs to 20 and look forward to continuing sustainable growth.”

To learn more about Energize Delaware programs, visit [www.EnergizeDelaware.org](http://www.EnergizeDelaware.org). To schedule a Home Energy Assessment call 877-524-1339.

## DIVERSE SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: **Lyons Companies** BY AMANDA SCHIMMEL

» In the male-dominated insurance industry, Lyons Companies sets itself apart with a female owner and predominantly female senior management team. When Kate Lyons stepped into the role of president and CEO of Lyons Companies four years ago, she made it her mission to diversify the company. Lyons recognized an opportunity to expand the company's leadership through obtaining a Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) certification.

The process is rigorous. Applicants must be for-profit organizations located in the United States; 51 percent owned by a woman, or a group of women who are verified owners and U.S. citizens or legal residents; and have a woman top executive officer with technical expertise. Lyons explains that the application process itself "requires a significant time commitment, extensive documentation, and an interview." Additionally, the company undergoes recertification every year to ensure that the ownership remains diversified and in compliance with WBENC standards.

For Lyons Companies—one of the mid-Atlantic region's largest insurance and risk management brokers—this certification sets them apart from their competitors

because it highlights a commitment to reinforcing the place of women in the insurance industry. "I'm glad we invested the time to earn the WBENC certification," Lyons reflects. "Many of our clients have federal contracts, and this certification helps meet their



*Kate Lyons with her sons, David (left) and Timothy (right), accepting the 2020 Marvin S. Gilman Bowl on behalf of her late husband, David F. Lyons Sr.*

*"My employees benefit from a level field of opportunity and our partners recognize a commitment to advancing women in business." —Kate Lyons*



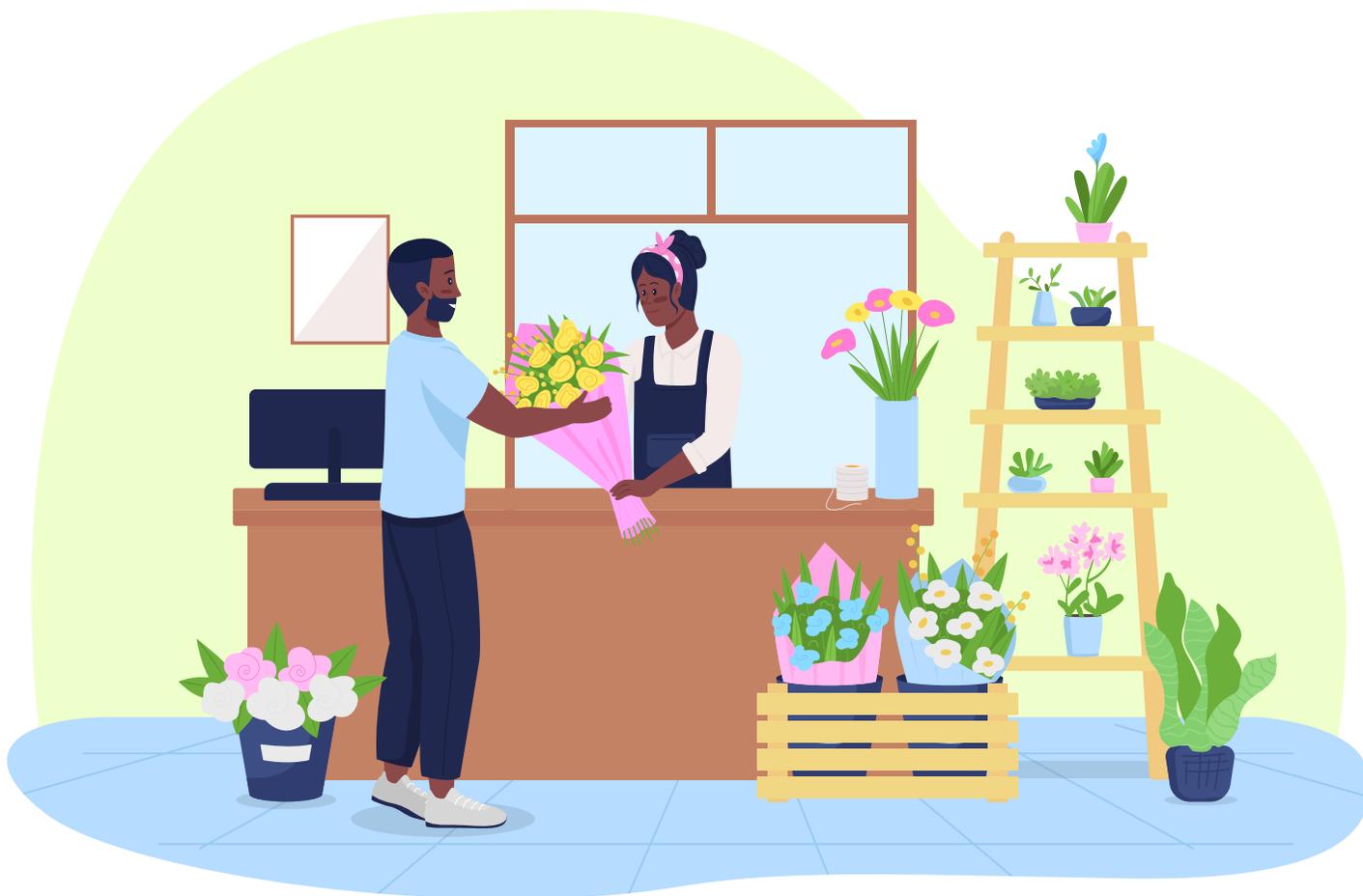
**LYONS**  
COMPANIES

supplier diversity requirements. My employees benefit from a level field of opportunity and our partners recognize a commitment to advancing women in business."

Not only does the WBENC certification solidify the company's values, but it also supports internal growth and career development for Lyons Companies' employees. "We are fiercely committed to independence with a focus on professional development and advancement from within. This is probably the most rewarding part of what I do," says Lyons. "There was a time

when I would sit in on meetings and be the only woman in the room; some of our partners actually asked who was running the company. Often, they didn't know who to make eye contact with."

With Lyons Companies stationed at the frontline, the progress in diversity has become increasingly tangible. Instead of male-dominated conversations and meetings, a WBE certification encourages a 360-degree outlook and fresh perspectives in the workplace. Lyons concludes, "It is really exciting to speak with these women who have started their own companies, many in fields that didn't exist five years ago. There is real energy behind that."



## Chair's Message BY NICK LAMBROW

» In this issue of *Delaware Business* magazine, you'll learn about this year's Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business winners—the four Delaware small businesses and nonprofit organizations recognized for their outstanding achievements and model approaches to business and management.

Each honoree has been in business at least 40 years. One of them, Jewish Family Services of Delaware Inc., was founded in 1899. They represent a range of industries and provide various services

to their customers and clients. Each has a unique, inspiring story to tell.

But they are as similar as they are varied—each one a thread among the tapestry of Delaware's small business community. As such, each of the Superstars in Business is dealing with similar challenges faced by many other small businesses in Delaware. They are stretched by similar forces, bound by common objectives.

They need to find, hire, and retain top talent. They're adjusting to a post-pandemic world. They're dealing with

the rising costs of doing business. Their clients are dealing with the rising costs of doing business. And it's unclear when or if these forces will subside. As a result of this uncertainty, it can be difficult to plan for what lies ahead.

A recent survey by the National Federation of Independent Businesses found that half of small-business owners still can't fill job openings, and about one-third say inflation is their biggest worry.

All this to say, Delaware's small businesses need our help right now—even the Superstars among them. The

small restaurants and shops that line beach roads along the shore. The mom-and-pop retailers in downtown Wilmington, Dover, and Georgetown. The manufacturers and suppliers in Seaford, Millsboro, and Smyrna. They need help to remain competitive, maintain employment, and make money in this challenging market.

As we approach the next legislative session at the beginning of the new year, I encourage each of you to consider what can be done to bolster Delaware's small business community. If you own a small business, share your story and experiences. If your business services a small business, ask how you can help. If you know a small-business owner, seek to learn more about the challenges and opportunities they face.

I'm proud of the work M&T Bank and other banks in the state continue to do in Delaware to help startups and other small businesses gain their footing. M&T continues to be among the state's top SBA lenders and among the top lenders nationwide.

So, while reading about this year's Superstars in Business in the pages that follow, think about how the trade winds of the economy are steering Delaware's small businesses and what could be done to calm the waters in front of them.



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

## Committee Spotlight: Technology

BY TYLER MICIK

»» The State Chamber's Technology Committee met in late August for their quarterly meeting. The committee was joined by Jason Clarke, Delaware's Chief Information Officer. Clarke leads a team of over 300 IT professionals at the Department of Technology and Information (DTI), aimed at providing technology services and scalable, collaborative solutions to provide the highest quality programs and digital government services to Delawareans.



Clarke talked about DTI—what they do, who and what they protect, and DTI's four main priorities: data center modernization, digital government, secure end user services, and workforce development. The Department does everything from cybersecurity and incident response to IT support, and they process around 8.3 billion threats per day.

Universal broadband was also discussed. In September 2021, Governor Carney announced a \$110 million dollar investment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to cover every "last mile" of the state with high-speed, wired broadband internet service—which is around 12,000 addresses. Since then, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, (IIJA) which guarantees states a minimum of \$100 million to connect

unserved homes and/or upgrade homes with lower-speed connections and an additional \$5 million in planning funds. Delaware is using \$25 million of that original \$110 million allocation to connect over 4,300 homes in the next 18 months as they transition deployment plans to leverage the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Fund (BEAD) in place of ARPA.

Delaware has also applied for the Digital Equity Program, which would give the state \$12 million to provide devices, establish connections, and teach internet use and cyber security to undeserved communities. To view if your address or business has internet service and find out more, visit DTI's GIS Hub at <https://gis.broadband.delaware.gov/>.

If you would like to participate in the Technology Committee, please contact me at [tmicik@dsc.com](mailto:tmicik@dsc.com).

## The Road to Reinventing Delaware

» The Pete du Pont Freedom Award will host its 8th Annual Reinventing Delaware Dinner on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at the DuPont Country Club in Wilmington, Delaware. The dinner kicks off the year-long Reinventing Delaware Program that serves as a catalyst for bold, innovative ideas that will create jobs, add to the economy, and ultimately make Delaware a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

The dinner gathers 100 thought leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs of all backgrounds for a shared purpose. All guests are required to come with an idea and be ready to collaborate with a like-minded audience. Guests will share their ideas over a meal and then vote for their favorites. Despite popularity within the evening, a committee will be tasked with reviewing all 100 ideas presented during the dinner and identify the most viable ideas to participate in a development process. During this six-month process, the champion of the idea will receive business coaching and connections to valuable resources to help formalize their concept and develop their idea into a business. At the end of this process, one idea will be named the

2023 Reinventing Delaware winner and will receive \$15,000 to help propel their business forward.

The Reinventing Delaware Dinner is one of the most exciting evenings of the year. Anyone—despite your background

Zip Code Wilmington, OpenBracket, Pay for Success, Wilmington Green Box, NERDiT NOW, WilmInvest, Intern Delaware, and The Warehouse.

Logan Herring, founder of The Warehouse, shares his experience in the Reinventing Delaware Program: “It all started with taking that first step with Reinventing Delaware, and we have just blossomed from there. Now we receive calls from across the U.S. from others who are trying to open a space like The Warehouse and asking us how to make it all work. It’s incredible and very rewarding to be able to offer this for the community.”

This year’s Reinventing Delaware Dinner is presented by Discover Bank and Barclays US Consumer Bank. While the idea submission window has closed, there are still ways to get involved.



*The Reinventing Delaware Dinner is one of the most exciting evenings of the year. Anyone—despite your background or experience—can submit an idea for the opportunity to join a dynamic group of doers discuss advancing Delaware.*

or experience—can submit an idea for the opportunity to join a dynamic group of doers discuss advancing Delaware. It is a unique experience filled with creativity and diversity, and the successes of past winners are a testament to the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation’s proven process.

Successful ideas in the past include



**Stephanie Johnnie** is the executive director of the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation. To learn more, contact her at [stephanie@petedupontfreedomfoundation.org](mailto:stephanie@petedupontfreedomfoundation.org).

# The ROI of Youth Entrepreneurship Education

BY APOLLO KHINE

»» Across the state of Delaware, teens are coming together to fill a need or to solve a problem in their community as they learn practical skills required to conceptualize, capitalize, and manage their own business ventures. Last year, 830 students operated 27 such Student-Run Enterprises across 15 Delaware schools.

Eighth graders in the Appoquinimink School District, under the guidance of their teacher, Brian Johnson, launched and operated not only the top grossing of these enterprises in the state but also second in the nation with more than \$60,000 in sales. Representative Eric Morrison honored Johnson and his students while sharing their accomplishments with fellow lawmakers at Legislative Hall. All told, Johnson's middle school students sold 34,240 items through 28,827 transactions at their pop-up store, netting both \$35,000 in profit and an unforgettable learning experience.

I personally experienced the impact and value of this work-based learning activity, as I too was involved in the JA Company Program® while attending Wilmington Friends School. Collaborating with my peers, making decisions, solving problems, speaking in public, and identifying opportunities were just a few of the skills I honed through this one-of-a-kind Junior Achievement learning experience.

Being a leader of my JA Company

and competing and winning at State and National JA competitions had a profound influence on my future. In fact, because of these robust, hands-on experiences and the role models I met, I changed the focus of my career pursuits in college from my original area of interest in engineering and medicine to finance. I went on to pursue a banking career, and today I volunteer as Junior Achievement of Delaware's chair-elect.



The 103-year-old JA Company Program has changed a lot since my high school days. The new, lean start-up approach and flexible models make it easy to implement in any curricular or afterschool environment. These include corporate host sites, such as CSC and JPMorgan Chase, and current and new CBO sites like Bellevue Farms, Christina Cultural Arts Center, and The Teen Warehouse.

What has not changed is the infusion of structured interactions with adult role models that volunteer as coaches and judges. These volunteers are anyone from Delaware Business Leaders Hall

of Fame inductees, to Wilmington University professors, associates from Marlette Funding, and more.

The JA Company Program integrates into Delaware Department of Education's Marketing Today Pathway; FFA and BPA/DECA; and multiple School Store and Culinary Café implementations. Academic year 2021-2022 high schools include A.I. duPont, Appoquinimink, Brennen, Caesar Rodney, Concord, Lake Forest, McKean, Middletown, Polytech, Seaford, and Smyrna. All Appoquinimink Middle School eighth graders participate in the pop-up model of the JA Company Program, including the Alfred G. Waters,

Cantwell's Bridge, Everett Meredith, and Redding schools.

Silver Lake Treatment Center, Ferris School, Newark Charter Upper School, Odessa, Saint Mark's, and Sussex Tech High Schools will launch JA enterprises in the 2022-2023 academic year, with more signing on each week.

The JA Company Program is a turnkey, quick-to-scale statewide solution for the Youth Entrepreneurship Education

measures called for by the Delaware Business Roundtable's Delaware Growth Agenda; Strategy 1.7. Questions? Contact Student Enterprise Manager Ryan Venderlic at [ryan.venderlic@ja.org](mailto:ryan.venderlic@ja.org).



**Apollo Khine** is the managing director and head of corporate development at US Consumer Bank Barclays.

## Local News Matters BY ALLISON TAYLOR LEVINE

» It's not news that the news is in trouble. Your morning paper is thinner than it used to be. Important elections sneak up on you. You hear rumors of something that happened down the street or around the corner, and the lack of news coverage leaves you wondering what to believe.

We hear about staffing cuts; we miss independent reporting on education, businesses, and development; and we struggle to find timely information about Delaware's state and municipal government. However, there are still many good journalists living and working in the First State, and our news organizations have tried to minimize the impact on news gathering as their traditional business models collapsed over the past two decades. But there's no sugarcoating the loss to local news and reporting.

And the impact of those losses is felt by everyone in our business community.

Strong, independent local journalism is closely linked to quality of life. Research shows us that in places where there are fewer working journalists, businesses and citizens pay higher taxes, more crimes go unsolved, fewer people vote, social cohesion is lost, and inequity grows.

These are the issues that make it harder for businesses to attract and retain top-tier employees—particularly among the younger professionals every business community wants. The

same goes for site selectors evaluating Delaware as a place to do business.

Nearly every inquiry starts with a Google search. If someone looking at Delaware from the outside in cannot easily access independent information about public safety, schools, housing, the arts, public parks, transportation, and other infrastructure, it will become increasingly more difficult to generate their excitement about the First State.

like the Hockessin Community News, Middletown Transcript, and the Delaware Wave, who is covering businesses in those communities? Stories go untold. New restaurants go unreviewed. Historic anniversaries of family-owned businesses pass without mention. Fewer people know what business is going on right on their street.

I told you this was not a news story. This is trend story. But trends can change.

The Local Journalism Initiative of Delaware is a new nonprofit organization working to bolster Delaware's local news and information ecosystem and bring our community back together.

We're pursuing several strategies, both supporting our existing local news organizations—legacy media with unmatched reach and resources that our communities simply cannot afford to lose—while exploring new opportunities to address historic gaps in news coverage.

One significant step is the creation of the new Delaware Journalism Collaborative (DJC), which is funded by a grant from the Solutions Journalism Network. The DJC includes 18 Delaware newsrooms and five community organizations that are pooling resources to help the community understand important local challenges and lead conversations about addressing them.

We also support a local journalism internship program in partnership with the Delaware Community Foundation and Maryland Delaware DC Press Association. This program—which has



Sure, information can be found from local chambers of commerce or organizations like the Delaware Prosperity Partnership, but a strong, independent news community gives life to their data in the form of stories. For example, you may hear that there is an active and growing arts and entertainment scene in Wilmington, but theatre reviews, nightlife calendars, and vibrant arts coverage are what make it enticing.

Lack of local news is particularly hard on businesses—including nonprofits—in small communities. With the demise of the smaller outlets

placed six interns at news organizations throughout Delaware so far—is helping to increase coverage of historically underserved communities and to create a stronger pipeline of reporters of color into local news operations.

We also recently completed a statewide assessment of Delaware’s news and information ecosystem. This study identifies the geographic and demographic communities that are in the greatest need of quality news coverage and shows key opportunities where we can improve access to news and information throughout the state.

The most important finding of this study? Delawareans want and need more independent local news and information. They need it to function, to participate fully in our democracy, and to strengthen all the connections that make Delaware a great place to live, work and play.

Armed with this research and continuing input from the community, the Local Journalism Initiative is now developing strategies to address the gaps. We invite you to learn more about our work at our website, [ljjdelaware.org](http://ljjdelaware.org), and share your insights by contacting me at [allison@ljjdelaware.org](mailto:allison@ljjdelaware.org).



**Allison Taylor Levine** is president and founder of the Local Journalism Initiative of Delaware, and vice president for marketing and communications at the Delaware Community Foundation.

## Newport Family Restaurant Celebrates 40 Years

»» A staple in the community, Newport Family Restaurant is not only known for its delicious, home-cooked meals but also for its proprietor who’s famous for her cooking—Maria Perdikis. The restaurant first opened its doors in 1982 and is proud to celebrate the huge milestone of 40 years in business.

From very humble beginnings, Maria grew up in a small mountain village called Pisterzo, Italy. Working hard has always been in her genetic makeup. “The family immigrated to Canada when she was 17. Three days after

arriving, [Maria] got two jobs—one as a dishwasher and the other ironing clothes,” explained Maria’s daughter, Petula Perdikis. “She would only get paid for the amount of clothes ironed so the faster she was, the more money she made.”

It was in Canada she met her husband, Sam Perdikis. Together, they immigrated to the United States and found themselves in Wilmington, Delaware. Sam worked as a waiter at the Hotel du Pont. Maria worked at the Strawbridge & Clothier’s merchandise mart as a cook. “When she left, they had to replace her with three people,” reflected Petula.

Eventually, the couple learned of an opportunity to purchase a restaurant for sale in Newport, nicknamed “the greasy spoon”. They put all their money towards buying the fixer-upper restaurant, rolled up their sleeves, and in 1982, the Newport Family Restaurant was born.

Sam passed away in 1987, but Maria has been running the restaurant on her own ever since. Over the years a loyal following of regulars has developed. “To this day, she still feels the need to cook the chicken and dumplings herself. It’s one of our customers’ favorites,” said Petula. But her homemade coleslaw, potato salad, and crab cakes are also legendary.

Next time you’re driving on I-95 or find yourself in Newport, be sure to stop by the award-winning Newport Family Restaurant and congratulate Maria on her years of service!



# CHAMBER SCENE



Our August networking breakfast was hosted at Superstar in Business winner L&W Insurance's new Greenville office.



SoDel Concept's Thompson Island Brewing Company hosted our evening mixer in Rehoboth Beach the eve before our Chamber Chase Golf Tournament.



Dr. Robert Resigno, Dr. Denise Wells, and Dr. David Tam networking at our Chamber Leadership Breakfast with Dr. Kathleen Matt in August.



"Partnerships, purpose, people, and passion. You connect those four things together and that's the key to leadership."  
- Dr. Kathy Matt, Dean, UD College of Health Sciences



DSCC's Regina Donato putting her putting skills to the test at the Chamber Chase Golf Tournament in September.



Chip Rankin and Representative Mike Smith smile for a photo shortly before teeing off at Chamber Chase.



Lets go Hens! At our September networking breakfast, guests toured the new, state-of-the-art Whitney Athletic Center at the University of Delaware.

The Delaware Networking Station, co-hosted annually with the Better Business Bureau of Delaware, attracted nearly 100 exhibitors and nearly 500 attendees.



A tee-rrific day! The Joint Military Affairs Committee (JMCA) hosted its 6th Annual Francis D. Vavala National Guard Youth Golf Tournament at Back Creek Golf Club in September. State Chamber members who serve on the committee along with others participated in the event.



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# WELCOME

## New Members



### **BIGCENTRIC APPLIANCES**

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**Atlantic City, NJ 08401**

Cooper Levenson, Attorneys at Law was established in 1957 with two attorneys. Today, the firm is a full-service law firm with 70 attorneys and offices in New Jersey, New York, New York, Nevada, Delaware, and Florida. Firm-wide, practice areas include business and tax law, estate planning and administration, real estate, land use and more.

### **GOOGLE**

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**25 Massachusetts Ave., NW, 9th Fl.**

**Washington, DC 20001**

Google is an American multinational technology company that focuses on search engine technology, online advertising, cloud computing, computer software, quantum computing, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and consumer electronics.

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Horizon Farm Credit has over 22,000 members throughout Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. They have experienced staff who are knowledgeable in agriculture and dedicated to serving you a wide range of products—farm loans, land loans, home loans, construction loans, crop insurance, refinancing, operating lines of credit, equipment loans and more.

### **PETE DU PONT FREEDOM FOUNDATION**

[www.petedupontfreedomfoundation.org](http://www.petedupontfreedomfoundation.org)

**(302) 312-6476**

**P.O. Box 221**

**Montchanin, DE 19710**

The Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation is expanding on the ideals and legacy of Governor Pete du Pont by promoting, encouraging, and facilitating bold ideas to better the state of Delaware. They hold two primary events each year, the Pete du Pont Freedom Award and the Reinventing Delaware Dinner.

### **STRATEGIC SALES DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING, INC.**

[www.strategicsalesdev.com](http://www.strategicsalesdev.com)

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Rob Thomas is a hands-on business advisor with over 25 years of experience who offers expert guidance on how a company can maximize its sales strategy, increase profits and margins, add value, and resolve issues. His experience provides insight and recommendations to help clients reach their goals and improve the sales operations of the company.

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

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



## 2022 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS

### Jewish Family Services of Delaware, Inc. Nonprofit Category

Founded in 1899, Jewish Family Services of Delaware (JFS) provides counseling and other social support services to individuals and their families. The nonprofit is licensed with the State of Delaware's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and fully accredited by the National Council on Accreditation. JFS is also currently the only agency conducting refugee resettlement and related support services in the state of Delaware.

### Action Unlimited Resources, Inc. 1-20 Employee Category

Action Unlimited Resources is a family-owned and operated business that is celebrating its 40th year in business in 2022. The company provides janitorial and sanitation products, supplies, equipment, training, and advisory services to businesses in a variety of industries throughout the tri-state area.

### L&W Insurance 21-50 Employee Category

A full-service, independent insurance agency, L&W Insurance is a one-stop-shop for commercial, benefits, and personal insurance. The agency works as the intermediary between insurance companies and clients to tailor policy options that are specific to a client's needs. Founded in 1932, the company has now expanded to have a location in all three counties in Delaware.

### Schlosser & Associates Mechanical Contractors 51-150 Employee Category

Founded in 1954 as Schlosser Plumbing & Heating, Schlosser & Associates Mechanical Contractors is in its second generation of family ownership and third generation of participation. The company has expanded to provide residential, commercial, and industrial services, including HVAC, plumbing, carpentry, concrete work, interior restoration, and more.

### Award of Excellence Recipients:

Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children (Nonprofit Category)  
RiversEdge Advisors, LLC (1-20 Employee Category)  
Delmarva Central Railroad (21-50 Employee Category)  
Ivira Health (51-150 Employee Category)

## 2022 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Grace Stockley \*Chair**  
FideliTrade, Incorporated

**Pam Cornforth**  
Ronald McDonald House  
of Delaware

**Kevin DiSabatino**  
DiSabatino Construction  
Company

**Joseph Farley, Jr.**  
Associates International, Inc.

**Trey Jones**  
Merrill Lynch

**Christa McLaughlin**  
Whisman Giordano &  
Associates, LLC

**Joseph Nadel**  
Colonial Parking, Inc.

**Meg Rafalli**  
Wilmington Trust

**Chip Rankin**  
milliCare Floor & Textile Care

**Christopher L. Scarpitti**  
WSFS Bank

**Brett Gilman Smith**  
Cornell Property  
Management Corp.

**Michael F. Vanderslice**  
Environmental Alliance, Inc.

**Jaimie Watts**  
Leadership Delaware, Inc.

## 2022 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

**Sheila Bravo**  
Delaware Alliance for  
Nonprofit Advancement

**Angela Coaxum**  
Your Part-Time Controller

**Pam Cornforth**  
Ronald McDonald House  
of Delaware

**Kevin DiSabatino**  
DiSabatino Construction  
Company

**Joseph Farley, Jr.**  
Associates International, Inc.

**Martha S. Gilman**  
Cornell Property  
Management Corp.

**Stacy Grady**  
Bank of America

**Rev. Thomas Laymon**  
Sunday Breakfast Mission

**Christa McLaughlin**  
Whisman Giordano &  
Associates, LLC

**Regina Mitchell**  
Delaware Division of  
Small Business

**Joseph Nadel**  
Colonial Parking, Inc.

**Michelle Neef**  
Faithful Friends Animal Society

**Meg Rafalli**  
M&T Bank

**Chip Rankin**  
milliCare Floor & Textile Care

**Christopher L. Scarpitti**  
WSFS Bank

**Grace Stockley**  
FideliTrade, Incorporated

**Brett Gilman Smith**  
Cornell Property  
Management Corp.

**Michael F. Vanderslice**  
Environmental Alliance, Inc.

**Jaimie Watts**  
Leadership Delaware, Inc.



SMALL  
BUSINESS  
ALLIANCE  
BY  
DELAWARE STATE  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
IN BUSINESS



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

**Nonprofit: Jewish Family Services of Delaware**

BY REGINA DONATO | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

THE KEY TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY is access to high-quality support and resources. Jewish Family Services of Delaware (JFS) has been providing that support to those in the local community who need it—regardless of religion, race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or special need—since 1899. With a Newark office in the making and current locations in Wilmington and Lewes, JFS is licensed with the State of Delaware’s Division of Substance

Abuse and Mental Health and fully accredited by the National Council on Accreditation. All in all, the organization serves over 1,500 patients and their families each year in the state—nearly 3,000 people in total.

“Most JFS clients are not Jewish, but our work is done through the embodiment of Jewish values,” explains Renna Van Oot, CEO of Jewish Family Services of Delaware. “The beauty of the Jewish traditions and commitment to tenants such as *tikkun olam*, or ‘repairing the world’ is at

the core of our actions.” And building a better world they are—by directly serving the people who come to them for help.

JFS’s two core areas of programming include both outpatient behavioral health services (counseling, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric care) and case management and support services (elderly care, caregiver support, financial support). Mental health care and other similar services should never be a luxury reserved for people over a certain socioeconomic threshold—and JFS ensures that anyone who may need services can receive them. While always available to all, the main focus of JFS’s programming is those who have been referred by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services or those who cannot afford the cost of their private insurance’s mental health care services.

A recent survey of their clients showed that:

- 70% report that their therapist helped them successfully manage a mental health condition
- 80% enjoy a better quality of life
- 75% learned the skills to cope with daily stressors
- 99% said their therapist was knowledgeable
- 90% would recommend JFS services to a family member/friend

JFS is constantly evaluating and adding onto their programming based on community needs. In 2021, they launched their youth anxiety treatment programs and maternal mental health assistance. “Next up is care navigation and support for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities,” says Van Oot. “JFS is proactive and innovative while also staying focused on maintaining strong foundational mental health services.”

Not only does the organization provide resources and a safe space for those here in Delaware, but to global refugees seeking safety or a new start. This service reinforces another Jewish value the organization holds themselves to—*kol Yisrael arevim zeh la-zeh* or “the inherent responsibility that each of us has to assist and care for other human beings.”

Jewish Family Services of Delaware is currently the state’s only comprehensive refugee resettlement agency. “During 2021, we helped 113 refugees from countries including Sudan, Rwanda, Vietnam, and Turkey as well as 52 refugees who arrived suddenly from Afghanistan during the late period of the year,” says Van Oot. “In 2022, we served more than 100



*“The beauty of the Jewish traditions and commitment to tenants such as tikkun olam, or ‘repairing the world’ is at the core of our actions.”*

— Renna Van Oot, CEO, Jewish Family Services of Delaware

refugees from around the world, including more than 50 refugees fleeing the turmoil in Ukraine.”

In addition to offering a welcoming environment for their clients and their families, JFS also wants to create one for their employees as well. For the last ten years, JFS has been named a “Top Workplace in Delaware” because of the organization’s positive, diverse, and accommodating company culture that encourages new ideas and feedback from all. To retain the best talent for their clients, the organization offers ample paid-time off, benefits, and continuing education reimbursement, which is especially important considering all their clinical staff have a master’s degree in social work or a similar field.

JFS’s dedication to their community, their staff, and the state of Delaware makes them well deserving of the Superstars in Business award. Van Oot gives the following message on behalf of Jewish Family Services of Delaware: “We are so thrilled to be recognized as a Superstar in Business for the great culture, excellent staff, and comprehensive services we offer. Thank you!” ■



MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
IN BUSINESS



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# PUTTING THE “ACTION” IN 100% CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

**1-20 Employees: Action Unlimited Resources, Inc.**

BY AMANDA SCHIMMEL | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

FAMILY-OWNED AND OPERATED since 1982, Alan Glazar founded Action Unlimited Resources after recognizing the need for a company that excels in customer satisfACTION. While some companies provide services to meet the bare minimum of demands, Action commits to

going the extra mile by actively seeking complete solutions to their clients’ problems and aligning their products and services to the needs—not just the wants—of their customers. These stellar qualities are what solidified Action’s position as a 2022 Superstar in Business.

After returning from Vietnam, Alan Glazar found his way into the custodial supply business by sweeping the floors for a local company. Through hard work and a desire to learn and develop, he grew his responsibilities, learning the business from the ground up. In 1982, Alan Glazar founded Action Paper and Chemical from a garage in Newport, DE. As customers' needs evolved, so did their product offerings, resulting in the need for a name change. Action Paper and Chemical was renamed to Action Unlimited Resources in 2003 and continues to grow in clientele and inventory.

With over 60,000 products, 30,000 square feet, and a full fleet of branded trucks serving approximately 1,000 customers nationwide, the company focuses on providing janitorial and sanitation solutions to keep facilities running smoothly. Action recently celebrated their 40th anniversary under the leadership of Aaron Glazar—Alan's son, who took over as president and CEO for the company—which reflects a long-term commitment to their loyal clientele base. As Aaron Glazar explains, "We've already seen so much progress and growth within the past years that I can only imagine how much more the company will evolve in the ones to come."

Not one customer is the same, and the company stakes their pride on customization and being a problem solver, not an order taker. As a result, Action has become the trusted advisor for many and boasts an impressive average customer tenure of 11 years, with 171 loyal customers being retained for more than 25 years. These numbers directly reflect the company's commitment to customer satisfaction.

Since day one, Action's guarantee has always been 100% Customer SatisfACTION. At the core of this guarantee lies their grit and team-oriented mindsets; where others would give up, Action instead combines their individual strengths to collaborate and overcome daunting obstacles. Glazar adds, "We each bring something different to the table in terms of skills and perspectives, and that really helps us tackle any problem head-on."

Additionally, Action dedicates its time to maintaining a high level of responsiveness by interfacing with clients with a speed and urgency that demonstrate top priority within the organization. Also striving to improve for the sake of the team and their customers, Action recently



*"It is thanks to a truly great group of people who share these values that makes the Action team great."*

— Aaron Glazar, CEO, Action Unlimited Resources, Inc.

implemented an Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) to clarify, simplify, and achieve the company's vision of success. This system reinforces the company's overall goals and outlines clear directives to reach them. "Implementing the EOS System has improved how our organization works. Having a tangible reminder of our mission really helps set a collective goal for Action," explains Glazar.

Above all else, however, is Action's company culture that Glazar is most proud of. "It is thanks to a truly great group of people who share these values that makes the Action team great," reflects Glazar.

The emphasis on company culture also feeds into Action's philanthropic activities. Employees are encouraged to share their philanthropic interests with the company's leadership, which will then assist in supporting that endeavor. Additionally, the company is actively involved on community boards and supports multiple area nonprofits. Action also developed a paid Employer Volunteer Program that encourages its employees to donate their time to the community. "Connecting with the community and recognizing a way to give back was something my dad placed a high importance on. He would always say 'helping others is the right thing to do,' and this is something that Action will continue to invest in," concludes Glazar. ■



MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
IN BUSINESS



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# YOUR PARTNER IN PROTECTION

**21-50 Employees: L&W Insurance**

BY KELLY BASILE | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

THE WORLD OF INSURANCE can be a daunting place. Choosing the right plan with the right benefits at the right price; what coverage do you actually need; and which company to go with; the list goes on.

This is where L&W Insurance—a full-service, independent insurance agency—can help. With divisions in commercial, benefits, and personal insurance, L&W serves as a “partner in protection” when it comes to navigating through adversity and safeguarding what’s most valuable to their clients.

“We are a one-stop-shop for every insurance need you could have as an individual or business owner,” says Chelsea Clark, director of organizational culture and communications. “As independent agents, it’s our job to make sure we understand the nuances of our clients’ specific needs so we can act as effective intermediaries between insurance companies and our clients.”

L&W Insurance is celebrating 90 years in business this year—a major feat for any company. What started as two local businessmen’s vision to make

insurance accessible and approachable for everyone in Delaware is now a team of 39 full-time employees who prioritize cultivating relationships first. “Our business is not and will never simply be about the sale,” explains Clark. “Our focus is on building relationships and being a reliable resource for our clients. Our insurance expertise encourages trust, and those relationships foster loyalty.”

L&W President Bill Strickland reflects on a long-time client who gave him a business-defining compliment that reinforces that sentiment: “You are a trusted partner. You’re not just the agents who insure my businesses, you are part of my team of advisors who help inform the decisions I am making.”

The growth, success, and longevity the agency has experienced over the years is credited to the passion and commitment of their employees to the company’s mission, vision, and core values—hard work, integrity, and community.

### Hard Work

“We are always willing to go the extra mile,” says Erik Kaufmann, commercial agent and vice president. “We will give every effort in every scenario to work smarter and practice harder to achieve our goals.” This commitment has led to the company’s organic growth over nearly a century. L&W is currently licensed in 15 states; contracted with more than 50 insurance carriers; serves more than 5,000 clients; and offers a combined 400 years of experience. In the last two years, the agency has also been able to open a location in both Sussex and New Castle counties, making L&W the only independent insurance agency in the state of Delaware with locations in all three counties.

### Integrity

“We will choose honesty every time to ensure our collective trustworthiness,” tells Clark. The agency recently re-developed its employee handbook to not only include the mission, vision, and values, but spent time discussing with the team how these principles guide the organization. Additionally, the team dedicates the first interview with candidates to not just discuss the position but to explain the company’s history, goals, and values with the intention of clearly explaining upfront who they are and the expectations of a teammate. “Understanding our mission and values has helped to build the team cohesion and rapport that we rely on,” furthers Clark.

### Community

“We believe that our best tools for ensuring a successful ROI is being visible in the community and accessible to clients,” shares Strickland. Under his leadership, the company has further engaged with the community because he believes success cannot exist without a strong connection to the people around them.

The company’s leadership actively participates on the boards of organizations such as Bayhealth, Delaware Turf, and Kent-Sussex Industries. As an agency, they financially give back to more than 50



community and nonprofit organizations each year. As a team, they hold an annual season of giving to support various initiatives by collecting non-monetary donations for Toys for Tots, Turkey Trot, and the SPCA. On an individual level, many team members engage with their communities by volunteering their time in senior centers, serving on parent-teacher associations, and taking part in local fundraising events.

“We will lift up and pour back into each other and the broader community what we have so gratefully received,” Strickland emphasizes.

Utilizing L&W Insurance means having an insurance experience, options, and advocates under one roof. The company is committed to its clients and fiercely dedicated to the state as a whole. As the last local-owned, independent agency in Delaware, Strickland concludes, “We operate with a fully local team and invest in the people and businesses that make up our communities. We are to our core a Delaware business.” ■



MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS**  
IN BUSINESS



SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# LONGEVITY, CREDIBILITY, AND QUALITY

**51-150 Employees: Schlosser & Associates Mechanical Contractors**

BY REGINA DONATO | PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY. When Paul Schlosser Sr. opened Schlosser Plumbing & Heating in 1954, he did so with the intention of not only serving the needs of his community, but also keeping his family involved. In 1998, the company was bought out by his children Paul Schlosser Jr. (who had already assumed day-to-day management in 1980), Garnet Schlosser Dennis, and her husband Steve Dennis. The company

name was subsequently changed to Schlosser & Associates Mechanical Contractors to reflect the wide range of services offered to their customers—which includes plumbing, heating, air conditioning, duct cleaning, interior renovation, hardscaping, site utility, and structural steelwork.

Flash forward. Upon Paul Schlosser Jr.'s unfortunate passing in 2013, Steve and Garnet Dennis purchased Paul's share of the business and Steve

took over the role of president. Garnet, the current vice president and co-owner, has been an active part of her father's business since she was old enough to pick up the house phone—quite literally! All Schlosser siblings, Garnet included, would answer the phone after hours and on weekends, as business calls would also go through to the house phone.

Garnet notes that “It’s an honor to be able to continue my dad’s and brother’s legacy by still playing a role in the family business. We now have a third generation involved, as well, with our sons now employed here.”

The leadership of Steve, Garnet, and Darryl Remedio Sr.—the company’s third owner—continues the legacy of the Schlosser family by ensuring top-quality services for their customers. “Our business is a ‘people business,’” explains Steve Dennis. “We adhere to the ‘The Schlosser Way,’ which includes treating clients as family; respecting their time and property; the importance of change and continuous improvement; doing things right the first time; always standing behind our work; and because we are not perfect, making things right if mistakes are ever made.”

The Schlosser & Associates leadership team prides themselves on the collaborative, hardworking, and fun culture they have created for their associates—who they call employees.

“We are only as good as our associates and their actions,” explains Garnet. “It takes each and every associate to make this work, and their honesty and integrity while serving our customers and working with other associates is critically important to their success, their families’ success, and the company’s success.”

Now, with Garnet as a majority share owner, Schlosser & Associates is a legacy woman-owned company in a primarily male-dominated field. The skills, expertise, and personalities of the women employed by Schlosser & Associates are integral to the success and overall culture of the company. Take Mary Clark for example, who has been employed by Schlosser & Associates since April 2005. In her previous role, she was the one selling project materials to Schlosser & Associates. Upon leaving her old position, she was approached by then-owner Paul Schlosser Jr. to work for the company, despite having no experience in the mechanical contracting field. In her role at Schlosser, Clark helps with materials procurement, on-site project administration, and product billing, amongst other tasks.



*“We adhere to the ‘The Schlosser Way,’ which includes treating clients as family; respecting their time and property; the importance of change and continuous improvement; doing things right the first time; always standing behind our work; and because we are not perfect, making things right if mistakes are ever made.”*

— Steve Dennis, President, Schlosser & Associates

“Schlosser & Associates is such a fantastic place to work. It’s very family oriented and they truly make me feel like a part of the family,” says Clark. “In my day-to-day, I’m primarily dealing with all men. You definitely have to be assertive as a woman in this field, but after being here for so long it is like working with my brothers every day. I love it.” Sometimes, a woman’s touch is welcome in such a male-dominated field. Through employees like Mary Clark, Schlosser & Associates is playing a very important role in creating a more ethnically and gender-diverse workforce, one associate at a time.

The sheer longevity of the company alone is a testament to the credibility to the community and quality of the services, truly making Schlosser & Associates Mechanical Contractors a Superstar in Business in every sense of the term. “Receiving this Superstars in Business award from the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce validates the hard work and emphasis we have been placing on customer service and working as a team for the benefit of our customers, our associates and their families, and the company,” reflects Garnet. ■

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We gratefully acknowledge the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, its Small Business Alliance, and everyone involved in the review and selection process for naming Schlosser & Associates a 2022 Superstar in Business.

We wish to thank our customers, associates (employees), and business partners for their contributions to the growth of our family company since our founding in 1954. We are gratified to be part of such an outstanding business community.

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Company Founder Paul Schlosser Sr.





# Eye on the Future

How consumers and communities are shaping the future of interacting with Delaware businesses

BY SHELLY KAVANAGH

THE PAST FEW YEARS have seen rapid change in how consumers interact with businesses, whether they are shopping for clothes at a local small business retailer, using contactless payment methods as their primary way to pay for food and groceries, or managing money at their bank.

The phrase “at their bank” has taken on a new meaning for consumers and the banking industry.

Today, consumers expect the same personalized experience in any interaction with a business. Whether they connect with their bank in a branch, at an ATM, by calling a contact center, or using online or mobile banking tools, they expect to accomplish the same thing.

They want easy, consistent interactions. They expect to have positive experiences wherever and however they interact with their bank, not only when managing their money, but in their communities too.

## Leading Their Communities

Business leaders throughout Delaware recognize and embrace the positive impact their employees can have on communities and how Delawareans interact with them.

Many banking and business professionals give their time to numerous organizations, serving on boards, volunteering at community events and nonprofits, and supporting local chambers of commerce.

The same commitment to service reflects how banks are evolving in how they interact with customers too, as customers expect their bank to offer the products, services and guidance through the channels they are using, in real time.

## Interacting in the Present with an Eye on the Future

To meet this demand, businesses must continuously evolve and invest in technology to provide insight-driven, personalized, and tailored interactions for individualized and engaging customer experiences. This is especially true in banking.

With technology advances enabling people to do their everyday banking on mobile devices, the role of bank branches has evolved to help customers with more complex transactions or financial needs, reflecting their need for flexibility from their bank, just as they need flexibility from other businesses they interact with in their daily lives.

Many banking customers use branches for the “Apple experience,” where they want to come in to speak with someone about loans, such as a mortgage or small business loan.



To provide this experience to our customers, many WSFS banking offices feature an innovative design and modern amenities, including banking pods, which bring our universal banking service model to life and provide customers with the service they need. Customers can still conduct transactions inside the banking office, but they have the option to use their mobile device or an ATM as well.

As technology continues to advance, consumers—including our customers and yours—will expect businesses to meet them how, when, and where it is convenient for them, making it crucial that we all continue to innovate and create these experiences as technology and consumer preferences evolve. ■



**Shelly Kavanagh** is senior vice president, director of retail delivery for WSFS Bank. Prior to her current role, Kavanagh served WSFS as director of retail strategy, regional manager, retail program manager, and small business relationship manager. She brings more than 16 years of experience in banking.

# Fulton Bank Evolves to Better Serve Diverse Business Customers

BY JOEL BARNETT

THERE'S AN INEQUITY in small business and commercial banking that needs to be fixed and Fulton Bank is out to do just that. Diverse businesses often lack access to capital and other banking services needed to grow their businesses.

In fact, the 2021 Small Business Credit Survey found that Black-owned organizations that applied for traditional financing were the least likely to receive financing. In total, 40 percent of white-owned firms, 31 percent of Asian-owned firms, 20 percent of Hispanic-owned, and only 13 percent of Black-owned firms received all of the financing they sought. The trend existed even among organizations with strong credit scores.

According to a Minority Business Development Agency report, minority-owned businesses are also less likely to receive loans than non-minority firms; the loan amounts received are lower; they are more likely to be denied loans; and are more likely to not apply for loans due to rejection fears. Further, when capital is received, minority-owned businesses pay higher interest rates on business loans than their non-minority peers. Capital access remains the most important limiting factor for the establishment and expansion of minority-owned businesses.

“There’s a significant disparity across the financial industry when it comes to serving and supporting minority-owned businesses,” said Wm. “Smokey” Glover, executive vice president, director of fair and responsible banking at Fulton Bank. “That problem was underscored during the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan process during the pandemic, and now it’s time for us to work together in solving this problem with the capital and opportunities these businesses need to succeed.”

## The Solution

Fulton Bank created a new director-level position within its ranks centered on building relationships with businesses owned by people of color, women, and veterans.

“This new role is focused on ensuring that we are reaching out to and meeting the needs of affinity businesses in our communities. By assigning enterprise-wide responsibility for building these relationships to one person, we can ensure a concerted effort on this outreach,” said Glover.

A few months ago, I joined Fulton Bank as the director of commercial



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affinity banking. In this new role, which is based in Philadelphia, I plan to draw on my more than 30 years of experience in the banking industry. Prior to joining the Fulton team, I served most recently as the senior vice president and business banking market executive at a Pittsburgh-based bank.

I have been working with my colleagues at Fulton to create a task force of several working groups dedicated to increasing access to capital, as well as enhancing deposit and payment services aimed at optimizing cash flow for affinity banking groups. In addition, we assembled a separate team to work on new ways to improve proactive outreach to these groups to ensure they are aware of our products, services, and programs.

Central to its purpose of changing lives for the better, Fulton is committed to creating opportunities for diverse and minority-owned businesses that will position them for growth and success in the years ahead. ■



**Joel Barnett** is the director of commercial affinity banking at Fulton Bank.

# Delivering for Delaware

How the power of partnership shapes our business and enhances community relationships CONTRIBUTED BY BARCLAYS US CONSUMER BANK

AS THE NATION works to overcome the challenges of the past three years, Barclays US Consumer Bank is demonstrating that the power of partnerships is the key to our success. Across the country and right here in Delaware, partnerships drive everything we do—it's our business ethos and our blueprint for being a good corporate citizen. We understand the power of partnership can lead to greater success for all.

During 2022, Barclays doubled our customer base by forging partnerships with America's best-known brands and we partnered with nonprofit organizations across Delaware to make the First State a better place to live and work.

"Being a good partner means making sure our community, our customers, and our colleagues grow with us," said Denny Nealon, CEO. "In business, we tailor our approach, innovations, and investments to serve clients' needs, while also investing our skills, time, and resources into helping our colleagues and neighbors build a stronger Delaware."

## Giving Back to Delaware

This spring, we partnered with ChristianaCare to advance their mission of making a positive impact on the health in our community by rolling out two mobile health services vans to underserved and undertreated individuals.

We recently renewed our 20-year relationship with EastSide Charter School with a \$1 million donation to support the school's mentorship program, started by Barclays in 2002, and expand the school with a new state-of-the-art STEM Hub.

In 2022, we provided significant support for Barclays LifeSkills community partners. These are organizations that help people develop



skills to secure work and build a better future, like the Challenge Program, which offers teens and young adults construction training and real-world experiences building furniture. We also worked with Tech Impact to launch its CXWorks customer service training program at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution, and continued to support Delaware State University's Technology & Training Center. We bolstered the efforts of the NERDiT Foundation and continued support for REACH Riverside, Kingswood Community Center, and the Teen Warehouse in Wilmington.

## Succeeding with Business Partners

In 2022 we doubled our total cardmember base to more than 20 million when we added Gap Inc.'s credit card portfolio, including Gap, Old Navy, Banana Republic, and Athleta retail brands. In addition to offering excellent reward features, the new card program also touts a "Do Good" component, allowing cardmembers to donate rewards points to vital social causes.

This year we also renewed two of our longest business partnerships: our 16-year relationship with Barnes & Noble, the number one book retailer in the U.S., and 18-year relationship with Carnival Corporation, the world's largest cruise company.

## Our Future Is Bright

We continue to innovate and explore new ways to enhance products and services for customers while diversifying our portfolio to foster continued growth in the U.S. consumer market.

We're not only optimistic about the future of our business partners, but for the work in the community that we'll be able to continue in Delaware to keep the First State in first-rate shape. ■



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# What Does the ‘Digital Generation’ Expect From Businesses?

BY ADAM M. BAKHASH

SINCE MILLENNIALS NOW SURPASS the baby boomers as the nation’s largest age group in the workforce, they are redefining society in profound ways. They’re also reshaping markets.

As a result, businesses need to consider new ways to approach this segment of the population with their sales, marketing, and advertising efforts.

To start, think of how the world has changed during the lifetime of the millennials. These are the children of astonishing advances in technology. Millennials are used to learning and communicating efficiently. As a result of “having the world at their fingertips,” millennials have high expectations for qualities like convenience and enhanced communication.

Businesses need to think seriously about how to deliver customer service to these convenience customers, particularly as they begin to take on more leadership roles and further shape our society.

So how does this apply to you and your business, and what can you do to adapt?

## Create consistency and convenience

In the age of Amazon where layers of algorithms are already calculating what products best suit a buyer’s lifestyle or when they’re likely to buy a product again, it’s important to bring consistency and convenience to your customer service experience. Remove all unnecessary hurdles from

service and sales to make the experience constantly convenient. This can be as simple as adding services like an electronic signature to your forms, so a customer or prospect doesn't have to go through the trouble of downloading, printing, signing, and then scanning back or mailing documents to you.

There are many tools and apps out there for every type of business that can be easily integrated into the customer experience. The goal is to make the experience scalable and repeatable through different markets and products.

**Display transparency and communication**

Businesses of all sizes can take advantage of the opportunity in front of them, which is marketing to millennials—who will outspend baby boomers before long.

Digital marketing has vastly expanded the sales network for companies that have adopted the style of the “social native” in which content is created by users and represented to new and existing consumers. Many consumers are taking away a layer of a once-coveted advertiser by spending their time letting other consumers know their true feelings on a product with reviews and original content, so offer plenty of opportunities for customers to contribute user-generated content on your social media channels.

Millennial consumers crave targeted messages that fit their lifestyles and ideologies, so create a connection that then creates loyalty to your brand. They need to trust in your brand to be loyal to it. Simply put, say what

you mean and mean what you say. By its nature, clarity builds trust. I've found that having that reliable and transparent brand message, combined with a strong social media presence, can make all the difference in reaching this large market with strong lifetime value.

**Stay ahead of the curve**

Naturally, millennials probably aren't impressed by the way companies such as Amazon, Netflix, Spotify, and Uber have redesigned the way people buy, sell, and consume. This type of discovery-based shopping, social purchasing, and DIY ethos is all they know—it's not unique. However, those over 45 are often simply amazed by it. But at the same time, they may be struggling to enjoy the new reality we live in while also getting frustrated by it.

Over time, I believe we will see a vast majority of businesses change direction to adhere to the new way consumers buy, trade, and share ideas. This will likely be led by discovery-based (browsing-oriented) buying and social shopping, frictionless and convenient applications, and transparent communication directed to consumers, particularly those in the millennial generation and beyond. ■



**Adam M. Bakhsh** is a senior wealth advisor with Wilmington Trust, a subsidiary of M&T Bank.




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# Delaware Needs a New Emphasis on Housing Affordability

BY KEVIN KELLY

RISING MORTGAGE RATES and little or no abatement in material and labor costs will continue to be strong headwinds for the home building industry through 2023. As a result, housing production in Delaware is down 31 percent (year to date).

Even without the significant run up in mortgage rates, tens of thousands of Delawareans as well as families across the country are facing a “housing affordability crisis”. Housing supply is simply falling short of needs. The mortgage giant Freddie Mac estimates the shortage to be 3.8 million homes. Other studies estimate the number is closer to five million. While there is nothing state and local policymakers can do to change the trajectory of mortgage rates, there are steps they can take to make housing more affordable.

A major driver of high housing prices is unreasonably stringent land-use policies that hurt affordability and reduce critically needed housing supply. Local land use regulations have made it more expensive and time consuming to develop lots for new homes. This irrefutable, incontrovertible fact is cited by various major think tanks (CATO and Brookings), universities (Penn/Wharton and Harvard Joint Center for

Housing Study), and nationally renowned economists such as Mark Zandi. In fact, this year the White House issued a statement that said in part: “Land use and zoning policies constrain land use, artificially inflate prices, perpetuate historical patterns of segregation, keep workers in lower productivity regions, and limit economic growth.”

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) has found that 25 percent of the cost of building a new single-family home and up to 40 percent the cost of multifamily housing is regulatory compliance.

Regrettably, the affordability crisis most severely impacts low-income families in our state. According to data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, more than 27,000 Delaware families pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing—a shocking statistic.

## Possible Solutions

Bringing back starter homes is a good place to begin. The starter home was always meant to be a young person or family’s first foray into home ownership: a smaller, more affordable home that allows a homeowner to start building equity toward something for the long term. We commend

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the Governor on leveraging ARPA funds to support the Catalyst Fund, designed specifically to further affordable homeownership.

However, in recent years, the starter home has gone by the wayside due to high building costs. In the face of a crisis and a large generation entering prime home buying age, this is the exact type of housing we need to meet these demands.

Another solution is to increase multifamily building activity. Multifamily housing built at scale allows builders to produce homes more economically and is a key component to resolving the housing affordability crisis. A shortage of multifamily rental units prevents low- and moderate-income families from finding housing that meets their needs at a price they can afford.

## Working Together

The market is ripe for more affordable homes and apartments. But it needs help.

Policymakers at the state and local level can help by enacting policy that incorporates the Biden Administration's recommendations to reducing regulatory barriers that discourage production of starter homes and more affordable apartments.

Lastly, we can all work to reduce "NIMBYism"—not in my back yard—in our neighborhoods by recognizing that increased density, which means increased housing opportunity, is good for everyone. ■



**Kevin Kelly** is chairman of Leon N. Weiner Associates (LNWA), a homebuilding, development, and property management firm. He has served on Fannie Mae's Affordable Housing Advisory Council and HUD's Housing Affordability & Transportation Review Panel, as chair of the Board of the National Association of Home Builders, and president of Home Builders Association of Delaware. He was also inducted into the National Housing Hall of Fame in 2021.



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# Economic Development Includes a Focus on Affordable Housing

BY RICHARD T. PRZYWARA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING has a direct link to workforce development and economic mobility. Delaware leaders—beginning with the Dupont Company and Bancroft Mills—began building affordable housing for their workforce in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Their thinking was that if their workers had a nice house close to where they worked, it would be conducive to their health, contentment, and efficiency.

Entire neighborhoods were created to house the growing workforce, necessitating the addition of grocers, barbers, shoe stores, dry goods stores—we are all familiar with this cycle of economic development.

## What is affordable housing?

In today's housing market, the Milpitas School District in California is asking residents to rent rooms to teachers because they cannot afford to purchase a home in the district (median price exceeds \$1 million for a home). And in Delaware? For a teacher with two years of experience and a salary at \$50,000, they could purchase a home at \$180,000. Could they live in Union Park Gardens? No, houses there are \$239k. How about McDaniel Heights? Houses there are in the mid \$300,000s. What about renting? The average monthly rent is \$2,350 for a home in Fairfax.

To take a step back, how do we even define affordable housing? Affordable housing is housing which is deemed within the means to those with a household income at or below the median. Affordability is also intrinsically linked to income. Quality housing needs to be affordable compared to the wages we are paying.

Henry Ford put this concept to work when his factory workers needed to buy the cars they were assembling. He announced \$5 per day wages in 1913. This was a radical investment in the labor force at that time, and it created a new market that could afford his product. Nearly every

business we know in Delaware is hiring, but where can employees live on the wages they earn?

## Who will build it?

We also face a second challenge—who will build affordable housing? The building trades continue to see a decline in young people pursuing careers as plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and masons. Our society has spent the last few decades diverting young people from learning a trade to funnel them to college. I spent almost 25 years working in the college environment and I saw enormous benefits to a university education. However, there are comparable economic benefits to learning a skilled trade. There is ample research to demonstrate that the lifetime earnings can often be comparable among skilled workers and college graduates.

Our vocational school districts offer great facilities and exceptionally skilled teachers. We now must encourage younger generations to reconsider this economic life path. At Woodlawn Trustees, we have begun a partnership with Howard Vocational High School to just that. I would like to say we are doing this for completely altruistic reasons to help the youth of tomorrow but frankly,

we are also doing this to help our business survive. The average age of my facilities staff is over 50. By taking interns, we are giving them their first work experience, and hopefully encouraging them to see this work as a viable career opportunity. Our company recognizes the need to play an active role in developing the workforce so there is a pipeline to hiring.

The City of Wilmington's Youth Development Program is one example of how employers can connect with eligible applicants seeking opportunities in the construction trades. Through American Rescue Plan



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funding, youth between 16 and 24 years old who reside in the city can be matched with contractors working to revitalize properties on the east side of Wilmington. Participants receive necessary skills training, application assistance, credential attainment, and transportation assistance.

## What can be done

Affordable housing needs several key supports to be available for our workforce. The first step is funding. Delaware currently has a shortage of 20,000 affordable housing rental units. Providers need a reliable source of funding to plan construction efforts and keep the units affordable to individuals making \$15-30 per hour. We should consider part of the real estate transfer tax be directed to build affordable housing. Two, our state and local governments need to direct funding to support the growth of skilled trades. These jobs are an economic engine for the future, and it starts with the high school students. Lastly, we need to recognize that small businesses are a growth industry in construction and renovation for affordable housing. Connecting small contractors to new resources is critical so they can grow their business. ■



**Richard T. Przywara** is president and CEO of Woodlawn Trustees.

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# Delaware's Property Tax Reassessment



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## Three things commercial property owners should know

BY DONALD N. ISKEN AND KATHERINE H. BETTERLY

DELAWARE IS AMONG THE FEW STATES that does not have a constitutional or statutory requirement to periodically adjust property values for purposes of real estate taxation. As a result, the last county-wide property tax reassessment took place in New Castle County effective 1983, Kent County effective 1987, and Sussex County effective 1974. As would be expected, the intervening decades have witnessed widely divergent rates of appreciation in market value amongst the hundreds of thousands of properties located throughout the state.

According to civil rights activists and public education advocates, this has created unequal treatment of properties and inequities in the way public schools are funded. These circumstances were brought before the Delaware Court of Chancery in 2018, in the highly publicized lawsuit, *In re Delaware Public Schools Litigation*, C.A. No. 2018-0029-JTL (Country Track), 2020 WL 2296888 (Del Ch. May 8, 2020).

In 2020, the Court of Chancery issued a landmark ruling, holding that Delaware's property tax system violated the Delaware Constitution, which requires all property owners to be taxed on an equal footing. The Court also ruled that Delaware statutory law had been violated, as it requires all property subject to taxation to be assessed at its "true value in money" (a concept similar to "fair market value").

### 1. Status of Reassessments

While the Court declared the existing property tax system unconstitutional, it did not go so far as to offer a workable solution. In the wake of that decision, the litigation parties agreed to a settlement that required each County to undertake a reassessment of its tax parcels. All three counties are expected to complete such work around fiscal year 2025.

While such countywide reassessments are intended to be revenue neutral, certain caveats under state law might lead to a tax revenue increase, although for counties only temporarily. Following a reassessment, school districts must calculate a new tax rate and realize up to a 10 percent increase in revenue over the fiscal year immediately preceding the reassessment. Counties can increase their tax rates in order to increase overall tax revenues by up to 15 percent but only for the year immediately following the reassessment. Presumably, the purpose of this temporary tax revenue increase was intended to defray the cost of the reassessment; however, counties officials have stated New Castle and Sussex counties intend to keep the reassessment revenue neutral by paying for the current reassessment out of reserves while Kent County plans to seek a temporary increase in tax revenue.

## 2. Considerations Involved in Establishing “Fair Market Value”

Because most commercial properties are unique, many subjective elements are involved in establishing the fair market value of a commercial property. In addition, assessing commercial properties often considers income derived from those properties which can vary widely from year to year and may imbue a sense of “valuation roulette” in the tax reassessment process. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some properties saw a dramatic income decline, while other properties were income stable or experienced a net income increase; however, these income figures could be anomalies that revert to historical norms once the pandemic is firmly in the rearview mirror. Given these factors, commercial property owners should view with skepticism whether a state-wide reassessment performed in an environment of unprecedented external influence can genuinely result in an accurate determination of their properties’ fair market value.

## 3. Mechanisms for Reassessments and Appeals

Consulting group Tyler Technologies is handling reassessments for all three counties. The company stated that it will invite property owners to provide feedback through an informal review process. That process is still developing, and it remains to be seen how a property owner’s feedback will be considered or impact the final reassessed value.

In the event of an overstatement in assessed value, property owners have other forms of redress available—such as the property tax appeal. When the last general reassessment in New Castle County was performed, a flood of property tax appeals were filed in the years following. We anticipate another increase in appeals following this reassessment.

Property owners should beware—each county has its own appeal process. If appeals are not filed in a timely manner, owners will be estopped from appealing that year’s property taxes.

The timing of when property owners will have their new reassessed values versus how much time they will have to prepare and file a commercial property tax appeal remains an open question. Concerned property owners should remain alert to developments in this area—especially given the consequences of failing to meet filing deadlines. ■

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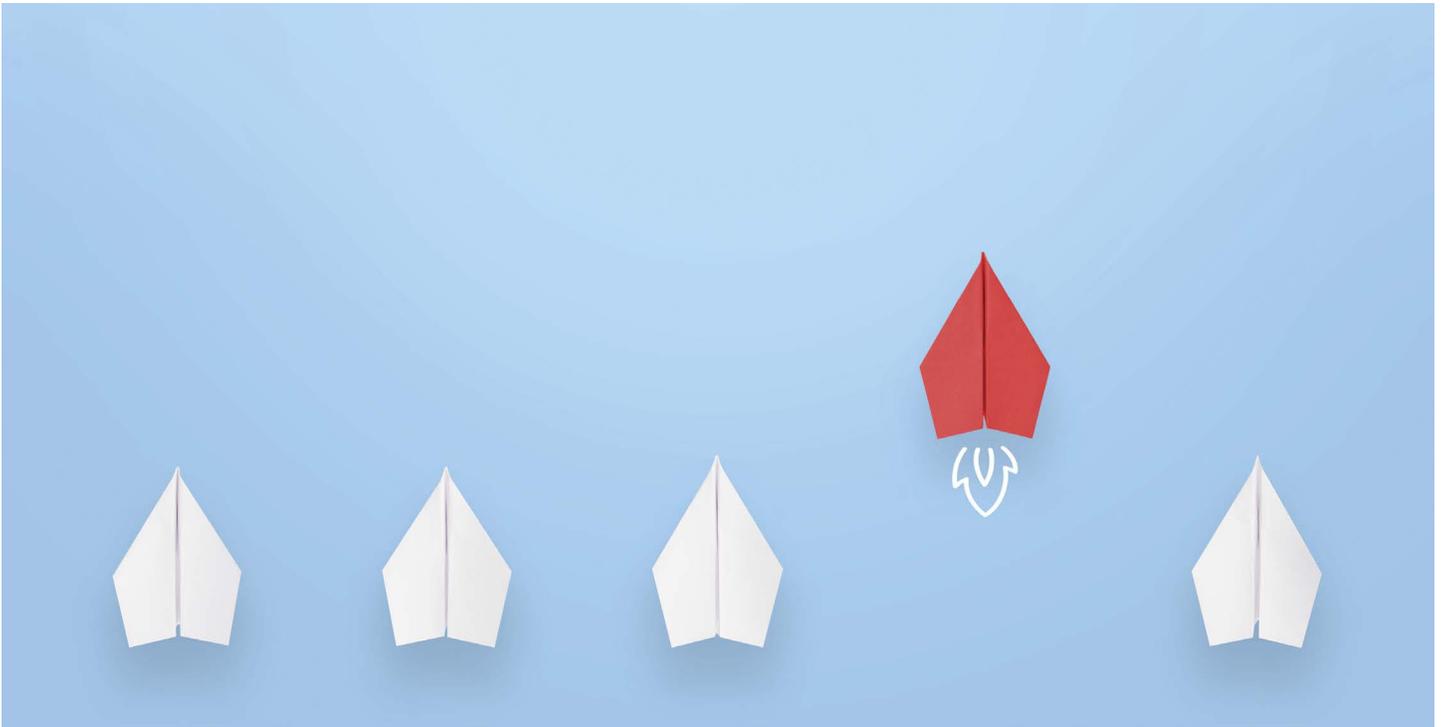
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# Innovation and Entrepreneurship Prosper in Delaware

Meet four companies thriving in Delaware's startup ecosystem

BY ERICA CRELL AND NOAH OLSON

DRIVEN BY THOSE WILLING to risk failure and try the untried, innovation introduces what's new. Without it, the world would never have had the telephone, the internet, the wheel, or even the chocolate chip cookie.

Entrepreneurship makes what's new repeatable and scalable. Whether building a business, transforming an organization, or launching a new career, an entrepreneurial mindset provides fresh viewpoints, exposes untapped opportunities, ignites ambitions, and creates the resourcefulness to adapt and thrive.

Innovation and entrepreneurship go hand in hand to create a healthy startup ecosystem. In Delaware, this ecosystem thrives as ideas, models, products, and services become reality—and, oftentimes, prosperous businesses.

Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP) provides access and flow of information for Delaware and the region's stakeholders to build a stronger and diverse entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. Working with innovators and entrepreneurs, DPP spotlights and celebrates their successes

and connects them with the information and resources they need to succeed. One of the ways DPP facilitates access to these assets is through a statewide database hosted on its website.

Another way is Startup302, which has offered financial capital, mentorship opportunities, valuable connections, and exposure within the startup ecosystem to scalable, tech or tech-enabled startups led by founders from underrepresented and underfunded demographics. The global competition focuses on early-stage companies in key segments of Delaware's economy, such as life sciences, chemistry, advanced materials, and fintech.

Four of the winners in 2022's Startup302 contest—Carbon Reform, OmniPotential Energy, BioCurie, and Resonate Forward—are Delaware-based companies. Each of them has taken advantage of the statewide innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem to help them launch and grow.

**Carbon Reform** is developing a modular CO<sub>2</sub> capture device to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels in buildings, save energy costs for building owners, and

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improve occupant health and cognition. The company has connected with mentors at the Delaware Sustainable Chemistry Association (DESCA), the University of Delaware Horn Entrepreneurship Program, and the Innovation Space, and has now opened its own office. Carbon Reform also competed or presented in many local and global competitions or investor forums and won several grants in addition to its Startup302 funding, including a Delaware Division of Small Business EDGE Grant.

“Delaware’s ecosystem is helpful in providing a variety of resources to new entrepreneurs,” notes co-founder Jo Norris, “including people, time, space, and funding.”

**OmniPotential Energy** is a shared residential electric vehicle (EV) charger energy solution for EV cars that is convenient, inexpensive, and quick. The company has taken advantage of the ecosystem by connecting with mentors and programs at DESCAs, as well as political leaders as they look to shape policy related to EVs.

“DESCA’s Tactics of Entrepreneurs networking value is real,” says OmniPotential CEO Cora Castle, “and the mentors have real skills or other connections that might prove useful.”

**BioCurie** is a software-based biotechnology data analytics company for manufacturing cell and gene therapy efficiently and cost-effectively. BioCurie has competed in pitch competitions and presented in investor forums in Delaware and throughout the United States.

“I founded BioCurie in Delaware because of its business-friendly environment and proximity to biopharma companies,” explains CEO Irene Rombel. “This makes it an ideal place for innovative businesses to thrive.”

**Resonate Forward** is a medical device company that is commercializing technology to reduce tremors and improve gait in patients with Parkinson’s disease. The company has taken advantage of the ecosystem by connecting with mentors at UD’s Horn Entrepreneurship and competing or presenting in numerous local competitions. Resonate Forward has won both an EDGE Grant and a prestigious Michael J. Fox Foundation Grant, along with its Startup302 funding.

“The Delaware support for entrepreneurs has been critical in our ability to move this technology forward,” says Theresa Litherland, co-founder and president. “The Startup302 grant will enable us to deliver a much-needed advancement to the market for Parkinson’s patients.”

Technology-enabled startups led by underrepresented entrepreneurs are invited to submit applications to compete in Startup302 in 2023. For notifications and other details, email [ecrell@choosedelaware.com](mailto:ecrell@choosedelaware.com). ■



**Erica Crell** (manager) and **Noah Olson** (director) make up the Innovation Team at Delaware Prosperity Partnership—Delaware’s statewide, public-private economic development organization.

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# Powering Advanced Analytics

Why investing in a data mature organization matters

BY RYAN HARRINGTON

**WHO ARE MY CUSTOMERS?** Where are they located? What communities share characteristics with them? Which potential customers are likely to purchase my product? Can I recommend other products for them to purchase?

These challenges, and so many others, represent the types of questions that an organization might want to answer about who they serve. Empowered with answers, organizations can make strategic decisions about how to grow and understand the way they impact the communities they serve. Fundamentally, addressing these challenges requires data—both qualitative and quantitative—about customers, their purchasing habits, and beyond.

As organizations begin to unlock the power of using data for strategic decision-making, they often begin by considering descriptive questions—“what happened?”, “who made the purchase?”, “how many items did we sell?” Descriptive analytics questions allow us to understand what occurred in the past and what is happening in the present. Further, descriptive analytics allow us to establish baselines by which we can strategically define new metrics for success.

As organizations grow their data savviness, they will begin to consider more advanced questions. They consider predictive questions—“will a customer churn?”, “will a lead convert to a customer?”, “can I predict demand one year from now?” While descriptive analytics allow us to answer questions about the past and present, predictive analytics allow us to answer questions about the future. This is the realm of advanced analytics, which includes concepts such as statistical modeling, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

Answering predictive analytics questions requires an organization to have the appropriate building blocks in place to support this work. It requires that organizations have considered—and invested in—their own data maturity and commitment to data-driven decision making.

Data maturity is a concept that covers the gamut of technical capability and strategic thinking of organizations. Data mature organizations—



whether they are for profit or nonprofit institutions—tend to have several common characteristics:

- They use data to continuously inform decision making. Data is not simply used for reporting but to drive strategy.
- They foster a data-driven culture across the whole organization. This culture doesn't live in small pockets in the organization, but rather is a language shared by everyone.
- They implement modern data architecture that supports their goals. Their data isn't stored on spreadsheets or in filing cabinets; it is integrated into a warehouse that allows all teammates to have their needs met.
- They constantly seek new sources of data to incorporate into their practice, building upon their own internal data and considering third party data sources.
- They utilize advanced analytics techniques—like machine learning and artificial intelligence—to drive decision making at scale.

As these building blocks are progressively implemented, data-mature

organizations position themselves to strategically utilize data to drive decision making across their teams. Investing in data maturity creates a positive feedback loop. An organization with a data-driven culture will ask continuously more sophisticated questions and seek to automate decision making. Investments in modern architecture make it easier to answer these questions and support advanced analytics techniques.

The Data Innovation Lab at Tech Impact partners with mission-driven organizations to use data for social good. In this process, the Lab works with its partners to assess their data maturity and ensure that the building blocks are in place to support statistical modeling, machine learning, and artificial intelligence to address their challenges. The Lab believes that all organizations—whether they are for profit or nonprofit—can better serve their communities by embracing data-driven strategies.

If you are a mission-driven organization that wants to use data more effectively, let us know. We'd love to hear from you at [techimpact.org/services/data-lab](http://techimpact.org/services/data-lab). ■



**Ryan Harrington** is the director of strategy and operations with Tech Impact's Data Innovation Lab.

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# Using Technology to Power New Possibilities

The relationship between collaboration, connectivity, and innovation in a work-from-anywhere world **BY DAN CARR**

TECHNOLOGY IS THE BACKBONE of a company's infrastructure and gives organizations the ability to prepare for what's next. As hybrid and remote work becomes increasingly popular, businesses of all sizes in Delaware and beyond are evaluating their relationship with technology to reinvent how to achieve collaboration, while keeping pace with innovation.

Traditional organizational structures are a thing of the past. Flexible work environments require reliable connectivity, security, and agility to

support a workforce that may be spread out across the state, country, or globe. Without proper technology, companies risk being outdated and limiting collaboration among employees to a physical setting and specific time of the day. When collaboration is restricted, so is innovation. To avoid this pitfall, organizations need to adopt an agile, cross-functional operating model powered by connectivity to support frictionless engagements and encourage creativity, fresh thinking, and teamwork.

The key to driving innovation is the integration and management of

business resources and processes. For example, by using fully integrated management and reporting tools for unified communications, companies can seamlessly add applications to meet business and user goals. By implementing a unified communications solution and reducing the burden for IT teams, organizations can reallocate those resources to other activities rather than just hardware and system maintenance and upgrades. These integrations streamline communication, eliminate time spent wrestling with various apps, and can be used from any location—whether at an office in Wilmington, in an employee’s living room, or on business travel in another country.

Technology can help power business functions previously not possible in a typical office environment, and the shift to a remote workforce requires entirely new workstyles and skill sets for employees. It also gives businesses the ability to keep up with training programs or learning systems to assess talent and reskill employees. With the number of remote workers increasing, technology opens up the hiring pool for talented workers despite location. By using technology to continue to educate, assess and retain employees, companies ensure they remain relevant and competitive.

Additionally, when it comes to any business network, security should not be an afterthought. According to the 2021 Comcast Business DDoS Threat Report, 2021 was another record year for distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks. While the 9.84 million DDoS attacks in 2021 was lower than the 10.1 million reported in 2020, it still represented a 14 percent increase over 2019.

Remote connectivity and the increased hiring pool have heightened concerns about network security, and as security perimeters evolve, every access point and network element becomes a potential risk for security breaches. The growing importance and evolution of networks beyond traditional perimeters are driving companies to rethink how to best integrate networks with cybersecurity. Security protocol guidelines must be put in place and followed from the start to determine how to best execute, review, and protect systems and assets, wherever employees may be located.

To enable collaboration and innovation, network reliability and connectivity are key. If network infrastructure is not secure or does not have the bandwidth to support organizations, the business’s ability to transform and innovate will be blocked. When building a network meant to enable innovation, organizations need to think about their strategy holistically—it needs to allow reliable connectivity while blocking cybersecurity threats no matter where employees are located. Remember that collaboration, connectivity, innovation, and security work best together. ■



**Dan Carr** is the regional vice president in Comcast Business's Beltway region. Visit [business.comcast.com](http://business.comcast.com) to learn more about innovative technologies and network solutions to ensure your business can remain collaborative from anywhere.

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(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail)	0	0
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	204
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d. (1), (2), (3) and (4))	0	204
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15e.)	2,949	3,200
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	0	0
h. Total (Sum of 15f. and g.)	2,949	3,200
i. Percent Paid (15c. Divided by 15f. Times 100)	100.00%	93.63%

\* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

16. Electronic copy Circulation

a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c.) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	2,949	2,996
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f.) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	2,949	3,200
d. Percentage Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies (16b divided by 16c x 100)	100.00%	93.63%

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
 Publication required. Will be printed in the Nov/Dec 2022 issue of this publication.  Publication not required

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
Signature: Kelly Basile  
Title: VP Communications  
Date: 09/14/2022

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

PS Form 3526, July 2014

## Innovation & Technology



# Driving Innovation While Keeping Our Purpose at the Forefront

CONTRIBUTED BY INCYTE

AT INCYTE, we are happy to call Delaware home. In 2002, we were founded by a group of scientists who believed Delaware was an ideal environment for innovation. In the years since, we have been working diligently to discover, develop, and deliver breakthrough medicines for people living with cancer and inflammatory and autoimmune diseases.

Two decades later, we are proud to have seven approved products indicated to treat serious medical needs, several of which were first of their kind or provided an additional option to patients where treatments were limited. We are also advancing a diversified portfolio of more than 20 clinical candidates that we hope will one day lead to additional treatments for patients who need them.

Since our inception, we have been embraced by the local community, which has helped facilitate our continued growth and expansion in the region, including a new state-of-the-art research facility that opened this year. This support has enabled us to continue to discover and develop new medicines for patients right here in Wilmington.

We know that creating a dynamic environment that breeds innovation requires resilience, tenacity, and collaboration.

At Incyte, we focus on creating an environment that enables innovation—a place where our employees can share ideas and grow. Our exceptional team of biologists and chemists work side-by-side in our labs each day and are just steps away from colleagues who help ensure our medicines get to patients who need them. This dynamic environment allows our employees to engage with one another and collaborate in real time.

Finally, we believe true innovation is born from a clear purpose. At Incyte, we exist to find meaningful, new solutions for patients around the world who have serious, unmet medical needs. Rallying around that shared purpose, we recognize that each employee plays a role in advancing new solutions that can positively affect patients' lives.

Our drive to innovate for patients is at the heart of what we do and centers us as a company. We are excited to see what the future holds. ■

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

 @Delaware State Chamber of Commerce

 @DelawareStateChamber  @DEStateChamber

# ICYMI

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



### Action Unlimited Resources, Inc.:

Check out the exciting behind the scenes action of our **Delaware State Chamber Superstars in Business** photo shoot! A huge thank you to our customer **St Mary Magdalen School** for allowing us to use your beautiful campus. We can't wait to view the actual photos taken by **Nick Wallace Photography**.



**Leadership Delaware, Inc.:** LDI in the Community: As proud members of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, Chief of Operations Jaimie Watts attended this morning's networking breakfast at the University of Delaware Whitney Athletic Center. LDI Alumni Mike Pfeifer and Kelly Basile were also in attendance!



**Spur Impact:** Always a great time networking and meeting new people at the Delaware Networking Station! Thanks to everyone who stopped by and to **@DEStateChamber** and **@BBBdelaware** for organizing!

#DNS22 #networking  
#youngprofessionals #b2b  
#SpurImpact #MILLSUMMIT



**Chemours**

*"Making a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplace isn't just an altruistic act, it is imperative to the long-term success of any company or organization."*

— Susan Kelliher  
Senior Vice President, People

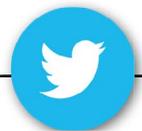
**Padua Academy:** It's all business on Broom Street! We are so **#PaduaPROUD** of our award-winning business programs at **Padua** and grateful for the **Delaware State Chamber** for sharing that pride with the rest of Delaware in this month's issue of Delaware Business Magazine! We are looking forward to another great year from Mrs. Higley's newest students and can't wait to see what products they design and business ideas they pitch! Visit: <https://bit.ly/3KZBQ4Z>



### It's All Business on Broom Street

Padua Academy is developing the next generation of female innovators. BY JENNIFER BELL

**The Chemours Company:** Check out this article from **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** where Susan Kelliher, Senior Vice President, People talks about our commitment to creating a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable workforce. From the frontline to the back office, learn more about how we are working towards making the world a better place through the power of our chemistry: <https://bit.ly/3AZgD6i>



#myPadua #DeIHS #NetDE



# How Perdue Keeps Driving Innovation After 100 Years

BY CHRIS PERDUE

PERDUE FARMS got its start more than 100 years ago, when my great-grandfather Arthur Perdue left his job as a railroad agent on the Eastern Shore to go into the poultry business. As a family-owned company, our legacy is important to us—but so is our future.

We've introduced many innovations over the years, from being the first major chicken company to eliminate routine use of all antibiotics in our animal-raising practices, to the commitment to provide a 100% vegetarian diet for our chickens with no animal by-products, and leading the industry in animal welfare.

However, being innovative also means we've had to change what we offer—and how—to meet consumers' evolving preferences. More than ever before, people want products that are convenient, nutritious, and fit into their busy lifestyles. And above all, they need to taste good.

With approximately half of shoppers buying meat and other perishables online, we launched our first direct-to-consumer e-commerce website, [PerdueFarms.com](http://PerdueFarms.com), in January 2020. The site has allowed us to offer tailored product bundles—from Father's Day grilling to back to school snacking—while learning what people want in real time and helping us better meet them where they are. We have even been able to launch new product innovations through [PerdueFarms.com](http://PerdueFarms.com) to assess consumer interest and fine tune our offerings before rolling them out nationally in retail grocery stores.

In the fall of 2020, we leveraged our e-commerce site to launch PERDUE® THANKSNUGGETS, a first-of-its-kind, limited-time-offer during the Thanksgiving season, that combined No Antibiotics Ever Turkey with classic fall flavors, like sweet potato, for a unique holiday snack. After the product sold out online in under three minutes, we worked in 2021 with our grocery partners to roll out THANKSNUGGETS in many retail stores across the country, including at Walmart, Sam's Club, Kroger, ShopRite, and many others.

Building on those learnings, we followed a similar process for our PERDUE® CHICKEN PLUS® Chicken Tots™, which combine two of America's favorite comfort foods, chicken nuggets and tater tots, into one delicious, bite-sized snack. After launching in retail earlier this year, PERDUE Chicken Tots were recognized by PEOPLE Magazine as one of the "Best Supermarket Products of the Year" as part of the publication's 2022 Food Awards.

Additionally, the Chicken Tots are part of our larger CHICKEN PLUS lineup of products, which blend the chicken that people love with vegetables for ¼ cup of veggies per serving, helping to serve the growing number of "flexitarian" families who are committed to getting more vegetables in their diets, and especially to help parents of picky eaters get more nutrition into their kids' diets.



*Three generations (from left to right): Jim Perdue, Frank Perdue, and Arthur Perdue*

Beyond product innovation, as we look to the future it's clear that technology will play an ever-increasing role in people's lives. That's why we were excited to partner with Samsung last summer to make Perdue offerings available through its latest Family Hub Smart Fridge, which allows consumers to search recipes, plan meals, purchase groceries and more—right from a touch screen on the appliance.

Whether it's a new product in your fridge—or one that you order using your fridge—we believe that providing options and offering consumers quality protein without sacrificing on flavor, nutrition, or eating experience is a great recipe for success.

Even though my grandfather probably wouldn't have quite imagined these advances when he started his "backyard table-egg business" in 1920, they do fit with the values and entrepreneurial spirit that he infused into Perdue Farms. We think he would be proud. ■



**Chris Perdue** is vice president of e-commerce at Perdue. For more information on Perdue's latest offerings, visit [www.Perdue.com](http://www.Perdue.com).

# WHAT'S NEXT? Chamber Calendar



**NOVEMBER 10, 2022**

## Networking Breakfast at Christiana Mall

We're back at this popular networking breakfast location! Kick off the holiday season and start your morning networking with fellow business professionals at the Christiana Mall, Delaware's largest shopping center.

**FREE** for members



**DECEMBER 1, 2022**

## Networking Breakfast at the Sunday Breakfast Mission

Join us for a networking breakfast at the Sunday Breakfast Mission, an organization that serves the homeless, addicted, and impoverished in the greater Wilmington region through Christ-centered programs.

**FREE** for members



**DECEMBER 6, 2022**

## 12th Annual Taste of Delaware

Join our honorary host US Senator Christopher Coons for the Twelfth Annual Taste of Delaware — a crowd favorite event held in the nation's capital showcasing the finest culinary traditions from the First State — we will have your Delaware favorites and more to enjoy.

**FREE** to attend



**JANUARY 9, 2023**

## 186<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner is Delaware's premier business event. It has always been the place to be in January for high-level networking with more than 1,000 business leaders, dignitaries, and elected officials.

We look forward to gathering in person with everyone at the Chase Center with an **earlier start and end time this year!**

**Admission:** \$275 Members | \$350 Future Members  
**Tables of 10:** \$2,750 Members | \$3,500 Future Members

When you think of the Delaware State Chamber, think of

**#NETWORKING**

Fill up your calendar by visiting our events page online at

**web.**  
**DSCC**  
**.com/events**

## Secretary of State Announces Leadership Change

Secretary of State Jeff Bullock announced that Jessica Welch will lead the Delaware Tourism Office as its next director. Welch most recently served as communications director of the Delaware Division of Small Business.

“Jessica brings an immense wealth of knowledge and experience to take on this crucial role in Delaware’s economy,” said Bullock. “The Tourism Office contributes billions each year to the state’s GDP and creates thousands of jobs in the process. As Delaware continues to be a preferred tourist destination, I know Jessica will expand upon the work done so far to continue attracting out-of-state visitors while promoting the prosperity of existing tourism businesses in the state.”

The Delaware Tourism Office (DTO), an office within the Delaware Division of Small Business, works to attract large volumes of out-of-state visitors to Delaware through advertising and marketing campaigns, travel publications, and year-round efforts to bring group tours and sports events to the state. The office regularly partners with Delaware businesses and municipalities to heighten their appeal as tourist destinations, helping them enhance their marketing efforts, and giving them the tools to boost visitation responsibly.

“I am proud and excited to step into this new role leading the Tourism Office and staff as we work together to highlight the many beautiful and unique places in Delaware for visitors to explore,” said Welch. “The travel and tourism industry is incredibly important to our state’s economy, and I am looking forward to working with our partners—including those in the sports and group tourism markets—to find new and innovative ways to further grow the industry in Delaware.”



Jessica Welch

leadership, strategy development, and operational excellence in a variety of chemical, energy, and industrial businesses. He is well known for leading organizations through change and delivering exceptional top line growth and profitability.

“I am very excited to be joining the Junia Holdings team and I look forward to working with the talented management team to innovate, grow our OASIS Inspection Systems brand, strengthen distributor partnerships, and continue to improve our George Products business,” said Tunji Taiwo.



Tunji Taiwo

## Integrity Staffing Solutions Gives Back for Anniversary

Integrity Staffing Solutions, the engine of opportunity for job seekers across the United States, announced that in honor of the 25th anniversary of its founding, the company is giving back to charities making an impact in many of the communities where the firm’s staff and associates live and work.

Integrity invited its team members to select their favorite charities and community partners across the cities where they operate. \$25,000 will be donated to 25 different charities, including organizations involved in veterans’ groups, animal welfare and adoption, autism awareness, medical research, work readiness initiatives, suicide prevention programs, homeless shelters, and more. Among the list of recipients are Delaware-based nonprofits, West End Neighborhood House and Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.



## DTC Receives Grant for Energy Efficient Buses

The Federal Transit Administration has awarded the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) \$11 million from the Low-No Program to support the transition of the nation’s transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicles. The agency has now received more than \$22 million through five separate federal grants to support the purchase of alternative-fueled buses.

DTC will use this funding to purchase two battery-electric buses and two hydrogen-fuel-cell electric buses, install two overhead electric charging stations, a large charger that would contain as many

as 16 individual chargers, and a hydrogen fueling station. These new buses will add to the current fleet of 26 electric buses, or about 10 percent of the total fleet of fixed route buses.

## Junia Holdings Names President & CEO

Junia Holdings Inc., a leading provider of digital non-contact optical inspection systems and a pioneer in the specialty metal fabrication industry, announced that Tunji Taiwo has been named as president and chief executive officer.

Tunji has more than 30 years of senior management experience, including roles in digital transformation

"Integrity's success is due to our staff's unrelenting dedication to our associates, our clients, and to the communities in which we live and work. Without our team—and our client partnerships—we wouldn't have been able to persevere through the years and grow to our capacity," said CEO Todd Bavol. "For this milestone anniversary, we want to say thanks and give back to the most meaningful causes to our team."

## Highmark Delaware Invests in Healthcare Workforce

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware shared its third quarter BluePrints for the Community grantees, which will collectively receive more than \$3 million funding. BluePrints for the Community has now committed over \$7 million in 2022 through its Small and Standard grant programs.

"As the health landscape constantly evolves, BluePrints sees Delaware nonprofits continue to adapt and innovate. It is a privilege to partner with every grant recipient to address the most pressing needs of our neighbors," said Rita Landgraf, chair of the Blueprints for the Community Advisory Council.

Standard grant recipients include American Heart Association, Beebe Medical Foundation, Delaware Health Equity Coalition, Do Care Doula Foundation, Nemours Foundation, University of Delaware, Westside Family Healthcare, and YMCA of Delaware.

Small grant recipients include Brain Injury Delaware, Cancer Support Community Delaware, Choir School of Delaware, Contact Lifeline, Donate Delaware, Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids, Into the Light Project, and Tilton Society.

"Our community and provider partners are doing tremendous work to develop our healthcare workforce, mitigate health risks, and provide the most needed services to those who need it most," said Nick Moriello, president of Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware. "We are thankful for their dedication and collaboration as we work to improve health outcomes throughout the state."

## Goldey-Beacom Ranked by U.S. News & World Report

Goldey-Beacom College (GBC) was recently ranked for the first time by U.S. News & World Report. After being listed as a "specialty school" for decades by the Carnegie Classification®, this



designation precluded GBC from being listed by U.S. News & World Report.

"I am thrilled that Goldey-Beacom College has attained reclassification by the Carnegie Classification® and is now listed as 'Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs'," said President Colleen Perry Keith. "This change qualifies the College to appear in the U.S. News & World Report's ranking system. Goldey-Beacom is now counted among the Regional Universities North category."

The College's official rankings are #133-175 out of 181 in Regional Universities North and #55 in Top

## Royale Group Expanding to Second Delaware Location

Royale Pigments & Chemicals, part of The Royale Group collection of specialty chemical companies, chose Seaford, Delaware, as the site for a \$2.35 million expansion that will double The Royale Group's Delaware presence since it relocated from New Jersey two years ago.

Royale's investment in Sussex County includes purchase of the former BASF Polymer that is now owned by Delmarva Central Railroad (DCR). DCR operates a transloading facility at the on-site rail spur located there, but the building itself is underutilized with no active operations at present.

"The chemical industry has long been part of Delaware's economy. Over the next three years, The Royale Group plans to purchase an underutilized site in Seaford, bringing new jobs and economic growth to Sussex County," said Governor John Carney.

In 2020, Delaware Prosperity Partnership began working with The Royale Group as it made its first investment in Delaware by acquiring IMS Chemblend and the IMS facility in Bear, changing the operation's name to AWSM Solutions Delaware, and relocating Royale's corporate headquarters from New Jersey to the New Castle County property. The company's \$1 million investment included adding 17 new jobs, and AWSM already has surpassed its job-growth projections with 30 active employees.

While continuing to invest and grow its Northern Delaware operations, Royale's expansion to a second Delaware location with on-site rail access will allow it to better serve a growing roster of customers and secure new contracts with leading companies throughout the region. Royale's Southern Delaware investment includes creating 29 new jobs over the next three years.



Performers on Social Mobility (tie). Schools are ranked according to their performance across a set of widely accepted indicators of excellence.

## Agilent Partners with Delaware State University

Agilent Technologies Inc. is launching a partnership with Delaware State University (DSU), a leading historically Black university, to increase the share of underrepresented students entering STEM fields, a central mission of the company's philanthropic work through the Agilent Foundation.

Agilent will donate \$1 million in addition to new lab instrumentation to help DSU expand educational opportunities and advance research in applied chemistry, biological sciences, food science, molecular and cellular neuroscience, and related disciplines. Agilent's support will also contribute to building research capacity of a consortium of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the mid-Atlantic region led by Delaware State.

"DSU has a tremendous pool of talented STEM students," said Agilent

President and CEO Mike McMullen. "This partnership will help us provide direct support to these students and encourage more scholars at HBCUs across the mid-Atlantic to consider opportunities at Agilent and within the broader life sciences sector."

Agilent's donation comes as DSU breaks ground on a new 24,000-square-foot building for its College of Agriculture Science and Technology (CAST), which includes space for new labs.

"Many believe that this is a renaissance moment for HBCUs. It's not," said DSU President Dr. Tony Allen. "We've been doing the work for 175 years—building the most useful pipeline for African Americans to the American middle class and breaking new ground in every field of human endeavor. Great companies like Agilent understand the work and are connecting with our system for the long term, a system still producing 25 percent of all the Black STEM graduates in our country. Our partnership with Agilent is about making the HBCU difference today, tomorrow, and for generations to come."

## Mountaire Launches Scholarship Program

Mountaire Farms has launched a new scholarship program aimed at high school seniors on Delmarva who are interested in helping feed the world.

The Farm to Table Scholarship program will reward qualified students with a passion for agriculture, the culinary arts, or related fields that support food production and feeding the world. Students must have a B+ grade point average or better and give back to the community with their time and talents.

"During the pandemic, many people across Delmarva and the country saw the strain put on our nation's food supply," said Phillip Plylar, president of Mountaire Farms. "The empty shelves at many retailers brought home the critical importance of American agriculture. We have two goals with this scholarship. The first is to shine a light on the important work of the people who grow, raise, prepare, and serve the food we eat each day. The second is to show our thanks by supporting local youth in pursuing their careers."

In partnership with WBOC, Mountaire will select a new Farm to Table Scholar every month who will be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship and be featured in a profile to air on WBOC and Fox21. Two overall winners (one male and one female) will be named during a Farm to Table banquet at the end of the academic year where they will also receive an additional \$5,000 scholarship.

## Nemours Children's Health Names New Director of External Affairs

Nemours Children's Health named Meghan Walls, PsyD, as director of external affairs, Delaware Valley. In this pivotal role, Dr. Walls will work to build awareness of the Nemours Children's Health mission and garner support for its strategic objectives with elected officials and community leaders. Dr. Walls will provide recommendations on public policy matters involving state and local governments, and lead and direct legislative and regulatory matters with key external stakeholders.

"We are excited about the leadership, policy, and clinical experience that Dr. Walls will bring to this position. We look forward to working collaboratively with our community and state leaders to create the healthiest generations of children," said Kara Odom Walker, MD, executive vice president and chief population health officer.



*Meghan Walls*

## AB&C Announces Leadership Changes

Aloysius Butler & Clark (AB&C)—one of the largest independent full-service marketing communications agencies in the region—CEO Tom McGivney retired on Sept. 30, 2022. In addition, AB&C

implemented several leadership changes to ensure a seamless transition after McGivney's departure, as well as to support the projected short- and long-term growth of the agency.



*Tom McGivney*

Effective Oct. 1, 2022, Paul Pomeroy, AB&C's current president, assumed the role of CEO and be responsible for revenue, strategic growth, and long-

range business planning. Linda Shopa, current chief financial officer, took on the additional role of chief operating officer and is responsible for long-range fiscal planning and agency operations. Steve Merino, chief creative officer, will continue his current responsibilities for overseeing the quality of the agency's creative product, as well as providing strategic leadership and vision.

During McGivney's 38 years with AB&C, he served the agency and its clients in multiple leadership roles, including the creative and management sides of the business.

"I have tremendous pride in everything AB&C has accomplished and continues to accomplish daily," said McGivney. "We've been engaged in a great deal of planning over the past year to solidify a strategy that will bring AB&C's vision for the future to fruition. I've never been more confident in the strength of the agency—and in our ability to provide our clients with the very best service, creative thinking, and guidance."

## Griswold Home Care Announces New Ownership

Griswold Home Care of New Castle County's Director/Owner Anne Eidschun announced her retirement



## Food Bank of Delaware breaks ground on Milford Facility

The Food Bank of Delaware is building a new 67,000-square-foot facility in Milford to replace the current 16,000-square-foot Milford branch on Mattlind Way.

"The pandemic magnified what we already knew – the Milford Branch is operating significantly beyond capacity, and as a result we are renting space. We cannot effectively serve our community's most vulnerable in our current building," said Food Bank of Delaware President and CEO Cathy Kanefsky. "This campaign is more than bricks and mortar... it's about building hope for a better tomorrow. So many come to the Food Bank of Delaware feeling hopeless, but leave hopeful. We are transforming lives."

"The Food Bank of Delaware is a shining example of what a culture of improvement looks like, not just getting bigger, but getting better—adapting, innovating—while always keeping it human," said First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney.

Once operational, the new facility will improve the Food Bank of Delaware's statewide efforts to distribute food to those in need. To learn more about the campaign to build a new Food Bank of Delaware in Milford or to donate, visit [www.fbd.org/hopeinmilford](http://www.fbd.org/hopeinmilford).

as of September 30, 2022. After a lengthy search and vetting process, she identified long-time Wilmington residents Carrie and Patrick Gray as the ideal owners to lead the business into the future.

"For 35-years, Griswold Home has been serving seniors and individuals with

disabilities in New Castle County. It has been an honor to lead this business, to care for our clients, and to have been a part of the Griswold family," said Eidschun. "Ten years ago, I was hand-picked by the original franchise owner, Maryanne Murray, to lead the business into the future. It is now my honor to do

the same. I know that Carrie and Patrick Gray will continue to provide our clients and their families with the excellent care and customer service that they have come to expect.”

Carrie Gray brings her more than 20 years of business management experience to her role as co-owner and CEO. She will be focused on managing the back-office of the business operations. Patrick Gray brings over 15 years of experience in the senior care industry and has been working with Eidschun since May as chief operating officer. He will serve as director/co-owner/COO and will continue to manage the day-to-day operation of the business, providing leadership for the long-tenured office staff and dedicated team of caregivers.

“We look forward to working with the outstanding management staff and caregiver team to continue and grow the legacy established by Maryanne and



Anne,” said Patrick Gray. Carrie Gray added, “With Griswold’s long history in Delaware, outstanding reputation, and a committed team of office staff and excellent caregivers, we have the perfect opportunity to continue to grow Griswold.”

## Blue Blaze Associates Works with Forward Journey

C.E.R.T.S. (Collaborative Effort to Reinforce Transition Success), the only provider of adult day services in Delaware specifically serving individuals with multiple and severe disabilities, unveiled their new name, new brand, and a new website: Forward Journey Adult Day Services.

“As our organization grew, we discovered that our former name was confusing to the public,” remarked Vivian Turner, executive director of Forward Journey. “So we engaged Blue Blaze Associates to guide us through a creative rebranding process that has resulted in a wonderful new name, new website, and new messages that clearly communicate who we are and what we do. Our new brand will also help caregivers and case managers find our program, allowing us to support more participants throughout Delaware who need our services.”

“My team has really enjoyed every step of our collaboration with Forward Journey,” commented Sandy Taccone, CEO of Blue Blaze Associates. “Their program is vital to our community, and we were thrilled to facilitate their growth.”

## TidalHealth Expands Team

TidalHealth recently welcomed Holly Schreiber, CRNP, to cardiovascular surgery in Millsboro and Reshmi Udesch, MD, to general surgery in Seaford.

Schreiber earned her Master of Science in Nursing and Family Nurse Practitioner degree from Chamberlain University in 2020. Holly, an Eastern Shore native, has been working at TidalHealth Peninsula Regional since she graduated nursing school in 2010 and has been involved with cardiovascular surgery in some capacity ever since. She began her nursing career on 3 Layfield, the cardiothoracic post-



Holly Schreiber



Reshmi Udesch

## Del Fabbro, Farrell, and Provine Named to Delaware Business Leaders Hall

In October, Junior Achievement of Delaware inducted Margaret Davis Del Fabbro, William J. Farrell, and William D. Provine into the Delaware Business Leaders Hall of Fame.

Well known across the community by their familiar names—Peggy Del Fabbro, Bill Farrell, and Bill Provine—these extraordinary leaders joined the illustrious ranks of seventy-three Hall of Fame laureates inducted since the institution formed in 1990. The Delaware Business Leaders Hall of Fame honors those whose actions have epitomized the successful adult role models Junior Achievement provides to students every day. The award also acknowledges the accomplishments of business, industry, and community leaders whose work has positively influenced economic and workforce development in the region.

Del Fabbro is chief executive officer of M. Davis & Sons; Farrell is chief executive officer and president of Wilmington Trust Company and EVP of M&T Bank’s Management Group; Provine is founder, president and chief executive officer of the Delaware Innovation Space.

“Like the amazing inductees that came before them,” said Junior Achievement of Delaware president Rob Eppes, “these three Hall of Fame laureates are exemplary role models to the thousands of students served by Junior Achievement of Delaware each year.”

operative floor, and then worked on the heart team in the operating room.

Dr. Udesch received her Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from Government Vellore Medical College and Hospital (GVMCH) in Tamil Nadu, India. She then completed her research fellowship at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pittsburgh, Pa., and later completed her general surgery residency at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital – Washington Hospital Center in Washington D.C. Dr. Udesch is DaVinci certified in robotic surgery.

## United Electric Supply Welcomes Earl Wade

United Electric Supply announced the addition of Earl Wade to the executive leadership team as vice president, IT and digital transformation. Wade brings over 20 years of information technology experience where he led strategic vision and practical implementation. He offers a variety of expertise including implementation of information services (IS) policies and procedures, improvement of infrastructure and data capacity, facilitating business transformation, and ensuring business continuity.

“We are pleased he chose to join our executive team as we accelerate our investment in strategic digital initiatives,” said George Vorwick, president and CEO of United Electric Supply.



## ChristianaCare Opens Pediatric Care Center in Newark

Families in northern Delaware and surrounding areas have a new option for pediatric care. In October, ChristianaCare opened a new 14-bed Pediatric Care Center that provides 24/7 combined short-stay inpatient and emergency care for children and teens. The new center is located on the first floor of the Center for Women’s & Children’s Health on ChristianaCare’s Newark Campus.

“This new facility is an exciting step in our continued journey to create the absolute best care for children and families in our community,” said David Paul, M.D., chair of the Department of Pediatrics. “The Pediatric Care Center will significantly improve access to care for children, enhance the patient experience and address the needs of families who want high-quality care in a child-friendly environment.”

The 24-hour Pediatric Care Center will be able to evaluate and manage 90 percent of the pediatric cases currently seen in the Christiana Hospital Emergency Department. The center expects to care for an estimated 6,300 patients the first year, with volume projected to grow 5 percent each year.

The Pediatric Care Center also provides expert care to children and adolescents with behavioral health emergency needs and appropriate referral sources for follow-up care.

“Our new Pediatric Care Center makes it easier than ever for families and children to receive excellent care when they need it, in a special space designed just for them,” said Sharon Kurfuerst, Ed.D., OTR/L, FACHE, system chief operating officer at ChristianaCare and president, Union Hospital. “The center will care for the special needs of pediatric patients, making it convenient for them to receive dedicated, expert resources for hospital-based, non-trauma emergency and inpatient care all in one location.”

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# CALL THE CHAMBER

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



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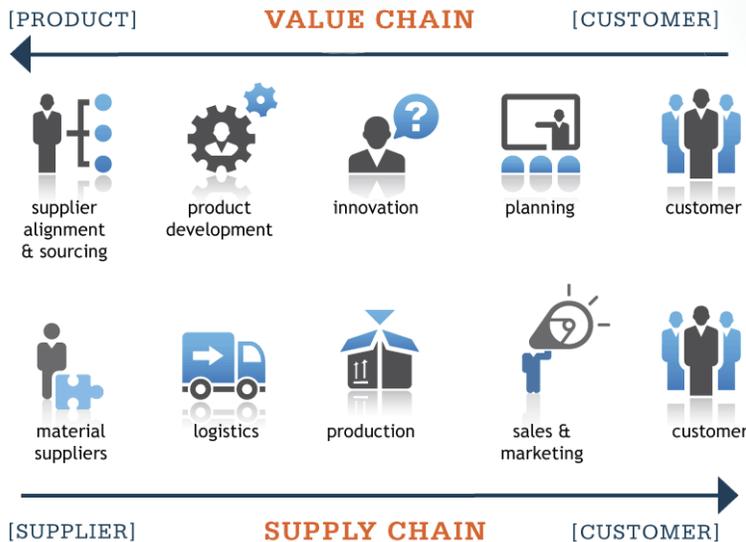
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The mission of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce is to promote an economic climate that strengthens the competitiveness of Delaware businesses and benefits citizens of the state. The Chamber will provide services members want; it will serve and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

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