



Chamber Connections



Vol. 48 // No. 5

cdcc.net

May 2025

CORNERSTONE MEMBERS



Daily State News PAGE 3



PAM Rehabilitation Hospital PAGE 4

IN THIS ISSUE...

55 Plus Recap and Photos PAGE 15

Murphey School's "Iron Chef" Competition PAGE 17

Meet DNREC's New Secretary PAGE 18

Introducing New Director of Division of Small Business PAGE 19

Voting Now Open for Business Awards

As the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) enters the final months of our fiscal year, we are looking forward to celebrating all the success of 2024-2025. That celebration comes to a crescendo at the Awards for Excellence Celebration, our crowning event planned this year for Wednesday, June



18th at Bally's Dover Casino Resort. This prestigious event honors the outstanding achievements of our members and their

dedication to excellence, service, and the Central Delaware community. Mark your calendar now, and plan on joining us to celebrate our vibrant business community and the remarkable achievements of our members.

Continued on Page 7

Free Leadership Central Delaware Invitational Planned for May 7th

Is there someone you consider to be a great leader in your life. What characteristics make them a great leader? Are you ready to take a step towards becoming a leader like that? The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) has an opportunity for you – Leadership Central Delaware (LCD)! The CDCC invites you to learn more about this inspiring program



The diamond program of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce

at a FREE LCD Invitational Reception on Wednesday, May 7th, 5 – 7 p.m. at Burwood Estates, 3367 Upper King Rd., Dover.

Since its inception, Leadership Central Delaware, the diamond program of the CDCC, having graduated more than 450 individuals, has had a significant positive

Continued on Page 6

Putt-It-Up at the CDCC's Mini Masters Mixer!

Calling all mini golf aficionados to the green at Tre Sorelle Dolce Ice Cream & Mini Golf in Wyoming. Start practicing your putt and perfecting your victory dance in preparation for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce's (CDCC) Mini Masters Mixer on Wednesday, May 28th from 4 – 7 p.m. We bet you are wondering, "Is that the



last Wednesday of the month?" Yes, it is, and that means it will be both a mini golf tournament and May's Sunset Business Mixer. Yes – a special two-for-one FUNction for our members and friends!

The CDCC is so excited to enjoy the beautiful spring weather of May with

Continued on Page 19



YOU BUY IT. WE BUILD IT. Professional Assembly Services.

Furniture Assembling and Installation Services:
Gym Equipment, Bedroom Furniture Sets, TV Stands, Curtain Rods, Appliances, Picture Hanging, Wall-Mounted TV's and more.

Many other services as simple as a light bulb replacement, fixing door handles, readjusting your furniture and much more.



Schedule your project today!



UNIVERSAL ASSEMBLING ENTERPRISE LLC

Always with you to make your life easier.

738 N. Dupont Hwy
302-543-3629 or 302-543-3885
contact@universalassembling.com
universalassembling.com

Dina's Digest



PRESIDENT
Dina Vendetti

Excellence is Fun to CELEBRATE!

When I was much younger, I never understood when folks who were older would say things like “the older I get, the faster time goes by!” Today, as the calendar is about to turn to May, I have suddenly become one of those people! This year – 2025 – seems to be whizzing by at breakneck pace. The good news, however, is that it has been filled to the brim with much to celebrate!

Many of you have heard your Chamber staff refer to this time of the year as “Event Season.” This cycle in our calendar began in mid-January with the Economic Forecast Breakfast, which was followed by the Capital Briefing and our January Showcase Mixer and Member 2 Member Expo. February brought the annual Military Affaire and our annual Home and Garden Show. Our Legislative Luncheon welcomed many in March – and, in April, the 55 Plus Expo returned to Bally’s for its 24th year. This month will be affectionately known as “Golf Month” as we bring back our Bluesuiters Golf Tournament at Jonathan’s Landing and our infamous Mini Masters Mixer Tonight at Tre Sorelle Dolce Ice Cream & Mini Golf. The end of our Chamber’s fiscal year will come to a fabulous fun culmination at the Awards for Excellence Celebration at the end of June.

In addition to these big events, we’ve connected with many of you at our Coffee Coaching sessions, Member Orientations, Leadership Central Delaware class days, meetings of all kinds, monthly Sunset Business Mixers and more. It’s a wonderful, busy time of the year with many opportunities to collaborate. This season of celebration produces an incredibly contagious kind of high energy as we get together, network, and do everything we can to help bring awareness and brand recognition to our businesses!

We’ve had many occasions to join you in celebrating big moments so far this year as

well. We’ve hosted ribbon cuttings for new starts, expansions, new members, and new locations. We’ve been excited to bring our ribbon and big scissors with us as we help to mark milestones. From 8 years to 75 years to 100 years, several of our members have celebrated anniversaries!

We count it a privilege to work with and for our member businesses – and we are extremely proud of all that you have accomplished. One of the things we love most is finding ways to tell your stories, because in telling those stories, we get to celebrate you and what you do for Central Delaware. In this issue of our widely read Chamber Connections Newspaper, you will read about nine business members who have risen to the top and whose accomplishments are worthy of recognition. These nominees for Small Business of the Year, Large Employer of the Year, and Young Professional of the Year have demonstrated excellence in a way that has impacted our region. I encourage you to take a few moments to read their stories and get to know them – and then vote for the one in each category that you believe embodies excellence in our business community. Instructions for voting are in the article.

It is imperative that the members of the Central Delaware business community support each other’s successes. It has been said many times by many people that “when one wins, we all win!” There is so much good happening in Kent County that it is hard to choose a “best.” But by lifting up a “best,” we all are motivated to improve, to excel, to grow – and ultimately to contribute to the greater good of Central Delaware.

As always, thank you for your part in making Central Delaware THE place to live, work, and play... thank you for your membership in the Chamber... and thank you for giving us all so much to celebrate!

Calendar of Events

MAY

- Thursday, May 1st**
Leadership Central Delaware
8:00am - 5:00pm, Economic Development Day
- Thursday, May 1st**
Kent County Open for Business
8:30am - 10:00am, Kent County Levy Court
- Wednesday, May 7th**
LCD Class of 2025 Invitational
5:00pm - 7:00pm, Burwood Estates in Dover
- Thursday, May 8th**
Bluesuiters Golf Tournament
10:00am Reg.; 11:00am Start,
Jonathan’s Landing
- Tuesday, May 13th**
CDCC Board Meeting
7:30am - 8:30am, Faw Casson
- Wednesday, May 14th**
Coffee Coaching 8:00am - 9:00am,
via Zoom
- Wednesday, May 14th**
Marketing Committee Meeting
2:30pm, via Zoom
- Thursday, May 15th**
Member Orientation 12:00pm - 1:30pm,
via Zoom
- Monday, May 19th**
CDCC Executive Committee Meeting
8:00am - 10:00am, CDCC Conference Room
- Tuesday, May 20th**
LCD Steering Committee Meeting
12:00pm - 1:00pm, CDCC Conference Room
- Monday, May 26th**
Memorial Day Office Closed
- Wednesday, May 28th**
Ambassador Committee Meeting
3:30pm, Tre Sorelle Dolce Ice Cream & Mini Golf
- Wednesday, May 28th**
The Chamber Mini Masters / Sunset
Business Mixer 4:00pm - 7:00pm,
Tre Sorelle Dolce Ice Cream & Mini Golf

JUNE

- Thursday, June 5th**
Leadership Central Delaware
8:00am - 5:00pm, Energy & Environment Day
- Thursday, June 5th**
Kent County Open for Business
8:30am - 10:00am, Kent County Levy Court
- Tuesday, June 10th**
CDCC Board Retreat
9:00am - 4:00pm, Macau Kitchen at
Bally’s Dover Casino Resort
- Wednesday, June 11th**
Coffee Coaching 8:00am - 9:00am,
via Zoom
- Thursday, June 12th**
Member Orientation
8:30am - 10:00am, via Zoom
- Friday, June 13th**
LCD Closing Retreat
9:00am - 3:00pm, Location TBD
- Tuesday, June 17th**
LCD Steering Committee Meeting
12:00pm - 1:00pm, CDCC Conference Room
- Wednesday, June 18th**
Awards for Excellence Celebration
5:30pm - 9:00pm,
Bally’s Dover Casino Resort
- Wednesday, June 25th**
Ambassador Committee Meeting
4:30pm, Hilton Garden Inn
- Wednesday, June 25th**
Sunset Business Mixer
5:00pm - 7:00pm, Hilton Garden Inn

Published monthly by the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, the first accredited Chamber of Commerce in Delaware. We represent the interests of the small business community. Over 800 businesses support CDCC.

OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Board Chairperson**..... Dana F. Wattay, Wattay Accounting
- First Vice Chairperson** Javier Santana, High Ground Solutions
- Vice Chair, Economic Development** Janell K. Upton, Dover Federal Credit Union
- Vice Chair, Organizational Development** Jesse C. Keleher, Harrington Raceway & Casino
- Vice Chair, Community Affairs** Denée Crumrine, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware
- Vice Chair, Legislative Affairs** C. Scott Kidner, C.S. Kidner Associates/Capitol Strategies
- Vice Chair, Military Affairs** Evans Armantrading, Jr., CNU Fit, LLC
- Treasurer** Richard A. Mohnk, Bayhealth Medical Center- Kent Campus
- Vice Chair Smyrna/Clayton** Lincoln D. Willis, The Willis Group, LLC
- Past Chairperson** Brian J. Stetina, Faw Casson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kim I. Adams, Mountain Consulting, Inc.
- Timothy M. Bayes, Century Engineering, LLC, A Kleinfelder Company
- Courtney Duncan, Merrill Lynch/Bank of America
- Laura Garofoli, Lean on Me Caregiving
- Dean Holden, Chesapeake Utilities
- Hassan Najjar, Biggs Museum of American Art
- Nick Polcino, Bally’s Dover Casino Resort
- Charmaine A. Whyte, Delaware State University
- Doug Yorke, Dover Motor Speedway

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to Chamber News,
435 N. DuPont Highway,
Dover, DE 19901

Subscription Price:
\$20.00 per year

(included in membership dues)
Periodical Postage Paid at
Dover, DE 19901

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS AND GUESTS

- Robin R. Christiansen, Mayor, City of Dover
- Col. William C. McDonald, Commander, 436th Airlift Wing
- G. Jody Sweeney, Commissioner, Kent County Levy Court

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

- Dina C. Vendetti, President
- Cristal R. Brennehan, Executive Assistant & Director of Special Events
- Heather F. Cregar, Director of Marketing and Communications
- Cindy A. Friese, Assistant for Special Events and Sponsorships
- Jennifer L. Sutter, Director of Membership Sales and Retention
- Martha L. Lehman, Administrative Assistant

MEMBER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES.
CHAMBER CONNECTIONS PRODUCTION AND LAYOUT BY: DAILY STATE NEWS

AN INDUSTRY EXCLUSIVE CDCC MARKETING PACKAGE!



Thank you to the CDCC Cornerstone Members!



435 N. DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901
302.734.7515 info@cdcc.net
www.cdcc.net

The CDCC is THE essential resource for the development of business in Central Delaware.



CORNERSTONE
MEMBERSHIP

State News offers niche advertising ops to reach public and industry pros

Continuing a decades-long legacy of award-winning journalism and unique advertising opportunities, the Daily State News and BayToBayNews.com have a full spring lineup of publications to stay informed and reach your potential customers.

Early May is the last chance to reserve advertising space in the glossy Sussex County Profile and the Choose Central Delaware magazines. These key economic development publications play a vital role in supporting business growth and employment opportunities throughout our region. The magazines aim to highlight interesting industries, local business opportunities, quality of life and more.

Also in May, voting continues for the Stars of Delaware, an exciting readers' choice poll. There are over 100 categories for everything, from favorite restaurants to best business professionals, employers and community service. Nominations and voting are a great way to honor a person, organization or business that goes above and beyond in their field, and Person of the Year honors someone who truly makes the community a better place. Plus, advertising your candidacy for a company Star award will encourage customers to vote for you—and potentially get you in the door of our exclusive Stars of Delaware celebration, a lively sell-out event each fall.

Bay to the Beach is another standout project by the Daily State News. It's basically a regional travel magazine, encouraging people to visit amazing sites, restaurants and parks across the Delmarva Peninsula, you can reach readers across Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, thanks to our 6-county distribution.

Speaking of fun times, the State News is gearing up to host its major annual festival in the capital city: Dover Con is a massive, free and



fun pop culture fest on Saturday, June 14, 2025. Previously called Dover Comic Con, the annual indoor/outdoor fest fills the historic downtown with vendors, artists, authors, cosplay competitions, fan groups, gaming tournaments and more. It's truly an all-ages event. Be a sponsor, get involved as a vendor, or show support as an advertiser this year.

The company also hosts many events that offer businesses face time with potential customers, like the Citywide Black History Celebration, Excellence in Education, What Women Want and the Thrive senior events.

"I hope that local businesses will consider us to help reach their customers," said Associate Publisher Tonda Parks. "Our publications, digital programs and our marketing opportunities can make an impact on their growth. We actively seek to keep showcasing our community and economic development."

The State News and its sister papers are a reliable resource for readers and advertisers. Reporting is published daily online. "Plus, our publications are held in non-profit trust to preserve community journalism," Parks explained.

Readers can subscribe to a mailed newspaper and e-edition, or read articles online, with prices as low as \$5 per month.

All of this work comes back to the company's mission statement: "We strengthen the communities we serve by publishing unbiased journalism and growing local business."



"We remain true to our mission, providing information that readers can use to make informed decisions," said Editor-In-Chief Andrew West. The Delmarva Group of Independent Newsmedia Inc. (all found at BayToBayNews.com) also includes the Greater Dover Independent, Middletown Smyrna Independent and the newly renamed Milford Harrington Independent, plus Eastern Shore newspapers.

The public can submit Letters to the Editor, event notices (BayToBayNews.com/calendar), press releases, event photos and news tips.

Companies and nonprofits can place ads on the website, newspapers, magazines, event publications and buy content sponsorship.

Check out their many advertising options, beyond the newspaper: like website ads, targeted emails, EDDM (Every Door Direct Mailed) publications and even local commercials in streaming services, like Spotify or connected TV.

Read Delmarva news at BayToBayNews.com, ask about advertising at adsupport@iniusa.org or call (888) 665-3848.



CORNERSTONE
MEMBERSHIP

PAM Health Announces Expansion for Dover Hospital



For the past six years, PAM Health has been honored to serve the residents of Dover and surrounding communities by offering high-quality, specialized care in stroke and brain injury recovery, orthopedic and hip fracture rehabilitation, pulmonary therapy, and a host of other services. As the only providers of acute inpatient rehabilitation in Kent and Sussex Counties, PAM Health has become a cornerstone of recovery and wellness in the region.

Since opening its doors, PAM Health has remained dedicated to meeting the evolving needs of its patients. This commitment has driven the organization to expand beyond inpatient rehabilitation, branching into outpatient services, workers' compensation recovery programs, and other essential offerings to better support the continuum of care.

However, that growth has come with a new challenge: demand is

now exceeding the capacity of the original facility. In response, PAM Health is proud to announce that it is in the planning stages of an expansion to its Dover Hospital.

"Our mission has always been to provide hope, healing, and recovery to the community," said Erin DelFarno, Market Director of Strategy for PAM Health. "The response and trust we've received from patients and families across the region have been incredible. Now, it's time for us to grow so we can serve even more people and do so with the space and resources they deserve."

The expansion will add more patient rooms to better accommodate the rising demand for inpatient care. A dedicated outpatient reception area will streamline the experience for patients accessing outpatient services, and the clinic space in the outpatient department will be significantly increased. This will allow PAM Health to introduce new programs and bring in addition-



al resources to serve the community more effectively.

Plans are currently underway, with more details to be shared in the coming months. The expansion represents not just a physical growth of the facility, but a renewed pledge to the community—a promise to continue raising the standard of care and support for every patient who walks through PAM Health's doors.

As PAM Health looks ahead to the future, it does so with deep gratitude to the Dover community

for its continued trust and partnership. The next chapter is set to be even stronger, broader, and more impactful—for every patient, every family, and every step of the healing journey.

For more information about PAM Health, please visit their website at <https://pamhealth.com/hospitals/pam-health-rehabilitation-hospital-of-dover/> or call 302-672-5800.

Healthcare & Leadership – A Winning Combination

Last month, our Leadership Central Delaware Class of 2025 spent their whole class day learning about what it takes to deliver the best health care possible to our community.



The Kent Campus of Bayhealth Medical Center served as host and coordinator of this day filled with information, presentations, tours, and a look behind the scenes of how our community hospital works day and night to help people become healthier.

community, one life at a time” and shared information about planned expansions coming soon to our Kent Campus. Terry also shared some insights about his leadership style. Terry is clearly a great collaborator and is not afraid to think outside the box.

In addition to housing our county’s local experts on health and wellness, Bayhealth is also no stranger to Leadership Central Delaware. At the program’s inception, hospital leaders decided that LCD was valuable and made sure to have a Bayhealth employee in its inaugural Class of 2002. Twenty-four years later, they are currently sending their 34th emerging leader through the program as part of the Class of 2025. They have certainly proven again and again that strong leadership is a key component to effective healthcare!

Bayhealth’s Senior Director of Patient Experience, Dominic Kayatta, captivated the class with his upbeat, open, and warm presentation on the importance of wellness. He related this journey towards wellness to patients, but also to those who are working diligently in healthcare to help patients achieve their goals. His message about the importance of mindfulness was relevant and applicable to anyone who is leading a team of professionals as he addressed real issues like anxiety, compassion fatigue, overload, and burnout.

Health & Human Services Day kicked off with a welcome and hospital overview from hospital president and CEO, Terry M. Murphy, FACHE (Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives), and LCD alum Class of 2003. Terry talked about the hospital’s initiatives “to strengthen the health of our

An insightful discussion regarding Bayhealth’s impact on the community and health equity was led by Jessica Alvarez, Senior Director of Patient Care Services. Jessica spent time talking about the way that Bayhealth works with other organizations to address any gaps in care and health disparities. She shared some of the

strategies used by the hospital like free screenings, education, and visits from their mobile unit.

Next on the agenda, Mike Metzger (LCD Class of 2010), Vice President, Corporate Support Services led the group on a behind-the-scenes tour of the hospital. This wasn’t the average, ordinary hospital tour – this was a tour of the “under workings” of the facility. The class viewed areas of the hospital that are considered vital, but are not typically on display such as the generator room, the HVAC system, the circuit breakers, etc. This up-close look at what it takes to keep the hospital running on any given day was both overwhelming and amazing!

Community Outreach, and proud member of the LCD Class of 2019 spent time with the class talking about the importance of messaging. Amanda, who has been described as a visionary marketer, shared her personal journey of growth with the group as she explained the importance of a personal brand, as well as the critical role played by a company brand.

After a wonderful lunch provided by Bayhealth, Darlene Stone, Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer, spent time talking with the group about the importance of fostering and developing a strong workforce. As a seasoned HR professional, Darlene emphasized the importance of listening, listening, and listening! She talked about the importance of “knowing your people” and understanding where they are coming from and what they are dealing with on any given day. Her words rang true not just for hospital leaders, but for our emerging leaders in whichever industry they are working.

“Culture in 7” has been a favorite presentation on this day for the last several years. In it, Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Rick Mohnk led the class through a discussion of his 7 steps for building a healthy, effective, collegial culture. The 7 steps include caring for the people you have the privilege of working with, listening, mentoring, challenging, and more. These steps are built upon a foundation consisting of two critical, but simple understandings: “take care of each other” and “no surprises.” Rick emphasized the need for continuous learning and constant sharing of new ideas: “The worst thing you could do is to keep all of the stuff you’ve learned to yourself.” This session ended with the reassurance that, if you take the time and energy to follow the steps and build culture, your work will be certain to make a difference.

Amanda Bowie, Vice President of Marketing, Communications, and

Continued on Page 6



HEALTHCARE

Continued from Page 5

This day of learning and sharing ended with two amazing conversations: one about the integral work of Bayhealth's strong core of volunteers led by Jenni Bobel, manager of volunteer services; and one on the Social Determinants of Health led by Ashley Istenes, Senior Operations Manager of Population Health and Tasheema Heyliger, Senior Manager of Clinical Integration and Health Equity.

Health & Human Services Day was packed with a variety of statis-

tics, perspectives, explanations, and leadership wisdom. Class members felt like they gained a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes knowledge from the presentations and conversations they experienced during the day. They were especially appreciative of the emphasis on leadership and the new skills and strategies they learned. Everyone left Bayhealth with a new appreciation of the leadership role they play as they work day in and day out to ensure the health of our community.





LCD LEADERSHIP CENTRAL DELAWARE
The diamond program of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce

Thank you
to our Sponsors!

Confirmed as of 9/17/24































LEADERSHIP

Continued from Page 1

impact in Central Delaware. LCD is designed to create effective, dynamic, and knowledgeable leaders. This program connects emerging leaders through diverse networks, while enhancing leadership skills and community knowledge, resulting in increased value, individually and professionally.

Participants in LCD gain an opportunity to develop resources and partnerships, an understanding of the role of leaders in the



community, connections with people of influence, and an understanding of the importance of collaboration among business-

es... all while developing and enhancing their own leadership skills.

Sponsoring companies receive ten months of advertising to 1,000+ people through numerous CDCC avenues, engaged and connected employees who are ready to make a positive difference, and recognition as a company dedicated to making Central Delaware THE place to live, work, and play.

The LCD 10-month program is comprised of 9 day-long learning sessions (one per month, beginning in October), an opening and a closing retreat, and graduation. Each day-long session (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) is focused on a different economic

segment of Kent County. The days are spent hearing from the leaders of various industries, enjoying presentations and tours, and engaging in hands-on learning experiences.

Don't wait! RSVP for the LCD Invitational Reception today to find out more about the program from LCD Alumni and learn how you can be part of Leadership Central Delaware. To get more details about Leadership Central Delaware, visit www.cdcc.net/education. To RSVP for the FREE Invitational Reception, please contact the CDCC office (302)734-7513. YOU could be in the next class of Central Delaware Leadership!

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Continued from Page 1

But before we can start the party, we need our members' help to recognize the nominees and select the winners of the Excellence in Business Awards! The CDCC is proud to offer our members the opportunity to vote for these award winners. This simple act of voting shows amazing support within our membership and the Central Delaware business community.

NOW is the time to vote for Excellence in the Central Delaware community! This

is simultaneously an easy and very difficult task because we are surrounded by excellence in Central Delaware. It's almost impossible to choose just one winner in each category. Thankfully, the choice is up to you, CDCC members! Every year, the CDCC is honored to facilitate these awards that showcase the time, talents, and treasure trove of knowledge that each nominee has shared with others.

Voters, please take into consideration the growth of the individual/company, their response to challenges, and their involvement with their local community.

These are pillars of strong leadership skills that must be highlighted and recognized. There are three categories for these awards: Large Employer of the Year (for companies with more than 50 employees), Small Business of the Year (for companies with up to 50 employees), and Young Professional of the Year (for individuals between the ages of 21 and 35).

All nominations were carefully reviewed by the Excellence in Business Committee and three nominees were chosen for each category. The winners are determined by the votes from

fellow Chamber members and will be announced at the Awards for Excellence Celebration in June. Let your support and voice be heard! Voting is NOW officially open.

Each CDCC member business is asked to cast ONE vote in each category for the nominee they think exemplifies excellence this year – again, that's just one vote per business. We thought you'd like to read a little bit about our amazing nominees, so you will find their profiles below. We are honored to present our distinguished candidates to you.

Nominees for Small Business of the Year



Delaware Farm Bureau

3457 S. DuPont Hwy. Camden, DE 19934
302-697-3183

defb.org
Mikayla Paul, Asst. Exec. Director & Marketing Coordinator

Mission/Philosophy:

Delaware Farm Bureau: our mission is to promote and protect Delaware agriculture through education and advocacy to ensure a quality of life for farmers and their families and their consumers.

Primary good or service provided:

The Delaware Farm Bureau is a membership-based nonprofit organization, that focuses on advocating on behalf of farmers and Delaware agriculture. We encourage farmers and community members to join Delaware Farm Bureau! Their membership dues go towards our lobbying efforts, as well as our programs and initiatives that provide educational resources to our farmers and educate consumers on the importance of agriculture and it how affects their daily lives.

Number of years in business: 80 (currently in our 81st year)

How did your business start?

The Delaware Farm Bureau (DEFB) was founded in 1920 to unify and represent farmers in Delaware. It was established in response to the growing need for a collective voice to advocate for agricultural interests at the local,

state, and national levels. At the time, farmers faced many challenges, including economic instability, land management issues, and the influence of larger industrial and corporate entities in agriculture. However, due to declining membership and financial difficulties, the DEFB disbanded.

In 1944, with support from the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), Delaware Farm Bureau was re-established. Before the formal reorganization, Delaware farmers gathered to discuss the future of the organization and how to address challenges, such as the negative image that had lingered from earlier years. Delaware became the 44th state to join AFBF, and the first meeting of the newly re-established Delaware Farm Bureau was held on April 28, 1944.

DEFB was modeled after similar Farm Bureaus in other states, created to provide support, resources, and advocacy for farmers. Its goals included promoting agricultural education, improving farming practices, supporting rural communities, and advocating for better legislative and economic conditions for farmers. Over time, its role expanded to include a range of services for farmers, such as insurance, networking opportunities, and marketing support.

Today, the Delaware Farm Bureau remains a vital organization for advocating agricultural policy and supporting Delaware's farming community. Its establishment and enduring presence stands as a testament to the cooperative spirit that has long been a cornerstone of farming in Delaware.

Number of employees:

Full-time: 4 Part-time: 1

Describe the growth of your business:

In staffing increases: In 2024, the Delaware Farm Bureau created three new full-time positions: (1) Membership and Outreach Coordinator; (2) Ag Literacy and Program Coordinator; (3) Program and Policy Coordinator. With the addition of these three positions, our state office is equipped to expand our resources and offer more value to our members. We are also more effective in advocating in legislation and educating consumers and the youth about Delaware agriculture and teaching them about how food is grown and how they support the agricultural industry through the food they eat and the clothes they wear.

In Sales:

In 2024, the Delaware Farm Bureau had a total of 1,826 members, consisting of 1,626 membership renewals and 200 new or returning members who rejoined after a lapse in their membership.

Describe the challenges facing your business:

American farm families represent only 2% of the population that feeds the remaining 98% of the American population. That just demonstrates how vital it is to be a Farm Bureau member now more than ever. The agricultural industry is slowly declining due to financial hardships and other factors that create uncertainty in this field.

Describe solutions developed to address those challenges:

As a result, Delaware Farm Bureau has held membership drives and social mixers and events in an effort to build and maintain membership. The addition of the three new full-time positions was also utilized as a solution to address

the challenges our organization is facing. DEFB understands the difficulties associated with farming, and we are constantly developing new programs and initiatives to support our farmers, support our ag communities, and promote the value of Delaware agriculture and value of Delaware Farm Bureau. Through these efforts, we have gained new members and members who have re-joined and gotten reinvolved in the organization.

Describe a creative, imaginative or innovative process you have developed that has helped your business grow:

Delaware Farm Bureau (DEFB) launched the #WhyFarmBureau social media campaign in June 2024. This campaign consists of reels shared across DEFB social media platforms with the hashtag #WhyFarmBureau and highlight various members from across all membership categories. Through this campaign, DEFB's goal is to share the many reasons why individuals are members of the Farm Bureau to gain new members, as well as demonstrate that Farm Bureau is for everyone, not just farmers!

Through the #WhyFarmBureau social media campaign, we demonstrate how our mission is carried out by each and every one of our members. For example, Delaware Farm Bureau (DEFB) President Bill Powers discussed that he is a member because DEFB works hard to care for their members and is eager to participate in legislative issues that farmers want and need to be involved in. Each #WhyFarmBureau video highlights different aspects of our mission and how our mission aligns with the needs of our members.

The #WhyFarmBureau social media campaign has the potential to lead to new members joining DEFB and demonstrate that Farm Bureau is for everyone! These reels help introduce the community to the many faces of Delaware Farm Bureau, making DEFB relatable and more personable. This campaign will also enhance our social media presence and help grow our following, reach and engagement.

What are the goals for your business in the next three to five years?

- Increase membership by 10% and create more opportunities for growth
- Advance on-farm business solutions
- Create more value for Delaware Farm Bureau members

What distinguishes your business from the others?

1. Strong Community Focus: DEFB places a strong emphasis on supporting local farmers and rural communities in Delaware. Our programs and initiatives are tailored to meet the unique needs of the state's agricultural industry, which includes a significant variety of crops, livestock, and poultry.
2. Active Advocacy and Policy

Influence: DEFB is highly involved in both state and federal agricultural policy, working to shape legislation that directly affects Delaware farmers. As the state's agricultural voice, the DEFB has a track record of effectively lobbying for policies that benefit farmers and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

3. Diverse Membership and Services: DEFB offers a wide range of services that go beyond traditional advocacy, including educational opportunities, networking events, and resources for farm marketing and management. This diversity of services helps members in various areas of their farming operations, making it a valuable resource.

4. Focus on Agricultural Education: DEFB places significant emphasis on agricultural education, helping both current and future farmers improve their skills and knowledge. This includes promoting programs for youth, such as 4-H and FFA, to ensure the next generation of farmers is well-equipped to lead Delaware's agricultural industry.

5. Longstanding History and Community Roots: DEFB's long history, dating back to its re-establishment in 1944, has created a strong foundation of trust and collaboration among Delaware's farming community. This deep-rooted presence allows the organization to

be a reliable source of support for local farmers over generations.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Delaware Farm Bureau members serve on numerous boards and committees, such as the Ag Land Preservation Advisory Committee, the Chesapeake Bay Program Agricultural Advisory Committee, and the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village Board to name a few. Our members are passionate about being involved in the community and serving on various boards within the agricultural community.

Serving as a volunteer:

Delaware Farm Bureau is committed to community involvement. We offer our members numerous volunteer opportunities, such as Mountaire's "Thanksgiving and Easter for Thousands" events, Food Bank of Delaware, Caring Hearts and Helping Hands, to name a few. Our members and staff see the value in having a physical presence in our community and are dedicated to volunteering their time and energy to help make an impact.

Providing in-kind services:

Through the Delaware Farm Bureau Foundation, which was incorporated in 2013, we provide

education resources and lead youth in the community through agricultural-related lessons and activities. We accomplish this through our Mobile Ag Lab which has visited schools and summer camps free of charge. The mission of the DEFB Foundation is to build awareness, understanding, and positive public perception about Delaware's farm operations and fresh local food.



Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital

4470 Forrest Ave. Dover, DE 19904
302-736-3000
www.forrestaveanimal.com
Christi Kiessling, Practice Manager

Describe the business:

Veterinary Hospital

Mission/Philosophy: The mission of the doctors and staff at Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital is to deliver the utmost quality veterinary medical care with loving compassion and respect to our patients and clients. By providing progressive and unique treatment options, personalized patient care, unrivaled service, and honest, open communication, we are

able to nurture the human-animal bond, improving and comfortably extending the lives of our furry friends. Our team strives to make each visit beneficial and enjoyable for all family members. Through our heartfelt concern for you and your pet, we hope your experience with Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital will make you feel part of our extended family.

Primary good or service provided:

Medical care for animals

Number of years in business:

24

How did your business start?

Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital was originally opened by Dr. Gil VanSciver. Dr. Kimberly Gaines was hired in 2000 and became a business partner in 2002.

Number of employees:

Full-time: 23 Part-time: 6

Describe the growth of your business:

Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital was originally opened by Dr. Gil VanSciver. Dr. Kimberly Gaines was hired in 2000 and became a business partner in 2002. At that time there were 4 support staff. The net revenue has increased 10-fold from 2004 to 2024. Dr. Robyn Lefort joined the practice in 2008. Our initial facility was less than 3000 sq ft. Our new, current facility is 8,000sq ft with an additional 1200 sq ft building housing the grooming salon and storage.

In staffing increases:

4 staff and 2 veterinarians in 2000. Today, 5 veterinarians, 1 groomer and 22 team members.

In sales:

The gross revenue has increased 10-fold from 2004 to 2024

Describe the challenges facing your business:

Nationwide shortage of veterinarians, hiring experienced staff, competing with corporate practices for both veterinarians and staff.

Describe solutions developed to address those challenges:

Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital (FAAH) mentors several high school, college and veterinary students. This gives them the needed experience as well as allowing them to be immersed in our amazing FAAH culture. In doing this, we hope they will consider coming back to Kent County to practice medicine at the completion of their education, whether veterinarian, or veterinary technician. In 2025, we have already mentored 5 students.

Describe a creative, imaginative or innovative process you have developed that has helped your business grow:

With both Dr. Gaines and Dr. Lefort originally from Camden, Delaware, the desire to "support local" and keep the practice grounded within our community has helped the growth of our business. Thankfully we have been blessed with three additional veterinarians that have roots here within the

State of Delaware, allowing that hometown ambiance to continue to carry through our practice. FAAH makes every effort to heed the need of its patients and clients, being available when other hospitals have been unable to accommodate.

What are the goals for your business in the next three to five years?

Our goals include continuing to provide the best quality medicine/surgery to our patients while conveying our compassionate care and concern to their pet parents. In the next 3-5 years, we hope to provide a venue for a specialty or group of specialties, such as veterinary cardiologists, ophthalmologists, radiologists, etc. This would provide a service and space where Kent County's pets could receive the highest level of care without the extra stress or anxiety of traveling a far distance. The challenges of driving, such as tackling a bridge or navigating the busier highways, tend to deter some clients from seeking the next level of care that would be best for their pet.

What distinguishes your business from the others?

We feel all the veterinarians in Kent County can provide good patient care. The friendly, benevolent culture that we portray at

our hospital is why Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital rises above the rest. Distinguishing our business from others would be our calm, caring, and welcoming atmosphere that we strive to achieve daily. Our team is what makes FAAH special, and we aim to elevate their accomplishments. This acknowledgement reflects on their approach to both patient and client care, giving FAAH that extra sparkle!

What contributions have you made in the community?

Below is a list of organizations that we helped support in 2024: Wreaths Across America, American Heart Assoc, Lake Forest FFA, The Children's Theatre

Polytech Football, Postlethwait – Odessey of the Mind, DE Distinguished Young Women, Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, Kent County 4H, CR High School – Odessey of the Mind, Kent County Diamond Clover Project, DE State Fair Junior Livestock, Dover HS Football Boosters, Calvary Christian Academy, DE 4H Foundation, USA Wheelchair Rugby, Fifer's Fall Fest, CR Jr ROTC, Milford Lions Club, Caroline County MD Junior Livestock, Ducks Unlimited - Bill Abbott Memorial Shoot, WB Simpson Elementary School, Felton Fire Company, Central DE

Christian Academy, CenDel Foundation, Camden Wyoming Little League

Serving on boards/committees:

Drs. Kimberly Gaines and Robyn Lefort are the two owners of Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital. As far as professional boards/committees, Dr. Lefort is the past President of the Delaware Veterinary Medical Association (DMVA), as well as serving on the Government Relations Committee, and Dr. Gaines is the DMVA Treasurer. Both have previously served as the Kent County representative to the DVMA and Dr. Gaines was previously the treasurer for 6 years. Dr. Lefort is currently the treasurer for the Board of Directors at Delmarva Animal Emergency Center (DAEC). Dr. Gaines has previously served as a member of the Board of Directors of DAEC. Dr. Lefort served as the Kent County veterinarian on the Spay/Neuter Performance Review Committee from 2019-2024. Dr. Lefort was named Delaware Veterinarian of the Year in 2019. Dr. Gaines was named Delaware Veterinarian of the Year in 2005 and the Stars of Delaware Veterinarian in 2021.

Serving as a volunteer:

Dr. Gaines volunteers for Wreaths Across America, Distinguished

Young Women of DE, Mt. Olive Cemetery, and Cow Marsh Baptist Church Cemetery. Dr Lefort volunteers with the Children's Theatre and as a praise director, a worship team member and nominations team member at Wyoming United Methodist Church.

Providing in-kind services:

Forrest Avenue Animal Hospital participates in the Delaware Spay/Neuter program, providing low cost spay/neuter surgeries for qualified clients. We also provide a safe, friendly workspace for the students from Roads to Success School, as well as the STAR program at Dover High School, to come perform day-to-day tasks and improve their abilities to become future members of the workforce.



Hilton Garden Inn Dover

41706 N DuPont Hwy., Dover, DE 19904
302-674-3784

www.dover.hgi.com
Cliff Weber, General Manager

Mission/Philosophy:

We support the Hilton Worldwide Mission statement: "to be the most hospitable company in the world – by creating heartfelt experiences for Guests, meaningful opportunities for Team Members, high value for Owners, and a positive impact in our communities."

To that end, on property, we also add that our goal is to provide the best service and accommodations to those visiting Dover or utilizing our amenities.

Primary good or service provided:

Overnight accommodations, friendly and efficient service, Full-service catering and meeting services, and a full-service restaurant and bar providing a unique and quality dining experience.

Number of years in business:

17 in total. 10 years under the current ownership.

How did your business start?

Originally licensed by Hilton in 2008. Current ownership purchased the property in April 2015. We are a business partner in 2002.

Number of employees:

Full-time: 18 Part-time: 9

Describe the growth of your business:

In staffing increases:

Seasonal expectations of 5-8 new Team Members

In sales:

No significant revenue growth expected over 2024

Describe the challenges facing your business:

A downturn in the local market, the loss of one NASCAR race, the change in NASCAR race dates to coincide with DE Turf, and the loss of any music festival this year. The market is sluggish, but we are poised to continue moderate occupancy growth.

Describe solutions developed to address those challenges:

We are aggressively pursuing new local negotiated accounts to add a base to our business.

Describe a creative, imaginative or innovative process you have developed that has helped your business grow:

As one of three hotels in Dover that provide meeting space coupled with catering, we are positioned

as the market leader for smaller groups. Rather than rely on a structured catering menu, which we do have for those who request it, our individualized attention allows us to pivot and cater to the specific needs of our guests. For our rooms, we are confident travelers will appreciate staying in a beautifully renovated property.

What are the goals for your business in the next three to five years?

Continued occupancy and rate growth in our market. The acquisition of new local negotiated accounts, a greater focus on marketing the new restaurant, Hearth Bar and Grille, and promotion of our full-service banquets.

What distinguishes your business from the others?

Service! We excel in providing the city's best service and accommodations. Many online reviews, even if a guest experienced an inconve-

nience, speak of how attentive and polite our entire team is. From the Front Desk to Housekeeping, each Team Member is proud of what they do and always eager to interact with our guests to make their day special. It is no longer just enough to sell a room or service. Guests want to know their business is appreciated, and they welcome the attention to detail our team provides.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Serving on boards/committees:

I am currently on the Board of

Directors for the Central Delaware Convention and Business Center. As a hotel, we remain a member of the CDCC and proud of our many sponsorships over the years.

Serving as a volunteer:

Our hotel proudly collaborates locally when possible. As an extra incentive, team members are rewarded for their volunteerism as well. From Code Purple Firefly cleanup and Arbor Day tree planting to supporting nurses with lunch during COVID and sponsorship with Meals on Wheels, we are always looking for ways to be better corporate stewards. Annually, we

host a group of students planning on hospitality as a career as we focus half a day to immerse them in the world of hospitality and tourism. As a Certified Tourism Ambassador, I also volunteer supporting the CVB Explorer at events.

Providing in-kind services:

With each property renovation, we donate a significant amount of furniture, mattresses, tv's, etc., that are being liquidated to Habitat for Humanity and other local charities. Each month the hotel donates \$5 per pet fee back to local pet charities. Over major event weekends such as

Firefly, NASCAR, Homecoming, etc., we donate a portion of our revenue to support local charities. Since current ownership acquired the hotel, we have donated over \$6,000 in cash and sponsorships, and more than \$40,000 in in-kind donations.



Nominees for Large Business of the Year



Bally's Dover Casino Resort

1131 N. DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901
302-674-4600

www.BallysDover.com

Nicholas Polcino, Vice President and General Manager

Mission/Philosophy:

Bally's Dover Casino Resort is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable gaming experience. Our philosophy is grounded in three core values: Trustworthiness, Rewards, and Responsibility

To that end, on property, we also add that our goal is to provide the best service and accommodations to those visiting Dover or utilizing our amenities.

Primary good or service provided:

Hospitality and Casino – Entertainment Company

Number of years in business:

29 years.

How did your business start?

The foundation of our legacy traces back to the beginning of Standardbred horse racing in 1969, a pivotal moment that shaped our journey. In December 1995, we expanded our offerings with the opening of Dover Downs Slots, marking a significant milestone in our growth. By 2007, we further

solidified our presence by adding 268 rooms, making us the largest hotel in Delaware at the time with a total of 500 rooms. Our expansion continued in 2010 with the addition of table games, enhancing the gaming experience for our guests. In 2019, we entered a new chapter through a reverse merger with Twin River Worldwide Holdings, further broadening our horizons. Finally, in 2021/2022, we proudly rebranded as Bally's Dover Casino Resort, reflecting our evolution and commitment to offering an exceptional experience for our guests.

Number of employees:

Full-time: 675 Part-time: 150

Describe the growth of your business:

In staffing increases:

As the casino business gradually came back online after 2020, staffing needs grew to support the increasing demand for services and enhanced guest experiences. This growth led to a significant increase in positions across various departments, from gaming and hospitality to security and customer service, ensuring that operations ran smoothly and efficiently to meet the evolving expectations of visitors.

In sales:

Again, as we came back to more normal operations after 2020, the business saw a steady increase driven by a broader range of gaming options, entertainment offerings, and accommodations. The growth of table games, slot machines, and ancillary services like dining and

events contributed to higher revenue streams, attracting more customers and boosting overall profitability.

Describe the challenges facing your business:

Similar to most casino businesses, we face challenges such as increased competition from both physical casinos and online gambling platforms, which can affect foot traffic and revenue. Additionally, we must navigate evolving regulations, address concerns around responsible gaming, and adapt to shifting customer preferences for technology-driven experiences while maintaining a strong focus on security and operational efficiency.

Describe solutions developed to address those challenges:

To address increased competition from both physical casinos and online platforms, we have invested in unique, high-quality experiences, such as exclusive events and/or loyalty programs to help retain customers and attract new ones. Bally's Corporation has ensured a robust digital presence as well. To stay ahead of evolving regulations, we prioritize compliance by continuously monitoring legal changes and implementing adaptive policies. We also address responsible gaming concerns by offering self-regulation tools, promoting awareness, and providing access to support resources. Lastly, by leveraging our security systems and maintaining operational efficiency through automation and data analytics, Bally's can create a safe, streamlined, and customer-friendly environment.

Describe a creative, imaginative or innovative process you have developed that has helped your business grow:

One innovative approach in our casino business has been to create an immersive, experienced-based loyalty program that blends entertainment, rewards, and community building. Rather than just offering standard points for play, this program has integrated personalized experiences like private events, VIP access to concerts, and occasionally a behind-the-scenes tour of the casino's operations. We not only strive to deepen customer loyalty, but also provide a new, imaginative way to engage guests, ensuring they feel valued and connected to the brand in a unique, memorable way. Through this, the casino can capitalize on its core values of exceptional service and innovation, reinforcing customer relationships and boosting growth without losing sight of the fundamentals.

What are the goals for your business in the next three to five years?

Our goals remain the same for most years: Enhance our customers experience; Expand digital and online presence to broaden our customer base; Enhance responsible gaming measures to help build trust and reinforce a commitment to our players well-being; Attract new demographics to build a broader, more loyal customer base; Strengthen employee development – happy employee contribute to better guest experiences; Continue our community outreach programs

ensuring employee engagement and meeting our social responsibilities; and Expand partnerships and brand recognition to increase the casino's visibility.

What distinguishes your business from the others?

What truly sets our business apart is the fact that we are one of only three establishments in our state within this industry, making us a unique and integral part of the local landscape. We offer a diverse array of entertainment options all under one roof, catering to every adult's recreational needs. As the epitome of the service industry, we provide a wide range of accessible offerings,

ensuring that there is something for everyone. Unlike many businesses that close during holidays or for other reasons, we remain open 365 days a year, always ready to welcome guests. This unwavering commitment gives us the opportunity to leave a lasting impression every single day, driving continuous growth and further establishing our position as a premier destination in the community.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Through our Bally's CREW program, we have participated in many activities over the past year for various organizations throughout Delaware.

Serving on boards/committees:

Central DE Chamber of Commerce (CDCC), Kent County Tourism, Capital Rotary Club

Serving as a volunteer:

DE Food Bank Event, Central DE Habitat for Humanity (CDHFH), Adopt A Highway, Earth Day City of Dover, and many more throughout Kent County

Providing in-kind services:

DE Breast Cancer Coalition, CDHFH, CDCC, Fire Departments, Police Departments, Kent-Sussex Industries, Harness Horsemen and more.



Century Engineering, LLC, a Kleinfelder Company

550 Bay Road, Dover, DE 19901
302-734-9188

www.kleinfelder.com

Scott Rathfon, Executive Vice President

Mission/Philosophy:

To provide professional services by uniting quality, innovation, and creativity with dedication, responsiveness, and commitment.

Primary good or service provided:

Century is a multi-discipline professional service firm providing a full slate of engineering related services to the Mid-Atlantic region. Services include Transportation, Civil, Environmental, Water & Wastewater, Survey, Structural, Geotechnical, Mechanical, Electrical, Utility Locating & Coordination, Right-of-Way Services, Construction Management & Inspection.

Number of years in business:

The first Delaware office was established in Dover in 1987 (38 years).

How did your business start?

The Delaware office was first established to provide planning and design management services to DelDOT for the SR1, US 13 Relief Route project. It all started with a staff of six (6) in a townhouse in downtown Dover.

Number of employees:

Full-time: 186 Part-time: 10

Describe the growth of your business:

In staffing increases:

Century's Delaware operation started with six (6) employees in 1987 and has grown to a current high of 186 full-time employees.

In sales:

The Delaware operation started with a couple million dollars in backlog and has steadily grown over the years to now over \$39M in sales for the Delaware operation.

Describe the challenges facing your business:

The typical challenges are recruiting engineering talent and fluctuations in the economy. Recruiting new talent is an industry issue due to the lack of engineering students as compared to the needs and a local issue in attracting talent to the Dover market. The fluctuations in the economy affect us when there is not a sustained funding source for new projects.

Describe solutions developed to address those challenges:

Some of the solutions to the recruiting challenge included opening the office in Newark to attract students from engineering universities in that area. Also, for the Dover market, we invest time in the local schools to promote engineering and try to attract students that intend to stay in central Delaware. We also work with local agencies in efforts to improve the quality of life in central Delaware and sell the good things that are happening in the area.

Describe a creative, imaginative or innovative process you have developed that has helped your business grow:

Century is dedicated to the local community, and we listen to the needs of the community and develop new and emerging markets based on those needs. We value responsiveness and putting the needs of our clients first by striving to provide a timely, quality product. And we are committed to the local area by hiring people from the area and being involved in the local community and organizations.

What are the goals for your business in the next three to five years?

Our goal is to continue to grow in the area and be involved in improving the local community. We will continue to be involved in working with local school mentoring programs, improving the environment of the local area and improving the quality of life for those that live, work and play in central Delaware.

What distinguishes your business from the others?

One thing we take great pride in is our effort and success to keep some of the best and brightest talent from Delaware in Delaware. We focus on local talent in the area that has the same dedication and commitment to improving the local economy and environment. Another thing that distinguishes our business is the dedication of our employees as can be supported by the low turnover rate of our staff.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Serving on boards/committees:

CDCC Board; DAFB Honorary Commander Program; Kent Sussex Leadership Alliance; Delaware Tech Advisory Boards; Local Sport Organization Boards; Professional Organization Boards

Serving as a volunteer:

Local School Mentoring Programs; Go Red/STEM event participation; School Robotics Club; Delaware Bay Clean-up



Nominees for Large Business of the Year



N.K.S. Distributors, Inc.

205 Big Woods Road, Smyrna, DE 19977
302-322-1811 (main number)

www.nksdistributors.com

Kathy Willes, Vice President of Finance

Mission/Philosophy:

The N.K.S. Family is committed to being a respected and trusted partner to our employees, customers, suppliers and the community by providing a dynamic beverage portfolio and superior service in the First State.

Primary good or service provided:

Beverage Wholesaler/Distributor for Beer, Wine, Spirits and Non-Alcoholic beverages in the State of Delaware. We take pride in offering an extensive and diverse beverage portfolio to satisfy our customers.

Number of years in business:

75 Years

How did your business start?

In 1949, James V. Tigani Sr and his wife Betty started N.K.S. by selling a few beer brands from their garage. The company experienced rapid growth during the 1950s with the addition of Schaefer beer and in 1960 N.K.S. was awarded the Anheuser-Busch franchise for Delaware. The business continues to be locally owned and operated by their son, Robert Tigani, Sr.

Number of employees:

Full-time: 140 Part-time: 3

Describe the growth of your business:

In staffing increases:

We have grown from the original 2 owner/employees to a steady number of approximately 140 employees. During the Summer we add several more seasonal employees. We have worked with local colleges to employee interns as well.

In sales:

N.K.S. started out with no suppliers and a handful of brands. Today we proudly represent 29 suppliers and 673 brands.

Describe the challenges facing your business:

People are drinking fewer alcoholic beverages, legalization of recreational marijuana, and threats to the Three Tier System such as Direct to Consumer shipments of alcohol.

Describe solutions developed to address those challenges:

Expand our beverage portfolio with new suppliers and beverage categories. Educate legislators and general consumers about the benefits of public health and safety provided by the Three Tier System.

Describe a creative, imaginative or innovative process you have developed that has helped your business grow:

In our previous locations (Milford and New Castle) we were landlocked with no room for expansion. We planned and constructed a new single facility with state-of-the-art and energy-efficient technologies in the center of the state which would provide room for the future growth of our business. N.K.S. has found success with our Leadership Team Management concept and our focus on our people and brands.

What are the goals for your business in the next three to five years?

To organically grow sales with our current supplier and looking to further

expand with new supplier opportunities.

What distinguishes your business from the others?

Of paramount importance to N.K.S. is keeping deep roots in all the communities we serve. N.K.S. has local management, sales and marketing departments as well as comprehensive delivery services. Our Brands and Our People make the difference every day in the First State, and we are all here in one building in Kent County—the center of the state.

What contributions have you made in the community?

What contributions have you made in the community? We have developed a N.K.Serves Volunteer program. The mission is “The N.K.S. family endeavors to provide a positive influence by inspiring, connecting, and investing in our employees, business partners, and the communities where we work and live. Our employees can earn up to 2 additional days of Paid Time Off for any volunteer hours worked for any Non-Profit Organization during non-working hours.

Serving on boards/committees:

Our President, Paul Ruggiero serves on numerous boards including: Delaware Police Chiefs Foundation President, Delaware Restaurant Association Board Member, Delaware Workforce Board 2024, President of Delaware Alcoholic Beverage Wholesaler Association, Former National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) Board Member and Management Committee, Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware Golf Classic

Board Member, Vice President of Neighborhood HOA, and volunteers for several events

Our Vice President of Finance Kathy Willes serves on Speedway Children's Charity/Dover Board, Autism Delaware Board, Finance Committee and currently is Treasurer, St. Polycarp Church Finance Council and volunteers for several events.

Serving as a volunteer:

Our employees volunteer for numerous charity organizations and events including: Dewey Goes Pink, Bombay Hook Cleanup, Gardening at Delaware Agriculture Museum, Vet Fest of Delaware, Smyrna-Clayton July 4th Association flag projects, Walk for Autism, Drive for Autism, Autism Delaware Snowflake Soiree, Delaware Police Chiefs Football Playoff event, Lums Pond State Park clean up, Special Olympics Truck Convoy, Hagley Museum and Library clean up, DFRC Blue/Gold game, Bayhealth Charity Golf Tournament, Delaware Special Olympics Golf Tournament, Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware Golf Classic, Autism Delaware Trunk or Treat, and many more.

Providing in-kind services:

N.K.S. provides our volunteers, beverages and promotional materials for numerous charity events throughout the State of Delaware. We are proud to be a Trusted Partner with our Delaware communities.



Nominees for Young Professional of the Year



Malcolm Jacob

Transportation Planner
Dover/Kent County MPO
 1783 Friends Way, Camden DE 19934
 302-387-6030
<https://doverkentmpo.delaware.gov/>



Number of Years at your current company/organization:
3

Describe your current role with the company/organization:

Transportation planners are sometimes described as a “jack of all trades,” and this has certainly been the case in my work with

Dover Kent MPO. Every day is a little different from the previous one. Tasks I am responsible for include writing and researching for transportation studies, coordinating with municipalities, serving on local committees, contributing towards grant applications, and engaging with the public. It’s a great position for anyone looking to interact with a wide range of stakeholders and become familiar with their community. The overarching goal of all my daily tasks is to ensure the people of Kent County can get from one place to another safely and efficiently, whether they are driving, walking, biking, or otherwise.

What are your professional goals in the next three to five years?

One of my long-term professional goals is to obtain my American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification. This would be an important milestone for anybody in the world of planning. Within my current position, I hope to continue to learn at every given opportunity, and I want the work I do to help improve community safety and connectivity. Finally, I look forward to completing the Leadership Central Delaware program as part of the Class of 2025, which so far has helped a great deal towards my goal

of getting to know the people and businesses of the area!

What distinguishes you from other young professionals?

Something that distinguishes me is my professional background, which includes transportation, environmental studies, and a wide range of other topics. Being in the public sector, I work closely with Kent County’s small communities and ensure their needs are heard. For example, I’ve helped the Town of Cheswold with relocating one of its bus stops, and I am currently working on a sidewalk inventory for the Town of Little Creek. Within my role with the MPO, I am able to influence public policy and have a positive impact on the experience of getting from Point A to Point B, hopefully for generations to come.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Through the MPO I am actively involved in two advisory committees for reviewing site plans: the State of Delaware’s Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) and the City of Dover’s Development Advisory Committee (DAC). By doing this, I can recommend sidewalks, crosswalks, bike facilities, and other transportation and safety infrastructure to be included in new

residential and commercial projects.

Serving as a volunteer:

Recently I’ve been volunteering alongside my LCD class. Our projects include maintaining the property of Cancer Support Community Delaware and painting the interior of the Boys & Girls Club in Dover. In addition to this, I’ve also participated in DNREC-sponsored beach grass planting and trash cleanups at Kent County’s beaches.

Additional personal information you would like to share: (Educational background, accomplishments, awards received, etc.)

I grew up in Maine and went to college in Massachusetts, studying English at Stonehill College (BA) and environmental science & policy at Clark University (MS). I’ve been in central Delaware for about three years. Although I was not raised in the area, Kent County has quickly become a new home for me, with plenty of new connections to make and a welcoming community. I also love how much outdoor recreation is available! The best part of my job has undoubtedly been getting to meet people and then seeing all these familiar faces around town and at local events.



Kylie Frazer

Community Outreach & Events Specialist
Bayhealth
 640 S. State Street, Dover, DE 19901
www.bayhealth.org



Number of Years at your current company/organization:
5 months

Describe your current role with the company/organization:

As Currently I serve as Bayhealth’s Community Outreach and Events Specialist where I have the privilege to work alongside our Communications, Marketing and Community Outreach team. In my role, I am working to identify and coordinate health screenings and educational opportunities for community members through events and speakers, build partnerships with local non-profits to expand our services in Kent and Sussex County, and increase awareness internally to amplify team member engagement in outreach opportunities.

What are your professional goals in the next three to five years?

Continuously learn new skills and

expand upon my current, increase my professional network through genuine relationships and grow in my role while doing what I love – making a difference across our great state.

What distinguishes you from other young professionals?

There are so many young professionals in our community doing outstanding work, but working enthusiastically for over 12 years in the non-profit sector to make our communities a better place is what makes me the proudest. Always looking at how we can do things bigger and better to make a more meaningful impact is my focus.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Prior to my role with Bayhealth, I worked for Special Olympics Delaware for over 12 years where I had the opportunity to serve in various roles that covered all aspects

of programming across the state in both schools and communities for over 4,000 athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities). Most recently I served as their Senior Director of Sports and Competition where I provided oversight of all community programming and engagement, lead their signature sports event committees, planned and executed over 20 single-day and multi-day events (100-2000 participants & volunteers) yearly, and organized and managed Delaware’s participation at the Special Olympics USA Games.

Boards/Committees:

I assist local 2018-2024 - Unified Sports Committee, Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA)



Codi Lyn Canasa

Owner, Head Piercer

Agapé Body Piercings

135 S Bradford Street, Dover DE 19904

302-359-7060

agapebodypiercings.com



Number of Years at your current company/organization:
5 Years

Describe your current role with the company/organization:

Owner and Head Piercer

What are your professional goals in the next three to five years?

I plan to possibly open 1-2 more locations. The next location in

Newark, DE and then possibly a third location in Lewes, DE. Simultaneously, I am working on expanding my personal ministry, Misfits On A Mission, to be a worldwide effort to help spread the light of Jesus to countries and communities that could use a little tender love and care. Currently, we take an annual missions trips to the Philippines, but are looking into Africa and other parts of Asia. We have executed food and clothing missions in impoverished neighborhoods, as well as helped provide food, entertainment, and quality of life necessities to local elder homes of abandoned seniors. We seek to expand those efforts and hope to add medical missions initiatives in the future.

What distinguishes you from other young professionals?

Agape Body Piercings has been an active part of the downtown Dover community since we opened. I am proud to serve and volunteer on 2 different boards that specifically focus on our beloved Downtown Dover District. We have also earned multiple awards throughout our tenure downtown, including being voted 4 times as the First State Favorite for Body Piercings, and last year, winning Stars of Delaware for Best Tattoo/Piercing Studio. I believe that these awards are the result of the attention to detail, care, and quality service we provide. We constantly promote the idea that "Agape isn't just a piercing, it's an experience."

In addition, I believe that my leadership style, both within my company, as well as through my personal brand, is what keeps our repeat customers percentage at 76%, which is well above the national average for my industry of 8%.

I have also been blessed to be highlighted in multiple publications from local TV news, to newspapers and online articles, not because of what I have done, but I because of what I stand for. I live my life and spend my days spreading hope, encouragement, and love to all who will receive, and even to those who might not. Because light is what will continue to win in a world full of dark distractions and criticism. Unity and kindness is what will make this world a better place.

What contributions have you made in the community?

Serving on boards/committees: Board Member of Downtown Dover Partnership,

Previously served for 3 years on the Board for Destination Downtown Dover

Serving as a volunteer:

Previously organized and curated Dover's St. Patrick's Day Parade and Festival for 3 years

Additional personal information you would like to share: (Educational background, accomplishments, awards received, etc.)

Thank you so much for the opportunity to share my story. Five years ago, I sold my Jeep and every single thing I owned that had value, including my precious sneaker collection. Only three months before the pandemic, I opened the doors of Agapé with only \$47 left to my name. I trusted simply God for every step. I never gave up. I knew there would be challenging times, but I also knew that they wouldn't defeat me. I had no idea that the pandemic would shut us down for nearly 6 months. But with the help of local organizations like the Chamber, the Downtown Dover Partnership, and the love of our community, we were able to survive. Not only did we survive, but we now stand 5 years strong and we're busier than ever!

We are blessed to be the only Piercing Exclusive studio in the entire state of Delaware. We went from a company of 1.5 (myself full time and our studio manager, Tabby, part time), to now having 5 employees. With opening more locations, I plan to hire anywhere from 10-20 employees in total. I also plan to stay continually and integrally active in the communities in which we serve. I believe that the only way to see the change that we seek is to be part of it! Thank you for this incredible honor and opportunity, and I hope to continue to represent the Chamber with the utmost integrity, care, and excellence. Be blessed, and NEVER stop smiling :)

Members are invited to vote using this link www.surveymonkey.com/r/CDCCAwards2025. Voting closes Thursday, May 29, 2025. Remember: ONLY chamber members are eligible to vote and only ONE vote in each of the 3 categories is allotted per member business. Consider this your civic calling. Together, we can continue to make our Excellence in Business Awards a true testament to the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in Central Delaware.

Thank you for your continued support and participation in the CDCC. The CDCC is so excited to celebrate this year's nominees, final winners, and the CDCC community at the Awards for Excellence Celebration at Bally's Dover Casino Resort- Rollins Center on June 18, 2025. Let's make this celebration the best one yet! Happy Voting!

**VOTE ONLINE AT www.surveymonkey.com/r/CDCCAwards2025.
BY THURSDAY, MAY 29 Remember, one vote per business!**

Special Feature

55 Plus Expo was a 5-Star Success!



Spring is a jammed-packed season of significant events for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC), and we are proud and excited to report that our 24th Annual 55 Plus Expo was once again a 5-star success!

This free event was held at the Bally's Dover Casino Resort – Rollins Center on Wednesday, April 16th. The team at Bally's was (as always) very accommodating and helped us create a wonderful event in their beautiful venue. It was a privilege to again serve Delaware's fastest growing sector of the population at this year's Expo!

The CDCC would like to thank the 70+ vendors who brought the Rollins Center to life for all attendees throughout the day. We appreciated your hard work, time, and service to Central Delaware's ever important 55 plus community and the CDCC. Vendors included a variety of industries including healthcare, home improvements, nutrition, home care services, finance, technology, and more.

The CDCC also appreciated the opportunity to build our relationship with the expo's vendors; complimentary remarks and positive feedback were noted on the evaluations collected at the end of the day. In addition to the amazing vendors present, there were many other highlights to this year's event such as: Bayhealth's Wellness Center with free health screenings, Modern Maturity's Steppin' Seniors dance performance, Dover YMCA's Zumba demonstration, the presenting of the colors and singing of the National Anthem by the First State Military Academy, take-home tomato plants from the Kent County Master Gardeners, and a large, walk-

through, inflatable colon bringing unforgettable awareness to the importance of colonoscopies. There was much more to be seen, heard, and experienced at the CDCC's 24th Annual 55 Plus Expo – you just had to be there!

And to those who were there, the CDCC thanks everyone for attending and working at the 55 Plus Expo, from the volunteers handing out bags at the doors to the drivers from the local senior centers who ferried their residents and members back and forth throughout the day. Thank you to our local healthcare heroes who care for our community in so many ways. Thank you to all caregivers for supporting your loved ones. We are sure this year's event provided smiles, a feeling of community, and resources to help you or your loved one live a better, happier, and healthier life.

Thank you to our 2025 55 Plus Expo Sponsors for their generous support!

Wellness Center Gold Sponsor:

Bayhealth

Silver Sponsors:

Coastal Bath Company, Connolly Dermatology, Delaware Department of Insurance (Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau), Delaware Health and Social Services – DSAAPD, Highmark Delaware, and Evergreen Post Acute / Bay Terrace Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center

Media Sponsor:

Dover Post

Event Sponsor:

Bally's Dover Casino Resort

The CDCC is excited about what's in store for the 25th Annual 55 Plus Expo coming next year on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Bally's Dover Casino Resort! Plans are already under way. In addition to a larger-than-ever collection of sponsors and vendors, the CDCC is seeking unique and lively entertainment and demonstrations to be included for the 25th anniversary. If you can offer something new to add to the spirit of the event, please contact the CDCC office at 302-734-7513. Mark your calendar now and be sure to share the news!



Special Feature

April Sunset Business Mixer Combines the Old and New



Sunset BUSINESS MIXER

The Sunset Business Mixer brought smiles, laughs, and great connections to the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce membership on Wednesday, April 30th at the new Bayhealth Occupational Health/Walk-in at Blue Hen Medical Facility. The CDCC members enjoyed a check-up with the Chamber and Bayhealth – our wonderful host for the evening!

Members and their invited guests savored the refreshing beverages and yummy food including subs, fresh fruit, cookies, brownies and more. Door prizes, 50/50 raffle cash, and the Member of the Month prize were all awarded with smiles and high fives. Plus, plenty of business cards were exchanged among the cheerfully engaged guests!

During her welcome address, Bayhealth Senior Director of Ambulatory Care, Deanna Rigby, reminded the mixer attendees that the building they were standing in was once Rose's Department Store in the original Blue Hen Mall. She went on to share that the original "Blue Hen" sign from the Mall was found in the back loading dock of the building when they started the remodeling for their new facility. A shiny, lighted reproduction of that Blue Hen sign is on the wall as you enter the facility and was a popular selfie spot as people were coming and going throughout the evening.

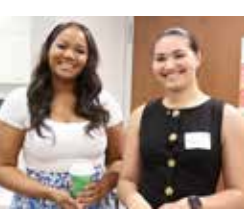
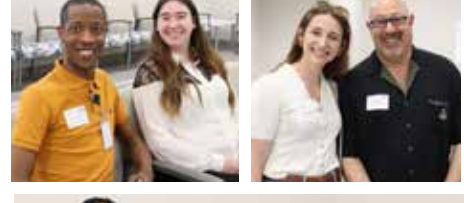
Thank you to the team at Bayhealth for making room for their community to meet and mix for the Sunset Business Mixer in the comfort of their expansive waiting

room. It is an impressive facility, and we are grateful for the care, kindness and compassion that the Bayhealth team shows our community. We appreciate you so much.

In our busy adult lives, free time can be hard to come by, so the CDCC doesn't take it lightly that you, our members, took the time to spend your time with us with the goal of growing Central Delaware, building a stronger community, and networking with like-minded individuals. The CDCC always has a great time facilitating the Sunset Business Mixer because of our members (some of whom you see pictured here) who bring the room to life! You make every event worthwhile, and the CDCC thanks you for spending your evening with us.

Remember – CDCC Sunset Business Mixers are a FREE member benefit and covers all your employees within your company! Share the news and invite them to represent your company if you can't make it that night. You are welcome to invite non-member guests to allow them a sneak peek at the energy created at a CDCC Mixer. Maybe they'll want to become a member, too.

To register as a spectator, golfer or sponsor for May's special Mini Masters Mixer that combines the mini-golf tournament and the Sunset Business Mixer, visit www.cdcc.net or call (302)734-7513 to join the fun!



Member News

Murphey School Residents Compete in Annual Iron Chef Competition

What sort of recipe would you put together to create a special entrée and unique dessert using beef, sweet potatoes and maraschino cherries with the goal of wowing a group of “foodie” judges and earning a coveted Iron Chef golden trophy? That challenge was put before the youth residents of The Elizabeth W. Murphey School during their annual spring break Iron Chef Cooking Competition.

The Murphey School is a 100+ year old non-profit agency that relies on state funds, grants, and donations to provide 24-hour care to children and youth ages 8 – 23 years old. Their current residential program is designed to provide supervision, structure, and direction to youth from all parts of Delaware and are referred for care through the Division of Family Services. The children in care at The Murphey School reside in four cottages on their Dover campus in a family-style atmosphere where they each have their own bedroom. Their care program is administered by a nurturing, trained staff of house parents.

The children all attend public schools, so during spring break there are always lots of activities planned to fill their time, allowing them to be creative, energized and burn off a bit of spring-time steam. In addition to the Iron Chef Competition, their activities this year have included a trip to the Salisbury Zoo, roller skating, a “Duck Drop” race, gardening, a beach trip complete with whale watching, and a visit from the ice cream truck.

In most of the cottages, the children were up early on the day of the Iron Chef Competition to plan their menu and prepare the ingredients for their dishes. Murphey School Assistant Director Murlene Clark pointed out that in addition to being fun and offering a bit of healthy competition, the Iron Chef activity also teaches the children cooking skills, social skills, and teamwork.



By 4 p.m. the judges arrived on campus and began their stop at each of the cottages. This year’s judges included Delaware beach restaurateur Megan Kee, Major “Donny” Donald Humphrey from Dover Air Force Base, and our very own Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce president, Dina Vendetti. They were all 3 new to the Iron Chef judging role, so they didn’t quite know what to expect.

At one of the cottages, they were presented with full-size servings of both the entrée and the dessert. This presented a problem, because both dishes were so delicious that it would have been easy to finish them off. But the judges knew that they needed to practice restraint, or they would be too full early in the judging to appreciate the tasty treats served at each cottage.

As they continued their food tour through The Murphey School campus, the judges were greeted at the entrance to some of the cottages with handshakes and introductions. Some of the competitors had set beautiful tables with linens, centerpieces, fancy dinnerware and stemware, and fizzy festive beverages. Jazz music was even playing in one of the dining rooms to help set the mood. At the younger girl’s cottage, the judges were greeted by the mini chefs dressed in brightly colored aprons and matching chef’s hats. One of the girls also recited the menu by memory. The judges were impressed.

Ms. Clark reminded the judges to not be distracted by any of the “extras” that the children presented

with their meals (i.e. special drinks, salad, etc.). The judging was for only the entrée and dessert based on these five criteria: presentation, originality, aroma, taste and use of ingredients.

When the judges had tasted all the amazing food creations at each of the cottages, they convened to a secret location to compare their tally sheets, notes and photos of the dishes taken with their cell phones. One point they unanimously agreed on was that this judging was difficult, because all the children had worked so hard and had done a great job on their food presentations. Even so, they knew that only one team could win the coveted trophy to display in a place of honor in their cottage until next year’s Iron Chef Competition.

After much discussion, and tallying up the numbers, the judges agreed that Elizabeth Cottage presented the best meal of beef and noodles and a sweet potato bread pudding. Judge Dina was very impressed by the bread pudding. “What kid thinks of using a sweet potato in a dessert?” she asked with an amazed expression.

The presentation of the trophy was held in the Ehinger Cultural Hall at Murphey School. All the food that was prepared for the competition was brought from each cottage to the hall for the children and staff to enjoy. The room was beautifully decorated for the special gathering and subsequent award presentation. Ms. Clark announced each of the runners-up and shared their point totals from the tally sheets so that everyone could hear how close the voting was. In the end, the children weren’t really that interested in who the winners were. They had so much fun putting together the menus, cooking and presenting their dishes to the judges that the day of creative cooking and camaraderie made them all winners.



Introducing DNREC Secretary – Dover’s Own Patterson

Delaware National Resources & Environmental Control’s (DNREC) new secretary Gary Patterson is no stranger to Dover. He was born and raised in the capital of the First State. The fact that he is a “local” has raised hopes with some that the policies he supports through his position with DNREC will be friendly to Central Delaware business community. That’s exactly what the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hoped to find out in our recent meeting with Secretary Patterson.

But first, here’s a little bit of background on Patterson and his work that you might not know. He has served in state government for more than 25 years including as communications director for Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, chief of staff at DNREC, legislative liaison and deputy chief of staff for Gov. Jack Markell, infrastructure implementation coordinator and federal affairs coordinator for Gov. John Carney, and he served as the chief of staff for the Department of Justice for 5 years. He has 3 daughters, and he and his wife live in Dover.

Even though this is a long list of many years of government work, Patterson admits that his new job is wide-ranging. The agency includes 7 divisions and about 800 people. To learn more about the agency, he has started “Field-Trip Fridays” where he visits different locations under his direction. Recent trips in Kent County have included the First State Heritage Park and the Murderkill River Jetty Rehabilitation project in Bowers Beach.

While Patterson is continuing to become familiar with the many



projects, programs and locations handled by DNREC, he has already put together his priorities for his tenure. These include climate change, environmental justice, permitting and fees, and DNREC employees.

The CDCC also has some priorities that we wanted to ask the secretary about, several of which match his priorities. First, we asked him about permitting and fees. There are concerns about the permitting processes that go through DNREC and hamper the “Ready in 6” initiative designed to reduce the amount of time it takes for a business to go from planning to opening its doors. In addition, some of the proposed plans to increase DNREC fees, that have been the same since 1991, will be especially costly for businesses with a large workforce, such as manufacturing. Patterson pointed out that some initiatives to make permitting more efficient are already in place including upgrades to technology and the work done by the Government Efficiency and Accountability Review (GEAR) Board. Plus, DNREC is working to move some of the things that require “permits” to be processed as a registration

instead. These would be permits that consistently receive approvals.

One of the biggest challenges that has come from keeping fees the same for more than 30 years is the hit that staffing and resources have taken. Only 24% of DNREC’s operating budget comes from the General Assembly fund, while 52% come from the Appropriated Special Funds (ASF). ASF are the fees collected by the state to support the various programs and agencies. These funds are designated for specific uses and are not part of the general state fund. Patterson made the point that permit and license fees are critical to allowing DNREC to protect natural resources and maintain public health, such as by ensuring proper cleanup and disposal of solid and hazardous waste, controlling air emissions, taking charge of stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution, overseeing wastewater treatment and monitoring construction and development along our coastline. Insufficient funding has hindered critical activities and made it challenging to fill positions and retain current staff.

Even though the need to increase fees is real, Patterson understands that large increases across the board is not the answer. His plan is to bring a list of the current fees to both the General Assembly and representatives of the business community so that they can collectively pick which fees to increase and how to best implement these increases. Patterson explains, “The business community needs to help us solve this problem.”

The second priority we asked Secretary Patterson about is climate

change – specifically the electric vehicle (EV) mandate. Patterson spoke about some confusion surrounding the “EV Mandate” pointing out that the regulation applies only to the auto manufacturers’ supply to Delaware, not a requirement for car purchasers. People can still buy gas-powered vehicles. The goal of the regulation is to make more electric options available to Delaware consumers. Even so, Patterson noted that the conversation is still ongoing in Legislative Hall. (Editor’s note: Less than 10 days after our meeting with Secretary Patterson, House Bill 92 to repeal Delaware’s zero-emission vehicle regulation was defeated in committee.)

To close out the meeting, we asked the Secretary what the CDCC can do to help him accomplish his list or priorities while also keeping ours at the forefront. He said that we need to keep the lines of communication open. “I don’t mind input. I’m in a position to be open to feedback,” Patterson shared.

As a member of the CDCC, be assured that your Chamber is consistently working behind the scenes to advocate for business members as legislation is crafted, heard, and voted on. This chamber works diligently to keep the lines of communication open with lawmakers and those in authority, a critical component of the Chamber’s legislative strategy. As pieces of legislation arise that may impact our Central Delaware business community, we will do our best to keep you informed, let your voice be heard, and lobby on your behalf.



© Delaware DNREC/Errol Ebanks – dnrec.delaware.gov



© Delaware DNREC/Errol Ebanks – dnrec.delaware.gov

Special Feature

New Director for Division of Small Business Hits the Ground Running

When you read Christopher “CJ” Bell’s resume, it checks off all the boxes to get him to his current position as the Director of the Delaware Division of Small Business. He holds a degree in psychology and public policy from the University of Delaware. Bell worked as an aid for U.S. Sen. Tom Carper and oversaw Gov. John Carney’s re-election campaign. Most recently he was the New Castle County economic director for close to two years.

Bell was nominated for this position by then Gov.-elect Matt Meyer who described him as “a millennial economic leader who has a unique understanding of the issues facing Delaware entrepreneurs.”

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) sat down with Bell in his Dover office in late March to find out more about him beyond his resume and hear how Central Delaware fits into his plans. “I see my role as an advocate for small businesses and a liaison between government and these businesses,” Bell explained. He believes Kent and Sussex counties have been underserved, and he is exploring ways to bring more businesses to these markets. The CDCC, the Downtown Dover Partnership and the Kent Economic Partnership were all named by Bell as groups he views as partners in building Kent County.

Bell currently lists his top four priorities as:



1) Advocating for his team to receive the resources and staff they need to be more effective.

2) Improving the efficiency of the Division of Small Business so their work can have more of an impact and better meet the standards required for economic growth. This would include improving information dispersion, improving processes,

and offering services during non-traditional business hours.

3) Exploring new and better ways to use the Encouraging Development, Growth & Expansion (EDGE) grants, adding new grant opportunities to their offerings, and exploring what other states are doing that can be replicated in Delaware. The plan for the EDGE grants includes

possible improvements to the limit on the number of grants awarded, adding non-profits to those eligible, adding additional dollars to the program, and adding wrap-around services to help with other things that aren’t included in the grants.

4) Ensuring that Delaware is taking full advantage of the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) program offered by the U.S. Treasury Department to support small businesses and entrepreneurs.

In addition, he plans on his first-year priorities to include: a focus on the SSBCI program, improving the EDGE grants, and sharing the state’s business success stories. “Delaware is an innovation hub, but we need to do a better job telling our story,” Bell said. When asked what role the CDCC can play in helping him achieve his goals, he said we need to share information both ways. “I’m looking for think tank partners,” he added. Bell went on to say, “I want to be able to focus on Kent and Sussex counties without pushback. We need to expand our services to both of those counties. I want to be part of the conversation with the CDCC and other organizations focused on helping businesses in Kent County.”

We left the meeting with a good feeling that Bell understands the components needed for successful business growth and has taken an interest in bringing that growth to Central Delaware.

MINI MASTERS

Continued from Page 1

a highly competitive game of mini golf accompanied by a not-so-mini serving of delicious hand-dipped ice cream with our CDCC members and friends. The Sunset Business Mixer is FREE to attend, and we highly encourage our members to bring some business guests with them. This is the perfect opportunity for your guests to see how much fun networking can be.

Are you looking for a team building activity for your coworkers? Look no further! The Chamber’s Mini Masters Mixer is an excellent team-building opportunity for your colleagues and friends as they compete in teams of four to win plenty of prizes and trophies. Best costume, best team, overall winner, and



the coveted Blue Jacket will be awarded. The Mini Masters will be an entertaining event perfect to experience high-spirited camaraderie and good company with a hint of competition as you and your team sink 18 holes of mini golf. However, if you’d prefer to cheer on the golfing teams as a spectator, we would love to have you there. Plus, in between cheering and eating ice cream, you can also enjoy fun outdoor games, such as, cornhole, giant Jenga, and giant connect 4, and more!

There will be something fun to enjoy by everyone!

As mentioned, the Sunset Business Mixer will be synchronized with the Mini Masters, occurring at the same location and at the same time. As you know, the CDCC’s mixers are the premiere networking event of the Chamber. They are one of the top-rated ways to expand your personal and professional network. We have members representing all categories of businesses here in Central Delaware, with a variety of skills to help you build your business. The CDCC is pleased to offer our monthly Sunset Business Mixers to our members and see Central Delaware thrive right before our eyes as connections are made between the attendees. The CDCC is here to strengthen Central Delaware and all who believe in building relationships to support one

another. The Sunset Business Mixer is just one consistent way that we can accomplish this goal with your help.

For more information about the Mini Masters Mixer, to register your team or RSVP for the Mixer, please call the CDCC at (302)734-7513 or visit our website at cdcc.net/events. The CDCC is still offering sponsorship opportunities, so don’t miss your chance to build your name recognition and brand at this fun-filled, high-energy event. This evening will be a blast with your presence and participation!

The CDCC can’t wait to see your competitive faces and A-game on the green or cheering from the sidelines at the Chamber’s Mini Masters Mixer at Tre Sorelle Dolce Ice Cream & Italian Ice on Wednesday, May 28th from 4 – 7 p.m.

Best of the Best Administrative Professionals



Tina Bailey

Century Engineering, A Kleinfelder Company



La Ronda Moore

NeighborGood Partners



Lorri Tanaka

Kent County Levy Court

The CDCC thanks all nominators for recognizing their wonderful Administrative Professionals and their hard work this year. Please know that it was extremely difficult for us to choose just three winners. However, know that the CDCC appreciates the work each of these professionals does, and they are the BEST of the BEST! Keep up the great work!

Thank you to our amazing members who donated wonderful items for our winners: Fifer Orchards, Jen-Mor Florist, MISSION BBQ, Mary Ann Curry - Independent Scentsy Consultant, Special Touch Card Creations, and Caribbean Bush Tea.

Honorable mention goes to (in alpha order by last name): Diane Brinker from King Cole Farm, Cassidy Jenny from Accurate Tint and Graphics, Cynthia Liverpool from The Elizabeth W. Murphey School, Nancy McCoy from Bally's Dover Casino Resort, Sarah McGarity from Keller Williams Realty Central Delaware, Deborah Moore from Lean on Me Caregiving, Anna Morgan from Lifestyle Document Management Inc., Dalia Rodriguez from Delaware Prosperity Partnership, and Anna Touchard from Merrill Lynch

Ribbon Cuttings

CDCC Celebrates the Newly Renovated Hilton Garden Inn with a Ribbon Cutting

DOVER, DE – The Hilton Garden Inn at 1706 N Dupont Hwy, Dover welcomed a sizable lunchtime crowd on Tuesday, April 29th to celebrate the recent renovation of the hotel. The ribbon cutting, hosted by the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC), included Chamber members, business friends, Dover Mayor Robin Christiansen and Councilman Brian Lewis, in addition to Hilton Garden Inn Dover General Manager Clifford Weber and the ownership and staff from the hotel and the restaurant. After the ribbon cutting, guests enjoyed a light lunch of gourmet sandwiches, bruschetta, fresh seasonal fruit, cookies and beverages prepared by the team from the hotel's newly renamed Hearth Bar and Grille restaurant. Guests were each given a door prize ticket for a chance to win one of two \$50 gift certificates for the restaurant.

The Hilton Garden Inn Dover originally opened in 2008. It is well known for offering warm and inviting accommodations with friendly and efficient service. The recently completed \$5 million renovation of the hotel includes all new furniture,



wall treatments, carpet, lighting, paint, and decor throughout the hotel giving it a fresh and on-trend look, while still giving off a welcoming vibe. Rooms with king beds have been converted from bathtubs to stall showers. For business travelers or local businesses looking for meeting space, the Hilton Garden Inn offer full-service meeting and catering services.

In addition to the renovations at the hotel, their restaurant has been renamed Hearth Bar and Grille and will feature new seasonal menus that embrace partnerships with local food and beverage businesses, such as Fifer Orchards, Painted Stave Distillery, and Harvest Ridge Winery.

General Manager Weber has been with the hotel for 10 years, with 9 of those in his current position. He exudes company pride and explains in relatively simple terms the daily



goal of his team at the Hilton Garden Inn, "Our mission is to provide the best in service and accommodations for those traveling to Dover for business or leisure activities." Cliff also understands the importance of supporting the local community: "We are proud to engage our property and team as good corporate stewards for the community." He went on to say, "Since 2015, the hotel has donated over \$5,000 in direct donations and

over \$45,000 for in-kind donations and volunteer projects."

Anyone interested in learning more about Hilton Garden Inn Dover can visit them online at www.hilton.com/en/hotels/phldogi-hilton-garden-inn-dover/ or call them at 302-674-3784.

Please join the Hilton Garden Inn and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to celebrate their newly renovated hotel and restaurant!

Ribbon Cuttings

CDCC Joins T-Mobile for a Ribbon Cutting

CAMDEN, DE – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for T-Mobile on Wednesday, April 9th at their Camden Town Center location at 379 Walmart Drive, Suite B in Camden, DE. Chamber members and friends joined T-Mobile market manager Meisam Katooli, branch manager Jari Sevilla, and the enthusiastic T-Mobile Camden team to celebrate the opening of this new location.

T-Mobile’s mission is to ensure their customers’ businesses are always connected, and that they are also connected with family and friends. Jari explains, “We offer business solutions, military plans, first responder plans, and also plans for our 55+ customers with taxes and fees included.” In addition to mobile network plans, the Camden T-Mobile location offers a wide variety of mobile devices from Apple, Samsung, and others.

In celebration of the ribbon cutting, they offered a limited-time discount to all customers that



switched to T-Mobile and gave away high-end swag including T-Mobile umbrellas and pickleball sets. Jari and her team felt it was important to hold a ribbon cutting to build their relationship with the community. She shared, “We want the community to know we are here and want to connect with them.”

To show their support of the local community, T-Mobile offers hometown grants and sponsorships to fund projects that foster local connections, like technology upgrades, outdoor spaces, the arts, and community centers.

Anyone interested in learning more about T-Mobile can drop by their new Camden location, call 302-240-0125 or visit them online at www.t-mobile.com/stores/bd/t-mobile-camden-de-19934-303g.



Please join T-Mobile Camden Town Center and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce

to celebrate the opening of this new location!

CDCC Joins the Downtown Dover Partnership for a Ribbon Cutting

DOVER, DE – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a special ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) on Friday, April 11th. This ceremony celebrated an exciting and important benchmark in the life of the Inner City Cultural League (ICCL) and their Sankofa Cultural Arts Center at 39 S. West Street in Dover. Chamber members, community friends, and a large group of dignitaries from the Dover City Council, Kent County Levy Court, members of the DDP and the ICCL, and Delaware Senator Trey Paradee, joined DDP executive director Diane Laird, DDP President Todd Stone-sifer, ICCL founder Reuben Salters, and the ICCL Board for the ribbon cutting. The event also included congratulatory remarks from Senator Paradee, a presentation of several proclamations from Delaware’s Senate and House of Representatives, and a catered lunch.

In 2014, the ICCL began construction of the Sankofa Cultural Arts Center on the DDP-owned property on West Street and since then have been actively providing arts, events, and a variety of



educational programs, including an after-school program for local children. Their performing arts program offers individual and group instructions for African dance & drums, string orchestra, guitar and theatrical productions.

This downtown Dover property was a salvage yard in the 1990s, and after almost 20 years of brownfield remediation and subsequent testing for an additional three years’ time, the property was confirmed in 2024 by DNREC to be a “greenfield” – free of contaminants. Soon after this confirmation, the DDP donated the property to the ICCL. This transfer

of property is an exciting benchmark for the non-profit organization by freeing up additional funds for their cultural and educational programs and events that would have gone for property expenses in the past. In addition, it is an important part of the transformation of Downtown Dover.

Just prior to the ribbon cutting, Mr. Salters spoke about the amount of work by numerous people from throughout the community to make the Sankofa Center what it is today.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Downtown Dover Partnership

should contact them at 302-678-2940 or info@downtowndoverpartnership.com.

Please join the Downtown Dover Partnership, the Inner City Cultural League, and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to celebrate this transfer of property that fosters continued success for the ICCL and downtown Dover!



Ribbon Cuttings

CDCC Joins Sunset Village for Their Grand Opening

CAMDEN, DE – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Sunset Village, a Windward Community, on Monday, April 14th to celebrate their grand opening. Sunset Village is a thoughtfully designed, premium rental community created to meet the growing need for high-quality housing in central Delaware. Multifamily group manager, Sherri Garyantes, described the grand opening, “This event marks the official launch of more than a home—it’s a place where people want to be.”

Chamber members and friends joined Sherri, property manager Darrian Shinn, and the team from Windward Communities for light refreshments and the opportunity to learn more about the inspiration behind this exceptional, residential experience.

The concept for Sunset Village was inspired by a simple observation—the Central Delaware area needed more premium rental options for both professionals and retirees seeking convenience without compromise. After years of planning, design, and community-focused development, Windward Communities is proud to unveil a



multifamily community that reflects the best of modern living—clean design, hospitality-driven service, and a true sense of place.

Sunset Village is a premier 238-unit multifamily community in Camden, DE, just minutes from shopping, dining, and historic downtown Dover. Designed for modern living, it features a luxurious clubhouse, resort-style pool, state-of-the-art fitness center, and dog parks. Residents enjoy spacious one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments with stainless steel appliances, granite countertops, walk-in closets, in-unit washer/dryers, on-site storage options, and private balconies or patios with scenic views. With high-end amenities and a prime location, Sunset Village offers an exceptional residential experience, catering to the growing demand for quality housing in this thriving market.

Windward Communities is committed to being a good neighbor. As they grow, they plan to partner with local organizations on resident events,



volunteer initiatives, and local sponsorships that strengthen the community they call home. Whether it’s supporting a local nonprofit or hosting a food drive, they believe small actions can make a big impact.

For additional information, please call the team at Sunset Village at 302-342-2449 or visit them online at www.sunsetvillagecamden.com/. Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce in welcoming Sunset Village to the community!

CDCC Joins Le Boulevard Bar & Grill for a Ribbon Cutting

DOVER, DE – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Le Boulevard Bar & Grill on Monday, April 21 at their newly-opened restaurant at 1036 Lafferty Lane in Dover. Chamber members, Mayor Robin Christiansen and friends joined with owners Mildred Alexis, Woolley Antoine, Elucienne Dorgilles and Marileine Etienne, and General Manager Felix Sainte, for a selection of menu tastings and cake to celebrate the opening of this new business.

At Le Boulevard, their mission is to celebrate the rich and vibrant flavors of the Caribbean while providing an unforgettable dining experience rooted in warmth and hospitality. Felix explains, “We want to introduce people to the heart of our people, as well as interweaving and blending the American cuisines and giving it our own twist. Food makes everything better. It makes people happy.”



In addition to the delicious Caribbean and American food and tropic-inspired, handcrafted cocktails available at their new restaurant, they also offer regular entertainment, event space rental and catering services.

The owners purchased this restaurant with the hope to have the community indulge in the Caribbean experience, enjoy the rich culture, and taste the great food. Felix went on to say, “We strive to create a welcoming atmosphere where friends and families can come together to enjoy delicious food, lively music, and the spirit of the Caribbean.”



The entire team at Le Boulevard feels blessed to have the opportunity to open their business in Central Delaware. They want to be involved in the Dover community by creating jobs and opportunities and joining the pillars of the community as role models who actively contribute to its well-being.

Anyone interested in learning more about Le Boulevard Bar & Grill can visit them online at leboulevardde.com or call them at 302-450-3183.

Please join Le Boulevard Bar & Grill and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the opening of their new restaurant!

Ribbon Cuttings

CDCC Celebrates Bright Side Roofing with a Ribbon Cutting

DOVER, DE – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 to celebrate the grand opening of Bright Side's new location at 4 Mifflin Rd in Dover. Chamber members and friends joined the Bright Side team for refreshments, networking, giveaways, special offers, and an exclusive first look at the GAF TimberSteel™ Metal Roofing Shingle.

Bright Side specializes in roofing, siding, and exterior home improvements, providing premium solutions tailored to meet homeowners' needs. They have grown into a leading roofing and home improvement company in Central Delaware, built on a foundation of trust, innovation, and excellence. Their expansion into their new, state-of-the-art location reflects their commitment to continuous improvement and better serving their customers.

As a GAF Master Elite Contractor, they offer high-quality asphalt and metal roofing solutions and superior siding and exterior services that elevate both protection and curb appeal. In addition, as part of this milestone grand opening, they are thrilled to introduce GAF Timber-



Steel™ Metal Roofing Shingles, a cutting-edge roofing solution that provides homeowners with enhanced durability and aesthetics.

Bright Side was founded and built right here in Central Delaware. They take pride in serving their friends, neighbors, and fellow business owners, ensuring their homes are protected with the best roofing solutions available. Their deep roots in this community drive them to continuously innovate and improve to meet the needs of local homeowners. Their dedication to craftsmanship, innovation, and customer service has

made them a trusted leader in the industry.

Bright Side's commitment to Central Delaware is reflected in the meaningful ways they give back to groups like Habitat for Humanity, local schools and young entrepreneurs, and the other local initiatives they support to uplift and strengthen this community.

Their future vision includes expanding their charitable roofing initiatives, hosting educational workshops and community events at their new location, and continuing to innovate roofing solutions that



help homeowners make informed decisions.

Anyone interested in learning more about Bright Side can visit them online at <https://trustbrightside.com> or call them at 302-219-0741.

Please join Bright Side and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce in celebrating the opening of their new location!

CDCC Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of B.I.G. Investment Services

DOVER, DE – Beautiful spring weather welcomed the B.I.G. Investment Services team, their clients and friends to a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony hosted by the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC), on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of B.I.G. The celebration attendees gathered under a decorated tent to enjoy light appetizers and curated coffee while listening to live music by local performer Joey Fulkerson.

B.I.G. Investment Services was founded 20 years ago with a mission to provide personalized, thoughtful financial planning and investment advice to the Central Delaware community. Over the years, they've grown into a trusted resource for their clients, expanding their services and deepening their local relationships. This Ribbon Cutting was way from them to celebrate the journey, their clients, and the community that has supported them along the way. Additionally, they were thrilled to announce the addition of Daniel Venable to the



B.I.G. team as a Financial Advisor, bringing fresh insights and expertise to better serve their clients.

B.I.G. specializes in financial planning, investment management, and retirement planning. Their services are designed to meet the unique needs of individuals, families, and businesses. Whether it's creating a retirement plan, saving for a child's education, or building wealth for the future, they help their clients every step of the way. Founder and president David Boothe explains, "At B.I.G., our mission is to know our clients' hopes, dreams and fears and then help make sure their money is aligned with their life."

When asked why B.I.G. chose this community for their business, David



replied, "Central Delaware has always been a vibrant, growing community filled with opportunity. We saw a need for a personalized approach to financial services in this area and were inspired to create a company rooted in the values of trust, community, and growth."

In addition to the services they provide their clients, B.I.G. Investment Services is committed to giving back to Central Delaware through partnerships, sponsorships, and active community involvement. They have a long history of serving the community through the American Heart Association, Salvation Army, Dover Downtown Rotary, CenDel Foundation, Kent Sussex Leadership Alliance, Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce,

Downtown Dover Partnership, Destination Downtown Dover as well as other nonprofits that align with their values—like Embrace, Green Beret Project, Calvary Christian Academy, and Dover High School. David adds, "Moving forward, we hope to deepen our impact by continuing to invest in causes that strengthen our community and foster growth."

Anyone interested in learning more about B.I.G. Investment Services can visit them online at www.abigplan.com or call them at 302-734-7526.

Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce in celebrating the 20th anniversary of B.I.G. Investment Services and welcome Daniel to their team!

Ribbon Cuttings

CDCC Hosts a Ribbon-Cutting Celebration for the Delaware Agricultural Museum

DOVER, DE – The grounds of the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village were the perfect location for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) to host a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on the spring evening of Wednesday, April 23, 2025 to celebrate the grand opening of the Museum's expansion to their building at 866 North Dupont Hwy in Dover. Chamber members, local dignitaries, and friends joined the Delaware Agricultural Museum's Board of Directors, staff and supporters for light refreshments and hors d'oeuvres provided by Skyline Catering, a valued local partner of the Museum and known for their exceptional service and culinary offerings.

The Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village is proud to announce the grand opening of its newest wing, a thoughtfully designed expansion that enhances both the guest experience and the Museum's capacity for educational programming. The new facilities include a beautifully appointed Bridal Suite, a refined Groom's Lounge, a fully equipped Warming Kitchen, and a state-of-the-art Educational Classroom—each space carefully curated to serve weddings, private events, and community learning initiatives with exceptional style and functionality.



This ribbon cutting marks the culmination of a long-anticipated vision to expand and enhance their facilities in meaningful ways. They are thrilled to officially unveil these inviting new spaces to the community, supporters, and sponsorships that not only elevate the Museum's event offerings but also deepen their commitment to agricultural education. The addition of our new wing allows them to better serve families, students, and visitors by creating immersive environments where children and the community can learn, engage, and connect with Delaware's rich agricultural heritage.

The Museum offers a wide range of educational, cultural, and community-focused experiences designed to

celebrate and preserve Delaware's rich agricultural heritage. These include the interactive exhibits and historic village that provide an immersive look into the lives of Delaware's early farming communities, educational programs, field trips, special events & seasonal festivals, a gift shop, and venue rentals for weddings, corporate gatherings, and private parties.

The goal of the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village is to serve as a hub for agricultural education, community engagement, and historic preservation, inviting visitors of all ages to connect with Delaware's farming legacy. Community involvement is at the heart of what they do. They believe that supporting and investing in Central

Delaware not only strengthens their local ties but also helps the region grow and thrive together.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village can visit them online at www.agriculturalmuseum.org, call them at 302-554-0551 or even better-visit them at 866 N. Dupont Hwy, Dover.

Please join the Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the grand opening of this new expansion!



CDCC Celebrates NFN Brain Connections with a Ribbon Cutting

DOVER, DE – It's always great fun to end the workweek with a celebration, and Friday, April 25 was no exception. On that date, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for NFN Brain Connections to celebrate the grand opening of their Dover office at 1057 S. Bradford Street, marking an exciting new chapter in delivering exceptional neuropsychological care to the community. Chamber members and friends joined Dr. Felicia Connor, Dr. Natasha Brown, and the staff at NFN Brain Connections for light conversation and delicious refreshments including custom-branded sugar cookies.

NFN Brain Connections has been proudly serving the community since 2020, offering specialized neuropsychological care to individuals with cognitive and neurological challenges through telehealth services. Over the years, the practice has grown and evolved, and now, in an exciting milestone, NFN Brain Connections



has established a physical office location in Central Delaware. This expansion reflects the practice's ongoing commitment to meeting the diverse needs of the community and enhancing its capacity to deliver exceptional care.

At NFN Brain Connections, their mission is to deliver compassionate, evidence-based neuropsychological care that empowers individuals to navigate cognitive challenges, improve their quality of life, and realize their full potential. The practice is committed to meeting the community's diverse needs through personalized services, cutting-edge technology, and a dedication to ex-

cellence. NFN Brain Connections is a neuropsychology practice specializing in supporting individuals of all ages with cognitive and neurological challenges.

NFN Brain Connections not only supports mental health and education by being a crucial public health resource, but it also contributes to the local economy by employing skilled professionals, attracting local, rural, and out-of-town patients with limited access to care for in-person and virtual services, and collaborating with local businesses or hospitals. Through community engagement and outreach, including participation in local events, hosting educational workshops, and offering consultations, they raise awareness about neurocognitive and mental health issues, reduce stigma, and provide valuable support. These efforts help foster more informed, compassionate community and family members who are better equipped to address mental health challenges.



Anyone interested in learning more about NFN Brain Connections can visit them online at www.nfn-brainconnections.com or call them at 302-217-3255.

Please join NFN Brain Connections and the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce in celebrating the grand opening of their Dover office!

New Member Spotlight



array of benefits including top wages for caregivers, 401k retirement plans, time and a half for many holidays, overtime, and medical benefits to all their caregivers. With this list of benefits, you can't go wrong.

The local market development representative for Help at Home, Sean Malarick, has the ambition to grow the company's footprint in central Delaware, and wants every member of the community to know that Help at Home is a great way to get one of the best home care services in the area. Sean and his wife live on the border of Pennsylvania and Delaware, and when he's not assisting Help at Home clients and caregivers, he enjoys watching sports and playing ice hockey and golf.

To find out more about Help at Home, visit their website at www.helpathome.com or call them at 302-298-3260.

Please join the CDCC in welcoming Help at Home as a new member!

client's family members or friends who become paid caregivers for someone in need of assistance in their home.

Help at Home knows the ability to remain independent, stay in familiar surroundings, and engage socially promotes physical and mental health for their clients. And they work to find the right care plan and innovative solutions to help seniors and individuals with short- and long-term disabilities stay in their own homes.

All their clients are approved for home care under the personal assistance services waiver and Medicaid eligible. Help at Home can assist anyone that is not approved and needs guidance through the assessment process with the State of Delaware so they can become eligible for care.

If you are taking care of a loved one and looking for an agency that offers great compensation and a dedicated support team, then it would be worth your time to talk to Help at Home. They would love to tell you more about what makes their agency the right choice for you! They offer weekly pay and a wide

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is pleased to welcome Help at Home as a new Chamber member!

For half a century, Help at Home has been a trusted partner for families across the country, providing compassionate care that allows individuals to maintain independence and dignity at home. Currently they are celebrating their 50-year journey, their commitment to caregivers, clients and communities—and look ahead to the future of innovation in home care.

Help at Home is a person-centered home care agency that provides their clients with assistance for all activities of daily life both in their home and outside in the community to create "Great Days" and "Meaningful Moments" for individuals, while also driving high-quality, low-cost outcomes. In addition, they employ competent, caring companions to take the role of home care aid, homemaker or helper for daily living activities. This could be a

Member of the Month



NAME: Michael Stypinski
TITLE: Account Representative
BUSINESS: Excel Business Technologies
ADDRESS: 201 Ruthar Drive Suite-10, Newark

HOURS: M-F 8:00 TO 5:00 PM
PHONE: (302) 453-1500
WEBSITE: www.exceldigital.com
EMAIL: Mstypinski@exceldigital.com



Tell us about your business/organization.

We have serviced the Dover area since 1984 helping our clients with their business technology needs. We offer products from Kyocera, Ricoh and Canon Plotters.

Tell us about your role in the business/organization.

I'm the account representative responsible for handling Kent and Sussex Counties along with southern New Castle. I help our clients transition to new technology, either through direct purchases or leasing.

Tell us something that makes your business/organization unique.

Excel Business Technology was acquired by Stratix Systems out of Reading, PA back on December 1, 2023. Were one of the Mid-Atlantic regions largest IT - networking providers.

What do you see for the future of your business/organization?

With the business trend of offices going more paperless, our goal will be to help our clients with better scanning solutions and document management.

How has the Chamber helped your business/organization grow?

The Chamber has been a great networking opportunity to meet decision makers of small to medium size businesses.

What is your best advice to other businesses/organizations?

We find that keeping in touch with our customers so they reach out when an opportunity arises. Also, understanding their business technology needs and recommending the right products and services to enhance there office efficiency is important..

Congratulations - You're a 10!

"Congratulations – You're a 10!" is designed to recognize, congratulate and highlight recently renewed members who are celebrating membership anniversaries in increments of 10.



Company Name	YRS	Company Name	YRS
Burns & Ellis Realtors	54	Aloysius Butler & Clark	6
Kent County Association of REALTORS®	37	Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware - Dover	6
Fifer's Farm Store & Kitchen	36	Camden Wyoming Rotary Club	6
Advantech Incorporated	34	Central Delaware Speech Language Pathology	6
Westminster Village	30	Leadership Delaware, Inc.	6
i.g. Burton & Co., Inc.	29	Scentsy	6
Byler's Store, Inc.	28	Special Touch Card Creations	6
Lighthouse Construction, Inc.	27	American Kidney Care of Dover	5
Sayers Jewelers & Gemologists Inc.	26	Miller Mortgage Group at AnnieMac Home Mortgage	5
W.D. Pressley, Inc.	23	Select Pizza and Grill Smyrna	5
Delaware State Housing Authority	21	Mr. Brett Emmons	4
Knights Fine Jewelry Ltd.	20	Eye Specialists of Delaware - Milford	4
Yencer Builders, Inc.	19	N.K.S. Distributors, Inc.	4
Simon Eye	16	Tomeka's Homestyle Eatery	4
Affinity Energy Management	15	ClearCaptions	3
Kent Sussex Leadership Alliance	15	Delaware Department of Insurance	3
Lake Club Apts	15	Delaware Imaging Network	3
Care First Dental Team - Robert R. Coope, DDS	13	Milford Wellness Village	3
Carey Insurance Group	12	SUMURI LLC	3
Kent County Republican Committee	12	Tidemark Construction	3
Fort Sill National Bank	11	Union Baptist Church, Inc	3
Two Men And A Truck	10	Bayada Hospice	2
Comfort Suites - Dover	9	Mark Group Companies LLC	2
The Willis Group, LLC	8	The Art Society at Loblolly Acres	2
Avery Hall Insurance Group	7	US ARMY Dover Recruiting Center	2
Benchmark Builders	7	EB5 Investors	1
Ingleside Homes Inc.	7	Ice House: Wellness + Community	1
Primerica Financial Services - Erlene George	7		

NEW MEMBERS

Cardiology Physicians	Michael Weeks	Abby Medical Center One Centurian Drive Suite 200	Newark	DE	19713	302-849-5169
Castle The Window People	Vennie Plater	109 Gaither Dr, Unit 309	Mt. Laurel	NJ	08054	856-373-3475
Christiana Care Heart and Vascular	Jennifer Holding	4755 Ogletown Stanton Road	Newark	DE	19701	302-733-1293
Colonial Rotary Club of Dover	John Daliani	P.O.Box 1772	Dover	DE	19903	410-713-9967
Coral Health	Caroline Unangst	737 S. Queen St., Suite #2	Dover	DE	19904	302-601-1350
Fastenal Fulfillment Center	Mellissena Owens	1070A South Little Creek Rd	Dover	DE	19901	302-741-2445
First State Educate	Julia Keleher		Dover	DE	19901	302-465-6477
Sunset Village Apartments	Derrian Shinn	111 Sun Circle	Dover	DE	19904	302-342-2449
Symmetry Massage and Bodywork	Jennafer Lamb	250 Gateway South Blvd. Suite 204	Dover	DE	19904	302-423-1561
Wilkes-Barre Storage Units	Carol Hernandez	77 King Boulevard	Camden	DE	19934	302-526-6984

Coffee On Us!

SPONSORED BY

Tre Sorelle Dolce

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce would love to connect you with something delicious! The photograph on our front pageheader changes each month, depicting picturesque and unique locations right here in Central Delaware. These photos are the subject of our monthly "Coffee On Us" contest. If you recognize the location of the header picture on our front page, be the FIRST PERSON to CALL the CDCC Office (302-734-7513) with the correct answer and you will win a \$10 gift card to:



You'll also see your picture and your company name on our Facebook page – and, of course, you'll win bragging rights for the month!

The winner of the March "Coffee On Us" Contest was Rachel Rohm with Visit Central Delaware – Kent County Tourism. She correctly identified the photo on the front page as the Air Mobility Command Museum. Congratulations, Rachel, and thank you for playing our game!

Please note that the same person is qualified to win the Coffee on Us Contest only twice per calendar year.

7-Day E-newspaper NOW AVAILABLE!

\$5 per month // \$55 per year

Subscribe to the Daily State News 7-Day E-newspaper and get unlimited digital access to BayToBayNews.com including regional news from Delmarva.

Subscribe at
BayToBayNews.com/subscribe-today

Already a print subscriber?
The 7-day E-newspaper is included with your print subscription. Just sign up at BayToBayNews.com/LogIn.html, then click on "need an Account."



Have questions about your subscription or need help? Call us at 800-426-4192.

Edward Jones



Christopher Smith
Financial Advisor, CFP®, AAMS®

302.735.8770

WE ARE LOCAL AND WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

Complimentary Portfolio Review Personalized Financial Strategies Strategic Planning

We are
YOUR
Chamber!



cdcc
Central Delaware
Chamber of Commerce
cdcc.net



When starting a small business,
you need *a guide.*

When growing a small business,
you need *a community.*

That's where we come in.

Delaware
DIVISION OF SMALL BUSINESS

SMALL BUSINESS
MONTH MAY 2025

de.gov/smallbizmonth