



# Chamber Connections



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February 2026

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## We are the CDCC!



## LAST CALL: Join CDCC & DAFB Leadership for "Military Affaire"

All members of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) are invited to the annual Military Affaire reception. This event provides a forum for the Central Delaware business community and the Dover Air Force Base (DAFB) community to come together as TEAM Dover for an outstanding, community-building experience. As our military friends and the members of the CDCC engage in conversation, they share

# MILITARY AFFAIRE

ideas, solve challenges and build new relationships.

The upcoming Military Affaire, brought to you by signature sponsor Dover Federal Credit Union, will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2026, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Air Mobility Command (AMC)

Museum, 1301 Heritage Rd, Dover AFB, DE. This impressive venue is the only museum dedicated to airlift and air refueling history, and the perfect backdrop for this remarkable reception!

The evening is free to attend and will include delicious hors d'oeuvres provided by our Military Affaire sponsors, a cash bar, an opportunity to meet and engage with our military personnel, and the perfect

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## Learn Why Everyone Loves the Sunset Business Mixers

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) will be presenting our upcoming monthly Sunset Business Mixer on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, from 5 – 7 p.m. with host Bay Terrace Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center, at a soon-to-be-determined location.

This is the premiere networking event of the Chamber, and the CDCC is so proud to continually offer this event, free of charge, for



our Central Delaware business community. As always with the Sunset Business Mixer, please be sure to bring your business cards for networking and door prize entries, cash to enter the 50/50

raffle, and a friendly face ready to expand your business relationships. Be prepared to go home with hopefully a cool door prize, most definitely new friends and business colleagues, and possibly some cash! You could even be the next "Member of the Month" and be featured in an article on the CDCC website and in the next edition of the Chamber Connections newspaper.

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## Legislators Set for March Meeting with CDCC Members

With the recent reconvening of the 153rd Delaware General Assembly for its 2026 session, local legislators are planning to meet directly with their constituents at the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) Legislative Luncheon. And you can be part of this event. This upcoming gathering, scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2026, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., at Bally's Dover Casino Resort, provides a vital forum for



business and community leaders to pose critical questions to their representatives.

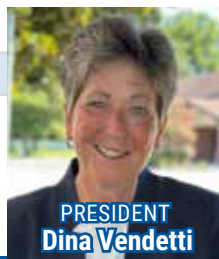
Considering recent calls for increased civil discourse on the House and Senate floors, this luncheon offers a more personal setting for lawmakers to address pressing 2026 priorities, including

affordable housing, complexities of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and property tax reassessment. By answering questions in a collaborative environment, the CDCC aims to bridge the gap between policy discussions by Delaware's elected officials and the real-world concerns of their constituents.

The Legislative Luncheon is presented by the CDCC Legislative

Continued on Page 23

# Dina's Digest



PRESIDENT  
Dina Vendetti

## Connections, Access, and Benefits Galore!

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is excited to serve as your opportunity hub! We are happy to offer opportunities to connect members to educational experiences, to advocate for healthy business legislation, and to find ways to tell their stories. Best of all, we love connecting members to each other in activities and events designed to build strong and lasting networks. Being connected is the best way to lay a foundation for business growth!

While serving as your hub for connections, the CDCC is also your hub for access. When you become a member of this Chamber, you immediately enter a world where access is granted to whoever and whatever can help you enlarge your footprint and expand your brand. We can get you to the right people, the right strategies, and the right techniques – a plethora of opportunities exist here in Central Delaware, and we can help you find them and take advantage of them.

CDCC membership comes with a multitude of benefits all designed to motivate success. Our goal at the Chamber is to assist you in taking advantage of as many of those benefits as possible. All we really want is for you to get everything that's coming to you! Our experience over more than 100 years tells us that, in order to receive all those benefits, our members must be engaged with us and actively participate in what we can offer. To make those connections and receive that valuable access, one must take advantage of the opportunities provided by showing up, making introductions, striking up conversations, and getting to know people.

You will notice that we have called this issue of the Chamber Connections "The Showcase Issue." It follows our annual

CDCC Showcase Event that was part of the January Sunset Business Mixer. In this publication, we have gathered as much information as possible to remind you about the benefits of your membership with the CDCC. There are so many benefits to Chamber membership that it is easy to forget some – so this reminder is designed to assist you in getting the best possible return on your investment! In addition, this the perfect issue of the Chamber Connections to share with business colleagues and friends who are not yet members of the Chamber (and don't forget, if you refer someone to the Chamber and they join our organization, you can receive a \$50 credit toward your membership dues – up to four new members!).

Whether you are new to the business world or have been in your industry for a long time, whether you are experiencing victories or challenges, through whatever changes come your way, we want you to know that you, our members, are always at the center of our conversations and your Chamber is always here to serve as your most essential resource. As a member of the CDCC, we want you to reap the benefits of belonging to the HUB and enjoy those benefits, connections, and easy access to the people and experiences that will help you to grow and to be successful!

Please keep us in the loop about what's happening in your business so that we can look for ways to assist you. Continue to share your stories with us so that we can brag about you and share with others what you're doing! And please know that, through it all, we count it a privilege to serve you and your businesses!

# Calendar of Events

## FEBRUARY

- Thursday, February 5th**  
Leadership Central Delaware  
8:00am - 5:00pm, Government and Politics Day
- Thursday, February 5th**  
Kent County Open for Business  
8:30am - 10:00am, Kent County Levy Court
- Tuesday, February 10th**  
CDCC Board Meeting  
7:30am - 8:30am, Faw Casson
- Wednesday, February 11th**  
Coffee Coaching  
9:00am - 10:00am, via Zoom
- Thursday, February 12th**  
Member Orientation  
8:30am - 10:00am, via Zoom
- Monday, February 16th**  
Presidents' Day Office Closed
- Tuesday, February 17th**  
LCD Steering Committee Meeting  
12:00pm - 1:00pm, CDCC Conference Room
- Thursday, February 19th**  
Military Affairs  
5:30pm - 7:30pm, TBD
- Wednesday, February 25th**  
Ambassador Committee Meeting  
4:30pm, Bay Terrace Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center
- Wednesday, February 25th**  
Sunset Business Mixer  
5:00pm - 7:00pm,  
Bay Terrace Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center

## MARCH

- Monday, March 2nd**  
CDCC Executive Committee Meeting  
8:00am - 10:00am, CDCC Conference Room
- Thursday, March 5th**  
Leadership Central Delaware  
8:00am - 5:00pm, Public Safety Day
- Thursday, March 5th**  
Kent County Open for Business  
8:30am - 10:00am, Kent County Levy Court
- Tuesday, March 10th**  
CDCC Board Meeting  
7:30am - 8:30am, Faw Casson
- Wednesday, March 11th**  
Coffee Coaching  
9:00am - 10:00am, via Zoom
- Thursday, March 12th**  
Member Orientation  
8:30am - 10:00am, via Zoom
- Thursday, March 12th**  
Legislative Luncheon  
11:00am - 1:30pm,  
Bally's Dover Casino Resort
- Tuesday, March 17th**  
LCD Steering Committee Meeting  
12:00pm - 1:00pm, CDCC Conference Room
- Wednesday, March 18th**  
Marketing Committee Meeting  
2:30pm - 3:30pm, via Zoom
- Wednesday, March 25th**  
Ambassador Committee Meeting  
4:30pm, Royal Prime Lounge at Bally's Dover
- Wednesday, March 25th**  
Sunset Business Mixer 5:00pm - 7:00pm,  
Royal Prime Lounge at Bally's Dover

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.

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- Vice Chair, Legislative Affairs** ..... C. Scott Kidner, C.S. Kidner Associates/Capitol Strategies
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# CORNERSTONE

## 2026 Market Outlook: Staying Disciplined as Risks Begin to Stack Up

The market has been “pedal to the metal” for 3 years. As markets move into 2026, the outlook could be best described as constructive but complicated. Economic growth remains intact, employment conditions have weakened but are rather stable, and innovation continues to push productivity forward at a record pace. At the same time, several historical risk factors are converging, creating an environment where complacency may be costly.

This is not an attempt to predict a downturn or sound alarmist. Markets rarely move on a single factor. But periods where multiple risk signals align have historically been associated with lower returns and higher volatility, and those conditions deserve attention.

Here are some of the things that have our attention for 2026.

### 1. A Midterm Election Year

Midterm election years tend to bring elevated volatility. Policy uncertainty, shifting political priorities, and changes in market expectations often result in larger drawdowns and more modest full-year returns compared to non-election years. Average decline -19%, average gain 4%.

### 2. An Extended Run of Market Gains

Markets are coming off three years of double digits gains. Four years has only happened 3 times in history. These types of rallies have usually resulted in subdued returns in year four. Average gain 4%.

### 3. A Transition at the Federal Reserve

A new Federal Reserve Chair is scheduled to take office in May of 2026. Markets have often “tested” the new sheriff, leading to periods of increased volatility. Average decline in the following 6 to 12 months of a new Fed Chair. -15%.

### 4. Elevated Valuations

By the most common used measures, we have one of the four most expensive stock markets in history joining the ranks of 1929, 1966 and 1999. Don’t Google the returns following those years, it will only scare you. Expensive markets



can get MUCH more expensive but valuation will eventually matter.

### 5. Widespread Optimism

Broad consensus that markets will have a strong year can itself be a risk. Markets have a habit of hurting the greatest number of people at any given time, especially those in our industry and you will be hard pressed to find caution or pessimism at the moment.

Beyond the near-term outlook, several longer-term warning signs are also beginning to surface. These things tend to show themselves prior to extended “secular bear” markets.

#### 1. Concentration Risk

A small group of stocks have generated the majority of stock market returns in recent years. Historically, periods of extreme concentration like this have often preceded increased instability, though timing remains uncertain.

#### 2. Tight Credit Spreads

The difference between higher-risk corporate bonds and U.S. Treasuries remains narrow, hitting 2.5% last year. Similar conditions have appeared late in prior long term economic cycles.

#### 3. Rising Investor Leverage

When “margin debt” (investors borrowing against their stock to buy more stocks) increases by 5% or

more over S&P 500 earnings, bad things tend to happen. Margin debt increased by 45% in 2025 with S&P earnings increasing 18%. Elevated leverage can amplify market declines if sentiment shifts.

### 4. Low Unemployment and an Expensive Stock Market

This combination has historically appeared late in market cycles, increasing vulnerability to economic or policy shocks.

None of these factors mean markets are “going off the rails.” History shows that markets can remain irrationally resilient for long periods. In the late 1990s, many of these same warning signs were present well before the eventual downturn, and markets continued to rise and rise significantly for some time afterward.

The lesson is not to abandon risk, but to respect it.

For 2026, a more realistic expectation is lower returns accompanied by higher volatility. Hope for the best but be prepared for the worst ... or at least prepared for “not so great”. Stay prepared for multiple potential outcomes, leaning in or out of your convictions along the way, rather than betting heavily on one outcome or another.

# BIG

## INVESTMENT SERVICES

Being cautious does not mean being pessimistic and slamming the brakes. It means recognizing that the risk reward tradeoff is not what it was a year or two ago and adjusting accordingly. It’s time to take your foot off the gas.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE AND DISCLOSURE

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CORNERSTONE

# Financial Empowerment Made Easy

In today's dynamic business environment, women entrepreneurs, veteran and minority-owned businesses in our community are making significant strides, yet they often face unique challenges in accessing capital. Dover Federal Credit Union's Business Empowerment Loan Program is designed to bridge this gap, providing these qualified businesses with the financial resources they can leverage to support the success of their company.

## What is the Business Empowerment Loan Program?

The Business Empowerment Loan Program offered by Dover Federal Credit Union is aimed at supporting diverse business owners, including women, minorities, and veterans. This program offers flexible financing options with modified credit requirements, making it easier for entrepreneurs to access the capital they need to grow their businesses.

## Benefits of the Business Empowerment Loan Program

- 1. Easily Accessible Funds**  
Minimum \$10,000 Business Credit Card or Working Capital Line of Credit
- 2. Support and Guidance** Access to professional advice and resources to help you succeed.
- 3. Waived Fees** Origination and document preparation fees are waived.
- 4. Additional Resources** Financial planning consultation for investment and retirement, and merchant services/card processing.

## How to Leverage the Business Empowerment Loan Program:

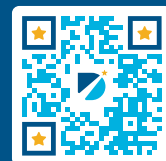
- 1. Expand Your Business Operations**  
Use the loan to invest in new equipment, hire additional staff, or expand your physical location.

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**Central Delaware Chamber  
of Commerce.**

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and bank with a winner.



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This can help you increase your business capacity and meet growing customer demand.

## 2. Launch New Products or Services

Innovate and diversify your offerings by using the loan to develop and launch new products or services. This can help you stay competitive and attract a broader customer base.

## 3. Improve Cash Flow Management

A business empowerment loan can provide the working capital needed to manage day-to-day expenses, ensuring smooth business operations. This is particularly useful during seasonal fluctuations or unexpected financial challenges.

## 4. Invest in Marketing and Branding

Enhance your business visibility and attract more customers by investing in marketing and branding efforts. Use the loan to create a robust marketing strategy, including

digital marketing, social media campaigns, and promotional events.

## 5. Upgrade Technology and Infrastructure

Stay ahead of the curve by upgrading your business technology and infrastructure. This can improve efficiency, enhance customer experience, and streamline operations.

The Business Empowerment Loan Program from Dover Federal Credit Union is a powerful tool for Chamber members to consider when looking to grow their businesses. By providing flexible financing options and professional support, this program helps bridge the funding gap and empowers women to achieve their business goals. Whether you're looking to expand operations, launch new products, or improve cash flow, leveraging this loan program can set you on the path to financial success.

## About Dover Federal Credit Union

For over half a century, Dover Federal Credit Union has been a premier financial partner, providing economic empowerment for Delaware residents and businesses. Recognized as a First State Favorite Credit Union and Top Workplace, DFCU is committed to providing financial strength and stability for the residents within the state.

Dover Federal Credit Union was first chartered in 1958 by a handful of Air Force and civilian workers at Dover Air Force Base. Their goal was to create a member-owned financial cooperative, democratically controlled by its members and operated to promote thrift, provide credit at competitive rates, and provide other financial services to its members. From the past to the present, our mission guides us to empower our communities by educating and inspiring members along their financial journey through equitable financial services.



# CORNERSTONE



## DuPont Plaza Expected to Begin Development Soon



A long-vacant section of Route 13 in Dover may soon become a new shopping center, with Tractor Supply Company already signed as the anchor tenant.

A recent Dover Planning Commission public hearing was held to consider a revised site development plan for the proposed DuPont Plaza shopping center.

The nearly 10-acre site, located at 747 N. DuPont Highway on the east side of Route 13 between Citizens Bank and the new Tim Hortons near Leipsic Road, was once home to Berry Van Lines. The former buildings have been demolished, and site prep began in 2020. With

tenants falling into place, development can start.

Rojan Inc., the site's developer, noted that construction of Tractor Supply's 22,183 SF retail space was expected to begin shortly after permits are in hand.

"Some of the remaining layout of the site is still in the 'to be determined phase,'" said Bob Aerenson, president of Rojan Inc. "But we hope to have most of the approvals by mid to late summer. Then, after finishing the site work, the rest of the building construction should begin."

Charles Rodriguez of R&A Commercial Realty, Rojan's broker, says negotiations are ongoing for the

remaining retail sites. "We hope to have some exciting announcements on the rest of the tenants soon," he said. "With Citizens Bank taking the building on the corner a few years ago and Tim Horton's recently opening the renovated Speedway Café, that entire stretch of Rt. 13 through Dover is getting a significant makeover. The DuPont Plaza is set to be the biggest expansion in commercial space Dover's main retail corridor has seen in several years."

Three additional buildings are proposed: two retail spaces of 12,950 and 7,440 square feet and a 2,046-square-foot restaurant. The development proposal also includes

subdividing the land into multiple lots and providing 247 parking spaces and 17 bicycle spaces.

Although a few more regulatory hurdles remain, it's possible the project will have a green light as of summer 2026.

For additional information about R&A Commercial Realty and its extensive inventory of commercial property, visit our website at [www.randrcommercialrealty.com](http://www.randrcommercialrealty.com) or contact our offices at 302-674-3400 or [info@randrcommercialrealty.com](mailto:info@randrcommercialrealty.com).

# LCD Masters in the Making!

The newest rendition of LCD Mastery began on Friday, January 16th. The first cohort of six would-be masters gathered in the conference room at the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce ready and excited to begin honing in on their leadership strengths, envisioning their own leadership styles, and building the toolbox needed to make a positive impact. Your Chamber's 10-week experience called "LCD Mastery" promises class members an opportunity to take a comprehensive look within, in order to maximize their strengths and discover strategies for overcoming their personal challenges.

This next step after graduation from Leadership Central Delaware is designed to bring several leadership experts to the group to cover various topics and strategies related to effective leadership. According to research, employing a broad base of facilitators helps cohort members to glean the tips and tricks that really resonate with them from each of the facilitators and assemble them in a way that allows their own unique leadership style to emerge. This strategy promises to assist in helping each member of the cohort to unlock the leader within and use the skills necessary to make a positive impact.

During the first session, led by CDCC president, Dina Vendetti, and CDCC board member, Tim Bayes of Century Engineering: A Kleinfelder Company, cohort members got to know each other and had the opportunity to talk a bit about their motivation for signing up for this opportunity. Participants were also introduced to a wonderful assessment tool entitled "StrengthsFinder 2.0." StrengthsFinder helps professionals to identify their top five strengths and focus on them in order to help them grow

in effectiveness and impact. The author of StrengthsFinder takes issue with the "misguided maxim" that people "can be anything you want to be if they just try hard enough." While those words can be motivational, they do not always hold true. Success isn't always about working hard enough – it's more often about capitalizing on one's strengths and figuring out how to create a team whose members offer the strengths that you, the leader, may not have. StrengthsFinder's author chooses to revise that adage and instead offers this: "You cannot be anything you want to be – but you can be a lot more of who you already are."

In session two, Tim Bayes worked to help cohort members to assess their current situations through a discussion that focused on "knowing where you are so that you can know where you're going." Tim also led session three on "Emotional Intelligence," helping participants to identify their capacity in this area, discovering the role that emotions can play in leadership, identifying triggers, and exploring strategies for harnessing those emotions in a way that is helpful.

Beginning in February, the group will turn to a variety of topics that promise to assist them in building the skills they'll need as their leadership journey unfolds. Mark O'Donnell of Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) will lead a discussion on casting a vision and creating goals to support that vision. John Moore, formerly of the United Way of Delaware and currently a member of the Colonial Rotary Club, will facilitate a session focused on effective communication, persuasion, influence, and listening. Janell Upton of Dover Federal Credit Union will zero in on the art of Servant Leadership and its effectiveness. February will wrap up with a conversation about building and maintaining effective teams led by Dr. Kathy Kennedy-Ratajack of Wilmington University.

During the last few weeks of LCD Mastery, we will highlight the importance of networking and how to make it work for you, strategic leadership, and plans for moving forward as emerging master leaders.

The CDCC is very pleased with the way this new pilot program is unfolding. Cohort members have entered this

experience with a deep desire to learn and improve; the topics have been relevant and immediately applicable, and the conversations have been enriching for all involved. If you are an LCD grad, this program is definitely worth your consideration!

The CDCC is currently exploring the possibility of running another LCD Mastery pilot again later this year. LCD Mastery is open to all LCD graduates who are employed by a CDCC member business. The tuition for this incredible pilot program is \$1,000 for all 10 sessions. Stay tuned for more information and announcements. In order to foster active participation from each participant and a high level of trust, this pilot is designed to accommodate no more than 10 participants.

*For more information or to apply for LCD Mastery, contact Dina Vendetti at the CDCC Office by phone (302)734-7513 or email at [dvendetti@cdcc.net](mailto:dvendetti@cdcc.net). The CDCC is pleased to be able to bring this transformational program to its members as, together, we work to "be the leaders we wish we had" (Simon Sinek).*



# Headlines, Deadlines, Decisions, and Distribution!

Members of the Leadership Central Delaware (LCD) Class of 2026 were excited to see each other again for the first time in the new year! A long holiday break, while a complete pleasure, made the absence between classes seem longer. Thus, the cold January day began with warm hugs and smiles and moments of reconnecting as the group was welcomed into a beautifully appointed large classroom in Polytech's Adult Education wing in Woodside!

The January session of Leadership Central Delaware explored the industry responsible for reporting and delivering our news! Media and Communications Day was chaired by Andy West, Editor-in-Chief, Daily State News, LCD Class of 2009 and Amber Startt, Commercial Lending Manager, Dover Federal Credit Union, LCD Class of 2017. The class enjoyed a full day of behind-the-scenes activities and gained a better understanding of all the elements that go into the process of bringing "breaking news" to the people of Central Delaware and beyond.

After a delicious breakfast from Bavarian Bakery & Deli, supplied by our friends at the Daily State News (DSN), the first thing on the day's agenda was a class book discussion led by Dr. Dina Vendetti, CDCC President, on two chapters of "It's Your Ship." The discussion intertwined two imperative leadership skills that would be pertinent for the whole day ahead: communication and trust. The class explored effective communication techniques, how to communicate with your team, fostering trust by trusting

people, and found themselves back at a common bottom line: it's all about relationships!

The first presentation that got class members into the topic for the day, Media & Communication, was a general overview by Andy West of the newspaper business, specifically what happens on a typical day at the Daily State News. Andy spent some time with the group talking about a myriad of changes over the years that have caused the newspaper business to constantly pivot to meet the changing needs of subscribers.

Next, the class welcomed Torrie Seagraves, broadcast journalist for Coast TV. Torrie shared her perspectives on how television works to deliver news and information to the public. Torre also took a deep dive into the impact of artificial intelligence on news stories delivered primarily on social media. She eloquently highlighted tips and techniques for making sure that these stories are, in fact, true.

To help apply their newly acquired media knowledge, the class members were divided into groups and asked to generate a brief news report based on details they were given of a fictitious news event. They worked diligently to produce the assigned news story as clearly and concisely as possible. They even had the opportunity to interview an eyewitness and take part in a press conference presented by the Police Department's Public Information Officer. They took special care in providing all the necessary information in such a way as not to cause undo alarm or panic on the part of the receiver. They got a real taste

of the weight of responsibility that rests on those who report the news.

Next, class members from each group were chosen to "broadcast" the news stories written by the small groups. Three class members (one from each group) were filmed by students under the direction of broadcast media teacher, Jason Gleockler, in Polytech's broadcast studio complete with lights, sound, and teleprompter, as they read their groups' renditions of the news story "on the air." Class members learned a lot about the fast pace and the skills needed to deliver breaking news – later in the afternoon, they had a great time watching each other's news reports.

After a wonderful lunch catered by Mike & Mel's in Wyoming, the class heard from a panel of experts in a variety of companies. Tom Interante represented Delaware Public Media, Tonda Parks represented the Daily State News, Tanner Hollis represented Dover Motor Speedway, and Lauren Irby (LCD Class of 2021) represented Delaware Electric Cooperative. Amber Startt served as the moderator for the discussion that focused on "getting the message out." Through a series of questions, class members learned the various components involved in deciding how to share important information about a variety of topics. Panelists were also asked to share their tips and tricks for effective leadership, a portion of the conversation that was of special interest to the group.

Along with the massive amount of information class members received about media, class members were also given applicable and pertinent information about the art of communication. Rev. Dr. John G. Moore, Sr., a member of the Colonial Rotary Club, pastor of Dover Christian Church, and nationally known Martin Luther King, Jr. impersonator, shared an impactful presentation with the group. John gave several pieces of advice about how to perfect the skill of communicating effectively in a public setting and shared a formula for creating an impactful speech. He also shared stories from his experience and often inserted brief excerpts of some of Dr. King's speeches. Class members were

completely engaged in this presentation and took much away that was relevant and applicable.

The day's final presentation was the ever impactful "You're the Editor" by Andy West. In this presentation, Andy showed real photographs of very personal, sometimes graphic, events and posed the question to the class: "Is this a phot you should print or not?" Each scenario was followed by a summary of what the paper actually did and why. This proved to be a very emotional, impactful conversation about how to report relevant news, while always making certain to maintain a boundary of respect for the people involved.

For the LCD Class of 2026, Media and Communications Day was eye-opening and informative. The class members enjoyed the hands-on experiences and gained a new appreciation for what it takes for news reports to be "fair and balanced." Their exercises in reporting and decision making helped them to understand the pressure involved in "telling it as it is." It became obvious throughout the day that the news media was not only an economic driver in Central Delaware, but also an industry that carries the responsibility of having a great deal of influence on Central Delaware's leaders, decision makers, and citizens.

Special thanks to our friends at Polytech for welcoming into their building for the day, to Jason Gleockler and his amazing students for their expertise in the broadcast studio, to our friends at Bavarian Bakery & Delis and Mike & Mel's for providing delicious treats for the class, to all of our guest panelists and speakers for the day, to Andy and Amber for crafting such an impactful day, and to our amazing class members for their attention, engagement, participation, and enthusiasm throughout the day!

Next month, the class will visit Legislative Hall and learn all about how government works here in Delaware on Government & Politics Day. Stay tuned!



The diamond program of the  
Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce

Thank you  
to our Sponsors!







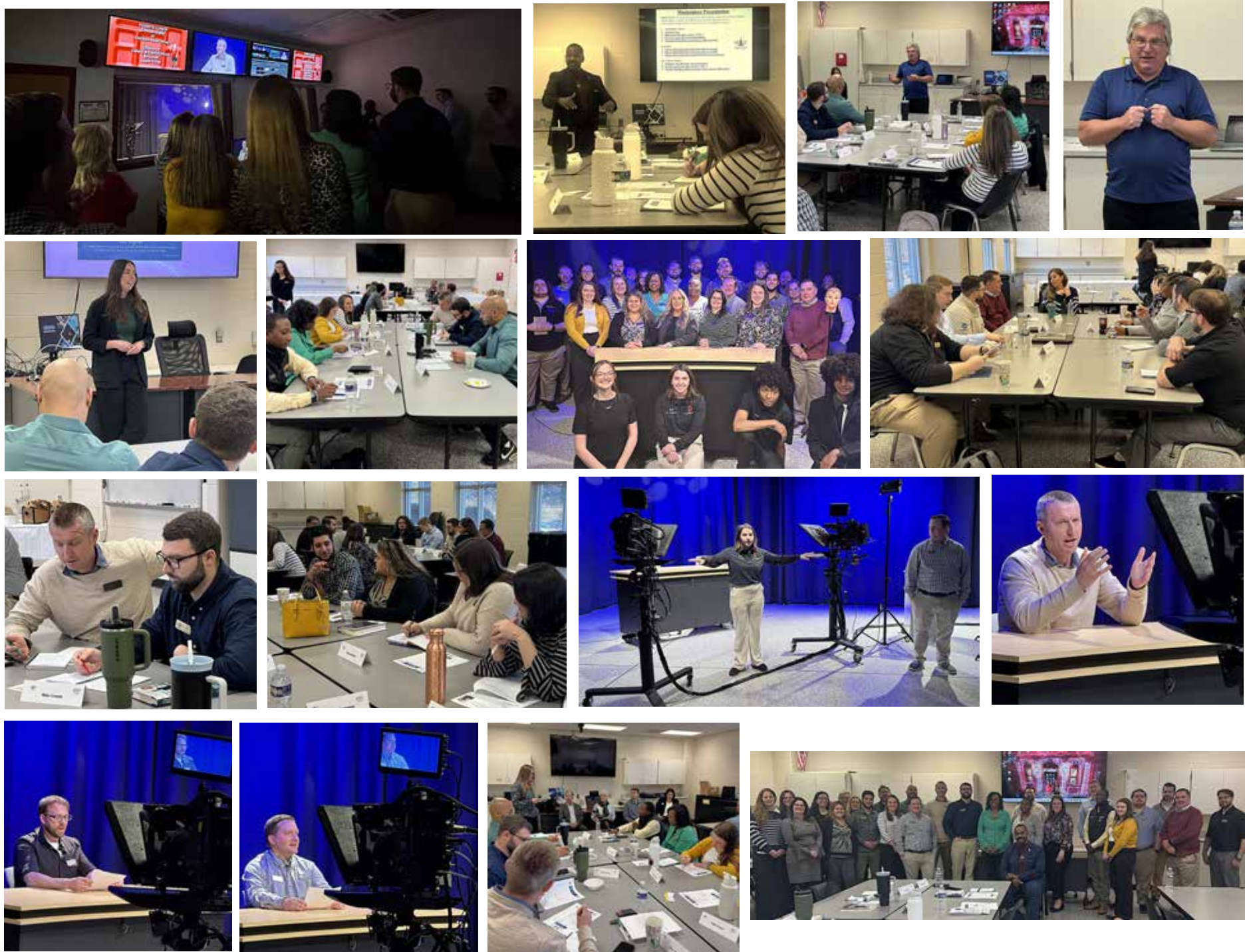








Confirmed as of 9/18/25



## MILITARY AFFAIRE

Continued from Page 1

chance to express our support and gratitude to those who carry out the mission at DAFB.

This event is presented by the Military Affairs Committee, composed of CDCC members, who help communicate the local economic impact of DAFB and their needs to the Chamber's members so that community support can be provided for the installation and its personnel. This event is one way of thanking our military leadership for all they do throughout the year. It's also an opportunity for CDCC members to meet the individuals who are carrying out the daily

mission, ask them questions, and understand more about the work they do at DAFB.

This event allows two thriving pillars of Dover's economy to connect and engage in a way that is helpful to the Dover community. Important conversations will be held between our business leaders and service members about any concerns on behalf of the community underlined with a spirit of gratitude for the work being done in both organizations to continue the prosperity of our shared home, Central Delaware. This is one of just a few events designed to build these relationships, which makes the impact even greater! The connections that are forged between our airmen and the community create strong business

relationships and friendships that transcend any permanent change of station.

The CDCC would like to especially thank our Premier Sponsor of this event, Dover Federal Credit Union. If you are interested in being a sponsor of the Military Affaire reception, please contact the CDCC as soon as possible at 302-734-7513.

Events such as this foster relationships, partnerships, community, and positive change. The CDCC understands the business community is busy, so they truly enjoy providing the time and space for two pivotal demographics to meet with each other in a relaxed setting with delicious food and drinks. The CDCC needs YOU, the members of Central Delaware business and

military communities, to make this year's event another striking success. Contact them now to make your reservations.

***The Military Affaire is free and open to the public to attend. For security reasons, reservations are required. To register, contact the CDCC at (302) 734-7513 or visit [www.cdcc.net/events](http://www.cdcc.net/events). When arriving at the reception, please access the AMC Museum from their main entrance on Route 9, south of DAFB. We look forward to seeing you on February 19th and celebrating TEAM Dover with you!***

**\*\*No Federal endorsement either expressed or implied.**

# Member News

## CDCC Members Snowball Their Support for WinterFest



# 2026 WINTERFEST DOWNTOWN DOVER

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) team paid a visit to the 2026 WinterFest on Friday, January 16th and again on Saturday, January 17th to check out all the frosty fun and share a mitten-handed high five with the CDCC member businesses who participated in this dazzling frozen event.

Formerly known as Fire & Ice, this year's festival was reimagined, expanded, and reborn as WinterFest Downtown Dover. The two-day festivities, situated on Lockerman, State and North Streets in downtown Dover, included ice sculptures, live ice carving demos, music, train rides, craft projects, vendors, scavenger hunt, food trucks, and stations for s'mores, hot chocolate and peppermint treats. In addition to all the sparkling festivities, this event was also to highlight the Downtown Dover Partnership's (DDP) "Capital City 2030 Transforming Downtown Dover" master plan.

A special shout out goes to the Snow Angel CDCC members who sponsored, supported and partnered with the 2026 WinterFest: 94.7

WDSO, Affordable Business Systems, Agape Body Piercings, Artisans' Bank, Bayhealth, B.I.G. Financial Services, Biggs Museum of American Art, City of Dover, City of Dover Mayor Robin R. Christiansen, Delaware Office of Highway Safety, Delaware State University, Del-One Federal Credit, Dover / Kent County MPO, Dover Motor Speedway, Dover Public Library, The DSU CURE, Energize Delaware, Faw Casson CPAs, Grey Fox Grille, The Hive on Lockerman, House of Coffi, Key to Life Juice Bar, Mitten & Winters CPAs, Montrose Environmental, Neighbor-Good Partners, PNC, Renewal by Andersen, Rail Haus, Vida Brand Lab, Visit Central Delaware / Kent County Tourism, YMCA of Dover, and Wesley United Methodist Church.

Congrats to Executive Director Diane Laird of the DDP, her entire team, and all the WinterFest volunteers, supporters, sponsors and partners for a great event. *To learn more about Dover's master plan, visit the DDP website at [www.downtowndoverpartnership.com](http://www.downtowndoverpartnership.com).*



# As the Second Session of the 153rd General Assembly Begins...

As the Delaware Legislature returns to Dover's Legislative Hall for the start of the 2nd Session of the 153rd General Assembly, it seems things are still as new as last year when the Meyer Administration entered the building. And in this election year for the entire House and half of the Senate, we already expect more change to be on the way.



Scott Kidner

of the economy as those entities see other places to live, work, and play across state lines. The Governor stated his distrust and unwillingness to support the electric vehicle requirements, but he

has taken no action to get DE out from under this mandate. We see continued modifications to paid family leave that do not address its complexity, and, while there have been some positive steps taken, there has been little real action on the "Ready in 6" development process, with projects continuing to take 12 months or more to get through the system. There are also rumors of more fees coming from DelDOT, immediately following an entire series of fee changes from DNREC last year. Is Delaware pricing itself out of the market when it comes to doing business in the First State?

### 3. The General Assembly:

Turnover seems imminent, as we already have received four announced retirements from long-term legislators. In the House – Representatives Rich Colins-R and Charlie Postles-R have announced their retirements, not entirely unexpected given both men have served for many years, both own or have owned their businesses, and both are looking to retire. In the Senate – Currently the longest serving member of the Assembly at 34+ years, Senator Dave Sokola-D announced his retirement to the Senate on Thursday, January 15th. This was after Senator Dave Lawson-R announced his retirement earlier in the month. Both men are in their 70s. Despite these announced retirements, we are still compelled to ask what the Assembly will consider to be priorities, and will these priorities match the police agenda of the Governor.

For example, will the House or Senate bring a \$20.00 minimum wage increase, or a new Homeless Bill of Rights, or Rent Control, or new reporting requirements for businesses seeking permits from DNREC or as mentioned above, a change in the Personal Income Tax Code penalizing the wealthiest among us? Will the Members address housing affordability by streamlining permit processes, or will they look at removing all the mandates in the construction codes that add costs to the home? Will data centers be addressed at the state level, and more specifically, the energy and water consumption these industries require? It is well understood Delaware is essentially an island where energy is imported from the top of the state. As the need for massive amounts of energy to support AI grow, will Delaware change its approach to growing our energy supply beyond intermittent wind and solar? Will we get out of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative so we can produce our own power from natural gas?

Clearly, at the start of this half of the 153rd legislative session, there are currently many more questions than answers, causing an atmosphere of uncertainty about what

the future holds for our beloved Delaware and our part in that future.

**BUT** amid that uncertainty, one thing remains constant: your Chamber, the CDCC, remains completely committed to influencing and negotiating for business-friendly legislation. Your Chamber will continue to serve as the voice of the Central Delaware Business Community and will do its very best to represent you and your business in the crafting of legislation.

As this year's legislative hands are dealt and the cards are beginning to be revealed, we urge you to communicate with us regarding the impact that proposed legislation could have on your business as you operate on the front lines of the economy. As we examine proposed bills and sit in on conversations at the hall, if we hear something that sounds questionable or dangerous, we will reach out to you and ask you to chime in. It is imperative that you take a moment or two to answer so that we can give informed feedback to those who are charged with creating legislation. If you are interested in becoming more involved in these discussions, we certainly invite you to consider joining the Legislative Affairs Committee. For more information, please contact us at 302-734-7513.

Thank you for your role in our state's economy and for all you do every day through your various companies for Delawareans. We are proud to serve you.

### 1. The Administration: Gov.

Meyer's first State of the State Address will be held on Thursday, January 22nd. He will likely take this opportunity to lay out his spending priorities for the coming FY27 budget. We believe that he will likely cover proposed changes to the school funding mechanism that Delaware has operated under for generations, strategies for dealing with the affordable housing crisis, a possible game plan to repair re-assessment in New Castle County, plans for the budget, among a few other issues. For us, the big unknown is the health of Delaware's revenue picture: Is it solid? Or is it likely to start showing signs of retreat or slowing down? Coupled with that, will the Federal Administration (as recently reported) cut their support to states they consider to be sanctuaries for illegal immigrants and will our preeminence as the "corporate capital" of the world be aggressively challenged by Texas and Nevada without a response? There is much on the line here.

### 2. The Business Community:

There seems to be a plethora of mixed signals from both the Administration and the Assembly when it comes to the backbone of our economy, small businesses. While much-needed legislation to revamp the hospital oversight board from last year's HB350 has been introduced and should pass before the end of January – thus taking a positive step, we also hear of the potential for new personal income tax categories for those earning over \$1mm, which could result in a slowdown



# Special Feature

## 55 Plus Expo Celebrates 25 Years of Sharing & Caring

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is delighted to announce the 25th anniversary of the 55 Plus Expo happening on Thursday, April 16, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bally's Dover Casino Resort – Rollins Center (1131 N. Dupont Hwy., Dover). The public is welcome to attend, and admission is FREE. Many things have changed since the first 55 Plus Expo in 2002, but the CDCC's commitment to our local senior community and their caregivers has remained steady. At the heart of this event is a mission committed to encouraging a sense of belonging and well-being among Central Delaware's senior community. The CDCC's Annual 55 Plus Expo stands as a testament to this mission, offering an event where attendees can explore a multitude of opportunities designed to support their physical, mental, and social vitality. But we couldn't have achieved this success without the participation and support of our members and the local community.

The expansive ballroom and adjoining foyer at Bally's Rollins Center will again be the perfect venue for this community gathering. Bayhealth is sponsoring the Wellness Center in the foyer which will include blood pressure screenings, carpal tunnel screenings, COPD & sleep apnea assessment, cancer education, stroke awareness, pet therapy and more. All the most-current healthcare information and screenings at the Wellness Center are offered free of charge, so this is the perfect time for attendees to take advantage of these opportunities to improve their health and well-being.

In addition to the Wellness Center, the ballroom will be home to the vendors and exhibitors from a variety of local businesses and organizations who offer the goods and services the 55-plus community is looking for. This can be healthcare, home care, hobbies,



volunteer opportunities, entertainment, and so much more! As mentioned earlier, this event also offers information for caregivers. We identify those exhibitors who work with caregivers with special signage, so they are easily identified by the event attendees. If you are interested in exhibiting at the 55 Plus Expo, now is the time to sign up. You want to make sure you can pick the best spot for your exhibit and enjoy the full amount of marketing that goes along with your participation.

Speaking of marketing...if you have an interest in some additional marketing for your business or organization, then you should become a sponsor for the event. These opportunities include additional exposure for your business in our print and digital marketing, day-of signage and

announcements, and premium exhibit space at the event. These sponsorships are limited so don't delay in contacting the CDCC with your interest. Plus, we are always interested in helping a business put together a unique sponsorship opportunity based on what they can bring to the event. So, let's talk!

The CDCC is busy putting together a list of activities and entertainment, including some new festivities, to celebrate this milestone anniversary. Stay tuned for more information about these new and fan-favorite activities. If you have any ideas for some fun and unique additions to our schedule of events, please reach out to us to share your suggestions. We want this to be a huge celebration that the attendees find

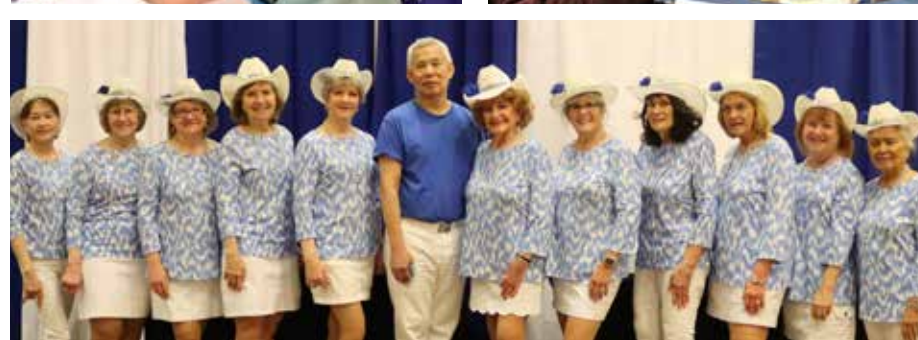
not only helpful, but inspiring and filled with plenty of high-energy fun.

We are so excited to present Delaware's longest running senior expo. The CDCC's 55 Plus Expo is highly respected in our community. People from throughout the state (and some from beyond) attend the 55 Plus Expo to gain more information about what life should look like after 55, engage with their local community, and support local businesses. They want to enjoy face-to-face interaction, gather knowledge to improve their life, and support their loved ones as well.

The CDCC would like to thank our 55 Plus Expo 2026 Sponsors (as of 1.19.26): Wellness Center Gold Sponsor: Bayhealth; Silver Sponsors: Coastal Bath Company, Delaware Department of Insurance - Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau, Highmark Delaware, Silver Lining Home Healthcare; and Media Sponsor: Dover Post.

If you are interested in increasing your company's name recognition and expanding awareness of your brand, you should participate in this event as a sponsor or a vendor! This expo allows us to bring many customers to you under one roof. The CDCC wants to attract quality leads for you and your business with the promise of building relationships simultaneously. This Expo-style event will also give vendors and exhibitors an opportunity to network with others in your industry!

***For more information on attending the 55 Plus Expo or serving as a sponsor or vendor/exhibitor, please call the CDCC office at (302)734-7513. We look forward to seeing you on April 16th, enjoying this unique expo and, whether you are a senior, someone who's planning to be a senior, or a caregiver, discovering new ways to live your best life! Visit [www.cdcc.net/events](http://www.cdcc.net/events) for more information today!***



# Special Feature

## The CDCC Trifecta – Connections, Connections, Connections!

On Wednesday, January 28th, Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) members and guests gathered at the Correctional Officers Association of Delaware Banquet Hall to learn about the CDCC, visit the table-top displays from more than 30 business members, and network with more than 100 fellow chamber members and guests. Unlike other monthly mixers, the January Sunset Business Mixer also included both the CDCC Showcase Event and a Member 2 Member Expo. Current and soon-to-be members alike braved the lingering snow, ice and frigid temperatures to come together in the welcoming Banquet Hall to hear about the work of the Chamber and see that work in action. The evening proved to be the perfect celebration of “all things Chamber!”

Special congratulations to Paul Morris, Jr., VP and Campus Director at Del Tech Terry Campus, for receiving his 5-Star Journey Pin at the event! This signifies his dedicated engagement with the



CDCC by completing the stepping-stones on his journey map. Check-in with CDCC Membership Coordinator, Jeff Spratley, to see where you are on your 5-star journey or to initiate a journey map and enhance your engagement with us.

Congratulations to all the door prize winners, the 50/50 winner Joe Parks from Harrington Realty, and Member of the Month winner Jennifer Jurczak from the Delaware Department of Labor. Watch for her bio in an upcoming edition of the

Chamber Connections newspaper and on the CDCC website.

The CDCC extends a special thank you to the accommodating staff at the Correctional Officers Association of Delaware Banquet Hall for opening their impressive venue space to us and making this event possible. Contact Debbie Arabia at (302) 734-8061 for more information about booking your special event at this hidden gem.

Also, thank you to volunteers Jose Arroyo for helping pack up tables, Kate Greene for helping staff

the Showcase tables, Sal Watson for bringing her truck to load with tables and helping with setup at the venue, and Dana Wattay for bringing his truck to load with tables and helping with teardown at the venue. You all ROCK!

Lastly, thank you to our exhibitors who put together fabulous displays and gave away great swag, door prizes and delicious food and drinks. Nice job to all!

Mark your calendars now for our next Sunset Business Mixer which will be held on Wednesday, February 25th from 5 – 7 pm, hosted by Bay Terrace Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. Enjoy an evening of networking, gaining qualified leads, delicious refreshments, and prizes, prizes, prizes. Don't forget your business cards! It's not too early to register for this FREE event! **To register or for more information, call the CDCC office at (302)734-7513 or register online through our events calendar at [www.cdcc.net/events](http://www.cdcc.net/events). We look forward to seeing you there!**



More Photos on Next Page



# The Economy: A Look Back and A Look Forward

Despite the cold weather on the morning of January 14, 2026, it was warm inside The Looking Glass at Polytech Adult Education for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce's (CDCC) Economic Forecast Breakfast brought to you by signature sponsor, B.I.G. Investment Services. The attendees, who gathered to hear about the "state of the economy" for the new year, included CDCC member businesses, public servants, and community leaders. Friendly conversation filled the room where everyone enjoyed a delicious breakfast and learned about what to expect in the world of finance for the new calendar year.

The panel of experts did their best to forecast the financial future based on market and investment trends, and spending patterns at the national, state, and local levels. The first presenter, David Boothe, president of B.I.G. Investment Services, reported that most of his expectations for 2025 were accurate. As we head into the new year, David reports that the economy looks good, inflation is headed the right direction, tariffs have not impacted the economy as expected, Federal fund rates have come down, the unemployment rate is good, and the labor market is somewhat no hire/no fire.

David recommended that for your 2026 financial plans, it's best to invest in reasonably priced stocks and diversify your investments to those options outside of stocks and bonds. He added that the European market appears to be a good investment right now since their valuations are more reasonable. Plus, he recommended seeking dividends/interest and higher-quality balance sheets on your stocks. David said it's important to maintain exposure and stay engaged in investment opportunities but stay away from "fad investments" and don't gamble but rather protect your current earnings. He summed up his presentation to say that he expects some volatility this year including a major drawdown, adding that investors can live with a market that lags or rips, but not a major drawdown. David also put an emphasis on the unknown effects that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will

## ECONOMIC FORECAST BREAKFAST

**BIG**  
INVESTMENT SERVICES

have on the economy. He pointed out that while it allows employees to be more productive, he feels it's questionable how AI will add new work opportunities to the labor market.

On the state level, the event welcomed Senator Trey Paradee, Chair of the Joint Finance Committee, as the second speaker for his first time at the podium for this event. He talked about the current economic status of Delaware and the 3 pillars that support the economy in the lower two counties: agriculture, tourism and construction. He pointed out that taxes have been traditionally low in Delaware, but they are going up mainly due to the reassessment of property taxes. Delaware is still fiscally strong with a AAA bond rating (1 of only 14 states) and a #2 ranking in the nation for fiscal stability. Plus, Delaware has a budget stabilization fund and a rainy-day fund that both contribute to the state's fiscal stability by helping to fund long-term infrastructure projects. Trey pointed out that as we move into the FY 27 budget year, revenues are leveling out and costs are rising. He added, "We need to make smart choices to keep our competitiveness."

Trey shared the process the State uses to put together a budget. The Governor just recently presented his budget. So, the Legislators are

now working on it, and they are mandated by the constitution to pass a balanced budget. "I can promise you that one way or another we will get it across the finish line," Trey said, "But there are going to be some challenges." Trey explained that revenues are flattening, and there will be some tough decisions to be made. Medicaid costs are up. There will not be a lot of money for the Governor to introduce new initiatives.

Trey closed by saying that one of the greatest threats he sees to our economy, especially in Kent and Sussex counties, is the current handling of the US immigration policies by the Federal government. Our local economy relies heavily on a Hispanic workforce for our poultry industry, agriculture, construction, and hospitality businesses. If we lose that workforce, the Delaware economy will collapse.

Linda Parkowski, the Executive Director of Kent Economic Partnership (KEP), wrapped up the day's presentations by shifting the audience's focus to what is happening here in Central Delaware. Linda started her presentation by sharing a current overview of Kent County. Items of concern include an aging demographic, limited availability of electricity for some manufacturing and technology companies, zoning codes that need to be updated to keep pace with modern industry and technology, housing deficits for workforce training, and workforce/talent limitations. Linda also discussed the various steps that are being taken by KEP and the organizations/businesses they work with to address and overcome these obstacles.

Linda also took the time to celebrate the success stories for economic growth. The permitting process has made great progress. She emphasized, "Ready in 6 is working!" DELDOT, DNREC and the Governor are all supportive of this goal and have been making changes to the various processes to get shovels in the ground in a timelier manner. In addition, locations have been found for 55 projects, and more than 2,000 jobs have been created. There has been a capital investment of \$413 million, and 42% of the businesses are new and the remaining 58% are expansions. A great deal of the recent success can be attributed to the Site Readiness Fund. Linda concluded her presentation by saying that KEP's forecast is positive. She described it this way, "Workforce, infrastructure, shovel-ready sites, speedy permit processes, education and training; we're all working together for the same goals. That's what makes Kent County a community. That's what makes it special. We all know each other and try to help each other as much as we can." We couldn't have said it better ourselves!

In addition to our three expert speakers, we would like to thank The Looking Glass at Polytech Adult Education for again hosting this event, Skyline Catering for their outstanding breakfast, and B.I.G. Investment Services for sponsoring this event. We hope to see you all in January 2027, when we review the 2026 forecast and again plan for the new year, together, as a community.



# Special Feature

## Central Delaware Legislators and Business Professionals Meet

There's no argument about Delaware's size. We are small. But interestingly, each of Delaware's counties has its own unique identity. Because of this fact, each county wants their voice heard by their Legislators. Delawareans have always worked together to find common ground and get things done in this small, but mighty state of neighbors. We're all trying to create a better community for our citizens. The senators and representatives who serve Delaware's citizens are the same people that live in our neighborhoods, shop at our grocery stores, and send their children to our schools. They understand why Delaware is such an amazing place to live, work, and play. We share the same goals. We communicate regularly and enjoy working together.

Central Delaware's residents and businesses alike take great interest in what's happening at Legislative Hall. In terms of creating laws and upholding policies, there is a spirit of collaboration. Soon after the second session of the 153rd General Assembly reconvened, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted its Annual Capital Briefing Reception on Thursday,



January 22nd, at Roma Italian Restaurant in Dover. Legislators, CDCC board members, sponsors, and members of the Legislative Affairs Committee gathered for an evening of conversation and a review of pertinent bills.

The purpose of this reception was for CDCC Board Members and local business professionals to share with current lawmakers the legislative agenda of the Chamber, hear their thoughts, ask questions, learn, and create an air of collegial understanding. The lively conversation swirled around topics concerning Business Attraction and Regulatory Reform, Potential Changes to the Personal Income Tax (PIT) Code, Corporate Structure Concerns, Energy Costs, Housing Affordability, and Paid Family Medical Leave (additional

changes). This conversation was a friendly exchange of ideas, and relationships were maintained and strengthened from all sides in the room.

The CDCC encourages all business leaders to be engaged in the work of the 153rd General Assembly. Delaware Lawmakers are interested to hear what our members have to say, they want to know how their decisions will affect your business, in Central Delaware and throughout the state. They serve at the pleasure of the people - and the people have a deep responsibility to be involved in the process. Your CDCC constantly monitors the work of the General Assembly on your behalf to keep you informed and up to date. We celebrate our unique relationships with our local

Lawmakers by continuing to work together with them as a team.

The CDCC thanks everyone in attendance at this year's Capital Briefing Reception. Thank you to the sponsors of this event: C.S. Kidner Associates/Capitol Strategies, Chesapeake Utilities Corporation, Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), Delmarva Power – An Exelon Company, Faw Casson, Horty & Horty, P.A., KenCrest, and Wattay Accounting.

Thank you for supporting YOUR CDCC and the Central Delaware community. Thank you to the fabulous and accommodating staff at Roma Italian Restaurant for taking great care of all our guests and for the delicious food and beverages they presented for this event.

*You can follow the General Assembly on their website <https://legis.delaware.gov/>. For more information about the CDCC's role in legislation or how you can become involved, please contact the office at (302) 734-7513.*



# CDCC SHOWCASE

## The CDCC Board of Directors – Always Making Connections

The CDCC Board of Directors is a volunteer organization comprised of representatives from 20 member businesses. The Board of Directors oversees the work of the CDCC and serves as the policy-forming branch of the Chamber. Board members gather monthly to offer guidance and support for the work of the Chamber.

In order to be completely informed, the Board of Directors must find ways to be tied to the community. To that end, there are several community leaders who attend the board meetings to provide updates and information on various efforts and projects. This way everyone is on the same page and all efforts are more successful in supporting the local businesses. Representatives from Kent County Levy Court, Kent Economic Partnership,



and Kent County Tourism report on their work in the community. In addition, the Wing Commander of the 436th at Dover Air Force Base and his guests, the Commander of the 512th Reserve Wing and a representative from Public Affairs, also attend the meetings, as well as the Mayor of the City of Dover. With all our board members and this variety

of honorary members and guests, these meetings are always a hub of shared community information!

In addition to the work the board members engage in at meetings, they also work diligently to stay in touch with CDCC members. They attend events and programs, and they spend time talking with members about how the CDCC can best be of service to them. They are interested in connecting with the membership to see how businesses are doing, to discover anything additional the CDCC can do for our members, and to make sure you are receiving all the benefits you can from your membership. When you receive a call or email from any of our Board members, please take the time to respond and share your thoughts and ideas. If you wish

to connect with one of our Board members, you will find them listed on our website ([www.cdcc.net](http://www.cdcc.net)) under “About CDCC” with a photo, name, and a link to their company. We value you - and we want to do everything we can to ensure that we are your opportunity hub!

While the board members are the ones who ultimately vote on policies and make decisions affecting the future of the CDCC, this collaborative effort, including the community's leaders, creates a certain synergy that spawns creativity and camaraderie. Even though the work of the board is often done “behind the scenes,” the fruit of their labor is seen in the vibrant work of the CDCC as it continues to serve as the opportunity hub for businesses in Kent County.

## Making the Most of Your CDCC Membership

Did you know that with your Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce membership you receive:

- Educational opportunities designed to help you grow your business
- A voice at the General Assembly speaking on your behalf about decisions that impact the business community
- Advertising and sponsorship opportunities that bring name recognition and help tell your story
- A strong framework of business relationships
- 75+ events per year produced to help you meet people, exchange information, and gain qualified leads
- ...and more?

Are you taking advantage of all that your Chamber offers? Are you participating in all the opportunities available to help your business succeed and grow?

The CDCC's Member Orientation sessions are designed to help you, our members, get the most out of your membership. We want you to get everything you can from the services, events, and activities we have to offer, but that can only

happen if you know what they are and can decide which ones will benefit your business the most.

On the second Thursday of each month, members gather via Zoom to hear about all the benefits your Chamber membership offers you. These virtual sessions are not just for new members, they are also for long-time members. We want you to stay current on all that is happening at your Chamber, and we especially want you to be aware of new opportunities and new services. (For example, did you know that by logging in to your member portal on our website you can begin saving money at Staples? This “for members only” promotion will provide you with discounts on supplies as well as printing services!)

Often attendance at these sessions is followed by the creation or the review of members' “journey maps.” Your journey map will assist you in making the most of your membership. We can be the opportunity hub for the development of your business – but that will only happen if you become familiar with the opportunities we can offer to you, and if we become familiar with the goals you


have in place for the expansion of your business.

Employers – be sure to share this event with your team so everyone can take advantage of your CDCC membership. Remember, your membership covers all employees at your location. Your encouragement for them to attend means a lot coming from you. It shows an interest in the success of not only your company, but an interest in your employees' success as well.

In addition to this virtual Member Orientation, we are pleased to come and meet in person with your staff to help everyone understand the benefits your Chamber membership offers. This on-the-road program is called “Onboarding” and can be scheduled during your regular staff meeting – or offered separately as a stand-alone event.

**The next Member Orientation session will be held on Thursday, Feb. 12th, from 8:30 – 10 a.m.**

**To register for this FREE session, contact the CDCC Office at (302) 734-7513 or [adminassistant@cdcc.net](mailto:adminassistant@cdcc.net). We look forward to helping you make your membership work for you!**



### Member Orientation

**FEBRUARY 12: 8:30 - 10AM**  
**MARCH 12: 8:30 - 10AM**  
**APRIL 9: 8:30 - 10AM**  
**MAY 14: 12 - 1:30PM**  
**JUNE 11: 8:30 - 10AM**  
**JULY 10: 12 - 1:30PM**

Orientation will be ALL Virtual via ZOOM!  
**MEETING ID: 821 4951 4243**  
**PASSWORD: 858438**

New Member? Been a Member?  
Join us for Orientation where we discuss all of the benefits and opportunities that you receive as a Valued Member!  
Questions or to register, email [adminassistant@cdcc.net](mailto:adminassistant@cdcc.net)

## Economic Development

Businesses are a vital component of our communities. They are the very foundation on which our economic well-being is built. Businesses provide goods, services, jobs, and opportunities to the people who purchase from them, work with them and connect to them.

The general role of chambers of commerce in economic development is not necessarily to attract businesses to come to the area, but rather to create an atmosphere where businesses want to locate and grow. It is chambers who provide the product that economic developers sell. A place where businesses can access the information they need, where they can be represented on public advocacy issues, and where they can network and connect with other businesses and community members who will support them and serve as their workforce.

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) plays a vital role in the economic development arena with our businesses. We provide information, education, representation, marketing opportunities, and connections. It is our responsibility



to strengthen businesses by ensuring they have support, opportunities, and networks to help them succeed.

In our informational role, it is our responsibility to provide up-to-date information to businesses that help them maneuver through the obstacles and challenges they face on a regular basis, so they make sound decisions for their businesses.

Education certainly ties into the informational role, however, in addition to just providing written materials, the CDCC also provides platforms for experts in various areas to share their knowledge with members to assist them with growing and expanding their businesses. These opportunities are known to our members as Coffee

Coaching Sessions. When speaking of education, we also must understand the importance of educating individuals to serve as leaders in our businesses, organizations, and communities. The CDCC is the only Chamber in the state to host and operate an extensive 10-month leadership training and development program – Leadership Central Delaware. Leadership is pivotal to the continuation and growth of any and every community.

Representation is also a service we provide to businesses. We serve as the voice of the business community when it comes to regulations and legislation. We have a Legislative Affairs Committee that is comprised

of leaders from a variety of businesses. It is their job to review and track legislation that will impact and affect businesses at all levels: federal, state, county, and municipality. We monitor all this legislation to assist businesses in lowering their risks and providing opportunities to succeed.

If you are in business, you know that networking and connections are critical to the survival and growth of your business. The CDCC offers over 74 events and programs each year, and each one has a built-in component of networking which allows businesses to make connections that help them fill needs and create pathways for development and growth.

Economic Development in every community takes a village and, at the CDCC, we are proud to be a member of that village. As we continue to work together, new businesses are attracted to our region and our current businesses are growing. Your Chamber is pleased to create partnerships that motivate economic development!

## Monitoring and Influencing Legislation – A Member Benefit

Through the years, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) has found that one of the biggest benefits of your Chamber membership is often one that many members do not even know about. This benefit is the CDCC's legislative advocacy.

This advocacy starts with the CDCC's Legislative Affairs Committee which is in place to monitor legislation at the federal, state, county and municipal levels. This committee also helps to represent the Chamber's position on various legislative issues that impact our member businesses. The committee also helps to improve communications with our elected officials, which is critical to the Chamber's proactive legislative strategy. The Chamber also has two lobbyists who represent the organization and its members on actions that impact the business community.

In addition to the continuous monitoring of current legislation,

the Chamber also works closely with the House Small Business Caucus to provide input on business-related bills and increase the awareness of Chamber members on proposed legislation at all levels by providing information through "Legislative Alerts" and "Call to Action" emails. The Legislative Affairs Committee also continues to take whatever measures necessary to protect the business community from the enactment of specific impact fees and taxes, works closely with the City and County to revise comprehensive plans, and meets with Congressional Delegates to discuss Federal Legislation and Regulations that impact our member businesses.

The Legislative Affairs Committee also hosts candidate interviews focused on business issues which are published in the Chamber Connections newspaper and on the website. The purpose of these interviews is to assist our members in understanding the positions taken by

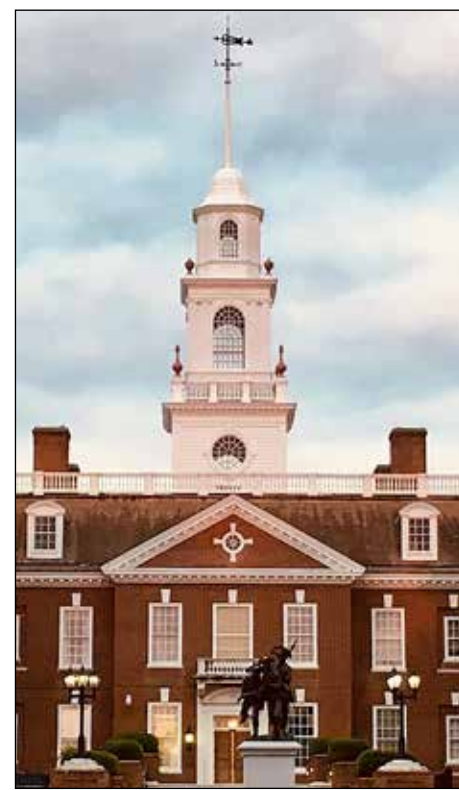
those running for office, especially related to the issues that may affect their businesses.

This Committee hosts the annual Legislative Luncheon event where elected officials are asked questions, again focused on the needs of our businesses, and are asked to share their views and information on issues while engaging in open communication with CDCC Members.

Each year, members of this committee, as well as members of the CDCC Board of Directors, attend the Capital Briefing Reception. This annual event gives the Chamber the chance to thank our legislators for their support and to present them with a preview of the Chamber's Legislative Agenda for the upcoming session.

As Chamber members continue to go about the day-to-day running of their businesses, they can be assured that the Legislative Affairs Committee is working behind the scenes to keep them informed,

making their voice be heard, and lobby on their behalf



# Cornerstone Partners: The Blocks on Which We Build

The cornerstone is a key component in construction because it is part of the foundation. The foundation of any structure is what provides the strong support on which it is built. With the shifting of the ground, the impact of inclement weather, and the weight of the entire structure, any building built without the bedrock of a foundation is likely to lean, collapse, or crumble over time. A great example of such a tragedy is the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa – which was built on sandy soil without a foundation. Clearly, cornerstones are necessary to ensure the long life of any building or institution.

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce is pleased to provide members with the opportunity to showcase their businesses through an exclusive marketing package called Cornerstone. A Cornerstone marketing package not only provides outstanding exposure, visibility, and name recognition, but helps to ensure a long, quality life of service for your CDCC. Cornerstone is a partnership that goes a long way to help businesses grow, by helping the CDCC continue to serve as your opportunity hub.

Member businesses who are part of the Cornerstone program will receive, for one full year, an exclusive homepage rotating banner ad on our



website, complete with a hyperlink to your business. Also, for one full year, your company logo will appear in an advertisement in the Chamber Connections Newspaper (12 months) identifying you as a Cornerstone partner. In addition, you will receive 2 - 3 featured articles in the Chamber Connections newspaper and four broadcast emails per year sent to more than 1,300 recipients. Cornerstone partners are invited to provide brochures/flyers/swag to be included bags that are distributed to each new member.

This exclusive marketing package will entitle you to a listing as a Platinum Sponsor for the State of the Base Briefing Breakfast (attendance 220+), the annual CDCC Legislative Luncheon (attendance 250+), and the Awards for Excellence Dinner (attendance 300+). You will also receive 1 exhibitor table at each of the semi-annual CDCC Member 2 Member Expos, admittance for 8 at the Chairman's Circle VIP reception at the Awards for Excellence Dinner, a quarter page/full color advertisement in the CDCC Holiday Gift Auction Program, and \$200 towards

the purchase of an advertisement in the CDCC's annual Resource Guide.

Another highly visible benefit of the Cornerstone marketing package is that all Cornerstone partners' logos are included at the bottom of the CDCC's email signature. This means that every email that leaves the CDCC office has your logo attached, providing a huge opportunity for exposure and name recognition.

The value of the Cornerstone marketing package is \$20,000, but as a Cornerstone partner, you will receive all these amazing opportunities for just \$6,250. The Cornerstone marketing packages are industry exclusive. Once you become a Cornerstone, you will be given the first right of refusal each year.

As you can see, the Cornerstone marketing package (established in 2013) is a marvelous, engaging way to showcase your business. It is also an incredible way to be known as part of the foundation on which your Chamber is built.

*For more information regarding the Cornerstone marketing package, please contact the CDCC office at (302)734-7513 or [www.cdcc.net/pillars/marketing/cornerstone-membership](http://www.cdcc.net/pillars/marketing/cornerstone-membership). As always, thank you for your continued support and encouragement as we work to help businesses grow and be recognized!*

## Introducing the CDCC's NEW Keystone Package

Over the last couple of years, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) has fielded many requests from you, our members, for a comprehensive advertising package designed to shine a spotlight on your company in a big way. What we heard from you is an appeal for a package that offers a variety of opportunities to expand your brand and increase name recognition here in Central Delaware. You are looking for an impactful way to share your story – and the CDCC is just the powerhouse that can help you achieve this!

We are pleased to announce a brand-new, industry-exclusive Keystone Package! When you become a Keystone partner, you will be given a year-long opportunity to shine a light on your business



and what you are doing for the community through our broad and varied marketing outlets. This package promises a presence on the CDCC website, in our Chamber Connections newspaper, on our social media – especially Facebook, through broadcast emails, on event programs, and much more.

Like our well-established Cornerstone package, this opportunity is designed to be a year-long, multi-faceted campaign. The Keystone package will provide exposure for your company all through the calendar year. This new package is also industry exclusive – once you are established as a Keystone partner,

no other business in a like industry can be part of this program without your approval. In addition, you will be given first right of refusal each year.

The cost of this new Keystone package for one year's worth of exposure is \$4,000. As you consider this opportunity, keep in mind that the value of this package is around \$12,000!

*To see a complete listing of the benefits provided in the Keystone package or for more information, please contact Dina Vendetti at the CDCC office (302) 734-7513 or by email at [dvendetti@cdcc.net](mailto:dvendetti@cdcc.net).*

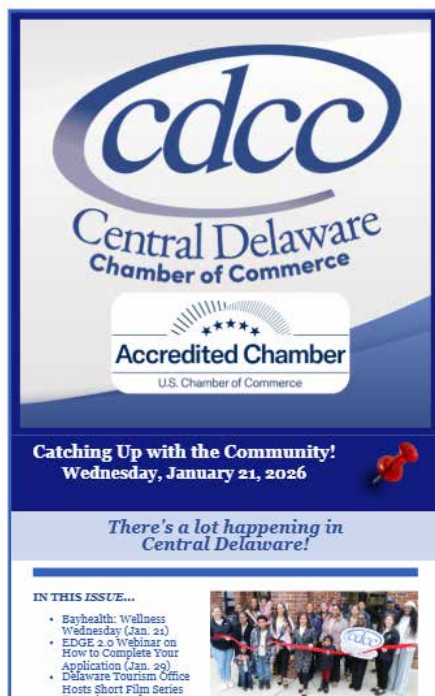
*We are thrilled to heed your requests, and we look forward to helping you share your story throughout the region through this new CDCC Keystone package!*

# Marketing Your Business Through the CDCC

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) appreciates each of our members' unique stories, and we love helping you tell those stories to others. Although there are many ways to market your business today, the CDCC offers you the opportunity to target an engaged business community with targeted marketing opportunities... several of which are FREE to our members. Read on to learn more.

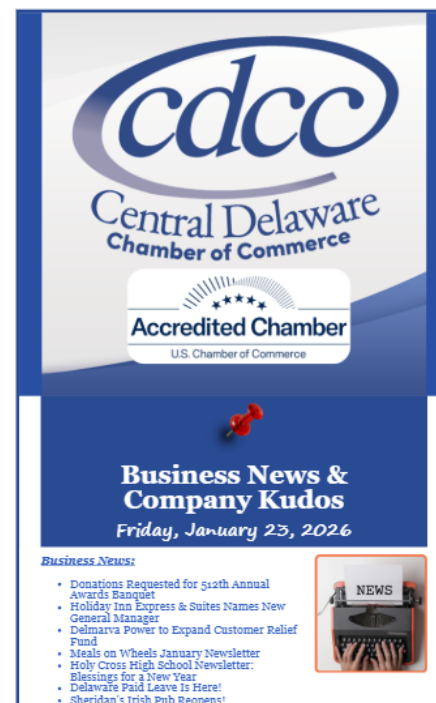
Are you receiving our Wednesday "Catchin' Up with the Community" e-news? If not, you're missing out on your fellow members' community events and happenings from throughout Central Delaware. This Wednesday morning e-newsletter features flyers and other event-centric information from our members. It could include your event info, too! Did you know that sending your materials to be included in this weekly newsletter is a FREE member benefit? Yes! So, send your event flyers today to [marketing@cdcc.net](mailto:marketing@cdcc.net) prior to the Tuesday noon deadline to be included in the next day's e-newsletter. Don't forget to send your flyer or information a couple of weeks prior to the event date for better viewership and coverage to the 1,300+ quality contacts in our database.

The same goes for our weekly Friday e-news, "Business News & Company Kudos." This email, sent on Friday mornings, is focused on Central Delaware's business news. This publication includes uplifting and important news about member businesses (i.e. new



location, expansion of product line or services, alerts, etc.) and congratulates members and their staff who have been recognized for something remarkable (i.e. won an award, celebrated an anniversary, engaged in a community service project, got a promotion, etc.). The Kudos section at the bottom of the e-newsletter is where we brag about our great members like you. Consider sharing your "good news" press release or document with a few pictures to be featured in this newsletter (submission deadline: Thursday at noon).

Be sure to help keep the CDCC in the know about the awesome accomplishments of your business through our weekly emails. Items in both e-newsletters normally run for at least two weeks at a time, depending



on space. They are each distributed to over 1,300 members, and the price is FREE.

We also offer sponsorships of these e-newsletters which include your ad at the top each week. It will be the first thing the readers see each time they open the newsletter. Frequency is the key to building name recognition and branding your company. Interested? Email us for pricing details and availabilities: [marketing@cdcc.net](mailto:marketing@cdcc.net).

In addition to ads and sponsorships for weekly e-newsletters, the CDCC offers the opportunity for members to showcase their business via a broadcast email! This is a single-business broadcast email of your flyer, information, and materials sent to over 1,300 contacts as well. This

is a great way to get the attention of the CDCC membership and the Central Delaware community when you advertise directly to them from a trusted source – which is so valuable in today's world of spam. These broadcasts cost only \$100 per send – which averages out to less than 8 cents per recipient. They can be used for any kind of news, announcement, or advertisement. Simply send your flyer or graphic (PDF, JPG or PNG) along with any pertinent information or links to [marketing@cdcc.net](mailto:marketing@cdcc.net), and we will help you create your broadcast in a way that is sure to get everyone's attention!

Be sure to check out our complete membership directory on our website at [www.cdcc.net](http://www.cdcc.net) to see some examples of an enhanced membership listing. We'd love to help you schedule your ribbon cutting as they are a great way to generate buzz for your business! Of course, the Chamber Connections Newspaper you're reading now is another method of sharing your story.

When telling your story through the CDCC, you can be assured you will be in good hands, and your message will be shared with those who are interested in reading it. These are just some of the ways the CDCC can help you accomplish this to expand your business and create a stronger presence here in Central Delaware. ***Please contact the CDCC office today at 302-734-7513 to learn more about how we can continue to tell your story!***

## SUNSET MIXER

Continued from Page 1

The CDCC is proud to host this monthly event for members and their business connections as a place for valuable networking opportunities, friendship, and a chance to support local businesses. These are great opportunities to visit with a business you may have never experienced before. Attend this month's Sunset Business Mixer at Bay Terrace to learn about their services and amenities, and find out why everyone loves the Sunset Business Mixers! One of the best things about these

Mixer is that you never know who you will meet and what new relationships you will make. This monthly event is known for bringing the community together in a fun way that allows everyone to help each other grow.

The host for the February Sunset Business Mixer, Bay Terrace, has created a post-acute care center where clinical excellence meets genuine hospitality—where each resident's journey is supported by both advanced medical protocols and the simple human touches that make a place feel like home. What sets them apart isn't just their upscale

amenities or spacious rehabilitation facilities, it's their understanding that true healing happens when you feel valued, respected, and genuinely cared for as an individual. They will be offering delicious light refreshments, cocktails and mocktails. Join the CDCC for a relaxing evening this month with the Bay Terrace team and experience for yourself their dedication to excellence.

This event promises great networking opportunities, a chance to reconnect with business colleagues, delicious refreshments, and an opportunity to learn about Bay Terrace and all they have to offer to

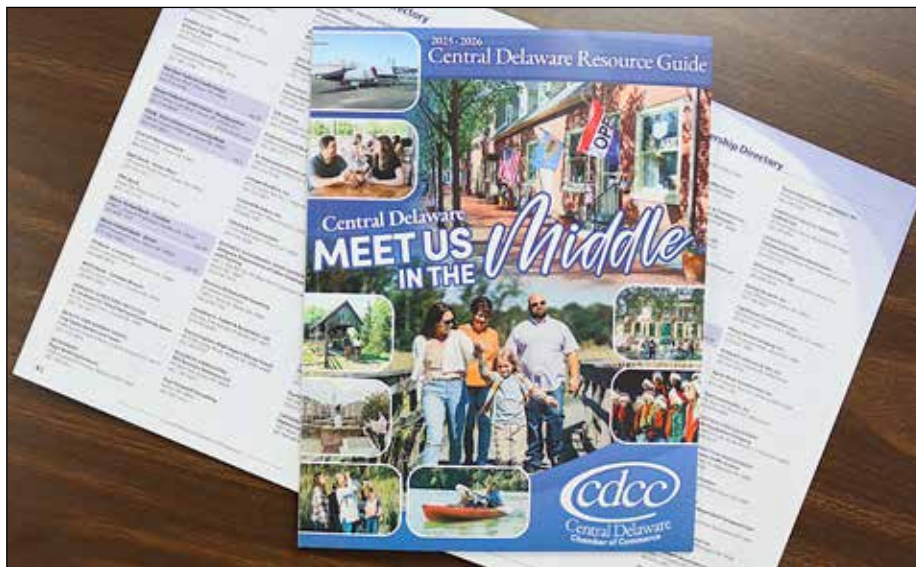
the Central Delaware community! You are welcome to bring a business guest who might be interested in joining the Chamber. Plus, you can gain some extra exposure for your business at the event if you bring a door prize. The CDCC can't wait to see you there!

***For more information about attending the February Sunset Business Mixer, please feel free to contact the Chamber at (302) 734-7513 or the February 25th date on the events calendar at <http://www.cdcc.net/events> to register.***

# The CDCC Resource Guide: The Name Says It All

If you asked the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) about the things to do and see in the area, where to shop, where to relax, and so on, it would be hard to know where to begin to guide you on the road to infinite possibilities! There are so many things worthy of your attention here in Central Delaware that we just had to put them in one central location: The official CDCC Resource Guide! This annual publication is the perfect tool for newcomers in the area and a great refresher for longtime residents as well.

The CDCC's Central Delaware Resource Guide is your one-stop destination for everything you should know about our business community. On full-color glossy pages, this 96-page reference guide will include all the details you need about Delaware industries, local and state government, tourist attractions, housing, accommodations, restaurants, medical/health care, education and more. The Resource Guide tells the remarkable story of Central Delaware in a way that is interesting, engaging and useful



— and by advertising in the publication, you will become known as an important part of that story. Use this handy guide to inform you or anyone you know about the area! Keep it in your car, in your business' office, on your kitchen table, or library for easy access.

With 8,000 copies printed and distributed to local hot spots around Kent County, this guide is the perfect way to showcase your business with a beautiful advertise-

ment featured where your target audience is searching for information. This glossy magazine is distributed to Kent County businesses, colleges, universities, hotels, the Dover Air Force Base, Delaware visitors' centers/rest areas and other prominent, high-traffic areas. Many of our larger member businesses, as well as Dover Air Force Base, distribute these books to their newest employees to help familiarize them with the area. In addition, the

Resource Guide is available on our website. What a marvelous opportunity to get your message out to many prospective customers!

The CDCC is currently offering advertising spaces for the 2026-2027 edition of the Central Delaware Resource Guide. This book will be available for distribution by August 1, 2026 so don't delay if your business is interested in marketing your business to this engaged audience! All full-page or half-page advertisers will receive a hyperlink from our online version of the Resource Guide to your website, driving traffic directly to you. Plus, early-bird advertisers will also receive ad space in our Kent County map as a "gift with purchase."

*Central Delaware is vibrant and full of infinite possibilities, and we want to bring them to you! Help us highlight the best of our beloved hometown to newcomers and residents alike. For more information, pricing or to reserve a spot in our Resource Guide, contact Heather Cregar at the CDCC office (302) 734-7513 or [marketing@cdcc.net](mailto:marketing@cdcc.net).*

## CDCC Coffee Coaching: Start Your Day with Some Brainfood!

A new day...a cup of coffee (or maybe a smoothie) ...business colleagues...and great ideas...what a way to start a day, right? Your CDCC's Coffee Coaching sessions provide a time and place for thoughtful collegial conversations about new trends in business, important success-building skills, strategies for growth, and the sharing of great ideas.

Coffee Coaching is virtually all you need to keep growing, expanding, learning, and connecting with business professionals of various industries. All Coffee Coaching sessions are held via Zoom, so they are super convenient to fit into your busy workday. Sign on to Zoom from 9 – 10 a.m. for a thought-provoking session with professional CDCC members sharing a relevant topic with you!

Stay tuned for this monthly educational session, always held at the



same time, on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. You'll be pleased with what you learn and use in your professional business journey moving forward! For example, the February 11th session named "Delegate and Elevate" will teach you a simple tool that helps you get out of the weeds and spend more of your week doing what you love, what you're great at, and what truly moves your business forward. Pretty exciting stuff! If this conversation doesn't stimulate your

attention and engage you in this morning session, then there's no need to try coffee!

March's series, taking place on the 12th, is named, "Investing for your Future." It will cover the different types of retirement and non-retirement accounts, in addition to market expectations and compound interest, and a sample 401K asset allocation selection – all important things to know and fully understand.

The Coffee Coaching sessions are a FREE member benefit of the CDCC, and we want you to take full advantage of the pertinent information being offered to you each month. This is part of the CDCC's continuing effort to foster learning, and innovative thinking for all CDCC members. Consider sharing this session with all your employees as well – they are included under your membership, and all are invited to learn with us!

Our one-hour Coffee Coaching sessions typically consist of a 30 to 40-minute presentation with time afterwards for questions, idea sharing and brainstorming. Your CDCC continually works on scheduling intriguing and knowledgeable presenters who are eager to share their expertise with those who want to learn. If you have an idea or inclination to lead a Coffee Coaching session on a relevant topic, please reach out to the Cindy Friese at [cfriese@cdcc.net](mailto:cfriese@cdcc.net) to learn more!

*If you are interested in registering to attend a CDCC Coffee Coaching session, please call the CDCC office at (302)734-7513 or register online through our calendar of events at [www.cdcc.net](http://www.cdcc.net). We can't wait to learn and connect with you!*

# CDCC Savings Club Card



**With a variety of discounts offered by Chamber members, this card goes right on your key fob, so you'll always have it with you. It features discounts on everything from automotive to retail to personal services and more.** As a business member, offer a discount and increase your foot traffic with fellow Chamber members! Your participation also includes a NEW sticker to put at your register or on your door to alert shoppers to be sure to use their card when shopping with your business. Contact us today to add your discount to the list: 302-734-7513.

## Military Affairs Committee – Supporting TEAM Dover!

As the proud 4-time receiver of the coveted Abilene Award, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is honored to have a strong relationship with our service members at Dover Air Force Base (DAFB). The “Abilene Trophy” is awarded annually to the community in Air Mobility Command that is most supportive of its local Air Force Base. Formally known as the Air Mobility Command Community Support Award, it has been awarded since its establishment in 1998. The award’s sponsor is the Abilene, Texas Chamber of Commerce,” reads the Abilene Texas Chamber of Commerce website. (Visit our website at [www.cdcc.net/about/committees/military-affairs-committee](http://www.cdcc.net/about/committees/military-affairs-committee) for more information highlighting the CDCC’s 2020 win of the Abilene Trophy).

This kind of collaboration wouldn’t be possible without the amazing relationship the CDCC has with the DAFB, which is maintained through the individuals who comprise the CDCC’s Military Affairs Committee. This committee meets 4 to 6 times a year and is



responsible for the planning and execution of three annual events to provide networking opportunities for CDCC members and military personnel to maintain and strengthen the positive and supportive relationship between the CDCC and DAFB, otherwise known as TEAM Dover. Currently serving as Board Chair is Timothy M. Bayes, Senior Program Manager for Century Engineering, LLC, A Kleinfelder Company.

The Military Affairs Committee can’t wait to welcome two crucial branches of the community together under one roof for the Annual

Military Affairs reception occurring THIS February 19, 2026 at the Air Mobility Command Museum from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. The Military Affairs provides an opportunity for community members to meet with the leadership of the DAFB and other military divisions in a casual setting – an opportunity that doesn’t come around very often. To register for this year’s Military Affairs, please contact the CDCC office at (302)734-7513 or register online here at [www.cdcc.net/events](http://www.cdcc.net/events).

In addition to the Military Affairs, this committee is responsible for coordinating the CDCC’s Annual

Bluesuiters Golf Tournament, which pairs two airmen with two business professional members to connect, have fun, and build relationships. Stay tuned for more information coming this spring on this event and how you can be involved!

The State of the Base Briefing Breakfast, held annually in November, is always a tremendous success! Guests hear directly from the base’s leadership team about the current missions and accomplishments of the DAFB. This event is attended by Delaware’s Congressional delegates, military commanders, elected officials, and members of the Central Delaware business community. The CDCC continues to emphasize the need to connect DAFB with the community because they are influential pillars of the Central Delaware economy, which impacts our day-to-day life.

***If you or your business is interested in supporting this valued relationship with the DAFB, consider sponsoring or attending an event with the CDCC! Give the office a call today at (302)734-7513 to start making an impact!***

## CDCC SHOWCASE

# Leadership Central Delaware: Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow

Now in its 25th year, Leadership Central Delaware (LCD), the CDCC's "Diamond Program," is a 10-month leadership development adventure that creates effective, dynamic, and knowledgeable leaders. LCD prepares the leaders of tomorrow with the information, knowledge, and resources they need to make Kent County a better place to live and work.

Each class is comprised of no more than 28 participants representing a diverse community in every way. Selection is based on a sincere concern about the future of Kent County and a personal commitment to help shape that future, a desire to learn about leadership techniques and strategies, an ability and willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to complete the program, and an organization/business that fully supports its employees.

The program begins each year in September with an overnight opening retreat focusing on team building and leadership skills. Following that, the group meets on the first Thursday of each month for a full day exploring the



area's industries who are the most impactful economic drivers, such as Agriculture & Agri-Tourism, Energy & Environment, Healthcare, Government & Politics, Criminal Justice & Public Safety, Media & Communications, Economic Development, and Education. The year ends with

a one-day closing retreat where participants talk about and plan the practical application of what the year taught them.

LCD connects emerging leaders through diverse networks, while enhancing leadership skills and community knowledge, resulting in increased value, individually and professionally. Participants in the program can expect to develop the following skills: team building, delegation, goal setting, innovative thinking, creative marketing, problem solving, decision making, ethical and moral discernment, assessment, evaluation, and more. Class members will 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 businesses.

The Leadership Central Delaware experience is supported by several member businesses. Sponsors of the CDCC's "Diamond Program" receive 10 months of advertising to over 1,300 people through

numerous CDCC activities, engaged and connected employees ready to make a positive difference, and recognition as a company dedicated to making Central Delaware THE place to live, work, and play.

In January of this year, the CDCC introduced the LCD Mastery Program. An exclusive program for LCD graduates the Mastery Program offers guidance and direction for the next step in the development of their leadership skills. This immersive program offers 10 weeks of intimate and customized assessments and training to include the development of hands-on skills, goal setting, time management, negotiations, and hard topics. Participants will graduate from the program with a better understanding of what kind of leader they want to be, a foundation on which to develop their own unique leadership style, and the skills needed to achieve that goal.

*To learn more about the Leadership Central Delaware programs, please reach out to CDCC President Dina Vendetti at [dvendetti@cdcc.net](mailto:dvendetti@cdcc.net).*

## LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

Continued from Page 1

Affairs Committee, chaired by Scott Kidner of C.S. Kidner Associates. At the event, CDCC members will ask questions of the Delaware legislators who will then each be given an opportunity to respond to the particular concern or issue. It is the committee's intention to have an exchange of information about a variety of current issues for the benefit of the entire Central Delaware business community.

Last year's meeting proved to be an informative interaction between CDCC members and our elected officials. A variety of issues were discussed including Senate Bill 21 (related to the General Corporation Law), rising utility rates, and the FMLA. In addition, through a random drawing two attendees of the event were handed the microphone to each pose a business-related question to the legislators. This was something new the Chamber



offered in response to several requests from the membership. Both questions came from nonprofit organizations and centered around childcare challenges for workers. The Legislative Affairs Committee will again put together the agenda for the Legislative Luncheon, including the opportunity for two attendees to be called on with their own questions.

The CDCC sends out a "thank you" to the Legislative Luncheon Signature Sponsor: B.I.G. Investment Services, and General



Assembly Sponsors: Allen Insurance Group, C.S. Kidner Associates/Capitol Strategies, Comcast Business, Delaware Crime Stoppers, Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), Delmarva Power - an Exelon Company, Dover Motor Speedway, Energize Delaware, George & Lynch, Inc., Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware, Pepsi Bottling Ventures, The Malmberg Firm, LLC and The Willis Group, LLC.

In addition, a special "thank you" goes to the accommodating staff

at Bally's Dover Casino Resort and Royal Prime Events & Steakhouse for hosting this event and welcoming the Central Delaware community into their beautiful facility with a delicious meal.

The 24th Annual Legislative Luncheon is open to both CDCC members and the community. Member tickets are \$60 if purchased by February 25th and \$65 after that date. Non-members tickets are \$80 each. Refunds are not available after February 19th.

*For more information about this event or to purchase tickets, please contact the CDCC office at (302)734-7513 or visit the "Calendar of Events" page at [www.cdcc.net/events](http://www.cdcc.net/events).*

*The CDCC looks forward to seeing you and our local legislators at the upcoming Legislative Luncheon on Thursday, March 12, 2026, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., at Bally's Dover Casino Resort.*

# Ribbon Cuttings

## CDCC Celebrates Westminster Village Anniversary with Ribbon Cutting



DOVER, DE – On Thursday, January 8, 2026, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) was delighted to open the new year with a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Westminster Village Assisted Living and the remodel of their assisted living and memory care community. Executive Director Wendy Nerad and the Westminster Village team, and residents were joined by local dignitaries, Chamber members, and friends to cut the ribbon at their Assisted Living Community at 1167 McKee Rd., Dover.

In addition to the ribbon cutting, event attendees enjoyed an afternoon Open House which included tours of the updated apartments, live entertainment, door prizes, light refreshments, and the opportunity to meet the Community Life team and

learn more about life at Westminster Village.

Westminster Village is a not-for-profit community that provides seniors, ages 55 and older, with resources and support to create truly fulfilling lives for their residents. They are the only Life Plan Community in Kent County (DE) addressing all levels of living which enables them to meet residents' needs now, and in the future.

Throughout the 25 years that Westminster Village has been serving Kent County seniors, they have been supporters of not only the CDCC, but also Toys for Tots, Food Bank of Delaware, YMCA, American Association of University Women (AAUW), local Rotary clubs, and the Ronald McDonald House. Their residents volunteer within the Westminster Village community on various com-



mittees including the Thrift Shop, which is open to the public and all proceeds benefit the community and benevolent care.

*Anyone interested in learning more about Westminster Village and their exceptional senior living should visit their website at [www.psl.org/dover](http://www.psl.org/dover) or call 302-744-3600 to request a visit.*

*Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to celebrate Westminster Village on their 25th Anniversary and their impressive new remodel!*

*Anyone interested in learning more about Westminster Village and their exceptional senior living should visit their website at [www.psl.org/dover](http://www.psl.org/dover) or call 302-744-3600 to request a visit.*

## CDCC Celebrates Royal Prime Steakhouse with Ribbon Cutting



DOVER, DE – The party was in full swing on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at the Royal Prime Steakhouse for their 4th Anniversary at their second-floor location in Bally's Dover Casino Resort. The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) celebrated this anniversary with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Chamber members, friends, and local dignitaries joined owner, Bob Ciprietti, and the entire Royal Prime Steakhouse team to cut the red ribbon and enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres and celebratory drinks.

At Royal Prime Steakhouse, classic recipes, contemporary takes, fresh ingredients, and expert preparation come together in a delicious selection

of menu options including prime beef and other cuts of quality meats and seafood. Their drink menu includes an extensive variety of wines, a refreshing assortment of familiar classic and local craft selections of beers, and handcrafted signature cocktails.

In addition to the first-rate dining experience the community will always enjoy at Royal Prime, they regularly host and support local charities and charitable events. They are strong supporters of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce as Cornerstone partners.

Royal Prime Steakhouse came to Dover 4 years ago at the invitation of Bally's who was looking for an innovative restaurant group to run



their anchor restaurant. Although 4 years isn't a traditional milestone anniversary, the Royal Prime team felt this was the perfect time to show their gratitude to the Dover area for making them a premier dining destination.

*Anyone interested in learning more about Royal Prime Steakhouse can visit them online at [www.royal-primesteakhouse.com](http://www.royal-primesteakhouse.com). But it might*

*be better to go ahead and stop in soon to enjoy this fine dining experience in person.*

*Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to congratulate and celebrate the Royal Prime Steakhouse on their 4th Anniversary!*

# Ribbon Cuttings

## CDCC Hosts Ribbon Cutting for Do Care Doula Foundation



maternal health disparities by addressing the physical, emotional, and educational needs that often impact outcomes for underserved and marginalized communities.

In addition to the food, basic needs, and diapers available in their pantry, they also supply maternal health support, Doulas, community baby showers, and much more – free of charge via grant funding. Plus, they host a variety of community resources every Thursday from 1 – 5 p.m. to provide key information about the support available within the community, such as healthcare,

financial planning, social services and more.

Erica explained, “There are not a lot of resources available in Central Delaware, and we believe that we can help fill the gap with what we offer. If we do not have what people need, we are happy to engage with community partners throughout the state to provide additional personalized resources and support.”

They regularly give back to the community and are active in engaging the community and being a vital

support for all who come through their doors.

*Anyone interested in learning more about the Do Care Doula Foundation can visit them online at [www.dedoulas.com](http://www.dedoulas.com) or contact Erica at 302-857-9026 [erica@docaredoulafoundationinc.org](mailto:erica@docaredoulafoundationinc.org).*

*Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to congratulate the Do Care Doula Foundation on this amazing growth for their organization!*

## CDCC Celebrates Live Well with Ribbon Cutting



central nervous system work and exercise. George has been serving the community through fitness for more than 20 years and understands the physical demands put on the body. “I opened Live Well to provide an alternative approach to mind/body wellness and recovery,” George explained.

Live Well offers one-on-one coaching/personal training, individual exercise program design, and recovery needs including infrared saunas, cold water immersion, red light therapy, and shiftwave therapy. They also recently added Stongevity strength coaching to their services. Stongevity is an intentional prehab strength program that addresses joint weakness and immobile/weak musculature, including knees, backs, and shoulders. The goal is to be

stronger longer by taking a customized personal approach to everyone’s training.

George added, “We plan on offering busy working professionals and caregivers the opportunity to have a place for restoration.”

*Anyone interested in learning more about Live Well and their transformative therapies should*

*visit their website at [www.livewellde.com](http://www.livewellde.com), call (302) 612-4071 to schedule a session, or visit them at 1655 E. Lebanon Rd., Dover.*

*Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the opening of the new Live Well!*

DOVER, DE – Erica Allen, Executive Director/Founder of the Do Care Doula Foundation, was all smiles on Saturday, January 17, 2026, when the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) celebrated the opening of their new location with a ribbon cutting. Chamber members, friends, and local dignitaries joined Erica, her team, and clients, to cut the ceremonial red ribbon on their impressive new location.

They are now located at 202 W. Loockerman Street, on the corner of Loockerman and Governors Avenue, and just a stone’s throw from their previous location. This tremendously larger space will house their food/basic needs pantry, diaper bank, and overall operations. Event attendees brought a variety of items to stock their diaper and basic needs inventory, and enjoyed a delicious, full-brunch buffet after the ribbon cutting.

Do Care Doula Foundation Inc is a nonprofit organization dedicated to holistically supporting families during pregnancy, birth, and well beyond. They are committed to reducing

DOVER, DE – On Thursday, January 22, 2026, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) was delighted to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of new business – Live Well. Owner/operator George Dobbins, his team, and Live Well clients were joined by Chamber members, and friends to cut the ribbon at their impressive new location at 1655 E. Lebanon Road in Dover.

In addition to the ribbon cutting, event attendees enjoyed the opportunity to tour their beautifully designed facility and visit each of the wellness rooms to learn more about the services they offer. Everyone also received a free session in one of the wellness rooms.

At Live Well they take a complementary wellness approach, combining science-backed therapies with mindset coaching to help you achieve balance, recovery, and overall well-being. They offer a space for restoration of the mind and body. This is done through intentional,

# Member of the Month



**NAME:** John and Melissa Cornwell

**TITLE:** Owner

**BUSINESS:** A-FAB Property Professionals

Home Organization, Redesign, Remodeling, Outdoor Spaces

**ADDRESS:** 607 Savannah Road, Dover, DE 19901

**HOURS:** Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**PHONE:** 302-484-0436

**WEBSITE:** [www.afabpropertyprofessionals.com](http://www.afabpropertyprofessionals.com)

**EMAIL:** [melissa@afabpropertyprofessionals.com](mailto:melissa@afabpropertyprofessionals.com)

## Tell us about your business/organization.

A-FAB Property Professionals was founded by husband-and-wife team John and Melissa Cornwell out of a shared passion for homes, problem-solving, and helping people navigate transitions with confidence. Drawing from years of hands-on experience owning, renovating, and managing properties, A-FAB was created to provide thoughtful, practical solutions tailored to each client's needs.

We specialize in home redesign and staging, estate dissolution and “living estate transitions,” market-ready repairs, organizing and decluttering, and custom living spaces including accessory and multi-generational living solutions. Whether preparing a home for sale, reimagining a space to better serve a family, or helping clients navigate an estate transition, our goal is always to create spaces that are functional, welcoming, and thoughtfully designed.

## Tell us about your role in the business/organization.

Melissa oversees client relations, design planning, staging, and project coordination, working closely with clients to understand their goals and guide them through each step of the process. John manages construction, repairs, and hands-on proj-

ect execution, ensuring quality craftsmanship and practical solutions. Together, we collaborate closely on every project to ensure both the design vision and functional details are aligned.

## Tell us something that makes your business/organization unique.

What sets A-FAB apart is our highly personalized approach. We don't believe in one-size-fits-all solutions. Every project is approached with care, empathy, and attention to detail—especially when working with clients who are downsizing, preparing an estate, or navigating major life changes. Our ability to combine design, organization, repairs, and staging under one roof allows us to simplify what can otherwise be an overwhelming process.

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

Looking ahead, we plan to continue expanding our service offerings while remaining rooted in our core values of quality, integrity, and personal connection. We see growth in helping more families with living estate transitions, multi-generational living solutions, and homes that adapt to changing needs—all while staying actively involved in our local community.

## How has the Chamber helped your business/organization grow?

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in helping us build meaningful connections within the community. Through networking opportunities, events, and member support, the Chamber has helped us increase visibility, develop strong professional relationships, and feel genuinely supported as a growing local business.

## What is your best advice to other businesses/organizations?

Build relationships, not just transactions. Stay involved in your community, listen to your clients, and don't be afraid to evolve or pivot as your business grows. Consistency, authenticity, and a willingness to learn go a long way.



# Ambassador's Corner

## Jose Arroyo



My name is Jose Arroyo, and I currently work as a Project Consultant with Bright Side Roofing. Bright Side Roofing specializes in roofing and siding solutions, helping homeowners protect one of their biggest investments through quality workmanship, honest assessments, and clear communication. My role allows me to work directly with homeowners from the initial inspection through the completion of their project, making sure they feel informed, confident, and taken care of every step of the way.

Outside of work, I'm a husband and a proud father to my son. Family and faith play a major

role in my life. My family and I attend United Church, which has been an important source of grounding, community, and personal growth for me. I love being outdoors, whether that's riding motorcycles, spending time outside with my family, or simply unplugging from the day-to-day routine. Before entering the roofing industry, I served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Alaska, an experience that helped shape my work ethic, discipline, and appreciation for teamwork and community.

I became engaged with the CDCC because of the genuine relationships it fosters. From the beginning, it was clear

that CDCC is about more than business—it's about people supporting people. The connections I've built through CDCC have helped me grow both personally and professionally, and I've learned a great deal from members who are intentional about serving others.

Serving as a CDCC ambassador is important to me because I enjoy welcoming others, building strong relationships, and helping people feel connected. I want to help create an environment where individuals can grow personally, professionally, and relationally—just as I have through CDCC.



**RENEWALS FOR DECEMBER 2025 - THANK YOU FOR YOUR RENEWAL!**

Company Name	YRS	Company Name	YRS
Delaware Division of Small Business	44	Wagamon Technology Group, LLC.	8
Richard Y. Johnson & Son, Inc.	43	Richard Downes	7
McGinnis Commercial Real Estate Co.	36	Fireside Partners, Inc.	7
Regulatory Insurance Services, Inc.	32	Independent Metal Strap Co., Inc.	5
R & R Commercial Realty, Inc	29	Curry Pizza House Dover	4
Delaware DNREC	26	First Command	4
Allen Ins. Assoc Inc. t/a Allen Ins. Group	24	DE Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education	3
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce	24	Roberts Insurance, Inc.	3
All Restored Inc.	14	Flight Club Uncorked	2
Edward Jones Investments - Christopher Smith, CFP®	14	Community Powered FCU	1
St. Andrew's LC Great Hall and Gathering Space	14	Master Networks	1
Friends of the Duck Creek Regional Library	13		

**NEW MEMBERS**

<b>Chesapeake Bath and Home Solutions</b>	Taylor Joseph	926 Eastern Shore Drive	Salisbury	MD	21804	410-846-2284
<b>Hangry Joe's Dover</b>	Kia Peterson	50 N Dupont Hwy, Ste 7	Dover	DE	19901	302-271-7449
<b>That 1 Painter Diamond State</b>	Andrew Pudimott	742 Dexter Corner Rd	Townsend	DE	19734	302-332-8960
<b>Thrivent Financial</b>	Herley Gaston	7716 Armiger Dr	Seaford	DE	19973	302-405-4454




**Christopher Smith**  
Financial Advisor, CFP®, AAMS®  
**302.735.8770**

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AND WE ARE HERE FOR YOU**



**Complimentary Portfolio Review  
Personalized Financial Strategies Strategic Planning**

# 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 January "Coffee On Us" Contest was Sal Watson from Bally's Dover Casino Resort who correctly identified the photo on the front page as Legislative Hall. Congratulations, Sal, 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.\*\*\*