



Chamber Connections



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February 2024

CORNERSTONE MEMBERS



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Mark your calendars for the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce's (CDCC) Home & Garden Show coming to you Friday,

Blooming Ideas & Inspiration at the Home & Garden Expo This February!

February 23rd (12-6pm) & 24th (9am-3pm) at the Delaware State Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall (18500 S. DuPont Hwy) in Harrington, Delaware. Immerse yourself in a world of possibilities, gather inspiration, and connect with fellow enthu-

siasts. Whether you're a seasoned gardener, a home improvement aficionado, or just looking for a free fun weekend, this event promises to be an enriching experience. Join us as we celebrate the beauty of local

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Strengthening Bonds for TEAM Dover: CDCC Military Affaire 2024

In the heart of Delaware, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) stands as a platform for unity, fostering economic growth, community development, and collaboration. The CDCC's work would be incomplete without its outreach to Dover Air Force Base – a critical and valued aspect of the Central Delaware community. The Chamber has shown exceptional dedication in supporting and engaging with the military community, particularly through its Military Affairs

Committee. This unique initiative reflects the Chamber's commitment to building bridges between the business community and the military, creating a symbiotic relationship that benefits both to form TEAM Dover. The CDCC is excited to welcome the community and DAFB service members to the 2024 Military Affaire.

Tuesday, February 13th, 2024, at King Cole Farm (1730 Bayside Drive, Dover) from 5:30-7:30pm will mark an engaging event that allows two thriving pillars of Central

Delaware connect, touch base (literally and figuratively), and generate discussion that is helpful to the community as a whole. Important conversations will be held between business leaders and service men and women about concerns on behalf of the community, with a spirit of gratitude for the work being done in both organizations to continue the prosperity of our shared home, Central

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February Mixer

working has proven to be a steadfast and abiding key factor for success. Building meaningful connections, sharing experiences, and exploring potential collaborations can open doors to new opportunities – we see and hear it happen all the time. One such routine event that promises an opportunity to achieve professional networking in a relaxed atmosphere

is the CDCC's monthly Sunset Business Mixer.

Join the CDCC and member community for this month's Sunset Business Mixer on February 29th, 2024, from 6-8pm at Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center (506 Jefferic Blvd in Dover). Our Sunset

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cdcc.net

Dina's Digest



PRESIDENT
Dina Vendetti

Change is Constant – So Are We!

Greek Philosopher Heraclitus is credited with saying: “Change is the only constant in life.” He observed that people age, new habits are formed, new things come along, and old things fade away... the natural world is in a constant state of movement. He even noticed that one cannot step into the exact same river twice... I had to think about that one for a second!

We experience this kind of movement constantly as one year changes to the next, circumstances evolve, business trends and strategies evolve, and people move in and out of our lives. Change happens when progress happens. It's something that we learn to expect and something to which we do our best to adapt.

And yet, in the world of constant change, it is comforting to understand that there are some things that we can count on NOT to change. The support, assistance, and encouragement that you receive from your Chamber is one of those things – an absolute constant in this world of change. We strive to walk alongside you, help you make the connections you need to grow and experience success, and work with you to navigate the various challenges of running a business. In short, we are here for you.

Your CDCC's four pillars of Education, Legislation, Marketing and Networking will continue to provide a strong foundation for business growth. Of course, change and a quest for constant improve-

ment are always part of the mix. As we work hard to have our finger on the pulse of what is happening in your business, we are constantly tweaking and editing to maintain our relevance and provide you with the highest quality and most up-to-date services possible that will help you grow and be successful.

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 in 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 – we want you to have everything that's coming to you! 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 this 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

An Industry Exclusive CDCC Marketing Package!

 The CDCC Cornerstones CORNERSTONE MEMBERSHIP Est. 2013	 Banking	 Casino/Entertainment	 Energy/Utility
 Engineering	 Investments	 Insurance	 Medical Rehabilitation
 Manufacturing	 News	 Roofing & Siding	 Real Estate

Thank you to the CDCC Cornerstone Members!



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www.cdcc.net

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

Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY

Thu, February 1st
Leadership Central Delaware
8:00am - 5:00pm,
Government and Politics Day

Thu, February 1st
Kent County Open for Business
8:30am - 10:00am,
Kent County Levy Court

Thu, February 8th
Member Orientation
8:30pm - 10:00pm,
via Zoom

Tue, February 13th
CDCC Board Meeting
7:30am - 8:30am,
Faw Casson

Tue, February 13th
Professional Power-Up Online
12:00pm - 1:00pm,
via Zoom

Tue, February 13th
Military Affaire
5:30pm - 7:30pm,
King Cole Farm

Wed, February 14th
Coffee Coaching
8:00am - 9:00am,
via Zoom

Wed, February 14th
Marketing Committee Meeting
10:00am - 11:00am,
via Zoom

Monday, February 19th
Presidents' Day
Office Closed

Tue, February 20th
LCD Steering Committee Meeting
12:00pm - 1:00pm
CDCC Conference Room

Fri & Sat, February 23rd & 24th
Home & Garden Expo
Friday - 12:00pm - 6:00pm & Saturday - 9:00am - 3:00pm,
Delaware State Fair - Exhibit Hall

Wed, February 29th
Ambassador Committee Meeting
4:30pm, CDCC Office

Wed, February 29th
Sunset Business Mixer 6:00pm - 8:00pm,
Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center

MARCH

Monday, March 4th
CDCC Executive Committee Meeting
8:00am - 10:00am,
CDCC Conference Room

Thursday, March 7th
Leadership Central Delaware
8:00am - 5:00pm,
Public Safety Day

Thursday, March 7th
Kent County Open for Business
8:30am - 10:00am,
Kent County Levy Court

Tuesday, March 12th
CDCC Board Meeting
7:30am - 8:30am,
Faw Casson

Tuesday, March 12th
Professional Power-Up LIVE!
12:00pm - 1:00pm,
Grotto Pizza - Dover

Wed, March 13th
Coffee Coaching
8:00am - 9:00am,
via Zoom

Wed, March 13th
Marketing Committee Meeting
10:00am - 11:00am,
via Zoom

Thursday, March 14th
Legislative Luncheon
11:00am - 1:30pm,
Bally's Dover Casino Resort

Thursday, March 14th
Member Orientation
12:00pm - 1:30pm,
via Zoom

Tuesday, March 19th
LCD Steering Committee Meeting
12:00pm - 1:00pm,
CDCC Conference Room

Wed, March 27th
Ambassador Committee Meeting
4:30pm, Location TBD

Wed, March 27th
Sunset Business Mixer
5:00pm - 7:00pm,
Location TBD

Friday, March 29th
Good Friday
Office Closed

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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Buying or selling a business? R&R can help



While R&R Commercial Realty provides top-shelf service to real estate buyers and sellers on Delmarva, one of our lesser-known services is business brokering.

Most people know their own business back to front, but selling it is a different story. Appraisal, marketing, negotiating terms, and closing the transaction all take specialized skills. R&R Commercial Realty has those in abundance. If you're considering selling your business, reach out to R&R Commercial Realty today for a free appraisal.

Retiring without a succession plan? Maybe you want to just close your doors and sell off the inventory and real estate. However, your business may be worth more than you realize as a package. Get a free opinion on this from us.

Has your business failed? In times of high inflation and rising interest rates, many businesses are forced to close because of their financial situation. While tragic, it is tempting to liquidate the assets and try for a clean break. Despite its condition, your business may still have more value than you'd think to the right buyer. We may be able to track that buyer down.

Want to explore new opportunities? Maybe you've spent the last decade building a successful, profitable business but you want to pursue a different career. Knowing how much your current business may be worth could help you plan your career change – let's do the math.

In the market for a business? Maybe you're recently retired, and you'd like to invest in a well-established



business to convert some of your savings into cashflow for the future. You may not realize how affordable and manageable this option can be. Contact our office today to inquire about local listings.

Business Brokering Acumen

R&R Commercial Realty has been a market leader in these services since 1996. Since then, we've sold businesses in all three counties of Delaware and built a network of nationwide industry contacts. Our agents have sold everything from gas stations and delis to laundromats and car washes – businesses of all shapes and sizes.

There is more to appraising a business's value than crunching gross receipts in a formula and more to marketing than just taking out an ad in the paper. R&R Commercial Realty gives you access to its hyperlocal understanding of market trends based on recent sales. The

firm's marketing team not only has immense reach through state-wide signage, social media campaigns, its high-traffic website, and traditional marketing, but also an extensive client list of ready buyers who may already be on the hunt for a business just like yours.

It's important to note that not all business brokers are created equal. R&R Commercial Realty offers more than just a steady hand at the wheel. With a thick rolodex of satisfied customers, this firm has been built on the bedrock of proven performance. In a small market like the Delmarva peninsula, reputation counts. Ours is one of competence, reliability, conscientiousness, determination, and professionalism. It's our job to know this market, and we've developed an understanding of it that only comes with decades of experience.

By putting R&R Commercial Realty to work as your business broker, you get our team, reputation, and the institutional knowledge that's been painstakingly acquired through years of hard work. That's a superior product available nowhere else in Delmarva.

About R&R Commercial Realty:

Established in 1996, R&R Commercial Realty is a highly successful real estate firm located in the center of the Delmarva Peninsula. With a focus on commercial real estate, R&R is one of the most visible and well-respected local firms. Services include commercial & industrial sales and leasing, land sales and development as well as property management.

For additional information about R&R Commercial Realty and its extensive inventory of commercial property, visit our website at www.randrcommercialrealty.com

INNOVATION

ENGAGEMENT



CORNERSTONE MEMBERSHIP

RESOURCEFULNESS

RELEVANCE

Exciting Improvements at the Dover Kraft Heinz Plant

KraftHeinz

With the new year already underway, the Kraft Heinz Dover plant is undergoing a huge transformation. If you are driving by during the first quarter of the year, you may notice more contractors on site that are working tirelessly on improvement projects. The iconic front lobby is in the middle of a makeover that looks to preserve the history of the plant but also modernize the space with a flooring upgrade and an updated display of what we produce inside these walls. The office area (which is home to departments such as finance and logistics) will be receiving similar modernization upgrades as well as server upgrades aimed at improving connectivity around the plant.

There are also pending improvements designed to enhance the production area of the factory. We are currently halfway through a

flooring overhaul that is part of a KHMS safety initiative to make the area safer and cleaner for our employees. The new blue floor will make it easier to maintain and has a special finish that will limit employees slipping. During the holiday shutdown, the lighting in our beverage and desserts departments was replaced with LED lighting as part of a green initiative to reduce energy consumption. It also improves visibility in the department and will hopefully create a more vibrant atmosphere for the employees. These changes are all thanks to a nearly three-million-dollar capital works project that demonstrates corporate's desire to invest in our location.

Another exciting initiative that started last summer was the addition of food trucks that employees can patron during their mealtime. Local food trucks such as Love That Plate, Pete's Peetza, and Scraped the Plate rotate around giving the employees a variety of options without having to leave the parking lot. The program has been a great success so far and

we are looking forward to continuing it into the new year.

This year, one of the focuses for this plant will be on bringing in passionate employees who share a love for the Kraft Heinz brand. One way we hope to achieve this is by becoming more involved with local high schools/colleges to show aspiring graduates how rewarding a career in production/maintenance can be. In the past, our plant hosted Claire Hyde as an intern where she was able to hone her skills and prepare for the next part of her career journey. She has now recently graduated from the London School of Business with an MBA. Claire was selected by the company as part of an educational improvement program that allowed her to study abroad and earn this degree. The Dover plant wants to congratulate her and wishes her well on the next steps of her career.

For more information about Kraft Heinz Company, please visit www.kraftheinzcompany.com or call (302) 734-6100.



Communication is Key for LCD Class of 2024!

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce's (CDCC) Leadership Central Delaware (LCD) Diamond program participated in an insightful and engaging time during the Class of 2024's Media & Communication Day this past January 4th. The day was an immersive dive into the local world of media and the art of communication, highlighting their profound impact on business, our community, and daily lives. **BREAKING NEWS** - Fire up the presses!

The day started off with a warm welcome and introduction to the leadership team at the Daily State News (formerly known as Delaware State News). The class took great advantage of one-on-one time with

the seasoned media and communication experts at our local, widely respected and recognized news outlet. The panel consisted of: Konrad LaPrade, Publisher, Logan Anderson, Managing Editor, and Heather Cregar Director of Marketing & Promotions. Andy West, Editor-in-Chief, LCD Class of 2009, and long-standing co-chair of the day unfortunately was unable to attend, but ensured the class was in good hands with Anderson, recent graduate of LCD, Class of 2023. In addition, Amber Startt, Senior Credit Analyst at Dover Federal Credit Union, LCD Class of 2017, was present as co-chair to support the current class and make arrange-

ments for the successful day to come.

Each panelist described his/her role at the Daily State News and their important relationship in sharing the benefit of local journalism. They gave insight on the impact of local news, changes the company and industry have made in the digital age, and ideas for now the community can partner with them. The class got a direct look at the company's mission: "to publish purposeful newspapers that encourage and support meaningful community involvement, and that provide citizens with the knowledge and participation they need to make rational decisions about public issues."

After this thought-provoking discussion, class members were divided into two groups to take turns seeing where ink meets paper – the Delaware Printing company. Led by LaPrade, the class maneuvered through the printing press warehouse where many of Delmarva's publications are made. Large machinery, vats of ink, and gigantic rolls of paper towered to the ceiling – a timely, 24/7 operation.

While one half of the class toured, the other half was split into small groups and asked to write a news report based on breaking-news details of a fictitious apartment complex shooting incident. They worked fast (as a reporter must) to analyze and write a news story as

clearly and accurately as possible with the limited information given from live press conference enactment by the CDCC team. This simulation gave them an accelerated feel of the responsibility and duty of reporters and the revolving cycle of conscientious journalism.

After their scripts were written, class members were sent to the Broadcast Media Newsroom at Polytech High School to be brought to life and broadcasted "live." With the assistance of the professional students, the class learned the roles on screen and off as they each recorded their broadcasts like pros. It was a fun experience of laughing, learning, and encouraging each other as they sat behind the anchor and productions desks. Many buttons, audio, video checks, and a shameless plug or two were included as part of this experience.

After a delicious lunch prepared by the Polytech Culinary Program, the afternoon was filled with enlight-

ening and engaging presentations. First to the podium, returned Logan Anderson to share his experience of 20 years in the industry. He shared with the class the many unforgettable highs and lows of journalism in the community. He told the class real incidences he will never forget and emphasized the importance of taking care of your mental health due to the fact that the "news isn't always pretty," and it can take an emotional and psychological toll on you, as it has with him. Anderson shared the questions reporters face each day when formulating stories. "Does it push the story forward?" "Is it more important to be first, or correct?" Anderson's leadership style was explained as "I'd rather be late, than wrong. As Managing Editor, I lead my team with 'thank yous' first," he stated in his presentation. He is fully aware of the duty he serves to readers and his team.

This was a great segue into his coverage of Andy West's presenta-

tion, "You're the Editor." Challenging the class's critical thinking and emotional intelligence skills by analyzing striking, graphic, and potentially triggering photos depicting grief, death, and heightened negative emotions. The class saw how difficult it can be to properly preserve people's dignity and respect while choosing appropriate words and images that adequately inform the public. The theme of the exercise focused on moving news forward in an ethically sound and balanced way.

Last but certainly not least, the LCD Class of 2024 was energized and informed of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) and its newfound implications for the future. Travis Frey, Chief Innovation Officer at Dover Federal Credit Union and LCD Class of 2022, entertained everyone with his expertise and excitable personality. Frey outlined how A.I. is being used today and where it could be used in the future. "Do you run from

it or embrace it?" he asked the class rhetorically.

Frey compared A.I.'s pervasiveness similar to the emergence of the internet. Ultimately, he left the class with the fact that A.I. is not going to go anywhere anytime soon; that this is another tool introduced to the world that could do a lot of great things (cure cancer, increase safety... etc.) or malice (war, deepfakes, false messaging, financial scams... etc.). It will be up to the user and those in control of the technology to use it for just reasons. Frey's presentation left the class with much to ponder.

As Media & Communications Day concluded for the Leadership Central Delaware Class of 2024, the CDCC hopes they got a heartfelt, local lens of media and message sharing in today's fast-moving world. Thank you to everyone who made this day possible – Next stop: Legislative Hall for Government & Politics Day!



LCD Leadership Central Delaware
A program of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce

Thank you to our Sponsors!
Confirmed as of 10/3/23

302-456-6816



Closing the Gap Between Business & Legislation at the Capital Reception

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce would like to thank all invited attendees present at our Capital Reception held this past January 25th, 2024, at Roma Italian Restaurant in Dover from 5:30-7:30pm! Board Members, Representatives, Senators, and Business Leaders, thank you for taking the time out of your business lives to meet for an evening of positive camaraderie and discussion over pertinent topics that will affect the community and our great state at large.

The purpose of this reception was for 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 atmosphere of understanding. The lively and friendly conversation swirled around topics concerning: Paid Family Medical Leave Act (PFML), Ready in 6, and a few House Bills from the Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) such as the Advanced Clean Car II Act.

The CDCC is passionate about connecting business leaders to the work of the 153rd General Assembly. Delaware Lawmakers are interested in what its residents have to say, they want to know how their decisions will affect your business. They serve at the pleasure of the people - and the people have a deep responsibility to remain involved in the process. Your CDCC constantly monitors the work of the General Assembly on your behalf in order to keep you informed and up to date. It's rare for states to have and offer this level of partnership between legislators and business professionals. Let's celebrate these unique relationships here in Delaware by continuing to work together as a team.

"The Delaware Way" was on full display this night. The practice of working together, through differences, to find common ground and get things done in this small, but mighty, state of close neighbors. Delawareans use our accessible land mass size, proximity to major metropolitan cities, and key economic drivers to our advantage. The people who represent the state's citizens are the same people that live in our neighborhoods, shop at our grocery stores, send their children to our schools and understand why Delaware is such an amazing place to live, work and play. These two parties share the same goals and communicate regularly and have fun together while working through tough decisions.

Thank you to the evenings' sponsors: C.S. Kidner Associates/Capitol Strategies, Chesapeake Utilities Corporation, Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), Delmarva Power - An Exelon Company, Horty & Horty, P.A., Faw Casson, and The Willis Group, LLC. Thank you for supporting YOUR CDCC and the Central Delaware community. Thank you to the fabulous and attentive staff at Roma Italian Restaurant for taking great care, time, and attention to detail for all our guests. Thank you for welcoming us into your fine establishment once more for an impactful evening.

Thank you to our Delaware legislators who took the time to connect with the CDCC and its business professionals. The CDCC thanks them for their work on the community's behalf. We look forward to working together with them to continue to move Delaware forward and create a business climate that is friendly and promises success! Thank you to everyone in attendance, we hope you had fruitful conversations and will look forward to joining us at this event next year.

22nd Annual Legislative Luncheon this March

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) invites you to come and meet your Delaware Senators and Representatives and participate in an open dialogue concerning business issues. Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 21st, 2024, from 11:00AM to 1:30PM at Bally's Dover Casino Resort for a Legislative Luncheon, brought to you by B.I.G. Investment Services, sure to enlighten and connect the community over governmental concerns. Chamber members and potential members, register by March 8th for early bird tickets, or reserve your table of eight today!

This highly anticipated gathering of business leaders, community stakeholders, and legislative representatives is set to bring together the best and brightest minds for an insightful discussion on the issues shaping our community. The CDCC enjoys organizing this event because of its networking and educational opportunities across all industries of Central Delaware and the entire State. Don't miss this chance to meet local dignitaries and leaders who make change. This prestigious event is a unique opportunity for attendees to engage with elected officials, gain valuable insights into



legislative priorities, and network with fellow community members.

Prepare to be inspired by our distinguished panel of legislators from both parties who will share their perspectives on the current economic climate, legislative initiatives, and the impact on local

businesses. Forge new partnerships, exchange ideas, and strengthen your ties within the Central Delaware business community. Also gain a deeper understanding of the legislative landscape that directly affects

Continued on Next Page

your business. Our elected officials will provide valuable insights into current and upcoming policies, allowing you to stay informed and prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

By attending our Annual Legislative Luncheon, you demonstrate your commitment to the growth and prosperity of Central Delaware. Join like-minded individuals who share a passion for building a vibrant and thriving community just like you. For legislators, this event will give them the opportunity to understand which issues are most important to their business constituents. The discussion will be kept to the issues that promise to have the most impact on business in Central Delaware. This event traditionally leads to subsequent conversations in which lawmakers can hear first-hand about the impact legislation will have on their business constituents.

We'd like to thank the leadership team at Bally's Dover Casino resort for allowing the community

to convene in their elegant ballroom to bring this event to life. We cannot wait to see everyone fill the room with positive energy!

The CDCC would like to thank our primary sponsor B.I.G. Investment Services for supporting this event!

Thank you to our platinum sponsors for making this event possible: B.I.G. Investment Services, Century Engineering - A Kleinfelder Company, Chesapeake Utilities Corporation, The Daily State News, Dover Federal Credit Union, Harrington Raceway & Casino, G. Fedale, Kraft Heinz Company, PAM Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Dover, Pratt Insurance, and R&R Commercial Realty.

Secure your spot at this essential event by registering early. Visit www.cdcc.net or contact the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce at (302) 734-7513 for more information on ticket prices, sponsorship opportunities, and registration



HOME & GARDEN EXPO

Continued from Page 1

passionate about helping you. You'll find treasures, information, and services that add a personal touch to your living space while contributing to the growth of the Central Delaware community. This is an opportunity to learn from accessible industry experts and discover how you can transform your living space into a haven of modern comfort and style. Our vendors are excited to engage with you and help you bring your idea to fruition from

start to finish. Face-to-face interactions with experts are an invaluable benefit of attending this FREE and open to the public expo.

In addition to the variety of vendors, the CDCC has curated an engaging lineup of educational seminars to ensure that attendees leave not only inspired but also equipped with practical, tangible knowledge. Attend these personable and informative sessions on Home & Garden topics to be enlightened and empowered for the peak Spring and Summer months ahead.

Join us for two days of innovation and connection at the CDCC's Home & Garden Expo. Make a day out of it with your best buds, family, friends, and coworkers. Enjoy food trucks, raffles, vendors, seminars, and connections to last you through the whole year. Don't miss this chance to support your local community and your most needed projects.

The CDCC thanks our 'Show Sponsor': Bright Side Roofing for their generous support of this event!

The CDCC would also like to thank supporting sponsors (as of

1.29.24): Coastal Bath Company, Daily State News (Media Sponsor), Delaware Health & Social Services, G. Fedale, Pierce Fence, and Pirana of Delaware.

If you'd like to be a sponsor and/or be a vendor in our 4th Annual Home & Garden Show – good news! There is still space available, call today as time is of the essence. Visit www.cdcc.net/homeshow or call (302) 734-7513 for more info or to register. Spread the word to everyone you know to come to the show – see you there!



Member News

Uplift & Commend: It's Time to Nominate Excellence!

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is proud to be a hub of economic development, connection, and community relations. We are home to a plethora of member businesses that consistently demonstrate excellence in many areas every day. As we celebrate this spirit of achievement and dedication, we invite YOU, fellow member businesses, to nominate your outstanding peers within the Central Delaware community for recognition. Your nominations play a crucial role in highlighting the hard work and contributions of the businesses around you. Let's come together to shine a spotlight on excellence!

The CDCC awards Large Employer of the Year (for companies of more than 50), Small Business of the Year (for companies 50 employees or less), and Young Professional of the Year (individuals between 21 & 35 years of age) are given annually at our culminating Awards for Excellence Celebration dinner. This event at the end of June is the highlight of the Chamber's year (a big deal to put it lightly). It wraps up the CDCC's fiscal year and celebrates our members in grand fashion. More on that event to come in the months ahead, but right now we need YOUR help in nominating CDCC members who have excelled this past year. These awards are completely driven and selected by members like you, so let your voice be heard!

Nominating a business is a simple yet powerful process. Nomination forms can be found in this month's CDCC mailer and will be available online.

"Excellence is not a skill, it's an attitude." - Ralph Marston

The nominations are reviewed by a committee comprised of previous winners who select three nominees in each category. This is followed by a vote of Chamber members – YOU, which determines the winner. Finally, awards are presented in June at the Awards for Excellence Celebration to mark a triumphant end of the CDCC's fiscal year.

Nominations for Excellence in Business awards are not just about accolades; they are about acknowledging the dedication, innovation, and impact our members bring to the community. By participating in the nomination process, you become an integral part of fostering a culture of appreciation and recognition. Your nominations serve as a testament to the outstanding efforts that contribute to the growth and vibrancy of Central Delaware.

Last year's Awards for Excellence winners were Lauren Webb, Dedicated to Women OB/GYN– Young Professional of the Year; Jessica Moyer, The Ice House Wellness & Community - Small Business of the Year; and Polytech Adult Education, Amelia Hodges, Jeremy McEntire – Large Employer of the Year. As you, our members, consider nominating businesses for the Excellence in Business Awards, know that your vote matters. Every nomination is valuable. Because these nominations come from business colleagues and peers who understand what it takes to operate a successful business, they have the potential to encourage nominees in deep and meaningful ways.

For more information about making nominations, please call the CDCC Office at (302) 734-7513 and visit our website at www.cdcc.net. Let's encourage the work of our fellow member businesses and applaud their exceptional contributions - it's time to award excellence. The CDCC

can't wait to hear from you and celebrate with you



Lauren Webb - Young Professional Winner



Large Employer Winner - Polytech



Jessica Moyer- Small Business of the Year

SUNSET MIXER

Continued from Page 1

partnership and connections you will make this year!

This event is a reputable way to stay informed and engaged with the happenings of the community. Often you will hear the latest developments or changes in the local business community through the "grapevine" at a Sunset Business Mixer. You can be in the know of what's to come in your backyard simply by conversing casually with fellow attendees. Knowledge is power!



We thank the staff and leadership at Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center for welcoming the CDCC and community into their facility and making arrangements for a pleasurable evening. Thank you to Glenenise Parks and her team for their support of this event and showing their commitment to a better Central Delaware.

To register for this event, visit www.cdcc.net or call (302)734-7513, bring your business cards to place in our silver bowl, cash for 50/50

raffle, and consider bringing a door prize for a lucky winner! Also – if you have friends, colleagues, and business partners who could be

potential Chamber members, you may bring them as guests (up to 2 times).

In a world where relationships matter, attending the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce's February Sunset Business Mixer is a strategic move for professionals looking to expand their networks and explore new opportunities. Embrace the chance to connect with fellow entrepreneurs, increase your brand's exposure, and contribute to the thriving business community of Central Delaware. Mark your calendars, and don't miss out on this unique and valuable experience!





CDCC Community Received the 411 on the 2024 Delaware Economy

It was an absolute pleasure for YOUR Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) to recently host our 10th Annual Economic Forecast Breakfast, bringing together local business leaders, entrepreneurs, and community members for an insightful discussion on the economic outlook for the region and nation. The event took place at Maple Dale Country Club from 7:30-9:30am and featured prominent experts in economics and business to shed light on key trends and opportunities shaping Central Delaware's economic landscape for 2024. Thank you to B.I.G. Investment Services, our premier sponsor, and to David Boothe, our keynote speaker of the morning.

The breakfast kicked off with a warm welcome from CDCC President, Dr. Dina Vendetti, who emphasized the importance of this event in fostering economic education and growth within the community. Attendees were then treated to a hearty breakfast as they prepared for a morning of engaging presentations and discussions. Thank you to the accommodating service staff at Maple Dale Country Club. The CDCC and extended community's hearts are with them as we process the passing of longtime General Manager, Chris Aulita. Kudos to the staff for still working hard to make this event possible for the full room of over 100 of Delaware's movers and shakers. May the spirit of community and collaboration that Aulita fostered at Maple Dale Country Club live on eternally.

The program featured 3 key leaders in the economic develop-

ment realm representing the nation, the state, and the county. Attendees listened attentively to learn about the current economic trends, budget, and market behavior.

First to the podium, the audience welcomed David Boothe, President of B.I.G. Investment Services, for a look at the National Forecast. He provided a comprehensive and digestible analysis of current economic indicators, highlighting both challenges and opportunities facing Central Delaware and the world in the coming year. "It's going to be a sloppy year for the market. Recession risk is still looming, yet the labor market continues to be very strong which makes it hard to envision a significant one. I'd be more concerned about the end of 2025, or end of 2026," stated Boothe.

Key topics included job market trends, industry growth projections, and the impact of global economic factors on the local economy. Boothe shared his "crystal ball" predictions for 2024 and opened for questions.

Carla M. Cassell-Carter, Director of Budget Management & Planning at the Delaware Office of Management & Budget (OMB), took to the podium to share the state's view of economic activity. She walked the audience through the Governor's Fiscal Year 2025 budget of anticipated spending in all sectors of the quality of life for Delawareans. Significant investments in the economy, public schools, family and workforce support, and environmental protections were addressed. State wage increases, early to higher education

investments, and Delaware's largest investment in affordable housing were leading takeaways from her presentation.

Last but not least, the crowd was happy to hear from Linda Parkowski, Executive Director of the Kent Economic Partnership (KEP), whose mission is to spur economic development in Central Delaware. She shared several recent wins of securing site-ready locations to entice businesses to relocate to the area. "You need to have a site. Nothing happens unless you have a site for a company to go to. The State's Site Readiness Fun has been an excellent program to get sites shovel-ready for businesses," stated Parkowski.

Since KEP's founding in 2018, this 3-person office has located 38 projects contributing to 1,400 new jobs, almost \$300 million of capital investment. Linda is a firm believer that if large businesses continue to see the value of locating to Delaware with good paying jobs, all the other necessary quality of life factors of Central Delaware will fall into place.

In summary, the CDCC's Economic Forecast Breakfast proved to be an informative and engaging event for its 10th year. Attendees walked away with a deeper understanding of the economic landscape and a chance to build meaningful connections within the business community. The CDCC is proud to offer an event like this because of its power to serve as a platform for fostering a stronger and more resilient local business community – which benefits everyone!

Thank you again to the team at B.I.G. Investment Services for sponsoring this event for another successful year. The CDCC wishes all attendees, members, and the community a prosperous and fruitful New Year. We look forward to a 2024 complete with connections, growth, and collaboration!

Christopher Smith
Financial Advisor
CFP®, AAMS®

302.735.8770

WE ARE LOCAL AND WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

Complimentary Portfolio Review
Personalized Financial Strategies
Strategic Planning

CDCC SHOWCASE

The CDCC At Legislative Hall – A Member Benefit

The CDCC would like to shine light on one of our biggest hidden gems of membership – the monitoring of legislation and advocacy! We all know well that the conversations, actions, bills, and laws coming from our Representatives, Senators, and Governor at Legislative Hall, have the ability to directly impact the way the Central Delaware business community conducts business for their livelihoods and the livelihoods of their employees. The interests of small businesses are at the forefront of the CDCC's mission of being "THE essential resource for the development of businesses in Central Delaware." Monitoring legislation and making sure our member's voices are heard on the Legislative floor is just one way the CDCC continues to ensure that Central Delaware is "THE place to live, work, and play."

The CDCC has a Legislative Affairs Committee whose purpose is to monitor legislation on behalf of

the membership body at the federal, state, county, and municipal level. The committee's purpose is to help represent the CDCC's position on various legislative motions that will affect the small business community and our member businesses. They maintain crucial communication with elected officials to stay updated on pressing matters. In addition to this committee, the CDCC has three lobbyists who represent the organization and its members to protect the interests of all members.

This committee also hosts elected candidate interviews focused on business issues which are published right here in the Chamber Connections newspaper and on the website. These interviews are done to help our members know where those running for office stand on the issues that will affect their businesses. To create better connections, this committee hosts the Legislative Luncheon, an event with the purpose of bridging together elected officials

and CDCC's members to share their views, opinions, facts, and information regarding law matters. This year's Legislative Luncheon will be held on March 21st, 2024, from 11am -1:30pm at Bally's Dover Casino Resort. Tickets are \$55 for Chamber Members and \$60 for nonmembers if paid by March 9th. For more information or to register for this event, please visit cdcc.net or call (302)734-7513! The CDCC will be thrilled to see you there!

The CDCC works closely with the House Small Business Caucus to guarantee valuable input on business-related bills to increase CDCC's awareness in order to create positive

change. The CDCC disseminates important information from Legislative Hall in Downtown Dover to its membership base through "Legislative Alerts" and "Call to Action" emails.

As you can see, the CDCC surely has its foot on the ground regarding Legislative matters that matter most to you. As busy business owners,

the CDCC understands you do not have the time to monitor legislation, track bills, lobby, or contact elected officials – leave that to the CDCC and rest at ease knowing you have an advocate on your behalf who cares about the same issues you do.



CDCC Board of Directors – Guiding Lights

The CDCC is very appreciative of the group of Kent County business leaders from various influential industries who comprise our Board of Directors. This collection of powerful minds volunteers time, energy, and expertise to the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce out of their pure desire to support our members, the community, and the CDCC's mission to be "THE essential resource for the development of businesses in Central Delaware."

You will find the CDCC's current Board of Directors on the CDCC's official website here: www.cdcc.net. You will see they are a curated group of hard-working, skilled, involved and invested visionaries who want Central Delaware's business community to thrive making Central Delaware "THE place to live, work, and play!" From their widely diverse industries, they bring their own perspectives, experiences, and ideas to the table when the CDCC staff, members, and the business community needs them the most.

The Board of Directors meets once a month, outside of special events, to vote on policies and make decisions affecting the future of this organi-

zation. Community leaders, such as representatives from Kent County Levy Court, Kent Economic Partnership, Kent County Tourism, Dover Air Force Base, and the City of Dover, are included in these meetings to maintain the Board of Directors' relationship with the community at large, and to stay updated on recent projects, changes, or potential problems. This creates a sense of unity among "branches" of the CDCC and Central Delaware.

The current Board Chair is Dana Wattay of Wattay Accounting. He is in the 1st year of his term, following his predecessor, Brian Stetina, of Faw Casson.

Although the Board of Directors makes formal votes on motions, it is still very much a collaborative and behind-the-scenes effort in directing the CDCC's present and next steps. There is great support, creativity, and camaraderie that exudes from our Board of Directors, and we couldn't be more grateful to have such a dedicated team of guiding lights. The light of their time and labor shines brightly through the CDCC's events, relationship with the community, and daily office practices.

CDCC SHOWCASE

CDCC Coffee Coaching: Start Your Day on the Bright Side!

You're already at work, in the office or at home, and you have your coffee made just the way you like it, it's a Wednesday, you're almost over the hump of a productive week and it can only get better from here! You woke up on the right side of the bed and are ready to engage and learn something new for yourself and your business! You're logged in via zoom and ready to be a sponge and absorb new information by an expert on the subject. You're at a CDCC Coffee Coaching session!

Coffee Coaching is virtually all you need to keep growing, expanding, learning, and connecting with business professionals of various industries. 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. You'll be happy to hear that currently all Coffee Coaching sessions are highly convenient because they are now via zoom. Sign on to zoom from 8-9am before you head into your workday for a thought-provoking session with professional CDCC members sharing a relevant topic with you!

Stay tuned for this monthly educational session, always on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, via zoom, from 8-9am – you never know what you'll learn and use in your business professional journey moving forward!

This is 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. We want to continue to foster a safe space for positive discourse, learning, and innovative thinking to all CDCC members. Consider sharing this session with all of your employees as well – they are covered 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 is currently working hard to schedule intriguing and knowledgeable speakers and presenters who are eager to share their craft with those who want to learn. If you have an idea or inclination to lead a Coffee Coaching session on a relevant topic of your expertise, please reach out to the Cindy Frieese at cfrieese@cdcc.net to learn more!

If you are interested in registering to attend a CDCC Coffee Coaching session, please do not hesitate to call the CDCC office at (302) 734-7513 or register online through our calendar of events at cdcc.net. We can't wait to learn and connect with you! Also – if you have an idea or inclination to lead a Coffee Coaching session on a relevant topic of your expertise, please reach out to the Cindy Frieese at cfrieese@cdcc.net to learn more!

**Sessions are
ALL VIRTUAL via ZOOM**

**Meeting Code:
850 8634 1814**

**Passcode:
838363**

**Call the CDCC Office to
register @ 302-734-7513**

Make Your CDCC Membership Work for You

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 created to help you meet people, exchange information and gain qualified leads... these are all benefits that come with your Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce membership.

Are you taking advantage of all that our 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 which ones will most benefit you.

Each month, on the second Thursday of the month, members gather via ZOOM to hear about the ways your Chamber works for you. These virtual sessions are not just for new members, they are also for longtime members as well. 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 that come along and new services as they are added. (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!)

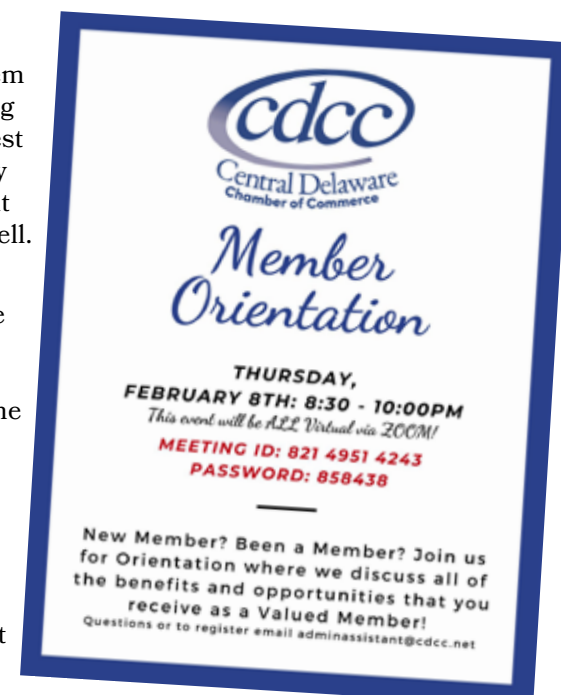
Often attendance at these sessions is followed by the creation or the review of members' journey maps. We long for the opportunity to meet with each of you to create a journey map that will assist you in making the most of your membership. We want to be your most essential resource for the development of your business – but that will only happen if you become familiar

with what we can do for you, and if we become familiar with the goals you have in place for the growth and expansion of your business.

Employers – be sure to share this event with your team so that everyone can take advantage of your CDCC membership. Remember that 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 investment of not only your employee's success, but the company's success as well.

In addition to our virtual Member Orientation, we are pleased to come and meet in person with your staff to help everyone understand the benefits that your Chamber membership offers. This on-the-road program is called "Onboarding" and can be fit into your regular staff meeting – or could be offered separately as a event on its own.

The next Member Orientation session will be held on Feb. 8th, from 8:30am- 10am. To register for this FREE session, contact the CDCC Office at (302) 734-7513. We look forward to helping you make your membership work for you!



The CDCC's Professional Power-Up

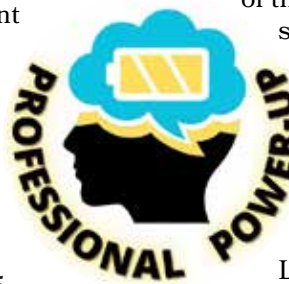
During the past year, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) has refreshed and rebranded its previously successful program formerly known as the Young Professional's Social. The CDCC introduced its first Professional Power-Up LIVE on Tuesday, March 14th, 2023, at the Biggs Museum of American Art, during the lunch hour from 12-1pm and it was an amazing success. Since then, the momentum has been steadily building for this program. As of Jan. 2024, the Professional Power-Up is now hosted by Grottos Pizza in Dover (1159 N. DuPont Hwy) and the CDCC is excited to continue to share the energy with you!

The CDCC has removed the confining age bracket of business professionals from 21-35 of the Young Professionals Social, with the intention of opening this monthly program to more eager learners. Sessions thus far have left everyone motivated, energized, and inspired to be their best selves. "What do professionals

need to know?" "How can the CDCC empower leaders and generate a promising future?" These were the motivating questions and reasoning behind this great program.

Please note another change – to increase the accessibility of this program, the CDCC is also offering Professional Power-Up sessions via ZOOM every other month. This means that this upcoming Tuesday, February 13th will be a Professional Power-Up ONLINE, solely taking place virtually via zoom. Stay tuned for more information on the topic of this presentation! March's session will return in-person.

Lunch will be provided, and the cost is \$5 for members, and \$15 for non-members to cover food costs for LIVE editions. The months and speakers will continue to alternate in this fashion for the remainder of the year. The current host venue is Grottos Pizza Dover, and the next in-person session will occur March 12th, 12-1pm. Topics and speakers change each session,



so be sure to stay tuned so you don't miss one that really piques your interest.

Employers – please spread the word about this program to your employees. Show them you want to invest in their education, networking capabilities, and their personal and professional development. Share the flyer with them, share why you think this could be useful to them, and allow them the space to be involved. Remember your membership covers all your employees at your location to benefit as well.

If you have a topic you are an expert at and are interested in

sharing an empowering message to the CDCC community, please contact the CDCC by calling the number below for more information. We'd love to hear your thoughts and ideas worth sharing. Knowledge is power, and the together, the more we know, the more we grow.

For more information or to register on upcoming Professional Power-Up LIVE & ONLINE sessions, please visit www.cdcc.net or call (302)734-7513. The CDCC can't wait to keep learning and growing with you through this program – let's keep powering up, professionals!

Military Affairs Committee – Supporting TEAM Dover!

As the proud 4-time receivers of the coveted Abilene Award, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is honored to have a strong relationship with our service men and women at the 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 www.cdcc.net for more information highlighting the CDCC's 2022 win of the Abilene Trophy.)

This kind of collaboration wouldn't be possible without the amazing relationship we have with the DAFB, which is maintained through the people 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 which 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 Evans Armantrading Jr., founder, CEO, & Head of Operations of CNU, Fit, LLC.

The Military Affairs Committee can't wait to welcome two crucial



branches of the community together under one roof for the Annual Military Affaire occurring THIS February 13th, 2024 at the beautiful King Cole Farm (1730 Bayside Drive) from 5:30-7:30pm. Military Affaire, usually a winter event, provides an opportunity for community members to meet with the leadership of the Base and other

military divisions in a casual setting – an opportunity that doesn't come around very often. To register for this year's Military Affaire, please contact the CDCC office at (302)734-7513 or register online here at www.cdcc.net.

In addition to the Military Affaire, this committee is responsible for

CDCC SHOWCASE

orchestrating the CDCC's Annual Bluesuiters Golf Tournament, which pairs two airmen and women 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! Business members of the community hear the intricate and profound stories of multiple servicemen and women throughout various branches of our defense. 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 wishes to connect DAFB with the community because they are influential pillars of the Central Delaware economy, which impacts residents' day-to-day life.

If you or your business is interested in a 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 get started in making an impact!



Leadership Central Delaware: The Emerging Class

Are you looking to take that next step in your career or professional journey? Are you looking to take a deep dive into the world of Kent County? Are you looking to connect with a diverse group of people with like-minded goals? If you answered yes to any of these questions, look no further than the "Diamond Program" of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) – Leadership Central Delaware (LCD)!

Leadership Central Delaware 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 year participants from various member business go through an applications and interview process to form a class of 28 individuals who will embark on a new journey together as they grow their personal and professional networks, their knowledge of Kent County, and hear from important leaders in the community.

Emerging leaders from various industries create long lasting bonds beginning at their Opening Retreat overnight stay in Rehoboth in September. From there the fun and is only just beginning – they will meet on the first Thursday of every month from October to June for their class days that focus

on a key economic driver in Kent County such as Agriculture & Agri-Tourism; Energy & the Environment; Healthcare; Government & Politics; Criminal Justice & Public Safety; Media & Communications; Economic Development; and Education and more! The class is expected to be in for a ride (and not just a hayride) on each of their jam-packed class days full of tours, presentations, activities, and connections from 8-5pm. We wish there were more hours in a day to spend with the class because there are just so many great things to see, do and learn about Central Delaware! The LCD program is a glimpse into the behind-the-scenes of Kent County. Whether you are a Delaware native or a recent resident, the CDCC guarantees your commitment in the LCD program will surprise and open so many doors for you!

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 CDCC would like to take a moment to thank the many supportive businesses who have sponsored this amazing program year after year – we couldn't keep providing this opportunity to the community without you – thank you! 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. Thank you to our LCD alumni who have stayed engaged, impacted their community for the better, and continue to spread the great news of this program.

Ask the CDCC's network of over 500 graduates about their experience and benefit from the program – the CDCC sees and hears of the connections made every day from LCD and we couldn't be more proud to facilitate a space to allow Central Delaware expansion to flourish!

To learn more about the Leadership Central Delaware program, visit our website at www.cdcc.net or call (302) 734-7513.

CDCC SHOWCASE

The CDCC Resource Guide: All You Need to Know About Central Delaware!

If you asked the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce about the things to do and see in the area, it would be hard to know where to begin to guide you on the road to endless discoveries! 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 Resource Guide is your one-stop destination for everything you should know about Central Delaware's business community. On full-color glossy pages, this 96-page reference guide will include all the details you need about taxes, 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. Make this your handy guide ready 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.

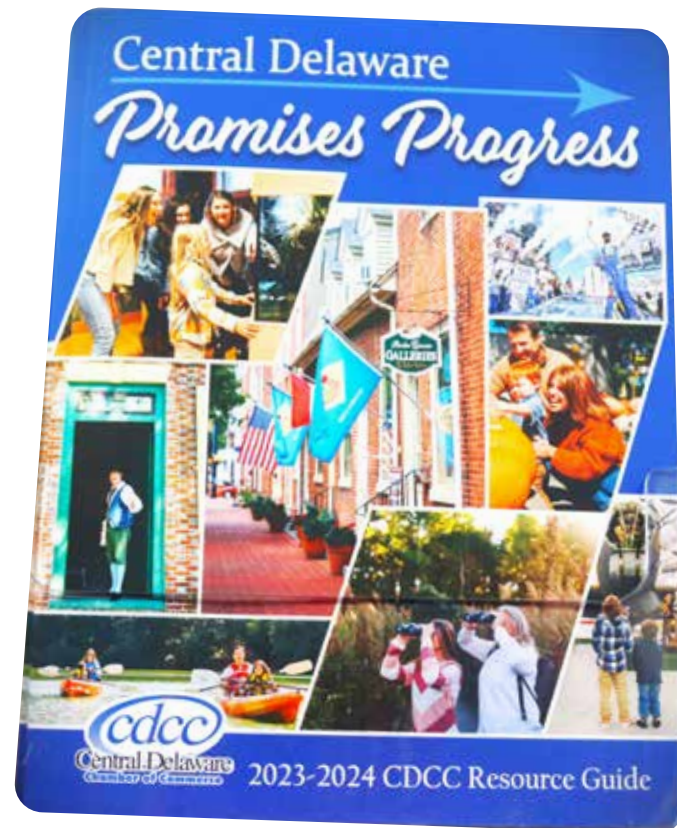
With over 8,000 copies printed and distributed to local hot spots around Kent County, this guide

is the perfect way to showcase your business with a beautiful advertisement featured where your target audience's eyes are fixed. This book is distributed to Kent County businesses, colleges, universities, hotels, the Dover Air Force Base, DE 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 name out to many prospective customers!

The CDCC is currently offering advertising spaces for the 2024-2025 edition of the CDCC Resource Guide. This book will be available for distribution by July 1st, 2024, so don't delay if your business is interested in reserving your space today! 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.

Central Delaware is vibrant and full of endless discoveries, and we want to bring them to you! Help us showcase the best of our beloved hometown for newcomers

and residents alike. For more information, pricing or to reserve a spot in our Resource Guide, contact Dina Vendetti at the CDCC office (302) 734-7513 or marketing@cdcc.net.







Catching Up with the Community!
Wednesday, January 24, 2024

There's a lot happening in Central Delaware!

Advertise with the CDCC

The CDCC understands and appreciates the unique nature of each member's story. The CDCC knows how difficult it can be to share that story in the best way possible. The CDCC is fueled by the accomplishments of the wonderfully hardworking people in its membership and exists to share the good news and messages with the surrounding community. In today's world there are so many ways to share messages: either through digital formats, print, or word of mouth methods. The CDCC has been a trusted voice representing the community for over 100 years and has no intention of stopping now — keep reading to see how the CDCC can help tell your business professional story!

Are you receiving our weekly "Catchin' Up with the Community" E-news?? If not, you are missing out on your fellow member's industry exclusive community events and happenings around Central Delaware. This weekly Wednesday e-news that is sent at 9am features flyers and information from our membership body who stays engaged and wants to share an event with the community! This could be you too! Did you know that sending your materials to be featured in this weekly newsletter is a FREE member benefit?? Send your events today to marketing@cdcc.net by Tuesday at 12pm noon to be included in the send. Don't forget to send your flyer or information a couple of weeks prior to the event date for better viewership

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and coverage to the 1300+ quality contacts in our database!

The same goes for our weekly Friday e-news, "Business News & Company Kudos." This email sent on Fridays at 9am is focused on business news happenings around Central Delaware. This publication lifts up news about member businesses (i.e. new location, expansion of product line or services, alerts, etc.) and also congratulates members who have been recognized for something remarkable (i.e. won an award, celebrating an anniversary, engaged in a community service project, got a promotion, etc.). The Kudos section at the bottom is a chance to brag on our great members like you! There you will find successful event recaps, awards, employee promotions, and more good news. It's always a cheerful read because the CDCC knows their members are always up to great things! Consider sharing your good news linked to a 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.

To contribute to either the Wednesday or the Friday publication, simply send a graphic (.pdf, .jpg, .png) along with pertinent information or a link to marketing@cdcc.net. Items normally run for at least two weeks at a time, depending on space. These emails are distributed to over 1,300 members, and the price is FREE.

In addition to our FREE weekly e-newsletters, the CDCC offers the opportunity for members to shout themselves out via an E-Blast! This is a solo broadcast email of your flyer, information, and materials sent to over 1300 contacts as well. This is a great way to get the CDCC membership and community's attention and advertise directly to them from a trusted source – which is so valuable in today's world of spam. Your email can be scheduled any time during the week. This is a strong advertising tool for promoting your business

and experiences above average open and click rates. These broadcasts cost only \$100 per send – which averages out to about 7 cents per recipient. They can be used for any kind of news, announcement, or advertisement. Simply send your flyer or graphic (.pdf, .jpg, .png) along with any pertinent information or links to marketing@cdcc.net and we will help you create your broadcast in a way that is sure to get everyone's attention!

Last but not least, print is certainly not a dead medium for sharing messages! Each month, the CDCC does a mailing comprised of flyers that highlight events and other happenings at the Chamber. Members are invited to contribute their own flyers to this effort in a program called "CDCC Direct." Members must contact the CDCC office by calling (302) 734-7513 or emailing adminassistant@cdcc.net to schedule a time to include their flyers. If you want to promote your business, advertise a product or service, or invite members to an exclusive event, CDCC Direct

is a great way to attract 1,300+ members. The standard rate for this program is just \$190 – members are responsible for providing the flyers (1,300). Don't discount print advertising with YOUR CDCC!

When telling your story through the CDCC, whether digitally or in print, you can be assured that you will be in good hands and have your message shared with those who care. These are just some of the ways that the CDCC can help you accomplish this to expand your business and create a stronger presence here in Central Delaware.

Be sure to check out our complete membership directory on our website at cdcc.net. 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. Please contact the CDCC office today to learn more about how we can continue to tell your story!

Cornerstone Membership: The Foundational Pillar

At the CDCC, our members are our "Why." They are the why behind the hard work the CDCC does every day. They are the foundation of what we do. They are the reason we are so well supported in order to support them, similar to what a cornerstone achieves. The CDCC is thrilled to offer an opportunity for our members to showcase their business in a stronger way through Cornerstone Membership. Cornerstones are critical in securing a strong foundation for the long life of any building or organization – that is why the CDCC is extremely grateful for our Cornerstone Members who prioritize community engagement, philanthropy, and service from various industries in Kent County. Keep reading to learn how you can be a Cornerstone Member and properly showcase your business as it should be.

Cornerstone Membership is the CDCC's only exclusive marketing package. Member businesses who are part of the Cornerstone program

will receive, for one full year, an exclusive homepage rotating banner ad – complete with a hyperlink to your business – on our website. 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 Member. In addition, you will receive two featured articles in the Chamber Connections newspaper and four broadcast emails per year sent to 1,300+ recipients. Cornerstone Members are invited to provide brochures/flyers/swag to be included bags that are distributed to each new member.

This exclusive membership 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 300+), and the Awards for Excellence Dinner (attendance 300+). You will also receive one exhibitor table at each of the semi-annual CDCC Member 2 Member Expos, admittance for eight at the Chairman's Circle event (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.

In addition, all Cornerstone Members' logos have been added to the bottom of the CDCC's email signature. That 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 package is \$19,700, but as a Cornerstone member, you will receive all these amazing opportunities for just \$6,000. Our Cornerstone Memberships are industry exclusive. As a Cornerstone Member, you will be given the first right of refusal each year.

We hope this gives you a glimpse into Cornerstone Membership with the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce. We hope that you have more questions about Cornerstone Membership that we are more than happy to answer for you! For more information about becoming a Cornerstone Member, please call (302)734-7513 or visit cdcc.net.



Meet the CDCC Staff!

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce staff is a small but strong team of 7 who work together for the best of our members! Lead by President, Dr. Dina Vendetti, the CDCC assures that you are in great hands of people who care deeply about their home – Central Delaware. You will see the staff at all events, meetings around town, Legislative Hall, at local businesses, and of course, at the office in Dover where we are here for YOU! Keep reading below for a brief insight into each team member's role at the CDCC and their favorite quote. Be sure to reach the CDCC office at (302) 734-7513 for more information!



**President
Dina C.
Vendetti**

Talk to me to learn more about...

what's happening! ...at the Chamber,

in the community, and where to go to be in the know.

My favorite quote is... "Don't worry that the world will end today – it's already tomorrow in Australia!" – Charles Schultz



**Crista R.
Brenneman**

Executive Assistant /
Director of Special
Events

Talk to me about...
how the Chamber

can help you & your business, any of the CDCC's 70+ events and programs, and the Military Affairs Committee.

My favorite quote is... "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." – Walt Disney



Cleo D. Bell

Director of Leadership
Central Delaware,
Marketing &
Communications

Talk to me about...
the Leadership

Central Delaware program and how the CDCC can market your business!

My favorite quote is... "Breathe. Let go. And remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure." -Oprah Winfrey



**Jennifer L.
Sutter**

Director of Member-
ship Sales & Retention

Talk to me about...

all the benefits of becoming a chamber member

and how to take advantage of all the free programs to help your business grow.

My favorite quote is... "Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try." – John F. Kennedy



Cindy A. Friese

Assistant for Special
Events
& Sponsorships
(Working Remotely)

Talk to me about...

our special events

and sponsorships.

My favorite quote is... "Stop being afraid of what could go wrong, and start being excited of what could go right." – Tony Robbins



Martha Lehman

Administrative
Assistant

Talk to me about...

when and where the latest Mixer will be so you can network

with others and learn more about other businesses in our local area.

My favorite quote is... "Don't expect to get different results when you keep doing the same thing over and over. For things to change, YOU have to change."



Economic Development: The CDCC is Ready to Build & Grow!

There is no doubt that a healthy local business economy equates and translates into a healthy society for all. Small and large local businesses are the backbone to Central Delaware's economic wellbeing. We all feel the effects of new business entering the area, and well as when they unfortunately close. The vibrant and balanced business landscape does wonders for a healthy and happy society. The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is honored to help this ebb and flow of businesses on their journey here. The CDCC has been ready and willing to assist in the economic development needs of Central Delaware for over 100 years – and thanks to our members, a 100 years more!

The role of Chambers of Commerce in the discussion of economic development is not necessarily working to attract businesses to the area, but instead working to cultivate an atmosphere where businesses want to relocate, build, and grow into. Chambers provide the product that economic developers – like our friends at the Kent Economic Partnership-sell. The CDCC has a fountain of information for business owners to access when they need it, and if we don't have the answers, we can connect you with those who do. We are business advocates that provide opportunities to network, which is crucial in our small, but mighty state.

The CDCC plays an important role in the economic development of Central Delaware and even the state as a whole due to the trickle-down effect from our members and partners. 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. Within our informational role, it is our responsibility to provide up to date information to businesses that will help them maneuver through the obstacles and challenges that face them on a regular basis for them to make sound decisions for their businesses. This was most evident in the recent COVID-19 pandemic, where we provided trustworthy and current updates through our email publications.

Networking in Central Delaware is crucial in making sincere business relationships for the success of businesses. Delawareans conduct business with people they know or who they've heard of via powerful word of mouth. The CDCC is always excited to connect in person with our amazing community. The CDCC offers over 75 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 their business development and growth. You never know where one conversation can lead. Be sure to check our Calendar of Events on www.cdcc.net to stay updated on the latest happenings!

Economic development takes a village; The CDCC couldn't do it without our hard-working partners, members, businesses, and community all working together creating synergy that blooms into a vibrant, expansive, and wholesome society for the bright future to come. Thank you for being along with us every step of the way!

Member News

Food Bank of Delaware Celebrates Grand Opening of Milford Facility with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony!

In a joyous celebration marked by community spirit and service, the Food Bank of Delaware officially opened its new facility in Milford with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event, held on January 15th at 10:30am on Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day of Service, brought together community leaders, volunteers, and supporters to commemorate this significant milestone in the organization's mission to alleviate hunger in the area.

The grand opening ceremony, attended by over 400 hundred supporters, which took place at 102 DE Veterans Blvd. in Milford, began with networking and continental breakfast in their newly opened café. Hot beverages and plenty of heaters and hand warmers were available to combat the cold. Steve Thompson, Chairman of their Board of Directors welcomed and introduced the crowd to Kathy Kanefsky, President and CEO. She gave a heartfelt speech about the significance of this facility, expressing great gratitude to the community for their unwavering support. The Milford facility, all 70,000 square-feet, is a testament to the organization's commitment to serving those in need and is poised to play a pivotal role in expanding the reach of their hunger-relief efforts.

"Today, we come together to celebrate a new chapter for our community. This facility represents more than just a building. It embodies our collective commitment of service to others with respect and dignity. This building symbolizes hope for so many. The project has been years in the making, and there are so many who united with us to make this vision a reality. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all who made today possible," welcomed Kanefsky.

"There are a number of reasons why we want to make sure that people have food to eat and one of those is we have a moral responsibility to do that. We have, I think, a spiritual responsibility to do that. We want kids to have the food to be eating nutritious foods so that

when they go to school, they'll be able to concentrate and learn and be students and someday support us in our old age," shared United States Senator Tom Carper. "We want to make sure that our workforce is healthy and strong. I just want to say on behalf of everybody that's benefiting from your service and your commitment and your help your stewardship and your adherence to what is in the scripture and it's an admonition for all of us thank you, thank you, thank you, God bless you all, thank you."

The new facility will be a beacon of hope for Delawareans. The facility will be able to distribute and house 3.7 million pounds of fresh cold-storage foods and 6 million pounds of non-perishables. A mini grocery store with household necessities will be available. A volunteer room for comfort, classrooms and hands-on training spaces for culinary and warehouse/logistics development professionals will do leaps and bounds for the workforce. An on-site café open to the public will directly support employment for graduates of their culinary training program, as well as their impressive 3.5 acres garden to grow fresh food for the community – What a sight!

"I stand before you today with immense pride. I've got so much gratitude and so much excitement for tomorrow, today is so cool but tomorrow, we're going to open the doors and people are going to walk through here and get food. Think about all the lives we will change," continued Kanefsky. "We do so much more than provide food, we provide hope for a better tomorrow. This building is a testament to that vision; it will allow us not only to distribute food, but to help our neighbors find long-term economic stability through job skills training financial coaching and more."

She extended a heartfelt thank you to sponsors of the Food Bank and contributors to this major building, and to anyone who has ever donated to make this possible. She made way for Frank "Fresh" Coverdale, the longest-serving

employee at the Food Bank, to make the ceremonious cut of the ribbon. "Fresh" has been a mobile pantry driver for 20 years, helping deliver more than 200 million meals to neighbors. The greatness continued with Perdue Farms delivering the first donation to the facility – two trucks full of chicken – over 83,000 pounds!

"When we refer to this as our new home, we're including you. We are so excited about the possibility of providing volunteer opportunities for students respite for families in partnership with our neighboring organizations. Independence commons will become a hub of non-profit collaboration. Thanks to our increased capacity and enhanced resources we can expand our outreach, reduce food insecurity, and create pathways to a brighter more sustainable future for all as we prepare to open these doors to our new home. Let this day be a symbol of renewed commitment, collaboration, and hope a testament to what we can achieve when we come together with purpose and passion," concluded Kanefsky.

Guests were invited in the facility for self-guided tours, A Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service project in the volunteer room, lunch in the café, and packing meal kits for their Backpack program for children on the weekend.

The grand opening of the Milford facility marks a significant milestone in the ongoing effort to build a hunger-free community, reflecting the collective strength and compassion of the people of Delaware. The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce congratulates the staff for their hard work and support of our shared community. The CDCC wishes them the best in their new facility and can't wait to see the amazing effect this will have on people in need.

For those interested in supporting the Food Bank of Delaware's mission or getting involved as volunteers, additional information can be found on their official website at www.fbd.org or by calling (302) 393-2010.



Member News

Cultivating Growth: FCCB Welcomes Agriculture Lender, Stacie Warner

In a significant move to strengthen its commitment to the agricultural community, First Citizens Community Bank (FCCB) has recently welcomed Stacie Warner as its new Agriculture (Ag) Lender. Stacie's extensive experience and passion for agriculture make her a valuable addition not only to the FCCB team, but Delaware's greatest economic industry, agriculture. Having both a birds-eye view and boots on the ground, Warner is poised to foster growth and provide tailored financial solutions for local farmers and their livestock.

Realizing a career in Agriculture was a full circle moment for Warner.



Growing up on a small family farm in Sussex County, she would most often be found outside helping her father. "I always loved it. I would get up early Saturday morning and catch my dad on the way out of the house because I would much rather go with him to do farm work to do housework with mom, and she would get mad," Warner laughed.

Halfway through her college path in architecture she realized that subject wasn't for her anymore, and it wasn't until a teacher guided her to take an Agriculture course where the epiphany set in, "that was where I was like, oh, this is what you know,

this is what I want to do," recounted Warner.

Her education led her to earn a degree in Production Agriculture, however she did not think she would go into Agriculture Finance as she is today. A series of events led her to work for Wilmington Trust and farther up the ladder at Farm Credit Bank for 19 years before switching over to FCCB. "Knowing Ag and knowing the finance side was really a winning combination for me," reflected Warner.

FCCB has long been recognized for its community-first mindset, but the public may be surprised to learn that this financial institution has always had an agriculture lending department. This is where the company got its roots – in the rural and small towns of Mansfield,

Pennsylvania, and parts of New York. FCCB's Ag Team collectively holds over 350 years of experience in farming and agricultural banking, and now, with the welcome addition of Warner, Delawareans across the state have an added resource in their backyard to support the state's number 1 industry.

"I'm excited for the challenge of growing this market and getting FCCB's name in there and being another option for Delaware farmers. Overall, what my main goal is, is to be an advocate for Ag and to help with the industry in any way I can. I just see that I'm best suited to do that on the lending side of it. My number one priority is what's best for the farmer; What's best for the

Continued on Next Page

Ribbon Cuttings

CDCC joins Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center for a Ribbon Cutting

DOVER – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) hosted a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center Wednesday, January 3rd, at 10:30am. The event was held at their location at 506 Jefferic Blvd. in Dover (in front of the Residence Inn by Marriot). Chamber members and friends joined head instructor, Glenenise Parks, to celebrate their 1-year anniversary in their new location!

Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center is here to help Central Delaware residents stick to their New Year resolutions of getting more active, feeling better, and leading a healthier lifestyle in a fun way. The mission of Jazzercise is to create and teach fitness classes that transform your body and life. They use an energizing dance-based, full-body approach that incorporates cardio, strength, and stretching. Morning and night classes are available, a variety of workout formats, and pop-up specialty classes with new chart-topping music each month. The beauty and enjoyment of Jazzercise is the uplifting community and relation-

ships you will make while having fun.

Their new location has been called home for one year and is only growing stronger! This new location has allowed passionate and peppy instructors like owner, Glenenise Parks, to better accommodate the growing membership of this fun fitness class and its services for the Central Delaware community. Their new location has allowed for more classes, participation, and events. "This was an exciting year. We were happy to have our own space so we could expand our schedule and have a space dedicated to Jazzercise. We added stretch class to our schedules right away. Later, we also included a body weight specialty class. We've had a nutrition workshop with a licensed clinical dietitian. We've acquired a certified yoga instructor that comes in every Monday night," shared Parks.

The CDCC was thrilled to celebrate their anniversary after one year of bringing Jazzercise to the forefront of Central Delaware. "I've lived here for quite a while. My father was in the military so that

is what brought me here. I absolutely find a lot of Joy in Jazzercise. I had a hard time sticking to a workout routine until I found Jazzercise. Once I became passionate about it and experienced the changes in my own life, I wanted to share that with others," continued Parks.

Current members of Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center love to volunteer outside of the studio and look forward to continuing to give back to local organizations. "We have volunteered at places like the Modern Maturity Center (MMC), Girls On the Run and The Dover Amish Bike Tour. We've volunteered to dance at MMC to raise funds for Meals on Wheels. We have donated to the Delaware military support and Modern Maturity Center. We hosted a Power in Pink fundraiser for the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC). We donate 100 percent of profits



made to DBCC. We've made special connections with all the organizations and plan to continue to work with them. We hope to find new ways to help within our community," concluded Parks.

For further information about Dover Jazzercise, please contact Glenenise Parks at glenenisejazzercise@gmail.com, visit www.jazzercise.com, or call (302) 222-7662. Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce in congratulating the team at Dover Jazzercise Fitness Center on their new location!

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Delaware agriculture,” continued Warner.

Warner holds relationships in high regard. The relationships she’s made and maintained throughout the industry have continued to be impactful. Settling into her new position in the Delaware market, she has been keeping her boots on the ground by meeting with farmers, assessing their needs, and organizing open forum events to support them. Agriculture Week (Jan. 8-11) was an ideal experience for her. “Ag Week was fantastic. I got to reconnect with a lot of industry folks and then the producers as well, which is huge. I’m working at a new place; same face, same service, new place,” Warner recounted as the event was a great re-connector for her and her clients.

Warner is excited to expand her reach to the entire state, rather than just Sussex County and Maryland. “So now that I have the whole state of Delaware, I am looking to get to know the producers that I don’t know. I am looking to grow that network and to let them know more about me and that FCCB is an option and I’m here to help. Because when you step back and look at it you’re helping the people who are feeding the world and you’re a very small part of that part either way.”

Warner loves the diversity of our First State. “It’s a small state, but we have something for everybody. And I feel like everybody can find their niche and you don’t have to go far to find it. So, I think that’s unique and kind of the best of both worlds or three worlds because you have the beach, you have the Ag, and then you have the city,” concluded Warner on her excitement

to expand her expertise across her home state.

First Citizens Community Bank’s decision to bring Stacie Warner on board as its Agriculture Lender underscores the institution’s commitment to supporting local farmers. With Stacie’s expertise and passion for agriculture, the bank is well-positioned to provide invaluable financial guidance and solutions for the agricultural community, fostering growth and prosperity in this vital sector. As Stacie Warner takes on her new role, the CDCC is happy to support her and FCCB’s work and journey here in Central Delaware.

Warner, on behalf of FCCB, is holding a Grain Marketing Discussion Breakfast this coming Thursday, February 22nd, 2024, at Rudy’s Family Restaurant in Harrington, starting at 8:30am. The event will feature Bill Hostetter of Hostetter Grain. RSVP by February

12th. Open to the public. The purpose of is to provide clarity to a common question of farmers wanting to know when they should sell and how to understand the markets as far as when to buy and sell.

To get in contact with Stacie Warner, FCCB’s New Agriculture Lender, you can reach her at (302)-467-1140 or via LinkedIn. For more information about First Citizens Community Bank (FCCB), please visit www.myfccb.com or call (302) 724-4826.



New Member Spotlights

Introducing: Project SEARCH at Bayhealth

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce is happy to shed light on a New Member who is working to change the lives of students aged 18-22 with mild to severe intellectual disabilities. Project SEARCH at Bayhealth (PSAB) is a Capital High School transition program that prepares these students to seek competitive employment for their futures. This year, the program held its 10th Anniversary at its graduation ceremony at Bayhealth Hospital. Over the past 10 years as a Capital School District transition program, PSAB has provided students with the skills and knowledge to be able to compete competitively for employment opportunities in the community!

PSAB is proud to maintain high rates of post-school employment for its interns and directly align with Capital School District’s commitment to great outcomes for students. Students and Interns at Project SEARCH at Bayhealth learn invaluable skills to directly make an impact to the local workforce and themselves. “Students learn transferable skills during three ten-week

rotations at Bayhealth Hospital, our host business, in such areas as Day Surgery, Environmental Services, Food and Nutrition and Respiratory Therapy, to name a few. Prior to working from 9 am to 2 pm every day, students spend an hour learning resume writing, interviewing skills and financial responsibility,” explained Kathy Ege, Program Coordinator.

In addition to hard skills, interns in the program build their soft skills such as teamwork, productivity, and a positive attitude. They learn the value of punctuality, consistency, dependability, communication, and much more. PSAB offers a wide variety of internship opportunities to support many career paths and skills. By promoting inclusivity and providing opportunities for skill development, the program is fostering a more diverse, understanding, and vibrant workforce.



As a new member of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, Project SEARCH at Bayhealth is eager to collaborate with local businesses and organizations and the CDCC is looking forward to facilitating a bridge to do so. Ege, on behalf of the Project SEARCH team, was motivated to join the CDCC for two primary reasons. “First, to allow Project SEARCH staff to become involved in community and business activities in order to develop relationships with businesses that would benefit from employing Project SEARCH graduates. Second, Project SEARCH is open to all Kent County students with Individual Education Plans for Autism or mild or severe intellectual disabilities who are entering their last year of high school whose goal is to secure employment and seek independence,” shared Ege. The CDCC is excited to see what’s in store in 2024 for Project SEARCH at Bayhealth.

Whether through mentorship opportunities, intern placements,

or collaborative events, there are numerous ways to support this impactful initiative. The Project SEARCH staff hold Family Information Nights throughout the year to provide parents and guardians with information about the program, as well as visits to high schools in the area. Applications for the following year’s class are due by the end of January.

For more information about Project SEARCH at Bayhealth, please reach Kathy Ege, Program Coordinator, at (302) 744-6900 or via email Kathryn.ege@capital.k12.de.us. Visit <https://kccs.capital.k12.de.us/locations/projectsearch> for details as well. Please join us in welcoming Project SEARCH at Bayhealth into membership!



New Member Spotlights

Introducing: Cosmic Vape Ventures, LLC



The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is happy to welcome Cosmic Smoke Vape Ventures, LLC as one of our newest members. They strive to provide the highest quality tobacco and hemp products, hookah, CDB, wraps, along with various other products such as accessories, glass, incense, and much more, all at the best prices possible. Newly opened, the knowledgeable staff is ready to guide customers through their extensive selection, ensuring a personalized experience. Whatever your level of familiarity with their selection, Cosmic Smoke provides a welcoming environment for enthusiasts to explore and find the perfect products.

What sets Cosmic Smoke Vape Ventures apart from other similar businesses in the area, you ask? "We don't believe in upcharging people a ridiculous amount just for profit in our pockets. We also deeply care about customer service, and we

do our best to help our customers and give them knowledge about the products they purchase, it's important to us to spread smiles to our customers before they leave our store," shared owner and partner, Cameron Gilbert.

Cosmic Vape Ventures, LLC is also in a very competitive position within their industry because "we sell high quality THCA flower, that is the same flower that the dispensaries are selling for a crazy markup, we have nothing against the dispensaries and we love that legalization is coming towards Delaware, but we sell a cost-effective AND high-quality product lab tested product," continued Gilbert.

The dynamic and driven duo behind the operation of Cosmic Vape Ventures, LLC are Cameron Gilbert and his business partner Naman Bhavsar. "We both have lived here for basically our whole lives. Naman comes from a business background,

his family owns businesses that stretch quite far. We became friends because we both trade stocks and cryptocurrency and we decided to start a business together. I am passionate about hemp and cannabis, while the laws are a bit foggy right now, we hope that we can carry hemp for years to come as it has many medicinal benefits! I was born in Freehold, NJ and Naman was born in Gujarat, India. As I mentioned, we are both traders and investors, and we like to analyze the markets and invest when its right to help us on our path to financial freedom. Naman loves F1 racing and has a passion for exotic cars and competition. We love sports, even though he's an Eagles fan and I'm a Giants fan, I still love him," laughed Gilbert.

This duo was motivated to join the CDCC because of the great things

they've heard about our organization. As a new business, Gilbert stated "that we just felt it was right." They are excited to get their word out to the community of their new venture and their exclusive, high quality products, and dedicated customer service. "Furthermore, we are excited to be a part of the Chamber because we are simply pro-business. We like to see the local economy doing well and we are happy to be a part of that," concluded Gilbert. The CDCC is looking forward to being a part of their Central Delaware business journey.

For more information, hours, and products of Cosmic Smoke Vape Ventures, LLC, feel free stop by 515 S. DuPont Highway in Dover or call 302-535-4880. Their hours of operation are Mon.-Thurs. 11am-8pm, Friday & Saturday 11am-9pm, and Sunday, 11am-6:00pm. Please join the Central Delaware chamber of Commerce in



Introducing: Two Bay Twists, LLC

We are thrilled to welcome Two Bay Twists, LLC, as one of the newest members of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC)! Two Bay Twists is a dynamic and innovative company that is a family owned and operated food trailer specializing in fresh "Pennsylvania Dutch Soft Pretzels with a Bay Twist." Keep reading to learn more about the guiding vision of how this salty snack favorite came to our area!

Who doesn't love a warm soft pretzel? The combination of texture, flavor, versatility, and cultural associations makes soft pretzels a beloved snack for many people. Soft pretzels are a convenient and portable snack, making them a popular choice for indoor and outdoor events. No matter your toppings or dip choices on the side, a soft pretzel is a perfect shareable, satisfying, and popular snack that always hits the

spot at the right time. Now, you can resolve your craving with a local twist, by keeping your eye out for the Two Bay Twists, LLC Food Truck, coming to a farmer's market, vendor fair, festival, and community event near you!

Pennsylvania Dutch soft pretzels are distinct from other soft pretzels due to their unique recipe and preparation methods. The term "Pennsylvania Dutch" refers to the descendants of early German-speaking immigrants to Pennsylvania. A key step in making Pennsylvania Dutch soft pretzels is boiling the pretzels in a water and baking soda solution before baking. This gives the pretzels their unique chewy texture and distinctive brown color. They are often larger than other soft pretzels and may have a characteristic twisted or folded appearance. The techniques used in this recipe have been passed down through generations,

now to the owners, contributing to a unique and regional style.

Scott Arbogast and Patricia Isherwood are the minds behind this new venture. Scott grew up in Pennsylvania Dutch Country and spent his childhood summers in Delaware Beaches. Years later, his career brought him back to Delaware and he now calls Central Delaware "home." Patricia moved to Delaware nearly thirty years ago when her father transferred to Dover Air Force Base. She has since planted roots in the community, raising a family and working with community organizations. Scott, Patricia, and their blended family (Riley, Alexander, and Giuliana) love everything beach and bay! You can find them "chasing sunrises and sunsets" and competing on who will play "DJ" on any road trip.

Isherwood is a recent Leadership Central Delaware graduate, Class of 2021, and the CDCC is excited to



be a part of her next entrepreneurial step. The program left a lasting impression on her by providing entrepreneurial inspiration from other small businesses. "It also offered insight into the resources and support Central Delaware offers businesses within a variety of sectors and sizes. We are excited to be a part of the CDCC because of its rich history in our community and the opportunities to network and learn from other members," shared Isherwood.

For more information about Two Bay Twists, LLC, visit www.twobay-twists.com, follow them on Facebook & Instagram at Two Bay Twists, or call them at 302-927-1115. Stay tuned for appearances at an event near you very soon. Please join us



New Member Spotlights

Introducing: The Missing Piece Food Trailer, LLC

Homemade comfort food on the go? Say no more! The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) is proud of the growing food truck scene here in Central Delaware. Food trucks have so much versatility to them, especially their accessibility to aspiring entrepreneurs. Food truck owners can quickly adapt their menu to changing trends and customer preferences. This flexibility allows for experimentation and innovation in their culinary offerings. Food trucks can move to different locations, allowing vendors to reach a variety of customers. This flexibility is especially beneficial for events, festivals, and busy urban areas. The CDCC is excited to shed light on this new food trailer accomplishing just that!



like to have a food trailer present such as birthday parties, graduations, and local events. We also cater for larger events that may take place inside or a more formal event. We serve Smoked BBQ with comfort sides and deserts."

The Missing Piece offers a menu that rotates weekly around delicious comfort food options like tender pulled pork, meatball subs, grilled chicken, chili, chicken and dumplings. You can couple your main course with sides like rich mac and cheese, collard greens, yams, and chips. Finish your meal with a sweet dessert of apple cobbler or banana pudding. The menu is constantly updated with the freshest ingredients so there is surely something for everyone to enjoy!

The loving owners of the Missing Piece Food Trailer have roots in the Central Delaware area. "Michael and I have been married for 1.5 years

and decided a food trailer would be a fun adventure for us to embark on," Crystal Ballentine shared. Outside of cooking, Michael, who is Delaware born and raised, is also head coach of the Smyrna High School freshman football team. He recently resigned from assisting with the Smyrna high school as a paraprofessional. Crystal on the other hand was born in Illinois and raised in the Navy, where she then joined the Air Force and served 20.5 years. She retired here at Dover Air Force Base in 2016. Between the two of them, they have 5 children and have settled down in Smyrna. Crystal is also a contractor at the Division of Public Health as the Delaware Emergency Medicine for Children Manager.

The CDCC looks forward to being along for the ride in supporting the Missing Piece's business journey in Central Delaware and beyond. "We were at our first event in Dover DE, and we ran into Dina who was so kind and pleasant, and she invited us to speak to Jen at the CDCC. She explained the networking possibilities and the success this specific



CDCC had and that compelled me to join," continued Ballentine. The couple is excited to meet other professionals in the community. "We want to see Central Delaware thrive and we want to be a part of that," concluded Crystal Ballentine.

For more information about The Missing Piece Food Trailer, LLC and to stay updated on their rotating menu and locations, check them out on Facebook @TheMissing-Piece-FoodTrailer or call (302)399-5594. Please join us in welcoming Michael & Crystal Ballentine of The Missing Piece Food Trailer, LLC into membership!

MILITARY AFFAIRE

Continued from Page 1

Delaware. This highly anticipated event also allows service men and women to step off base for a relaxed evening with people who they may not meet on their typical workday. These interactions help bridge the gap between military and civilian life, fostering understanding and appreciation for each other's contributions.

The DAFB is home to the 436th Airlift Wing, known as the "Eagle Wing," and the 512th Airlift Wing, the Reserve associate known as the "Liberty Wing." The term TEAM Dover, originally designated as a reference to both wings, has come to mean both wings and their community partners. These two Wings, with over 7,900 active-duty military, reservists, and civilian employees, collaborate to train, maintain, operate, and provide mission support to keep the Lockheed C-5M Galaxy and the Boeing C-17 Globemaster III up and running. These aircraft are responsible for 25% of the nation's inter-theater airlift capabilities which allow

worldwide transportation of cargo and personnel. Therefore, TEAM Dover is an indispensable element of not only the DAFB and the Dover community, but to our nation.

Initiatives and events like these are not only designed to express gratitude, but also serve to integrate military personnel into the fabric of the local community, creating a sense of belonging and appreciation. By actively engaging with military personnel, supporting veterans, and recognizing the contributions of the armed forces, the CDCC contributes significantly to the overall well-being and prosperity of the Central Delaware region. We could not make this event a success without YOU – our beloved community, so mark your calendars to attend this powerful, reception-style event!

The CDCC thanks our Premier Sponsor, Dover Federal Credit Union, for their generosity and support in making this event possible!

Thank you to our 5-Star Sponsors for their support (as of 1/23/24): Always Advertising – Veteran Owned, Bavarian Bakery & Deli, City

of Dover, CNU Fit, LLC, Dowding Resource Group, First Command, Military Officer Association of America – Dover Chapter, On Point Therapy Services & Wellness, The Moving Experience, and Wilmington University.

Additionally, thank you to 4-Star Sponsor, Air Force Association Galaxy Chapter as well.

The CDCC's Military Affaire is free to attend with registration. For more information or to register, please call the CDCC at (302) 734-7513 or visit www.cdcc.net. The CDCC is and the DAFB are so excited to touch base with you at this year's Military Affaire, February 13th, from 5:30-7:30pm, at King Cole Farm in Dover.



MEET THE BOARD MEMBERS!

Dana Wattay

Wattay Accounting, CDCC Board Chair

1. Feel free to talk to me about...

- Anything
- Business or Individual Taxes and Planning
- Your Books & Financials (Business / Personal)
- Planning for Your Small Business
- Budgeting
- How to Maintain, Grow, or Sell Your Business
- Beach Music!

2. I think it's important to be part of the CDCC...

- To be the main resource for connecting my company and clients to the right people.
- To be my voice in front of our legislators.
- To network with other businesses.
- to help answer questions from my business's and perspective.
- because they keep up with the needs and issues of all businesses in Central Delaware!



3. The #1 reason I believe that we are a 5-Star Chamber is...

We give back and participate in the needs of our members as if we were a member in need. We make sure the voice and concerns of businesses in Central Delaware are heard!

4. My favorite quote is...

"Actions speak louder than words!"

5. If I had one extra hour of free time a day, I would...

- Do the things I keep saying I do not have the time to do.
- Start playing the guitar again.
- Workout.

6. In one word I am...

Not sure how to describe myself, especially in a single word?

7. Through my membership and volunteering at the CDCC, I've learned...

- More than I can give back, but I am still trying!
- Helping to navigate people in the right direction.
- How to guide those in need to the right place and the people to help.

Ambassador's Corner

Amanda Perdue, Delaware Prostate Cancer Coalition



It is a pleasure and an honor to be recognized by the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce.

My name is Amanda Perdue, and I am a Five-Star Ambassador for the CDCC. The CDCC is an integral part of our Kent County Community, and I became more involved with this organization due to my love for our local community and belief in the CDCC's mission. Through avenues such as the CDCC's Legislative Committee, the CDCC's Ambassador Program, and the CDCC's Leadership Central Delaware initiative, I have had the opportunity to engage in the community

and represent the community on behalf of Kent County.

In addition to engaging in the CDCC's focus committees, I serve the community through the Delaware Prostate Cancer Coalition as a board member. My mission is to bring awareness, educate, and encourage advocacy surrounding prostate cancer. Additionally, I currently serve as a 2024 Honorary Commander for the Dover Air Force Base: Mortuary Operations Affairs. I aim to bring awareness to both the Dover Air Force Base and the community, of what each integral relationship

does to support each other. Both the community and DAFB serve each other, local and nationally, by providing resources and economic stability in our communities.

Kent county is a close-knit community, where neighbors know and support one another. You will find that community members love to frequent our local businesses and take pride in what this county has to offer. I encourage you to support locally owned businesses and explore all of the little wonders Kent County has to offer.

Congratulations - You're a 10!

The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce is excited to introduce a monthly feature for 2022-2023 in the Chamber Connections. "Congratulations – You're a 10!" is designed to recognize, congratulate and highlight recently renewed members who are celebrating membership anniversaries in increments of 10.



Thank You for Your Renewal!

RENEWALS FOR DECEMBER 2023

Company Name	YRS	Company Name	YRS
Delaware Division of Small Business	42	ShureLine Electrical	11
Richard Y. Johnson & Son, Inc.	41	Splash! Designworks	11
Blood Bank of Delmarva, Inc.	40	Progressive Software Computing Inc - PSCI	10
Comcast	34	Representative Lyndon D. Yearick	8
McGinnis Commercial Real Estate Co.	34	Affordable Business Systems, Inc.	7
Paul Edwards Carpet	32	Dover Downtown Rotary	6
Atlantic Concrete Co., Inc.	28	Richard Downes	5
Allen Ins. Assoc Inc. t/a Allen Ins. Group	22	Heartland Payment Systems	5
Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition, Inc.	20	iDIMENSIONS Alignment for Success	5
Delwood Trailer Sales, Inc.	20	Hook PR & Marketing	4
Emory Hill Real Estate Services Inc	16	Military Officers Association of America -Dover Chapter	4
Telepathy Networks, LLC	15	The Wedding Boutique	4
Always Advertising, Inc.	14	Town of Cheswold	3
Dover Tents & Events a div. of Collective Event Group	14	Dover Health Care Center	3
Dover Mall LLC	13	Precision Garage Door of Delaware	3
All Restored Inc.	12	Independent Metal Strap Co., Inc.	2
Edward Jones Investments - Christopher Smith, CFP®	12	Legal Shield - Jason King	2
Kaizen Karate Academy	12	Skyline Catering LLC	2
Restaurant 55 / DDEGE Investments, LLC	12	Delaware Imaging Network	2
St. Andrew's LC Great Hall and Gathering Space	12	Brain Love Neurotherapy	1
Atlantic Refrigeration & Air Conditioning, Inc.	11	City Wide Facility Solutions Delaware	1
Delaware Community Foundation	11	DE Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education	1
Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing	11	Delaware Department of Insurance	1
KCI Technologies, Inc.	11	First Command	1
Key Advisors Group, LLC	11	Mark Group Companies LLC	1
		SunWise Family Dermatology & Surgery	1

New Members

Always Best Care - Delaware	Daniolle Gagr-Bila	624 Mulberry St.	Milton	DE	19968	302-409-3710
Christ Church	Mariann Marston	501 South State Street	Dover	DE	19901	302-734-5731
Cosmic Smoke Vape Ventures, LLC	Cameron Gilbert	515 South DuPont Unit 4	Dover	DE	19901	302-535-4880
Flight Club Uncorked	Shannon Anderson		Smyrna	DE	19977	302-632-4096



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 last "Coffee On Us" Contest was **Bill Skocik of Skocik's Discoveries and Collectibles** for correctly identifying the **Johnson Victrola Museum in Downtown Dover**. Congratulations, **Bill** – 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.

Vendor Space & Sponsorships Available!

W³ WHAT WOMEN WANT FEST

Saturday, March 23, 2024

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Wild Quail Golf & Country Club • Wyoming, DE

Delaware's most popular event targeting women in a relaxed, fun-filled atmosphere. The day includes a fashion show, shopping, light refreshments, signature cocktail, door prizes, giveaways and a VIP experience.

Vendor space is limited. Don't miss this opportunity.

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2024 • EIGHTH ANNUAL CITYWIDE BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION

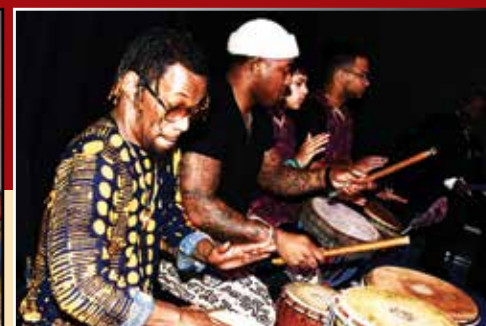


February 2024

*A series of events
highlighting local
art, music, culture
and history.*

FREE EVENTS!

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Family Friendly!*



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Daily State News • Delaware State University • DonDel Productions
Dover Art League • Dover Public Library • First State Heritage Park
Friends of Old Dover • Inner City Cultural League
Sankofa Cultural Arts Center

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Look for upcoming event details at www.DelmarvaEvents.net