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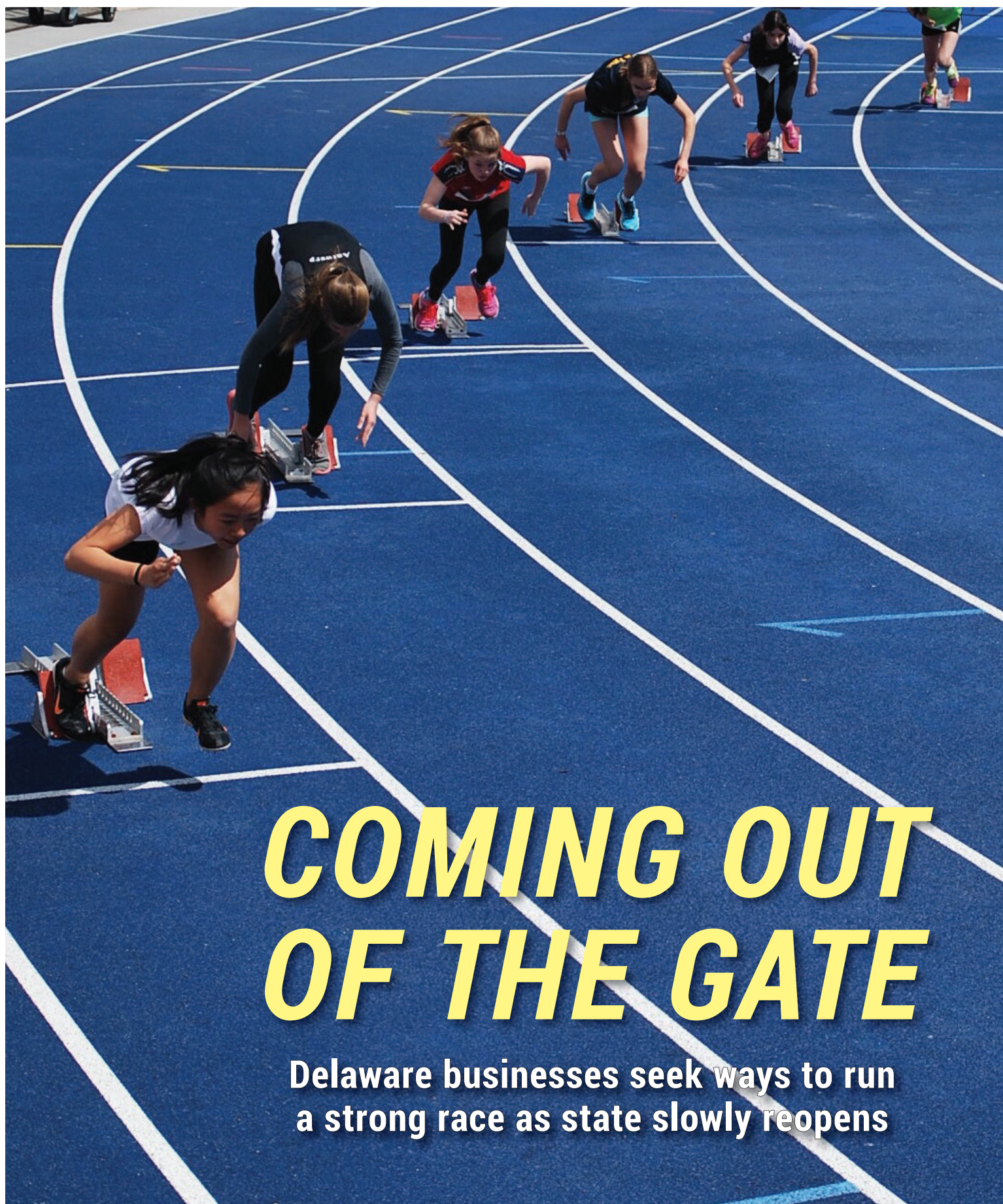
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Supporting Restaurants & Healthcare Workers

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At the onset of the pandemic, *Delaware Today* and *Delaware Business Times* created Delaware Delivers for Heroes, a program designed to help support our state’s restaurant community while acknowledging those who have worked tirelessly to care for Delawareans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to the generosity of our readers, we were able to purchase nearly \$4000 worth of gift cards from local restaurants by the end of May and present them to nominated groups.

As Delaware continues to reopen, local restaurants and our healthcare community are still facing extraordinary challenges.

For more information, to donate or nominate a hero visit, DelawareDeliversForHeroes.com



1 From left, Kelly Connell, director of operations for Platinum Dining Group, presents Delaware Today’s Scott Pruden with the Platinum gift card purchase. **2** From left, firefighters Jacob Strab, Bill Krupa and Jordan Edgerton of Hockessin Fire Company accept gift cards for Platinum Dining Group, presented by Delaware Delivers for Heroes. **3** Robert Lloyd and Charmayne Lane, anesthesia technicians at ChristianaCare in Newark, accept gift cards to Stone Balloon Ale House on behalf of their team, presented by Delaware Delivers for Heroes. **4** Chef Robbie Jester of Stone Balloon Ale House in Newark presents the gift cards purchased from High 5 Hospitality. *Photos by Scott Pruden*

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Medical tourism company plans to add 200+ jobs by year end to address pent-up demand

BY PETER OSBORNE

HOCKESSIN – Medical-tourism company My Med Choices says it will hire 230 full-time employees in Delaware by the end of the year thanks to opportunities created by skyrocketing health care costs, a boom in interest in its telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the anticipation of a return to patient travel for specialized medical, dental, and cosmetic surgeries in early 2021.

The short-term plans include a move to the University of Delaware's STAR Campus in Newark by the end of 2020 and hiring of people in executive level positions, technical roles, case managers, and call-center positions. The longer-term plans calls for the hiring of nearly 1,000 people in Delaware by the end of 2021.

The company currently employs 17 people on its core team, including 10 in Delaware, but expects to have more than 1,250 between Delaware and satellite offices by the end of 2021.

My Med Choices works directly with consumers, self-insured employers and government agencies to reduce health care costs by contracting with top-quality hospitals; medical and dental providers; and recovery and wellness centers in the United States and overseas, said founder and CEO Mary Swenson.

My Med Choices works with employers – many of them large with international operations – to assess their biggest health care costs and then connects them with “centers of excellence” in nine surgical areas, including knee and hip replacements, cardiac, cancer, spine, and bariatric. It negotiates with those institutions within the United States and globally to offer lower prices than they might get through insurance providers, largely because hospitals offer a significantly lower cash price for services, Swenson said. The company helps clients negotiate for those cash prices.

“The United States is the only country without transparent health care pricing,” Swenson said. “Many people here have to make a decision whether to pay their medical bills or their house payment at the end of the month.”

Virginia-based, medical-focused consulting firm Global Healthcare Resources says that an average of 11 million people travel to different parts of the world for medical assistance.

“This industry has been on pause for a while because of COVID but it's starting to come back,” said Jonathan Edelheit, chairman and co-founder of the Medical Tourism Foundation in West Palm Beach, Fla. “It's about a \$100B industry and the big players [like My Med Options aspires to be] need to deal with thousands of patients per year to break even.”

Edelheit said that COVID's impact on companies and individuals means that the industry is likely to become even more attractive as companies and patients focus on saving money.

“The opportunity with Korea is huge, and one of the big opportunities ahead is second opinions and building trust because we have a lot of pent-up demand,” he said.

My Med Choices negotiates a set fee for employers and individual patients and also receives referral fees from clients like Australia-based Ramsay Health Care, a provider of private health care in the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Indonesia, and Malaysia with 480 facilities across 11 countries.

“This is the future of health care,” Swenson said. “We can shop for a car anywhere in the world with

no surprise bills a month later. Why not shop for our health care? It's about giving the patient more choices and options, crossing geographic borders to get the highest quality of care and transparent pricing. It is really that simple.”

The company's rapid expansion will be backed by a \$48 million capital infusion from an Australian investor, Swenson said. The early goings of that expansion have required a lot of pivoting though.

Back in March, My Med Choices was scheduled to send 11 patients to Australia and 17 to South Korea before COVID-19 put an immediate stop to all travel.

“That forced us to pivot and reinvent ourselves,” Swenson said. “We're leading now with the telehealth and second opinions as our main focus until the travel market reopens fully in January 2021.”

Other hospitals have seen huge jumps in use of telehealth services while patients are quarantined. In My Med Choices' case, it's also using the telehealth platform that Swenson created in India in a previous role as an add-on for clients.

Swenson also plans to establish a prescreening center in Delaware, which is a service that few other medical tourism companies currently offer.

Right now, the company has more overseas patients traveling to the United States; however, with the recent agreement with Ramsay Health Care and other top 10 hospitals worldwide, Swenson sees My Med Choices as “an organization without health care borders.”

“The United States has the best cancer treatment but only for the very wealthy,” she said. “In the United States, most insurance companies automatically reject a claim for CAR T-Cell Therapy, which can cost up to \$1 million for treatment. Sheba Medical City in Israel has a 90% survival rate for CAR T-Cell Therapy for less than \$300,000.”

The company signed a memorandum of understanding earlier this year with five South Korean medical firms, a more than \$1 million contract that was facilitated by Export Delaware, a state agency under the Department of State. She's also helped the state of Florida reduce costs for elderly dental patients by identifying reputable providers in Mexico and negotiating discounted rates there and has even helped individual clients in the final stages of life travel with their families to Switzerland, where euthanasia is legal.

The company's new employees will be arranging visas and domestic and international flights; working with employers to identify cost savings; and guiding patients through the process. She will also be hiring a medical director and hopes to acquire a medical-records data management company soon.

Swenson said she will also be hiring a to-be-determined number of part-time nursing assistants and home-health aides to escort patients, transport data and act as translators where needed.

Looking ahead, Swenson said My Med Choices will collect data over the next five years from hospitals that describe themselves as “centers of excellence” and benchmark hospitals against each other. She also hopes to work with a Delaware college or university to create a Medical Tourism/Travel for Treatment certification program and hire top graduates to work for the company.

“None of this would have been possible without the help we've gotten from the Secretary of State's office through the global export program and [Export Delaware Director] Beth Pomper's targeted global mission and expert advice,” she said. ■

Business sub-committee of Pandemic Resurgence task force kicks off

BY KATIE TABELING

WILMINGTON — It's time to move past the reactive split-decisions from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and form a proactive plan if a resurgence does come, said Delaware State Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Chair Katie Wilkinson.

Wilkinson, the senior vice president and commercial market executive at Fulton Bank, has been tasked to lead the Pandemic Resurgence Advisory Committee's business subcommittee. Her chief goal: Setting data benchmarks for Delaware businesses to keep an eye on as the state reopens the economy.

"It will be a challenge, but to identify these benchmarks that business owners can follow when we're approaching a resurgence or in a resurgence will give them the opportunity to self-monitor and control their own destiny," Wilkinson told the Delaware Business Times.

The benchmarks for Delaware's



Katie Wilkinson

economy will be driven by data, like what the state has done in tracking hospitalizations for its phased approach in reopening this month. In theory, this would give business leaders guidelines of what to do to ensure that the curve stays flat.

It would also give businesses advance notice of what to expect if an uptick in COVID-19 comes to Delaware, contrasting with the abrupt closure many stores faced in March, Wilkinson said.

"The idea is to have tools so folks can be aware, part of the solution and maybe even plan accordingly," she said. "It's about providing the tools and guidelines so we do not face another complete shutdown if we can avoid it."

But another challenge in making a

forward-thinking plan is looking five steps ahead, she added. Like every other state and almost every country in the past three months, Delaware has reacted to a number of positive cases, and COVID-19 test results come within 14 days.

"We need to understand the leading indicators that got them from where they are. Because once we start hearing about positive tests, that's old news from two weeks ago," Wilkinson said.

Gov. John Carney created the PRAC and appointed 44 business and community leaders and elected officials to outline strategies moving forward. Led by Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long and Secretary of State Jeff Bullock, the PRAC is divided into three sub-committees: equity, health and business.

To ensure that most industries had a voice, Carney appointed prominent representatives from Delaware's business community like Kurt Foreman, the president and CEO of the Delaware

Prosperity Partnership, and Perdue Agribusiness. President Dick Willey.

But Carney also asked the state chamber to appoint three members to represent each county.

Those business leaders include Chris Schell, CEO of Schell Brothers Homebuilding that focuses in Sussex County; Taryn Dalmasso, plant manager at Edgewell Products in Dover; and Steve Chambliss, the general manager of the Christiana Mall in Newark.

"Once we start work, I suspect we will have potential gaps [in industry and county]," she said. "But my feeling is that we have the right people on the subcommittee to reach out to folks in those industries to get solid input, so that their ideas are represented in the process."

The PRAC's goal is to have a final report done by September 30, so recommendations are ready to execute in time for the predicted fall resurgence of COVID-19. ■

The Pandemic Resurgence Advisory Committee is divided into three subcommittees: business, equity and health.

Members of the Pandemic Resurgence Advisory Committee include:

• **Business:** Subcommittee Chair Katie Wilkinson, Chair of the Board of Directors, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce; Kurt Foreman, president and CEO of the Delaware Prosperity Partnership; Nelson Hill, vice president of United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 27; Todd Lawson, Sussex County Administrator; Steve Chambliss, general manager of the Christiana Mall; Taryn Dalmasso, plant manager at Edgewell Products; Chris Schell, CEO of Schell Brothers Homebuilding; Judy Diogo, president of Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce; Carrie Leishman, president and CEO of the Delaware Restaurant Association; Dick Willey, president of Perdue Agribusiness; Delaware Transportation Secretary Jen Cohan; Senate Majority Leader Nicole Poore (D-New Castle); State Rep. Bill Bush (D-Dover/Milton); State

Sen. Dave Wilson (R-Bridgeville) and State Rep. Jeff Spiegelman (R-Clayton).

• **Health:** Subcommittee Chair Dr. Nancy Fan, Chair of the Delaware Health Care Commission; Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of the Delaware Division of Public Health; New Castle Health & Rehabilitation Center Nursing Home Administrator Mickey Carroll; Genesis Health Care Vice President of Operations Vickie Fox; Beebe Healthcare President and CEO Dr. David Tam; ChristianaCare President and CEO Janice E. Nevin; Delaware Medical Society President Dr. Joseph Straight; State Sen. Bryan Townsend (D-Newark); State Rep. Dave Bentz (D-Newark); State Sen. Ernie Lopez (R-Dewey/Rehoboth Beach/Lewes); State Rep. Steve Smyk (R-Lewes), and AJ Schall, Director of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (also serving on the equity sub-committee).

• **Equity:** Subcommittee Chair Eugene Young, President, Metropolitan Urban League of Wilmington; Delaware State Housing Authority Director Anas Ben Addis; Delaware Department of Technology and

Information Chief Information Officer James Collins; New Beginnings Community AME Church Pastor Rev. Rita Paige; Freeman Williams, NAACP State Conference executive member and former superintendent of the Christina School District; Westside Family Healthcare President and CEO Lolita Lopez; True Access Capital President and CEO Van Hampton; Latin American Community Center President and CEO Maria Matos; Dr. Leroi Hicks, vice chair of the Department of Medicine for the ChristianaCare Health System; La Red Health Center Chief Operations Officer Rosa Rivera; Jane Hovington, NAACP State Conference executive member and president of the Richard Allen Coalition; NAMI Delaware CEO Dr. Josh Thomas; Delaware Department of Corrections Commissioner Claire DeMatteis; State Sen. Elizabeth Lockman (D-Wilmington); State Rep. Sherry Dorsey-Walker (D-Wilmington); Senate Minority Leader Gerald Hocker (R-Ocean View); and State Rep. Lyndon Yearick (R-Camden).

VOICES

The Delaware Business Times is publishing a regular series of short features on how Delaware small businesses are responding to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. They're pivoting: changing their business models or adding new products, or making it easier for their constituents to serve customers. You can find many more at delawarebusinesstimes.com/voices

Refusing to let a pandemic cause her business to melt

No one can say that Janine Crawford's first year opening Pop In Artisan Pops in Middletown was a dull one.

"When you open your own business, you have high expectations and hopes," Crawford said. "But the area has really embraced me because what I have is so unique."

Pop In Artisan Pops, which offers handcrafted ice pops, opened for business in July 2019. What sets the business apart from store-brand ice cream is Crawford's passion for sweets and using all-natural ingredients. Pops are sweetened with cane sugar or honey, and fresh fruit can be found in fruit-flavored treats.

"My grandmother always made wedding cakes and I loved sweets," she said. "Eventually, you start pushing your boundaries. I started to study how to make gelato and sorbet, and here we are."

Crawford did expect a slowdown in



Janine Crawford

the winter. That is why she introduced liege waffles and hot chocolate to keep customers coming back in colder weather. But what she did not expect was a pandemic

triggering an economic recession.

"It's really hard to tell what the difference in business this season is because we weren't open last March," she said. "I'm not really sure what's ahead to be honest, but you position yourself the best you can."

When Delaware started to shut down, Crawford refocused her efforts. She started to revamp her website to offer online sales for take-out. She doubled down on her social media and online presence. Some of it came at an added

expense, but it is the price of doing business in the new normal.

"There are some added fees with takeout, with the boxes and charges through the system," she said. "But without leveraging my platform, I wouldn't be able to do curbside service as I'm doing now. If I waited, I wouldn't be able to do it."

Now that summer is here, Crawford is prepared for the heat to drive more customers craving a cool snack. People can walk in and order, but the dining area is still closed for sit-down service.

But she is not going to sweat it. Instead, she is going to try and stay positive.

"You never know what comes up as a small business owner," she said. "You have to be willing to try new things and be as agile as possible." ■

--Katie Tabling

Sources: DSU nearing deal to acquire Wesley College

(Editor's Note: The newspaper went to press in the middle of a meeting of DSU's board of trustees, where they were expected to discuss a potential purchase. Wesley has a board meeting scheduled for early next week. Please check our website for the most up-to-date information on this story).

BY PETER OSBORNE

DOVER – Delaware State University is reportedly in the final stages of talks to acquire cash-strapped Wesley College, and a formal agreement could come as early as the end of June.

A deal would still have hurdles to clear, including getting outside support for helping fund the acquisition, a deeper review of Wesley's finances, and approval from DSU's accrediting body, according to sources close to the talks.

During Wesley President Robert Clark's five-year tenure, Wesley has reduced expenses and improved its range of academic offerings, but it has been battling well-documented financial challenges, including declining enrollment and falling revenue, a situation that was not helped by the university needing to refund room and board costs to students during the pandemic.

Clark declined comment on any prospective merger partners, citing a confidentiality agreement, beyond saying that "discussions are moving forward in a

positive manner."

"Like a few of our sister institutions in the state, we have talked with Wesley about their future," DSU Chief Operating Officer Cleon Cauley told DBT. "They have strong academic programs and have long been a valued pillar of the Dover community. They are also a minority-serving institution which is a federal designation and emblematic of their student demographic profile. In many ways, their students are very similar to ours, so we care about their ability to provide greater access to students from underserved communities. While we have no definitive agreements with Wesley, we want to be helpful wherever we can."

According to Wesley's website, undergraduate enrollment was 1,035 for fall 2019, compared with 1,228 for fall 2018, 1,447 for fall 2017, and 1,600 for fall 2013. Wesley's minority population is above 60%, according to its online Fact Book.

Wesley students and their parents may welcome a DSU acquisition. Full-year tuition and fees at Wesley for the 2020-21 school year is just over \$27,000, while DSU's published tuition and fees for the upcoming school year currently stands at \$8,258 for in-state students and \$17,294 for out-of-state students.

Wesley's nursing program is one of the best in the state and provides a large portion of Delaware's health care

workforce. Its accredited Master of Occupational Therapy program, which Wesley started when Clark arrived at the university, is the only one in the region. In 2019, the school had roughly 400 to 500 applicants vying for 40 nursing program slots, and its first class from the occupational therapy program had a 2019 pass rate of 100%, which is significantly higher than the national average, Clark said.

There has been some debate over whether Wesley, as a private school, should receive state funding.

Clark, the former commandant of the U.S. Naval Academy who came to Wesley in 2015, argued in September that Wesley should be eligible for state funding since more than 50% of Wesley's students are Delawareans and more than 80% of its graduates stay in Delaware after graduation. Additionally, he said, "Wesley employs 500 people from full professors, students, staff, maintenance, adjuncts, and we provide \$80 million a year – and that's conservative – to our region."

The state did provide a bit of a lifeline earlier this year when Wesley was approved to receive up to \$3 million, buying the school additional time to find a merger partner. Since 2018, the private college has received a total of \$6.4 million from the state.

In addition, Wesley received \$1.5

million in stimulus funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, half of which is required to go to student relief.

Wesley reportedly had discussions in February with Central Florida-based Saint Leo's University, a Catholic university that aspires to become one of the largest faith-based universities in the United States.

Over the past few years, Saint Leo's has walked away from other acquisition deals with schools in similar situations to Wesley, in part because of balance-sheet concerns. The Florida-based private university with 35 regional locations across seven states will also be closing 17 campuses over the next few months and shift solely online, according to a university statement sent to the Tampa Bay Times newspaper.

People familiar with the current negotiations said the acquisition is contingent on DSU's ability to get support from sources beyond the Delaware General Assembly. The General Assembly has barred Wesley from requesting any more funding from the higher-education investment committee or any other state agency.

Clark said in September that Wesley has reduced operating expenses by close to \$3 million, "looking at everything from how you handle consumables to what types of lights you use." ■

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"I realized I wanted to do something so I can see the impact in my community. The DCF addresses a lot of things in the state, and I love how it's evolved in the last 10 years."

Donald W. Nicholson, Jr. and family
Senior Financial Advisor,
Donald W. Nicholson & Associates, Ltd.

ChristianaCare works with MIT, Stanford and Cal to advance COVID-19 testing

BY JACOB OWENS

CHRISTIANA – Eric Kmiec has studied molecular medicine and gene editing for 30 years, but he’s rarely seen a time when the fruits of research are so readily at hand.

As director of the Gene Editing Institute of the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute at ChristianaCare, Kmiec has been leading the New Castle County-based health system’s effort to study patients’ responses to the COVID-19 virus.

The Gene Editing Institute is internationally known for its work with CRISPR, an emerging technology that allows scientists to examine genetic defects and treat them at a level not seen in prior decades. Calling it “the genetic spell checker of human disease,” Kmiec explained that CRISPR is a bacteria’s genetic defense against viruses, which scientists have learned to use as a tool.

“It helps us correct inherited diseases like cystic fibrosis or sickle cell disease, but it will also help us to disable genes that are malfunctioning in cancer,” Kmiec said, noting that ChristianaCare’s work to date is aimed at lung and pancreatic cancer.

Studying gene panels with Stanford, Cal, and biotechs

In mid-May, the Gene Editing Institute was contacted by a consortium of researchers at Stanford University, the University of California, Berkeley and several biotechnology companies to join an effort that is seeking to determine which genes are responding to a COVID-19 infection.

“That’s really the problem in the country right now. Some people who get infected remain asymptomatic while others have a variety of levels of response,” he said.

Kmiec said that researchers will study gene panels obtained from COVID-19 patients, likely through saliva or blood samples, to seek out the genes that may be influencing a patient’s response to the virus. Once they can determine the genes, scientists may be able to identify easier to discern factors related to those genes, such as genetic ancestry, inherited diseases, and socioeconomic factors.

If the work is successful, Kmiec said CRISPR tests may one day be able to tell hospitals how an individual patient may fare with the virus early on in their diagnosis, potentially leading to better allocation of resources and treatment of patients.

Kmiec said that because the study will likely require a year of testing of patients, it is unlikely to be used in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because COVID-19 is among the SARS family of coronaviruses, which already saw a prior pandemic in 2002, epidemiologists believe there will likely be more such



Dr. Eric Kmiec and his team at the Gene Editing Institute are working with leading universities and biotechs to improve COVID-19 tests and potentially make them cheaper. | PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIANACARE

pandemics in the future where the CRISPR science could be applied though.

“We’re cautiously optimistic that we’ll be able to come up with something in the next year or so that will help us understand what genes are accounting for that for the response,” Kmiec said. “It’s not easy, but I think CRISPR has got everybody excited because it allows us to attempt to do that.”

Working with MIT on a diagnostic test

While Kmiec’s team works on the gene panel study, it is also helping the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) refine a CRISPR-based diagnostic test for COVID-19 that its researchers helped develop.

Kmiec said that his team has worked with MIT previously and when he heard that the university was developing its own test using CRISPR, he called them a few weeks ago to see if the Gene Editing Institute could help.

“They sent us samples of their test overnight,” he recalled.

Kmiec explained that the so-called Sherlock test – developed by MIT, Harvard University, Ragon Institute, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute – uses CRISPR to search for the COVID-19 virus’s RNA and binds to it if found. The science comes with huge advantages compared to the more common nasal swab polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test: time and money.

Labs need more expensive thermocycler equipment to run a PCR test and the tests themselves cost upward of \$200 each. In comparison, no expensive equipment is needed for the Sherlock test, and the tests themselves cost about \$6 each, Kmiec said.



It will save the state and health systems an ungodly amount of money if it proves to be as effective.



ERIC KMEIC

Director, Gene Editing Institute of the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute at ChristianaCare

“It will save the state and health systems an ungodly amount of money if it proves to be as effective,” he added.

The test can also return results in a matter of hours, which would help in the pandemic response of rural or impoverished communities that may not have access to the expensive PCR equipment, and are forced to wait days for test results from farther afield, Kmiec said.

To help the effort, Kmiec’s team is working to improve the sensitivity of the Sherlock test as well as fine tune it to the COVID-19 strain that is found in Delaware. Each region seems to have slight variations in the viral type, and Kmiec explained that the CRISPR test will have to be tailored to a region and its population. The Gene Editing Institute has been working in partnership on its research with Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children, which has the ability to verify the results found by Kmiec’s team.

“We’re hoping that this test can really become sort of the standard of care because frankly, it could be used in places where they don’t have the opportunity to have major instrumentation to run the PCR test,” he said. ■

Southern Delaware Tourism launches \$20,000 campaign

BY KATIE TABELING

GEORGETOWN — Southern Delaware Tourism is gearing up for a new marketing message, asking visitors to rediscover what the Delaware beaches have to offer.

In Phase 2, Gov. John Carney hopes to balance health concerns and the highly seasonal tourism industry with lifting the ban on short-term rentals and giving restaurants more seating capacity inside and out. But that all depends on visitors feeling comfortable making the trip.

“Welcoming people back to Delaware and encouraging them to come back is also a big part of it,” Carney said at a press conference earlier this month. “We think we have the best beaches and the best restaurants at the beaches, and we need to do some marketing.”

In the upcoming days, Southern Delaware Tourism Executive Director Scott Thomas said a new “Welcome Back” marketing campaign will run across social media platforms via ad banners, stills and future videos. In total, the campaign cost \$20,000 and required some reshoots to weave into existing materials.

“There’s a lot of thought out there about how to travel safely in the foreseeable future, and we’re ready to relay that message, reinforcing welcoming people back,” Thomas said. “This is really about promoting the county at large with outdoor adventure, wildlife, our culinary coast and more.”

In a typical year, Southern Delaware Tourism would start advertising in January through the end of summer. But most of the effort would ramp up in the spring and fall months, coinciding with efforts to expand the high tourism months.

But since COVID-19 upended those plans, this will be the first time in recent history Southern Delaware Tourism launches a marketing campaign in June. The new ads should run for at least 90 days.

After reallocating some grant funding and other monies, Thomas said this campaign will also target more on the Philadelphia and D.C. metro region within a two-hour radius.

In previous years, Delaware extended its marketing reach to New York and Connecticut. The expectation is that visitors this year are more likely to come somewhere familiar and local rather than make a 5 to 6-hour car drive.

Looking at regional competition at the Jersey Shore or in Maryland, Thomas said that Delaware’s location and how the business community was taking precautions against coronavirus gives it an advantage.

“Rehoboth Beach is known in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and we’re really showcasing our business and how serious we are about this,” he said. “Whether it’s summer safely or welcome back, we’re ready to meet people.” ■

Increased capacity may not be on many restaurants' Phase 2 menu

BY PETER OSBORNE

Delaware restaurant inspectors found that restaurants were “receptive” to restrictions during Phase 1, with only a few stumbling blocks that were dealt with through education rather than enforcement.

But the big challenge in Phase 2, as the state doubles capacity limits from 30% to 60%, is that many restaurants can't take advantage because of the stringent requirement that tables be 8 feet apart.

“We've seen some issues and opportunities to educate about mask wearing and distancing, but most were only one or two violations that they were able to fix so we could move on,” said Jamie Mack, section chief for the Health Systems Protection unit of the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH). “We reinforced that customers had to wear masks when they weren't at the table and had some challenges with employees, particularly with some back-of-house workers. We understand those challenges and are having conversations about next steps.”

The state got off to a slow start with inspections during Phase 1, which ran from June 1-15. In a late May interview with the Delaware Business Times, Mack said he was expecting his 20-person team to do 60-100 inspections per day but they only completed 50 in the first two

weeks as they slowly returned from other assignments, including working with the State Health Operations Center. Mack also said at the time that while inspectors are “not turning away from food safety, our first priority will be COVID-19 compliance.”

Delaware Restaurant Association President and CEO Carrie Leishman said she's heard that the inspections were cordial and educational, adding that she's “really proud of the industry for adhering to the guidelines.”

But Leishman said many restaurants are finding that it's difficult to go much beyond 30% capacity with the stringent 8-foot spacing.

“We're not seeing that anywhere else in the country,” she added. “Our [new] bar-seating allowance is proper social distancing. We just want the same language for our tables, particularly since many of our restaurants can't take advantage of things like outdoor seating.”

Longtime Delaware restaurateur Xavier Teixido agreed that the move to Phase 2 has not been the panacea many hoped for. In his case, he has not applied for expansion of outdoor dining in Trolley Square because he believes it would be contested.

“We are unable to get to 60% capacity at either Kid Shelleen's or Harry's Savoy Grill under the current social distancing



Xavier Teixido

regulations,” he said. “Bar seating is at about 45% of previous capacity. Demand for our existing patio seating is high but due to social distancing requirements we are under 50% capacity there as well. [Plus], you also have to factor in the additional loss of seating when two people are seated at a table of four, which is common.”

Mack acknowledged that there will be “an adjustment period” to the increased capacity allowance with the 8-foot restrictions still in place, but said he has been “impressed with how seriously the restaurants are taking this and how everyone is doing the right things in the right way.”

Delaware has about 4,000 businesses that are registered as a food establishment. Mack said that his team is looking at a cross-section of restaurants so that they can understand where they need to focus future inspections. That could include small independent operators, a specific restaurant chain, or larger, more popular restaurants.

“We haven't received any food-establishment complaints in the last



Bar seating is at about 45% of previous capacity. Demand for our existing patio seating is high but due to social distancing requirements we are under 50% capacity there as well.



XAVIER TEIXIDO

Delaware Restaurateur

week or so after a few initially,” Mack said. “We have seen some folks try to get creative and do some things we don't allow, and we did identify a few places that didn't have permits.”

But Delaware restaurants waiting for the removal of restrictions in Phase 3 may have to wait longer than expected.

Gov. John Carney's Deputy Chief of Staff Jonathan Starkey tweeted June 16 that “Delaware has not set a date on Phase 3 of reopening. Why? Because too many people are not wearing masks, not social distancing, and only thinking about themselves. Governor Carney and the public health team will follow the data closely and move forward when we can do so safely.” ■

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Arts organizations get 'vital lifeline' through CARES Act grants

BY PETER OSBORNE

The Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA) has allocated \$443,000 in relief grants to 55 arts and community-based organizations as well as 11 artists.

The grants, supported organizations and individuals who have had to postpone or cancel events – and in many cases, fund-raising – as a result of social distancing guidelines set forth by the state.

The money came from the National Endowment for the Arts through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and ranged in size from \$1,000 to \$12,500. Funds could be used to support salaried employees, fees for artists and/or contractual personnel, as well as facility costs such as rent and utilities, incurred between March 15 and August 31.

"After having to postpone our July production of 'The Tempest' until summer 2021, [this] is a vital lifeline," said David Stradley, producing artistic director for Delaware Shakespeare, which received \$10,000. "The summer production is our largest source of earned revenue with over \$58,000 in ticket sales. The grant ensures that we are able to keep our small administrative staff in place, while continuing to find innovative ways to connect Delaware community members with Shakespeare. Our online Sonnet Project has so far received over 25,000 cumulative views and supported artists with supplemental income at a challenging time for freelance workers."

Lewes-based Coastal Concerts Executive Director Carol Dennis said, "The grant really helped reduce our cashflow uncertainty as we lost critical revenues from our advertisements and sponsorships from struggling local businesses. This is allowing us to focus on the launch of our new website/electronic ticketing platform and the 2020-21 season – all while developing a new business model for the COVID-19 era."

The Delaware Division of the Arts is an agency of the Delaware Department of State that administers grants and programs that support arts programming,

educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life.

"We were literally days away from announcing what would have been our biggest season to date at The Freeman Stage when COVID-19 hit our nation," said Patti Grimes, executive director of the Joshua M. Freeman Foundation/The Freeman Stage, which received \$12,500. "With the assistance of the CARES grant, we were able to pivot to a virtual presentation of arts enrichment and education for the local community and schools."

"This emergency support from DDOA is critical to an organization like ours at this perilous time," said OperaDelaware General Director Brendan Cooke. "We have a highly specialized staff that would be very hard to replace. At present, there is no safe way for us to produce large scale, live opera. Socially distanced seating may be achievable, but right now, it does not seem to be safe to rehearse large groups of singers indoors. We've been able to pivot to some small-scale, outdoor "drive-through" performances, but there's simply not enough capacity for revenue for that to be sustainable long-term. Funds like this act as a "ventilator" for organizations that can't quite breathe on their own yet, and we are profoundly grateful."

Newark Arts Alliance Executive Director Terry Foreman, whose organization received \$7,500, said, "The programs we are now able to offer due to this funding are the Newark Garden Tour, Camp Imagine, Spring and Summer workshops and classes and maintaining our space to be ready to host exhibits again in late June," said Terry Foreman, executive director of the Newark Arts Alliance, which received \$7,500.

CARES Artist Relief Grants also provided up to \$500 to eligible Delaware artists impacted by the cancellation of a specific scheduled event, gig, or opportunity (e.g. commissions, performances, readings, contracts, teaching classes, etc.) because of COVID-19. DDOA did not disclose the names of those recipients. ■

Grants went to the following organizations. Unless otherwise noted, the organizations are based in Wilmington or the city indicated in the organization's name:

- **\$12,500:** Delaware Symphony Orchestra, Joshua M. Freeman Foundation (Selbyville), and Music School of Delaware.
- **\$10,000:** Art Therapy Express Program (Hockessin), Art Works for All (Dover), Associated Community Talents (Middletown), Biggs Museum of American Art (Dover), Brandywine Baroque (Greenville), Center for the Creative Arts (Yorklyn), Choir School of Delaware, Christina Cultural Arts Center, Cityfest Inc., Delaware Art Museum, Delaware Choral Society (Dover), Delaware Dance Company (Newark), Delaware Shakespeare, Delaware Theatre Company, Developing Artist Collaboration (Rehoboth Beach), First State Ballet Theatre, Grand Opera House, Inner City Cultural League (Dover), Mid-Atlantic Ballet (Newark), Mispillion Art League (Milford), OperaDelaware, Possum Point Players (Georgetown), Rehoboth Art League, Rehoboth Beach Film Society, Rehoboth Beach Jazz Festival, Rehoboth Summer Children's Theatre, Smyrna Opera House, The Candlelight Theatre (Ardentown), The Delaware Contemporary, UD Resident Ensemble Players (Newark), Wilmington Drama League, Winterthur Museum Garden & Library
- **\$7,500:** Clear Space Theatre Company (Rehoboth Beach), Delaware ChoralArts (Greenville), Delaware Institute for the Arts in Education, Market Street Music Corp., Newark Arts Alliance
- **\$5,000:** Coastal Concerts Inc. (Lewes), Newark Symphony Orchestra, Pieces of A Dream, Rainbow Chorale of Delaware, UD Master Players Concert Series (Newark),
- **\$2,500:** Arden Club, Bootless Stageworks, CoroAllegro, Kent County Theatre Guild Foundation Inc. (Dover), Southern Delaware Chorale (Rehoboth Beach)
- **\$1,000:** Capital Ringers (Lewes), Children's Theatre of Dover, Delaware Pacem in Terris, Milton Arts Guild, Rehoboth Concert Band

Gulftainer keeps sights on lofty future for Wilmington port

BY JACOB OWENS

WILMINGTON – Gulftainer has wasted no time in making an impact as the new operator of the Port of Wilmington, but it has had to navigate the uncertain waters of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The world's largest independent port operator, based in the United Arab Emirates, took over the Port of Wilmington in October 2018 after striking a 50-year deal with the state entity that previously ran the port, Diamond State Port Corp.

Since then, Gulftainer has invested \$118 million to repair the port's eight berths, road infrastructure and warehouses while also installing additional crane rail, so that ship-to-shore cranes now run the length of the berths, and a new water pump house, according to Eric Casey, CEO of GT USA Wilmington, the local subsidiary for Gulftainer. The company has another \$70 million in projects left to go, Casey said – meaning Gulftainer will nearly double the original \$100 million capital investment commitment made when the state leased the property.



Eric Casey

“We are in the process of building our rubber-tire gantry container stacks,” he explained, referring to the tracked cranes that can stack and sort the 20-foot standardized containers that house import and export products. “We’ve also finished the design on our new dry warehouse that we are going to start relatively soon. I say ‘relatively’ because with COVID-19, everything was slowed down significantly and we’re trying to figure that out now.”

Gulftainer is seeking to increase the number of containers that can be stored at the port by about 70%, rising from 350,000 to 600,000. That will be achieved by use of the gantry stacks to increase the height and density of container yards without having to expand the wharf's footprint, Casey explained.

Increased collaboration, efficiency

A new face has arrived at the port to support customers' needs once freight arrives in the country. Momentum Logistics, another Gulftainer subsidiary, opened its first U.S. office at the Port of Wilmington in March, bringing 30 jobs with it.

“When we got our feet wet here at Wilmington, [Momentum Logistics General Manager] Stuart Mainland determined that this would probably be a good opportunity for Momentum to join in,” Casey said. “Momentum is a very synergistic business to us, because



Work is steadily progressing at the Port of Wilmington to bring in more ships and cargo under Gulftainer's watch. | PHOTO COURTESY OF GULFTAINER

not only can we take your containers off the berth, but now we can put it right on to the logistics trucks and take it right to your distribution center.”

The port itself has also seen lower unloading and loading times under the new owner. Casey explained that those efforts included consolidating the container yard and getting better productivity out of the rail cranes.

“Our ILA friends have been absolutely fantastic in showing us what they can really do in terms of safe, efficient and effective productivity,” he said of the hundreds of unionized port workers represented by Local 1694 of the International Longshoremen's Association. “They really helped us change the dynamics by which we were measured, so we were seeing an increase of around 38% in productivity across the board, across all volume.”

Part of Gulftainer's efforts to maintain a good relationship with its union is to include it in a project being developed at the former Elbert-Palmer Elementary School in Southbridge. The port operator signed a 10-year lease for the property from the Christina School District in order to operate a training center for job applicants while also giving space to the ILA for a union hall.

“We want people to look at joining the ILA and see that these are these are career-oriented jobs and their families can have opportunities to work,” Casey said. “We’re also talking to a credit union that wants to set up shop in there to give people some financial opportunities as well.”

What the future holds

While Gulftainer waits out the impacts of the pandemic, it is also keeping its eyes on the future. The Port of Wilmington ranks as the 22nd largest container port in the country, but hopes to break into the top 10 in coming years.

Part of that will come through the signing of new shipping lines. Casey said that Gulftainer was in talks with 19 of the 20 of the world's largest shipping lines, 17 of which would be new to the port. The pandemic has thrown a wrench into those negotiations, but Casey said he

hopes to pick back up in coming months.

Key to that planned growth will be the development of a second shipping terminal a few miles to the north at a former Chemours plant at Edgemoor. The state purchased the site for \$10 million just before the leasing of the property to Gulftainer, which now plans on investing at least \$500 million to build a terminal capable of holding 1.2 million containers. The bulk of that investment will come from building a wharf on the Delaware River to receive ships hauling primarily dry container cargo.

“We’re going to be able to bring in bigger ships, 10,000 [containers] and up,” he said. “Right now, that's bigger than we can handle here at Wilmington.”

Casey said that project, which is still in the permitting phase, had eyed breaking ground in 2021, but the pandemic's impact may change the company's timeline. Once built, Gulftainer believes



We're seeing an increase of around 38% in productivity across the board.



ERIC CASEY

CEO, GT USA Wilmington

Edgemoor will be a gamechanger for Delaware's shipping status because of its unique geographic positioning, Casey said.

“Once you leave the facility, there is one traffic light between you, Canada, Miami, or Chicago. You're within 24 hours of two-thirds of the U.S. population,” he said, noting most older ports in the mid-Atlantic are located inside cities. “We’re also the first port on the Delaware River from the Atlantic Ocean, saving customers hours of sailing time and a lot of fuel money as well.” ■

Pandemic suppresses traffic volumes

Traffic volumes at the Port of Wilmington have been well below expectations as a result of the pandemic

“The shipping lines are estimating that by August they will have taken 4 million containers worth of capacity out of the supply chain system,” said Eric Casey, CEO of GT USA Wilmington. “That weighs on everybody worldwide and it does weigh on us here.”

Bulk freight volume has declined, principally because mines have slowed production or closed due to social distancing concerns around COVID-19, Casey said. Mineral and chemical salt shipments that would normally flow through the port have fallen in Wilmington.

Fresh fruit imports, a calling card for Wilmington as it is the largest North American port for fresh fruit and juice concentrate under brands like Dole, Chiquita and Citrusuco, also have declined because farmers in Central and South America couldn't harvest their crops as they normally would with diminished workforces. Lockdowns in China and Western Europe allowed some exporters to consider sending their product to the United States though, which helped lessen some of the potential volume losses, Casey said.

Thankfully, Wilmington's longstanding stringent health guidelines to back its Safe Quality Food certification aligned fairly closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for COVID-19.

“Our system wasn't totally disrupted because we were already on board with a large majority of what they were asking for,” Casey said, noting Gulftainer's operational costs were limited to additional cleaning and acquisition of personal protective equipment.

The work on a training center for job applicants that would also house a union hall came to a halt with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, Casey said, noting they hope to begin again soon as the state's reopening plan continues.

THE LIST

Delaware's Largest Exports

Ranked by Total 2019 Exports

Rank	Code Description	UN Commodity Code	Total 2019 Exports	Total 2018 Exports	Q1 YTD 2019	Q1 YTD 2020	YOY YTD %	% Growth '18-'19	DE Exporters
	ALL EXPORTS		\$4,407,150,210	\$4,704,478,083	\$1,492,960,443	\$1,222,113,480	-18.1%	-6.3%	
1	Pharmaceutical Products	30	\$1,034,488,677	\$989,099,112	\$312,456,654	\$126,066,761	-59.7%	4.6%	Incyte, Astra Zeneca
2	Plastics And Articles Thereof	39	\$419,739,764	\$505,416,387	\$147,384,560	\$163,348,052	10.8%	-17.0%	Chemours, Polymer Technologies, Speakman, White Optics, Batta Environmental, ILC Dover
3	Optic, Photo, Medical Or Surgical Instruments	90	\$410,584,538	\$389,958,547	\$126,355,585	\$137,776,299	9.0%	5.3%	Agilent, ANP Technologies, Advanced Materials Technology, Avkin, B&W Tek, Denovix, Halosil, LiteCure, Sepax Technologies, GS-Tek
4	Vehicles and Parts; Excludes Railway	87	\$400,608,316	\$833,308,494	\$126,892,600	\$106,763,532	-15.9%	-51.9%	Port to Port
5	Industrial Machinery	84	\$382,248,222	\$385,333,870	\$119,569,097	\$130,732,181	9.3%	-0.8%	Accudyne, Solar Unlimited
6	Mineral Fuel, Oil, Bituminous Subst.; Mineral Wax	27	\$243,693,122	\$350,027,430	\$128,181,814	\$56,015,225	-56.3%	-30.4%	Delaware City Refinery
7	Aircraft, Spacecraft, And Parts	88	\$203,353,166	\$70,121,118	\$139,298,694	\$29,367,467	-78.9%	190.0%	Accudyne
8	Natural/cultured pearls, precious stones & metals, coin	71	\$185,469,370	\$43,381,789	\$21,114,505	\$17,993,511	-14.8%	327.5%	
9	Edible Fruit & Nuts; Citrus Fruit Or Melon Peel	08	\$165,437,105	\$176,483,244	\$61,000,120	\$63,207,402	3.6%	-6.3%	Vincent Farms, Fifer Orchards
10	Electric Machinery; Sound Equip; Tv Equip	85	\$130,016,079	\$193,634,479	\$33,282,672	\$90,346,621	171.5%	-32.9%	
11	Soap; Waxes, Polish Etc; Candles; Dental Preps	34	\$88,107,998	\$77,573,482	\$27,358,343	\$33,458,277	22.3%	13.6%	Jax & Daisy
12	Rubber Products	40	\$87,840,461	\$4,476,427	\$23,530,591	\$44,124,146	87.5%	1,862.3%	
13	Organic Chemicals	29	\$64,371,876	\$71,056,208	\$22,427,051	\$21,077,049	-6.0%	-9.4%	Arkion, Adesis Inc.,
14	Converted Paper Product Manufacturing	32	\$62,750,462	\$74,511,635	\$24,074,731	\$19,676,109	-18.3%	-15.8%	
15	Chemical Manufacturing	32	\$58,071,324	\$54,934,756	\$22,402,335	\$16,568,527	-26.0%	5.7%	DuPont
16	Meat And Edible Meat Offal	02	\$56,638,855	\$77,071,193	\$19,143,017	\$24,809,753	29.6%	-26.5%	Perdue, Mountaire Allen Harim
17	Works Of Art, Collectors Pieces And Antiques	97	\$51,310,008	\$12,271,250	\$15,484,882	\$2,291,584	-85.2%	318.1%	Bayshore Fine Art
18	Miscellaneous Chemical Products	38	\$38,586,916	\$52,261,681	\$14,459,636	\$14,208,188	-1.7%	-26.2%	Miles Scientific, Halosil, Arkion
19	Iron and Steel Mill Manufacturing	73	\$31,879,016	\$36,061,204	\$14,338,774	\$4,809,013	-66.5%	-11.6%	Industrial Valves and Fittings
20	Inorganic Chemicals; Precious & Rare-Earth Metal & Radioactive Compounds	28	\$30,899,951	\$23,770,731	\$8,956,183	\$12,286,469	37.2%	30.0%	
21	Manmade Staple Fibers	55	\$26,047,017	\$32,888,022	\$8,133,434	\$7,730,651	-5.0%	-20.8%	
22	Textile adding, felt & nonwoven; yarns; twine, cordage	56	\$21,411,089	\$12,718,737	\$6,015,649	\$6,715,067	11.6%	68.3%	
23	Miscellaneous Edible Preparations	21	\$19,782,268	\$13,728,930	\$4,088,404	\$10,165,443	148.6%	44.1%	Dr. Natural Healing
24	Construction; Contractors	23	\$13,903,314	\$6,148,572	\$2,491,900	\$5,045,978	102.5%	126.1%	Buccini/Pollin Group
25	Essential Oils; Perfumery; Cosmetics	33	\$13,581,426	\$12,046,750	\$3,353,477	\$2,280,785	-32.0%	12.7%	
26	Impregnated Etc Text Fabrics; Tex Art For Industry	59	\$11,018,186	\$5,850,670	\$2,722,549	\$5,013,488	84.1%	88.3%	
27	Glass And Glassware	70	\$10,478,195	\$10,726,243	\$3,328,585	\$3,318,815	-0.3%	-2.3%	
28	Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles	96	\$10,478,043	\$12,324,517	\$4,301,877	\$4,087,602	-5.0%	-15.0%	
29	Copper And Articles Thereof	74	\$9,357,416	\$8,276,412	\$2,609,835	\$24,169,842	826.1%	13.1%	Speakman

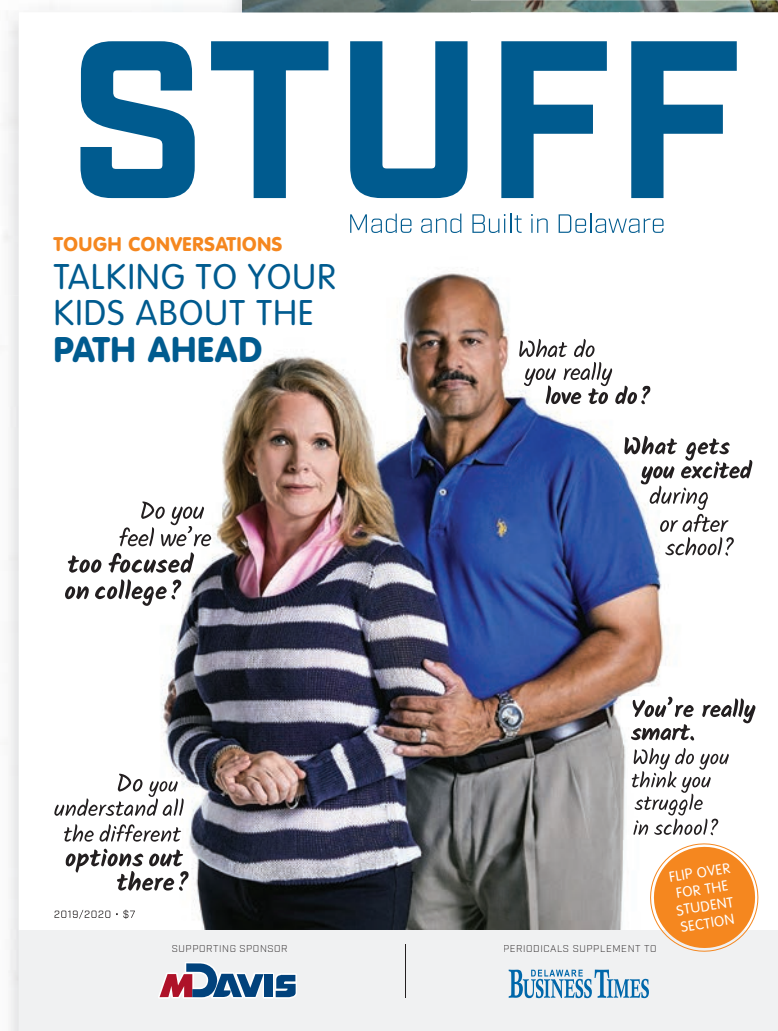
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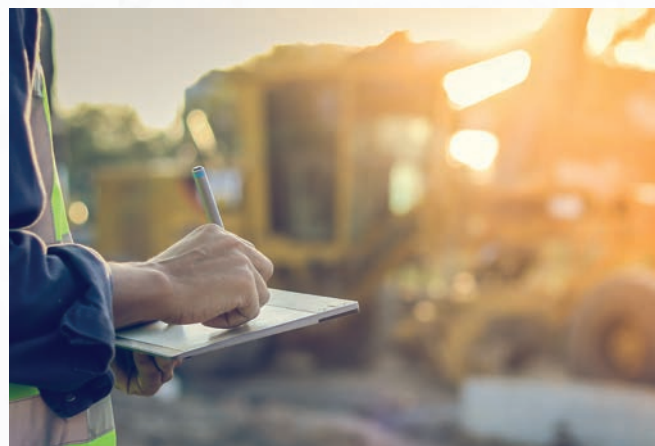
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How asking courageous questions inspires change



SHARON KELLY HAKE
Guest Columnist

The workshop had been planned months ago. The topic was curiosity, specifically how to be productively curious by asking courageous questions.

Great Dames, a community whose focus is helping women activate their purpose and passion, would come together virtually in a workshop led by Adina Tovell, a nationally recognized curiosity advocate and expert.

Then COVID-19 hit, and we found ourselves questioning how to lead our families, communities and businesses into an unknown future. Then George Floyd was killed, and we joined people everywhere to ask fierce questions about pervasive racial injustice and unconscious bias.

That's what Great Dames do well. We ask questions. As women, we frequently engage in powerful conversations to help us know better and do better. We aim to understand what matters most and how we can make sense of the world. We talk about how we can create a better world

for our children and future generations. How we can make our mark.

We learned there is a skill involved in crafting and asking courageously curious questions. I do not believe there is a more important time in history to become masters of this skill. Why? This new skill will serve us because it is time to ask courageous questions. Questions that will awaken new insights within us. Insights that illuminate our values and help us to align our actions with our values.

When we are asked a courageous question, it taps into a deeper place within us. Courageous questions make us more open to new ideas and solutions. They play a vital role in teaching, mentoring, forging authentic connections and solving big problems. They help us listen with openness, act in alignment with our values, lead with integrity, love deeply and compassionately.

Guided by Adina, we learned that the process starts with purpose – understanding what matters most and what you want to achieve. Next comes context. Right now we have the opportunity and necessity to boldly ask questions about our society and ourselves. We learned that a productive question

needs to be phrased using positive and empowering language like “If my goal or intention is to...” or “How might I....” or “How else could...” And, we learned that you need to pay attention to mood, tone, timing, and body language when asking courageous questions. Mastering these skills opens up dialogue and change instead of asking questions in a negative way that can shut the door on the ideas and inclusiveness we need to survive and thrive.

I believe that Great Dames – and there is a Great Dame in all women – love to ask questions, especially when they are surrounded by a community of sisters who show us what it means to listen without judgment, to love unconditionally, and to value others, even when their stories are different from mine. Great Dames show us what it means to believe in all women. And that all women have value and deserve our support.

At this remarkable moment in history, we are asking all women to make a commitment to ask courageous questions and to listen to what they awaken within us. ■

Sharon Kelly Hake is co-founder and president of Great Dames, Inc.

Courageously curious questions template for focusing

- If my goal is to _____, how might I _____?
- If my intention is to _____, how can I honor that in this moment?
- If I truly value _____, what might I _____?
- If I truly want to show up as _____, how might I _____?
- If _____ really matters to me, how might / will / could I _____?

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Dover Post downsizes, but new building owner adding 40 jobs

DOVER — The Dover Post plant is downsizing its space in the capital, making way for textile manufacturer Avalon Industries, Inc. and plastic container maker International Container Corporation.

Steven Manlove, the CEO and president of both Baltimore-area based Avalon Industries and International Container, bought the 24,000-square-foot warehouse for \$1.4 million in May. Once interior renovations are complete, the manufacturer will bring up to 40 new positions to the state capital.

“There’s some heartburn because we’re leaving people that have worked for years with us behind. But the business climate in Maryland is getting tougher and with our lease up, this was an opportunity we had to jump on,” Manlove told the Delaware Business Times.

Avalon Industries, based in Baltimore, makes bags, straps, covers and more. Among its clients are first responders, major U.S. defense contractors and other commercial clients. International Containers is an injection moulding company that currently focuses on disposable containers for laboratories.

Manlove plans on entering into a long-term lease with Gannett, which owns the Dover Post. The warehouse will be divided into four suites, with 18,000 square feet to be divided up between Manlove’s companies, and the rest to the Dover Post and its 18-person staff.

“We have been using about 20% of the space we have. We’re excited that we can see this remaining space utilized instead of remaining vacant,” said Amy Dotson-Newton, the publisher and advertiser director of the Dover Post.

Breaking down the space, the Dover Post will retain 3,500 square feet for office space and 2,500 square feet in warehouse space where carriers will get newspapers before they start their routes, according to Dotson-Newton.

The Dover Post was founded in 1975 by Jim Flood, which later added six other weekly newspapers. In 2008, the paper was sold to GateHouse Media, which owned 144 daily newspapers and 684 community publications. GateHouse also added other Delaware publications to its portfolio like the Middletown Transcript, Smyrna/Clayton Sun-Times, Sussex Countian, Milford Beacon and the Hockessin Community News.

GateHouse merged with Gannett last year in a transaction valued roughly \$1.4 billion, making Gannett the country’s largest newspaper chain with 261 newspapers in 46 states, including The News Journal based in Wilmington.

The Dover Post stopped printing newspapers onsite in 2017. Printing has moved to the News Journal’s New Castle plant, according to Gannett spokeswoman Stephanie Tackach. ■

—Katie Tabeling

AstraZeneca studying potential COVID-19 antibody treatment

WILMINGTON – Building on its work toward a COVID-19 vaccine, the pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca announced June 9 that it has secured federal funding for a treatment using antibodies grown in labs.

AstraZeneca, which has its U.S. corporate headquarters in the Wilmington suburbs, reported that it has licensed six coronavirus-neutralizing antibodies from Vanderbilt University and plans to enter two of them into clinical development in the next two months. Terms of the collaboration agreement it signed with Vanderbilt in April were not disclosed.

The treatment focuses on antibodies, which are created in the body to fight infections. Monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) mimic natural antibodies and can be produced in large quantities in the lab to inject into infected patients.

The spike protein on the SARS-CoV-2 virus is the primary target being explored for targeting by mAbs, because it is responsible for binding and fusing the virus to the host cell membrane. The aim is that by targeting the spike protein, the antibody will be able to neutralize the effects of the virus by affecting its capacity to infect healthy cells.

AstraZeneca reported that it has evaluated more than 1,500 mAbs in the treatment of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and found the most encouraging pre-clinical results in Vanderbilt’s antibodies. The two advancing to trial are hoped to be combined together in a single treatment.

“By combining two monoclonal antibodies that bind to distinct parts of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein into what potentially could be a single



preventative therapy, we hope to improve its effectiveness in neutralizing the virus. These collaborations help ensure potential medicines that can prevent or treat COVID-19 are accelerated as quickly and safely as possible,” said Mene Pangalos, executive vice president of AstraZeneca’s biopharmaceuticals research and development division, in a statement announcing the deal.

In conjunction with the Vanderbilt licensing, AstraZeneca announced that it has also signed an interagency agreement with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), part of the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Those deals will support the company’s development efforts, including a Phase I clinical trial and the manufacturing of the investigational product for testing in Phase 1.

AstraZeneca announced in May that it was developing a promising COVID-19 vaccine that it licensed from the University of Oxford in the U.K., where its global headquarters is located. The company said the mAbs treatment could be used as a preventative for those potentially exposed to the COVID-19 virus and could be complementary to a vaccine, as some people are not able to receive vaccinations. ■

—Jacob Owens

Delaware keeps top bond ratings and saves \$5 million in refinancing

WILMINGTON – The state’s top bond ratings were recently reaffirmed by three of the four rating agencies, as it also refinanced bonds to save on a lower interest rate.

State finance officials reported that \$33.1 million in general obligation (GO) bonds were refinanced at a record low interest rate of 0.79%, saving the state \$5.2 million over the bonds’ decade-long term. The savings were structured to help the state address the fiscal year 2021 budget challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the state-mandated shutdown of commerce to stem its transmission.

Fitch, Moody’s and KRBA all reaffirmed Delaware’s Triple A rating in June reviews – Standard & Poor’s did not review the 2020B GO bond offering, which refunded old debt at the new lower rate – and

credited the state with preparing for economic downturns through building reserves. All four agencies had last evaluated the state’s financial position in January, before the pandemic began.

In a statement announcing the reaffirmed ratings, Gov. John Carney said, “The COVID-19 emergency presents enormous financial challenges for every state, including Delaware. But I think all Delawareans can be proud of the work we’ve done with the General Assembly to boost the state’s finances prior to this unanticipated event, so our state is better prepared to weather the storm.”

Delaware Finance Secretary Rick Geisenberger added that the state’s refunding “shows the market’s confidence in Delaware despite the near-term challenges faced by every state.”

The agencies all highlighted the state’s

budget cushions, including its \$252 million reserve “rainy day” account and its \$126.3 million Budget Stabilization Fund, as a big reason for its top ratings. They also complimented the state’s use of the independent, non-partisan Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Council (DEFAC) to forecast revenue estimates.

The reviews did warn the state about drawing too much upon its reserves to help plug deficits in the FY 2021 budget though.

The General Assembly’s Joint Finance Committee recently reviewed a revised budget proposal from Carney’s administration that sought to utilize \$76.3 million from the Budget Stabilization Fund, which was created under Carney’s tenure to plug smaller budgetary gaps through an annual savings program. The proposal does not use any of the state’s reserve fund, which

is filled by unspent funds each year and capped at 5% of state revenue. States typically try to leave such savings funds untouched to boost credit ratings, and Delaware has not drawn from the reserve account since it was created in 1980.

To further meet the estimated \$403.4 million deficit for FY 2021, the administration is proposing to eliminate a planned 2% pay increase and step increases for state employees, the annual bond bill, and earmarks for land.

The agency estimated that Delaware’s revenues will fall 20.8% in 2020, followed by a 9.1% increase in 2021, resulting in a cumulative result over a three-year period of a 10.1% decline. That would be a slightly worse downturn than its estimated state median decline of 16.6% in the first year and negative 5.7% over the three-year scenario, Fitch reported. ■

—Jacob Owens

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NCC receives interest on airport, won't appeal tax case ruling

NEW CASTLE – With New Castle County poised to possibly put the long-term operational lease of the Wilmington Airport out for bid, County Executive Matt Meyer said there has been interest from new parties.

Meyer confirmed that private companies have reached out to the county regarding the future of the airport.

"We haven't gotten into details because, ultimately, if we go that route, we're going to run a bidding process," he said.

The county's current contract with the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), a transportation agency backed by Delaware and New Jersey, is set to expire in 2025. The county's deadline to notify DRBA of non-renewal is June 30, however, and failing to provide notification would automatically renew the contract for another 30-year term.

A county task force asked to review the airport's lease recommended that it not be renewed, and the county council backed that recommendation in a near-unanimous vote in May. The task force's contracted consultant, Airport Business Solutions, reported that DRBA has failed to pay its \$1 lease since 1995, when it began operating the airport. DRBA countered that the nominal rent was factored into its debt service payments on the property, which totaled \$7 million when it took on the airport. The consultants also questioned a lack of communication and transparency between the county and DRBA, which the two-state agency has refuted.

Meyer said that he will submit the non-renewal notice and consider whether to enter into a bidding process at some point in the future or try to negotiate a new contract with DRBA, which has previously said it would not participate

in a competitive bidding process.

"My obligation is to get the best deal for taxpayers," Meyer said. "We may end up continuing with the DRBA; we'll see whatever's in the best interest of county taxpayers."

With the COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc on the airline industry right now – Frontier Airlines pulled out of its May relaunch of service from Wilmington Airport with plans to try again in November – and a five-year window until the contract expires, Meyer said the county has time on its side.

Tax-assessment appeal?

Meyer also confirmed that his administration won't appeal a Court of Chancery ruling last month that found the outdated property tax assessment system used by Delaware's three counties was unconstitutional.

The case was split by the court into a liability phase and a remedy phase, and Meyer said that he won't appeal the ruling against the counties but rather hope to address its concerns in the remedy phase.

"We think there are some serious issues with the decision the chancellor made in the liability phase," he said. "We may have an opportunity to appeal it later and we may just do that."

Meyer emphasized that the ruling will not affect property owners 2020 tax bills, especially as many are struggling during the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Your taxes are not going up this year and, for most people, your taxes will never go up as a result of this decision," he said. "It's going to be a several years' process if there is a reassessment." ■

—Jacob Owens

NCC Exec. Meyer seeks to continue expanding virus testing in county

NEW CASTLE – New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer has been pleased by the utilization of COVID-19 testing sites set up in recent weeks, and he hopes to widely expand the availability of tests in coming months.

Meyer said that he was encouraged that Delaware's outbreak never seemed to approach the crisis seen in New York City, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, especially considering the interconnectedness of the region. He credited Gov. John Carney's administration and the leaders of the state's health care systems with preventing a surge of cases.

As of June 16, the state had more than 10,400 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 426 deaths. The percentage of positive cases related to overall tests, however, has continued to fall in recent weeks.

"It's not perfect. There are people on my staff who've lost members of their family, and that's a tragedy that we can never undo," Meyer said. "But we're going to continue working really hard."

Meyer, who was perhaps the first Delaware public official to call for widespread testing, said that he still believed that testing would be the quickest way to jumpstart sectors of the county and state economy.

"One way [out of this pandemic] is a vaccine and another way is really effective treatment," he said. "Most of us don't have much control over a vaccine or treatment, but a third way is we start turning this invisible virus visible...the more people get tested, the quicker we identify where this thing is, and we can squash it once and for all."

Meyer has been credited with bringing Curative Inc., the California-based company that is supplying 200,000 saliva-based COVID-19 tests to Delaware in a \$30 million deal, to the table with state officials. Lifelong friend Dr. Neil Hochstein read his News Journal Op-Ed on the need for more testing and began consulting with

colleague Dr. Michael Bass on how to help.

They connected the county executive with Dr. David Sinclair, a Harvard University medical school professor, and Dr. Chris Mason, a Cornell University medical researcher. Those connections led to meetings with several leading testing companies across the country. However, it was Curative, which had just completed a sale of thousands of tests to the U.S. Air Force and the city of Los Angeles, that state health officials felt most confident in.

Meyer is glad to see the hundreds of residents coming out to county testing sites, noting about 1,200 residents got tested June 10.

He's not satisfied with those numbers. He wants to increase testing to a point where every resident has the opportunity to receive a test weekly. Meyer said that he believed widespread testing will be the tool to bridge the gap until a vaccine is ready, providing relief to affected businesses by boosting consumer confidence.

For now, the Curative tests are largely identifying pockets of concern and trying to head off potential outbreaks. One of the tools that the county has been using to decide where to hold testing sites is an innovative collaboration with Biobot Analytics, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology-incubated startup that analyzes urine and stool samples from municipal wastewater systems to identify asymptomatic carriers who are potentially shedding the COVID-19 virus.

The Biobot analysis estimates that positive cases of COVID-19 could be upward of 75,000 – or nearly one in six residents in the county.

The data has further convinced Meyer of the need to acquire more tests, which he said is a constant effort for the administration.

—Jacob Owens

'Al fresco' initiative seeks to create curbside restaurant service in Delaware

WILMINGTON — In an effort to bring a sense of normalcy to Delaware and expand dining options, Wilmington has closed off some parking spaces so restaurants can expand further outside starting with an iconic downtown street.

"Curbside Wilmington" closed 20 parking spaces along Market Street between Ninth and Fourth Street so that restaurants nearby can use them as parklets, where dining tables are set up, or for curbside service. City officials, Downtown Visions and The Committee of 100 launched the initiative June 13 to

entice city residents to start dining out and shopping again.

The first weekend was a success from the vantage point of Wilmington Small Business and Minority Business Development Director DaWayne Sims. "We definitely saw an uptick in traffic, and people enjoyed the live jazz music that was playing at the Grand. Talking with residents and businesses, we're seeing a lot of pent up demand and people eager to get outside," Sims said. "The key is not doing this at a top-down level but doing what we can to enhance

what businesses are doing and get people more comfortable coming out."

Jennifer Kmiec, executive director of the Committee of 100, said that the "dream team" of Downtown Visions and the Wilmington Office of Economic Development had worked throughout the weeks to understand what downtown businesses needed in terms of support.

"This is about enhancing what retailers and restaurants can already do, providing the infrastructure in place," she said. "We want to see this expand, ideally to the west side, because this really works

best when there's a cluster of businesses. We've found that restaurants draw more people to shop retail, and vice versa."

Wilmington is the latest city to work with restaurants to shut down streets or expand outdoor seating options. Rehoboth Beach blocked off some downtown parking, causing an 11% drop in parking revenue in the first days of June. The Rehoboth Beach City Council agreed on June 16 to remove parking baracades, except for 10 restaurants that requested outdoor dining. ■

—Katie Tabelaing

FOR THE RECORD

Liquor Licenses

Source: Delaware Office of Alcoholic Beverage Control Commissioner

NEW APPROVALS

Acepub, LLC T/A Ace's Pub; 7288 Lancaster Pike, Hockessin 19707, License Type: Taproom-On, Sunday, Contact - Shawn Naylor (302) 438-3800, Transferred from Famous Tom's Tavern, Inc.

Theo's 44 Rehoboth, LLC T/A Theo's Steaks, Sides & Spirits- Rehoboth; 44 Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth Beach 19971, License Type: SPR-ON, Sunday, Patio, Owner - Chris Agharabi, Transferred from A Muse

JMF Group, LLC T/A Wild Quail Golf and Country Club; 1 Clubhouse Drive, Camden-Wyoming 19934, License Type: Multiple Activity Club-On, Sunday, Contact - Joshua Ferris (302)-382-6797

NEW APPLICATIONS

Acker Auction DE, LLC T/A Acker; 1800 Ogletown Road, Suite D, Newark 19711, License Type: Package Store

Vino e Spirito, LLC T/A Tim's Liquors; 6303 Limestone Road, Hockessin, DE 19707, License Type: Package Store, Sunday, Tasting, Owner - William Galbraith, Jr. (302) 239-5478, Transferred from Gunina Enterprise, Inc.

TRANSFER REQUESTS

Simpra, Inc. to KPT, Inc. T/A Delaware City Liquors; 76 Clinton Street, PO Box 4146, Delaware City, DE 19706, License Type: Package Store, Sunday, Prakash

Patel - (302)834-1941 #12828

CANCELLED LICENSES

Casual Dining Concepts, LLC T/A Michael's Family Restaurant; 1000 Churchman's Road, Newark 19719 #12235

Real Estate Transactions

Source: Local Records of Deeds

KENT COUNTY

Vijay & Padma Tatagari to Henry Mast; 316 Quail Run, Wild Quail Golf & Country Club, Camden Wyoming 19934, \$449,900

Fung Fung Ting & Freeman Hwang to Vinaykumar; 40 Case Ridge Rd., Wolf Creek, Dover 19901, \$532,500

Champions Club Homes, LP to Darlene M. & James C. Carroll; 153 Augusta National Drive, Jonathans Landing, Magnolia 19962, \$455,346

Betty Anne Wyatt-Dix to Betty Ann & John C. Johnson, Sr.; 6 Cedarfield Rd., Magnolia 19962, \$487,000

NEW CASTLE CO.

Kelly P. Dashiell to Samantha Transue and Anthony Ward; 236 Porky Oliver Drive, The Legends, Middletown 19709, \$410,000

Joyce M. Bembry to Pamela and Richard Severance; 21 Forest Ridge, Creek Landing, Newark 19711, \$425,000

K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons at Baymont Farms, LLC to Mark Ambrose and Toni Nestore; 224 Northern Oak St., Baymont Farms, Middletown 19709, \$430,000

Calatlantic Group, Inc. to Surrender Katta; 166 Hammersmith Way, Bear 19701, \$421,000

Townsend Properties LLC to Dolores Shantay Hainey; 333 Helen Drive, Townsend 19734, \$410,000

Steven M. and Diane M. Roberts to Nikoloas and Aimee Zafiratos; 34 Crimson King Drive, Rose Hill at Lexington Farms, Bear 19701, \$430,000

DeWees Properties, LLC to Timothy and Stephanie Cairo; 4200 Pyles Ford Road, Wilmington 19807, \$1,160,000

Toll DE LP to Dennis Shevlin & Mamny Palmer-Shevlin; 704 Jake Way, Highpointe at St. Georges, New Castle 19720, \$565,000

Lawrence M Peltier to Gerald A Ciriaco; 102 Beacon Court, Breckenridge, Wilmington 19808, \$440,000

Toll DE LP to Kulsoom & Syed Qadri; 906 Mellissa Court, Highpointe at St. Georges, New Castle 19720, \$642,000

Boyd's Corner LLC to Anthony and Audrey Hill; 2750 Van Cliburn Circle, Village of Bayberry - South, Middletown 19709, \$506,000

Christopher and Kathleen Sprizzirri to Brittany and Trevor Riccobon; 304 Ellenwood Drive, Parkside, Middletown 19709, \$462,000

Ronald J. & Carmen Craig to Payal Parth Mody; 17 Hempsted Dr., Farmington, Newark 19702, \$400,000

Thomas & Kathryn Koch to Gary T. & Pamela S. Henry; 2 The Strand, New Castle 19702, \$575,000

Michael & Valerie J. Rabb to Troy & Allie Truesdale; 720 Wood Duck Court, The Estates of Dove Run, Middletown 19709, \$485,000

Toll DE LP to The Kayden Elizabeth Cobb Trust; 714 Jake Way, Highpointe at St. Georges, New Castle 19720, \$585,426

Reybold Venture Group Xi-A LLC to Ty A. Cornelius & Destany L. Stripling; 117 Sirius Dr., Bear 19701, \$416,475

Richard and Janvier Clark to Dimitrios and Maria Tangelidis; 220 Bohemia Mill Pond Drive, Bohemia Mill, Middletown 19709, \$1,050,000

NVR, Inc. to Leroy and Preethi Hill; 2001 Ferwig Court, The Preserve at Deep Creek, Middletown 19709, \$440,000

SUSSEX CO.

Shell Brothers LLC to Louis and Eileen Martini; 27219 Anchor Point Road, American Bayside Village, Selbyville 19975, \$1,974,000

Walsh Properties LLC to Dewey Walsh TIC 1 LLC and Dewey Walsh TIC 2 LLC; 2004 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach 19971, \$1,600,000

Daniel and Francis Conaty to David and Anita Ianni; 506 Bayard Ave., Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$1,375,000

Lighthouse Cove Development Company II, LLC to Eugene and Kathryn Gaietto; 1301 Coastal Highway, Unit S263, Dewey

Beach 19971, \$1,035,000

RJL Family Enterprises LLC to Scott and Kelly Serpico; 216 Grey Plover Court, Lewes 19958, \$995,801

Michael and Molly Ceppetelli to Jennifer and Andrew Hickey III; 105 Godwin Place, Bethany Beach 19930, \$950,000

Schell Brothers LLC to Paul and Laura Albrecht; 26304 Crosswinds Landing, Americana Bayside Village, Selbyville 19975, \$847,000

Shell Brothers LLC to Teresa Lyons; 27034 Bay Bluff Road, American Bayside Village, Selbyville 19975, \$816,000

John Stoner & Elizabeth Riep to Cathy & Earnet Carter III and Leah & Matthew Watkins; 150 New Castle Drive, Bethany Beach 19930, \$785,000

Joseph and Rachel Hutson to Robert and Maria Joyce; 17541 Venables Drive, Senators, Lewes 19958, \$717,000

Insight at Peninsula LLC to Peter Schuyler and Signy Eisl; 33241 Indian Bay Circle, The Veranda Condominium, Unit 35, Millsboro 19966, \$584,000

William and Sally Duveneck to Natalie and Matthew Conley; 18682 Sunny Sky Blvd., Gravel Hill, Milton 19968, \$575,000

Walter and Barbara Samuels to Bayhealth Medical Center, Inc.; 7237 Cedar Creek Road, Lincoln 19960, \$575,000

Karen M. Vorsteg to Graeme C. & Glenda A. Lake; 8 Demarie Dr., Grand View Shores, Ocean View 19970, \$550,000

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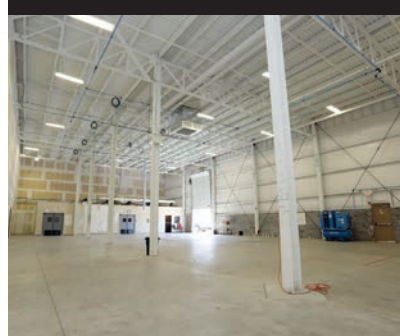
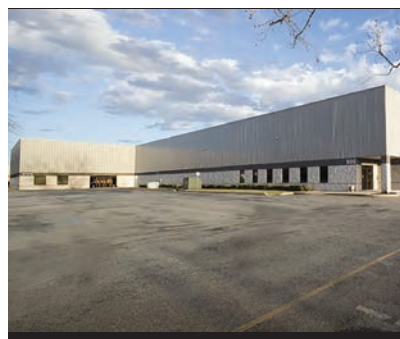
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FOR THE RECORD

NEWS BRIEFS



This month, Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen of the Delaware National Guard continued their missions in support of saliva-based testing and analysis for COVID-19 across the First State. More than 25 members with the National Guard in Delaware have been working with staff members from the Delaware Emergency Management Agency to increase the availability of saliva-based testing for the coronavirus disease to individuals at mobile drive-thru locations. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DELAWARE NATIONAL GUARD

PHILANTHROPY

In its ninth round of grants, the Delaware COVID-19 Strategic Response Fund on June 8 awarded \$108,760 to 13 nonprofit organizations providing services to communities throughout the state. The fund also earmarked \$50,000 to create a new initiative to increase equity in Delaware by strengthening smaller nonprofits (operating budgets \$250K and under) led by and serving people of color, who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Grantees are: **Laurel Public Library**, \$3,900 for a UV sanitation

machine for books and materials; **Chinese American Community Center**, \$8,000 to support virtual programming and operations of the facility in Hockessin; **Siegel JCC**, \$16,360 for equipment to facilitate safely reopening the facility in Wilmington; **Delaware Zoological Society**, \$10,000 to support zoo operations and virtual programming; **Wilmington & Western Railroad**, \$5,000 for equipment to facilitate safely reopening the historical railroad; **Lewes Public Library**, \$10,000 for equipment to support virtual programming; **Paws for People**, \$4,000 to support virtual pet therapy and reading

programs statewide; **Absolutely Flawless Women**, \$5,000 to provide meals for families in Indian River School District; **Freeman Foundation**, \$10,000 to convert its free, weekly Young Audience Series to a virtual program; **Delaware Center for Horticulture**, \$10,000 to mobilize home gardeners to grow and donate produce statewide; **Clear Space Theatre Company**, \$10,000 to support operations; **Merakey Allos**, \$6,500 for equipment to provide services for individuals with intellectual disabilities at Delaware group homes; and **Bellevue Community Center**, \$10,000 to provide fresh produce to underserved families in Wilmington.

Beebe Medical Foundation received a donation of \$19,000 from the **Pines Restaurant** in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, from the proceeds of a four-week Saturday night virtual fundraising series at the "Top of the Pines."

The Sallie Mae Fund, **Sallie Mae's** charitable arm, has awarded a total of \$67,500 in grants to nonprofit organizations in Delaware. The grants support education and outreach initiatives at **Christina Cultural Arts Center**, **Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay**, **Delaware Humane Association**, and **Year Up Wilmington**.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

WSFS Bank, the primary subsidiary of WSFS Financial Corporation, ranked 21st nationally on Forbes' second annual World's Best Banks list. This is the first time WSFS has made the global list. Forbes partnered with Statista to produce the list, surveying more than 40,000 banking customers across the globe for

their opinions on their current and former banking relationships. Banks were rated on general customer satisfaction and important attributes including trust, fees, digital services and financial advice.

The **PNC** headquarters building on Delaware Avenue, in Wilmington has installed state-of-the-art logo and brand signage installed facing the I-95 corridor as part of its lease renewal agreement that was completed last fall.

HEALTH CARE

ChristianaCare has developed a new virtual telehealth service for businesses and employers that provides daily monitoring of employees for COVID-19 symptoms, testing, if needed, and care for employees who test positive. The Employee COVID-19 Symptom Monitoring and Testing Program is designed to increase safety and ease anxiety in the workplace by effectively monitoring employees' health. For employees, it offers the convenience of access to a registered nurse to discuss their symptoms and the opportunity for a tele-visit with a provider. The program relies on ChristianaCare's COVID-19 Virtual Practice and its award-winning CareVio care management program for daily bi-directional, secure text messaging.

Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children has been ranked in five pediatric specialties in U.S. News & World Report's new 2020-21 Best Children's Hospitals rankings. Orthopedics ranked in the top 20 in the nation and the hospital's other ranked specialties were Cancer, Cardiology & Heart Surgery, Gastroenterology & GI Surgery, and

Neurology & Neurosurgery.

Saint Francis Healthcare in Wilmington recently received Certification in Hip and Knee Replacement from The Joint Commission. The certification reflects Saint Francis Healthcare's commitment to providing the highest quality of care for hip and knee replacement.

Highmark Inc. and HealthNow New York Inc. today announced an agreement to affiliate, marking a key milestone in plans to bring together the two not-for-profit Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance plans to better serve the communities of Western and Northeastern New York, as well as Highmark's Pennsylvania, Delaware and West Virginia regions.

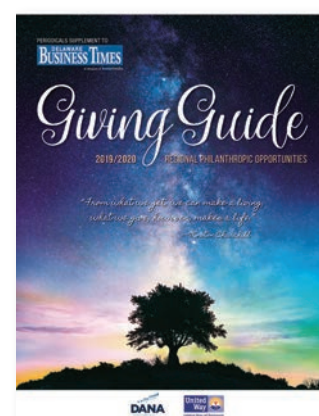
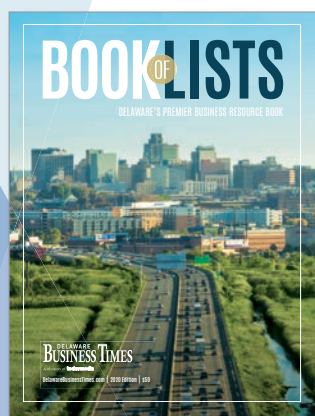
MEDIA AND PR

Short Order Production House took home two gold awards at the 2019-2020 Philadelphia Metro American Advertising Awards, known as the ADDYs, for "LiveWorkPlay: It's Time Wilmington" in the Local Television Commercial Campaign category and for "A Century Old Time Lapse" in the Advertising Industry Self-Promotion category.

Blue Blaze Associates has completed the first phase of a comprehensive multi-channel strategic marketing plan and digital transformation for White Horse Village, an active senior living community in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. Services provided so far include a brand refresh, a website redesign, COVID-19 communications, and redesign of print materials. Launched in late February, the site's virtual tours have served as a critical resource to the White Horse Sales Team during the coronavirus pandemic.

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FOR THE RECORD

NEWS BRIEFS



Dover International Speedway is partnering with the American Lung Association in Delaware by turning turquoise through June 30 to honor those impacted by lung cancer as part of Turquoise Takeover (June 14-20). | PHOTO COURTESY OF DOVER INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

NONPROFITS

Wilmington Alliance has formed the **Wilmington is Working Equitable Technology Fund**. Powered by the Alliance's anchor supporter **Barclays US Consumer Bank**, the fund aims to address the digital divide by increasing equitable access to online job training and support faster economic recovery for citizens hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wilmington is Working Equitable Technology Fund is designed to assist Wilmington-serving 501(c)(3) workforce development programs in need

of hardware devices (i.e. Chromebooks or laptops) and virtual access technologies (i.e. Zoom Pro Plan) for their learners and training providers to offer online job training. Barclays' anchor funding will support the procurement, setup and delivery of technology hardware and other technology needs.

Jewish Federation of Delaware won first place in a national communications competition hosted by the National Federation of Press Women for a magazine page designed by Carolyn Katwan that ran in the organization's

j-VOICE Monthly publication.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management) recently awarded its premier Excel Platinum Award to **SHRM Delaware State Council, DelMarVa SHRM Chapter, and Delaware SHRM Chapter** for numerous accomplishments in 2019. The EXCEL award is given to state councils and chapters to recognize major accomplishments, strategic activities, and tactical initiatives that elevate the profession of human resources.

Delaware Farm Bureau has received a specialty crop block grant from the United States Department of Agriculture, managed through the Delaware **Department of Agriculture**, to promote local farmers and produce side-by-side with **iHeartMedia**. The campaign will run for two-years through December 2021, digitally introducing 24 fresh market specialty crops available seasonally at markets all over Delaware to consumers who are on the go and ready to find local produce.

The **Lewes Chamber of Commerce's** "Restarting Lewes's Economy" is highlighting its new brand — Love, Lewes — through the sale of yard signs. Students from Cape Henlopen High School's DECA program are "planting" the yard signs and working on the social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram. The signs are available for \$10 at the Lewes Chamber Visitor Center at 120 Kings Highway; online at the chamber's LewesChamber.com website; or at Lewes Wear at 109 Savannah Road.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Legal 500 has ranked **Richards, Layton & Finger** in its top tiers in M&A Litigation: Defense and Delaware Corporate Law in its 2020 national rankings. Firm director Gregory Williams was named in the prestigious Hall of Fame category; Catherine Dearlove, Rudolf Koch, and Srini Raju were ranked as Leading Lawyers; and Blake Rohrbacher was chosen as a Next Generation Partner. The Legal 500 also named Mark Gentile, Richard Rollo, and John Mark Zeberkiewicz as key lawyers.

PUBLIC COMPANY NEWS

Incyte has launched a new Global Responsibility section on its Incyte.com website. This section provides information on Incyte's long-term approach and commitment to building a sustainable business by helping patients in need, supporting its colleagues, giving back to its communities, reducing its impact on the environment and promoting ethical and responsible behavior. As part of this newly available content, Incyte has also released its first annual Sustainable Accounting Standards Board (SASB) Summary and its 2019 Global Responsibility Highlights.

Corteva, Inc. filed a motion June 12 to intervene in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit case challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration of the dicamba herbicide marketed as XtendiMax® Herbicide with VaporGrip® Technology. Corteva was not a party to the lawsuit, and until June 3, the case appeared to involve only the XtendiMax registration. The Ninth

Circuit Court nevertheless vacated in its June 3 decision the EPA's registration of XtendiMax and Enginia™ herbicides, as well as Corteva's registration for DuPont™ FeXapan® with VaporGrip® Technology. Corteva said it is seeking to intervene to preserve its rights and to support the rights of customers to use the impacted dicamba weed control technologies. Corteva said it "believes dicamba is an effective weed management tool for farmers when used according to the label." It also seeks to "preserve the role of the U.S. EPA to administer the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide & Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), including granting or cancelling crop protection product registrations, for the benefit of agriculture and society."

RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL

Grain On The Rocks, located at 43 Cape Henlopen Drive, has opened at the **Lewes Ferry Terminal**. The Lewes Coffee Company has been added with locally roasted coffee, opening at 8 a.m. for early morning visitors to the ferry or Cape Henlopen State Park.

Capriotti's is offering four new menu items featuring American Wagyu Beef, supplied by Silver Snake Farms. The new subs include American Wagyu Roast Beef, American Wagyu Slaw Be Jo, American Wagyu Cheese Steak, and Wagyu and Bleu Salad.

Thompson Island Brewing Company in Rehoboth Beach recently released four limited-edition new beers available in cans. One of the latest offerings, Revival, is a collaboration with nearby **Revelation Brewing Company**.

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FOR THE RECORD

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Vincent J. Daniels, DMD, has been elected president of the Delaware State Dental Society (DSDS), the first African American to lead the organization in its 157-year history. Daniels, 54, a practitioner of 29 years, has owned Blue Diamond Dental in Wilmington since 1999. His specialty is general family restorative dentistry. Services include implants, periodontics, oral surgery, endodontics, restorative, crowns, bridges, dentures and partials. Daniels graduated from the Temple University School of Dentistry in Philadelphia and completed undergraduate studies at the prestigious Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. He began his dental career in Center City Philadelphia and later relocated to Wilmington where he began his private practice.

The Delaware Senate has confirmed the following judicial nominations:



• **The Honorable Charles Butler** as a Superior Court Resident Judge of New Castle County. Judge Butler – who since 2012 has served as a judge on the

Superior Court in New Castle County – replaced Resident Judge of Superior Court Richard “Dick” Cooch, who retired in January. Judge Butler was nominated and confirmed in 2012 to serve as a judge on the Superior Court in New Castle County. Previously, Judge Butler served as Delaware’s chief deputy attorney general. Judge Butler also served as a prosecutor in the Delaware Department of Justice and has experience as an Assistant District Attorney with the City of Philadelphia.



• **Francis “Pete” Jones** as a Judge of The Superior Court. Jones will replace Judge Butler. Jones is a Morris James partner who chaired the firm’s

personal injury group and served as an executive committee member. Previously, Jones clerked for the Delaware Supreme Court; Goldman, Phillips, Nichols, Pederson and Hurtt; and the National Labor Relations Board.

• Justices of the Peace:

- **Walter Newton** from Wilmington
- **Shanaya Eyong** from Newark.

• **The Honorable Catherine Hester** from Lewes

• **Brett Graves** from Lewes

• **Candace Whitelock** from Seaford

Governor John Carney has nominated Mark Conner as Superior Court Judge in Sussex County; Monica Horton as Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in New Castle County; and Rae Mims as Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Sussex County.

• **Mark Conner** has served as the managing attorney for the Office of Conflicts Counsel for Sussex County within the Office of Defense Services since July 2016. During his time in this position, he represented criminal defendants in the Superior Court, the Court of Common Pleas, the Family Court, and the Justice of the Peace Court. Conner has previous experience as a Deputy Attorney General at the Delaware Department of Justice in both the Criminal and Civil divisions, as well as in the Public Defender’s Office. Between 2007-2016, Conner served as an adjunct professor at Delaware Technical and Community College and Wilmington University, teaching courses on business law and criminal law and procedure. Conner would replace Judge Scott Bradley, who retired May 1, 2020, on the Superior Court in Sussex County.

• **Monica Horton** has served since 2016 as a Deputy Attorney General in the Delaware Department of Justice, where she is the head of the Health Law Unit in the Civil Division and provides general counsel to the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. Horton’s public and private legal experience includes serving as an assistant county attorney for New



ChristianaCare president and CEO **Janice Nevin** was named as one of this year’s 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives by Modern Healthcare. Modern Healthcare is the nation’s leading industry-intensive news magazine for health system executives, and this program focuses clinicians working in the health care industry who are deemed by their peers and an expert panel to be the most influential in terms of demonstrating leadership and impact.

Nevin, who became ChristianaCare’s first female CEO in 2015, was ranked 14th on the list. In making its decision, Modern Healthcare pointed to Nevin’s vocal support of Gov. John Carney’s stay-at-home orders to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as well as being the first to hold a drive-thru testing event two days after Delaware saw its first confirmed case of COVID-19.

“This has been an extraordinary time for our community and our nation, as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. I am so grateful to receive this recognition at a time when our caregivers are demonstrating our values of love and excellence daily, as they so selflessly serve our community,”

Nevin said. “It is my privilege to serve alongside them and to lead ChristianaCare through this crisis, and I am optimistic that the lessons that we are learning will make us an even better health care organization in the future, making a positive impact on health for everyone in all of the communities we serve.”

Castle County, as an associate attorney for Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin, and as a judicial law clerk for the Family Court. From 2000-2009 and again from 2014-2016, Horton, who is also a registered nurse, attended to obstetrical patients. Horton would replace Judge John Welch, who will retire on June 30, 2020.

• **Rae Mims** has been a deputy attorney general in the Delaware Department of Justice since 2007. She has represented the Delaware Department of Correction, the State Board of Education, the Delaware State Police, and the Division of Public Health. During her time as a deputy attorney general, Mims also oversaw criminal adult felony prosecutions in the Superior Court, and prosecuted misdemeanor cases in the Family Court, the Justice of the Peace Court, and the Court of Common Pleas. Additionally, Mims has experience in private practice as an associate with Binder & Binder in Philadelphia, and was an Assistant District Attorney in Bucks County, PA. Mims would replace Judge Rosemary Betts Beauregard, who retired on April 1, 2020, on the Court of Common Pleas in Sussex County.



Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS, will join Nemours Children’s Health System on Sept. 1 as senior vice president and chief population health officer (CPHO).

In this new role, Dr. Walker will report to Nemours President and CEO R. Lawrence Moss, MD, and be based at the Nemours National Office in Washington, D.C. Dr.

Walker is Secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) under Governor John Carney. The agency has 11 divisions, more than 4,000 employees and a budget greater than \$2 billion.

Stephen J. Akerley has joined InterDigital Inc. as vice president of litigation. In his 28-year career, Mr. Akerley has forged a presence as a leading voice and litigator on IP issues worldwide. He has been a partner at various top law firms, including Dechert LLP and, since 2017, Mintz Levin, specializing in standards-essential patent and FRAND issues. Mr. Akerley has been listed among the top IP litigators in Silicon Valley and recognized multiple times as a top litigator by Daily Journal (DJCO) and National Law Journal.



Eva K. Hakoranta has joined InterDigital as chief licensing officer, effective July 1. Ms. Hakoranta joins the company from Nokia, where she led patent

licensing since 2012, and most recently served as senior vice president and head of intellectual property and litigation. Under her leadership, Nokia successfully concluded license agreements with substantially all the world’s major handset manufacturers. Ms. Hakoranta moves into the role upon the retirement of Timothy J. Berghuis, who had been chief licensing officer since January 2018 and who joined the company in 2001.

Ted Morris is serving as acting CFO of Navient, following the resignation of Chief Financial Officer Christian Lown, who resigned to accept a new career

opportunity. Morris joined the company in 2003 and has served as Navient’s controller since 2014.

William Burton has joined Barnes & Thornberg as an associate in its Delaware office. He litigates issues related to breach of fiduciary duties, shareholder and corporate governance disputes, valuation and appraisal law, and other corporate and commercial litigation issues, on behalf of corporations, directors, officers, members, partners, investors and stockholders. While his practice is primarily focused in the Court of Chancery, he also represents clients in other state and federal courts, including the Delaware Superior Court, the Federal District Court for the District of Delaware, and the Delaware Supreme Court.



Michelle D. McCann has launched her first book, *The Nature of God: The Revelation*. This book chronicles Michelle’s journey with God and the

angels. As a former social worker, Michelle directed a welfare-to-work program, supervised graduate students and taught in the Master of Social Work program (MSW) at Widener University. She also worked in the financial industry for 16 years, first at MBNA America and then at Bank of America. Michelle retired from corporate marketing in May.

Jennifer Bailey has left her role as director of global business and market development at Solenis to become vice president of business development at SANEXEN Environmental Services Inc.

Fleming tapped as new Delaware Bio president



WILMINGTON – Delaware BioScience Association has named Michael Fleming as its next president, succeeding Helen Stimson who left

the organization this month for a role at Adesis Inc.

Delaware Bio represents 130 pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms, medical device manufacturers, agricultural biotech and chemical companies, research and testing companies, hospitals and medical institutions, and other organizations and related service companies that employ 8,000 in the state. Fleming left his previous role of head of global medical and regulatory communications at the

multinational pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

Christopher Yochim, chairman of Delaware Bio’s board of directors, called Fleming “a proven strategic leader with deep roots in Delaware” and noted that continuity in Delaware Bio’s leadership was vital in the current pandemic environment.

“Michael’s experience with life science companies and his expertise in marketing, branding, communications, and public policy will be of great value as we strive to find new and effective ways to support our members,” Yochim said.

Fleming takes over for Stimson, who departed Delaware Bio on June 1 to take the role of chief operating officer at Adesis, a contract research organization based in New Castle. She had led Delaware Bio since 2017, when she took over for the association’s founder, Bob Dayton.

Fleming spent 18 years at GSK, where he led corporate brand management, community investment, digital media, and product communications, and

was president of the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation. He and his wife, Christy, also founded Town Square Delaware, an online media outlet that covers the state of Delaware and recently sold to Delaware Live, owned by Chris Kenny.

Fleming said that he was drawn to the Delaware Bio position due to his uniquely applicable set of skills – aside from his pharmaceutical industry background and communications work, Fleming also served as a legislative assistant and state office director to the late U.S. Sen. William V. Roth Jr.

“It’s a really unique opportunity to be able to work on behalf of the industry to support what is, I think, the future of the state,” he said.

Although Fleming is a lifelong Delawarean, his work at GSK had him based in Philadelphia and focused on a global market. So, he said his first task is to become better acquainted with all of Delaware Bio’s members, from the largest, multinational companies to the smallest startup firms.

“It’s such a broad range of companies that are involved in lots of different areas of scientific innovation, beyond just biopharmaceuticals, although that’s certainly a big piece of it,” he said.

Fleming said that he is lucky to inherit a well-run organization and emphasized that he wanted to continue to provide high-value programs for members, while also helping to tell the stories of Delaware

Bio members to the public.

“Every day they’re researching and developing really world-class technologies and breakthroughs,” he said, noting Delaware companies, universities and research firms are developing a COVID-19 vaccine, treatments, and tests.

With a deep heritage of scientific innovation like DuPont and AstraZeneca and the home of billion-dollar startups like W.L. Gore and Incyte, Fleming said that he wanted to help ensure that future generations of innovators continue to make Delaware their home by fostering a supportive climate. ■

--Jacob Owens



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FOR THE RECORD

BUSINESS CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, webinar access details will be e-mailed to registrants.

JUNE 1 – JULY 20

Boy Scouts of America Virtual Golf Classic

The Del-Mar-Va Council, Boy Scouts of America, is excited to announce that the BSA Golf Classic is back for its 38th year and will also be its first "virtual golf tournament." As always, every dollar raised by this event benefits more than 10,000 Scouts across the Delmarva Peninsula. The tournament kicked off on Monday, June 1st and will conclude on July 20th with a Virtual Award Ceremony. Foursomes and individuals can register to play online at www.dmv.org/golf. After your round, enter your score online before July 17th. Registration will remain open until the tournament ends in July. Winning teams will claim prizes and bragging rights that they can carry into 2021.

JUNE 22 – 26

Stuff the Bus

Help support the Food Bank of Delaware's COVID-19 relief efforts by joining DART's "Stuff The Bus" Food Drive. Donate non-perishable to help Delawareans in need of food assistance during this time. Mon, June 22, 9 - 4 PM Safeway, 19283 Coastal Highway, Rehoboth; Tues, June 23, 9 - 4 PM Safeway, 190 John Hunn Brown Rd., Dover; Wed, June 24, 9 - 4 PM, ShopRite of Four Seasons, 700 Plaza Dr., Newark, Thurs, June 25, 9 - 4 PM, ShopRite of Brandywine Commons, 1300 Rocky Run Parkway, Wilmington, Fri, June 26, 9 - 4 PM, ShopRite of First State Plaza, 1600 W. Newport Pike, Stanton. More info at fbd.com.

JUNE 23 | 9:30 – 11 AM

Organize Your Workspace for Maximum Efficiency

On average, workers spend 19% of their time searching for what they need to do their job. That comes out to one day out of a 40-hour workweek. Disorganization costs time and money. Whether you work in a corner office with a view of the city, a corner of the guest room, or anywhere in between, this workshop will teach you on how to structure your workspace for optimal productivity. More information is available at dsbchamber.com.

JUNE 23 | 12 - 1 PM

PPP and your business: What comes next?

Did your business obtain a PPP loan and wonders "what happens next?" How do you utilize the loan to its maximum benefit? How do you fortify your business for the future? More info at whismangiordano.com.

JUNE 25 | 9:30 – 11:30 AM

New Castle County – Open for Business

Join the NCC Chamber for a virtual Open for Business through Zoom. Meet with representatives from partner organizations that provide a range of services that help start-ups. Advance your business model, reach potential customers, land government contracts, secure loans, meet state regulatory requirements and meet other entrepreneurs striking out on their own for the first time. More info at ncccc.com.

JULY 16 | 1 PM

27th Annual Milford Chamber Golf Classic

The entry fee of \$100.00 per person or \$400.00 for a foursome includes green fees, carts, use of the practice range, mulligans, lunch, snacks & beverages, a putting contest, a goodie bag, a keepsake team photo sponsored by C.M. Baker Photography, and dinner. Other contests will be featured on the course, and great prizes will be awarded throughout the day. More information is available at milfordchamber.com

JULY 16 | 7:15 – 8:15 PM

Networking, Locating and Applying for Positions

Power Up your career with the University of Delaware's Summer Seminar Series. As the job market shifts to address current realities, important strategies include thinking virtually, strengthening connections and identifying businesses that are adopting to the new normal. Learn how to network and identify resources and strategies for your job or career shift. More information at udel.edu.

JULY 20

25th Annual Dickie DiSabatino Golf & Tennis Classic

Cancer Support Community Delaware invites you to participate in the annual DiSabatino Golf & Tennis Classic at Bidermann Golf Course and Vicmead Hunt in Wilmington. Enjoy a day of golf and tennis, accompanied with a live and silent auction. Any changes, due to social distancing protocol, will be communicated via email or through the Cancer Support Community Delaware application. More info at cancersupportdelaware.org.

JULY 21 | 9 – 4:30 PM

Putting Delawareans Back to Work

Delaware's business and community leaders must now play a vital role in getting Delawareans back to work and driving economic recovery without a resurgence of the virus. This full-day, digital conference will explore strategies and policies to restore the state's economy and to enable Delawareans to safely return to work. More information at dscc.com.

JULY 21 | 5:30 – 8 PM

The Committee of 100 Annual BBQ

Reconnect with colleagues, clients, friends and elected officials, at the Committee of 100's annual barbeque at the University and Whist Club in Wilmington. Members who have prepaid for the 2019-20 Dinner Meetings and Receptions are entitled to two guest tickets. More info at committeeof100.com.

JULY 23 | 8 – 10 AM

DelawareBio Virtual BioBreakfast

BioBreakfast is a morning opportunity to connect with the life science industry and learn about hot topics. The event provides the opportunity to network with more than 100 professionals from the region over breakfast and coffee and learn about ground-breaking research and news from key members of the life sciences community. More info at delawarebio.org.

AUG. 6 | 10 – 11:30 AM

Learn to Understand Yourself and Others to Build Better Business Relationships

Presented by Rosa Maria Faulkner, CEO of TRU Seminars. Attendees will learn the strengths and weaknesses of the four personality types and analyze their behavior patterns so you can understand yourself and others. You will gain knowledge on how to build better relationships by realizing why your co-workers behave as they do. This knowledge will enable you to form better teams to grow your business. Not only will this information improve your business relationships, but your out-of-office relationships as well. More info at dsbchamber.com.

AUG. 13 | 7:15 – 8:15 PM

Acing the Virtual Interview

Power Up your career with the University of Delaware's Summer Seminar Series. New to virtual interviews? You are not alone. Join in on this seminar to learn strategies to prepare for phone and video interviews. During the seminar they will discuss the nuts and bolts of setting up your tech and how to effectively articulate your fit for the role and the organization. More information at udel.edu.



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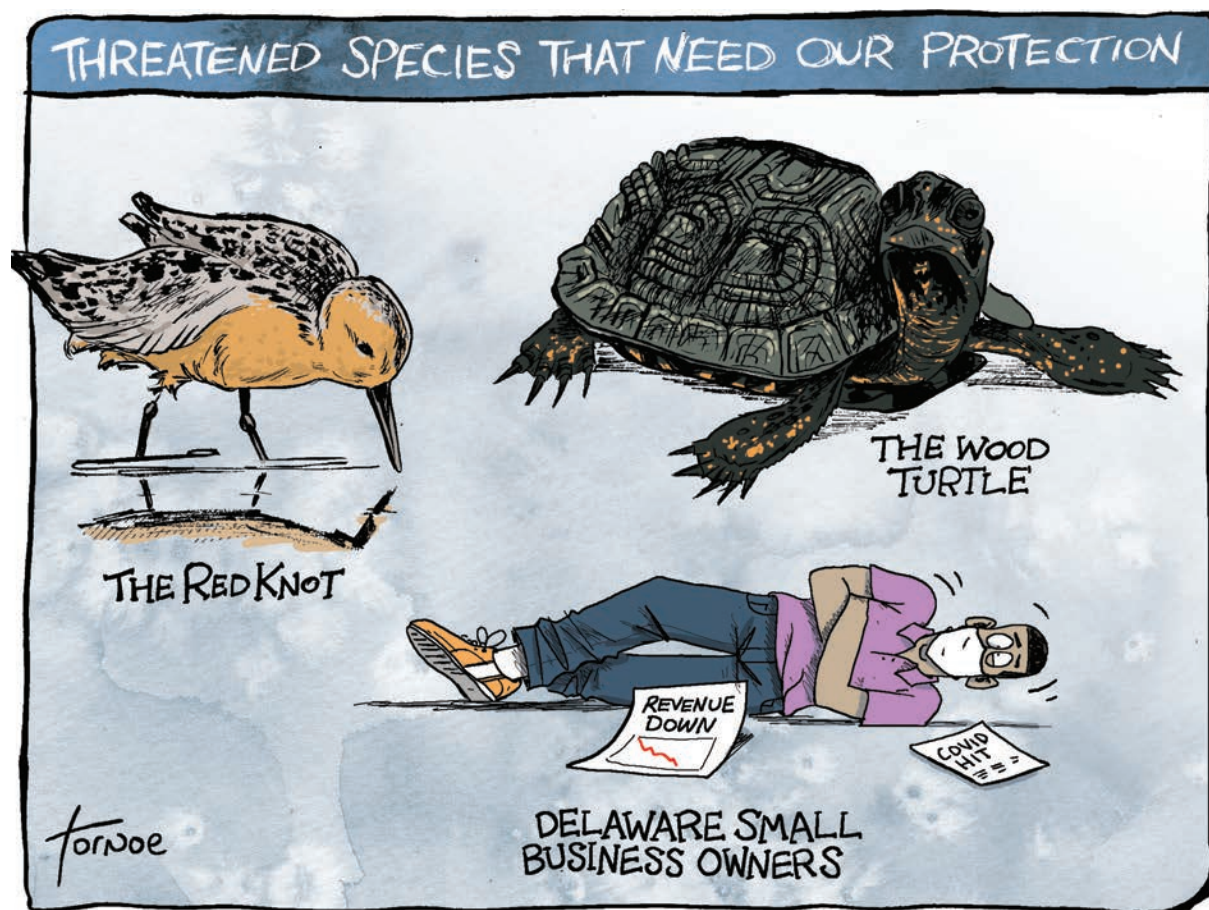
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YOUR VIEW

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We welcome your comments and opinions on topics related to Delaware business and economic trends. Letters must be signed and include contact information for verification.

Op Ed Columns

We also welcome guest columns on topics of interest to our readers. Columns should be no longer than 500 words, and concern topics of interest to our readers.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Six "what does it mean" questions for the coming week



PETER OSBORNE

The BBC published a story at the end of May that said Microsoft is planning to replace dozens of contract journalists on its MSN website and use

automated systems to select news stories.

Curating of stories from news organizations and selection of headlines and pictures for the MSN site is currently done by journalists, but the Seattle Times reported that artificial intelligence will perform these news production tasks.

Well ... isn't that special.

The news isn't all that surprising, given that newsroom employment at U.S. newspapers has fallen by around half since 2008, according to a recent Pew Research Center analysis of federal job data that was completed before a pandemic that has cost even more reporters and editors their jobs.

To be fair, there has a modest increase in jobs after 2014 in other news-producing sectors – especially digital-native organizations – which has offset some of the losses at newspapers.

The decrease in local newsroom jobs is a driver behind the launch of Delaware Live (and its subsequent purchase of Town Square Delaware). Owner Chris Kenny and investors like Ben du Pont have expressed interest in competing with The News Journal, which is dealing with its own staff challenges following Gannett's merger with GateHouse Media.

For those journalists interested in self-preservation, that leads you to consider how you must differentiate yourself and your product. Content gurus Joe Pulizzi and Robert Rose identified four questions on their podcast that every journalist should be answering for their readers:

1. What happened?
2. Why did it happen?
3. What does it mean?
4. What can I (the reader) do about it?

The reality is that artificial intelligence can handle the first two questions, but you can't program wisdom into the software. So those of us who can provide answers to the third and fourth questions – as DBT tries to do on a regular basis – will survive over the long term.

Even with the growth we've seen in our digital engagement, finding that balance between reporting the news and providing context is more difficult for our biweekly print editions. As an example, we have a few questions that we'll be asking in the weeks to come.

What's happening? Dr. Kara Odom Walker resigned as the state's director of health and human services to join Nemours Children's Health System as senior vice president and chief population health officer, starting Sept. 1. She had been keeping a fairly low profile amid the COVID-19 pandemic, ceding the spotlight to Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of the Division of Public Health, but she's been equally low-key in talking about the drivers of her decision beyond a press release saying she wanted to return to Washington, D.C.

The question: Why leave in the midst of a pandemic when the governor and others are raising concerns that

Delawareans are not as serious about the health-care risks as they have been?

What's happening? Carney's chosen replacement for Walker is her second-in-command, Molly Magarik, who by all accounts has done a great job. But this is a role that 43 states have filled with an M.D., a Masters of Public Health, nursing degree or law degree. Magarik is pursuing a Masters of Public Health degree, but has little health care experience outside of her three-year tenure at DHSS. Notably, she has political ties to the governor, running his state office when he served in Congress – which is in line with her political science education.

The questions: Were any other officials considered for this critical role? We expect that state senators will be interested to hear answers at Magarik's confirmation hearing this month.

What's happening?: Delaware restaurants are complaining that expanding capacity from 30% to 60% in Phase 2 doesn't mean much with the additional 8-foot distancing requirement in place? At the same time, the governor is expressing concern about residents being less concerned about the restrictions that are in place?

The questions: Is that 8-foot restriction going to be loosened? If it isn't, will more restaurants be able to stay open?

What's happening? Kenny buys Milford Live and Town Square Delaware to create a statewide platform to compete with The News Journal. He has hired the well-respected Betsy Price as editor and now has a strong Town Square Delaware team to develop community news, but

he's also launched with a heavy emphasis on reprinting press releases.

The questions: Why didn't you wait to launch with more reporters if you want to compete with the News Journal? And as someone who many believe will run for the Republican nomination for governor – and as someone who co-founded the A Better Delaware PAC – will you (Kenny) separate yourself from the news operation if you choose to run to avoid any concerns that you're going to use Delaware Live to support your candidacy.

What's happening? Companies are talking about bringing employees back to the office.

The questions: What criteria are you using, giving the growing concerns about future spikes in the numbers, to determine whether employees need to come back? Are you seeing indications that individual teams are more or less productive working remotely? What have you lost in terms of innovation by losing face-to-face interaction? And is this an opportunity to save money by downsizing your office space and other costs and finding ways to bring people together on an occasional basis?

What's happening: Delaware State University is reportedly in talks to acquire Wesley College (see page 5).

The questions: It's clear what the benefit is to cash-strapped Wesley, but what's in it for DSU? What are the benefits to acquiring a school with outdated buildings, declining enrollment, and a rough balance sheet? Who's going to fund it? Can the university find a way to make the deal make fiscal sense over the long term? ■

New E3 initiative hopes to find ‘Equitable’ opportunities for all entrepreneurs

BY STEPHEN SYE AND RENATA KOWALCZYK

It is easy to see the impact of COVID-19 and social unrest in our nation's cities and it is just as easy to respond with empty platitudes. The difficult work lies in offering effective solutions and long-term remedies. The Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation and Wilmington Alliance aim for the new E3 initiative to be one of those effective solutions.

E3 stands for Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and will be powered by Wilmington-based Barclays US Consumer Bank, our anchor funder. It is a program designed to leverage the expertise and experience available in Delaware's private and public sectors to grow opportunities for businesses and related employment. “Equitable” is a key component of E3. While our nation discusses and debates policing practices and race, we must not lose sight of the importance of increased business and employment — particularly for smaller employers, businesses, individuals of color, and all who live in underserved communities. We see the timeliness of the E3 equitable focus in statistics like the 25,000 Delaware small businesses impacted by COVID-19 and the nationwide 40% fall in working African-American business owners. Those numbers represent real business owners, employees, and families and highlight the importance of E3's goal of leveling the playing field for access to resources.

Since the establishment of the Wilmington Alliance in July of 2019, we have put every aspect of our work in the city through the lens of equity and inclusion. Like the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation, the Alliance views entrepreneurship as a key path to prosperity. We need to make this path more accessible and equitable for entrepreneurs.



STEPHEN SYE
Guest Columnist

The Foundation has an important role in the entrepreneurship element of E3, given our focus on maintaining the legacy of Governor du Pont by unleashing the state's

entrepreneurial spirit and furthering individual opportunity and initiative. Specifically, E3 complements the Foundation's Reinventing Delaware program and draws on that program's successes in seeking, nominating, and supporting Delaware's “best ideas.” E3 will build on this process by establishing teams of organizations willing to step up as ecosystem partners to support ideas from conception to launch and beyond.

While the actual nature of individual E3 ecosystems will change over time and apply differently to different businesses and individuals, the overall goal is to implement a process that continually feeds entrepreneurs into pipelines that provide access to necessary resources and connections to accelerate the launch or growth of their businesses. Identified efforts/ideas/businesses will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and, if selected for full support, will receive a customized acceleration plan. Some may need to begin with coaching and guidance in business planning, marketing, and promotion. Once established milestones in those areas have been achieved, additional assistance in planning, acquiring, and employing the necessary information technology infrastructure as well as optimizing space planning (virtual offices, co-working space, or dedicated offices) would be provided. Finally, when appropriate, the E3 ecosystems will help increase



RENATA KOWALCZYK
Guest Columnist

access to funding opportunities.

The goal is to roll out E3 across Delaware, with the first ecosystem beginning in Wilmington this summer. The Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation

and Wilmington Alliance are proud to partner and lead this pilot project.

Wilmington Alliance has been working with the National League of Cities (NLC) on structuring an opportunity for Wilmington to join NLC's Innovation Ecosystem Program in 2020. Ranging from rural townships, college towns to major metros, these cities have joined with more than 200 local partners and leveraged more than \$100 million in regional and national resources to address local challenges. Examples of those commitment making cities include: Akron, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Providence, Roanoke, Syracuse, Washington DC, and others. The E3 Wilmington initiative is exactly the type of an entrepreneurial ecosystem building effort that would give Wilmington access to regional and national resources and funding.

E3 will look at conceptual opportunities (ideas with potential that warrant additional research), development opportunities (ideas in place or where there is a strong market potential), existing business opportunities (where the initiative needs guidance to reach the next step), and expansion opportunities (where an existing initiative is ready to scale up) in order to help businesses at various stages.

After E3's pilot in Wilmington, we plan to expand the program and its benefits to Dover and a third city



We have put every aspect of our work in the city through the lens of equity and inclusion.



RENATA KOWALCZYK
CEO, Wilmington Alliance

in Sussex County in 2020.

E3 is designed to provide opportunity for all. Critically, even businesses and opportunities that are not selected for specific E3 assistance should benefit from the networks, guidance, and involvement of various E3 partners.

We are proud to lead organizations that are committed to the vision that everyone, no matter what race or socioeconomic background, should have the opportunities and access to resources to create businesses and help economies grow for their communities. Anyone that is interested in supporting as a partner or a sponsor, please visit our website at www.petedupontfreedomfoundation.org/e3 or email contact@petedupontfreedomfoundation.org.

Governor du Pont continually pushed for “ideas that break the mold,” held optimism in people as generators of these ideas, and viewed that prosperity for all comes when “individuals are encouraged to excel in a marketplace of choices.” E3 is designed to ensure that all individuals have opportunities and access to the resources needed to create businesses and drive economic growth in communities throughout Delaware. ■

Stephen Sye is executive director of The Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation and Renata B. Kowalczyk is CEO of the Wilmington Alliance.

Dear white corporate America...

Editor's note: The Delaware Business Times rarely prints guest columns by business leaders outside the state, but this seemed like an appropriate time to make an exception. This letter appeared as a full-page ad in Sunday's New York Times (June 14, page A7), as well as on LinkedIn. Mr. Johnson gave DBT permission to reprint this column; the boldfaced passages came from him.



OMAR JOHNSON
Guest Columnist

I get it. I know you have the best intentions.

I know you're horrified and heartbroken by the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor,

and too many others to name.

You want to take a stand against the

racial injustice and anti-Black prejudice built into the very foundation of America. You want to do the right thing. But you just don't know how.

Is that about right?

I know it is because you've been calling me. For the past two weeks, several times a day, it's been the same question: What can I do?

Let me break it down for you.

For starters, the fact that you're only asking now is part of the problem. Companies have been profiting off Black

culture and Black consumers for decades.

Are you just now realizing that all Black lives matter, not just those of Black artists and athletes? Not just Black dollars? Ask yourself, truthfully. That's step zero.

Next, listen. Before you open your mouth, open your eyes and ears. Listen to your Black employees. They've been sounding the alarm for years. But don't stop there. Dig into the cold, hard Black data. Learn where Black people exist in your company — and, more importantly, where they don't. Count the too-few Black faces in meetings. Notice the muted Black voices in conversations where decisions get made. If you do that, you'll see the problem clear as day.

You're not nurturing your Black talent. You're not benefiting from Black

experiences, relationships, perspectives, insights, and ideas. **And most importantly, you're not doing the right thing.**

But don't feel bad about that. Now is not the time to beat yourself up, or to obsess about the ten ways you might get it wrong. That helps no one. What helps is fixing the problem. And you can do that. You can fix this.

To me, this isn't only a social justice problem or an equal opportunity problem. This is a business problem, too. And you fix business problems all the time. So, you got this.

But just in case you don't “got it,” let me help you out. **Here's a game plan:** Inside your company walls, you need

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SCOTUS decision means employers need to review policies and notices

BY JENNIFER GIMLER BRADY
AND A.J. BOLAN

On June 15, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, Georgia (No. 17-1618), holding that “[a]n employer who fires an individual merely for being gay or transgender violates Title VII” of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The *Bostock* opinion addresses the appeals of three separate plaintiffs whose employers fired them after learning of their sexual orientation or transgender status. In reaching the conclusion that Title VII protections extend to sexual orientation and gender identity, the Court reiterated the well-known principle that “an employer who intentionally treats a person worse because of sex—such as by firing the person for actions or attributes it would tolerate in an individual of another sex—discriminates against that person in violation of Title VII.” The Court rejected the employers’ argument that because the employers would discriminate against all homosexuals or transgender individuals, the employers were not discriminating against the employees because of sex. The Court emphasized that the text of Title VII makes clear that it protects “individuals” rather than groups from discrimination and held that “it is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating against that individual based on sex.” In other words, the Court recognized that sexual orientation and gender identity inherently rely on the employee’s sex.



JENNIFER BRADY
Guest Columnist

The Court declined to address the effect its ruling may have on the interpretation of other federal and/or state laws. However, the Court’s rationale in *Bostock* could

readily be extended to other non-discrimination provisions that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, including statutes governing housing, public accommodations, education and healthcare. Exemptions for religious employers may be available under Title VII, First Amendment law, or the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and we expect to see further litigation on these issues. Cases decided later this term, including *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru* and *St. James School v. Biel*, which address the “ministerial exception” included in Title VII, may provide further insight on how religious exemptions would apply.

The *Bostock* opinion, issued during Pride month, is a victory for LGBTQ employees and diverse workplaces. While Delaware and its neighboring states, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey, already prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the *Bostock* decision now extends these protections to the estimated half of LGBTQ employees living in states without state-level protections.

Any Delaware employer covered by Title VII should already be in



A.J. BOLAN
Guest Columnist

compliance with state non-discrimination laws, as Delaware’s non-discrimination protections apply to employers of four or more employees, while Title

VII applies only to employers of 15 or more employees. Therefore, employers already complying with their state anti-discrimination provisions should not have to change much going forward. However, employers should undertake a review of their employment policies and non-discrimination notices to both update any Title VII language to include sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as to ensure their internal policies do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, employers should take this opportunity to update their anti-discrimination training to include the Title VII protections for LGBTQ employees and remind their employees that discrimination in the workplace is not permitted.

Businesses also can expect to see increased activity at the state level aimed at expanding LGBTQ protections in other areas. Businesses should proactively review and/or update their policies to provide discrimination protections if they are covered by any provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.

The *Bostock* opinion may lead to an increase in discrimination cases brought against employers and shift cases from



When evaluating health insurance programs, employers should consider whether plans include non-discrimination protections for their employees.



state courts to federal courts moving forward. Employees who may have been hesitant to bring such claims under state law may now feel more empowered to raise their discrimination claims after the Supreme Court’s ruling.

As a final observation, the Court’s ruling in *Bostock* could upend the recent rule issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which rolled back protections for LGBTQ persons in healthcare insurance programs by limiting the definition of “sex” to “biological sex.” When evaluating health insurance programs, employers should consider whether plans include non-discrimination protections for their employees. ■

Jennifer Gimler Brady is a partner and general counsel at Potter Anderson & Corroon LLP in Wilmington. A.J. Bolan is an associate at Potter Anderson. Brady was recognized as the 2018 “Lawyer of the Year” in health care law for Wilmington by The Best Lawyers in America.

AMERICA Continued from page 21

to hire more Black people. Period.

On one side of the equation, that means fixing the “pipeline” challenge, once and for all. So, redouble your efforts to identify, recruit, attract, develop, and elevate Black talent. Fund educational institutions that champion Black students and their futures.

On the other side of the equation, that means helping Black talent climb the ladder, and turning over power and authority to rising Black leaders. Retention and promotion is just as urgent as recruiting and hiring. In fact, the former accelerates the latter. I guarantee you.

Analyze where you are as an organization. Set goals for where you want to be. Put in place incentives to achieve those goals. Measure against them ruthlessly and relentlessly with KPIs. This is core-business stuff, not extra credit.

Oh, and while you’re at it, stop with the BS office microaggressions. Check yourself before you call a Black person “aggressive,” “disruptive,” or “difficult.” That goes a long way. Trust me.

Those are the internal moves.

Outside your walls, you have to step up. As businesses, you have obligations to the communities you benefit from. And that work has to start now. Time is of the essence.

Support Black organizations who are fighting to revolutionize criminal justice and public safety in the United States. Invest in Black-owned businesses and Black business leaders. Buy Black. Create a cycle of Black opportunity and Black prosperity.

And help shore up our democracy: Be part of the progress. Mobilize voters. Help Black consumers hold politicians accountable. Don’t sit on the sidelines.

Those are the external moves.

I know this sounds like a lot. And my own story demonstrates how hard this all is, but also how important.

I grew up in Brooklyn during the age of stop-and-frisk. I was arrested as a college student in Atlanta during the era of Red Dog policing. I sold mixtapes in a flea market to pay for school, before working my way from the bottom to the top of America’s favorite companies — from junior associate at Nike to CMO at Beats



Check yourself before you call a Black person “aggressive,” “disruptive,” or “difficult.” That goes a long way. Trust me.



OMAR JOHNSON
Founder, OPUS United

and the top 1% of executives at Apple.

Everything they call Black employees in the workplace — creative, but “just a kid”; cool, but “not a cultural fit” — they called me all of it. Some said, stick to “urban” marketing, not global marketing. Others said, you don’t have the “skills” to be a top boss.

Thankfully, I had my own board of directors. One amazing Black mentor, and a group of white leaders who made a bet on me — and won big. The results speak for themselves: I helped create

billions of dollars in enterprise value.

Here’s the bottom line: This isn’t the time for another “diversity report,” or for any report at all. This is a time for action, inside and outside. This is a time for change: inside ourselves and our companies; across our communities and our country.

No doubt, it’s daunting. You may feel pummeled, or paralyzed. I understand. But lean into the discomfort. It’s okay. I have faith in you, corporate America. Like I said, you can fix this. We can fix this.

So, before you call me again — before you ask me what you should say, or what you should change — I’ll tell you my answer right now: **Absolutely everything.**

See you in the room. ■

Omar Johnson is the founder of Los Angeles-based OPUS United. He is the former chief marketing officer at Beats by Dre and former vice president of marketing at Apple. If you’d like to participate in a discussion on this topic, please send Editor Peter Osborne an e-mail at posborne@delawarebusinesstimes.com or submit a comment to this column on our website.

Delaware Inc. 5000 companies pivot in response to pandemic challenges

Acting fast helped Keystone Funding survive risk concerns

CAMDEN –Keystone Funding has come out of what has been a tough three months for the residential-mortgage business with a \$130 million pipeline of business mostly because it “reacted faster” than other lenders who sell their mortgages to investors, CEO Tim Paret said.

When COVID-19 became a reality, the market for residential securitizations was thrown into flux. The government announced widespread forbearance allowances for homeowners without guidance to lenders and mortgage servicers, leaving mortgage lenders like Keystone with a large pipeline of loans that nobody really wanted.

“It’s difficult to manage risk when you don’t have all the information and when so many people are experiencing hardships from layoffs and concerns about their health,” Paret said. “We really didn’t know how many homeowners would fall behind on their payments in an extended shutdown.”

“That persisted for three weeks or so. We made the decision to cut our

losses and sell off our loans earlier than most, meaning that we took significant discounts [on how much we made] and reduced the risk to investors,” Paret said, adding that he believes some of the mortgage lenders who tried to wait it out may be “mortally wounded.”

Keystone, which is licensed in eight mid-Atlantic states, ranked 1,259th on the 2019 Inc. 5000 list, with 328% growth to \$5.3 million between 2015 and 2018. Parets, bought a majority stake in Keystone in January 2018 because he liked the technology platform that founder Jared Martin had created and felt that he’d rather help capitalize the company rather than start from scratch and then push the fast-growing company “over the finish line by helping to expand its distribution channels.”

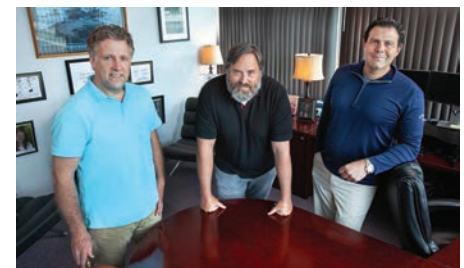
Paret said Keystone is coming out of the pandemic in “really, really good shape. The market has been going gangbusters since late March after a start to the crisis where nobody was calling us back. People now are refinancing; people are buying

homes. That market is really strong.”

Lenders like Paret say there are three phases of recovery during a situation like this: You start by updating your credit policy with no exceptions; then move to phase two where you make exceptions where it makes sense; and then memorialize changes with a new policy.

Paret said Keystone tightened its credit policy “earlier than everyone else,” increasing minimum credit scores and required reserves, and initiating verification of employment within two days of closing a loan.

“A lot of times when things get difficult, business owners are drawn toward shiny objects, said Paret, who employs 37 people – 25 in Delaware. “I believe that when things get hard, you have to focus on blocking and tackling of your business, on getting more efficient, and identifying people and expenses that don’t belong [in the culture you’re trying to create]. This is the advice my mentor, Jerry Schiano, gave me in early March. We’ve made this advice a daily topic



From left: Jason Martin, Tim Paret and John Ghanayem of Keystone. | PHOTO BY ERIC CROSSAN

among the leadership team — we’ve laid off two people but replaced them. With the growth we’ve seen, we hired three team members and we are now looking to fill four open positions.”

“I think we’ll come out of this fine with the [Inc. 5000] rankings” in 2021, Paret said. “I think we’ll double in size from a revenue and profitability perspective. We’ve been able to double our capital base with retained earnings, mostly from adding two new channels — wholesale lending and consumer direct — and we have some tailwinds given that some of these other lenders seem to be absent from this space because they took significant losses.” ■

--By Peter Osborne

Recession’s lessons helping Placers weather pandemic

NEWARK – For nearly 20 years, Placers has been connected Delaware jobseekers with employers in need, but company founder and President Chris Burkhard said that the level of disruption in the job market has been something he’s never seen before.

“I can’t tell you the number of customers that called me and said, ‘Do I do layoffs or furloughs,’” he recalled.

Placers connects temporary workers with employers in need. In typical years, that need may be to work on a new project or to support undermanned divisions. The employee actually works for Placers, which establishes a wage with the employer in need and pays the relevant taxes and insurance with a few-dollars-an-hour markup as its revenue stream.

While temporary staffers are used to moving between employers to cover projects and duties as needed, the pandemic essentially hit pause on new opportunities, Burkhard said. Some of his employees were furloughed and filed for unemployment assistance as they awaited opportunities to return as the lockdown eased, while others were able to work remotely and some found work with essential businesses.

“We didn’t lose that many [to unemployment],” he said. “We were down, but we’re starting to rebound now.”

While Burkhard declined to say how many temporary workers are employed by Placers – the figure would be of interest to his competitors, he

said – Burkhard said that they employ thousands every year. He said that his goal remains to make Placers the largest private employer in the state – a distinction that ChristianaCare holds with about 12,000 employees.

His company’s success has landed it on the annual Inc. 5000 list each of the last four years, ranking 3,195th last year with 114% growth over a three-year period to total revenues of \$12.1 million in 2018. Burkhard said that he expects a tough second half of 2020 to give way to a much better 2021.

“COVID was rough, but we were incredibly well-positioned,” he said. “We did so many things over so many years to get ready: low debt, having proper credit, good policies, stronger management team, diverse customer base, etc.”

With stability under its roof, Burkhard said he felt compelled to put Placers’ expertise to work during the pandemic that has seen more than 100,000 Delawareans file for unemployment assistance in less than three months. He created the Act of Kindness program, which provides free coaching for job seekers and business owners alike.

“We’re just doing whatever we can to help, be it with resumes, helping people get leads or tips, doing mock interview practice, etc.,” he said. “We want to help them just navigate their search in the whole process.” ■

--Jacob Owens

Karins and Associates sees growth as pandemic antidote

NEWARK – When Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf decided to close the construction industry amid his state’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Karins and Associates President Dev Sitaram worried that a snowball of such decisions would be a sizable blow to the engineering, planning and surveying firm’s revenues.

Thankfully, Delaware and Maryland allowed the trades to keep working and his 47-year-old firm endured year-over-year revenue declines of an estimated 15% in April.

The company made a commitment to not furlough or layoff any of its 56 employees at five offices during the pandemic, Sitaram said. Instead, Karins took the time to complete new staff training and standardize its filing systems across all offices, while also taking some speculative risks.

“We advanced some projects that we did not necessarily have in the books or were not authorized to work, and so that was a cost for the company,” he said, noting they chose projects they expected to advance as work ratcheted back up.

The firm’s foresight is why it has landed it on the annual Inc. 5000 list each of the last three years, ranking 3,546th last year with 99% growth over a three-year period to total revenues of \$7.1 million in 2018.

Sitaram said that his firm sought to diversify its project portfolio after the 2008-09 Great Recession, when it was then-skewed toward residential projects, and also expand its reach. That recession

more than a decade ago forced the firm to close a nascent Sussex County office.

Today, the firm still does more residential than any other project type, but it has increased its commercial, office, industrial and institutional portfolios as well. It has also expanded into Pennsylvania and Maryland, opening three offices across them with plans for more.

“When everybody was shrinking, we made a strategic plan to diversify,” Sitaram said. “In the next one to three years, our strategic goal is to grow in Pennsylvania, both with our two offices and maybe a third location more toward Harrisburg, and in Maryland with a second office closer to Washington, D.C.”

That growth may come organically, as two of its out-of-state offices did, or by acquisition of another firm, which was how it opened its first Pennsylvania office, Sitaram said.

“There may be some opportunities for us with the downturn, and we are well positioned to make an acquisition,” he added, noting a firm’s size, core values and work ethic are the traits Karins seeks.

Although the firm is projecting lower revenues than budgeted due to the pandemic’s disruptions, Sitaram said that they were still looking to fill several high-paying jobs in its offices.

“We’re looking to grow because we are optimistic of what the future holds,” he said.

--By Jacob Owens



Sometimes we have to do more. This time, a lot more.

Sometimes the urgency of a better future compels you to act. We are in such a moment, when a global pandemic, a cry for racial justice and a feeling of hopelessness challenge each community.

In the face of this, Bank of America has committed to investing \$1 billion over the next four years to build on our long-standing work to drive economic opportunity and equality in communities of color. It will power small businesses, help connect workers to new skills and job opportunities, improve medical response capacity and access to health care, and support affordable housing.

This bolsters our recent commitment of an additional \$100 million to support nonprofit partners and \$250 million to support Community Development Financial and Minority Depository Institutions, addressing impacts from the coronavirus that disproportionately affect black and brown communities.

My teammates and I here in Delaware commit to the important work that lies before all of us. We share the sense of urgency gripping the nation, and we welcome the promise of achieving great things together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chip Rossi".

Chip Rossi
Delaware Market President

To learn more, please visit [**bankofamerica.com/community**](https://bankofamerica.com/community).

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