

DELAWARE BUSINESS TIMES

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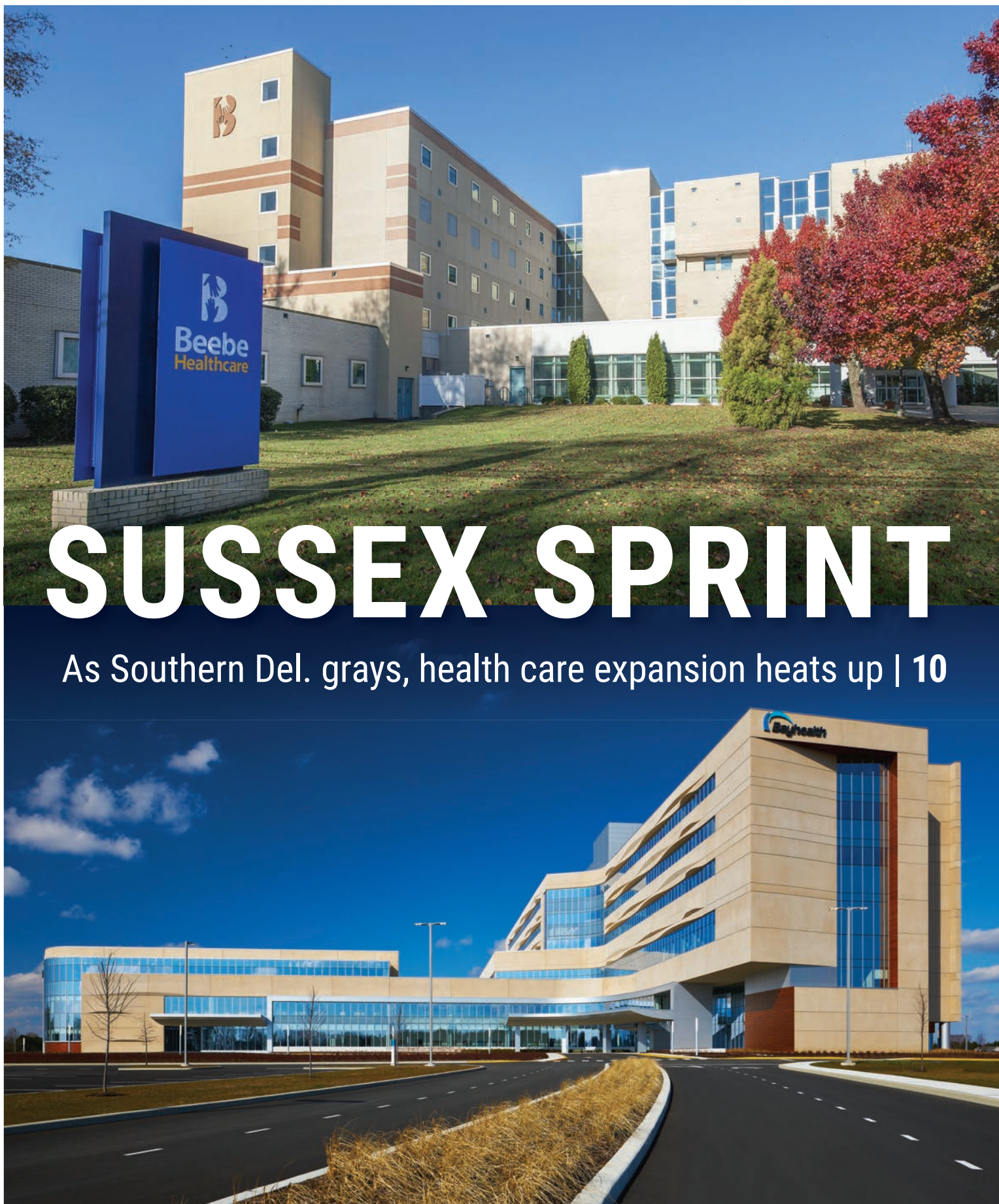
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Former Adj. Gen. Vavala receives state chamber's Marvel Cup award

BY JACOB OWENS

WILMINGTON – Retired Maj. Gen. Francis D. Vavala, who served for nearly two decades as the leader of the Delaware National Guard, received the prestigious Josiah Marvel Cup award from the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce (DSCC) at its 184th annual dinner on Jan. 11.

Vavala was recognized for his service to the state through military service as well as a second act in assisting veterans amid his retirement. The state chamber's highest honor is named in memory of the late Josiah Marvel, who reorganized the state chamber and served as its first president in 1913. It has been awarded annually since 1951.

In receiving the award, an overwhelmed Vavala was clearly surprised and honored.

"This is an honor of the highest magnitude. I never in my life thought that I would be the recipient of this award," he said. "I've been to the dinners over the years and it's so magnificent."

In a unique year when the chamber held its annual gala virtually rather than in-person when more than 1,000 would typically attend, Vavala was surprised with the honor before the event. Chamber leaders coordinated with the Delaware National Guard (DNG) to bring Vavala to the Joint Force Headquarters, where current DNG Adj. Gen. Michael R. Berry and DSCC President Michael J. Quaranta informed him of the honor.

"Gen. Vavala embodies what it means to serve the state and nation. For more than 50 years, both in uniform and out, he has made a tremendous impact on our National Guard and the state of Delaware," said Berry, the current adjutant general of the Delaware National Guard, in a statement. "He normally is the one giving out the recognition and awards, so it's only right he gets some recognition."

As an additional surprise, President-elect Joe Biden and incoming First Lady Jill Biden sent their congratulations to the general as well.

"We know how meaningful this award is," said the president-elect in a statement, having won the award with his wife in 2018. "It comes from the community. It is about service to the people. There is no one more deserving than General Vavala. He's not only been an incredible leader to the Delaware National Guard, but he's been a genuine friend to so many."

A born and raised Delawarean, Vavala attended Salesianum School and Wilmington University, and even worked for DuPont at one time. His military service began in 1967, when he enlisted in the Delaware Army National Guard as a private. He was commissioned as a signal officer after completing the Delaware Military Academy Officer Candidate School in 1970.

Vavala was appointed on Feb. 1, 1999, by then-Gov. Tom Carper as Delaware's adjutant general, the highest-ranking DNG officer responsible for the mission readiness of all guardsmen units for both federal and state missions. Over his 18-year tenure serving three different governors, Vavala became the longest-tenured adjutant general in the country and earned the state's first four-star rank.

After 50 years of DNG service, Vavala retired and took on a new role as a veteran's advocacy specialist at Delaware Technical Community College. There he assists in the day-to-day operations of the Veterans Resource Center at Delaware Tech's Stanton Campus. "People who look for the stereotypical leader in his



Delaware State Chamber of Commerce President Michael Quaranta presents former Delaware National Guard Adj. Gen. Francis D. Vavala with the 2021 Marvel Cup award. | PHOTO COURTESY OF DSCC

area might expect someone who is gruff, analytic or curt. But most people who know him describe him as kind, compassionate and respectful," said Mark T. Brainard, president of Delaware Tech, in a statement.

The state-of-the-art headquarters, the Major Joseph R. "Beau" Biden III National Guard/Reserve Center in New Castle, was a 15-year-long dream of Vavala's, who led the efforts to construct the building in 2014. The facility is now home to approximately 400 soldiers, airmen and sailors.

"General Vavala is what one would call a servant leader – someone who by his own words and actions has, time and again, led by example. He is the very definition of public service," said Chamber President Quaranta in a statement.

In other news, former State Sen. Margaret Rose Henry was presented with the chamber's rare Dick DiSabatino Award. Named for former DSCC Chairman Richard DiSabatino Sr., it was established in the mid-90s to recognize significant contributions to shape opinion and public policy in the state of Delaware.

The rarely given honor was last presented in 2019 to the former State Rep. Joseph G. DiPinto, and in 2013 to John H. Taylor Jr., executive director of the Delaware Public Policy Institute.

Henry was the first Black woman to serve in the Delaware State Senate and was one of only four women serving in the chamber at the time of her election in 1994. She served as majority leader of the Senate Democratic Caucus and represented the 2nd Senatorial District.

Henry spent her professional career also working in the nonprofit sector. She served in management roles with groups like Delaware Guidance Services, Girls Inc., Ingleside Homes, YWCA, United Way of Delaware, and Delaware Technical Community College. This diverse background in public service gave her an intimate understanding of the needs of the communities she served. ■

On the Cover

Beebe Healthcare, headquartered in Lewes, and Bayhealth, headquartered in Dover, are rapidly expanding services in Sussex County.

Photos courtesy of Beebe & James Steinkamp via Cannon Design



New advisory group aims to push Del. innovation economy

BY JACOB OWENS

WILMINGTON — A new state advisory group intends to increase Delaware's spotlight as a science and technology innovation hub, helping the state remain competitive in the region for growing and relocating companies.



Patrick Callahan

The Science & Tech Advisors Group, announced Dec. 30, consists of more than two dozen representatives from Delaware's top tech companies, industry organizations, institutions of higher education and state government. It will be chaired by Patrick Callahan, co-founder of the Delaware Data Innovation Lab and CEO of Wilmington data analytics firm CompassRed.

As the First State's spotlight grows under an impending President Joe Biden, Callahan told Delaware Business Times that there is a "huge opportunity to really take this to the next level." Organization

of the new group that was sought by Delaware's public-private economic development agency, the Delaware Prosperity Partnership, took several months behind the scenes in 2020, but it has been a goal for Gov. John Carney since he announced his transition plan four years ago.

Callahan credited J. Michael Bowman, state director of the Small Business Development Corp. and chairman and president of the Delaware Technology Park, an innovation hub near the University of Delaware, for setting the foundation that the group hopes to build on. With startups growing rapidly, an established group of big-name companies and fertile training grounds at UD and Delaware State University, Callahan said that Delaware is poised to benefit.

"I hate to say this, but the pandemic sort of brings an eye toward the need for this type of industry in our region," he said. "It seems like it's the perfect timing for all this to really take off."

The effort to increase the state's advocacy for the growing science and technology industry also comes after DPP commissioned a market assessment

in 2019 that established the sector as a growth prospect. About 40% of DPP's pipeline of business expansion or relocation projects are in the science and technology sector.

While companies may also look at neighboring states like Pennsylvania and Maryland, Callahan said that he believes Delaware's smaller size allows it to be nimble to the needs of its employers, and the Advisory Group is working on drafting both state and federal legislation for consideration.

"We can put in policy legislation that makes an impact right away. So, if anyone thinks we're behind, we have an opportunity to leapfrog above that very quickly," he said.

Callahan said that he also envisions the group helping state companies to identify potential funding sources and lobby federal leaders for funding as well — once again aided by the connection to a Biden administration. The work of the group will be done in subcommittees, but the whole will be a larger voice for Delaware's science and tech companies, he added.

Delaware also has an advantage from

a diversity and inclusion standpoint, as it ranks highly in terms of its diverse, trained workforce and its aptitude for technical skills, according to a Harvard Business Review study. Callahan said that means Delaware is poised to gain as companies seek to diversify their staff, especially with the growth of pandemic-spurred remote working.

"[Diversity and inclusion] is becoming more and more important because for science and data science, you need that diversity and inclusion, that different eye, that context, to be able to do the analysis," he explained.

"Historically, we have been a science state," Callahan said, noting that at one time Delaware had a higher per capita ratio of doctorate holders than any other state. He pointed to DuPont, MBNA and other companies that created a wellspring of trained workers.

"All that kind of exploded, but it left this good, fertile ground of knowledge capital that can be pulled together and then leveraged for all the next businesses that are going to be growing here," he said. ■

Developer moves Beebe-anchored complex outside Milton

BY KATIE TABELING

MILTON — After withdrawing plans to construct a \$35 million medical office complex in downtown Milton, developer Phoenix RHCS Holdings has moved the project 3 miles outside town limits with the help of a new partner.

Phoenix RHCS Holdings principal owner Chris Selzer announced that he was working with well-known local firm DiSabatino Construction to build Jerry Ann McLamb Medical Pavilion at the intersection of Routes 16 and 30.

Preliminary site plans approved by the Sussex County Planning Commission show a single 40,000-square-foot building, but Selzer confirmed the campus envisions at least two buildings, with the possibility of a third in the future.

"We are excited to partner with DiSabatino Construction on this project. We had many options as we considered the future of the Jerry Ann McLamb Medical Pavilion, but DiSabatino has the experience in construction and design, and that is no small matter," Selzer told Delaware Business Times.

"We're thrilled to have such a partnership with a major medical operator with a vision for this property," added Kevin DiSabatino, vice president of business development and real estate for the namesake firm.

The pavilion's name honors Selzer's mother-in-law McLamb, a Milton native and dedicated Beebe registered nurse who died in 2018. She graduated from the Beebe School of Nursing and spent most of her 50-year career in the health system.

Phoenix RHCS first proposed the medical campus in downtown Milton in early 2020, with Beebe Healthcare's support. Beebe plans to use the space for outpatient services such as primary and walk-in care, specialists, lab and rehabilitation services, and diagnostic imaging.

"My mother-in-law introduced me to [Beebe Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer] Rick Schaffner socially," Seltzer said. "But while we were making plans for this complex, we knew that Beebe would be a natural fit for us. Not only because they're delivering great health care in Sussex, but because of that connection. Jerry even has bricks placed in front of Beebe's Lewes campus. That connection is important."

But public outcry over commercial ventures in residential areas and unfavorable recommendations from the town's Planning Commission led Phoenix RHCS Holdings to withdraw its application.

"We wanted to remain close to Milton, and in order to facilitate the project moving forward more quickly, we decided to look for property outside town limits," Selzer said.

The proposed campus would be on 142 acres owned by DiSabatino Construction, which was acquired decades ago. It was rezoned in the mid-2000s with the hope of developing the land into a commercial and residential complex, but the company opted to wait out the recession before moving forward.

DiSabatino declined to comment on



Phoenix RHCS Holdings has resubmitted plans for a medical pavilion on the outskirts of Milton. PHOTO COURTESY OF PHOENIX RHCS HOLDINGS

whether those plans were still moving forward. However, the application to the county Planning Commission notes that Phoenix RHCS Holdings is pursuing a minor subdivision along with the medical complex.

Beebe President and CEO Dr. David Tam confirmed that Beebe will be a tenant of the McLamb Medical Pavilion, and that Beebe is "ecstatic to have the opportunity to expand the medical services we offer in Milton."

The pavilion will be Beebe's most northern location, continuing a string of recent expansions through Sussex County. This spring, Beebe opened a freestanding emergency department and a cancer center at the Beebe South

Coastal Health Campus in Frankford. Construction work is underway at Beebe's \$124 million surgical hospital on Route 24 near Rehoboth Beach with a target opening in 2022.

"Now, more than ever, it is essential that Milton residents, and the surrounding community, have access to local and readily accessible health care," Tam said in an email to DBT. "As the approval process continues, we look forward to sharing more information about Beebe's presence on the campus."

Construction on the McLamb Medical Pavillion is expected to start this summer, pending the county's planning process, and Beebe is currently slated to open the doors of its offices at the end of 2022. ■

Duffield Assoc. merges firm in three-way national deal

BY JACOB OWENS

PIKE CREEK – Duffield Associates, the state's largest environmental engineering firm, announced Friday that it has merged with two other firms across the country to create a new national company.

The deal also includes Hull & Associates, headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, and HSW Consulting, headquartered in Tampa, Fla. The combination of the three resulted in an eight-state presence with 20 offices and more than 275 staff members.

Behind the deal is New York-based private equity firm Round Table Capital Partners, which has invested in buy-and-build strategies in the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry. It first acquired Hull & Associates in July and is now acquiring Duffield and HSW in turn. Terms of the latest acquisitions were not disclosed.



Guy Marcozzi

leaders. Gerry Salontai, CEO of Hull & Associates, will serve as the chief executive



Duffield Associates, headquartered off Limestone Road in Pike Creek, has merged with two other engineering firms to create a national firm. DBT PHOTO BY JACOB OWENS

of the combined firm, while former Duffield President Guy Marcozzi will now serve as its executive vice president. Deirdre Smith, the former chief operating officer of Duffield, will serve in the same role for the merged firm and reportedly run the Delaware operations.

Marcozzi told Delaware Business Times that the deal came together after he had conversations with Salontai, whom he's known through the industry for about 25 years. It was Salontai, a former longtime CEO of the California-based national engineering firm Kleinfelder, who brought in HSW Consulting as well. Marcozzi said that Duffield had been exploring expansion opportunities before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as guided by its 2019 strategic plan.

"In our business, you get to a certain

size and you have to think about how you get to the next level," he added. "This seemed like a great way to do it, so we're excited about the breadth and depth of services and service areas that come with this pretty exciting prospect."

Marcozzi said that a new brand may be established in the future for the combined firm, but it is also looking to continue acquiring other firms looking to increase their scope and profile, including in New England, Northwest, and West Coast where the combined firm doesn't yet have a presence.

"We're really trying to develop around the geoscience and the environmental sector," he said. "We want to grow around the services of the future, as opposed to the traditional engineering offerings."

A bigger national presence will help prevent the limited amount of attrition that Duffield sees mainly due to relocations while also helping its recruitment efforts, Marcozzi said. Duffield has five offices, including Pike Creek, Dover, Philadelphia, West Deptford, N.J.; and Bel Air, Md.

"I think the big thing to getting and keeping the best talent is having opportunities, and we think they will have more opportunities through this merger," he said.

Duffield has already contributed to high-profile projects like Incyte Corporation's Alapocas headquarters

“In our business, you get to a certain size and you have to think about how you get to the next level.”

GUY MARCOZZI

President, Duffield Associates

campus, the University of Delaware's STAR Campus, ChristianaCare's Newark-area campus, the Delaware City Refinery, and the development of the Fort Dupont project, among others.

Well-known in the region for its expertise in environmental and geotechnical engineering, Duffield is poised to potentially gain from a Biden administration that is expected to strengthen requirements for builders to consider climate change impacts on their developments. The combined firm is expected to play into that opportunity, but also energy, water and wastewater, transportation, commercial and industrial real estate, and manufacturing.

"Hull in particular has a large presence in green energy, a lot of solar and wind work, and we think that's going to create a lot of opportunities in the future," Marcozzi said. "There's a lot of, no pun intended, tailwind pushing in that direction." ■



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New round of PPP lending opens, offers second loans

BY JACOB OWENS

A new round of lending under the U.S. Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) began Jan. 11, starting with a targeted opening to lenders that serve underserved communities.

The PPP was the federal program most acutely tailored to the economic recovery of businesses impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, offering low-interest loans that could be entirely forgiven under certain terms. Originally instituted under the CARES Act passed by federal lawmakers in March 2020, it doled out \$525 billion of the \$659 billion appropriated by Congress before the program expired in August. Delaware businesses received more than 13,000 loans worth more than \$1.5 billion in the program's first runs.

Under the second stimulus package approved by Congress and President Donald Trump in December, the PPP was restarted with \$284 billion to allocate through March 2021, including at least \$15 billion targeted at those underserved communities.

When the loan portal reopened Jan.



John Fleming

11, it initially accepted first-time PPP loan applications from participating community financial institutions (CFIs), which included community development financial institutions, minority depository institutions, certified development companies and microloan intermediaries. The only participating CFI in Delaware was Wilmington-based True Access Capital, according to John Fleming, the SBA's state director.

Starting Jan. 19, others will be allowed to submit applications, including for second-time borrowers. Those loans will be capped at \$2 million rather than the prior \$10 million, and only be eligible to businesses with 300 or fewer employees, versus 500 in the first rounds.

What the appetite may be for a new PPP loan remains to be seen as borrowers will need to prove at least a 25% reduction in gross receipts in a 2020 comparable quarter, but federal

legislators also loosened the program's terms and expanded eligibility to 501(c)(6) nonprofits, housing cooperatives, destination marketing organizations, and others.

PPP borrowers can also now set their loan's cover period anywhere from eight to 24 weeks to cover additional costs, including operations expenditures, property damage costs, supplier costs, and worker protection expenditures.

"That was key because now any kind of modifications that they had to do for COVID, such as buying protective equipment or making modifications outside – like a restaurant buying those heaters and tents – all that is now going to be eligible as well," Fleming said, noting 60% still must go toward payroll for a loan to be forgivable.

Hotel and restaurant operators are also now allowed to apply for up to 350% of monthly payroll versus the 250% allowed in the earlier round, to address the disproportionate impact they have shouldered this past year, Fleming said.

Virtually all of Delaware's largest lenders, including WSFS Bank, M&T Bank, PNC Bank, TB Bank, Chase



Any kind of modifications that they had to do for COVID ... is now going to be eligible as well.



JOHN FLEMING

SBA, Delaware state director

Bank, Bank of America, Citizens Bank, Fulton Bank, and more, are participating in the PPP again, however, many are prioritizing their own customers. Fleming noted that online lenders such as Kabbage, PayPal, Square and more are an option for those without a bank relationship.

The forgiveness process for first-round PPP loans is underway, and Fleming noted that Congress has made the process simpler for the smallest borrowers. A single certification sheet is now all that is required for those borrowing \$150,000 or less – essentially becoming an honor system for 87% of the program's borrowers nationwide. ■

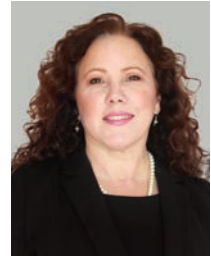
Armstrong Teasdale firm opens Wilmington office

BY JACOB OWENS

WILMINGTON – The St. Louis-based law firm Armstrong Teasdale has entered the Wilmington market after recruiting four former Elliott Greenleaf attorneys with experience in corporate, bankruptcy and intellectual property (IP) law.

Partners Shelley A. Kinsella, Jonathan M. Stemerman, Eric M. Suttty and Rafael X. Zahralddin joined the No. 177 AmLaw-ranked firm effective Jan. 4. Each worked at Elliott Greenleaf for years before leaving the smaller firm based in Blue Bell, Pa.

Richard Scheff, a Philadelphia-based partner and leader of the Eastern U.S. for Armstrong Teasdale, told Delaware Business Times that he has viewed Wilmington as an obvious expansion market for the growing firm since he joined in 2018.



Shelley Kinsella

"Wilmington really is a center of a very sophisticated and complex practice of law," he said. "There's a lot of demand. I get questions all the time about whether we have people with a Delaware license."

The entry of Armstrong Teasdale into the market came from a recruiter who connected the four attorneys to the firm.

"We get contacted by recruiters all the time – sometimes they work out,



Jonathan Stemerman

sometimes they don't," Scheff said. "We're fortunate. We have good people with good practices, they're known in Wilmington, have a nice book of business and

we're very, very excited about them having joined us."

The firm, which has now added seven offices in less than three years and 100 attorneys and staffers last year, intends to continue growing in Wilmington, Scheff said.



Eric Suttty

"We don't expect that process to happen overnight, it takes hard work. We'll work at it, identify the right people, and hopefully we can get them to come aboard," he said,

noting the firm is looking for a "full-service" office for its corporate clients.

For now, while the four attorneys joining Armstrong Teasdale primarily focus on bankruptcy and financial restructuring, they have a wide range of experience across litigation, mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance and regulatory matters, cross-border issues, and employment law. Each has been in private practice for about 20 years representing clients before U.S.



Rafael Zahralddin

Bankruptcy Court, Delaware Court of Chancery, federal court and state courts.

Married couple Kinsella and Zahralddin have long kept bankruptcy

practices in Delaware, with the latter founding Elliott Greenleaf's office in Wilmington in 2007. Aside from traditional bankruptcy proceedings, Zahralddin has worked with early-stage companies, venture capitalists and private venture funds as both a transactional lawyer and corporate litigator while Kinsella has experience defending involuntary bankruptcies and representing buyers of distressed companies.

Suttty has advised merger and acquisition clients along with other transactional work and trial experience, while Stemerman frequently litigates matters in Chancery Court, including actions involving breach of fiduciary duty, business divorce, receiverships, and books and records requests.

While the new office won't inhabit the former Elliott Greenleaf office at the I.M. Pei Building, Scheff said the remote-working scenario amid the pandemic has allowed the firm to take longer to find its long-term home, which will be in downtown Wilmington. They are actively looking at offices right now, and he expects to sign a lease toward the early to mid-second quarter of 2021 when dissemination



There's a lot of demand. I get questions all the time about whether we have people with a Delaware license.



RICHARD SCHEFF

Philadelphia-based partner and leader of the Eastern U.S. for Armstrong Teasdale

of the COVID-19 vaccines has hopefully allowed more spaces to reopen.

With other recently opened offices in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Princeton, N.J., Armstrong Teasdale has strategically been expanding along the East Coast.

"I think one of the things that the firm has realized was that although it had a Midwest presence its clients are all over the country," Scheff said. "The firm was doing very sophisticated work with great talented people, but that there were opportunities to do more of our clients' work if we were in other locations."

Armstrong Teasdale joins a growing number of out-of-state firms entering the Wilmington market in the past year, including Virginia-headquartered WhitbeckBennett, Florida-based Saxena White P.A., New Jersey-based Porzio, Bromberg & Newman, Los Angeles-based Lewis Brisbois, and Boston-based Block & Leviton LLP. ■

Startup aims to provide brand web-conferencing services

BY KATIE TABELING

WILMINGTON — New startup company Markee has its sights set on leading the revolution of customer relationship management (CRM) software, creating a new option for sales and customer relations firms.

Launched in May 2020, Markee offers a customizable virtual space for businesses with features like video conferencing, chatting, paywalls and the ability to customize its look for branding. It can also offer the ability to share content internally and externally.

From creating central spaces for sales teams to meet with customers to selling interactive event packages under a company's own name, Markee CEO Craig Doig said this platform has the ability to reimagine sales and customer management tools.

"People see Markee as an event tool, and they see it as just a straight Zoom replacement. Where we want to be is with the Hubspots and Salesforces, but CRMs right now are a very back-end process," Doig told the Delaware Business Times. "But there's a major component missing: the front-end. The most important thing that these tools allow you to do is to interact with your customer."

The seeds were planted for Markee while Doig was serving as chief operating officer of Short Order Production House in 2018, when one of its customers was looking for a content management system to share content internally, and wanted to walk away from their video contract. Short Order whipped up a system, which prompted the Fortune 500 company to buy it, Doig said.

"We let it percolate, and we agreed to lift it out of Short Order. The COVID hit, giving us the tailwind. We'd been playing with this infrastructure, and started to learn we could plug in video conferencing, polling, synchronous and asynchronous chatting and polling," he added.

Markee started first with less than \$100,000 in capital which included funds from friends and family, and with the leadership at Short Order at its back. By this point, Doig said the company has raised \$600,000, and with partnerships with venture capital firms like Chicago-based OCA Ventures and Boston-based Atreides Management, known for investing in game-changing tech like SpaceX.

The pandemic also gave Doig and his team the opportunity to connect with partners to gauge interest level to take Markee to market. It has grown



Markee marketing material of what a video conference meeting could look like. | PHOTO COURTESY MARKEE

organically as a video conferencing tool, but Doig said it really shines for branding purposes.

For example, when you set up a Zoom call, the Zoom logo will be visible in the corner of the screen. Not only does Markee have no logo visible, but it offers businesses to include their own.

Right now, Markee is working with Trellist Marketing and Technology in Wilmington and California-based companies The Future Party and NVE Experience Agency, a marketing firm with clients like Prime Video and Adidas. More locally, the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce has used Markee for virtual events and dinners, and the Eastern Seals of Maryland and Delaware has used it for

internal meetings and external events.

In the long game, Doig, who moved to Delaware a few years ago from California, said he wants Markee to become the go-to replacement for Slack, Zoom and other similar tools for companies in the First State.

"I believe there's \$10 million in recurring revenue annually in Delaware, and it's very important for us to stay here. We have the flexibility and right now, companies do have a tremendous say in what tools we can offer," he said. "While Zoom and WebEx are faceless, I'm right here, and we can deliver. I will personally walk that relationship for any Delaware executive." ■

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A decade later, the ACA awaits Biden's return

BY JACOB OWENS

WILMINGTON – At the dawn of his presidency, one of the most important victories of Joe Biden's time as vice president, the Affordable Care Act of 2010, has endured a decade of challenges, funding cuts, and a rollercoaster market.

Today, more than 25,000 Delawareans have purchased health insurance due to the legislation perhaps better known via Biden's former presidential partner as Obamacare. While the COVID-19 pandemic, an economic recovery and the tumultuous end to the Trump administration will likely embroil much of the early days of Biden's four-year term as president, he has also committed to preserving and strengthening the law that covers about 11.4 million Americans today.

The ACA was a hallmark achievement for President Barack Obama, who saw Biden lobby former Democratic Senate colleagues to ensure it cleared the 60-vote threshold. Upon its signing in a March 2010 East Room ceremony, Biden famously told Obama it was a “big [expletive] deal.”

The bill expanded Medicaid eligibility, opened new marketplaces for individual plans and disallowed insurers from considering pre-existing conditions when reviewing new applicants. Between the expansion of Medicaid and the offering of individual plans through the HealthCare.Gov marketplace, more than 20 million Americans have found health insurance coverage – roughly half of the nation's uninsured population prior to the law's passage.

In the years since, however, the law was put into the crosshairs of Republican lawmakers who saw it as government overreach, and it survived a U.S. Supreme Court challenge only to have Congress strike down one of its most controversial features, the individual mandate. With many insurers backing out of individual marketplaces and the Trump administration cutting spending on marketing and enrollment assistance, nationwide sign-ups have fallen annually from a high of 12.6 million in 2016 to about 11.4 million in 2020.

ACA impact on Delawareans

In the First State, ACA individual marketplace enrollment has exceeded 20,000 for the majority of the program's history. More than 25,000 signed up for the 2021 benefit year, the second consecutive year of enrollment gains, and an estimated 10,000 residents are eligible for Medicaid due to the ACA's expanded eligibility provisions.

Together, those programs have helped keep the percentage of uninsured Delawareans around 6%, down from around 10% before the ACA's passage.

“This is in spite of the best efforts of the Trump administration to kill the

ACA through what I call 1,000 paper cuts,” Delaware Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro told the Delaware Business Times. “I think it's quite remarkable that the numbers have stayed pretty stable and have actually increased [in Delaware] the last two years, given the efforts to disparage and destroy the ACA since 2016.”

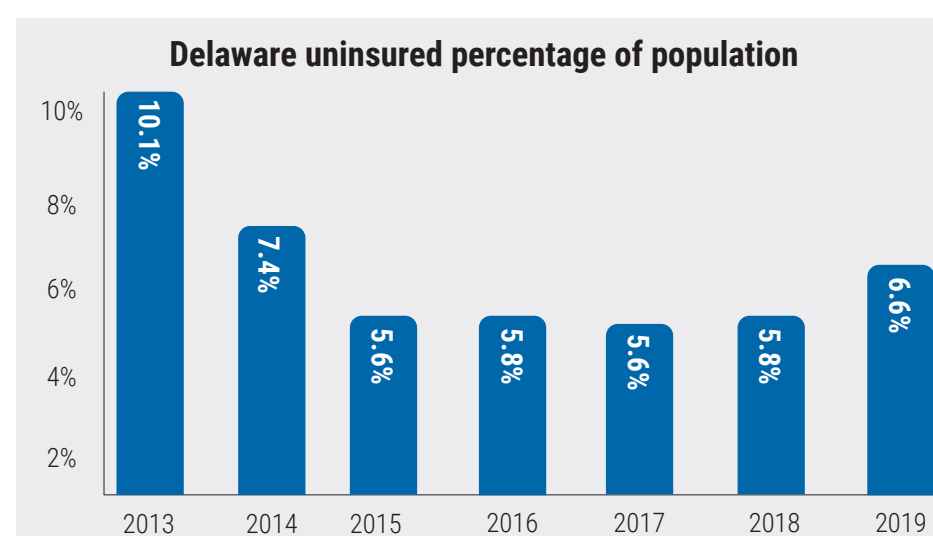
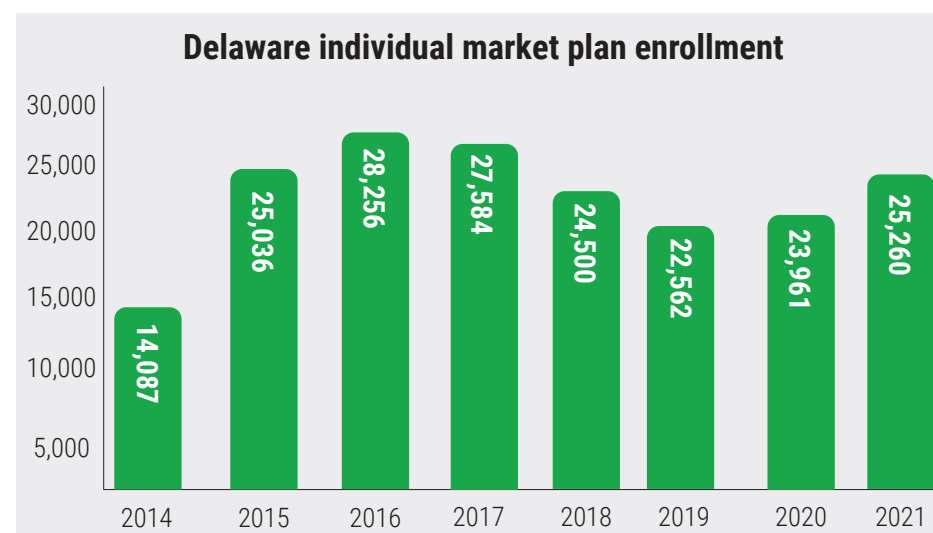
Navarro said that his department has undertaken marketing efforts that used to be funded by the federal government to ensure the public is aware of the resources. The importance of having health insurance cannot be overstated for individuals, who carry the inherent financial risk, or the community at-large, he said.

“It prevents, in many cases, people who go into the hospital emergency room for

treatment for something as simple as a sinus infection. If you spend money and time in primary care, it will save money in the future with long-term types of illnesses and disease,” Navarro said.

Reinsurance proves successful

Today, only Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield participates in Delaware's ACA marketplace, offering 12 plans with differing premium and deductible levels, after Aetna backed out in 2018. Navarro blames that loss on Congress's refusal to extend so-called risk corridor payments, or a shuffling of funds from more profitable plans to less profitable ones, to meet the intent of servicing all, regardless of how sick a patient was and the cost to treat them.



*Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Using its purse-string powers, Congress essentially shorted the program, only allowing it to pay out annual overages rather than spending more, leaving a bill of more than \$2 billion that was only settled by the Supreme Court this past year. Aetna was reported to have lost about \$900 million on ACA policies between 2014 and 2017.

“One of the biggest drivers in Delaware is the actual cost of care because we have a very small pool in Delaware and an aging population. I've seen a number of national studies that

indicate that the reason why insurance costs for health insurance are so high is because of the cost of care in the state of Delaware,” Navarro said of Delaware's 12th highest average benchmark ACA premium of about \$540, before subsidies.

The First State has found success in the past two years with a reinsurance plan, though. The program draws from a \$27 million fund of federal subsidy savings and insurer assessments to help insurers cover the cost of the sickest patients. Those savings in turn lead to lower premium costs for all policyholders.

After starting the reinsurance program, premiums for 2020 Delaware ACA plans dropped 19% and another 1% in 2021. Last year, Highmark actually made enough profit on its Delaware ACA plans that it exceeded its allowable 20% margin, and was forced to reimburse state policyholders \$21.5 million in September – a first under the ACA in Delaware.

“We are back in talks with other insurers to come back to the state of Delaware so there will be more options,” Navarro added.

The commissioner said that other states have reached out in the months since to learn how Delaware navigated the complex federal waiver system necessary to implement reinsurance. Navarro also recently signed a letter with 10 other insurance commissioners from around the country suggesting that the Biden administration consider funding a national reinsurance program.

Jessica S. Banthin, a senior fellow at the Health Policy Center at the Washington think tank Urban Institute, agreed that a national reinsurance program would be effective.

“It adds a little certainty; it makes it less risky for insurers. Even though they're supposed to insure against risk, they don't really like risk,” she said.

What's next for ACA

The Biden campaign floated several proposals to strengthen the ACA, including offering a Medicare-like public option to anyone who wanted it, removing the income cap on tax credit eligibility to help subsidize more users and offering premium-free access to the public option to more than 4 million people in 14 states that have refused to expand their Medicaid programs under the ACA.

Banthin, who spent 25 years working in the federal government, including on health policy for the Congressional Budget Office, said the public option in particular would allow the federal government to use its negotiating power to push down costs compared to the commercial market.

“We get a lot for our health care dollars, but it's just really expensive. So, there's still a number of people who can't really afford to buy on the exchange or find it very onerous to do so,” she said.

Looking back, Navarro said that he considers the ACA “a significant success,” and notes that its impact has been exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the federal law, infection of the coronavirus would have been considered a pre-existing condition for the roughly 67,000 Delawareans who contracted it during the crisis.

A decade on, Banthin agreed.

“When you look at the ACA's widespread impact, it's achieved a lot,” she said. ■

State plans 'sprint' to push out COVID vaccinations

BY KATIE TABELING

Delaware is three weeks into its statewide vaccination plan, but rollout has been slow in its early weeks. There are two questions on everyone's mind: when can I get one and what's taking so long?

The state has used close to 40,000 of its 75,000 doses as of Jan. 14, according to the Delaware Division of Public Health's vaccine tracker. Delaware health officials expect that number to skyrocket with a "sprint to vaccinate Phase 1A," or health care personnel, emergency medical service agencies and long-term care staff and residents.

DPH plans to start Phase 1B, which includes those who are 65 and older and frontline essential workers, by the end of January. No specific date had been set as of press time Jan. 14.

"It is very important that we escalate our vaccine efforts to get the vaccine to the population as quickly as possible. We're all eager to move on," Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) Director Dr. Karyl Rattay said Jan. 12.

There were earlier concerns of the slow rollout as 2020 ended, but Rattay pointed to building infrastructure and under-reported numbers, further complicated by the holiday season. During Gov. John Carney's weekly press conference, Rattay

confirmed that there were delays in data reporting, and said that it is likely that more than 10,000 additional people have received the vaccine than was represented on the state's tracker portal.

In terms of infrastructure, Delaware health officials are expanding options to include drive-thru vaccination events. In the first week of January, the DPH was able to vaccinate 650 people, including first responders who have medical duties, school nurses and home-help personnel, at a drive-thru event at the Georgetown DMV.

For future events, DPH is directly reaching out to home health, dialysis center and health care personnel serving people with intellectual disabilities. Future clinics are targeted for weekends, in hopes of reaching more people, Rattay said.

Several pharmacies will also start administering the vaccine to people in Phase 1A. Six Rite Aid stores and Camden Pharmacy locations started vaccinations in the week of Jan. 14, and a total of 60 Walgreens and Giant stores the week after. By Jan. 25, 11 Acme, SaveOn and Safeway stores will begin vaccinations and CVS and Walmart are reportedly looking to join as well.

"Our infrastructure to be able to vaccinate is expanding," Rattay said. "Of course their focus is going to be



The Pfizer Vaccine arrived at the Delaware Public Health warehouse on Dec. 16, with 7,800 doses to start. The state hopes to accelerate vaccination as January closes. | PHOTO COURTESY OF DPH

1A right now. But as you can see, this is preparing us well to move into 1B with all of these pieces. So there are a lot of options and opportunities for people to get vaccinated."

DPH is also working quickly to identify and help enroll medical offices that are willing to vaccinate older Delawareans when it becomes available. At this point, there are about 200 health care providers enrolled with state health officials to administer shots, and that includes hospitals, qualified health centers, medical offices, dentists and even veterinarians.

Any health care practices in Phase 1A

that do not have a vaccination plan in place should contact VaccinePlanning@delaware.gov. Questions about the vaccine can be directed to the Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-643-1715 or emailed to Vaccine@Delaware.gov.

The majority of the general public should not expect to get vaccinated before late spring or early summer.

"I know there's a tremendous amount of eagerness and anxiety about where people will find their vaccine. When it is their time and we promise we will be releasing information to you as soon as we are able," Rattay said. ■

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As Sussex grays, health care arms race heats up

BY KATIE TABELING

Two major Delaware hospital systems have leapt into an arms race for land acquisition and expansion of services in Sussex County, and it's likely that trend will continue as retirees continue to flock to rural areas.



Wayne Smith

"Demographics are destiny in this case," Delaware Healthcare Association President and CEO Wayne Smith said. "At one time, Sussex County was the

fastest growing spot for retirees to move into in the nation, that's what's pushing the health care needs. If this were Boulder, Colo., where a lot of people in their 20s and 30s live, it would be a much different landscape."

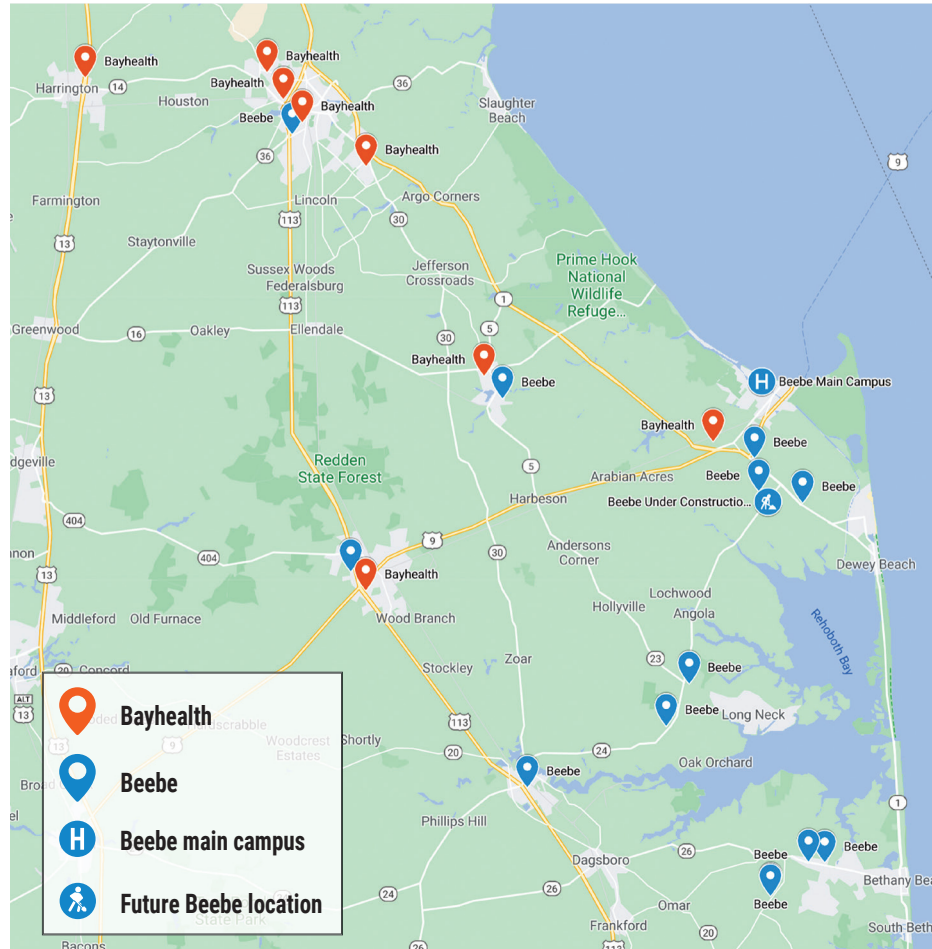
For years, both Beebe Healthcare and Bayhealth bought land in the state's southernmost county for long-range expansions that have recently come to fruition. The Dover-based Bayhealth sold off its Milford Memorial Hospital and invested \$314 million to build a six-story hospital off Route 1, which opened in 2019. Since then, Bayhealth has partnered with Nemours/A.I. duPont Hospital for Children to open a pediatric care center, and invested another \$19 million to expand beds and include a cesarean section suite at the Sussex Campus.

Simultaneously, Beebe has been shoring up its presence in lower Sussex County with the opening of the South Coastal Health Campus near Millville in April 2020, followed shortly by a \$48 million comprehensive cancer center. Beebe is also currently constructing its \$124 million surgical hospital off Route 24 near Lewes.

But as time has passed, both Bayhealth and Beebe have been looking to go beyond their unspoken boundaries in Kent and Sussex counties. Bayhealth successfully received preliminary approval for a \$35 million hybrid emergency department and offices outside Milton from the Delaware Health Resources Board, the regulatory body that oversees health care resource expansion in the state. Meanwhile, Beebe is seeking approval for its own hybrid emergency care department off Route 113 between Georgetown and Millsboro, targeting the edge of Bayhealth's projected service area of its own hybrid facility.

"Sussex County is growing at an exponential rate. The area directly surrounding the location of our new outpatient center, along Hudson Road and Route 9, is growing especially fast," Bayhealth President and CEO Terry Murphy said.

Both Bayhealth and Beebe executives point to a steadily growing population



Since 2017, Both Beebe Healthcare in Lewes and Bayhealth in Dover have been eyeing the land in between them for future expansion. Both health care systems have made inroads in Sussex County since then, each vying to serve a growing population. | MAP COURTESY OF GOOGLE/DBT

in Sussex County as a result of the need for more services. The Delaware Population Consortium predicts that by 2030, the population in Sussex County will be around 139,000, about 25% more than what it was five years ago. Areas like Milton, Millville and Haberson, on the outskirts of the county's well-known beaches, show the promise of a population boom as people will want to be within a short drive of the ocean but not close enough to be inconvenienced by beach traffic.



Ed Ratledge

But Ed Ratledge, the University of Delaware's director of the Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, said the numbers that every hospital executive is keeping an eye on are the age demographics. Sussex County's population of 65 and older is projected to reach 87,000 in 2030 — a 65% bump from what it was in 2015.

"It's a very old county, and you're seeing more of an older group move for summertime homes, and they're facing health issues that need to be addressed when they happen rather than delay it until they get home," Ratledge said. "There are about 3,500 retirees moving and selling homes a year to come here, because it's so attractive with low-income tax and property taxes, and it's adjusted for pensions. But it also has a year-

round population with younger residents working jobs with low wages."

Although the older demographic is determining the need for health care services, more hospital executives are opting for more outpatient offices, as it is less expensive than building a new hospital and helps preventative care and keeps costs down. Beebe Healthcare President and CEO Dr. David Tam said that Beebe's hospitalizations at its Lewes Campus grew 22.3% between Fiscal Years 2014 and 2017, which was "unprecedented in its recent history."



Dr. David Tam

"Medical technology and care protocols make it possible for patients to receive safe, innovative care with shorter inpatient stays. These same innovations in health care allow for some surgeries that traditionally require an inpatient stay to now be done as an outpatient procedure," Tam told the Delaware Business Times.

Beebe's Specialty Surgical Hospital is designed with this in mind, he added. As this facility will focus exclusively on scheduled surgeries, there will be less demand in the emergency room.

As Sussex County attracts more retirees, it is also poised to see a swell in support for health services, like hospice and home health care. Beth Copeland, executive director of Griswold Home

Care of Sussex and Kent County, the largest provider of non-clinical support in the county with 190 caregivers and 200 clients, said the competition has been fierce in her sector of home assistance.

"It's grown tremendously in the last couple of years, and I truly believe the reason why we benefited for so long is word-of-mouth. We're constantly hiring, and finding qualified staff seems to be the biggest obstacle at this point," Copeland said.

Sussex County's other immediate need will be primary care providers. The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services reported that roughly between 15% and 20% of Sussex County's physicians plan to retire or be unavailable by the year 2024. Copeland said that many of her clients are troubled when a doctor's office closes down or flips to a concierge service that charges \$1,800 per visit.



Beth Copeland

"It's big news when that happens, and it's hard when they have to find a new doctor and sometimes wait around eight months to see somebody and there's no follow-

up," she said. "A lot of people fall through the cracks."

As a stop-gap measure, state Rep. David Bentz (D-Milford/Harrington) has filed a bill that would create a Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program, which would award new primary care providers \$50,000 per year for a maximum of four years if they serve underserved areas and accept Medicare and Medicaid.

In the meantime, Bayhealth is preparing to launch a residency program in July to bring top medical residents to Sussex County for three years. Specifically, Bayhealth's Family Residency Program will add eight new physicians each year with capacity for 24 residents and the Bayhealth's Internal Medicine Residency Program will recruit 13 new resident physicians each year to the area with a cap of 39 residents.

Combined, the total capacity of Bayhealth's residency programs will add more than 50,000 patient care visits for the community each year.

"The hope is that they will thrive and become part of our communities and ultimately choose to practice medicine in southern Delaware," Murphy said. "We have a chance to show these aspiring physicians, through the richness of our communities and hospitality of our towns, that Sussex is a wonderful county in which to live and work." ■

THE LIST

Hospital Groups

Ranked by No. DE Employees

Rank	Company	DE Employees	No. of Beds	Hospitals in System	Senior Executive	Phone Website
1	ChristianaCare 501 W. 14th St. Wilmington, DE 19801	12,450	1,400	Christiana Hospital - Newark Wilmington Hospital - Wilmington Union Hospital - Elkton, MD	Dr. Janice E. Nevin (President, CEO)	(302) 733-1000 christianacare.org
2	Bayhealth 640 South State St. Dover, DE 19901	4,300	419	Bayhealth Hospital, Kent Campus Bayhealth Hospital, Sussex Campus Bayhealth Emergency Center, Smyrna	Terry M. Murphy (President, CEO)	(302) 674-4700 bayhealth.org
3	Nemours Children's Health System 1600 Rockland Road Wilmington, DE 19803	4,100 ¹	195	Alfred I. duPont Hospital For Children	Dr. R. Lawrence Moss (President, CEO)	(302) 651-4000 nemours.org
4	Beebe Healthcare 424 Savannah Rd Lewes, DE 19958	2,850	230	Beebe Healthcare - Lewes	Dr. David A. Tam (President & CEO)	(302) 645-3300 beebehealthcare.org
5	Trinity Healthcare Mid-Atlantic 701 N. Clayton St. Wilmington, DE 19805	1,200	219	St. Francis Hospital - Wilmington	Brandon S. Harvath (President and COO)	(302) 421-4100 trinityhealthma.org/ location/saint-francis- healthcare
6	TidalHealth 801 Middleford Road Seaford, DE 19973	1,050	139	TidalHealth Nanticoke - Seaford TidalHealth Allen Cancer Center - Seaford	Dr. Steven Leonard (President & CEO)	(302) 629-6611 mytidalhealth.org
7	Wilmington VA Medical Center 1601 Kirkwood Highway Wilmington, DE 19805	1,000	120	Wilmington VA Medical Center - Wilmington	Vincent Kane (Medical Center Director)	(302) 994-2511 wilmington.va.gov
8	Meadow Wood Behavioral Health System 575 S. Dupont Highway New Castle, DE 19720	250	93	* Meadow Wood Hospital	Purcell Dye (CEO)	(302) 328-3330 meadowwoodhospital.com

¹ Includes employees of Nemours Foundation and Nemours Estate and Mansion.

Source: Individual company survey responses. Researched by: Delaware Business Times. Information for DBT's lists are either generated through public sources or supplied by individual organizations through questionnaires. We make every effort to confirm that the lists are comprehensive through industry sources. We assume that information provided by company representatives is accurate and truthful. Organizations that do not respond to our requests for information may be excluded from the list or listed at the bottom as Not Ranked (NR).

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NEWS BRIEFS

Carney lifts 10 p.m. Delaware restaurant curfew



Gov. John Carney | DBT FILE PHOTO

WILMINGTON – Gov. John Carney announced Friday, Jan. 8, that he was lifting the 10 p.m. curfew on restaurants and bars in Delaware spurred by rising COVID-19 cases.

Establishments still have to display signage on tables stating that parties must be from the same household and share messaging on masking compliance, including Delaware's mandatory indoor mask usage.

The curfew was enacted Dec. 14, as state public health officials watched positive COVID-19 cases rise to all-time daily highs. They argued that late-night hours, often mixing with drinking, led to higher risk of viral transmission, but the Delaware Restaurant Association has pushed back against the state's arguments and called for more precise contact tracing to determine where spread is occurring.

In a Jan. 8 statement, DRA President and CEO Carrie Leishman said the industry is pleased with the move.

The latest modification also allows all athletic games, matches, and competitions to resume, provided that the maximum occupancy is 30%, which includes athletes, coaches, and other employees or staff. One person may accompany an athlete and are not included in the 30% capacity limit, however, additional spectators are not permitted to attend.

Prelude closes public offering raising \$172M



Prelude Therapeutics CEO Kris Vaddi.

WILMINGTON – Startup cancer research company Prelude Therapeutics closed a public offering of 2.5 million shares on Monday, Jan. 11, as well as an additional 375,000 shares to underwriters, raising a reported \$172.5 million.

The clinical-stage company offered about 2.2 million voting shares and 300,000 additional shares of non-voting stock, with all shares priced at \$60 per share – a significant discount from the stock's Friday, Jan. 8, close price when it was trading for more than \$66 a share. The company increased the size of the offering after initially proposing 1.75 million shares earlier in the week.

Prelude will use the proceeds to advance its three clinical trials for cancer drugs while also starting a fourth trial this year, and furthering development of preclinical programs.

After the offering, Prelude will have over 46M shares of common stock on the market.

Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, BofA Securities and Barclays acted as joint book-running managers for the offering.

Katabat acquires Idaho-based software developer



Ray Peloso | PHOTO COURTESY OF KATABAT

WILMINGTON – Katabat, a Wilmington-based global provider of debt management software solutions for lenders, fintechs, and collection agencies, announced Jan. 5 that it has acquired an Idaho-based software developer as it continues to expand its reach.

Terms of the acquisition of Simplicity Collection Software were not disclosed.

"We believe that the combined company, built through deep industry expertise at both Simplicity and Katabat, delivers truly superior offerings in the market," said Ray Peloso, president and CEO of Katabat, in a statement announcing the deal.

Simplicity has developed SimplicityCollect, a cloud-based debt collection software product designed for small-to-medium-sized, third-party debt collection agencies, health care providers, law firms and legal recovery. The program tracks a case from entry to close in real-time via a cloud-based software.

Katabat has endured in a difficult year, with the COVID-19 pandemic upending the lending and collections industries' typical workflow. Katabat reported in October that one client rolled out a pandemic-tied forbearance program for 125,000 mortgage holders while another requested software enhancements to allow employees to work from home securely.

Harvey, Hanna to build new Hyatt hotel near Lewes



The Hyatt House in Lewes, seen here as the typical prototype, is being built by Harvey, Hanna & Associates near Five Points. | PHOTO COURTESY OF HHA

LEWES – Banking on a strong post-pandemic recovery, Newport-based developer Harvey, Hanna & Associates (HHA) announced Dec. 17 the start of two new Hyatt-branded hotels in its growing portfolio.

The 105-room Hyatt House near Lewes recently broke ground near the intersection of northbound Route 1 and Marsh Road, south of Five Points. Meanwhile, HHA will also build the bayfront Hyatt Place in Kent Narrows, Md.

Its hotel management affiliate TKO Hospitality Management currently operates nine hotels and will oversee the two newly announced ones. The multi-faceted firm already has three other hotels in development in Newark, Chadds Ford, Pa.; and Allentown, Pa.

New construction on hotels has slowed through the pandemic as bookings have fallen nearly 25% statewide year-over-year as of October, according to the Delaware Hotel and Lodging Association. Many remain bullish on the idea of travel ticking back up starting as soon as 2021 as vaccines are administered, pointing to 2019's 60% occupancy total for Delaware rooms – a five-year high.

Hanna said his firm was "confident in the anticipated post-COVID recovery throughout the Delmarva Peninsula, and we are positioning HHA and its partners for new challenges and greater successes." The hotel is scheduled for a summer 2021 opening.

The new Lewes-area hotel will be fully extended-stay-focused, with all 105 rooms featuring suites with kitchenettes.

DE Relief Grants portal to reopen on Jan. 19

WILMINGTON - The Division of Small Business has announced that its DE Relief Grants portal will begin accepting new applications on Tuesday, Jan. 19 at 10 a.m.

This means that small businesses and nonprofit organizations that have not applied in earlier rounds will have the opportunity to apply for this relief program presented by the State of Delaware and New Castle County using federal CARES Act funds.

For those who have already applied for the DE Relief Grants program, the Division of Small Business is continuing to process applications as quickly as possible.

Rather than rejecting applications that are incomplete the Division of Small Business is working with applicants to get them to the point where they can be approved.

The Division is starting with those applications that need the least help and will move on from there to those applications that need the most work.

One of the requirements has been that recipients needed to have experienced a revenue decline in 2020 compared to 2019. If they claimed the grant, but did not experience a revenue decline, they would have to pay back the grant with interest.

The Division of Small Business is announcing that this interest penalty will be waived if a business returns grant funds prior to Feb. 15.

If a business has experienced a revenue increase in 2020 compared to 2019, they can return the funds prior to Feb. 15 without facing an interest penalty.

Delaware Senate convenes the 151st General Assembly

DOVER – The Delaware Senate convened the 151st General Assembly on Tuesday, Jan. 12, by swearing in a historically diverse class of re-elected and newly elected Senators, selecting a new President Pro Tempore, confirming a new Secretary of the Senate and adopting updated Senate rules.

"Delaware faces historic challenges today stemming from both the COVID-19 pandemic and more deep-rooted inequalities left unaddressed for far too long," said Sen. Dave Sokola, D-Newark, who was unanimously elected Senate President Pro Tempore by his peers on Tuesday.

"The voters of Delaware spoke loud and clear last fall that they are tired of the status quo. They demand changes that will benefit all Delawareans and not just a privileged few. I believe we have a Senate today that is eager to tackle these issues head on. I am excited to roll up our sleeves and get to work for the people of this great state."

The Majority Caucus is also more reflective

of Delaware's broader demographics than ever before. For the first time in Delaware history, the Majority Caucus includes three African American members in Sen. Lockman, Sen. Darius Brown and Sen. Marie Pinkney and one Latina in Sen. Laura Sturgeon. Sen. Pinkney and Sen. Sarah McBride, the first two openly LGBTQ+ Delawareans elected to the State Senate, also were sworn in on Tuesday.

DuPont PAC to pause candidate donations after riot

DuPont announced Thursday, Jan. 14, it would pause political donations to federal candidates for office, joining the ranks of several major companies that have pulled campaign backing after the direct fallout of the riot in the nation's capital.

"Due to the appalling mayhem and violence that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, DuPont has decided to suspend all contributions from the employee run and funded Employees of DuPont PAC to candidates for federal office until July 1, 2021," read a DuPont statement released on Twitter.

The Employees of DuPont Political Action Committee is a non-partisan political action committee that is organized, managed and funded by contributions from DuPont employees. DuPont is a powerhouse not only in Delaware, but on a national scale as a lauded chemical manufacturing company.

The Employees of DuPont PAC board determines PAC contributions, while all activity is overseen by the company's legal department. Contributions are made without regard to party affiliation. But DuPont's Political Accountability Policy of September 2020 notes that "candidates must also demonstrate 'honesty, integrity, effectiveness and a commitment to good governance.'"

The Federal Election Commission reports that the Employees of DuPont PAC collected \$96,702.65 and spent \$108,489.52 as of Dec. 16. The largest donations to individual candidates included \$5,000 to U.S. Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) and U.S. Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Mich.), both of whom were re-elected. It also donated \$5,000 to Republican David Perdue's failed Senate re-election bid in the Jan. 5 run-off election.

The PAC donated \$4,000 each to U.S. Reps. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.) and Fred Keller (R-Pa.), both of whom were also re-elected.

Bill to give citizens a voice in State of Emergency modifications

Providing a check against the governor's unlimited authority to renew and modify State of Emergency orders is the goal of a new bill sponsored by State Rep. Rich Collins (R-Millsboro) and State Sen. Bryant Richardson (R-Seaford).

At present, the Delaware Code gives the governor the power to declare a State of Emergency in response to, or in anticipation of, any emergency or disaster posing a threat to the public. The initial State of Emergency declaration can last for up to 30 days. Afterward, the governor has the unrestricted authority to renew and modify the order at their discretion. The state legislature has no ability to alter or limit the orders in any way.

They also note that their bill should not be viewed as a criticism of Gov. Carney, but rather as a reaction to the flaws of Delaware's current law that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed.

Rep. Collins said his bill would be unlikely to have any bearing on the current COVID-19 response, but he says the reforms it contains would improve the process should the state find itself in a future extended State of Emergency.

BUSINESS LEADS

Liquor Licenses

Source: Delaware Office of Alcoholic Beverage Control Commissioner

NEW LICENSES ISSUED

Little Italy, LLC DBA Neighborhood Liquors; 500 North Union St., Wilmington 19805; Contact - Navnitchandra Patel (302) 559-9194; License Type: Package Store, Sunday **#15391**

Restaurant Associates, Inc. DBA Winterthur Museum-Pavilion Restaurant; Route 52; Winterthur 19735; License Type: Restaurant-On, Patio and Sunday **#15297**

Kangayi Ventures, LLC DBA Breakfast Guru Restaurant & Bar; 19 Wilmington Ave., Rehoboth Beach 19971; Contact - Dennis Kangayi & Ana Kangayi (302) 567-2829; License Type: Restaurant, Sunday **#15364**

Buriram, LLC DBA Buriram Thai Kitchen; 1126D Capitol Trail, Newark, DE 19711; Contact - Jason Dye (302) 990-3139; License Type: Restaurant, Sunday **#15393**

NEW APPLICANTS

DMV Distributing, LLC DBA DMV Distributing; 202 Cassidy Drive, Newport 19804; License Type: Wine Wholesaler

BKD Partners, LLC DBA Canalside Inn; 34 6TH St., Rehoboth Beach 19971; License Type: Hotel-On, Patio and Sunday

Benvenuto Catering, LLC DBA Benvenuto Catering; 3 Haven Lake Ave., Milford 19963; License Type: Caterer-Off and Sunday

Salinas Restaurant, LLC DBA Salinas Restaurant; 1847 Pulaski Highway, Bear 19701; License Type: Restaurant and Sunday

TRANSFER REQUESTS

P7C3, LLC DBA T/A Two Stones Pub to Daphne, LLC DBA Sonora; 2-3 Chesmar Plaza, Newark 19713; Contact - Michael Stiglitz (302) 294-1890; License Type: SPR-On, Sunday **#14255**

Real Estate Transactions

Source: Local Recorders of Deeds

NEW CASTLE CO.

Boulden, Inc to Old Barksdale Road Associates LLC; 532 and 540 Old Barksdale Road, Newark 19711, \$1,300,000

James and Lorraine Nelson to Delaware River Land Company; 115 and 117 North Market St., Wilmington 19801, \$1,050,000

K-T Associates to LBH Properties

LLC; 20 Germay Drive, Wilmington 19804, \$1,050,000

Reybold Venture Group XVIII-A LLC to Cyril and Marlene Milunsky; 1219 Coulee Way, Unit 23, Wilmington 19803, \$1,025,000

Ashby PPlace LLC to Diego Matias Dominguez; 913 Ash Farm Way, Ashby's Place, Middletown 19709, \$1,000,000

Aquila Partners to BCL Real Estate Holdings LLC; 1812 Newport Gap Pike, Wilmington 19808, \$935,000

Louis Anatrella to Kenrick Scott; 517 Spring Hollow Drive, ParkSide, Middletown 19709, \$740,000

Michael Gunselman to Joseph D'Antonio; 1007 North Broom St., Wilmington 19806, \$750,000

John and Pamela Hamilton to Geoffrey and Jennifer Smith; 10 Reese Drive, Merestone, Newark 19711, \$718,000

Ernest Gonzalez and Geraldine Jaye to Abigail Nti and Daniel E. Dagadu; 1312 Healy Court, Red Lion Chase, Bear 19701, \$698,000

Xia Zhao to Wootten Enterprises LLC; 3513 and 3517 Old Capitol Trail, Wilmington 190808, \$685,000

NVR, INC. to Syed Tareq Mahmood Husain; 214 Mistmeadow Drive,

Silver Wind Estates, Middletown 19709, \$639,500

K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons at Baymont Farms LLC to Joseph Harding and Julie Lawrence; 727 Honey Locust Road, Baymont Farms, Middletown 19709; \$610,000

SUSSEX CO.

INV Materials LLC to Opportunity Street LLC; 1700 Dulany St. Unit 8, Seaford 19973, \$7,090,400

Terry Allen and Rose M. Bryan to Chase Oaks DE LLC; 20617 Robinsonville Road, Lewes 19958, \$6,000,000

Bruce Cleland to Stephen A. Vintz; 1 McKean Ave., Rehoboth-Indian Beach, Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$5,200,000

Thomas Schmutz and Karol Lyn Newman to Joshua and Angela Lipshutz; 29797 Ocean Ridge Drive, Ocean Ridge, Bethany Beach 19930, \$4,450,000

JJ Stien III to 330 Hospitality Group LLC; 330 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$4,200,000

East Clayton LLC to Jason Lawrence Mackey; 5 Clayton St., Dewey Beach 19971, \$3,200,000

DJB Beach Property LLC with David and Deborah Ball to Melissa

and Christopher Brennan; 18 Pelicans Way South, Pelican's Pouch, Bethany Beach 19930, \$3,085,000

Paul and Anne Kuhns to Norman and Pernick; 125 Stockley St., Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$2,700,000

Dewdrop Inn LLC to Brian and Kelley Clark; 29 Rodney Ave., Dewey Beach 19971, \$2,600,000

Kenneth and Susan Hopkins to SEaside at Lewis LLC; 16039 Coastal Highway, Lewes 19958, \$2,250,000

Richard and Katherine Minutella to Dean and Kim Wampole; 102 New Castle St., Rehoboth Heights, Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$2,249,000

Michael and Kathleen Cummings to Wendy Jill Steingberg; 121 Parkwood St., Bethany Beach 19930, \$2,200,000

RBV LLC to Clifford and Amy Melberger; 53 Lake Ave., Rehoboth Beach Camp Meeting Association, Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$2,160,000

Margaret Celest Martin, William Martin and Melinda Euler to Aaron and Courtney Derby; 77 Lave Ave., Rehoboth Beach Camp Meeting Association, Rehoboth Beach 19971, \$2,125,000

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Jim Donahue
Managing Partner, NuPOINT Marketing
Wilmington
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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Sharon Kurfuerst Ed.D., has been appointed President of Affinity Health Alliance and ChristianaCare, Union Hospital.

Kurfuerst will oversee efforts to strengthen community relationships in the communities that Union Hospital serves after joining ChristianaCare a year ago.

Kurfuerst also will continue her leadership responsibilities as ChristianaCare's COO, where she heads the development and execution of core enterprise business processes and functions.

Kurfuerst was recently recognized as a 2020 Women in Business honoree by Delaware Today and Delaware Business Times, in part due to her extraordinary leadership in mobilizing and collaborating with personnel across the state to integrate resources to benefit all Delawareans.

Kurfuerst joined ChristianaCare in 2007 and held several roles before becoming COO of the health system in 2017.



Tony Allen has joined the Economic and Community Advisory Council (ECAC) of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.

Allen, who also serves as president of Delaware State University, was one of two new appointments announced in December. The Federal Reserve Bank also named John E. Harmon Sr., founder/CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, to serve.

The ECAC is a committee that informs the bank's senior leadership team about emerging issues and market conditions in the Third Federal Reserve District and nationwide. The council is composed of up to 15 leaders representing businesses of varying sizes and in different industry sectors as well as nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, the public sector, and organized labor.



Sam Eathington, Ph.D., has begun his role with Corteva as senior vice president and chief technology officer, effective Jan. 1. Eathington has responsibility for the company's industry-

leading portfolio of products and technology and spearheading global agricultural innovation and sustainability.

Eathington joins Corteva from The Climate Corporation (part of Bayer Crop Science) where he was chief science officer. He spent nearly two decades focused on quantitative traits and molecular breeding at Monsanto.

Eathington holds more than 50 patents, patent applications and publications and is an expert contributor to numerous periodicals.

Scott Dolor has been named operations manager of M. Davis & Sons Inc., a woman-owned, fifth generation industrial construction company based in Wilmington.

Dolor, who has been a project manager at M. Davis since 2011, has more than 13 years of experience in the construction industry. As operations manager, he will have oversight of customer bids and rates as well as resource management. He will continue to be instrumental in the development and leadership of the project management team at M. Davis.



Wohlsen Construction announced the promotion of **Roger Ball** from vice president of construction for the Delaware Valley Region to vice president of construction quality.

In his new role, he will drive performance enhancements related to quality control and workflows throughout all phases of a project life cycle. He will apply his expertise to assist operations teams across Wohlsen's geographic footprint to consistently achieve best in class results by implementing these enhanced procedures known as the "Wohlsen Way."



Casey McCabe has been promoted to Chief Financial Officer of Bancroft Construction Company. McCabe first started working for Bancroft in 2005 as an Assistant Project

Manager at DuPont Company's Experimental Station and Chestnut Run Plaza Sites.

McCabe was promoted to Project Manager in 2010 and since then has managed over a dozen projects including the Dover Air Force Base, Brandywine River Museum, Delaware Technology Park, Howard High School of Technology, Nemours, and Longwood Gardens. McCabe was responsible for the Mechanical, Electrical, Fountain, Controls, Audio and Special Systems for the world-renowned Longwood Main Fountain Garden Revitalization project.

Richards, Layton & Finger has announced that attorneys **Katharine Lester Mowery** and **Jason J. Rawnsley** have been elected as directors of the firm, and **Edward S. Little** and **Robert C. Maddox** as counsel.



Dr. Andy Goberdhan has joined hematology-oncology at Saint Francis Healthcare in Wilmington. Goberdhan is a fellowship-trained oncologist with experience in surgical services, who served as

surgical house officer at Nazareth Hospital before pursuing additional training in internal medicine and oncology. His research on cancer has been published in professional journals such as The Journal of the National Cancer Institute. His research encompassed such topics as breast cancer, HPV, and head and neck squamous cell carcinomas.

The Board of The Nemours Foundation, and the Alfred I. duPont Charitable Trust, announced three new members: **William F. D'Alonzo**, former CEO and President of Friess Associates and Chairman of the Brandywine Funds, **Elliot Joseph**, advisor and board member for several private equity portfolio companies including TPG Growth, Chicago Pacific Founders, Triple Tree and Epsilon; and **Harold Mills**, CEO of VMD Ventures.



Loré L. Baker, a dedicated commercial lines claims advocate for Arthur Hall Insurance, has had the Associate of Claims (AIC) designation conferred upon her after successfully passing

the national examination for the significant designation.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, webinar access details (including dial-in information) will be e-mailed to registrants.

JAN. 21 | 8:30 - 9:30 AM

DelawareBio: BioBreakfast

Join the Delaware BioScience Association for a virtual breakfast event. January's BioBreakfast will showcase exciting local developments and initiatives including the new Data Innovation Lab and its work on COVID-19, the University of Delaware's Data Science Institute and the biopharmaceutical company Incyte's application of data science in seeking breakthrough medicines. This month's speakers will include Cathay Wu, Ph.D., Institute Director of the Center for Bioinformatics & Computational Biology at the University of Delaware; Frank Buckley, account manager at Solutions/Reprints Desk; Ian Silverman, principal investigator at Translational Sciences; and Patrick Callahan, founder of CompassRed. For more information, visit delawarebio.org.

JAN. 25 | 11 - 12 PM

Future-Proofing Your Business by Shopify

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have had to develop new ways to connect with customers and rethink their approaches to selling from in-person to online. This webinar will include industry experts from Shopify discussing the importance of an omni-channel approach to selling and how businesses can use industry trends to ensure they are preparing for a strong 2021. The webinar will cover: omni-channel versus multi-channel approaches, how to maximize omni-channel sales strategies, how to leverage technology to future proof your business strategy. Register for this event today and learn how to build a future for your business. For more information, visit ncccc.com.

JAN. 27 | 11 AM - 1 PM

90 Ideas in 90 Minutes

In just 90 minutes, participants will walk away with the collective wisdom and expert advice from nine proven leaders and their 90 ideas that can help strengthen any business and carry any organization to the next level. This year's speakers include: Andrew Cottone, President and Founder of Adesis; Katey Evans, Co-Founder of The Frozen Farmer; Kevin Finn, Founder and Chairman of Iron Hill Brewery and Restaurant; Michael Fleming, President of the Delaware BioScience Association; Logan Herring, CEO of REACH Riverside; Cynthia Martin, Founder of Trustees of Color; Michele Schiavoni, Director of External Relations and Marketing for Delaware Prosperity Partnership; Dr. David Tam, President and CEO of Beebe Healthcare; Michelle Taylor, CEO of United Way of Delaware; and Rob Ward, President and CEO of CSC. The virtual event will begin with a 30-minute networking session. For more information, visit delawarebusinesstimes.com/90-ideas-90-minutes-event.

JAN. 28 | 9 - 10 AM

Virtual Chamber Open House

Jumpstart or restart your New Castle County Chamber membership. They will provide an overview of the chamber, information on how best to leverage your benefits and networking opportunities to help you be strategic and successful while making business connections. This event will also give you the opportunity to meet new and existing chamber members. This event is geared toward executive teams,

marketing, sales, HR ... or anyone looking to improve and grow their business. For more information, visit ncccc.com.

FEB. 5 | 11 AM - 12:30 PM

14th Annual Economic Forecast

Dr. Anirban Basu, CEO of the economic and policy consulting firm Sage Policy Group, will share his economic expectations for Delaware, the surrounding region and the nation for 2021. This event will provide an opportunity to business leaders to evaluate emerging trends, share their thoughts and plan for a successful year. For more information and to register visit ncccc.com

FEB. 10 | 7 AM - 2 PM

23rd Annual Breast Cancer Research Update

The Breast Cancer Update will again be offered as an educational conference free to the public, featuring leading medical breast cancer panel experts and informational resources offering the latest developments in treatment and care to breast cancer survivors and their families, physicians, nurses, students, and allied health professionals. Certificates of attendance documenting four contact hours and 0.4 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be available to nurses, social workers, and other health care professionals. For more information, visit debreastcancer.org.

FEB. 10 | 7 AM - 2 PM

D.I.V.E.R.S.E. Speaker Series - How Behaviors Change in Uncertain Times

Diversity means different things to people, it may be diversity in gender, race, culture, knowledge, skills, social or ethnic backgrounds. Behaviors and attitudes also make us diverse. Join the Delaware Small Business Chamber to learn more about how your behaviors and attitudes change during uncertain times and the impacts that has on others. 2020 was a year filled with uncertainty, and learning how to adapt your attitudes and behaviors during challenging times allows you to reduce stress, build confidence, and strengthen relationships at home and work. Visit dsbchamber.com for more info.

FEB. 11 | 8:30 - 9:30 AM

DSCC Chamber Leadership with Jennifer Cohan

Join the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce to hear the personal story of Jennifer Cohan and her plans for her new leadership position with Leadership Delaware. Cohan has had a storied career in Delaware; most recently serving as Secretary of Transportation from 2015 through 2020. Cohan has spent the last 12 years as an adjunct professor at Wilmington University, teaching leadership and public policy in the master's program. In August 2020, Cohan was named the CEO of Leadership Delaware, an organization training the next generation of Delaware's great leaders. For more information, visit dscc.com.

MARCH 18 | 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Gals That Give Charity

Held at the Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, the '#dogood benefit' includes a three-course dinner, engaging conversation and giving back to the community. The proceeds from this event will benefit the Nemours Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children. For more information, visit cdcc.net.



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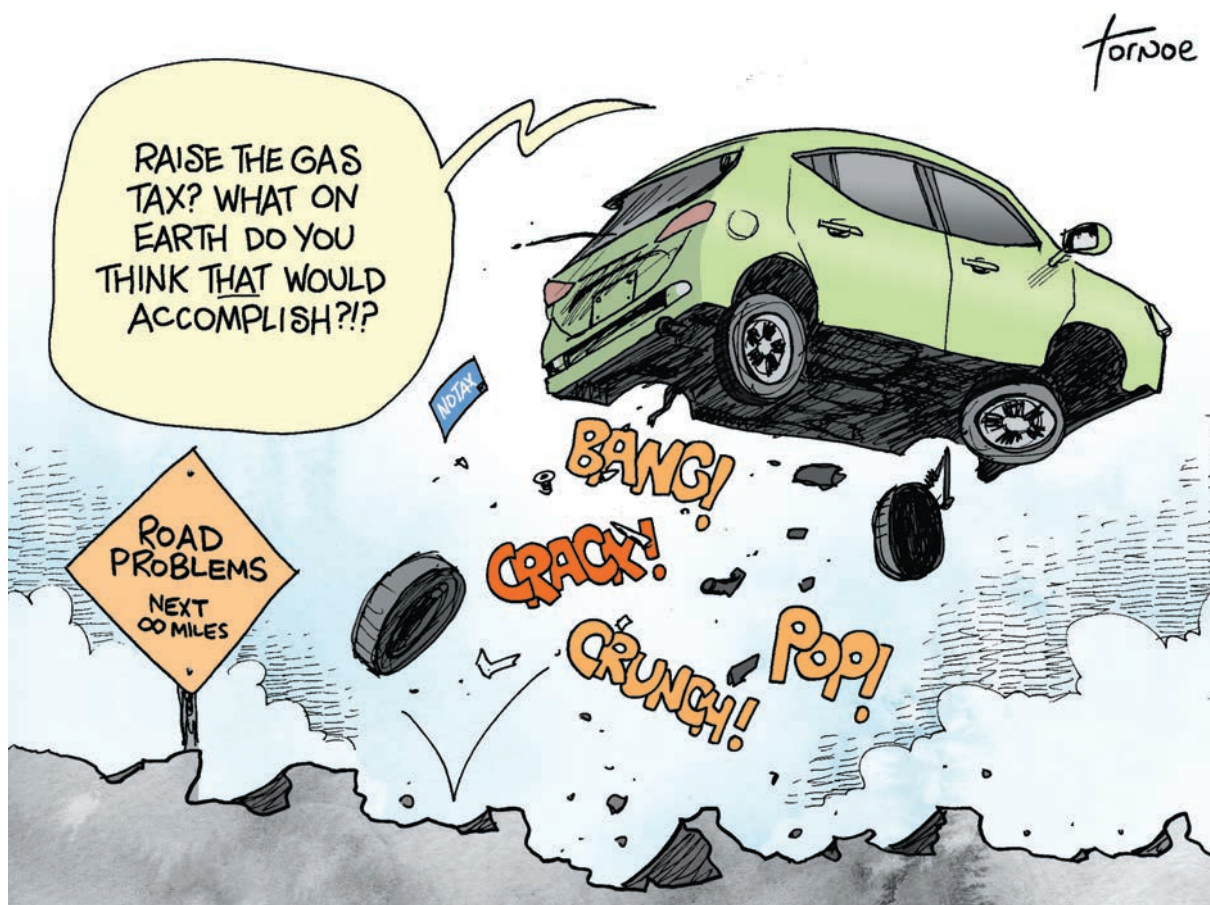
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Op Ed Columns

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 VIEW

We must remain focused on the pandemic



JACOB OWENS

It's been a wild start to 2021, as Democrats somewhat surprisingly won full control of the federal government only to see chaos erupt at the U.S. Capitol

and the start of an unprecedented second impeachment of a sitting president.

Here in the First State, we've been lucky to largely avoid the rancor that has enveloped the nation's capital or several other states around the country, but the 151st Delaware General Assembly has kicked off with some surprising debate of tax increases. That conversation may or may not progress, although Democrats in Dover do hold a supermajority for two years that would make passing controversial measures a bit easier.

As I sit and think about our current predicament, however, I'm struck by the realization that the conversations taking place in our state and nation's capital are not likely those to carry a lot of weight at dinner tables across America right now. Don't get me wrong, I think what occurred in Washington was a tragedy and our federal lawmakers should be able to fulfill their duties free from threats and harassment.

Every moment that is spent discussing impeachment, big tech, and whatever else though, leaves fewer minutes to discuss the desperate need to advance COVID-19 vaccination efforts, plan for the recovery of an economy that is increasingly leaving the most-vulnerable on the wayside, and determining how

best to get our children learning in the most normal environment possible again. Those three things should be the only topics on the lips of our leaders and legislators right now, and yet we seem to be discussing everything else.

I recently reconnected with Bob Perkins, chairman of the Delaware Business Roundtable, a non-partisan, volunteer consortium of CEOs whose companies collectively employ over 75,000 people in Delaware, and he shared a similar sentiment.

"There are things that need to be dealt with, urgently and boldly, and Delaware is just the kind of a place where that kind of leadership would make a difference," he told me. "We look for our state leaders to try to focus on the things that are important, work collaboratively and get Delaware through this tough period."

We're not alone in that thought, as reporting indicates that Delaware's own President-elect Joe Biden is growing anxious at the need to address the pandemic more fully, after it has frankly fallen out of much of the news cycle almost a year after it started.

Biden was set to announce his trillion-dollar spending proposals after we headed to press Jan. 14, but Brian Deese, the incoming director of the National Economic Council, told the Reuters Next conference days before that "the president-elect feels that we need to move aggressively on both rescue and recovery."

Among the proposals reported by the New York Times to be included in Biden's plan were additional direct stimulus payments of \$1,400 – meeting the \$2,000 mark abandoned by President

Trump after Republican rebuffs in December, and aid to small businesses and local and state governments. An extension of supplemental federal unemployment benefits, which are set to expire in March for many workers, and more help for renters were also on the table, the NYT reported.

With Delaware reporting more than 24,000 workers unemployed in November along with a continuously shrinking labor force, and expectations that December's job report would continue to see declines, state leaders need to remain focused on supporting those who have been left behind. The steepest losses, through no fault of their own, have come in the industry sectors that don't pay six-figure wages.

Biden is also reportedly seeking enough money to allow most schools to open, in an effort to increase labor force participation. "We need to get the schools open so that parents, and particularly women, who are being disproportionately hurt in this economy, can get back to work," Deese said.

That's a point that both Perkins and I also agreed on. Employers can announce that offices in downtown Wilmington, Philadelphia or New York will reopen tomorrow, but if children are still conducting remote learning from home or childcare centers haven't been able to reopen, then workers will have no choice but to remain home.

Anyone who has had to work remotely these last eight or so months with a child at home knows the challenges that present. Companies may have found that workers are just as productive working from home through the pandemic,

“With the constant emotional rollercoaster we’ve been riding this past year, we need to keep our eye on the end of the tunnel.”

but it doesn't mean that the practice is sustainable forever. Time is much more chaotic than linear, with work often being done outside of the traditional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. period in order to fulfill other family responsibilities, leading to stress and anxiety.

With the constant emotional rollercoaster we've been riding this past year, we need to keep our eye on the end of the tunnel. What can we do now to get to that light faster? What program or investment can we make to ease someone's burden either now or after we exit the COVID tunnel? What can we do to prepare in case this awful scenario occurs again?

"If there were ever a time when you want to make big, bold plays, big investments in areas that will really move the state forward, this is a great time to do that," Perkins said.

I agree, and with Dover expected to be working with a budget surplus this year, I hope our legislators keep their focus on the same goal. ■

Increasing primary care access is good business



TRINIDAD NAVARRO
Guest Columnist

I am an optimist. I know that we can find sparks of light in even the darkest of times.

During COVID-19, belief in a better tomorrow was hard to hold on

to when each tomorrow brought bad news – but now, reports are positive: new treatments are more successful, the vaccine is being administered, businesses are reopening, and people are returning to work.

While we are far from able to fully look back on the pandemic, the darkness of the past year has illuminated many lasting lessons. In part, it has shone a light on the need to create a more equitable, accessible, affordable health care system. A system that prioritizes patients – not paperwork or profits. A system that provides high-value care whether in-person or through telemedicine. A system that prioritizes primary care, reducing preventable emergencies and saving policyholders money. This need is known, but because of the pandemic we have more momentum for change than ever before.

Delaware employers have long recognized the connection between

well-being and productivity. We know that when employees are physically and mentally healthy, they are absent less frequently and more efficient during the workday. And let's not forget, a healthier population makes insurance premiums more affordable.

To foster a healthy workforce, we need to invest in primary care. When we increase utilization of these services, we can decrease expensive emergency room visits and hospital admissions. This emphasis doesn't have to raise rates or increase the total cost of care, but it does take a restructuring of our priorities and a strong shared vision for success.

And, while we want health care to be affordable, it should also be worth the money – “high-value” care. We have seen that low-value care, for example, unnecessary diagnostic testing, makes up a large portion of health care expenses. Value-based care ties payments for service to the quality of care provided, encouraging a focus on positive patient outcomes while reducing costs.

With the support of many stakeholders, including the Primary Care Reform Collaborative and the General Assembly, we created the Office of Value-Based Health Care Delivery within the Department of Insurance. Our team's inaugural report, Delaware Health Care Affordability Standards: An Integrated Approach to Improve Access,



As we continue to uncover opportunities for improvement in our health care system, I am optimistic about the future we can build together.



Quality and Value includes plans to more than double primary care spending in the commercial fully-insured market by 2025 without increasing the total cost of health care services to policyholders.

To achieve this dual goal, the affordability standards in the report include decreasing price growth for certain health care services and expanding use of payment models that aim to improve health care value. The data-driven analysis provided is the basis for the outlined health insurance premium affordability standards and targets for investments in primary care to better address our primary care shortage.

Making progress on these targets will make our workforce healthier and health care more affordable and accessible – one of my highest priorities. Over the past several years, we made strides toward

this lofty goal. We have decreased health insurance rates, implemented a reinsurance program to balance out high-cost health care, began work to address rising pharmaceutical costs, and worked to protect residents with preexisting conditions through codifying portions of the Affordable Care Act, amongst other efforts. In recent weeks, I joined Insurance Commissioners across the country in making short- and long-term recommendations to the Biden administration on actions the federal government can take to foster a healthier community. And, with this report, we have produced a roadmap for emphasizing and enhancing primary care in Delaware. While we may encounter obstacles in rebuilding from this pandemic, we are more united toward positive action than ever before. As we continue to uncover opportunities for improvement in our health care system, I am optimistic about the future we can build together.

We are grateful to our partners, including those from the business community, who participated in the process of building these guidelines. Public comment on the report is open until Jan. 25 at email DOI-legal@delaware.gov. ■

Trinidad Navarro serves as Delaware Insurance Commissioner.

Mentorships, now virtual, still needed during COVID-19



TOM THUNSTURM
Guest Columnist

For nearly 60 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware (BBBS) has served thousands of kids. As part of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, we

are blessed with our federation's 100-year legacy of helping ignite the power and promise of youth. We achieve this by developing one-to-one mentoring relationships between adults (Bigs) and children ages 7 to 17 (Littles). We currently have programs in all three counties of Delaware, which happen during the school day or outside of it.

I joined BBBS in June when COVID-19 was wreaking havoc throughout our disadvantaged communities and shortly after my predecessor had passed away after a lengthy illness. I have been blessed that my staff has been resilient and creative and felt empowered to help our mentors and kids through the pandemic.

Mentoring these days happens virtually

– by Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, Duo, or really any technological means possible. While that limits the in-person interaction that is ideal, it has definitely driven some creative ideas. Game nights, shared cooking experiences, watch parties via Netflix, tours of museums around the world, and playing video games online have become some of the creative workarounds. Despite the pandemic, the gift of technology has provided us the ability to pivot and work through the challenges as best as we can. I appreciate the presence of my staff and our mentors in supporting kids during this time.

I am also appreciative of the support of our donors – from individuals to charitable foundations to corporations, who all have provided us needed financial support – as well as our partnership with the United Way of Delaware. Our board of directors' support and championing of our mission at their places of businesses is greatly appreciated. Thank you to all of you!

Even with our corporate and volunteer partners, we are still in need of additional mentors. January is National Mentoring Month, which provides us a great opportunity to spread the word

about the importance of mentoring and being present in the life of a boy or girl that could use some extra support. We currently have 150 Littles waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister throughout our state, 100 of whom are in New Castle County. We especially could use some adult men as new mentors; the vast majority of our waitlist consists of boys. If you'd like to help, email info@bbbsde.org, check out our website (bbbsde.org), or call 302-998-3577 for more information.

We provide you training, support, and continual guidance as you become a Big Brother or Big Sister. We just ask for your time and presence to make it work.

An example of how you make a difference comes from a young girl in Kent County who joined our program at age 9. In their first meeting, the girl's Big Sister asked what she wanted to do that day. For that girl, that one statement changed everything and empowered her since she had never been asked before what she likes to do. She developed confidence, improved her self-esteem, and eventually graduated from high school and is now attending Delaware Technical Community College. She



Despite the pandemic, the gift of technology has provided us the ability to pivot and work through the challenges as best as we can.



hopes to become a Big Sister once she is done with her studies.

Helping provide opportunity to those who are at-risk requires all of us working together in some way. At BBBS, we're giving presence, stability, and a trusted mentor to at-risk kids throughout our state. In doing this, we are unlocking the power and promise of all kids. It's my hope you'll join us or support us in helping kids succeed. ■

Tom Thunsturm serves as executive director of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware.

In the C-Suite: Brandon Harvath

St. Francis Healthcare President and CEO

BY KATIE TABELING

WILMINGTON – It's rare for insurance executives to make the transition to health care, but for Brandon Harvath, it's a higher calling that led him to change course and eventually lead Saint Francis Healthcare.

The path to becoming the nearly century-old Wilmington hospital's president and CEO has been circuitous, to say the least.

Raised in Delaware's small town of Viola, Harvath joined the legions of financiers at MBNA and Bank of America and worked his way up the ladder. But his Christian faith guided him to use his experience to serve others, leading him to start in the insurance sector.

"I was literally seeking a higher purpose, and for years, I felt that banking just wasn't quite what I was supposed to be doing," Harvath said. "The two biggest impacts on my life my parents made were a strong work ethic and a Christian upbringing, and that drives me today."

He served in leadership positions in Independence Blue Cross and then as an executive for Cigna Global Health Benefits. It was truly in his international travel, where he was exposed to health care practices around the world.

The turning point came when he made a stop in East Asia, where he saw people — broken, sick, bleeding — lined up outside a hospital, and three floors up there was a state-of-the-art medical suite ready for VIPs or those who could pay the right amount of cash.

"I remember I was getting on a plane and I thought, 'There's a higher purpose for me.' I was just open to where the Lord would lead me next," he said. "It hasn't been easy, because I've made decisions to leave great organizations where I made friendships. But for people of faith, I think, you have to fulfill the calling God has for you."

That calling led him to Saint Francis Healthcare, a hospital under the Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic group, which follows a mission of serving its communities in the spirit of the Gospel as a compassionate and transforming presence within our communities.

As the chief executive, Harvath believes his role is one of a steward for that culture, but also shepherding in changes to how world-class care is delivered. Specific to Saint Francis' reach, about 60% of children in the census tract live below poverty, while 57% of people in Wilmington spend a third of their income on rent. Another 41% residents 65 and older live alone in Wilmington.

"It's also about moving that history forward and seeing how that ministry can morph into the right need at the right time," he said. "There's no question in my mind about Saint Francis' role here in Wilmington, and our commitment to the poor, underserved to bring state-of-the-art and innovative care to the entire community."

For example, Harvath pointed that during the early weeks of the pandemic Saint Francis took advantage of the downtime and a half-empty building to continue to make investments that would pay off for the community. That included installing a \$2.3 million interventional radiology suite, made sweeping investments in its stroke and sepsis programs, refined its geriatric services and renovated its entire emergency department.

"It's not just symbolic, it's tangible evidence of the investment that we will

continue to make here in Wilmington," he added.

While MBNA served as his "leadership bootcamp" in many ways, Harvath said that his 15 years of experience in the payer space helped give him a perspective not many have in his position as a CEO that oversees thousands of patient visits within a year. In health care, he noted that doctors and nurses can "look the patient right in the eye" and have personal responsibility for their welfare.

"[Insurance companies and health care systems] work on the same problem, just at different positions and angles," he said. "You're starting to see synergy, since this is where they both come together. Insurance companies are creating integrated financing and looking at delivery of care, and healthcare systems are making the investment to broaden access."

"That's part of the value and the excitement I find in being on the hospital side now is bringing some of that value to the table," Harvath continued. "It's in finding some of those creative solutions that meet

in the middle."

The pandemic also brought the greatest challenge of his career, as Harvath ascended to CEO in July from his role as chief operating officer. Not only was he leading a team of medical professionals that likely did not have a day off since the pandemic started, but he had to keep them focused to bring their best to work, knowing each day could be worse than the day before.

"I've learned the technical skills in various leadership positions, so you do gain an instinct for it," he said. "My reliance [to get through] has been on prayer. I keep my Bible on my desk and I carve out time in our chapel every week to stay grounded."

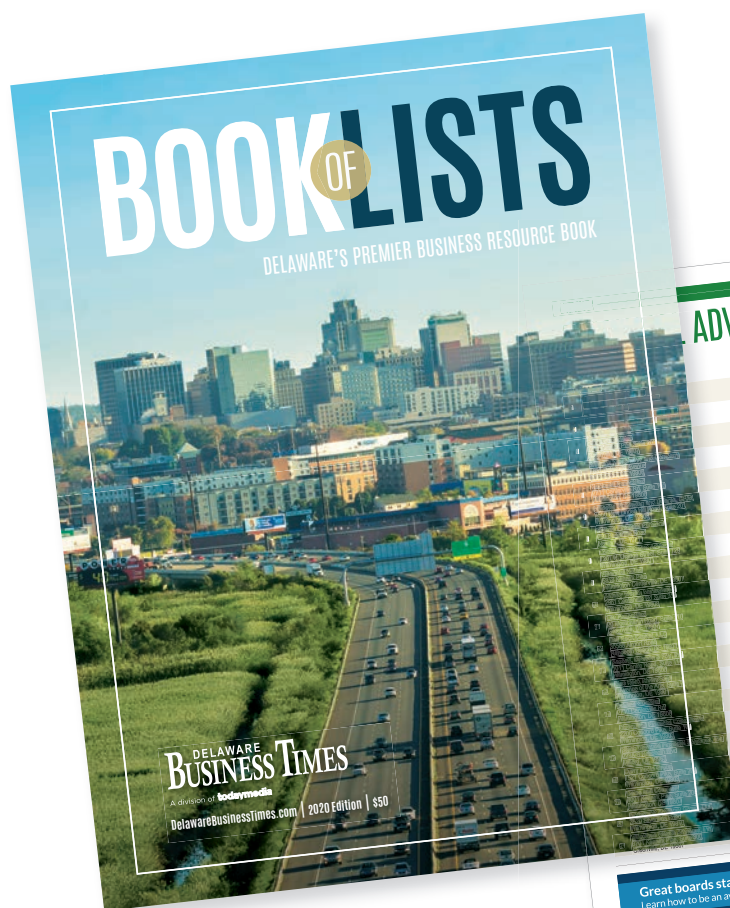
The quote Harvath uses to guide his path: "It's amazing what you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit."

"That's the picture I strive to paint. How can you put your team first in the day-to-day, take responsibility for failures that may happen and celebrate their success?" he asked. ■



DELAWARE
BUSINESS TIMES

2021 BOOK OF LISTS



ADVISERS & WEALTH MANAGERS			
Ranked by number of Delaware employees			
No. of Employees	Business Executive	Phone	Year Founded
37	Stephen Graham (Chief Executive)	(302) 738-0886	1987
36	Raymond R. Blevins	(302) 365-0886	1989
35	Charles R. Blevins (President)	(302) 365-0886	1989
34	John P. Blevins (President)	(302) 365-0886	1989
33	Thomas A. Williams	(302) 365-0886	1989
32	Tracy D. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
31	Tracy D. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
30	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
29	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
28	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
27	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
26	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
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17	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
16	David W. Williams (CEO, Partner)	(302) 365-0886	1989
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Welcome to the Leadership Delaware

Class of 2021 | Leadership Delaware's 13TH Class of Fellows

Since 2009, Leadership Delaware has annually selected 16-29 of Delaware's "Best and Brightest" young leaders to join its program. In this "transformational," year-long program, Fellows (participants in the program) meet and hear from over 140 speakers, each prominent and accomplished Delaware leaders, who present on topics including the economy, healthcare, education, finance, banking, the nonprofit sector, corporate governance, agriculture, energy, and more. The program challenges participants to rise to ever higher levels of leadership and accomplishment in each of the following three areas: their career field and profession, the nonprofit sector, and government/politics. After a very intense, challenging, and competitive application and interview process, the interview committee, comprised of current Fellows, graduate Fellows and Board Members, selected 17 young leaders for Leadership Delaware's 13TH class of Fellows. This group is poised to be an incredibly dynamic and talented class from many diverse backgrounds and experiences, from all three counties in Delaware. We wish them much success as they embark on this exciting year of discovery.



Stephen Bart



Jordan Bonner



Jeffrey Chapin



Angela Dolan



Markevis Gideon



Sierra Harris



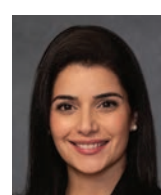
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Jaime McNatt



Drew Moore



Rebecca Nazario



Alex Parkowski



Danika Perry



Justin Rodriguez



Taymi Santiago



Nancy Shen



Alison Travers



Stephanie Wilhelm

About Leadership Delaware

Leadership Delaware, Inc. (LDI) recruits outstanding young Delawareans and prepares them with the knowledge, vision, integrity, and networks to significantly impact and transform their communities, and to excel at community, nonprofit, political, professional, and corporate leadership within the First State. For more information, please visit [LeadershipDelaware.org](https://www.leadershipdelaware.org)