



# Annual Report

## November, 2013

***SEDAC Mission Statement:***

*To leverage the experience, intellect, and creativity of the Sussex County community to inform, develop, recommend, and communicate strategies for creating sustainable economic prosperity.*





## Letter from the Chair

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As we reflect on the year of 2013 at the Sussex Economic Development Action Committee (SEDAC), it was truly a year of growth and creativity, a year of progress and commitment. But most of all, it was another year for all of us associated with SEDAC to be able to work together towards the worthwhile common goal of bringing about sustainable economic prosperity and opportunities in our home of Sussex County. In our second “official” year as a 501(c)3, we are proud of the significant accomplishments, made possible only through collaboration and hard work.



Notably, at the start of the year, we hired on a part-time Program Manager utilizing a \$25,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant. With a dedicated staff person in place, we were able to reenergize and expand upon our flagship event, the *Sussex County Open for Business* series, as well as build up our social media presence and implement two strategic small business networking events. We continue to seek out more grant opportunities to help us move forward.

In addition, our Board of Directors is an engaged group of extremely talented individuals that have worked diligently this year to accelerate our efforts. We have been involved in numerous initiatives including the One Million Cups Initiative, a newly formed infrastructure subcommittee, a state wide broadband initiative, Wallops Island, the Delmarva Technology Transfer Initiative, creation of a shellfish aquaculture industry and the Georgetown Blueprint Communities, among many others. By participating in these initiatives, we are pushing ahead economic development priorities on behalf of the entrepreneurs and business owners throughout the county.

My deepest appreciation and thanks goes out to our entire Board of Directors, staff and the many volunteers and other partnering organizations that helped make this year a success. While we celebrate our past year’s accomplishments, we realize our work is far from complete, as SEDAC continues to identify needs, bridge gaps, form partnerships and take actionable steps to pave the way to economic prosperity.

Regards,

Rob Rider  
Chair

## **SEDAC Board Members**

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November 2012 – November 2013

(\*term expires)

### **Executive Committee**

Rob Rider, Chair (2015)

Dr. Bill McGowan, Vice Chair (2015)

Dr. Ileana Smith, Treasurer (2014)

Nancy Moore, Secretary (2015)

### **Staff**

Tricia W. Matsko, Program Manager (N/A)

### **Board Members**

Joe Conaway (2014)

Ernie Felici (2015)

Patti Grimes (Immediate Past Chair) (2015)

Bill Pfaff (2014)

Mark Reeve (2013)

Bob Ruggio (2013)

Scott Thomas (2013)

Chris Weeks (2015)

### **Ex-Officio Members**

Melody Booker, DEDO

Gene Dvornick, SCAT

Ed Lewandowski, University of Delaware College of Earth Ocean and Environment

Julie Wheatley, Sussex County

# SEDAC Supports New Business Development and Fosters a Connected Community of Local Businesses

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## Sussex County Open for Business

SEDAC's ongoing flagship initiative designed to support the development of small businesses in Sussex County, *Sussex County Open for Business*, continued to grow and evolve throughout the year. In order to create an additional draw, SEDAC paired up with the Delaware Technical Community College, to combine the One Million Cups presentations with the monthly *Sussex County Open for Business* fair. *Sussex County Open for Business* creates a one-stop shop offering information on funding, business consulting, and training every third Wednesday of the month at



the Student Services Center at Delaware Technical Community College's Jack F. Owens Campus. *Sussex County Open for Business* serves both startups and established businesses seeking to expand. In the past year, the series served thirty new and existing local business entrepreneurs. Participants come from a broad spectrum of sectors—manufacturing, construction, services, and more.

## Participating Agencies

SEDAC thanks the following organizations for participating in *Sussex County Open for Business*:

- Delaware Center for Enterprise Development- Delaware State University
- Delaware Economic Development Office
- Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- DE Small Business & Technology Development Center
- Delaware State Treasury
- Delaware Technical Community College- Entrepreneur Center
- Job Center at Delaware Libraries
- SCORE Delaware
- Southern Delaware Tourism
- Sussex County Economic Development Office
- U. S. Small Business Administration
- YWCA- Center for Women's Entrepreneurship

## One Million Cups Initiative in Delaware

Recognizing the synergy between SEDAC’s established *Sussex County Open for Business* series, SEDAC partnered up with Delaware Technical Community College to bring the Kauffman Foundation’s One Million Cups Initiative to Delaware. Georgetown, Delaware is the first Northeastern city to join – and the tenth nationwide – to host the weekly gathering that is building startup communities over cups of coffee and conversation across the country.

Entrepreneurs, innovators and interested community members from Georgetown and the surrounding region meet at 9 a.m. each Wednesday at Java 101 in the Student Services Center on Delaware Technical Community College’s Jack F. Owens Campus. The 1MC Program in Delaware officially launched on Wednesday, July 17, and has continued each subsequent Wednesday. It provides a great exchange of ideas, consistent opportunity to network and gather community support. To learn more, visit: <http://delaware.sites.1millioncups.com/>



## 2013 Success Stories by the Numbers

<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>
Sessions of Sussex County Open for Business were held in the last year	Individuals have participated in Sussex County Open for Business	Service organizations participate in Sussex County Open for Business	Entrepreneurs have presented at One Million Cups-Delaware

## Strategic Networking Events: Building a Connected Community of Small Businesses

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One of SEDAC's goals is to bridge gaps among small businesses in the county so that all areas are thriving and can learn from each other. To achieve this goal, SEDAC orchestrated a strategic networking event this past year, tailored for the local business community. The event took place at the Lavender Fields in Milton, Delaware. Guest speaker and acclaimed artist/imaginarian John Donato of Lead Your Way Solutions demonstrated the power of doodling to help business people map Sussex County's small business networks, encouraging outside the box thinking and finding innovative solutions for business issues. Funding for the networking event was provided by the University of Delaware's Coastal Communities Initiative.



*Photo: Courtesy of Marisa Van Hoeven*

## SEDAC Broadens Its Reach through Social Media Tools

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Working with a social media consultant, this past year SEDAC developed a social media framework, including guidelines, long-term goals and overall strategy. SEDAC established a Facebook page, as well as SEDAC LinkedIn subgroup of the Southern Delaware Economic Development group, and continues to expand its active Twitter following. By utilizing various social media tools in an effective way, SEDAC plans to expand its reach, visibility and provide an additional two-way communication platform for those interested in economic development in Sussex County and SEDAC's work. These outlets provide yet another way for us to help build a connected network of local businesses and those interested in economic development issues throughout the county, and staying abreast of the latest news as well as SEDAC happenings.

### Stay Connected



## SEDAC Supports Local Business Issues

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SEDAC regularly supports initiatives that will contribute to the development of businesses in Sussex County. In the past year, the Committee supported the **expansion of broadband availability and improved infrastructure** throughout the County, **creation of a shellfish aquaculture industry** in the Delaware Inland Bay, **extension of the runway** at the Sussex County Airport and the creation of an **emergency management building** at the Sussex County Airport. SEDAC has been instrumental in moving the emergency management project forward.



Additionally, SEDAC is a sponsor of the **University of Delaware's Focus on the Coast** series.

### **Developing Issues SEDAC Monitors**

SEDAC closely monitors new initiatives in the County that will contribute to future economic development. We are monitoring these local and state efforts:

- **Infrastructure/Broadband:** In addition to our efforts to expand the availability of broadband services throughout the County, our members also work on a number of initiatives aimed at improving the overall infrastructure throughout the County, with the goal of attracting companies to develop sites that have all of the necessary infrastructure in place. To that end, SEDAC formed an infrastructure subcommittee this year to help identify these needs and be able to respond more quickly to workforce issues. We have been working with the various towns throughout the county on this project and seeking input.
- **Creation of Shellfish Aquaculture Industry:** Governor Markell signed House Bill 160 on August 23 this year to permit shellfish aquaculture in Delaware's Inland Bays, allowing the state to reap the economic benefits of a multimillion dollar industry while improving water quality in the bays. House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf sponsored the legislation following an extensive review of the impact of shellfish aquaculture on the state. Center for Inland Bays led a 14-month effort by a diverse committee of experts and stakeholders to explore the potential of shellfish aquaculture and address the challenges of the project. During this process, SEDAC wrote a letter of support and was a vocal supporter and advocate for this legislation.
- **Extension of the Sussex County Airport Runway:** Sussex County has received \$4.3 million for the final phase of the Sussex County Airport runway extension project from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration. The project improves the runway to accommodate larger aircraft and attract new business to the region. This grant award is the last phase of a four-phase project that includes the 500-foot runway extension, the relocation of airport thresholds to meet design standards, the installation of an approach lighting system, and the establishment of new non-precision instrument approach procedures.
- **Extension of the Permit Extension Ordinance:** SEDAC supported revision of code (Section 115-174) in respect to the time of validity of approvals of a Conditional Use relating to Utilities Services. Utility providers expressed a need for change to the draft ordinance that would help to curtail costly expenses and promote progress instead of timely burdens and delays, ultimately, allowing the Sussex County Utility Providers to better serve their customers in a more efficient manner.
- **Emergency Management Building:** The development of an Emergency Management Building is in the planning stages in Sussex County. The name of the new facility will be the Sussex County Sports Arena and Emergency Facility. Unfortunately, more recently, due to funding challenges, the project has been delayed. SEDAC continues to push for and support the development of such a facility to the area.



- **Wallops Island:** On the Eastern Shore of Virginia, NASA's Wallops Flight Facility is a great source of innovation and job potential. SEDAC is promoting Delaware's greater involvement in activities at the facility. The goal is to create more opportunities for Sussex County companies. Local educational institutions such as Delaware Technical Community College are exploring developing training classes to better prepare future workers and meet NASA's needs.

Photo source: Tim Beach / FreeDigitalPhotos.net, [http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/images/view\\_photog.php?photogid=230](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/images/view_photog.php?photogid=230)

## **SEDAC Reaches Across and Beyond the County**

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In order to support our mission of economic development in Sussex County, our members participate with a number of local and regional initiatives that develop businesses, entrepreneurs, and the region overall.

### **Sussex County Council**

SEDAC regularly updates Sussex County Council on our progress. SEDAC has presented to Council numerous times at regular Council meetings. Additionally, we meet with Council members when economic development issues arise. SEDAC is committed to keeping County Council up-to-date on our progress and success stories.

### **Sussex County Conference**

This marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sussex County's Today & Tomorrow Conference, hosted by Delaware Technical Community College in Georgetown, DE. The focus of this year's conference will focus on the human resources element of business, themed "People – Your Most Important Asset." It will highlight where we've been and where we are going. The ultimate mission of the conference is to promote collaborative action by stakeholders in the areas of education and the economy for the purpose of benefiting the community.

### **Georgetown Blueprint Communities**

SEDAC members actively participated in this initiative to improve Georgetown's downtown area. Blueprint Communities helps cities, towns and neighborhoods develop stronger leaders, a clear community vision, and a detailed strategic plan for sustainable community growth.

### **Delmarva Technology Transfer Initiative (DT<sup>2</sup>i)**

DT<sup>2</sup>i is a partnership of area Community Colleges, and includes the Georgetown campus of Delaware Technical Community College. DT<sup>2</sup>i was created to explore the potential for introducing technology transfer to the Delmarva region with an initial target market of manufacturers and the individual entrepreneur.

### **Diamond State Entrepreneurship Challenge for High School Students**

Delaware Technical Community College hosted the preliminary rounds of the inaugural Diamond Challenge for High School Entrepreneurs. Competitions were held March 20, 2013 in each county at three Delaware Tech campus locations. The Diamond Challenge provides high school students the opportunity to explore entrepreneurship as a future career path. The competition gives students real world experience in developing a business plan. Students presented their business ideas to a panel of judges comprised of local business professionals, including several SEDAC members and staff.

### **Peninsula Commercial Alliance**

The PCA (Peninsula Commercial Alliance) was formed in 2011 to meet the needs of Commercial Real Estate professionals in the Southern Delaware and Eastern Shore of Maryland area. Professional development as well as economic development are the main focus of the group.

## **Small Business Financing**

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While SEDAC explores development of our own future Economic Development Fund, we monitor the current funding sources available to small businesses, including:

### **Non-Profit Sussex County Investment Foundation in Formation**

SEDAC will be working closely to help get off the ground and provide mentorship to a new, exciting non-profit organization that plans to provide angel funding to start-up businesses in Sussex County. This is a great opportunity for the local economy and businesses.

### **Sussex County Economic Development Incentive and Loan Programs**

The County's Incentive program goal is to provide incentives for business based on new employment. The amount of the incentive is based primarily on additional County revenues generated by the expansion of a business. The County's Loan program is available to assist businesses with low-interest rate loans for the development of economically beneficial programs and in particular new job creation.

### **State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) program**

The Delaware State Small Business Credit Initiative program supports lending to small businesses that will help create new private sector jobs and spur more than \$121 million in new private lending. DEDO's SSBCI program is a loan participation program, involving at least one lender and DEDO. The program entices lenders to provide small businesses with the cash they need at a lower cost. SSBCI provides flexibility to both lenders and small businesses. When a lender is reviewing a loan or line of credit application, it might consider an SSBCI participation.

### **Delaware Strategic Fund**

The Delaware Strategic Fund represents the primary funding source used by DEDO to provide customized loans and grants to businesses for job creation, relocation and expansion. For businesses considering locating in the state of Delaware, financial assistance may be provided in the form of low interest loans, grants, or other creative instruments to support the attraction of businesses that pay sustainable wages. Assistance terms are negotiated specific to each firm's individual needs and situation.

### **Delaware Rural Irrigation Program (DRIP)**

The Delaware Rural Irrigation Program (DRIP) Revolving Loan Fund, administered collaboratively through the Delaware Department of Agriculture and the Delaware Economic Development Office, is a revolving no-interest loan fund available to qualified Delaware farmers to add new irrigation systems including center pivot, linear move, towable systems, span angle systems, corner arm systems, single phase systems or wells and filters associated with drip irrigation systems. The goal is to significantly increase the amount of irrigated cropland in Delaware.

## Organizations that have presented to SEDAC

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SEDAC recognizes the importance of keeping up-to-date on major activities in Sussex County and the surrounding region. These guest speakers have made presentations to SEDAC in 2013.

- **U.S. Senator Tom Carper** shared remarks with SEDAC on his work, particularly in the economic development realm, as well as received an update on the activities that SEDAC is currently focusing on in Sussex County.
- **Secretary Alan Levin of the Delaware Economic Development Organization** provided an update to SEDAC regarding his work with DEDO and latest priorities. In exchange, he learned more of SEDAC's initiatives and concerns.
- **Rodney Wyatt of Artesian Water** visited SEDAC to recommend and ask for SEDAC's support for revision of code (Section 115-174) in respect to the time of validity of approvals of a Conditional Use relating to Utilities Services. On behalf of utility providers, he explained how a change to the draft ordinance would help to curtail costly expenses and promote progress instead of timely burdens and delays, ultimately, allowing the Sussex County Utility Providers to better serve their customers in a more efficient manner.
- **Karen Duffield, executive director of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce**, provided a presentation to SEDAC on the Georgetown Blueprint Communities project, including lessons learned, community involvement and next steps.

# Financial Report

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## Financial Milestones

SEDAC utilized their \$25,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) from the US Department of Agriculture, by hiring on a part-time Program Manager. The RBEG program provides grants in rural areas to organizations like SEDAC that finance and facilitate the development of small and emerging businesses, as well as a number of other economic development projects. SEDAC continues to broaden its funding sources by seeking out additional grant opportunities to better sustain and build upon its current work. Additionally, SEDAC has received a number of in-kind contributions throughout the year.

## SEDAC Sponsors

SEDAC wishes to thank these organizations that have provided sponsorship to SEDAC this year:

