



Annual Report

January 2016

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

As 2015 comes to a close, we can reflect that it has been another year of economic recovery and growth. The same holds true for the Sussex Economic Development Action Committee, or otherwise known as SEDAC. In our third year, we are proud of the substantial accomplishments, made possible only through teamwork and hard work of each of the Board of Directors and members.

Following one of the most pivotal years for SEDAC, we continued to strengthen our relationship with Sussex County and each of the 25 individual towns. The Infrastructure subcommittee undertook a capacity survey, whereas to gain an understanding of each town's

preparedness for business growth, whether it be new or existing. Stemming from this endeavor and with the partnership of the University of Delaware/Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative, SEDAC worked with the town of Laurel and created www.reimaginel Laurel.net/welcome-to-laurel. We look to target other cities and towns to tailor an economic tool that encapsulates their individual benefits, feel, and history. SEDAC continues to spearhead, the Sussex County Open for Business series has been reenergized. SEDAC continues to fortify our mission to provide valuable resources to Sussex Countians so that they may individually contribute in sustaining a stable economy in a place where they call home.

SEDAC is very proud of our marketing committee in 2015, in strategizing to bring the SEDAC brand to the forefront. There is going to be a strong initiative in 2016 to bring our committee's message and mission to each town. It is important that the cities and towns understand the valuable resource center SEDAC could serve.

We continue to focus on other initiatives, such as continued support of One Million Cups Series, the rebranding of the Delaware Coastal Airport, and the ever necessary Broadband initiative.

Once again, my gratitude is extended to our entire Board of Directors, members and the many volunteers and other partnering organizations that helped make this year another success. As my two year term as Chair comes to a close, I will leave the leadership in good hands. I still believe that SEDAC needs to continue to identify needs, bridge gaps, form partnerships and take actionable steps to pave the way to economic prosperity for Sussex County, Delaware.

Regards,

Ernie Felici, Jr.
Chair



SEDAC Board Members

2016

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

Sussex County Open for Business

SEDAC's flagship initiative continues to grow and adapt to the needs of small businesses in Sussex County. *Sussex County Open for Business* is designed to support the development of small businesses in Sussex County. After pairing with One Million Cups for a time, *Sussex County Open for Business* has returned to a stand-alone event and is now held in an exciting new venue.



In the past year, the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) contributed significant marketing support to the Open for Business programs in each county, and has created a marketing campaign that is consistent across the state. *Sussex County Open for Business* now utilizes the branding and marketing materials created by DEDO.

Sussex County Open for Business is now held at the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center at the Georgetown Airport once a month. *Sussex County Open for Business* continues to serve as a one-stop shop offering information on funding, business consulting, and training every third Thursday of the month. *Sussex County Open for Business* serves both startups and established businesses seeking to expand. In the past year, the series served fourteen 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- DSU
Delaware Economic Development Office - DEDO
Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership

DE Small Business & Technology Development Center
DTCC- Entrepreneur Center Programming
SCORE Delaware
Southern Delaware Tourism
United States Department of AG (USDA)
Delaware Housing Authority
Delaware Procurement Technical Assistant Center
Sussex County Economic Development Office
U. S. Small Business Administration
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)
Delaware Department of Transportation (DELDOT)
Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)-Federal Contracting
Delaware Office of Supplier Diversity (OSD)

Infrastructure

SEDAC's Infrastructure Committee has completed their first initiative, and will shortly be unveiling the results of their inventory of all incorporated towns and cities in Sussex County. Their survey and accompanying in-depth interviews with Sussex Counties' municipalities will provide a complete picture of the infrastructure in place on a town-by-town basis. This study has been designed to provide the information that a company looking to start, expand, or re-locate their business in Sussex County would need. The results of this study will be readily available to the County, State, real estate professionals, and growing businesses. It is the committee's vision that the data will be used to develop and economic development instrument. A good example is www.reimaginelareel.net/welcome-to-laurel online portal; a SEDAC collaboration with the University of Delaware/Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative and the Town of Laurel.

The Infrastructure Committee's next initiative is to aid in expansion of high-speed Internet services throughout Sussex County Government. This group, with the Marketing committee as hopes to assist the County in rebranding of their airport.

Marketing

SEDAC's Marketing Committee, started in the last year, has hit the ground running. This committee has already developed an exhibit booth that can market the County at regional and national events. The booth was unveiled for the first time at the Leesburg Executive Airport in Virginia at their Aviation Education and Career Expo.

The Marketing Committee promotes the *Sussex County Open for Business* program, creating and distributing press releases, keeping the website updated, and coordinating with DEDO's state-wide marketing program of the series.

The Marketing Committee also added expertise to the newest component of the annual Wings & Wheels Festival, the Aviation Education Expo. This Expo, targeting high school juniors and seniors, introduced hundreds of young people to the vast array of career opportunities within the aviation industry.

SEDAC Supports Local Business Issues

SEDAC regularly supports initiatives that will contribute to the development of businesses in Sussex County. In the past year, the Committee has seen progress on three of our focused issues: **creation of a shellfish aquaculture industry** in the Delaware Inland Bay, **extension of the runway** at the Sussex County Airport, and **expansion of broadband availability**. SEDAC has been instrumental in moving all of these projects forward.



In addition, The UD-led Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative (SCCI), in collaboration with SEDAC, organized and facilitated a May 2015 public forum called “Picking up Speed – Delaware Broadband for Economic Development”. Presentations articulated sector- and-site specific demands for enhanced broadband infrastructure and internet services to enhance economic development in southern and central Delaware. Participants engaged in a facilitated discussion to identify objectives and strategies for continuation of the Sussex Broadband Work Group, which plans and implements projects to enhance broadband provision in the region. More than 50 individuals participated in this one-day event.

SEDAC closely monitors new initiatives in the County that will contribute to future economic development. We have seen significant progress on these local and state efforts:

- **Overbrook Town Center** – support provided for new shopping center to be built on Route 1 in Lewes, via letter to Sussex County Council
- **Sun Behavioral Health** – support provided for new 90 bed psychiatric facility to be constructed on 404 in Georgetown, next to LA RED Health Center
- **Extension of the Sussex County Airport Runway:** The Sussex County Airport has completed the 500-foot extension of the runway, and now the facility features a 5,500 foot runway. The next step is the extension of the runway an additional 500 feet, so that major tenants at the Airport can accommodate larger aircraft and expand their operations. Additionally, the extension will attract new business to the region. SEDAC’s infrastructure committee has recently commenced their work with the Airport, and will continue to define and provide support.
- **Broadband:** SEDAC’s infrastructure committee was encouraged by the expansion of high-speed fiber-optic service in Georgetown this year, as well as the availability of grant monies specifically for the expansion of high-speed Internet throughout the State. Our Infrastructure Committee has met with the County to coordinate efforts to expand broadband availability throughout the County.
- **Delaware Tech:** Presentation from CIRWA – Center for Industry Research and Workplace Alignment
- **Lewes Library Reuse:** For the support of a residential, higher education institution for Sussex County which would be located in the soon-to-be former Lewes Library. The support lies in recognizing the significant economic impacts, as well as the continuing educational gardening of the Sussex County youth, and the inevitable re-investment into the community.

SEDAC Reaches Across and Beyond the County

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 year marks the 21st 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 focused on selling, themed "SELLebration." 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. 2015's focus was Innovation, which was highlighted by the change by the conference committee's decision to go paperless, with the encouragement to bring laptops for the presentations.

One Million Cups

1 Million Cups is a simple way to engage entrepreneurs in communities around the world. Each week, the 1 Million Cups program offers two local entrepreneurs an opportunity to present their startups to a diverse audience of mentors, advisors, and entrepreneurs. Presenters prepare a six minute educational presentation and engage in 20 minutes of feedback and questioning after they present. Entrepreneurs gain insight into possible ways they can improve their businesses, gather real-time feedback, connect with a community that truly cares about their progress, and walk away feeling like they have advanced their business. The audience also learns a great deal from the presentations. Whether this is through passively listening or deeply engaging with the entrepreneurs, there is much to learn every week from these dynamic and diverse communities.

The program takes place every Wednesday morning from 9:00-10:00 a.m. in locations all around the country. The local One Million Cups program is held at the Jack Owens Campus of Delaware Technical Community College.

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.

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.

Organizations that have presented to SEDAC

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 2014.

- **Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Controls (DNREC)** Now-Secretary David Small visited SEDAC to provide an overview of the Governor's Clean Water for Delaware's Future initiative. This comprehensive plan would protect public health and clean up Delaware's bays, rivers and streams within a generation, while creating jobs and strengthening Delaware's economy.
- **Eastern Shore Manufacturing Council and Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center** visited with SEDAC to share the programs and services their organizations provide on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. As a parallel organization, SEDAC had the opportunity to investigate their successes and challenges as part of planning future economic development activities in Sussex County.
- **Leading Edge Ventures**, a second angel-level venture capital fund starting in Newark visited with SEDAC to share their plans. This for-profit fund will invest in start-up companies throughout the state. Their presentation also provided an introduction to venture capital investing for the group.

Financial Milestones

SEDAC continues to broaden its funding sources by seeking out additional grant opportunities to better sustain and build upon its current work.

Sponsors

SEDAC thanks Sussex County Government for their support of the Sussex County Open for Business series. The County donates, on a monthly basis, the use of the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center at the Delaware Coastal Airport for this series.



SEDAC wishes to recognize and thank Fulton Bank for their sponsorship of the Sussex County Open for Business series. Fulton Bank has generously supplied SEDAC with door prizes at these events.

Fulton Bank

2015 Success Stories by the Numbers

12	52	16
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
