



www.sedac-de.org

Annual Report

2019

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



The Sussex Economic Development Action Committee experienced another successful year in 2019. Membership in SEDAC continues to grow and expand in depth of membership. Those who share our view of a more sustainable economic prosperity for Sussex are invited to join with us in our goal to create the jobs that will help keep our young people here. Contact any member (listed in this report) or contact me at jconaway@hotmail.com.

We continue to distribute editorials concerning economic development and we will continue to provide our thoughts throughout the coming year. We are pleased to welcome and thank the Delaware State News and Delaware Business Times for joining with the local papers who provide coverage of our thoughts. In 2019 these editorials included the Annual Report for 2018, thoughts on skilled training in Sussex, a new effort to reduce the amount of time it takes to obtain permits in Delaware, Ready in Six, the development of a Growth Fund that would allow growth to pay for itself, and a more realistic view of reassessment's effects on taxes.

In 2019 we began a process of alternating locations for our meetings with a thought that SEDAC could develop a better understanding of what's going on in and around Sussex. We have taken steps to hire a professional firm to help understand what the economic future could be for Sussex. As you will read elsewhere in our Annual Report, we have revised the format for the very successful "Open for Business" program that we initiated 9 years ago. We met with Sussex County to discuss its efforts to provide broadband for all of Sussex. The County gets this and understands that economic success is tied directly to the availability of broadband.

We plan to meet with all the Chambers of Commerce in Sussex to discuss our common goals. This meeting should be early this year. We have encouraged the Public Private Partnership (PPP) that is Delaware's Economic Development program to pay more attention to Sussex County. Governor Carney is seeking more ways to get more money into Sussex for Economic Development.

Our members have volunteered to work with Sussex Tech to provide valuable insight in developing training programs to teach the so-called "soft skills" (coming to work on time, showing up every day, etc)

We supported the efforts of the Delaware Business Roundtable to improve the permitting process in Delaware, a program known as Ready in Six. We also supported an effort by the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce that has as its purpose that we all benefit if we engage as business and government leaders in conversation and collaboration that will generate job creation. They believe, as do we, that innovation is created from these partnerships that will help business thrive in Delaware. We continued our sponsorship of the Sussex County Today and Tomorrow Conference.

We supported the Governor and the General Assembly's successful efforts to revise the Coastal Zone Act to bring land that needs to be restored to productive use back from the extreme contamination that is its present state. Unfortunately, it took the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control two years to revise the regulations that would allow this to happen.

Sussex County hired a consultant to develop recommendations for Affordable Housing, a recommendation offered by SEDAC. We supported the efforts of the Sussex County Working Group to develop a workable Buffer Zone Ordinance, that is both respectful of property rights and the environment.

We supported efforts to obtain more capital funds for Del Tech to provide money to attack the tremendous backlog in capital needs of the college. The General Assembly and Governor did begin a process that will provide for more funds for these vital needs, but more needs to be done.

We continued our efforts to support the Poultry Industry in Sussex. Problems continue to exist but the industry is reaching out to resolve those issues and they should be commended for those efforts.

We supported the "FAST" program (Focus on Alternative Skills Training) that was passed by the General Assembly and will provide beginning funds for skills training. We

continue to support those towns and cities that are diligently working to bring growth and economic development to the constituencies. We have watched, over the year, the efforts of Millsboro, Bridgeville, the Laurel Redevelopment Committee and Dagsboro Business Alliance as they seek a better future for their people.

The Sussex County Council, Administrator and Economic Development Director are also to be commended for their efforts. The County's bond rating has been improved from AA1 to AAA as a result of its great financial position. The County Finance Director and staff are to be commended as well. The Coastal Airport is now a Foreign Trade Zone. A number of pro-business programs have been created by the County that will provide financial assistance to both new and existing businesses. The County Economic Development Department's budget was increased. All of these are great steps forward.

Now, there were some setbacks as well. SEDAC was left out of a Statewide Initiative to fund organizations like us to assist in economic development. New Castle, Kent and Middletown all received funds but we did not. We had sought assistance with our successful Open for Business program but I guess we can do without, after all, we are only Sussex. We did, however, receive a \$1000 grant from SBA to assist with this program.

I would be very remiss if I didn't thank member and Secretary, Linda Price for all of her efforts on behalf of SEDAC, from scheduling our monthly meetings, preparing our Annual Report and keeping our minutes precise and to the point. Without all of her efforts, I am not sure just where SEDAC would be. Thank you Linda!

I want to take this opportunity to thank membership for their efforts to make SEDAC successful. We are all volunteers and, without their help and advice, nothing would be possible. We wish all of you a Happy New Year and look forward to the day that our children will not have long drives home during holidays because the good paying jobs that they hold elsewhere are right here in Sussex County, Delaware.

One other point – in the area of where angels fear to tread, we are starting off our new year in Millsboro on January 24, 2020, with a membership discussion of the Skipjack Offshore Wind Energy Project featuring Ray Bevins, Delaware State Park and Matt Drew of Orstead, the company proposing the project.

Joe Conaway
Chairperson
Sussex Economic Development Action Committee

SEDAC Board Members

2019

2019 Executive Committee

Joe Conaway, Chairperson

Walt Bryan, Vice Chairperson

Kevin Yingling, Treasurer

Linda Price, Secretary

Board Members

Joe Conaway

Doug Liberman

Linda Price

Chris Baker

Kevin Yingling

Rob Tunnell

David Root

Ray Sander

Scott Thomas

Cathy Bassett

Ernie Felici

Brian McGlinchey

Bob Ruggio

Sheldon Hudson/Jamie Burke

Chris Weeks

Dave Speicher

Ed Lewandowski

Brian Shannon

Pete Keenan

Steve Weick

Walt Bryan

Lillian Harrison

Dean Holden

Trisha Newcomer

Jerry Esposito

Mike Vanderslice

Charlie Timmons

Bobbi Barends

Bobby Horsey

Bob Wheatley

Ex-Officio Members

Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT)

Bill Pfaff, Sussex County Economic Development

Dawn Hopkins – Delaware Economic Development

Jim Provo - SBA

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



Sussex County Open for Business Fair

SEDAC's flagship initiative continues to grow and adapt to the needs of small businesses in Sussex County. Sussex County Open for Business (SCOFB) is designed to support the creation and development of small businesses in Sussex County. 2019 was a year of trial and error. Although participation was down, both with participants and vendors, those that did take advantage of the opportunity, found SCOFB beneficial.

Open for Business in Sussex County will occur the third Wednesday of every other month starting on January 15, 2020 in Seaford at the Town Hall. The rotation of Open for Business is designed to take in all of Sussex County. The program will begin at 9am and end at 10:30am. The program will begin with brief introductions and a short presentation by a resource provider. The program topic in January will be the EDGE Grant presented by Laura Wisler from the State Division of Small Business. More to come as the year progresses.

Sussex County Open for Business (SCOFB) held at the Student Services Center at Delaware Technical Community College (Owens Campus in Georgetown) once a month, along side One Million Cups. SCOFB continue to serve as a one stop shop offering information on funding, business consulting and training every third Wednesday of the month. Sussex County Open For Business serves both startups and established businesses seeking to expand. Throughout 2019, SCOFB served thirty three (33) new and existing local business entrepreneurs. Participants come from a broad spectrum of sectors – manufacturing, construction, services and more.

2019 marks the eighth year that SEDAC has hosted these free “one stop” business development events. More than 15 professionals from county and state agencies, colleges, business advocacy and resource organizations attend each month to provide:

- Free business development consultations
- Information on state and county licensing and permitting
- Financial resources and business coaching
- Networking with other business start-ups
- Brainstorming with experts

Agencies and organizations that typically attend each month include: Sussex County Economic Development, The Center for Enterprise Development; Delaware State University; Delaware Economic Development Office; Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership; University of Delaware’s Delaware Small Business Development Center; Delaware Procurement Technical Assistance Center; Delaware Technical & Community College’s 1 Million Cups, SCORE Delaware; Southern Delaware Tourism; U.S. Small Business Administration; Delaware Office of Supplier Diversity; Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Delaware Department of Transportation; USDA; U.S. Census Bureau; Women’s Business Center; and the Delaware State Housing Authority.

SEDAC board members Scott Thomas, Southern Delaware Tourism Director and David Root, Director of the Small Business Development Center are injecting great energy into this program. Through their efforts, monthly press releases are distributed, social media campaigns have started and success stories are being chronicled.

SCOFB is looking to make changes for 2020 based on focus groups held during the later part of 2019. Stay tuned as the New SCOFB emerges in 2020.

2019 Success Stories by the Numbers

11	33	17
Sessions of Sussex County Open for Business held in the	Individuals participated in Sussex County Open for Business	Service organizations participate in Sussex County Open for Business

SEDAC'S Continued Strategic Doing

- SEDAC continues monthly to address Strategic Doing Initiatives as identified from our 2017 workshop
- 2019 efforts were made on the following strategic doing initiatives
 - Support job creation and retention
 - Every job is worthy and thoughtful of consideration
 - Focus on communicating the role of SEDAC
 - Strengthen the relationships between partners
 - Make connections/always aware – 2019 saw an increase in identifying the right connections and making them a part of the SEDAC board
 - Understand partners – Economic Development focus (ie Kent County Partnership/Delaware Prosperity)
 - Promote SEDAC
 - Workforce Development & Affordable housing – continuing to hold workshops between the local High Schools and businesses – focus on trades and workforce development
- How do we get there ○ Op Eds ○ Social Media ○ Direct Action ○ Endorse Economic Development Projects ○ Monthly agenda discussions
- 4 Op Eds were completed by Chairman, Joe Conaway and circulated through local print media
 - Annual Report ○ Vocational Education ○ New Directions
 - Affordable Housing and Industrial Parks
- Social Media initiatives – LinkedIn page saw increased traffic due to consistent posting relative to all things business throughout the County.

Cindy Small of the SBDC took our FB page to new heights, again with consistent messaging. Increased followers by 118 over 2018 to 590. Our top posts have out posted Rehoboth Dewey Chamber, Central Delaware Chamber, the new DEDO, Sussex County and the SBDC.

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 help develop businesses, entrepreneurs, and the region overall.

Sussex County Council

SEDAC regularly updates Sussex County Council on our progress. 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. SEDAC regularly participated in the numerous public forums on the 2018 Land Use Plan and succeeded in getting much of the County's vision for Economic Development to reflect our views.

Sussex County Conference

2019 marked the 26th 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 was Social Mobility and marked a change in how the conference was conducted. Breakout sessions were a little longer, allowing more time for questions. Participants for 2019 included: Dr Mark Brainard and Dr Bobbi Barends of Del Tech; Michelle Taylor of United Way; Tyler Bell, DE Housing Alliance; Rachel Turney, Dept of Labor; Lisa Wheeler, HR Director Sol Del Concepts; Kevin Braunskill, HR Director Mountaire Farms; Erin Willis, Sun Behavioral; The Honorable Cerron Cade, Secretary of Labor.

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 2019.....

- Secretary Jennifer Cohan – DELDOT
- Linda Parkowski – Kent County Partnership
- Daniel Bond – Milford Downtown Development and Historic Tax Credits
- Rick King & Mike Schaeffer – NV & Ryan Homes – affordable housing
- Rob Rider – Delaware Prosperity Partnership
- Sussex County – Gina Jennings, Finance Director; Bill Pfaff, Economic Development Director and Eric Littleton, new Airport Manager
- Steve Guthrie – Superintendent Sussex Tech – new direction
- Senator Brian Pettyjohn – FAST (focus on Alternative Skills Training)
- Town of Seaford – Mayor Genshaw; Charles Anderson, Town Manager and Trish Newcomer, Economic Development Director
- Kevin Gilmore – Executive Director – Sussex County Habitat for Humanity

Financial Milestones

SEDAC continues to broaden its funding sources by seeking out additional grant opportunities to better sustain and build upon its current work. Member dues totaling \$3000 have been collected in 2019. A grant from SBA of \$1000 was also received to further SEDAC program, Open For Business.