



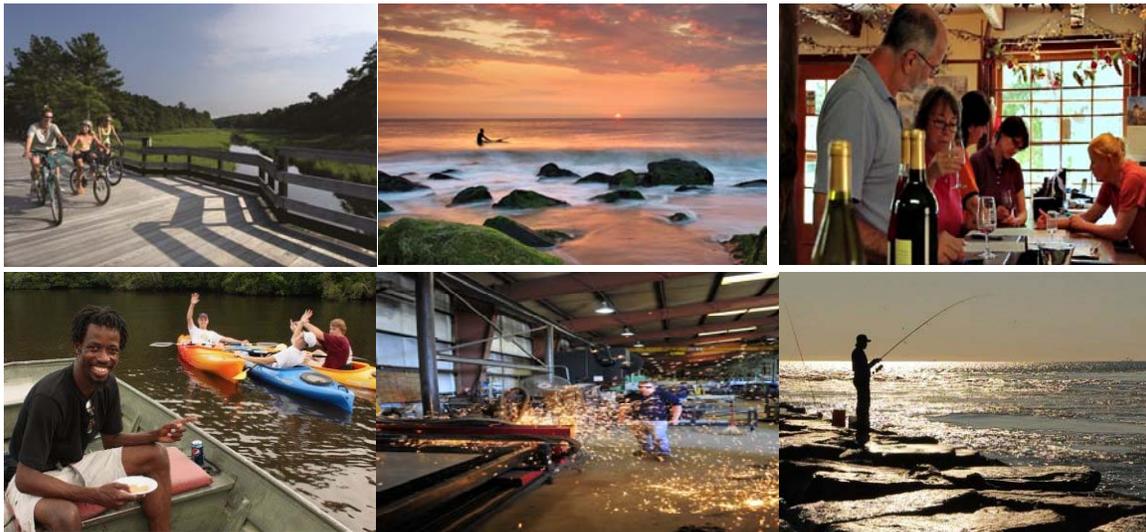
www.sedac-de.org

Annual Report

January 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.



Photos courtesy of Southern Delaware Tourism

Letter from the Chair



Before I report to the people of Sussex County on SEDAC'S activities in 2018, I would like to take a moment to thank all those who emailed and/or phoned me supporting the last editorial on Affordable Housing and Economic Development. Your comments and support were greatly appreciated.

The Sussex Economic Development Action Committee (SEDAC) picked up its pace in 2018. This year we undertook a program with the Sussex school districts to help the schools add to their understanding as to what employers look for in a high school graduate. We believe that not every young person needs to go on to college but that they should be ready to take those jobs in Sussex that provide a decent living and a salary that allows one to buy a home and support a family. Towards that end, we brought three groups that provide jobs in our County together with the Sussex school districts. (all but Laurel participated in this program). Representatives of the school districts met with representatives of the water, electric and building trades to gain a better understanding of what an employer looks for in a high school graduate. These discussions will continue this coming year, hopefully with the school career counselors to better equip them to help a student make a lifetime decision. Benefits and salaries in these industries can lead to full and rewarding careers. School to business training is a must in today's world.

Our 2018 editorials focused on our Annual Report 2017, the Gateway to Success programs that presently exist in our high schools, the new direction SEDAC has taken to expand our membership and to become more aggressive in supporting economic development projects throughout Sussex County, including participating in public hearings to support and endorse these opportunities and finally a compliment to the County Council for adopting an Economic Development program in the 2018 comprehensive land use plan whose goals, objectives and strategies meet 93% of the goals, objectives and strategies as recommended by SEDAC. Included in this last article were two recommendations as to how the affordable housing problem in this County can be solved and how to provide shovel ready job sites in Central and Western Sussex County that would be paid for by growth itself. Both recommendations do not call for tax or fee increases but would be created from existing revenue sources to help pay for solutions to both of these challenges.

A project we endorsed over five years ago finally began to provide a financial return to our County with oysters now being harvested and sold in Delaware. This was done in spite of the many road blocks created by our friendly bureaucrats in DNREC.

We supported the re-introduction of Junior Achievement programs to Sussex County as this primarily based New Castle County program is now set to launch new programs in the Woodbridge School District, the district recommended by SEDAC for the new beginning.

We supported Senate Bill 50 that would give Delaware Technical and Community College the same right to assess a property tax as presently held by the Vocational School Districts in Delaware. This very small tax would enable the college to access vitally needed funds to repair its building and add the training programs that would provide our people with job-ready skills to handle the jobs that need to come to Sussex County.

In March, 2018, member Bob Wheatley and I traveled to Wilmington to meet with officials of the ZIP CODE WILMINGTON program in an effort to see how SEDAC could bring this very successful coding training program to Sussex County. Graduates of this program are guaranteed jobs in Delaware with an average starting salary of \$70,000. Lots of obstacles, not least of which is funding, makes SEDAC'S efforts to bring it to Sussex County very difficult. However, towards that end, we have had preliminary discussions with Delaware Technical Community College. Stay Tuned!

SEDAC continued to sponsor the Sussex County Open for Business monthly seminars. These seminars are coordinated by member Scott Thomas and are designed to support the creation and development of small businesses in our County. Read more about this program elsewhere in our Annual Report, which you can find online at our website, www.sedac.de.org. SEDAC continues to endorse programs that support economic development in Sussex County including the Sussex County Today and Tomorrow Conference, the Delmarva Development Center, funding for the multi-language preschool Primeros Pasos and the Overbrook Shopping Center that would have brought hundreds of jobs to Sussex and expanded shopping experiences in Sussex County, thus avoiding unnecessary trips for Sussex Countians to Dover or Salisbury.

I had the privilege of being part of and addressing the Delaware State Chamber's New Direction Forum held in Rehoboth Beach. We discussed the role of SEDAC in economic development in Sussex County.

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!

In closing I want to quote an article that I wrote as the Sussex County Administrator, way back in 1983, when it first appeared in the Seaford Leader. "As Sussex County grows, as it will, our traditions and heritage will come under pressure from those who settle here. WE must make every effort possible to preserve our traditions, of which we are very proud, while at the same time developing new traditions in cooperation with the new Sussex Countians."

Joe Conaway
Chairperson
Sussex Economic Development Action Committee

SEDAC Board Members

2018

2018 Executive Committee

Joe Conaway, Chairperson
Walt Bryan, Vice Chairperson
Kevin Yingling, Treasurer
Linda Price, Secretary

Board Members

Joe Conaway
Linda Price
Kevin Yingling
David Root
Scott Thomas
Ernie Felici
Bob Ruggio
Chris Weeks
Ed Lewandowski
Pete Keenan
Walt Bryan

Lillian Harrison

Dean Holden

Jerry Esposito

Charlie Timmons

Bobby Horsey

Bob Wheatley

Bobbi Barends

Mike Vanderslice

Trisha Newcomer

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. In 2018, SCOFB paired with One Million Cups, A Kaufmann Foundation Program sponsored and facilitated by Delaware Technical Community College.

Sussex County Open for Business (SCOFB) is held at the Student Services Center at Delaware Technical Community College (Owens Campus in Georgetown) once a month.

SCOFB continue 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. Throughout 2018, SCOFB served thirty three (33) new and existing local business entrepreneurs. Participants come from a broad spectrum of sectors – manufacturing, construction, services and more.

2018 marks the seventh 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 member 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.

2018 Success Stories by the Numbers

11	33	17
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

SEDAC'S Strategic Doing

- SEDAC continues monthly to address Strategic Doing Initiatives as identified from our 2017 workshop
- Discussion took place concerning SEDAC'S Aspirations, Challenges and Conditions for Change. Throughout 2018 we continued to expand on those initiatives
- **Core Principals –**
 - Advocate for robust and sound Economic Development
 - Support job creation and retention
 - Every job is worthy and thoughtful of consideration
 - Independent organization
 - SEDAC is credible, powerful & visible voice thru our experience, knowledge, and talent
 - SEDAC is nimble, responsible and agile
- **Group identified & prioritized opportunities**
 - Focus on communicating the role of SEDAC
 - Strengthen the relationships between partners
 - Make connections/always aware
 - Understand partners – Economic Development focus
 - Promote and utilize SEDAC
 - Workforce Development & Affordable housing
 - Develop Online Presence
- **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 390. Our top posts have out posted Rehoboth Dewey Chamber, Central Delaware Chamber, the new DEDO, Sussex County and the SBDC, however our engagement is lower due to the # of followers by comparison

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

2018 marked the 24th 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 Celebrate the Past, Envision the Future. The ultimate mission of the conference is to promote collaborative action by stakeholders in the areas of education and the economy for benefiting the community, which was front and center for 2018, including a panel discussion, hosted by Dr Bill McGowan with multiple local businesses (Jay Baxter of Baxter Farms, Secretary of Education & Dr Susan Bunting), as well as breakout sessions for One Million Cups, the future (with Dr Bobbi Barends, Charlie Burton and Terry Megee), ending with our keynote speaker, County Administrator, Todd Lawson with a report on the County.

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 2018.....

- Sally Boswell – Delaware Botanical Gardens – update on progress
- Chad Robinson – Delaware Food Bank – Available vocational programs
- Dave Tiberi – Delaware Decision Makers – update on its efforts to bring jobs to Delaware
- Chuck McClure – Atlantis Industries – update on its efforts to create new jobs
- Chuck Desh – Bayhealth – update and progress with the new hospital in Milford

- Holly Porter – Delmarva Poultry Industry – it's benefits to Sussex and the problems they face

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 \$2,200.00 have been collected in 2018.