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2021 Annual Report

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.



Report from the Chair – Joe Conaway



In 2020 when I reported on SEDAC over that terrible year for all of us, I had great hopes that 2021 would be a much better year. In many respects it was. The vaccine began to gain ground against COVID and the numbers seem to be tracking in the right direction. We were even beginning to think it was safe not to practice social distancing or wear the dreaded mask. But, alas, it was not to be, variances of COVID reared their ugly heads and numbers began to climb again. Please, let's all work through this together; get vaccinated, practice social distancing and wear the damn masks (as Governor Hogan would say)! Our mission at SEDAC has not changed. WE continue to push for jobs that will keep our young people in Sussex to protect and expand our existing businesses and to make Sussex County even more attractive to new businesses. Feel free to contact any member (listed elsewhere in this report) or contact me at jconaway@hotmail.com or visit our website at www.sedac.de.org.

Following proper COVID protocols we did resume in person and also Zoom meetings in September and we will continue this joint format as long as COVID dwells among us.

We heard from a number of speakers this year. They included Erin Willis from Sun Behavioral, Scott Gornall of BAO Enterprises, Jeff Fried of Vistage Worldwide, Michelle Freeman of Carl M Freeman Companies who discussed growth in Sussex County, State Secretary of Transportation, Nicole Majewski who is working to shorten the review period on projects, Dr Jules Bruck of the Coastal Resilience Design Studio and Kurt Foreman of the Delaware Prosperity Partnership who described their efforts to focus on attraction, expansion, innovation and talent needs for all of Delaware. DPP is working to strengthen the key job sectors in Delaware, including industries manufacturing and logistics, Healthcare and education, agriculture and food, science technology and business and financial services. We also heard from Mary DuPont who is leading efforts to create Plaza Latino in Georgetown. SEDAC did not endorse this project as of yet because we believe that more from the people of Georgetown, especially the Hispanic population, is needed. Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro spoke about his

successful efforts to reduce Worker's Compensation costs. Dr Manon Antony of the Sussex Pain Center discussed their effort to expand their services throughout Sussex County. We did endorse these efforts. Chuck Desch, Director of Development for the Bayhealth Foundation, talked about their expansion plans in Sussex County and described the residency program that they have developed to help with the doctor shortage in our County. SEDAC endorsed these programs as they are in keeping with our efforts to bring more health care people to Sussex County. SEDAC endorsed HB 48 and saw it become law. This bill, coupled with the existing DIMER program will assist health care providers with their education expenses in return for a commitment to practice their skills in Sussex County. In addition, we saw the passage of SB120 that required insurance companies spend a greater percentage of their funds for health care for their members than what they are doing now. The bill required less money be spent in administration of their programs and more on health care costs. SEDAC's Doctors Shortage Committee, led by Dave Baker, worked closely with the Governor and members of the General Assembly to get this done. Also in the healthcare area, SEDAC endorsed Beebe Hospital's attempt to create a mobile health care clinic focusing on addiction medicine in Sussex County. We also heard from Jessica Echman of AARP who discussed the Delaware Earns Program which is a retirement program for owners of small businesses. Preston Schell described a program called C-Pace that works to make commercial buildings more environmentally sound. SEDAC endorsed this program and it has been adopted by the Sussex County Council.

Membership in SEDAC continued to grow in 2021. By the end of 2021, membership had grown by 42% over last year. Membership in SEDAC is open to all business owners in Sussex County. Dues are \$100 a year.

The Delaware Business Times listed two of our members as 2 of the top construction companies in Delaware in 2021. Those firms were George & Lynch and Corrado Construction. The Delaware Business Times has also named SEDAC Board Member, Preston Schell as a person to watch in 2022. More exciting news for SEDAC Board Members, David Baker, former County Administrator, was appointed by the White House as State Director for Rural Development of the USDA for Delaware & Maryland and Brian McGlinchey who was named as the first Honorary Consul of Ireland to Delaware. This position will open up the ability for Delaware Businesses to do business in Irish Markets and for Irish Businesses to do business with Delaware Businesses.

SEDAC has endorsed a number of business initiatives this past year including the efforts of the Sussex County Council to address the County's Economic Development program through a major increase in the Department's fiscal 2022 budget. They also added

additional funds to their successful business loan program that will more than double funds available for these purposes. In cooperation with the City of Seaford and the State of Delaware, the County followed through on a recommendation from SEDAC to create a Western Sussex Business Park that is now under construction.

In addition to these efforts, SEDAC endorsed the Road to Recovery Program developed by the Delaware Business Roundtable and the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

This program is designed to put Delawareans back to work.

We are most proud of our efforts in the broadband area in Sussex County. After securing a commitment from the state to spend upwards of \$20 million in State funds to improve broadband service in Sussex County and Lower Kent County, the Federal and State governments have added \$110 million to help resolve broadband problems throughout the State. The Sussex County Council has also been working aggressively to improve services in this area. Imagine in this day and time three levels of government all working to resolve a major economic development problem!

We continued to provide editorials that promote economic growth in Sussex County. The included articles that discussed special tax districts the Western Sussex Business Park, our efforts to assist in helping to solve the doctor shortage in Sussex and our 2020 Annual Report. The Chairman has been a little remiss in providing these articles on a timely basis in 2021 but has committed to being more aggressive in the coming year, both in content and numbers of articles.

SEDAC has become increasingly concerned over the efforts of the anti-growth and anti-jobs groups in Sussex County and we are in the process of creating a more factual record on jobs creations and land use in Sussex County than what we are hearing from these groups. SEDAC has formed an Advocacy Committee to provide fact-based reports on projects that promote jobs throughout Sussex County. More on these efforts in 2022.

Once again, I want to thank Linda Price, our secretary for all of efforts on behalf of SEDAC. Keep in mind that she does all of this work while serving as Executive Director and President of the Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. What's that old saying? If you want something done, ask a busy person!

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our 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, stay safe and smart when it comes to COVID and join us all as we look forward to the day when our children and

grandchildren will not have long drives home during the holiday because the good-paying jobs they presently hold elsewhere, are right here in Sussex County.

SEDAC Board Members

2021	Executive Committee	Directors
	Joe Conaway, Chairperson/Conaway & Assoc	Bob Ruggio/Ruggio & Assoc
	Ernie Felici, Vice Chairperson/Beacon Hospitality	Lillian Harrison/Elevated LLC
	Kevin Yingling, Treasurer/DECoop	Rich Hartnett/County Bank
	Linda Price, Secretary/GT Chamber	

Board Members

Joe Conaway	Doug Liberman/Larson Engineering
Linda Price	Chris Baker/George & Lynch
Kevin Yingling	Rob Tunnell/Tunnell Companies
David Root/SBDC	Ray Sander/DE Botanical Gardens
Scott Thomas/SDT	Cathy Bassett/Zach Evans/Mountaire
Ernie Felici	Brian McGlinchey/McCarter & English
Bob Ruggio	Sheldon Hudson/Jamie Burke/Town of Millsboro
Chris Weeks/Becker Morgan	Dave Speicher/WBOC
Ed Lewandowski/UD	Brian Shannon/Laurel Redevelopment
Pete Keenan/IBEW	Steve Weick
Walt Bryan	Lillian Harrison
Scott Gornal/BAO	Trisha Newcomer/City of Seaford
Jerry Esposito/Esposito LLC	Mike Vanderslice/Environmental Alliance
Charlie Timmons/ABC	Bobbi Barends/DTCC
Bobby Horsey/Horsey Companies	Bob Wheatley/RW Wheatley
Casey Kenton/I-Realty	Sandra Ware/Berkshire Hathaway
Dona Troyer	David Baker
Patricia Anderson/SCAOR	Pat Ryan/Solutions IPEM
Mark Davidson/Penoni	Steve Henschel
Preston Schell/OA Properties	George Beckerman/HoartBeckerman
Derek Southard/NCALL	Gavin Short/Insurance Market
Caroline Antony/Sussex Pain Center	Jack Riddle/Community Bank
Jared Shelton/Chesapeake	Josh Mastrangelo/Freeman Companies
Laurence Corrigan/Town of Dagsboro	Lorri Grayson/GGA Builds
Michelle Freeman	Gus Mergenthaler/Tetrattech
Jerry Denney/Corrado Const	John Jones/GreenLea
Bruce O'Connor/Tidewater	Sarah Gilmour/Pathways to Success

Ex-Officio Members

Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT)

Bill Pfaff, Sussex County Economic Development

Lauren Swain – Delaware Division of Small Business

Jim Provo - SBA

SEDAC'S Continued Strategic Doing

- SEDAC continues monthly to address Strategic Doing Initiatives as identified from our 2017 workshop
- 2021 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
 - Continued in 2021 to identify key stakeholders and have them become part of the SEDAC board
 - Understand partners – Economic Development focus (i.e. Kent County Partnership/Delaware Prosperity Partnership)
- How do we get there
 - Op Eds
 - Social Media
 - Direct Action
 - Endorse Economic Development Projects
 - Monthly agenda discussions
- 3 Op Eds were completed by Chairman, Joe Conaway and circulated through local print media
- - Annual Report
 - Vocational Education
 - New Directions – Healthcare
 - Affordable Housing and Industrial Parks
- Social Media initiatives – LinkedIn & Facebook pages saw increased traffic due to consistent posting relative to all things business throughout the County.

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 continues to stay involved in happenings within the County and 2020 saw a better partnership develop

Sussex County Conference

2021 saw the return of the Sussex County Today and Tomorrow Conference, although dramatically different, it was a great opportunity to bring partners focused on Economic Development Together. This year Key Note Speaker was Dr David Tam/President and CEO of Beebe Healthcare, who broke down for the group just what the impact of Beebe Healthcare had within the County and how they will continue.

In 2021 SEDAC developed a couple of core committees to address a variety of key issues:

- **Healthcare Committee** – led by David Baker with participation from all 3 hospitals in the County (Beebe, Tidal Health & BayHealth). This committee took on a couple of pressing issues – lack of primary care doctors and SB120 & HB 48
- **Advocacy Committee** – newly formed and led by Josh Mastrangelo – to address the ever growing issues relating to building/permitting etc within the County

Each month SEDAC also hears from the following:

- Town of Millsboro
- City of Seaford
- Town of Georgetown
- City of Milford
- Sussex County Economic Development
- Delaware Division of Small Business
- Infrastructure Committee

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 2021.....

- AARP/De Earns
- Bayhealth

- Plaza Latina
- Sussex Pain
- Kurt Foreman/Delaware Prosperity Partnership
- Dr Jules Bruck/University of Delaware Coastal Resiliency
- DELDOT – Secretary Nicole Majeski
- Jeff Fried/Vistage Global
- Michelle Freeman – Freeman Companies
- SUN Behavioral
- BAO Enterprises