



www.sedac-de.org

2022 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



Twenty twenty two was another successful year for the Sussex Economic Development Action Committee (SEDAC) and, although much was done, there is still more to do! With ever-increasing membership, SEDAC looks forward to continuing the fight to bring more jobs to Sussex County and will continue our efforts with a number of other groups to create economic opportunity for the people of Sussex. You will find our membership is involved with economic development throughout Sussex County. From new growth in Seaford, continued growth around Millsboro, to efforts to bring more affordable housing to our county, SEDAC is there and stands ready to assist with the economic development so important to the retention of our young people, to the creation of new services, and to see that the infrastructure improvements so necessary for proper growth continue at the financial level we now see from the Federal, State, County and Municipal governments. But let us not forget that the private sector continues to be the driving force that makes all this possible. We hope that 2023 brings the needed change in the roadblocks that have been created that slow proper growth and cost outrageous sums that simply increase costs without protecting or improving our environment and providing opportunities for all the people of Sussex. As I mentioned last year, feel free to contact any SECAC member (listed elsewhere in this report) or contact me at jconaway@hotmail.com or visit our website at www.sedac.de.org.

Let's talk about 2022. We heard from a number of speakers this past year. They included Dr. Jeffrey Hawtof, Dr. Joyce Robert and Mrs. Tanha Ray, all of Beebe Hospital, to discuss Beebe's efforts to increase the number of doctors in Sussex. We heard from Mrs. Michelle Harris, the Delaware Regional Director for the Small Business Administration, as well as the State Planning Coordinator, David Edgell, concerning land use planning. Bob Perkins, Executive Director of the Delaware Business Round Table discussed impediments to smart growth. Dr. Matthew Robinson, professor of Business Administration at the University of Delaware spoke about the return of the Slam Dunk to the Beach. In addition, he pointed out the many ways that the University of Delaware reaches out to various groups in Sussex that are involved with the arts and cultural activities as well as the University of Delaware's efforts to grow healthy communities and its efforts to promote sustainable Coastal Communities. Dr. Kevin Carson, Sussex Tech Superintendent and Mr. Matthew Donovan, principal of Sussex Tech High School,

pointed out that Vocational Education is alive and well in Sussex. This discussion led to a tour of the school by SEDAC. We also heard from State Treasurer Collen Davis about a number of her initiatives, including a self-funded retirement program for those without a such an opportunity, ABLE, a program for those with disabilities and ASPITE for those aging out of foster care. The next month Attorney General Kathy Jennings spoke about her efforts to combat criminal activities involving fraud, environmental crimes, and public corruption. The voters of Delaware awarded both public servants four more years to continue their outstanding efforts.

David Baker, former Sussex County Administrator as well as SEDAC member, talked about his new role as State Director of the United States Department of Agriculture for Delaware and Maryland and was accompanied by Letitia Nichols, also with the USDA. They spoke about the millions of dollars that have made their way into Sussex through USDA, including money for Broadband.

Bay Health discussed its very successful residency program that, hopefully, will lead to more doctors in Sussex. Dr. Ed Hale of the University, and Mike Casey, local shellfish grower, discussed the successful Delaware Shellfish Aquaculture Program that not only provides economic opportunities for individuals but, because of the work associated with oyster farming, they have created more and better habitats for mussels, blue crabs, and commercially valuable fish.

One of our members, Preston Schell, urged SEDAC support to correct a loophole in our present Realty Transfer Tax that works against affordable housing units. Obviously, SEDAC supported this change. Assistant Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Shante Hastings, PE, spoke of the Department's new efforts in Sussex to reduce the time problems associated with their regulations. It was pointed out to the Assistant Secretary that, although Sussex County is the largest land mass in Delaware, (49%), we only get 17% of the Four Billion Dollars available for road construction in Delaware.

Finally, Mike Dunmyer, US Wind, and Matt Drew and Bradley Walker of ORSTED, discussed the economic effect the development of wind farms off our coast would have on Sussex. After a thorough vetting by both SEDAC's Advocacy Committee and SEDAC membership, we endorsed the project for the jobs that will be created, fearing if we stay out of the issue all the jobs will go to Maryland. That endorsement was made public by a letter under my signature that supported the jobs that will be created and the renewable energy that will be provided.

We saw a project that we endorsed come to fruition with the expansion of broadband in Delaware through a grant of over One Hundred Million dollars to three providers in Delaware. We created a committee to explore the creation of a medical school in Sussex, headed by members Chris Weeks and George Beckerman.

We met with the Kent County Partnership to explore the possibility that we could work together when it came to issues and concerns that would benefit both counties. We supported and commended the Sussex County Council for increased funding of its Economic Development Department and their setting aside Seven Million dollars for the Sussex Airport and Business Park. We supported the Beebe plan to provide a freestanding hybrid ER in Millsboro that will specialize in both adult and pediatric treatment, and it has been approved by the Delaware Health Commission.

We supported the County Council's new affordable rental program and encouraged them to now move to affordable home ownership. We supported the Bioenergy Innovation Center that provides energy, supports the environment, and helps the poultry industry remain viable in Sussex. We continue to support the reduction of the Realty Transfer Tax from 4% to 3%, a move that will make homeownership more affordable.

Our Advocacy Committee, under the leadership of Josh Mastrangelo, has endorsed a number of development projects that will provide construction jobs, permanent jobs, new homes, new businesses, affordable rental units and will support the Sussex County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. We invite those who are seeking to provide these opportunities in Sussex County to reach out to the Advocacy Committee for support.

Once again, I want to thank, Linda price, our secretary for all her efforts on behalf of SEDAC. Keep in mind that she does all this work while serving as 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. Membership in SEDAC is open to all business interests in Sussex County. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact any of our present members or reach out to me. Please join us as we all look forward to the day when our children and grandchildren will not have long drives home during the holidays because the good paying jobs that they presently hold elsewhere are available right here in Sussex County.

Thank you.

Joe Conaway, President, SEDAC

SEDAC Board Members

2022 Executive Committee

Directors

Joe Conaway, Chair/Conaway & Assoc	Bob Ruggio/Ruggio & Assoc
Ernie Felici, Vice Chair/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	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/Sussex Tech	David Baker/USDA
Stephanie Moody/SCAOR	Pat Ryan/Solutions IPeM
Mark Davidson/Penoni	Steve Henschel
Preston Schell/OA Properties	George Beckerman/HoartBeckerman
Derek Southard/NCALL	Gus Mergenthaler/Tetrattech
Shelby Gillis – NAI Coastal	Josh Mastrangelo/Freeman Companies
Jack Riddle/Community Bank	Eric Doroshov
Jared Shelton/Chesapeake	Joe Ashton/Ashton Pools
Lorri Grayson/GGA Builds	Adam DiSabatino - EDIS
Jerry Denney/Corrado Const	John Jones/GreenLea
Bruce O'Connor/Tidewater	Sarah Gilmour/Pathways to Success
Sunny Gyani/RE Developer	Sarah Pletcher/City of Milford
Matt Robinson/UD – Slam Dunk to the Beach	
Jerry Denney/Corrado Construction	Bruce O'Connor/Tidewater Utilities
Chad Robinson/Food Bank of DE	Joe Reed/Capstone Homes
Katie Brittingham/CFS Financial	Lauren Weaver/Bethany Fenwick Chamber
Michael Glick/Lighthouse Construction Alliance	Shelly Cecchett/Kent Sussex Leadership

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

Sussex County Legislators

SEDAC'S Continued Strategic Doing

- SEDAC continues monthly to address Strategic Doing Initiatives as identified from our 2017 workshop
- 2022 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 to bring on board key stakeholders to build a coalition
 - Partner with like-minded groups – 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

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 as the partnership grows.

Sussex County Today & Tomorrow Conference

2022 brought back a more in person conference with speakers and keynote that dealt with the growing issue of affordable housing in Sussex County. We learned that some large hospitality groups are working towards creating their own housing for their employees because finding anything they can afford is almost impossible. We learned we all need to begin to work together as the lack of housing is only getting worse.

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

- **Healthcare Committee** – The committee has taken on a new focus with a new Chair, Chris Weeks and Co-Chair, George Beckerman. The current focus is working with our hospitals leadership and other invested stakeholders on the possibility of bringing a Medical School to Sussex County. Plans are in process for studies and other necessary research to make this a future reality
- **Advocacy Committee** – Under the direction of Josh Mastrangelo, the advocacy committee is off and running. The Committee heard from several projects that wanted support from SEDAC and are now posed to move forward. In addition, communication was started concerning several members projects that have had several issues with the Southern Region of DelDot. This has now morphed into a spreadsheet being formulated with several of those issues which at some point in the future will be used to provide input to DelDot. The Advocacy Committee has recently learned of several other groups having the same issues and we will all now partner together to bring those issues to the necessary parties.

Each month SEDAC also hears from the following:

- Town of Millsboro
- City of Seaford
- Town of Georgetown
- City of Milford
- Sussex County Economic Development
- Laurel Redevelopment Corporation
- Delaware Division of Small Business
- Infrastructure Committee
- Southern Delaware Tourism

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 2022.....

- Matt Robinson – UD & Slam Dunk to the Beach
- Colleen Davis – DE State Treasurer
- Preston Schell – OA Properties/Schell Brothers
- Mike Dunmyer – US Wind
- Matt Drew – Orsted
- Shantay Hastings – DE Dept of Transportation
- Dr Ed Hale – US Aquaculture
- Kurt Foreman – Delaware Prosperity Partnership
- David Baker & Letitia Nichols – USDA
- Kathy Jennings – DE Attorney General
- Bayhealth
- David Edgell – De State Planner
- Michelle Harris – SBA
- Dr Jeffrey Hawtof – Beebe Healthcare
- Robert Perkins – Delaware Business Roundtable

The SEDAC Website – www.sedac-de.org provides many resources and more information about our mission and members.

SEDAC is organized for charitable and educational purposes including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code.