



[www.sedac-de.org](http://www.sedac-de.org)

# Annual Report

## January 2018

***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

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2017 has been an active year for the Sussex Economic Development Action Committee known as SEDAC. We began a campaign to re-examine our role in Economic Development in Sussex County. Part of that re-examination was our attempt to inform the people of Sussex County what SEDAC actually does to promote Economic Development. Towards that end we offered three opinion editorials dealing with the availability of our members to assist the County, municipalities and private entrepreneurs in their efforts to bring jobs to Sussex County, the need for our educational system to re-direct their programs to provide job training for those who do not wish to attend college, wages that are in line with those in other areas of our state and county, the need for affordable housing in all areas of Sussex County and the need for government regulations to be reviewed for effectiveness and necessity. We visited with Sheldon Hudson, Town Manager of Millsboro, to hear the good things going on there and to offer our assistance with Mayor and Council's efforts to grow Millsboro.

We have involved ourselves in a number of issues that bring jobs and positive economic growth to Sussex County. We supported the efforts of the Overbrook Shopping Center to provide a new and exciting retail experience in Sussex County. We have supported the state's efforts to bring oyster farming to Sussex County. We have supported the efforts of the University of Delaware to bring more jobs through renewable energy programs to the First County. We stood up as a group and as individuals when the state attempted to cut tourism dollars to the second largest economic development engine in our great county. We continue to work with Punkin' Chunkin' to strive to save this Sussex County tradition. We heard from Horsey Construction about the difficulty of finding qualified truck drivers for its business as well as other companies with the same needs and we put Horsey together with Delaware Tech where an outstanding program is available and where the actual need of truck driver trainees can be improved. We have been active in assisting the County in the development of a new Comprehensive Land Use Plan. We have urged the County Council to reject the snake oil proposal known as Right-to-Work and instead to focus on the real needs of our County which include appropriate infrastructure, a well-trained work force, excellent schools, widely available broadband, regulations that are clear, consistent and timely, affordable housing available throughout the County and sites that are ready for development. To their credit, the County has begun to work on those issues.

We believe that 2018 could be a good year. We will meet with the superintendents of the Sussex County School Districts in an attempt to support their present job training efforts. We will continue to encourage job growth throughout Sussex County with a special interest in Western Sussex. We will continue to monitor the development of the new Comprehensive Land Use Plan to assure that it supports the job growth we so vitally need if we are to retain our young people and give them the same opportunities that exist in Delaware and elsewhere in this Country. The land use plan cannot be an obstacle to growth but a supportive tool to enhance appropriate job opportunities.

Since 1735, when the first Conaway, Patience, settled here, we in Sussex County have been patient but now it is time for a change and Sussex County must be supported and assisted as we grow towards an even brighter future. To learn more about SEDAC, please visit our website at [sedac-de.org](http://sedac-de.org).

Joe Conaway  
Chairperson  
Sussex Economic Development Action Committee

## **SEDAC Board Members**

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*2017*

### **2017 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  
Mike South  
Ed Lewandowski  
Pete Keenan  
Walt Bryan  
Lillian Harrison  
Dean Holden  
Jerry Esposito

**Ex-Officio Members**

Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT)  
Bill Pfaff, Sussex County Economic Development  
Trisha Newcomer, Seaford Economic Development  
Bob Wheatley, Sussex County Planning & Zoning Commission  
Bobbi Barends – Delaware Tech  
Jim Provo - SBA

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

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**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* is designed to support the creation and 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.



*Sussex County Open for Business (SCOFB)* is held at the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center at the Delaware Coastal Airport once a month. SCOF 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. Throughout 2017, SCOFB served fifty-two (52) 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, newly appointed director of the Small Business Development Center team of

Sharon Louth and Cindy Small 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. SEDAC has allocated funds for marketing *Sussex County Open for Business* and is tracking results.

**Sponsors**

SEDAC thanks Sussex County 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.



**2017 Success Stories by the Numbers**

11	52	19
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 Initiative – May 2017

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- **Dr Bill McGowan** – led the SEDAC group and interested parties in a Strategic Doing workshop
- **What was learned** – Discussion took place concerning SEDAC'S Aspirations, Challenges and Conditions for Change
- **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
  - Monthly agenda discussions
- 3 Op Eds were completed by Chairman, Joe Conaway and circulated through local print media
  - An Old Idea with a New Twist
  - Suggestions that may help
  - To regulate or not
- Social Media initiatives – LinkedIn page saw increased traffic due to consistent posting relative to SEDAC happenings. Cindy Small of the SBDC took our FB page to new heights, again with consistent messaging. Increased followers from 90 to 277. Our top 5 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

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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. 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**

2017 marked the 23rd 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 collaboration. 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 2017, including a breakout session hosted by SEDAC Board Member, Ed Lewandowski/UD, who provided a session on the Re-Imagine Laurel Project, one of whose sponsors was SEDAC.

### **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.



## **Organizations that have presented to SEDAC**

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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 2017.....

- August, 2017 – Bonnie Ram & Dr Jame McCray/UD – Renewable Energy & Opportunities in Sussex County
- September, 2017 – John Ewart/UD – Delaware Sea Grant Program/Aquaculture
- October, 2017 – Bobby Horsey/Horsey & Sons – need for Vocational Training in Sussex County
- October, 2017 – Louis Di Bitonto/Trout Development - Overbrook Center – update and future

## **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 \$1,100.00 have been collected in 2017.