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Medical Director**

Dr. Albert has over 20 years of comprehensive Occupational Healthcare experience. His experience in emergency department medicine is an asset to our team. Dr. Albert is a certified Medical Review Officer and a DOT Certified Medical Examiner.



**James Stephenson, MD, MRO,
DOT Certified Medical Examiner**

A skilled Board-Certified Occupational Health medical provider and surgeon, Dr. Stephenson has over 30 years of clinical health care experience. Dr. Stephenson is a certified Medical Review Officer and a DOT Certified Medical Examiner. An avid traveler, Dr. Stephenson also oversees the Travel Medicine Clinic at our occupational health clinic.



**Monica Kwan-Consigli, PA-C,
DOT Certified Medical Examiner**

Monica has been employed at Pottstown Hospital for over 20 years. During this time, she has been a dedicated medical provider for our Occupational Health Team and Pottstown Hospital's Employee Health Department. Monica's health care expertise in both departments is well respected.



**Theresa Cedzo PA-C,
MSA Health Care Administration,
DOT Certified Medical Examiner**

Theresa's 30 years of comprehensive Occupational Health Medical Provider and Occupational Health Clinic Management expertise is an asset to our team. Theresa also leads our ancillary clinic team.

For More Information: Kathleen Kelly O'Hara,
Client Service Coordinator 610-326-2300 ext. 5555

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SIGNARAMA LIMERICK



PHOTOS BY STYLISH IMAGES



The Sign of a Success

By Kathy Hunt

You're driving down an unfamiliar street, scanning the buildings and storefronts on either side with no success, when your GPS announces that you have arrived at your destination. You look around, stumped. Technology must have failed you for you don't see any indication of the sought-after dentist's office, hair stylist, or hardware store. Or perhaps you've agreed to meet friends at the only funnel cake stand at an outdoor festival. Weaving through the crowds, you pass tent after tent advertising fries, cotton candy, and other carnival specialties. Yet you can't spot the one vendor who doles out that powdered sugar-dusted treat.

In both scenarios bad directions are not to blame. Instead, it's the absence of clear, eye-catching signage that has led you astray. Chances are, you aren't the first who has struggled to locate that office, store, or food purveyor.

Located at 70 Buckwalter Road Suite 407, Signarama Limerick makes it easy for customers to find your business and for you to promote your services to them. Franchise owner Phil White and his team have helped area businesses small and large to connect with consumers since November 2004.

"We're very hands on and work closely with customers to help them grow their business," White said.

LOCAL EXPERTISE WITH GLOBAL SUPPORT

Prior to opening his Signarama shop, White worked in retail, specifically "big box retail," for several years. He was inspired to follow a similar career path by a friend who owned a sign business.

"I have a passion for signs, the uniqueness of every sign, and for helping businesses get off the ground and grow. So, I researched sign companies, found that the Signarama franchise was the way for me to go, and have loved it ever since. It's never the same job twice.



Every job is custom so you get to work very closely with customers, learn what they need, and help them expand their businesses with the advertising that we design. It's very hands on," he said.

"We take the time to understand your business before creating the right sign for your space."

White, who resides in Collegeville, chose to open his franchise in Limerick. By the end of 2005, he had more than doubled the first year's sales plan. Due to the company's rapid growth, he has moved the business within Limerick three times — from locations on 10th Avenue and Ridge Pike to its current site in the Limerick Square Shopping Center on Buckwalter Road. Signarama moved to its newest location in May 2022. Each time, the company has relocated to a larger facility.

With over 35 years of experience and locations all around the globe, Signarama the franchisor is the world's leading signs and graphics franchise. It is among the Starpoint Brands constellation of trusted companies, which collectively serves millions of customers in 60+ countries with over 1,600 locations.

The Florida-based franchisor is recognized for its extensive array of advertising products and its commitment to seeing a project through from concept to installation. Signarama encourages a collaborative environment, not only between clients and franchise staff but also among its franchises. Should a designer or other team member need guidance on a project or problem, help is just a call or keystroke away.

To ensure that franchises stay on top of the latest trends and advances, Signarama holds ongoing training sessions for all its franchisees and quarterly meetings to keep everyone up to date on vendors, materials, and processes. In addition to these company-sponsored events, White attends sign conferences in various cities including Las Vegas, Orlando, and Atlanta to learn about the newest and best materials and processes that can benefit his customers. This includes Signarama's own annual convention, SARCON, occurring annually in partnership with the International Sign Association's annual convention.

Along with providing a supportive and educational buying experience to its clients, Signarama advocates giving back to the communities in which its franchises work. An example of its philanthropic spirit is its "Signs of Support" program, which awards local nonprofits with grants to create or replace branded signs and other advertising materials.

In 2021, White was recognized by Signarama corporate offices for his charitable work in the Limerick region and for donating approximately \$10,000 annually to Montgomery County food banks, toy drives and other nonprofit organizations and events. That same year, in his role as co-chair of Limerick Uncorked, he helped to raise \$20,000 for local charities.

White also currently serves on Signarama's Franchise Advisory Council, which is made up of ten franchise owners from across the U.S. The group helps with strategic planning and innovation for the brand, providing the corporate team with feedback from other franchise owners on various brand initiatives.

CREATING THE PERFECT SIGN FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Whether you're just starting your business or looking to refresh your brand, the prospect of crafting a sign to hang on your building or inside your business may seem daunting. What best represents the essence of your business? What will customers find both eye-catching and appealing? What materials will stand up to unpredictable weather and seasons? Fortunately, the team at Signarama Limerick can help answer those questions and more.

"Prior to coming to us, many companies already have their concept or logo, but we do offer logo creation," White said. "For the sign designs themselves, we layout 90 percent of the signs. Layout is a free service that we offer with the purchase of signs."

White has a dedicated in-house designer, Dane Dewees, who collaborates with each customer to ensure their needs are met in the end-product.

"Dane is also our shop manager and he's an integral part of our organization. He started with us when he was still in college and has been doing graphic design here for 17 years," White said. He added that the company recently hired a full-time designer to assist Dewees.

Prior to the design phase, a member of the Signarama team reviews the customer's budget and what type of advertising best suits their business. Then, they look at the proposed location of the sign in relation to the street and automobile and foot traffic. After that, they consider how much information should appear on the sign. White pointed out that, if a sign has too many details on it, no one will bother to read it or be able to see it from a distance.

(Continued on page 8)

COVER STORY

(Continued from page 7)

From there, the conversation moves on to color, size, and material for the sign. “The material depends on the end use of the sign, but, if it’s for a building, we tend to use metal or aluminum,” White said.

Yet another consideration is the type of sign permitted by the building’s landlord or surrounding community. White noted that some landlords only allow channel lettering, which are three-dimensional, illuminated letters. He added that Signarama fees are based upon the sign’s square footage and not by the number of letters. Additionally, the company offers free site surveys and job estimates.

“We have a lot of capabilities, everything from business cards to general lettering on the outside of a building, and we can advise and educate our customers when it comes to getting the right sign,” said Nicholas Diamond, business advisor for Signarama’s northeast region. “It’s not just selling the sign. It’s helping customers through the process. Phil [White] has set up a beautiful showroom here where we can put our hands on the materials and customers can see and feel the difference between them. With all our capabilities, this is where we beat the competition.”

White added that during the past 12 to 18 months, his business has upgraded its equipment to include a flat-bed printer capable of direct-to-substrate printing and a climate-controlled garage.

ADVERTISING ON BUILDINGS, AUTOMOBILES, BOATS, AND MORE

Signarama’s products don’t begin and end with indoor/outdoor signs. White and his team design and create decals, stickers, labels, posters, floor graphics, flags, banners, trade show displays, vinyl vehicle wraps, and graphics for boats, buses, trucks, and other vehicles. Presently, the most requested type of sign is vehicle graphics. As the company’s website states, “From a single vehicle to an entire fleet, vehicle signs are an extremely cost-effective way to be seen. With a one-off investment lasting up to five years, it makes sense to turn your vehicle into a mobile billboard, spreading your message 24/7.”

Signarama offers several options for vehicle signs. Customers can choose vinyl graphics or a complete vehicle wrap, which, as the name suggests, consists of printed vinyl that wraps around your car or truck. An ultraviolet laminate protects the digitally printed graphic from UV rays, weather, and other elements. Within vinyl graphics, customers have the option of standard or reflective. The latter possesses a shiny, metallic base that reflects light and is quite vibrant. Vinyl graphics can be applied to boats as well as land vehicles.

Full color, self-adhesive, one-way vision graphics are yet another possibility. Applied to car and truck windows, they allow passersby to view the business’s information while still permitting the driver to see clearly. A lower cost alternative to graphics and wraps are digitally printed, vinyl car magnets.

The majority of Signarama’s products are made on site, White said. However, a Signarama facility in Philadelphia fabricates its large signs and channel letters.

Among the local businesses utilizing Signarama Limerick’s services are Oehlert Bros., Lewis Environmental,



Gorski Engineering, Phoenixville Federal Bank, First Colonial Bank, Christ’s Church of the Valley, Pope John Paul II High School, Corroplese Bakery, and the fire companies in Limerick and Linfield.

“With Oehlert Brothers, we were able to help them rebrand their entire fleet with graphics — about 30 to 35 vehicles — over the last several years, and we work with Lewis Environmental, which is a staple in Royersford, to develop signage in the community. Rick Lewis is working on a project called “Riverfront at Royersford” with shops, offices, trails, and restaurants — we will be working on the signage for that project as well,” White said.

FORGING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A percentage of Signarama’s patronage comes as a result of White’s close ties to Limerick and the surrounding area. From 2006 to 2020, he was a member of the Spring-Ford Rotary Club and continues to work closely with the service organization. He counts Rick Lewis of Lewis Environmental as one of the connections made during his time as a Rotarian. Currently, White belongs to the Royersford Business Association and Spring City Business Association and is a board member of the Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce.



In addition to his membership in these professional groups, White participates in Limerick Uncorked, the town's annual fall wine and beer festival and fundraiser. Held at Limerick Community Park, the Saturday afternoon event features local wine, beer, spirits, and food purveyors as well as artists, craftspeople and other vendors. Proceeds from the event benefit the Limerick Parks and Recreation department and community charities.

In September 2023, White will mark his fifth year of co-running the festival on behalf of the Spring-Ford Rotary and Limerick Parks and Rec. Limerick Signarama is also a sponsor of Limerick Uncorked and creates the signs for this event.

The good works don't end with this event. White and his team donate to food pantries — Daily Bread Community Food Pantry in Collegeville and Open Door in Royersford — and participate in Pottstown's Operation 143. The nonprofit provides backpacks filled with shelf-stable food to children experiencing food insecurity in the Pottstown area, Norristown, Spring-Ford, Boyertown, and Upper Merion Valley. Additionally, White contributes to fundraisers and other events that benefit local first responders.

White's commitment to community extends to his Signarama staff. "We know everyone's spouses and children and we go out for family dinners and events (like corn hole tournaments). This summer we have a trip planned to a Reading Phillies game and we tell our employees to bring their children, bring their spouses, and bring whoever else. We are very proud of the family atmosphere here and that we get along as a family," White said.



For White, Signarama embraces family in the literal sense. His wife, Mary, is the office manager and his partner in the business. "She has been my support system since we started planning this business back in 2001," he said.

At Signarama, White maintains an open-door policy. Customers don't need to schedule an appointment to see the showroom or speak to a member of his team.

He encourages prospective and existing clients to stop by Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Friday from 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. They can phone Signarama at 484.961.8802 or email info@signarama-limerick.com. They can also visit the company website at

Signarama-Limerick.com

FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN REVITALIZATION

Progress Being Made in the Revitalization and Reimagining of Pottstown



By Peggy Lee-Clark,
Executive Director
Pottstown Area
Economic Development,
Inc. (PAED)

Recently, Pottstown Area Economic Development's (PAED) Executive Committee hosted a tour for Montgomery County Leadership and Staff. These opportunities not only serve to highlight all that is right with Pottstown but, also serve as great reminders of the progress that is being made in the revitalization and reimagining of Pottstown.

For many decades, Pottstown's industrial and manufacturing businesses brought much success to the Borough. Over time, those same industries shifted, or closed, leaving behind land and buildings that became abandoned sites, and ultimately environmental concerns. Today's investors are managing everything from air quality testing and soil sampling, to securing professional plans, exploring funding through grant programs, clean up, construction and utility upgrades... the list is long, and the timelines require patience and perseverance. As I have often shared,

"This is a marathon, not a sprint, and some days it's a slog."

On the tour we made multiple stops and met with developers and employers. The first stop on the tour took us to meet Jay Lankford on the site of the future **ReStream Energy Plant**. There the group had a recap of where the development is in the process. It will be the first major project under the 2018 Keystone Employment & Economic Plan (KEEP) administered and developed by PAED. The Plant will use a green gasification process that produces virtually no emissions or other environmental consequences to produce pipeline-ready renewable diesel, while keeping 200,000 tons of waste out of landfills. At this point, the group is on target to begin moving dirt this summer. The project will not only bring numerous construction jobs during the development phase but, once operational, will require approximately 110 full-time employees.

After leaving Keystone Boulevard, we headed East to Industrial Boulevard. There we made a stop at **215 South Washington Street** — the site of the former Pottstown Plating Works. It is almost unrecognizable. After the former owner left the environmen-

tally contaminated site to decay and his bills unpaid, including years of taxes, there seemed to be no future except for the property to continue to remain a liability and a symbol of a long-forgotten industry. The public entities and creditors were never going to see that money — They had become only numbers on pieces of paper. Through the vision of a local investor and the collaborative work of Pottstown Borough, Pottstown School District, Pottstown Sewer Authority, Montgomery County, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority and PAED, the property is now environmentally remediated and has been producing tax revenues since 2021. The current owners are working on obtaining a tenant which would have the ability to produce 50 jobs by its second year after relocating to Pottstown. They continue to improve the property both structurally and aesthetically.

The last formal stop on the tour was the **Pottstown Industrial Complex** aka, the partial footprint of the former Bethlehem Steel Facility. The uniformity of the Complex from the outside disguises the diversity of the innovative industries that are currently operating or are under construction to operate in the near future in

the massive interior spaces. Tenants who occupy the more than 800,000 square feet are drawn to the site because of what it can provide. The Industrial Complex has the benefit of high ceilings, heavy power capability, cranes and rail. When so many places like this have been leveled throughout the region for office parks and housing developments, Pottstown is lucky to have this competitive advantage. The group heard about and visited three of the newest tenants. **Toggle** makes products out of rebar which then are delivered to variety of construction projects including cell tower locations. They do this through a combination of using robotics and employees skilled in tying rebar. **APW Turf Management** uses Italian technology to remove, recycle, and maintain sports turf fields. This ecologically friendly technology keeps sports turf from simply ending up in landfills at the end of their lifecycle. **Dowa Holdings Company** from Japan is also using green technology like many of the companies highlighted on the tour. At their location in Pottstown, they will recycle metal in the production of catalytic converters.

The afternoon wrapped up with a stop at The Alley on High Street. We took a

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peek at what will be The Alley's Kiki indoor expansion. It will allow the successful venue to operate year-round and during inclement weather. As we all started departing, all agreed that things are going in the right direction, and we need to keep the positive front and center.

PAED is committed to working alongside responsible investors to re-imagine, convert, and redevelop these same location sites for tomorrow's economy. These projects and properties all have a variety of complexities. One such challenge is bringing older historic buildings into today's code compliance. PAED developed a proposal with input from developers, design professionals, and builders to suggest a DCED grant program for similar boroughs throughout Montgomery County. The funds would be for assisting owners with improvements to the buildings. That proposal has now been expanded to include the entire State and we look forward to its introduction in an upcoming legislative session. Environmental clean-up is a comprehensive process, requiring guidance from county, state, and federal departments. PAED is grateful to all who are contributing to economic development of Pottstown.

Peggy Lee-Clark can be reached at 610.326.2900; email:pleeclark@paedinc.org

O'Donnell Weiss & Mattei, P.C.

The pending commercial development and investment in Pottstown is exciting and O'Donnell Weiss & Mattei, P.C. is proud to be a part of that growth and revitalization.

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FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN REVITALIZATION

Vlahos Dunn Insurance and Iron Gate Biergarten — Invested in Pottstown

By James Vlahos

In 2007 after having a great year in our insurance business, my partner (Tom Dunn) and I decided to look into making another investment in Pottstown. Our insurance agency Vlahos Dunn Insurance has been a staple in the community for more than twenty years, living and breathing the changes that the Pottstown community has experienced over the past two plus decades. As our agency was growing nicely, we found a nice open lot right in the middle of town for sale with an approved plan for a building with commercial space on the first floor and condos on the upper two floors. We purchased the property and started to put our plan together to move forward — Then the Great Recession came in like a lion and put a halt to those plans!

A couple of other opportunities came under consideration over the next several years until a friend of ours



Vlahos Dunn Insurance Headquarters at 1954 E. High Street, Pottstown.

suggested that the lot at 230 E. High Street would make a perfect Beer Garden. We did our research and again formed a partnership, went to the Borough for

approval and permitting and built our beautiful beer garden that is now open for all to enjoy. The name “Iron Gate Biergarten” is derived from the strong history of the iron business which built our town. The Iron Gate Biergarten is more than a bar. It’s a place to sit for a spell with old friends and meet new friends while trying Pennsylvania crafted spirits, beers, and



Iron Gate Biergarten located at 230 E. High Street, Pottstown.

ciders while enjoying a piece of history. We will continue to find ways to improve and expand our beer garden in the future. The mission of Iron Gate Biergarten is “Honoring Those Who Served” and for the past 13 years our insurance agency has been raising money for our veterans in the area with a popular annual Vlahos Dunn Insurance Veterans Golf Outing. This year’s outing will be held on September 20.

Go to our Instagram page and follow us and visit www.irongatebiergarten.com or call 610.203.4579. Thinking of a place for your event, bridal shower, birthday, or just the right place to gather with friends? Come join us as we grow together, and don’t forget to bring your furry friends! For additional information, please contact Jim Vlahos or Nicholas Vlahos at 610.326.1010; email: jvlahos@vlahosdunn.com; nvlahos@vlahosdunninsurance.com.

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**Hobart's Run
is Open for
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Hobart's Run, a neighborhood improvement initiative and 501(c)3 created with support of The Hill School, now offers a Business Incentive Grant!

Qualified new businesses must open in the 500 to 900 blocks of East High Street. Our BIG of up to \$1,500 will help entrepreneurs with their first month's mortgage payment or rent. More information can be found at: hobartsrunpottstown.org/business.

To learn more about Hobart's Run and how we welcome local business development, please email **Twila Fisher**, Executive Director, at twila@hobartsrunpottstown.org, or call **610-780-6324**

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Pottstown GoFourth! 2022 Returns to Successful Street Fest Venue

Downtown streets, Memorial Park to be filled with family-friendly July 4 activities

This year's Pottstown GoFourth! Festival Independence Day celebration will pay homage to the '70s, with a special nod to one of the originators of the Pottstown 4th of July celebrations of years ago. The day will begin with the Rotary Club of Pottstown July 4 parade on High Street from Adams to York, beginning at 10:15 a.m.

Pottstown GoFourth! Street Fest will get underway at 11:15 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. Stroll High Street from Penn to York to enjoy live music, local restaurant fare and popular food trucks, Pottstown's brew pubs and beer gardens, artisans and other vendors, nonprofit information exhibits, and children's activities.

Kids Zone will be focused in the area between Penn and Hanover. Organizers are still seeking a sponsorship for the Kids Zone activities. They have added additional face painters this year to accommodate demand. There will be games and entertainment including the ever-popular Judy Tudy the Clown, and living history presented by the Shire of Hartshorn-dale, including reenactments, medieval history, dance, costumes, and combat. New this year is



Scotty Cavanaugh, an "action-comedy juggler" who performs on unicycle.

Live musical entertainment, sponsored by VideoRay, LLC, will be featured at Smith Family Plaza in the 100 Block of High Street. JoAnn Bathurst will open the show with the singing of the National Anthem. Following are country music favorite Stephanie Grace, sponsored by Pottstown Parks and Recreation, Ms. Grace was the opening act for the Taylor Swift concert in Philadelphia on May 14. Hector Rosado y Orchestra Hache are up next, returning for their 6th performance at the festival, and Modern Luxe, back by popular demand, will close out the afternoon. Live sound is provided by Montgomery County Community College's Sound Recording & Technology Department.

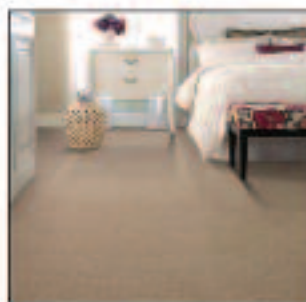
(Continued on page 14)

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FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN REVITALIZATION

POTTSTOWN GoFourth!

(Continued from page 13)

Festivalgoers can enjoy the music with a beverage from Sly Fox Beer Garden and food from one of the many food trucks. A number of High Street restaurants also will be open to customers.

The Rotary Duck Race Drawing will take place at 3 p.m. at High and Hanover streets. This event raises money for vital area nonprofit organizations.

The fireworks pre-show party will kick off at 5 p.m. in Memorial Park, 75 W. King St., featuring food trucks, a Sly Fox Beer Garden, Inflatable “rides” for kids, and DJ Q Ball. This year will also see the return of Grandpop Bubbles, a favorite of kids and adults alike, with his giant bubbles to be enjoyed by all. The pyrotechnics, presented by International Fireworks and sponsored again this year by Precision Polymer Products, Inc., will begin at 9:30 p.m.

Parking will be available on the streets where appropriate (please be considerate of our Borough neighbors) and in the Borough of Pottstown lots at South Hanover Street near the train tracks, the lots at High and Evans Street, and the lot on King Street



between Hanover and Penn streets. In addition, free parking will be available on the parking lot at Montgomery County Community College’s South Hall, 101 College Drive. Premium fireworks parking passes will be available, but parking tickets are required; they will go on sale in mid-May at www.pottstowngofourth.com.

Sponsorships are still available as planners work to meet significant costs and make this genuine Pottstown community celebration extraordinary. Visit www.pottstowngofourth.com/sponsorships. Volunteers also are needed: www.pottstowngofourth.com/volunteer.

Vendors and nonprofits who would like to set up a stand or table should contact Darlene Bainbridge at PG4Vendors@gmail.com.



gmail.com. Vendor registration deadline is June 10, 2023.

Pottstown GoFourth! recognizes these valued top-level sponsors to date: Precision Polymer Products, Inc.; VideoRay, LLC. (Entertainment Sponsor).

Donations toward this community event and the Rotary Club of Pottstown Parade are welcomed (and donors will be recog-

nized in the Pottstown Mercury). Please visit www.pottstowngofourth.com or by check made out to Tri-County Community Network (TCN), and send to Pottstown GoFourth!, P.O. Box 1362, Pottstown, PA 19464.

Website visitors also can purchase Pottstown GoFourth! shirts and other merchandise, see photo albums, and find other information about this event.

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Tower Health Physicians Share Inspirations for National Doctors' Day

Tower Health doctors work alongside patients every day, ordering tests, talking with families, and saving lives. Their dedicated work, diligence, and relationships are critical for successful patient outcomes. Tower Health encouraged the community to recognize and thank doctors for their dedication on March 30, National Doctors' Day.



Halen Van Vliet, MD



S. Luke Kusmirek, MD

Tower Health doctors are known for their compassionate, personalized, and attentive care. That is because the health of their patients is their priority, and their journey becomes intertwined with their lifelong dedication to healing. Their patients are the reason our doctors continue to practice.

"Emergency Medicine, and then Street Medicine, is an opportunity to serve those in crisis while also positioning myself to be a strong advocate for social change," said Halen Van Vliet, MD, Medical Director, Pottstown Street Medicine and Emergency Medicine physician at Pottstown Hospital. "My parents and older sisters nourished a

deep understanding of the injustices in the world while also fostering my belief that things can improve. Ultimately, I hope to leave the world at least a slightly better place than it might have been without me and understand what it means to be human."

S. Luke Kusmirek, MD, Chief, Division of Cardiology at Phoenixville Hospital said, "I started off as a philosophy student before I landed in medical school. Once there, I became more focused on the practical applications of the medical sciences and later chose the field of cardiology based on its immediate and profound impact on the often critically ill patient."

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Anthony Donato, MD, Internal Medicine, Reading Hospital, shared, "I became a doctor to play my part in another's struggle and offer the gift of healing that might mend a body and patch a soul." Bernice Robinson-Bennett, MD, Chief, Division of Gynecologic Oncology, added, "I knew that I wanted to serve in the field of medicine to help others maintain or regain their health. To me it has been a calling that I look forward to each day with humility and reverence. I am thankful for the patients who entrust their care and lives to us."

P. Sue Perrotty, Tower Health president and CEO said, "Our physicians are known for the clinical excellence, compassion, and high-quality care they provide patients. I thank them today, and every day, for following their calling to heal and choosing to share their talents with Tower Health and the individuals in our community."

Doctors' Day was first celebrated in 1933 in Winder, Georgia by Dr. Charles B. Almond's wife, Eudora Brown Almond. She wanted a way to recognize physicians for their hard-work and organized the community to send greeting cards and place red carnations on the graves of deceased doctors.

March 30 was chosen to honor the anniversary of the first surgery in which

ether anesthesia was used by Dr. Charles Long. On February 21, 1991, President George H.W. Bush proclaimed National Doctors' Day.

About Tower Health: Tower Health is a regional integrated healthcare system that offers compassionate, high quality, leading-edge healthcare and wellness services to communities in Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. With approximately 11,500 employees, Tower Health consists of Reading Hospital in West Reading; Phoenixville Hospital in Phoenixville; Pottstown Hospital in Pottstown; and St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia, in partnership with Drexel University. Tower Health is strongly committed to academic medicine and training, including multiple residency and fellowship programs, the Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health, and the Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences in West Reading. The system also includes Reading Hospital Rehabilitation at Wyomissing; home healthcare provided by Tower Health at Home; TowerDirect ambulance and emergency response; Tower Health Medical Group; Tower Health Providers, our clinically integrated network; and 25 Tower Health Urgent Care facilities across our service area. For more information, visit towerhealth.org.



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Daybreak at Chestnut Knoll, our secured memory care neighborhood, responds to residents' ever-changing abilities through their journey with Alzheimer's disease or dementia-related illness. Our structured program nurtures their needs while making in-the-moment connections, with daily engagement that supports physical, mental, and social well-being.

Chestnut Knoll's positive and proven care model is based on Positive Approach to Care® developed by Teepa Snow, one of America's leading dementia educators. We create a personalized care plan for each resident that restores dignity and gives purpose by focusing on what they can do now and what makes them happy. In addition, our program provides access to a full range of on-site



therapy services, including our exclusive Optimal Living Program. Memory care residents are encouraged to participate in the exercise program because they gain the same benefits from regular physical activity, like improved mood, maintenance of motor skills, better sleep, and more.

Choosing the right care can make a difference! Chestnut Knoll has built its reputation by providing superior care, which earned national recognition from companies like Caring.com, A Place for Mom, and U.S. News & World Report. Schedule a tour to learn more about our memory care services by calling 610.400.1430 or emailing jkrasley@chestnutknoll.com.

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PRIME HEALTHCARE PENNSYLVANIA REGION HOSPITALS GIVE THANKS TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WORKERS DURING EMS WEEK

Prime Healthcare Pennsylvania Region hospitals honored frontline professionals as part of National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week, May 21-27. During National EMS Week, Lower Bucks Hospital, Suburban Community Hospital, and Roxborough Memorial Hospital recognized EMS providers' vital work throughout the Philadelphia region. To mark the occasion, the three hospitals provided lunch for their local first responders.

"We want to make sure that the EMS providers who work with Prime Healthcare Pennsylvania Region, and help our patients in a time of need, know we deeply appreciate their service and skill," said Jacqueline Pester-Babcock, RN, MSN, regional chief nursing officer, Prime Healthcare Region II.

"EMS providers are on the frontlines of healthcare delivery, often helping patients when every second counts," Pester-Babcock said. "We encourage all community members to thank them for their lifesaving work."

EMS workers answer the call day and night, in all kinds of weather and in all types of conditions, many of which can be

dangerous and emotionally challenging.

"It's easy to forget how difficult this work can be, but our dispatchers, first responders, EMTs and paramedics deliver, without fail, day in and day out," Pester-Babcock said.

The greater Philadelphia region consist of EMS professionals dedicated to answering the call and making a difference in people's lives. Members of these teams, whether career or volunteer, public or private, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills. They also give back to their communities far more than they take.

The theme of this year's EMS week was "Where Emergency Care Begins," a phrase that truly encompasses the time and commitment of the men and women who dedicate their lives to the emergency services field.

National EMS Week began under the direction of President Gerald Ford in 1974 to celebrate the critical work EMS practitioners do in American communities.

(Continued on page 20)

CELEBRATING NATIONAL EMS WEEK



This National EMS Week, Prime Healthcare Pennsylvania Region salutes our Emergency Medical Service Professionals for their tireless dedication to the health and well-being of our communities and beyond.



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PRIME HEALTHCARE

(Continued from page 19)

National EMS Week also highlights the thousands of first responders, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics who make up a complete system designed to save lives.

EMS workers are essential to the nation's health care and public safety systems. EMS practitioners respond to medical emergencies 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year no matter the severity in a genuinely selfless way.

EMS practitioners compassionately care for patients during their most difficult moments. When not responding to emergency calls, they spend countless hours educating and teaching the public by visiting local schools, meeting with health care and business leaders to develop emergency preparedness plans and providing CPR and first-aid training to community members.

"As a healthcare leader, we recognize that without the benefit of our area's dedicated EMS partners, our hospital staff, and more importantly, our patients, would be at a loss," Pester-Babcock said.

All communities are asked to recognize the heroic efforts of their paramedics and EMTs this EMS Week and to support their

local EMS agencies throughout the year.

About Prime Healthcare Pennsylvania

Region: Prime Healthcare Pennsylvania Region is part of Prime Healthcare, an award-winning health system operating 46 acute care hospitals in 14 states. Prime Healthcare Pennsylvania Region includes Roxborough Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia, Lower Bucks Hospital in Bucks County, and Suburban Community Hospital in Montgomery County.

Prime's hospitals in Pennsylvania are certified by The Joint Commission as Primary Stroke Centers and have won multiple awards through Healthgrades and the Get With The Guidelines Quality Achievement Awards through the American Heart Association.

Our hospitals offer medical, surgical, and emergency care, which includes diagnostic radiology, lab services, behavior health, heart care, rehabilitation, family medicine, wound care, and residency programs.

Through high quality medical care, educational programs, and community outreach services, our hospitals treat all members of our communities with respect and compassion.



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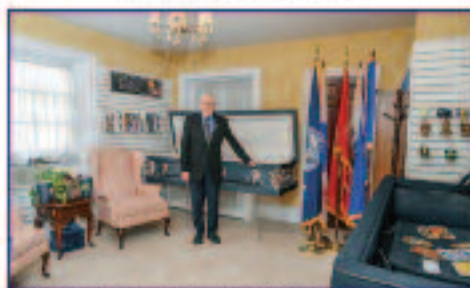
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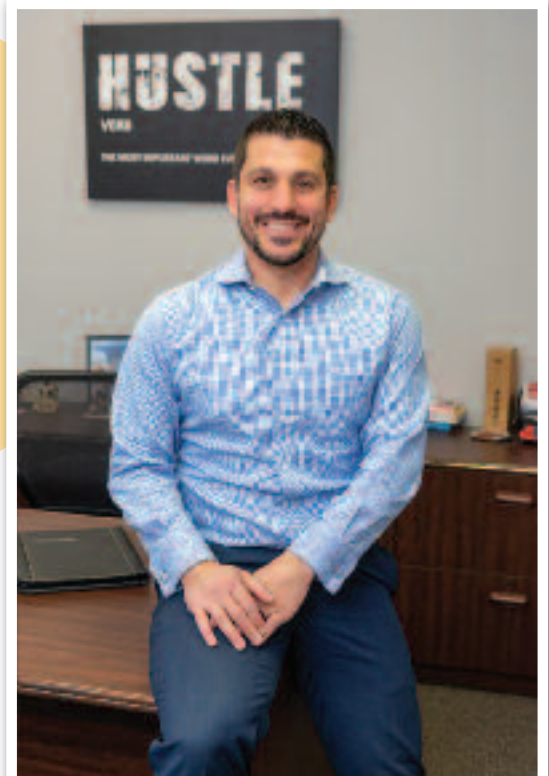
At beMarketing, our holistic approach combines digital marketing, social media, SEO, and your expertise to create a comprehensive, customized marketing strategy. We work closely with our clients to address their unique goals for each campaign. Then, we meticulously plan and launch their marketing campaign. Throughout the process, we continually track and analyze our results.

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Throughout the years, we have seen how transformative integrated marketing can be. We help companies amplify their brand's message, build trust, and encourage meaningful connections with customers. Our comprehensive approach allows us to adapt and respond to the ever-evolving market dynamics. We pivot to meet new challenges while maximizing our client's marketing investments.

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Brandon Rost, beMarketing Founder and CEO

Patriot Pest Solutions *Supporting Local Businesses*

By Denice Harrison, Co-Owner,
Patriot Pest Solutions

It's hard to believe that it has been over 12 years since we started Patriot Pest Solutions out of our home dining room in Royersford. It didn't take long for us to realize that we needed to get an office location that could hold our equipment, trucks and employees. The Trappe office fit the bill for five-six years and then we outgrew that office. These are good problems to have, but I sure do hate moving!!

Now, our new office is located in Limerick. The office space is larger, but more importantly there is plenty of parking for our trucks and equipment. It really does lift the morale of the team when you have a new and improved workspace. Once my office team picked out the paint color, **Brock from Professional Painting** got busy painting the inside and outside of the building. It made such an improvement in the appearance both inside and outside.

The upstairs needed new flooring. I can always count on **Adam, owner of A&E Flooring** to get the job done promptly and professionally. Fortunately, we all have very similar taste in décor, so it was easy for us to make selections for flooring and paint.

A local handyman, **Eugene of Matgen Property Solutions**, handled many projects for us. We needed an organized area for the technicians to work and gather the products they need for the day. He installed safety railing down the basement steps and installed a mailbox — just to name a few projects.



The Signarama crew

Our phones system and computers needed to be wired and upgraded ... For the past 10 years I've counted on **Plus One Technology, Marc Umstead**. I would be lost without a reliable IT person to lean on. Technology is definitely not my forte'.

The new sign in front of the building is the work of **Phil White, and his crew at Signarama Limerick**. In addition to signage, they design all of our truck wraps. Again, Phil has been a long-term friend since we started the business...

Trust me, the list goes on...

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Demedio's Building Maintenance — Collegeville

Premier Radon Services — Pottstown
Father and Son Locksmith — Collegeville

Do you see a theme? ... SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES and surround yourself with trusted advisors. I feel very strongly about supporting our



The new Patriot Pest Solutions office located in Limerick

local businesses who have likeminded owners. I've developed these friendships over the past 12 years while serving as a board member or chairperson at the local Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Rotary Club and local BNI Chapters. Networking has been an invaluable instrument in growing our business and building relationships. Covid really put a 'dent' in our ability to network for two years. There are many people who have not rejoined the networking world yet. I too, am guilty of this, but it's a work in progress.

I've always been a proponent of "buying small" because it creates more local jobs and opportunities, not to mention that the tax dollars stay local and reenter the community.

When I work with local entrepreneurs, I get a level of service that I will not get from a large company.

For example, in our industry, Pest Control has become inundated with foreign-owned companies that have purchased market share (i.e., Local Companies). At times they may offer a slightly lower price point, but remember what your parents told you — "You get what you pay for." When your service is lousy, you will understand why that price was lower.

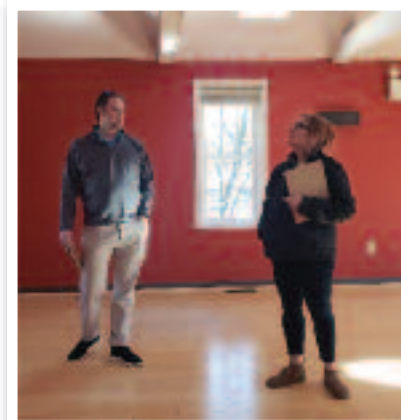
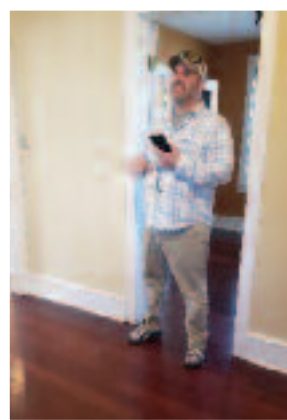
One positive aspect of local businesses is that they usually excel in Customer Service ... because they CARE! Their reputation is extremely important to them because it is personal. If a customer is not pleased with the level of service they receive, most owners want to rectify that situation. This is why there is such a focus on google reviews. At PPS we reward our staff when their customer posts a complimentary google review about their experience with them.

We are looking forward to our new home in Limerick and are thankful to have met so many like-minded professionals along the way.

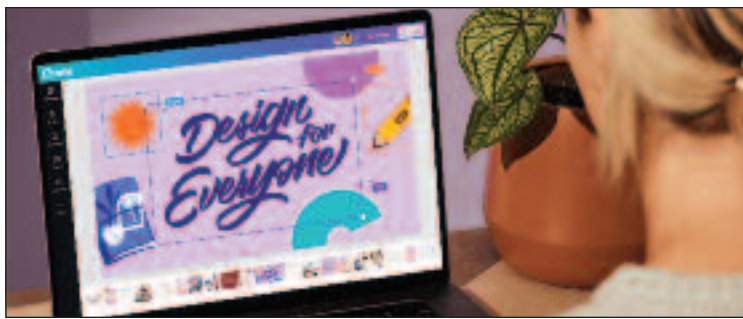
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SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

By Theresa Mintzer

When you are doing your own social media, creating graphics can be time consuming. Canva is a free design tool that you can use for presentations, video, and social media. Canva also has a paid plan called Canva Pro which is well worth the cost if you plan on using it on a regular basis. The Canva Pro bundle offers video background remover, premium content, instant animation, templates, and branding.

Try these hacks to save you time on your social media. Canva Pro has a brand

kit to store your logo, brand colors, brand fonts, and templates in one place. You can now choose any template and through the brand hub, adjust it to your brand colors. This feature saves you time while giving your posts a cohesive look.

Canva's new AI features provide suggestions for wording through Magic Write. It will also create designs posts and entire presentations through Magic Design. Magic Replace allows you to erase part of a picture and replace it with something you suggest. I have a Crushing Canva coaching program — send me an email and I'll send you the information.

For additional information, call 484-686-2995; email: Theresa@MintzerSolutions.com and visit: MintzerSolutions.com.

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THE RISE OF MOBILE OPTIMIZATION IN 2023



MARKETING TIPS

By Michael Ianniello,
Communications
Coordinator,
beMarketing

Mobile optimization is a set of techniques and strategies for adjusting your website or app for use across devices. Businesses need to put careful thought and consideration into it. Mobile optimization isn't as straightforward as it sounds because devices are constantly changing and evolving.

Optimization involves adjusting the presentation of your interface to smoothly rotate through various screen sizes, from a large display on the television down to a phone or even a watch. Adjusting the location of images, balancing content, and optimizing your site for different devices is complicated. Let's look at some of the trends we'll see moving forward.

Video Content: Video is one of the fastest-growing uses for mobile devices, and it's getting harder to predict. While YouTube focuses on landscape videos, apps like Instagram and TikTok use portrait views. As a marketing strategy,

optimizing video content for mobile helps boost engagement, drive traffic, and improve your SEO.

Sponsored Content: Sponsored content is essential if you want to create a smooth customer experience. Creating compelling headlines, calls-to-action, and rotating through multiple ad variations creates a seamless user experience.

Location-Targeted Ads: Location-based ads target specific ads to the user based on their location. The device, typically a phone, tracks the user's location and triggers advertisements when they enter a specific area, like shopping malls or recreation centers.

Intelligent Chatbots: Intelligent chatbots use AI and natural language processing (NLP) to communicate. They're designed to simulate human conversations and can handle more requests than conventional ones.

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PROTECTING YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES IS A SMART MOVE

"TM," "SM," "PAT PEND," "©," "®." These small symbols and abbreviations carry a lot of legal weight when it comes to safeguarding a company's proprietary names, designs, products, and services. As an entrepreneur, you should consider making sure the valuable intellectual properties of your small business are protected as well. But which one(s) do you need?

Trademarks are not the same as patents and copyrights, even though the differences are not widely understood. While there are similarities, they serve different purposes.

According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), a trademark is a word, name, symbol or device used in business to indicate a source of the goods, i.e., your business, and to distinguish those goods from those sold by another business. A service mark is the same as a trademark, except that it identifies and distinguishes the source of a service rather than a product.

A patent for an invention grants a specific legal property right to the inventor—"the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale or selling" the same invention.

A copyright is harder to define. It is mainly a protection for authors of original works, including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works, both published and unpublished.

The Internet has transformed the once mysterious process of applying for a trademark into something accessible to anyone willing to

spend some time to understand the intricacies and get it right. But while no business skills or special legal knowledge are required to apply, the field is filled with potential pitfalls and wrong turns that could sabotage your trademark filing if you don't know the intricacies of creating trademarks that can stand up to legal challenges later on.

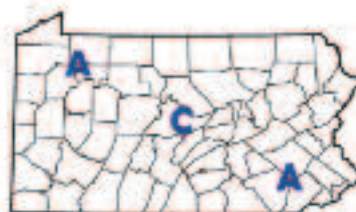
For example, the application requires that you identify goods or services under specific categories. But misunderstanding these categories and filing too broadly or too narrowly can ruin your trademark and cause problems later on. A qualified trademark attorney can help you avoid such problems.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's Web site at www.uspto.gov provides a wealth of information and resources about protecting your small business' intellectual properties. You'll find basic information about trademarks, patents, and copyrights; links to easy-to-follow "How To" guides; and search engines for researching existing trademarks and patents.

To learn more about trademarks and other small business matters, contact SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business." SCORE is a nonprofit organization of more than 10,500 volunteer business counselors who provide free, confidential business counseling and training workshops to small business owners. Call 610.327.2673 for the Pottstown SCORE office, or visit on the web at www.pottstownscore.org.

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SOME INSIGHTS ON SUCCESSFUL OUTSOURCING

Outsourcing is a common practice in today's business world, but it's not the domain of large companies. Small business owners use outsourcing for a variety of reasons — to handle work overflows, receive specific expertise in a new or unfamiliar area such as marketing or IT, or take on more routine administrative tasks that are taking up too much of their time and attention.

The decision to outsource certain functions requires a professional approach, particularly since the small business owner may be understandably leery about relinquishing control over a task that he or she has handled from the outset. Developing a successful long-term relationship with an outsourcing partner requires effort on both sides. It's important to treat it like a partnership, because that's what it really is. A vendor who supplies a vital service for your business is like part of your staff, so you should go through a similar interviewing and reference checking process before you "hire" them.

Using outside service providers who have experience working with your particular type of business is important. You'll also want someone with the technology and expertise to deliver cutting edge services.

Be sure to ask detailed questions about the service you will receive and your access to someone who can answer questions and solve problems as they arise. For most small business owners, this kind of accessibility and service are

top priorities. If the firm you are considering won't be available when something goes wrong, look elsewhere.

Also ask your candidate firms for current and past clients who received services of a scope similar to what you're looking for. If possible, ask for clients similar to yours to properly gauge how well the company understands your needs. And, always meet with the service provider's leadership as well as the people who will be working directly with you. You don't want to have any doubts about their ability to handle what may be critical tasks for your business.

The "go-to" resource for help is the Outsourcing Institute, the world's largest professional community dedicated solely to outsourcing. The Institute's Web site (www.outsourcing.com), provides a wealth of information about outsourcing trends, articles on securing IT and business processing services, and tips for ensuring your outsourcing partner delivers the level of performance you want.

To learn more about outsourcing successfully, contact SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business." SCORE is a nonprofit organization of more than 10,500 volunteer business counselors who provide free, confidential business counseling and training workshops to small business owners. Call 610.327.2673 for the Pottstown SCORE chapter, or find a counselor online at www.pottstownscore.org.

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CRAFTING AN AI ACTION PLAN

A GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



TECHNOLOGY TIPS

By Marc Umstead,
Plus 1 Technology

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to reshape the business landscape, small business owners must adapt to stay competitive and capitalize on the benefits AI has to offer. Designing an AI action plan can help businesses identify areas where AI can augment or replace existing processes, leading to improved efficiency, cost savings, and growth. This article provides a step-by-step guide for small businesses looking to create an effective AI action plan.

Assess Current Business Processes

The first step in designing an AI action plan is to evaluate the existing business processes and identify areas where AI can have the most significant impact. Businesses should analyze their operations, looking for repetitive, time-consuming tasks that can be automated, or complex problems that could benefit from AI-driven insights. Examples

include customer service, inventory management, and data analysis.

Set Clear Objectives

Once the areas of opportunity have been identified, businesses should establish clear objectives for their AI initiatives. These objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). By setting well-defined goals, businesses can effectively track progress, ensure alignment with their overall strategy, and measure the success of their AI implementation.

Research AI Solutions and Providers

With objectives in place, businesses should research available AI solutions and providers, focusing on those that align with their identified needs and goals. This may involve exploring off-the-shelf AI tools, cloud-based AI services, or custom AI development. It's essential to compare the features, pricing, and support offered by different providers to determine the best fit for the business.

(Continued on page 28)



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TECHNOLOGY TIPS

(Continued from page 27)

Prioritize and Allocate Resources

Implementing AI solutions can require a significant investment of time and resources. Businesses should prioritize their AI initiatives based on the potential return on investment (ROI), ease of implementation, and alignment with their strategic goals. Once priorities have been set, businesses should allocate the necessary resources, including budget, personnel, and technology, to support their AI initiatives.

Develop a Training and Adoption Strategy

To maximize the benefits of AI, businesses must ensure that their employees are trained and comfortable using the new technology. Developing a comprehensive training and adoption strategy is crucial for a successful AI implementation. This may involve providing hands-on training sessions, online courses, or workshops to educate employees on the AI tools and their benefits. Additionally, businesses should establish a clear communication plan to keep employees informed about the progress of AI initiatives and address any concerns or questions that may arise.

Monitor and Evaluate Progress

Once the AI solutions have been implemented, it's essential to continuously monitor and evaluate their performance against the established objectives. Regularly reviewing progress and measuring ROI can help businesses identify areas for improvement and fine-tune their AI strategy. Additionally, businesses should stay informed about the latest AI advancements and industry trends to ensure their AI initiatives remain competitive and up to date.

Conclusion

Developing a well-designed AI action plan is crucial for small businesses looking to harness the power of AI. By assessing current processes, setting clear objectives, researching solutions, prioritizing initiatives, and implementing a strong training and adoption strategy, businesses can maximize the benefits of AI and drive growth. As AI technologies continue to evolve, small businesses that proactively develop and adapt their AI action plans will be better positioned to thrive in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven landscape.

Marc Umstead can be reached at 610.792.5660; email: mumstead@plus1technology.com.

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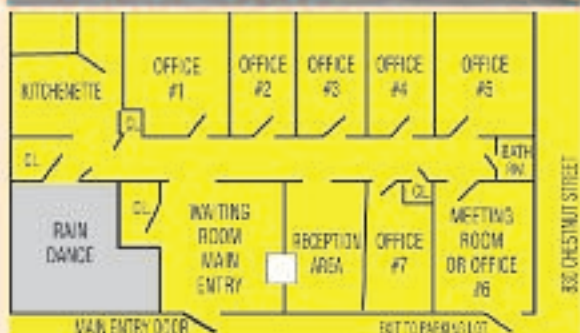
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WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A DATA PROTECTION BACKUP SYSTEM



IT SOLUTIONS

By Rob Landis,
Binary IT Solutions

The need to back up data has been around since floppy disks.

Data loss happens due to viruses, hard drive crashes, and other mishaps. Most people using any type of technology have experienced data loss at least once.

But one thing that's changed with data backup in the last few years is security. Simply backing up data so you don't lose it, isn't enough anymore. Backing up has morphed into data protection.

Some of the modern threats to data backups include:

• **Data Center Outage:** The "cloud" basically means data on a server. That server is internet accessible. Those servers can crash. Data centers holding the servers can also have outages.

• **Sleeper Ransomware:** This type of ransomware stays silent after infecting a device. The goal is to have it infect all backups. Then, when it's activated, the victim doesn't have a clean backup to restore.

• **Supply Chain Attacks:** Supply chain attacks have been growing. They include attacks on cloud vendors that companies use. Those vendors suffer a cyberattack that then spreads throughout their clients.

• **Misconfiguration:** Misconfiguration of security settings can be a problem. It can allow attackers to gain access to cloud storage. Those attackers can then download and delete files as they like.

What to Look for in a Data Protection Backup System

Just backing up data isn't enough. You need to make sure the application you use provides adequate data protection. Here are some of the things to look for when reviewing a backup solution.

Ransomware Prevention: Ransomware can spread throughout a network to infect any data that exists. This includes data on computers, servers, and mobile devices. It also includes data in cloud platforms syncing with those devices.

Continuous Data Protection: Continuous data protection is a feature that will back up files as users make changes. This differs from systems that back up on a schedule, such as once per day.

Threat Identification: Data protection incorporates proactive measures to protect files. Look for threat identification functions in a backup service. Threat identification is a type of malware and virus prevention tool.

Zero-Trust Tactics: Cybersecurity professionals around the world promote zero-trust security measures. This includes measures such as multi-factor authentication and application safelisting.

Backup Redundancy: If you back up to a USB drive or CD, you have one copy of those files. If something happens to that copy, you could experience data loss. Cloud backup providers should have backup redundancy in place. This means that the server holding your data mirrors that data to another server.

Air Gapping for More Sensitive Data: Air gapping is a system that keeps a copy of your data offline or separated in another way.

Need Help With Secure Backup & Data Protection Solutions?

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Rob Landis can be reached at 610-320-2628. Binary IT Solutions is a Managed Service Provider supporting small to medium sized business with their business IT needs. Find more information at www.binaryitsolutions.tech

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Ondra-Huyett Associates recently announced the hiring of their newest team member, Greg Brown. Greg will be joining OHA as the Business Development and Marketing Manager. As a Lehigh Valley native, Greg is a graduate of Easton High School, Northampton Community college, and the University of Phoenix. Greg's experience includes numerous sales, marketing, and management roles including airport advising, IT services, and emergency restoration services. Greg is also the current President of

the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the International Facilities Management Association. When not working Greg enjoys playing guitar, golfing, and spending time with his dogs and friends. Ondra-Huyett Associates looks forward to introducing Greg to you, our clients, and hope that you welcome him to the OHA family. Feel free to reach out to Greg at 610.366.1709 ext 243 with your construction questions or needs today! For additional information, please visit www.ohainc.com.



DIAMOND NAMES NEW CHIEF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, STEPHEN MARKLEY

Diamond Credit Union has named Stephen Markley as its new VP/Chief Business Development Officer.

Markley brings over 25 years of leadership experience to Diamond. He has held positions in strategic planning, business development, sales and service management, banking operations and team development.

"We are excited to welcome Steve to the Diamond team," Diamond President and CEO, Rick Patel said. "His knowledge, passion and skills will help us provide better service and assistance to our business members."

He was most recently employed as a Senior Vice President and Small Business Development

Sales Manager at Fulton Bank before joining Diamond. Markley currently serves as a volunteer member for the Upper Bucks Board of Trustees at St. Luke's Hospital. He acts as an advocate for St. Luke's and helps to provide insight to hospital leaders to meet the needs of the Greater Upper Bucks community.

Markley is currently studying for his Master's of Business Administration in Data Analytics from DeSales University. He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration focused in Finance, General, from DeSales in 2015.

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| • Belco Equip | • Echo | • Boxer Mini Loader |
| • Belco Equip | • Farmco Equipment | • Premier Augers |
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REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE



- 606 Court Street, Reading, PA 19601
- 610.376.6766 • fax 610.376.4135
- info@greaterreading.org
- www.greaterreading.org

Our mission is to be Berks County's leading unified resource for building a healthy, competitive business community. Our vision is to assist companies to retain, expand and grow their operations and employment and attract new businesses to berks County.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PENN STREET MARKET 2023

Thursday Jun 1, 2023
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM EDT

Every Thursday June-September rain or shine*
**Delay or cancellation may occur if the weather is deemed to be unsafe due to high winds, lightning, and/or thunder.*

638 Penn Street, Reading, PA 19602

<https://www.pennstmarket.org/>

Free to attend! Free for all ages!

Contact Information: Aaron Gantz
agantz@greaterreading.org

PREP YOUR LIFE PANEL: THINGS YOU NEED NOW - W2W JUNE 2023

Thursday Jun 1, 2023

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

GoggleWorks Center for the Arts

201 Washington Street, Reading

\$35 / GRCA Member; \$45 / Future GRCA Member

Advanced Registration Required

Contact Information: Rachael Romig
rromig@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11300>

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY ROUNDTABLE 2023

June 1, Sept. 7, and Nov. 9 from Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

\$175/person for Chamber Members for All 3 sessions. Lunch included.

\$225/person for Future Chamber Members for All 3 sessions. Lunch included.

Contact Information: Keith Stamm,
610-898-7776 kstamm@greaterreading.org

INTERMEDIATE EXCEL - JUNE 2023

Four weeks on Mondays: June 5, 12, 19, 26

Time: 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Shearer Technical Computer Consultants

727 Penn Ave., West Reading, PA 19611

\$300/person - Chamber Members;

\$375/person - Future Chamber Members

<http://GreaterReading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11415>

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK - JUNE 2023

Two weeks on Tuesdays: June 6, 13

Time: 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Shearer Technical, 727 Penn Ave.

West Reading, PA 19611

\$180/person - Chamber Members

\$225/person - Future Chamber Members

<http://www.greaterreading.org>

Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development

mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11416>

WORKPLACE FOUNDATION SKILLS TRAINING - SPRING COHORT

Spring Cohort

3 weeks on Tuesdays:

June 6, 13, and 20

Time: 9 a.m. - Noon

Fall Cohort

3 weeks on Wednesdays:

Sept. 6, 13, and 20

Time: 9 a.m. - Noon

Chamber's Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Drive

Wyomissing, PA 19610

\$450/person for GRCA Members

\$565/person for Future GRCA Members

WEDnet eligible

Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development

mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11425>

CLARITY OF ROLES & ACCOUNTABILITY EXPERT PANEL - FBA JUNE 2023

Tuesday Jun 6, 2023

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

GoggleWorks Center for the Arts

201 Washington St., Reading

****parking onsite**

\$30 / GRCA Member; \$40 / Future GRCA Member

****includes lunch, networking & workshop**

****FBA Sponsors & Peer Group Members receive complimentary tickets to this event.**

Contact Information: Rachael Romig
610-898-7775 rromig@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11301>

BREAKFAST4SUCCESS - KEYS TO SUCCESS

Wednesday Jun 7, 2023

7:30 AM - 9:30 AM EDT

GoggleWorks Center for the Arts

201 Washington St., Reading

parking available behind building

\$35 / Member (Member Exclusive)

Contact Information: Katie Johnsen
610-898-7779 kjohnsen@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11302>

MFG IP QUARTERLY MEETING

Wednesday Jun 14, 2023

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM EDT

This event is open to members of the Manufacturing Industry Partnership of the Greater Reading Region. If interested in attending, please contact Keith Stamm at

kstamm@greaterreading.org

Contact Information: Keith Stamm,
610-898-7776 kstamm@greaterreading.org

LUNCH&LEARN - EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Wednesday Jun 14, 2023

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT

Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing

\$75 /member

Contact Information: Katie Johnsen 610-898-7779 kjohnsen@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11374>

INTRO TO QUICKBOOKS - JUNE 2023

Four weeks on Thursdays:

June 15, 22, 29, and July 6

Time: 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Shearer Technical, 727 Penn Ave.

West Reading, PA 19611

\$350/person - Chamber Members

\$435/person - Future Chamber Members

<http://www.greaterreading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11418>

COURSERA ONLINE LEARNING - PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Starts - June 19, 2023

Ends - Sept. 17, 2023

\$395/person for Chamber Members;

\$495/person for Future Chamber Members

How it Works: Once you complete your registration, Alvernia University will be notified, and you will receive your link to access the program within three business days. You will have 90 days to complete the program. Upon completion of the program, you will receive a Certificate of Completion from Coursera.

Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development

mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11429>

COURSERA ONLINE LEARNING - FINANCIAL ACUMEN PROGRAM

Starts - June 19, 2023

Ends - Sept. 17, 2023

\$395/person for Chamber Members;

\$495/person for Future Chamber Members

How it Works: Once you complete your registration, Alvernia University will be notified, and you will receive your link to access the program within three business days. You will have 90 days to complete the program. Upon completion of the program, you will receive a Certificate of Completion from Coursera.

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11430>

COURSERA ONLINE LEARNING - ECOMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Starts - June 19, 2023

Ends - Sept. 17, 2023

\$395/person for Chamber Members;

\$495/person for Future Chamber Members

How it Works: Once you complete your registration, Alvernia University will be notified, and you will receive your link to access the program within three business days. You will have 90 days to complete the program. Upon completion of the program, you will receive a Certificate of Completion from Coursera.

Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development

mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11431>

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK - MID-JUNE 2023

Two weeks on Tuesdays: June 20, 27

Time: 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Shearer Technical, 727 Penn Ave.

West Reading, PA 19611

\$180/person - Chamber Members

\$225/person - Future Chamber Members

<http://www.greaterreading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11417>

SALES METHODS & MASTERY TRAINING PROGRAM

June 22 & 23

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Center for Business Excellence

49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing, PA 19610

\$795/person for Chamber Members;

\$995/person for Not-Yet Chamber Members

\$695 Early Bird registration by May. 6 (Chamber Members)

\$795 Early Bird registration by May. 6 (Not-Yet Chamber Members)

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11397>

NETWORKING@NIGHT - MEMBERS 1ST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Thursday Jun 22, 2023

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM EDT

Members 1st

4620 Penn Ave., Sinking Spring, PA 19608

Free to GRCA Members

Contact Information: Katie Johnsen 610-898-7779 kjohnsen@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11305>

ULTIMATE EXCEL 2019/365

Four weeks on Fridays: June 23, 30, July 7, 14

Time: 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Shearer Technical, 727 Penn Ave.

West Reading, PA 19611

\$300/person - Chamber Members;

\$375/person - Future Chamber Members

<http://GreaterReading.org>

Contact Information: Mark Dolinski, Vice President Training and Professional Development
mdolinski@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11432>

WOMEN2WOMEN LOBSTERFEST 2023

Thursday Jun 29, 2023

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM EDT

Go Fish! Seafood Market & Sushi Bar

301 S. Hull Street, Sinking Spring, PA 19608

****Parking available on site and across street from restaurant**

301 S. Hull Street Sinking Spring PA 19608

\$100 / GRCA Member (all inclusive)

\$120 / Future Member (all inclusive)

Choice of Lobster or Chicken

Contact Information: Rachael Romig 610-898-7775 rromig@greaterreading.org

Register: <https://greaterreadingchamber.chamber-master.com/eventregistration/register/11306>



152 E. High St., Suite 200, Pottstown, PA 19464 | 610.326.2900 | www.tricountyareachamber.com

Our Mission: Leveraging the power of membership to provide valued membership services and proactive leadership for the tri-county region.

Our Vision: The tri-county area has a strong sense of place – quality of life, economic opportunity, and generations of leaders - to support the region's businesses and communities.

Follow us on:



#WhyTCACC

#tcaccbettertogether

MAKING PA COMPETITIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LUNCHEON

Update for the Keystone State

Luke Bernstein, President and CEO of the PA Chamber of Business and Industry, will give an Economic Development Update for the Keystone State. Berks County Commissioner Christian Leinbach will give an update on the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority.

Wednesday, June 14th | 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

RiverCrest Golf Club & Preserve
100 Golf Club Dr., Phoenixville, PA 19460

Ticket Prices:

\$55 Per Member

\$400 Per Member table of 8

\$110 Per Non-Member

REGISTER

For more details, please call Alice at 610.326.2900, visit tricountyareachamber.com, or email alice@tricountyareachamber.com. Scan the QR Code to learn more or to register!



WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

Congratulations to the business listed below for becoming a new TCACC Member!

Nova Technologies
(484) 877-1247

<http://solutionsbynova.net/>
Telecommunications Equipment / Services

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Happy anniversary to the following Members for their consecutive years of Chamber membership:

35 Years

Pottstown Industrial Complex

21 Years

Bella Vista Golf Course, Ltd.

Marshall Geoscience, Inc.

VFC

5 Years

Seedcopa

SOS Group Inc.



Building Communities

Creating Connections

Supporting Commerce

Membership opens the door for your business to exchange ideas with other talented leaders in business, community, and government.

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

TCACC 2023 TIERS INVESTORS STAKEHOLDER



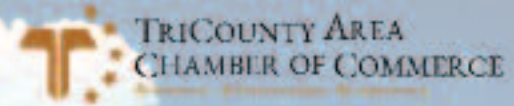
BUILDING COMMUNITIES



CREATING CONNECTIONS



SUPPORTING COMMERCE



Annual GOLF OUTING and CLAMBAKE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

HICKORY VALLEY GOLF CLUB

1921 LUDWIG RD. GILBERTSVILLE, PA 19525

REGISTRATION OPENS AT 10:30AM | SHOTGUN START AT NOON

PRICE PER MEMBER: \$200

PRICE PER MEMBER FOURSOME: \$750

PRICE PER MEMBER DINNER ONLY: \$50

NETWORKING LUNCH, GAMES, DOODIE BAGS, CASH PRIZES, DINNER, AND MORE!

Presenting Sponsor:



Learn more

Sponsorship opportunities are available!

CREATING CONNECTIONS MIXER

THURSDAY, JUNE 22ND | 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

THE COLEBROOKDALE RAILROAD

64 S. WASHINGTON ST., BOYERTOWN, PA 19512

\$25 PER PERSON

MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE

TICKET INCLUDES:

-APPETIZERS

-BEER & WINE

-A CHAMPAGNE TOAST

-BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHAMBER MEMBERS

-PLUS, A CHANCE TO BOARD THE COLEBROOKDALE RAILROAD CARS AND EXPERIENCE A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

*THE TRAIN WILL REMAIN AT THE STATION DURING THE MIXER FOR TCACC MEMBERS TO BOARD AND UNBOARD AS NEEDED.

SPONSORED BY:



**Register
HERE**



CHAMBER NIGHT AT THE R-Phils.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16TH

GAME TIME: 7:00 PM

PLAZA OPENS: 5:00 PM

PLUS POST-GAME FIREWORKS!

Complimentary General Admission Tickets are one of TCACC's Member Benefits thanks to the many sponsors of this event. Tickets have been mailed to each Member. If you would like extra tickets, please contact our office at 610-326-2900 or email alice@tricountyareachamber.com.

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

SPRING-FORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Powered by TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce

• P.O. Box 127, Royersford PA 19468 • 610.489.7200



The Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce is a community-focused business advocate. We strive to help our member businesses grow while improving the community in which we all live and work.

The Chamber consists of local businesses whose main objective is to run a successful business. We are a great resource for members, not only because we offer the opportunity to network and brainstorm with fellow members, but also to have exposure to the local community, your customer, through our continued involvement in community events and charitable endeavors. Visit www.springfordchamber.com for Chamber Events, Press Releases, Online Newsletters and more!

Annual Luncheon 2023



Congratulations Award Winners!

Spring-Ford Chamber Lifetime Legacy Awards:

Deslee Hamrick, Patriot Pest Solutions LLC; Kelly Taylor, The Victory Bank; Tom Donahoe, Donahoe's Handyman Service

First Responder Award:

Shawn Secor, Limerick Township

Rising Star Award:

Brandon Shoemaker, Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation

Community Impact Award:

Tom McCoy & staff at Royersford Staples

Volunteer of the Year Award:

Kelly Shinto, Liffoux School of Dance

Chamber Member of the Year Award:

Limerick Township

UPCOMING EVENTS

Registrations can be found at www.springfordchamber.com

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS

Join our SHARK THINK TANK

Monthly Luncheon Roundtable Discussions for business owners only



Next Meeting:

Thursday, June 15th
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Copperfield Inn at Lakeside

[Register here](#)



FAMILY FUN

FOOD TRUCKS

BEER GARDEN

LIMERICK COMMUNITY DAY

SATURDAY AUGUST 12TH

For more details or marketing and exposure opportunities, please call Alice at 610.326.2900 or email alice@tricitychamber.com. Scan the QR Code to learn more or visit tricitychamber.com.

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

• 171 East Bridge Street, Phoenixville, PA 19460 • 610.933.3070 • fax 610.917.0503
• info@phoenixvillechamber.org • www.phoenixvillechamber.org

Celebrating 90 years in the PXV Business Community



PHOENIXVILLE
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce is an independent organization serving the business interests of Northern Chester, Western Montgomery and parts of Delaware Counties.

The Chamber's mission is to "advance the principles of free enterprise by providing the leadership which will enhance the economic climate of the region, address the priority needs of its members, and interact with other individuals and organizations for the overall benefit of the business community."

UPCOMING EVENT

2023 is your year to **build connections** – find dozens of networking events with the Phoenixville Chamber.
Keep an eye on our events page...



Rhythm & Brews

LIVE MUSIC | CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT | BEER GARDEN
JUNE 24 | AUG 19 | SEPT 16

COFFEE & CONNECTIONS

TUES. JUNE 27TH 2023
9:00AM-10:00AM
PHOENIXVILLE REStore

MORE THAN JUST A DAY

MORE THAN JUST A LEMONADE STAND
NEWLY COMMITTED TO THE POWER OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ECONOMIC FORECAST

WITH CREATIV CAPITAL

INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP?
LEARN MORE:



MORE UPCOMING EVENTS:

PHOENIXVILLE NON-PROFIT ROUNDTABLE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 07 at 11:30am

PHOENIXVILLE Social

TUESDAY, JUNE 06 at 6:00pm

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP



MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

• 101 Bill Smith, Blvd King of Prussia, PA 19406
• 610-265-1776 • montgomerycountychamber.org

ADVOCACY: The Chamber works for your business interests and the future of small and large companies in Montgomery County. The Chamber works for business reforms and promotes legislative action on a county, state and federal level to ensure Montgomery County is an attractive place for businesses to prosper. **NETWORKING:** For business development, nothing can work better than the personal contacts developed through the Chamber. Chamber events offer nearly 40 events annually designed for you to meet and connect with other members. Events include monthly Business Builders, quarterly Lunch & Learns, quarterly Chamber Chats, Legislative Forums, and four Signature Events.

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE CHAMBER:

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Register for all Events on
montgomerycountychamber.org

Business Builders – June 22

Lincoln Center for Family and Youth
Audobon, PA
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GOLF OUTING – June 26

The 1912 Club in Plymouth Meeting
Register Today!

SAVE THE DATES

Business Builders – July 13

Merrymead Farm in Worcester
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State Representative Lunch – July 21

Hotel West & Main
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REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

PERKIOMEN VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



521 Main Street, Trappe, PA 19436 • 610.489.6660

• info@PVchamber.net • www.PVchamber.net

Welcome to the Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce!

For 65 years the Chamber has been the recognized voice & advocate for the business community. Creating opportunities for members to connect with business professionals, mentors, and potential customers, the Chamber helps members improve business and create a thriving community for themselves and their employees. We can help grow YOUR customer base in Collegeville, Trappe, Schwenksville, Upper Providence, Lower Frederick, Lower Providence, Perkiomen, Skippack, and Oaks. Visit www.PVchamber.net to view membership directory. To **sign-up for E-news**, send request to info@PVchamber.net. Follow the PV Chamber FaceBook Page @PerkValleyChamber.

EVENTS

Registrations can be found at www.PVchamber.net

Business Roundtable Luncheon

June 27, 2023
@ 11:45am – 1pm

Join us for interactive discussion and sharing of best practices among other business owners and key decision makers. Member-only event.

PV Chamber Annual Summer Barbeque

July 19, 2023
@ 11:45am – 1pm

ALL WELCOME TO ATTEND! Join us for a fun afternoon of networking, grilled burgers, hot dogs and salads courtesy of The Pink Moose, and adult beverages served by the Chamber board. Not a member of the PV Chamber? Even Better! This is a great opportunity to meet the Chamber board and members and learn more about the local business community. A large tent will provide shade and protection in event of inclement weather. Sponsorships available. Please RSVP by July 6th.

Annual Night Out at Reading Phils

July 26, 2023 @ 7pm

Become a Sponsor - YOUR logo will be printed on 10,000 tickets and receive 400 tickets to gift to clients, employees, friends and family. Sponsor rep invited to throw out a ceremonial first pitch. Sponsorship \$425. Sponsorships are close to sell-out; check the chamber website for registration details.

FEATURED EVENT

PVCC Annual Golf Outing

June 12, 2023

Spring Ford Country Club

Put your business in the spotlight at the 37th Annual Chamber Golf Outing!

All golfers welcome. However, sponsorships are reserved for PV Chamber members only.

Golfer tournament fee includes Lunch Buffet, Bloody Mary Bar, golf, goody bag, on-course snacks and beverages and networking dinner! Non-golfers welcome to volunteer or purchase a ticket for lunch/dinner.



Golf and Sponsorship Details and Registration on www.PVchamber.net or contact Renee Blomstrom to discuss a custom package! Sponsorship packages starting as low as \$100.

Title Sponsor:



SAVE THE DATES:

- Oct 2nd – Annual Sporting Clays Tournament and Luncheon
- October 25, 2023 - *New Event* Business Conference & Expo

POST-EVENT FEATURE



The PV Chamber hosted their annual drive-thru Community & Business Shredding Event at Tower Health Medical Building B, Limerick on Saturday, May 13th. The first 100 participants received a goody bag filled with promotional products from PV Chamber members. In addition to PVCC Board Directors, Ambassadors, and members, several students from PVSD volunteered at the event.

New Member Promo!

Thinking about membership with the PV Chamber? Don't delay! JOIN NOW during our Summer Promotion and boost your benefits! Receive a complimentary advertising package, membership discount (extended month), and more! Contact Renee Blomstrom for details at 610-489-6660.

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THE SBRA COMMUNITY

AVOIDING Entrepreneurial BURNOUT



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business
Resource Association**

How many times have you seen the flame burn out in a relationship, a project get put on hold or never completed, an employee go from good to bad to fired, a successful business go out of business or a once overly enthusiastic entrepreneur start to slow down and pull back from much or all of what he or she was doing? There are probably many reasons for the above but, all too often, the real root of the problem was that the difficulty overruled the joy, the intensity took away the fun, juggling too many balls distracted focus and fear of failure took away the drive for success. In other words, the work level exceeded the mental and physical capacity and resulted in BURNOUT.

If you are a true entrepreneur there is no easy way to be successful. Risk is part of the definition of being an

entrepreneur, challenges consume much of your work life, you are forced to do the things that you do, not like to do, or you are not skilled at doing. Entrepreneurism is not

meant to be for the person that is looking for the easy way out. Entrepreneurs often have way much to do in a given work day and therefore take work home to do in place of taking some special time for themselves and their loved ones. Entrepreneurs are proud and have much to prove to their competitors let alone to themselves. Worst of all, entrepreneurs are dreamers and visionaries and they want to take an idea and build it into reality forcing them to push their mental and physical limits. They also perceive themselves as the one that knows the most and can do the job better than anyone else, forcing them to take on more and more work which causes frustration and challenges as work piles up, unfinished.

Dealing with business can take a toll on anyone. Inspiration and drive start to diminish and the 9 to 5 job will start to look more and more appealing rather than being in charge of the whole show.

Burnout results in almost every profession and is a major cause of suicide in sev-

eral. Let's look at a few ideas that may help you deal with your entrepreneurial drive and in so doing, lessen the possibility of BURNOUT.



1. Take a look at what is causing you the most stress—Seek advice and help to reduce that stress and replace it with solutions that make the work easier, more profitable and enjoyable. Otherwise, find a way to get rid of that stressor.
2. Surround yourself with people equal to or better than you—Allow them to take on more responsibility and help you make your dream come true. Remember, you are the boss and they cannot fire you. However, they can make you more successful, easier and quicker, than doing it all yourself.
3. Make time for yourself—Note that I did not say, find time for yourself. You must intentionally make time available for yourself or you will never find the right time that fits into your busy schedule. Try to make that time the same time every week so it becomes a scheduled, repeatable part of your work/life schedule. Focus on things that are not related to your work and can put you in a different frame of mind. Examples are a favorite hobby, spending time with friends, going on a well-deserved vacation several times a year, take a night off each week, spend family time at home.
4. Give your burnout a rest—How much sleep do you get each night? Believe it or not, the amount of sleep you get, or do not get, can contribute to your burnout. You need sleep to re-build and strengthen your body and mind. 5 hours of sleep or less can cause up to 29% of productivity loss. How do you get more sleep? Develop and stick

to a sleep routine, stay away from sleep devices to help you fall asleep, create a restful environment, get rid of caffeine later in the day, exercise regularly and clear your mind in the evening.

5. Learn how to say NO—As an entrepreneur you take on a lot of responsibilities. However, that is a choice you have made and imposed on yourself that is not necessary. You have a responsibility to your business to hire good employees, train them well and allow them to assume many of the tasks that you have burdened yourself with. Learn how to say NO to new tasks and instead say yes to allowing others to assume those responsibilities. Learning how to say NO is an important ingredient to holding back symptoms of Burnout.
6. Manage your time well—The key to being a successful Entrepreneur is learning how to manage your time between personal work, meetings, answering calls, emails and work-related questions, continual improvement, exercise, quiet time, personal and family time. Do not let non-relevant situations rob you of time needed to do what is most important to you and your business.

Your body will tell you when the burnout meter has reached a danger level. Look in the mirror and you will see the signs. Listen to your staff, family and friends because they will see it before you will. Take it seriously because it can and will be harmful to your health and business.

SBRA Business Spotlight



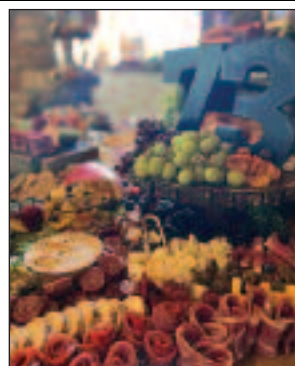
Business Name: 73 Charcuterie Co.

Address: 38 Golfview Lane Reading PA 19606

Phone: 610.401-7447

Website: www.73CharcuterieCo.com

Business Bio: 73 Charcuterie Co., located in Exeter Township, provides ready-to-eat charcuterie boards, grazing tables and workshops. Owner, Erika Lebo, is ServeSafe certified and has worked in all aspects of the food service industry for over 20 years. Her attention to detail in design and choosing the freshest ingredients led 73 Charcuterie Co. to being named "Top Caterer in Reading" by Community Votes 2022 within the first year of opening.



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DESPITE BIG BANK FAILURES, LOCAL BANKS REMAIN SAFE AND SECURE



**By Carolann Westendorp,
Business Solutions
Officer, of Jonestown
Bank & Trust Co.**

With the failure of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank grabbing headlines nationwide, it's natural for small business

owners and the general public to wonder what the effects will be on all banks, including local community banks.

According to Carolann Westendorp, Jonestown Bank & Trust Co. (JBT) Business Solutions Officer, the safety of local, community banks, is unaffected by what's happening with banks like Silicon Valley Bank and others.

"The reality is JBT, and it's true of other local banks, is as strong and stable as we've ever been and JBT has been an independent, local community bank for 150 years," said Westendorp.

Westendorp went on to explain that part of the issue that led to the recent bank failures was a business strategy that left those institutions in a vulnerable position.

"As a well-capitalized community bank, JBT does not conduct any business in the venture capital arena or the cryptocurrency market nor do we engage in speculative or high-risk lending, all of which played a role in the downfall of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank," said Westendorp.

Business owners and other clients have security by knowing their deposits, up to federal limits, are safe with banks, like JBT, because they are Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insured institutions. In addition, Westendorp said JBT offers other products and services which provide additional coverage for clients who have concerns about deposits over FDIC limits.

In response to the recent failures, the FDIC is exploring ways which may provide depositors even more peace of mind.



The FDIC recently released a comprehensive overview of the deposit insurance system and options for reform to address financial stability concerns stemming from the recent bank failures. While nothing has been approved or finalized, the overview included three options for possible deposit insurance reform:

Limited Coverage: Maintaining the current deposit insurance framework, which provides insurance to depositors up to a specified limit (possibly higher than the current \$250,000 limit) by ownership rights and capacities.

Unlimited Coverage: Extending unlimited deposit insurance coverage to all depositors.

Targeted Coverage: Offering different deposit insurance limits across account types, where business payment accounts receive significantly higher coverage than other accounts.

Of the three options outlined in this report, the FDIC believes targeted coverage best meets the objectives of deposit insurance of financial stability and depositor protection relative to its costs. These proposed options would require Congressional action, though some aspects of the report lie within the scope of the FDIC's rulemaking authority.

Note: JBT is a local, community bank with branches in Lebanon, Lancaster & Berks Counties. Visit jbt.bank to learn more.

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TUNE-UP Tuesdays
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• **Tuesday, June 13th,
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presented by Russell E. Farbiarz
Esq. of Antanavage Farbiarz, PLLC

• **Tuesday June 27th,
9:30-10:30 a.m.**

presented by Bladimir Mercedes
of American Capital Express

Free to the public. Get more details and register at
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Wednesday, June 28th, 5:30-7:00

at Violet Vintage Wine Company

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Violet's Flowers and Vintage Boutique opened on April 1st in Historic St. Peter's Village. Violet is the shop's floral designer, and her mother runs the vintage items portion of the shop. The store focusses on selecting rare and unusual flowers and plants to design gorgeous bouquets and arrangements. Many of these arrangements are placed in vintage vases that add additional beauty and uniqueness for our customers.

Violet's Flowers is a full-service flower shop that offers delivery throughout Route 422 Business Advisor's service area. Our services include flower subscriptions that allow you to always have beautiful fresh flowers in your home or office for your friends, family, customers, or clients to enjoy. Nothing makes an office space look more professional or a home look

lovelier than fresh flowers. We specialize in providing flowers for public and private events — large or small — including corporate events, weddings, luncheons, and parties.

At Violet's Flowers and Vintage Boutique, we are committed to providing our customers and clients with the highest quality and most beautiful flowers available. We work when we can with local flower farms to support other local businesses and to provide the freshest flowers money can buy. Our designers are happy to meet with you in person to discuss your design aesthetic or to create one of our own designs for you. We hope to

work with you soon.

Violet's Flowers and Vintage Boutique is located at 3420 St. Peters Village. For additional information, please call 484.901.5400 or visit www.violets-flowers.com.



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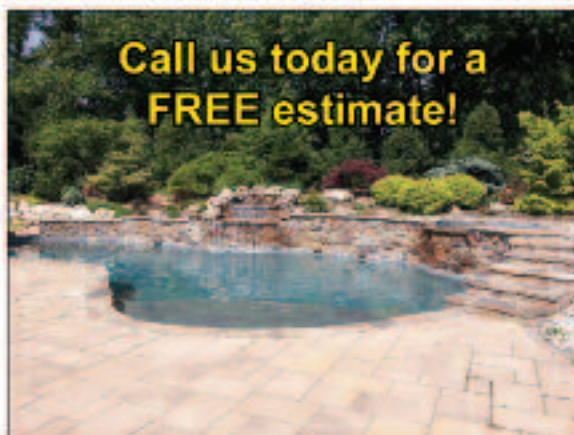
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Canon Capital — HOW TO AVOID DIRECT DEPOSIT FRAUD

Do you remember the last time you had to visit the bank to deposit your paycheck? For decades, direct deposit has been the efficient and safe way for employees to receive their pay. This convenience does not come without risk. A new direct deposit scam has recently been making the rounds.

In many cases, the employer receives an email from someone claiming to be an employee. They tell the employer that they have had fraudulent activity on their bank account and need to update their direct deposit information. Without confirming this request directly with the employee, employers have updated the account information. However, the new account information provided belongs to the scammer not the actual employee. As soon as the scammer receives the funds via direct deposit, they close the account and move on to the next victim.

Avoid direct deposit fraud with these best practices:

- Verify direct deposit information directly with the employee, whether it

is the initial set-up or to make any changes. If face-to-face confirmation is not possible require documentation, like a voided check or bank statement, to confirm the account belongs to the employee.

- Educate your employees about the risks of direct deposit fraud and how to protect themselves. Encourage them to monitor their accounts regularly and report any suspicious activity immediately.
- Consider using fraud detection software for corporate bank accounts to help detect and prevent direct deposit fraud from happening before it is too late.

You have many opportunities to protect yourself from direct deposit fraud. Consider taking these steps today.

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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

By Alexis I. Lehmann, Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.

As a prospective home buyer in Pennsylvania, it is essential to consider getting a home inspection before finalizing the purchase. Home inspections in PA are NOT required, but this article will show why they are so important.

A home inspection can reveal critical information about the condition of a property, giving you peace of mind and helping you make an informed decision. Home inspectors identified issues that needed to be fixed in 86 percent of home inspections. Home inspections can reveal significant defects in the property that a homebuyer may miss. A home inspector performs a home inspection, and the report carries an inspector's objective assessment of the house. Qualified home inspectors will highlight material defects that could pose a significant financial or physical injury risk to the next homeowner. The inspector will create an inspection report summarizing his or her observations and comment on whether the issue is a safety risk, a repair recommendation,

or a minor issue. A thorough home inspection can uncover issues like mold infestation or faulty electrical systems. This will give you an estimate of the maintenance required on the property.

Inspections can be generalized or specific. In a general home inspection, a home inspector will examine all the mechanical systems and physical structures of the property. Inspectors assess the interior parts of a house and the exterior grounds to find flaws. A home inspector may recommend an additional inspection for a house, depending on the initial assessment. A trained real estate professional will evaluate a specific aspect of the property in a specialized home inspection.

(Continued on page 46)

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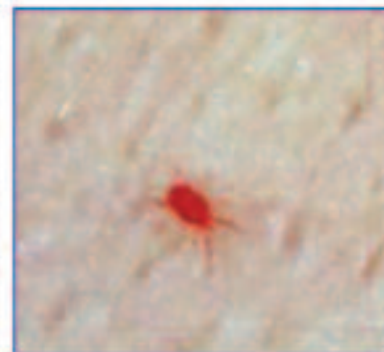
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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 44)

The areas flagged as “defects” during the general home inspection are scrutinized to find the root cause.

Here are some statistics that highlight why home buyers in Pennsylvania should get a home inspection:

Structural Issues: According to a study by the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), structural issues are one of the most common problems found during home inspections. Out of the 50,000 inspections they performed, 20 percent of the homes had some sort of structural issue. In Pennsylvania, homes are subject to harsh weather conditions that can cause foundation cracks, roof damage, and other structural problems. An inspection can identify these issues and save buyers from expensive repairs later on.

Electrical Problems: The same ASHI study found that 13 percent of the homes they inspected had electrical issues. These problems can range from outdated wiring to faulty electrical panels, both of which can be dangerous and costly to repair. Pennsylvania homes that were built before the 1970s may still have aluminum wiring, which is prone to overheating and causing fires. An inspection can reveal these issues, ensuring that the electrical system is safe and up to code.

Plumbing Issues: Another common issue found during home inspections is plumbing problems. The ASHI study found that ten percent of the homes had plumbing issues, including leaky pipes and outdated plumbing fixtures. Pennsylvania homes may also have issues with hard water, which can cause buildup in pipes and decrease their lifespan. A home inspection can identify these issues, helping buyers make necessary repairs before moving in.

Radon Gas: Radon is a naturally occurring gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Pennsylvania has higher-than-average levels of radon gas, with 40 percent of

homes in the state having levels above the recommended limit. A home inspection can test for radon gas and help buyers take steps to mitigate its effects.

Termites and Pests: Pennsylvania is home to several species of termites and other pests that can cause damage to homes. These pests can go unnoticed for years, causing significant structural damage and costly repairs. A home inspection can identify signs of pest infestations, allowing buyers to take action before the problem gets out of hand.

Home buyers need a house inspection so that they can estimate the maintenance cost of the property. A real estate home inspection reveals the property's defects, so that you can anticipate the repair costs based on the replacements or repairs identified in the house inspection report.

In conclusion, getting a home inspection is a smart decision for anyone buying a home in Pennsylvania. The statistics show that many common issues can be uncovered during an inspection, saving buyers from costly repairs and potential safety hazards. With a home inspection, buyers can make informed decisions and feel confident in their investment.

Alexis Lehmann, Esquire is an experienced attorney with the law firm of Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C. with offices in Pottstown, Reading, Pennsburg, and West Chester. She concentrates her practice in small business representation, commercial litigation, employment law and FCRA compliance. Ms. Lehmann be reached at 610.323.7436 or by e-mail to alehmann@wolfbaldwin.com.

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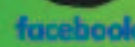
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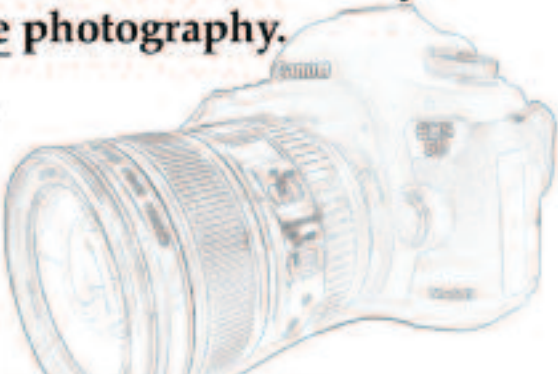
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Ask SCORE

TIPS FOR CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

Social media in the workplace is a huge gray area for employers. Putting guardrails around social media use has been a growing challenge as these platforms have become a central part of our lives – and our work.

Social media use in the workplace was once simply a concern over time management. Could you trust your employees to get work done with the distraction of Facebook notifications popping up on their phones throughout the day? Today, there's another layer of complexity as more and more professionals use and rely on social media to do their jobs. Even more, many businesses now rely on their employee's social media content to promote the company and drive customer awareness.

If you haven't already, consider creating a social media policy for your small business. A written policy will help you clarify the gray area into a more black and white set of social media usage expectations that support and protect not only your business, but your employees as well.

Create a social media policy that clearly states the do's and don'ts of social media use related to your business.

There's a lot to consider when deciding what goes into your social media policy and how to find a balance between the legal rights of the employees, your rights as an employer and the general wellbeing of your entire team.

Consider these tips as you set out to create a social media policy for your business.

Tip #1: Recognize that

Your Employees Have Rights

Protecting your company from the financial impacts of lost time and reputation damage by restricting social media usage and certain types of content can begin to infringe on your employee's right to freedom of speech and other rights. Do your homework to understand your employees' rights and your rights as an owner before you draw up your social policy. The National Labor Relations Board is a great resource for learning the details of the National Labor Relations Act and its protection of an employee's freedom of speech.

Tip #2: Be Clear on Your Expectations About Social Use in the Workplace

You need to be upfront with your team about their use of social media during work hours. And, those stipulations need to be spelled out clearly in your policy. If you feel that it's in the best interest of the company to limit social media use to breaks or the lunch hour, then that goes in the policy as a line item. Be specific so there's no confusion.

(Continued on page 50)

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Ask SCORE

(Continued from page 49)

Tip #3: Talk to Your Employees Before They Endorse Your Product on Social

There's a fine line between employees rallying behind your brand with positive social posts and coming across as endorsing or promoting a product to an unknowing audience. The Federal Trade Commission's Endorsement Guide details specific rules to prevent paid company endorsements as a way to protect consumers. Employees who use their social accounts to promote your product without disclosing that they work for your business put themselves – and your company – at serious risk. Take your lead from the FTC's guidelines and make sure this is clearly spelled out in your social policy.

Tip #4: Create a Policy that Addresses Both General Employees and Social Media Managers

Your policy needs to account for the actions of employees tasked with managing your business' social media accounts. This can include posting and sharing content and commenting on your behalf. Create a separate policy for these members of your team, or create an addendum to your policy that details the guidelines for posting, including a social strategy and plan for the business. Whichever you choose, make sure your expectations are clearly documented and communicated.

Tip #5: Discuss Your Social Media Policy Openly with All of Your Employees

Documentation is important, but openly communicating your expectations is the secret to the success of your social media policy. Discuss the policy with your employees and welcome their feedback.

Before you add your social media policy to your employee handbook, run it by a group of advisors.

Your social media policy, like any other business policy, has a legal impact on your business and should be run past your attorney before being implemented. It's also a good idea to consult a Human Resources professional to make sure you've thought through every aspect of how social media could impact your business.

Another smart source of guidance is your SCORE mentor. A SCORE mentor can support you as you draft your policy and connect you with a small business attorney and HR consultant who can help you put the best policy in place for your small business.

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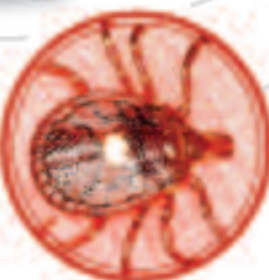
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DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

By Barry Cassidy

The face of cities is changing. Recently, the CoStar Group reported that 12.9 percent of office space is vacant nationally, marking the sixth straight double-digit quarter. The rate has increased from a post-financial crisis low of 9.4 percent in the second quarter of 2019. The office space "availability" rate, which measures vacant offices plus currently leased space that isn't being renewed or has been listed for subleasing, is 16.4 percent.

This situation is not what commercial landlords visualized when many office buildings were built. Short work weeks and the reluctance of people to return from remote work have created foot traffic issues. As a result, the space being used is not used to the maximum extent. Reduced hours in the office have changed the nature of foot traffic in the cities.

When I visited 70 cities during the last days of the 2021 Lockdown, much of the retail was gone. There was no way for restaurants, gyms, and people-intensive functions to open because of the lockdown. The lack of people downtown led to the encampments of people experiencing homelessness along the deserted commercial streets.

The displacement of the shopper with the wave of people squeezed by the lockdowns further changed the nature of who was in the downtowns. When not many people are on the street, things of an aberrant nature are more likely to happen. I see it on the Avenue of the Arts in Philadelphia when addicts bang up on the street corner.

In Germany, before the pandemic, there were waves of refugees coming to German cities and defecating on the sidewalks. Now in America, it is a commonplace occurrence in cities like San Francisco and Chicago. Things can get real weird fast in some of these places. I believe that much of it is because not as many people travel to the city from suburban homesteads.

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Consider that in-person schooling was also interrupted during the lockdown, which prevented school-age children from being consumers. The interruption in group activities was felt throughout society. As a result, there was a change in habits and the way we interact with commerce.

Retail in small towns that do not have a large office population seemed to have fared better than some larger cities because they did not have to rely on the workforce to provide foot traffic. From my window at 101 Bridge Street in Phoenixville, I can see that 31,000 square feet of office space are available. The downtown's only large office building is sitting vacant. There has been a minimal effect on the nature of foot traffic as this building is an isolated use in the downtown. This is not the case in large cities where hundreds of thousands of feet of vacant office space exist.

The lack of foot traffic has led to a wild west atmosphere in some larger cities. What was once unheard of is now commonplace as the sensibility of the underclass has been awakened. I have worked in some of the worst neighborhoods that cities had to offer, and although there were problems, I never saw the dysfunction prevalent in commercial centers today.

I could theorize that everyone walking around with a camera and taking pictures

and videos magnifies the problem that, in many cases, existed before the pandemic. But people pulling up and taking a dump in front of a store or overdosing in front of the library takes it to a higher level. So again, the ills of society are front and center.

Not all homelessness is a matter of people being mentally ill or having drug issues, but a function of having life interrupted by the virus lockdown and not being able to garner the resources necessary to sustain a normal existence, including food, clothing, and shelter. The lockdown changed the way many of us live.

Much can be said about the advent of online sales and the ability to shop for what you want and have it delivered to your door. This increased convenience eliminated some burdens of going outside during the lockdown. In addition, the option has limited the amount of demand there is for going to a local store, and buying what you need.

Coupling all of the issues listed above, there is now a kind of acceptance that juveniles can start shooting each other to settle neighborhood disagreements. Just like online sellers have taken away some of the local retail store trade, criminal gangs have used this opportunity to kill each other over whatever issues rile them on that particular day.

(Continued on page 54)

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DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

(Continued from page 53)

So, a retail business owner encounters fewer workers being customers, increased ease of ordering online, more socially aberrant behavior, safety issues, and rising interest rates. As a result, what once was the model for a successful downtown in a large city business has changed. As a result, the concept of a city is changing.

There was a time when most of the goods and services were centered in the city. Before interstates and massive road projects that gave birth to the suburbs, it was difficult not to go to the city to get something if you wanted a higher end product. Unfortunately, the suburban mall sent retail in the cities into a tailspin with massive vacancies prompting the days of Urban Renewal in the early '60s. It appears to me that too much capital is tied up in some of these office buildings to start demolishing them.

So what, then? How is this resolved? I harken recollections of the dystopian 1988 film *Escape from New York*. The city was transformed into a giant maximum-security prison to deal with a 400 percent increase in crime. Through real estate redlining/discriminatory lending, we

have already isolated the economically disadvantaged and minorities in the city. While being kinder and gentler toward that population, we allow their children to be slaughtered by juvenile gangs, with little threat to their long-term incarceration because of their age. Guys taking a dump on the sidewalk maybe isn't that bad in the context of present reality.

The combination of issues and events is the focus of the problems in large cities today. Massive first-floor vacancies and lack of continuity in the distance between open businesses do not relate to a positive shopping experience. The lack of physical continuity on the street, the dissemination of the mom-and-pop owner-operator, and the factors outlined above make it hard to have an optimistic view of the future of the large city. Walmart, Cracker Barrel, Walgreens, Whole Foods, Nordstrom, Pottery Barn, Abercrombie, Macy's, and a host of others are packing their bags. The small mom-and-pop shops cannot compete in an atmosphere of transition and uncertainty.

Barry Cassidy is a freelance grant and economic development consultant. He can be reached at barrycassidy@comcast.net.

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Stiff competition and thin profit margins have made running lean a necessity for most small businesses, so it's important to establish smart *buying* habits from the outset. The steps are not complicated, nor do they require fancy financial formulas. Cutting costs is all about common sense. You just have to know where to look.

Here are five ways to save your small business money on the simple things:

Avoid buying only name-brand items in small quantities. Shop for bargains online. Superstores like Office Depot, Staples and Office Max offer "store brands" at reduced prices. And when you establish an online account, they'll often send coupons worth \$10 or \$20 off orders of \$100 or more.

Don't photocopy high-volume items that you can print for less. Copies typically cost five to 15 cents each, even if you do them yourself, including paper, toner, labor and maintenance. Printing can lower costs to three cents or less. The biggest cost items are forms, flyers and form letters that you *think* you use in small quantities.

But if you photocopy a few dozen per week, that can be thousands per year and you could save by having it printed.

Think of your inventory as company cash sitting on a shelf or in a warehouse doing nothing. Costs include storage, insurance and taxes, among others. Keep good records and regularly root out dead items.

Express shipments for next morning delivery are costly. Consider next afternoon or maybe two- or three-day service.

Review vendor relationships at least annually for Internet services, phone, wireless, DSL, shipping, legal, printing and other day to day expenses. Prices and package deals change and you may be overpaying.

Spending wisely on your routine expenses also helps you be more alert for ideas that will make other aspects of your operations more cost-effective. It all adds up to better value for your customers, and a healthier bottom line for your business.

For more money saving ideas for your small business, contact SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business." SCORE is a nonprofit organization of more than 13,000 volunteer business counselors who provide free, confidential business counseling and training workshops to small business owners. Call 610.327.2673 for the Pottstown SCORE chapter or find a counselor online at www.pottstownscore.org.

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WASHINGTON SHOULD BLOCK DATA COLLECTION RULE TO PRESERVE SMALL-BUSINESS LENDING



By Troy Peters, President & Chief Executive Officer,
Jonestown Bank & Trust Co.

At a time of growing threats to privacy and security in an increasingly plugged-in world, a new federal regulation threatens to make the problem worse for the residents and small businesses of the Susquehanna Valley and other communities nationwide. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently finalized a rule that will require financial institutions to burden small-business customers with invasive questions and then publicly report the data they collect to the federal agency.

As I recently told Congress in testimony before the House Small Business Committee, Washington should block this misguided rule given its harmful impact on privacy and its potential to restrict access to credit, particularly for the women- and minority-owned businesses this rule is designed to help.

Big Rule for Small Businesses

The CFPB's new rule implements a section of federal law requiring lenders to collect and report data on credit applicants. The law specifies several data points financial institutions must compile on applications from women-owned and minority-owned businesses, including the race, sex, and ethnicity of the principal owners as well as gross annual revenue.

While these requirements are mandated by Section 1071 of the *Dodd-Frank Act of 2010*, the CFPB has the authority to exempt any class of financial institutions from the standards it develops and to limit mandatory data points to those required by the law. Unfortunately for applicants served by community banks — which

make roughly 60 percent of the nation's small-business loans and are leaders in meeting the credit needs of women- and minority-owned businesses — the CFPB has opted to apply the rule to the vast majority of local financial institutions and the businesses they serve. And the data points it requires these institutions to collect and report far exceed those required by law, compounding its impact on small businesses and community banks.

Harming Local Economies

The CFPB's rule will have a substantial negative impact on small-business lending for several reasons.

First, the rule raises significant concerns about the privacy of applicants for commercial credit, particularly in smaller communities and rural areas. Community bankers are concerned for small-business customers that are the only business of their type in their local community, such as the town dentist or auto repair shop — a significant concern in the Susquehanna Valley and many other areas of Pennsylvania.

(Continued on page 58)

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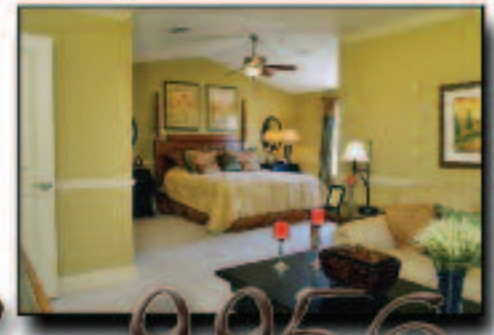


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OP-Ed

(Continued from page 57)

Requiring financial institutions to collect and report data on loan applicants will make it possible for them to be identified, potentially driving small businesses away from local communities.

Second, the CFPB's rigid data collection requirements will hamper the ability of Jonestown Bank & Trust Co. and other community banks to tailor loans to meet the unique needs of local businesses. While community banks look at each small business individually and make highly customized loans, the CFPB's rule requires a homogenized approach that will degrade their ability to offer small businesses the type of credit they need in a timely and efficient manner.

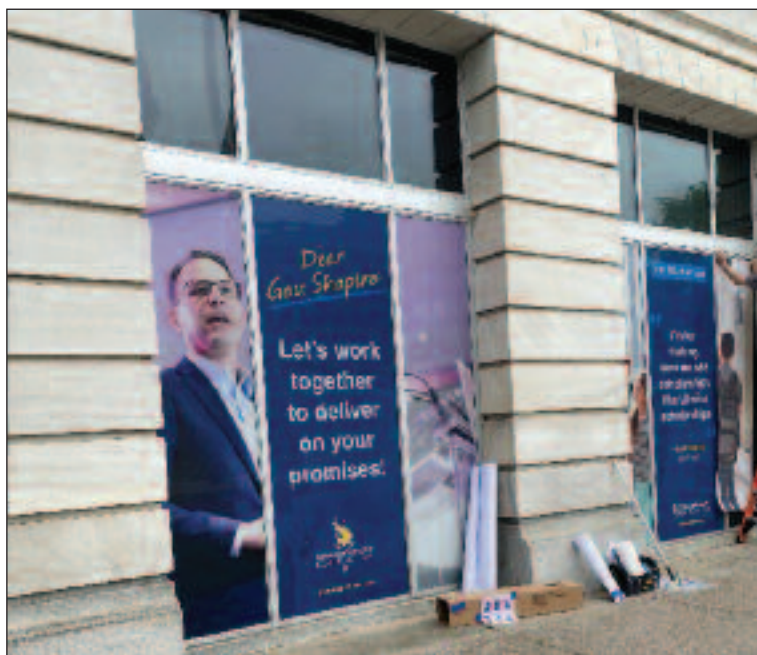
Third, these requirements and their chilling effect on small-business lending will ultimately harm the borrowers the bureau is trying to help — women-owned and minority-owned businesses. By targeting the community banks that are outpacing larger institutions in serving minority and women borrowers, the CFPB's self-defeating rule threatens to undermine a part of the banking sector that is working as it should.

With the U.S. Supreme Court consid-

ering a case challenging the constitutionality of the CFPB's funding structure, the bureau should first issue a stay on the rule's effective date until the high court issues a decision, which will likely come next year. Meanwhile, the CFPB should use its authority to exempt more community banks and small businesses from its rule and limit mandatory data points to those required by law. Finally, Congress should step in and pass legislation to eliminate these harmful requirements once and for all.

Community bank small-business lending is a complex process that cannot be commoditized like consumer or mortgage lending, which would have a chilling effect on access to credit, particularly for the borrowers Washington is seeking to help. To avoid disadvantaging small businesses in local communities, including right here in the Susquehanna Valley, Washington should suspend and ultimately block this misguided policy.

Troy Peters is president and CEO of the Jonestown Bank & Trust Co. He recently testified on the small-business data collection issue before the House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access.



THE COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION | CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Commonwealth Foundation unveils its 'Shapiro's Promises' campaign to highlight key policy issues it hopes the new Democratic governor will cross the aisle to support.

POLICY PILLARS ERECTED FOR STATE'S 'GREAT COMPROMISE' BUDGET



**By Christen Smith,
Regional Editor,
The Center Square**

The possible parameters for a state budget compromise emerged last month in a window across the street from the Pennsylvania Capitol in Harrisburg.

The Commonwealth Foundation, a free-market think tank headquartered just steps from the building's grand rotunda, unveiled signage for its "Shapiro's Promises" campaign – in reference to Josh Shapiro's overtures for bipartisan cooperation during his first term as governor.

By all appearances, negotiating his first spending plan – with a Republican-majority Senate and Democratic-majority House – serves as a *de facto* litmus test for the strength of that promise. The possibilities leave the foundation, whose policy positions typically align with legislative Republicans, feeling optimistic.

"We don't agree with Governor Shapiro on every issue, but we stand united around these important priorities," said Erik Telford, the foundation's senior vice president. "And we're ready to work arm-in-arm to help him follow through on his promises that will ensure a better Pennsylvania."

The foundation's messaging highlights a handful of key issues – all of which Shapiro discussed on the campaign trail last year – where compromise could be found, including expanding school

choice; licensure and permitting reform; accelerating business tax cuts; ways to reduce energy costs; and making telehealth more accessible.

To his credit, the foundation said, the governor signed an executive order during his third week in office that approved refunds for residents when the state misses deadlines to issue permits, certifications and licenses. The policy impacts scores of professionals – from nurses to educators to cosmetologists to restaurant owners – who must receive state approval to work in their respective fields.

While it's a start, the foundation argues more work must be done to fix the structural deficiencies that bog down the process in the first place. Telford, in a news release, pointed to recent polling that shows 86 percent of respondents support these reforms too.

Telemedicine access also ranks high among shared priorities. Some 83 percent of poll respondents agreed on continued flexibility for providers to treat patients virtually – offering a lifeline to underserved rural communities and reducing opioid overdoses, The Center Square previously reported. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, and Shapiro himself, agree that pandemic-era waivers for telehealth should be permanent.

Accelerating the corporate net income tax rate reduction – structured as a decade-long descent from 9.99 percent to 4.99 percent – also seems ripe for compromise.

(Continued on page 60)

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POLICY PILLARS — 'GREAT COMPROMISE' BUDGET

(Continued from page 59)

Republican leaders in the Senate, where the tax cut originated last year, say speeding up the process will encourage economic growth as the state barrels toward a demographic crisis.

Shapiro's first spending plan, unveiled in March, would slash the corporate net income tax to four percent by 2025. On the campaign trail, he said he prioritized policies that fueled manufacturing and technological innovation, attracted more business investment, and encouraged college graduates to settle in the state.

Lawmakers agree that stemming population loss, especially among working-age residents, is the state's biggest challenge — one that must be conquered to prevent future economic ruin.

But school choice, a top priority for legislative Republicans, may not fit so easily into a negotiated spending plan. For Shapiro, enough money exists to both fund public schools and support alternative choices for families who want them — a position that's a tough sell for his Democratic colleagues.

House Democrats, in charge of the legislative calendar for the first time in more than a decade, want a budget that

invests billions into public schools, boosts tax and salary incentives for teachers, and reconfigures state financial support and regulatory oversight of charter schools.

Senate Republicans litter the spectrum of support for school choice. In total, the caucus wants to boost funding for the state's dual tax credit programs that reimburse businesses for donating money to cover tuition for low-income students attending private schools.

Supporters argue that families shouldn't be bound to underperforming school districts based on ZIP code alone, but critics believe the money funnels out of the state with practically zero oversight of how it's spent.

Foundation polling found that 77 percent of respondents want to expand the tax credit programs, too.

A newer GOP-backed idea, however, seems less likely to win Shapiro over: lifeline scholarships. Last year, the House approved legislation to create spending-restricted accounts for families living in the bottom 15 percent of districts. The scholarships offer roughly \$6,700 per student to cover tuition,



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The state spends just under \$20,000 per student overall, though the exact amount varies based on each district's share of local support, administrative costs, and special education needs.

Shapiro, however, included no mention of the program in his budget proposal. And legislative Democrats have long believed the state should focus on bolstering its support to public schools first, rather than relying on local tax dollars to fill in the gaps.

Some 67 percent of poll respondents expressed support for lifeline scholarships, the foundation said.

Rising energy costs likewise fail to engender bipartisan solutions. While the courts deliberate over the state's entry into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative – a regulatory program that charges power producers for the carbon pollution they emit – Republicans' years-long crusade to derail the entire effort has hit a wall.

Critics argue RGGI does nothing to lower emissions since air pollution doesn't stay within state borders – so non-participating neighbors, like Ohio and West Virginia, will still emit carbon into the atmosphere, as will the rest of the world. And, worst of all they said, RGGI will raise energy costs for residents as utility companies increase rates to try to recoup money lost through the "carbon tax."

Republicans also lean on 2022 analysis from the Independent Fiscal Office that found the annual cost of RGGI had nearly quadrupled from initial estimates given in 2019. Shapiro's budget anticipates receiving more than \$600 million from the program in the coming year, too.

This, even though the governor had both publicly and privately expressed

doubts about RGGI's environmental impact, as The Center Square previously reported.

Just over half of poll respondents want to see concerns about RGGI's impact on energy costs "resolved," according to the foundation.

Although Shapiro and Republican leaders appear aligned on several of these key issues, Democrats' long-ignored policy wish list will still present challenges.

Shapiro's \$44.4 billion budget strategy centers around investing as much state money as possible into policies that will grow the workforce and boost tax revenues to cover future spending.

Like legislative Democrats, he wants to raise the minimum wage to \$15, expand access to affordable childcare, create tax incentives for in-demand professions, boost benefits for public retirees, widen the social safety net, and boost public education support.

Key Republican leaders have expressed doubts about the viability of the governor's plan, which includes depleting the state's \$5.6 billion savings account over the next five years.

These differences widen the gap any budget compromise must overcome. Still, Telford said, he believes it can be done.

"We stand ready to work with Governor Shapiro to enact these critical solutions," Telford said. "The governor and lawmakers have an opportunity to unite across party lines, set a new tone in Harrisburg, and improve the lives of all Pennsylvanians."

Christen Smith, Regional Editor, joins The Center Square as its Pennsylvania News Editor and brings with her more than a decade of experience covering state and national policy issues from all angles. She's a Pennsylvania State University alumna and has been published in the The Washington Examiner, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, RealClear and Broad+Liberty, among others.

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