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**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 Cadzo 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.

For More Information: Kathleen Kelly O'Hara,
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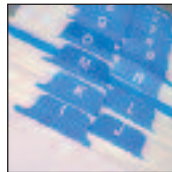
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Cover Story: AskSpot empowers small businesses, content creators, and more by offering AI-powered solutions like intelliforms for automated customer service and data collection, FlowBuilder for visual workflows, and Spotlight, an AI landing page for enhanced business networking.



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The Residences at
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AskSpot Makes Utilizing AI Easy

By Kathy Hunt

It's the thing that everyone is talking about, the innovative field of computer science that strives to make life easier and work more efficient and save money while doing so. But exactly what is artificial intelligence or AI?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines artificial intelligence as "the capability of computer systems or algorithms to imitate intelligent human behavior" and "a branch of computer science dealing with the simulation of intelligent human behavior by computers." Direct a GPS app to find the quickest route to a destination. Dictate and send a text or email with a smartphone.

Scroll past a series of personalized ads on social media. Engage with an online customer service chat or "chat bot." All of these activities utilize AI.

AI may be achieved through machine learning. Here, a computer studies large amounts of datasets to learn how to perform tasks without direct instruction. Through experience, it learns and improves on its own. Hence the name "machine learning."

This answers the question of what AI is, but it doesn't explain how different enterprises will benefit from using it. In 2024, *Forbes* magazine reported that AI promises to help companies by streamlining operations, tailoring customer experience, and accurately predicting market trends. It pointed to how AI automates routine, time-consuming jobs such as scheduling appointments and managing customer inquiries, as well as more complex duties such as writing reports. AI can also evaluate customer behavior and preferences, determine which marketing efforts work, and personal-

ize consumer experiences, sparing businesses from pursuing wrong and often costly approaches to wooing customers. By being freed from mundane work, employees can shift their efforts to new and challenging projects.

Although AI's abilities sound encouraging, entrepreneurs still face the dilemma of how to implement AI in an easy and effective way. For that, they can turn to AskSpot. This "copy-and-paste, easy, no-code, custom AI chatbot builder" was launched by Drew Griffin and David Calafiore in January 2024. AskSpot provides the tools, knowledge, and experience needed to build AI-powered assistants, interactive forms, and automated workflows. It can be embedded on websites and chat platforms or used as a direct link.

"Our design is really to help local businesses do easy, copy-and-paste artificial intelligence," said AskSpot developer and co-founder Griffin, who is based in Douglassville PA (Berks County).



PHOTO BY STEVE LADNER PHOTOGRAPHY

How AskSpot empowers small businesses, content creators, and more

With AskSpot, businesses can rely on AI-powered assistants to handle repetitive customer service tasks such as answering frequently asked questions.

"We saw the emergence of AI and built this tool for us internally to handle frequently asked questions and things like that," Griffin said. "When we were able to automate a lot of what our tool does, we realized it would make a very pragmatic tool for other businesses, whether that be other software companies or local brick-and-mortar businesses, to help them solve some of their low-hanging-fruit problems."

One such solvable issue, Griffin noted, concerns the repeat calls that companies receive regarding hours of operation, accepted methods of payment, and shipping regions, rates, and fees. Rather than have an employee field these queries, they can be answered by an AI assistant.

Another problem-solver is intelliforms. Using AI, an online form collects and processes data for such things as inquiries and service requests. AskSpot can then generate and send responses to customers. It can also create new content for blogs, reports, and other formatted text outputs. Intelliforms safely collect and store user data, forwarding it to CRMs (customer relationship management), Google Sheets, or internal tools. Among the advantages of intelliforms is the ability to deliver lead magnets. In this scenario, customers receive special deals or free resources in exchange for inputting their contact information, which then allows a business to grow its email list and its audience.

Yet another AskSpot feature, FlowBuilder, walks users, step-by-step, through specific information. "It gives the user a visual interface to connect the dots between the functions that they're trying to do. It's an 'If this, then that,'" Griffin says.

In April 2025, AskSpot released Spotlight. This is an AI-powered landing page that Griffin believes will aid everyone, no matter the industry. In essence, it enables businesspeople to network more effectively.

"Think about an AI-powered business card. If someone scans the card, it might go to a website. Could you interact with it in such a way that it gets right to the point about the product or service and shows someone how to connect with the business card holder? Yes, you could," he said. "Spotlight links to all the social channels, like Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Instagram. It also has video where a business card owner could welcome the person who scanned the card and interact with them, inviting them to click on a button and enter their information. Someone can then reach out to them directly. It's a profoundly different experience than the traditional business card."

Griffin added that Spotlight is trained to recognize who the person is and the value that the individual brings to a business. It gives the card owner and its recipient the opportunity to work together simply by asking a few questions and determining what's important and how to best leverage an individual and that person's network.

(Continued on page 8)



DREW GRIFFIN & DAVID CALAFIORE



Helping businesses adopt innovative technology

When developing AskSpot, Griffin, Calafiore, and their developers structured the software for ease of use. Even so, they realized that not everyone would feel confident about building their own AI tools or even utilizing new software. With this in mind, AskSpot offers a free, 30-day trial so that prospective customers can become acquainted with its capabilities. They can also book a 30-minute, personalized demonstration that takes them through AskSpot's features, explains its benefits and use cases, and answers questions about the product and its implementation. Both offerings aim to remove reservations that may exist around using AI in the workplace.

Once someone has signed up for AskSpot, the customer attends a live, onboarding session. "We have amazing trainers who walk customers through utilizing the tool," Griffin said. "Kim Amio is one of our trainers and she does a great job, all by way of Zoom, with either one-on-one or group calls. We have continuous training on AskSpot throughout the week, and community on Skool.com that allows us to educate, inform, and improve the customer's experience with our software."

After AskSpot has been installed, AI training begins. A good way to train AI is to have a conversation with ChatGPT. It, along with API, Google Gemini, Claude, DeepSeek, and other AI tools, served as a basis for the AskSpot model.

To start this conversation, Griffin suggested creating a document and then uploading it to AskSpot. "This way, AI knows everything you want it to know, and it more or less becomes a clone of whatever your training tool might be," he said.

He added that not only documents but also PDFs and audio and text files will quickly educate AskSpot about the functions that the AI system should perform.

Any establishment can benefit from AskSpot, but those that possess a waiting area, such as a medical, dental, or law office or a mechanics shop, are especially good candidates, Griffin said. He cited restaurants as an example.

While waiting at a restaurant, customers could use their phones to scan a QR code on a table-top tent. In exchange for entering their name and email address, they receive a 10-percent discount on their meal. They also get to pass the time, as they wait for the food and beverages, by playing a trivia game.

In this instance, AskSpot accomplishes a few different things. "First, it decreases the customers' awareness of the wait time," Griffin said. "Then, it entertains them on the very device that everyone likely has on them at all time. At the end of the meal, they can rate their service, and the business gets to advertise upcoming events, specials, and discounts. It entertains, informs, and educates customers in a simple drag-and-drop format" he explains.

Join the free AI Power Hour

In addition to demonstrations and onboarding sessions, AskSpot hosts a free webinar series known as AI Power Hour. The hour-long workshops help local businesses “discover, learn, and apply AI in real life.” Led by Griffin and Calafiore and featuring a range of industry experts, the series covers a range of AI topics as well as AskSpot.

The intentions of AI Power Hour are to demystify AI and serve the greater community. The workshops are described on the social media platform Meetup as a “go-to local community for practical, no-hype conversations around artificial intelligence. Whether you’re ‘just getting started’ or already knee-deep in AI tools and workflows, this group is for curious minds, business owners, creators, and professionals who want to make AI work in the real world.”

AI Power Hour includes real-world use cases, explainers and tutorials on the latest AI tools, and a chance to ask questions and get answers about AI. It’s also a networking opportunity where attendees meet local entrepreneurs, tech professionals, and others who share a passion for learning about new and innovative tools for the workplace.

The inspirations for this series come from the fast pace at which AI is advancing, and the limited time people have to master new technologies.

“AI isn’t coming. It’s here,” Griffin said. “What we’re learning today is almost obsolete the next day. I want to alleviate the fear around AI and get people informed. Whether you want to use AI or just be cognizant of it, it’s better to be ahead of the game instead of reactionary.”

To join an AI Power Hour, check out the website <https://aipowerhour.events/> or <https://www.meetup.com/aipowerhour> for event details and registration.

Different AskSpot plans address different AI needs

Because not all businesses have the same needs, AskSpot offers three levels of services. All three packages include: AI assistants, intelliforms, and drag-and-drop FlowBuilder; chat logs and export; lead capture; prompt library; webhook integrations; and the ability to cancel or upgrade at any time.

Perfect for small businesses that are new to AI, the Starter plan offers the aforementioned features. It is \$29 per month. Larger or growing companies with multiple AI needs can opt for the Pro plan. At \$59 per month. This is the most popular plan and includes a custom domain and 20 assistants, intelliforms, and bots. Indicated for businesses desiring full customization and scalability, the Unlimited plan also provides a custom domain as well as unlimited assistants, intelliforms, and bots. It costs \$99 per month.

For additional information about AskSpot or to sign up for a free, 30-day trial or demonstration, visit AskSpot.ai.

Learn the AI lingo

To navigate the world of artificial intelligence, it helps to have an understanding of its terminology. The following are a few commonly used words and their definitions. Unless otherwise indicated, these definitions are taken from Merriam-Webster.

AI model: (from IBM): a program that has been trained on a set of data to recognize certain patterns or make certain decisions without further human intervention.

Algorithm: a set of rules or instructions that a machine follows to learn how to do a task.

Bot: a computer program that performs automatic repetitive tasks; a computer program or character (as in a game) designed to mimic the actions of a person.

Chatbot: a bot designed to converse with humans.

ChatGPT: (from Wikipedia) generative AI chatbot developed by the company OpenAI that can generate can human-like conversational responses. It is credited with creating the AI boom.

Data mining: the practice of searching through large amounts of computerized data to find useful patterns or trends.

Dataset: a collection of data taken from a single source or intended for a single project

Deep learning: a type of machine learning in which the computer network rapidly teaches itself to understand a concept without human intervention. It does this by performing a large number of repetitive calculations on an extremely large dataset.

Generative AI: AI capable of generating new content in response to a submitted prompt by learning from a large reference database of examples. Simply put, it is artificial intelligence that could successfully do any intellectual task done by humans.

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FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN REVITALIZATION

Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED) Celebrates 60th Anniversary: *Reimagining Pottstown Since 1965*

Since its founding in 1965 as Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID), now known as Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED), the organization has served as the lead economic development entity for Pottstown, PA, promoting commercial and industrial growth across the region. Established as a 501c (3) non-profit corporation, PAID was a regional organization, serving not only the Borough of Pottstown, but also surrounding townships including Lower Pottsgrove, Warwick Township, Douglasville, and Royersford. In 2010, PAID was reorganized so that there could be a focus on the “spine” of this multi-town area, with the Borough at its core. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created between the Borough of Pottstown, Pottstown School District and the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County — to commit to the establishment of a leader for economic development in the Borough’s 5.5 sq. miles. PAED is governed by a Board of Directors,



with participation from key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. For many decades, PAED has been leading Pottstown’s growth with a commitment to a diverse and responsible economic development strategy. As an independent non-government organization it has been and remains the “go-to” organization for the development community.

1950s - 1960s

Major industries were headquartered in Pottstown and the Borough was recognized as the economic engine for the region. Thriving larger employers included Bethlehem Steel, Mrs. Smiths’ Pies, and Stanley Flagg Brass. Although these iconic companies no longer physically exist, many businesses and organizations from that time, and even earlier, continue to be a part of the economic story in Pottstown today. These include Dana Inc., O’Donnell Weiss & Mattei P.C., and Picardi, Phillips & Ottaviano (formerly Yervey, Daylor, Allebach, Scheffey, Picardi).



1970s-1980s

A major economic shift began, forever changing the economic landscape of this post-industrial town. Pottstown was hit hard by the closure of major industrial businesses, leaving large, vacant buildings and environmental conditions in need of remediation.

In 1973, PAID worked with the Borough to acquire 85 acres, west of Route 100, which

would become Shoemaker Road, creating Pottstown’s first industrial park. Today this business area is home to businesses such as Eastwood and US Axle. Less than a decade later, in the 1980s PAID acquired 50 acres, establishing the Pottstown Municipal Airport Campus, also known as Circle of Progress. This second development has become home to a variety of businesses, including Aegis Technologies, ECT (Engine Cleaning Technology), Helwig Woodworks,

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Manatawny Stillworks, and Sly Fox Brewing Company. In 1984, after being closed for ten years, the majority of the Bethlehem Steel footprint was reimagined into *Pottstown Industrial Complex*. A private company acquired the property and committed to open Keim Street as a public thoroughfare and to preserve these industrial buildings for future businesses. Businesses that opened during these years, and are still thriving today, include Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C., Precision Polymer, Fromm Electric, Cody Systems, Budget Maintenance Concrete, and Bause Catered Events.

This busy decade wrapped up when in 1989 PAID funded the Urban Land Institute Advisory Study, leading to the creation of a Plan for the new Borough Transportation Center, with its proximity to the Charles W. Dickinson Transportation Center. This garden courtyard, complete with abundant trees and a water fountain was named Smith Family Plaza, after one of Pottstown's prominent families and today is the location of many events, including the annual Pottstown Fete En Blanc and the annual Santa Saturday Tree Lighting.

1990s - 2010s

Pottstown's progress continued. PAID purchased two buildings in 1999, shutting down nuisance bars, one of which is now

home to Frida's Mexican Taqueria. In the Early 2000s, PAID facilitated the renovation of the 1888 building Security Trust Bank at the corner of High and Hanover Streets. PAID owned the building while conducting a structural analysis and environmental studies, before it was sold again. The new owners, after significant renovations, transformed the ground floor into a restaurant and the upper floors into offices. Economic conditions continued to fluctuate, as many industries and businesses downsized due to the market conditions or closed completely. However, some new businesses were to become part of Pottstown's future, including VideoRay and the High Street Music Company. In addition, the Steel River Playhouse relocated to the Downtown. During this time PAED formed the Tourism & Recreation District (TRec) to plan, market, and highlight unique assets that establish Pottstown as a regional tourism destination.

2010s - Present

The reorganization of PAID in 2010 was a direct result of the 2008 financial crisis. After another visit from an Urban Land Institute (ULI) team, who issued a report indicating that a lead economic development entity, outside of government, was necessary for revitalization efforts. The creation of the MOU was for

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the purpose of identifying PAED to be the "single authoritative entity" to "facilitate, manage and implement" economic development efforts in the 5.5 sq. miles of the Borough.

In 2011, PAID hired and appointed its first Executive Director. During the mid-2010s many businesses were relocating, or undergoing construction, expansions, and renovations. In 2017, PAED launched "I Pick Pottstown!", representing the positive activity of incoming businesses after decades of struggle for the Borough. In 2019, the Borough and West Pottsgrove Township adopted the *Keystone Employment & Economic Plan (KEEP)*, which established a vision for economic development, revitalization, and infrastructure improvements of the Keystone Boulevard area, along the 422 Corridor and Route 100 intersection. PAED led the effort towards creating a plan that would encourage development of un-utilized and under-utilized sites. Perhaps one of the most challenging but successful projects in recent history that PAED took on was 215 S. Washington Street, the site of the former Pottstown Plating Works. PAED successfully guided the property through environmental remediation, untangled and resolved a complex tax history inherited from the

previous owner, ultimately restoring the site to productive use and returning it to the tax rolls.

In 2020-2021, as the nation responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, PAID provided support to the business community by interpreting and disseminating critical government information, facilitating microgrants, and creating networks for financial and services support. In 2021, during the post-COVID recovery, PAID stepped in to fill the gap between local, county and state government and the business community. At the same time, PAED had already been poised to rebrand from "Industrial" to "Economic," representing an alignment with the commitment to an innovative, diverse and responsible economic development strategy for Pottstown's economy of tomorrow. This shift from the "I" to the "E" strengthened PAED's strategy to tell the Pottstown story to a wider audience and create awareness of the organization's purpose. PAED's work, while historically project and property specific, evolved into a blend of bringing together resources that investors, business owners, and key stakeholders needed, while simultaneously engaging established businesses and attracting visitors.

(Continued on page 12)

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FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN REVITALIZATION

A focus on the Downtown resulted in this shift, bringing forth initiatives such as sidewalk cleaning (The Clean Team), the installation of a canopy of lights (Light up High Street), increasing branding and beautification efforts, the LSA (Local Share Account) Streetscape Design Plan, and the pursuit of a Main Street Designation and a Business Improvement District.

Today, PAED continues revitalization efforts through a myriad of activities such as managing grants for environmental remediation of properties to further commercial development projects and supporting small businesses throughout the Borough's entire 5.5 sq. miles. PAED administers the Land Bank for the Borough, successfully completing the sale of eight residential properties between 2022 and 2025.

Additionally, policy advocacy is an integral part of PAED's economic development efforts. In 2023, PAED convened a committee of municipal leaders, property owners and design professionals throughout Montgomery County, working with PA State Representative Joe Ciresi to introduce House Bill 1573. This legislation would create a pilot grant program for historic buildings, administered through the PA Department of Community and

Economic Development (DCED). Should this legislation be adopted in the Senate and signed by the Governor, it would help cover the high costs of modern mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems — all required to bring these beautiful old buildings up to code.

For 60 years, Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED) has been reimagining Pottstown, providing services to businesses and organizations seeking to invest, expand or relocate including assistance with site selection, commercial and industrial real estate development, access to resources and workforce development. PAED's efforts have stimulated investment, helped maintain and enhance the tax base, retained and created job opportunities, and restored under-utilized buildings. To celebrate this incredible milestone for Pottstown, PAED will host a special 60th Anniversary luncheon event on **Thursday, November 13, 2025**. Sponsorship opportunities and tickets will be available starting July 15, 2025, via ipickpottstown.org, and information is available by emailing info@paedinc.org.

For more information about Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED), please contact Peggy Lee-Clark, Executive Director at 610.575.7233.



Progress Continues in Pottstown: PAED Issues RFP for Pottstown's Streetscape Design Plan

Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED) is accepting proposals for the development of a comprehensive Streetscape Plan and Design for Pottstown's Downtown, Western Gateway, and Circle of Progress. This initiative aims to elevate the perception of this district, highlight its aesthetic appeal and walkability, and enhance cohesive branding for the Borough.



"This is more than beautification. It's about shaping a downtown experience that attracts people, supports local businesses, and reflects Pottstown's evolving identity," said Peggy Lee-Clark, Executive Director of PAED. "We're excited to take this step for the LSA Grant Streetscape Plan, as we support the Borough's long-term vision for revitalization."

Funded through a 2024 LSA (Local Share Account) upon PAED's application, the project seeks to unify the Borough's visual identity while celebrating the distinct character of each area. "(LSA) is a program funded by a portion of the gaming revenues generated in Pennsylvania... to support projects in the public interest, improve the quality of life for citizens and foster economic development within Pennsylvania communities." The Plan will provide a strategic vision for improvements including uniformed branded signage, outdoor street furniture & gathering spaces, planters and landscaping, public art, lighting, trash receptacles, bike racks, traffic calming methods, and more. The full Request for Proposal (RFP), including design guidelines, boundary maps, and FAQs, is now available on the PAED website at <https://ipickpottstown.org/2025/04/21/streetscaperfp2025>.

The project aligns with strategic recommendations from the Urban Land Institute's (ULI)* 2019 Advisory Services report, which emphasized placemaking efforts such as temporary parks, outdoor activities, wayfinding signage, and photogenic gateway features to help activate underutilized spaces and support local businesses. This report builds upon ULI's previous work in Pottstown in 1976, 1989, and 2009.

Once a thriving heavily industrialized community, Pottstown experienced a significant decline when those industries closed and left behind vacant environmentally challenged properties. As the leading economic development organization since 1965, Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED) was established to stimulate investment, which helps maintain and enhance the tax base, retain and create job opportunities, and restores, utilizes or removes under-utilized buildings.

*THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI) "is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 46,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide." To learn more visit Uli.org.

For more information about Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED), please contact Peggy Lee-Clark, Executive Director at 610.575.7233.



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Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future, and the Next Generation: North End Florist's 40th Anniversary

Whether they wanted flowers for a wedding, signs of love and affection for Valentine's Day, honoring parents on Mother's and Father's Day, sympathy arrangements for a funeral, bouquets, wristlets, and boutonnieres for the prom, sending to a special someone far away, North End Florist has always been the go-to place for the Pottstown Community's floral needs.

North End Florist is well known for their ability to create custom designed arrangements. Although their work is always on display in the glass cooler cases, the pieces that usually are not seen are for funerals. Our designers have been asked to incorporate quite a variety of items and mementos into these pieces. Some of our best remembered pieces included a Firestone tire; a pair of Harley Davidson boots; and a pair of fireman's boots.

See our ad (above) and let us become your go-to place for flowers and gifts.

A brief history of North End Florist

Donald and Jill Conner wanted to open a second location to accompany their well-established business at 300 High St, Pottstown Florist. North End Florist first opened its door in August 1985, at 453 N. Charlotte St. In 2003 they expanded into an adjoining storefront at 451. This expansion also allowed Donald to operate a wholesale floral supply business out of a warehouse in the rear of the building. Eventually, due to various reasons, the business had to downsize, and subsequently relocated to its current location at 403 N. Charlotte St. Even with this move, North End Florist has been at the same intersection of N. Charlotte & Oak Streets for 40 years. Quite the achievement. It was also the beginning of what would become a multi-generational business.

In 2014 Donald decided to retire and in 2015 his granddaughter, Krystal Steele, took



over ownership and operation of the shop. Krystal took the business in a new direction with the incorporation of social media and donations of arrangements, gift baskets, and gift certificates to local fundraisers.

In 2025 Krystal decided to take a sabbatical and the shop is now in the hands of her daughter, Hailey Lettich. Hailey will continue the tradition of offering beautifully arranged flowers for every occasion, along with other locally sourced types of gift merchandise.

Finally, we'd be remiss if we failed to recognize the recent retirement of two of our long-term designers. Sherry McMichael, our former manager and lead designer with 30 years in the industry, and Lori Davis, designer of 14 years. We wish these ladies a long and happy retirement.



Vlahos Dunn Agency Offers Liquor Liability Insurance for Fellow Hospitality Industry Entrepreneurs

Vlahos Dunn Insurance Agency has been an integral part of the Pottstown community for over two decades, skillfully navigating the changes that have influenced the area, including its recent revitalization. As our agency grew, we took the opportunity to acquire a prime location in the town center. A friend's suggestion inspired us to convert the space at 230 E. High Street into a lively Beer Garden. After conducting thorough research, we proudly launched the "Iron Gate Biergarten," which is now open for public enjoyment.

If you have experienced a rise in your Liquor Liability Insurance costs that has affected your profitability, our agency is ready to help. As the proprietors of Iron Gate Biergarten, we fully understand your requirements and can tailor your



coverage to protect your valuable investments. With our extensive expertise in the restaurant and bar sector, we recognize the unique challenges it entails. Liquor Liability Insurance is one of our specialties, alongside Commercial and Property & Casualty insurances, and we work with a variety of carriers. For a detailed review of your coverage and personalized recommendations, please reach out to our office at 610.326.1010 and ask for Nick Vlahos (nvlahos@vlahosdunn.com).



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Daily specials: Every Monday — special "2-for-dinners" with five choices — chef special dinners; Tuesday — Taco Tuesday; Wednesday — Burger Day specials; Thursday — Clam special & Trivia, 8-10 P.M. featuring fun and prizes. Weekend dinner specials include Prime Rib; Saturday afternoon — Soup and Sandwich special; Sunday — Family Day-Wert's Birch Beer on tap from 1960s, a local favorite from Topton; Shepherd's pie and children's menu.

The Coventry Pub features 11 drafts with three rotating seasonal taps. There is always a draft and cocktail special. Check out our Facebook page for daily specials and events. For more information, please call 610.323.5790.

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Sunnybrook Ballroom / SoulJoel's Comedy Club

**By Joel Richardson, Owner /
Founder at SoulJoel Productions**

Let me tell you something that sounds like the start of a bad joke—but isn't. A guy walks into a nearly 100-year-old ballroom in Pottstown, sees crumbling plaster, a leaking roof, and hears the echo of history whispering through a hollow shell. Most people would've turned around. I saw potential.

Revitalization isn't a glamorous word. It's messy, expensive, and takes more time than most of us would like. But if you're lucky — or maybe just stubborn — you'll find something in it that's worth fighting for. For me, that place was The Sunnybrook Ballroom. And the town that surrounds it, Pottstown, is the community I've committed myself to helping bring back to life.

A Place with History — and a Future

Sunnybrook isn't just a building. It's a memory. It's Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, and Frank Sinatra. It's where people danced through wars and weddings, heartbreak and healing. It's carefree summer days by the once existing pool. But when I first stepped into the building, that magic had dimmed.

Restoring Sunnybrook has been no small task. It has meant balancing preservation with progress — keeping the bones of this grand dame intact while bringing her into the 21st century.

But more than plaster or paint, Sunnybrook has become a platform. It's a stage not just for music, but for momentum. It is time to start new family memories for the next generations.





A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

I believe in this town. That's not lip service — it's philosophy. In business, and in life, I've found that a rising tide really does lift all boats. If Sunnybrook hosts a successful comedy night, the restaurant down the street gets more business. If we bring in a national swing dancing competition, the hotel fills up and people discover they actually like craft beer from a local taproom. Everybody wins.

That's why I've never wanted Sunnybrook to be a standalone island of revival. I've focused on bringing people to Pottstown, yes — but more importantly, giving them a reason to *stay*. From wedding expos to comedy festivals, swing bands to kickboxing, our events are designed to cross generations, genres, and state lines. And they do — folks come from New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, even Ohio to attend something that, on paper, sounds like it shouldn't work: high-end entertainment in a town people once drove *past*.

But now they're stopping. They're staying. They're investing.

Beyond the Ballroom

Revitalization doesn't stop at our doors. We've partnered with other businesses, supported new ventures, and encouraged everyone from city council to high school music groups to think bigger. And yes, I've annoyed more than a few people along the way — if you've read my book *Not Funny*, you know I'm always going to challenge the status quo. But I'm relentless because this place matters.



To me, restoring Pottstown isn't a vanity project — it's a responsibility. It's about legacy. And it's about refusing to accept that "good enough" is where the story ends.

Come See for Yourself

I always say: you don't have to believe the hype — come see the heartbeat. Come to a comedy night and laugh until your cheeks hurt. Or dance until your knees complain. Bring your cousin from Allentown, your aunt from Baltimore. Come early. Stay late. Spend your money where it matters: in a community that's writing its next chapter — one event, one restored building, one stubborn dreamer at a time.

Because this isn't just about Sunnybrook. It's about Pottstown.

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Joseph Scott McArdle Appointed Certified Commercial Investment Member Networking Subcommittee

Joseph Scott McArdle, CCIM who recently celebrated his fortieth anniversary in the real estate business, has been appointed by the Certified Commercial Investment Member networking subcommittee for 2025. The National Association of Realtors have also appointed him to their national commercial committee as an at-large member for 2025. McArdle is often credited with helping lead to the renaissance of Phoenixville. Recently McArdle was chosen by the local Chamber of Commerce to help them purchase a new facility to expand their programming as was needed with the ever-booming nature of the area. He has also been tapped to be the host of the Tri-County Suburban Board of Realtors Commercial/Industrial marketing exchange as well as being added as a member of their Commercial Chapter Advisory Committee.

McArdle said, "It truly is an honor and a privilege to be able to give back to an industry in such a meaningful way after

four decades, it seems like just the beginning for me." Adding, "Recent industry events have helped me learn from national and international experts as to the true state of the economy and keep current on the real estate industry. This helps me guide my clients in these uncertain times."



McArdle achieved the prestigious industry pinnacle designation of Certified Commercial Investment Member (C.C.I.M.). He is an award-winning graduate with distinction from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School with a Bachelors in Business Administration (BBA) in marketing and graduated Summa cum Laude from Harvard University with a Masters in Liberal Arts (MLA) in sustainability. He is an active member of the Tri-County Suburban Board of REALTORS® and recently completed their Leadership Development Program. He is also the host of their Commercial/Industrial Marketing Exchange.



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CREATE CONTENT WITH AI



SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

By Theresa Mintzer

Do you struggle with ideas for your social media content? Try asking Chat GPT to give suggestions. This

is an excellent starting point for your content. You can ask chat to give you posts, too. One thing to consider what utilizing AI is that the responses can seem generic. It is a good idea to check the output to confirm the content is correct and matches the tone you wish to convey with your brand.

Another way to use AI for content creation is a program called Minvo to create short form videos for YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Minvo will create shorter videos with your branding. You can ask Minvo to clip out content according to keywords you provide.

Creating social media graphics can be time consuming. Canva is a free design tool that you can use for presentations, videos, and social media. The paid plan called Canva Pro is well worth the cost if you plan to use it on a regular basis.



There are many tools available today that utilize AI to help save time with your content creation. Always remember your ideal customer when creating content. Have fun experimenting with these new tools.

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LEVERAGING NEW TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST YOUR MARKETING EFFICIENCY



MARKETING TIPS

**By Julie Huff, Copywriter,
beMarketing**

Marketing technology should make finding new leads and customers easier, not more chaotic. With AI, automation, and endless platforms available, the real trick is knowing which ones to use effectively. Remember, tools alone don't drive performance. People do.

Smarter SEO Starts with Smarter

Tools: Platforms like SEMrush, Moz, and Ahrefs help you find the exact keywords your audience is searching for and monitor competitors in real time. Combine data with strategy and use tools to support — not replace — your expertise.

Content Creation: Generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Jasper, and Claude are transforming content creation. They speed up ideation and offer SEO-friendly suggestions but remember: AI can't replicate your brand voice. Use these tools to kickstart your process but always add that human touch.

Social Media Management: Platforms like Hootsuite and Sprout Social let you plan content, track engagement, and monitor conversations from one place. Social media success still relies on authenticity and creative content.

Email Marketing & Personalization:

With platforms like Mailchimp and HubSpot, it's easy to segment audiences and automate follow-ups. AI adds subject line testing and predictive targeting, but a truly personalized strategy comes from understanding your audience first.

Data-Driven Decisions: Platforms like Google Analytics help you interpret performance in real-time. Use data to spark ideas and test assumptions but keep a strategist in the loop to connect the dots.

A Word on AI

AI is revolutionizing marketing technology, but the key is learning to work with it instead of letting it take over. The best strategies remain human-led and tech-supported.

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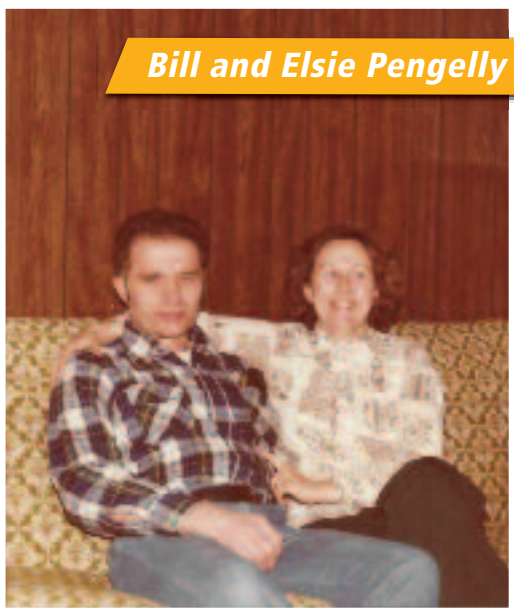
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PENNY'S PIZZA REBRANDS AS RED TOP PIZZA BY PENNY'S



We here at Penny's Pizza would like to take the time to reach out to our loyal fans to inform you of some very exciting changes that are coming in the near and present future.

We would like to first thank everyone for the many years of support and the many more to come. We just want to let you know of some upcoming changes that at first glance may be a bit of a shocker.

Penny's Pizza was first established as a unique and delicious option in the Limerick area by Bill and Elsie Pengelly in January of 1970 and for the past 55 years has built a reputation as a "must try" pizza staple in the area. The unique style and taste of our pizza has garnered a popularity that has earned this pizza trips not only all over this nation but even the world to places like the Bahamas and Europe. Wow! Right?

This is why we are excited to announce two things. One, we have begun franchising our pizza — You can invest in a proven pizza legacy for a one-time \$25,000 franchise fee, and \$147,400 minimum initial investment. Number two, in order to make the business something that not only stands out among competitors in a stale market but also a simple, fresh, and recognizable look nationwide we will be implementing a rebrand of Penny's Pizza to Red Top Pizza by Penny's.



Plain pizza

There, I said it. It's out there. Finally, we've been holding on to that for so long. But please don't worry. Nothing about the pizza is actually going to change. The recipes will always be what was handed down from the Pengelly's original vision for pizza and stromboli. The same faces that you're used to seeing when you pick up your order will still be present. The only change will be the name and the image of our logo.

And believe us when we say that the location at 68 W Ridge Pike in Limerick PA will always be Penny's Pizza. No matter how we spell it on the sign. But we believe in our vision for the future and legacy we gratefully been a part of and that it has such great potential to not only stand out in the market and be successful but bring a truly one-of-a-kind pizza experience to many more people across this country. We love our customers, and we are so thankful for you because without your support and the Pengelly's vision this wouldn't be possible, and we hope that you will continue on this experience with us as we reach into the future of Red Top Pizza.

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Lasagna



Sicilian pizza



Stromboli



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Jennifer and Ricky Boehmer

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WHAT IF THE MOST POWERFUL MEMBER OF YOUR TEAM ISN'T EVEN HUMAN?

"AI isn't here to replace your team — it's here to unlock their potential."



AI-POWER

By Alyse Mitten, Interlace Communications / ICI Connect

AI is no longer a future concept — it's reshaping how businesses operate right now. But instead of fearing it, imagine what's possible when you treat AI as your team's most reliable support system. It doesn't sleep, doesn't get overwhelmed, and never needs a coffee break. If your team is buried in repetitive work or struggling to move the needle on big goals, AI might just be the game-changer that shifts everything.

The power of AI isn't in replacing your people — it's in unleashing them. When routine tasks like data sorting, first-draft writing, and process automation are handled by AI, your team can finally focus on what they do best: creative problem-solving, strategic thinking, and

relationship-building. That's where real growth happens — not by working harder, but by working smarter.

You might be wondering, *Is it too late to start? Do I need to be tech-savvy?* The answer to both is no. Today's AI tools are surprisingly accessible, even for beginners. And with the right guidance, you can take your first steps with confidence — starting small, testing solutions, and scaling as you grow more comfortable. The sooner you begin, the sooner you see results.

Want a clearer picture of how this could work for your business or organization? Let's explore how AI can become your team's newest superpower. I provide a 15-minute consultation to help you identify where AI fits best for you — no tech degree required. Just a willingness to explore what's next. This will be the best 15 minutes you will spend to shift your mindset.

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Tony & Joe's Landscape Design

Our Services Are Always in Season

Tony & Joe's Landscaping provides customized landscaping and lawn care services in Reading, PA. We bring affordable prices, high-quality service, flexible plans for your needs, and high customer satisfaction.

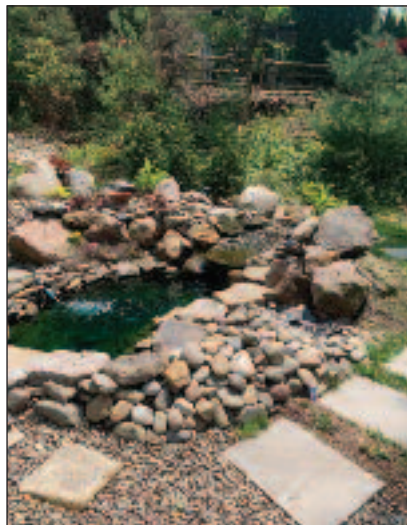
We are a full-service landscape and lawn maintenance company serving the needs of homeowners. We offer turnkey solutions to our clients and can take on any project from a small lawn care service to a large landscaping project. We take pride in offering you top-notch customer service that covers all aspects of landscaping: from planning to designing and installation. In addition, we offer affordable lawn care maintenance service to ensure that your garden stays as the day it was created.

At Tony & Joe's Landscaping, we understand the desire to make your backyard your oasis. Your place to go on a sunny afternoon or warm summer evening to relax and commune with nature. We're here to make that happen! Serenity, peace, relaxation. That's what outdoor living should offer. But why go anywhere but your own backyard to experience that? Now you don't have to. Let us turn your dream backyard into your very own Shangri-La.

Our Services

At Tony & Joe's Landscaping Service, our emphasis is on the quality of work, building relationships with our customers and achieving our goals of satisfied customers.

We possess extensive experience in the landscape field, including the tools, methods and materials used in grounds keeping supporting various landscape projects.



We employ talented, motivated individuals who treat the environment and the land as a non-renewable resource and to work towards enhancing its value to our customers.

We offer Architectural Landscape Design, Commercial and Residential services and Landscape Maintenance, including Design & Installation; Stone & Hardscaping; Water Features; Planting; Lawn and Garden Care; Tree Trimming & Removal; Landscape Maintenance; and Irrigation and drainage.

For additional information, please call 610.775.5380 or email; Toninog1014@aol.com and visit www.tonyandjoeslandscapedesign.com.

Tony & Joe's
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Our Services are Always in Season.

We are a full-service landscape and lawn maintenance company serving the needs of homeowners. Landscaping projects large or small.

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WHAT DO COACHES AND ROBOTIC VACUUMS HAVE IN COMMON?



By Lana Potgieter,
Lighthouse Leadership

One of my favorite gadgets at home is my new robotic vacuum cleaner. There's something oddly satisfying about watching it navigate my home

— bumping gently into obstacles, pausing, turning slightly left or right, and moving forward again to reassess its path. Then it spins around, recalibrates, and keeps going.

It struck me recently: sometimes, that's exactly what life feels like — maybe yours too?

As humans, we value our autonomy. And like those vacuums, we often “learn by doing,” adjusting our course as we go. It's a trial-and-error process — one we embraced fearlessly as kids. But do we maintain that same level of resilience as adults? Do we still have the grit, or as I call it, the “stick-to-it-ness,” to keep moving and pivot when needed?

Since relocating to the USA last year, I've found myself in a constant state of recalibration. The learning curve has been steep — challenging, frustrating, and at times disheartening. I took advice from well-meaning sources, only to realize that some of it didn't serve me. Why? Because it overlooked my unique strengths, past accomplishments, and personal vision for success.

So, I adjusted. Pivoted. Re-mapped my route. Like my robotic vacuum, I had to rely on my own internal sensors and algorithms to keep going.

These clever machines use technology — sensors, algorithms, sometimes even cameras — to clean with minimal intervention. But even they get stuck sometimes.

Yesterday, mine needed rescuing after 90 minutes of aimless spinning. That, in coaching, is what we call “clarity of distance” — the value of perspective, the ability to see the bigger picture.

So here are a few questions I had to ask myself — and maybe you should, too:

- What *algorithms* do I need to update to grow into the leader I want to be?
- What *sensors* do I need to turn on — or sharpen — to better lead the unique individuals around me?
- If I keep bumping into the same challenges or results, is it time to pivot a few degrees?

That's where coaching comes in.

When you work with me, *you* stay in the driver's seat. I simply walk alongside you as we:

- Clarify the outcome you truly want. Are we “cleaning one room,” or the whole house? Just vacuuming, or mopping too?
- Identify the obstacles in your path (because yes, even a smart mop will fail miserably over a shag rug).
- Create a timeline that works for your goals.
- Stay accountable — because that's the real fuel for momentum.

The truth is, today's leaders operate in unfamiliar environments — new teams, evolving economies, shifting priorities. That means our internal maps need regular updating. And sometimes, even the smartest systems need a little human intervention.

As your coach, I bring my full commitment to your success — leveraging my strengths to help you achieve your goals in a way that aligns with your purpose and potential.

Ready to test-drive what this could look like for you?

Give me a call, and we can discuss developing empowerment skills for yourself and your executive team. Book a meeting here: lane@lighthouseleadership.today

Lana Potgieter is an internationally acclaimed leadership coach and business strategist who specializes in empowering business owners and executive teams within small to mid-sized organizations.

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PATEL ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF JBT BANCORP, INC.

JBT Bancorp, Inc. (OTCQX: JBTC), the holding company of Jonestown Bank & Trust Co. (JBT), recently announced that at its 2025 annual shareholders meeting Vinod Patel was elected to the JBT Bancorp, Inc. and JBT Board of Directors.

Patel is a retired developer, businessman, and engineer, with 35 years in the hospitality industry as a developer of hotels, residential rental properties, commercial development and redevelopment properties. Over the years, Patel served as Secretary of the Lancaster Hotel/Motel Association, a member of the Board of Directors of the Pa. Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau, and as Advisory Board Chairman for SAAL (South Asian Association of Lancaster).

"We at JBT have had a long-standing connection with Vinod Patel and we are extremely happy to have him join our Board of Directors," said Troy A. Peters, President and CEO of JBT. "Mr. Patel's experience in the hospitality industry and development business will be valuable as the Bank continues to grow. He has also proven himself to be very community-

minded and that aligns perfectly with our focus as a community bank."



A graduate of Fairwinds Christian School in Bear, DE, Patel earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering as well as a Masters of Engineering degree from Pennsylvania State University.

"My first experience with JBT was as a customer and JBT's Bank on a Smile philosophy was exactly what I experienced as a customer," said Patel. "The dedication and helpfulness of the employees focused on helping me achieve my personal and business goals was very memorable. Due to that positive experience, I became a stockholder. And now as a member of JBT Bancorp, Inc. and JBT Board of Directors, I am very excited to be able to help continue those values and principles that will help the local community grow, as well as grow value to the employees and stockholders."

A resident of Lancaster, PA, Patel currently serves as Secretary of East Lampeter Township Sewer Authority.

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Larry Vukovic



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* Investment Advisory Services offered through O.N. Investment Management Company.

Larry Vukovic is an independent Insurance Agent and is not affiliated with The O.N. Equity Sales Company or O.N. Investment Management Company.

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THE RESIDENCES *at Manatawny Village*



***Our Community at The Residences at Manatawny Village Has One Main Goal
— To support you and your loved ones in Successfully Aging in Place.***



Whether you're fully independent, require some assistance, or are at the palliative or hospice care stage, we are here for you—every step of the way.

We take a holistic approach by considering your **physical, financial, and social needs** to help make The Residences your forever home—no need to move again.

Our **Personal Care** and **Memory Care** services are located on the second floor of a campus that also includes a **Skilled Nursing Center**—ideal for short-term rehab or skilled nursing care when needed.

Senior Living with Wellness Built In

Each apartment includes access to:

- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)
- Certified Medication Technicians
- Personal Care Aides
- In-house doctors, pharmacy services, and medical specialists

Comprehensive Care

- **24/7 Compassionate Staff:** Caregivers provide around-the-clock support for daily needs and well-being.
- **Meaningful Engagement:** Staff trained in Validation Therapy, Montessori Methods, and Dementia Care for stimulating, respectful experiences.
- **Tailored Care Plans:** Personalized support for every resident.
- **Medication Management:** Included — no extra charge.
- **Secure, Serene Grounds:** Beautifully landscaped for comfort and peace.
- **On-Site Health Services:** Including geriatrics, psychiatry, podiatry, dental, audiology, vision, lab work, palliative, and hospice care.
- **Therapies Available:** Physical, occupational, and speech therapy.
- **Optional Services:** Laundry and cable TV available upon request.



**Your Community
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We've Listened!**

Introducing Enhanced Memory Care at The Residences at Manatawny Village

We understand how deeply important it is to find compassionate, reliable memory care for your loved ones. That's why we've expanded our **Horizons Memory Care** program to offer more homes, more support, and more heart.

All-Inclusive. All-Compassion. All the Time.

No surprise fees. No hidden costs. Just one transparent price that covers everything.

Make the compassionate, clear choice with **Horizons Memory Care**—the trusted name in affordable, high-quality care for individuals with memory needs.

Why Choose Horizons Memory Care?

- **True All-Inclusive Care:** Medication management, multiple care levels, personal support—all included at one clear rate.

- **Family-Focused, Compassion-Driven:** Our experienced caregivers offer personalized support tailored to the unique journey of each resident with dementia.



- **Specialized Programs for Mind, Body & Spirit:** Led by our Social Engagement Director, we offer enriching activities rooted in **Validation Therapy**, **Montessori Methods**, and **Dementia-Specific Training**—fostering dignity and joy daily.

- **No Hidden Fees, No Fluctuating Bills:** Financial peace of mind for your family—so you can focus on what truly matters — love and connection.

We're Here for Your Family

At Horizons Memory Care, we empower residents to live with dignity, comfort, and purpose. Let us walk beside you and your loved one on this journey with unwavering support and understanding.



Want to Learn More?

Call or text **Terri Flannery** at 610.412.8884

Follow us on Facebook:
The Residences at Manatawny Village

30 Old Schuylkill Rd, Pottstown, PA 19465
Located in East Coventry, Chester County

Visit us at <https://manatawnymanorpa.com/residences-life/>



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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

Berks Women2Women Navigating Foreign Trade Zones (Webinar)

June 3

10 a.m. – 11 a.m. via Zoom, FREE to attend
Register at Greaterreading.org/ftz

Breakfast4Success Leading Through Change

June 4

7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
At Perkins Multipurpose Room, Penn State Berks – 2100 Stoudt Road, Reading
\$40/person for GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/june4s

De Mujer a Mujer Championing Yourself and Other Women & 6th Annual De Mujer a Mujer Awards

June 5

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Tec Centro, 450 S 6th St., Reading
\$20/person for GRCA Members
\$25/person for future GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/mujerawards

Mastering Work Talk Speaking with Confidence and Impact

June 10, 17 and 24

9 a.m. – noon
Center for Business Excellence
49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing
\$395/person for GRCA Members
\$495/person for future GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/worktalk

Customer Service Excellence Workshop

June 13

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Center for Business Excellence
49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing
\$375/person for GRCA Members
\$495/person for future GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/customerservice

Berks Women2Women Lobsterfest

June 18

5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Go Fish! Seafood Market & Sushi Bar
301 S Hull St., Sinking Spring
\$125/person for GRCA Members
\$145/person for future GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/lobster25

Situational Leadership Bootcamp Adapting Your Style for Success

June 19

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Center for Business Excellence
49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing
\$395/person for GRCA Members
\$495/person for future GRCA Members
WEDnet eligible
Register at Greaterreading.org/bootcamp25

Berks Family Business Alliance (FBA)

What's Next? Planning for Succession Success

June 24

7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Center for Business Excellence
49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing
\$35/person for GRCA Members
\$50/person for future GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/whatsnext

Networking@Night Moselem Springs Golf Club

June 26

5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.
684 Eagle Road, Fleetwood
Free for GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/moselem

REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP



MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

• 101 Bill Smith, Blvd King of Prussia, PA 19406
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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, bi-monthly Chat & Chews, Legislative Forums, and four Signature Events.

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE CHAMBER:

Advocacy | Networking | Grow Your Business | Referrals | Benefits Management
e-news | Website | Mailing Lists | Recognition... **BECOME A MEMBER A MEMBER**

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Events that grow your business through real relationships.



As the longest-standing Chamber in Montgomery County, we help businesses grow through connection, education, and advocacy — backed by one of the region's strongest networks.

What You'll Find at Our Events:

- Learn from marketing & business experts
- Build real relationships over lunch or coffee
- Celebrate with us at high-impact signature events

Upcoming Event



Swing Into Summer: Annual Golf Outing

Grab your clubs and join us for a day of connection, competition, and community. Play solo or as a team—it's golf, good vibes, and local impact.

Mon, June 9 from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM

At The 1912 Club, 888 Plymouth Rd, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

Sponsorships and Tickets Available



Join us at our next event—your seat's waiting.

Scan the QR code or visit:
<http://members.montcochamberpa.org/events>





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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

TriCounty Young Professionals Hosts Inspiring 2nd Annual Summit

Pottstown, PA – On May 6th, the TriCounty Young Professionals Program welcomed 60 local professionals, ages 21 to 40, to its 2nd Annual Young Professionals Summit at Spring Hollow Golf Club. The event brought together ambitious individuals for a day of connection, inspiration, and growth.

Attendees had the opportunity to network and gain insights from a lineup of dynamic speakers. Navixha Bagga, Leadership & Mental Wellness Coach at OYL Consulting by Navixha and TEDx International Speaker, covered Breaking Barriers and Making Goals You Can Accomplish, Jay Sidhu, Executive Chairman of Customers Bank, spoke about the Importance of Never Giving Up, and Tonya Petrunak, Executive Director of Marketing and Baseballtown Charities Reading Fightin Phils, discussed Sharing Your Potential and Giving Back to the Community.

These influential speakers left the room inspired, "Cedarville Engineering Group, LLC is a proud supporter of the TCACC YP Program. Sending a group of young professionals to the YP Summit offers an incredible opportunity to grow through inspiration and actionable insight. With powerful sessions from Navixha Bagga on achieving meaningful goals, Jay Sidhu on relentless perseverance, and Tonya Petrunak on the value of community impact, our team members left the session energized and equipped for both personal and professional success. Experience like these not only foster leadership development but a renewed sense of purpose and connection." – April Barkasi, President/CEO - Cedarville Engineering Group, LLC. Each attendee also received a signed copy of Never Ever Give Up by Jay Sidhu, who generously took the time to personalize the books during a meet-and-greet following his presentation.

The event was made possible thanks to generous support from Customers Bank and Penn State Berks. A special thank you also goes to Spring Hollow Golf Club for their exceptional hospitality and to Dylan Eddinger Photography for providing professional headshots for attendees.



Planning and execution of the Summit were led by the TriCounty Young Professionals Committee, a dedicated group of volunteers who continue to fuel the growth of this impactful program. Committee members include: Hailey Heimbach, Chair, TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce; Kirsten Groff, Marketing Chair, Community Health & Dental Care; Julie Johnson, Community Service Chair, Constellation; Megan La Rosa, Treasurer, Tompkins; Ryan Brumfield, Edward Jones; Amanda Reitbauer, CEDARVILLE Engineering Group, LLC; Vincent Sciortino, Herbein + Company, Inc.

This group of individuals have been a tremendous help in engaging with local young professionals and creating events that resonate with the group... "I am deeply grateful to the dedicated members of the TriCounty Young Professionals Committee for their unwavering support of this program. Many of them have been involved since the committee's revitalization over two years ago, and their passion for engaging the next generation of professionals is truly inspiring. Their commitment to continued learning, community involvement, and fostering professional development has been instrumental in the program's success. Simply put, the impact we're making on local young professionals would not be possible without the incredible individuals who serve on this committee." – Hailey Heimbach, Marketing & Communications Director at the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce and Chair of the TriCounty Young Professionals.



The committee is currently planning upcoming events which will include opportunities to volunteer, network, and grow professionally with other young professionals in the area. Stay tuned and check the calendar frequently (www.tricountyareachamber.com) for volunteer opportunities, social events, and professional development opportunities through the TriCounty Young Professionals!

About the TriCounty Young Professionals:

TriCounty Young Professionals is an inclusive and growing program for individuals ages 21–40 working in Berks, Chester, and Montgomery Counties. It brings together motivated professionals from diverse industries who are eager to connect, grow, and give back to their communities. Whether you're looking to advance your career, expand your network, or engage in meaningful service, this program offers a supportive space to thrive.

With a mission to foster a network of leaders, promote professional and personal development, and encourage volunteerism, the program offers multiple events each month. Participants can access valuable professional development resources, engage in networking and social events to build connections, and participate in community service initiatives to make a positive impact locally. These opportunities are tailored to help young professionals establish and expand their networks while equipping them with tools for career and personal success.

The program is open to all young professionals in the region—Chamber membership is not required—and has doubled in size over the past year and a half.

To learn more or get involved, email hailey@tricountyareachamber.com.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Congratulations to the businesses listed below for becoming new TCACC Members!

L&S Home Care Agency LLC
Pottstown, PA 19465

<http://landshomecareagency.com/>
Personal Care Products / Services

Nye Pro LLC

403 Dartmouth Rd., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
<http://www.nyepro.com/>
Audio Visual Equipment / Production

Fiercephreneur

150 Monument Rd., Suite 207, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
<https://fiercephreneur.com/application>
Consultants

Mahanatawny Chapter, DAR

PO Box 1204, Pottstown, PA 19464-5419
<http://mahanatawnydar.org/>
Nonprofit Organizations

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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

47+ Years

The Body-Borneman Companies

37 Years

Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities

20 Years

Patriot Environmental Management, LLC

17 Years

Sher Properties, Inc.

NAMI Montgomery County PA

5 Years

Dischell, Bartle & Dooley, P.C.

The Bowman Group

Boyetown Area Multi-Service - The Rickett's Center





UPCOMING EVENTS.

JUNE
13

Friday, 4:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Young Professionals' Tour and Game at Reading Fightin' Phils

Join us for a family-friendly evening of casual networking, great baseball, and community impact—all for just \$10! Children 12 and under get in free, and your ticket includes an exclusive tour of the stadium, a 10% discount at the Alarm Tech Team Store (valid only on TCCC Night), and the chance to relax outdoors while supporting a meaningful cause. \$2 from each ticket benefits Baseballtown Charities Dream League, which gives individuals with physical and intellectual challenges the opportunity to enjoy the game of baseball just like their able-bodied peers.

JUNE
17

Tuesday, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

REACH Luncheon: Connect

Come for the Bally Spring Inn experience—enjoy a delicious family-style salad, passed hors d'oeuvres, meal, and dessert—while connecting with fellow REACH Members in a warm, welcoming setting. This women's luncheon offers a unique opportunity to build authentic connections, share your story, expand your network, and celebrate personal and professional achievements. Whether you're looking to grow your business, find mentorship, or simply enjoy empowering conversations, this event is designed to inspire, encourage, and create a sense of community among women with shared goals and aspirations.

JUNE
20

Friday, 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Refresh Friday: Flourishing, Not Just Winning

In a world that often equates success with hustle, metrics, and external achievement, it's easy to lose sight of what it truly means to flourish. Drawing inspiration from Gallup's groundbreaking Global Flourishing Study, this session invites us to explore a richer, more sustainable view of well-being—one that goes beyond just "winning" and embraces a life of purpose, connection, and resilience.

JUNE
25

Wednesday, 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Business After Hours: June

Join us for a Summer Bash at Hidden River Brewery! The Route 422 Business Advisor and new TriCounty Chamber Member Muhlenberg Greene Architects are hosting a Summer Bash for Chamber Members and customers. Enjoy a beer and light fare from Bause Catering while checking in with your business colleagues over the summer.

JULY
16

Wednesday, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Business After Hours: July

Join us for an open house of Dr. McCurdy's Gilbertsville location. Light fare and wine/beer will be offered. Come out to see their state-of-the-art facility and meet their amazing staff and network with fellow Chamber Members. Door prize and swag for attendees.



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REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



- **Future headquarters:**
710 Main St., Phoenixville, PA 19460
- 610.933.3070
- fax 610.917.0503
- info@phoenixvillechamber.org
- www.phoenixvillechamber.org

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."

Visit our events page for details on these events and more.



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.net

EVENTS

PVCC Annual Golf Outing – June 9

Golfer ticket includes lunch buffet, Bloody Mary bar, golf greens and cart, swag bag, on-course snacks and beverages (beer/margaritas), contests 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. Sponsorship packages starting as low as \$100. **ALL welcome to golf; sponsorships limited to PVCC Chamber members.**

Business Roundtable Luncheon

June 26, 2025 @ 11:45am – 1pm

Join us for interactive discussion and sharing of best practices among other business owners and key decision makers. Topic: *Rethinking Productivity – Doing More by Doing Less*. Member-only event. Register online www.PVchamber.net



Monthly events include Business Roundtable Luncheons, PV Men's HH.

Join us for bi-monthly Membership Orientation, quarterly PV WIN events, and quarterly Non-Profit Meet & Greet ... just to name a few!

New Program!

Are you a young professional (age 22-40) looking to expand your network, develop your career, and get more involved in the community? We're launching **PV Next-Gen, to empower Young Professionals!** Whether you're new to your career or looking to build stronger connections, this is the perfect opportunity to grow your network and gain practical skills alongside other like-minded young professionals. PV next Gen kicked off with a Happy Hour Networking event in April, followed by a professional development workshop in May. Visit www.PVchamber.net to learn more about the program and upcoming PV NEXT-GEN schedule of events.



Save the Date (July - TBD): PV Chamber Annual Summer BBQ Mixer

We're firing up the grill for our Annual Summer Mixer—one of the most popular networking events of the season! This casual, fun-filled afternoon will take place in July (second or third week) and features a classic BBQ, great company, and a relaxed atmosphere perfect for making connections. The exact date is still being finalized at the time of this publication, so be sure to visit our website at www.PVchamber.net for updates and registration details.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Opulent Event Venue

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[instagram.com/opulent_event_venue/](https://www.instagram.com/opulent_event_venue/)

Hope Heart Momentum Counseling, LLC

Licensed professional counselor
Sandra Puckett (484) 501-4836
www.hopeheartmomentum.com

Dudes Who Care

Charitable Organization
Frank Plonski (215) 859-2622
www.dudeswhocare.com

SPRING-FORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

• P.O. Box 127, Royersford PA 19468 • 610.489.7200 • www.springfordchamber.com



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!

JOIN US AT LIMERICK COMMUNITY DAY

Vendors

Food Trucks

Family Fun

**Saturday
16 August 2025
12pm-3pm**

**Limerick
Community Park**

Vendor Pricing:

- Vendor Rate - \$150
- Non-profit Vendor Rate: \$50
- Food Truck Rate: \$150

Sponsorship Opportunities:

- Platinum Sponsor: \$5,000
- Gold Sponsor: \$1,000
- Silver Sponsor: \$500

Vendor Registration

Contact Us
610-495-6432
dhouseholder@limerickpa.org

Join Us at Limerick Community Day – Saturday, August 16th!

Bring the whole family out for a fun-filled afternoon at Limerick Community Park from 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM! Enjoy food trucks, local vendors, entertainment, and exciting activities for all ages. This is a fantastic way to support our community, connect with neighbors, and celebrate summer together.

Location: Limerick Community Park
Date: Saturday, August 16, 2025
Time: 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Interested in becoming a vendor or sponsor?

Vendor Rate: \$150 | Non-Profit Rate: \$50
Food Truck Rate: \$150
Sponsorship Opportunities: Starting at \$500
Contact: dhouseholder@limerickpa.org
Let's make this year's Community Day the best one yet!

Business Connect

This event is a fantastic opportunity to gain insights, expand your professional network, and discover innovative ways to grow your business.

Venue: Sunshine Cafe
Date: Every Tuesday

Event Logistics:

- 8:00-8:30am- Networking
- 8:30-8:45am- Introductions
- 8:45-9:00am- Presentation
- 9:00-9:15am- Wrap up

Contact Us:
(610)-489-7200
sfchamberofcommerce@gmail.com

The Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce is committed to driving economic growth, retaining and growing local businesses, and fostering relationships that will continue to enhance the progress and prosperity of our members and the community we serve. We are excited to share upcoming events!

The Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to continue our thriving- Spring-Ford Chamber Business Connect! This event is held every Tuesday at the Sunshine Café. Interested in speaking? Reach out to us at mileva@springfordchamber.com

BECOME A MEMBER

- Networking
- Business Growth
- Community Service

www.springfordchamber.com

Join the Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce and Become Part of Our Thriving Business Community!

Are you looking to drive economic growth, connect with local businesses, and enhance your community impact? Look no further! The Spring-Ford Chamber is dedicated to supporting and fostering the success of businesses like yours.

As a member, you'll enjoy: Networking opportunities with fellow entrepreneurs and professionals • Access to valuable resources and tools for business growth • Participation in exclusive events and workshops • Promotion of your business through our channels • And much more!

Visit us online at www.springfordchamber.com to explore the new features and opportunities available to you. Join us in our mission to drive progress and prosperity in our community. Reach out to mileva@springfordchamber.com for more information on membership benefits and how to join. Let's grow together!

Spring-Ford Chamber Announces Upcoming Professional Networking Events

The **Spring-Ford Chamber of Commerce** invites local professionals to three exciting **networking events** designed to foster connections, collaboration, and business growth.

- **June 25- Professional Networking Event at Irongate Biergarten (5:30 PM)**
- **July 24th- Professional Networking Event at the Alley on high Street (5:30PM)**
- **August 27th – Professional Networking Event at Downtown on 401 Main street (5:30PM)**

These events provide a fantastic opportunity to **meet local business leaders, exchange ideas, and grow your professional network** in a welcoming and engaging atmosphere.

Don't miss out! Mark your calendars and join us for an evening of **fun, networking, and new opportunities.**

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GROW FASTER!



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Resource Association**



THE SBRA COMMUNITY

Do You Have an Entrepreneurial MINDSET?



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

What does a Log Jam, a Lumberjack and an Entrepreneur have in common? Glad you asked that question because it is a great lead-in to this article.

In the old days, trees were cut down alongside a river where, downstream there was a lumber mill. The logs were put into the river to transport them to the lumber mill. Every once-in-a-while a log would get wedged in between another log, start to spin sideways and ultimately cause a jam that prevented the logs from getting to the mill. Without the logs getting to the mill, production was halted and the business was temporarily shut down.

Here enters the lumberjack. His job was to spot a possible "start" of a log jam and either go out on the logs and fix the situation or get someone else to do so. His MINDSET was to be a "smokey the bear" and prevent a shut-down and therefore keep the company in business.

In the same manner, true Entrepreneurs need to have a similar MINDSET. They need to have a clear and total understanding of their business in order for them to be able to spot a possible log jam or roadblock in their business. Then, they must be able to fix the problem themselves or call on someone that has the expertise to do so.

However, with a true Entrepreneur, it's not just about solving a problem that they are responsible for, it's a whole lot more. Let's take a look at the real life and responsibilities of an entrepreneur.

Most of you know the story of the Titanic. Most of you would probably say that the cause of the sinking of the "unsinkable" Titanic was an iceberg. Not really. You see, the captain of the ship had his mind focused on making the fastest trip across the Atlantic with this new unsinkable ship. The thought that a few icebergs would sink his ship was unimaginable to him. In fact, he left his post and went to his cabin to get a good night's sleep thinking that all was well. His mind was not focused on identifying potential hazards like deadly icebergs beneath the surface, problems you cannot see or that you refuse to see. The captain of the ship killed about 1500 people because of his tainted mindset.

As Entrepreneurs, we have a fiduciary responsibility to know what is best for our business, our employees and our clients. Falling asleep at the wheel, thinking all is well, is a sure formula for disaster. Our job is to have a MINDSET that is focused on the best interest of the business, its' employees and its' clients.

Here's a checklist of traits to determine if you have an entrepreneurial/leadership mentality:

1. How well you deal with experiences in life, both good and bad.
2. Self-belief (trusting your intuition)

3. Self confidence (appreciation for your own talents and willingness to take action)
4. Aptitude (natural ability)
5. Discernment (spotting a problem before it becomes a problem)
6. Initiative to fix the problem or find someone that can
7. Leadership that allows others to do what you want them to do because they want to do it

How do you build entrepreneurial mentality?

1. Ask questions
2. Read books and articles
3. Listen to podcasts
4. Join an association
5. Go to seminars and workshops
6. Find a mentor
7. Spend more time learning your business and competitors
8. Spend more time learning about the members of your team
9. Be a "smokey the bear" and not a "fire fighter"

An Entrepreneurial MINDSET is not something you are born with, it's acquired.

The more you learn about your business, your employees and your customers needs, the more you will have a mind of a leader and an entrepreneur. Feed your mind with knowledge and you will be better prepared to deal with the day-to-day challenges of owning and running a business. Become a lumberjack and you will be able to spot the logjams in your business and know how to fix them.



SBRA Business Spotlight



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KDA Tech Solutions

Kyle Riggs - Northwestern Mutual

Lions Pride Salon

Top Knotch Hood Cleaning

SBRA EVENTS

Events: Register at <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

- **Breakfast Referral Club** – June 6th 7:30-9:00 am at B2 Bistro
- **Wednesday Workshop** – June 11th 9:00-10:30 at Riverfront Federal Credit Union Building
 - **Tune Up Tuesday** – June 17th 8:30-9:30 on Zoom
 - **SBRA Mingle** – June 25th 5:30-7:00 at Kinya Ramen

SCAMS TARGETING SMALL BUSINESSES

Awareness, Impact, and Prevention



By Anthony Pomponio, Chief Lending Officer for Riverfront Federal Credit Union and Certified Fraud Examiner

Small businesses are often the backbone of local economies, driving innovation, employment, and community development. However, their limited resources and lean staffing structures can also make them prime targets for a variety of scams. From phishing emails to fake invoices, small businesses must navigate a minefield of fraudulent schemes that can lead to financial losses, data breaches, and reputational harm.

Common Scams Affecting Small Businesses

1. Phishing and Business Email Compromise (BEC): Cybercriminals often pose as trusted contacts—such as vendors, clients, or even company executives—using email or text to request sensitive information or authorize fraudulent payments. These attacks are growing increasingly sophisticated, sometimes involving real names, spoofed email domains, or cloned websites. With AI technology and remote work, one can create fake videos of company executives and in some cases direct staff that work offsite to make payments to sham vendors.

2. Fake Invoices: Scammers send convincing-looking invoices for goods or services that were never ordered or delivered, banking on the possibility that overworked employees may process them without thorough verification. These invoices may come from seemingly legitimate companies or use logos and branding those closely mimic real suppliers.

3. Tech Support Scams: Fraudsters contact businesses claiming to be from a well-known tech company, warning of a security issue or license expiration. They may try to convince the business to pay for unnecessary services, purchase fake software, or grant remote access to company systems.

4. Directory and Advertising Scams: In these scams, businesses are contacted with offers to list them in a directory or place an advertisement in a publication. Often, there's no real directory or publication, or the business is charged exorbitant fees for minimal or non-existent services.

5. Fake Government or Regulatory Agencies: Scammers pose as officials from tax authorities, labor departments, or licensing bodies, demanding immediate payments for fake violations or the purchase of permits. These tactics rely on fear and urgency to force quick, unquestioned payment.

6. Overpayment and Refund Scams: A scammer posing as a customer "accidentally" overpays for a product or service, then requests a refund of the difference before the initial payment is reversed or flagged as fraudulent.

Why Small Businesses Are Targeted

- **Limited Cybersecurity:** Many small businesses lack the robust security infrastructure of larger corporations.
- **Less Staff Training:** Employees may not be trained to recognize or report fraud attempts.
- **Trusting Culture:** Smaller teams often operate on trust, making them more susceptible to social engineering tactics.
- **High Workload:** Busy environments may result in overlooked red flags or insufficient vetting of transactions.

Preventative Measures

1. Employee Training: Regularly educate employees on identifying and handling suspicious emails, calls, or documents. Simulated phishing exercises can also be a valuable training tool.

2. Verification Processes: Implement multi-step approval processes for financial transactions, especially those involving new vendors or changes in banking details.

3. Cybersecurity Tools: Use up-to-date antivirus software, firewalls, and email filtering systems to reduce exposure to malware and phishing attempts.

4. Regular Audits: Conduct internal audits of financial transactions and vendor lists to detect anomalies early.

5. Report and Share: Encourage a culture of reporting suspicious activity without fear of reprimand. Businesses should also report scams to relevant authorities like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) or local consumer protection agencies.

6. Stay Informed: Subscribe to fraud alert bulletins from trusted sources, such as the Better Business Bureau (BBB), the Small Business Administration (SBA), or your local chamber of commerce.

Scams targeting small businesses are increasingly clever and persistent, but they can be mitigated through awareness, education, and proactive defense strategies. Protecting your business starts with knowing the risks—and acting decisively to defend against them.

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Fortunately, the range of small business-oriented learning opportunities and training programs has never been broader for veteran and novice entrepreneurs alike. Seeking help is simply smart. No business owner can be adept at every aspect of operating successfully. Plus, conditions change, so keeping yourself informed is vital to long-term success.

The single most popular program in America is probably the SBA Small Business Training Network/E-Business Institute, which registers nearly a million users at its Web site each year. The Small Business Training Network is a Web-based conglomerate that can link you to online courses, workshops, publications, learning tools, information resources and access to electronic counseling and other types of technical help. For details on the Small Business Training Network, go to www.sba.gov and click "Training" under the site's Services section.

Free online courses are offered on about 75 topics in areas such as business startup, growing your business, home-based business and re-engineering your skills. Sample titles include:

Growth Strategies; Analyzing Profitability; Building Your Brand; and, Understanding Business Insurance.

The Tools section of www.sba.gov gives you access to an extensive library of articles, podcasts, and Web chats on various small business issues.

Local SBA-sponsored training events are offered nationwide. These range from breakfast talks on local economic conditions, to brown-bag networking lunches, loan seminars, startup workshops and free business assessments. Simply go the Local Resources section of www.sba.gov and click your state on the Web site map for a calendar listing dates and event details in your area. You can also sign up for free newsletters issued by your state SBA office.

In addition, dozens of top colleges and universities offer business training courses you can take online or in more traditional classroom environments. Most require a fee, and some may have educational prerequisites. Advisors at the individual schools will help you identify one or more courses that are best suited to your needs.

To learn more about training opportunities your small business, 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.score.org/tricounty.



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MORE TECH, MORE PROBLEMS FOR REGIONAL POWER GRID STABILITY

By Lauren Jessop,
Contributor, The Center Square

The potential growth of data centers and industrial facilities in Pennsylvania could boost the state's economy, but it also has utility officials weighing new regulations to manage the surge in electricity demand, prevent grid overloads and protect ratepayers from unfair cost burdens.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, or PUC, is addressing the challenges posed by the rapid growth of

large load customers — particularly data centers — through a series of public hearings aimed at developing a model tariff to guide interconnection and rate structures.

On April 24, the commission heard testimony from electric distribution companies, data center operators, and statutory advocates. Participants underscored the need for transparent, equitable policies to maintain grid reliability, protect existing ratepayers, and enable economic development.

(Continued on page 42)



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REGIONAL POWER GRID STABILITY

(Continued from page 41)

Vice Chair Kim Barrow expressed cautious optimism, citing challenges such as base load requirements, climate-driven superstorms, infrastructure limitations, and unprecedented demand growth — especially from data centers that can draw as much power as a mid-sized city.

She stressed that meeting these challenges would require thoughtful regulatory approaches and “radical transparency.”

Representatives from Amazon Data Services, Google, Vantage Data Centers, and the Data Center Coalition emphasized the need for tariffs that are fair, transparent, and grounded in cost-causation principles.

Recommendations include:

- Reasonable interconnection timelines: 3–6 months for studies, 12–18 months total; transparent and predictable interconnection processes.
- Flexible financial security requirements based on project risk.
- Long-term contracts with provisions for load ramping schedules.
- Recognition of customer-owned infrastructure and the prioritization of new generation co-location projects.

“When customers bring their own new generation alongside the new load, they are not simply adding demand,” stated Vantage Data Centers Vice President of Utility & Regulatory Shawn Smith. “In reality, they are helping to offset their own load, improving system resiliency, and reducing net stress on the grid.”

Electric distribution companies, or EDCs, represented by Duquesne Light Co., First Energy, PPL, and PECO, echoed many of the data center providers’ recommendations and supported requiring co-location projects for large load customers.

Other recommendations include:

- Clear guidelines on cost recovery and customer-funded infrastructure.
- Interconnection processes that protect existing customers from potential stranded costs.
- Prefer a policy statement over a strict model tariff to allow for innovation and adaptability.
- Require large load developers to bear the cost of studies and infrastructure investment.

(Continued on page 44)



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REGIONAL POWER GRID STABILITY

(Continued from page 42)

C. James Davis, director of rates and energy procurement at Duquesne Light, noted that a single data center could account for 30 percent of the current peak load in its service area.

Similarly, four of these projects could raise PECO's overall peak demand by 3.8 gigawatts, representing nearly a 40 percent increase in demand on the company's distribution system, said Richard Webster, PECO's vice president of regulatory policy and strategy.

Statutory advocates testifying included the Office of Consumer Advocate and the PUC's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement. They concurred with many recommendations from the previous two panels and supported the development of a model tariff — but stressed that any framework must protect existing customers from stranded costs and unfair costs shifts.

They also urged that the tariff allow case-by-case flexibility while maintaining uniform standards for transparency and accountability.

Allison Kaster, chief prosecutor for the Bureau of Investigation and

Enforcement, noted that data centers often require large water supplies for cooling, which could impact system pressure and water source reliability — especially in light of recent droughts and usage restrictions in Pennsylvania.

"Therefore," she said, "it is important not to lose sight of the other potential impacts on Pennsylvania's utility customers."

PA PUC Chairman Stephen DeFrank said they will continue to gather input and collaborate with stakeholders as the commissioners consider whether to move forward with a model tariff or issue a broader policy statement.

"This is a challenging issue," said DeFrank, "but with great challenge also comes great opportunity."

He added that the commonwealth is well situated to meet the needs of this new industry, and they will work together to address these challenges in a meaningful way for the benefit of ratepayers in Pennsylvania.

"If we are able to attach these facilities to the local distribution system, all benefit."

UNITY & DIVISION IN ESTATE PLANNING



LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

By Carolyn Marchesani, Esq., Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.

When we think of family, we want to have more unity than division. Certain key estate planning documents can help your family stay connected rather than stand divided. It is not uncommon in a family for a parent to

have one child who is the point person when it comes to estate planning. Likewise, there is often one sibling on whom the other siblings in the family rely for assistance due to willingness, proximity, and availability.

Oftentimes when I meet with my clients, they tell me that their son, daughter, or sibling will "take care of everything" and that "they know what I want them to do." Does this sound familiar? While it may be true, that they know your wishes and are reliable as to carrying out your directions, there is no guarantee that they will be able to legally manage your estate if you become unable during your lifetime, or at your death, without specific written instructions that you put in place.

In order to safeguard your family against uncertainty, conflict, or division after you become incapacitated or after your death, it is necessary to write down your specific wishes and also have the written document executed so that it is legally effective. Two types of documents that are key here are the Power of Attorney and the Will.

You probably know that you may prepare for a time when you are living but have become unable to communicate your wishes, due to illness or decline, by obtaining a Power of Attorney.

A Power of Attorney is the legal document (in effect only during your lifetime) that allows you to identify your "point person" (and an alternate person if your first choice is unavailable). The

person you appoint is known as the Agent. The specific powers which you grant your Agent are spelled out in this written document. When you have this document in place it is recommended that you also explain your plans and decisions to your Agent. Also, update your Agent as your decisions shift or change.

Once this document is in place, your Agent will be able to assist you and support you with everyday bill paying as well as interactions with financial advisors and healthcare providers.

When you choose this person or persons, be sure to also let the entire family know whom you have chosen. Have a family chat, a zoom call or even a group email. Explain what it means to you to have this point person to help. This can provide order and transparency with your family.

Equally as important, make sure that the Agent, the person you appointed, maintains open communication with family members, and most importantly, keeps a clear, detailed record of all financial transactions. Record keeping as an Agent under a Power of Attorney is paramount, and also legally required.

(Continued on page 46)

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Breanna Angstadt is a Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach, Life Coach, NLP Master Practitioner & Personal Trainer.

Breanna spent most of her life overweight, dieting, battling eating disorders. After many years of trial & error, seeking help & transforming her mindset, she not only surpassed her health & fitness goals, but then went on to inspire others to transform their own lives. After founding the successful Just & Whole Body & Wellness Coaching, Breanna has used her experience, education & intuition to coach women around the world transform their mindset as well as their physique.

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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 45)

The Agent should keep these records with the view that a judge may ultimately need to see every dollar that was spent and received. There is software available for this purpose. QuickBooks was an early tool available for record keeping. You can create and maintain an Excel spreadsheet. You can save invoices and receipts in a computer folder. If computers are not available or preferred, then use a notebook for record-keeping, noting dates and descriptions of transactions, and use a physical container to keep all the invoices, bank statements, and records.

After death, your point person is known as the Executor in your Will, sometimes also known as the estate's personal representative. It may or may not be the same person as your Agent under the Power of Attorney. As the family divides what was once owned by their beloved deceased family member, know that the writing rules. Not the conversation Mom had with Sally on the porch two years ago, not the fact that the items that belong to the deceased are now stored in one family member's possession for safe keeping. Not the plea that, "Granddad wanted me to have it." These methods are not reliable as to

division of property. And, not surprisingly, they have no legal significance. These anecdotal stories often create division.

When you choose to confide in or rely on just one person when your family has multiple members, you may create division which can lead to unintended consequences. Family members may assume that they will receive certain items of property or have the right to remain in your home after you die, even when your intention is to share all of your property equally with your children.

A Will is a vital document to communicate your wishes and make them enforceable. Its effectiveness depends on the directions that are included in the document. You may specify gifts of personal property in a memorandum referenced in the Will. Place these instructions in writing so there is no question as to which person you want to receive which item. If you want your home to be sold at your death, so that its value is shared equally with your family, this should be stated clearly in the Will. This decision should be made known to your family during your lifetime.

(Continued on page 48)



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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 46)

This is especially important if you have family members living with you. If you have an adult caretaker who is your child living with you, but at your death you want everything you own to be shared equally with all of your children, make sure that the child who lives with you is prepared to find a new home or living arrangement.

Rather than leaving the sorting it out to that one family member who was always ready to help you, do them a massive favor. Sort it out specifically in your written documents. In order to maintain unity within your family after death, you must specifically spell out in writing in a document signed and dated how you want your property divided.

Communicating with the entire family is important when making decisions that may affect everyone. During your lifetime and while you have capacity, you can pick up the phone and share news with everyone. You may update your family on changes that have occurred or schedule a family meeting to discuss information that involves everyone. Kitchen table chats, group emails, or zoom calls are ways for families to share news and this can assist with unifying the family.

After your death or incapacity, your only opportunity to communicate your wishes legally is through these carefully written legal documents. Take the time, now, to provide clear instructions in your Power of Attorney and Will in order to foster family unity and avoid family division. Contact a skilled estate planning attorney to assist you today, so that you can avoid family squabbles in the future.

Carolyn M. Marchesani, Esq. is an associate in the law firm of Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C. She focuses her legal practice in estate planning and probate and estate administration in Montgomery, Berks, and Chester Counties. She can be reached by phone at 610.323.7436, or by e-mail at cmarchesani@wolfbaldwin.com.

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PA HOUSE PASSES TAX DEDUCTION FOR PENNSYLVANIA HOMEBUYERS

By Christina Lengyel,
The Center Square

In the hopes of increasing odds for homeownership in the commonwealth, the PA House moved forward a bill that would establish a first-time homebuyer savings account Monday.

The bill would designate a specific type of savings account into which individuals can deposit tax-deductible funds with the express purpose of saving for a first home.

Rep Ryan Bizarro, D-Erie, wrote in support of the bill, "It is estimated that this type of savings account program in Pennsylvania could result in an annual increase of up to 4,000 home purchases within the state."

"The result would be an overall positive impact on Pennsylvania's economy, spurring additional economic activity, job creation and earnings for households," said Bizarro. "It's estimated that the economic impact could range between \$7.8 million to \$68.8 million."

Republican Thomas Kutz of Mechanicsburg spoke in support of the new accounts.

"As policymakers we have it incumbent upon us to take steps that help prepare the next generation to be better off than we are today," said Kutz. "If you own a home before 2020, you face a very different reality than those who are searching for homes today."

Kutz pointed to home values that have nearly doubled, making it much harder to afford the initial down payment. Interest rates have also continued to rise, creating huge disparity between mortgage payments for people living even on the same street. He said



that first-time home ownership rates are down by over 13 percent.

"This is one small step that puts a tool in the toolbox of every family or individual seeking to own a home — that they can save for that first home, that they can save for that down payment," said Kutz.

The representative also pointed out the advantage a bill like this poses for existing homeowners who need more interest from buyers to be able to sell their homes.

Many have worried over trends in which Baby Boomers are less likely to downsize from larger homes than previous generations, opting instead to age in place and limit the number of available homes on the market.

Even without factoring in individual home buying and selling trends, the involvement of private equity in the housing market has introduced considerable strain. Single family homes are increasingly owned by real estate corporations rather than individuals.

The bill passed the House with a bipartisan majority of 183-20, the negative votes coming from Republicans.

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2. Stay Hydrated & Energized. Warmer weather means more sweating, so staying hydrated is crucial. Keep a water bottle with you at all times, and load up on hydrating foods like watermelon and cucumbers. Fuel up with light, protein-rich meals to keep energy levels high.

3. Get Outside & Enjoy It! Take advantage of the sunshine - try an outdoor bootcamp, a beach workout, or a family hike. GYMGUYZ trainers can bring workouts to your favorite outdoor spot, keeping sessions fun and engaging.



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On May 3, North Montco Education Foundation hosted its fourth annual car show fundraiser. Over 85 vehicles registered for the event and had the chance to win first or second-place trophies in one of six categories (street rods, antique-classic-survivor, muscle car, truck, import, Custom Body, Modified). North Montco's Automotive and Collision Repair instructors judged each of the many unique vehicles. In addition, a Chairperson's Award was presented to David Ziegler, who showcased a 2019 Corvette Coupe.

The trophies, creatively designed and built by students in Mr. Rocco Sexton's Welding class using internal engine components, contributed by North Montco's Automotive and Collision Repair classes, were a hit of

the show! Mr. John Jacobs' Precision Machining students added the finishing touch with the engraved trophy plaques they created.

We want to thank everyone who participated in the day, whether you or your business donated a raffle, or you were a car show exhibitor, spectator, or sponsor, the event was successful because of you.

A special thank you to our Gold and Silver level sponsors and other supporters listed on the banner! Your support allows us to continue to fulfill our mission by providing students with opportunities/initiatives that otherwise would not be possible. For more information about the North Montco Education Foundation contact dcollins@nmtcc.org or visit our website at northmontcoef.org.

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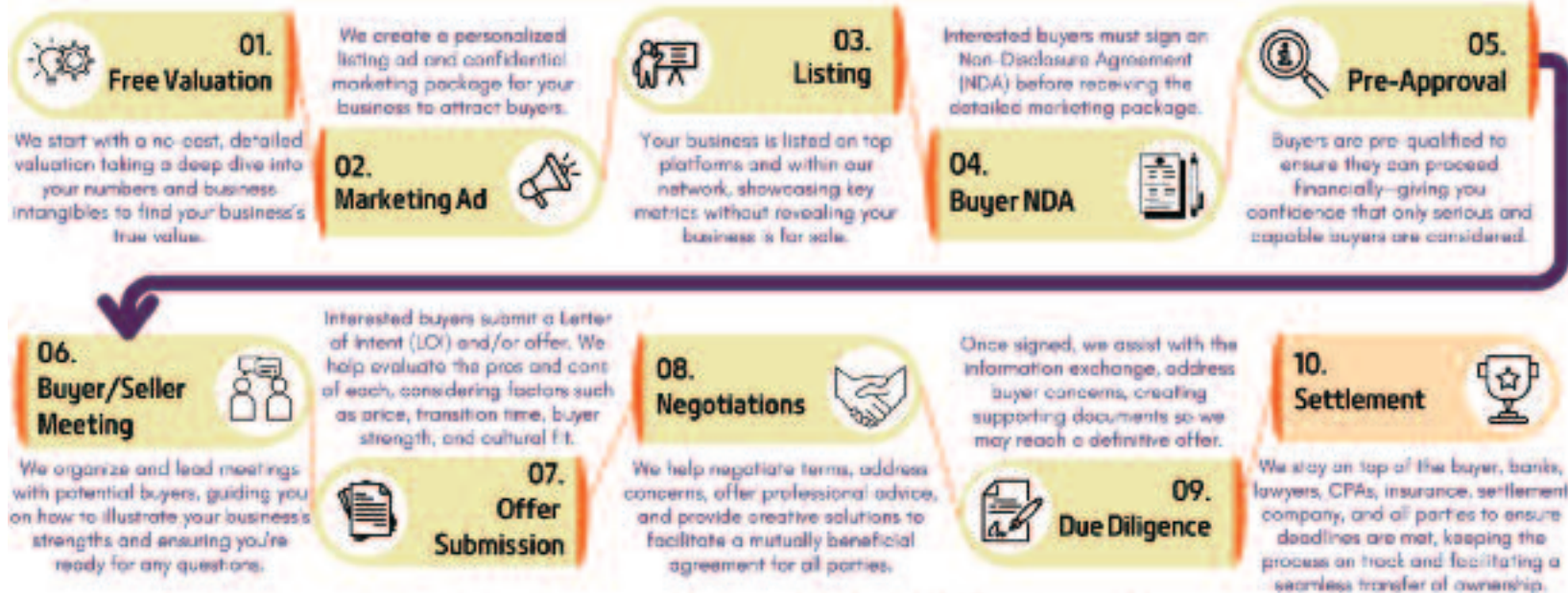
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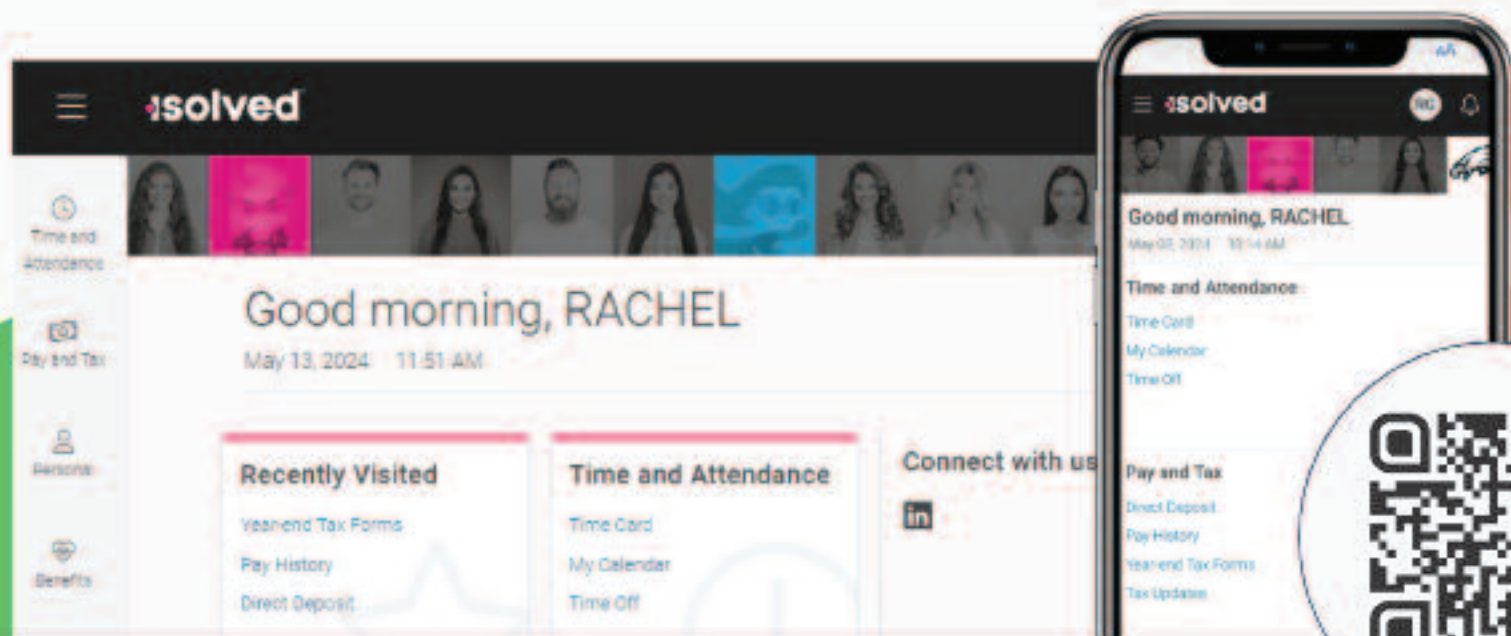
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