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Pottstown Hospital Saved My Life

Thomas

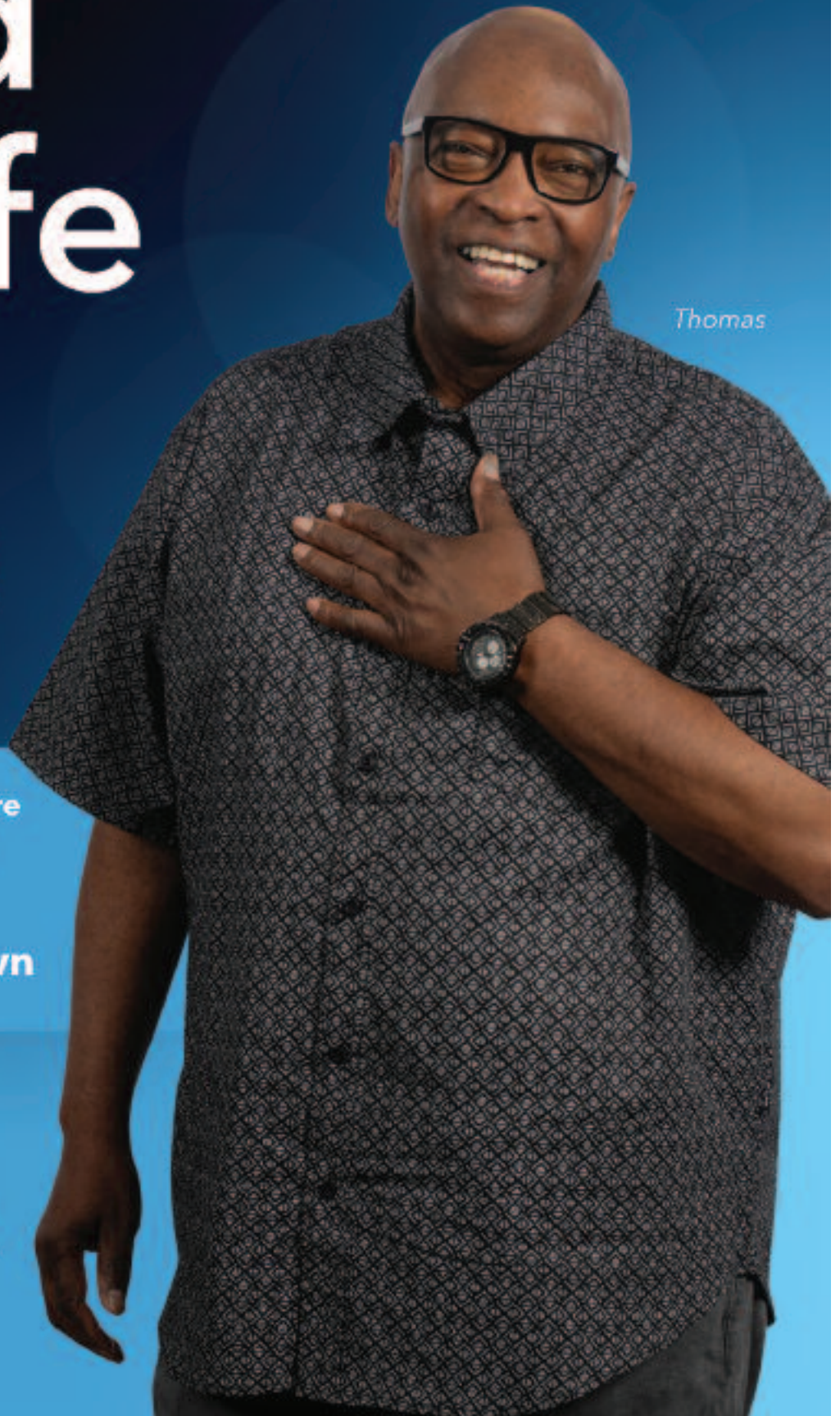
When Thomas arrived at Pottstown Hospital, he thought lingering back pain was slowing him down. Instead, emergency physicians discovered he was having a heart attack.

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PHOTO BY STEVE LADNER PHOTOGRAPHY

Cover Story: From its Mohnton, PA showroom, Lezzer Lumber is helping homeowners embrace smart-home living with app-controlled Marvin Connected Home windows and doors while offering seasonal savings on decking, siding, roofing, windows, doors, and more.



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The leadership gap is real, and it starts earlier than we think

The world our young people are inheriting demands more than academic credentials. It demands self-awareness, resilience, emotional intelligence, agility and the ability to communicate, collaborate, and lead under pressure. The disruption of COVID-19 left an entire generation with widened gaps in social and emotional development, confidence, and interpersonal skills.

At Global Prism-EquuSmart, we believe closing that gap requires intentional, experiential leadership development, that starts in high school so that the next generation enters the workforce not just qualified, but truly ready to lead.

Why Horses?

Horses are extraordinarily perceptive animals that respond to the emotional and energetic signals of the people around them, making them powerful, non-judgmental mirrors for human behavior. In Equine Assisted Learning, students engage in guided, ground-based activities (**no riding required**) that reveal how they communicate, recognize and manage their emotions, establish trust, and influence others. The lessons are immediate, visceral, and deeply memorable in ways a classroom simply cannot replicate. EAL is uniquely powerful for adolescents and young adults navigating identity and leadership.



The EquuSmart Leadership Academy

The EquuSmart Leadership Academy is a progressive, multi-stage program that follows the participants' growth from 9th grade through the first years of the workforce. Learning comprises self-assessments, interactive classroom workshops, executive coaching, and immersive, ground-based Equine Assisted Learning sessions.

The Academy is designed to meet students where they are. It is available as a dedicated program for a specific school, college, or organization; as open enrollment cohorts welcoming students of the right age from across the region; and as a purposeful complement to homeschool curricula.

For homeschooling families who already prioritize intentional, values-driven education, the Academy offers something you can't find in a textbook: peer cohort connection, social-emotional growth, and real-world leadership skill building in a supportive, nature-based environment. Programs are available in half-day, full-day, and multi-session formats designed to fit homeschool schedules and learning goals.

Leadership is not a title, it is a practice.

The earlier young people begin that practice, the stronger, more self-aware, and more capable adults they become.

Contact us to explore what the EquuSmart Leadership Academy can do for the young leader in your life.



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The Perfect Season for Connected Windows and More at Lezzer Lumber



PHOTO BY STEVE LADNER PHOTOGRAPHY



Mohnton location

By Kathy Hunt

One of the pleasures of a cool, summer day is to open your windows and let a breeze flow through your home. But what if you left your house shuttered when you headed off to work, or, worse still, your windows are too high or too old to use safely? Wouldn't it be fantastic to be able to open your out-of-reach or antiquated windows with the flip of a switch or tap of an app? Lezzer Lumber can make this, and other summertime wishes, come true. In business for nearly a century, the family-owned company has the knowledge and experience to help with practically any residential or commercial project.



With 15 retail locations in Allegheny, Berks, Butler, Chester, Lancaster, Lehigh, Indiana, Lycoming, Clearfield and Northampton counties, including new stores in Western Pennsylvania's Bethel Park, Valencia, and Zelienople, and Trinity Supply and Installation in Pittsburgh on the West Side, the company makes home improvements and commercial projects, including selecting and installing smart/connected windows and doors, easier.

Modern conveniences for an ancient invention

In some form or other, windows have existed for millennia, providing light during the day and protection at night, holding in warmth during cold times and welcoming in cool breezes when it was hot or smoky inside. Ancient people covered these openings with animal hides, reeds, and other materials, removing and re-installing the coverings as needed. Eventually, these rough holes in caves, huts, and other dwellings were replaced with glass-covered apertures. During the Middle Ages, European introduced the casement window, which swung outward,

followed in the late 1600s by the sash window, which raised upward. Like the rough-hewn openings before them, these windows were opened and closed by hand and with a great deal of physical effort.

We've come a long way since the time of hoisting out or up and propping open heavy panels of glass, lead weights, and wood. Now, Lezzer Lumber takes consumers even further. This spring, after partnering with family-owned, Minnesota-headquartered Marvin and Lancaster-base RMS (Residential Media Systems), Lezzer Lumber introduced a new, cutting-edge product to its customers — Marvin Connected Home windows and doors. Part of Marvin's Modern Collection, Connected Home gives customers the opportunity to schedule and remotely control the opening and closing of their automated awning and casement windows.

Gone are the nagging concerns about surprise rain showers and storms that soak window treatments and sills, walls, floors, and furniture. Marvin's smart windows can sense moisture and close themselves when rain starts to fall. Pretty nifty!

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Equally wonderful are Marvin's five options for connectivity. Marvin's automated windows and multi-slide door can be integrated into existing home automation systems, including Crestron® Home and Control4®, or voice assistants such as Amazon's Alexa. Download the Marvin Home app to your mobile phone and you can open, close, and view the lock status of windows and doors no matter where you are.

If it starts to rain, the Marvin Home app will alert you that moisture has been detected and, as a result, the windows and door are being shut. You will also be notified if an obstacle is encountered during the closing process. When the multi-slide door meets an obstruction, it stops moving. If the windows detect an object or interference, they attempt to close three times and then contact the homeowner, requesting information on how to proceed. Should your home lose power, the windows and doors close and lock automatically.

When you want a more hands-on approach, you can control the windows and doors with hard-wired wall switches. You can also operate them by pressing a button on the window itself. Both options are especially helpful if you lose your power or WiFi connection; windows can still be operated through their on-unit control buttons or optional wall switches.

"It's the ease of automation without the headaches of technology," said Kaethe Huber, manager of Lezzer Lumber's Reading-area store at 3171 Morgan Road in Mohnnton. She added that the company also wanted "to bring in the Modern line because it's Marvin's newest line."



Ensuring customer comfort with home automation

Marvin has designed its Connected Home products so that, whatever your comfort level is with automated fixtures, you can live seamlessly and happily with these.

"We've had quite a few customers come and look at the connected Marvin Modern windows," Huber said. "The ease of using the window itself is very appealing. One application was for a window that was up really high. The homeowners wanted to be able to open the window, but there was no

way to access it from the ground. This is where being able to have an automated window that can open and close with an app or with a switch from the ground is really helpful. You can then get airflow from where you wouldn't normally be able to."

If someone is interested in learning more about Marvin Connected Home or home automation in general, Huber advised making an appointment to speak with a Lezzer Lumber employee and a Marvin representative and/or RMS salesperson. "After answering the customer's questions about Marvin Connected, a salesperson either will go out to the site, meet with the builder, and get measurements, or the builder will come in with the measurements," Huber said. "And if the customer doesn't have a builder, we can recommend one."

In addition to talking with experts, the customer can also investigate Marvin's automated windows and doors and RMS's home automation in Lezzer Lumber's showroom. There, they'll find a version of a tiny home that showcases Marvin Connected Home and RMS's automation services. RMS can link such systems as heating/cooling, intercom, lighting, camera, and doorbell to the internet and to each other. RMS also has its own electricians who can install Marvin Connected Home products.

Note that Marvin Connected Home is ideal for new construction but not necessarily the best fit for older buildings.

Depending on the window and door dimensions, electrical wiring, and other construction considerations, you may or may not be able to replace your current Marvin windows and doors with automated Marvin windows and doors. Keep in mind, too, that existing Marvin windows and doors cannot be retrofitted with Marvin Connected Home.

Summertime means savings time

Along with offering its customers the latest developments in home automation technology, Lezzer Lumber gives them the opportunity to save on summertime projects. Running through July 11, Lezzer Lumber's Red, White, and Build sale features discounts on decking, railings, roofing, siding, and other materials. Trex, which is known as the inventor and leader in composite decking, has deals on its Select, Enhance, and Transcend lines. All of Trex's decking is comprised of 95-percent recycled plastic film and reclaimed wood sawdust. Transcend has the added bonus of SunComfortable™ technology, a heat-mitigating system that keeps Transcend deck surfaces up to 35 degrees cooler than Trex's original decking boards.

A competitor to Trex, TimberTech has specials on several composite collections, specifically Prime painted-wood look, Prime+ woodgrain, and Terrain. All three contain approximately 85-percent recycled plastic. Also on sale are TimberTech's





Harvest, Landmark, and Vintage collections. These lines are 100 percent PVC (polyvinyl chloride) and engineered to reflect more sunlight, retain less heat, and cool down faster.

The advantages to composites and PVC are that they offer durability, longevity, and limited maintenance. Due to their high recycled-materials content, composites are likewise considered eco-friendly. For pricing on other Trex and Timber Tech products, visit, email, or call one of Lezzer Lumber's retail locations listed on its website, <https://www.lezzerlumber.com>.

Introduced in Lezzer Lumber's 2025 Outdoor Living campaign, BestPLUS plastic lumber is another product in the Red, White, and Build event. BestPLUS plastic lumber consists of 98-percent recycled plastic and is weather- and insect-resistant, and impervious to rot and decay. It can be used in a large number of ground-contact settings, including garden edging, raised garden beds, planters, walkways, hard-scaping, retaining walls, outdoor steps, fences, and posts, and on playgrounds and even in bocce courts. It also serves as a durable substitute for wood in benches, palettes, tables, and truck and trailer scuff boards.

BestPLUS has special pricing on the following plastic lumber: rounded, black, plastic landscape timber; two sizes of regular, black, plastic landscape timber; four sizes of black, plastic lumber; a black, plastic edging kit; and gray, plastic lumber forming/edging.

Also participating in the sales event is RDI Railing. It has lowered its prices on aluminum 6-foot and 8-foot black railing kits and Pelinore, Tristan, and Oberon top rails.



Additionally, there is a 15-percent discount on all RDI lighting while supplies last.

Various lengths and widths of treated lumber are also on sale. Unlike many big box stores, which carry grade #2 treated lumber, Lezzer Lumber sells grade #1, which means a stronger wood that possesses fewer knots and marks than grade #2. Lezzer Lumber does offer both #1 and #2 grades of treated lumber to serve all needs.

Thinking about replacing a window or door or sprucing up the exterior of your house? MI Windows and Doors offers 10-percent off select double-hung windows, patio doors, and in-stock fiberglass and steel doors. You can also take advantage of reduced prices on Westlake's Royal Estate and Royal Crest vinyl siding. Royal Estate comes in 12 shades and boasts that its siding will not warp, buckle, or sag. Royal Crest possesses a natural, wood-grain finish and five colors in stock. Both are avail-

able in double 4 dutchlap and double 5 dutchlap. Vinyl soffits, aluminum gutters measuring 16, 21, or 26 feet, and 10-foot downspouts, all in white, are on sale, too.

Prefer the look of stone over vinyl on the outside of your house? Evolve Stone is selling its 14 1/4 square-foot box of stone veneer for \$12.25 per square foot, or approximately \$174.56 per box. This stone veneer requires no mortar to install, just a nail gun to attach it to the wall. The discounted veneer comes in four colors and three patterns — four-inch high National True, two-inch high District True, and one and three-fourths-inch to 10-inch Georgetown Run.

Maybe a new roof is what you need. Atlas Roofing's Pinnacle Pristine and GAF's TimberlineHDZ shingles are both included in the Red, White, and Build sale. So, too, are such deck, railing, and other outdoor project essentials as round and square-tip shovels, hoes, rakes, tamping bars, post hole diggers, and a sidewalk edger.

Still more in store for residential and commercial customers

Along with its numerous product lines, Lezzer Lumber operates commercial door facilities in Lancaster, State College, and Williamsport. Moreover, it has a truss manufacturing plant that makes roof, floor, and custom trusses in Curwensville. Its Lancaster-based mill and trim shop creates such custom millwork as stock boards and molding profiles. Working with all wood species as well as PVC, the shop can craft the following custom items: cabinetry, libraries, and entertainment centers; fireplace mantels and surrounds; interior or exterior doors; entrance, window, and door trim; exterior rail, balusters, posts, and brackets; raised-panel wainscot; columns and ceiling beams; and straight or curved stairways with pre-fit rail and baluster.

For its commercial customers, Lezzer Lumber offers such services as contractor sales, commercial sales for developers and professional builders, and installed sales. Installed sales deal with complete framing packages for exterior doors and windows for new construction projects. They also cover the installation of siding, insulation, cabinets, countertops, decks, windows, and interior and exterior doors.

For additional information about Marvin Connected Home, the current Red, White, and Build sale, and other products, sales, and locations of Lezzer Lumber, or to follow the company on social media, please visit the website <https://www.lezzerlumber.com/>.



GRCA 2026 ANNUAL DINNER RECAP

FROM REJECTION TO ORBIT

Massimino
Headlines GRCA
Annual Dinner
Honoring 70
local Businesses

The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) recently celebrated the vitality of the Berks County business community at its 113th Annual Dinner held at the Santander Arena.

More than 700 people gathered for the space-themed event.

The evening began by instantly transporting attendees to the moon with a space-themed showcase featuring companies that have worked directly or indirectly with NASA. VIP Sponsors were treated to an exclusive experience, complete with signature cocktails delivered by a roaming robot named KittyBot, gourmet hors d'oeuvres and a photo opportunity with keynote speaker and former NASA Astronaut, Mike



Mike Massimino, GRCA's keynote speaker and former NASA astronaut, relayed his time in space and what he learned to a crowd of more than 700 people.

Massimino. As other guests arrived, they were welcomed by dancing and high fiving robot named PepperBot. The excitement continued with lively photo backdrops, the use of CatapalloVR's headsets to land a crashing spaceship and hang out in Reading Truck's speakeasy lounge. Smoke

billowed and subwoofers shook the room to emulate a rocket launch.

During Massimino's 45-minute speech he recounted being rejected by NASA three times before finally being accepted into the 1996 astronaut class. He encouraged the audience to never crush the ideas of the new

person on your team, even if they aren't good, because they'll be less likely to share when they have a good idea. He also reflected on his role in a complex repair of the Hubble Space Telescope, encouraging the audience to trust their tools, training and team when facing high-pressure challenges.



Category 1 winners Eric Unger (middle left) and Barry Unger (middle right) celebrate Vision Mechanical Inc.'s win with GRCA COO Sally Stewart and Jeff Rush, Chairman of the Board.



Category 2 winners Doug and Rachel Brown of Blades of Steel Landscaping celebrate with GRCA COO Sally Stewart and Jeff Rush, Chairman of the Board.

2026 GRCA DINNER BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

Category 1

1. Vision Mechanical, Inc.
2. Irish Creek Construction
3. Mail Shark
4. Grant Manufacturing & Alloying, Inc.
5. Halter Landscaping, Inc.
6. Singer Equipment Company
7. Diamond Credit Union
8. JB Plumbing HVAC & Construction
9. Levan Machine & Truck Equipment
10. Ethosource, LLC
11. Wyatt Seating
12. D&S Elite Construction, Inc.
13. Discovery FCU
14. Sense of Peace Home Care
15. Fraser Advanced Information Systems
16. Unique Pretzel Bakery, Inc.
17. Customers Bank
18. RKL, LLP
19. Rothenberger Insurance Services, LLC
20. REMAX of Reading
21. East Penn Manufacturing Company
22. Betterview Counseling and Trauma Recovery, LLC
23. Berkshire Systems Group, Inc.
24. Stoney Creek Rentals, Inc.
25. New Castle Lawn & Landscape
26. Blatt Construction, Inc.
27. Solve IT Solutions, LLC
28. Advanced Comfort Specialists, Inc.
29. Fromm
30. Entech Engineering, Inc.
31. Spotts Insurance Group
32. Smith Bukowski
33. Financial Planning Advisors, Inc.
34. Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys
35. Kitay Law Offices
36. Muhlenberg Greene Architects, LTD.
37. Catering by John Lowe
38. Moselem Springs Golf Club
39. Reading Royals
40. Van Scoy Jewelers
41. Bell Tower Salon Spa
42. Santander Arena and Santander Performing Arts Center
43. Retro Fitness Kenhorst
44. Reading Truck Body, LLC
45. D&S Portable Toilets, LLC
46. Brentwood Industries, Inc.
47. Descco Design & Construction, Inc.
48. Ronnie C. Folk Paving, Inc.
49. Reading Truck Equipment, LLC
50. Phytogenx, Inc.

Category 2

1. Blades of Steel Landscaping
2. Bime Beauty
3. Disc Centers of America
4. Blinds and Designs
5. FXV Digital Design
6. Uncorkd
7. Lausch's Moving Company
8. Archwood Soapery
9. Berks Digital, Inc.
10. Three Hive Studios
11. Empowerment Behavioral Health, LLC
12. Gilded Design Studio
13. Bell Media Group
14. Interlace Communications, Inc.
15. Jeff Martin, Century 21 Gold
16. LJ's Fitness
17. Parcon Cleaning Services
18. Moyer-Drabick & Associates, LTD
19. Inspired Wellness, LLC
20. Ignite Martial Arts

"You never know when innovation is going to come," he said.

During one of the many lighthearted moments from his speech, Massimino talked about sending the first tweet from space.

"Take that, Neil Armstrong!" he recalled thinking.

Shortly after, he received an email from his kids learning that not only their friends and they were making fun of him, but also the comedians on Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update.

The evening continued with recognizing the 50 companies that made up the Business Excellence Awards in Category 1. Vision Mechanical, Inc., Irish Creek Construction, and Mail Shark took the top three spots. The honored businesses in Category 1 are for-profit companies, with revenues of at least \$1 million in each of the past three fiscal years.

Twenty small businesses were recognized in Category 2 with Blades of Steel Landscaping, Bime Beauty and Disc Centers of America making up the top three. The recognized companies in Category 2 are for-profit businesses, with revenues of at least \$250,000 in each of the past three fiscal years.

"The Annual Dinner was a strong reflection of the innovation and forward momentum across the Greater Reading business community," said Jeff Rush, Chairman of the board. "With a nod to exploration and discovery, the evening highlighted businesses that are leading the way and setting a high standard for growth in Berks County."

The Platinum Sponsor of the event was JPMorgan Chase & Co. and the Diamond Sponsor was Shuman Development Group.

ABOUT THE GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE: Our mission is with excellent and committed leadership and coordination, we: attract new businesses to our community, support the businesses that are already here, nurture local start-ups, develop the workforce for today and the future, and advocate on behalf of the business community.

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For additional information, please contact Barry H. Unger, President at 610.376.6700, Ext. 230 or email barryunger@visionmechanical.com, and visit www.visionmechanical.com.



GRCA 2026 ANNUAL DINNER RECAP



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GBDF SELLS 24 ACRES TO C&B DEVELOPMENT LLC

The Greater Berks Development Fund (GBDF), an affiliate of the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA), is pleased to announce the sale of 24 acres of land to C&B Development LLC, (C&B), Wyomissing.

The parcel of land, which GBDF purchased in 2018 with the purpose of providing industrially zoned land for business attraction and growth, is located on Van Reed Road in Bern Township. The construction of a 221,000-square-foot building on the site has been fully approved by all entities and construction is expected to start in the spring.

"It has been a pleasure working with the GBDF team over the past few years. This has been a complicated project that required quite a bit of collaboration, and we are very appreciative of GBDF's support," said Matt Close, C&B Development LLC Partner. "We believe this project will be very beneficial to the community and we are proud to invest in Berks County. We hope to continue to collaborate with GBDF on future opportunities."

Previous sales from the GBDF's 100-acre holdings in and around Van Reed and Leisz's Bridge Roads include G&T Foam, UGI Utilities, Inc. and Mid-Atlantic Interstate Transmissions, LLC. An 8-acre and an 11-acre parcel remain available for sale.

"We are pleased to have worked with C&B on this transaction. As a local developer, we were confident that C&B would successfully navigate the required review processes, ensuring an impactful project. This investment signals continued confidence in Berks County as an attractive location for business growth," said Debra L. Millman, GBDF President.

ABOUT THE GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE: Our mission is with excellent and committed leadership and coordination, we: attract new businesses to our community, support the businesses that are already here, nurture local start-ups, develop the workforce for today and the future, and advocate on behalf of the business community.

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POTTSTOWN LAW FIRM RECEIVES RECOGNITION

Attorneys named to SuperLawyers for Pennsylvania list

Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C. in Pottstown, PA announces that two of their attorneys have again been named to the list of top attorneys in Pennsylvania for 2026 as published by Super Lawyers magazine. Levi S. Wolf and Daniel E. McCabe were named in the practice area of Workers' Compensation.

In 2013, Mr. Wolf and Mr. McCabe became two of the first attorneys in the state to be certified as specialists in the practice of workers' compensation law by the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Section on Workers' Compensation Law as authorized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Super Lawyers magazine uses a patented selection process of multiple phases to create their list of top attorneys in the state. The process starts with nominations by peers. These nominations are validated by third-party research across 12 categories. Candidates are then grouped into categories based on practice area and reviewed by those attorneys who received the highest totals from each category. In the final selection, five percent of the state's attorneys are named to the Super Lawyers list, and 2.5 percent are selected to the Rising Stars list.

Mr. Wolf was previously named as a "Rising Star" in the SuperLawyer magazine in 2011 and 2012, and to the SuperLawyers list each year since 2014. Mr. McCabe has been on the SuperLawyer list since 2021.



Levi S. Wolf



Daniel E. McCabe

"It is an honor to once again be named as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer in the area of workers' compensation, said Mr. Wolf. "Our team comes in every day and works hard to get the best possible results for our clients, and to be recognized publicly for the good work we do is very gratifying."

"I'm thankful to have been named again as a SuperLawyer this year," added Mr. McCabe. "It is my honor to be able to represent injured workers and help them navigate the system and receive the benefits they deserve."

Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C. has offices in Pottstown, Pennsburg, Reading, and West Chester. The firm was founded in 1973 by Jack F. Wolf. Bruce Baldwin joined the firm in 1987. The firm currently employs 19 people.

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ARIANNA RUMLEY



AriCares Childcare Center is a family-centered childcare provider coming to Pottstown, Pennsylvania this September 2026, rooted in compassion, dignity, and service. Founded by Arianna Rumley, AriCares was created with a clear mission: to strengthen both businesses and families by providing children with safe, structured, and nurturing care during the hours when working families need it most. The center will serve children ages 18 months through 5 years, offering toddler care, preschool, and Pre-K programs through a 24-hour workforce childcare model designed to support employees working evenings, overnight shifts, weekends, and other non-traditional schedules.

Christian values guide the way AriCares approaches every child, family, and interaction — with compassion, gentleness, integrity, patience, and love. Families from all backgrounds and beliefs are warmly welcomed, and for those who desire it, optional faith-based enrichment is available, including Christian instruction, mentorship opportunities rooted in Biblical values, and spiritual development activities. The result is an inclusive environment where every child feels safe, valued, and genuinely cared for.

AriCares also maintains strategic partnerships with local churches and Christian organizations to connect families with essential community resources — from emergency assistance to mentorship and family outreach programs. This network of support reflects AriCares' belief that quality childcare extends beyond the classroom and into the broader wellbeing of the whole family, especially those navigating difficult seasons of life.

As AriCares prepares to open its pilot center in Pottstown this fall, the team is actively seeking local businesses interested in reserving dedicated childcare slots for their employees. Reliable childcare access helps employees show up consistently, strengthens staff retention, and reduces costly last-minute scheduling disruptions — making AriCares a smart investment for employers and a lifeline for working families. To learn more about business partnerships or family enrollment, visit www.AriCaresChildcareCenter.com or call 484.501.5641.

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Supporting Employers & Working Families

AriCares Childcare Center has developed a 24-hour workforce childcare model designed to support employees working non-traditional schedules.

The model supports employees working nights, evenings, and weekends while helping employers maintain a stable workforce.

The Cost of Employee Turnover

Healthcare (Nursing)	Manufacturing & Skilled Trades	Hourly Workforce Positions
Replacing a bedside registered nurse can cost \$40,000–\$64,000 per nurse	Replacing a manufacturing worker can cost \$5,000–\$15,000 per employee	Replacing hourly workers often costs employers thousands of dollars per employee.

A Workforce Childcare Solution

The AriCares model supports employees working:

- Evening shifts
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- Weekend schedules
- Essential workforce roles

Reliable childcare access helps employees show up consistently, strengthens staff retention, and reduces costly last-minute scheduling disruptions.

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BOYERTOWN AREA MULTI-SERVICE CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY THROUGH NUTRITION, WELLNESS, AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

The Boyertown Area Multi-Service (BAMS) remains committed to enhancing the quality of life for residents throughout Boyertown, Pottstown, and surrounding communities through a wide range of programs and services for older adults, families, and youth.

One of the organization's most vibrant offerings is its **Active Adult Center**, where adults age 55 and older can enjoy social connections, fitness opportunities, educational programs, and recreational activities for an annual membership fee of just \$25. Members have access to fitness classes, a billiard room, shuffleboard, quilting and sewing groups, crafts, card games, special events, and much more. The center also offers daily congregate lunches at noon, providing a nutritious meal and an opportunity for fellowship. Meals are available for a suggested donation of \$2.50, and all adults age 55 and older are welcome to participate. In the coming months, BAMS will also introduce convenient Grab-and-Go meals, allowing older adults to pull up to the center and receive a prepared meal without leaving their vehicle.

BAMS is also proud to continue the legacy of **Preston's Pantry**, a community food pantry named in honor of Preston, an eight-

year-old Boyertown boy who began a food drive to help local families in need. Although Preston tragically lost his life in 2018, his compassion and generosity continue to inspire the community. Preston's Pantry accepts food and monetary donations throughout the year and provides critical support to individuals and families facing food insecurity. Community members are encouraged to continue Preston's mission by donating non-perishable food items or making a financial contribution.

In addition, BAMS provides **Meals on Wheels** services throughout Montgomery and Berks Counties, helping older adults and individuals with disabilities maintain their independence while receiving nutritious meals. Whether someone needs short-term assistance during recovery or ongoing meal support, the program is available to help eligible residents remain healthy and safe in their homes.

The organization also operates the **Ricketts Center in Pottstown**, a family-focused community center offering youth development programs, fitness opportunities, after-school activities, summer camps, and wellness initiatives. The center serves as a safe and welcoming place where chil-



BAMS Offerings – Left: Active Adult Center Volleyball. Above: Ricketts Center in Pottstown. Below: Meals on Wheels



dren, teens, adults, and families can learn, grow, and thrive together.

The support of the community makes these programs possible. To learn more, volunteer, or donate, visit **BoyertownAreaMultiService.org**. If you would like to donate, click the "Donate" button. Every contribution helps BAMS continue its mission of strengthening individuals, families, and communities throughout the region.

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DO SMALL BUSINESSES NEED A SUPERCOMPUTER?



TECHNOLOGY

By Marc Umstead,
Plus One Technology

Artificial intelligence is everywhere right now. It is writing emails, summarizing meetings, building marketing plans, and probably judging your Excel formulas just a little bit. So, it is a fair question. Do you actually need to upgrade your computer to keep up with AI, or is your current system just fine?

Let's break this down in plain English so you can make a smart business decision without getting lost in tech jargon.

First, let's clarify something important — Not all AI is created equal. There are two very different ways businesses are using AI today: Web-based AI tools (Think ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Claude in your browser); and Local AI tools running on your computer (Think Claude Desktop, OpenClaw, LM Studio, or any locally hosted AI model). This distinction matters more than any hardware spec. If you are using web-based AI (Most busi-

nesses are), here is the good news. You probably do NOT need a new computer.

When you use tools like ChatGPT or Copilot in your browser, the heavy lifting is happening in massive data centers. Your computer is basically acting like a window into that system. What this means for you: Your PC is not doing the AI processing.

Performance depends more on your internet connection than your hardware. A standard business computer is usually enough. If your current system is not slow, freezing, or holding your team back, there is no urgent reason to upgrade unless it is older than five years old.

In fact, many small businesses operate efficiently with moderate specs because modern tools are cloud-based. This aligns with a broader trend where software and data are moving off local machines and into centralized platforms for flexibility and scalability.

Simple rule: If your team is using AI in a browser and not complaining about speed, you are fine.

(Continued on page 18)



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TECHNOLOGY

(Continued from page 17)

When You DO Need a More Powerful PC

Now let's talk about the other side. If you are experimenting with local AI tools, the game changes quickly. Running AI models on your own machine means your computer is responsible for: Processing large datasets; Running complex mathematical models; Managing significant memory loads. This is not light work.

Common signs you are in this category:

- You are using tools like OpenClaw, LM Studio, or Ollama.
- You want to run AI without sending data to the cloud.
- You are testing custom models or automation workflows.
- You care about data privacy or offline capabilities.

If that sounds like you, your current office PC may struggle.

Recommended Specs for Local AI Work

Let's keep this practical and realistic for a small business environment. Minimum Starting Point (for basic local AI use): CPU: Intel i7 or AMD Ryzen 7; RAM: 32GB; Storage: 1TB SSD (solid state drive is critical); GPU (optional but helpful): NVIDIA RTX

series with at least 8GB VRAM.

Why these matter: RAM (32GB): AI models consume a lot of memory. This is often the biggest bottleneck. CPU: Handles general processing and keeps things responsive. SSD: Faster data access improves overall performance dramatically. GPU: Speeds up model processing significantly, especially for larger models.

If you go below these specs, you may still run AI locally, but expect: Slow responses; Freezing applications; Frustrated employees. And frustrated employees are expensive.

The Business Question You Should Actually Be Asking

Instead of asking: "Do I need a better computer?" Ask this: "What problem am I trying to solve with AI?" Because hardware should follow business outcomes, not hype.

Examples:

- If your goal is faster email writing @ Web AI is enough.
- If your goal is internal data analysis with sensitive data @ Local AI might make sense.
- If your goal is automation and integration @ Could go either way.

The right answer depends on your workflow, not the latest trend.



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A Quick Reality Check (With a Little Humor)

Buying a high-end AI workstation “just in case” is like buying a commercial pizza oven because you made a frozen pizza once. It is impressive. It is expensive. It is probably unnecessary.

When It Makes Sense to Upgrade

You should seriously consider upgrading your PCs if:

- Your team is actively using or planning to use local AI tools.
- Your current machines are already slow with normal workloads.
- You are working with large files, video, CAD, or data-heavy applications.
- Your computer is already older than five years old.
- You want to future-proof systems for the next three to five years.

If none of these apply, your money is likely better spent elsewhere.

The Risk of Getting This Wrong

Underpowered systems lead to: Lost productivity; Employee frustration; Abandoned AI initiatives.

Overpowered systems lead to: Wasted budget; Low ROI; Equipment that never gets fully used.

Neither is a great outcome.

Where Plus 1 Technology Fits In

Your business is the hero here. You are trying to use AI to grow, become more efficient, and stay competitive. Our role is simply to guide you. If you are unsure whether your current systems can support your goals, we can help you evaluate:

- What your team is actually using.
- Whether local AI even makes sense for your business.
- What hardware investments will produce real ROI.

You can learn more about how we approach this in our AI Consulting Service and broader technology planning.

Final Thought

AI is powerful, but it does not automatically require powerful hardware. For most small businesses, the tools you are already using in the cloud are more than enough.

But if you are stepping into local AI, your PC matters a lot more than you think. The key is not chasing technology. It is making sure your technology supports your business goals without slowing you down.

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3 FIERCE AI TIPS TO SHINE BRIGHTER THIS JULY



By Deborah Ann Spence, Fiercepreneur

July carries that electric energy — it's bold, unapologetic, and alive. It's also the month where most entrepreneurs either burn out... or break through.

This is the season to be seen. To stop hiding behind "busy" and start showing up with intention, energy, and truth. Let's talk about how AI can help you elevate your presence, simplify your workload, and reclaim your fire.

Let AI Handle the Work, So You Can Handle the Stage

You're the brand. The face. The energy that drives it all. But if you're buried in tasks, no one can see your magic.

Use AI to run your backend like a dream — automate your follow-ups, post scheduling, and onboarding so your focus stays on visibility, not logistics. Whether you're speaking, hosting, or creating, your system should be working even when you're not.

Fierce Truth: You can't lead from behind the inbox. Free yourself to shine.

Turn Your Voice Into Velocity

You've got stories, lessons, and insights that need to travel further. Feed your podcasts, videos, or speeches into AI tools to pull quotes, captions, and content themes that align with your core message. Let it multiply your message without watering it down.

Repurpose once. Reach everywhere. You're not just creating content — you're building movement.



Fierce Truth: When your story moves, your audience moves with it.

Automate Your Energy, Not Your Empathy

It's easy to over-automate and lose the human touch. Use AI to enhance connection, not replace it. Set reminders to reach out personally to your top clients, send milestone messages, and celebrate wins that matter.

AI keeps you consistent — but *you* keep it soulful.

Fierce Truth: Technology can follow up, but only heart can follow through.

Final Thought

This July, I want you to show up — for real. In your power, in your confidence, in your story. Let AI work in the background while you work the spotlight. Because you weren't built to play small — you were built to *shine* fierce.

Show up. Stand tall. Stay human.



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GOOGLE JUST CONNECTED YOUR BUSINESS PROFILE TO ANALYTICS:

Here's What Home Services Owners Should Actually Do About It



MARKETING TIPS

By Brandon Rost,
CEO, beMarketing

The Era of Unified Local Data

For years, a massive blind spot has existed between the late-night emergency service calls on your Google Business Profile and the traffic reports in your website analytics. Now, a new native integration finally bridges that gap, pulling vital local interactions like direct calls, direction requests, and bookings right into your main reporting dashboard.

The Power of the Profile Conversion

Home service businesses thrive on immediate intent, meaning a frantic phone call straight from a search result is the ultimate conversion. Previously, these critical

local actions were siloed away from your primary web analytics, forcing owners to guess how local demand truly translated into booked jobs. Bringing this activity into the same view as your paid campaigns paints an **honest, comprehensive picture** of your true customer acquisition.

Aggregation is the Catch

While this update is a massive win for single-location contractors, multi-market operators need to tread carefully before abandoning their old dashboards. Linking multiple profiles results in **completely aggregated data**, stripping away your ability to filter performance by individual service areas. Rely on this new feature for spotting recent, high-level trends, but understand that serious location-by-location reporting still requires dedicated data exports.



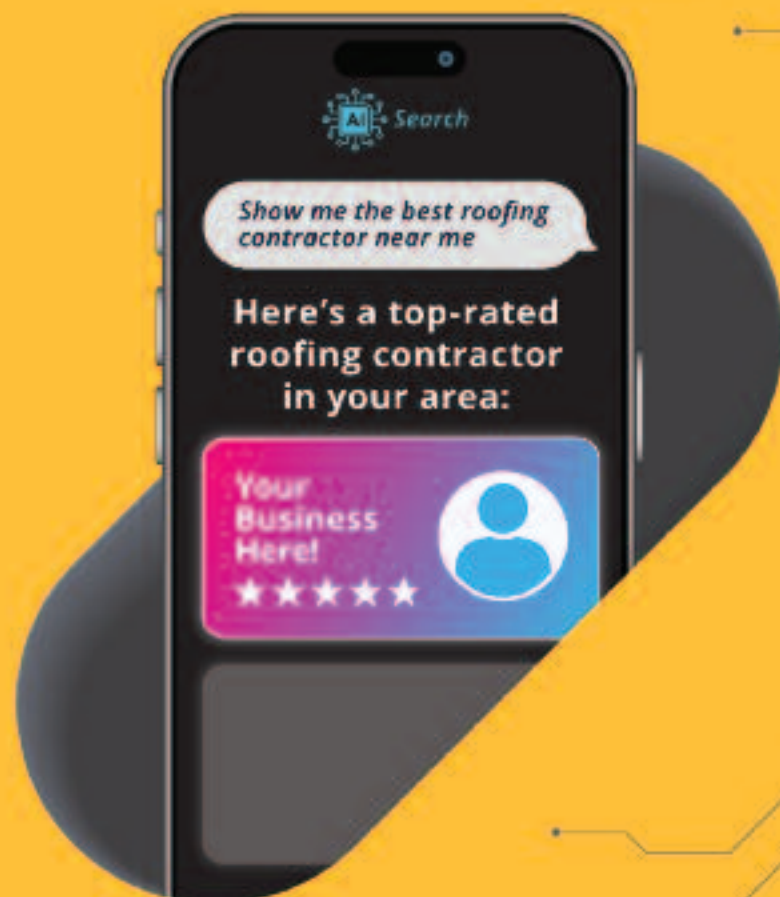
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Double Down on Strategic Tracking

If you manage a single storefront or service area, activating this consolidated view is a free, simple upgrade that you should implement immediately. For larger operations, turn on the integration to monitor broad performance, but **retain your specialized local tracking tools** to guide your location-level budget decisions. Ultimately, failing to measure profile interactions alongside web traffic means you are making business-critical choices using incomplete data.

The Bottom Line

Google has simplified the tracking landscape for independent operators, but this native link is not the complete attribution solution that complex, multi-location businesses require. The home service brands that win will be the ones that leverage this new visibility while continuing to rigorously track the exact local actions that drive their revenue. Ensuring your current setup captures every call and direction request is the exact conversation you need to have before your next budget cycle begins.




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SHORT-FORM VIDEO TRENDS IN 2026



SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

By Theresa Mintzer

In 2026, short-form video remains one of the most powerful tools for growing your brand online. Platforms like Instagram Reels, TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and LinkedIn continue to prioritize video content, helping businesses to increase visibility and engagement.

Trending video ideas include:

- Day-in-the-life content
- Quick tips and tutorials
- Customer testimonials and UGC
- Behind-the-scenes clips
- Myth vs. fact videos
- Product demonstrations

Short-form video is also becoming a search tool, with users turning to social platforms for recommendations and answers. Optimize videos with captions, keywords, and strong hooks in the first one-three seconds.

AI-powered tools like Canva and CapCut make creating videos easier through



automated captions, editing assistance, and content repurposing features.

Not comfortable on camera? Try voiceovers, screen recordings, B-roll footage, or text-based videos instead.

The bottom line: Consistent short-form video content helps your audience know, like, and trust your brand. Start simple, stay authentic, and focus on providing value to your ideal customer.

Ready to build video into your content strategy? I offer 1:1 social media coaching to help you grow your social media platforms with confidence. Visit mintzersolutions.com to learn more and schedule a session.



Transplant Alliance Foundation • Transplant Alliance Bingo
799 State Street, Pottstown, PA 19464
484.752.8073
www.TransplantAllianceBingo.com • www.TransplantAlliance.org

♥ Funds raised benefit transplant patients and donor families facing financial hardship during the transplant journey. ♥

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WACKY WEDNESDAY BINGO
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\$125 SPECIALS
\$1500 JACKPOT

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The Route 422 Business Advisor (ISSN 1524-1254) is published monthly, twelve times per year by MACnificent Pages, P.O. Box 334, Pottstown, PA 19464-0334, and is mailed free to qualified business owners and operators throughout the Route 422 and Route 100 Business Corridors in Pennsylvania, USA, and is available in digital format at www.422business.com. Copyright © 2026 by MACnificent Pages. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form is forbidden without written permission of the publisher. Views expressed in articles published in the Route 422 Business Advisor are the views of authors and individual contributors and are not to be attributed to the Route 422 Business Advisor, its editorial advisors, or its advertisers, unless expressly stated. The Route 422 Business Advisor does not verify the accuracy of claims made in advertisements, and publication of an ad does not imply endorsement by the magazine or MACnificent Pages. All ads are non-cancellable. ERRORS — It is the Route 422 Business Advisor's policy to review all ads set in-house with the advertiser regarding content, spelling, prices, and contact information PRIOR to publication. In ALL cases, including camera-ready ads, the advertiser assumes complete responsibility for the accuracy of information presented in ads. In any case where an error is clearly the fault of the Route 422 Business Advisor, and which would prevent a reader from contacting an advertiser or in which incorrect pricing is involved, Route 422 Business Advisor's liability will be limited to granting a FREE ad run to the advertiser or a correction announcement, whichever the advertiser prefers, provided the Route 422 Business Advisor is notified PRIOR to the next edition's deadline. Placing an advertisement in the Route 422 Business Advisor constitutes acknowledgment and acceptance of these terms.



UPCOMING AUCTIONS

NEW CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT, CONTAINERS, GOLF CARTS SKID STEERS, EXCAVATORS, ATTACHMENTS & SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT

Location: 1100 E Philadelphia Ave, Gilbertsville, PA 19525

Online bidding closes Friday, July 10th at 6pm

1264 MAPLE GLEN CIR POTTSTOWN, PA 19464

Open Houses: Sunday, June 28th from 12:00pm to 2:00pm and Tuesday, July 7th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm

LIVE Public Real Estate Auction will be held on Tuesday, July 14th at 7:00pm

TREE EQUIPMENT, CHIPPERS, SHOP & MECHANICS TOOLS ONLINE AUCTION – PERKASIE, PA

Location: 1528 Ridge Road Perkasi, PA 18944

Online bidding closes Tuesday July 14th at 6:00pm

N. VALLEY RD, POTTSTOWN, PA 19464

LIVE Public Real Estate Auction will be held on Wednesday, July 15th at 7:00pm

10 SHERIDAN LN POTTSTOWN, PA 19464

Open House: Sunday, June 28th from 3:00pm to 5:00pm and Thursday, July 9th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm

LIVE Public Real Estate Auction will be held on Thursday July 16th at 7:00pm

215-326-9624 mark@geyerauctions.com



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GRCA ROUNDUP

GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE

GRCA

GREATER READING Chamber Alliance

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

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Resilient Leadership: Building Self-Sufficient Teams That Thrive*

July 9
9 a.m.-Noon
Center for Business Excellence
49 Commerce Dr., Wyomissing
\$195/person- GRCA Members;
\$275/person- Future GRCA Members
Register at Greaterreading.org/resilient

Membership Matters Webinar

July 21
10 a.m.-11 a.m.
Zoom
Free
Register at
Greaterreading.org/membershipmatters

Networking @Night: Reading Public Museum

July 23
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Reading Public Museum
500 Museum Road, Reading
Free, GRCA Member exclusive
Register at Greaterreading.org/RPM

Economic Development + Placemaking Webinar

July 29
Noon - 1 p.m.
Zoom
Free
Register at Greaterreading.org/placemaking

*WEDnet eligible



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REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP



MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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

ADVOCACY: At the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, we champion the interest of businesses big and small. We work with lawmakers at every level to create a thriving environment where companies can grow and succeed.

NETWORKING & CONNECTIONS: Our events aren't just meetings, they're opportunities to build meaningful connections. Whether you're a Chamber member or just Chamber-curious, join us for a welcoming atmosphere with good food, great conversation, and authentic networking. No hard sells just real people making real connections! Bring your business cards, curiosity and your elevator pitch.

WHY JOIN THE CHAMBER?: Advocacy | Connections | Networking | Exposure | Referrals | Member Benefits | Visibility | Weekly E-News | Community Recognition | Learning Opportunities | Access to Local Leaders

The Power of Connections



Nearly 80 business leaders packed a recent Chamber event, sharing ideas, laughs, and connections that lasted well beyond the night. The Chamber's programs bring professionals together to collaborate, learn, and strengthen Montgomery County's business community.



Check out all of our upcoming events and check back often— we're always adding new opportunities at MontcoChamberPA.org.

P.S. Member or not, everyone is welcome; we build a community together!

More info: MontcoChamberPA.org • 610.265.1776 • MontgomeryCountyChamber@gmail.com

www.MontcoChamberPA.org



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

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



TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Resources. Relationships. Recognition.

18 W. Lightcap Road, Suite 613, Pottstown, PA 19464 | 610.326.2900 | www.tricountyareachamber.com

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

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

Follow us on:      **#WhyTCACC**
#tcaccbettertogether

LEADERSHIP TRICOUNTY: AN EVOLVING TRADITION

For 30 years, Leadership TriCounty has served as a hallmark 10-month journey for professional development in our region. The program recently celebrated a major milestone with the showcase and graduation of the historic **Leadership TriCounty Class of 2026** on Thursday, June 4, 2026.

A huge congratulations goes out to this year's exceptional graduates who have successfully completed this rigorous journey and are primed to step into impactful leadership roles across our community:

- **Kiley Borkey** – Sealstrip Corporation
- **Shannon Harley** – Montgomery County Community College
- **Fior Herrera** – Community Health and Dental Care
- **Rosalia Hoffman** – Ambler Savings Bank
- **Julie Johnson** – Constellation
- **David Martin** – The Lewis Group
- **Samuel Mirarchi** – Pottstown Regional Community Foundation
- **Lana Potgieter** – Lighthouse Leadership Coaching and Development
- **Harrison Santangelo** – TriCounty Area Chamber Of Commerce
- **Prativa Shah** – S&P Associates LLC
- **Cathy Skitko** – The Hill School and Hobart's Run
- **Jacqueline Sergent** – The Hill School and Hobart's Run

As the chamber looks to the future we recognize that the landscape of business is evolving, and the needs of employees are changing alongside it. To meet these shifting demands, the program is undergoing a significant evolution starting in 2027. Leadership TriCounty is moving away from the traditional, one-size-fits-all 10-month track. Instead, the curriculum is being decoupled into two distinct, targeted programs: **Leadership TriCounty: Ignite** and **Leadership TriCounty: Impact**. This restructuring gives businesses the power to customize professional development, perfectly aligning training with a team's immediate operational and strategic needs.



Every great leader requires a solid tactical foundation. Running from January to May, **Ignite** focuses purely on the raw, tangible skills needed to manage and inspire teams on a daily basis. The curriculum dives deep into five critical pillars:

- **Leadership Characteristics:** Promoting radical transparency and authenticity.
 - **Systems & Tracking:** Utilizing data and setting clear expectations.
 - **Communication:** Mastering true, active listening.
 - **Delegation:** Empowering teams effectively to eradicate micromanagement.
 - **Accountability:** Building an organizational culture where people naturally take ownership.
- Ignite serves as the perfect runway for emerging managers, newly promoted supervisors, or any professional needing to sharpen their core leadership toolkit.

While tactical skills are essential, they only represent half the battle. True corporate stewardship happens when leaders step outside the walls of the office. Launching from August to December, **Impact** is entirely dedicated to community-focused leadership.

Community engagement is no longer just an act of philanthropy; it is a vital business strategy. Data shows that businesses win in three major ways when their leaders engage with the community:

- **Strategic Relationships:** Building deep, meaningful connections with fellow executives, local nonprofits, and elected officials.
- **Market Insights:** Gaining a front-row seat to local trends, which keeps the business agile and ahead of the competition.
- **Executive Readiness:** Training team members to step into board-level leadership and navigate high-level financial decisions.

The Impact program is specifically designed for executives, senior leaders, business owners, and nonprofit professionals who drive the community forward and want to scale their collective influence.

By decoupling these programs, employers gain complete control over their training investments. If you have a brilliant technical expert who needs to work on delegation, you can send them to **Ignite**. If you have a veteran manager who needs to expand their footprint and build strategic partnerships, you can send them to **Impact**. For organizations seeking a comprehensive transformation, leaders can be enrolled in **both**.

Businesses no longer risk losing team members for 10 straight months if they only require a specific skill tune-up. Organizations can now invest exactly where they need it most, maximizing ROI and seeing immediate operational impacts.

The future of our region depends entirely on well-rounded, community-minded leaders. Whether your organization needs to ignite foundational management skills or drive a lasting impact locally, the Chamber is ready to partner with you to make that happen. This is the future of TriCounty leadership, optimized for your business, designed on your terms.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

A Helping of Greens
(610) 340-5565

<http://www.ahelpingofgreens.com/>
Fundraising Consultants

Advantage Insurance Group
(610) 326-1372
<http://www.advantage-360.com/>
Insurance Companies

Montgomery County SPCA
(610) 825-0111
<https://montgomerycountyspca.org/>
Nonprofit Organizations

Wise Choice Business Coaching,
Authorized Phenomenal Business
Coaching Partner
(484) 955-1177
<http://www.wisecoachcoaching.com/>
Coaching - Business / Life

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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

48+ Years
AAA East Central

Graham Management
t/a McDonald's

30 years
Pottstown Area
Police Athletic League

20 years
RiverCrest Golf Club & Preserve

5 years
Cornerstone Advisors
Asset Management



REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

You're Invited to the TriCounty Area Chamber's 2026 Golf Outing!

Come support your Chamber and make lasting connections over a round of golf!



Friday, August 21st
At Twin Ponds Golf Course

8 AM Registration

9 AM Shotgun Start

1:30 PM Chamber BBQ Lunch by Moyer's Catering

(Lunch only option available for non-golfers)

Single Golfer- \$150

Foursome - \$550

Networking BBQ Lunch Only \$40



Scan the QR Code to register for the golf outing, lunch, or a sponsorship opportunity.

Scan the QR Code to register for the REACH Conference or a sponsorship opportunity.



Join us for the 6th Annual REACH Conference on

September 2nd from 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM!

An unforgettable half-day experience designed to inspire, connect, and empower women across our region.



Keynote Speaker: Erika Rothenberger

A nationally recognized keynote speaker, bestselling author, and thought leader on audacity, resilience, and bold leadership. Known for her powerful storytelling and actionable insights, Erika inspires audiences to expand beyond limitations and step into courageous leadership.



Panel Discussion: Real Conversations. Real Impact.

We are proud to present a dynamic panel featuring:

- Karen Nerheim, CEO, American Crane & Equipment Corp
- Heather Chaudler, President of Sealstrip Corporation
- Kristi Gage-Lisderman, CEO of Gage Talent & Business Solutions
- Margo McDannell, President at 1031 Corp.



Roundtable Discussions:

The day will also feature interactive roundtable discussions led by Michelle Gavan, a dynamic speaker, certified life coach, and co-founder of The Gavan Group, LLC. Michelle is known for her ability to inspire transformation through both corporate and personal development work.



VISIONARY



STAKEHOLDER



BUILDING COMMUNITIES



CREATING CONNECTIONS



SUPPORTING COMMERCE



REGIONAL CHAMBER ROUNDUP

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



710 Main St., Phoenixville, PA 19460
• 610.933.3070

• 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.
www.phoenixvillechamber.org

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 voice and advocate for the local business community—connecting members with professionals, mentors, and customers while helping businesses grow and strengthening our region. We serve businesses in Collegeville, Trappe, Schwenksville, Upper Providence, Lower Providence, Lower Frederick, Perkiomen, Skippack, and Oaks. Visit www.PVchamber.net to view membership directory. To sign-up for E-news, email info@PVchamber.net and follow us on Facebook @PerkValleyChamber.net

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Johnson Starling & Rotman

Full service law firm

Jacqueline A. Johnson 215-966-1777
www.jsrfirm.com

Pennsburg Power Equipment Rental

Outdoor Power Equipment Sales, Service, Parts
Jami Harmansky 215-679-2089

Cornerstone Caregiving East

In-home care services

Samuel Watanabe 267-551-8092
www.cornerstonecaregiving.com

Celebrating 40 Years on the Green

Thank you to everyone who helped make our **40th Annual Golf Outing a success**. Nearly 100 golfers, dozens of volunteers, and many generous sponsors joined us for a beautiful day of golf, networking, contests, raffles, and camaraderie. This event remains one of the Chamber's most important fundraisers and a favorite tradition among our members. Be sure to check out this our Facebook page for photos highlighting some of the day's memorable moments.

www.facebook.com/PerkValleyChamber



PV Perks Cards – Shop Local & Save!

For just \$10, enjoy exclusive multi-use offers from your favorite local **restaurants, retailers, and service businesses**. Purchase online, then pick up your card at the PV Chamber office or request it to be mailed directly to you. Visit www.PVChamber.net to purchase and view the full list of participating businesses and offers.

Visit www.PVChamber.net for details and event schedule.



PV Next Gen Happy Hour July 9

PV Next-Gen is a vibrant network for young professionals (ages 22–40) across the Perkiomen Valley, Montgomery, Berks, and Bucks Counties. Our members—entrepreneurs, innovators, and rising leaders—connect, grow skills, and give back to the community. Annual membership is \$25 for PV Chamber member employees and \$50 for non-members.

Our next HH will be held on **July 9th at The Dutch Cottage Tavern**. Learn more and purchase tickets at www.PVchamber.net.



Annual Chamber Night at Reading Fightin Phils – July 29

Grab your family, friends, clients, or coworkers and join us for Chamber Night with the Reading Fightin Phils on July 29. Tickets are available through the Chamber office and provide a fun, affordable summer outing while supporting Chamber programs. Don't wait—tickets are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Summer Mixer Details Coming in July

We're finalizing plans for our Annual Summer Mixer, one of the Chamber's most anticipated networking events. This casual gathering offers a great opportunity to connect with prospective and fellow members, welcome new businesses, and enjoy a summer afternoon with the local business community. Watch our website and social media channels in early July for event details and registration information.

Visit www.PVChamber.net for details/event schedule.



SPRING-FORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

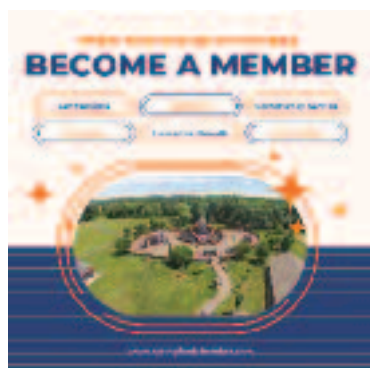
• P.O. Box 127, Royersford PA 19468 • 610.489.7200 • www.springfordchamber.com



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 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 sfchamberofcommerce@gmail.com for more information on membership benefits and how to join. Let's grow together!

BUSINESS CONNECT

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 sfchamberofcommerce@gmail.com

Event Logistics:

8:00-8:30am-
Networking

8:30-8:45am-
Introductions

8:45-9:00am-
Presentation

9:00-9:15am-
Wrap up

HOST A SPRING-FORD CHAMBER HAPPY HOUR

Want to spotlight your business and connect with local professionals in a fun, relaxed setting? Now's your chance! The Spring-Ford Chamber is inviting members to host our monthly Networking Happy Hour.

Why Host? Showcase your business to Chamber members • Build relationships in a casual, social environment • Gain extra promotion through Chamber emails, social media, and event listing

Host Investment: \$150.00 Hosting Fee – covers event promotion, location if not at your business and Chamber staffing.

Interested in Hosting? Email: sfchamberofcommerce@gmail.com

Claim your preferred month today!

HOST A WOMEN IN NETWORKING (WIN) EVENT

Showcase your business. Build connections, Support women in business The Spring-Ford Chamber invited members to host one of our monthly Women in Networking (WIN) events!

As a WIN Host, You Will:

❑ Provide the Venue – Host the event at your business or chosen location

❑ Offer Light Refreshments – Coffee, pastries, or snacks for guests

❑ Pay a \$100 Host Fee – This covers Chamber advertising and event promotion across email, social media, and our website

❑ Enjoy the Spotlight! – You'll have 5-10 minutes to introduce your business and share what you do.

Why Host a WIN Event? Gain visibility in the local business community • Reach new potential customers and partners • Support women's professional growth and empowerment • Be featured in Chamber promotions before and after the event

Interested in Hosting? Email: sfchamberofcommerce@gmail.com

WOMEN in NETWORKING

Connect. Empower. Grow.

Hosted by:
MICHELLE GOVAN

Join us for inspiring conversations, valuable connections, and real support from women who get it.

1ST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

2026 DATES

- August 7, 2026
- September 11, 2026
- October 2, 2026
- November 6, 2026
- December 4, 2026

TIME

8:00 AM

LOCATION

Limerick Township Building
646 W Ridge Pike

REFRESHMENTS

Light refreshments served

SPRING-FORD CHAMBER HAPPY HOUR

Raise a Glass to New Connections!

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2026

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

LOCK 29 MONTE CLARE
127 Bridge Street
Monte Clare, PA 19453

Join us for an evening of networking, conversation, and community building with fellow Chamber members and local business professionals.

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THE SBRA COMMUNITY A MINDSET FOR SUCCESS



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

At a recent networking event, I asked the attendees what their plans were for becoming more successful. Before answering, they needed to think about what success meant to them and then address success from a personal and business perspective. What I was really trying to get them to think about was whether they were satisfied with where they were at the moment or whether they felt something was missing and needed to be improved upon.

Sometimes we get to a point where we feel like what we are doing is good enough, or that we are not able to achieve more. We have maxed out our abilities and capabilities and we are just where we are meant to be. Think about this quote, "IF YOU ONLY DO WHAT YOU CAN DO — YOU WILL NEVER BE ANY BETTER THAN YOU ARE NOW." So often we allow our thoughts to control our words and then our words become our actions. "I'm just not smart enough," "I'm just not good enough," "I don't have enough time, money, experience," "If I only..." and the list goes on with all the reasons you cannot be any better than you are now.

The end result of this thought process is that you will most likely remain being the person that you think you are and you will only achieve what you think you can. Your mind will determine your destiny and any thoughts of bettering your personal and business success will be held captive.

Self-awareness leads to self-compassion which will trigger actions that will create change. In other words, a positive mindset is the key to most people's successes. You can either have a FIXED MINDSET or a GROWTH MINDSET. Let me show you how this works.

YOUR LIFE	FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
CHALLENGES	Avoidance	Embrace
OBSTACLES	Give up easily	Persist in the face of setbacks
EFFORT	See effects as fruitless	See efforts as a path to success
CRITICISM	Ignore useful negative feedback	Learn from criticism
SUCCESS	Feel threatened by success of others	Drives hunger for more

The chart explains how a Fixed Mindset versus a Growth Mindset deals with everyday CHALLENGES in your life, views and handles OBSTACLES that block your growth and success, allows your EFFORTS to guide your achievements, protects you from CRITICISM and allows you to achieve the SUCCESS, whatever that might mean to you, that you are striving for.

Self-Awareness is knowing who you are and what you are good and not so good at, and being OK with that knowledge. Self-Compassion is being kind to yourself, not beating yourself up. Your Growth Mindset opens the doors to your success by saying "I haven't reached my goal — YET, "It's OK, let's just do it" or "I want to do it because..."

Reward your Growth Mindset by setting goals that are realistic and attainable, break those big goals into steps and celebrate the success of each step as you travel that journey.



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WHAT EVERY SMALL BUSINESS OWNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

HEALTH COVERAGE OPTIONS IN PA

A Comprehensive Guide

Health Coverage Options

As a business owner, or contractor, when it comes to insuring one's self and one's family in Pennsylvania, most people assume there are really only two options: Enrolling in an **Employer Sponsored Group Health Plan**, or enrolling in an **Individual / Family Health Plan** as mandated by the Affordable Care Act. In Pennsylvania however (and in several other states, **there's a third category** that many healthy business owners don't even know exists! **Medically Underwritten "Non-Qualifying" Health Plans**. If you can enroll in Employer Sponsored Group Health Plan, it is likely the best choice because it offers **lower premium costs** (as employers typically subsidize a large portion of the cost) and **significant tax benefits**, so this article focuses on the later 2 choices.

ACA (Affordable Care Act) Coverage?

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), often called Obamacare, is a comprehensive Federal law enacted in March 2010 meant to **increase the number of Americans with health insurance while decreasing the overall cost**. ACA plans are regulated by **federal law** and are offered through **marketplaces**. These plans must accept all applicants, regardless of health status, and cover a set of "essential health benefits." Premiums are based on Age, Zip Code, Tobacco use, and Income ONLY.

- **Guaranteed Acceptance:** No medical underwriting; all applicants are accepted.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** Includes "essential" health benefits such as preventive care, maternity, mental health, and more.
- **Pre-existing Conditions:** All are covered, with no exclusions or waiting periods.
- **Subsidies Available:** Income-based subsidies can make premiums more affordable.
- **Cost:** Premiums are generally higher (as underwriters must ASSUME you'll need a certain level of care for pre-existing conditions and chronic illnesses like Cancer and Diabetes).

What Is Medically Underwritten Health Coverage?

As "**Non-Qualifying**", Medically underwritten coverage is NOT available via the marketplace, and is priced based on one's **HEALTH** as opposed to one's **WEALTH**, and they are NOT required to accept everyone.

- **Eligibility:** Based on health status; healthier individuals may receive lower premiums.
- **Customization:** Plans can be more tailored to individual needs and risk profiles.
- **Cost Savings:** Generally less expensive than ACA plans with comparable protection
- **Limitations:** Pre-existing conditions may be excluded or result in higher costs. Coverage may be denied for some applicants.

Key Differences at a Glance

Medically underwritten coverage and ACA coverage differ in several important ways.

Applicant acceptance is not guaranteed with medically underwritten plans, while ACA coverage guarantees acceptance for all applicants.

Coverage of pre-existing conditions is often limited or excluded under medically underwritten plans, whereas ACA coverage fully covers pre-existing conditions.

Premiums for medically underwritten plans are based on health and age. ACA premiums are based on age, location, and tobacco use.

Plan customization is generally high with medically underwritten coverage, allowing for greater flexibility. ACA coverage is more standardized.

Essential health benefits may vary under medically underwritten plans, while ACA plans are required to include essential health benefits.

Medically underwritten coverage does not offer **subsidies**. ACA coverage may qualify for income-based subsidies.

Pros & Cons

- **Medically Underwritten Coverage**
 - Lower premiums for healthy individuals
 - Greater plan flexibility
 - Risk of denial or high costs for those with health issues
 - May not meet all coverage needs
- **ACA Coverage**
 - Comprehensive, standardized benefits
 - Protection for all, regardless of health
 - Higher costs
 - Subsidies available for qualifying incomes

Scenarios: Which Option Is Right for You?

- **If you're healthy and want lower monthly premiums:** Medically underwritten may offer savings.
- **If you have pre-existing conditions or want comprehensive protection:** ACA coverage ensures you get the benefits you need, with no exclusions.
- **If you qualify for subsidies:** ACA coverage may be more affordable than anticipated.

Questions to Consider

- What is your current health status?
- Do you require coverage for specific conditions or treatments?
- Is budget or comprehensive coverage more important to you?
- Do you qualify for ACA subsidies?
- Would you prefer a fully customizable plan or standardized coverage?

Ready to Explore Your Best Option?

Choosing the right health coverage doesn't have to be overwhelming. Every situation is unique, and the best plan depends on your health, budget, and long-term goals.

We offer no-cost, no-obligation consultations to evaluate your options and help you make an informed decision. Together, we'll review your situation and needs, compare available plans, and identify the solution that delivers the best value and protection for you and your family.



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THOSE WHO BELIEVE WHAT WE BELIEVE



**By Lana Potgieter,
Lighthouse
Leadership Coaching
& Development**

Simon Sinek, in his first “Start with Why” Ted Talk, famously said: “Your aim is not to do

business with everyone in the world, your aim is to work with those who believe what you believe.”

That has been something I have tried to hold at the front of my mind in my business since I first heard it! However, being new to the USA, I find I need to clarify what I believe to create alignment and awareness.

Let’s look at the WHAT, WHO, WHY for leaders. Do one or more of these apply to you:

- Your current success was achieved with a flexible, maverick, risk-taking decision-and-reaction style, which is becoming harder to do as the team has expanded.
- You do not want to be rigid or ‘corporate’ in any way, but need to grow the team, the revenue, and your market share.

• Your team has grown, and you’re still involved in too many operational decisions.

• You’d like to put in fewer hours, yet increase results and outcomes.

• You want a succession plan to create a meaningful exit road map.

• You have a team with potential, and you’d love for them to live up to it and perform better.

WHAT: Gaining clarity around a few fundamental questions is something that we do at our very first ‘Connect & Explore’ meeting. Ask yourself the following, and take your time to answer:

• What aspects of their business work really well?

• What is working but not working as well as it could?

• What (or who) is causing frustration, a bottleneck, or creating losses in terms of absenteeism, waste, rework, or other inefficiencies?

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exploring with you how your team leads people to achieve results.

Although there are obvious similarities in challenges businesses experience, one size does not fit all. We never “sell you a product” – we work with you to achieve predetermined and measurable outcomes that are important to you as the visionary in the business.

Together we will:

- Clarify the goals that are most important for you to achieve with and through the team. This tells us the bottom-line impact you anticipate receiving.
- Create a roadmap to equip the relevant team members to follow through on deliverables through changes in behavior, attitudes, and skills.

- We share a “toolbox” and equip you and your team to operationalize the learning for continued growth, even without us.

- Unlock the potential in each team member to ensure sustainable, measurable results

WHO: I have worked with more than 1,000 leaders individually or in groups. In-house or as part of a cohort. Many of our clients work with us over a number of years as the team grows and they expand. The ones who achieved the biggest overall impact, have the following in common:

- 80 – 200 team members.

- Privately owned – the success or struggle of the business directly affects the founder/s future and legacy.

- The owner/s are naturally curious & committed to continued learning for themselves and their leadership teams.

- The owner/s use the business to build futures, not only for themselves but also for their team members.

- The owner/s know they will achieve more if they surround themselves with a great team, and see the potential in the people they employ, and want the best from everyone.

- The owner (s) want the freedom to spend time with their families or pursue hobbies and interests outside their business. They didn’t start the business to be held captive by it.

WHY:

The results shown are what we intentionally work toward.

If you want less generic information and to explore if this might be a fit for you, then call Lana at 484.347.0515 to set up a no-obligation “Connect and Explore” conversation.

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ARE YOU CALLING YOUR EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS?



LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

By Daniel E. McCabe, Esq., Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.

Fifteen years ago, on October 13, 2010, Governor Ed Rendell signed into law House Bill 400, establishing the Construction Workplace Misclassification Act (CWMA). This new law went into effect on February 10, 2011, and had a dramatic impact on all construction companies utilizing independent contractors. For years a heated and debated issue in Workers' Compensation law has been the treatment of workers as independent contractors under the Workers' Compensation Act. Fifteen years later, any employer involved in construction should still be well aware of the effects of the CWMA.

Generally, if a worker is an independent contractor, workers' compensation benefits are not available for any injuries sustained on the job. The independent contractor must have his or her own insurance. The practical effect of this is that many employers would classify, or misclassify, their workers as independent contractors, when they were actually employees. By calling workers independent contractors, employers can try to avoid the cost of carrying expensive workers' compensation benefits and can be held out of long and costly litigation over work injuries. This practice is especially prevalent in construction businesses, such as roofing and general contracting, where workers' compensation insurance is prohibitively expensive, and injuries are often quite severe and debilitating.

For many years, a relatively vague test, which basically came down to how much control an employer had over a worker, controlled the law as to that worker's status as either an employee or an independent contractor. However, under the CWMA, an individual who performs construction work may be considered and paid as an independent contractor only if:

- The individual has a written contract.
- The individual is free from control or direction over performance of such services, both under the contract and in fact.
- The individual is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, profession or business

Thus, a written contract seems to be essential, however, this aspect alone certainly would not suffice. For years, many

employers have simply written up employment agreements which name employees as independent contractors. However, the addition of codified degrees of control over services and the addition of the requirement of an "individual (who) is customarily engaged in an independently established trade," serve to clarify matters even further.

Before the CWMA, employers looking to be free of the liability and costs of workers could simply have each worker sign a contract labeling each worker as an independent contractor, and then nevertheless control each aspect of that workers' job. However, now there must be a definitive lack of control over a true independent contractor, and there would likely need to be a showing that this worker is not simply performing a task for the employer, but rather, that the worker performs this task independently as part of an established trade or business. Thus, a showing that the worker performs the same task for numerous employers would be an ideal way to meet this requirement.

With respect to the third criterion above, the CWMA states that an individual is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, profession, or business only if:

- The individual possesses his/her own tools.
- The individual's arrangement is such that he/she can realize a profit or suffer a loss as a result of the individual's performance of services through a business in which the individual has a proprietary interest.
- The individual maintains a separate business location.
- The individual previously worked as a bona fide independent contractor (as defined by the CWMA) or holds him/herself out to the public as a bona fide independent contractor.

These requirements basically codify the factors which have been used in litigation for many years. When a worker supplies his or her own tools, the obvious connection is that they are not just an employee, but an outside contractor, who clearly possesses a skill and service that requires tools to perform that service. For example, an electrician who is hired by a contractor (who does not himself do electrical work) to wire a home and comes with his own tools to do so, is clearly an independent contractor. However, an electrician who wires a home with another individual's tools would be more likely to be considered an employee.

(Continued on page 38)

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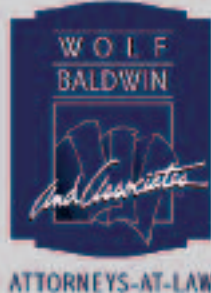
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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 37)

The second requirement regarding profits or losses seems to indicate that while an employee gets paid for a job whether performed well or not, an independent contractor would be more likely to lose money on a poorly performed job, or conversely make more of a profit on a job that was completed efficiently, or take a loss on a job that was overbudget.

Under the CWMA, there are a lot of hurdles to clear in order to establish that a worker should be classified as an independent contractor. The overwhelming majority of workers in the construction industry in Pennsylvania who are currently classified as independent contractors are now considered employees. Further, the failure to withhold federal or state income taxes or pay unemployment compensation contributions or workers compensation premiums will not be considered in determining whether an individual is an independent contractor. The CWMA sets out the factors to be used by the courts, instead of relying upon case law which points to numerous and varying factors.

Misclassification directly affects workers' comp coverage: if a construction worker is not a valid independent contractor under CWMA, they are an employee

for workers' compensation purposes and must be covered. The two statutory frameworks (CWMA and Workers' Compensation Act) operate simultaneously but are not mutually exclusive — violation of CWMA results in administrative penalties while also establishing employee status for workers' comp claims.

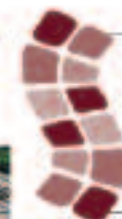
The courts have generally held that the absence of a written contract (defining that the employee is an independent contractor) alone makes the worker an employee entitled to workers' comp benefits. This means that even if all of the other factors from above are met, without a contract, Judges generally find that alone to enough to make the injured worker an "employee" under the Workers Compensation Act. *Staron v. W.C.A.B. (Farrier)*, 121 A.3d 564 (Pa.Cmwth.Ct. 2015), further established that this contract must exist at the time of the injury, and not after the fact.

Recent case law has limited the scope of the CWMA to some extent. The most significant recent development is the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's 2018 decision in *Department of Labor and Industry v. WCAB (Lin and Eastern Taste)*, 647 Pa. 28 (2018), which clarified the scope of the CWMA by holding that the statute applies

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only when the putative employer is itself in the business of construction. This ruling narrowed the CWMA's reach and confirmed that the traditional common-law balancing test continues to govern worker classification disputes in non-construction industries — even when the work being performed involves construction activities.

However, another new case clarified the CWMA even further. In 2024, the Commonwealth Court's decision in *Linda's Cleaning Consultants, Inc. v. Department of Labor and Industry*, 308 A.3d 962 (Pa.Cmwlth.Ct. 2024), reinforced the rigor with which the CWMA's criteria are applied in Department enforcement proceedings. The court upheld the Department's determination that where an employer claims workers carry their own liability insurance but fails to provide documentary proof despite having opportunities to do so, testimony alone is insufficient to satisfy the CWMA's insurance requirement. This ruling emphasizes that employers must be prepared to document satisfaction of CWMA criteria, particularly the insurance requirement, when challenged by the Department.

Under the CWMA, the consequences for misclassifying an individual as an independent contractor are severe. Administrative penalties may be up to

\$1,000 for the first violation, and up to \$2,500 for each subsequent violation, and each misclassified worker is considered a separate offense. In addition, violations of the CWMA can lead to a "stop work" order requiring the cessation of work by misclassified individuals within 24 hours, individual liability, and criminal sanctions.

The Pennsylvania legislature's intent was clear, and still is, to stop abuse of the classification of workers as independent contractors to avoid employers' liability under the Workers' Compensation Act. If you have questions about how this applies to your employment or your business, contact a certified specialist workers' compensation attorney for a consultation — it could save you big time in the long run.

Daniel E. McCabe, Esq., is an associate in the law firm of Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C. He and managing attorney Levi S. Wolf are two of about 200 lawyers across the state who have been certified as specialists in the practice of workers' compensation law by the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Section on Workers' Compensation Law as authorized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. His practice, located in the firm's West Chester office, concentrates on the representation of injured workers and medical providers. He can be reached by phone at 610.436.8300, or by e-mail at dmccabe@wolfbaldwin.com.

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St. Peter's Bakery: A Tradition of Fresh Baking and Community

Nestled in the heart of St. Peter's Village at 3441 St. Peters Road, St. Peter's Bakery has long been a destination for locals and visitors seeking fresh baked goods, quality coffee, and a welcoming atmosphere. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the village and nearby trails, the bakery serves as a gathering place where neighbors, families, hikers, cyclists, and travelers can slow down and enjoy good food together.



Every day, our team prepares artisan breads, croissants, pastries, cookies, desserts, and café favorites using quality ingredients and traditional baking methods. From rustic loaves and buttery pastries to homemade pies and specialty tortes, we take pride in offering products that are made fresh and crafted with care. Our commitment to quality extends beyond our baked goods. We strive to provide friendly service and an experience that keeps customers coming back.

As the new owner of St. Peter's Bakery, I am honored to continue a tradition that has been an important part of the community for many years. My goal is to preserve the bakery's character and reputation while introducing new ideas and offerings that reflect the needs and interests of our

customers. Whether it's expanding our menu, featuring seasonal specialties, or creating events that bring people together, we are always looking for ways to enhance the bakery experience.

Small businesses thrive because of the communities that support them, and we are incredibly grateful for the encouragement and loyalty we receive every day. Whether you have been visiting the bakery for years or are discovering it for the first time, we invite you to stop in, enjoy a fresh-baked treat, and become part of the St. Peter's Bakery family.

We look forward to serving the community for many years to come and continuing to make St. Peter's Bakery a place where great food, warm hospitality, and lasting connections come together.



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Matthew Alan's Tasty Treats™ is a fully independent bakery located at 600 Heritage Dr. #102 in Pottstown, serving Pottstown, Sanatoga, and the surrounding Tri-County area. Our story began in November 2021, when we first opened as a licensed affiliate of a well-known sticky bun brand. From day one, we focused on high-quality ingredients, a professionally trained barista crew, a custom-designed coffee blend, and a strong commitment to baking excellence.

Over time, our menu expanded well beyond its original offerings, with many customer favorites developed in our own Pottstown kitchen. Today, our menu highlights include specialty bun toppings, classic eclairs, fruit tarts, cakes, our signature breakfast sandwiches, and a growing selection of gluten-free treats. That continued growth led to the official launch of Matthew Alan's Tasty Treats™ on May 9, 2026, featuring an expanded menu of independently developed baked goods, including our all-new sticky bun and cinnamon bun recipes, which are already receiving positive reviews from customers as being better than ever.

Today, we are pleased to introduce ourselves to fellow local businesses, organizations, schools, offices, and community groups. In addition to our daily bakery offerings, we provide catering trays and



big box coffee suitable for meetings, parties, conferences, staff appreciation events, and special gatherings. We also support culinary training and internship opportunities for students from local vocational and community college programs. As we continue to grow, we look forward to building relationships throughout the local business community and sharing with the people and organizations that make this area special.

For additional information, please call 610.550.3680 and visit www.MatthewsTreats.com.

Hares Hill Brewing Company

Here at Hares Hill Brewing Company, we share a commitment to supporting the good people and organizations of our community. It's always been about working hard, having fun, and giving back. We believe that great beer and food brings people together. Our team aims to cultivate community through handcrafted brews, American comfort food, and superior hospitality.

Our menu features a variety of scratch-made foods that were created in collaboration with our staff. We're proud to provide our guests with fresh, locally-sourced ingredients. Everything on our menu was created with our guests' experience in mind and we believe it shows! If someone is unsure of what to try, our enthusiastic staff is happy to provide rec-

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Our goal is not to be a "big brewery." Our goal is to bring you a small portfolio of great craft brews that complement our culinary driven craft food. We want to give you the whole package.

You won't find 14 beers on tap, but you will find a good time, great beer, and great food with smiles and exceptional service. We strive to do everything we do with perfection, so we have chosen to partner with one of the area's best local breweries to brew our beers to perfection. You will always find our five flagship beers on tap, as well as two or three seasonal brews.

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SEATTLE 2026



DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

By Barry Cassidy

While in Seattle, I am documenting the decline of a downtown area. A combination of factors has led the city to focus more of its efforts on the market area near Elliot Bay. Things have not changed much since last year. The astounding number of street-level vacancies shows a shrinking city.

To make matters worse, on 5th Street, the U.S. Bank has been the anchor tenant for decades. In August 2025, it announced it would vacate four of its seven floors — slashing its space from 135,300 sq ft to just 16,700 sq ft. That's a massive reduction of about 118,600 square feet. This closure on one side, combined with the Macy's closure on the other, left the 1400 to 1900 blocks with few businesses on both Third and Fifth, isolating Fourth from the rest of the downtown.

(Continued on page 46)

There are long strings of vacant storefronts on Third Avenue (25 total) and Fifth Avenue (nine total), leaving Fourth Avenue in jeopardy, with vacancies that were present the year before. The vacancy rate is lower on Second and First near the Public Market border. I was there on a Sunday, and the market area was packed. I am not sure what it is like during the week, but it was a nice day with a lot of foot traffic.

Third Avenue has long struggled with crime, open drug activity, and homelessness. The area was known as a rough but functional retail corridor. The "9.5 Blocks" initiative (mass arrests for drugs/crime on 3rd Ave and nearby) brought temporary improvement, but problems returned quickly, with a visible rise in open drug dealing, shoplifting, and encampments.

In 2019, Downtown Seattle Association led a group of nearly 70 business and property owners, residents, government staff, and other stakeholders to develop a long-term vision for the future of Third Avenue.

Macy's flagship at 3rd & Pine was struggling but still open. In February 2020, Macy's closed permanently; this was a major anchor loss right on 3rd Avenue. The COVID lockdown began the next month and lasted until June 2021.

By the time I got there in June 2021, the entire third street sidewalks were filled with tents, businesses were closed, and most never reopened. Even if there were a way to keep your store open, there were too many tents, and the sidewalks were filled with people who did not want customers to visit.

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DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

(Continued from page 44)

Eventually, I believe Fourth Street will succumb to isolation, leaving the downtown as first and second, along with the market. I do not see much hope for the area unless they raze the historic Macy's building. Ross closed its store in this area, and Barnes & Noble and Nordstrom Rack have announced plans to move closer to 6th Street.

If this were my downtown, I would be in panic mode. Huge vacant storefronts all over the place, and, depending on the future of undesirable control amid the historic drug district, along with lines of vacant storefronts on Third and Fifth. I see Fourth Street going down the tubes. In my opinion, it is only a matter of time.

That is not to say that Seattle is bad. The day I was there, it was vibrant and alive, with what is left of the designated downtown. Very cool city, but key large vacancies on the streets, taking up to a city block of nothingness, bring gloom to the area as it transitions. It is better not to have a block here and a block there with one or two stores; it tends to look like a transition through a war zone.

The 1400 block of Third has 10 consecutive vacancies, and I counted five in the 1500 block of Fifth Street, so the problem

extends across intersecting streets. Third Street is the primary transit stop for the downtown rail and is a bus-only street. I did not detect a heavy hardcore drug scene on Third Street, but I was there early. A few strangers in a strange land wandered, but for the most part, it was hollow and bare, wide and tall.

I started doing a little research into what is going on there. Someone wrote, "Third Street is where all good plans come to die." It is a big problem. Think about it. The area is where commuters have their first and last things to do in the city: be there. Yet there are issues such as ownership, years of people camping in front of the stores, the history of petty crime and human trafficking, and a general lack of plans that will work.

The core issue is whether the business district remains bifurcated by transit or whether the area's environment is improved in a city way, not a transit interpretation. It would be good to provide people with street-level scale improvements to make it look less stark. Maybe just the opposite: make it really stark in a coordinated framework. Whatever... can't leave it like that.

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



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