

The Chamber Elects its Leaders and Thanks Law Enforcement Agencies



On November 29 at The Grove at Centeron, the Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) elected and installed officers and directors for 2024, recognized the service of its leaders, and paid tribute to the law enforcement agencies that serve the area. The Chamber's law enforcement agency guests from Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office were County Prosecutor Jennifer Webb McRae, and Matthew Rudd, Community Justice Coordinator.



Law enforcement agencies honored by the Chamber on Nov. 29.

Representatives from the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department were Sheriff Robert Austino, Lt. Darryl Meyers, and Sgt. Elizabeth Hoffman.

The Bridgeton Police Department was represented by

Chief of Police Michael Gaimari, and Captain James Battavio. New Jersey State Policeman who represented the Bridgeton and Port Norris stations was Captain Darrin Pulman.

Tony Stanzione, Chamber CEO, expressed the gratitude of the Chamber members and the community saying, "we recognize and thank you for the brave, dedicated, and professional service of all law enforcement officials who strive every day to make our communities safe."

He thanked the meeting's main sponsors Atlantic City Electric and Newfield National Bank as well as the law enforcement sponsors Randi Galan State Farm Insurance Agency, The Passion Professor, LLC, SERVPRO - Team Fabiani, and Allen Associates Insurance Services.

Chamber officers that were elected to one-year terms ending Dec. 31, 2024 included President: Barry Seay, 1st Vice President: Jonathan Cummings, 2nd Vice President: Minerva Alvarado, Treasurer: Randi Galan, and Corp. Secretary: Marlise Counsellor.

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With Hanukkah ending December 15, winter beginning on Dec. 21, and the Christmas season underway, this newsletter includes ideas for local shopping, dining, and entertainment. Thank you for supporting our Chamber Members. See more at www.CumberlandGrows.com/ShopLocal

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The Chamber Annual Meeting and Service Recognition continued from page 1

Members of the Board of Directors that were elected to 3-Year terms ending Dec. 31, 2026 includes Jon Cummings, Randi Galan, Chris Jespersen, Stephanie McGhee, Patricia Mooneyham, Megan Sheppard, Eric Sjogren, and Omarey Williams.

Chamber President Barry Seay introduced the keynote speaker for the meeting, Cumberland County Prosecutor Jennifer Webb McRae. She was nominated by Governor Jon S. Corzine to be the first African-American, female Prosecutor of Cumberland County. In her capacity as Prosecutor, she is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the County.



Jennifer Webb McRae

"We as Law Enforcement leaders have taken on the responsibility to create tools that promote effective crime reduction while building public trust and safeguarding officer well-being," stated Prosecutor Webb McRae. She added, "it is a really tall order in today's age; however, we owe it to the public and our law enforcement officers."

"I am never ceased to be amazed at how overwhelmingly professional our patrol officers who make split second decisions for

the safety of everyone involved in dangerous situations. We are truly proud of our officers who continue to respond to the call of duty, who run into the face of danger and get up and do it day after day with all of the mandates we place upon them."

Webb McRae concluded her remarks saying "I'm proud of what our law enforcement agencies are handling and appreciate the challenges they continue to overcome day after day. Let's work together to be part of the change we want to see, which starts with appreciating each other for our contributions and encouraging one another to new heights."

The meeting included a special thank you to Sheriff Robert Austino, who leaves office at the end of this year, after 16 years of service as County Sheriff, and over thirty years in law enforcement.

Century Savings Bank was noted as The Chamber's largest financial contributor as well as contributing Chamber leadership such as the many years of service by the bank's Vice President and

past Chamber President Carol Musso.

Chamber Board Member Patricia Mooneyham led the presentation of a donation of \$2,700 to the Sheriff Department's K9 Unit. The money was raised at the Chamber Foundation's "Dog Days of Summer" event at Cedar Rose Vineyard in August. She thanked the K9 Unit for its outstanding service to the community, and thanked sponsors and all who contributed to the fundraiser.



New officers and board members were elected the Nov. 29 meeting. Sheriff Austino was thanked for his years of service as Sheriff. A donation of \$2,700 made to Sheriff's K9 Unit by the Chamber Foundation.



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★ Business & Community Heroes Honored in November ★

On November 1, more than 200 people gathered at The Grove at Centerton to join The Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce in recognizing business and community heroes. It was an evening of emotion and much deserved recognition for the people and organizations who were honored.

Chamber Board Member and Co-Chair of the Hero Awards Committee Randi Galan opened the celebration, "success comes from drive, dedication, confidence, and faith. We acknowledge these words as the foundation for success, success exemplified by our honorees. Their stories of service inspire us to support their efforts and to become community and business heroes ourselves."

Olivia A. Cruz received a community hero award. Olivia founded her nonprofit organization, Love through Laces, which raises awareness as well as funds to purchase new shoes for children in need throughout South Jersey. Over ten years, this project has raised over \$55,000 to provide shoes to hundreds of local children deserving of extra love. Her parents accepted the award on her behalf.

Edgar Aquino Huerta, who received a community hero award, is a community leader, filmmaker, and writer that came from a small town in Mexico. Edgar now dedicates himself to working with the Latino, immigrant community. He also created a platform called "Voices of the Soil," which aims to tell uplifting stories, and to highlight artists, and heroes that make a difference in the world. Edgar hopes to expand it into an arts institution in the future where he can



Congratulations to The Chamber's 2023 Business and Community Hero Award Recipients

create opportunities for his community.

The Dolores Romero Cancer Foundation received a community hero award. It was started in July 2021. The local



non-profit, 501c3 charitable organization raises money to assist Cumberland County cancer patients and their families cover expenses.

Dolores Romero passed away from complications stemming from cancer in 2020.

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(Continued from page 3) **Business & Community Heroes Recognized**

At a celebration of life memorial service to honor her memory, the family learned that someone anonymously paid thousands of dollars of medical expenses on behalf of Dolores. This act of charity moved the family to find a way to pay it forward. This story and the good actions taken are great examples of what it means to be a community hero.

SERVPRO – Team Fabiani accepted a business hero award for its success, dedication, hard work, professionalism, and training. They are part of America’s most trusted disaster recovery services. SERVPRO, Team Fabiani has a stellar record of community involvement and service.



Randi Galan State Farm Insurance Agency in the Hopewell Galleria was presented with a business hero award. In January 2018, Randi Galan realized a life-long dream of opening her business in the area where she lives, works and plays. She considers it the highlight of her career.

Randi is a South Jersey native and 30-year veteran of insurance and financial services. Relationships and community are the focus of her agency. Randi and her team support and volunteer at events all over the area as well as creating innovative social media events as another avenue to give back to the community.



The Bridgeton Public Library received the Gary F. Simmerman Community Leadership Award for the important services it has provided to the community for more than 100 years, fueling imaginations, inspiring dreams,

providing information, and helping people succeed. In November 1922 a ballot referendum passed, forming the Bridgeton Free Public Library under the jurisdiction of the Bridgeton City government as it continues today. The library strives to serve young people, assists in their education. With a small, dedicated staff, with the help of volunteers, and the support of Friends of the Library, Save the Library!, and City of Bridgeton, the library offers multicultural and diverse programming.

Wade and Pamela Sjogren received the Francis L. Sharp, Sr. (Binks Sharp) Lifetime Achievement Award.

This husband-and-wife team are successful entrepreneurs, parents, and community leaders, who make their lives about love for family, business, church, and community.



Wade presently serves his industry nationally and locally, serves on the Cumberland County and Maurice River Township Economic Development Boards and is the Treasurer of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bridgeton. Pam served as Chair of the Board of Trustees of Cumberland County College and for their church most recently as a Lay Preacher and Confirmation Class teacher.

Elmer “Skip” Bowman received the Francis L. Sharp, Sr. Lifetime Achievement Award. We are blessed to have people in our community like Skip, who care about others, are willing to serve others, and who believe in our area. Skip Bowman’s extraordinary



record of service and leadership, including more than 4 decades of service on the Lawrence Township Committee, is just one of the reasons he was selected to receive the award. This long-time resident of Cedarville has made a lasting impact on the community through his commitment to public service.

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It's in the Wind: NJ EDA and Salem County Talk about Wind Power



Monica Coffey of NJ EDA speaks at Oct. 17 meeting

The Chamber held its October 17 meeting at the Cumberland County Improvement Authority (The Authority) training center in Deerfield Township. The meeting sponsored by Newfield National Bank, provided an updated look at the job and business opportunities expected from the NJ Wind Port project and the leadership role the State of New Jersey is playing in this emerging, industry along the East Coast. The keynote speaker was Monica Coffey, the Sr. Officer for Stakeholder Engagement and Communications for this project at NJ EDA.

Frederick Young, Salem County Economic Development Director provided the perspective of Salem County which is home to the Wind Port, and the economic development it can provide there, in Cumberland County, and South Jersey. Both talked about the progress of the construction of the Wind Port in Lower Alloway Creek, the first of its kind in the nation, built to handle the heavy, large elements on the ocean-based wind mills. Monica talked about the status of the large projects planned off the Jersey coastline. She acknowledged that political



Monica Coffey, Patricia Mooneyham and Frederick Young

leaders and others in the shore area have organized opposition to the projects. Subsequent to this meeting Orsted canceled two off-shore wind projects that were planned off the coast of New Jersey. As of the writing of this article, the NJ Wind Port project is nearing completion and Salem County and NJ officials say it will still be a leader in the wind power industry serving other wind projects along the coast. Governor Murphy reacting to the canceled projects said, "I remain committed to ensuring that New Jersey becomes a global leader in off-shore wind – which is critical to our economic, environmental, and clean energy future."

Hendrick's House Expands



We joined with Greater Vineland Chamber for the ribbon cutting for Hendricks House Group new addition. Find out more about the excellent work this organization does at www.hendrickshousegroup.org.



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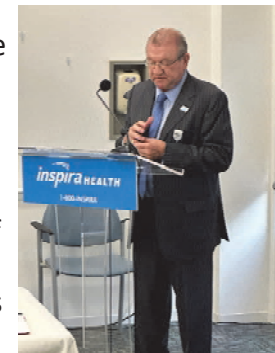
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Inspira Health's LIFE Center

Chamber Members from Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland, and many other visitors enjoyed networking, food, and information at Inspira's LIFE Center on Oct. 16. The unique services for people 55 and older were reviewed and tours of the facility on S. Delsea Drive in Vineland were provided.



Inspira LIFE program enables seniors to live independently and safely in the comfort of their homes while being closely monitored by a team of healthcare professionals.



Gary Galloway talks about the LIFE Center.

Inspira LIFE is one of only four programs in the state of New Jersey. This program provides all-inclusive care to eligible participants 55 years and older that meet a nursing home level of care. For more information contact LIFE Center at 800-245-4143 or visit www.inspirahealthnetwork.org/locations/inspira-life-vineland.

4 Chambers Network Online



On Nov. 20, Chamber of Commerce of Southern NJ led an online networking meeting with their members and members from Bridgeton Area, Greater Millville, and Greater Vineland Chambers. Cumberland County trivia and breakouts into small groups provided opportunities for participants to interact.

Hopewell Township Celebrates 275 Years at Hopewell Community Day

Hopewell Township Community Day on September 30 was the focal point for the Township's celebration of its 250th anniversary. What an amazing day Hopewell Day turned out to be. The Township thanks the Greater Bridgeton Amish Market for allowing us to share their space and for being partners in this event. From the live music, to the food, to the family fun, to the business and community vendors, Hopewell's 275th birthday could not have gone any better. Thank you to all that helped make the celebration of Hopewell's 275th Anniversary a day to remember!



Bridgeton Area Chamber's Legislative Breakfast Promotes Communication with State, County, and Local Officials

This article was contributed to by Laurie LaTorre.

The Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce board members and other invited guests revived the legislative breakfast tradition on October 11 at The Grove at Centerton. The purpose was to provide a forum for discussion of current legislative issues and to learn a little more about our elected officials. The panel consisted of all six legislators representing the NJ Legislative Districts 1 and 3, which include Cumberland County's 14 municipalities. NJ State Senators Michael Testa and Edward Durr, NJ Assemblymen Antwon McClennan and Erik Simonsen, and NJ Assemblywomen Beth Sawyer, and Bethanne McCarthy-Patrick participated.



NJ State Senator Michael Testa



Legislative panel, left-right seated: Sen. Michael Testa, Assemblymen Antwan McClennan and Erik Simonsen, Sen. Ed Durr, and Assemblywomen Beth Sawyer, and Bethanne McCarthy-Patrick. Standing left-right: Meghan McCormick Hoerner, Catherine Hardy.

There were also guests from Cumberland County and local governments. The panel provided insight into their reasons for running for elected office and shared some of their platform issues. Topics of discussion included the pros and cons of the offshore wind power industry, over-regulation by the State government, especially the NJDEP, concerns about State budgets and spending, including opposition to the multi-billion dollar proposed high-speed train line expansion to Glassboro.

The meeting was organized by the Chamber's Government and Community Relations Committee, co-chaired by Meghan McCormick Hoerner and Catherine Hardy. The meeting was sponsored by A Whiskey Array, short-term residential rental homes available in Bridgeton, Hopewell, and Stow Creek.

Signs of Economic Growth Continue in the Area

New retailer, Xpress Liquors, opened its doors in November at the Carlls Corner Shopping Center. The Chamber, Cumberland Development Corp., Upper Deerfield Township, and other area officials attended the ribbon cutting. It is hoped to signal the start of a revitalization of the area's original shopping center.

F & S Fresh Foods, a local success story from Rosenhayn that has grown and become a national business, is building a new facility in its hometown at the corner of Lebanon Road and Kenyon Avenue in Deerfield. Congratulations to Sam Pipitone, Jr. and Sam Pipitone, III, and the entire F & S team for their continued success.



F & S expanding in Deerfield Township.



Upper Deerfield Township, County, and State officials join Tushar Patel (second from left) and others from the store for the ribbon cutting ceremony marking the opening of Liquor Xpress in Upper Deerfield's Carlls Corner Shopping Center on Friday, Nov. 10. Officials left-right: Committeeman Tom Speranza, Mayor Jim Crilley, NJ Senator Michael Testa, Committeeman Joe Spoltore, County Clerk Celeste Riley, and County Commissioner Carol Musso.

Taco Bell construction in downtown Bridgeton at Rt. 49 and S. Laurel St. is nearly complete.



Message from Chamber President Barry Seay



Barry Seay of South Jersey Water Conditioning Service is President of the Bridgeton Area Chamber. He is an active board member and founder and chair of the Cumberland County Business Expo and Job Fair. He will serve a second year as President in 2024.

We are completing a successful year for our Chamber of Commerce which included providing many opportunities for networking, education, developing new business, and active partnerships with other Chambers and organizations.

This fall was a busy one as we presented our 37th business and community hero awards celebration, and held our Cumberland County Business Expo and Job Fair. My thanks to all who help plan and present these events. Thanks to our expo partners, Greater Vineland and Greater Millville Chambers, for their assistance.

As this year comes to a close, I thank our board members, officers, staff, and members for your support. I look forward to working together with all of you for a prosperous new year for our chamber and our area. Best wishes for happy, blessed holidays, and the new year ahead.

BRIDGETON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS

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Tues., Jan. 23, 2024, Noon, Here to Help! Business assistance agencies talk about what they do to help new and existing businesses. This is a luncheon meeting at Golden Pigeon Restaurant with speakers to be announced. \$30, Register www.CumberlandGrows.com/events.

Sat., Feb. 3, 2024, 6-10 PM, Bridgeton Rotary Club Presents Mardi Gras, a masquerade fundraiser with live music by Jack Neff Band, Seabrook Fire Banquet Hall, \$50 per ticket, RSVP and info: Rotary23@gmail.com.



Tues., Feb. 27, 2024, Noon, Chamber Meeting, Love Your Self - Take

care of your business by taking care of yourself. We'll look at stress management, priority management, goal setting, and more. This is a luncheon meeting at Terrigno's Fairfield Inn. Patricia Mooneyham of The Passion Professor will speak. \$30, Register www.CumberlandGrows.com/events.

Tues., March 19, 2024, 5 PM, Featuring Local Women-Owned Businesses, a dinner meeting at Frightened Turtle Winery at Sunny Slope and speakers to be announced. \$30, Register www.CumberlandGrows.com/events.

April 2024, 5 PM, Business to Business Meeting at Bridgeton Public Library. This free information & networking meeting celebrates national library month. Date to be announced. Register www.CumberlandGrows.com/events.

Tues., April 16, 2024, Noon, Economic Development Focus, luncheon meeting at The Grove at Centerton. Learn about growth and development in Upper Deerfield and the area. \$30, Register www.CumberlandGrows.com/events.

Historic Holiday House Tour

Highlighting Bridgeton's history and its beautiful historic buildings, Bridgeton Main Street Assoc. presented the Bridgeton Historic Holiday House Tour on Dec. 2, bringing hundreds of visitors to the city.



Bridgeton Parade

Bridgeton City Parks and Recreation Dept, presented the Christmas Parade on Dec. 9. The Chamber float themed "Home for the Holidays" seen under construction here.



Holiday Bowling

On Dec. 6, the Chamber held its holiday bowling night at Campani's Legacy Lanes in Deerfield.



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