

**Economic Development Committee  
Town of Bridgeville  
June 2016 Update**

**Summary of Conference: Main Street Now, May 22-26, 2016 – attended by Ruth Skala, Chairperson**

After three days of intensive seminars, I realized that all communities working on revitalization of their downtowns are facing the same challenges. Some have been extremely successful while others are struggling. The fundamentals of revitalization are defined as:

1. Identify the Community Vision for Success: understand the market, know the market data, specialization positioning.
2. Create Community Transformation Strategies: economic vitality, design, promotion, organization.
3. Impact and Measurement: identify visible results.

Revitalization efforts have to be community driven and require broad community engagement leading people to action. There has to be a clear direction with defined priorities. Partnerships need to be developed and an investment/funding structure identified.

**Additional Conference Highlights:**

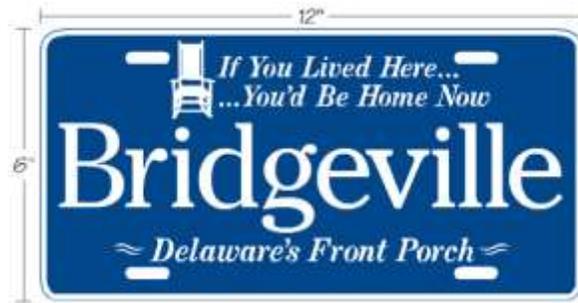
- Impact of Local Business: economic multiplier, connection to place, business support network
- Develop a brand; brand recognition, capture market, *definition of a brand – proprietary, visual, emotional, rational and cultural image*
- Finding entrepreneurs: early school training, community groups and churches, having a local plan and telling the community story, keeping young people
- Trend returning to downtowns and city centers, creating livable communities to grow up and grow old, walkable and safe main streets, multiuse buildings, streetscape, incubator stores
- Diverse team for leadership
- A business as a destination regardless of town size and/or location, reinvent marketplace
- Value of volunteers, community pride, recruit for specific job, and equip volunteers with tools to do task
- Shop Small as promulgated by American Express “Shop Local Saturday”
- To grow business district: identify customers, complete commercial assessment, financial incentives, work plan, talk with realtors and property owners, PROMOTE and SELL VISION PLAN, establish a network, market vacant spaces, marketing campaign, recruit specific tenants, contact prospects, business retention, financial assistance (SBA, specialty loans, angel investors), publicize special events, use all media
- Façade improvement leading to increased sales and increased first time customers
- Connectivity of distinctive neighborhoods, work on physical infrastructure, social infrastructure, financial infrastructure, work with strengths in a coordinated collaborative system
- FUNDING Sources: Micro lending - SBA, CDBG (HUD), USDA, CDF (Jack Riddle); Venture capital, Angel funds
- National Historic Tax Credits – National Park Services partnership with Certified Local Government – specific Bridgeville properties may be eligible for Delaware and National Tax Credits

## Economic Development Committee Activities:

The EDC held a Roundtable Discussion with local bankers. Fulton Bank has increased its staff to assist with small business development. The consensus was that Bridgeville is on the right track for economic development.

Deborah Brown, who has a strong financial background with experience in accounting, real estate and insurance sales as well as human resources, has joined the committee. The EDC now has ten members.

The sale of Bridgeville front license plates for \$10.00 is being coordinated by EDC member John Brodeur. All profits from these sales will be used for economic development.



A review of town regulations relating to economic development will be undertaken by committee members led by Ralph Root. This is part of the committee's efforts to make Bridgeville more "business friendly".

SEDAC held a breakfast at Jimmy's Grill on June 1 to learn about the Bridgeville EDC's program and how it can assist us.

Over the summer the EDC plans to further implement its Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Skala, Chairperson  
Economic Development Committee