

FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN REVITALIZATION

Establishing a Productive Path Forward is Supported by Taking Valuable Wisdom from the Best of the Economic Development Models



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

Growing up in King of Prussia during the 1960s I remember the early days of the King of Prussia Mall, farmland, peach orchards, and close-knit neighborhoods. Everyone's parents, other than

my own, worked at General Electric mostly in the space program. The office parks became prolific in the 1970s and by the end of that decade, layoffs from GE began. By 2000, the office parks were dated, and large vacancies existed.

In 2010, the King of Prussia Business Improvement District (BID) was established. BIDs are special districts typically funded by an additional tax assessment that goes towards improvements of the area and are managed by a non-profit entity. They have been established in nearly 1,000 major cities and small towns throughout the United States, and many major cities have multiple BIDs. New York City has 76. The establishment of a BID encourages responsible development, functioning like "a gatekeeper" and creating conditions favorable to that development. In twelve years, the King of Prussia BID was successful in diminishing those office park vacancies, and ultimately creating a residential, retail, and recreational hub.

Long-time residents often do not like the development, complain about the traffic, and most recently were overjoyed when the KOP Rail Project came to an abrupt stop. Residents tend to have an idyllic, some would even say nostalgic, vision without thinking about how that vision will be supported. It takes people to pay for products and services and if that market is not there, the business cannot exist. Residents and businesses don't have to be in conflict although they often are. Some residents like the idea of retail shops and restaurants that do not produce traffic or parking problems. Others like outdoor or indoor recreational spaces or entertainment venues. They want job-producing companies to locate in town but not if there is a need for more homes to be built. Regardless of the varying degrees of opinion, when all is said and done, people want to live in places where they feel safe, and their surroundings are clean and well-maintained.

Historically, there is another major difference of conditions that supported business and commerce in past decades. Businesses not only operated out of buildings; the individuals who ran those businesses also owned real estate. This made for a symbiotic relationship for keeping buildings occupied and productive. As real estate investment became a way of life

into the mainstream, people who may or may not have ties to an area started buying property. As with anything this created opportunity and challenges. Buildings that had new investment could be updated and reimagined for new market conditions. Unfortunately, it also allowed other properties to languish and to be leased to less than desirable businesses. Those investors with less experience are more likely to have properties that sit uncared for or projects in various stages simply because they did not understand the financial resources that would be necessary to make their properties productive.

With over 23,000 residents, and a 270+ year history of industry and business, the economic development efforts of the Borough of Pottstown are sometimes met with ire from a small representation of those residents vocalizing their frustration with the pace or type of development. PAED's (Pottstown Area Economic Development) role in establishing a productive path forward is supported by taking valuable wisdom from the best of the economic development models established across the County, State, and Country and adapting them for Pottstown's future.

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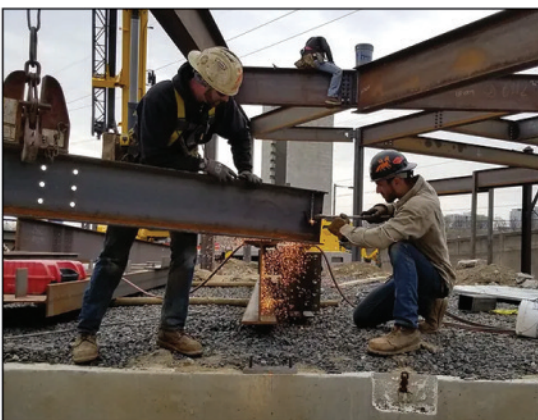
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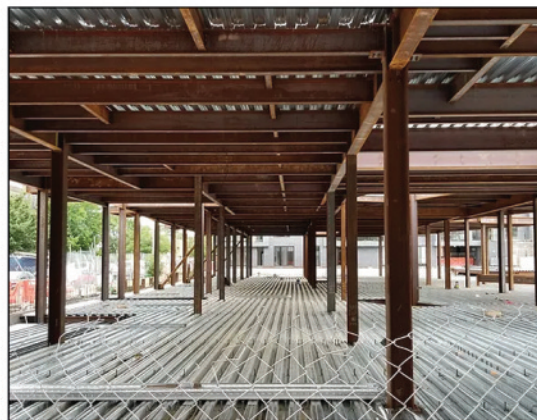
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If you've taken a walk, grabbed a bite to eat, enjoyed a local brew or cocktail, or just passed through downtown Pottstown, chances are you've seen work done by Downtown DeZign, LLC. As a graphic designer for over 40 years, Linda Jacobs established Downtown DeZign in 2015 right here in the heart of town, to provide small businesses in Pottstown and beyond high-quality graphic design services for any size budget. With a strong desire to work with local non-profits, whose budgets are most often non-existent, Linda wanted to give them the image and visibility they needed to be successful; hence the creation of my tagline "advertising and graphic design with a heart."

new approach. Linda is proud to say that many of her clients have been with her for over 35 years, and it's one of her main priorities to source local printing and small business vendors with every opportunity she has.

If you walk down High Street in downtown Pottstown, take note of several of Linda's logo designs created for High Street Music Company, High Street Billiards, Operation 143, and the new Espresso Yourself Book Cafe. Many of the non-profits she's done work for over these past eight years include the Pottstown FARM, PDIDA, Veterans' Island Project at Memorial Park, Pottstown Veteran's Community Day, ARTfusion 19464, the Pottstown Children's Pet Fair, Pottstown GoFourth Festival, the STRIVE Initiative, Love Your Block Pottstown, Hobart's Run Program Initiatives, Pottstown Area Children's Foundation and Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning. You may see signage for Walk and Bike Pottstown, pass a local bus that bears the takePART logo, or have networking opportunities with the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce and their REACH and Leadership initiatives.

Linda prides herself on working one-on-one with her clients and becoming a partner/member of their "family" ... their success is her number one priority. She gets excited about what she does, every day. Focused mainly on print media, logo design, brochures, catalogs, newsletters, signage, print and social media ads, and special event promotions, Linda works with new start-up businesses, non-profits, or established businesses that may want to update their existing identity and marketing materials with a fresh

(Continued on page 20)

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(Continued from page 19)

If you venture just south across the river, or a bit north on Route 100, you'll find several of Linda's local restaurant clients, including Giovanni's 724, Gianni's Catering & Events, Los Osorio Mexican Restaurant, Pudge's Steaks & Hoagies, and Brakeman's Cafe. They all surely take good care of the "starving artist" in Linda!

Thinking about a freshen-up for your business identity or materials? Is what you currently have truly representing the image you want to share with the world? Downtown Deziign would love to add you

to their "family" of satisfied clients. Follow them on Facebook!

A Pottstown native, Linda Jacobs is a graduate of Pottstown High School and Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, PA. She is proud to have established her graphic design business in Downtown Pottstown, where we all share the desire to promote positive growth and opportunities for our community.

Downtown Deziign is located at 26 S. Charlotte Street, Pottstown, PA 19464; 484.363.7793; downtowndeziign.com / linda@downtowndeziign.com.

SoulJoels at Sunnybrook Ballroom

On October 31st, 2022, Joel Richardson of SoulJoel's officially took over the historic SunnyBrook Ballroom in Lower Pottsgrove, PA.

After 15 years in the entertainment industry, all roads have led to the new home for SoulJoel's.

Now open six days a week, SoulJoel's at SunnyBrook offers a variety of entertainment options. From Bingo, to all ages magic shows, comedy shows to dances of all styles,

there's literally something from everyone.

Looking for somewhere new to grab a bite to eat? Check out Gatsby's Pub located inside SunnyBrook open Tuesday through Saturday from 3 pm until 12 pm. It's quickly become the Pottstown Area's destination pub, featuring local craft beers, local sourced ingredients and welcoming atmosphere where everyone feels like family.

For more information, please visit www.SoulJoels.com.

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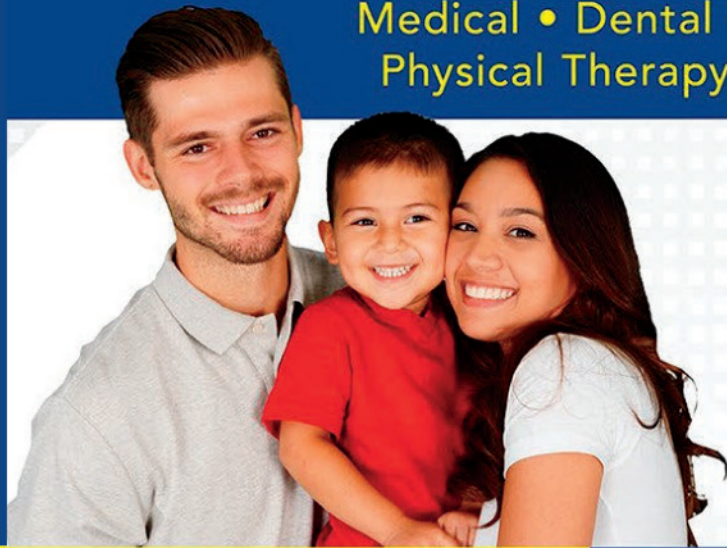


percent healthcare discount, the nominal fee for a medical/behavioral health/vision visit is \$20, \$35 for a dental visit and \$5 for a prescription! CHDC can offer the health care discount because we receive annual funding from our Federal partner, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) since 2012 as a designated Federally Qualified Health Center.

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Complete Graphics Inc

Complete Graphics Inc is a full service graphic design and printing company with over 39 years in the printing and advertising business. Jim Rittwage Sr. started CGI in the basement of his home in 1984 and expanded to what it is today with the help of his family. In 2018 Jim Sr. & Phyllis stepped away from the day-to-day business and left it in the capable hands of their sons Jim Jr. and Mark. Daughter-in-law Elaine Rittwage oversees the daily administrative duties.

Their current location at 38 East High Street which allows walk in customers to experience a warm and welcoming environment, while customers from across the world can reach them via phone, email and on the web. Some of their customers have never even met them, or know where Pottstown, Pennsylvania is.

Complete Graphics has successfully integrated high-tech graphic design with basic family values, allowing a balance of home and work life. CGI brings this balance to their customers as well, allowing them to forget about large agency fees and know that one person is handling their project from start to finish. Whether it is a project to be printed and distributed via mail, or a banner hung on display for window advertisement, it can be done at CGI.



As the world changes and technology enhances, so do the machines at CGI. We have the ability to print full color or black and white digital prints for products of various sizes and quantities. We offer commercial printing backed by service and quality that is second-to-none and wide-format printing that is unmatched by any other printer in its class. We can take your digital photograph and take it to the press in a matter of hours. From small projects to large scale projects, we are your one stop shop for all your advertising and printing needs.

For additional information, please call 610.327.1780 and visit www.complete-graphix.com.



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