

# FOCUS ON THE REVITALIZATION OF POTTSTOWN

(Editor's note: Last month's issue featured an article on the recent wave of investment in the borough of Pottstown, particularly in the downtown. Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID Inc.), the lead organization promoting investment in the borough, deserves much of the credit for attracting and facilitating that investment. The following article by PAID Executive Director Peggy Lee-Clark examines a variety of new initiatives contributing to the growing momentum toward revitalization of the borough.)

## The Borough of Pottstown is 5.5 Square Miles



By Peggy Lee-Clark, Executive Director, Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID)

Growth and change are words that have often been used to describe Pottstown in the last two years. Within the 5.5 square miles of the Borough, adaptive reuse has made Pottstown relevant and on an upward trajectory.

From the end of 2017 through 2018 more downtown properties changed hands than at any other time in recent history of the Borough. The section of Pottstown that gets the most attention is the Downtown. It is the most visible section of the Borough and an area that was severely tired looking but, that has started to change. There are currently seven full-service restaurants in the downtown with another slated to open in August. There is an ice cream shop that will reopen now that the weather is warm, and a beer garden that will sprout up out of a vacant lot in early summer. Kiki Vodka and Aye Caramba, both located within the Farmer's Market, and Pottstown United Brewing have enhanced the existing culinary culture in the downtown. These new additions are joining already well-known dining hot spots like Henry's Café, Beverly's Pastry Shop, The Avenue, Lily's Grill, and Cuisine India. 2018 also brought two new retail businesses into the downtown area — Once Upon A Time

has the most amazing consigned clothing options, while Studio 36 gives creative spirits a place to make their own jewelry pieces or to pick up a unique gift. Many visitors and residents are also embracing the new entertainment sport of throwing axes at Splitting Edge.

(Continued on page 14)



Splitting Edge Axe Throwing



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Precision Polymer Products, Inc

(Continued from page 13)

Although these investments in the downtown and its rebirth are important, that section of the Borough does not stand alone. It is only a portion of the ecosystem that makes up the engine that is economic development. It is necessary to have thriving businesses that offer family sustaining livable wages throughout the Borough too. Pottstown was already a center of employment in the region. Our largest employer, Tower Health Pottstown Hospital, gives us a solid foundation, while other legacy companies like the Dana Corporation who have been operating in the Borough for 100 years, and Cody Systems, who are celebrating 40 years in the Borough, show that those companies that have called Pottstown home were able to succeed. Other businesses like Video Ray, Ultraflex, Eastwood, Budget Maintenance, Cigas Machine, and Precision Polymer continue to thrive and show that Pottstown has been and will remain an area focused on building, creating and developing the tools needed to keep our region moving forward. These types of companies, the ones who have been providing jobs to our community, have continued to grow and expand.



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It's not just those already in Pottstown who are seeing new opportunities in the Borough. There are also new dynamic companies choosing to expand or relocate into Pottstown at an increasing rate. Cedarville Engineering took an underutilized bank building in need of environmental remediation and turned it into their relocated headquarters. Other companies that are remaking the town and taking over existing buildings include Contrast Metals and Hard Hat Services. This growth is occurring all over the Borough. Turn 5 moved to a former grocery store and developed it into a modern workplace for a call center with national reach. These companies show that new companies are looking around the region



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and making the choice to pick Pottstown as a place for their workers.

The employees of these companies translate into new customers for retail and dining options at lunchtime and after work hours. New businesses that are popping up in response to these demands are not confined only to the downtown either. Many new investors and developers are jumping at the opportunity to expand in all corners of the Borough. Recently, we have seen an older shopping center get a face lift and new tenants. A car dealership of bygone days has been reborn as a car enthusiasts social club where car aficionados can gather. The investments in the shopping center at 1432 East High Street will help continue the revitalization of the eastern section of the Borough. Dynamic changes are coming to every corner of Pottstown, and it is showing.

When you put all the growth together, the new businesses, new shops, new restaurants, it shows that dramatic change is happening. This change is not only good for the Borough, but also the surrounding region too. Pottstown has always been a center of recreation for the area. Newly updated outdoor resources like our municipal parks and our local trail systems make it easy to enjoy the natural beauty of the Schuylkill River in Pottstown. There is now increased interest in well-known local events like the Powwow on Manatawny Creek, an annual celebration of local Native

American culture and tradition; the Pottstown Volleyball Rumble, the largest grass doubles volleyball tournament in the nation; the Pottsgrove Manor Mayfair, a yearly event that celebrates the arrival of spring in historical fashion; and the Sly Fox Goat Races. Other regular events like the monthly car shows, the Carousel of Flavor and our main street holiday parades give us the opportunity to show off these new developments and express our Pottstown pride. This new energy has also led to new events like the Fete en Blanc in September and Cheesetoberfest in October that will soon become traditions on the community's calendar. These events help us highlight what is happening here in Pottstown and allows those visitors from outside our community to see for themselves the changes that are taking place.

All this new interest and growth is thanks to the investors focused on Pottstown. It doesn't matter if they have been in the Borough for 100 years or just moved in last year, they are the ones making the difference. These pioneers took a leap of faith and have now set the groundwork to make sure Pottstown generates prosperity far into the future. Working in partnership with these investors is Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc, a private 501(c)(3) entity, that since its re-organization in 2010, has endeavored to improve the economic climate and future of Pottstown.

*(Continued on page 16)*



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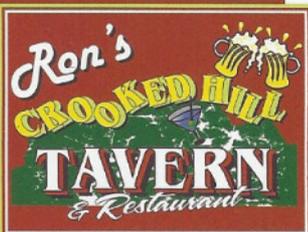
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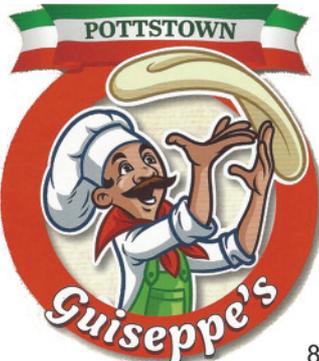
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(Continued from page 15)

Pottstown is a town with a proud history that now offers a solid foundation for new, relocating, and growing companies who, like the businesses mentioned, want to be in on the ground floor of shaping the personality of the community they call home. Growth and change are two words that have described Pottstown over the last two years. We welcome everyone to come and see why these businesses have said, "I Pick Pottstown" for yourself.



**Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc.** was incorporated in 1965 with the stated purpose to provide a charitable organization through which public-spirited citizens can develop, promote, encourage, and protect the economic welfare of the Greater Pottstown Area of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, with the aid of and in concert with private or public groups, corporations or entities, or existing government, governmental facilities, divisions, agencies, departments, or representatives, and the attraction of new industrial, manufacturing and commercial enterprises and research and development facilities within the Greater Pottstown Area, with the result that the economic well-being of the community will be increased, investments in the community will be stimulated and employment opportunities of the inhabitants of the community will be enlarged.



## Third Annual Pottstown Investors Conference Advances Local Economic Development

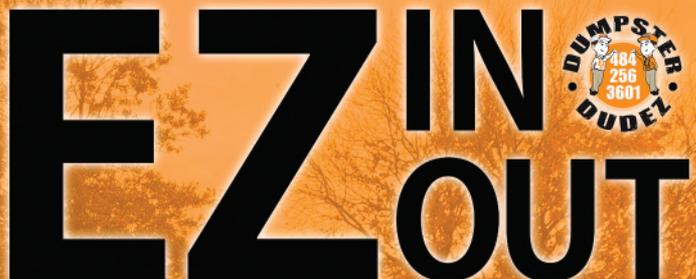


The Third Annual Pottstown Investors Conference was held on April 12 at The Hill School's Center for the Arts. The conference, geared toward real estate investors, developers, business owners, entrepreneurs, state and federal officials, and Pottstown community leaders, was well attended again this year.



This year's conference featured fewer "speeches," more conversational story-telling by Pottstown stakeholders and entrepreneurs, and further showcasing of intriguing real estate opportunities. Participants were also treated to a guided trolley tour of the borough.

This event offered "Taste of Pottstown" lunch featuring fare from local restaurants — paired with a "gallery walk" displaying information



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[Facebook.com/HobartsRun](https://Facebook.com/HobartsRun) [HobartsRunPottstown.org](http://HobartsRunPottstown.org)



and literature about nonprofits and other organizations that support and serve Pottstown in partnership with our business community.

The program included a panel highlighting women-owned or operated businesses in the borough, among other stimulating, timely discussions including a "Q & A" with elected officials who interacted with Pottstown investors. The day ended with a networking happy hour. The event was hosted as a partnership of the Hobart's Run neighborhood revitalization initiative and The Hill School.

A 501(c)(3), **Hobart's Run** works with residents and property owners to revitalize the neighborhood through projects that create a clean, safe, and inclusive community; provide incentives for home ownership and home improvements; and generate positive, sustainable commercial and retail development. While initially addressing an area of approximately 600 parcels in Pottstown (Queen Street in the south, North Adams on the west, Beech, Grant, and Jackson on the north, and Keim Street on the east), Hobart's Run strives to use successes in this focus area to spark and support revitalization throughout the Borough.



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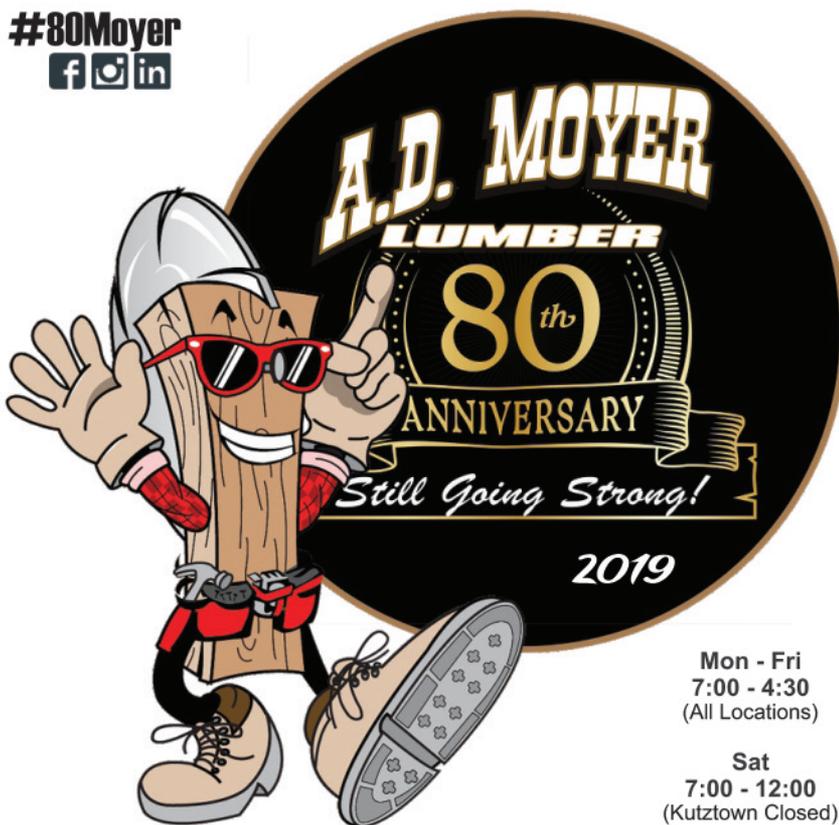
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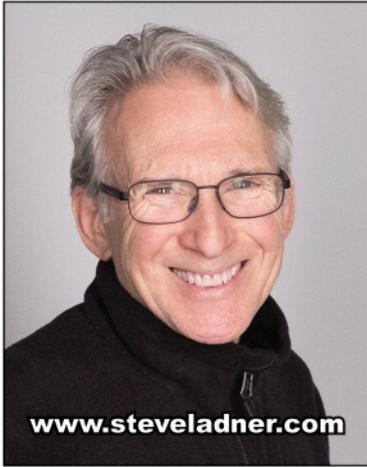
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## Hobart's Run Working to Make an Impact in Pottstown

At the Third Annual Pottstown Investors Conference (April 12) sponsored by Hobart's Run at The Hill School, Twila Fisher, director of community and economic development for this 501(c)(3), and her colleague, Cathy Skitko, senior director of institutional public relations, shared a "Top 10" list of projects and goals they are pursuing. Their first goal always is engagement with the town through a wide range of activities, community meetings, volunteerism, and collaborative efforts, Fisher said.

In addition, Hobart's Run, founded in 2016, leads a number of initiatives in support of the Olivet Boys and Girls Club/Ricketts Center; partners with Edgewood Cemetery to help restore this Pottstown resting place; organizes block clean-ups and has contributed 11 security cameras to the town in coordination with the Pottstown Police Department; and is preparing to launch a forgivable loan Homeownership Incentive Program this spring. It actively communicates with investors and realtors to promote home

ownership in Pottstown, and, soon, Hobart's Run will rent two formerly distressed properties it has rehabilitated largely through volunteer labor — with proceeds to be given back to the community via various community improvement initiatives.

Also, Hobart's Run is running the Pottstown Area Social Innovations Lab which brings together Pottstown High School and Hill students to brainstorm about local concerns; it works with East Coast Volleyball and Hill's squash teams to run free clinics in these sports for local residents; and it sponsors The Hobart's Ram Run 5k to raise money toward local façade improvements. You can follow Hobart's Run on Facebook to learn more about these and other happenings geared to sparking and supporting revitalization of Pottstown and enhancing Borough-wide constructive, positive communication. Also, contact Fisher at [tfisher@thehill.org](mailto:tfisher@thehill.org) or Skitko at [cskitko@thehill.org](mailto:cskitko@thehill.org).

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## Pottstown Health & Wellness Foundation Inspires Health Improvement and Strong Community for 15 Years

In July 2003, The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation set out to improve the health and wellness of Pottstown-area residents with grants to schools, parks, and networks, as well as funding to improve health access and support non-profits. Fifteen years later, the Foundation has awarded \$38.5 million to almost 200 grantees in the community, helping to inspire countless area residents to enthusiastically embrace a healthier lifestyle and build strong communities.

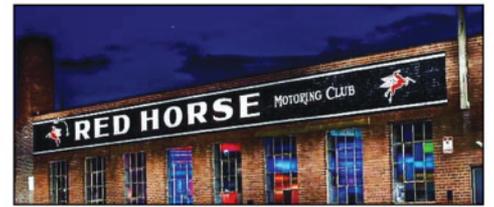
Accomplishments from grant making include the grand opening of Community Health & Dental Care along with its co-location with Creative Health Services, the Circuit Rider program, Walk/Bike Pottstown, Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK), TriCounty Health Council, and TriCounty Community Network, to name a few.

At 15 years, the Foundation recognizes the necessary partnership that empowers them to fulfill their mission. President

Dave Kraybill says, "We're so privileged to work with local wellness organizations, nonprofits, schools, parks and more. The health and wellness impact we're making is powered by our grantees and partner organizations. And each year, we build more connections among them all as we grow and expand collectively. That's how we fit together."

The Foundation also has its own initiatives to inspire, educate and motivate community members and leaders. The annual Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute trains local educators about research and best practices that support a culture of wellness in schools. Additionally, the Foundation promotes cultures of good health in the community through the annual Home Garden Contest.

A healthy Pottstown benefits everyone—from community members to business owners—by making it a better place to live, work and play. A video honoring the Foundation's 15 years can be viewed at [bit.ly/2UmMLK9](http://bit.ly/2UmMLK9).



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