



LANCASTER

Thriving!

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SPRING 2021

Tourism Transformed

How Lancaster County destinations are preparing for an unknown 2021 season

pg. 10

Food In-Focus: The Ecosystem Of A Restaurant

Supporting our local restaurants and eateries means more than you think. Learn why!

pg. 6

What's Up Around The County?

Explore special business & community spotlights on areas of Lancaster, from Marietta to East Petersburg

pg. 18



PENN MEDICINE HEALTHWORKS IMPACTS EMPLOYEE HEALTH IN MEASURABLE WAYS

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Merlin's Mayhem roller coaster at Dutch Wonderland
Image courtesy of Dutch Wonderland



FEATURE STORY

10

Tourism Transformed

Explore how Lancaster County destinations are preparing for an unknown 2021 season, what they are doing to safely reopen, and how you can help make a positive impact on these exciting local experiences!

contents

6

Food In-Focus: The Ecosystem Of A Restaurant

Supporting our restaurants is critical, now more than ever. But did you realize how big of an impact these restaurants make on a larger economic ecosystem?

18

What's Up Around The County?

Discover what's happening around Lancaster County from Marietta, to East Petersburg, to the Southern End of Lancaster. We're thankful to showcase the vibrancy of our County.

23

When Doors Closed, Lancaster's Entrepreneurs Opened Windows

COVID-19 proved to be difficult for many businesses, yet some entrepreneurs took the risk to start a business in 2020.

Meet these innovative owners in our unique Q&A interview!

COVER PHOTO

A snapshot of Merlin's Mayhem roller coaster at Dutch Wonderland. Image courtesy of Dutch Wonderland
Dutch Wonderland is opening in May 2021.

DEPARTMENTS

22 // Out & About: Grand Openings

27 // Lancaster Chamber Upcoming Events

28 // Lancaster Chamber Member Anniversaries



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Editor:
Tony Gorick
agorick@
lancasterchamber.com



Assistant Editor:
Ashley Glensor
aglensor@
lancasterchamber.com



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For Advertising Opportunities:

For Advertising Opportunities:

Sherry@Hoffpubs.com
717-979-2858 or
Alicia@Hoffpubs.com
610-685-0914 x210 or
Sales@Hoffpubs.com
610.685.0914 x1

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Jeni Rathman, Graphic Designer

A Call For Local Loyalty

A Letter from Tom Baldrige

One lesson I've come to embrace about communication is that to be heard you have to say something, repeat it, and then say it one more time to ensure it resonates. Well, here I go again...

While the contents of this edition of *Thriving!* cover a host of topics from a variety of perspectives, the reminder I'd like to lend to each of them is to "Think Local!"

Never before has the power of "Thinking Local" been put to the test as it has been this past year. And, going forward, it remains a critical component of our County's long-term success.

Within these pages, you'll learn how restaurants, and their unique ecosystem that impacts local farms, are finding their way - yet all of us Thinking Local is the secret recipe to their success; You'll be inspired by how our local hospitality businesses and attractions have navigated, and continue to navigate, their challenges - which, it simply wouldn't happen without guest and visitor loyalty shown by Thinking Local; and, You'll be encouraged by the way entrepreneurs were able to start a business even during the hardship of the last year - with Lancasterians Thinking Local and embarking on a small business journey worthy of applause.

I've said it before and I'll say it again (and again...and again), we all win when we all Think Local. And, we hope this edition of *Thriving!* gives you some additional encouragement to double-down on the opportunity.

Sincerely,

Tom Baldrige, President & CEO
Lancaster Chamber

Food In-Focus:

The Ecosystem Of A Restaurant

Supporting our local restaurants and eateries means more than you think.

In the last year of the Pandemic, restaurants, along with many other industries, took incredible risks to pivot their normal practices to accommodate safety guidelines in an ever-changing landscape. They were focused on being open for the benefit of our community and every individual that touches the restaurant industry. When we think about the restaurant itself, we think of the brick and mortar experience. But behind that plate of food, that server, or host, the bartender, the chef - is an entire system of other Lancasterians who economically rely on the success of that restaurant. That web of diverse businesses and industries has been deemed the "Restaurant Ecosystem" and analyzing this system is an important exercise in recognizing this industry's particular impact on our greater community.

Ben Barr from Barr's Produce works on a variety of crops on the farm





FROM FARM TO TABLE

Often, we forget that our favorite flavors and dishes go on quite a journey to get to our table. To talk about the impact of locally grown and sourced produce and how it makes its way to your plate, we touched base with **Ben Barr** of Barr's Farms to learn more!

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

We rely on the restaurant industry for our business, as it makes up half of our produce business. This ranges from restaurants getting orders for delivery, pre-order to pick up at our Lancaster Central Market stand, or regular shopping at our stand for their produce.

HOW IS YOUR BUSINESS/FARM CONNECTED TO THE RESTAURANTS IN OUR COUNTY? WHAT DO YOU DO FOR THEM?

We base our planting on the restaurants' needs and keep in regular communication about growth and harvest with them. We provide fresh, homegrown, in-season produce, and also source unique produce from all over the world for our customers year-round or for produce not found locally. We also value our relationships with our customers, including restaurants; building a personal relationship is important to us.

WHAT DOES THE IMPACT MEAN TO YOUR BUSINESS WHEN THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTS RESTAURANTS?

When the community supports restaurants, they are not only supporting a local restaurant, but they are supporting the many small businesses that supply that local restaurant. We all support each other, and it's great doing business with people you care about. That is what makes it all worth it.

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SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS

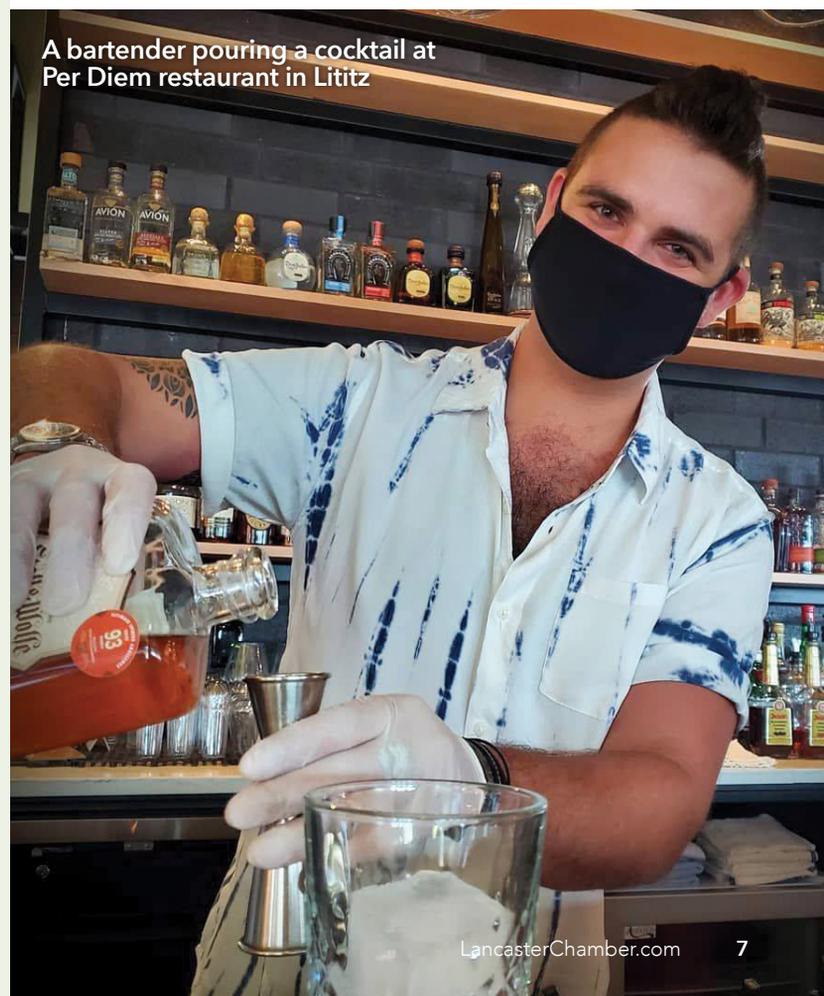
The spark for the theme for this article comes from **Josh Funk**, owner of TFB Hospitality (the likes of Annie Bailey's, Per Diem and more) who recently mentioned the restaurant ecosystem in a local merchant's meeting. Josh is a local entrepreneur and has extensive insight and passion into what it means to be a part of the fabric of Lancaster's culinary experience.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR ROLE AS THE OWNER AT A RESTAURANT?

For our 6 different locations I have primarily corporate functions like Finance, Accounting, HR, Payroll, and Marketing. Additionally, I work with each business unit to help develop operation strategies and refine current practices to stay ahead of trends in our industry.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY?

Wow, where do I start? Most people don't realize all the work and labor it takes to make a successful restaurant. The number of people it takes to get just one plate to the table, let alone 500 in a day, is a remarkable feat in logistics. It cannot be solved with technology or a piece of equipment, it takes people and passion.



A bartender pouring a cocktail at Per Diem restaurant in Lititz

WHAT DOES YOUR WORK AS AN OWNER IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Growing up in Lancaster, I feel a deep responsibility to our community. Not only in providing good-paying jobs that provide benefits and a work-life balance but supporting other local businesses to help keep the dollars my company is spending in Lancaster.

Over the pandemic, we launched our community feeding program, TFB Cares. The program has helped feed over 2,000 individuals in 2020 and is funded in part by TFB Hospitality Group, local businesses, and diners at each of our restaurants. In launching the program, we created a crowd-sourced funding model and add 1% to each check at all our restaurants to assist in funding this program. Visit tfbhospitality.com/tfbcare for more information.



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An array of food at popular Lancaster downtown restaurant Annie Baileys

WORKFORCE & RESTAURANTS

Steve Cabalar, owner of Cabalar Meat Co., breaks down what it's like for him and his employees - during COVID-19 and beyond - and the experience of his staff as hospitality workforce.



A delicious sandwich from Cabalar Meat Co. - restaurant downtown Lancaster

WHAT DID RETAINING EMPLOYEES AND GROWTH DURING THE PANDEMIC MEAN TO YOU AS A BUSINESS OWNER?

I feel privileged to have such a supportive customer base that has shown so much compassion throughout this pandemic. The challenges workers were experiencing with delayed unemployment benefits and having to search for jobs in new career paths - I am glad my crew did not have to experience that. I am humbled to have such a hard-working team that has gone above and beyond the norm in dealing with the challenges this pandemic has thrown their way.

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT STRATEGIES YOU TOOK TO RETAIN YOUR EMPLOYEES?

The first week of the restaurant shutdown was the toughest. None of us had any idea what the landscape was going to look like. We came to a collective decision to continue with a to-go platform and maintain our operating hours. Thankfully, this was well received, and we were able to maintain our business levels and experience growth throughout the year. We were able to maintain full-time hours for our employees and hire on new team members.

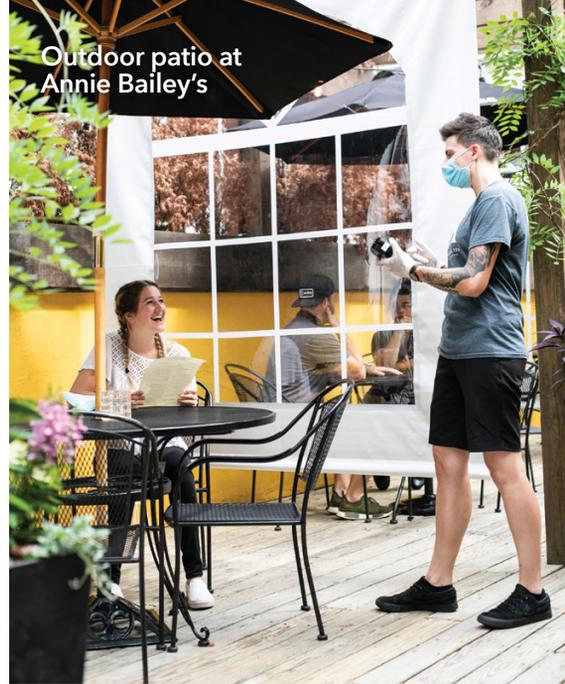
WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING A RESTAURANT OWNER IN LANCASTER?

When the second round of shutdowns began, restaurant owners began promoting and posting about other restaurants' offerings to show support for one another. I am grateful to be part of such a loving Lancaster restaurant community.

www.cabalarmeatto.com



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As evident in the experiences of the industry experts we interviewed, restaurants are vital to the economic, social, and cultural vibrancy of Lancaster County. When you are supporting a restaurant, you are supporting far more than just the food on your plate - a whole ecosystem of businesses and people that rely on each other - as they rely on you. As we turn the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to support these businesses - outdoor dining, take out, safe indoor dining, recommendations and reviews, following them on social media and more will help keep our restaurants alive, and thrive well into the future. **LT**



BY MOLLY CROUSER,
*Special Events &
Programs Manager
at the Lancaster Chamber
Contact Molly at
mrouser@lancasterchamber.com*

IMPACT ON TOURISM

Tourism is one of Lancaster County's top 3 industries - hospitality and restaurants make up a large portion of that industry. **Joel Cliff**, Director of Communications and Advocacy for Discover Lancaster, provides insight about the impact the restaurant industry has on our tourism economy.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF RESTAURANTS ON OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY? HOW IMPORTANT WILL RESTAURANTS BE AS WE HEAD INTO THE TOURISM SEASON?

An important aspect of our restaurant community is its integral role in our broader tourism industry. Food and drink are a primary part of Lancaster County's appeal to travelers, and our sheer variety of restaurants - as well as taverns, breweries, distilleries, and vineyards - provides options sure to please any palette.

Some of our dining properties have become destinations themselves - such as Shady Maple and Good 'N Plenty - while the increasing number of ethnic restaurants are a delightful addition to traditional Pennsylvania Dutch favorites.

Mix in our popular farm-to-table emphasis, well-known sweets & treats, and a wide-ranging Craft Beverage trail, and it's easy to see why our restaurants and other food service elements are always crucial to area tourism, especially during this build-back year of 2021.

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ECONOMIC INSIGHTS

Naomi Young, Executive Director of the Center of Regional Analysis at Economic Development Company, shares the economic impact the restaurant industry has on our broader economy - often the indicators for other important elements of our economy like trends in growth.

WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RESTAURANTS ON OUR COMMUNITY?

Prior to the pandemic, the County had around 700 restaurant establishments offering dine-in or take-out services and employed around 14,000 people. While they made up around 6% of the establishments in Lancaster County, they represent an important element of the economy and have relatively high multipliers. In some ways a thriving restaurant scene is a signal for a vibrant economy.

HOW HAS THE CHANGING PANDEMIC LANDSCAPE AFFECTED OUR RESTAURANT COMMUNITY?

Without question, the restaurant community has been and continues to be impacted by the public health threat of COVID-19. At the same time, there has been fiscal support directed at this industry and workers. It's too soon to know what the lasting impacts will be.

In some ways, the pandemic reversed the decade-long transformation that industry has undergone in Lancaster County. Between 2010 and 2018, the number of restaurants did not change that much. However, they went from being limited service (eg, take-out) to dine-in. This transformation came with an increased economic footprint and employment base.

www.edclancaster.com/center-for-regional-analysis



Cylo relaxes at Clipper Magazine Stadium, home of the Barnstormers baseball team

Tourism



Riders on the Kingdom Coaster at Dutch Wonderland
Image courtesy of Dutch Wonderland

How Lancaster County destinations are preparing for an unknown 2021 season

Transformed

Take a moment to hear it all once again: excited laughter of kids on a roller coaster under the summer sun, the clink of glasses as you toast to warm weather at a local restaurant, inspiring voices echoing from the theatre stage, the crack of a baseball bat meeting a ball before a winning home run.

There is something special about the destinations in Lancaster County and the experiences so many people, both local and distant, know and love.

It's a gross understatement to say that the hospitality industry was hugely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic over the course of the last year and a half. Yet, like so many other businesses in our community and beyond, there is a resilience and dedication to build back, safely reopen, and add new experiences for 2021.

"Tourism has always been a huge economic driver of Lancaster County as it brings in millions of people outside the area," says Tom Baldrige, President & CEO of the Lancaster Chamber. "Yet I also want to encourage residents of Lancaster to 'Think Local' and support the destinations around us in this vibrant County as local 'tourists' as well. From staycations at a local resort or bed and breakfast, to visiting some of the great shops, restaurants, and experiences we offer in all areas of the County, supporting local is more important now than ever. Make it part of your spring and summer plans to try new things, revisit your favorite spots, and invest in what's around us here in Lancaster."

We interviewed a variety of local leaders in the attraction industry to hear how they are safely preparing, adding new experiences, and how Lancaster County residents can invest in these destinations as part of Thinking Local and sustaining our community.

BUILDING BACK CONFIDENCE: SAFELY REOPENING

As a robust vaccination plan continues, and as the weather begins to warm, our Lancaster County attractions are preparing to safely reopen, welcome visitors, and begin a busy 2021 season.

"Our tourism properties have been diligent about obtaining relevant health and safety guidelines & best practices and then putting them into operation," says Edward Harris, President & CEO of Discover Lancaster. "The industry fully recognizes that the first step in a great visitor experience is feeling comfortable and confident in your surroundings, and we have placed a priority on achieving that comfort since day one."

Harris ensures that locations will continue to model safe practices and encourage guests to do the same as we navigate the year.

"Our visitor metrics like website traffic and lodging data have been trending up since the start of the year, so





Visitors enjoying the summer sunshine while shopping at Kitchen Kettle Village



Outside of Decades on a beautiful Spring day

we're hopeful that this build-back will continue as we head further into spring and the summer," adds Harris. "We have a number of new offerings debuting this year, as well as especially appealing attributes right now like numerous outdoor activities and being a traditional roadtrip destination – so we believe all of that will work in our favor during 2021."

A major local attraction is preparing to open its kingdom gates on May 15: **Dutch Wonderland**.

"Last year was so tough for businesses and attractions like ours because we'd never experienced a scenario like this before," says Jeffrey Eisenberg, Director of Marketing at Dutch Wonderland. "Now, we have more than a year of experience with COVID-19 and we're ahead of the game in preparing for a successful summer season."

The Dutch Wonderland team is again implementing safe mitigation measures like temperature checks before entry, masks for everyone ages two and up, social distancing, an abundance of sanitation stations, and other plans to help ensure success.

"To all guests thinking of visiting Dutch Wonderland this year, we want you to know that our guests' health and safety is always our first priority," adds Eisenberg. "That means we'll always err on the side of caution, COVID or not, because it's our goal to provide the cleanest, safest destination for family entertainment."

Kitchen Kettle Village, another popular destination for a variety of tourists from all over the region, is preparing similarly.

"Kitchen Kettle Village is the perfect getaway – whether for two hours or the entire day," says Lisa Horn, Director of Fun at Kitchen Kettle Village. "The outdoor spaces are ideal for social distancing, coupled with fun events, enhanced

cleaning procedures, and required mask wearing in shops, all of which should make our guests feel safe."

At a time where people are desperate to connect and have fun experiences, these destinations are stepping it up. **Decades**, a unique boutique bowling alley, arcade, restaurant, and bar in Downtown Lancaster, is ensuring safe operations while still giving guests an engaging, memorable experience.

"The Decades team has taken every measure for the last year, and beyond, to maintain a safe and enjoyable experience," says Jonathan Yeager, Marketing & Events Manager/Partner at Decades. "We have followed all CDC guidelines throughout the pandemic to keep our staff and our customers safe and cannot thank our customers enough for supporting us through this past year. We are open and we are ready to give you a memorable, safe entertainment experience!"

One announcement that provided a wave of relief to baseball fans and the community alike happened early this year: baseball is back on June 4. **The Lancaster Barnstormers**, who play at Clipper Magazine Stadium, will be back for a season after taking a hiatus due to the pandemic.

"We are very excited to have baseball back," says Mike Reynolds, General Manager at the Lancaster Barnstormers and Clipper Magazine Stadium. "We have set up our seating to allow for families to sit together with spacing between the next group of guests. Our staff will also be cleaning and sanitizing all common areas throughout all games and events to provide a safe and fun experience for all."

In Columbia, PA, the **Turkey Hill Experience** has shifted to accommodate safety measures for tourists and local visitors.



Tea tasting and the entrance at the Turkey Hill Experience

"We are requiring reservations to ensure we don't exceed revised capacities, we're requiring temperature screenings prior to entry, we have multiple sanitizing stations throughout the facility, and we've made our touch-screens touchless through the use of stylus," says Bob Adams, General Manager at the Turkey Hill Experience. "We have enhanced our cleaning protocols and maintain appropriate distancing so we can give our guests the wonderful experience they've come to expect here."

Live entertainment, including theatre, has been one of the biggest impacted areas in hospitality, with closed venues and cancelled shows being the new unfortunate norm these organizations have to navigate.

"By monitoring the gradual reopening of other entities and speaking with leaders in the sporting events, academic, and hospitality sectors, we've been able to gain a clearer understanding of which measures are proving most effective, which instill the most confidence, and how to best implement them," says Brandon Martin, Director of Operations at **American Music Theatre**. "Some steps we are working toward involve an investment, such as new air filtration units, specialized lighting, and antiviral effects hazers to replace our current units within

Questions about COVID-19 vaccines and other workplace safeguards?



With COVID-19 vaccines becoming available, many employers are starting to plan for the physical return of their workers to their buildings.

For help with your planning, turn to the **Returning Workforces and COVID-19 Vaccines** toolkit as your go to resource and guide. This comprehensive toolkit explores COVID-19 vaccines and other workplace safeguards to help HR professionals and employers decide what policies, communications, considerations, and plans are best for their organizations.

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the performance space – others simply involve ways in which we can operate more effectively in regards to combatting the spread of illness in general.”

Martin hopes that American Music Theatre will have a better understanding of timelines once the year progresses.

There is another local experience that gets visitors howling: the **Wolf Sanctuary of PA**, located in Lititz. The organization is an educational facility that offers refuge to gray wolves and wolf-dogs.

“As we slowly begin to increase our tours, we have taken extra precautions to ensure that our visitors, volunteers, and staff remain safe and healthy,” says Michelle Mancini, Education Coordinator at the Wolf Sanctuary of PA. “Our tours are outdoors and visitors must wear masks and social distance throughout the tour. Our gift shop has also been remodeled with safety in mind, and we continue to expand our online gift shop as well for those who wish to shop remotely.”

ADDED ADVENTURES: WHAT'S NEW IN 2021

Even though it's an unusual season, it's still about to be summer – and with that brings new additions and new experiences to explore.

“Guests seem to be really excited to visit Dutch Wonderland again. We plan to have a much fuller season this year,” says Eisenberg. “We also own and operate the **Cartoon Network Hotel**, right next door to the park. Since the hotel closed for part of last year due to COVID, I'm really excited to see the property's outdoor amenities get their first

full summer. A new resort-style pool, Powerpuff Girls splash pad, outdoor movie screenings, and more, are in store for our guests!”

Another new addition to the great lineup of retail spots at Kitchen Kettle Village is **MOMS Pretzels**, a pretzel and lemonade shop that is donating all profits to local charities. The shop will feature a charity of the month so guests know the impact their purchases are making. Also, there will be new Spring Fling Shopping Packages offered at Kitchen Kettle Village now through June 30, 2021 that include lunch and free gifts from eight of the shops.

Although American Music Theatre isn't ready to announce an exact date as to when doors will be open once again, the team is hard at work with exciting initiatives.

“Right now we're focusing squarely on our 2021 Christmas Show, Winter Wonderland, and a jam-packed summer/fall concert calendar that will feature some perennial American Music Theatre favorites as well as many shows we're welcoming to Lancaster for the first time,” says Martin. “Personally, I don't think I've ever been as excited for the content that we have in store. This past year has given us something that is always in short supply in this industry – time – and we've utilized it to plan and build a Christmas Show that will be bigger and better than ever before, and to cultivate a celebrity roster that is shaping up to be our strongest yet.”

As the year progresses the Wolf Sanctuary is hoping to expand tours to allow even more guests to safely experience the conservation.



Running Bear curiously peering at the camera through the trees at the Wolf Sanctuary



Previous Christmas Show at American Music Theatre



Cozmo is being used at the North Museum to help visitors learn and explore real robotics technology and coding

Also, Clipper Magazine Stadium hopes to continue providing outdoor entertainment, in addition to the much-anticipated baseball season, including movie nights, music events, kickball leagues, and more, that proved popular last year.

One destination that is open and ready for guests to enjoy new collections and added experiences is the **North Museum of Nature & Science**.

"Guests can now enjoy our collections, which include more than 400,000 objects in disciplines ranging from archaeology to zoology," says Scott Downs, Director of Corporate Giving & Media Relations at the North Museum. "Our theme for May will be Space, and we'll also present Journey To Africa: Elephants where guests can explore the world of African elephants and learn even more about life on the African continent."



Kids expressed why they love the North Museum

The North Museum goes Under the Stars for its 6th annual Cosmic Bash, Saturday evening, May 22, on the Museum lawn on the Franklin & Marshall campus. The event is the Museum's signature annual fundraiser; a gala benefiting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Education opportunities for children in Lancaster County, and throughout Central Pennsylvania.

"Atomic, which designed the set for the Superbowl LV halftime show, will create the Cosmic Bash event design," adds Downs. "This newly-envisioned outdoor experience will be filled with stimulating science activities, heavenly food and drink, and celestial music. The ever-popular silent auction returns, accessible in-person and online! The silent auction will include products and gift cards from





New MOMS Pretzels shop at Kitchen Kettle Village



Overhead shot of the Decades arcade, restaurant, bar, and bowling lanes

local businesses, with the aim of helping the community's recovery from the financial challenges they've faced in the past year. Tickets will be available soon so keep checking our website."

LIVING LOCAL: HOW LANCASTER RESIDENTS CAN SUPPORT DESTINATIONS

Though visitors outside of Lancaster County travel and support our destinations, it's imperative we also do our part as local residents and businesses in supporting the venues, experiences, restaurants, and attractions to keep them sustained.

"While all aspects of tourism have suffered from COVID, food & drink properties, the performing arts, and lodging have been hit especially hard," says Harris. "Any extra opportunity that folks have to enjoy their favorite Lancaster County food or beverage, treat themselves to an overnight staycation, and patronize live performances as they return will be a huge boost to these segments of our industry."

Brandon Martin at American Music Theatre agrees.

"I would urge anyone who sees the benefit of having a healthy live arts element within their community to simply show up once we're all back up and running," says Martin. "Perhaps that means some folks taking a chance on a form of entertainment that is not a typical one for them. I promise they will not be disappointed!"

"We just went through a year unlike anything any of us has ever experienced," adds Adams. "Our Turkey Hill team is

100% committed to allowing families, friends, groups and all people to come and safely make moments that turn into memories that they will cherish forever."

Local Lancaster guests are a big portion of the audience for both Dutch Wonderland and Decades.

"For all those Lancaster or Central PA locals, we hope as you venture out that you'll enjoy some of the gems right in our own backyards," says Eisenberg. "That includes Dutch Wonderland and the Cartoon Network Hotel, but also the many other great attractions throughout Lancaster County, too. Many tourism industry surveys suggest that, for many, travel will not be as far from home this year. As everyone starts to venture back out, we want you to know that your local and regional favorites are here for you to enjoy."

"Decades is a prime location for Lancaster residents or businesses to have events, and we can't wait to get back to hosting team building events, work parties, weddings, rehearsal dinners, anniversaries, retirement celebrations, and birthday parties," adds Yeager. "We really do love to throw parties, and we will all want to celebrate once we can do so again!"

Other ways to support businesses include purchasing gift cards and donating to a variety of causes or programs.

The Wolf Sanctuary of PA has suffered from a number of restrictions, lowering their ability to give their typical-capacity tours making it critical for those who enjoy the organization to make symbolic wolf adoptions, donations, or become Members.

Support is also not limited to just individuals. Businesses



Guests enjoying the carousel at Dutch Wonderland - Photo credit Dutch Wonderland



Strasburg Railroad - Photo credit DiscoverLancaster.com

can be a catalyst for support as well. Your business or organization can explore sponsorship packages at places like Clipper Magazine Stadium and American Music Theatre, or prioritize local spots like Kitchen Kettle Village or the robust restaurant scene for employee gifts.

The North Museum also has opportunities for sponsorship with their educational initiatives: North Museum @ Home (an innovative e-learning portal and curriculum), School @ North Museum (an on-site program facilitated by an experienced and certified teacher) and After School @ North Museum (a program that provides parents with a safe, fun and educational solution for their children during work hours).

Overall, local support is crucial - from buying your favorite cheeseburger from a local pub, to visiting attractions like Dutch Wonderland, Strasburg Railroad, or our assortment of theatres, to shopping local for gifts, to going that extra mile to donate to a nonprofit that is in dire need of an extra boost.

"Together our business community, and community at large, can make a huge impact on the sustainability and success of our hospitality and attraction businesses here in Lancaster County," adds Baldrige. "We can all play a part in helping businesses as we look towards hope on the horizon in 2021 and beyond." **LT**



BY TONY GORICK,
Creative Services Manager,
at the Lancaster Chamber
Contact Tony at
agorick@lancasterchamber.com



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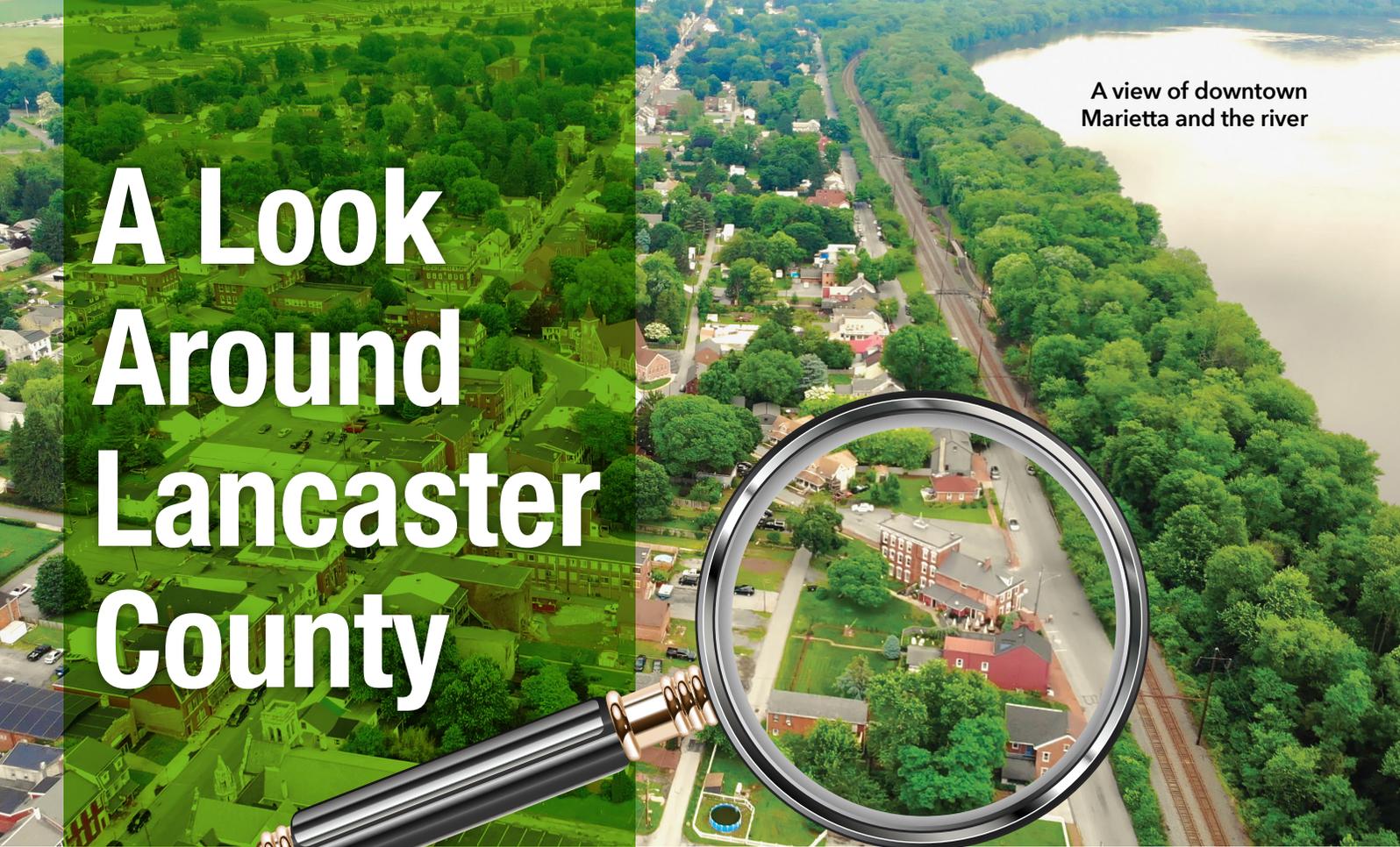
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A view of downtown Marietta and the river

A Look Around Lancaster County

Our County is full of inspiring stories about business and community. Explore a few spots in Lancaster to learn more about the growth, transformation, and shifts happening!

NEWFOUND VITALITY – Southern Lancaster County Chamber

Mandy Leggett and her husband Zadok own and operate Chapel Hill Forge in Conestoga providing forged ironwork and fabrication along with sign making services to the community. In 2018, Leggett joined the Southern Lancaster County Chamber as a way to network and grow their business. On March 12, 2020, she was named the President of this regional chamber. The next day, schools began closing, upending many businesses and lives.

Leggett remembers thinking, “We are going to need to change just about everything we do.” She also wanted to keep the chamber moving and growing. To her delight, she discovered not only were they able to hold on to most of the members they had, the past year saw an increase of 15 percent in membership!

One of the first acts was to lead a total revamping of the web site <https://southernlancasterchamber.org>. Other efforts included a re-invigorating of the relationship between the chamber and SCORE, an organization providing expert guidance and assistance to start-up and existing businesses. Another way of growing has been Leggett meeting monthly

with the other regional chamber leaders in the county. Outreach from the Recovery Lancaster program also provided value to the members of the group. With the help of her chamber volunteers, the group also added two new military scholarships at \$250 each, as well as two monthly meetings for the Women in Business group of their chamber. Despite not being able to do their annual shredding event for the community to raise scholarship money, the chamber is still able to provide three \$500 scholarships to Solanco, Penn Manor and Lampeter-Strasburg.

This change to the way the group met allowed many new business owners to join in driving attendance to about 30-35 per online meeting. Leggett notes, "Many of the new members have just started businesses from their homes and are also raising children. The move to online meetings allows them to contribute and learn more than they were able to if we only met in person."

Leggett is excited about these new businesses, saying, "They bring a new sense of vitality and have expanded the range of businesses in our network. Many people used to think about chambers as being for the big businesses, but recently we have added a beekeeper, candle maker, winery owners and a donut maker, with most of them being female-led small businesses. That is SO exciting." She adds, "We are going to keep this momentum going and as we are able to go back to meetings in person, we will discover new ways to keep those who prefer virtual meetings engaged. The whole community benefits when we do this!"



A delicious look at treats from OMG Donuts, Quarryville, PA

GROWTH & OPPORTUNITY – Marietta Business Association

Steve Ulrich was raised in Marietta and the river was part of his life. "This was a great place to grow up," he says. "Four years ago, when we decided to move our business from downtown Lancaster to Marietta, some colleagues thought I was crazy. But there is a real sense of growth here. Marietta is not only a nice place to visit, but a place that is starting to attract residents who enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle. Our town is also central, regionally, with convenient connections to larger cities. We are becoming a desirable bedroom community."

Part of the strategy of the Marietta Area Business Association, of which Ulrich is president, is to attract visitors who might turn into residents. "We've seen that new residents are often the most highly engaged and motivated to volunteer, and are eager to fix up our historic properties," he says.

The opening of the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail <http://nwrt.info> has been one of the big drivers of a burgeoning reinvigoration of Marietta. "We saw this even before COVID-19," says Ulrich. "But the pandemic has truly



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Mulberry Thrill Outdoor Cafe operates out of an old bank drive-up (pictured here with a bike from Lancaster Recumbent)

helped it explode as people rediscovered the outdoors as a safe way to pass the time.” The trail is a key factor that has allowed businesses to see the potential of Marietta. The Heart Cafe (now re-opened as Molly’s Courtyard Cafe) attracted outside owners who see the trail as a major revenue pipeline. The business community placed trailmarker directional signs pointing to businesses and eating places right off the trail and those signs are making a difference. Lancaster Recumbent cycles moved from their Rohrerstown location to Marietta with the trail being a major part of the decision. Bikes are always present downtown and the local entrepreneurs have responded by adding bike racks and even more outdoor seating for those pedaling through the area.

“It’s going to take some time, but we know this is working,” says Ulrich. Fully half of the visitors to Mulberry Thrill Outdoor Café, operated by his wife Abby, report having learned about the scoop shop from these river trail signs. The café, which serves ice cream and other treats from the drive through window of the restored 1875 First National/Farmers First Bank, is preparing for an even better 2021 as more people learn about the trail and the nearby eating options in town.

The pandemic forced many businesses to rethink and reorganize, and some positive things came out of it. For example, The Lancaster Chamber, along with the Economic Development Company, hosted weekly Zoom meetings with local chambers and business associations, like the Marietta Area Business Association, to facilitate discussion and ideas on how to help businesses find their way through this tough time. Ulrich continues, “Those Zoom calls were

critical to navigate the various grants, loans, regulations, and distribution of scarce protective gear. The meetings also lead to connections that we probably would never had made in person with other business leaders. The dark days were made lighter through those professional connections, and we encouraged each other to continue our pre-pandemic plans as much as possible.”

Other county agencies are part of the growth in Marietta. Working with the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, a trailhead is planned to make it easier for trail users to access the trail from inside Marietta. The historic train station, owned by The Railroad House Restaurant and Inn, will be the anchor for the trailhead.

Ulrich invites everyone to experience the trail and to take the short spur into Downtown Marietta and view the Victorian homes and thriving businesses. “We have a lot to offer here,” he says, “come and enjoy it.”

DETERMINED ACTION – Elizabethtown Chamber

The cost of the pandemic was high for the Elizabethtown Chamber of Commerce, leading to the loss of two staff positions. However, the Chamber was determined to press on and brought Bob Price, Executive Director, and Kelly Fuddy, Director of Member Experience, on part time to keep things moving.

It has also been a time of changing leadership with a few of the area’s largest employers, with new leaders installed at Masonic Village, Elizabethtown College, and Mars/Wrigley just to mention a few. These new leaders, and many others, are bringing new energy to the region, according to Price.

Fuddy notes this energy is leading to action. “We are hearing from our stakeholders and listening to how they see the area developing. We want to engage all sectors of the area in this effort.” Using the slogan CONNECTING YOU TO OPPORTUNITIES, the Chamber is continuing to work at bringing new and diverse employers to the area.

The Chamber is also working hard at introducing Elizabethtown as a destination, not just as a bedroom community for Lancaster, Harrisburg, York and Hershey. “We have new folks moving in and buying places downtown that had been empty or underutilized,” reports Price. “These are people who want to become involved and contribute to the vitality of the community.” There is also energy going into preparing for the return of much-loved events, and they are creating seasonal community guides sharing places to eat, shop and live in the area.

Both Price and Fuddy are excited about what is coming for Elizabethtown. “We know we have a great location and have a quality of life here that is hard to match,” says Fuddy with Price adding, “Our challenge is to raise awareness of people who already are in the area and leave to go elsewhere for eating and shopping. There are great options right here.”

KEY COLLABORATION – East Petersburg Borough

While the past year had its share of challenges, the community of East Petersburg collaborated well and is emerging with some “wins” to point toward moving forward.

Manager Karen St. Clair reports, “We worked hard with residents who were struggling with paying water and trash bills.” It was a group effort, she points out, and while it wasn’t perfect they did provide help to those in need. In addition, she reports that by being careful with project spending they were able to make it through without laying off borough staff.

A major change coming out of the pandemic has been the collaboration with East Hempfield township along with the East Petersburg, Hempfield and Rohrerstown Fire Departments in the formation of the Hempfield Area Fire Services Commission and the hiring of Chief Fire Official John Kottmyer. “We were already working at this,” says Council President John Wolf, “but the pandemic made it even clearer it was time for this effort to bear fruit. Now we have one person working with all three departments to make sure we are using best practices and reducing duplication.”

Council Vice-President Deb Miller points out that one of the highlights of last year was the work the borough and

Hempfield REC were able to do in keeping the community pool open and safe for members. While many were closed for the summer, being open provided healthy outdoor exercise at a time when that was important. **LT**



BY LARRY GUENGERICH,
*Director of Organizational Communications
and Church Relations at Landis Communities*
Contact Larry at
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A snapshot of the
Elizabethtown Chamber
having a meeting

Out & ABOUT

GRAND OPENINGS CONGRATULATIONS

2021 CHAMBER MEMBER RIBBON CUTTINGS

We are so thankful we can once again participate in special ribbon cuttings to welcome new Chamber Members in 2021! These safe celebrations officially welcome the business to Lancaster County. We're honored to have these businesses adding to our ever-growing business community.

Check out the photos below!



DRAYER PHYSICAL THERAPY
at 365A Comet Drive, Millersville



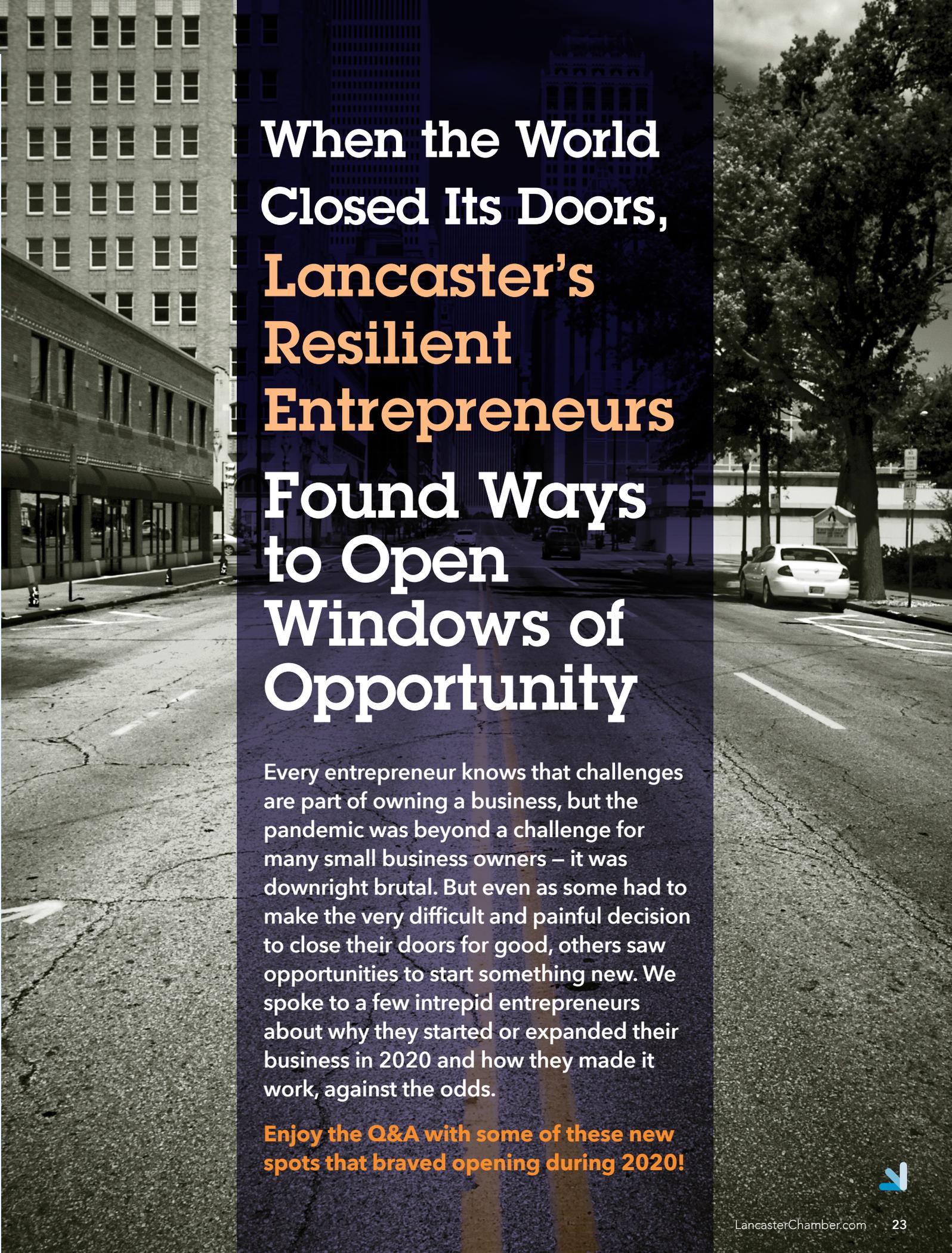
GOOD LIFE ORGANIC KITCHEN
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NEW ARMSTRONG FLOORING RESEARCH LAB SPACE
at Greenfield



PENN STATE HEALTH PEDIATRIC CENTER
using the previous Toys R Us location, Lancaster



When the World Closed Its Doors, Lancaster's Resilient Entrepreneurs Found Ways to Open Windows of Opportunity

Every entrepreneur knows that challenges are part of owning a business, but the pandemic was beyond a challenge for many small business owners – it was downright brutal. But even as some had to make the very difficult and painful decision to close their doors for good, others saw opportunities to start something new. We spoke to a few intrepid entrepreneurs about why they started or expanded their business in 2020 and how they made it work, against the odds.

Enjoy the Q&A with some of these new spots that braved opening during 2020!





Elizabeth Byler, Creative Image Director
NAME & TITLE

Eden Environments
COMPANY NAME

edenenvironments.org
WEBSITE

Brief description of your business:

Eden Environments is committed to creating healthy and hospitable spaces where people flourish through sustainable design practices.

**Why did you decide to start your business?
When did you make the decision?**

In June 2020, I started Eden Environments after completing an office renovation and seeing the tangible impact on myself and everyone who walked into the space. I knew it was something I wanted to keep doing. My degree in healthcare administration led me to investigate how I could promote human well-being through the use of interior design. I discovered innovative research around the benefits of human-centric design which I combined with sustainability for a unique design approach.

What advice would you give others about running/leading a business in uncertain/challenging times?

The pandemic highlighted our lack of control and continues to require us to be flexible, rest when needed, and value progress over perfection. I would say to myself and everyone else, be willing to ask for help, boundaries are important, and come back to your “why” often. I have a giant post-it with the words “human flourishing” on it to remind myself of what I want in the world.



Francisco Gomez De La Torre, Founder & Managing Partner
NAME & TITLE

Frisco’s Chicken
COMPANY NAME

FricosChicken.com
WEBSITE

Brief description of your business:

Hola! Enjoy a bit of Peru, right here in Lancaster, PA! You’ll love our healthy, quick service, authentic Peruvian Charcoal Chicken, sides and desserts. All made with fresh locally-sourced ingredients, and, most importantly, served with a smile!

**Why did you decide to start your business?
When did you make the decision?**

I had always dreamed of opening my own Peruvian Chicken restaurant. After losing my job to COVID, starting Frisco’s, seemed natural to me. It was the perfect time to go forward with this dream and it was my only option, knowing that my line of work in the hotel industry was not going to be available in the foreseeable future.

What was the hardest part about starting a business during a pandemic?

Not knowing what to expect with regulations and the availability of other businesses and agencies changing almost daily. Also not having access to financing - the pandemic really caused lenders, vendors, landlords, and other creditors to really pull back and tighten their belts. Most of them thought we were crazy to even consider opening a restaurant during a time when the restaurant and hospitality industry had really taken a beating.

What advice would you give others about running/leading a business in uncertain/challenging times?

Believe in yourself and your product. Persevere. Be patient. Don’t take no for an answer. There is always a way to succeed even when things are constantly changing. And be willing to accept that failure is a part of the process of being successful.



Chelsea Christmas, Certified Personal Trainer
NAME & TITLE

Fit City Women
COMPANY NAME

Coming soon! (fitcitywomen.co)
WEBSITE

Brief description of your business:

Fit City Women offers affordable virtual and in-person fitness classes for women who have been negatively impacted by the lack of accessibility to affordable and inclusive gym settings. FCW also helps bridge the gap for women that cannot afford memberships at high end gyms by collaborating with locally women-owned gyms to give a high-end experience at a comfortable rate for every budget.

**Why did you decide to start your business?
When did you make the decision?**

Starting a business felt scary to me, especially during a pandemic. At first I did not even want to call Fit City Women a business but after seeing how much of a need there was for this I took a step out on faith and went for it. After my own negative experiences in gym settings that lacked diversity and were not affordable I created FCW so that women could have the gym experience that they deserve.

Did the pandemic give you any second thoughts about starting your business?

I had second thoughts going into this at first due to the pandemic and all of the shutdowns. I thought to myself there is no way I can build a clientele with the many restrictions due to COVID. I started feel more confident with the way the virtual community in the fitness industry was taking off and that helped me to stay the course. I would constantly remind myself to stay faithful in the small things, so even if one client showed up I promised myself that I would always “do it for the one.” After launching in August of 2020 there was an immediate following and liking to FCW. This encouraged me to keep going.



Laura Merkel - Owner
NAME & TITLE

Laura the Cookie Lady
COMPANY NAME

www.lauracookielady.com
WEBSITE

Brief description of your business:

We take ordinary sugar cookies and turn them into works of art. Between our decorated sugar cookies and our delicious flavored drop cookies, your sweet tooth will be happy!

**Why did you decide to start your business?
When did you make the decision?**

We decided to add a location to be able to reach more customers. We felt that Lititz was a perfect place to do this with the amount of foot traffic that is there. The decision was basically made overnight when my space was shown to me.

What did you do to stay positive and persevere?

I’ve learned that I have to take a break here and there. I generally work 60-80 hours a week decorating cookies. My family will always come first so I’ve made it a point to be home more.

What advice would you give others about running/ leading a business in uncertain/challenging times?

Really do your homework. Make sure there is a market for what you are trying to do, even if another lockdown were to occur. Unfortunately we can’t change situations sometimes and just have to make the best of it.

Fit City Women is the winner of the **2021 Great Social Enterprise Pitch!** This annual competition is for Central PA entrepreneurs with business ideas or start-ups that use a positive social and environmental impact model. Visit lanasterpitch.com to learn more.



There are many other businesses that have opened in the last year, so continue to check out your local communities all around Lancaster County to support local and invest in places that need your extra support!



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Ronald Daggett - Owner
 NAME & TITLE

Brick Heads
 COMPANY NAME

brickheadsshop.com
 WEBSITE

Brief description of your business:

New LEGO® brick shop in beautiful Lancaster, Pennsylvania. We carry new and used LEGO® sets, thousands of minifigs, build-a-fig, activity build tables, and more. We also buy, sell and trade LEGO®.

**Why did you decide to start your business?
 When did you make the decision?**

I love LEGO®, always have since I was a very young child and my body was getting tired from 20-plus years of working in the construction field. I knew I would enjoy this type of work rather than dread it every day. About 4 years ago, I had the idea, and hadn't given up on it all the way up until the day I opened.

What was the hardest part about starting a business during a pandemic?

Limiting the number of customers and not being able to open for the first 4 months I had rented the space which limited my business and made it hard to make ends meet.

What did you do to stay positive and persevere?

LEGO®... Need I say more?!



BY ALISON VAN HASKAMP,
*Director, Corporate Communications,
 at Armstrong Flooring
 Contact Alison at
abvanharskamp@armstrongflooring.com*



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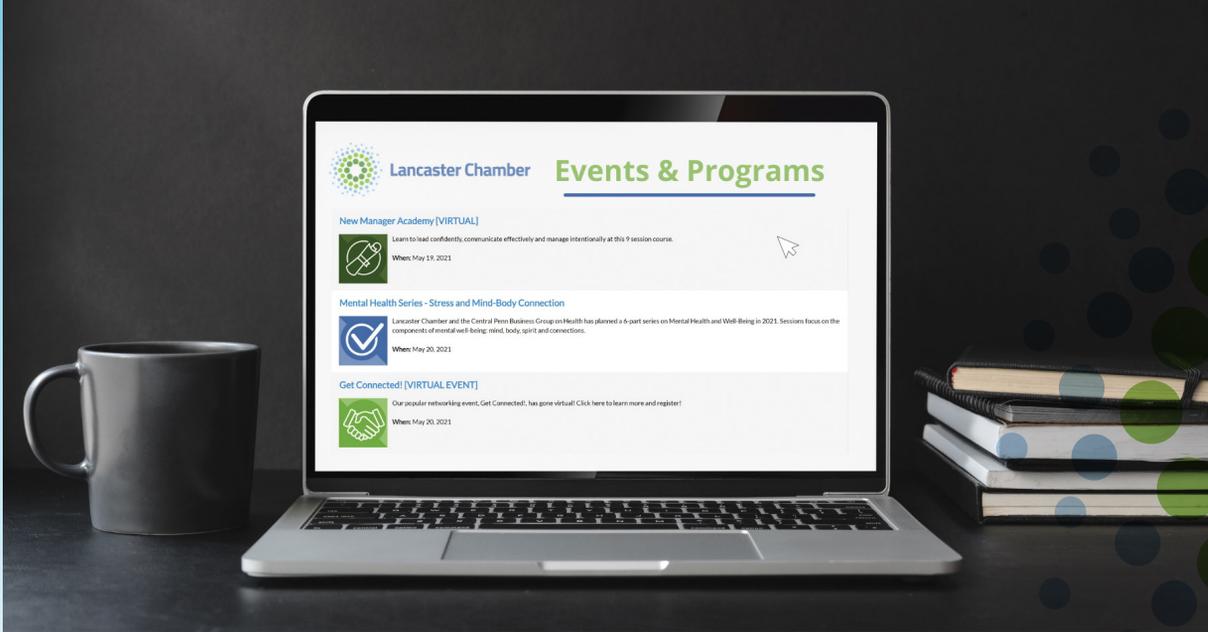
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TRANSITIONING TO IN-PERSON EVENTS & PROGRAMS: A NOTE

The Lancaster Chamber continues to monitor policy, procedures and guidelines provided by federal agencies and local governments in regard to safety as we continue into the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Chamber has expanded our modes of delivering events and will remain committed to providing exceptional event experiences virtually, we plan to begin the transition to outdoor, in-person networking events this summer.

To follow proper safety guidelines and adhere to local recommendations, the Lancaster Chamber will be counting on our attendees to comply with the safety expectations we set forth including proper social distancing, consistent hand sanitizing, wearing masks and signing a waiver upon arrival to the event.

We want to create safe, healthy, outdoor experiences for our members and business community - but it is imperative that we adhere to proper safety guidelines to make this work. We are excited to 'see' you again soon!

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 11 Selling Series: Prospecting

New to sales or need a refresh? Join us for our NEW three-part Selling Series! In the first session you will learn how to find business opportunities in a remote world.

MAY 19 New Manager Academy begins

Learn to lead confidently, communicate effectively and manage intentionally at this 9-session course.

MAY 20 Mental Health Series – Stress and Mind-Body Connection

Lancaster Chamber and the Central Penn Business Group on Health has planned a 6-part series on Mental Health and Well-Being in 2021. Sessions focus on the components of mental well-being: mind, body, spirit and connections.

MAY 20 Get Connected!

Our popular networking event, Get Connected!, has gone virtual! Connect with local leaders in Lancaster.

MAY 25 Better Branding for Better Business

Session 4 of our Small Business Series is focused on branding and how to position your business for success.

We are always adding more events, so please visit www.lancasterchamber.com/events to get the most updated list of upcoming programs, events, and sessions!

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We are so grateful for the support of these Lancaster Chamber Members, especially during this challenging business landscape. Please take note of our Members who are celebrating special milestone anniversaries with us in February, March, and April!

MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

5 YEARS

The Foundation of the Economic Development Company
Intulse
Armstrong Flooring, Inc.
GR Mitchell, Inc.
Horst Excavating
Lancaster Truck Repair
All Things Business, LLC
Candoris

10 YEARS

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)
Trans Equipment Co. Inc.
The Amish Village
Omega Systems
Hertzler Electric, Inc.

15 YEARS

IComm, LLC
Smilebuilderz
SDR Mechanical, Inc.
Hope International
Lancaster Mennonite School
Shady Maple Smorgasbord & Banquet Center
Daniel Baum Company
Annie Bailey's Irish Pub
Stoner Bunting Advertising

20 YEARS

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RJW Industrial Group, Inc.
Hourglass
Ephrata National Bank
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Wheaton Worldwide Moving
Pleasant View Retirement Community
Premier Technology Group

25 YEARS

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Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology
Allegiance Staffing
Susquehanna Insurance
Belco Community Credit Union
Costco Wholesale
High Hotels Ltd.

30 YEARS

Alder Health Services
Dale Carnegie Training
Beacon Container Corporation
First American Abstract of PA
Peiffer Machine Services
SCORE Lancaster Chapter No. 16

35 YEARS

Triangle Communications, Inc.

40 YEARS

The Salvation Army
Derck & Edson, LLC
Scantron

45 YEARS

Lancaster Orthodontic Associates
Stauffers of Kissel Hill

60 YEARS

Keystone Chapter Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc.

75 YEARS

Dutch Gold Honey, Inc.



Want to become a member of the Lancaster Chamber?

From special value-add benefits, to discount pricing on events being a Chamber Member helps you and your business grow. As we head into 2021, we want to be your partner to ensure your success in an ever-changing business landscape.

Reach out to Tom Wallace, Business Development Director,
twallace@lancasterchamber.com,
to learn more about the benefits of Membership.



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