

PROGRESS 2021 OUTLOOK

BLADES | BRIDGEVILLE | DELMAR | FEDERALSBURG | GREENWOOD | LAUREL | SEAFORD



WESTERN SUSSEX PROGRESS- Shown (clockwise from top left) are: the Bridgeville water tower, located near the town's wastewater plant which will be demolished this year; the TidalHealth Seaford building and surrounding landscape; businesses in downtown Greenwood; the intersection of Ross Station Road and Herring Run Road in Seaford, site of the future Western Sussex Business Campus; and Mike Alvini, right, who purchased Todd's Income Tax and Accounting Service of Laurel from Ralph Todd, Jr. (also pictured). Photos by Mike McClure and submitted photos

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City of Seaford moves forward with plans despite COVID-19

By Lynn R. Parks

Seaford City Manager Charles Anderson didn't mince words: "COVID has been difficult for the city," he said.

"Our workforce had to adjust to the 'new normal' that the pandemic has presented," he continued. Because of the nature of much of what the city does, "we cannot work remotely. This has required our employees to change their work routines in ways to protect themselves and the people that we serve."

The city has had to invest money as well as time to ensure as much as possible that employees stayed healthy, Anderson said. "We have also had to accommodate increased reductions in our workforce as we have dealt with staff quarantines and illness," he added.

Dealing with the pandemic didn't mean that other work came to a halt, though. "During the past year, even with the difficulties of the pandemic, our mayor and council, and our staff have continued to move forward for the betterment of the city and its residents," Anderson said.

"Seaford is moving forward despite COVID," added Mayor David Genshaw. And the city is making progress that will have benefits for years to come, he said.

"There really is a whole culture shift happening that I'm hoping is going to be

a foundation for what's going to happen long beyond my time here," Genshaw said. "The city has key leadership in place in all of our departments, where people are really pushing forward with great ideas, big ideas, God-sized ideas that are beyond what we're able to do on our own, and that are really forcing us to rethink how we can get things done that will benefit our community."

New business complex

Genshaw points to the planned Western Sussex Business Campus as something that will change the economic face of Seaford. The park, to be constructed on the northwest edge of town, at the intersection of Herring Run Road and Ross Station Road, is being developed through a partnership with the city, Sussex County, the state and a private developer.

"Together, we will make a \$15 million investment in the infrastructure and building in that park," Genshaw said. "There is so much investment going on, and once we have infrastructure in place, the investment that will come in will be even greater."

Genshaw expects that sometime this month, the city will finalize an agreement with the as-yet-unannounced private developer to purchase about half of the 100-area complex. The developer plans to put up a 50,000-square-foot building,



Shown is work taking place at the site of the city of Seaford's Oyster House Park, located on an acre of land along the Nanticoke River. Photo by Mike McClure

estimated to cost from \$4 million to \$5 million, and then search for tenants for the building.

"The city of Seaford has had a clear vision on the possibilities of this property," Genshaw said in December, when the plans for the business park were announced. "We knew that without infrastructure, this would be slow going to attract businesses to consider us. Partnering with the county adds velocity to this vision of bringing good-paying jobs to Seaford and western Sussex."

Oyster House Park

In December, the city broke ground

for a new downtown park. Oyster House Park is slated for nearly an acre of land along the Nanticoke River, stretching from South Pearl Street east past Church Street.

The property is the former site of the J.B. Robinson Oyster House, where oysters harvested from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries were brought in and then sorted for shipment to regional cities. The park will have interpretive panels, explaining the history of Seaford and the role that the town played in the oyster industry, as well as in shipbuilding. A

Continued on page 5B

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Seaford

Continued from page 4B

planned visitor's center will be a small (about 2,000-square foot) replica of the oyster house.

The park will serve as an access point for the National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

The city has a little more than \$1.2 million in funding to complete Phase 1 of the park construction, which will include an extension of the city's Riverwalk, new bulkhead and construction of a pier, gangway and floating docks. In September, the city awarded a \$998,000 contract to Dissen & Juhn, Stevensville, Md., for the first phase of construction.

The riverfront property was purchased in 2018 by the Chesapeake Conservancy and given to the city. The conservancy paid \$244,000 for the land, using funding from the Mt. Cuba Center near Wilmington.

Since then, the conservancy has worked to find funding for the park. Funding for Phase 1 includes \$250,000 from the Longwood Foundation, \$100,000 from the Crystal Trust and the Welfare Foundation and \$400,000 from the state's Community Transportation Fund.

The city council approved a master plan for the park in February.

New sewer lines

A new sewer line, being put in along U.S. 13 by the county as part of the new

Sussex County Unified Sanitary Sewer District, is nearing completion. Seaford's wastewater treatment plant is already handling some waste from Bridgeville and Greenwood, Anderson said. "The transition will be complete once additional work is completed at the Bridgeville wastewater treatment plant and at a new pumping station," he added.

The new sewer district will enable Bridgeville to avoid having to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant to meet federal requirements. The small town, which also handles wastewater from Greenwood, was facing a \$16 million project at its plant to reduce the amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus in wastewater that it discharges.

Seaford already treats waste from Blades. With the completion of the sewer line, the city is facing a transformation in how it brings revenue into the city, Genshaw said.

"When I came on board, the city's budget was all electric focused," he said. Seaford purchases power through the Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation, a public organization that provides electricity to Seaford and eight other cities in the state, and then sells it to its residents.

"But we're going to see that shift over the next couple of year to wastewater," Genshaw added. "I think that will be a foundational key for Seaford into the future."

Also along U.S. 13, the city is installing new water lines north to its boundary. The extension is the result of an agreement between the city and the county under which the city will provide water and sewer for the new paramedic build-



Pictured is the new paramedic building which is being constructed at the intersection of Swain Road and U.S. 13 in Seaford. The city of Seaford is installing new water lines in the area. Photo by Mike McClure

ing being constructed at the intersection of Swain Road and southbound U.S. 13, the former location of the Pet Emporium. That location is outside the city limits and, because it is not bordered by any property in the city, is not eligible to ask for annexation.

In exchange for the city services, the county is chipping in \$200,000 toward the \$800,000 construction project. Additional funding came from the state's bond bill.

With the new water and sewer lines, Seaford expects to see increased development along U.S. 13. In August, the city council approved sketch plans for a 118-lot residential community on 33 acres on Old Furnace Road. The property, now largely a farm field with a small amount of woods, is owned by Jay Dolby. It was annexed by the city in 2003.

Partnerships

In addition to the new water and sewer lines, Seaford has also partnered with the county to promote the sale of the largely-vacant Nylon Capital Shopping Center. The center, owned by the Cordish Companies, Baltimore, has long been an eyesore

on the west edge of town.

"The county has been a great partner in helping to promote and looking at ideas on how we can get Cordish to sell, or move forward, or get the property in the hands of someone who sees the potential of something different there," Genshaw said.

Genshaw said that working with partners, public as well as private, is the way of the future in Seaford. "In order to do these big investments, we need partners," he said.

And being successful in finding partners, and completing projects with them, is a sign that, while the nation seems to be split over many issues, Seaford and its residents are able to find consensus in moving forward.

"We are living in a divided country, but in Seaford we are unified," he said. "Division is not healthy; we should be united around our country and around our love of country. I think that in Seaford, there's real passion and unification around what we need to do and how we need to do it."

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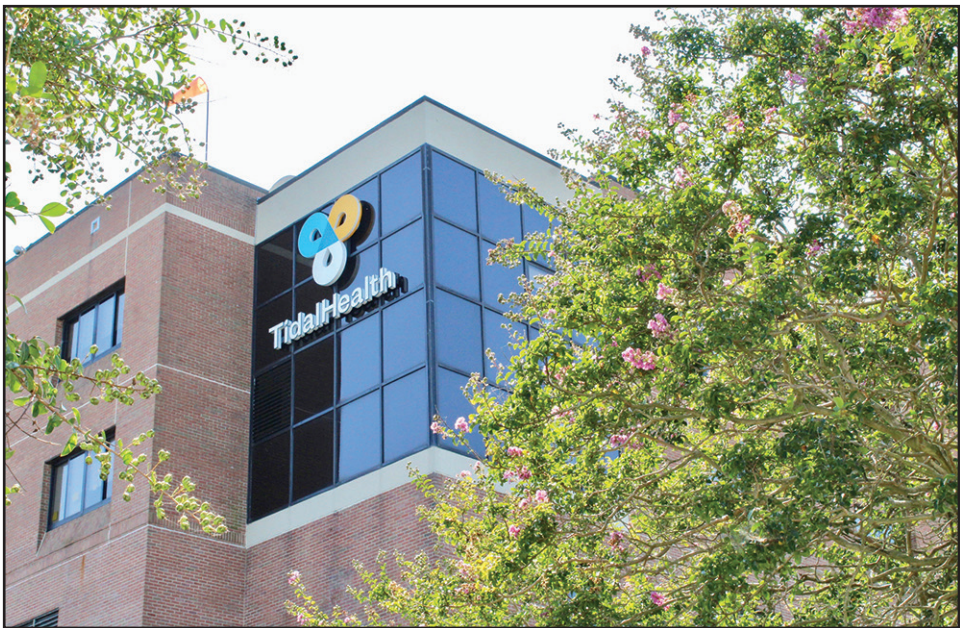
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Shown is the TidalHealth Nanticoke hospital in Seaford.

TidalHealth: A look back at 2020; a look ahead to 2021

As we move into a new year, we all have hopes of a better tomorrow - one where we can return to business as usual, or at least something a little closer than we experienced in 2020.

“At TidalHealth, we are looking forward to a time when we can again meet with our community where they live and work,” said Penny Short, president of TidalHealth Nanticoke. “Though 2020 has been a challenging year like no other, TidalHealth has much to be thankful for as we continue to expand access to care for everyone across Delmarva.”

In case you missed it and were wondering about TidalHealth, in 2020 the healthcare teams of Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Nanticoke Memorial Hospital and McCready Health came together to form a strong partnership, focused on people.

“All that we do is centered on quality, service and community,” said Steven Leonard, president and CEO of TidalHealth. “Other larger systems may attempt to take care of the problem, but at TidalHealth we take care of the person.”

Alongside the integration of the two hospitals and many outpatient locations, healthcare providers from around the region also came together. TidalHealth now boasts a robust network of primary and specialty care providers that is 750 employees, 250 providers strong with more than 30 locations.

“Better together, this team has thrived during a year dominated by a global pandemic,” said Ms. Short. “We provided compassionate care, supporting families in a time when they could not always be with those they loved. We celebrated victories and supported them as they grieved. Our team has endured a year of exhausting work, but has been there caring for our community every step of the way. And they will continue to be there for the health needs of this community.”

The TidalHealth team has worked hard to begin the first phases of system integration. At TidalHealth Nanticoke, management systems including information technology, employee management systems and others have been completed. Integration of the website, internal com-

munication systems such as email, shared network drives and project management systems are well underway - all while maintaining quality, with the system receiving numerous quality and safety awards for services in both Seaford and Salisbury.

“While the community may not have had the opportunity to see all that was happening, there has been a tremendous amount of work done,” said Mr. Leonard. “We are excited to continue this journey and the many projects scheduled for 2021.”

At TidalHealth Nanticoke, plans are being made to expand surgical services, including investments in additional technology. Across the system, TidalHealth is welcoming additional specialty practices to its provider network, including in Seaford. TidalHealth has also purchased property and begun planning for an expanded location in Millsboro.

An exciting integration will be the conversion to the EPIC Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system across the entire health system in July 2021. For patients from TidalHealth Nanticoke, it means one health record regardless of where you received care at any TidalHealth location. It will also allow Delaware patients to use the EMR to schedule provider appointments.

Among other projects is a focus on health equity and the expansion of mobile health services in Sussex County.

“Planning for the expansion of Population Health in Sussex is still in the early stages, but I am thrilled that we are moving forward with this critical work in our community,” said Ms. Short.

As part of a Highmark grant already received, TidalHealth will be purchasing a second mobile van to provide services in Sussex County.

“So much is ahead for us over the next several years that I couldn’t begin to cover it all here,” said Mr. Leonard. “What is important to share is that TidalHealth is committed to all those living on the Delmarva Peninsula; whether you live in Delaware, Maryland or Virginia, we are better together.”



Ralph Todd, Jr. and Mike Alvini are shown with staff and family members as they shake hands. Alvini recently purchased Todds Income Tax and Accounting Service, LLC from the Todds.

Alvini and Associates purchases Todd’s Income Tax and Accounting Service

Alvini and Associates has expanded into Sussex County by acquiring Todd’s Income Tax and Accounting Service LLC/Todds Financial Services of Laurel. Founded in 1949 by Ralph Todd Sr., the firm has been faithfully serving Sussex County and the surrounding areas for 71 years. Todd started the business while working as a school administrator.

“We will continue to do business here in the well-respected Todds’ name. We wish Ralph and Jill Todd a wonderful retirement and welcome the existing staff

members to our firm,” said Michael Alvini.

Alvini founded Alvini and Associates, P.A. in January 2006. Prior to founding the firm, Mr. Alvini spent several years at both a well-known local accounting firm as well as a leading Delaware trust company developing expertise in the areas of income tax planning and compliance (individual, corporate, and estates & trusts), estate and gift tax planning and compliance, personal financial planning, and the use of

Continued on page 9B



State Senator Bryant Richardson

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Laurel leaders remain calm in the midst of the economic storm

By Tony E. Windsor

There were most likely no communities throughout the country which did not experience significant challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Laurel was no exception. By the second quarter of the year, economic instability set in and navigating the daily, many times unpredictable, changes became the order of the day.

Throughout this health crisis, Laurel's Mayor John Shwed, has remained optimistic and in coordination with colleagues on the town council, town manager and department staff, there has developed a "calm in the midst of a storm."

"It is an understatement to say that for Laurel and all communities, 2020 was a year of formidable challenges thrust on the population by the COVID-19 pandemic," he said. "But like most Americans, Laurel's citizens, organizations and government are resilient. Working with our state and federal partners, creative solutions were found to enable significant progress on all fronts."

One area of progress does not involve economic, or brick and mortar construction or infrastructure, but is nonetheless, a great source of pride for the leadership of Laurel. This comes in the way of "social progress."

The mayor feels the town has embraced a national conversation that has produced degrees of social unrest, but has also been a conduit for positive change. He touts the grassroots community initiative known as "One Laurel" as helping to bring a diverse community base together in one voice.

"In a year marked by a national conversation on social justice, Laurel's citizens continued to make great strides in embracing the diversity within the community," Shwed said. "'One Laurel,' a grassroots effort of community volunteers, came together with the goal to make our great little community even greater."

Shwed said "One Laurel" committees sponsored a food giveaway for approximately 500 families, led the construction of two new basketball courts, followed by a "three on three" basketball tournament and youth activities. The One Laurel volunteers also installed a new sign highlighting the kayak launch on the north bank of Broad Creek, and held a "Karaoke Night" event in Roger Fisher Park. "I am confident that 2021 will bring more positive, exciting changes from this initiative," he said.

In conjunction with the One Laurel community initiatives, Shwed said the Laurel Police Department, under Chief Dan Wright, has stepped up its involvement in the community, an effort that has been welcomed by the residents. "The Laurel Police Department continues to build trust among our citizens through its Community Policing initiative," he said. "The department did an excellent job in 2020 protecting and serving the people of the community. During the holiday season officers participated in presenting donated gifts to deserving families and children."

Two Sussex County building initiatives, in conjunction with area developers, have also joined in partnership with the town of Laurel to address housing. Exist-



Pictured is the construction project taking place at Records Pond in Laurel. DeIDOT has been doing extensive work to upgrade the Old Mill Dam near Willow Street. Photo by Mike McClure

ing housing stock was improved by homeowners and developers and with the help of Habitat for Humanity and the Milford Housing Corporation.

Shwed said the town gave its approval in the way of permits for 11 new single family homes. In addition, at the "Villas on Broad Creek," new units were completed and construction for other units is ongoing.

Shwed also points out that a longstanding mission to enhance owner-occupied housing has also been realized as seven rental homes were sold and returned to owner occupied homes. This is part of the town's initiative to improve housing stock and make use of existing homes. "Five homes, vacant for several years, were bought, renovated and offered for sale," Shwed said.

According to town Code Director Ken West, "2020 is by far the best year we have had in my eight years with the town, as far as new construction permits and general repair permits."

Shwed also pointed to enhancements made in the town's water infrastructure. He said this because of a focus by the town's Public Works Department on continuity of operations and delivering water quality. The town recently completed construction of a new well at the area of U.S. 13. This brings the number to three water wells servicing the town.

In 2021, the West 7th Street water main will be upgraded from four-inch to eight-inch pipe and the old cast iron pipe replaced by PVC pipe. This, Shwed said, will result in improved water pressure, flow, and fire protection. In the same general area old transite water pipes will also be replaced with PVC pipe for improved water quality.

Another area of infrastructure upgrades includes street improvements which are underway. Shwed said Wilson Street paving, started at the end of 2020, will be completed in 2021. In 2021, the sidewalk will also be replaced on the Delaware Avenue side of the Laurel Library.



Pictured is the kayak launch located on Board Creek in Laurel. Photo by Mike McClure

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Hitchens Homestead in Laurel, shown above, will be a future museum. It was built in 1878 overlooking the Mill Dam. Photos by Mike McClure

The Mayor compliments the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) for significant work being done within the community. "DelDOT held a public hearing in December on a grant which the town received to replace the aging walkways in Janosik Park and to install new walkways along the Creek west to Central Avenue," Shwed said. "The state estimates it will take about two years from design to completion. Future plans call for a new walkway to be constructed from the other side of Central Avenue west along the south bank of Broad Creek and under the railroad bridge to Roger C. Fisher Laurel River Park."

In addition, DelDOT has been doing extensive work to upgrade the Old Mill Dam near Willow Street. "Everyone is talking about how nice it looks and they are anxiously awaiting the reopening of the road in the next few weeks," Shwed said.

A benefit that Laurel has enjoyed for many years include partnerships from grassroots organizations including the Laurel Historical Society and the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation. Shwed said these organizations in cooperation with town's government are slowly changing the landscape along the banks of Broad Creek. Recently, the town was awarded a \$100,000 grant which will be matched with in-kind services and donations from State Rep. Tim Dukes, Sen. Bryant Richardson and the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation to purchase and install playground equipment for a section of Tidewater Park designed for children age 2-5. Tidewater Park is being constructed in the open parcel of land that borders

Broad Creek across from the Shore Stop convenience store and Pizza King along Central Avenue.

In the Willow Street area where the Old Mill Dam is being renovated, the Laurel Historical Society is planning to renovate and restore the "Hitchens Homestead," a property built in 1878 by the owner of the pond and grist mill which operated near the dam. The Homestead overlooking the Mill Dam site will become a future museum, according to Shwed.

Relative to the historic preservation of Laurel iconic properties, Shwed said the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation has purchased "Rosemont," a home built in the late 1700s and owned by the Mitchell Family. Nathaniel Mitchell, the fourth owner of the home, served as Governor of Delaware from 1805 – 1808, he said.

"Tidewater Park, historical property restorations such as the Homestead and Rosemont, and the new walkways are exciting pieces of the larger vision known as "The Ramble" which will make the area bordering Broad Creek from the Mill Dam on the east to Roger C. Fisher Park on the west an attractive venue for residents and tourists to recreate, dine, and shop," Shwed said.

The town in recent years has made significant inroads in helping to prepare the U.S. 13 corridor for enhanced commercial development. Though the process has faced challenges relative to national economic downturns, Shwed remains optimistic. "A developer has plans to develop two commercial businesses and a commercial building for rent," he said. "Construc-

Todd's

Continued from page 6B

Delaware trusts to achieve several asset protection, estate planning, and retirement planning goals.

In addition to oversight of the firm, Alvin's primary specialties are business tax consulting, assisting high net worth individuals in planning for retirement and estate planning, working with professional athletes, and helping clients understand the financial ramifications of divorce through divorce planning.

Mike holds a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from Wilmington University. In addition, he is a Certified Public Accountant (licensed to practice in Delaware), a Certified Financial Planner™ Practitioner, as well as a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst practitioner. Mike is also a graduate of the Southeastern Trust

School of Campbell University and the ABA accredited National Graduate Trust School at Northwestern University. During his career, Alvin has spoken on topics including estate planning, taxation, and the use of Delaware Trusts for several organizations, including Lorman Educational Services (approved speaker) and the Society of Financial Services Professionals.

Alvin is also a member of several organizations, including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the National Society of Tax Professionals, and the Institute For Certified Divorce Financial Analysts. Mike also serves on the board of directors of several local charities and in his free time enjoys coaching high school baseball, boxing, fitness, and travel.

Alvin and Associates has retained all of the Todd's employees. The company is also investing in technology, but Alvin says personal touch and client care are the company's top priority.

tion plans were delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19. Hopefully, the town and the developer will be able to make a groundbreaking announcement in early 2021."

In expressing the overall attitude of Laurel leaders and staff in reaction to the challenges faced by national economic trends and the ongoing battle to bring COVID-19 under control, Shwed said he feels the town's Alderman, Judge Kelly Pettyjohn gave a fitting statement.

She said, "Reflecting on the past year, the town of Laurel's Alderman Court would like to express our gratitude to our co-workers, town residents, and our neighbors in surrounding communities. It takes patience and kindness to endure the ever-changing processes that our state as well as our court, have had to put in place to keep everyone safe while still functioning as we can to serve you. We wish you all a safe, happy, and healthy 2021."



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Town of Blades sees significant growth

By Lynn R. Parks

The town of Blades saw significant growth last year, with a dozen new single-family homes being constructed in the Little Meadows development. And already this year, a permit is in the works for construction of another house in the 55-plus community.

“Little Meadows is almost full,” said Town Clerk Karen Raines. “We anticipate that a few more houses will be built there this year, and there are just a few more lots available.”

Elsewhere in town, Habitat for Humanity completed a home-construction project on East 7th Street. The lot for the two-story home, now occupied by the Reynoso family, was donated to Habitat by the town.

“It was an abandoned lot,” Raines said; the house that had been on it was razed about six years ago. “It seemed like a good idea to donate it, to help a family in need.”

This was the first Habitat for Humanity construction project in the town.

Blades is going through the bidding process for an upgrade of the carbon filtration system at its water treatment plant. Estimated cost is \$598,000, Town Administrator Lisa Marks said.

The filtration system was installed in 2018, after perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) were found in the town’s drinking water. The compounds were widely used by industry for more than 50 years, in stain repellents for carpets, textiles and paper; in foam used to fight fires; in

metal finishing; and as a pesticide. In humans, they have been linked with cancer, hormone disruption, high cholesterol and obesity.

After the carbon filtration system was installed, tests showed no traces of PFCs. Raines said that the numbers are still good: “The system is working.”

Marks said that Blades is applying for funding for the filtration system upgrade through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A public hearing on the project, and on its funding, will be held Feb. 8 at 7 p.m.

The town is also working toward an expansion of its water system, to properties on the east side of U.S. 13 that are in town limits. That project is currently being designed by the town’s engineering firm.

In normal times, Blades holds four public events each year: an Easter egg hunt in the town’s park, a flag retirement ceremony on Flag Day, the recycled cardboard regatta at the town’s marina, and Blades Night Out. All four were cancelled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Raines said that whether any will be held in 2021 remains to be seen. Already, she said, she is thinking that the Easter egg hunt will have to be cancelled.

She and Marks have had to work with some residents who haven’t been able to pay their town bills after losing jobs due to the pandemic. And the improvement project at the water plant has been delayed by difficulty in getting supplies.

But overall, the town has managed pretty well despite COVID, Raines said.



Little Meadows Blades saw 12 new homes built in 2020. The development is almost built out. Photo by Mike McClure

Mike Vincent

Sussex County Council President

“Sussex County is truly a wonderful place to live.”

Now that everyone is aware of us, the challenge is to work to make the county remain a great place to raise our families.”



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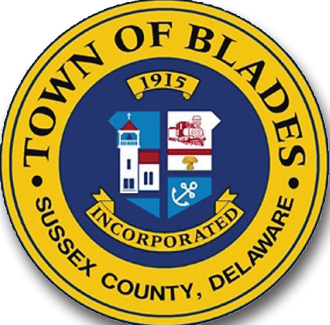
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Bridgeville looks to fill former police building, demolish wastewater plant

By Mike McClure

With the new police building recently opening, the town of Bridgeville is hoping a business will fill the former police building and spur development downtown. The town is also planning to demolish its wastewater plant at the end of the year with the county taking over wastewater operations in 2021.

Town Manager Bethany DeBussy said the town is looking to draw more people into the downtown area. While renovations need to be done to the former police building, she is hoping it will help with the town's downtown development and revitalization plans.

The town's Economic Development Committee is looking to help existing businesses during the pandemic while bringing in new businesses.

"We want to keep the focus on keeping more businesses alive," said DeBussy, who added that consumers are looking to travel less and stay local. "There's more of a focus on 'what do we have here and what do we need here'."

Sussex County will take over the wastewater operations in Bridgeville (as well as in Seaford and Greenwood) by June. The town plans to demolish its wastewater plant to provide green space. The area, located between town hall and the new

police station, may be used for a park or facility and would serve as a hub in the downtown.

The wastewater operations will no longer be a town responsibility, allowing it to focus on water and stormwater improvements through meters and software improvements.

New homes in Heritage Shores grew from an average of 40 to 50 to 68 in 2020. Coastal Run Apartments, with the same developer as Heritage Shores, is on hold as the developer focuses on single family homes.

The Bridgeville Town Center, a large multiuse commercial development located east of Route 13, is moving forward. The development's application was submitted in March with activity on the application taking place over the summer. Bridgeville Town Center will include apartment buildings, a hotel, and commercial space and is expected to be developed in about a year.

The Blue Hen Crossroads site, the former Jimmy's Grille properties, is looking to expand. Developers are looking at different options for the property, which includes a restaurant, banquet facility, and two homes. The planned 7-11 store is on hold, however, everything but the sign has been approved with the project.

Due to COVID-19, events such as Apple-Scrapple and Christmas in Bridgeville



Shown is the new Bridgeville Police Department building, located near town hall. The town is hoping to find a business to fill its old police building on Market Street. Photo by Mike McClure



Pictured is the town of Bridgeville's wastewater plant, which is scheduled to be demolished later this year. Sussex County will take over the wastewater operation this summer. Photo by Mike McClure

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The town of Bridgeville's Economic Development Committee is looking to draw more people and businesses to the downtown while helping existing businesses get through the pandemic. Photo by Mike McClure

didn't take place last year. The town was able to hold its inaugural community trunk or treat event in the fire company's parking lot as well as a house decorating contest.

As Bridgeville sees more growth at Heritage Shores it will look to do more capital improvement programs. That includes getting more structured plans for street and sidewalk improvements.

DeBussy said the town is looking at its comprehensive plan, titled One Bridgeville, in hopes of bringing together resi-

dents of the older downtown, commercial growth, north Bridgeville, and Heritage Shores areas.

"That's a challenge, keeping those areas growing but trying to find a way to unite everybody," DeBussy said.

DeBussy, who started as town manager last June after working in Kent County previously, is one of the new staff members and town commissioners who provide a new perspective on the issues the town of Bridgeville faces.

Town of Greenwood experiences residential activity, business change

By Julleanna Seely

Looking back over the past year and the unique challenges of 2020, the town of Greenwood experienced a good amount of residential activity and some local business changes.

"The town has been alive with growth residentially," said Hal Godwin, who has been the Greenwood town manager for the past three years.

The town issued 36 permits in 2020, mostly for additions and renovation projects in town with three of those being building permits for new homes.

A new subdivision on the northeast corner of town near the Cove was started in 2020. Milford Housing plans to build 17 new senior living homes, Godwin said.

In that same area, the town has granted first level of approval for 28 lots to have new homes constructed by Bay to Beach Builders, Inc., a Greenwood-based home builder who purchased Cove II. This subdivision was approved more than a decade ago with another developer. Godwin expects final approval for construction will be in the spring.

"We're very excited about the opportunity for new neighbors with nice new homes," Godwin said.

In downtown Greenwood, the new owners of Café Tamburelli's renovated and updated the 20-year-old restaurant, which reopened in March 2020. Though the timing was a challenge with the shutdowns due to the pandemic, the restaurant

adapted and stayed busy with take-out orders and offering delivery of pizza, pasta, subs and more. They are open for sit-down dining now.

Neighboring business Amity Coffee Roasters was purchased by a local young couple, Elmer and Melody Slaubaugh, on April 1. Buying a food and drink service business at that time was a challenge, but they were able to stay active.

"During the height of the pandemic, we provided delivery and take out only, but since then we've been able to safely open our seating area again," Melody Slaubaugh said.

She said they look forward to offering more lunch items and "grab and go options" this year. They hope to see restrictions lift in 2021 and host events like open mic nights, board game nights and make-and-take crafts for kids. They also plan to take the Amity cart to weddings, family events and farmers markets when possible.

The town of Greenwood operations had to adjust significantly as a result of the pandemic. "How to manage a business with COVID rules has been a nightmare," Godwin noted. "It was a year where we're all trying to stay alive."

A positive thing they were able to accomplish was adjusting the town's utility billing, making it easier to understand and no more payments made in-person.

As the town looks to 2021, Godwin said a major project is the economic development plan working with local property owners and businesses.

Housing sector outperforms expectations in 2020

Existing-home sales in November declined 2.5 percent to a sales rate of 6.69 million – down from the prior month, but up 25.8 percent from one year ago.

"Home sales in November took a marginal step back, but sales for all of 2020 are already on pace to surpass last year's levels," said Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. "Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it's amazing that the housing sector is outperforming expectations."

In Delaware, the real estate industry accounted for \$14 billion or 18.6 percent of the gross state product in 2019. The total economic impact of a typical home sale in 2019 was \$80,919 which includes \$22,221 in income generated from real estate industries, \$4,650 in expenditures related to home purchase, \$12,898 in housing related expenditures and \$41,150 in new home construction, according to the National Association of REALTORS.

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Shown is the caboose, located on Pennsylvania Avenue in Delmar. The town began restoration of the caboose last year and will begin work on the second phase this spring. Photo by Mike McClure

Town of Delmar to replace sewer mains, some residential construction planned in 2021

By Mike McClure

The town of Delmar began work on restoration of its caboose last year. While new construction began in 2020, one residential development is near completion with other projects being planned this year.

According to Town Manager Sara Bynum-King, the first phase of the restoration of the caboose on Pennsylvania Avenue has been completed. The caboose, which was declining in appearance, was made weather tight, the cupola was repaired, and windows and doors were replaced. This spring the second phase will take place, which includes taking the old siding off and putting cedar siding back on it.

The town's drive-thru at town hall came in handy in the midst of COVID-19. It allowed services to be provided to residents. Now the town hall's doors are open on Tuesday and Thursday.

Yorkshire Estates, with just six lots remaining, is nearly built out. The streets are in the process of being paved, then the utilities will be dedicated to the town.

COVID-19 impacted smaller business in town, however, the business park on U.S. 13 (where TidalHealth is located) continued to add tenants. At the end of 2020, Perdue transferred land it had purchased on 13 back to the town. Infrastructure has been installed, including water and sewer main, but a developer would need to pay for the collection system and tie in to the property. Bynum-King said the town is not sure what it wants to do with the property.

Ownership of the Mills building, located across from town hall, is being transferred. The building has been in the process of being restored for a number of

years. This year the town will replace its old terra-cotta sewer mains, which has been a

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English Conversation Class via Zoom, Tues./Thurs. @ 7 pm. See Event calendar.

Knit and Crochet the Zoom Way, 3rd Tues., 6 pm. See Event calendar.

Music Play Patrol, New lesson every Monday. <https://musicplaypatrol.com/login/> Login available from staff.

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The business park on Route 13, where TidalHealth is located, gained a tenant in 2020, while Perdue donated land it planned to use to build an office to the town for future use. Star File Photo

major contributor to its inflow and infiltration (I and I) issues. The state of Maryland is providing \$1.3 million to make the repairs. The town has been doing slip lining, which is less intrusive, on less severe areas.

The Stillwater development, located off of Route 54 on the Delaware side, has received final approval. The subdivision will include 170 single family homes. The phased project has been dormant for awhile but is moving toward the start of construction. The land is located east of Heron Ponds and borders Yorkshire Estates.

The Ponds Edge apartment complex started infrastructure on the second phase at the end of last year. Construction on apartment buildings and townhomes are expected to begin in 2021.

The former Pheasant Lake project, on Maryland Avenue on the Maryland side, has received special exception to change

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Federalsburg grows in 2020 despite challenges from pandemic

By Julleanna Seely

In the midst of major challenges due to the pandemic, the town of Federalsburg was still able to experience growth and close out or begin several capital improvement projects in 2020.

"The town completed a Safe Route to School project and began an industrial solar panel project to provide sustainable and renewable clean energy to power the wastewater plant," said Federalsburg Town Manager Lawrence DiRe. The plan is for the solar project to be completed by early spring.

He added that the town also moved forward with zoning map and ordinance text amendments to allow for industrial fish farming as requested by an annexation application from a proposed development project.

In the business community, there were significant improvements and expansions, including the Lywood Building in the Frank Adams Industrial Park.

The Lywood Electric Company consists of three metal frame type buildings placed on a 6.3 acre lot and containing 22,800 sq. ft. of floor space.

The buildings include a state-of-the-art administrative office and call center, a large warehouse and loading dock, and a building for keeping the trucks out of the weather and performing maintenance on the vehicles.

Total estimated cost of construction was \$809,000 however the actual cost of the finished project is not known. The

final building inspection was performed July 14, 2020 and the occupancy permits were issued.

They continue to maintain their old building at 301 Bloomingdale Drive and use it as additional work space.

Most obvious was the completion of the new Royal Farms station which opened in May. In addition, approximately two dozen residential units acquired permits for meaningful improvements.

DiRe became town manager on March 17, 2020, just as the pandemic took hold and said it has made a significant impact in the delivery of municipal services since late that month.

"Fully one-third of town staff has tested positive with one virus-related fatality," DiRe shared. "Other staff members have been out while awaiting test results to come back."

Since early April 2020, there has only been a few weeks when the public works and public utilities departments were fully staffed and able to provide services at full capacity, due to COVID-19.

There has been a positive side, DiRe noted. The CARES Act funding reimbursed all town expenditures on facility and vehicle decontamination and personal protective equipment. CARES Act funding also fully reimbursed the town for information technology upgrades.

He stated that the Caroline County finance department staff has been "excellent in turning around town requests for reimbursement."

The community felt the impact from the



Shown is the industrial solar panel project, located next to the Lywood Building in the Frank Adams Industrial Park. The project will provide sustainable and renewable clean energy to power the town of Federalsburg's wastewater plant. Photo by Mike McClure

pandemic as town facility use and public availability were limited. While Federalsburg's parks, trails, and boating facilities remained open, all experienced restriction to their use at some time since last March.

One example was the closure of the popular town splash pad all summer due to the town's inability to meet the health department requirements. Limitations on social gatherings and social distancing requirements caused the town to suspend park and pavilion facility rentals, which remains in effect.

The town offices have been opened for staff every day, but the town facilities remain closed to the public except by appointment. According to DiRe, town hall was open to the public with restricted

access from late June through late October. When cases started going up again the building was again closed to the public.

Throughout the pandemic and until further notice the senior center has been closed and the senior club has not met.

He added that local businesses, especially the food service businesses, were impacted in 2020 but all remained open. Activity in the industrial parks has been steady.

As the town of Federalsburg looks to 2021, the Planning and Zoning Commission intends to review and revise the town comprehensive plan. The proposed AquaCon industrial salmon farm should be moving forward to plan review and permitting this year.

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