Chamber welcomes new leadership

In October 2017, the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors announced the hiring of Stephen “Steve” Christian as president of the Chamber and executive director of Chambersburg Area Development Corp. (CADC).

Steve spent the last decade focusing on economic and community development along the I-81 corridor in the Cumberland and Shenandoah Valley region. In his role as executive director of the Berkeley County Development Authority, he more than doubled the organization’s staff and budget in nine years and was instrumental in working on the project that landed the Procter & Gamble $500 million multi-category facility in West Virginia.

“Steve’s extensive knowledge of the region, experience in economic development and understanding of a variety of business industries will be a tremendous asset to our organization and community,” said Troy Garman, chair of the Chamber’s Board of Directors. “The board of directors looks forward to a prosperous future for the Chamber and its affiliate organizations under his leadership.”

His career of 30 years includes experience not only in economic development, but also in real estate, government, sales and marketing. In his new role, Steve will continue economic and community development in the region. He plans to get to know all of our Chamber members to best serve their business needs and inspire a prosperous local economy.

Membership vital to community

Our Chamber members are essential to the business community and economic make-up of the greater Chambersburg area. As the largest business advocacy organization in Franklin County, we exist to help our members prosper. With the support of the Ambassador Committee, the Chamber achieved an 89.3 percent retention rate of our existing membership. We also attracted 63 new members in 2017 and finished out the year with a total membership of 880 businesses.

We offer a variety of programs and services to benefit our members, from referrals and networking opportunities to commercial and residential energy programs. In 2017, the Chamber and its affiliate organizations held more than 168 events, including 13 after-hours mixers, 26 ribbon cuttings, 27 special events, 30 young professionals events and 13 Lunch & Learns. We also held successful membership events like Sip & Savor: Masquerade Ball, the Golf Tournament, awards breakfasts and more. All of these initiatives enable us to serve our members and enhance the quality of life in our community.
Chamber Travel Club successful launch

In 2017, the Chamber kicked-off the Chamber Travel Club in partnership with our local member travel agents. The Club was designed to provide an opportunity for local residents to enjoy unique group travel experiences with their neighbors to magnificent destinations, both domestic and international.

Forty-two local travelers ventured to Southern Ireland on the inaugural Club trip discovering castles, sampling Irish specialties and exploring picturesque landscapes. The seven-day excursion was coordinated by Cathy Folmar and Rhonda DeShong of Dream Vacations. The group was comprised of local residents from Chambersburg, Waynesboro, Greencastle, Mercersburg, Shippensburg and Fort Loudon.

The Chamber Travel Club has additional trips planned including: Bermuda Cruise, Pacific Wine Country Cruise, Reflections of Italy and Natural Wonders of Costa Rica. For more information about these trips and other news, visit Chambersburg.org/TravelClub. Special thanks to the following member travel agents for supporting the Chamber Travel Club initiative: Dream Vacations, Cruise Planners, Kay’s World Class Travel and UniQuest Chambersburg Travel, LLC.

Communications serves business community

The Chamber has steadily increased its communications platform to better serve our members. Our online presence includes regular blog postings, daily e-blasts, weekly e-newsletters and daily social media engagement. Our mobile-responsive website continues as a top site in the region with more than 18,000 pageviews/month. We also saw significant growth on social media with Facebook followers increasing to more than 3,850 and Instagram rising to nearly 1,660 followers. The Chamber also maintains FranklinCountyWorks.com through its Chamber Foundation as well as websites for Downtown Chambersburg Inc., Civil War Seminars & Tours and the 11/30 Network.

Printed publications continue to thrive at the Chamber. Our newsletter, The Outlook, was mailed monthly to nearly 700 people and distributed digitally to over 2,400 subscribers. Other popular publications include the Chambersburg Business Directory & Community Profile (4,000 delivered annually and 54,023 online pageviews) as well as the Chambersburg and Franklin County road map. All of these works include opportunities for our members to advertise.

CHAMBER MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mission: We exist to help our members prosper and to enhance the quality of life in the Chambersburg area.

Vision: The Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce will be the premier business organization in our region to promote the business community, economic development and education in innovative ways - contributing to the community’s quality of life and having a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

Values: The Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce serves as the welcoming front door of the community. The Chamber is committed to being a positive, helpful and visionary community leader and resource - treating everyone with respect, providing excellent service and acting with fairness and integrity. Chamber staff, volunteers and partners are proactive advocates for our members and are passionate about communicating and achieving these goals.
Businesses & leaders honored in 2017

Each year the Chamber awards businesses, community members and leaders with a variety of awards. At the Annual Awards Breakfast in the spring, the Chamber honored 10 members for their community engagement and accomplishments.

One of the recognitions included honoring Joanne Cochran as the 2017 international ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, which honors professional, community and personal leadership and those who actively assist women in reaching their full leadership potential. Cochran founded Keystone Health in 1986 after recognizing the area’s migrant workers needed health care. Thirty-one years later, Keystone Health serves more than 50,000 patients annually and employs over 400 people. Through her leadership, Keystone Health is becoming the largest multi-specialty Federally Qualified Health Care Center in the nation. As an innovative leader demonstrating compassion, creativity and fearlessness, Cochran helps women grow and develop to their full potential through leading by example.

The Chamber also named James “Jim” Resh, Jr. the 2017 Business Person of the Year at its Annual Business Breakfast in December. Resh, owner of J&B Bridals and Tuxedos, was honored with the award in recognition of his business growth, contributions to the community and regional impact on the bridal and formal industry. Jim, together with his wife, Barb, started and developed their business from a two-person operation to one that has grown into a multi-million dollar bridal and formalwear center.

The Greater Chambersburg Chamber Foundation, an affiliate of the Chamber, recognized leaders in the community as well. Dr. Michael Doncheski and Angela Austin were named Volunteers of the Year and Janet Pollard was named the Leadership Franklin County Alumni of the Year.

Chamber Cards reach 25,000+

With more than 50 participating businesses and over 25,000 Chamber Cards in circulation, the buy local program supports small businesses in our community each year. These keycards offer users great discounts at local businesses ranging from 10 percent to 50 percent off their purchases.

To further engage the community in buying local, the Chamber continues its Shop Small Sweepstakes. By completing five shopping experiences on a Shop Small Sweepstakes card, shoppers had the chance to win more than $1,000 in cash and prizes simply by supporting our community’s small businesses over the holiday shopping season.

Civil War Tours success

More than 220 individuals from 28 states and Canada attended military history tours led by well-known historians in 2017. Chambersburg Civil War Seminars & Tours had a prosperous year educating participants on our area’s rich history while delivering tourism dollars to Franklin County.

The 2017 conferences included:
- “Shiloh” - 43 attendees from 18 states.
- “On to Richmond” - 76 attendees from 19 states and Canada.
- “Lincoln at Antietam” - 41 attendees from nine states and Canada.

The Franklin County Visitors Bureau provided advertising support, allowing the seminars to reach a national audience. Other communications outlets included social media outreach on Facebook, Twitter and their blog. More than 1,000 people comprise its member database. Three seminars are planned in 2018 including the National Ed Bearss Symposium, Roads to Gettysburg and Lincoln’s City & Booth’s Escape. For more information visit CivilWarSeminars.org.

11/30 Network thrives

An initiative of the Chamber, the 11/30 Network hosted 30 events in 2017 to encourage personal and professional growth for the under 40 crowd who live and/or work in Franklin County. Events ranged from First Responders Appreciation Day to financial wellness seminars.

The group is managed under the leadership of an 11-person steering committee comprised of young professionals who live and work throughout the county. For more information, visit 1130Network.com.
Civil War heritage recognized

From 1989 to 2017, more than $200,000 has been donated to Civil War battlefield education and preservation by Chambersburg Civil War Seminars & Tours, an initiative of the Chamber held in partnership with historian Ted Alexander.

In 2017, Thomas J. Ryan was the recipient of the Ed Bearss Award. Given annually, the award encourages the study of the American Civil War era by reimbursing the awardee with up to $1,000 for scholarly research about the Civil War in Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia or the Shenandoah Valley.

The 2017 seminars also raised $4,885 through donations, silent auctions and raffles. The funds were donated to many deserving organizations including Save Historic Antietam Foundation, Civil War Trust, Civil War Museum of Medicine, National Civil War Museum, Allison-Antrim Museum, Rural Plains Foundation and many others.

Advocating for business

Due to the Chamber’s goal to maintain strong government relations and advocate on behalf of the business community, the Chamber co-hosted the 2nd Annual Franklin County Legislative Breakfast with the other four chambers of commerce in Franklin County. The event planned to feature our elected state officials discussing important issues affecting the business climate in south central Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, the PA Representatives were called to Harrisburg unexpectedly and only Senator Alloway and Eichelberger joined the panel moderated by Gene Barr, CEO of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry. Despite this setback, more than 200 people attended the event.

The Chamber regularly publishes government affairs articles from the PA Chamber of Commerce in our monthly print newsletter, The Outlook. This delivers regular legislative updates that impact businesses to our members.

At the beginning of each year, the Chamber also publishes its Public Policy Positions, which identifies issues in which the Chamber will act as a voice of business for our members. For example, we support and advocate for the widening of Interstate 81, a major north-south corridor that supports our regional economy. Learn more about our legislative goals by visiting Chambersburg.org/PublicPolicyPositions.

Affiliates provide direct community impact

The Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce could not accomplish the work it does without its affiliates. The Chamber and each affiliate organization work together to address the needs of the community and improve the quality of life in the Chambersburg area. Our affiliates include two industrial development corporations, a downtown development corporation and a foundation.

Many people don’t realize the role the Chamber plays in economic development through its affiliates. Downtown Chambersburg Inc. spearheads development in our downtown, helping to retain existing businesses and attracting new ones. The other two economic development affiliates are Chambersburg Area Development Corp. and Cumberland Valley Regional Development Corp. Both focus on job creation and retention through industrial development.

The Greater Chambersburg Chamber Foundation is an important affiliate that focuses on workforce development, education and citizenship. Its three county-wide leadership programs help to develop business and community leaders. They include Leadership Franklin County Community, Leadership Franklin County Youth and Leadership Franklin County Advanced.

Find out more about our Chamber affiliates and the great things they’ve done in 2017 on the following pages.

CHAMBER WEBSITES
For more information about the Chamber or its affiliates, visit the following websites:
Chamber - Chambersburg.org
11/30 Network - 1130Network.com
Chambersburg Civil War Seminars & Tours
CivilWarSeminars.org
Downtown Chambersburg Inc.
DowntownCburg.com
Franklin County Works
FranklinCountyWorks.com
CADC leads community through investment, workforce and economic development

Over the past 12 months, Chambersburg Area Development Corporation (CADC) has filled important roles in several successful projects which contribute to area economic, workforce and downtown development. CADC recently announced its partnership with CFDC LLC, to make a $600,000 equity investment in Rose Rent Lofts. The project, part of the redevelopment of the old Central Junior High building on the corner of Queen Street and S. Third Street by McKissick Properties, will convert the original 1909 school building into 27 market-rate loft apartments.

CADC also agreed to provide the Borough of Chambersburg up to $100,000 for a portion of a project to refurbish and beautify the Central Parking Lot adjacent to the new Shook Home Therapy Center. CADC partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Franklin County to initiate a Home Again program, which targets vacant houses within downtown to convert back to single-family homes. The first home at 153 S. Second St., was completed in November and awarded to a local family.

Additionally, CADC supported workforce development initiatives by providing funding to the Coyle Free Library Preservation Campaign, Costa Academy and the Greater Chambersburg Chamber Foundation. CADC also plans to make a $15,000 commitment to the construction of the new Franklin County Practical Nursing Program facility on the Franklin County Career and Technology Center campus.

While CADC has jumped in on these new initiatives as part of the strategic plan, its 57-year history of supporting local economic development through business parks and managing properties continues. CADC manages six properties, which collectively generate nearly a quarter of a million dollars in local taxes each year – the equivalent of 100 single-family homes. CADC has been an important contributor to the economic health of Chambersburg and Franklin County through the development of several business parks. Today, businesses in these parks employ thousands of individuals, generating millions of dollars of tax revenues that support our local communities and schools.

Chamber salutes a legacy

David G. Sciamanna stepped down from his role as executive director of CADC in December 2017 after 34 years of service with the Chambersburg Chamber and its affiliates. Sciamanna started as the president of the Chambersburg Chamber in 1983 with only two employees and 300 Chamber members. During his tenure, he expanded the Chamber’s reach to encompass six affiliate organizations, more than 850 Chamber members and 10 employees. He was executive director through 14 CADC board presidents and hundreds of board members. Sciamanna leaves behind a legacy of hard work, dedication and positivity; we wish him the best in his future endeavors!

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A prosperous year for downtown

Downtown Chambersburg had a successful year in 2017, with positive changes continuing to happen. Downtown revitalization efforts take years to develop and implement, and the growth that has been spurred in recent years through increasing investment is starting to become more visible. This investment has a trickle-down effect, increasing traffic for existing businesses, attracting new businesses and investors and creating a hub of activity for residents and visitors to enjoy.

New businesses on Main Street
Downtown became home to several new or relocated businesses in 2017: Brussel’s Cafe opened at 55 N. Main St., Toy Box Gifts & Wonder opened at 42 S. Main St., the Public Opinion moved their offices to the renovated 1 N. Main St. building along with the new restaurant Square 1, Black Diamond Studios relocated downtown to 109B N. Main St., Rice + Pho Vietnamese opened at 120 S. Main St. and the Coyle Free Library reopened at 102 N. Main St. after completing their renovation and addition of the old post office building.

Large-scale investment
Investment comes in many forms: planning, programming, new businesses, capital ventures and more. It’s often difficult to see this investment if it’s not right in front of you, but we’re starting to see more large-scale investment in the central core of Chambersburg - making the transformation of downtown more obvious. Numerous major projects are underway; some are in the early planning phases while others are in construction or have just been completed.

Major projects include the recently expanded Coyle Free Library ($5.5 million), the Borough Hall expansion ($9 million), the conversion of the old Central Junior High School into new Rose Rent Lofts and Central Center ($7-10 million), the completed Shook Home Rehabilitation & Wellness Center ($5 million), the new 11/30 Welcome Center for the Franklin County Visitors Bureau ($1 million) and the recently announced Franklin County Court Facility Improvement Project ($67.7 million). Together, these will reshape the downtown, building Chambersburg’s infrastructure while being respectful to the town’s historic charm and attracting smaller-scale investors to Main Street storefronts.

Making downtown a destination
Hosting events and festivals is key to bringing masses of people downtown. The most successful of these is IceFest, which continues to put our downtown on the map as a regional destination for winter fun. Small Business Saturday is another successful event for downtown merchants, when hundreds of shoppers come to support small businesses for the holiday shopping season. Other small-scale events like Second Saturdays provide free, family-friendly things to do. With more activity downtown, we attract more consumers who are spending money supporting our locally owned businesses.

Fostering and promoting a vibrant arts community also contributes to making downtown a destination. Many recent art additions – both public and private – have spurred the local art scene. Between public murals, art galleries, artist cooperatives and performance art, downtown is rich with opportunities to create and appreciate art.

Why focus on downtown?
Downtowns are the heart of a city and region - and with a strong central core, we build a strong community. Downtowns and surrounding areas along with industry and small business must work symbiotically to grow the economy. Strengthening our downtown core will complement the development happening throughout the surrounding area, which will attract more people to live here while encouraging investors and entrepreneurs to seek opportunities here. These developments, in turn, improve quality of life for Chambersburg as a whole, making it an even better place to live, work and play.

Working together, we can revitalize downtown and make it an amazing destination for business and leisure. To get involved with Downtown Chambersburg Inc., contact Amy Weibley at aweibley@chambersburg.org or 717-264-7101 ext. 204.
Foundation awards technology grants

Nearly $11,000 in grants were awarded to Franklin County teachers for using innovative technology in the classroom during the Greater Chambersburg Chamber Foundation’s Annual Luncheon in September.

Tara Clopper from Greencastle-Antrim High School received a grant for $5,000 for iBuild: Computer Science meets Makerspace. This project-based learning opportunity will allow students in the Occupations in Technology course to research, plan, budget, order, build, image and deploy desktop computers to the school’s media center and/or technology classroom.

Jennifer Jarusewski, Mary Finucane and Melissa VanArsdale from the Chambersburg Area Senior High School received a grant totaling $5,000 for The One Million Pillowcase Challenge. Approximately 600 students will research a specific type of cancer in small groups by finding current online articles on their topic. Afterwards they will present their research to the class and create pillowcases to donate to the Pediatric Unit.

Susan Berrier from Andrew Buchanan Elementary School and Lurgan Elementary School in Chambersburg Area School District was also awarded a grant of $960 for Dash and Dots Robots: Bring Coding to Life. The Chamber Foundation has awarded more than $404,000 in Innovative Technology Grants to local teachers since 1999 thanks to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program.

Leadership
Franklin County graduates 31st class

Leadership Franklin County (LFC) celebrated the graduation of its 31st Community program in May 2017. The 2016-2017 class was comprised of 16 emerging and seasoned professionals with diverse backgrounds. In addition to learning about their community and meeting county leaders throughout the course, the class also completed five community service projects for local nonprofits. Since 1986, more than 630 area residents have graduated from LFC Community, which was developed to produce well-informed, motivated leaders who are willing and capable of working together for the betterment of Franklin County.

What started as a Chambersburg-only program is now countywide consisting of three programs. In addition to LFC Community are the Youth and Advanced programs. LFC Youth brings together high school sophomores from throughout the county to create a community of young people who are actively engaged in responsible, ethical and effective leadership. LFC Advanced provides opportunities for higher leadership development for managers and executives.

Franklin County Works #1 job site

The Chamber Foundation hosts FranklinCountyWorks.com as a community job board for the workforce and employers in Franklin County to utilize. More than 6,000 users have visited the site in the last year, with the site advertising at least 30 local jobs on a daily basis. The mobile responsive design includes a local job board, resume bank, information about leadership training programs and advertising opportunities for employers.

Leaderscast returns to Franklin County

Leadership Franklin County (LFC) Advanced was proud to be a host site of Leaderscast for the second time. It is the largest one-day leadership event in the world, broadcasted live from Atlanta to hundreds of locations. Leaderscast brings together some of the most recognized and respected global leaders for a unique leadership conference experience. The theme, Powered by Purpose, was well received by more than 75 people in attendance. The simulcast was heard at Shippensburg University with keynote speakers Daniel Pink, Dr. Henry Cloud, Molly Fletcher, Tyler Perry and others.

LFC plans to host another Leaderscast on May 15, 2018 in order to provide an opportunity for advanced leadership development unlike any other in the region.
The Chamber and its affiliates coordinated more than 160 events in 2017. Some events are held every month, such as Mixers and Lunch & Learns, while others are held annually, like the Annual Business Breakfast and Small Business Saturday. Even more events are planned for special occasions, including ribbon cuttings and milestone anniversaries. Here are pictures of some highlights from 2017: