

Program Overview/Responding to an Important State Need

Like many states in the country, Delaware's downtowns were significantly affected by the Great Recession in 2008. Businesses closed, residents moved to other areas, crime increased, and vacant and blighted properties were on the rise. Seeing a need to address this issue, the Governor and the state legislature created the Downtown Development District program. The Downtown Development District program provides rebates of up to 20 percent for qualified property investments in selected downtown districts. DSHA manages the rebate program while partnering with other communities and agencies to provide additional incentives. The Downtown Development District program began in 2015 in three designated downtowns and has since grown to include eight downtowns across the state.

The Downtown Development District program uses a small amount of state investment to leverage significant private investments to overcome barriers to development so that new market opportunities can be shifted back to the heart of Delaware's communities, making them excellent places to live, work, and play. The program is designed to:

- Spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other neighborhoods;
- Stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of districts;
- Help build a stable community of long term residents by improving housing opportunities; and
- Assist municipalities in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative businesses, and residents from all walks of life.

To date, DSHA and the state have invested \$29.3 million in Downtown Development District project rebates and spurred \$551 million in private investments. The program has supported over 150 projects (52 residential, 47 mixed-use, and 52 commercial) up and down the state and has proven that a relatively small amount of state investment can help generate and support significant private investment in our downtown areas. More than 50 private investors have benefitted from the Downtown Development District rebate program over the last four years.

The program is designed to assist not only the large, mixed-use projects but also small business owners, entrepreneurs, and homeowners in downtown areas. Resources are available for the restaurant that needs to renovate to remain competitive, a property owner looking to upgrade office space or the homeowner undergoing an extensive residential rehab project. Many of the business owners, nonprofit organizations, and investors who receive funding tell us that their projects would not have gotten off the ground without Downtown Development District funding.

This infusion of partnerships, private investments, and public incentives has created the environment needed to overcome the financial, regulatory, and other barriers associated with redevelopment. By specifically targeting commercial, industrial, and residential growth in Delaware's downtown areas, DSHA has capitalized on emerging market trends while making a long-lasting contribution to the economic vitality and quality of life in these formerly distressed areas.

An Innovative Program

The 'carrot and stick' approach has long been used as an enticement to accomplish objectives. The Downtown Development District initiative utilized the same method but with a bit of a twist. We recognized that state government could not achieve significant redevelopment of our downtown areas without help from the private sector. The Downtown Development District program is structured to take advantage of the motivation and drive of the private investor (as well as their market knowledge) while offering them opportunities for success.

When the program was first launched four years ago, DSHA knew it would need to appeal to both large and small investors. This flexibility built into the Downtown Development District program is one of its best features. The program has benefitted investors and businesses of all sizes – from some of our state's top employers to a locally-owned coffee shop with less than 10 employees. DSHA recognizes the value of all of our private investors, no matter the size of the project, and the Downtown Development District program is designed to benefit any private investor willing to take a chance on our downtowns.

DSHA works closely with developers, investors, nonprofit organizations, and homeowners interested in taking on projects in the Downtown Development Districts and helps guide them through the rebate application process. The program is truly a partnership between the public and private sectors and is unique when compared to programs typically managed by state agencies in Delaware and around the country.

Providing Benefits that Outweigh the Costs

The most compelling evidence that the benefits of the program outweigh the costs is the overwhelming response from the private sector. In the first round of funding alone, DSHA received a total of 16 applications requesting \$7.7 million in funding for the \$5.6 million available. Since that initial round of funding, the program has consistently attracted demand from the private sector. In the most recent round of funding in fall 2018, eight applications were received for a total of \$4.6 million in available funding.

As noted earlier, the overall state investment in the program (\$29.3 million) pales in comparison to the private sector investment (\$551 million) and is indicative of the overwhelming support the program has received from private investors. The benefits of the community development associated with the Downtown Development District program far outweigh the costs to DSHA and the state. For the first time since the recession 10 years ago, we are seeing new restaurants, businesses, and residential projects pop up in our downtowns. Residents are proud of their communities once again, and the private sector is seeing the value in investing in these once dilapidated areas.

Achieving Intended Results

The overall goal of the Downtown Development District program was to provide the catalyst that would help drive investment and development in Delaware's downtowns. With more than 150 projects supported so far, we feel the program is far exceeding its intended results.

One example of the program's success can be found in Delaware's largest city: Wilmington. The downtown area, particularly Market Street, had been significantly affected by the recession. Many of the once-thriving stores and businesses in this area closed when the financial institutions located in the city laid off workers or relocated outside the city. Several properties on Market Street sat vacant for years until the Downtown Development District program was created, and Wilmington received its designation. Today, the downtown area of the city is bustling with activity. Since the program's launch in 2015, Wilmington has welcomed a new brewery, co-working space, community pharmacy, ice cream shop (managed by the University of Delaware), a Starbucks coffee shop, an upscale Italian restaurant and more. In addition, dozens of new apartments and other rental housing development projects have also been supported by the Downtown Development District program rebates in Wilmington. The program is encouraging Delawareans to live, work, and play in the state's downtowns.

In addition to the overall benefits of improving our downtowns, one of the most rewarding results of the Downtown Development District program is how well the towns and cities have responded. Municipalities up and down our state saw the huge potential of the program and ran with it. Since the program's launch in 2015, the demand from other cities and towns seeking district designation has been significant. When the program was first launched, nine towns applied to have a Downtown Development District designated in their community, but only three were designated initially. When the second round of designations took place in 2016, nine communities applied for designation and only five were selected. Because demand from other cities and towns has been so high, Delaware's current governor decided this year to accept applications from additional cities and towns interested in receiving a designation. Three more will be selected in this round, but far more than that number will likely apply for designation, proving demand for the program remains consistent.

Visual Aids

1) Photos from selected Downtown Development District events and completed projects:



Delaware Governor John Carney, Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki and DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi pose with owners of Bardea Restaurant, an upscale eatery housed in a Downtown Development District-funded building project in Wilmington, at the February 13 event announcing the latest funding awards.



Downtown Development District rebate recipient Christopher Cook, co-owner of Greenhill Pharmacy in Wilmington, speaks with Delaware Governor John Carney,

Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki, and DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi at the February 13 event announcing the latest funding awards.



Business owner Bob Johnson speaks to the benefits of the Downtown Development District program during the February 13 event announcing the latest funding awards. Mr. Johnson used Downtown Development District funding to construct new office space for his computer repair business.



Downtown Development District program rebate awardees Enrique and Veronica Nunez are pictured at the February 8 ribbon cutting for the site of their project in

Georgetown, Delaware. Mr. and Mrs. Nunez plan to rehab and expand the pictured once-vacant building into a laundromat, coffee shop, and beauty salon on the first floor with apartment units on the second floor. The majority of residents in this area do not own a car so having a laundromat within walking distance will fulfill a crucial need for families living there.



Pictured is Blue Hen Dental in Smyrna, Delaware. The dental practice opened in 2018. Funding from the Downtown Development District program allowed the owners, two brothers from Smyrna, to fully renovate the interior and exterior of the building.



The House of Coffi opened in Dover, Delaware in 2018. The owner of the coffee shop, Kristin Stonesifer, received a \$14,345 rebate through the Downtown

Development District program. The rebate allowed the owner to completely renovate the historic building.

2) Video featuring Tonic restaurant owner Dan Butler on the benefits of the Downtown Development District program: <http://tiny.cc/DSHA-TonicDDD>



“Tonic today would not exist as it is without the Downtown Development District. It made the deal doable. This was a real turning point – a real decision where we could go one way or the other.”

- Dan Butler, owner of Tonic Bar & Grille and Downtown Development District program rebate recipient

3) Selected media coverage of the February funding announcement from the Delaware State News (print); the News Journal (print); WDEL (radio); and Delaware Business Now (online news publication)

Downtown development investments make impact

Feb 13th, 2019 · by [Jennifer Antonik](#) · Comments: 0

<https://delawarestatenews.net/news/downtown-development-investments-make-impact/>

HARRINGTON — More than \$1.8 million has been invested in downtown Harrington to date thanks, in part, to funding made available through the state's Downtown Development District program.

Gov. John Carney, Delaware State Housing Authority Director Anas Ben Addi and local leaders came together Wednesday morning at Main Street Café in Harrington for a roundtable discussion on the impact of those funds in the smallest municipality to take advantage of the Downtown Development District program.

"It started about three to six years back," Mr. Ben Addi said. "And really, the purpose of the program is to power our local investors . . . and to do what Delaware does best which is to enable private sectors and other partners to do their work and do their jobs in development."

Seaford, Dover and Wilmington were chosen as designated towns when the program opened in 2015. Harrington was joined by Georgetown, Laurel, Milford and Smyrna when the next round of towns were announced in 2016.

It originally encompassed 33 acres of the downtown area, but recently doubled to include 72 acres in hopes of spurring more investments leading to quality housing and job opportunities for Harrington, according to City Planner Jeremy Rothwell.

"The domino effect this program has is just unreal," State Planning Director Connie Holland said during the discussion. "It's just the most positive thing I've seen in my 40 years of planning."

For Harrington, the program has led to the completion of several projects that may not have happened if the DDD program was not involved.

"I've got, in the works or completed, seven [DDD] projects either for myself or other developers. I can tell you, from my perspective, the ones that I own would definitely not have happened without the DDD funding," Blue Hen Construction Owner Darrin Simpson said.

In recent years, Mr. Simpson purchased a building in downtown Harrington many refer to as the Farrow building. Formerly the home of the Harrington Journal, the building sat vacant for many years and in need of more work than investors would like to provide.

Purchasing the building and offering the TLC it needed to survive saved it from pigeon infestation, major damages and ultimately, condemnation and demolition.

“It was not economically feasible for me to buy the building [before the DDD]. It’s one of the oldest buildings on the street. We lost one building next door to it already,” he said. “Being from Harrington. . . I want to see the city grow. I like the heritage of the city; I don’t want to see that change. It was important to me that that building not be torn down.”

A total of two larger projects and four smaller projects have been completed using the DDD to spur their development. The program will cover up to 20 percent of the hard costs associated with construction projects within the pre-determined districts in the form of a rebate.

Connections benefited from the program in 2015 when it opened a withdrawal management clinic in the city’s first shopping center, the Quillen Shopping Center on East Street.

“The DDD helped us to leverage a \$7 million rural development loan from the USDA and that allowed us to put together a program in Kent and Sussex County to help those with opioid disorder. We’ve been really grateful to the town of Harrington who helped us to get that off the ground in seven months,” Connections CEO and President Cathy McKay said.

She added that the development helped bring 70 new jobs to the area – some of which were professional jobs needed to support clients while other jobs were filled by those in recovery who can assist clients with a personal perspective.

“And a lot of them are working with DSHA to become homeowners to plan to stay here and work. I think you see a ripple effect in them being able to buy houses and be a part of the community as opposed to being a drain on the community,” Ms. McKay said.

According to the DSHA, a total of \$29.3 million in rebates has spurred \$551 million in private investments throughout the three Delaware counties.

“The DDD program has been a central part of our efforts to revitalize Delaware’s downtown business districts and drive private investment in our towns and cities. In just a few years, the DDD program has leveraged significant private investment in a wide variety of projects,” Gov. Carney said in a press release. “Encouraging private investment that also revitalizes our downtown business districts and surrounding neighborhoods is the goal of the DDD program, and we’re thrilled that it has been so successful.”

Eight more large projects rebates, reserved for a total of \$4.6 million, were announced Wednesday afternoon.

The new projects stretch from Wilmington to Milford and include a variety of future retail, business and residential opportunities alike.

Dan Bond of Milford is one of several recipients as he works toward renovating the historic Wells Building in Milford. According to the DSHA, he is also working on nine new townhomes and the historic Pikus Building, previously known to many as Lou's Bootery.

"I would not have taken on these projects if financial support from the DDD program had not been available. By combining financial support from the DD program with state and federal historic restoration tax credits, I plan to restore both of these historic buildings to their original glory," he said.

NCALL is using funding to combine two properties in Dover to create a three-story office building. According to the DSHA, "NCALL's proposed tenant, Delaware State University, plans to open a new small business incubator in this location. NCALL also plans to move their Restoring Central Dover staff to these offices."

Among project opportunities in Wilmington are a multifamily development, a hotel with a restaurant and business center, apartments and an expansion of the Ministry of Caring's St. Josephine Bakhita House.

"The DDD Program is doing exactly what we intended – attracting significant private investment to our downtowns," Mr. Ben Addi said in a press release. "We're excited to support new projects that are bringing businesses and jobs downtown, renovating vacant buildings, supporting historic preservation, and creating homes in Delaware's towns and cities."

State downtown grants to help fund new Wilmington apartments, amenities

[Jeanne Kuang](#), Delaware News Journal

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<https://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2019/02/13/state-downtown-grants-help-fund-new-wilmington-apartments-amenities/2861337002/>

More than 300 new apartments, a yoga studio, beer garden, hotel and other amenities are coming to Market Street and nearby downtown locations in Wilmington, thanks in part to state grants.

The state on Wednesday announced the projects it selected for its Downtown Development District rebate awards. The funds are intended to spur private investment and economic development in business corridors across the state.

Approved development projects in those downtowns can receive state funding worth up to 20 percent of eligible construction costs. The grants are awarded in the form of rebates issued after the work is complete.

A total of \$29.3 million in taxpayer funds has gone toward the program since 2015, according to the state, which in turn has drawn \$551 million in private investment.

The projects announced this year include one in Dover, one in Milford, and six announced in Wilmington, four of which are being built by the city's largest developer, the Buccini/Pollin Group.

A total of \$4.1 million is going toward the Wilmington projects, with a small amount going toward areas outside the central Market Street area.

At 4th and Washington streets, the Ministry of Caring, Inc. is receiving about \$200,000 to rehabilitate an abandoned house to attach to the adjacent St. Josephine Bakhita House convent to accommodate the religious organization's staff.

The owner of a cluster of townhouse-style apartments on 9th Street on the East Side is getting \$500,000 for improvements, including accessibility updates, to those units.

The rest is going toward BPG projects, including the building of a new 208-unit apartment complex at 517 N. Shipley St., which is currently a parking lot.



The Residences at Mid-town Park (Photo: Suchat Pederson, *The News Journal*)

The developer plans to use \$1.5 million of state funds in building the complex in the style of its Residences at Mid-Town Park, a luxury building it opened in 2018 at 9th and Shipley streets. The new building will have two floors of parking.

Next to the Residences, BPG is getting a rebate to build two buildings close to the corner of 8th and Shipley streets. One building will have two stories of retail and office space, and the other will have a restaurant, a bar, event space on the second floor and a yoga studio on the third.

A vacant building is being partially demolished next to that site to make room for a beer garden and space for food trucks.



Two of the historic buildings on Market Street in downtown Wilmington that are set to be demolished for a new apartment building built by the Buccini/Pollin Group (Photo: Jeanne Kuang/*The News Journal*)

At 5th and Market streets, the developer will install a 33-room hotel with a restaurant and businesses in the lobby on the edge of the Delaware Historical Society's town square.

The historical building was previously owned by the Kuumba Academy Charter School and currently owned by the Christina Cultural Arts Center. The developer has a contract to purchase it, according to Mike Hare, BPG executive vice president for development.

BPG is also getting funds to renovate parts of the Nemours building at 1007 N. Orange St. That building contains The Mill, a coworking space, and Theatre N.

The renovation, which will be partially funded with more than \$800,000 of the state grant money, will add 160 apartment units in the building. Some of those are being converted from the building's current extended-stay units.

Hare said the Shipley St. restaurant, beer garden and yoga studio complex will be completed in late May. The other projects are being designed.

In addition to being located in the state's development rebate areas, the projects are in one of the census tracts that Gov. John Carney designated as a Delaware "Opportunity Zone," raising the possibility of more taxpayer investment.

That federal program, included in the 2017 tax law, allows lucrative tax benefits to those who invest in projects in low-income and economically distressed census tracts.

BPG is considering using that program in its funding for the Nemours building renovation, Hare said. It will also seek state historic preservation tax credits for rehabilitating the hotel building.

Carney announces expansion of program that helps Delaware's downtowns

Joe Irizarry

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https://www.wdel.com/news/carney-announces-expansion-of-program-that-helps-delaware-s-downtowns/article_61a5ab2c-304c-11e9-9c56-8f08fb53d27f.html

Delaware's Downtown Development Districts (DDD) program will be expanding to more cities and towns this year.

"The idea is to put up some state money and to leverage significant investment into the private sector," said Governor John Carney Wednesday.

Currently, only eight municipalities are eligible, including Wilmington, Dover, and Milford. On Wednesday, February 13, 2019, the governor announced eight new downtown revitalization projects in Milford, Dover and Wilmington will receive \$4.6 million in rebate funding through the program.

"Expanding to other towns that are very interested in the program, that haven't been qualified or applied for the program yet," said Governor Carney. "They have to be designated first through this round and then come up with the projects."

The eight designated districts that already use downtown development funds can re-apply to have their districts expanded allowing for even further opportunity.

"So, any local jurisdictions that may be interested in joining the DDD and taking advantage of the DDD incentives, they have to work on an application, submit it to the State Planning Office, and then a recommendation would be made to the Governor who will ultimately make the designation," said Anas Ben Addi, Director of the Delaware State Housing Authority.

The application form, program guidelines booklet, and other materials are available on the Office of State Planning Coordination website. The deadline for submission of completed applications is May 15, 2019.

Downtown development projects to receive \$4.6 million in funding

By
Delaware Business Now

-

February 13, 2019

<https://delawarebusinessnow.com/2019/02/downtown-development-projects-to-receive-4-6-million-in-funding/>

The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) announced that new downtown revitalization projects in Milford, Dover and Wilmington will receive \$4.6 million in rebate funding through Delaware's Downtown Development Districts (DDD) program.

Established in May 2014, the program was created to spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other neighborhoods; stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of our cities and towns. With these new awards, \$29.3 million in rebates through the program has leveraged \$551 million in private investment in designated downtown districts in all three counties.

"The DDD program has been a central part of our efforts to revitalize Delaware's downtown business districts and drive private investment in our towns and cities. In just a few years, the DDD program has leveraged significant private investment in a wide variety of projects." said Gov. John Carney. "Encouraging private investment that also revitalizes our downtown business districts and surrounding neighborhoods is the goal of the DDD program, and we're thrilled that it has been so successful."

"The DDD program is doing exactly what we intended – attracting significant private investment to our downtowns," said Anas Ben Addi, director of the Delaware State Housing Authority. "We're excited to support new projects that are bringing businesses and jobs downtown, renovating vacant buildings, supporting historic preservation, and creating homes in Delaware's towns and cities."

At today's event, Governor Carney also announced the expansion of the DDD Program and encouraged cities and towns throughout the state to apply to become designated districts. The DDD program is currently available in eight designated districts: Dover, Georgetown, Harrington, Laurel, Milford, Seaford, Smyrna and Wilmington. Existing districts can also apply to have their district expanded, increasing the opportunity within their cities and towns for DDD-funded projects.

Eight large DDD projects in Milford, Dover, and Wilmington will be funded with reservation awards announced at an event in Smyrna. The event was held at a location previously awarded a DDD large project reservation. In fall of 2016, project investor and local business owner Bob Johnson applied for and was awarded the reservation to construct a new building at 133 N. DuPont Boulevard in Smyrna. The building currently houses Johnson's computer and electronics business and will soon house Smyrna's Dairy Sweet Restaurant, set to reopen shortly. "It's been a great experience being part of the DDD program and receiving the reservation award gave me the opportunity to finish my project earlier than I had thought possible," said Johnson.

By utilizing a DDD large project reservation award, NCALL plans to combine two properties on Division Street in Dover to construct a three-story office building which will be leased in part to Delaware State University for a new small business incubator. NCALL also plans to move their Restoring Central Dover staff to these offices. Karen Speakman, NCALL's executive director, said, "We're excited about this opportunity, as this gives us a chance to have more space for our employees so we can continue to make a difference in the Dover community. We are ecstatic at being one of the applicants selected for the DDD Program in this round of funding."

In Milford, investor and business owner Dan Bond is receiving his third DDD large project reservation award. He plans to renovate the historic Wells Building in Milford. Bond is also currently working on a project to restore the historic Pikus Building and build nine new townhomes in Milford. "I would not have taken on these projects if financial support from the DDD program had not been available. By combining financial support from the DDD program with state and federal historic restoration tax credits, I plan to restore both of these historic buildings to their original glory," he said.

4) Article in the Delaware State News about the town of Dagsboro applying to be a designated district in the latest round of district designations.

Dagsboro hoping to land Downtown Development District designation

Apr 11th, 2019 · by [Glenn Rolfe](#) · Comments: 0

<https://delawarestatenews.net/business/dagsboro-hoping-to-land-downtown-development-district-designation/>

DAGSBORO — The town of Dagsboro for a second time is applying to the state in hopes of landing designation as a Downtown Development District community.

Earlier this year, Gov. John Carney announced the expansion of the Downtown Development Districts Program, which is geared toward urban revitalization.

Several large areas in Dagsboro's town limits have been identified in the application that must make the May 15 deadline. Those areas include Piney Neck Road and Clayton Street.

"We're hoping some developers, that this might push them toward us," said Dagsboro town Administrator Cindi Brought. "Maybe some developers will reach out to us in the designated areas that we have for the Downtown Development District."

Specifically, the town's application encompasses the former Heathman Jewelers property. Last summer, Matthew and Karen Kern unveiled their plans to renovate that property and turn it into a restaurant/bar. That property borders the Clayton Theatre and Bodenweiser properties on Main Street.

"They have agreed with us to go ahead and use their project," Ms. Brought said.

“It’s in the works,” said Mr. Kern. “My wife and I are hoping that if Dagsboro is selected, we want to be a part that. We see it as such a cute, quaint, small town. We want to start building the right type of business to support the other great businesses that are already downtown. We like the small-town charm of Dagsboro.”

Selection as a DDD entitles private construction projects within the identified district to receive grants to offset up to 20 percent of their capital construction costs.

“People have to be on board 100 percent, because if they accept that application they have got to come to fruition before they get any rebate,” Ms. Brought noted.

Investors who make qualified improvements to residential, commercial or industrial properties in designated districts may also qualify for additional state and local development incentives. Grant funds to investors are administered by the Delaware State Housing Authority.

The Downtown Development Districts Act of 2014 was enacted by the General Assembly to leverage the resources of state government in a limited number of designated areas in Delaware’s cities, towns, and unincorporated areas in a multifaceted effort to:

- Spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other neighborhoods;
- Stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of such districts and neighborhoods;
- Help build a stable community of long term residents by improving housing opportunities; and
- Assist municipalities in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative small businesses and residents from all walks of life.

In January 2015, downtown areas of Seaford, Dover, and Wilmington were designated as Delaware’s first three DDDs.

In August 2016, five new Districts were announced as Smyrna, Milford, Harrington, Georgetown and Laurel created districts and local incentives.

Dagsboro developed a Downtown Development Plan in 2015 but was not designated at that time.

A resolution seeking application approval is on the agenda for the Monday, April 15 town council meeting.

Designation would be “a huge benefit for the town,” Ms. Brought said.

5) Editorial from DSHA Director Anas Ben Addi on the benefits of the Downtown Development District program. This editorial was published in the Delaware News Journal and the Delaware State News.

<https://www.delawareonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2019/02/28/opinion-were-working-revitalize-delawares-downtowns/2993948002/>

<https://delawarestatenews.net/opinion/commentary-downtown-development-district-program-benefits-all-of-del/>

Opinion: We're working to revitalize Delaware's downtowns

Anas Ben Addi Published 4:37 p.m. ET Feb. 28, 2019

Earlier this month, Gov. John Carney and the Delaware State Housing Authority announced the latest round of large project funding in the Downtown Development District program.

The announcement was made in what will be the new home of Smyrna's iconic Dairy Sweet restaurant and ice cream shop. The owner of the building, Bob Johnson, received a project rebate to help offset construction costs.

Established in 2014, the Downtown Development District program was created to spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other connecting neighborhoods; stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of our cities and towns; and help build a stable community of long-term residents in our downtowns and other neighborhoods.

The Downtown Development District program is currently available in eight designated districts: Dover, Georgetown, Harrington, Laurel, Milford, Seaford, Smyrna and Wilmington. Projects in these designated districts have access to numerous local and state incentives, most prominently the Downtown Development District rebate administered by Delaware State Housing Authority.

We know that a relatively small amount of state investment can help generate and support significant private investment in our downtown areas. To date, the state has invested a total of

\$29.3 million in Downtown Development District project rebates and spurred \$551 million in private investments.

Success stories like Bob Johnson's prove that the Downtown Development District program is working. Funding from the program is being used to renovate vacant buildings, support historic preservation and create homes in Delaware's towns and cities.

From the renovation of Bardea Food & Drink in Wilmington, The House of Coffi in Dover and Blue Hen Dental in Smyrna to one of the newest projects in Georgetown bringing a laundromat, café, coffee shop and hair salon to a once derelict building, the Downtown Development District program is benefiting residents up and down our state.

Larger projects throughout the state are also providing home ownership opportunities, including the construction of five new duplexes at the Villas on Broad Creek in Laurel and several new affordable homes on New Street and Kirkwood Street in Dover.

Many of the business owners, nonprofit organizations and investors who receive funding tell us that their projects would not have gotten off the ground without Downtown Development District funding.

The program is designed to assist not only the large, mixed-use projects but also small business owners, entrepreneurs and homeowners in downtown areas. Resources are available for the restaurant that needs to renovate to remain competitive, a property owner looking to upgrade office space or the homeowner undergoing an extensive residential rehab project.

In addition to the large project funding announcement made earlier this month, Governor Carney also announced the opening of new Downtown Development District designations. City and town officials across the state are invited to submit a designation application.

Existing districts can also apply to have the designated area of their district expanded, increasing the opportunity for Downtown Development District-funded projects within these cities and towns.

I encourage cities and towns across the state to take advantage of this great opportunity to revitalize downtown areas. The application form, program guidelines booklet and other materials are available by contacting the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination or Delaware State Housing Authority. The deadline for submission of completed applications is May 15, 2019.

2019 NCSHA Award Entry

HFA: Delaware State Housing Authority

Entry Title: Capitalizing on Private
Sector Expertise to Redevelop
Delaware's Downtowns

Category: Special Achievement

With the support of the legislature, city and town officials, investors, and business owners, the Downtown Development District program can continue its success in even more areas of our state.