

Commerce

CIANJ

The Business of New Jersey

January 2025 • \$4.99

Real Estate 2025 Forecast *Shifting Lifestyles Impact Market*



#FORWARD *with* FREEDOM

BUSINESS SERVICES

- Checking Accounts
- IOLTA Accounts
- Credit Cards
- Online Banking & Bill Pay
- Remote Deposit Capture
- Positive Pay
- Merchant Services
- Commercial Loans




FREEDOM BANK
THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY BANKING



80 Route 17 North, East Rutherford | 201-355-0328
6812 Park Avenue, Guttenberg | 201-868-8855
380 Route 17 South, Mahwah | 201-252-4022
99 West Essex Street, 2nd Floor, Maywood | 201-599-3000
375 Route 17 South, Ridgewood | 201-820-0995

freedombanknj.com



CONTENTS

HEALTHCARE CHECKUP

New Technology and More Across Healthcare 6

HIGHER EDUCATION

Williamson and Rowan Partner on Construction Degree. 9

INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Belgium Fosters Cross-Border Opportunities in New Jersey. 10

NETWORKING

When CIANJ Networking Leads to Partnerships 12

REAL ESTATE

Real Estate 2025 Forecast:
Shifting Lifestyles Driving Change 14

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ramapo College of New Jersey Looks Ahead 16

MEMBER NOTES

New Jersey's Ongoing Infrastructure Updates. 17

MEMBER MOVES

Appointments at Meyner and Landis,
M&T, Spencer, and Valley. 18

COLUMNS

Advertisers' Directory 1
CIANJ Officers & Board of Directors 2
Upcoming 3
President's View 4
Lessons in Leadership 13
Effective Management 20

Advertisers' Directory

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center....	1
Caucus NJ	19
Feedom Bank	IFC
Gibbons.....	BC
Stand and Deliver	11
Taplnto	IBC
Valley Health Systems	7
World Insurance Associates	5

Despite a post-pandemic downturn in warehouse construction, projects like this recently completed building at 245 Paterson Plank Road in Carlstadt, NJ, represented by NAI James E. Hanson, are proof-positive that NJ's ports and highways still earn the state its reputation as a "logistics state."

Photo: NAI James E. Hanson.

COMMERCE (SSN 0745-077X) is published 11 times a year for a subscription price of \$35.00 per year by the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey, 365 West Passaic Street, Suite 490, Rochelle Park, New Jersey 07662, (201) 368-2100, Web site: www.commercemagnj.com. Postage Paid at South Hackensack, New Jersey and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to above address.

YOUR TOMORROWS ARE IMPORTANT

Faster Recovery with Our da Vinci 5 Surgical Robot

Experience the most advanced, minimally invasive procedures that reduce pain, promote quicker recovery, and get you back to what matters most.

For more information, call 201-225-7130.

J. Christopher Kollar, DO
Chair of Surgery



Dr. Kollar leads our surgical team using robotics for minimally invasive procedures across various specialties, helping improve healing and recovery.



Bergen New Bridge Medical Center
201.225.7130 • NewBridgeHealth.org/surgery



CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

DAX STROHMEYER

*President,
Triangle Manufacturing*

VICE CHAIRWOMAN

KIM VIERHEILIG

*President of Buildings and Facilities,
STV*

TREASURER

KATHLEEN ALEXANDER

*Partner,
Sax, LLP*

SECRETARY

JOSEPH IMPERATO, JR.

*Partner,
XSolutions Consulting Services, LLC*

COUNSEL

LANNY S. KURZWEIL

*Partner,
McCarter & English, LLP*

PRESIDENT

ANTHONY RUSSO

AT LARGE MEMBERS

PAIGE DWORAK

*President & CEO,
CareWell Health Medical Center*

PAUL HARENCAK

*Vice President, Operations
LPS Industries*

JAMES A. KOSCH

*Partner,
McCarter & English, LLP*

DREW R. MALDONADO

*Managing Director,
Private Client Advisor
Bank of America Private Bank*

DEL MCLENNON

*Director of Business Development/Sales
Safari Solutions*

PAST CHAIRMEN

RICHARD W. ABRAMSON

*Member,
Cole Schotz P.C.*

NORMAN ALWORTH

*Chief Operating Officer,
Perfect Snax, LLC*

JAMES R. BEATTIE (in memoriam)

*Counsel to the Firm
Beattie Padovano LLC*

JAMES D'AGOSTINO

*President,
JD Companies*

WILLIAM C. HANSON

*President
NAI James E. Hanson Inc.*

WILLIAM J. HELLER

*Senior VP And General Counsel,
New York Football Giants*

MARTIN W. KAFAFIAN, ESQ.

*Managing Partner,
Beattie Padovano, LLC*

THOMAS MCNABOLA

*Senior Advisor,
Sax LLP*

AUDREY C. MURPHY, ESQ, MSN, RN

*Executive Vice President/
Chief Legal Officer
Hackensack Meridian Health*

B. FRANKLIN REINAUER III

*President,
Reinauer Realty Corporation*

ANDREW SILVERSTEIN (HONORARY)

Dorfman Abrams Music

TRACY STRAKA

*Executive Vice President,
Creamer Environmental, Inc.*

LOUIS WEISS

*CEO,
WFM Project & Construction, Inc.*

Mission

"The mission of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey is to be the leader in free enterprise advocacy for the purpose of providing, through education, legislative vigilance, and membership interaction, an economic climate that enhances business potential and makes New Jersey a better state in which to live, work and conduct business."

Directors

RICHARD W. ABRAMSON

*Member
Cole Schotz P.C.*

RON ANDERSEN

*Senior Managing Director,
Commercial Private Banker
Peapack-Gladstone Bank*

AGNES ANTONIAN

*Chair of Environmental Law Practice Group
Connell Foley*

ROBERT "TOBY" BABEUF

*Regional Manager, Commercial Banking
Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*

WENDY BLACHER

*Market Executive, Northern NJ Middle Market
J P Morgan Chase*

DR. KELLY BLUNDY, DC

*Co-owner
The Spine & Health Center of New Jersey*

JOHN BRENNAN

*Senior Vice President
J.H. Held LLC*

PHILIP I. BRILLIANT

*Founder and Owner
Brilliant Environmental Services*

DONALD F. BUCKLEY

*Market President
TD Bank North Jersey*

DAVID CAPODANNO

*Member of the Firm
CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP)*

BRIAN JOHN CLARK

*Administrative VP, Group Manager
Commercial Banking Division
M&T Bank*

CONRAD COLON

*Vice President, Sales & Marketing
Goya Foods, Inc.*

JOHN J. CORCORAN

*Managing Director
Merritt Walsh Associates, LLC*

DALE CREAMER

*Director
River Bank Management*

JAMES D'AGOSTINO

*President
JD Companies*

GUILLERMO DE VEYGA

*Vice President
William Paterson University*

PATRICIA DIAZ

*CPA, Partner
Dorfman, Abrams, Music LLC*

ULISES DIAZ

*Director, Government Affairs
Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NJ*

JACQUELINE ESPINOZA

*Vice President
Jersey Central Power & Light*

ROBERT P. EVANS Honorary

DANIEL FOWLER

*Vice President of Corporate Services
and Special Projects
J. Fletcher Creamer & Sons, Inc.*

ERIC M. FRIEDMAN

*President
Bergen Community College*

TODD GALANTE

*Principal/Partner
Piro, Zinna, Cifelli, Paris & Genitempo, LLC*

SARABETH GAVER

*Partner
White and Williams LLP*

SALLY GLICK Honorary

BOB GORDON

*Vice President
Stevens & Lee Public Affairs*

RICHARD M. GOLDBERG

*President & CEO
Ultra Artists LLC.*

WILLIAM C. HANSON

*President,
NAI James E. Hanson*

TODD HAY

*Regional VP, Office Director
Pennoni Associates, Inc.*

ROBERT IACULLO Honorary

LAWRENCE INSERRA, JR.

*President
Inserra Supermarkets, Inc.*

AIYSHA (AJ) JOHNSON

*CEO & Executive Director
New Jersey Society of CPAs*

KEVIN JOYCE

*VP, Insurance Networks
Atlantic Health System*

MARTIN W. KAFAFIAN, ESQ.

*Managing Partner
Beattie Padovano, LLC*

ALADAR G. KOMJATHY

*Owner
Komjathy & Kean, LLC*

PAUL KRIEGER

*Managing Partner
Deloitte LLP*

RICHARD J. LAMBERT

*Founding Partner
Dunn Lambert LLC*

ANTHONY J. LEE

*President
The Cardinal Hill Group, Inc.*

DANIEL M. LESKO, SVP,

*Business Banking Sales Manager
PNC Bank, N.A.*

KEVIN LUING

*Chairman of the Board
Berkeley College*

PAUL B. MAIDE

*Senior Executive
Pace Analytical*

JOHN MARCHIONI

*President and COO
Selective Insurance Company of America*

PAUL MARDEN

*CEO
UnitedHealthcare of New Jersey*

MICHAEL A. MARON

*President & CEO
Holy Name Medical Center*

BOB MARTIN

*Managing Director
Christie 55 Solutions*

MILDRED MIHLON

*President
Felician University*

DENNIS MIKULA, JR.

*President
Mikula Contracting, Inc.*

MICHAEL MURPHY

*Vice President of Sales
AmeriHealth*

WILLIAM MURRAY

*Executive Vice President, Public Affairs
MWWPR*

CINDY MYER

*President
Ridgewood Moving Services*

STEVEN NAPOLITANO

*Principal
SNS Architects & Engineers*

CORETHIA V.E. OATES

*VP, Portfolio Manager
Morgan Stanley*

KEVIN O'CONNOR

*VP External Affairs
Veolia North America*

TERRIE O'CONNOR

*President/Broker
Terrie O'Connor Realtors*

BRENDAN O'DONNELL

*GM, Newark Brewery
Anheuser-Busch*

GIANFRANCO A. PIETRAFESA

*Partner
Archer & Greiner P.C.*

ROBERT M. PIGNATELLO

*Senior Vice President, Government Affairs,
Community Engagement &
Strategic Initiatives
Fairleigh Dickinson University*

BARRY PETRUZZI

*Vice President
Delta Dental*

JASON POURAKIS

*Partner,
Mazars USA LLP*

B. FRANKLIN REINAUER III

*President,
Reinauer Realty Corporation*

DAVID REPETTO

*Co-Managing Partner
Harwood Lloyd, LLC*

STEVEN C. SCHINELLA, CPA

*Roseland Office Managing Partner
CohnReznick, LLP*

THOMAS J. SHARA

*Vice Chairman
Provident Bank*

NISHA M. SIKDER

*VP of Payer Strategies
Valley Health System*

MICHAEL SMILOVITCH

*SVP, Market President
Commercial Banking
Valley National Bank*

AUGUST SODORA

*President
Swift Electrical Supply Co., Inc.*

JENNIFER SOLEWSKI

*VP Business & Technical Development
Bayshore Family of Companies*

TRACY STRAKA

*Executive Vice President
Creamer Environmental, Inc.*

JIM TROUWBORST

*SVP, Senior Credit Officer
ConnectOne Bank*

LEONARD VAN DAM

*First Senior Vice President
Columbia Bank*

DEBORAH D. VISCONI

*President & CEO
Bergen New Bridge Medical Center*

PETER WEBSTER

*Resident Managing Director
AON Insurance*

LOUIS WEISS

*CEO
WFM Project & Construction, Inc.*

Information gathered and presented in this publication is presumed to be accurate. However, because of the extensive number of sources used, Commerce Enterprises, Inc. and the CIANJ cannot guarantee accuracy or be responsible for any omissions in fact or credit.

UPCOMING



Photo: Gage Skidmore

Garden State Initiative's Economic Policy Outlook for 2025 – Economist Stephen Moore

January 7

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Park Avenue Club
Florham Park, NJ



Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto/carl osorio

Experience AriZonaLand: CIANJ's Immersive Arizona Iced Tea Tour & Networking Event

January 14th

2:00 p.m.

1 Arizona Way
Keasbey, NJ



Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto/Pointimages

CIANJ & Fortuna Cigars Networking Event

January 22

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

The Metropolitan Society
Fairfield, NJ



Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto/korawit thairinhan

2025 Real Estate Forecast and Legislative Update

January 31

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Bergen Community College
Lyndhurst, NJ

Register and stay up to date on all CIANJ and COMMERCE events at: <https://web.cianj.org/events>

24/7 COMMERCE

Stay in the know on all the top business news across NJ.
Find COMMERCE Magazine online @ www.commercemagazinenj.com



What's New For 2025

By Anthony Russo
President, CIANJ



Happy New Year! I hope the holiday season went well and the year is off to a good start. This time of year is always exciting because it's an opportunity to not only reflect on the year that ended but also on the year ahead and what you want to accomplish.

2025 will mark The Association of New Jersey's 98th year of protecting and enhancing the business climate in New Jersey. CIANJ has a proud history of serving the business community in many ways including through the many events we host, our advocacy efforts in Trenton and of course, through our magazine.

Our goal has always been to connect businesses in ways in which are unique and exciting. CIANJ is a member driven organization and that is why one of our resolutions for the new year is to hear from you! We hope you will join one of our many forum steering committees, provide content for our magazine, and share your knowledge by becoming a speaker at CIANJ events.

To improve our service to members, CIANJ is excited to announce a new membership management system which will make your interactions with CIANJ easier and more user friendly. By downloading the "MemberPlus" mobile app



Steve Forbes, Chairman & Editor-In-Chief, Forbes Media, mingling with CIANJ members at the 97th Annual Meeting and Luncheon, where he was the Keynote speaker.

and creating a login, you will be able to register for events, track your profile, and communicate with members all at the touch of a button (reach out to Kathy Agudo with questions at Kagudo@cianj.org).

In the year ahead, we will host more events that are educational, informative, and afford attendees opportunities to meet business professionals from virtually every sector. To kick off, this issue's cover story "Real Estate 2025 Forecast" explores the state of New Jersey real estate, ahead of CIANJ's January 31st event "Real Estate 2025 Forecast and Legislative Update."

On the magazine front, COMMERCE Magazine has been the voice of the business community since 1968 and the tradition will continue with a broader reach through our

partnership with the TAPinto network. Make sure to sign up for [weekly newsletters from COMMERCEMagazineNJ.com](https://www.commercemagazine.com/newsletters) to stay in the know. Additionally, COMMERCE will continue updating our readers through the new COMMERCE Magazine NJ LinkedIn page. In addition to how we plan to reach you, we also invite our readers to share with us. From Member Moves and Spotlights, to roundtables, industry updates, news, and more, we have many outlets to share your voice.

We look forward to making 2025 a special year for everyone and we look forward to working with you in accomplishing that goal. 🍀



In 2025, CIANJ will host a plethora of informative events with opportunities to meet business professionals from virtually every sector, including the Enterprising Women in Commerce Awards, seen here.

COMMERCE MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER/CEO

ANTHONY RUSSO
arusso@cianj.org

EDITOR

JAMIE GRILL-GOODMAN
jgoodman@cianj.org

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JULIA PANGBURN
LARRY FELD

ADVERTISING SALES

RICH WALTMAN (646) 808-5114
rwaltman@cianj.org
TOM WORLEY (917)-733-5135
tworley@cianj.org

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

MARJORIE CAMPOLONGO
Art Director,
mjcampolongo@gmail.com



COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE SOLUTIONS FOR REAL ESTATE

Value-add Protection for All Your Properties with Real Estate Insurance

Whether you are an owner, operator, developer, or manager of residential or commercial real estate, adequately protecting your property is critical. Your risk level will vary depending on the property type, but in general you may need to protect yourself from disasters during building construction, injuries to visitors on your property, environmental exposures, harm or injury caused by your mistakes, and more.

INSURANCE PRODUCTS

- Commercial Insurance
- Employee Benefits
- Payroll & HR Solutions
- Financial & Retirement Planning
- Surety & Bonding
- Personal Insurance

CONSIDER PROTECTING YOUR

- Condominium complexes
- Entertainment complexes
- Industrial facilities
- Mixed-Use facilities
- Multifamily units
- Office buildings
- Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)
- Recreational facilities
- Student housing properties

WORLD INSURANCE ASSOCIATES

100 Wood Avenue South, Iselin, NJ 08830

732-380-0900 • yourteam@worldinsurance.com

WWW.WORLDINSURANCE.COM

New Technology and More Across Healthcare

BNBMC Adds da Vinci 5 Robotic Surgical System by Intuitive

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center (BNBMC) added the da Vinci 5 Surgical System by Intuitive, which will allow for less invasive surgeries while enabling better outcomes. This system provides patients with shorter hospital stays, reduced pain, lower risk of infection, as well as shorter recovery times.

"This is a game changer for the Medical Center, our surgeons, and most importantly, our patients," said Deborah Visconi, President & CEO, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. "We are dedicated to being a beacon of health, hope, and healing and now by adding the da Vinci 5, we can help our communities experience the benefits of this revolutionary technology."

BNBMC, a clinical affiliate of Rutgers, is a 1,070-bed hospital located at 230 East Ridgewood Avenue in Paramus, NJ. The Medical Center is one of only a few hospitals in New Jersey to offer this technology. "For our surgical team, this system allows us to better feel the tension and pressure of tissue during procedures which can help us perform safer and more gentle surgeries on our patients," said Dr. J. Christopher Kollar, Chair of the Surgery Department, Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. "This innovative technology should be available to all



Photo: Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

The da Vinci 5 provides a gentler surgical experience leading to optimized health outcomes.

patients. I am pleased that the communities we serve will now have access to this robotic surgical system."

Hunterdon Health Launches Infor

Hunterdon Health recently launched Infor cloud-based applications for financials and

supply chain management to support its digital transformation journey. With more than 30 primary and specialty practices throughout Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Morris and Warren counties plus a 178-bed hospital in New Jersey, Hunterdon Health recognized that moving its

Continued



Photo: RWJ Barnabas Health

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway celebrates the opening of its new cardiac catheterization laboratory.

Far and away,
some of the
finest minds in
neurosurgery...

aren't far and
away at all.



Everything medicine can do. A few things medicine can't.

With a team of neurosurgeons utilizing the latest techniques, patients at Valley Health System know they're in skilled hands. Our brain and spine neurosurgical experts, alongside our rigorously trained 'Brain Squad' nursing staff, include your loved ones at every step, giving you the support you need to understand all your options.

**To learn more, call 201-447-8647 or visit
ValleyHealth.com/Neurosurgery**



Healthcare Checkup

critical business applications to the cloud would help them better manage vital resources.

Hunterdon Health decided to replace its aging platforms and manual processes for a single streamlined platform to minimize time allocated managing disparate systems, eliminate silos between departments, and automate tasks to free up teams. Part of the Infor Healthcare CloudSuite suite of solutions, Hunterdon Health will benefit from cloud-based applications for supply chain and enterprise financial management, which will allow users to make better business decisions, and better align operations.

Hunterdon Health will also benefit from Infor's ability to connect to third-party applications. The healthcare ERP platform was built specifically for healthcare allowing clinical connection to an organization's EMR and out-of-the-box best practice capabilities. These tools will provide consolidated analytics and data from across the organization into one system. Having all this key business information together in real-time will help decision-makers at Hunterdon make more informed business decisions that will impact patient care.

RWJUH Rahway Opens New Cardiac Catheterization Lab

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway (RWJUH Rahway), an RWJBarnabas Health facility, recently celebrated the opening of its new, state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization laboratory, equipped with the latest generation of technology to provide rapid and comprehensive heart and vascular care for patients requiring life-threatening emergency or scheduled procedures.

"We are incredibly proud of our team of physicians, nurses and staff who provide exceptional heart care," said Kirk C. Tice, President and CEO of RWJUH Rahway. "Our new cath lab is a major investment which will transform treatment for patients requiring cardiac procedures. We are extremely grateful for the RWJUH Rahway Auxiliary and their contribution in support of this new cath lab."

Cardiac cath labs allow cardiologists to perform minimally invasive tests and advanced cardiac procedures to diagnose and treat cardiac and peripheral vascular diseases. Common procedures performed in the cath lab include interventional cardiac procedures like stenting or angioplasty to open up blocked arteries, and the improvements enable quicker and more efficient diagnosis and treatment, reducing radiation exposure.

The hospital unveiled the new technology in November, which includes a ceiling-mounted C-arm, high-res Liquid Crystal Displays (LCDs) for viewing live and stored images, a carbon fiber, radiolucent patient support, with integrated system controls and an impressive control room with a work spot and viewing console for clinical images.

"Whether you need treatment for high blood pressure, state-of-the-art diagnostic



Left to right: Steve Setteducati, CEO, New Concepts for Living, and Robert Brenner, MD, MMM, FACHE, President & CEO, Valley Health System.

imaging, heart surgery or a heart transplant, RWJBarnabas Health's multidisciplinary team of award-winning cardiovascular specialists are close to home, helping to build healthier communities," said Conor Barrett, MD, MBA, SVP and Chief Clinical Officer of RWJBarnabas Health Heart and Vascular Services. "This new cath lab at RWJUH Rahway is an example of that investment in local communities to provide the highest quality heart and vascular care."

Saint Peter's University Hospital Makes Best Hospitals List

Saint Peter's University Hospital, a member of Saint Peter's Healthcare System, has been named by U.S. News & World Report to its 2024-2025 Best Hospitals list as a High Performing hospital for Diabetes; Heart Failure; Kidney Failure; Leukemia, Lymphoma and Myeloma; and Urology.

This is the highest distinction a hospital can earn for U.S. News' Best Hospitals Procedures & Conditions ratings. U.S. News evaluated nearly 5,000 hospitals across 15 specialties and 20 procedures and conditions, and hospitals awarded a "Best" designation excelled at factors such as clinical outcomes, level of nursing care and patient experience.

The annual Procedures & Conditions ratings are designed to assist patients and their healthcare providers in making informed decisions about where to receive care for challenging health conditions or elective procedures.

"This recognition reflects Saint Peter's commitment to providing exceptional care to our patients," said Leslie D. Hirsch, FACHE, president and CEO of Saint Peter's Healthcare System. "Our dedicated healthcare professionals work tirelessly to ensure that every patient receives the highest standard of care."

Valley Health System Donates Beds to New Concepts for Living

Valley Health System donated 20 beds to New Concepts for Living, a New Jersey provider of community residences, day programs, and therapeutic and behavioral services for adults 21 and over living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The beds donated will be used at three of New Concepts for Living's medically supportive community residents - located in Old Tappan and Hillsdale. This donation will enhance the quality of life for residents by ensuring their living environments are as accommodating as possible. These beds play a vital role in meeting the unique medical and therapeutic needs of the individuals served by New Concepts for Living. 📌

Williamson and Rowan Partner on Construction Degree

By Jamie Grill-Goodman

Williamson College of the Trades and Rowan University have come together to help reduce the shortage of qualified labor in the construction industry.

The two institutions have entered an academic partnership that allows Williamson students seeking an Associate in Specialized Technology (AST) degree to receive dual credit for approved courses toward a Certificate of Undergraduate Study from Rowan University in either construction or project management.

“The nation continues to face a severe shortage of qualified men and women in the construction fields,” Arlene A. Snyder, CFRE, VP for Institutional Advancement, Williamson College of the Trades, tells *COMMERCE*. “Skilled tradesmen and women are highly sought after to solve the generational gap in the workforce, not just in terms of new construction, but also in repairing our badly needed infrastructure alongside providing everyday services to our communities. Whether you look at state or federal labor force data, careers in the construction

fields are projected to remain a high demand career path for decades to come.”

The stackable certificate enables students to earn their credentials in carpentry, electrical or masonry trade programs, while also earning course credits toward a Bachelor of Arts in construction management, offered online through the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering. The degree program is designed to meet the educational needs of the construction industry by training entry-level construction managers and by providing continuing education for construction employees.

The Articulation Agreement between NJ-based Rowan University and PA-based Williamson College of the Trades was signed effective June 1, 2024, and the first class of students that will directly benefit from this opportunity will graduate from Williamson on May 22, 2025.

In addition to receiving an Associate Degree from Williamson upon graduation, students in the program will receive a Certificate of Undergraduate Study (CUGS) in Construction Management and a CUGS in Project Management from Rowan University.

In order to complete the Bachelors of Arts degree in Construction Management, Williamson graduates will need to be enrolled at Rowan University. “However, as part of the Articulation Agreement both institutions have committed to making this transition as easy as possible for the student desiring to pursue the Rowan University B.A. degree,” says Snyder.

Williamson is a private postsecondary institution unique in the nation in providing a full scholarship covering tuition, room and board for every student’s three-year education. Special consideration for admission is given to students demonstrating financial need.

Rowan University offers bachelor’s degrees through doctoral and professional programs in person and online to 23,000 students. With eight colleges and nine schools, Rowan focuses on practical research at the intersection of health care, engineering, science and business.

“Nationally, there is an industry need for a highly trained, highly skilled workforce,” Rowan University Provost Tony Lowman said in a statement. “To better meet that need, we’re bridging the trades and higher education.”



Signing the agreement between Rowan University and Williamson College of the Trades are (from left to right): Dr. Anthony Lowman, Rowan provost; Dr. Ali Houshmand, Rowan president; Michael Rounds, Williamson president; and Dr. Todd Zachary, Williamson provost. Standing behind the table are all Williamson students studying construction technology.

Photo: Williamson College of the Trades

Belgium Fosters Cross-Border Opportunities in New Jersey

By Larry Feld

Belgium is open for business. More specifically, the Wallonia region is looking for international export/import opportunities, with a keen eye on the New Jersey marketplace.

“We are the public Wallonia Export and Investment agency, in charge of supporting the business connections between Belgium/Wallonia with the rest of the world,” notes Pascale Delcomminette, CEO of the [Wallonia Export & Investment Agency \(AWEX\)](#).

She explains that AWEX has two specific missions: “attracting foreign investment and supporting our companies to go global. This includes the export of Belgian products and services as well as building international partnerships.”

Established in 1830 when it gained independence from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Belgium is a federal constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. There are three distinct (and autonomous) regions, including the Flemish Region to the north, The Walloon (Wallonia) Region in the south, and the Brussels-Capital Region in the country’s center.

Sandwiched between France to the south, Germany to the east, and Netherlands to the north, Belgium encompasses slightly less than 12,000 square miles and boasts a population of just under 12 million, making it the 22nd most densely populated country in the world. Due to their complex history, visitors will encounter French, Dutch, and German-speaking natives. As one of the early industrialized nations in Europe, Belgium has a sophisticated and thriving economy, with a 2024 estimated GDP of nearly \$864 billion.

“Belgium is seen as a very attractive investment region in Europe for different reasons,” explains AWEX’s Delcomminette. “It’s a very central location. As you look at the map, you will see that we are very close to any big capital in Europe. We also have the logistics, including the roads, railways, airports, and waterways to move products.”

“Wallonia is also easy and low-cost to set up operations compared to other regions. We have incentives, fiscal incentives, R&D incentives, as well as talent for hire. Belgians enjoy a high quality of life, including excellent healthcare.”

“Above all that,” notes Delcomminette, “We have a thriving innovation ecosystem in Wallonia. We’ve been working around what we call the triple helix; Industry is working hand-in-hand with research and development as well as the universities.”



In the EVS offices in Fairfield, NJ (left to right): Pascale Delcomminette, CEO of the Wallonia Export & Investment Agency (AWEX); Nicolas Bourdon, Chief Commercial Officer, EVS; and Quentin Derzelle, Trade and Investment Counselor, Wallonia Export & Investment Agency (AWEX).

While Belgium is excited to promote opportunities for companies in the United States to establish themselves in Europe, AWEX is also busy promoting young businesses in the Wallonia district to invest in the American marketplace.

In the Fall of 2024, AWEX embarked on a trade mission to the New Jersey/New York area. The mission introduced several promising start-up companies to connections inside America with the goal of helping to expand import/export opportunities by finding potential business partners and financial sources.

“We are commemorating the 400th anniversary of the presence of the Walloons in New York this year,” notes Delcomminette. “We want to celebrate that milestone by proactively supporting the development of our tech companies here in the States. When we think about the future, our young startup companies embody innovation,” she explains.

AWEX focuses its economic development efforts on key industries in the U.S., including life sciences, entertainment technology, green/smart building technologies, and immersive technologies like augmented reality and artificial intelligence (AI) applications. “Life sciences in particular provides about 30% of our economic strength,” she notes, however, technology is also an important sector.

One Belgian company that has successfully established a presence in New Jersey

with the support of AWEX is [EVS Broadcast Equipment SA](#), a video broadcast technology company.

“We’re delivering technology related to live video production for the broadcast world,” explains Nicolas Bourdon, Chief Commercial Officer at EVS. “We are well-renowned for developing the first digital-based replay system in 1994.”

If you watch sporting events like FIFA soccer, a live remote network news broadcast – or just about any remote broadcast in the U.S. for that matter – you are likely experiencing technology built by EVS Broadcast Equipment SA. Since 1994, the company has expanded into providing high-quality live video solutions for a variety of applications, from news production to corporate events, houses of worship, and general production centers. Today, EVS Broadcast boasts 700 employees worldwide, including about 50 based in New Jersey.

“Eighty percent of the company’s development is based on software,” notes Bourdon. “We have about roughly half of our teams doing research and development.”

EVS has very optimistic growth plans, and the New Jersey office is a strategic location for the company. “Our ambition is to become number one in the industry by 2030,”

Continued

International Spotlight

Bourdon says, adding that global turnover in 2020 was about 100 million euros (about \$150 million). “Today we’re about halfway to our target of 250 million euros, or roughly \$400 million in revenue.”

Bourdon explains the company’s growth strategies. “We’re really on track with our growth plan, which includes extension of our product portfolio, acquisitions, as well as both organic and non-organic growth. Our history in the U.S. has always been very strong,” Bourdon confesses.

EVS landed in New Jersey in 1998, moving to its Fairfield location in 2001.

“Our objective is to accelerate the growth in North America because the potential of business in live sports, news, and entertainment is big,” Bourdon says, adding that the company is not limiting itself to providing technology to the sports industry.

“We are working with all major sports broadcasters, stadiums, federations, leagues as well as the facility companies, including owners of the TV trucks working for broadcasters. These are our customers. However, since 2010, we started to grow rapidly in the entertainment market. We provide our technology for live shows, game shows, and more. We are also working with the corporate world, including major companies, banks, and Silicon Valley technology companies who are using EVS technology for stockholder meetings, conferences, and keynotes as well as product launches,” Bourdon explains.

EVS has some high-profile customers, including NBC, CNN, ESPN, as well as MLB and of course the FIFA World Cup.

Why New Jersey?

Both Delcomminette and Bourdon expressed great promise for Belgian businesses looking to grow in New Jersey.

“Talent is very important to our growth,” notes EVS’ Bourdon. “We very often take young people from university straight to support and make them evolve from support to all the other

positions within the organization. The quality of the training at universities in New Jersey is very high,” he says.

Beyond access to a skilled workforce, Bourdon appreciates New Jersey’s proximity to New York City and other major places as well as easy access to transportation. “We travel to Belgium with a direct connection out of Newark Airport. Every week, we have teams traveling to Brussels or around the world. Newark makes it super easy,” he says with a smile. 📍



Belgian company EVS Broadcast Equipment SA has established a presence in New Jersey with the support of AWEX. The company boasts 700 employees worldwide, including about 50 in NJ.

STEVE ADUBATO'S LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

with co-host Mary Gamba

Saturday 5:00pm
Sunday 10:00am

news12+



Stand-Deliver.com

Promotional Partner:



When CIANJ Networking Leads to Partnerships

By Jamie Grill-Goodman

When Barnett Design and Mikula Contracting connected through The Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ), they didn't know the project would lead to a MarCom Award. But the outcome echoes the association's rich history.

The CIANJ has been busy cultivating connections for decades. Founded in 1927 as the Bergen County Chamber of Commerce and renamed CIANJ in 1983, there have been countless examples through the years of how the real value of a business association is found in the relationships built between its members and resources shared.

Mikula Contracting has been a CIANJ member since 2021, and Dennis Mikula, Jr., President, Mikula Contracting, tells COMMERCE membership has given his company four exceptional years of connections within the organization.

"I have participated in numerous events, panels, and networking opportunities during this time," says Mikula. "This involvement has allowed our company to expand its reach and build meaningful professional relationships."

Enter Barnett Design, a CIANJ member for three years. "Shortly after Barnett joined CIANJ," says Debbie Barnett Sagurton, Founder and Creative Director of Barnett Design, "I attended

a networking event where Anthony Russo (CIANJ President) and Kathy Agudo (CIANJ Executive Vice President) made thoughtful introductions – and that's where I met Dennis! We had a great conversation, and Dennis shared that Mikula was ready for a brand refresh. The timing was perfect, and our collaboration began from there."

The two connected through the CIANJ during its in-person event, "A Summer Carnival Networking Extravaganza," in Jersey City in June 2023.

"At the event, I met Debbie Barnett, and our conversation naturally shifted to our branding goals and ways to enhance and modernize our logo," Mikula says. "It quickly became apparent that her expertise was an excellent match for our needs."

Mikula Contracting was established in 1946 and has become a leader in excavation, demolition, and environmental services. Now in its third generation of family leadership, its team has completed many significant land improvement projects throughout New Jersey.

"Our commitment to excellence, innovation, and a deep understanding of our clients' needs distinguishes us in the industry," he notes.

Since its founding in 1991, Barnett Design has evolved into a full-service creative studio offering branding, campaigns, publications, websites, digital media, packaging, and more.

The range of clients and industries it serves is diverse, including consumer products, healthcare, non-profit organizations, professional services, education, and more.

"Our six-person creative team is a multi-faceted group of expert designers, writers, and developers, collaborating to craft fresh, effective solutions that have earned over 100 industry accolades," says Barnett. "We take pride in building relationships with so many wonderful clients. It's all about listening, learning, and pinpointing what's unique so we can deliver meaningful, creative solutions that inspire, connect, and make a lasting impact."

Rebranding

While Mikula Contracting wasn't actively looking for a complete rebranding initiative at the time when Mikula and Barnett met, during a conversation the topic arose naturally.

"As we discussed the importance of visual identity in remaining competitive, it became evident that updating our logo could inject fresh energy into our brand and help differentiate us in the market," notes Mikula.

Led by Barnett Design's Senior Art Director Jeff Ramos, the project involved refreshing their logo, developing a suite of branded sales materials, creating a website concept, and recommending branded promotional items. Vehicle rebranding will come next.

"The project aimed to redesign our company logo to reflect our evolving brand identity better," says Mikula. "Mikula Contracting has a long history of excellence, and we wanted our logo to convey our legacy and forward-thinking approach."

The process included brainstorming sessions, creating design drafts, and finalizing the logo with feedback from both teams.

"In reimagining Mikula's branding, we developed a streamlined logo that retained their brand's identity while strengthening their color palette, adding a complementary gold/yellow to their signature green," shares Barnett. "The logo features a customized, symbolic backhoe bucket, making it more iconic, and we selected a font that reflects their strength, reliability, and longevity in the contracting industry. This refreshed branding and suite of materials reflect Mikula's values and forward-thinking approach. It is a privilege to help bring their vision to life."

"Working with Barnett Design was an outstanding experience," says Mikula. "From the beginning, their team exhibited creativity, *Continued*



Debbie Barnett and Dennis Mikula, Jr. at a CIANJ event.

Photo: Debbie Barnett

■ Networking

professionalism, and a strong understanding of our vision. They engaged us at every process stage, ensuring the final design aligned with our values and goals.”

“Collaboration was clear,” notes Barnett, “allowing us to create most effectively, to bring about the most successful results. This is an inspiring partnership.”

In the end, the project not only exceeded Mikula Contracting’s expectations to develop a modern, recognizable design that stayed true to the company’s roots, the new logo also won a 2024 MarCom Award in the Logo category. The MarCom Awards honor excellence in marketing and communication while recognizing the

creativity and hard work of industry professionals. Since its inception, MarCom has evolved into one of the largest, most-respected creative competitions in the world with thousands of print and digital entries submitted from dozens of countries each year.

Advice for CIANJ Members

Mikula’s advice to all current and potential CIANJ members is straightforward: get involved.

“Attend events, introduce yourself, and feel free to share your goals and ideas,” he shares. “The actual value of CIANJ lies in the connections you make and the opportunities they

create. Networking is not merely about exchanging business cards but building genuine relationships and collaborating with like-minded professionals. The benefits will follow if you approach it with an open mind and a willingness to engage.”

Barnett echoes his advice, urging members to participate in events regularly. “It’s really about taking the time to connect with people and build genuine relationships,” she says. “Joining committees and getting involved in different activities also opens up more opportunities to engage. CIANJ offers so many ways to connect, and the more you take part, the more you and other CIANJ members will benefit.” 📌



Mikula Contracting’s previous logo.



Mikula Contracting’s new logo by Barnett Design.

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Entrepreneurial Leadership



By Steve Aduato, PhD

Freelance Contributor

People talk all the time about starting their own business. Some people believe if you are good at something, then that is the thing you should do. If it were only that simple. With this in mind, let’s identify the other leadership and communication traits that entrepreneurs need to succeed:

- It’s all about the customer. It’s terrific if you are enthusiastic about a particular product or service, but your business won’t work if that product or service is not compelling to prospective customers. People must want or need what you are selling.
- Promote your brand. Get comfortable with self-promotion. You can’t succeed in a small business unless you are constantly communicating why you believe in yourself and what service or product

you are selling. What makes you stand out? What makes you distinctive?

- Be humble. This may sound like a contradiction to the point above, but it’s not. Humility is being secure enough to acknowledge that you don’t have all the answers. Therefore, as an entrepreneur, you want to know more and ask probing questions.
- Burn the midnight oil. Successful small business professionals understand that we don’t work conventional hours. Sometimes, we are drafting a business plan or sketching out our vision at two or three in the morning. Further, not only do we not resent doing it, but we love doing it because at our core, entrepreneurs have a special passion.
- Be persistent. See a “no” or rejection as an invitation to prove how wrong those who rejected you really were. If you are easily defeated by the word “no”, then going into your own business may not be for you. However, if you can get beyond the rejection, the satisfaction of getting a “yes” is what makes being in business for yourself worth it. 📌



Steve Aduato, PhD, is the author of five books including, “Lessons in Leadership.” His sixth book, “Lessons in Leadership 2.0: The Tough Stuff,” will be released in summer 2023. He is an Emmy® Award-winning anchor with programs airing on Thirteen/WNET (PBS) and NJ PBS. He has also appeared on CNN, NPR and NBC’s Today Show. Steve Aduato’s “Lessons in Leadership” video podcast with co-host Mary Gamba airs Sundays at 10:00 a.m. on News 12+. For more information visit www.Stand-Deliver.com

Real Estate 2025 Forecast: *Shifting Lifestyles Driving Change*

By Larry Feld

Real estate's fortunes have always been subject to the winds of change; however, this market is unique. Beyond interest rates and inventory, shifting lifestyle needs (remote work, boomers retiring, and the continuing move to online buying) are driving fundamental change.

Take the warehouse industry, for example. Fulfilling the needs of the online retail industry has turned New Jersey into a key logistics state. According to the "[New Jersey Warehouse Boom](#)" report, written by the Environmental Defense Fund and published by Globalcleanair.org, New Jersey now has 3,034 warehouses comprising 527 million square feet. That represents an astounding 35% increase in the last two decades.

So what will 2025 look like? What are the Trends?

"I expect that there'll be a lot of improvement in the warehouse industrial market, from both leasing and in sales," suggests William C. Hanson, President of NAI James E. Hanson, Commercial Real Estate Services.

"We are seeing the first shoots of recovery for warehouse construction and investment in

warehouse automation as e-commerce starts to stabilize and companies embrace just-in-case inventory," notes Rueben Scriven, Research Manager for Interact Analysis, a national research firm.

David Polazzi, Senior Counsel and Chair of Commercial Real Estate practice at Peckar & Abramson, P.C. adds, "I think we will see growth in some segments, such as the light industrial/warehouse market and multi-family residential real estate development projects, while retail and office will continue to struggle."

Bill Hanson agrees. "The office market is going to continue to be challenged. There's just not as much demand for office space as there once was," Hanson notes.

His comments mirror the opinion of the accounting and advisory firm PwC. In their most recent "[Emerging Trends in Real Estate](#)" report, the firm opines "Today's critical real estate investment factors are supply dynamics and a modernized stock of buildings. For example, newer office buildings offer amenities (the so-called 'flight to wellness') that make them preferable to the languishing stock of aging buildings."

"In New Jersey, we've overbuilt and have an excess inventory of older office space," Hanson

continues. "Most of the deals we're involved in are some kind of consolidation of space. It may be a nice-sized deal, but it's half of the square footage the tenant is coming out of," Hanson explains.

"We feel optimistic about the real estate market for 2025," notes Oliver Lewis, Executive Vice President of Commercial Lending for Columbia Bank. "The economy is strong and unemployment remains relatively low. Commercial borrowers in 2024 took a backseat 'waiting to see what happens' approach. I think we're starting to see that trend reverse. With interest rates dropping, opportunities make more sense for our investment clients. We're definitely seeing more activity," he says.

"I am positive about the new year," agrees Terrie O'Connor, President of Terrie O'Connor Realtors. "I think there will be more transactions and a little more improvement all-around."

Some bright spots in commercial real estate are showing promise. One surprise is retail space. "The good location properties will remain in demand and pricing will be good. It's that secondary retail that is suffering. I don't see that changing," Hanson says, adding

Continued



William C. Hanson, President,
NAI James E. Hanson



Terrie O'Connor, President,
Terrie O'Connor Realtors



Oliver Lewis, Executive Vice
President of Commercial Lending,
Columbia Bank



David Polazzi, Senior Counsel and
Chair of Commercial Real Estate
practice at Peckar & Abramson, P.C.

Real Estate

“Old dilapidated real estate in secondary locations, there’s not a taker for those properties as retail space. There’s not enough demand to fund expensive redevelopment. E-commerce has changed a lot of shopping habits.”

What retail space is successful right now? Entertainment-related projects, according to Hanson. “Social real estate, where people go to find restaurants, shopping, and the movies. These properties feed into a lifestyle,” he says.

Other promising commercial projects anticipated for 2025 include manufacturing and multi-unit housing.

“I think as companies grow, it is a great opportunity right now to invest in themselves,” notes Columbia’s Lewis. “Whether it’s office or warehouse space or a factory expansion, we are seeing some activity within manufacturing.”

At the same time, Lewis says housing inventory remains in short supply. “There’s just not enough housing in New Jersey. Young couples are looking for apartments because buying a home is not a viable option right now. It’s extremely expensive to buy a single-family home, so multifamily housing continues to be an extremely healthy market,” he says.

According to the National Association of Realtors, the average age of a first-time buyer is now 38 years old – the oldest ever.

“There remains a critical shortage of single-family inventory,” adds Terrie O’Connor.

“This is challenging affordability while keeping prices rising higher.” According to Bankrate, the median price of a single-family home in the Garden State as of June 2024 was \$550,400.

O’Connor says that the lack of inventory is based on a few important factors. First, pricing premiums and higher interest rates force many entry-level buyers out of the market. There is also a shortage of new construction. “With land

“There remains a critical shortage of single-family inventory,” adds Terrie O’Connor. “This is challenging affordability while keeping prices rising higher.”

inventory in short supply in Northern New Jersey, residential developers are more likely to build townhomes or multi-unit rental projects,” she explains.

“There will continue to be a tremendous increase in new multi-unit rental projects, as young buyers seek an alternative to ownership,” she notes, adding that the lifestyle needs

of young renters demand amenities and convenience. “We are seeing more new mixed-use rental projects with retail on the bottom floor and residential above.”

While O’Connor is confident that 2025 will bring some relief regarding interest rates, she sees confidence building as a result of the national election cycle coming to a close. “Elections create uncertainty, and that erodes confidence.”

The National Association of Realtors offers optimism for 2025 sales projections, predicting existing home sales will rise 9% year-over-year and new home sales will jump by 11%.

The limited inventory of single-family housing is also the result of a shift in lifestyle. Not just from remote workers, but also seniors. What was expected to be the “great migration” of baby boomers leaving their homes for warmer retirement regions has not materialized. “Seniors are aging in place,” O’Connor explains.

Regardless of the kind of real estate transaction, attorney David Polazzi stresses the importance of hiring the right professionals to assist with your transaction. “It is important for buyers and sellers to seek out an attorney with actual experience with real estate transactions to ensure that pitfalls are avoided,” he notes.

Editor’s Note: Learn more at The Commerce and Industry Association of NJ’s (CIANJ) event [“Real Estate 2025 Forecast and Legislative Update”](#) on January 31st. 📌



Photo: Terrie O'Connor Realtors



Photo: Terrie O'Connor Realtors

“I am positive about the new year,” says Terrie O’Connor, President of Terrie O’Connor Realtors. “I think there will be more transactions and a little more improvement all-around.” Shown here: 2 Alford Dr, Saddle River, NJ, priced at \$5,500,000, according to Zillow.

Ramapo College of New Jersey Looks Ahead

“At Ramapo College of New Jersey, a liberal arts education means that we teach our students how to think, not what to think,” Cindy R. Jebb, Ph.D., President, Ramapo College, tells **COMMERCE**.

Established in 1969, Ramapo is a public liberal arts college with around 6,110 students. Located in Mahwah – and named by *Condé Nast Traveler* as one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America in 2020 – undergraduate students at Ramapo College may choose to concentrate their studies in one of five schools with more than 40 academic programs, including business. Ramapo also offers several graduate programs.

In addition, Ramapo has established innovative partnerships with several community colleges in New Jersey. This includes a 3+1 program with Passaic County and Sussex County Community Colleges to allow students a more affordable path to a bachelor's degree.

“Our coursework cultivates students’ critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills by exploring multiple disciplines,” says Jebb. “Through interdisciplinary study and hands-on learning, our students are equipped to pursue a range of career paths, not just one specific role.”

To learn more about Ramapo College of New Jersey, **COMMERCE** caught up with Dr. Cindy R. Jebb, who became the College’s fifth president in 2021.

COMMERCE: What makes a Ramapo College education unique?

Cindy R. Jebb, Ph.D.: By blending the essential foundations of the liberal arts with specialized coursework, Ramapo equips our students with a unique skill set that makes them adaptable, empathetic, and effective leaders in their

respective fields. We pride ourselves on mentorship, hands-on learning, small class sizes, and paid internships – all of which contribute to our awesome graduation rates.

COMMERCE: How would you describe Ramapo’s approach to healthcare education as a liberal arts college?

Jebb: Two words: Holistic and interdisciplinary. Two excellent examples of the many successful programs at Ramapo College are nursing and social work. While nursing traditionally emphasizes clinical skills and medical knowledge, Ramapo’s nursing program also incorporates critical thinking, communication, and ethical decision-making. A deeper understanding of the human condition is acquired through coursework in subjects like history and sociology. We know that nursing goes beyond just treating symptoms; it’s about understanding the whole person. Our curriculum helps nurses address the physical as well as the emotional needs of patients and their families. Our graduates are uniquely equipped to approach patient care with empathy and an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Similarly, through our BSW and MSW programs, Ramapo College prepares social work professionals to build meaningful and empowering connections with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to promote social welfare. Our students unpack the complexities of the human condition and develop the knowledge and skills needed to understand and address issues like poverty, inequality, violence, and communication breakdowns, ultimately promoting well-being and positive change.

COMMERCE: In November, the **COMMERCE** website included an article about the New Jersey Council of County College’s new Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative, which is focused on helping students develop job skills and durable/soft skills. Is this an initiative that Ramapo also embraces?

Jebb: Yes, Ramapo is proud of this initiative that our partners in the county college system are embarking on – in many ways, it reflects the Ramapo model. From physicians to case managers, healthcare professionals and community-based practitioners benefit from Ramapo’s emphasis on problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and ethics. Our liberal arts curriculum sharpens students’ ability to engage in thoughtful discussions, advocate for patients



Photo: Ramapo College of New Jersey

Cindy R. Jebb, Ph.D., President, Ramapo College, joined Ramapo after 39 years with the U.S. military. She was the first female Dean of the Academic Board at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

and clients, build and serve on diverse teams, and navigate complex moral dilemmas. Our courses in ethics, psychology, and communication are woven into the fabric of our healthcare and social work programs, ensuring students are well-prepared for real-world challenges where technical skills alone may not suffice.

COMMERCE: We hear a lot about the increasing demand for nurses across New Jersey. How does Ramapo see itself in addressing this need?

Jebb: In the spring of 2024, Ramapo launched our Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program to expand access to current healthcare personnel and career changers who wish to seek the degree and RN-eligibility in a shorter amount of time. Thanks to \$3.5 million in supportive legislative appropriations over the last two years, our program expanded its clinical lab space to feature a new simulation lab equipped with five beds, four additional fully-networked simulation stations in pre-existing static lab space, two new classrooms, two new collaboration and study spaces, a new Anatomy and Physiology lab, and the hiring of additional faculty to meet the demands of increased enrollment. Our first ABSN cohort, which began in May 2024, will graduate in August 2025! 🎉



Photo: Ramapo College of New Jersey

New Jersey's Ongoing Infrastructure Updates

By Gary Dahms

In COMMERCE Magazine's February 2023 issue, we took a deep dive into the exciting and long-awaited upgrades that the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) would bring to the Garden State. As we kick off 2025, let's take a look at how this initiative is continuing to roll out statewide.

What the IIJA Means for NJ

The IIJA, signed into law in November 2021, authorized about \$1.2 trillion in badly needed infrastructure investments across the United States, comprised of both new project funding and overall infrastructure improvement. This included more than \$12 billion for New Jersey, to be allocated over six years.

As a reminder, the IIJA represents a departure from previous infrastructure funding models, where funds were mainly drawn from the Transportation Trust Fund and the Department of Transportation Budget. This new influx of "recession-resistant" funding is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address the deteriorating state of much of New Jersey's infrastructure, including hundreds of aging bridges and roadways. The funding will also help strengthen our infrastructure and safeguard the state against future threats, including climate change and cyberattacks.

In establishing its statewide IIJA Office, New Jersey created five core policy commitments that serve as the priority tents by which it approves projects and allocates projects:

- **Equity:** At least 40% of overall benefits must be allocated to underserved communities, including communities that are vulnerable to climate hazards and lack access to resources that include clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, workforce development, and vital clean water and wastewater infrastructure.
- **Job Creation:** The IIJA's guaranteed multi-year funding will help support our growing talent pipeline in areas that include construction, engineering, and technology.
- **Reliability:** In the face of advancing technologies, a changing climate, and a growing statewide population, the state is prioritizing projects that will stand the test of time and require less frequent maintenance. Minimizing disruption to the public is an important goal.

- **Safety:** From design all the way to construction, all approved projects must promote public safety for both workers and local residents. Fortunately, the ultimate results of many of these infrastructure upgrades, which will result in cleaner water and air, will also improve statewide health outcomes.

- **Sustainability:** New Jersey has made a commitment to 50% greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2030, and 80% greenhouse gas emissions reduction (and 100% clean energy) by 2050. Many of the IIJA's planned infrastructure upgrades directly support these goals, including an increase in public transit options, the expansion of our electric vehicle charging network, the elimination of lead service lines, and the delivery of cleaner drinking water.

How the Funds are Allocated

For each funding year, a portion of the funds must be allocated to specific projects within three years and expended within five. This approach contrasts with previous infrastructure and transportation programs, where funds often flowed directly to states without requiring detailed investment plans.

Projects are being brought to life in all 21 New Jersey counties, with \$3.7 billion allocated to roads, bridges, and major projects. \$1.3 billion has been allocated to non-road related transportation projects, including those in public mass transit. Other areas of investment include environmental remediation, water, resilience, and clean energy and power. Work is progressing on the long-delayed Gateway Project, which involves the construction of new tunnels under the Hudson River from New Jersey into Manhattan. Communities across New Jersey are also benefiting from numerous "Safe Streets and Roads for All" grants, part of a comprehensive framework to reduce injuries and fatalities on the state's public roads.

Overall, I believe the state has done an outstanding job of ensuring that the funds are flowing in the right directions, with work being approved at a record pace. Governor Murphy's administration has further hastened our ability to get projects completed by passing the Design-Build Construction Services Procurement Act, which was signed into law in 2021, with rules published in 2024 under the auspices of the state's Office of Alternative Project Delivery. The Design-build approach allows a single entity to be responsible for both the design and



Photo: T&M Associates

Gary Dahms, President and CEO, T&M Associates, and NJ Chamber of Commerce chair

construction of a project, in contrast to the traditional design-bid-build method. With one entity responsible for the work from design through completion, a variety of unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles are eliminated.

Construction projects are always challenging to communities; they can create occasional inconveniences and disruptions for commuters, businesses, and residents. But the extraordinary results will strengthen New Jersey from the ground up and prepare us for a stronger, more resilient future. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our clients and partners throughout the state to make significant progress in 2025 and beyond. 📌

Gary Dahms is the president and CEO of T&M Associates, a leading national consulting, engineering, environmental, and technical services firm headquartered in Middletown, NJ. He also serves as chair of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce and previously served as chair of its Transportation Committee.

Appointments at Meyner and Landis, M&T, Spencer, and Valley

By Jamie Grill-Goodman

Angela Nascondiglio Stein Joins Meyner and Landis

Meyner and Landis LLP welcomes attorney Angela Nascondiglio Stein to the firm. Her law practice is focused on Banking, Corporate Business Transactions, Creditors' Rights, and Litigation. She specializes in commercial litigation involving creditors' rights matters, including but not limited to foreclosures, workouts, and collections. She represents financial institutions, including national and state banking institutions, corporations, borrowers, landlords, insurance companies, and other secured and unsecured creditors. Prior to joining Meyner and Landis she was an associate at Middlebrooks Shapiro, P.C.

M&T Bank Names Shannon Lazare NJ Regional President

M&T Bank has promoted Shannon Lazare as its New Jersey Regional President. Lazare will lead the bank's local growth and community engagement initiatives throughout New Jersey. She succeeds Tom Comiskey who, after serving as M&T's New Jersey Regional President for nine years, was elevated last year to Area Executive in its Commercial Bank.

In her new role, Shannon will lead M&T's team in the Garden State, ensuring that the bank continues to serve its communities and customers. She will oversee all aspects of the bank's involvement in community engagement, economic development, and charitable initiatives for M&T in New Jersey along with her current duties as Business Banking Regional Manager.

Shannon joined M&T in 2013 as a Senior Relationship Manager with Business Banking and has held the role of Regional Manager since 2019. She brings over 20 years of experience in the financial services industry, having previously worked with J.P. Morgan Chase, Wachovia, and Valley National Bank.

Spencer Savings Bank Makes Two Appointments


Spencer Savings Bank welcomes Milena Bosak as Vice President, Small Business Relationship Manager, and has promoted Michael Claisse to Executive Vice President and Chief Lending Officer.

Claisse joined the bank in 2018 as Director of Commercial Real Estate Lending where he managed the bank's Commercial Real Estate department. In his new role, he will assume leadership responsibilities across all residential, consumer, and commercial lending areas as well as oversee the loan portfolio management and loan operation functions.

Bosak assumes the role within the Bank's Small Business Finance division which provides small business lending and deposit products to clients across New Jersey. She brings almost 20 years of banking industry experience to Spencer's Small Business Finance division. Prior to joining Spencer, she held various leadership positions at national and regional financial institutions in New Jersey.

Sita Chokhavatia, MD, Elected as Chairperson of the ACG Board of Governors

Valley Health System congratulates Valley Medical Group gastroenterology Sita Chokhavatia, MD, on being

elected as chairperson of the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) Board of Governors. The ACG is a professional organization dedicated to advancing the field of gastroenterology through impactful patient care, education, and research. ACG governors are elected annually and serve a term of three years. In the chairperson position, Dr. Chokhavatia will oversee a group of more than 75 other governors across the United States and abroad. 

Are you a CIANJ member with news, such as an appointment, new office, or merger? Reach out to Jamie Goodman at JGoodman@cianj.org to be considered for the next "Member Moves."



Photo: M&T Bank

M&T Bank has named Shannon Lazare, who joined M&T in 2013, as its New Jersey Regional President.



Photos: Milena Bosak, Spencer Savings Bank

Spencer Savings Bank welcomes Milena Bosak and promotes Michael Claisse.



Photos: Michael Claisse Spencer Savings Bank



Photo: Angela Nascondiglio Stein

Associate Angela Nascondiglio Stein Joins Meyner and Landis from Middlebrooks Shapiro, P.C.



Photo: Chokhavatia, Sita, M.D.

Dr. Chokhavatia is board certified in internal medicine, gastroenterology, and geriatric medicine.

OneonOne
with **Steve Adubato**

**CELEBRATING
30 YEARS
OF BROADCAST
EXCELLENCE**



NJ PBS THIRTEEN

Watch our anniversary specials! SteveAdubato.org



Leadership Characteristics of Highly Effective CEOs



By Joseph P. Truncale, Ph.D.
Contributing Editor

When a leading research team began tracking results of privately held industry companies, a great deal of data was collected, analyzed, and compared. They

began to look for patterns of performance over an extended period of time. Through a strict process, they made a stunning discovery.

A select group of companies outperformed the rest of their industry by a significant margin in key metrics including organic sales growth, value-added and profitability. And they did so consistently over more than ten years.

These leading companies were not a particular size in terms of sales volume or head count. They weren't located in one area of the country nor were they concentrated in one type of product or service specialization. What then is the common thread that enabled these businesses to perform at such a high level, consistently and for so many years?

To answer this question, a comprehensive research project was undertaken with a special focus on the leadership characteristics of the CEOs of these high-performing companies. While this study was conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation, it became far more than an academic exercise.

The baseline comparative was based on James McGregor Burns' theory of leadership which is centered around three distinct leadership styles: Transformational, Transactional and Passive-Avoidant (Laissez-Faire). A brief description of each style follows.

Passive-Avoidant is considered the least effective style of leadership, evidenced by leaders who interact with their reports only when there is an obvious problem or serious issue/mistake. It focuses on punitive, even embarrassing measures as corrective action.

Transactional leadership can be an effective style but in a somewhat limited way. It assumes that leadership is based on a quid pro quo; that is, people work for remuneration and should expect nothing more. The working relationship is based on the idea that work is done, and there is an exchange of consideration in the form of compensation. Simple and straight forward.

Transformational leadership is considered as effective as it is rare. This style of leadership is focused on getting organizational results by maximizing the potential and unique ability of every team member. The leader is seen as a facilitator, educator, coach and mentor. Team members working with a transformational leader report high levels of personal and professional satisfaction and tend to contribute to significant organizational success in ways that are specific, measurable and reflective of their individual contribution.

The construct of the study included use of three survey instruments and in-depth interviews. Here's what was learned.

Every one of the CEO's participating in the study rated their leadership style as transformative. Not a surprise; these are confident, self-aware individuals. However, what we did not expect to find is that in every case, the direct report groups (the CEO's management team) also rated their CEO's leadership style as transformative.

Is it coincidence that where there is a transformative style of leadership (recognized by the CEO and by their direct reports), organizational performance significantly exceeds that of industry norms and over an extended period of time? If not, what are the specific behavioral traits, beliefs, and characteristics of these transformative leaders? Can they be taught, learned, practiced, and improved by anyone willing to better understand and improve their own leadership behaviors/style?

For more information the traits identified and how they can be applied in your organization, contact me at joe@ajstrategy.com 📧

Joseph P. Truncale, Ph.D., CAE, is the Founder & Principal of Alexander Joseph Associates, a privately held consultancy specializing in executive business advisory services.

He is the former CEO of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the world's largest public relations organization. Prior to joining PRSA, Joe was President & CEO of NAPL, a business management association representing leading companies in the printing, graphic communications, mailing, fulfillment and marketing services industry.

Joe specializes in strategy, customer analysis and organizational effectiveness.

He is a graduate of Monmouth University and he holds a Masters' Degree from Rutgers University. In 2011, he earned his Ph.D. in Media, Culture and Communications at New York University and was the recipient of the Prism Award for Academic Achievement. His dissertation was a ground-breaking study of the leadership styles of highly successful entrepreneurial business executives in the graphic communications industry.

Joe served as Co-Chair of the New York University Board of Advisors and is an adjunct faculty member at NYU teaching graduate courses in Executive Leadership, Financial Management and Analysis, Finance for Marketing Decisions, and Leadership: The C Suite Perspective. He resides in Colts Neck, NJ.



Good leadership can be transformative.

Photo: Getty Images/stockphoto/AndreyPopov/Chan2545

Local news is more important **than ever**



TAPINTO PROVIDES ORIGINAL LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE
EVERY DAY IN MORE THAN 125 NJ TOWNS

Proud Partner of Commerce Magazine

Find Commerce online at www.commercemagazinenj.com

Objective Local News
Coverage

No Editorial
Page

No Comments/
Anonymous Comments

No Paywall

To Advertise:
TAPintoMarketing.net

Franchising
Information:
StartTAP.net

Sign Up for Our
Free Newsletter:



Making Our Mark.

GIBBONS

Impacting businesses when it matters most.
Your legal partner since 1926.

gibbonslaw.com

NJ NY PA DE DC FL

Gibbons P.C. is headquartered at One Gateway Center, Newark, New Jersey 07102. Prior results do not guarantee similar outcomes.
No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.