

Economic Stability Starts at Home

Buena Vista Takes New Initiative in Difficult Times

By: Mayor Chuck Chiarello, Buena Vista Township, NJCM Executive Board Member

Buena Vista Township, a 41.5 square mile Pinelands Regulated Community is in the western end of Atlantic County. Ninety percent of our land has restrictions that limit our growth potential. We have an Economic Development Committee which is made up of volunteers. Our budget does not allow for us to have an Economic Director or the staff that many larger towns have. Mayor and Township Committee must fill this void and think outside the box to both retain businesses and attempt to find new ones. Our efforts center on making Buena Vista government concerned, helpful and business friendly.

The economy in Atlantic County is virtually at an all-time low with the closing of four casinos, high unemployment, high foreclosure rates and other factors. It is now more important than ever to take new local economic initiatives. Atlantic County, through the Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA), has recently taken on a larger role in working with towns to expand the economic opportunities on a county-wide basis rather than just rely on the casino and tourist economy. The ACIA appointed Max Slusher as its new Economic Development Director. With Max's help, we have been able to tackle some major projects that might have otherwise remained dormant.

Our first project in 2015 came with a company named Buenapac. They flash-freeze fruits and vegetables to ship elsewhere from our large local farm community. The new owners are from Canada and looked towards the Township to guide them in

improving an existing building they purchased. We helped them with local regulations, Pinelands rules, finding contractors and other possible economic resources. They are off to a good start and this operation will bring jobs to our community.

Our proudest accomplishment was with a local pharmaceutical manufacturer called IGI, Inc. The company which has been around since 1988 had its shares of ups and downs. In recent years, they have become very successful and were looking to expand to meet their needs over the next five to ten years. Their choices were to stay here in Buena Vista or look for some other site elsewhere in New Jersey, Pennsylvania or in some other state. The Township set up a series of meetings involving our elected and professional staff along with Max Slusher from ACIA. The Township was able to show IGI that there were economic resources available through the State of New Jersey and educational opportunities right here in the County to train skilled staff for their future expansion. IGI liked what they saw and the Township helped to expedite the steps to get them through our Planning/Zoning Board. IGI also purchased back their original executive office building which had been sold in more difficult times. By 2017, their main research and manufacturing facility will double in size to 75,685 sq. ft. and their staff is expected to grow from 100 to 200 employees during that time frame. This project is a valuable asset to our local work force and a solid commercial ratable for our taxpayers. The Township worked closely with the executive staff at IGI and was persistent with our follow up. IGI has now changed



Chuck Chiarello is Mayor of Buena Vista Township in Atlantic County. He is a lifelong resident of Atlantic County and has served as a Township Committeeman in Buena Vista Township for 25 years. He has served 20 of those years as Mayor and is knowledgeable in every aspect of local government. Mayor Chiarello has been associated with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities for the past 25 years, serving as state-wide President in 2011. He has also been on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Conference of Mayors since 1996 and is currently on the Executive Board as 4th Vice-President.

With the dramatic changes in Atlantic City and Atlantic County with the closing of casinos, unemployment, and record foreclosures our towns need to look after themselves.

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its name to meet its future goals to Teligent, Inc. They are rapidly moving ahead with their project. Only ten percent of Buena Vista is not regulated by the Pinelands Commission. The ability to move IGI's project along rapidly certainly was helped by them not being in a Pinelands Zone. Other challenges are not as easy.

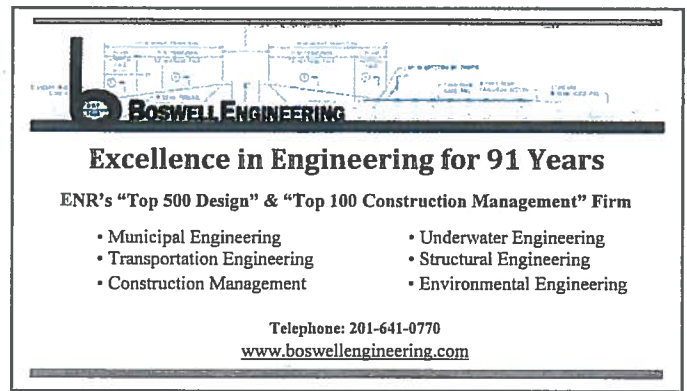
Inspira which is a South Jersey based hospital and medical group had plans to open a new medical complex in Buena Vista. They were on a tight timetable to meet their goals with other projects that they were working on in the region. Their property was located within the Pinelands area and the Township was able to help them through the review process with the Pinelands Commission. Our local knowledge and our ability to work with the Pinelands Commission helped expedite the process. Inspira's building started construction in the spring of 2015 and opened in late January 2016.

Another large plastics manufacturing facility that was built before the Pinelands regulations existed is a tougher challenge for us. The company wants to greatly expand or possibly go elsewhere. Again, the Township brought its staff and professionals together along with County and State officials to help convince this manufacturer that Buena Vista was still the place to be. Fantastic economic incentives were found through the State Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the Lt. Governor's Business Action Center. That project is still in the works, but we are expecting positive results.

The personal touch and the feeling of wanting to be part of our Hometown were great assets in advancing our economic goals. 🍷



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