

Businesses selected for Project Pop-Up 2014

Participation more than doubles for state program, which offers rent-free commercial space

Dover, DE – Last year, five entrepreneurs jumped at an opportunity offered by the State of Delaware and used it to achieve their dreams of moving into a brick-and-mortar location.

Using last year's success as a springboard for 2014, [Project Pop-Up](#) has more than doubled that number, as 13 businesses will participate in the program this holiday season.

Project Pop-Up, a joint effort between the Delaware Economic Development Office and Downtown Delaware, offers three months of rent-free commercial space and the assistance of a business advisor from October through December. The program also helps to spur economic development in towns across the state by placing businesses in renovated properties that were once vacant.

“The success of Delaware's talented and hard-working entrepreneurs is vital to our state's present and future economy,” Gov. Jack Markell said. “Project Pop-Up has proven to position them for long-term success, helping to turn their great ideas into thriving businesses, while reinvigorating vacant properties in our downtowns. Combined with initiatives like expanding the research and development tax credit for small businesses and reforming state regulations, this initiative is an essential part of our efforts to unleash the potential of Delaware's small business community.

The following businesses will take part in Project Pop-Up 2014 and will open on Oct. 1:

- Fresh Faced Skin Care, LLC, owned by Erica Suppa, 104 West Main Street, Middletown
- Max Tax, LLC, owned by Gary and Nicole Kennedy, 202 North Union St., Wilmington
- Patty Cakes, LLC, owned by Latricia Vicks, 22 South Walnut St., Milford
- Skin by Hillary, LLC, owned by Hillary Reid, 105 Federal St., Milton
- WineKnot21, LLC, owned by Amy Conroy, 113 Union Street Unit F, Milton

This year will also see the addition of a Project Pop-Up Incubator at 9th and Shipley streets in Wilmington, which will include the following businesses:

- Barrel of Makers, owned by Jesse Taylor
- Cherné Altovise Jewelry, owned by Cherné Bishop
- Dolley's Sweet Cakes, owned by Andrienne Dolley
- Fit Body Personal Training, owned by Ositadinma Ofuani
- FLYOGI, owned by Jason Aviles
- London Rocks Kids, owned by Damaris Colon
- MIZ INK, owned by Michael Hill
- Tasty Couture, owned by Theresa Holland

“The expansion of this year’s Pop-Up program to include a three-month incubator in the City of Wilmington will create an opportunity for early stage entrepreneurs to market test their products and services, during the holiday season, in an active downtown location,” said Ken Anderson, director for entrepreneurial and small business support for DEDO. “We are confident that a number of these businesses will be in a better position to pursue longer-term lease arrangements going forward.”

Last year’s Project Pop-Up participants included 302 Fitness, a personal training studio and small group workout center in Milton owned by John Lehne; Milton Wellness Center of Delaware, owned by Dr. Bill Shearer and Mary Van House;

Milford Massage, Wellness and Yoga, owned by Paige Deiner; Royal Treatments, a home décor and window treatments business in downtown Smyrna owned by Karen Gill; and Computers Fixed Today, owned by Theo Morgan and located in Dover.

“The response to last year’s program was just phenomenal, and we couldn’t be happier with the fact that we were able to more than double the number of participating businesses,” said Diane Laird, State Coordinator for Downtown Delaware. “What was most encouraging was our ability to help last year’s businesses sign long-term leases beyond the holiday season. We hope to replicate that success this year.”

Last year, all five businesses signed long-term leases and continue to do business in the communities in which they were established.

Deiner’s business did so well that it outgrew its space and moved to a larger location less than a mile away. Since she first opened her business with the help of Project Pop-Up, Milford Massage has quadrupled its business, compiling in one day what it used to bring in over a week.

“I don’t think any of this would have been possible without Project Pop-Up,” Deiner said. “It was hard to take that risk and invest in something that I was unsure about. Project Pop-Up not only gave us a start, but it gave us constant support. It gave me the opportunity to work toward that dream with confidence.”

Project Pop-Up represents a “graduation phase” of DEDO’s support of small business, which begins with programs like Start It Up Delaware and continues with the Kauffman FastTrac Program, said Alan Levin, Director of the Delaware Economic Development Office.

“Every big business started out as a small business. We provide financial assistance and support for small businesses because they are the future of our economy,” Levin said.

“Project Pop-Up has been successful at identifying those individuals who are willing to take the leap and move ahead with their vision. These men and women will lead Delaware’s economy for years to come, and we will gladly support their efforts long after the ink dries on their first long-term lease.”

About the Delaware Economic Development Office

The Delaware Economic Development Office is an executive state agency responsible for attracting new investors and businesses to the state, promoting the expansion of existing industry, assisting small and minority-owned businesses, promoting and developing tourism and creating new and improved employment opportunities for all citizens of the State. Visit dedo.delaware.gov.

About Downtown Delaware

Downtown Delaware, a program of the Delaware Economic Development Office, provides Delaware’s historic downtowns, communities, and small businesses with tools to revitalize their commercial districts, increase entrepreneurial opportunity, and enhance quality of place. To learn more about the Main Street program, visit www.delawaremainstreet.com.

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