

Right Place. Right Size.

Delaware downtowns selected for second Project Pop-Up

Entrepreneurs can apply now for golden opportunity in one of six commercial business districts

WILMINGTON, Del. (July 25, 2013) – During its inaugural run last year, Project Pop-Up turned the dreams of entrepreneurs into reality and brought life to vacant buildings in otherwise bustling downtowns throughout Delaware.

Looking to build on that overwhelming success, Downtown Delaware and the [Delaware Economic Development Office](#) have launched the second Project Pop-Up, which will offer commercial space, rent-free for three months to select entrepreneurs during the 2013 holiday season.

The goal is to offer these business owners a limited risk opportunity while also stimulating economic activity at several locations in participating communities statewide: Wilmington, Middletown, Dover, Smyrna, Milton and Milford. (For details and photos, visit the [Project Pop-Up website](#).)

“Whether you’re a home-based entrepreneur looking to move your business into a brick and mortar location, or an existing business owner considering expanding to a new space, we believe Project Pop-Up is for you,” said Diane Laird, DEDO State Coordinator for Downtown Delaware. “Owners of businesses that took root during last year’s Project Pop-Up were highly encouraged by the community support they received, and we anticipate the same kind of camaraderie and collaborations in the communities chosen for this year’s program.”

Two success stories that emerged from last year’s Project Pop-Up were First & Little, a baby boutique in Middletown owned by Amber Shader; and Little Posies Photography, a Milford-based business owned by Jenn White.

First & Little, an offshoot of Shader’s photography business, did extremely well during the 2012 holiday season after moving into a space at 49 W. Main Street. Shader’s business was also recently named “Best Baby Boutique in Northern Delaware” in Delaware Today’s recent “Best of Delaware” issue. Shader said she couldn’t have accomplished that feat without the help of Project Pop-Up.

“I really thought that my goal for my brick and mortar store was about two years down the pike. Project Pop-Up helped me achieve that goal much sooner,” Shader said. “If you’re a business that’s ready to take the next step - jump at the opportunity. It’s a great way to dip your toe into the water and test it out and see how it goes.”

White said the business owners in downtown Milford have been extremely helpful since she opened Little Posies at 131 N.W. Front Street.

Thanks to the help of Project Pop-Up, both Shader and White signed long-term leases to continue doing business at their respective locations.

Alan Levin, director of the Delaware Economic Development Office, said the state nurtures entrepreneurship from the very early concept phases through its support of programs like [Start It Up Delaware](#) and the Kauffman FastTrac Program.

“Project Pop-Up helps entrepreneurs move to that next phase, where they take the idea they’ve cultivated to a real-life location,” Levin said. “This in turn contributes to the success of Delaware’s downtowns, which are crucial to our state’s economy. In these hubs of commerce, the addition of one or two new businesses can be the spark a town needs to really come to life.”

[Applications](#) will be accepted from small business owners through Sunday, **Aug. 11, 2013**. A panel of representatives from DEDO, Downtown Delaware, and participating Main Street towns will review applications to select the best qualified applicant for each space.

One qualified business owner will be selected for each participating property and will be notified by **Aug. 26**. In preparation for opening the business, winners will participate in a one-on-one consultation with a business coach between **Sept. 9-13** to ensure likelihood of a successful launch of the business by **Oct. 1**, and then continued running of the business.

For additional details, visit www.dedo.delaware.gov/popup.

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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