



## W E L C O M E

The breadth of activity at the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) in the past year was the widest in the six-year history of our organization.

The "Core Four" (Lauren Moore, Max Slusher, Francine Palumbo, and Noel McGuire), worked on projects ranging from redevelopment of the historic Ducktown neighborhood in Atlantic City, to executing agreements with the U.S. Air Force to advance aviation research related to national security. This annual report is a picture in time highlighting many of the major activities and accomplishments of the ACEA in 2023.

Looking back, much of our output focused on creating the ecosystem to attract the aviation industry to Atlantic County. Developing an environment conducive to technological advancement is a continuous and evolving effort far beyond building an office park and prospecting for tenants. It is about pursuing government funding and grants; fostering a climate for research, testing, and evaluation; forming strategic and academic partnerships; and educating the local workforce, one student at a time.

This past year, the ACEA also worked on a wide range of projects outside the field of aviation. These activities were focused on small business and entrepreneurial assistance, planning, and support for municipal economic development initiatives. We are proud of the breadth of our accomplishments, but they simply would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of our extended team. We offer our sincere thanks to ACEA consultants:

- Dr. Patricia Gentile – Lead Grant Writer and Administrator
- Michael Rennick – Grant Writer
- Kenneth LeFevre – Organizational Advancement
- Mary Ann Pontari – Full Charge Bookkeeper

And to Performance Marketing:

- Glenn Davila – President
- Michael Epifanio – Vice President

Thanks also to our active Board of Trustees for their guidance and to the members of our organization for their financial contributions, which are so critical to our operations. It is a privilege to serve the needs of our county and our communities. We look forward to working with you all in 2024.

Onward!



*Breaking ground on NARTP Building 2 are, from left to right, the ACEA's Max Slusher, Lauren Moore, Francine Palumbo and Noel McGuire.*

Lauren H. Moore, Jr.

Noel McGuire

Max Slusher

Francine Palumbo

The ACEA is governed by an independent Board of Trustees who represent a variety of business and community interests and is supported by private sector investors with partial funding from Atlantic County government.



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*President,  
Harrison Beverage*



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Vice Chair  
*Partner,  
Fox Rothschild*



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*President & CEO,  
Parke Bank*



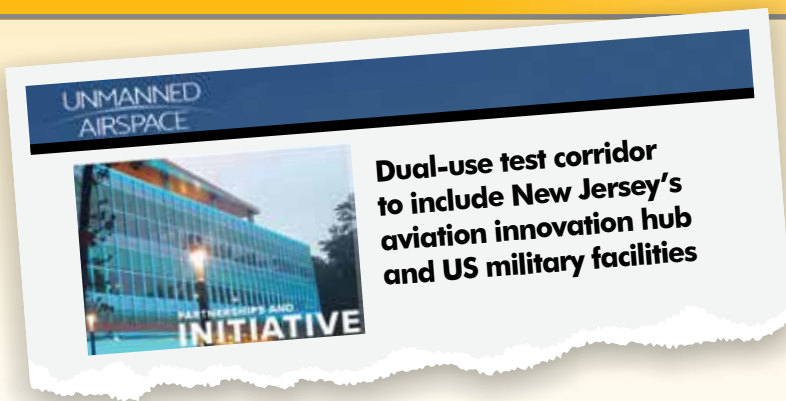
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*Executive Director,  
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**David Zappariello**  
*Chief of Staff,  
South Jersey  
Transportation Authority*



**Mitch Zitomer**  
*Past Chairman,  
Greater Atlantic City Chamber*



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This agreement is a significant accomplishment and will demonstrate the NARTP’s ability to facilitate aviation research. USTRANSCOM and AMC are major players in aviation. Their interest in working with the NARTP helps to advance both the development of the NARTP and the emerging aviation industry in New Jersey’s Atlantic County.

– Mark Loeben, NARTP Board Chairman

## Three-Dimensional Testbed in the Sky

An agreement to create a three-dimensional testbed in the sky for development of Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) technologies (flying cars) was signed by officials representing U.S. Transportation Command, U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command, the National Aerospace Research & Technology Park (NARTP) and the ACEA.

Under terms of a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA), the parties pledged to develop this testbed to evaluate UAS and AAM technologies. This testbed will pass over Atlantic County and link Joint Base McGuire-Dix-

Lakehurst in central New Jersey to Dover Air Force base in Delaware. The CRADA represents a significant step forward by ACEA and NARTP to make Atlantic County an attractive home for aviation companies, creating the nation’s first and only dual-use (civil/military) testbed in the sky.



## Airport Hotel and Business Center

Leo Schoffer, President of Schoffer Enterprises, announced that his company is developing plans to build a four-story, 111-room hotel with meeting space, restaurants, and other amenities inside the Aviation District on Delilah Road. As aviation-related businesses relocate to Atlantic County, they attract visiting scientists and technicians worldwide, and the hotel will provide overnight and extended-stay accommodations. Site-development plans have been approved by Egg Harbor Township and construction of the project is expected to begin in 2024.

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We believe this hotel development will be followed by more private-sector investment that will build on the foundation of a booming regional aviation industry that we mark today.

– Leo Schoffer, President,  
Schoffer Enterprises



## Airfield Autonomy Initiative (AAI)

In December 2023, the NARTP signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the William J. Hughes FAA Technical Center which enables it to start processing a \$2.224 million congressionally directed spending request to advance the Airport Autonomy Initiative. The development and implementation of increasingly autonomous systems for military and civil aviation is proceeding rapidly. It is driven by the expectation that such systems will bring significant benefits in safety, reliability, efficiency, affordability, and new military mission capabilities. The market for new, autonomous related aviation products and services is projected to be more than \$150 billion annually within 15 years. AAI is a cooperative effort involving the NARTP, ACEA, the FAA and the U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command.

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It is truly a milestone for us to see government funded, U.S. Air Force-backed autonomous research being conducted right here in Atlantic County. AAI is putting a giant spotlight on the NARTP as a technology hub, and we look forward to seeing much more AAI research activity in our area as our federal funding gets deployed.

– Howard Kyle, President, and CEO, NARTP

AINonline

AEROSPACE



### Grant Awarded for Autonomous Airfield Technology

by Curt Epstein - February 6, 2023

## Beyond Aviation Opening Flight School at ACY

On November 1, Beyond Aviation signed a lease with Signature Aviation for hangar and office space at Atlantic City International Airport (ACY). This project is expected to create 10 new jobs.



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We worked closely with Signature Aviation, Atlantic City International Airport, and the Atlantic County Economic Alliance to get this deal done. We look forward to welcoming our first group of students and plan to be active members of the growing aviation community around the FAA Tech Center, ACY, and the aviation research park.

– Bill Diamond, CEO and Founder, Beyond Aviation

## Air Boss

While launching a testbed in the sky will attract new companies and jobs to Atlantic County, it is a long-term undertaking requiring complex planning, access to restricted radar data, and approvals from the FAA. To help companies conduct testing in the shorter term, a specialized air traffic control management firm is now serving as an on-site “Air Boss,” helping companies conduct test flights on an as needed basis and adding value for tenants leasing space at NARTP.



## NARTP BUILDING #2 GROUNDBREAKING

Approximately 150 people, including federal, state, and local officials, celebrated a groundbreaking for construction of the second building at the National Aerospace Research and Technology Park (NARTP) on October 12, 2023.

The NARTP is located on a 58-acre campus adjacent to the Federal Aviation Administration’s William J. Hughes Technical Center and the Atlantic City International Airport in Egg Harbor Township. Upon full build-out, the park will consist of seven buildings with 400,000 square feet of Class A research and development space.

Several potential new tenants are engaged for space in the new building. Tenants in the fully occupied first building at the

park include the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), NASA, General Dynamics Information Technology, Woolpert, the Atlantic County Institute of Technology, and Optimal Solutions and Technologies. The companies and other tenants are already conducting leading-edge research into novel uses of UAS and their integration into the National Airspace System and the field of Advanced Air Mobility that employs electric-powered aircraft that take-off and land vertically.

According to FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center Director Shelley Yak, the further development of the NARTP coincides with what she called the “third revolution” of the aviation industry.



The crowd filled the tent and spilled out at the site of Building 2 where the groundbreaking ceremony took place.



Among the dignitaries who spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony were Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson, the FAA’s Shelley Yak, and Sen. Vince Polistina.



The ACIT Air Force JROTC present the colors at the start of the groundbreaking ceremony.



ACEA Chair Brett Matik, ACEA Chair Emeritus Leo Schoffer, and ACEA President Lauren Moore, Jr.

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The first revolution began with flight and the Wright Brothers in 1903, the second occurred during WWII with the invention of the jet engine. Today's revolution is preparing for a future like we saw on the 'Jetsons' with flying taxis that will take our visitors from casino to casino and with unmanned aircraft systems delivering packages to your doorstep. These are examples of the substantial research within the field of aviation that are open to the research park's involvement.

– Shelley Yak, Director, FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center



Left to right: NARTP supporters Chris Seher, Dr. Ed Salmon, Ron Esposito, Dave Sweet, Sen. Vince Polistina, and Frank LoBiondo.



# Major Airport Development Deals Signed in 2023

## Alterum

Alterum, a wholly owned subsidiary of Optimal Solutions and Technologies, a tenant at the NARTP, signed a lease agreement with the South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) to develop aeronautical facilities on 20 acres at Atlantic City International Airport (ACY). Details of Alterum's plans for development at ACY are expected in 2024.

## Industrial Realty Group (IRG)

Industrial Realty Group, LLC (IRG), one of the largest commercial real estate developers in the nation, announced in October that the company reached agreement with the SJTA on a ground lease of more than 300 acres in the northwest corner of ACY.

The agreement is a culmination of more than six years of the ACEA working cooperatively with the SJTA to unlock the site for development. The accord calls for the SJTA and IRG to work towards construction of a new, mixed-use (air cargo/logistics) development with the potential for multi-modal infrastructure.

ACEA has been working with IRG for two years on this transformational project, which would create 2,000 new jobs, prompt construction of three million square feet of space, and stimulate \$1+ billion of capital investment. Before the site could be approved for development, a sanctuary for endangered birds along the main runway at ACY had to be relocated to a farm in Hamilton Township. Atlantic County government purchased the farm for the relocated birds for \$2 million.

Courier Post  
SOUTH JERSEY



October 11, 2023

## Industrial Development Plan Advanced at Atlantic City International Airport



Immediately after IRG's lease agreement was signed, ACEA began coordinating meetings with state and federal officials to ensure regulatory requirements are met and help navigate the permitting process and environmental assessments necessary for New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Pinelands Commission approvals.

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**IRG has a wealth of experience in the aviation segment of commercial development. We have already discussed site opportunities with many job-creating tenants. We believe this momentum will continue to grow because of the property's location and airport proximity.**

– Stuart Lichter, President, Industrial Realty Group, LLC

## Roadway Infrastructure Study

ACY is used at only 23 percent of capacity. The airport has potential to be an economic engine for southern New Jersey.

In 2023, ACEA entered into an agreement with the SJTA, which manages ACY, and the Atlantic County Planning Department, to conduct a roadway planning study to support anticipated development “inside the fence” at the airport.

The \$175,000 study is funded by grant proceeds ACEA received in 2022. The study will be completed in 2024 and will put Atlantic County in a strong position to apply for federal grants related to highway construction.



## THE PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY

**The idea of a  
Galloway train stop  
has come back out  
of mothballs**



**Travelers from outside the area can easily book a flight to the city, but getting to and from the casinos and Tourism District is another story. Convenient and accessible transportation from the airport would be a boon not only for tourists but the entire Atlantic City community.**

– Sen. Vince Polistina  
*The Press of Atlantic City, “Polistina Bill to Fund Airport Transport Projects Clears Committee” March 24, 2022*

## Atlantic City Rail Line Coalition

The Atlantic City Rail Line Coalition (ACRC) is an ACEA-sponsored, ad-hoc citizens group organized to investigate the improvement and expansion of rail line services along the track. The ACRC has met with NJ Transit Senior Leadership numerous times in the past two years and has mutually agreed to explore approaches to increase rail line ridership for the benefit of the residents and businesses in southern New Jersey.

Due to the ACEA efforts over the last several years, local elected officials have taken a hands-on interest in the creation of a train station and ACY rail spur in Pomona. The SJTA and NJ Transit also have contributed planning funds to investigate the establishment of a train station and spur into ACY at Pomona.

Legislation that authorizes the CRDA to finance transportation projects between ACY and the Atlantic City Tourism District has passed the State Senate and is making its way through the State Assembly as of the end of December 2023. Current law requires all available assets and revenues of the CRDA be devoted to the Atlantic City Tourism District and community development in Atlantic City. Should this legislation pass the Assembly and be signed into law in 2024, it would enable the CRDA to fund the proposed Pomona train station and ACY rail.

## Municipal Assistance

In 2023, the ACEA took major steps forward to support economic development activity in Atlantic County municipalities. The Alliance interacted with Galloway Township, Somers Point, Hamilton Township, and Egg Harbor Township on a range of local development and redevelopment issues. The ACEA also helped Northfield coordinate a focus group of business leaders, reestablish an economic development commission, host business events, enhance the city's website, and engage a leading professional services firm, which drafted a new economic development strategy for the city.

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**Thanks to the integral, vital involvement of the ACEA both Northfield's business association and economic development association made substantial progress towards the economic vitality of Northfield.**

– Michael Grossman, Kensington Furniture

## Trophy Park, Galloway

The ACEA is working to assist Trophy Park New Jersey LLC, which is planning to develop up to 300 acres in Galloway Township for a multi-purpose indoor and outdoor athletic complex. The complex, known as Trophy Park, will feature three Wyndham-branded hotels, including 600 rooms, banquet facilities and conference rooms, and a unique Athlete Village with suites for teams and coaches. Fields and courts include 12 baseball/softball fields, batting cages with turf and lights; 12 multi-purpose fields for lacrosse, soccer, and rugby; a 400,000-sq.-ft. 16-court indoor facility for basketball, volleyball, cheer, wrestling, pickleball, and an indoor soccer field; as well as a 3,000-seat outdoor stadium with grass and lights. The complex will also feature an indoor track and field facility, a 25,000-sq. ft. E-sports arena, and an amusement and water park. The all-star campus will have the ability to host more than 2,000 athletes per week. Trophy Park expects thousands of visitors per year by presenting youth athletic tournaments and sports camps locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.



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**Trophy Park will be a great corporate citizen, bringing fantastic ratables and jobs and enhancing youth sports throughout the region. But before an athletic complex of this scale can be built, a dizzying number of approvals from local and state-level committees and agencies are required. The ACEA has been an invaluable asset to us in site selection, permitting, and assistance with navigating local endorsements and state program requirements.**

– Alan Nau, CEO, Trophy Park

**Northfield went from having one sentence addressing economic development in their master plan to clear and definable economic goals moving forward with the assistance of the ACEA.**

– Councilwomen Carolyn Bucci



Northfield Councilwoman Carolyn Bucci and businessman Michael Grossman speak at the ACEA's Business Growth Summit in May.

## Atlantic County Economic Development

Atlantic County is bustling with business expansion and construction activity. Here are some photos of the progress being made throughout the county.



*A yacht brokerage facility is being built in Somers Point.*



*The new bath, kitchen and lighting showroom for Frank Webb Home is now open on Fire Road in Egg Harbor Twp.*



*D.R. Horton is building an upscale community of single-family homes, the Winds at Ocean Club, in Egg Harbor Twp.*



*A 43,000 sq. ft. indoor sports complex is coming to Fire Road in Egg Harbor Twp.*



*Spencer's & Spirit Halloween is expanding its corporate headquarters in Egg Harbor Twp.*



*Island Waterpark at Showboat opened this summer.*



*Orsted's operations and maintenance center, under construction in Atlantic City's Bungalow Park neighborhood*



*Luxury apartments coming to Galloway Township.*



*White Horse Wine & Spirits opened a new location in Absecon on December 8.*

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Battelle and ACEA through their resources in the field of aviation have provided our youth at Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City the opportunity to not only learn more about a field very unfamiliar to them, but they have had the opportunity to educate their peers during this process. Our youth are informed daily that there is no limit to their success, opportunities such as this allows them to be creative, to think big and surpass their own imaginations.

– Dr. Aigner Holmes, COO, BGCAC



Battelle provides \$40K funding for Boys and Girls Club of A.C.'s drone program

By Linda Lindner (Egg Harbor) - July 20, 2023



## Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City

The hopes and dreams of teens in Atlantic City are taking flight thanks to a \$40,000 grant from Battelle to the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City (BGCAC). The grant was used to create an aviation and drone education curriculum. Representatives of both the BGCAC and Battelle credit the ACEA with getting the program off the ground.

The initiative began in 2022, when promising STEM high-school students got to take an introductory aviation course offered through Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC). Those students then worked with BGCAC staff to mentor 160 inner-city youths, exposing more Atlantic City children and teens to the use of drones and career opportunities presented by the aviation industry.

The BGCAC used the Battelle grant to cover staffing costs, enrollment in the ACCC aviation course, and purchase of equipment, including drones. Seven high school students passed the aviation class and earned college credits. Those teen students then worked with BGCAC staff facilitators to visit Atlantic City elementary and middle schools to demonstrate the use of drones to the younger students.

## Veteran's Film Apprenticeship and Drone Training Program

ACEA received \$150,000 in congressionally directed funding for a training program intended to assist veterans to become FAA certified drone pilots and find jobs in the aviation and film industries. Senator Cory Booker helped secure the funding, which will be administered through the U.S. Department of Labor. ACEA is working with actress and filmmaker Lisa Regina, along with Atlantic Cape Community College and private industry employers, to develop the program and put program graduates on a path for employment using their newly earned piloting credential.



**DRONE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ATLANTIC COUNTY VETERANS**



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The Veterans Film Apprenticeship is a chance for veterans to heal from the traumas of war and assimilate back into civilian life. I have many inroads in the filmmaking community and made so many fantastic connections with drone companies thanks to my company's recent participation in the flightPlan Aviation Accelerator program, so we have lots of ways to help these veterans network and find opportunities for work as a commercial drone pilot.

– Lisa Regina, Founder, Veterans Film Apprenticeship



## Atlantic Cape Community College

ACCC continues to be an indispensable partner, helping ACEA meet the needs of aviation-related employers interested in expanding into Atlantic County. ACCC's program provides students with the skills necessary to pursue a host of careers in aviation business administration, air traffic control, air transportation management, and as pilots.



## Aviation Training Academy of the Future

Aware of the need to build a workforce to support the region's growing innovation cluster, ACEA is leading an initiative to develop the "Aviation Training Academy of the Future" (ATAF) in southern New Jersey. ACEA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Air Force and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) to develop the school, and its curriculum, along with Atlantic Cape Community College. The ATAF will be a "hybrid" school providing traditional aviation maintenance technician training while also preparing students for emerging technologies including Uncrewed Aerial Systems (drones), Advanced Air Mobility (flying cars), and sustainable engine technologies.

In 2023, ERAU completed an economic feasibility study on the ATAF, with ACEA now pursuing federal funding to build the main facility at Atlantic City International Airport with a satellite campus at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

## Atlantic County Institute of Technology

Atlantic County Institute of Technology (ACIT) is constructing a \$53 million, 133,000-square-foot Career and Technical Building on its Mays Landing campus. The new building will house the expanded Academy of Aviation Studies and other technical programs. Students in ACIT's Aviation Studies program are exposed to aviation curriculum developed by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the world's largest accredited university system specializing in aviation and aerospace.



**This effort benefits the U.S. Air Force, the future maintainers of aircraft, and southern New Jersey. Each partner has a motivation for pursuing shared success; however, when our interests align, we can move forward, farther, and faster to benefit all... We all are seeking to build an aviation workforce for the future.**

– Jon D. Schleifer, Manager, FAA Research and Development Management Division



## Small Business and Entrepreneurial Assistance

In 2023, ACEA expanded its outreach and support for the region's entrepreneurs and small businesses. Forging new and leveraging existing relationships, the ACEA partnered with the New Jersey Business Action Center, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and the New Jersey Small Business Development Center network to conduct three major events for small businesses, two of which were hosted in the "Thunder Room" at the National Aerospace Research and Technology Park and one at Stockton University. The three events provided vital information and support to more than 400 attendees and small businesses.



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The NJSBDC and ACEA share the common goal of helping small business owners and entrepreneurs on their path towards success. We are thrilled to be partner with ACEA to offer these events in Atlantic County. NJSBDC has so many resources that have not been offered in Atlantic County and now are able to spread the good word with our collaborative approach to get those much needed resources into the region!

– Kelly Brozyna, CEO and State Director  
of the NJ Small Business Development Center

## GRANTS

In 2023, ACEA managed more than \$6 million in grant activity. Grants under ACEA administration include:

### 1. State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF)



This grant was awarded to the ACEA by the Murphy Administration using federal funds distributed through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

**Purpose:** Provide economic development support for regions of New Jersey harmed by COVID impacts. The ACEA grant is being used for construction on Building 2 at the National Aerospace Research and Technology Park (NARTP).

**Participants:** ACEA is working with the NARTP and the Atlantic County Improvement Authority, which is overseeing construction of Building 2.

**Grant amount:** \$5,000,000. **Timeline:** The grant period ends December 31, 2024.

### 2. Statewide Planning Grant (SPG)



This grant was awarded to ACEA by the Murphy Administration with funds supplied by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

**Purpose:** SPG was designed to assist communities nationwide in their economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and to build local economies more resilient to future economic shocks.

ACEA was approved to pursue the following projects under the SPG:

1. Conduct a statewide aviation assets assessment and prepare a report to state policymakers recommending ways to develop New Jersey's aviation ecosystem.
2. Conduct a roadway study to support air cargo and mixed-use development "inside the fence" at Atlantic City International Airport.
3. Attract aviation research to Atlantic County involving the use of drones to aid in recovery from natural disasters, for policing, and marine/wildlife monitoring.
4. Plan and create a three-dimensional testbed in the sky to attract aviation research and development to Atlantic County involving drones and Advanced Air Mobility vehicles (flying cars).
5. Conduct planning to develop a Smart Aviation Workforce and Entrepreneurial Center at Stockton University in Atlantic City.

**Participants:** ACEA, NARTP, the National Institute of Aerospace, ACCC, and Stockton University.

**Grant amount:** \$1,000,000. **Timeline:** Grant term ends March 31, 2024.

### 3. Ducktown Community Development Corporation Grant



**Purpose:** Provide funds to revitalize the historic Ducktown Neighborhood of Atlantic City. Projects include sidewalk, façade, and lighting improvements, murals, and demolition of dilapidated structures.

**Participants:** Ducktown CDC is the lead agency with ACEA serving as fiduciary for the grant.

**Grant amount:** \$521,000.

**Timeline:** Ongoing with ACEA applying for additional grant funding in 2024.

### 4. Battelle – Atlantic City Boys and Girls Club Grant



**Purpose:** Stimulate education and training in aviation STEM among the youth of Atlantic City.

**Participants:** Battelle, the Atlantic City Boys and Girls Club, and ACEA serving as fiduciary for the grant.

**Grant amount:** \$40,000.

**Timeline:** Grant ended August 2023. ACEA is applying to Battelle for another round of grant funding in 2024.

### 5. State Budget Appropriation



**Purpose:** Provides funds, distributed through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, to identify and catalogue all social services providers in Atlantic City in support ACEA operations.

**Participants:** ACEA, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

**Grant amount:** \$250,000.

**Timeline:** Funds must be allocated by the end of 2024.

### 6. Contract Awarded to ACEA from the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board



**Purpose:** Develop a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) to implement workforce and career development programs and services in Atlantic County for adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

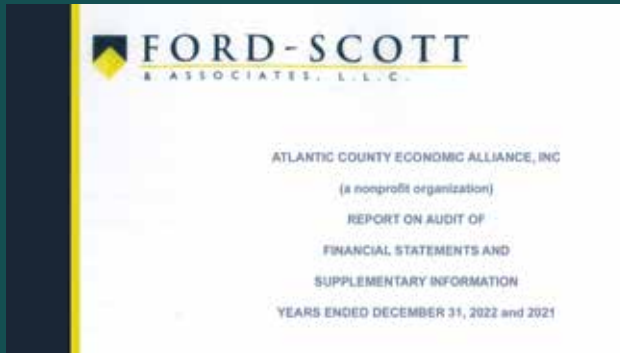
**Participants:** ACEA worked in partnership with the Executive Director of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board to draft the RFP.

**Grant amount:** \$40,000.

**Timeline:** Contract ended June 30, 2023.

## FINANCIALS/ ANNUAL AUDIT

The ACEA continues to provide conservative stewardship of the organization's financial resources, maintaining a 2024 core budget that is in line with the ACEA's 2023 and 2022 budgets.



### 2023 Audit

Like many agencies funded by government grants and appropriations, the ACEA is required to be audited annually. Attaining a "clean" audit aligns with ACEA's goal of maintaining an administration that is characterized by good governance, financial compliance, and internal controls.

On October 23, 2023, certified public accounting firm Ford, Scott and Associates LLC released a 2022 audit on ACEA's financial operations. The auditors' opinion states:

"We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Atlantic County Economic Alliance, Inc., (a nonprofit corporation) which comprise the statements of financial position as of December 31, 2022, and 2021, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

"In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Atlantic County Economic Alliance, Inc. as of December 31, 2022, and 2021, and the changes in its assets and cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

For the sixth year in a row, ACEA has received only positive findings in its audit, reflecting the time and attention the financial team spends to ensure that resources are properly received, accounted for, and expended.

## MEMBERSHIP

According to Ken LeFevre who leads our Organizational Advancement efforts, ACEA had another strong year for renewals and new memberships. More than 94 percent of ACEA's members renewed with the organization and 10 new members joined in 2023.

Our grateful thanks to our existing members and a warm welcome to our new partners, including:

- **Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind**
- **Duane Morris**
- **Caring, Inc.**
- **New Vistas**
- **Colliers Engineering and Design**
- **Galloway Township**
- **Egg Harbor City**
- **Northfield**
- **NJ American Water**
- **Somers Point**



## Esports, redevelopment, TV, boats; Atlantic County Business Growth Summit brings many ideas together

John Russo - May 14, 2023



## 2023 Business Growth Summit

The ACEA hosted a reception for businesses in Atlantic County (or those wishing to do business in Atlantic County) on Thursday, May 12 and billed the event as the 2023 Business Growth Summit. The event, held at the Smithville Inn in Galloway, was intended to introduce business owners and managers to the various ways the ACEA can provide "business concierge" services to help businesses expand in/into Atlantic County.

In addition to introductions by the ACEA's Lauren Moore, two other speakers discussed additional help available to businesses:

- **Fran Kuhn** of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board
- **Kelly Brozyna** of the NJ Small Business Development Center

The rest of the speakers were businesspeople who gave their insight into how the ACEA has helped their businesses grow or how the organization was crucial to recruiting them to Atlantic County. These speakers included:

- **Michael Cagno** of the Ducktown Neighborhood Development Corp.
- **Anthony Gaud** of G3 eSports
- **Michael Grossman** of Kensington Furniture/City of Northfield
- **Peggy Hamilton** of the Mahogany Company
- **Andrew Kennedy** from Industrial Realty Group
- **Alan Nau** of Trophy Park
- **Lisa Regina** of the Veterans Film Apprenticeship



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I was asking for help in trying to hire employees. Not only did we get in touch with them once, or twice, or three times, any time we have a question or anything, Lauren [Moore] says he'll find out. If he doesn't know the answer, he'll find out.

— Peggy Hamilton, Mahogany Company  
The Press of Atlantic City, "ACEA Brings Plenty of Ideas Together at Summit" May 14, 2023



ACEA's relationship with Performance Marketing (PM) as an in-house/out-of-house marketing agency delivers enormous value. Through this relationship, PM provides marketing strategy and budget management, key message development, public relations support, website maintenance, and special events planning.

## Public Relations

Through a program of consistent publicity efforts throughout the year, PM promotes the ACEA's activities, building awareness locally as well as statewide and nationally. Media lists of journalists and editors with whom PM has cultivated professional relationships are used to distribute press releases and media alerts. PM also assists with messaging for guest column opportunities and helps to organize and run press conferences at NARTP. No less than 18 publicity efforts in 2023 resulted in millions of media impressions from dozens of media outlets.



- Southern NJ Development Council's Chronicle Magazine article on the Aviation Academy of the Future, February '23
- NARTP Gets \$2.25M to Advance Airfield Automation, February '23
- Drones and Emerging Tech on Display as Surveyor's Week is Celebrated at the NARTP, March '23
- ACEA Announces \$150K Award to Fund Drone Training Program for Veterans, March '23
- Gaba and Cuitiño Join NARTP Board of Directors, March '23
- ACEA Hosts Business Growth Summit, May 14, 2023
- ACEA/NARTP Sign Cooperative R&D Agreement with USTRANSCOM/USAF AMC, June '23
- Press of Atlantic City Editorial Board Meeting, June '23 (resulted in a positive Editorial about ACEA in July '23)
- Documented NJSBDC "Meet the Lenders" event, July '23
- Battelle Grant Gives Flight to AC Boys and Girls Club Aviation/Drone Program, July '23
- Aviation Day Guest Column, Press of Atlantic City, August 19, 2023
- ROI-NJ Career Classroom Column, "Atlantic County High School Students Study Aviation," October 3, 2023
- Guest Column in Hammoncton Gazette: "Atlantic County Economy in Good Hands," October 6, 2023
- AC First Responders Use Drones to Help Save Lives, Oct. 10, 2023
- Atlantic City International Airport Advances Industrial Development (IRG Lease), October 11, 2023
- NARTP Groundbreaking for 2nd Building, October 12, 2023
- NJ Association of Counties NJAC County Biz article, "Atlantic County is Taking Off," October (Jan. '24 publication)
- EHT/Mainland Living profile article, December (Jan. '24 publication)

## Marketing to Support Membership Recruitment

The 2023 marketing plan was designed to increase ACEA membership within the region. To this end, ACEA and PM developed new materials and strategies to engage potential members and support Ken Lefevre's outreach efforts:

- New printed membership materials outlining the value of ACEA membership
- A new presentation deck for use when engaging municipalities
- New local marketing efforts aimed squarely at attracting new members:
  - Business Growth Summit – On May 11 at the Smithville Inn, ACEA hosted its first-ever membership event. The program introduced business owners and managers to the various ways the ACEA can provide “business concierge” services to help businesses expand in/into Atlantic County.
  - Web to Direct Mail Retargeting – Web retargeting is a well-known tactic where website visitors pick up a “cookie,” a digital code that enables advertisers to serve digital ads in available spaces throughout the internet. Web to Direct Mail Retargeting takes that process one step further, mailing a postcard that promotes the advantages of becoming an ACEA member to the website visitor's physical address. The program generated solid results:
    - 419 postcards mailed in 2023.
    - 12.2% of eligible visitors received postcards. The industry standard is 1%.
  - Geo Targeting Campaign – To support the membership campaign, ACEA launched a Geo targeting campaign, which is a tactic that allows the ACEA to deliver messages to specific audiences based on location and personal profile, minimizing waste, and maximizing engagement. In 2023, the successful campaign generated:
    - 2,040,385 impressions
    - 4,675 clicks to the website
    - 0.23% click through rate (industry benchmark is .1%)
- ACEA, NARTP, and Performance Marketing continued a marketing plan to engage potential clients for Building #2 featuring:
  - A series of three letter mailings to FAA Contractors, firms with expiring office leases, and firms already engaged with the ACEA and NARTP.
  - New printed materials highlighting the building and leasing terms.
  - These marketing activities culminated in a groundbreaking for NARTP Building #2 on October 12 with 150 guests, including federal, state, and local officials, coming to celebrate the start of construction.



- Absecon
- Northfield
- Linwood
- Ventnor
- Ducktown (Atlantic City)
- Galloway





## THANK YOU, BRETT MATIK!

For Serving as Board of Trustees Chairperson  
January 2018 through January 2024

Dear Brett,

The staff and Board of the Atlantic County Economic Alliance would like to express our deepest gratitude for your service to our organization during the last six years.

Your tenure as our Chairwoman has been an incredible journey, and we are grateful for your leadership and guidance. You have demonstrated a profound passion for our mission, and your governance has helped us navigate through many challenges and opportunities.

We especially wanted to thank you for your active participation in making speeches, attending groundbreakings, joining us on important business trips, and participating in meetings with key state and federal officials. Your presence at these events has elevated our organization's profile beyond measure.

As you step down, we want to take this opportunity to thank you for your tireless commitment. Your accomplishments will be felt for years to come, and we are confident that your legacy will continue to inspire us as we move forward.

Thank you again. It has been an honor to work with you, and we wish you nothing but continued success in all your future endeavors.

– ACEA Staff and Board of Trustees




## M O V I N G F O R W A R D

As this report demonstrates, the ACEA advanced a wide array of economic development activities in the past year. Much of our focus has been directed at the creation of a setting that fosters technological progress, especially regarding aviation, and that effort requires ongoing and dynamic endeavors that will extend well into the future.

The groundbreaking for the second building at the NARTP heralded the opportunities to come as we secured financing options for the building. In the coming year, we'll continue to oversee the earliest phases of construction with our partners at NARTP and the ACIA as we secure the most flexible and least restrictive sources for the remaining financing package for the new building.

We will also redouble our efforts to work with our partners at Performance Marketing and New Vistas to develop interest amongst potential tenants. The pitch is a compelling one: Live at the shore while working on the future – in a new research facility designed for today's hybrid workforce with smaller collaborative spaces amidst an ecosystem of innovative co-tenants who are working with the FAA and NASA to develop tomorrow's aviation technologies.

In Atlantic City, the ACEA's efforts are aimed at the neighborhood level. We are proud to support the Ducktown Community Development Corporation in its efforts to transform Atlantic City's Ducktown neighborhood at the ground-roots level. The ACEA acts as the Ducktown CDC's fiduciary to the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit program. Ducktown is one of four CDCs in Atlantic City (along with Chelsea CDC, Midtown CDC, and Inlet CDC) and they were collectively awarded \$1 million in mid-December 2023 to produce a major public space activation project that will be collaboratively led by Stockton University. The funding will be used to support streetscape improvements, specifically 40 wayfinding signs identifying non-casino cultural assets, four neighborhood branding gateways, 100 signs for the public murals, and a public tile installation in the heart of the city. The project also includes a comprehensive and collaborative citywide arts and cultural branding, marketing, and event coordination program that will increase social gatherings, activate vacant and underutilized space, and contribute to the resilience of the community. We pledge to continue to support the efforts of the city's four CDCs in the year ahead as they improve quality of life in Atlantic City one neighborhood at a time.



In the waning days of 2023, the fantastic Aviation/Drone Program for the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City (as described on pages 10 and 13) was extended into 2024 through an additional \$30,000 grant commitment from Battelle. The ACEA will continue to administer this grant and monitor this exciting and unique youth development and workforce development project.

The ACEA's regional approach to economic development is manifested in the relationships we built with our regional aviation partners at Cape May Airport, Woodbine Airport, Millville Executive Airport, Hammonton Municipal Airport, and others. This started as we catalogued southern New Jersey's aviation assets as part of a \$1 million statewide planning grant we administered in 2023 (See *Grants*, page 12). We will continue to promote New Jersey's only designated Aviation District, along with its neighboring aviation assets, as we draft and present recommendations to the Governor and state legislators/policymakers.

This same regional approach drives our partnerships with each of Atlantic County's municipalities. In the coming year we will

continue to assist the efforts of member cities Egg Harbor City, Egg Harbor Township, Galloway Township, and Northfield, while bringing Somers Point into the fold with individualized economic growth plans for each based on their needs and unique assets.

As our approach to economic development is to pursue every opportunity and "leave no stone unturned," the ACEA is constantly working to uncover grant opportunities, attract new businesses to Atlantic County, and help our local enterprises grow. We are aggressive in this pursuit, while patiently and methodically working with our myriad partners in government, academia, and commerce to advance the longer-range projects that take years to develop.

Our work plan for 2024 is jam-packed with deadlines to be met, applications to file, projects to monitor, grant obligations to administer, and pitches to be made. The small-but-mighty ACEA staff is up to the task and excited to bring many of our projects closer to the finish line as we endeavor to diversify and grow Atlantic County's economy.

**Even with all of the irons we have in the fire for 2024, we are never too busy to be your business/economic development concierge. We make doing business in Atlantic County easier and we are ready to go to work for you in the year ahead.**

**Atlantic County Economic Alliance**

ACEANJ.com • (609) 245-0019

