Support Local Business Rerport

Sustainable Gloucester Township is very excited to announce initiatives in Gloucester Township that support local businesses in our community. Access to Gloucester Township's RFPs, RFQs and bids for businesses was broadened. A link was created for each current RFP, RFQ or bid on the municipal website's home page. All current bids are available to download, and they are also available to download in the RFP, RFQ and Bids Archive which was recently established for residents to look at past bids. The "GO local!" part of the Sustainable Gloucester Township part of Gloucester Township's municipal website lists different places in our community that are great places to eat, shop, and do business with. It was created and published in April of 2011 and each year is updated. Our local businesses are listed on our website to advocate buying at local stores first. This directory has been announced in numerous forms of media including our e-mail newsletter, verbally, and through social media sites. An estimated 30 hours of time was spent creating the directory by the municipality's webmaster. http://glotwp.com/sustainable/golocal/index.html Gloucester Township has also eliminated performance bonds for commercial development, which promotes economic development and growth. Businesses are always invited to participate in community events such as Gloucester Township Day, as well as the Blackwood Farmer's Market. The Blackwood Farmer's Market is held yearly during the growing season and is continuously improving. While most businesses are not able to physically participate in our farmer's market, there is a booth set up each week with promotional materials, such as brochures, of our local businesses. Many businesses help the farmer's market out with in-kind donations. For example, one of the banks in the township donated reusable shopping bags to give to patrons of the farmer's market. The Gloucester Township Economic Development Corporation leads the economic development for the community. The EDC oversees an aggressive economic development program and strives to improve the economic climate in the Township by attracting new businesses and helping existing businesses expand. Membership includes key municipal officials and businesspersons. The Economic Development Corporation also hired an economic consultant who works with the corporation to improve and promote business development within the municipality. In conjunction with the EDC, the Township offers a variety of services to resident firms, developers and potential relocation prospects, including financial assistance and assistance at the regional and state level, negotiating the permitting and funding processes. The GTDEC is also listed on our township website. <http://glotwp.com/economic_development/index.html> Each year, a Business Breakfast is held in April, in partnership with the Gloucester Township Economic Development Corporation. Other participants include the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the NJ Small Business Development Center at Rutgers University Camden, and the Camden County Regional Chamber of Commerce and Sustainable Gloucester Township Green Team. Local businesses are spotlighted and shown that they are appreciated. Many of them are given awards of recognition for supporting and being a vital part of our community. There were approximately eighty businesses that attended in the 2014 event. Awards include the New Business Award, Small Business Award, Mayor's Award, and the Economic Development Award. At the 2014 Business Breakfast, the second annual Green Business Award was given to two of the township’s more ecologically friendly businesses. The Business Breakfast is constantly improving and this past year had the largest group of attendees than ever before. The Business Breakfast was highly publicized this year, both in newspaper articles, through the electronic marquees at the municipal building, through the township website and various other advertisements. The Business Breakfast also includes a report on the township's economy and a keynote address from a featured speaker. Moreover, businesses in targeted areas are available to participate in a 50/50 matching program for improvements to business facades; this program is fully endorsed by the Gloucester Township Council. Applications for businesses are available online. This program was first announced at the 2010 Business Breakfast and continues through today. Gloucester Township has also hired Michael Cagno as our Arts Consultant. Gloucester Township is looking to revitalize downtown Blackwood as an Arts District. They just completed Academy Hall and Mainstage Center for the Arts has made it its home. They have implemented a plan and hope to bring in businesses having to do with the Arts. A used bookstore, The Book Asylum, has opened and just purchased another building. They mainly chose this area due to the proposed plan.