

# BC BROADCAST

A PUBLICATION OF THE BEDFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

## — OUTDOOR GETAWAY — INVESTS IN BEDFORD COUNTY

After scouring the East Coast for the perfect location, the founders of River Mountain discovered Bedford County and fell in love.

"The beauty of Bedford is the unlimited access to the outdoors and its proximity to Washington D.C. and Baltimore," said Meghan Gruszynski, a River Mountain co-founder. "Bedford offers our guests the open space and fresh mountain air many are seeking during these times."

Having worked together for years developing phone app software, Gruszynski, and her fellow co-founder, Ryan Tyrrell, decided to exit the rat race and work on giving back to the community by helping people disconnect and spend time outside.

"Technology is keeping us connected, particularly right now" Gruszynski said. "But it can also detract from connecting with the natural world and relating to one another."

Hailing from Tennessee and Wisconsin, the founders looked into numerous potential sites east of the Mississippi River before settling into Bedford County with the help of the Bedford County Development Association (BCDA).

"We simply wouldn't be where we are today without the BCDA," Gruszynski said.

While the original idea was to create a camp where kids could disconnect from technology, COVID-19 stole away River Mountain's client base, and they found themselves looking for a new business model.

"We anticipate River Mountain being a unique getaway to stay, remote work, and unwind in magnificent beauty that is Bedford County outdoors," Gruszynski said.

Whereas at inception, the retreat was planned to initially serve young people during summer camp followed by adult overnights throughout the year, Gruszynski said plans reversed after the pandemic.

"We partnered with Penn State on our youth summer camp curriculum and had commitments from school districts in Washington D.C., but we put that on hold in April as a precaution to manage the health and of safety of our young camp guests" she explained. "Now, our target demographic is 22-35 year olds. Offering young professionals a safe way to getaway, change up the scenery, remote work, and explore the outdoors."



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(L-R) Brian Pachtman, BCDA; River Mountain co-founders Ryan Tyrrell, Megan Gruszynski, Brandon Rauch; Commissioner Josh Lang; Liz and Toby Buhrman, River Mountain; Bette Slayton, BCDA

## River Mountain continued from 1

Spread across 150 acres, River Mountain, Everett, is bordered by Buchanan State Forest, Sweet Root Creek, Warrior Ridge and Tussey Mountain.

To date, the retreat has invested \$3.2 million in the project, and is now partnering with local business to highlight the area's diverse offerings to guests, on-site River Mountain anticipates creating up to 30 new jobs.

The site features historical buildings, including "Big Red", a barn restored as event space, and an 1804 log cabin, restored as a dining facility near the commercial kitchen. The founders also broke ground this spring on its modern accommodations, one-of-a-kind cabins and glamping pods erected by Amish artisans and designed to flow with the body's natural circadian rhythm.

Under normal circumstances, River Mountain can accommodate more than 70 guests, but Gruszynski said they are following social distancing guidelines set out by the state and local authorities; thus, operating at 50 percent capacity, after opening September 3rd.

On-site experiences include yoga, hiking, bonfires and local craft beer and wine tastings. And the staff will also facilitate off-site adventures around Bedford County through partnerships with several established businesses that have gone above and beyond to welcome our new guests, Gruszynski said. "Bedford has so much offer," she said. "And we're very proud to be a part of this community."

[www.rivermountain.org](http://www.rivermountain.org)

*"We anticipate River Mountain being a unique getaway to stay, remote work, and unwind in magnificent beauty that is Bedford County outdoors,"*

Meghan Gruszynski, River Mountain co-founder

## TWO LOCAL EMPLOYERS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION

*"Bringing quality employers to Bedford County is one of BCDA's top priorities. We're always proud to see these employers receive national recognition," notes Jim Gonsman, BCDA Chair. Two recent examples include:*



### REI ranks among the Best Places to Work

Working at REI Co-op is a real treat — employees get days off to play outside, deals on gear and competitive benefits — and Fortune Magazine is taking note.

Since 1998, the go-to seller for quality outdoor equipment has found a place on Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For list and 2020 was no exception.

In 2007, REI opened its East Coast Distribution Center in a 525,000 sq. ft. facility in Bedford Township. Nearly 14,000 people work for REI, with the Bedford DC currently employing approximately 400 people during peak season.

Tina Molski, Director of Operations-DC East Recreational Equipment, Inc. notes, "We were looking for an amazing workforce and we found this here in Bedford County. We have employees that work hard, share their ideas and have a sincere desire to succeed personally as well as help us succeed as a business."

### Employee-owned manufacturer celebrates a decade of topping the "FAB 40" list

In June 2020, Mayville Engineering Company (MEC) announced that it was once again named the nation's largest fabricator by The Fabricator magazine. This marks the tenth consecutive year that MEC had led the 'Fab 40' list.

Employee-owned and publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange, MEC started operating in Bedford County in December 2018 after acquiring Defiance Metal Products. Its facility is located on Sunnyside Road in Bedford Township.

2020 is MEC's 75th year as a company. With 20 manufacturing facilities strategically located across eight states, MEC provides an array of prototyping and tooling, production fabrication, coating, assembly and aftermarket services.



# KATE'S REAL FOOD COMES TO BEDFORD COUNTY

To meet the surging demand for the highly acclaimed Kate's Real Food bars, a new food processing facility was recently opened in the Bedford County Business Park.

The Organic Snack Company opened its new 20,000 sq. ft. facility, fabricated by Bedford County-based Corle Building Systems, in May 2020.

"We couldn't be happier to be in Bedford County," noted Mark Thaler, CEO, The Organic Snack Company. "Bedford has welcomed us with open arms. We look forward to bringing more growth, jobs and tasty snacks to the community," he said.

Kate's bars are receiving rave reviews from across the country – from Bowhunters Magazine to Forbes. When the project was announced last fall, REI was Kate's biggest



Mark Thaler, CEO, The Organic Snack Company, checks out boxes of Kate's bars for shipment at the new production plant in Bedford County Business Park |

customer. Since then Walmart, Whole Foods and numerous other national and regional stores have begun selling Kate's.

The bars were created by Kate Schade in the 1990s while she was a ski bum in Jackson Hole. Bruce Thaler, a Blair County real estate developer, was so impressed with the bar, he bought into the company, Kate's Real Foods.

As the company grew and demand increased, Thaler knew it was time to ramp up production. "I spent a lot of time in Wyoming, where I met Kate,

but deep down, Pennsylvania is my home. With this new facility and a strong Bedford County workforce, we can manufacture in one day what it took a month to produce in Idaho," Thaler noted.

[www.katesrealfood.com](http://www.katesrealfood.com)

## GREEN LEAF ANNOUNCES MAJOR EXPANSION



Alan Mountain, Greenleaf, gives Bette Slayton, BCDA, a tour of the facility currently under construction for the \$30 million Phase II project

Less than a year after opening its Saxton facility, Green Leaf Medical LLC is expanding.

"We are really excited about Phase II. It's a \$30 million expansion that will enable us to add hundreds of new jobs and better serve the needs of patients throughout the Commonwealth," state Philip Goldberg, CEO of Green Leaf.

Located in the former Seton facility, Green Leaf purchased the 274,000 sq. ft. facility in April 2017 and received state

approval to become a grower-processor of medical cannabis in 2018.

Phase I of building renovation, completed last summer, included a \$15 million investment to upgrade 100,000 sq. ft. and created approximately 125 new jobs.

"Saxton has exceeded our expectations. We have great employees and incredible community support. We certainly made the right decision to locate in Bedford County. It's a great fit for us," noted Goldberg.

With the new \$30 million Phase II expansion, the facility's remaining 174,000 sq. ft. will be renovated. The new project could add more than 500 new jobs to Bedford County and quadruple production capacity.

"With this expansion, we believe Green Leaf will have one of the largest indoor medical operations on the East Coast," Goldberg said.

*"Saxton has exceeded our expectations. We have great employees and incredible community support."*

Philip Goldberg, Green Leaf CEO

Front Row Sitting (l-r): Assistant Secretary, Travis Collins, B.C. Stone, Inc.; Vice Chair, Brian Pachtman, Reed, Wertz & Roadman; Chair, James Gonsman, Hometown Bank of PA; Assistant Treasurer, Sherry Cain, Cain Coaching and Consulting and Secretary, James Wistar; Everite Door Company. Back Row Standing (l-r): Office Manager, Melanie Miller, BCDA; Trudy Mitchell, Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission; Director, Tabitha Barbarito, BCDA; Barry Dallara, Bedford County Commissioner; Dwayne Zimmerman, Crowsnest IT Support; Bob McGowan, Mission Critical Solutions, LLC; Immediate Past Chair, Mark Bollman, Bedford County Technical Center; President, Bette Slayton, BCDA; Treasurer, Bill Liedholm, Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa; CA Detwiler, Forsheys Ag and Industrial and Golden Rule Farms; Josh Lang, Bedford County Commissioner; Jeffrey Crist, Gatter & Diehl, Inc.; Deb Baughman, Bedford County Commissioner; Marcia O'Rear, StelTek Graphics Inc.; and Start-up Business Coach, Andrew Trexler, BCDA.

Missing from the picture are: Lester Meck, Saxton Borough Council; Robbie Weaver, Weaver's Sanitation Service, Inc.; Greg Lang, Recreational Equipment Inc.; Jan Fisher, UPMC Altoona/UPMC Bedford; and Carl Barnhart, JLG Industries, Inc.



## BCDA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS,



**NEW BOARD MEMBERS:** (L to R): Jeffrey Crist, Gatter & Diehl, Inc.; Carl Barnhart, JLG Industries, Inc.; Dwayne Zimmerman, Crowsnest ITSupport and Jan Fisher, UPMC Altoona/UPMC Bedford. Missing from the picture is: Trudy Mitchell, Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission

Providing experience and expertise, the Bedford County Development Association Board of Directors' veterans and newcomers are working to provide leadership and insight needed for the economic trials of 2020.

"Bedford County is strong and resilient," notes Board Chair **James Gonsman**. "And despite this pandemic's best efforts, we've made strides toward bolstering our business community and laying the path for a successful future."

Gonsman, Senior Vice President at Hometown Bank, notes that now more than ever, it is important for BCDA to focus on supporting existing businesses, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and paving the way for new businesses to call Bedford County home.

"Our legacy is not only attracting job-producing businesses but also doing our best to ensure the longevity of our existing businesses" he said.



## CHAIR IN 2020

Providing fresh perspective and diverse skill sets, the Board also welcomed five new members:

Crowsnest IT Support founder **Dwayne Zimmerman**, of Woodbury, started his telecommunications career with another company, before trying his hand at entrepreneurship.

“I started Crowsnest IT Support in 2013, and we expanded to offer broadband in 2019,” Zimmerman said. “Today, we are a full service IT company and wireless Internet Service Provider.”

JLG Bedford Director of Operations **Carl Barnhart**, of Fulton County, said he worked his way from assembler to upper management at JLG through hard work and dedication over a period of 35 years.

“I love Bedford’s small-town atmosphere and the level of community engagement,” Barnhart said. “I joined the Board to help provide BCDA with insight into the latest manufacturing trends and needs and to help align our program strategies.”

UPMC Altoona and Bedford President, **Jan Fisher**, of Hollidaysburg, brings the health care industry’s perspective to the board. Fisher is the former chair of the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, has served as a board member of the Citizens and North Bank.

Raised in Bedford County, **Jeff Crist**, of Alum Bank, is president of both Gatter & Diehl, Inc., and Gatter & Diehl Services as well as a managing partner at JLRL Associates, LLC.

“Although my family and I moved to Harrisburg in the ‘80s, we came back to Bedford County almost every other weekend,” Crist recalled. “We moved back in 1996, because we wanted our children to grow up here, experiencing the county in all its glory.”

“As a Board member, I plan to assist BCDA in promoting Bedford County as a great place to live, work and play,” Crist said.

**Trudy Mitchell**, of Altoona, is the director of business lending at Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission and previously served as the vice president of economic development at the Centre County Industrial Development Corporation.

“I facilitate regional business start-ups, acquisitions, expansions and diversifications through the use of public-sector loan programs,” Mitchell explained. “As a member of the BCDA Board, I can better help Bedford County entrepreneurs and employers become aware of available funding options.”

# NEW ARCHERY CENTER HOPES TO ATTRACT BOW HUNTERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE AS WELL AS THE SURROUNDING STATES.

Juniata Trading Company recently expanded to include a 7,800 square-foot indoor archery center. The newly opened center, located beside the main Juniata Trading Company building at 13921 Lincoln Highway in Everett, includes a six-lane paper range, a TechnoHunt video range that accommodates up to five shooters per session, and a vast retail archery space.

“The expansion is a benefit to our customers,” noted Blaine Smith, President and Co-owner, Juniata Trading Company. “Not only will they be able to see the products, but customers will also be able to learn about the product from our experienced in-house archery technicians. We’re not just here to sell you something, we want you to know and understand the product before you buy.”

Juniata Trading Company’s new archery center offers a variety of brands and bows. All the accessories needed for bow hunting are also available as well as many good quality used bows.

Additionally, the archery center offers indoor paper and video ranges for honing archery skills.

During the winter and spring, the center holds a TechnoHunt League shoot where teams can sign up to participate and compete against other teams.



Smith believes the expansion of the archery department into an archery center will provide a service to the community and region. Not only does it provide a complete line of products and services to their customers, but it has increased employment at Juniata Trading Company as well. Since the new owners took over in September of 2018, employment has increased from 17 to 21.

**Juniata Trading Company Archery Center**  
**814-652-5878 ext. 4**



“We’re not here to just sell you something, we want you to know and understand the product before you buy.”

Blaine Smith, Juniata Trading Company co-owner

# BCDA HELPS UPCOMING ENTREPRENEURS FULFILL POTENTIAL

“People here have so much potential...All they really need is a little guidance and an organization that they can trust to help them realize their dreams.”

Andrew Trexler, BCDA entrepreneur coach

When Bedford-native Ankit Patel introduced BCDA entrepreneur coach Andrew Trexler to a fresh take on the car horn, Trexler knew the idea had big potential.

“A lot of business ideas tend to only service those in the general community,” Trexler explained. “But Ankit’s Smart Horn has the potential to meet a national or even global market.”

Doing business as Meerya LLC, Patel caught the people’s attention with his car horn at the Ben Franklin’s \$50,000 BIG IDEA Contest in June, earning the People’s Choice award and winning his company \$2,500 for prototyping.

“The smart horn reads the audible levels of your vehicle to determine its speed and environment,” Patel explained. “If the vehicle is moving or is in a noisier environment, the horn will kick to a higher setting, ensuring others can hear it.”

While vehicle technology has grown by leaps and bounds in recent decades, Patel said car horns remained primitive. A beep is the same beep whether the driver is flying down the interstate or stopped at a rural traffic light.

And yet, honking the horn is one of the most common and effective ways drivers have to communicate with each other and pedestrians.

Years ago, when walking to work, Patel watched as a bicyclist — unaware of the car behind him — pulled into the middle of a lane, putting himself at risk of being hit. The car swerved, but the interaction set Patel’s mind to work.

“In these situations, how do you communicate?” he asked. “You can honk, but it could come across as aggressive, or worse, startle the person, causing them to wreck.”

With a business degree from Penn State, Patel saw a market opportunity; and thus, taught himself a modicum of engineering to rig up a horn to help drivers communicate more effectively with their environment.

But, ideas and prototypes are only the first steps toward building a business that can serve a global economy.

“The BCDA was absolutely instrumental in getting this off the ground,” Patel explained. “Andrew helped us realize our potential. Instead of just selling a smart horn, we could solicit the auto industry, the industrial industry and so much more.”

Trexler said coaching Patel was made easier by the innovator’s motivation to go beyond pitching a product.

“His passion is infectious,” he explained. “He has this idea, and it’s a good idea. But, most people stop there. Ankit has this drive to take this thing all the way, and we’re here to give him a hand.”

Patel nodded, adding, “You simply can’t find coaches with Andrew’s knowledge and the BCDA’s resources anywhere else.”

Meerya is a success story, but is only one of the many companies that BCDA is developing to ensure a thriving business community throughout Bedford County.

“People here have so much potential,” Trexler said. “All they really need is a little guidance and an organization that they can trust to help them realize their dreams.”



# BEDFORD COUNTY

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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