



# Quality of Business Life

Its central location and supportive business community make Mount Laurel an economic hub for companies of all sizes.

[ By Liz Hunter ]

**F**rom its early days as a meeting ground where farmers could sell their goods to its current variety of retail and commercial properties, Mount Laurel has maintained a solid hold on the old business mantra: location, location, location.

Mark Remsa, director of the Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning in Burlington County, says Mount Laurel is an ideal location for businesses for several reasons. "It's close to Philadelphia and its international airport; accessible to 295 and the NJ Turnpike; there is an availability of mixed commercial, office and light industrial buildings at reasonable rents; there's a highly skilled workforce available; and relatively high household incomes within a five-mile radius," he says. "These features make Mount

Laurel a standout for businesses."

Home to more than 40,000, Mount Laurel is known around South Jersey for its quality school system, parks and recreation areas and variety of housing options, drawing residents of all ages—making it an attractive place for businesses to settle as well.

Brett Michener, owner of Golf Performance Institute, has lived and worked in Mount Laurel for 14 years, which made his decision to open this facility one year ago an easy one. "It was important to be in this town for the community involvement, friends and family contacts and logistics," he says. "Our homes are here and our great support structures are here."

Mayor Linda Bobo says it's not unusual for business owners to reside in town. "We are

always looking to improve the quality of life for our residents and continuously investing in infrastructure is one way we maintain ourselves as a premier community in the region," says Mayor Bobo. "The strong commercial base helps stabilize the residential tax rate, and the commercial tax rate is much more stable compared to other towns."

## ACCESSIBILITY

Mount Laurel's proximity to Routes 38 and 73, 295 and the NJ Turnpike is often cited as its top benefit to businesses.

"Mount Laurel is at the heart of the Burlington County business community with its convenient location and access," says Kristi Howell, president of the Burlington County Regional Chamber of Commerce (BCRCC). "It's a convenient commute, which makes it attractive to talented business professionals and a hub for businesses."

Companies with clients in the surrounding states don't have to go far to reach them. Albert Fox, senior vice president at Fox, Penberthy & Dehn at Morgan Stanley, says, "[Our location in Mount Laurel] allows me to easily meet and do business with clients all over New Jersey and in many areas of Pennsylvania and Delaware. It's accessible for business owners and customers."

Perhaps one of Mount Laurel's most well-known attributes is its thriving hotel industry. It ranks third-highest for number of hotels in the state, behind Atlantic City and Newark, and while it sounds like a lot, there is enough business to go around between them.

"There's a very good business atmosphere here, and there is enough business to accommodate a majority of hotels depending on what people are looking for," says Dian Wender, director of sales at The Holiday Inn Express & Suites.

Local businesses appreciate having so many hotels to choose from, including Corporate Synergies Group, which has called Mount Laurel home since 2003. "There are hotels and restaurants conveniently located within a few miles of our location," says Ellen Hosafros, senior manager of corporate communications. "This is important for a headquarters location where employees from our other regions gather for training and development."

Another accessible feature in Mount Laurel is a viable talent pool.

Teresa White, senior branch manager of Adecco Staffing, says resources like schools and universities are a great benefit to the company's Mount Laurel location. "We have been fortunate to have such great resources yielding employees with many transferable skills," she says. "We are seeing a diverse workforce with an expanded skill set that will benefit the



employers and businesses in Mount Laurel and the surrounding areas. Administrative and office personnel, skilled labor, contact center professionals are in large demand and we constantly recruit for these positions. ..."

If you think you need to be headquartered in the city to recruit top talent, think again, says Chris Lukach, president of Anne Klein Communications Group, located in Mount Laurel.

"One thing that is underrated about Mount Laurel and South Jersey as a whole is the talent pool," he says. "Others have told us we need to be downtown [in the city] for access to talent, but I've seen a vibrant and healthy talent pool in South Jersey. There is more keeping people here: schools, child care, up-and-coming towns. People are willing to stay and are choosing to stay. We don't apologize for working in New Jersey."

**EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES**

Mount Laurel has a reputation for being business-friendly, too, and according to Mayor

Bobo, working in concert with businesses is important for town council. "I will often attend chamber events and network with business owners," she says. "We're always looking for ways we can improve responding to businesses and their requests, including alternatives for vacant lands and property, infrastructure and working with the economic development office to ensure we're using our resources to the best of our ability."

Several new businesses have opened their doors recently in Mount Laurel. One of the most buzzed about sits where Fellowship Road and Church Road intersect. Life Time Fitness completed a more-than \$30 million, 170,000-square-foot facility (including outdoor pool deck and bistro), which looks more like a resort than a fitness center, and created more than 300 jobs.

Frank Quatararo, general manager of Life Time Athletic at Mount Laurel, says the town fits the type of community the company seeks out. "When Life Time looks at expand-

ing or entering a new market, there are many things we consider but in particular we look for strong, vibrant and growing communities with a wide-spread age demographic, including families," he says. "As a total lifestyle center with so many high-end offerings and amenities we are not inexpensive so it's important we consider that as well. Mount Laurel is a burgeoning community and one that made sense for us as we made our foray into South Jersey and the broader Philadelphia market."

Mayor Bobo says Walmart is set to break ground on this same lot of land in the coming months. Others in the works include the expansion of Rowan College at Burlington County, two hotels on Route 38, an iFly indoor skydiving center and a paralysis recovery center called Project Walk.

Bancroft is also going to have more of a presence in Mount Laurel, adding to the neuro-rehabilitation center it opened last year, which serves children and adults throughout

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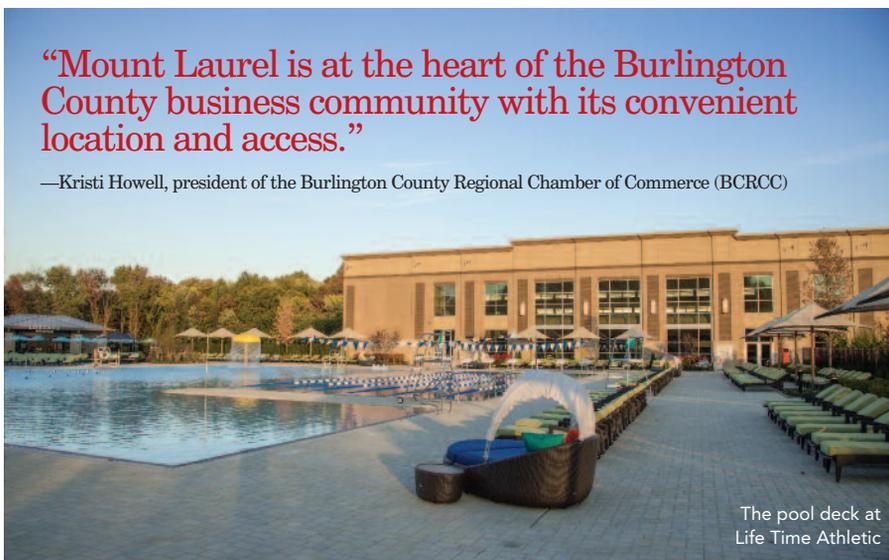
New Jersey. Bancroft will be moving from its Haddonfield location to an 80-acre campus in Mount Laurel.

"The Bancroft Campus in Mount Laurel will be the new home to the Bancroft School, as well as other important programs and services for the greater autism, developmental and intellectual disability community," says Lori Shaffer, director of corporate communications. "Mount Laurel is an ideal location for accessing services, both specialized and general retail. We look forward to getting a shovel in the ground. ..."

Another project South Jersey has had its eye on is the development at Midlantic Boulevard, across from the new Super Wawa and Centerton Square on Route 38. Developed by MSC Retail, the land will now be home to 10,500 square feet of restaurants, including Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza, Qdoba and Jimmy John's.

According to Douglas J. Green, managing principal at MSC Retail, this particular plot of land had everything restaurant tenants look for.

"It was almost a perfect storm of factors," says Green. "There is a huge daytime population thanks to the office buildings populating the area, which drives lunch time business. Then there is the affluent residential population with disposable income, and the



The pool deck at Life Time Athletic

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—Kristi Howell, president of the Burlington County Regional Chamber of Commerce (BCRCC)

traffic activity."

He says one benefit of this location was its visibility from the road. "If you are tucked away in a shopping center, customers have to be otherwise going to that shopping center to see you," Green says. "With this, you are loud and proud on the road at a significant intersection. You have the benefits of immediate traffic, but also transient traffic, people who are passing by and will get that brand recognition."

Green adds there was more interest than

space available, and his firm was methodical in choosing the tenants. "We wanted diversity in price point and cuisine," he says. "There are some grab-and-go options which will skew to the lunch crowd, and also a liquor license concept with Anthony's, for a dinner option." Green says the restaurants are expected to open around Labor Day.

All told, Mount Laurel's longstanding reputation and continuing attention to the community make the area a great choice, no matter what your business is looking for. ▶

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# “WHAT BUSINESSES ARE SAYING”

Local companies and officials tell us what they like about doing business in Mount Laurel:

## **ALOFT MOUNT LAUREL**

**Tom Juliano**  
President

Mount Laurel is conveniently located in the northeast corridor and is in close proximity to major interstate highways and brings a lot of travel business to the area. Our hotels thrive in this market.

## **KOKUA TECHNOLOGIES**

**Jeff Platt**  
CEO and Co-Founder

Mount Laurel is an easy choice when deciding on a corporate location; in addition to being very centrally located, the variety in industry and availability of business resources support strong strategic alliances. The mindset is one

of business expansion and genuine desire to keep South Jersey thriving.

## **SUN NATIONAL BANK**

**Mike Dinneen**  
SVP, Director of Marketing, Communications & Investor Relations

In 2014, Sun Bancorp Inc. changed its headquarters to Fellowship Road in Mount Laurel from Cumberland County. This change allowed the company to have a centralized headquarters, with proximity to multiple major highways and transportation options. This not only allows us to attract talent from a wider geographic area, but also allows us to deliver a superior level of access

to our clients and investors throughout New Jersey, New York and the Philadelphia area.

## **ALBERT'S TRANSPORTATION**

**Bob Schiavo**  
Owner

There is a wonderful mix of businesses and people in Mount Laurel. We truly value the working relationships we have developed with many organizations, hotels and businesses big and small.

## **BANCROFT**

**Lori Shaffer**  
Director of Corp. Communications

Mount Laurel has a large footprint with a small town feel. It's

a community that embraces growth and development.

## **ADECCO STAFFING**

**Teresa White**  
Senior Branch Manager

A sense of community in Mount Laurel is evident. Anchor companies, who have been part of this community for many years, and their potential for expansion is a huge benefit from a business perspective. We've seen a tremendous growth among retail operations, as well as manufacturing and production environments.

## **HOTEL ML/COCO KEY WATER RESORT**

**Jeffrey I. Marshall**  
Director of Sales and Marketing

Several major companies have a presence here such as Lockheed Martin, NFL Films and TD Bank, making it a great place for a hotel to be located. Mount Laurel is also an attractive place to live and work as it has affordable housing and a great school system.

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