

CAN DO continuing to provide personalized financing services during coronavirus pandemic

In its role as a Certified Economic Development Organization, CAN DO has been assisting businesses with a variety of financing services for decades.

As things change by the minute during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, CAN DO's staff has continued to make themselves available to provide personalized service to businesses of all sizes to help them navigate the loan application process and discover additional business resources.

As a result of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having, CAN DO has fielded phone calls and emails from more than 70 businesses throughout Greater Hazleton to determine their eligibility for loans and processed multiple Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority loan applications for emergency funding.

If those loans are approved, it will result in hundreds of thousands of dollars of financial assistance for businesses located in Greater Hazleton.

CAN DO Business Development Specialist Mark Minnig said CAN DO's staff is using its business financing expertise and partnerships with state and federal organizations to give companies personalized service.

"We are a resource center with access to the most up-to-date information as it pertains to the various specialized funding programs developed to help businesses survive during this time. As a result, we offer one-on-one consulting to help you select the funding sources that are right for your business," Minnig said. "We believe it is vital to our local economy to assist small

CAN DO is certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) as a certified economic development organization (CEDO), enabling the organization to act as a conduit for state funding.

businesses, especially those that have been effected by the virus, in packaging loan applications for state and federal funding."

When a business reaches out for financing assistance, Minnig personally gathers information on who the business is and what their individual needs are so he can present the business owner with a list of the programs that best fit their needs. Additionally, he works with business owners to make sure they understand every aspect of the loan programs, including the time requirements for filing the loan, the paperwork that is involved, the eligibility requirements, the loan terms and what each program offers.

Minnig said, "This is how I approach every meeting with a client. I give them the facts, I explain the loan programs in-depth to them and I let the company make a decision on what program is best for them. I stress to them that there are no guarantees they will be approved

but that I will do everything I can to help them."

Minnig added that what makes CAN DO further stand out is its experienced staff and the quick and efficient service it offers to each business. He said business owners often say they appreciate him explaining things to them that they didn't know about the loan programs and responding with a call so quickly after their initial request.

"We don't just have people fill out an online form and reach out to them via email. We put a human element to things by making sure to respond to their request with a phone call within 24-48 hours. CAN DO has a staff that has the experience to tackle all of their business financing issues and we're here to help."

Minnig said that businesses are understandably anxious to apply for financial assistance and are relieved when they see CAN DO's personalized service.

"CAN DO is working for our community to help our local businesses with a very personalized experience. When people call, they know that I will get back to them quickly."



CAN DO has been assisting businesses with applying for Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) loans from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.



Tri-Mountain Realty leased its 70,000 square-foot facility, pictured here under construction, in Humboldt Industrial Park to Amazon.

Greater Hazleton's workforce, location and cost efficiency are factors in Humboldt Industrial Park's continued growth

Humboldt Industrial Park is already one of the largest parks in the state and continues to grow because of Greater Hazleton's strong workforce, strategic location and low cost of doing business. All three factors have led several developers – including Tri-Mountain Realty – to construct speculative buildings in the park over the past few years.

Tri-Mountain Realty constructed a 70,000 square-foot facility on 10 acres in the Humboldt North section of the park two years ago. Amazon is currently leasing the facility, as well as two surrounding sites, for its Amazon Delivery Service division.

Neal DeAngelo III, president of Tri-Mountain Realty, is a life-long resident of Greater Hazleton and has made considerable investments in the area. He said the Humboldt Industrial Park, and Greater Hazleton as a whole, provide many benefits for businesses and industries who are looking for a prime location for their operations.

"My family and I built our businesses here because of the workforce. We believe in the Greater Hazleton area. There is a very strong workforce. They have a good work ethic and are honest people. Location is also critical, not only the access to interstates 80 and 81, but because you are two hours from some of the largest and most populated cities in the nation. The transportation network we have and the access to these cities is critical."

Much of the Humboldt Industrial Park, including the Humboldt North section, is in Hazle Township and DeAngelo said another

key benefit of constructing a facility in the park was the support he received from local government officials.

"Greater Hazleton is a very business-friendly area. Hazle Township continues to step up for development and works to take down walls rather than put up walls to help developers. They are really good at working with you," he said.

Although there are already more than 60 industries in Humboldt, DeAngelo said there are many growth opportunities for the park. Top developers, including Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services, have continued to show interest in the park and the I-81 corridor. Additionally, DeAngelo said the region is fortunate to have an economic development agency like CAN DO that is focused on making it even easier for businesses and developers to invest in the park.

"There will be challenges (for growth) but there are a lot of opportunities as well, as you see with Mericle putting their flag here. I think there is a lot of opportunity in Humboldt and I think you'll see continued growth from companies and developers. CAN DO is doing a great job of recruiting these businesses. We are lucky to have an organization like CAN DO to take some of the challenges off of the plates of the developers. Not every community is like this so I think you'll see people continue to invest and companies continue to come here. I'm bullish on this area and if I could build more buildings here, I would."

Bluewater Property Group chose Greater Hazleton's Humboldt Industrial Park for reputation as a park with staying power

Greater Hazleton has built a reputation as a prime location for industries to do business because it offers developers and companies multiple benefits.

When Bluewater Property Group was looking for a location to construct an industrial spec building, Associate Ryan Kelly said the company chose the Humboldt Industrial Park because it offered immediate access to major transportation routes, affordable local labor, a low cost of doing business, access to a strong labor population, and support from local economic development and community leaders.

"On the tenant demand side, we like Greater Hazleton particularly

because of the abundance of affordable local labor and the economical rents in the area. The proximity to major interchanges and dense consumer populations is another big factor," Kelly said. "Greater Hazleton has been a big beneficiary of the recent secular changes in the logistics sector as evidenced by the increased activity from tenants, developers and institutional capital. On the entitlements side, the local municipalities have been cooperative and great to work with."

Blue Water Property Group, in partnership with Pacific Coast Capital Partners, is currently constructing a 470,000 square-foot Class A cross-dock industrial distribution facility on a 50-acre site



Bluewater Property Group is constructing a 470,000 square-foot cross-dock facility in Humboldt Industrial Park that features Class A pre-cast construction and exceptional interstate highway frontage.

Bluewater Property Group (continued from page 2)

at 101 Commerce Drive in the Humboldt East section of the park. The company expects the facility to be ready for a tenant by the third quarter of this year.

When completed, the state-of-the-art facility will feature a 36' Clear Height, precast construction, 185' truck court, 101 dock doors, 54' x 50' column spacing with 60' speed bays, T5 lighting, and ESFR sprinklers. The site plan also allows for satellite parking, if needed, to provide additional car and/or trailer parking. "We like our site plan particularly because of the lack of supply for cross-dock buildings in the half-a-million square foot size range in Northeast PA," Kelly said.

When they looked at the Humboldt Industrial Park, Kelly said one of the many things that stood out for Blue Water Property Group officials was the amount of tenants in major industrial sectors that were located in the park.

"We like Humboldt for a number of reasons. Specifically, the park is filled with tenants in industries with staying power – manufacturing, packaging, logistics, food and beverage – which is a major driver for the low vacancy in the park."

Given the benefits that Humboldt has brought to the park's existing tenants, Kelly said that Bluewater Property Group expects to market the building to companies that are within the manufacturing, logistics, food processing and e-commerce sectors. "We expect to see both existing tenants looking to grow and new users aiming to create a presence in the market. Our site plan is designed to be flexible to accommodate the variety of uses we will see with interest in the project. We are thrilled to be partnering with Pacific Coast Capital Partners in this joint venture as they bring a wealth of industrial real estate development experience to our project."

In addition to the physical perks of Greater Hazleton and the Humboldt Industrial Park, Kelly said Bluewater Property Group received tremendous support from CAN DO since it first inquired about the site. "We worked closely with CAN DO throughout the sales process, particularly Executive Vice President Joe Lettiere, and they have been an excellent partner every step of the way. CAN DO has been helpful in providing local economic and labor data as well as getting us involved with the local business community in Hazleton."

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