



by Philip Kirschner
President

Report TO MEMBERS

These New Neighbors Good for New Jersey's Economy

For nearly five decades, NJBIA has highlighted outstanding development projects in New Jersey through its New Good Neighbor Awards. Every year, we honor ten to 12 construction or renovation projects, that have benefited their local communities. We recognize them for architectural merit, job creation, and community involvement. An independent panel of judges selects the winners from dozens of nominations received every year. This is one of three programs NJBIA holds to showcase the benefits employers bring to the State and local communities.

The New Good Neighbor nominations highlight projects that support thousands of construction jobs and lead to the creation of thousands more permanent, full-time jobs. These projects represent capital investments of hundreds of millions of dollars. To emphasize the public interest side of the developments, nominations are not submitted by developers, architects or engineers, but by public officials: the mayors, State legislators or economic development professionals from the communities where the projects are located.

The projects vary in size, style, and impact. This year they included a major corporate expansion in Somerset County that brought nearly 3,000 jobs to New Jersey. In Morris County, an early 19th century inn was restored to its earlier glory, with the two owners, who now run the restaurant, doing much of the renovations themselves.

Among the other projects, a vacant manufacturing plant in Essex County was reopened after lying idle for a decade. A new corporate center in Burlington County is helping to keep and expand high-tech, and high-paying jobs here in New Jersey. New healthcare facilities in northern New Jersey bring new hope to cancer patients and those with spinal cord injuries. There is also a new corporate headquarters in Monmouth County, a business incubator in Hudson County, and a vocational performing arts and technology center in Somerset County. The list goes on.

Each one of these development projects has helped make its community a better place in which to live and work. They brought idle, underutilized properties back to life. They added attractive, stunning new buildings to the landscape. They preserved history.

These projects simply represent the best of the best. Literally hundreds of construction and renovation projects are undertaken every year in New Jersey that have beneficial impacts on our towns. They support a construction industry that has been a backbone of our economy and support manufacturing industries by generating local markets for building materials.

At NJBIA, we believe it is important to highlight the important contributions businesses make to society. That's why, every spring, we honor the best development projects with a New Good Neighbor Awards luncheon, and feature them in the June edition of New Jersey Business magazine. At this year's June 1 luncheon, NJBIA presented awards to eleven companies before a crowd of 200 builders, architects, and VIPs. Later, on October 16, we will hold our Awards for Excellence Dinner, where we will recognize companies for entrepreneurship and job creation, protecting the environment, providing outstanding benefits to their employees, and public service. We also hold a Made in New Jersey Day in the State House in Trenton to show lawmakers many of the fine products that are manufactured in our state.

What amazes me most about these projects and these companies is that they accomplish so much even as they operate in a tremendously difficult business climate. Despite high taxes, a costly regulatory system, and some of the highest operating costs in the nation, New Jersey businesses are still able to do amazing things.

There are plenty of people who will always want to find fault with the business community and what it is doing. At NJBIA, we strive to make sure everyone understands the tremendous benefits of having such a dynamic, vibrant class of entrepreneurs and executives here in New Jersey. ❧