



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Visits Small Businesses in Reading, Urges Pennsylvanians to Support Their Favorite Local Shops

Gov. Wolf has proclaimed May 1-7, 2022, as "Small Business Week" in Pennsylvania

Reading, PA – Today, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Acting Secretary Neil Weaver highlighted the importance of small businesses in the commonwealth and encouraged Pennsylvanians to support their favorite local shops during [Small Business Week](#) in Pennsylvania. The celebration is taking place May 1-7, 2022, as proclaimed by Governor Tom Wolf.

"The commonwealth is home to more than 1 million small businesses that employ about 2.5 million workers, and we are celebrating them during this special week," said Acting Sec. Weaver. "I encourage every Pennsylvanian to take Small Business Week as an opportunity to support their favorite local businesses by visiting, shopping online, providing positive online reviews and recommendations, and tagging them on social media. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, so let's do all that we can to support them this week, and every week."

Acting Sec. Weaver was joined by Mayor Eddie Moran and others on a walking tour in downtown Reading. The tour celebrated the diversity and impact of small businesses on Pennsylvania's economy and communities.

The following local businesses were highlighted during this morning's tour in Reading:

- New Heightz Grocery Store – a bodega
- The Great American Creamery – a micro creamery that makes soft serve and hand-dipped ice cream cones, sundaes, milkshakes and specialty frozen desserts
- La Casa Del Chimi Restaurant – a Latin American restaurant
- Juice Bar – a maker of healthy juices, smoothies, and bowls
- American Barber and Beauty Academy – a beauty school that develops leading industry professionals

"Undoubtedly, we have a history of entrepreneurial excellence that has long lived in our City for decades. Small businesses allow our economy to progress — they are the heart and soul of our community," said Mayor Eddie Moran. "We are immensely proud of our small businesses. Their diversity, creativity, and resilience are remarkable, and I will continue to advocate and protect rich small business culture today and always."

“Being a business owner for the last 9 years in the City of Reading has taught me a lot about myself,” said Moises Abreu, Owner, New Heightz Grocery Store. “It has developed a hidden gift from within me, which has been the compassion of the community. The success in my business is due to the community. So, when the question comes up of why I chose Reading to open up my business, I say Reading chose me!”

“We live here, work here, and play here,” said Lucine Sihelnik, Owner, Great American Creamery. “We know that Reading is Ready - Reading is ready for entrepreneurs & investors; Reading is ready to host visitors for world-class entertainment; Reading is ready for a larger, more diverse workforce and industry; Reading is ready to grow into its role as the fourth largest city in the commonwealth.”

In addition to Reading, DCED will be visiting local businesses in several cities across the commonwealth as part of Small Business Week: Philadelphia (May 2); Bedford (May 3); Scranton (May 4); Erie (May 5); and Zelienople (May 6). The tours are celebrating the contributions small businesses make to the culture and fabric of the communities in which they reside.

Diversity and Impact of Small Businesses in PA

- 39.4 percent of small business owners are women
- 16.6 percent are racial minorities
- 4.2 percent are Hispanic/Latino
- 6.3 percent are veterans
- 13,690, or 88.2 percent, of Pennsylvania firms that exported goods in 2019 were small businesses – and small firms exported goods worth \$12.5 billion
- For every \$100 spent at a small business, \$48 goes back into the local economy in which the business is located

State Resources for Small Businesses

DCED and our partner network across the commonwealth offer many resources to help small businesses grow:

- The [PA Business One-Stop Shop \(BOSS\)](#) is the first point of contact for Pennsylvania business development. The BOSS team helps connect and guide businesses through all stages of development — from planning and startup to operating and expanding.
- The 16 [Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers \(SBDC\)](#) serve all 67 counties and provide entrepreneurs and small business owners with the knowledge needed to make smart decisions on how to start and grow their business. The SBDCs are funded in part through DCED.
- There are several funding programs for small diverse businesses, including the [Small Diverse Business Capital Access Program \(SDBCA\)](#), [Pennsylvania Minority Business Development Authority \(PMBDA\)](#), and the [Business Opportunities Fund \(BOF\)](#) to help disadvantaged and small diverse businesses access financing.
- The [Ben Franklin Technology Partners](#) provide both early-stage, technology-based firms and established manufacturers with funding, business and technical expertise, and access to a network of innovative, expert resources.
- The [PA Office of International Business Development](#) can assist small businesses looking to export goods to foreign markets.

For more information about Small Business Week, visit DCED's [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#), and be sure to talk about your favorite local small business on your social media accounts and tag them with **#PASmallBiz** or **#ShopLocal**.

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