



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Susan J. Soloway, Director

Susan.soloway@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon's Growing Bio-Science Economy And Home-Based Businesses Highlight Director's Community Tour

Hunterdon County Board of Commissioners Director Susan J. Soloway, joined by Economic Development Director Marc Saluk on October 28th, met with the CEO of a bioscience company at the Shelbourne facility in Union Township and visited a Franklin Township home based business, as part of the Director's Community tour that has included over twenty-five site visits around the County throughout the year.

Soloway, elected as Board Director by her colleagues in January, has conducted site visits highlighting achievements, business successes, and community service initiatives in Hunterdon County over the course of her term this year.

“Meeting with those directly engaged in our community; our businesspeople, social services providers, municipal leaders, Police Officers, Veterans, senior citizens, volunteers, and others, is the most effective way to learn what people are thinking in the county and how the Board of Commissioners can best help.

Hunterdon County is recognized as the Safest, Best, and Healthiest County and the main reason why is the efforts of all our community members.”

At the Shelbourne facility in Union, Director Soloway met with Visikol Chief Executive Officer Michael Johnson to learn more about the life science start up that spun out of the New Jersey's Bioscience Center Incubator in North Brunswick and into Hunterdon County in 2019.

Mr. Johnson detailed how Visikol, a leader in the fields of bio-imaging and advanced cell culture, was able to expand at the Shelbourne Facility, having grown its presence to over 11,000 square feet in 2020, including a 2,000 square foot lab expansion.

“The Hunterdon County area is perfect in terms of our ability to attract the talent we need to be successful, which has been helpful in driving our expansion,” commented Visikol CEO Michael Johnson.



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Economic Development Director Marc Saluk noted, “Shelbourne is one of Hunterdon’s premier office facilities and is home to other Life Sciences companies, such as Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals and Celldex Therapeutics, in addition to a host of other quality businesses.”

Moving from bioscience to the chemistry of baking, Director Soloway visited a Franklin home-based business that uses locally grown and produced ingredients, Sweet Caroline’s Bakeshop, owned by Carey Bell.

Ms. Bell, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, managed an award-winning bakery in Atlanta, Georgia, before returning home to Hunterdon County to establish a baking operation whose products are available throughout the County and can be found here:

<https://www.sweetcarolinesbakeshop.com>

The development of home-based businesses to aid economic growth has been supported by the County’s 78/22 coalition of municipal leaders from towns along the I-78/Route 22 corridor in Hunterdon County.

The Coalition, coordinated by the County’s Economic Development Office, encourages municipalities to consider allowing or expanding home base business zoning, where appropriate, recognizing the opportunity provided to those who have faced barriers to participating in traditional work, such as stay-at-home parents and those with mobility-related disabilities.

The Director’s Community tour over the course of 2021 has included a site visit at Exxon/Mobil’s global research campus in Clinton Township, the kickoff of the Hunterdon Outdoor Parks Exploration (HOPE) program at Echo Hill Park, and honoring Raritan, Clinton and Readington Townships for being recognized as the safest towns in New Jersey.

At a particularly emotional stop, Director Soloway made a memorial tribute at the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall in Califon.

The Director also lent support to the re-start of bocce with county Seniors at the re-opened Senior Center, the launch of the Human Services Hope One van initiative at the North County Library in Clinton and learned why the new business owners at Vacchiano Farms in Readington are willing to invest in the county.

In order to direct County resources effectively, under the county state of emergency issued by the Director in response to Tropical Storm Ida on September 1st, Mrs. Soloway observed firsthand many areas of damage around the county, including in Lambertville, Frenchtown, Milford, Califon, Raritan and Delaware Township.

“Throughout my stops on the Director’s Community Tour, I have found our residents, businesspeople, municipal leaders, and non-profit service providers to be creative, resilient and dedicated to keeping Hunterdon County a great place to live and work,” Soloway concluded.