



**YOUR GUIDE
TO DOING BUSINESS**

in

**EPHRATA,
PENNSYLVANIA**



*Compiled by
Downtown Ephrata, Inc.*

*...in collaboration with...
The Borough of Ephrata*

May, 2004



Dear Prospective Downtown Ephrata Business Owner:

Ephrata, Pennsylvania, is a premier location to live and do business. As one of the larger boroughs in Lancaster County, it is regarded as a major market center for the northern end of the County. Its jewel is its Downtown. *Your Guide for Doing Business in Ephrata* is compiled here as an effort to provide quality customer service to our downtown community and to make it easier to expand or start a business by providing handy, valuable information - all in one place.

As a general reference, you will find this guide useful in contacting the appropriate local, county, and state departments for your needs. It is meant to be your one-stop resource for obtaining contact information for permits, licenses, and other information necessary for starting, expanding, and conducting business.

This guide is the product of an effort by Downtown Ephrata, Inc. (DEI), a private, non-profit business and economic development entity serving downtown Ephrata. The goal is to consolidate information pertaining to business development and growth into one source. Both the DEI and Ephrata Borough will make every effort to ensure that you receive useful information and service.

We want downtown Ephrata to be your location of choice. Please feel free to contact the Executive Director of Downtown Ephrata, Inc., Marsha DiBonaventuro at 717-738-5060 for more information.

Best wishes for ongoing success in your business venture!

Sincerely,

George Dillio
President
Downtown Ephrata, Inc.

BUSINESS START-UP CHECKLIST

(Note: The items in this booklet are intended as a guide only and have been carefully researched and deemed correct. However, DEI and the Borough of Ephrata cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions. Please contact DEI with any suggestions or corrections.)

- For demographic information, space availability, and business information assistance in downtown Ephrata, contact:
Marsha DiBonaventuro, Executive Director, Downtown Ephrata, Inc.
P.O. Box 124, Ephrata, PA 17522
Phone: 717-738-5060 Fax: 717-738-5072
E-mail: dibonaventuro@yahoo.com
Web site: www.downtownephrata.org
- To prepare a written business plan, complete with pro-forma statements that will serve as an operating guide as well as a financial prospectus, you may receive free and confidential advice through the following agencies:
 - Small Business Development Center (SBDC) 877-4PA-SBDC
 - Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) 717-397-3092
 - Community First Fund 717-393-2351
- The Ephrata Area Merchants Association was formed to promote the identity and awareness of Ephrata, specifically downtown, through effective advertising, meaningful promotions, and special community events. They strive to encourage unity, cooperation, and innovation among all Ephrata businesses in order to optimally satisfy customer markets and enhance vitality of each business and the community as a whole. Contact Pike's Paints, 733-2333.
- The Borough of Ephrata does not issue local business licenses. However, restaurants/food providers are required to obtain a health license. Annual permits run from \$30 (for establishments with no seating) to \$75 (for establishments with 100 or more seats). Phone: 717-738-9202, ex. 130.
- Decide upon your business structure--sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation or subchapter "s" corporation, Limited Liability Partnership, etc. To form a corporation in the state of Pennsylvania, you must file Articles of Incorporation with the Department of State (form DSCB:1306). Phone: 717-787-1057
- Register your fictitious name with the Corporation Bureau of the Department of State (cost is \$70). A fictitious name is any assumed name, style, or designation other than the proper name of the entity using the name. The surname of a person by itself or with words that describe the business is not a fictitious name. The inclusion of words that suggest additional owners, such as Company, & Company, & Sons, or & Associates, makes the name a fictitious name. To register, you must file form DSCB:54-311 (go to www.dos.state.pa.us, "Register Your Business", "Forms & Publications"). Before or after registering a fictitious name, you will be required to place an advertisement in newspapers of general circulation in Lancaster County (such as the Ephrata Review, 717-733-6397).

- Every employer subject to employment taxes is required to obtain a federal employer identification number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service. Contact the IRS for Form SS-4. Some businesses are required to have an identification number for use on returns, statements and other documents even though they do not have any employees. Filing this form will result in you receiving all other federal tax forms and instructions required of a new business. Your EIN will also be used as your Pennsylvania employer identification number. Internal Revenue Service, Philadelphia, 19255. Phone: 1-800-829-4933, 7:30am-5:30pm.

The IRS will also allow you to obtain an EIN number directly for their web site, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To apply, go to www.irs.gov, enter EIN as a keyword to begin the process (located in the upper right hand corner of the homepage). No registration is required to use the system and the number is issued immediately. This is the preferred method, as registering on-line will eliminate the need to send paperwork to the IRS as well as prevent the delay in issuing a number that may result from an incomplete application.

- The Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) is a free service provided by the US Department of the Treasury that allows business (and individual taxpayers) to make federal tax payments electronically using the internet or phone. To enroll, visit www.eftps.gov, or call EFTPS Customer Service at 1-800-555-4477.
- If you employ one or more persons, you may be liable for the state unemployment compensation tax and must register with the Bureau of Employer Tax Operations. Contact the Field Accounting Service for Lancaster County. Phone: 717-299-7606
- Register your employees for the Ephrata Borough and Ephrata Area School District Earned Income Tax – levied once/year, a 1%-2% tax on annual salary. Forms can be obtained by contacting the Lancaster County Tax Collection Bureau at 717-569-4521, or www.lctcb.org. (See page 9 for more information.)
- Various state taxes are imposed upon individuals, employers, businesses and certain products. The tax for which any business is liable depends on the type and structure of the business. Direct your questions on tax topics or ask general tax information to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue – Harrisburg at 717-787-8201, or the local office in Department of Revenue office in Lancaster at 717-299-7581.
- Obtain workers' compensation insurance coverage for your employees. In Pennsylvania, workers compensation insurance is required if a person, company, or corporation has any full or part-time employees. This includes employees, family members, one-person corporations and corporate officers. Contact the Department of Labor and Industry's Bureau of Workers' Compensation in Harrisburg. Phone: 717-772-4447 - Hot Line Phone: 1-800-482-2383.
- For information on parking regulations as well as assistance with your parking needs, contact the Community Development office of Ephrata Borough. Phone: 717-738-9202 ex. 129.

OPENING YOUR BUSINESS

Your first stop when exploring opening a small business in downtown Ephrata should be at DEI (717-738-5060). It can provide you with a variety of information to help you make an informed decision about opening a business specifically in the downtown.

1. Demographic Information

Comprehensive demographic information about the area is available specifically from two entities. DEI and the Ephrata Chamber of Commerce (717-738-9010) both offer a wealth of information for the Ephrata area and its environs.

2. Space Availability

DEI operates a property log with a listing of available commercial space for lease or for sale. A listing with the latest properties allows for the potential entrepreneur to examine what is available in downtown and to do some easy comparison shopping. Phone numbers of the owners or leasing agents of the properties are included.

3. Educational Programs

Throughout the year, seminars and workshops are scheduled to provide local entrepreneurs with the latest business skills and information. Events may be offered in cooperation with area businesses, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, Ephrata Area Chamber of Commerce, Ephrata Area Merchants Association, and other groups

4. Cooperative Advertising

For businesses interested in cooperative advertising, DEI offers advertising events for downtown businesses. Especially during the holiday season, cooperative programs are arranged. DEI also produces brochures and flyers that highlight local shopping, dining and parking. Brochures are provided to area businesses free of charge.

5. Financial Incentives

Through DEI, eligible businesses expanding in or relocating to downtown Ephrata can gain access to local and state financing and business assistance.

DEI provides Design Challenge Grants, through a Façade Improvement Program, to property and/or business owners to encourage the appropriate renovation and restoration of building facades within the downtown “Main Street” boundaries.

These funds are limited to availability and disbursed on a first-come, first-served basis. The Design Committee reviews applications and recommends approval to the Board of Directors as warranted. Call DEI at 717-738-5060.

PERMITTING AND REGULATIONS

THE OFFICE OF ZONING AND CODES of EPHRATA BOROUGH

124 South State Street

Phone: 717-738-9202 x130

Fax: 717-733-4062

Web Site: www.ephратaboro.org

1. Permitting

Most people begin the development process by meeting with the staff of the Code Enforcement Division, located at Ephrata Borough Hall (124 South State Street, 717-738-9202, x130). This is where permit applications for building alterations such as electrical and plumbing permits originate and where zoning questions are answered. The staff will work with you to help you understand the review process and help you to determine, up-front, what requirements you will need to move through the approval process. It is important for you to be as specific as possible with all questions in order for the department to give you the correct information.

No construction can begin until a building permit has been issued.

Building Permit Fees:

\$25.00 for first \$1,000 of work and \$5.00 for each additional \$1,000 above that

\$15.00 for each plumbing inspection

2. Zoning Districts

One of the first considerations you may have prior to moving forward on a project is whether your chosen business location is properly zoned under the Borough's Zoning Ordinance.

Every property in the Borough is within a zoning district. There are twelve classes of zoning Districts. Downtown Ephrata is in the Central Business District (CBD), and also has a retail overlay district. It is important to verify which zoning regulations apply to your proposed location. The Borough's Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for permitted uses, setbacks, density, parking, building height and other pertinent information.

3. Zoning Appeals, Special Exceptions, and Variances

Applicants who cannot comply with the Zoning Ordinance may file an appeal seeking a special exception for a variance from any provision of the Zoning Code. The rules and procedures for filing an appeal are available in the Code Enforcement Division. The application is reviewed by the Zoning Hearing Board for conformance with the Zoning Ordinance and compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, which outlines the criteria for zoning appeals. Residents and property owners within 200 feet of the property in question are mailed a notice and a legal advertisement is placed in the local newspaper at the applicant's expense.

Ordinance interpretations are made by the Zoning Officer. If an applicant disagrees with the interpretation for the given application, an interpretation appeal may be filed with the Zoning Board through the Zoning Office.

4. Site Plan Review by Ephrata Borough Planning Commission

All subdivision/land development projects are either Minor or Major.

A minor subdivision or land development project is one in which:

- ? No street is to be constructed or widened; and
- ? No other improvement is to be constructed; and
- ? No land disturbance activities will take place except those incidental to construction of a single-family dwelling on each lot; and
- ? Not more than 5 lots are created

Or

- ? A building addition of not more than 1,000 square feet, provided that no improvements are to be constructed or modified and no land disturbance activities will take place except those incidental to construction of said addition.

A major subdivision or land development project is one that is NOT Minor.

All submissions must be made on applications available at the Codes Enforcement Division of Ephrata Borough, 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

5. Sign Permits

Any visible property signage for your business must be issued a sign permit. To apply for a permit, stop by the Code Enforcement Division of Ephrata Borough.

You will need the following:

- ? Indication on plan of all existing and proposed signs;
- ? Computation of the following:
 - (a) sign area of each existing and proposed sign;
 - (b) sign area, height, and setback of each existing and proposed free-standing sign; and,
 - (c) sketch of the proposed signs indicating dimensions, materials, source of illumination, and construction method.

Sign Permit Fee: \$25.00 for each permit

BUSINESS-RELATED PENNSYLVANIA STATE LICENSES

- Bureau of Food Safety & Laboratory Service: 717-772-8573 (Bakery Licenses, Frozen desserts, Non-alcoholic drinks, Permit to sell milk, eggs and dairy products.)
- Liquor Control Board: 717-783-8250 (Liquor License, Malt Beverage to sell, Wholesale License to manufacture and sell.)
- Department of Public Welfare: (Adoption, foster family, residential, maternity homes, day treatment services, private and county children and youth agencies 215-560-2249)
- Day training for adults, community residential, vocational rehabilitation, intermediate care facilities, family living agencies 215-560-2242
- Child day care, group day care homes, family day care homes (registered) 215-560-2541
- Personal Care Homes 215-560-2916 or Toll Free: 800-833-5094
- Department of Revenue
 - Cigarette dealer's license...717-787-5393
 - Lottery Agent...717-986-4699
 - Small Games of Chance...717-787-8275
 - Bureau of Transportation ... 717-787-2838
 - General services...1-800-728-2937
- Professional and Occupational Affairs Bureau
 - Accountant 717-783-1404
 - Architects License Board 717-783-3397
 - Auctioneer Examiners 717-783-3397
 - Barber Examiners 717-783-3402
 - Chiropractic 717-783-7155
 - Cosmetology 717-783-7130
 - Dentistry 717-783-7162
 - Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists 717-783-7049
 - Funeral Directors 717-783-3397
 - Landscape Architects 717-783-3397
 - Medicine 717-783-1400
 - Navigation Commission for the Delaware River 717-787-6458
 - Nursing 717-783-7142
 - Nursing Home Administrators 717-783-7155
 - Occupational Therapy Education and License 717-783-1389
 - Optometry 717-783-7155
 - Osteopathic Medicine 717-783-4858
 - Pharmacy 717-783-7157
 - Physical Therapy 717-783-7134
 - Podiatry 717-783-4858
 - Psychology 717-783-7155
 - Real Estate Appraisers, Certified 717-783-4866
 - Real Estate Commission 717-783-3658
 - Social Work Examiners 717-783-1389
 - Speech-Language and Hearing 717-783-1389
 - Vehicle Manufacturers, Dealers and Salespersons 717-783-1697
 - Veterinary Medicine 717-783-7134

- Miscellaneous

- Complaints Against Licensed Professionals 800-822-2113
- Attorneys (PA Board of Law Examiners) 717-795-7270
- Food Stamps, License to Sell (U.S. Department of Agriculture) 800-692-7462
- Private Investigator (contact County Clerk of Courts) 610-344-6135
- County Food handlers License (Dept of Agriculture) 717-346-3223

For additional information, forms, etc. See.....www.agriculture.state.pa.us

The Department will require site plans, equipment, layout, etc. Once approved, an inspector will visit the establishment. If it passes inspection, he/she will issue a letter of approval. A license will then be issued. Licenses range from \$30 to \$103.

Note: By July 1, 2004, every establishment handling food in Ephrata (and throughout the County) will be required to have at least one certified person in "food handling". 16-hour courses are taught at the Penn State Extension campuses for \$162 pp.

- Local Taxes

1. Emergency and Municipal Services Tax

Employees earning in excess of \$1,500, working within Ephrata Borough, are subject to a tax of twenty dollars (\$20.00) per annum. For those having more than one occupation within the borough, proof of evidence is required so that the tax is only deducted once by the primary employer. Employers are responsible for collecting this tax and submitting same to the Borough Business Office (124 South State Street). Phone: 717-738-9222

2. Earned Income Tax – Employers must submit an Earned Income Tax for every employee that lives in Lancaster County (and Octorara Township in Chester County). The annual tax is a percentage of salary, based on where the employee resides in the County. Percentages range within 1%-2%, and are determined by each municipality and accompanying school district. For specific percentages, forms, and employer registration, call the Lancaster County Tax Collection Bureau at 717-569-4521, or go to www.lctcb.org.

- Parking

On-street parking in Ephrata is intended for a high turnover of spaces, while the parking lots are designed to serve long-term parking needs. The Ephrata Borough Police Department, located in the Borough Hall, 124 South State Street is responsible for enforcing the parking ordinances and meters.

1. Parking Meters - The on-street parking meters are for turnover (short-term) parking; therefore, continuously feeding the meters is prohibited. Parking meters generally are enforced 9a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day except Sunday and other legal holidays.
2. Parking Garage – A clean and secure parking garage is located behind the Brossman Business Complex, for your parking needs.
3. Ephrata Borough has a limited number of parking spaces, which are rented in selected parking lots. For information on location and availability, contact the Community Development Office at the Borough. Phone: 717-738-9202, x129.

ABOUT EPHRATA MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The Borough of Ephrata is a “Council-Manager” Municipality, which is a municipal corporation with a Council-Manager-Mayor form of government. The eight-member Council is elected by wards and is the legislative body in charge of the Borough's government. The Mayor is elected at large and directs the operation of the Police Department. The Borough Council appoints the Borough Manager as a chief administrative officer.

The regular meetings of the Borough Council are held on the second Monday of each month, beginning at 7:30 pm, and they are preceded the Monday before (at 7:00 pm) with Council Work Session. All meetings are held at the Ephrata Municipal Building at 124 South State Street, Ephrata, Pennsylvania.

2004 Elected Officials

Ralph E. Mowen
Mayor

Fred M. Thomas
President, Borough Council

Mary E. Schurr
Vice-President of Council, 2nd Ward

John W. Berkes
Councilmember 1st Ward

Bryan J. Foard
Councilmember 1st Ward

Johann H. Freeseaman, Jr.
Councilmember 2nd Ward

Robert J. Good
Councilmember 4th Ward

A. Anthony Kilkuskie
Councilmember 3rd Ward

Paul S. Rauch
Councilmember 4th Ward

Borough Staff Management

Gary Nace
Borough Manager

Shirley M. Daniels
Director of Community Development

D. Robert Thompson
Director of Engineering/Public Works

Gail M. Bare
Director of Administration/Finance

Steven M. Annibali
Chief of Police

Useful Business Development Websites

Business Gateway to Federal Resources

www.business.gov

An official web site of the US government, this resource links you with a host of individual programs within each of the topics listed below. Through this gateway, you can easily retrieve information and forms to help you comply with federal regulations and utilize the government’s vast array of business development tools.

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|----------------------|----------------------|
| Business Development | Financial Assistance |
| Taxes | Laws and Regulations |
| International Trade | Workplace Issues |
| Buying and Selling | Forms |

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us

Team Pennsylvania CareerLink is a cooperative effort to provide one-stop delivery of career services to employers and others. Such services include unemployment compensation, job order services, labor market statistics, and economic/technical support. Services are also available at the County CareerLink office, Lancaster.

Ephrata’s Business Support Team - Local Websites

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| Downtown Ephrata, Inc. | www.downtownephrata.org |
| Borough of Ephrata | www.ephrataboro.org |
| Ephrata Area Chamber of Commerce | www.ephrata-area.org |
| County of Lancaster | http://www.co.lancaster.pa |
| Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce & Industry | www.lancasterchamber.com |
| also | |
| Ephrata Area Merchants Association | 717-733-2333 |

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This booklet is published by Downtown Ephrata, Inc. Special thanks to the Borough of Ephrata for their cooperation in assuring accurate representation of borough services. For additional copies, contact: Downtown Ephrata, Inc., P.O. Box 124, Ephrata, PA 17552 Phone: 717-738-5060.

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Significant excerpts courtesy of “Your Guide to Doing Business in West Chester,” West Chester Business Improvement District, and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.