

GRCA 2026 ANNUAL DINNER RECAP

FROM REJECTION TO ORBIT

Massimino Headlines GRCA Annual Dinner Honoring 70 local Businesses

The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) recently celebrated the vitality of the Berks County business community at its 113th Annual Dinner held at the Santander Arena.

More than 700 people gathered for the space-themed event.

The evening began by instantly transporting attendees to the moon with a space-themed showcase featuring companies that have worked directly or indirectly with NASA. VIP Sponsors were treated to an exclusive experience, complete with signature cocktails delivered by a roaming robot named KittyBot, gourmet hors d'oeuvres and a photo opportunity with keynote speaker and former NASA Astronaut, Mike



PHOTO CREDITS: WAYNE BECKER, ZERBE STUDIO OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Mike Massimino, GRCA's keynote speaker and former NASA astronaut, relayed his time in space and what he learned to a crowd of more than 700 people.

Massimino. As other guests arrived, they were welcomed by dancing and high fiving robot named PepperBot. The excitement continued with lively photo backdrops, the use of CatapalloVR's headsets to land a crashing spaceship and hang out in Reading Truck's speakeasy lounge. Smoke

billowed and subwoofers shook the room to emulate a rocket launch.

During Massimino's 45-minute speech he recounted being rejected by NASA three times before finally being accepted into the 1996 astronaut class. He encouraged the audience to never crush the ideas of the new

person on your team, even if they aren't good, because they'll be less likely to share when they have a good idea. He also reflected on his role in a complex repair of the Hubble Space Telescope, encouraging the audience to trust their tools, training and team when facing high-pressure challenges.



Category 1 winners Eric Unger (middle left) and Barry Unger (middle right) celebrate Vision Mechanical Inc.'s win with GRCA COO Sally Stewart and Jeff Rush, Chairman of the Board.



Category 2 winners Doug and Rachel Brown of Blades of Steel Landscaping celebrate with GRCA COO Sally Stewart and Jeff Rush, Chairman of the Board.

2026 GRCA DINNER BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

Category 1

1. Vision Mechanical, Inc.
2. Irish Creek Construction
3. Mail Shark
4. Grant Manufacturing & Alloying, Inc.
5. Halter Landscaping, Inc.
6. Singer Equipment Company
7. Diamond Credit Union
8. JB Plumbing HVAC & Construction
9. Levan Machine & Truck Equipment
10. Ethosource, LLC
11. Wyatt Seating
12. D&S Elite Construction, Inc.
13. Discovery FCU
14. Sense of Peace Home Care
15. Fraser Advanced Information Systems
16. Unique Pretzel Bakery, Inc.
17. Customers Bank
18. RKL, LLP
19. Rothenberger Insurance Services, LLC
20. REMAX of Reading
21. East Penn Manufacturing Company
22. Betterview Counseling and Trauma Recovery, LLC
23. Berkshire Systems Group, Inc.
24. Stoney Creek Rentals, Inc.
25. New Castle Lawn & Landscape
26. Blatt Construction, Inc.
27. Solve IT Solutions, LLC
28. Advanced Comfort Specialists, Inc.
29. Fromm
30. Entech Engineering, Inc.
31. Spotts Insurance Group
32. Smith Bukowski
33. Financial Planning Advisors, Inc.
34. Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys
35. Kitay Law Offices
36. Muhlenberg Greene Architects, LTD.
37. Catering by John Lowe
38. Moselem Springs Golf Club
39. Reading Royals
40. Van Scoy Jewelers
41. Bell Tower Salon Spa
42. Santander Arena and Santander Performing Arts Center
43. Retro Fitness Kenhorst
44. Reading Truck Body, LLC
45. D&S Portable Toilets, LLC
46. Brentwood Industries, Inc.
47. Descco Design & Construction, Inc.
48. Ronnie C. Folk Paving, Inc.
49. Reading Truck Equipment, LLC
50. Phytogenx, Inc.

Category 2

1. Blades of Steel Landscaping
2. Bime Beauty
3. Disc Centers of America
4. Blinds and Designs
5. FXV Digital Design
6. Uncorkd
7. Lausch's Moving Company
8. Archwood Soapery
9. Berks Digital, Inc.
10. Three Hive Studios
11. Empowerment Behavioral Health, LLC
12. Gilded Design Studio
13. Bell Media Group
14. Interlace Communications, Inc.
15. Jeff Martin, Century 21 Gold
16. LJ's Fitness
17. Parcon Cleaning Services
18. Moyer-Drabick & Associates, LTD
19. Inspired Wellness, LLC
20. Ignite Martial Arts

"You never know when innovation is going to come," he said.

During one of the many lighthearted moments from his speech, Massimino talked about sending the first tweet from space.

"Take that, Neil Armstrong!" he recalled thinking.

Shortly after, he received an email from his kids learning that not only their friends and they were making fun of him, but also the comedians on Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update.

The evening continued with recognizing the 50 companies that made up the Business Excellence Awards in Category 1. Vision Mechanical, Inc., Irish Creek Construction, and Mail Shark took the top three spots. The honored businesses in Category 1 are for-profit companies, with revenues of at least \$1 million in each of the past three fiscal years.

Twenty small businesses were recognized in Category 2 with Blades of Steel Landscaping, Bime Beauty and Disc Centers of America making up the top three. The recognized companies in Category 2 are for-profit businesses, with revenues of at least \$250,000 in each of the past three fiscal years.

"The Annual Dinner was a strong reflection of the innovation and forward momentum across the Greater Reading business community," said Jeff Rush, Chairman of the board. "With a nod to exploration and discovery, the evening highlighted businesses that are leading the way and setting a high standard for growth in Berks County."

The Platinum Sponsor of the event was JPMorgan Chase & Co. and the Diamond Sponsor was Shuman Development Group.

ABOUT THE GREATER READING CHAMBER ALLIANCE: Our mission is with excellent and committed leadership and coordination, we: attract new businesses to our community, support the businesses that are already here, nurture local start-ups, develop the workforce for today and the future, and advocate on behalf of the business community.

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Business Excellence Category 1 Winner #1

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For additional information, please contact Barry H. Unger, President at 610.376.6700, Ext. 230 or email barryunger@visionmechanical.com, and visit www.visionmechanical.com.



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GBDF SELLS 24 ACRES TO C&B DEVELOPMENT LLC

The Greater Berks Development Fund (GBDF), an affiliate of the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA), is pleased to announce the sale of 24 acres of land to C&B Development LLC, (C&B), Wyomissing.

The parcel of land, which GBDF purchased in 2018 with the purpose of providing industrially zoned land for business attraction and growth, is located on Van Reed Road in Bern Township. The construction of a 221,000-square-foot building on the site has been fully approved by all entities and construction is expected to start in the spring.

"It has been a pleasure working with the GBDF team over the past few years. This has been a complicated project that required quite a bit of collaboration, and we are very appreciative of GBDF's support," said Matt Close, C&B Development LLC Partner. "We believe this project will be very beneficial to the community and we are proud to invest in Berks County. We hope to continue to collaborate with GBDF on future opportunities."

Previous sales from the GBDF's 100-acre holdings in and around Van Reed and Leisz's Bridge Roads include G&T Foam, UGI Utilities, Inc. and Mid-Atlantic Interstate Transmissions, LLC. An 8-acre and an 11-acre parcel remain available for sale.

"We are pleased to have worked with C&B on this transaction. As a local developer, we were confident that C&B would successfully navigate the required review processes, ensuring an impactful project. This investment signals continued confidence in Berks County as an attractive location for business growth," said Debra L. Millman, GBDF President.

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