

# The Times Herald

## KOP-BID executive director: ‘King of Prussia is on fire’

UPPER MERION >> “King of Prussia is on fire.”

Although he was not in attendance at the King of Prussia District (KOP-BID) annual report and awards luncheon held recently at Sheraton Valley Forge, executive director Eric Goldstein spoke to the business advocacy group’s partners through a colorful brochure, which detailed several of King of Prussia’s \$1 billion completed or burgeoning development projects.

“There is a palpable new energy and new optimism these days,” noted the ailing Goldstein — emcee Bob Hart explained to the crowd that Goldstein had neglected to get his flu shot — in the report. “2016 was a phenomenal year in King of Prussia ... Economic development and job growth continued at an impressive rate.”

Nowhere was that economic development more in evidence than at King of Prussia Mall, which owner Simon Property Group unveiled last August when its side-by-side malls, The Plaza and The Court, officially merged into a metropolis all its own, with more than 450 retailers and four distinctive food courts.

“King of Prussia Mall had a great year,” noted Hart, the mall’s manager, who presented the Economic Development award to Simon Property Group — “through which I am gainfully employed,” he added, smiling.

The mall’s director of marketing and business development Kathy Smith accepted the award for the Simon Property Group.

Recognition as the outstanding Residential Property went to 251 DeKalb, the 26-acre hilltop complex down the road from the mall that was purchased in 2014 by Candlebrook Properties LLC, which is restoring the once glamorous 1960s Marquee property to its former glory with a thoroughly modern aesthetic, focusing on lifestyle.

Josh Levy, managing director of Candlebrook Properties, accepted the award for the complex, now undergoing a phase by phase multi-million dollar renovation that includes exterior as well as interior upgrades, including a TechnoGym fitness center, Kidville children’s playspace, swimming pool, curated lobby art showcases and even a lending library.

Other awards included Leadership (Upper Merion Township Board of Supervisors); Hospitality (Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board); Community Outreach (Brandywine Realty Trust and Budget Maintenance) and Transportation (PennDOT District 6-0 and Valley Forge National Historical Park).

The Commercial Office Property award went to The Judge Group, a professional services firm that had relocated its headquarters from West Conshohocken to 151 S. Warner Road, Wayne, Upper Merion Township, in the falls of 2015, expanding its staff to more than 250 employees.

RCLCO managing director Adam Ducker had kicked off the luncheon with [a comprehensive report that compiled data, issues and best practices from the top 50 metro areas](#) and revealed that suburban growth is driving metropolitan growth, with nearly 70 percent of Americans working in the suburbs.

With its wave of growth mounting year after year, King of Prussia continues to be suburban Philadelphia's largest commercial center, Ducker indicated.

As reported by KOP-BID, more than 2,500 new residential units are now completed or under construction and five companies have announced their corporate relocation to the town that boasts more than 30 percent of all hotel rooms in Montgomery County and features the region's only full-amenity gaming resort in Valley Forge Casino Resort.

Sponsors of the luncheon included King Limousine and Transportation Services; Coleman Kellam Team; TD Banks; Peco; APPI Energy; Agile Cat; Kreisler Miller; Riley, Riper, Hollin & Colagreco and Unruh, Turner, Burke & Frees.