

DELAWARE Business

BUSINESS CALENDAR

Today

Getting Out of Debt and Staying Out. Sponsored by Delaware Money School. Presented by Primerica. 6-

Helping small business via cable is her business

New tech park tenant lets entrepreneurs relate their stories

By PETER BOTHUM
The News Journal

A new business recently joined Quest Pharmaceutical Services, Quantum Leap Innovations and about 40 other high-tech companies that call the Delaware Technology Park in Newark their home.

But this new neighbor has nothing to do with Java expertise, semiconductors or aluminum foam.

Entrepreneurial Spirit Institute helps promote small businesses through weekly cable television shows and by helping them learn new strategies through seminars. CEO 'FM' doubles as the shows' only on-air personality. She and a camera operator visit businesses in Delaware and the surrounding area and let the owners tell their stories.

Michael Bowman, chairman of the technology park, said it might seem a little strange for a multimedia communications company to move into a park that scientists and engineers call home. But Entrepreneurial Spirit brings a much-needed element to the park, he said.

"It is odd in the sense that normally that's not what [companies in the park] do," Bowman said. "But what they provide is a marketing publicity opportunity for a lot of these companies."

Bowman said the addition of a nontechnology business to the park at 15 Innovation Way does not represent a change in focus. The park,



'FM', CEO of Entrepreneurial Spirit Institute, lunches with a Client at Costa's Grill & Wine Bar, in Wilmington.

2,500 people with jobs.

Like its neighbors, Entrepreneurial Spirit is a business first and foremost. 'FM' operates the company with advertising dollars from businesses that buy spots on her shows, which air locally on channel 28, and money from admission to seminars.

But 'FM' views her startup as much more than an advertising vehicle for businesses. The Philadelphia native wants business owners and occasionally corporate executives to tell their stories, assist people in finding jobs and bring about connections in the small-business world.

"If everybody's going to grow, they're going to have to open up," 'FM' said.

After working as an airline stewardess, a tour coordinator, a receptionist and a cable installer, 'FM' went into business for herself as The Cable Lady in Voorhees, N.J. For about \$65 an hour, 'FM' would come to people's houses and program their VCRs and home entertainment systems.

'FM' soon spun that business into an audio-video production house that became the bedrock for her first attempts at a TV show.

Finally she landed in Delaware with Entrepreneurial Spirit - in a technology park.

Bowman said 'FM' and her business are a good fit for the park, which also houses the nonprofit Small Business Development Center. The University of Delaware center is right across the hall, so 'FM' and the center can work together to meet the needs of entrepreneurs. The center offers seminars and other services similar to Entrepreneurial Spirit's, but it also helps clients identify and bid on government contracts.

There's a place for Entrepreneurial Spirit outside the park as well, said Jim O'Neill, director of UD's Center for Economic Education and Entrepreneurship.

"Awareness is important," he said. Contact Peter Bothum at 324-2428 or pbothum@delawareonline.com.