

Celebrating Berkshire women in business

BY HEATHER BOULGER

Fall is by far my favorite time of year in the Berkshires! The air is crisp, leaves are falling, bonfires glow, and there are lots of outdoor activities to enjoy – not to mention the yummy apple cider donuts that our farm stands boast.

It's also the season in which we celebrate a myriad of workforce activities in the Berkshires including Women in Business month.

Ladies who lead

Women in business are a driving force in the nation's flourishing economy and represent 30 percent of business owners in the Berkshires. Earlier this autumn we celebrated National Women's Small Business Month in October, giving us an opportunity to recognize and applaud the talented, dedicated and driven women whose entrepreneurial spirit helps drive our economy forward.

Here are some national statistics from the 2019 U.S. Census:

- The nation has 12.3 million women-owned businesses.
- U.S. women-owned businesses generate \$1.8 trillion a year.
- 40 percent of US businesses are women-owned (30 percent of Berkshire businesses).
- 64 percent of new women-owned businesses were started by women of color last year.
- Latina women-owned businesses grew more than 87 percent.
- There are 114-percent more women entrepreneurs than there were 20 years ago.
- Women-owned businesses added half a million jobs between 1997 and 2007.

The top woman-owned industries are health care and social services (64.6 per-



Spectrum Plastics in Pittsfield recently recognized four members of its team for the important roles they play in every part of the company's manufacturing process. They are, from left: Quality Assurance Engineer Amber Ubertini, Junior Quality Assurance Engineer Nicole Sebastino, Manufacturing Supervisor Kelly Thibodeau, and Quality Document Control Specialist Cherie Pasquarelli.

cent), educational services (56.9 percent), other services such as personal or pet care (52 percent), administrative support (47.1 percent), and retail (41.8 percent). There are numerous female executives, department heads, and senior management in the area as well. From arts and culture and manufacturing to health care and education, Berkshire County is home to so many outstanding and committed women leaders.

Employer Spotlight

It is, of course, not just women-owned businesses that are noteworthy, but the important contributions made by women throughout the workforce.

For this year's Women in Business celebration, the MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board places the Employer Spotlight on Spectrum Plastics. Located at 17 Downing Three in Pittsfield, Spectrum Plastics specializes in advanced manufacturing of medical bioabsorbable polymers and other commercial polymer applications



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grown through the operation of advanced manufacturing molds to control all risk documentation outlining the pre- and post-run of all manufactured items at Spectrum Plastics today. Before any item is made, Pasquarelli ensures that operators have all the information that is required to select the resins, molds, machine calibrations, output measurements, material concentrations, and temperature specifications for shipping. In this role, she is instrumental in ensuring the design, manufacture, quality assessment and shipping all occur within strict compliance protocols

Manufacturing Supervisor Kelly Thibodeau has been with Spectrum Plastics for over 10 years and has worked in advanced manufacturing for more than 25 years. Thibodeau schedules operators, conducts training on all injection mold machines and some of the CNC machines – ensuring consistency in training and operator development across the manufacturing floor. She oversees the operation of commercial manufacturing floors with

ness of the Month

to each other is enriching for both child and community, Executive Director of Greenagers. Started in 1997, Greenagers is used predominantly on volunteer-led trail-building projects and provides opportunities for teens and young adults in the area to gain environmental leadership, and the trades. In a typical year, Greenagers operates throughout Berkshire County, Columbia County,

Will's approach to Greenagers was

manufacturing of medical bioabsorbable polymers and other commercial polymer applications.

Vicky Layden, Human Resources Generalist at Spectrum Plastics, nominated four exceptional women in manufacturing at Spectrum Plastics for special recognition: Quality Assurance Engineer Amber Ubertini, Junior Quality Assurance Engineer Nicole Sebastino, Quality Document Control Specialist Cherie Pasquarelli, and Manufacturing Supervisor Kelly Thibodeau. These women play important roles in every process carried out in the manufacturing of each product at Spectrum Plastics.

As Spectrum's Quality Assurance Engineer, Amber Ubertini is responsible for ensuring the quality and manufacturing integrity of the manufacturing process, using state-of-the-art industrial coordinate measuring machines that are simplified, highly flexible and provide precise and fast quality measurements on the shop floor. Ubertini is also involved in continuous process improvement – from the client's purchase order, engineering design, process control and certification, mold-making, and advanced manufacturing of bioabsorbable polymers in their clean rooms, through post-production quality control, packaging, inventory control and shipping.

As purchase orders come in from customers, this triggers process control of the entire order. This process is handled by Quality Document Control Specialist Cherie Pasquarelli, whose responsibility ranges from pre-production to post-production quality assurance and shipping to the client. Pasquarelli started with Spectrum Plastics as an operator in 1993, and in 27 years with the company has

across the manufacturing floor. She oversees the operation of commercial manufacturing floors with over 18 presses and a class 8 clean room with 12 machines manufacturing medical bioabsorbable polymers. Thibodeau's commitment to training and consistent quality in manufacturing systems ensures outstanding product output for Spectrum Plastics.

Junior Quality Assurance Engineer Nicole Sebastino, who has been with Spectrum Plastics for three years, assists Ubertini in ensuring all products are made to the highest quality. Sebastino firmly believes in continuous system improvement and has been instrumental in implementing a shipping/inventory barcode warehouse management system that has streamlined efficiencies across many departments within the past year. This new system has led to more efficient inventory storage and shipping to customers, reducing costs to Spectrum Plastics and their customers.

Each of these women clearly comes to work each day with the intent to provide the highest quality service, training, assessment, and process improvement for Spectrum Plastics. We want to congratulate Spectrum Plastics for recognizing the important contributions of the women in their workforce to the firm's ongoing growth and success.

Join us in honoring women business owners and the numerous female executives and managers throughout the Berkshires by making a commitment to #BuyWomenOwned or write a review or give a recommendation to a friend, which is the best form of compliment for a business owner or woman in business. Let's help them succeed well into the future. #BerkshireWomenInBusiness.◆