

SPECIAL EDITION  
DATA DELAWARE: Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
SUBJECT: Jobs, jobs, jobs!

DISCLAIMER: This transcript is produced from Data Delaware podcast electronically; the conversion is being offered on a best-efforts basis.

Dace Blaskovitz:

Welcome back to Money and Politics in Delaware. Welcome back to the program, New Castle County Executive, Matt Meyer.

Matt Meyer:

How you doing Dace? Great to be here.

Dace Blaskovitz:

I'm good. I'm good. I'm good. I'm good. So let's see. Last time we saw you was a couple of years, so welcome back to the program. But gee whiz, we always give first time listeners, you know that, 30 seconds about you, as we do with every guest and 30 seconds about what you do for a living.

Matt Meyer:

Matt Meyer, New Castle County Executive. I grew up off Shipley Road and then in middle school moved to Wilmington, the west side of Wilmington. Moved away for college, was a lawyer in New York, taught elementary and middle school math. Went to Iraq as a diplomat, came back home, ran for County Executive, ran a grassroots campaign four years ago. Unseated a three-term incumbent in a Democratic primary and I've spent the last four years as your New Castle County Executive.

Dace Blaskovitz:

All right, next question is more of a civics lesson, especially for an eighth grade class. What is it that you actually do?

Matt Meyer:

I get up in the morning and go to work. These days I don't always get up in the morning. Sometimes I'm up all night dealing with this situation. But our job is effectively to be the mayor, to govern the largest county in the state of Delaware. New Castle County has about 565,000 people. It's about 60% of the population of the state of Delaware, which actually makes it pretty unusual around the country. There are very few counties that are actually a majority population of the state. Probably most important thing we do is your sanitary sewer, your liquid waste. Without that we'd all be ending life probably in our thirties and forties like in the middle ages, but we have a really quality sanitary sewer system. We have the second largest police department in the state, the fantastic New Castle County police. The paramedics, largest paramedic service in the state, 911 center. We run one of the largest affordable housing programs in the state. We govern land use and of course have 248 beautiful free parks and 15 public libraries.

SPECIAL EDITION  
DATA DELAWARE: Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
SUBJECT: Jobs, jobs, jobs!

DISCLAIMER: This transcript is produced from Data Delaware podcast electronically; the conversion is being offered on a best-efforts basis.

Dace Blaskovitz:

You ready to go?

Matt Meyer:

Ready to go, Dace.

Dace Blaskovitz:

All right, now as I tried to at the intro at the beginning of the program, Matt is here with a mission. Altruistic and it's really resource driven. Good deed compliments to Matt Meyer. Let me tee it up for you. The first one, summer jobs.

Matt Meyer:

Yeah, this is really a challenging time where we're actually asking the overwhelming majority of residents listening today to stay at home. Normally we're constantly trying to create work opportunities for people, but we want you to stay inside unless you're an essential employee trying to address the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus, we want you to stay at home. There are certain professions that we need out in the field. County government is no different and we are hiring for those positions. Normally this time of year we hire about 10 public works employees for summer seasonal positions. We're hiring double or triple that this year and maybe more. We know there are people out there who really need work, so please do apply. Just go to [NCCDE.org](http://NCCDE.org), click on jobs. You'll see more information.

Dace Blaskovitz:

Very good. The next one I have to tee up is called capital programs. We did this in our pre-interview. Please put it on the air. What's going on?

Matt Meyer:

So I believe in a time like this when there's sort of massive economic slowdown, probably nothing like our country has seen in its history, where in a matter of weeks everything is shut down. The tendency of every business and organization and me in my personal finance is to stop spending. You have a lot less money coming in, so you need to stop spending. In government there's a tendency to do the same. I tend to believe that now is the time actually to do the exact opposite. In the Great Depression they had a lot of problems right in the beginning because government stopped spending money and that actually compounded the problem. What we're trying to figure out to do is how do we use our borrowing power, use the leverage of bail outs that are coming from the federal government to actually put money on the streets.

SPECIAL EDITION  
DATA DELAWARE: Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
SUBJECT: Jobs, jobs, jobs!

DISCLAIMER: This transcript is produced from Data Delaware podcast electronically; the conversion is being offered on a best-efforts basis.

Matt Meyer:

So as soon as this crisis is over, we will be spending on capital projects like never before and putting you and your family and your neighbors and your community back to work. So what we're doing is if you go to [bids.nccde.org](https://bids.nccde.org), let me say it again, [B-I-D-S.nccde.org](https://B-I-D-S.nccde.org). You will see over the coming weeks an increasing number of bids that we're putting online. We're hoping you can sit at home, you can telecommute, you can work with your team to put together contracting bids, service bids over the next few weeks while it's not completely safe to go outside. Once part of the lockdown is lifted, once it's safer to get out there and do more of these projects, we will be able to issue the bids and the economy will jumpstart.

Dace Blaskovitz:

And Matt, just to do a follow up, do you have... Not that you should, do you have a for instance there on the type of projects that we're talking about?

Matt Meyer:

So, many of our construction projects are actually not under lockdown in this state. There are some sort of services contracts, IT type contracts for which you may not be allowed under the state of emergency today to go outside. The biggest projects we have in dollar terms are sewer projects, building and upgrading various parts of our sewer system. There are very large projects going on down in Delaware City. A company called North Point is coming in with a huge logistics facility that's going to hire thousands of people. A lot of sewer work around that we're doing and there's obviously another one at by at Boxwood where a large Amazon facility is coming in. We also have one of the largest libraries in state history coming into Middletown that we're going to be building.

Dace Blaskovitz:

All right. You had two more things you wanted to chat about. Non-essential/moving it online. What am I trying to say?

Matt Meyer:

So you can imagine our position five weeks ago when suddenly there's a demand to shut down. We have 2,091 government employees who work for you every day in New Castle County and one of our first thought is, just like any employer, how do we keep all those people safe? At the same time, we need to keep our real estate market moving. We need to make sure our recorder of deeds is open. Register of wills cannot close, our police, our paramedics, they cannot close. Even building inspections and things of that sort. If we want our economy to at least manage to move, we need to keep those things open.

SPECIAL EDITION  
DATA DELAWARE: Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
SUBJECT: Jobs, jobs, jobs!

DISCLAIMER: This transcript is produced from Data Delaware podcast electronically; the conversion is being offered on a best-efforts basis.

Matt Meyer:

We managed to on a dime, within 48 hours basically take a workforce that had been known for not entering the 21st century and within about 48 hours got a whole bunch of people laptops, turned our whole operation into a telecommuting operation so that we can continue operations for you. I want to mention that, just because it took a Herculean effort, not necessarily by me, but by many of those 2091 employees and we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Dace Blaskovitz:

Let's do one more good deed here. Hardship/resources. In our pre-interview, you really wanted to spend some time there. Here's your platform.

Matt Meyer:

Yeah, this is a time, Dace, when a lot of people have family members who are being affected by Covid-19, or being affected by other illnesses and they can't see them. They can't express what you normally express to a loved one. We're seeing images, as I'm sure you've seen, online of funerals and memorial services where two or three people are there because that's all that is allowed. Physically, mentally, emotionally, economically, educationally, this is such a difficult time. But what's really interesting is that when you strip all that down, sometimes you realize how great and amazing and strong our community is. How many people across our community are sewing masks so that first responders can be protected? I cannot tell you the number of calls that I've gotten, various residents of the County who simply want to help. Pope Francis on Easter called it the contagion of kindness or rather the contagion of hope.

Matt Meyer:

And so I just want to communicate to everyone listening that we know times are tough. There are people probably listening today, Dace, who have spent decades, maybe generations building a small business and see it disappearing before their eyes. I just want people to know that we are here. We're going to continue working for you and together we're going to get through this.

Dace Blaskovitz:

All right, let's wrap it up, Matt. We got about 30 seconds. So people interested in summer jobs should go to the New Castle County website and as far as the capital programs, it's [bids.nccde.org](https://bids.nccde.org).

Matt Meyer:

[Bids.nccde.org](https://bids.nccde.org). Together, Dace, we're going to get through this really tough time.

Dace Blaskovitz:

His name is Matt Myers. We hope to get him back with regularity going forward.