

# REAL-WORLD at Rowan University

When the day comes that fans cheer on drivers zooming around the Thunderbolt Raceway/New Jersey Motorsports Park (NJMP) in Millville, they may owe their entertainment in part to a group of Rowan University MBA students.

Those student-consultants are part of the “Strategic Project-Based Experience” class, and they are learning as much outside of the classroom as they are inside it.

Like their predecessors, these students are spending the semester on experiential projects that have them working with businesses and non-

profit agencies in the region that need some business expertise and research assistance. And while they are helping those organizations, the students are building their own skills and resume.

This semester, 11 students are working on several major projects, including the proposed Thunderbolt Raceway/Motorsports Park under consideration for the vicinity of Millville Airport in Cumberland County. The complex will feature a 4.1-mile road circuit raceway as its focal point, and it will have design features and characteristics similar to those of the legendary Virginia International Raceway that opened in Southern Virginia in



*Discussing the Non Profit Development Center business plans are (l-r) Becky Corbin (client), Steve Majewski, John Zander*



*Working on the Thunderbolt Raceway Project are (l-r) Joe Savaro (client), Larry Pologruto, Jeff Polizzi, Don Fauerback (client)*

1957 and was revived in 1999.

The Rowan team is helping the developers of the proposed \$100-million complex expand their business plan, conduct a market analysis and complete their strategic plan so they can approach investors. The team's primary goal is to attempt a preliminary economic impact analysis using the IMPLAN economic impact modeling system or other means to prove the need for state and local government funding for the project.

In addition to the raceway, plans call for the complex to feature a country club clubhouse, garages, VIP suites, track infrastructure buildings, a go-kart track, a skidpad/vehicle dynamics testing area, a 3/4-mile paved tri-oval, an off-road vehicle track, a classic car gallery, in-house driving schools, restaurants, motels, at least one hotel with a conference center, a motorsports industrial complex, television/media studios and possibly a car/motorcycle dealership.

### MBA Projects

"We want the New Jersey Motorsports Park to be more than a racing venue," said Joe Savaro, a principal and development manager for NJMP. "There are unique learning experiences and business opportunities that can be tied into both the automotive and aviation industries. These are industries and programs that could really make a difference to the community. Rowan's involvement provides us with an insight into those various possi-



*"Our MBA and graduate students... get a chance to spread their wings..."*

*Mark Weaver, Ph.D.  
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bilities and helps create an important linkage between an educational leader and the businesses. We hope our relationship with Rowan University will continue to grow beyond this initial development project."

While one team is assisting the Millville group, others are working on:

- Exploring the potential for a Gloucester County-based Habitat for Humanity to open a ReStore, a facility that raises money to further the organization's work by selling at a discount products such as paint donated by major retailers.
- Conducting a competitor analysis for a Philadelphia accounting firm as it considers opening an office in New Jersey.
- Completing an analysis of pharmaceutical and biotechnical firms in the state for PSEG.
- Working on a technology commercialization project for the FAA.
- Developing a strategic plan for a

Non-Profit Development Center in Gloucester County.

Dr. Mark Weaver, who teaches the class, sees the consultancies as a benefit for students and businesses and organizations. "Our MBA students and graduate students working in the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship get a chance to 'spread their wings' and work with people from other backgrounds and companies to develop new views and methods of solving problems," Weaver said. "The project-based learning approach is our way of providing challenges and leadership situations in a live-action consulting engagement. The students win, the companies win, and Rowan wins by positioning itself as the go-to place for business in South Jersey."

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