

BLUE HEN NEWS

FALL 2026
ISSUE NO. 03



From March Madness to Summer Magic

Summer brought plenty of sunshine, connection, and professional growth to the First State Chapter. From an exclusive evening celebrating our valued Business Partners to an inspiring half day focused on the future of legal operations, it was a season filled with opportunities to connect, learn, and look ahead.

Our **First State ALA Board Dinner** with Parcels, held at Moro in Wilmington, was a wonderful summer evening dedicated to celebrating the relationships and partnerships that help make our chapter strong. Board members and our top tier Business Partners enjoyed great food, conversation, and time together in a relaxed setting. It was a special opportunity to show our appreciation for their continued support and the important role they play in our chapter.

We also welcomed legal management professionals to First State ALA's **Human + AI Advantage** at Potter Anderson. This half day seminar explored the intersection of technology, people, and legal operations, with practical sessions focused on Microsoft Copilot, human centered strategies for navigating change, workflow design, and responsible AI supported processes. Attendees left with new ideas, practical prompts, and strategies they could put to work right away.

As summer comes to a close, we're grateful for the connections made, the ideas shared, and the continued energy within our chapter. As we transition into fall, we're excited to build on that momentum and look ahead to an exciting season for First State ALA. Fall brings a renewed sense of energy and plenty of opportunities to come together, whether through educational programs, networking events, or simply spending time with colleagues and friends within our legal management community.

We're looking forward to creating more opportunities for our members and Business Partners to share ideas, learn from one another, and build meaningful connections. From professional development and industry insights to social events and informal gatherings, there will be plenty of ways to stay engaged with the chapter and with one another.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and feel inspired by all we've accomplished together. Thank you for being part of our First State ALA community and for helping make our chapter such a welcoming, connected, and engaged group of professionals.

*First State Chapter
Board Members xxx*

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A Message from our President:

Fall is near, and with it comes the familiar busyness of back-to-school, fall sports, activities, work, and everything else life seems to throw our way. And, of course, those mornings when you leave the house in a coat and come home in a T-shirt! I find myself busier than ever this year with my daughter starting kindergarten and jumping into quite a few sports and activities. While I love every minute of it, I'm also reminded how quickly our schedules can fill up and how easy it is to put ourselves last. With World Mental Health Day on October 10, it's a great time to remember the importance of taking care of ourselves—not just when we're overwhelmed, but every day. As we get closer to the holidays, that reminder becomes even more important as our already busy lives can become even busier. Take a few minutes when you can to slow down, recharge, set boundaries, and do something that makes you happy. Taking care of ourselves allows us to show up as our best selves for our families, our colleagues, and our communities.



Best, Jessica

JESSICA TOMB	FIRST STATE CHAPTER PRESIDENT
www.firststateala.org	

WHAT'S TRENDING IN LEGAL MANAGEMENT?

LOOKING FOR FRESH IDEAS AND INDUSTRY INSIGHTS? CHECK OUT THE LATEST ALA NATIONAL LEGAL MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE AND LEGAL MANAGEMENT TALK PODCAST. FROM TALENT RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLANNING TO AI, LEADERSHIP, AND LAW FIRM OPERATIONS, THESE RESOURCES COVER THE TOPICS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATION. STAY INFORMED, STAY INSPIRED, AND STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE!





Jeff Lowe,
*Director of Retail
Services & Logistics,*
Innovative Driven

I recently celebrated 34 years with Innovative Driven as Director of Retail Services & Logistics, overseeing Legal Print/Production, Courier, and Retail Marketing for our clients. I got my start in the legal industry in 1990 as a courier for an attorney in Newark, DE, and I've stayed with the same succession of companies since, from SH Deliveries through Innovative Driven. That tenure has let me build long-term relationships with colleagues and clients, and grow into the role I hold today.

Law firms demand exceptional service, their reputation and case results depend on it. My team and I approach every project as a partner, prioritizing clear communication and attention to detail. Clients are also navigating fast-changing technology, including how to responsibly bring generative AI into their practices, an area where our eDiscovery team works directly with firms to help them adopt AI the right way.

We've supported the ALA for years because of their administrators and their dedication to their business partners, a partnership that strengthens our relationships with law firms and connects us to an organization advancing best practices across the legal industry.

Innovative Driven is an alternative legal support provider known for creative solutions and exceptional consultative services to law firms, corporate counsel, and government agencies. We provide solutions across the litigation lifecycle, from Information Governance and eDiscovery to Staffing and Recruiting and Trial Support Services for the Delaware Court of Chancery. We're trusted by 85 of the Am Law 200, 25 Fortune 500 companies, and multiple government agencies, and we're ISO 27001 certified and both GovRAMP and FedRAMP authorized.

Chapter Reminders

Stay on top of important deadlines and action items. Check your email notifications regularly and visit our website to join discussions, connect with other members, and review chapter announcements.

Remember to whitelist
chaptermembers@firststateala.org
to avoid missing any communications.



Save the date for our annual blood drive on **October 15, 2026**, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

More details and ways to get involved coming soon. Thank you for making a difference!

Don't miss out on updates, events, and exclusive content! Visit firststateala.org and follow us to stay in the loop.

- **Instagram** - [@firststateala](https://www.instagram.com/firststateala)
- **Facebook** - [First State Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators](https://www.facebook.com/FirstStateChapteroftheAssociationofLegalAdministrators)
- **LinkedIn** - [First State Chapter ALA](https://www.linkedin.com/company/FirstStateChapterALA)



Resources & Opportunities

Certified Legal Manager (CLM)

Earn your CLM credential through ALA to demonstrate your expertise in legal management. Access study resources, practice exams, and peer support through our chapter. Visit the ALA website or contact your chapter leaders to learn more about eligibility and next steps.

[ALA's National Website](#)



First State Chapter Scholarship

Our chapter offers an annual scholarship for students who are interested in attending the Fall 2026. Applications are now open — visit our website for eligibility criteria, required materials, and submission deadlines.

[for more information and to apply click here](#)

Calling All Long-Time Members!

Do you have throwback photos from past chapter events? We'd love to feature them in upcoming newsletters and social media posts. Share your memories and help us celebrate our chapter's history.

Send photos to
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Past ALA Events

First State ALA Summer Social with Parcels

This summer, the First State Chapter had the pleasure of hosting an intimate Summer Social Dinner with Parcels, our Top Tier Business Partner, at Moro in Wilmington. The evening provided a wonderful opportunity for our Chapter Board and Parcels team to step away from the day to day, enjoy a great meal, and spend meaningful time together.

Beyond the dinner and conversation, this gathering was an important opportunity to strengthen the partnership between Parcels and First State ALA. We value the relationships we build with our Business Partners, and events like this allow us to have open conversations about what is working well, what our members are looking for, and how we can continue to make our chapter stronger.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to hear feedback, ideas, and suggestions from Parcels and to discuss ways we can continue creating valuable experiences for our members and Business Partners. These conversations are an important part of how we shape our programming and ensure that First State ALA remains responsive to the needs of our legal management community. A special thank you to Parcels for their continued support of the First State Chapter and for joining us for such a memorable evening. We are grateful for the partnership, the candid conversations, and the opportunity to continue growing together. It was a beautiful summer evening filled with great food, meaningful conversation, and the kind of connection that makes our chapter special.



We can't wait to see you all at the next First State Chapter ALA event — stay tuned, because more great moments are on the way.

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Past ALA Events

The Human + AI Advantage

First State ALA brought legal management professionals together at The Human + AI Advantage, a practical half day seminar hosted at Potter Anderson in Wilmington. The event focused on one of the most important conversations happening in legal operations today: how we can embrace emerging technology while keeping people, judgment, and responsible practices at the center.

Attendees explored the practical applications of Microsoft Copilot, including how AI can support everyday administrative work, email management, drafting, information retrieval, and workflow development. The program went beyond the technology itself, with thoughtful discussion around navigating change, maintaining human connection, and building responsible AI supported processes within a legal environment.

With three expert speakers and four learning blocks, the afternoon offered a combination of education, hands on learning, and collaboration. The interactive Prompt a Thon gave attendees the opportunity to bring a real workflow challenge to the table and develop practical prompts and solutions they could take back to their organizations.

The day wrapped up with a happy hour, giving attendees the chance to continue the conversation, exchange ideas, and connect with fellow legal management professionals facing many of the same opportunities and challenges.

A special thank you to Potter Anderson for hosting us and to Ben M. Schorr, Leilani Decena, and Adrienne Prentice for sharing their expertise and helping make the event such an engaging and practical experience. The Human + AI Advantage was more than a conversation about technology. It was an opportunity to think differently about our workflows, our organizations, and the role we each play in navigating the future of legal operations.



A timely and engaging discussion on the rapidly evolving role of AI in legal operations, with practical strategies for harnessing technology while keeping human judgment, responsibility, and people at the center.



Strengthening our chapter through education and shared commitment to excellence.



Upcoming ALA Events

Business Partner Roundtable and Networking Event

Join us October 21 for our annual Business Partner event, exclusively for Caesar Rodney and Brandywine Blue Business Partners. Two representatives from each company are invited to join First State ALA Board members and Committee Co Chairs for an interactive discussion focused on Business Partner experiences, chapter feedback, and opportunities for continued engagement.

We'll gather in The Oak Room at Blackwall Barn & Lodge for an evening of meaningful conversation, connection, and networking.



First State ALA Holiday Party

Get ready to celebrate the holiday season with First State ALA! Join us on Tuesday, December 1st at Fourier Hall in Wilmington for a fun and festive evening of pasta making, followed by a delicious family style dinner.

It's the perfect opportunity to step away from the busy season, enjoy some good food, and celebrate the friendships and connections that make our chapter special.

Save the date—we can't wait to celebrate with you!

Office Environments: Puts Workplace Design to the Test

A conversation with Sherry Leary, COO of Morris James, and Pamela Motter of Office Environments.



One Year Later: How Morris James' New Headquarters Is Working

Nearly one year after moving into its new headquarters, Morris James is seeing the benefits of a workplace designed around the evolving needs of today's legal industry.

Morris James reduced its footprint from 69,000 to 42,000 square feet, partnering with Office Environments to furnish a space focused on efficiency, flexibility, and collaboration.

Designed for the Way People Work:

The new headquarters accommodates a mix of in-office, hybrid, remote, and hoteling arrangements. While most practice groups work on a hybrid schedule, there are a couple that come in five days a week and a couple that are fully remote with hoteling capabilities. On any given day, approximately 40% of employees are in the office.

Although attorneys were initially concerned about having less individual office space, Sherry says the transition has gone smoothly. The new furniture and space planning have improved efficiency and resulted in "less clutter." Sound masking was also incorporated to help manage noise in open areas.

Making Space Work Smarter:

Office Environments helped Morris James rethink its use of space, increasing shared and collaborative areas. Client-facing conference rooms are located on the first and second floors, with additional spaces on the upper floors for internal meetings and collaboration.

Nearly a year in, the spaces are being utilized as planned:

The move away from downtown Wilmington has meant fewer walkable restaurants, but continued development in the surrounding area is expected to bring new retail and residential amenities. Morris James also maintained a 5,500-square-foot downtown office near the courthouse, providing convenient access for attorneys who need to be downtown.

Looking Back:

If given the opportunity to do it again, Morris James would consider larger floorplates to bring more people together on one floor and encourage collaboration.

Overall, however, the new headquarters has delivered on its vision. The team particularly appreciates the ease of access, free parking, flexibility, and efficiency of the new space.

The Morris James project demonstrates how thoughtful workplace design can help law firms make less space work better, creating an environment built around how people work today and where the legal workplace is headed tomorrow.

Announcements & Bragging Rights

A circular portrait of Evelyn Lin, a woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a black blazer over a light blue collared shirt.

Gunnip & company LLP
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A New Chapter for
Evelyn Lin:

Partner at Gunnip & Company

Congratulations to Evelyn Lin on her promotion to Partner at Gunnip & Company this July! She joined Gunnip in 2018 as a Senior Staff Accountant and has spent her entire career providing accounting, audit, and compliance services to law firms. A 2011 University of Delaware graduate, Evelyn specializes in financial statement and employee benefit plan audits, reviews, and Delaware legal compliance.

Congratulations on this well-deserved achievement!

Congratulations!

EVELYN LIN, CPA
ON BEING PROMOTED TO
Partner

The logo for Just Legal, featuring a stylized column with the letters 'JL' and a laurel wreath.

JUST LEGAL

JUST LEGAL IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE

ANDREA S. BROOKS, ESQ.

as our **Director of Attorney Placement**

A circular icon containing a pair of scales of justice.

Andrea joins us after 19 years of practicing law. She looks forward to working with the **Delaware legal community** in her new role.

A portrait of Andrea S. Brooks, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue blazer, standing with her arms crossed in an office setting.



Fall Flavors & Favorite Bites for the Team

As the leaves begin to change, it's the perfect time to enjoy cozy seasonal flavors that bring the team together—whether at firm events, fall gatherings, or a well deserved break after a busy day.

Reasonable Apple Cider Mule

A crisp, refreshing fall cocktail perfect for happy hours and autumn gatherings.

Ingredients: 2 oz vodka (optional), 3 oz apple cider, ½ oz fresh lime juice, ginger beer, apple slices and cinnamon stick

Instructions: Add cider, lime juice, and vodka to a glass with ice. Stir and top with ginger beer. Garnish with an apple slice and cinnamon stick.

Case Closed Cranberry Brie Bites

An easy, elegant appetizer that makes a strong case for seconds.

Ingredients: Puff pastry shells, brie cheese, cranberry sauce, chopped pecans, fresh rosemary

Instructions: Fill pastry shells with brie and cranberry sauce. Top with pecans and rosemary. Bake at 375°F for 10-12 minutes, until golden and bubbly.

Pumpkin Spice Deposition Dip

A sweet and savory seasonal dip that's sure to make its case at any gathering.

Ingredients: 8 oz cream cheese, ½ cup pumpkin puree, ¼ cup maple syrup, ½ tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp nutmeg, chopped pecans

Instructions: Beat cream cheese, pumpkin, maple syrup, cinnamon, and nutmeg until smooth. Chill before serving. Top with pecans and serve with apple slices, graham crackers, or cinnamon pita chips.

Pear & Brie Precedent Crostini

Simple, sophisticated, and easy to serve at office events.

Ingredients: Baguette slices, brie cheese, ripe pear, honey, chopped walnuts, fresh thyme

Instructions: Toast baguette slices. Top with brie and thinly sliced pear. Drizzle with honey and sprinkle with walnuts and thyme.

The Final Verdict Old Fashioned

A cozy fall classic that makes the perfect finish to any autumn gathering.

Ingredients: 2 oz bourbon, ½ oz maple syrup, 2 dashes Angostura bitters, orange peel, ice

Instructions: Add bourbon, maple syrup, and bitters to a mixing glass with ice. Stir until chilled. Strain over a large ice cube and garnish with an orange peel.



First State Chapter

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