

## 'A Gigantic Thank You' Chamber Members Grateful for Support

Matthew Tallarico believes that now is the time to “double down on the things that make us feel good,” and he has the hemp-derived products to do just that.

The owner of Your CBD Store at 1220 Ulster Ave. in Kingston is pulling out all the stops to make sure his customers get what they need, even with the challenges of conducting business amid a global pandemic.

“Lack of sleep and stress are big right now,” Tallarico said. “People are worried about their jobs, their careers, their livelihoods and seeing their family. It’s obviously a stressful time.

“At the beginning, people weren’t exactly sure of what to do, but now, many are feeling cooped up, and they are looking for a healthy organic option. Taking CBD is part of a healthy lifestyle.”

Even with the government-mandated shelter-in-place orders, Tallarico has been able to meet needs by offering phone consultations, educational Facebook videos, curbside pick-up and free, same-day delivery.

He took it a step farther in late April by opening a drive-thru for the expanded convenience of his customers. Now, they could get out of the house, go for a drive and pick up their favorite products, including hemp-oil tinctures, water solubles, edibles like gummy peach rings and topical creams for pain.

Tallarico said his business just opened about six weeks ago and having the Chamber by his side has been a tremendous comfort.

“Especially in the beginning, information was moving so fast that nobody knew what was going on with things like loans or who was considered an essential business. It was hard to get a straight answer,” Tallarico said.

“I turned 200 percent to the Chamber for all my reliable information. It’s interesting because a lot of my friends and peers weren’t getting that information and were paying accountants and lawyers to do that. I ended up telling them because I got it from the Chamber.”

Tallarico said it was “invaluable” to be able to check in with Chamber President Ward Todd and Jess Davis, the Chamber’s director of membership engagement, for best practices.

“It was almost like a counsel for how it should be approached,” he said. “I think it’s incredible to see them out there supporting all the other businesses. These are the times when you need a Chamber more than ever. As I started the business, someone told me, ‘You should join the Chamber,’ and it’s one of the best decisions I’ve made. They’re all exceptional people.”

Alex Cabrera, owner of Mohonk Landscaping and Turf Management and Mohonk Masonry, seconds that.

“The Chamber is definitely a great resource to turn to, whether it’s advice on different financial programs to keep businesses afloat or just being a morale booster to keep their spirits going,” he said.

Cabrera has been one of the fortunate few during the COVID-19 outbreak. As the owner of a full-scale landscaping company that specializes in everything from mowing to weed treatments, he is experiencing an uptick in business.

“It’s been a pretty good mix of commercial and residential,” he said. “We had expected a lot of our commercial clients to fall off, but they’ve been very generous in keeping us on, and the residential has exploded because people want to get things done. They’re stuck at home and noticing things they need to do to their properties.”

Cabrera said he is grateful for all the support from the community and the Chamber staff, particularly Davis.

“I owe her a big thank you for doing everything from enrolling me in the Chamber to using her reputation to refer me to different prospects. She has been a truly fantastic person to get to know and interact with,” he said.

Cabrera added that while he has not yet attended a Networking Mixer or Chamber Business Card Exchange, he did view the Chamber’s Virtual Breakfast Meeting on April 29 and said he appreciates all it is doing to keep

the members informed.

“I’m so glad I joined and happy to know they are helping businesses make it through and see that there is an end in sight,” he said.

Hopes are high in Ulster County, and Andrew Addotta, co-owner of Hamilton and Adams, a men’s apparel store in Uptown Kingston, is doing his part to keep it going.

He and business partner Clark Chaine are not only producing a product that is getting national attention, but they are helping to feed the community.

Their “New York Strong” T-shirt has been in demand in cities as far away as Atlanta and Los Angeles, Addotta said. Proceeds go to Project Resilience, a feeding program run by Ulster County and administered by the United Way of Ulster County.

“A lot of people want to support New York,” Addotta said. “They know we’re taking the brunt of it.

“When we were looking at what we could do to help, we figured we could do a charity T-shirt to help support the community and help keep our ecosystem whole, and it is working out well.”

Addotta called the Chamber an “oracle of information” and said the team has been an integral part of the T-shirt’s success and a real partner in uncertain times.

“I think they’ve done an amazing job gathering information and funneling it to the members who want to know what resources are available to us. We’re glad we joined,” he said.

Melissa Brown and Brittany Morton, the new owners of Monkey Joe Roasting Co., agreed. They are counting the days until they can welcome friends back to savor their java inside the familiar structure at 478 Broadway in Kingston.

Until then, they’ve been adapting to the new normal by posting specials to the Chamber’s recently launched Facebook pages, Ulster Eateries United and Ulster Small Businesses United.

“It has been such a boon,” said Brown. “Brittany posts every morning and tries to put up two to three a day. Broadway is very quiet now with no school, and when you aren’t active on social media, you fall out of people’s sights. They’re not out early driving around a lot these days.”

On top of everything else, she and Morton appreciate all the current information Todd is sharing with members.

“When all this came down, nobody knew anything, and though the governor is making the best decisions he can, there was nobody to say this is what our new world looks like for the time being,” Brown said.

“You need a point person to tell you what’s next,” Brown said. “Just getting those emails about the PPP (Payroll Protection Program), saying there’s money available has been very helpful, especially when you’re a small business owner. You don’t have time to research these things yourself. Right now, our entire goal is to keep the doors open and the lights on and make sure there’s a business here for everyone to come back to when this is over.”

Brown and Morton bought the 20-year-old business last September and just celebrated a ribbon-cutting with the Chamber in early March, so they did not have much time to enjoy their new role before the virus hit and restrictions were implemented.

Brown emphasized that connecting with customers via the Chamber has been crucial to staying afloat.

“Not everyone knows we’re still open,” she said. “Last week, we had a woman peering through our door. You could tell she wanted to come in, but then she turned around and left. We just bought a big ‘open’ sign, so that should help, but having the Chamber Facebook pages has been a great help.

“Just a gigantic thank you to everyone at the Chamber,” Brown said. “Looking at Jess and Ward and the constant effort they’re making to keep everyone present and aware is truly inspiring. We’re definitely getting our money’s worth.”



**Matthew Tallarico,**  
Your CBD Store Kingston



**Alex Cabrera,**  
Mohonk Masonry & Mohonk Landscaping & Turf Management



**Clark Chaine,**  
Hamilton & Adams



**Melissa Brown and Brittany Morton,**  
Monkey Joe Roasting Co.


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## 'A Virtual Success'

### Chamber Breakfast Provides Options for Business Relief

The only things missing at the Chamber's first "Virtual Breakfast Meeting" on April 29 were the scrambled eggs and an in-person audience.

Just the same, the Chamber pulled off an information-packed hour that included detailed COVID-19-relief options for small businesses and plans to reopen the local economy in three stages.

Hundreds of viewers watched the event Live from the Seven21 Media Center broadcast studios and more than 2,500 viewed the event by the next day. There is a link on the chamber website (UlsterChamber.org) for anyone who missed the event.

The breakfast was produced by Ellenbogen Creative Media. Due to social-distancing rules, the online forum was held in lieu of the Chamber's monthly breakfast, which is typically held at the Best Western Plus in Kingston. It was sponsored by the Ulster Literacy Association and Ellenbogen Creative Media.

In addition to featured speakers Steve Bulger, the Regional Director of the Small Business Administration, and Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan, the Chamber incorporated live video feeds from three area companies that have transitioned to make personal protective equipment for the community.

Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan opened with news from a public-health perspective. As of late April, there were more than 1,300 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 35 deaths in the county. On a bright note, he said 600 people have recovered and the number of hospitalizations has declined.

Ryan said he and Lisa Berger, the director of Ulster County Economic Development, are laying out plans for an "economic resilience plan" consisting of three phases: Recover, reopen and realign.

"Recover is really that first step for individuals and families that have been devastated economically," he said. "How do we get them unemployment benefits and other critical services like food, shelter, mental health services (and) addiction recovery services?"

"That, plus business recovery support to figure out how to get access to federally available funds. We've now had ... over \$50 million in loans and financial support from the federal level into Ulster County businesses," he said.

The second phase to



reopen local businesses includes "sector-specific working groups" that will focus on how to "responsibly get manufacturing, retail, hospitality and lodging" up and running, Ryan said. "Each of these industries is going to have different parameters to get things going again."

Realign, the third phase, aims to retool and make the local economy even better than it was pre-COVID-19, Ryan added. Bulger, who also addressed the breakfast remotely, gave an update on the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program authorizing another \$310 billion in loans for small businesses to keep their employees working during the COVID-19 crisis.

Bulger said the average loansize this time around is \$103,000, compared to \$206,000 in the first round distributed in early April. Loans will be forgiven if used

for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent and utilities, he said.

Since the second round rolled out on April 27, the SBA began accepting applications from participating lenders and is processing \$2 million in loans for 20,000 businesses every hour, he said. More than 7,000 businesses had already been approved as of April 29.

"The majority of the loans we're seeing have gone to very small businesses—certainly smaller than in round one, so we're pleased to see that."

Bulger said the program is designed to get money into the hands of employees at small businesses.

"The intent of Congress with this program ... is to keep the paychecks flowing so that during the shutdown, our small business employees are getting paid and they have jobs to go back to at the end of this.

"We have over 5,000

lenders across the country who are pounding our website and portal to put these applications in. The system is working well. It's a very steady pace, but I would encourage small businesses to have patience," he said.

Bulger also highlighted other small business options such as the Economic Injury Disaster Loans, which provide up to \$10,000 in economic relief to businesses experiencing temporary revenue losses due to the pandemic. Loans are available to any small business with less than 500 employees.

To further reduce the burden on small businesses, the SBA is, for a six-month period, picking up all the interest and principal payments on any outstanding loans.

"That's really going to help a lot of small businesses," Bulger said. "It's one last payment they have to worry about."

The breakfast wrapped up with virtual tours of three Ulster County companies that are meeting the need for personal-protective equipment. Alethea Shuman and Wayne Schaefer from the Ulster County-based Usheco, a manufacturer of custom plastic products; Maria Cabrera Alterations and Tailoring; and Johann Huleatt from Community Products in Rifton all agreed the demand for their products is great.

Cabrera has made more than

5,000 fabric face masks since late March at a pace of about 200 a day. She has donated the majority to hospital workers and others on the front line.

The family-owned Usheco has been able to produce thousands of disposable masks, face shields and plastic screens from their facility.

Community Products has made thousands of masks, medical gowns, face shields and privacy screens for agencies like the Kingston Police Department, Esopus Fire Department, Hudson River Food Alliance and Little Falls Hospital.

The Virtual Breakfast Meeting concluded with a recap of the Chamber's highly successful Ulster Eateries

United Facebook Group, which already has close to 10,000 members after being launched just several weeks ago. Director of Membership Engagement Jess Davis, who administers the Group, told viewers that the Group is so popular because it allows restaurants to post their daily takeout specials while consumers can post photos of their families enjoying the meals at home.

More information about Ulster Eateries United and Ulster Small Businesses United can be found on the Chamber's Facebook Page. For information about the benefits of membership in the Ulster Chamber, go to UlsterChamber.org.

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**VIRTUAL WASHINGTON UPDATE**  
Friday May 8, 2020 | 1:30 - 2:30 pm

Special Guest  
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U.S. Congressman

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- Include a brief description and tell us why this person is deserving of this recognition. Please keep to 100 words.

The Chamber of Commerce will post their name, photo and description on social media for all Ulster County and the world to see.

We invite everyone to join with the Ulster Chamber of Commerce to salute our Hometown Healthcare Heroes!

# VIRTUAL BREAKFAST Meeting

**Tuesday May 19, 2020 | 9:00 - 10:00 am**

Live on Facebook or Livestream at [www.UlsterChamber.org](http://www.UlsterChamber.org)

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