

Delgado Ready For A Second Round

Congressman Begins New Term At Breakfast

U.S. Rep Antonio Delgado will begin his second term in the House by addressing the Chamber's next Virtual Breakfast Meeting from 9:00-10:00 a.m. on Jan. 26.

Delgado, a Rhinebeck resident, will likely be broadcasting from Washington, D.C. Local Chamber members and the public can watch via the Chamber's Facebook Live Page as well as YouTube. The Breakfast Sponsor is Ulster Savings Bank with Technical Support from Radio Kingston.

"I am looking forward to returning to the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce breakfast to discuss my work at the federal level to advocate for our small businesses and family farmers," Delgado said. "Bringing economic relief to our area through funding for state and local governments, loan relief for small businesses, and disaster payments for our agriculture community remains a top priority.

"I'm excited to share with members of the Chamber my plans for building our local economy stronger in both the short term and long term."

Delgado, who turns 44 two days after the breakfast, survived a seven-member primary to get his party's nomination in 2018. An attorney and former Rhodes Scholar, he defeated former U.S. Rep. John Faso in the general election in 2018. Last November, Delgado won reelection with 55 percent of the vote in defeating Republican Kyle Van De Water of Millbrook.

The Congressman, who received the COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 18, finished up

his work in the 116th Congress by holding his 50th town hall via Facebook Live the next day. Delgado said 35 of the town halls were in-person events and 15 were virtual due to the coronavirus.

"From my first days in office, I have made town halls a central part of my work to be everywhere in this sprawling district and connect with folks across all eleven counties," he said.

Delgado also recently visited the campus of SUNY Ulster in Stone Ridge to meet with President Dr. Alan P. Roberts. Delgado said the discussion focused on how SUNY Ulster is dealing with budget impacts due to COVID.

The two also discussed SUNY Ulster's workforce development programs, including the Green Careers Academy in partnership with Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan.

"Our colleges and universities in NY-19 are working to manage the coronavirus pandemic and keep students and faculty safe and healthy while facing serious budget constraints," Delgado said. "Congress has a duty to support organizations in our community during this critically important moment, and that includes passing a needed coronavirus relief package with state and local government funding.

"We must continue to work together at the federal, state, and local levels to meet the needs of students in our area and support the long-term health of community colleges in upstate."

Meanwhile, earlier in December the House voted unanimously to pass a legislative



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Congressman Antonio Delgado
 Tuesday January 26, 2021
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package with two of Delgado's (NY-19) bills to support veterans. One bill would ensure that county-run veteran cemeteries in states without state-run veteran cemeteries are eligible for federal funding.

The legislation also included a bill directing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to publish a report on veteran's benefits disaggregated by sex and minority group member status. The bills have also passed the Senate and were awaiting President Trump's signature in late December.

The 19th Congressional District represented by Delgado includes all of Ulster, Greene, Columbia, Sullivan, Delaware, Schoharie and Otsego counties and parts of Dutchess, Rensselaer, Montgomery and Broome counties.

Virtual Chamber Breakfasts are a great way to stay on top of current events. For more information, contact the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or go online at www.ulsterchamber.org.

Ulster Savings Bank Is The Virtual Breakfast Sponsor for January

While 2020 certainly was not the year we all expected it to be, it helped to foster innovation and compassion, and allowed us to help each other through difficult times. Together we welcome a fresh start with a new year.

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Many may not realize that Ulster Savings Bank is the oldest community bank in Ulster County. This year we will be celebrating our 170th anniversary! We are grateful to our customers and the community for helping us reach this milestone. We look forward to celebrating with you in the year ahead.

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Virtual Chamber Breakfast Meeting

Congressman Antonio Delgado

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Coming Out Of The Woodwork

Sales Skyrocket At Mike's Office Furniture

If there's one thing Don Shuman has learned in these past ten months, it's that changing with the times has never been more important.

When Mike's Office Furniture reopened following "New York State on Pause," he found that needs had shifted due to COVID-19.

More people were working from home. Kids were learning remotely. Families were competing for space. Homes weren't necessarily equipped to handle the new way of working and schooling.

Shuman was glad he had a leg to stand on and just what they needed to make it all right.

"We were closed for three months, and when we got back, I had a big backlog of calls for the proper kind of ergonomic seating," said Shuman, the store manager and president of the corporation.

"We sold out of our high-grade chairs almost right away. In the past, people who had home offices didn't necessarily give much thought to their chairs, but while we were all at home, they were spending more time in their chairs and at their desks. Everybody at home needed a dedicated space to work in. That included children doing their schoolwork. A lot were working at the dining-room table, but they'd have to stop for lunch and dinner, so we had a lot of people in here, looking for the proper setup."

Not only did Mike's Office Furniture provide solutions with ergonomic chairs that people could actually try out, but other home-office furniture that would make remote offices more functionable. The store at 299 South Wall St. in Kingston also had sneeze guards and full panel systems to section off family workstations.

"Everything that happens in the world affects us all," Shuman said. "We have to do our best to change with the times. At the same time, many things go in cycles. We have to do our best to react to the new normal."

A big plus for Mike's Office Furniture was its solid reputation and overall attention to customer service. The 10,000-square-foot store has been in business for 60 years and had furnished companies big and small throughout the region. That includes the Chamber.

"We've put a lot of furniture in the Chamber office over the years, including (Chamber President) Ward Todd's ergonomically correct sit-stand workspace," Shuman said. "We do business with pretty much everybody from nonprofits to larger corporations like Rotron and various banks."

Started by a local legend, the late Mike Weiner, for whom the store is named, it evolved from home to business furnishings.

"In my 30 years here, I've seen a lot of changes," Shuman said. "It used to be that we sold more used furniture, but now, it's probably 60 percent new and 40 percent used."

"Everything we stock in the front room is new, including conference-room furniture as well as tables and chairs. The two back rooms are strictly used furniture. Depending on when you come in, it's a different store every month. We sell from the floor, so as things go out, new items come in."

Mike's Office Furniture carries brand names like La-Z-Boy, Hon, Safeco, Virco, Alera, Tennisco and Office Source and has long featured ergonomically correct furniture to ensure proper posture and ease discomfort.

"Everyone's need is different, and you've got to meet as many of them as you can. Ergonomics is something everybody



MEMBER PROFILE

"Everything that happens in the world affects us all."

— Don Shuman

strives for," he said. "We have had many chiropractors send their patients to us to help them pick out the proper furniture to support them."

While Shuman said the public-health crisis has slowed corporate sales, he's optimistic that once the pandemic is in the rearview mirror, the tables will again turn for the better.

In the meantime, he plans to continue making life easier for those working from their couches or students learning from their breakfast tables.

"The thing that makes Mike's Office Furniture different is our knowledge and our customer service," Shuman said. "We stand behind everything we sell, and we do installations and delivery. Our reputation for customer service is what's kept us in business all these years. The internet is a cold and impersonal place. Here, we still have to have that personal touch, where you can feel the quality."

Mike's Office Furniture, located at 299 South Wall St. in Kingston, can be reached at (845) 331-4027 or www.mikesofficefurniture.com.

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Ulster County SPCA Marks 130 Years

Find Your Next Best Friend in 2021

Maybe you didn't get a furry friend for Christmas this year, but that doesn't mean you have to start the new year alone.

The Ulster County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) at 20 Wiedy Drive in Kingston features plenty of cats and dogs looking for a forever home.

Gina Carbonari, the SPCA's executive director, said about 1,000 animals come through the no-kill shelter each year.

"We find homes for them and we have not only dogs and cats, but small animals," she said. "We often have rabbits, Guinea pigs, mice and rats."

Carbonari said the shelter will also occasionally have farm animals when they are taken in humane law cases. The SPCA tries to find them homes with an animal sanctuary or private farm where they won't be used for food.

That kind of compassion for animals has kept the SPCA in business for the last 130 years. In fact, the organization's motto is "Healing. Helping. Adopting."

"We investigate animal cruelty and neglect cases," Carbonari said. "We are the only humane law enforcement agency in the county. We also take in local surrenders. We do transports as well, so any animals facing possible euthanasia in other shelters, we will do what we can to assist them and find placement through folks who are adopting through us."

The SPCA also operates a community food pantry, where pet owners can find free wet and dry food for dogs and cats, along with cat litter.

None of that is cheap and Carbonari said the Ulster County SPCA is not a part of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) or the county government.

"We are our own independent, non-profit organization," she said. "All of our funding comes from donations."

Carbonari said Chamber member businesses are among those helping out.

"We try to do outreach in our community to get as much support as we can because we really can't do what we do without the community's support," she said. "A lot of the programs we have developed over just the last couple of years are really geared more toward our main philosophy of keeping animals in their homes."

Carbonari said COVID has not changed the SPCA's mission, but the community outreach element has been altered.

"We've certainly beefed up our community pet food pantry," she said. "We've had more calls for assistance with veterinary care. We've had more instances where our officers have gone out and simply provided assistance and education to folks rather than just removing animals because we do understand that some folks are having a difficult time economically."

"COVID hasn't changed what our mission is. It's changed a little bit of where our focus is right now in order to keep pets in



their homes."

When asked how the SPCA has survived for 130 years, Carbonari said the answer is easy.

"We have a lot of animal lovers in this community, so there's certainly a need we fill in the community," she said. "They love animals and they want to see them cared for properly."

"It's really great to be part of an organization that's been around here for that long and is doing so much good for the community."

Carbonari said even a decade ago, people didn't look at pets like they do now.

"They really are a part of the family and a lot of what we're doing isn't really separated from what human services are providing for people," she said. "Pets influence our decisions and our lives—people choose where they're going to live or what kind of home they're going to have based on their pets being a part of their family."

Carbonari, who has been the SPCA's executive director for three years, grew up in High Falls taking in animals with nowhere else to go.

"All of the animals that we had were strays," she said. "They would happen to show up at our house and we started feeding them outside and before you knew it, they were coming inside. We had cats and we had dogs and we had ducks."

"It really does come down to having a love for animals. I've been involved in animal welfare for about 15 years now."

Carbonari served 22 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, including a tour in Iraq, before coming to the SPCA.

"It's nice to come back into the community and continue serving, really is how I look at it," she said. "There's such a connection between humans and animals that you really are providing a human service and you're helping people as much as you are the animals."

The SPCA is open from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday.

"We are an essential service," she said. "We are here pretty much 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We have animals that are here and require our care and people have to be here to take care of them."

Tours have been canceled due to COVID, but Carbonari said adopting a pet online is a simple process at www.ucspca.org.

"Our No. 1 mission is to try to get all of these animals into

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Continued from page 4

homes, so we really do want to see folks finding their next best friend here," she said.

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New Crop Of Happy Campers

Pandemic Sparks Boon At Camping World

The doors to Camping World of the Hudson Valley never closed during the coronavirus pandemic, and that is a good thing.

Turns out, the motor homes on the 6-acre lot at 124 Route 28 in Kingston came to serve important functions for many frontline medical workers.

“People were looking to RVs for temporary housing,” said Mike Lucido, the sales manager. “We were helping doctors and nurses, who needed to quarantine from their families after caring for the sick. They were buying them and parking them in their driveways.”

That was one of the many unforeseen ways the giant RV retailer, formerly known as Campers Barn, served a critical role while life all around chugged to a standstill.

Then, as winter turned to spring, something else unexpected happened, according to Lucido.

“You would think that due to unemployment and job losses and people staying at home and quarantining, that buying an RV might not rank high on their lists, but it’s been quite the contrary. Regardless of the financial situation, this pandemic has shown us that time with family is more important and that memories live forever, and what better way than hitting the open road with the whole family?”

“It’s been surprising. We’ve seen more first-time campers than we’ve ever seen,” he said. “It used to be that it was mainly retirees buying RVs, but the market is exploding with Generation X’ers and Millennials.”

Camping World of the Hudson Valley certainly had the inventory to meet the demand. On average, the lot has more than 300 units, ranging from vehicles that people use for a weekend hunting trip to ones they live in full-time and tour the country in, Lucido said.

“We carry anything from a 10-foot tow-

behind to a 40-foot diesel motor home, so we have products starting at \$10,000 and going upwards of \$300,000.

“And you don’t miss a beat. Camping is not what it used to be. Most camp sites offer a water and an electric hookup, so utilizing those features, you could be outside barbecuing while the football game is on. You can be in the living room, watching a movie with the whole family. The kids can even hook up a game console and play video games.”

Camping World carries leading industry names like Winnebago and Thor as well as Mercedes Benz Sprinter vans that come with modern features like blind-spot monitors and pre-collision systems.

“It has the name of Mercedes Benz behind it, so it’s an excellent product that will last you forever. They’re built to be luxurious,” Lucido said. “The Winnebagos have also changed a lot. Nowadays, you can buy it with imported Italian cabinetry and things you wouldn’t expect to be in an RV. Some folks say it’s nicer than their homes or apartments.”

Even before the pandemic struck, RV sales across the nation skyrocketed due to the healthy economy and low fuel prices, but Lucido said right now, it’s first-time campers driving the industry.

“Most first timers don’t have a big pickup truck. They’re driving a sedan or SUV, so what we offer is a motorhome, not anything they need to tow. Many are settling on class-C and class-B vehicles. That market is bigger than I’ve ever seen it. Things are selling before they physically hit my lot. That’s how high the demand is now.”

Camping World also offers pre-owned vehicles and units for those on a budget. In addition, the retailer just off the New York State Thruway features a store with everyday



maintenance merchandise to parts and accessories as well as motor bikes, pots and pans, satellite systems and even generators.

Owned by TV personality and philanthropist Marcus Lemonis, Camping World invests heavily in the community. The company just launched Plating Change to support independent restaurants while delivering meals to those in need.

Another added perk for Camping World customers is its Good Sam membership program, which offers RV loans, fuel savings,

camping and propane discounts, auto and RV insurance and road-side assistance.

An outgrowth of that is the Project Good Samaritan in which Camping World employees volunteer eight hours of their work time per quarter working in soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters and nursing homes.

Camping World of the Hudson Valley, located at 124 State Route 28 in Kingston, can be reached at (845) 943-2010 or www.campingworld.com.

