

## What Does Post-COVID Future Hold?

### Hudson Valley Economic Head Breakfast Guest

The man with his finger on the pulse of the Hudson Valley economy will address the Chamber's next breakfast on Oct. 13.

Mike Oates, president and CEO of the Goshen-based Hudson Valley Economic Development Corp. (HVEDC), will be the guest speaker for the breakfast, scheduled for 7:30-9 a.m. at the Best Western Plus in Kingston. The sponsor is Hudson Valley Credit Union. The breakfast is an in-person event but will also be livestreamed on the Chamber's Facebook page.

HVEDC is the leading economic development agency for the seven-county region that includes Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Westchester, Rockland, Sullivan and Putnam counties.

Oates said his remarks would address how the Hudson Valley economy is dealing with COVID-19 and what the region may look like post-pandemic in such areas as housing, infrastructure, energy and overall economic development.

"I'll paint a broad picture of what's happening throughout the Hudson Valley and how it relates back to Ulster County," Oates said. "I think one of the things we're going to try to focus on is some of the redevelopment efforts in the county, looking at some of the key industry sectors and how they're doing."

Oates said he will also talk about the struggles of the hospitality industry during COVID-19 "and what the future holds as we get a better handle on the pandemic and what the future of tourism and hospitality look like going forward."

Chamber President Ward Todd has also asked Oates to talk about Ulster County's red-hot housing market, which has seen cash bids, bidding wars, sellers getting thousands over their asking price and even "virtual showings" for buyers worried they may miss out on a house.

Kingston was one of the top destinations in the country for people migrating out of New York City after COVID-19. The typical value of homes in Ulster County saw a 34-percent jump in the last year.

Oates said Ulster County needs to be concerned about the exodus out of Gotham because a flourishing New York City helps the county.

"While there are some advantages, and we've seen great investment coming to the region, there's always that underlying concern that a wounded or an underperforming New York City will have a dramatic impact on our regional economy," Oates said. "We need to have



Mike Oates

a vibrant, growing New York City, so at some point that exodus has to kind of slow down. We have to see New York City rebound because we can't do it alone."

Oates returned as president and CEO of HVEDC in May 2018 following the resignation of Laurence Gottlieb. He held the same positions with HVEDC from 2009 to 2013.

HVEDC markets the region as a prime business location to corporate executives, site selection consultants and real estate brokers. HVEDC helped start the organizational, branding and promotional effort for NY BioHud Valley, Hudson Valley 3D Printing and the Hudson Valley Food & Beverage Alliance.

Before his initial work with HVEDC, Oates was vice president and regional director at Empire State Development Corp. In that position, he was responsible for managing New York State's economic development initiatives in Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Westchester, Rockland,

October  
Breakfast

October 13

7:30-9:00 am

The Venue Uptown  
503 Washington Ave.  
Kingston, NY

Sponsor:



Sullivan and Putnam counties—the same seven counties represented by HVEDC.

From 2016 to 2018, Oates was managing partner of Bellefield Development Partners. He previously was CEO of Hudson River Ventures, a small business investment fund that works to empower entrepreneurs in the Hudson Valley.

To learn more about HVEDC and its work, call (845) 220-2244 or go to [hvedc.com](http://hvedc.com).

*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](http://www.ulsterchamber.org).*

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# Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce

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The official publication of the  
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# DAILY FREEMAN

# UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

**October 13 | 7:30 - 9:00 am**

**Chamber Breakfast Meeting  
The State of the Hudson Valley Economy, Post COVID  
Mike Oates, President HVEDC**

The Venue Uptown  
503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY  
\$25 Members-Advanced Pay • \$30 Members-At The Door  
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**October 21 | 5:30 Cocktails 6:30 Dinner**

**Business Recognition Awards Dinner**

Diamond Mills Hotel & Tavern  
25 S. Partition Street | Saugerties, NY  
Join us to honor this year's Award Recipients  
Tickets \$125 per person

**October 26 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm**

**YUP Trivia Night  
@ The Venue Uptown**

503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY  
\$10 per person  
All proceeds will be donated to Ulster County Habitat for Humanity  
Registration is required.

**November 4 | 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**New Member Meet & Greet  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites**  
1835 Ulster Avenue | Lake Katrine, NY  
There is no cost for Members to attend.  
Reservations are required.

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# Ulster Chamber Named Tops In The State

## Business Council Cites COVID-19 Response

The Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce has been selected as the winner of the Charles Steiner Memorial Chamber of Commerce of the Year Award by The Business Council of New York State. Chamber President Ward Todd accepted the award at the BCNYS Annual Conference last week.

Ken Pokalsky, BCNYS Vice President, cited the Ulster Chamber's work assisting local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic in announcing the honor.

"While many chambers stepped up to support their local business communities during the COVID crisis, our selection of the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce, as Business Council Chamber of the Year, was based on their specific engagement and COVID response efforts," Pokalsky said.

"The Ulster County Chamber delivered essential business outreach by creating innovative means to inform and stay connected with their members. Their engagement in social media forums to promote local businesses, especially the hard-hit hospitality section, and their success in providing other essential services to their member companies made them our top choice."

The Ulster Chamber didn't miss a beat after the government-imposed shutdowns last March, forming online Facebook groups, Ulster Eateries United and Small Businesses United. The pages let people know that the businesses, many of them restaurants, were still open and offering carryout. Many restaurants credited the group with helping them stay afloat.

Jess Davis, the Chamber's Director of Membership, said the idea came to her when a Chamber business reached out for help as COVID-19 began.

"We brainstormed and just came up with the idea that we could give them a platform to communicate how they could do business," she said.

The groups are still going strong with Ulster Eateries United boasting 12,400 members and Ulster Small Businesses United about 3,000. "There still is a pretty high engagement in both those groups," Davis said.

Chamber members also got to enjoy Facebook episodes of "Jess Delicious" throughout the pandemic. The videos, which can be found on Ulster Eateries United, feature Davis visiting local restaurants and trying out their food and talking to the owners and customers.

Davis called it "humbling" to be honored as the state's top chamber.

"There are so many chambers out there that have worked so hard to reinvent themselves through this," she said. "I think our chamber is really unique and really special and it's the Ulster County community as well. It was our community coming together and wanting to overcome this."

Meanwhile, during the pandemic, the Chamber also held virtual events to keep its members informed about government



assistance and resources, such as PPP loans and other programs.

The Chamber also continued to hold monthly networking breakfasts, though virtually. The Chamber even held its annual Buy Local Expo and Business Awards Dinner virtually.

In accepting the award, Chamber President Todd said, "We are pleased to receive this honor from such a prestigious organization as the Business Council of New York State," Todd said. "We thank them for recognizing our hard work during the pandemic. It was a challenge, but one that we accepted and, working with our county government and other community partners, we were able to overcome and keep our businesses open and thriving."

The Business Council's

annual meeting ran from Sept. 22-24 and featured Gov. Kathy Hochul and a roundtable political discussion featuring former Gov. David Paterson, ex-Comptroller H. Carl McCall and former Attorney General Dennis Vacco. The keynote speaker was Syracuse men's basketball coach Jim Boeheim, who is in his 46<sup>th</sup> season.

"After a challenging year and a half, our annual meeting agenda was focused on how to bring the state's economy back to full strength. We believe our members found great value in this year's programming, which we designed to help them continue to navigate the challenges left behind from the pandemic," said Heather Briccetti, President & CEO of The Business Council of New York State.

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# Buy Local Expo Returns In Person

## ‘Ulster County Is Open For Business’

“Welcome to the 2021 Buy Local Expo – live and in person,” Chamber President Ward Todd said in opening the 25<sup>th</sup> Buy Local Expo on Sept. 15 at Diamond Mills.

The Expo, Ulster County’s largest networking event, was held virtually last year because of COVID-19. The Expo returned in-person this year—albeit with masks—and local business leaders seemed genuinely happy to see each other again. There was an air of optimism as the five-hour event kicked off at noon featuring several first-time exhibitors.

“As every exhibitor was coming in this morning since 8 a.m., I felt a little bit more relieved, I felt a little happier,” Todd said during the opening ceremony. “The thrill of seeing so many folks live and in person is something that we’ve been waiting for a long time.

“It does feel very, very good and very special to see all of your faces. Even though we are masked, we are enjoying the face-to-face communication we’ve been lacking so long in this digital economy.”

John Burlingham, president of the Chamber’s board of directors and the owner of American Business Solutions, said he remembers last year’s virtual Expo and prefers the in-person version.

“Isn’t this great to finally see somebody live?” he said.

Todd called Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan a “great partner of the Chamber” when introducing him to the business crowd before the sold-out event.

“I haven’t seen this many people live in a really long time, so it feels great,” Ryan said. “I’m really glad we could make this happen. We can actually run our economy and do it safely.”

Ryan said the pandemic has been “absolutely brutal,” but he praised the business community for its perseverance.

“I’ve talked to so many of you about the challenges of the last year and a half and I just want to thank you for fighting through that and pushing through that, doing right by your employees, doing right by your customers, and doing right by your community,” he said. “What you’ve been asked to do is basically the impossible and somehow you’ve all done it and

risen to that challenge and really exceeded that challenge.”

Ryan said the federal, state and county governments would be making investments to level the playing field between small businesses like those at the Expo and multi-national corporations. He also gave a plug to the Expo’s “Buy Local” theme.

“The spirit of buying local must carry the day going forward,” he said. “This is what really has to power us coming out of this pandemic.”

Tom Struzzi, the owner of the host venue Diamond Mills, said he



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knows businesses are still suffering from the effects of COVID-19, including a struggle to find workers in a diminished labor pool.

"I'm feeling that," he said. "I get it and hopefully all the extraordinary abilities in this room and hard work you've all put together is going to help us rise above this and get through this all."

It's because of us, all together, that we're going to rise above this and succeed."

Town of Saugerties Supervisor Fred Costello struck a similar theme.

"We are a resilient community," he said. "We are here and we'll certainly find our way through this. Ulster County is open for business and we welcome that. We are going to continue to create jobs and we are going to continue to be the economic hub of the Hudson Valley."

John Naccarato, the owner of Naccarato Insurance and the Expo's presenting sponsor, said he noticed that everyone had an "extra step in their walk" and were looking to a better 2022.

Businesses put their best foot forward with colorful, creative and informative exhibits during the day. The networking event gave business owners the chance to shine as they made pitches to each other and members of the public with brochures, imaginative giveaways and plenty of conversation.

RBT CPAs, based in Orange and Dutchess counties, featured a booth with employees Erin Blabac and Stephanie Ingold giving away scoops of ice cream.

"We like to have a theme with our booth every year and somehow tie that into our accounting practice. One of the ideas we had was to give out scoops of ice cream because we've got the scoop," said Blabac, the firm's marketing director.

The Ulster County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) displayed a "sponsor tree" featuring photos of some of the shelter's animals. People could sponsor an animal for \$50.

"Everyone's familiar with the giving tree during the holiday season. You can take any animal off the tree and sponsor their shelter space for a month. We're at full capacity," said Jamie Dea, the SPCA's marketing director.

The SPCA recently brought up a "good number" of animals from Louisiana after Hurricane Ida and could use the help, Dea said.

Other businesses used the Expo to demonstrate their products, like Kingston's Dark Arts Tattoo. The shop, which has only been open a few months, offered a \$60 flash sale and had a line most of the day.

"We just figured what we

normally do during flash sales at our shop we would do here, and it's basically like the other businesses handing out advertising," said co-owner Christine Black.

Dark Arts Tattoo ended the day by winning a booth award for most effective demonstration.

The major booth awards went to Naccarato Insurance for Best in Show, while Emerson Resort & Spa finished second and Ashokan Equestrian Center for Autistic Children third.

Other winners included Ulster County Habitat For Humanity ReStore, most original booth design; One N Only Cakes, most creative giveaways; People's Place, best new exhibitor; Jewish Federation of Ulster County, most friendly staff; David Leifer Photography, best use of technology; and Hennepen's, best sales presentation.

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Coalition To Save Belleayre  
Coldwell Banker Timberland Properties  
Collision Research Ltd.  
Community Bank N.A.  
Community Foundations of Ulster County  
CPL  
Crafts People  
Earl B. Feiden Appliance  
Firmbach & Firmbach, CPAs  
Foxhall Deli  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites - Kingston  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites - Saugerties  
Homestead Funding Corp.  
Hudson Valley Endodontics  
Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center, Inc.  
KC Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.  
Kimlin Energy Services

LHV Precast Inc.  
Next Boutique  
Normann Staffing  
People's Place  
PLUGPV Solar  
PMC Supplies  
Radio Kingston WKNY  
Rainbow Drive-In  
RBT CPAs, LLP  
Reservoir Road Productions  
Resource Center For Accessible Living, Inc.  
Rhinebeck Bank  
Ryan, Roach & Ryan LLP  
Senate Garage  
Sound of LIFE Radio Network  
Spa21 Kingston, LLC  
Stenger, Diamond & Glass, LLP  
StoneRidge Electrical Service, Inc.  
Strand House  
The Arc Mid-Hudson  
Thomas K. Petro, Esq.  
Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency  
Wallkill Central School District  
Wiltwyck Golf Club  
Windmill Wine and Spirits  
Woodland Pond at New Paltz  
Woodstock Chimes  
Zell CPA, PC

## Anniversaries:

### 40 Years

The Arc Mid-Hudson

### 30 Years

Resource Center For Accessible Living, Inc.

### 20 Years

Rainbow Drive-In

### 15 Years

C2G Environmental Consultants, LLC

LHV Precast Inc.

Sound of LIFE Radio Network

### 1 Year

Bridge Creek Catering

Early Terrible

Green Heron Farm, Inc.

Tony and Nick's Italian Kitchen

Windmill Wine and Spirits

WMC Heart & Vascular Institute

Zell CPA, PC

# Ribbon Cuttings

## **DARK ARTS TATTOO**



1086 Morton Blvd., Kingston, NY  
[darkartstattoo.bigcartel.com](http://darkartstattoo.bigcartel.com)

## **WELLNESS CENTER AT PEOPLE'S PLACE**



17 St. James Street, Kingston, NY  
[www.peoplesplace.org/wellness-empowerment-center](http://www.peoplesplace.org/wellness-empowerment-center)

## **KINGSTON ATHLETICS & ARTISIAN BLOW DRY BAR**



1300 Ulster Avenue (Hudson Valley Mall), Kingston, NY  
[www.Kingstonathletics.com](http://www.Kingstonathletics.com)

## **GRAINNE AND THE MARKET AT GRAINNE**



299 Wall Street, Kingston, NY  
[grainnekingston.com](http://grainnekingston.com)

## **ACCORD MARKET**



23 Main Street, Accord, NY  
[www.accordmkt.com](http://www.accordmkt.com)

## **GATEWAY HUDSON VALLEY DAY HABILITATION & PRO SERVICES PROGRAMS**



1 Amy Kay Parkway, Kingston, NY  
[ghv.org](http://ghv.org)