

## Kingston's Future On Breakfast Menu Meet The Mayoral Candidates On Oct. 17

The future of the city of Kingston will be discussed at the Chamber's next breakfast meeting on Oct. 17 when two-term incumbent Democrat Steve Noble and challenger Scott Denny, a Democrat running on the Republican and Conservative lines, share their visions with business leaders.

Hudson Valley Credit Union will sponsor the breakfast, which is scheduled from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus. The candidates, who face the voters on Nov. 5, will answer questions from the audience screened by The League of Women Voters.

Noble, a former environmental educator with the city, first took office in January 2016 and is seeking a third four-year term as mayor. Denny is a former general manager at Honda of Kingston and has been in the auto business for 40 years.

Noble said his priorities in a new term would be housing, implementing a new zoning code and rebuilding the city's infrastructure.

"The first thing we hear when we're out in the community is that people want to be able to live here and work here and to do that, they need to be able to afford housing," Noble said. "We're trying to build housing at all income levels, which will help our businesses and larger employers to recruit and retain employees."

Noble said the new zoning code would streamline the process of starting businesses and would help development and redevelopment. He also touted infrastructure projects that depended on grants instead of impacting local taxpayers.

"We think in order to have economic development and business growth, we really need a strong foundation to work on and for me that's been repairing roads, fixing sewers and creating a more sustainable city," he said.

"I think that concept has resonated with our community."

Noble said the experience he gained by being mayor the last eight years will serve him well if he is re-elected.

"I'm excited to create that city that everyone wants—one that's vibrant, that's growing and has the ability to create new jobs and has housing available," he said. "We want a city that everyone wants to live in and continues to have a high quality of life. I feel I'm the best person to oversee that."

"Government is a complex operation and I'm really proud of the work that my team has done and been able to accomplish, but I feel like another four years will help us get through some of these really important projects that we're working on and maintain a steady hand as we move our city forward."

Denny is running on a "Kingston United" platform and said charter reform is his top issue as he campaigns across the city.

"Right now, I think we have a divided community to the degree the mayor really has complete and total control of city government under the current charter," he said. The No. 1 issue is charter reform. It's been talked about for many years. It's essential. We can't have a mayor basically dictating the city of Kingston.

"I think the Common Council really needs to take more of an initiative in governing the city of Kingston."



Steve Noble (D)



Scott Denny (R)

Denny would also like to see more ordinary Kingston taxpayers showing up for meetings of the Common Council. He often attends the meetings and said usually only a smattering of residents attend; some meetings, Denny said he was the only person there from the public.

"The residents don't have a voice and they know it," he said. "I think you need community involvement. It's imperative that people get involved and have their voice heard at City Hall. It's their community. The community doesn't belong to the mayor. It belongs to the residents."

Denny called the housing crisis in Kingston "horrific" and lamented a growing homeless problem. While Noble is a strong advocate of the proposed Kingstonian project in Uptown Kingston, Denny set the record straight about his position.

"I was never against the Kingstonian," he said. "I was against the process. The residents had no say."

Denny also advocates term limits and noted that Noble would serve 12 years if he is re-elected.

**October Breakfast**  
**October 17**  
**7:30-9:00 am**  
**The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus**  
**503 Washington Ave.**  
**Kingston, NY**  
**Sponsor:**

"We need new blood, new life and new ideas," he said.

Denny said he would also like to see a fully staffed Kingston Police Department to battle the ongoing opioid epidemic.

*Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders. Reservations are required. Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door for Chamber members (\$40 for non-members.) For more information, contact the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or go online at [www.ulsterchamber.org](http://www.ulsterchamber.org).*

## Hudson Valley Credit Union Will Be The Breakfast Sponsor

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## 'Come With Great Expectations' Buttermilk Falls Hosts Oct. 4 Mixer

It's the most colorful time of the year, and Chamber members will get a chance to experience the vivid hues on the sumptuous grounds of Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa at 220 North Road in Milton as it hosts the Oct. 4 Mixer from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The onsite Henry's at the Farm restaurant will provide hors d'oeuvres and drinks at the networking event being sponsored by Wallkill Valley Federal Savings and Loan.

"Fall is arguably the best time to visit us," said Morgan Doyle, Buttermilk Falls' event planning manager. "The property—much like the rest of the Hudson Valley—is a cornucopia of golds and reds. It's also just a cozy time to enjoy the tranquility of the changing seasons."

Buttermilk Falls, tucked away in Hudson Valley wine country, is a historic 75-acre estate dotted with ponds, waterfalls, willow trees and orchards, which blend seamlessly with an animal sanctuary, farm and organic garden.

That was the vision of real-estate agent Robert Pollock when he purchased the property in 2001, according to Doyle.

"He converted the (original 18th-century) Anning Smith residence to a 10-room inn in 2004, naming the property after the Buttermilk waterfall that falls from our pond to the Hudson River," she said. "Since then, he has completed multiple projects expanding our property and the businesses in Milton, helping revitalize the area."

This is not the first time Buttermilk Falls has hosted a networking Mixer, but a lot has changed since the last event several years ago.

For starters, Henry's at the Farm, the acclaimed farm-to-table restaurant, has been enlarged, doubling occupancy to more than 100 and offering guests another dining room with what Doyle calls "an exciting and exotic ambiance." A private dining room for intimate occasions has also been added, along with two levels of waterfront decks for dining and relaxing.

Buttermilk Falls also is renovating and tripling the size of its award-winning 6,000-square-foot spa. When finished, it will include three infinity pools, a sauna, steam room, nail salon, salt room, 12 treatment rooms and an indoor-outdoor yoga deck. Even while that's underway, the current eco-friendly spa is still open seven days a week, Doyle noted.

She promised Chamber members a tour of the property, which includes scenic trails, and hinted that they may even get to hand-feed the goats and mingle with the other rescued animals like llamas and alpacas that roam about happily.

"Overall, it is a beautiful location that is close to nature, with



sustainable practices found throughout all aspects of the property and that has all of the amenities a metropolitan guest, or anyone else would enjoy," she said. "We cross-utilize our farm-fresh produce, fruit, and eggs across the inn ... and our tight-knit operation makes it so that our guests receive the utmost attention and hospitality while being greeted by the people who make the magic happen. It feels like you are a world away from the busyness of everyday life."

Make sure to bring your smartphone for stunning selfies under a brilliant oak, and a good pair of walking shoes to fully experience Buttermilk Falls' grounds. Above all, come with great expectations, Doyle said.

"We want guests to be amazed at the level of attention that our staff provides and be awed by the natural beauty of the property—from serene ponds and lush gardens to our animal sanctuary. We want

**Mixer**  
**Oct. Mixer**  
**Wed., Oct. 4**  
**5-7 pm**  
**Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa**  
**220 North Road Milton, NY**  
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them to be refreshed from their day-to-day life. We want them to walk away thinking, 'Milton is the place to be.'"

*Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa, located at 220 North Road in Milton, can be reached at (845) 795-1310 or by going to [buttermilkfallsinn.com](http://buttermilkfallsinn.com).*

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# Chamber's 27th Buy Local Expo A Hit

## Sold-Out Event Draws Big Crowd

The Chamber's annual Buy Local Expo, Ulster County's largest networking event, hit another milestone in 2023.

"Not only did we sell out this year, but we sold out sooner than any year prior," Crystal Jacob, the President of the Chamber's Board of Directors, said in opening the event at Diamond Mills Hotel on Sept. 13. "We want to thank all of our exhibitors and our sponsors who are here today who made that happen."

Jacob, a Vice President with Ulster Savings Bank, said the goal was "to bring all of our businesses and organizations together under one roof, where you get the opportunity to showcase your business and your products and services to our community."

"We consider this the ultimate example of the Buy Local, Shop Local event, which we think is critical and key to maintaining a strong economic condition for our community," she said.

State Sen. Michelle Hinchey presented a certificate from the Senate honoring the Chamber. A Saugerties native, Hinchey said the Expo and emphasis on shopping local "shows who we are as a community."

"You have really elevated every person's understanding of how important it is to support local," she said. "Your dedication and commitment to elevating our small businesses is what makes us such a great community here for our businesses."

Saugerties Supervisor Fred Costello said his town exemplifies small business with its host of mom-and-pop shops and boutique businesses.

"We have so many small businesses that are active and integral parts of the community here in Saugerties, but also throughout Ulster County," he said. "We want to continue and build that."

Chamber President Ward Todd spoke just before the ribbon-cutting opened the event, which went from noon to 5 p.m., and was free and open to the public.

"Keep that energy going for the next five hours," he urged. "I know you're all going to do really well today. Put on that smile and keep it going all day."

Businesses, organizations and non-profits did keep that energy going on the floor, where nearly 100 booths showcased the diversity of Ulster County's businesses. Many companies had owners and employees on hand to chat, demonstrate their services, and offer nifty handouts from their uniquely crafted booths.

Tony Marmo and his staff at the temp agency Normann Staffing dressed as characters from "The Wizard of Oz" with Marmo as the Tin Man.

"We always try to do something unique and there's a yellow brick road if you come to Normann Staffing," he said. "Just stay on it. We have brains, we have the heart, we have the courage to find you a job."

"Ulster County is an amazing place with amazing businesses," Marmo continued. "The Chamber is the place to go if you're looking for referrals. You have a better shot at getting a better deal and better service than you do on the street."

Support the Ulster County Chamber, which supports businesses that support our community. It's great to be part of this community."

John Burlingham of American Solutions for Business agreed the Expo "helps get your name out and it keeps your name out there."

"A lot of my customers are here and that makes me relevant," he said. "If there's something new, they get to see it right here, but it's definitely a unique show in that it's almost like being part of a big family. If you're part of the Chamber, you definitely have to get involved and come by to see what's new out there. I try to show not just the product, but also the packaging, so I try to show something new all the time."

Burlingham goes back to the original Buy Local Expo event when it was called the Business Showcase and was held at various locations.

"I found that the more that I got involved with the Chamber, the more I benefited from the Chamber to the point that I got on the board of directors and worked my way up to chairman and now immediate past chair," he said.

Jim McCann of Jim



McCann Photography was at the Expo for the second time and said he was "looking to get my name out there" while gathering feedback about what people want.

"I picked up a few customers and it went really well last year," he said. "I'm looking to see how viable this is going to be as a part-time business and then see if I can transition to full-time work in this field."

Jesse Uttendorfer, an associate wealth manager at Marshall & Sterling, was at the Expo to talk about the Chamber's Young Ulster Professionals (YUP).

"This is a perfect opportunity to see what other local businesses have going on and share what your business is doing," Uttendorfer said. "It's a great opportunity to network and not only support other businesses but to show other businesses what you've been up to. I'm trying to recruit and to get the word out about YUP Meetups and the volunteer events we put together for the community."

Gina Carbonari of the Ulster County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) dressed as a dog and was one of several non-profits at the Expo.

"This is a great opportunity for us to let everybody know what we actually do," she said.

The Chamber also gave out awards for the top booths. The winners included:

**BEST IN SHOW—FIRST PLACE:** People's Place.

**BEST IN SHOW—SECOND PLACE:** Simply Gone Mobile Dumpsters.

**BEST IN SHOW—THIRD PLACE:** RBT CPAs.

**MOST ORIGINAL BOOTH DESIGN:** Ashokan Equestrian Center for Children with Autism.

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Wednesday October 4 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

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220 North Road | Milton NY

There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members. Reservations are required.

**Sponsor: Wallkill Valley Federal Savings & Loan**

Tuesday October 17 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

**Chamber Breakfast Meeting  
Meet the Candidates for Kingston Mayor**

The Venue Uptown | 503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY  
\$30 Members-Advanced Pay • \$35 Members-At the Door  
\$40 Non-Members

**Sponsor: Hudson Valley Credit Union**

Thursday October 26 | 5:30 Cocktails 6:30 Dinner

**Business Recognition Awards Dinner**

Diamond Mills Hotel & BLACKBARN Hudson Valley

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Thursday November 2 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

**Networking Mixer  
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Wednesday November 15 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

**Chamber Breakfast Meeting  
Darrell Wheeler, President of SUNY New Paltz**

Wiltwyck Golf Club | 404 Steward Lane | Kingston, NY  
\$30 Members-Advanced Pay • \$35 Members-At the Door  
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### ChamberNews

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# SPOTLIGHT

The YUP Spotlight highlights Young Ulster Professionals (YUP) events, their participants, and the local talent that inspires us. Every few months, young professionals in their 20s and 30s making a difference and showing their support for Ulster Chamber will be spotlighted for their achievements and dedication.

This month's spotlight belongs to Alejandro Duran Sanchez, founder of marketing firm Volna Unalign and recipient of the Ulster County Business Recognition Awards' 2023 Emerging Young Leader Award.

"We specialize in helping small businesses grow and expand, whether that's through social media content, videography, or building a website," he said. "We have fun getting to meet the customer and seeing how much their business can grow."

With a team of young professionals and close friends, Duran Sanchez helps local businesses curate content from videos to social media posts. His firm opened in 2022, inspired by the word Volna, meaning water in his parent's native language, and the importance of adaptation in marketing strategy.

He was inspired by Bruce Lee's famous concept about water, "Be formless, shapeless, like water," he said "In my mind, marketing is all about adapting" As for 'unalign,' he thought it was a real word initially and when he realized it wasn't, his friend and co-worker Keegan Howland, [Volna Unalign's director of operations] decided to make it a part of the

name and work hard to give it meaning.

Alejandro is fulfilling his life's dream of being an entrepreneur, inspiring others in his native Ulster County to achieve their business goals in turn.

"Each day keeps getting better," he said. "From the time I was a marketing student at SUNY Ulster, I knew I wanted to do something on my own, and I've made great connections thus far."

YUP has been a gateway for him in making connections with local business owners. His first entry into the YUP community was January's PechaKucha night, which marked a chance encounter with a prominent client.

During the event, he captured the attention of Bernadette Rexford, executive director of Children's Benedictine Hospital in Kingston, New York.

"Growing up, I understood early the value of business cards, so when I was sitting next to her, I wanted to use it as an opportunity to exchange information with her as a collaborator," he said. "Because I went to that meeting, I was able to build connections that changed the direction of the work we were doing." Through his affiliation with YUP and the Ulster Chamber of Commerce, Duran Sanchez continues to be a "sponge" in immersing himself in the business community.

"There's a lot to learn here," he said. "Being in Ulster allows me to live the life of a young entrepreneur, soaking in all the knowledge of



Alejandro Duran Sanchez

people I've met through the Chamber. Without the people I've met, I don't know where I'd be right now."

**Want to get involved? Follow YUP on Instagram @youngulsterpros and on Facebook @Young Ulster Professionals -YUP to learn about upcoming events and other opportunities within the group.**

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# Mixer

September 7, 2023

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Oz Farm Mixer Hosts Dallas Gilpin and Jennifer Oz LeRoy (C) with staff of Oz Farm

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## Viking Industries Marks 50 Years Major Expansion Unveiled Soon

One of the staples of the Ulster County economy will soon unveil an expansion at its New Paltz facility, just as the company marks a half-century in business.

Viking Industries President Richard Croce said a 46,000-square-foot addition of production/warehouse space will be open in the next few months. The company, which manufactures corrugated cardboard and other packaging products, currently boasts a facility of 80,000 square feet on Ohioville Road in New Paltz.

"We're adding some automated conveyor lines and some higher-speed production equipment to allow us to expand our offerings and respond better to the market growth that's out there," Croce said.

The Croce family has been in the packaging business for five generations and got its start when Ferdinand Dominick Croce began F.D. Croce Co. in New York City way back in 1892.

The business evolved and in the 1970s was providing produce crates with corrugated partitions to the many apple farmers in the Hudson Valley. When the partitions became difficult to source reliably and cost-effectively, Croce's grandfather, Leo "Russell" Croce, started Viking Industries in 1973 to provide those partitions for F.D. Croce Co.

Viking Industries continued to grow over the years under Croce's father, Rich Croce Sr., with additions in 1978, 1988, 1998, and 2006.

The 47-year-old Croce, who worked at Viking Industries as a summer and after-school job, joined his dad in the family business in 1998 after returning home from Union College in Schenectady. He studied engineering, but "couldn't escape the packaging in my blood."



"It was like Cinderella slipping into the glass slipper," he said. "It was a perfect fit from the moment I got back, and I said, 'Yeah, this is where I'm meant to be.' It's my calling."

When asked how the family business has lasted a half-century, Croce repeated a mantra he learned from his grandfather and father: "Find the need, fill the need, and make it fun."

"We have an obsession with meeting our customers' needs and making ourselves more reliable than if we were a machine sitting on our customers' floor," he said.

The expansion will result in 10 additional employees and allow Viking Industries to go from one order to another in less than 15 minutes, Croce said.

"Everything we do is custom for our customers, so that's very important so they can get even small runs produced

very quickly," he said.

Viking Industries also looks at how it can improve a customer's business through packaging, Croce said.

"Sometimes that is redesigning a box to make it more efficient to pack or to take up less space on a pallet," he said. "We also look at our customers' packaging as both advertising and a first impression they are making with their customers."

Croce said the Chamber has been a huge part in the company's success over the years.

"They're a great resource for us from an educational perspective," he said. "Leadership Ulster does a great job of providing some opportunities for the future. From a networking perspective, they help us find customers, suppliers, and resources in our area as well."

"I think the Chamber is an excellent organization for supporting economic growth in our community. Whenever we face a business issue, I can immediately think of another Chamber member who I know I can talk to and get help navigating that challenge."

The company wanted to get the expansion done before celebrating the 50th anniversary and will probably hold events to mark the milestone in 2024, Croce said.

Viking Industries, located at 89 S. Ohioville Road in New Paltz, can be reached at (845) 883-6325 or [vikingpackaging.com](http://vikingpackaging.com).

