

Metzger Promises Exciting '24 for Workforce

County Executive Addresses Chamber Feb. 21

Freshly elected to a full four-year term, Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger says investing in the local workforce is the real key to economic development prosperity in the new year. "2024 is going to be a very exciting year for workforce development in Ulster County, and I'm excited to share a bit about what we'll be working on in the New Year," Metzger said of her Feb. 21 breakfast appearance before the Chamber. The breakfast, scheduled from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. at The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus in Kingston, is sponsored by The ARC Mid-Hudson. Metzger, a former state senator and Rosendale town councilwoman, has been Ulster County Executive since 2022 and is the first woman elected to that post. She said her administration is committed to addressing the major challenges facing the county, including housing, workforce development and mental health needs. Other goals include further diversifying the economy and "setting it on a more environmentally sustainable and resilient path for the future." "When I addressed the Chamber last year, a month into taking office as County Executive, I set out ambitious plans in each of these areas, and I look forward to the chance to update Chamber members on our progress as well as what we're planning for 2024," Metzger said. "We've got a lot going on, including a new Housing Action Fund, plans for a Workforce Innovation Center at iPark87, the first-ever County Decarbonization Reserve and a new Center

for Well-Being, among other major initiatives to meet the challenges of the moment." Metzger said the business community has a role to play and shouldn't sit on the sidelines. She wants business leaders engaged. "Our business community is a key partner in all our work, from housing and workforce development to addressing climate change and protecting the natural resources upon which we depend," she said. Metzger said the county recently hosted a successful Workforce Summit and will be engaging business leaders in strategic planning for the new Workforce Innovation Center at iPark87, the former IBM complex. The county executive also encouraged businesses to take advantage of an on-the-job training program offered by the Office of Employment and Training, which will reimburse businesses for up to 75% of the wages (based on the size of the company) paid during the agreed training period. Companies can find more information about the program at ulsterworks.com/employers/on-the-job-training. Metzger also invited Chamber members to explore the new Participate Ulster webpage at participate.ulstercountyny.gov to learn more about initiatives underway and to connect with Ulster County Economic Director Kevin Lynch and Ulster County Tourism Director Lisa Berger. "Please know that my door is always open, and we welcome hearing your ideas for strengthening our local economy and realizing our full potential here in Ulster

County," she said. Meanwhile, Metzger thanked the business and non-profit communities for the work they've already done contributing to the "well-being and vitality" of Ulster County. "We are blessed with so many incredible individuals, businesses and service providers who make our communities a great place to live and work and contribute to the quality of life and well-being of our residents," she said. "It's my job to make sure our county government is doing its part in supporting these efforts, which ultimately benefit everyone. As I always like to say, together, we can build a sustainable, resilient, thriving Ulster County that leaves no one behind."

BREAKFAST Meeting

FEBRUARY BREAKFAST
 Wed, February 21, 2024
 7:30 - 9:00 am
 The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus Kingston Hotel
 503 Washington Ave. Kingston, NY

Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger

and are open to Chamber Members as well as the general public. Tickets are \$30 in advance or \$35 at the door for Chamber members, \$40 for non-members. Reservations are required. Call (845) 338-5100 or register online at www.ulsterchamber.org.

Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders

The Arc Mid-Hudson Is The Sponsor For The February Breakfast

The Arc Mid-Hudson is a private not-for-profit agency founded by families in Ulster, Greene, and Putnam Counties who believed that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities as their peers. We support over 1300 individuals and have approximately 1200 employees. Our programs include 70 residential opportunities, 11 day habilitation locations, 2 preschools, and 2 respite programs. We also offer clinical services. All of our services are individualized to foster independence, productivity, and participation in community life. For more information about The Arc Mid-Hudson services, please visit: www.arcmh.org. Employment - The Arc Mid-Hudson works cooperatively with 52 local businesses to

provide competitive employment opportunities to 83 individuals with disabilities. Our Supported Employment (SEMP) program assists individuals with disabilities to secure and maintain employment. This can be an untapped staffing solution for the business community. Our candidates have a variety of aptitudes, educational background, experiences and trainings that make them ready for the working world. When a business partners with us, our priorities are to make the employee and employer satisfied. This may include disability training for the employer and coaching for the employee. A job coach may be utilized on-site at the business to support the employer and employee. Job



coaches will supplement any training that is provided, break down the steps or sequences of a task to maximize efficiencies and serve as an intermediary between the supervisor and employee. For more information about SEMP, please visit: www.arcmh.org/sempp. Our Community Pre-Vocational program serves as a precursor to the SEMP Program. In this program, a small group of individuals accompanied by a Community Pre-Vocational Specialist engage in work specified by the host company. The host company show the staff and the individuals how to do the specific tasks and the staff person will reinforce the training, provide guidance when needed and

ensure that the tasks are completed to the host company's expectations. A major benefit is that the host company is not responsible for wages or liability. For more information about the Community Pre-Vocational program, please visit: www.arcmh.org/community-pre-vocational. The Arc Mid-Hudson Foundation is the education and fundraising branch of the Arc Mid-Hudson's operations. The Foundation hosts a series of community fundraising events throughout the year as well as providing opportunities for Corporate and Event sponsorships for our local business partners. For more information about the Arc Mid-Hudson Foundation, please visit: www.arcmh.org/foundation.

The YMCA Has It All! Come Check It Out At February Mixer

So what are your goals for the New Year? If you're like nearly half of all Americans, your No. 1 goal for 2024 is to lose weight and get fit. So the question now is, where do you stand? An even greater question is why haven't you checked out the YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County?



Chamber members will get that chance on Feb. 7 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. as the 'Y' hosts the first Mixer of the year. The Bank of Greene County is sponsoring the event at 507 Broadway in Kingston. The Underwriting Sponsor is Scrub Masters Plus Corp. The facility offers everything from group fitness classes to yoga, pilates, senior strength training and pickleball instruction. One of the newest additions is an indoor rowing studio led by a certified instructor for all populations and levels. Heidi Kirschner, the President and CEO of the YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County, said she is thrilled to welcome back the business community for the Y's annual Mixer. "It's exciting for us because we get to share all the things we've accomplished in 2023 and look ahead to the new things that we'll be offering in 2024," she said. "Of course, the Y is a not-for-profit, and their support—however it comes about—is deeply appreciated. I'll be talking about all of our programs and how we help our community. It's through that

community support that we're able to do all the things we do, so having the Chamber here to feel our energy is important." Attendees will witness that energy on the basketball and pickleball courts. Additionally, the YMCA offers a large indoor track for walking, personal training, massage therapy, swimming lessons, leadership and educational programs and myriad youth enrichment activities. In recent years, the Y upgraded its locker rooms, gyms and childcare rooms. Not only that, but a new parking lot was installed, and a conference room built to accommodate 170 people for meetings, seminars and other community functions. One of the biggest improvements was to its pool. The space now sports floor-to-window ceilings, a new pool surface, lighting, filters and climate control. Aquatics fitness classes, swimming lessons and lap swimming are offered. On top of everything else, the YMCA offers community enrichment programs such as movie and panel discussions, poetry slam workshops, afterschool activities and a space known as the "Zen Den" to unplug from the world. New this year is its diabetes prevention program led by a trained lifestyle coach. Kirschner said it comprises 26 sessions designed to help adults at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes take steps to improve their overall health by following a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention curriculum. As far as goals in the new year, Kirschner said special focus will be on aquatics training and swimming lessons for youth as well as bike safety. "In 2023, we did 725 lessons for land-based water safety and more than 1,000 for bike safety, so those are some of the things we'll continue working on. The Y is committed to eradicating drowning in Ulster County," she added. Aside from that, Kirschner said the YMCA expects to host more pickleball tournaments this year. "It's hot, and the interest keeps growing," she said. "We have four indoor courts, and last year, we held two tournaments, afforded 2,775 hours of pickleball time

and did 41 four-hour lesson sessions for 216 individuals, so we're looking to do even more this year." The YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County at 507 Broadway in Kingston can be reached by calling (845) 338-3810 or going to ymcaulster.org.

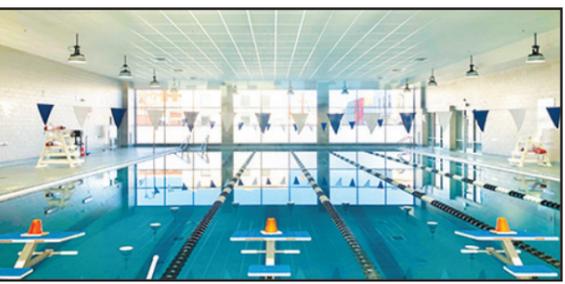
Chamber Mixers are a great way to network and promote your business. Be sure to bring plenty of business cards! This free networking event is open to Chamber members and prospective members only. Reservations are required. Call (845) 338-5100 or register online at www.UlsterChamber.org.

Feb. Mixer

Wed., Feb. 7
5-7 pm

YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County
507 Broadway
Kingston, NY

Sponsor:



Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce

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Outdoor Recreation Thriving In U.C. Post-Covid

Part One - Skiing

The first in a four-part series on the affect the pandemic had on local outdoor sports and activities.

Every cloud has a silver lining, as the saying goes, and that proved true for Belleayre Mountain and New York's overall ski industry during the pandemic and in the years following it, according to the experts.

Scott Brandi, president of the trade association Ski NY, said although the 2019-2020 season was cut short in mid-March due to the spread of COVID-19 and state-imposed restrictions, things improved later that winter and the industry has continued to evolve in a positive and more efficient way since the pandemic.

"Skiing and other outdoor activities were considered 'low risk,' so during the 2020-2021 season, we were open for business," Brandi said. "At the same time, school sports were suspended, and people were working from their homes. They were looking for things to do and gravitated more to outdoor activities. We had a lot of rules if you came indoors, but outdoors, it was wide open, so people said, 'Let's go skiing.'"

The result, he said, was not only growth at New York ski resorts but in all outdoor activities, a movement that hasn't lost steam since the pandemic turned the world upside down.

Not surprisingly, the Highmount-based Belleayre, known for its 61 trails, parks and glades as well as eight lifts, had become a magnet that first full winter after COVID hit, said Darcy Rowe Norfolk, director of communications at the Olympic Regional Development Authority, which operates the Belleayre, Whiteface and Gore ski centers.

To maintain operations while providing a safe and healthy environment for visitors and staff alike, the Olympic Authority instituted "carefully considered changes to operations," including standard masking requirements and capacity limits, she said. It also introduced online ticket sales and reusable RFID cards to eliminate lines at ticket counters.

"During the pandemic, as outdoor activity became highly desirable to a greater portion of the population, Belleayre Mountain saw more demand on a daily basis while also continuing

to operate within capacity limits," Rowe Norfolk said.

Brandi added that Belleayre had close to 161,000 visits in the 2020-2021 season, while statewide there were more than 4 million skier visits, boosted in part by quarantines in nearby states.

"Vermont was pretty much closed. That was another big part of the story," he said. "It typically gets about 5 million visits, so where were those skiers going to go? New York really took off, and when you look at the proximity of Belleayre to New York City, it was a logical choice for many."

Simultaneous with the easing of the pandemic, the Olympic Authority also was investing in updating and expanding Belleayre's lodge facilities and snowmaking systems in a multi-phased series of projects that "have translated to greater visitor capacities and an ability to make more snow, faster, with less energy than ever before," Rowe Norfolk said.

"Even in summer, the Belleayre snowmaking team has been all about winter, laying the literal groundwork up and down the mountain for great winters. Last season, in fact, the Belleayre snowmaking team was a winner of a national 'I am a Snowmaker' contest, a fitting tribute, as the mountain produced bountiful winter conditions and achieved a record-breaking season last year (with 29 percent more visitors and 48 percent more revenue), despite a mild winter with limited natural snowfall," she said.

Of course, all of this means a better experience for visitors, including seasoned skiers and riders, said Joe McCracken, Belleayre's marketing manager. "The popularity of the SKI3 season pass, new lifts, modern learning facilities and lodges, and major snowmaking advancements all play a role in increasing consumer preference for Belleayre among New York's numerous ski areas. The totality of the improvements means highly reliable skier and rider experiences with offerings for the entire family, including long cruising trails, bumps, glades, parks, steeps and loads of fun."

The way Brandi sees it, the skiing industry, with \$1.5 billion economic impact during the winter. "We came out of COVID very strongly," he said. "Sometimes, it takes something dramatic for businesses to change their models, so that's what happened here. It's forced us to

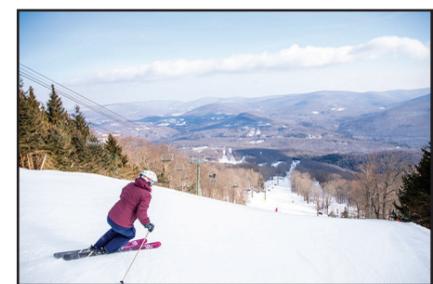


look at how we do business, and now, we're running more efficiently. We're doing a lot more with ticketing systems that are online and remote and we're managing capacity better as a result of the pandemic."

McCracken added that while Belleayre has evolved into one of the most impressive ski areas in the Northeast, its location, natural setting, terrain and amenities make it an attractive destination in all seasons with a full-service beach, rides on the Catskill Thunder Gondola, disc golf, wall climbing, music events and festivals and hiking and biking terrain for all abilities.

"A visit to Belleayre is also an opportunity to learn about the history, ecology and geology of the region as well as the Olympic Authority's commitment to sustainability," McCracken said. "The natural environment is a priority for the Olympic Authority, and improvements made in recent years have been carefully

planned to improve the sustainability of all facets of daily operations. From high-efficiency snowmaking to facility systems, LED lighting, and many other considerations, Belleayre embraces technology and careful planning to provide exceptional guest experiences while minimizing impacts on the natural environment and climate change."



UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

Wednesday February 7 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Networking Mixer

@ YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County

507 Broadway | Kingston, NY

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

Sponsor: Bank of Greene County

Wednesday February 21 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

Chamber Breakfast Meeting

Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger

The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus

503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY

\$30 Members-Advanced Pay • \$35 Members-At The Door
\$40 Non-Members

Sponsor: The Arc Mid-Hudson

Thursday March 7 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Chamber Foundation Mixer

Celebrating Ulster Women In Leadership

The Locust Grove at Garvan's | 215 Huguenot St., New Paltz, NY

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

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Friday March 15 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

Chamber Breakfast Meeting

St. Patrick's Day

Featuring T. McCann Band

The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus

503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY

\$30 Members-Advanced Pay • \$40 Non-Members

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DAILY FREEMAN

Reginato's Ristorante Weekend Hotspot

Owners Cherish New Work-Life Balance

The COVID-19 pandemic handed restaurateurs Kevin and Stephanie Reginato an unexpected gift—the chance to slow down and look at life a little differently.

The owners of Reginato's Ristorante in Lake Katrine travel more these days. They're able to attend their daughter's gymnastics meets, eat dinner as a family, go camping and pursue their passions since cutting back their work week.

While Reginato's, a family-run restaurant founded in 1982 by Kevin's father, Giampaolo "Gianni," and Uncle Roberto, is open Friday through Sunday, the extra days off have allowed Stephanie to pursue her master's degree in education at SUNY New Paltz and Kevin to volunteer more and pick up a side gig as a photographer at Auctions International.

"We found a model that works for us," said Reginato. "Right after COVID, we decided to stay open three days a week, and it's worked amazingly well for us as far as work-life balance goes. The pandemic changed everything for us, and thankfully, it's changed it for the better."

One thing that hasn't changed is the love that goes into running Reginato's each weekend. The beloved restaurant at 34 Leggs Mills Road, remains a staple in Ulster County, drawing guests hungry for authentic Italian cuisine with house favorites like pollo al franchise (chicken franchise) and scaloppini al marsala (veal Marsala). Many of the recipes date back to the family's hometown of Treviso, Italy.

"There are generations of people who have come through the restaurant," Reginato said. "We've heard their stories over and over again, and when they come back, they want the same dishes they enjoyed on those

special occasions. Part of what makes this place so special is the nostalgia."

The story behind Reginato's is a familiar one for many of the immigrants who came to the United States to forge a better life. After finding their way to America in 1972, Giampaolo and Roberto got their start at Villaggio Italia in Haines Falls, a year-round resort, where they worked for more than 10 years.

All the while, they dreamed of opening a restaurant of their own. The brothers made it happen after they found an old home for sale in Lake Katrine, not far from the former IBM campus. Stephanie's great-grandparents once owned the home, although the couple didn't know it when they met. "We call it fate," he said. "We're fortunate that it stayed in the family and that we own the building."

Over the years, the family renovated the

structure and opened an outdoor dining patio in 2012, which helped them to stay afloat during the pandemic. The restaurateurs also participated in Project Resilience, a countywide initiative that paid restaurants to feed those in need. When indoor dining restrictions were imposed, loyal patrons rallied behind the Reginato family, Stephanie said.

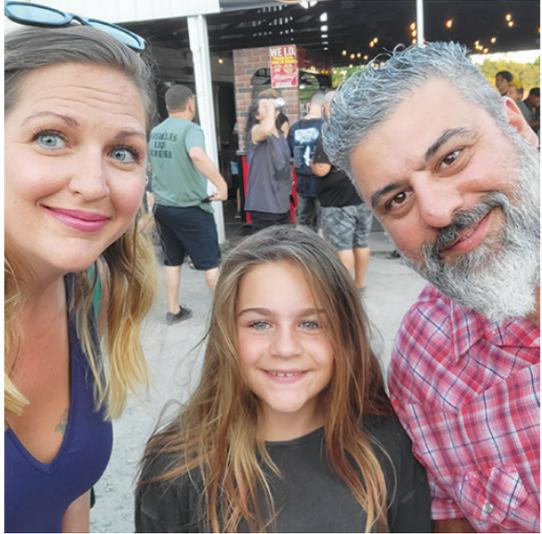
"We were overwhelmed with takeout. Many times, especially on holidays, we would have a long line of customers waiting outside our building. They showed us their love and got us over the hump."

For that, the Reginatos said they are ever grateful and will continue to give customers their best on the weekends. At the same time, they're content with this new chapter in their life where they're also prioritizing self-care and quality time with family.

"I was born at the restaurant," Reginato said. "It's been everything I've ever known, so when the pandemic came and forced us to slow down, it opened up a new world to us. The way I look at it is it's given us a refreshing new outlook on life."



Reginato's Ristorante, located at 34 Leggs Mills Road in Lake Katrine, can be reached at (845) 336-6968 or reginatoristorante.com.



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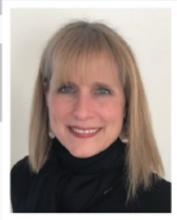
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135 N Chestnut St.
New Paltz, NY 12561
rycorhvac.com
CB Mayer - Comfort Specialist
 Category: Heating Companies & Supplies
 Description: *Mitsubishi Electric Mini-Split Systems and Installation*
We're a leading specialist in the Mitsubishi Electric Ductless Mini-Split System—a clean and economical source of both heating and cooling. When you work with us, you will work with a team of experts who will design and meticulously implement the most efficient system for you and your family's year 'round comfort.

SMYLE & ASSOCIATES, LLC

122 East 42nd Street Suite 3900
New York, NY 10168
www.smyleandassociates.com
Nicole Smyle - Director of Client Engagement and Retention
 Category: Tax Preparation
 Description: *Smyle & Associates, LLC are enrolled agents and accountants specializing in tax, compliance, financial planning and IRS representation. We can handle all of your accounting, bookkeeping, tax preparation, financial planning and tax filings to keep you in compliance with federal, state and local requirements.*

TRI-STATE PAPER AND JANITORIAL SUPPLY

624 Route 17M
Middletown, NY 10940
Derek Wilkin - Sales
 Category: Wholesale
 Description: *We provide facility maintenance supplies. Toilet paper, hand and roll towels as well as dispensers for them. Hand soap and soap dispensing systems. Garbage bags in every size are available. We provide free delivery on many of our orders. We have been locally owned and operated for over 20 years.*

TOAST POS

29 Upton Street, Apt. 2
South End, MA 02118
pos.toasttab.com
Emily McLaughlin - Principle Account Executive
 Category: Restaurant And Kitchen Supplies
 Description: *I am the local sales representative for Toast POS! I already work with many restaurants in the county but would love to connect with more business owners and help them solve their restaurant POS and Payroll needs. A little bit about Toast: We empower the restaurant community to delight their guests, do what they love, and thrive through our innovative cloud based technology.*

WHY MOBILE SOLUTIONS

110 Riverside Rd. Apt. 5
Highland, NY 12528
whymobilesolutions.com
Roy Revill - President
 Categories: Marketing; Web Site Development
 Description: *Why Mobile Solutions? Because Mobile Marketing Works*
Because Proximity Marketing sends automated messages to mobile devices about your business in your local area. because Mobile Responsive Website Design looks nice on all devices. Because Mobile Wallet Applications generate leads and use a customer loyalty program to engage and remarket to your existing customers. Because Progressive Web Apps is the newest mobile app technology to build your customer database. Because 2-Way & Mass SMS & MMS Text Marketing is the best way to communicate and generate new leads and message customers fast.



#LeapOfKindnessDay

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR EXTRA DAY?

#LeapOfKindnessDay February 29, 2024

The idea is to get as many people in our community as possible to use the extra day we all get in a Leap Year to do something kind for someone else.

#LeapOfKindnessDay offers you a chance to motivate your organization, business, or community to donate to local not-for-profit organizations.

This is a great opportunity to do some good in our community.

www.UlsterChamber.org/leap-of-kindness-day | Chamber Office 845.338.5100

