

‘Destination For Discovery’

Breakfast Features County Tourism, Economic Development Message

Ulster County is not just a vacation. It's a destination for discovery! That new tagline for the Ulster County Tourism Department rings true not just for travelers looking for a good time but for businesses looking to put down roots. That idea forms the thesis of the May 15 Breakfast that will feature Lisa Berger, Director of Ulster County Tourism, and Kevin Lynch, the County's Director of Economic Development. Together, the pair will highlight how Ulster County's vibrant tourism brand is being expanded to economic development to leverage business attraction and development. The breakfast, from 7:30-9:00 a.m., will be held at The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus, 503 Washington Ave. in Kingston. Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union is sponsoring the event. Locally, the tourism industry encompasses a variety of sectors, including hospitality, historic sites, outdoor recreation, agritourism and a dynamic arts and cultural scene, creating a rich tapestry for business opportunities. Berger said she will provide an overview of the tourism industry but focus mainly on how the department has developed a unique brand identity that highlights what the county has to offer—one that she said resonates with visitors. "If you're interested in art, we have it. If you're interested in music, we have it. If it's history or the outdoors, we've got it, and we are at the forefront of the farm-to-table movement

and always have been," she said. According to Berger, visitor spending has increased 146 percent since 2019, representing nearly \$1 billion a year at \$979 million. "It is certainly one of the largest drivers in the county. Fourteen percent of our people are employed in the industry, and we are above the industry standard for return visitors. That means we have a tremendously professional and welcoming hospitality industry. Kudos goes entirely to the businesses that commit to caring for people—our restaurants, retail, cultural sites and farms make them feel welcome and comfortable," she said. The county's message has resonated, creating what Berger calls the "halo effect of tourism," a phenomenon where a strong brand identity not only drives visitation but business development, home ownership and even college recruitment, Berger said. "Pure Michigan is an example of that, and really, Ulster County is the northeastern beacon of this phenomenon. This strong brand attracts the right kind of businesses that we'd like to see in Ulster County—high-speed, clean jobs in the tech industry being one area." Economic Development Director Kevin Lynch pointed to Charles Brill, the cofounder of the lighting and design company RBW, who had vacationed in Ulster County before moving his operation from Brooklyn to a 100,000-square-foot factory in the town of Ulster. "There's a famous saying by John Muir that

"between every two pine trees, there's a door leading to a new way of life." That fits with what RBW did. It's a different way of life up here compared to the city," Lynch said. Inspired by Brill and others (such as entrepreneur Lizzie Vann, who purchased and revived the Bearsville Center after visiting the area), Lynch said his department is taking its cue from the county's tourism promotion campaign and moving ahead with its own messaging to drive business development. "We offer a lot in terms of recreational activities and natural beauty, so combining those two concepts—nature and business—makes a lot of sense," he said. "For folks who like to go hiking or kayaking or exploring the outdoors, what better place than Ulster County to set up their business?" "We're fertile ground for all kinds of businesses. Many of these emerging companies are looking for a work-life balance for their employees and a high quality of life, and we certainly offer all of that here," Lynch said. *Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders and are open to Chamber members as well as the*

BREAKFAST Meeting

MAY BREAKFAST

Wednesday, May 15, 2024
7:30 - 9:00 am

The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus
503 Washington Avenue, Kingston, NY




Sponsor: 

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.

Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union Is May's Breakfast Sponsor

How lucky we are to live and work in Ulster County. The Hudson River, the Catskills, and 350 miles of hiking trails – it's no surprise people flock here to enjoy what's in our own backyards. And with elevations from sea-level to over 4,100' we have our own fair share of peaks and valleys, gorgeous vistas and strenuous climbs. When's the last time your financial journey felt at its peak, like you were on top of Slide Mountain, gazing out at a beautiful future, and at ease with your next steps? For a lot of people, money feels more like a valley, with steep climbs, no view, and not a lot to look forward to. And it can feel lonely – like you're the only one who hasn't made it to the top. The truth is, though, financial stress is rampant. 75% of Americans feel anxious about their

finances, according to CNBC. **But here's the thing:** No one needs to make that journey alone. For some it's ensuring their already secure financial future stays that way. For others, it's getting started on managing their own money in a responsible way. For still others, it's guiding a recovery from a few missteps, a wrong path taken, an unexpected obstacle. Just like any of the hiking trails across Ulster County, how your financial journey unfolds depends on how well you prepare, what turns you take, and knowing when to ask for help. Your greatest ally is learning money. Understanding how to make it work for you uncovers possibilities you may have never known existed. What habits are hurting your credit without you knowing it? How do you

start a savings account? Do you really need to think about retirement now? How are you ever going to pay for college? What's an Insufficient Funds Charge anyway, and how do you avoid it? Putting the answers to those questions in your pocket means expertly navigating financial ups and downs – and never feeling alone on that journey. You've got the on-demand financial education you need. Podcasts, seminars, articles, eBooks, videos, recorded webinars – however you like to learn, Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union (MHV) provides open access to financial education to everyone in the Hudson Valley, regardless of whether you bank with us. Rather than outsource to big-box providers, we build our financial education



MID-HUDSON VALLEY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

in-house, crafting resources we know our communities need. Videos breaking down the difference between debt consolidation and debt relief, articles exploring why money is hard to talk about, even airing a podcast episode on how to stage your home to sell – MHV knows your financial questions are unique and important. Just like the beauty of Ulster County, your financial possibilities are calling. Discover them. Visit mhvcu.com/learn.

Blissful Getaway

Waterside Spa At Diamond Mills Hosts May Mixer

Every now and then, one must reset and reboot and leave all the cares of the world behind. Good thing there's a sanctuary created for that purpose right here in our backyard, and luckily for Chamber members, they'll have a chance to explore the newest venue—another gem created by Tom Struzzi and his Diamond Mills Hotel team. The Waterside Spa at Diamond Mills will host the Mixer on May 22 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., showing off its facility with 10 treatment rooms, a fitness center, onsite cafe, lounge site and sauna. Although it's part of the Diamond Mills campus, the spa is located at 2 Ferry St. in Saugerties, a satellite location about a mile away. M&T Bank is sponsoring the networking event. The Waterside Spa premiered in January as the latest in owner Tom Struzzi's upgrades to the property known as a luxury hotel and events venue. Jamie Ford, the Spa Director, said the facility offers massages (including Swedish, deep-tissue and couple's massages), facials that use a natural and sustainable product line called Comfort Zone and body treatments, ranging from mineral mud wraps to one called Fire + Ice to stimulate microcirculation, by well-trained service providers. "They're really caring and compassionate and here to help people relax," Ford said. "It's hard to fake that in a spa service because you're in a room with a client for an hour, and the energy has to be right. The goal is always to make that person feel great and look great."





May Mixer

Wednesday,
May 22
5-7 pm

Waterside Spa at Diamond Mills
2 Ferry St., Saugerties, NY

Sponsor: 

The location, offering tranquil views of the Esopus Creek, sets the tone. Ford and her team plan to offer Chamber members tours of the facility—a historic brick building dating back to the late 1860s. Ford noted that it was used to store ice blocks, which were harvested from the creek and then transported to New York City. "We were careful to keep the same historic look on the outside, but the inside had to be completely redone," Ford said. "It still has the original brick and wood beams and the rustic historical charm throughout the building. We wanted to honor that but offer warm touches throughout the facility. The location is just incredible. You can enjoy the water views, see the lighthouse, enjoy the sunshine and the view while receiving exceptional services." While the spa services are the main draw for hotel guests as well as the general public, the 2,000-square-foot fitness center also is an important element in the overall wellness destination, according to Ford. "Here, any spa guest can access the fitness facility," she said. "It was curated to bring in equipment to do all kinds of exercises, so we have bikes, treadmills, an elliptical and OxeFit, an apparatus that no one else in the area has. It's a platform with different attachments and benches, where you can target specific muscle groups or focus on cardio. It also has fun, interactive components if you want to simulate canoeing or another form of exercising." Special fitness classes, including indoor cycling with Jess Davis (the Chamber's Vice President), and bodyweight BootCamp with Jordan Gallo, are also offered for a nominal fee. Ford said the overall spa was created for clients to spend the day. That means satisfying their appetites at the Waterside Cafe on the premises. The kitchen staff collaborates with the team at BLACKBARN Hudson Valley at Diamond Mills, serving up fresh, locally sourced food and drinks. Ford added that the menu

focuses on healthy options such as seasonal fruits, build-your-own flatbreads, egg souffles, specialty grilled cheese sandwiches and smoothies. "It's an entire experience here," she said. "It's coming here for the day, unwinding, relaxing, having great food and beverages and enjoying incredible services. We've gotten incredible feedback. People love the services and the facilities," Ford said. Waterside Spa offers yearly and monthly memberships, allowing access to all the facilities for both individuals and couples. Ford said there are other perks associated with memberships, including discounts on services, spa retail

products and even Diamond Mills hotel stays. The Waterside Spa at Diamond Mills is located at 2 Ferry St., Saugerties. For more information, go to diamondmillshotel.com/spa or call (845) 247-0700. *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. Reservations are a must and can be made by calling the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or by registering online at www.ulsterchamber.org.*

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Blue Skies, Big Thrill

Falling For Skydive The Ranch

If you think skydiving is just for daredevils—those who live for adrenaline overload—think twice. Fact is, Joe Richards has seen people from all walks of life take the fearless plunge in the 44 years he's operated Skydive the Ranch with his brother, Bill. It's everyone from teachers and lawyers to homemakers and widows to retirees and brain surgeons who have made their way to the ranch at 55

late start for the ranch, which carefully monitors the weather conditions before scheduling jumps. Joe Richards said it usually starts in late March or early April, but due to unfavorable conditions this spring, he and his team held off slightly longer than usual. Typically, Skydive the Ranch hosts about 30,000 jumps during its season and is busiest on weekends when the weather is good, he said. By May, the operation is open seven days a week, weather permitting.

Most of Skydive's customers come from the tri-state area, according to Richards, although he has welcomed visitors from all over the country and

internationally. Before they jump, guests are required to watch an informational video and meet with their tandem instructor, who walks them through the skydiving process from start to finish. The first jump is a tandem

proved that age is just a number. "She had it done a year or two before and just loved it. When she came to us with her 70-something-year-old son, he was more afraid than she was," he said.

He said most people enjoy soaring over the Hudson Valley with views from the Catskills to the Shawangunk Mountains and even the Manhattan skyline. Every now and then, a customer gets cold feet while standing on the edge of the plane, Richards noted.

"Nervousness overtakes them, and they decide they don't want to do it. It rarely happens. We maybe get two or three a year who back out once they get up there."

For the most part, visitors know what to expect and are thrilled by the outcome, he



added. "You'll never forget your first jump. Everybody's experience is unique to them, and for the vast majority of our jumpers, it's positive and eye-opening. It's all about pushing the boundaries of what we can and can't do."

Skydive the Ranch, a Chamber member for 30 years, is open seven days a week (weather permitting). Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. To book online go to skydivetheranch.com or call (845) 255-4033. To skydive, one must be at least 18 years old.



Sand Hill Road in Gardiner—one of Ulster County's most heart-thumping destinations.

One he'll never forget was the 99-year-old woman, who years ago earned her place in Skydive the Ranch's annals as the oldest person to have tumbled from a plane 13,500 above the Earth.

Richards says skydiving appeals to all personality types for a variety of reasons. "Sometimes it's a person who's always wanted to skydive. It's been on their bucket list for years, and they finally make up their minds to do it," he said. "Then, there are people who do it once and move on to their next great adventure. Some want to do it again and again and they go on to become hard-core skydivers."

Whatever their reasons or backgrounds, those who hook up with Skydive the Ranch are in for an intoxicating, thrill-of-a-lifetime experience. Owned and operated by professional skydivers (Richards has himself logged more than 4,000 jumps), Skydive the Ranch has brought the gift of flight to hundreds of thousands of people since opening in 1980.

It all started after his brother convinced some friends to start a skydiving operation in Gardiner. Bill Richards had jumped numerous times at a facility in Dutchess County before he discovered the 98-acre property in Ulster, which today is known as the "Premier United States Parachute Association Dropzone in the Northeast."

Skydive the Ranch boasts an airplane hangar that also serves as an equipment hub as well as a fleet of four Twin Otters, a Porter and Cessna 182. Skydive the Ranch has a prestigious team of licensed skydiving instructors, who hold the highest ratings in the sport.

The season just got underway on April 20—a

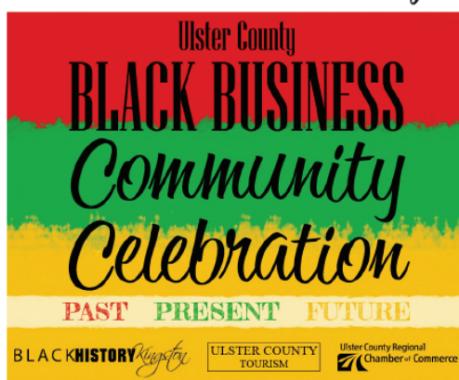


skydive on a parachute built for two people—the instructor and guest—who are strapped together with a harness. The jump is made from 13,500 feet, with a freefall down to 6,000 feet at which point the parachute deploys. The sit-down landing is typically smooth—something Richards likes to compare to a "baseball player sliding onto base."

Skydive the Ranch also offers an IAF training program that teaches the techniques and skills needed to skydive solo and earn a skydiving license and is a mecca for experienced skydivers to come and enjoy the sport.

Richards says he's seen many unforgettable things since the business opened, including the time one of his customers lost his false teeth mid-air and that 99-year-old woman, who

Everyone is Invited to Join in the Celebration!



Tuesday, June 18, 2024
 4:30-6 pm Awards
 6-8 pm Community Celebration
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- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Black Business Excellence Award</i> Corey James (Spectrum News) | <i>Maude Bruce Community Impact Award</i> Essie "Liz" Baker (We Got the Juice) |
| <i>Black Business Leadership Award</i> Rendesia Scott (SUNY New Paltz) | <i>Young Black Leader Award</i> Shataya McComb (Point God Academy) |

Registration is required. There is no charge to attend but space is limited. For more information or to register for this event call 845.338.5100 or visit www.UlsterChamber.org

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- 9 Essentials Pilates and Wellness LLC
- Acadia HR
- Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices/ Hudson Valley Properties
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- Callanan Industries, Inc.
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- Chleo
- Circle of Friends for the Dying
- City of Kingston
- ColorPage Marketing & Publishing Services
- Cruise Planners
- Cummings Engineering, PC
- Destinations Ireland & BEYOND
- Ellenville Central School District
- Ellenville Regional Hospital
- Esopus Business Alliance
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- Ten Broeck Center For Rehabilitation and Nursing
- The Barn Raiser

- The Hudson Valley National Center for Veteran Reintegration
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- WAMC 90.9 Northeast Public Radio
- Westchester Medical Center
- Woodland Playhouse, LLC
- Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild
- Woodstock School of Art
- WZ Accountants * Rose Woodworth, CPA

Anniversaries:

- 55 Years**
SUNY Ulster
- 35 Years**
Jackson Lewis, P.C.
Mental Health Association in Ulster County, Inc.
- 30 Years**
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices/ Hudson Valley Properties
- 25 Years**
Kingston Kiwanis Club
- 15 Years**
Cummings Engineering, PC
Peak Engineering, PLLC
- 10 Years**
ColorPage Marketing & Publishing Services
- 5 Years**
The Hudson Valley National Center for Veteran Reintegration
- 1 Year**
9 Essentials Pilates and Wellness LLC
Chleo
The Barn Raiser
WZ Accountants * Rose Woodworth, CPA
Woodland Playhouse, LLC

UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

Wednesday May 15 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

Chamber Breakfast Meeting
Lisa Berger, Ulster County Tourism
Kevin Lynch, Economic Development
Tourism Boosts Economic Development
 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: Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union

Wednesday May 22 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Networking Mixer @
The Waterside Spa at Diamond Mills
 2 Ferry Street | Saugerties, NY
 There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members. Reservations are required.
Sponsor: M&T Bank

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

Networking Mixer @
Rondout Savings Bank's New Uptown Branch
 267 Wall Street | Kingston, NY
 There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members. Reservations are required.
Sponsor: Rondout Savings Bank

Thursday June 13 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

Chamber Breakfast Meeting
Dr. Paul Padalino, Superintendent
Kingston City School District
 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: WMCHHealth | HealthAlliance Hospital

More Info and Registration UlsterChamber.org
Questions (845) 338-5100

ChamberNews

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Adams Fairacre Farms Your Local Source

Where Customer Service Is A Top Priority

You can see the buzz of activity for Adams Fairacre Farms from Ulster Avenue in Lake Katrine. It's rare to pass by and not see a brimming parking lot, at all times of the day and evening, seven days a week.

Once inside, it's a one-stop shop with a grocery component known for its fresh produce, meats, greenhouses and more, a veritable wonderland of healthy food and specialty items you can't find anywhere else. Oh yeah, and then there's the friendly and affable staff.

"I would say what separates us from other retailers is our customer service," says Store Manager Terri Cranston. "It's a family-owned business. I think the turnover here is so low because Adams treats their employees well and the employees in turn are grateful. They actually are happy to come to work. The excellent customer service brings customers back."

Adams also boasts seasonal greenhouses featuring soils, seeds, mulches, plants, trees and everything you need to spruce up your yard. Every spring, the store holds its Lawn and Garden Show against a backdrop of patios and ponds, walkways and waterfalls and flowering bulbs and shrubs. The Chamber has held its monthly networking Mixer at the show.

Around Christmas, it's the go-to place for everything from trees to decorations to wreaths and specialty holiday gifts.

The grocery store, which grew out of a farm founded by Ralph and Mary Rogers Adams in 1919, is an area institution known for its fresh produce, quality meats, seafood and bakery. There's also a sweet shop, deli and salad bar, as well as catering.

Adams also has stores in Wallkill, Poughkeepsie, Wappingers Falls and Newburgh carrying endless bins stocked with hand-selected fruits and vegetables



and grocery items that originate from at least a dozen local farms, while its meats and poultry come from local butchers. Additional draws include a salad and hot-food bar as well as floral and gift shops.

"I think the reason people love that store is because of the people who founded it and the people who work in it," Cranston said. "I believe the difference here is the friendliness and the willingness to do whatever we can for our customers. If we don't have something, we'll make sure we get it. Our goal is for people to come in day to day and have a great shopping experience. We want to be cordial and welcoming."

Patrick Paulson, Assistant Store Manager, agreed with Cranston about the reasons behind the store's longevity and success. Adams marked its 100th anniversary in 2019.

"I would say part of our success is our concentration on quality products and sourcing from local farms and local vendors, as well as our emphasis on customer service," Paulson said. "We make sure our customers are taken care of. We try to keep our front-end registers full so we can get people out quick."

The store, which employs around 315 people, has been a member of the

Chamber for 30 years and Paulson is now on the organization's Board of Directors.

"I think we have a good rapport with the Chamber, and we help each other and sponsor events," Cranston said. "We promote each other, and it's good to get to know people and network. I think it works for all businesses in the area."

Paulson said Adams is dedicated to the Chamber's "Buy Local" motto.

"I think that's a big part of our success," he said. "We don't just buy from big warehouses; we get our products from local vendors."

Cranston said Adams is a generous and caring community partner.

"Adams is here for the community," she said. "They've been very giving, and they give to numerous organizations and people in need. They're just wonderful when it comes to community service."

Adams Fairacre Farms has five locations in the Hudson Valley. The Lake Katrine store is located at 1560 Ulster Ave. and can be reached at (845) 336-6300 or adamsfarms.com.

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Mixer



Our Mixer Host the Bearsville Theater at the Bearsville Center staff and Owner, Lizzie Vann (center), Claude Dal Farra (Woodstock Film Festival), Barbara O'Brien (Bearsville Center), and staff.

April 4, 2024
Bearsville Theater
 291 Tinker Street
 Woodstock, NY

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Our Mixer Sponsor Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union President/CEO, Wayne Winkler with staff.



Monica LaClair, Debra D'Aprile (both with Onteora Central School District), Jordan Davis (Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce), and Matt Laclair (Onteora Central School District).



Daniel Burns (Northwestern Mutual), Jim Cozza (FASTSIGNS of Kingston), and Alec Bonjolo (Northwestern Mutual).



Jeremy Rhodes and Ali Chetkof (both from Moonrise Bagels).



Kate Weston (Ulster BOCES) and Tom Smiley (Mohonk Mountain House).

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Greg Chorvas - Supt.
 Category: Sporting Events
 Description: The Saugerties Stallions are a 10-week summer baseball franchise in the Perfect Game Collegiate Baseball League. Each summer Saugerties will be the home for the top college baseball prospects in today's game. Come out and support your local Saugerties Stallions! saugertiesstallions.com.

UPSKILLR

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www.whyupskillr.com
Andy DeSancis - Founder
 Category: Consultants - Technology
 Description: At Upskillr, our Salesforce Admin, Business Analyst, and Sales Engineer training programs are designed to build teams and elevate people into technology careers. We use AI-powered tools, immersive simulations, and real-world challenges to deliver the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today's multi-faceted tech-job landscapes. Our experienced Program Delivery Coaches are here to guide trainees every step of the way.

WOODSTOCK SPA

62 Ricks Road
Woodstock, NY 12498
www.woodstockspa.com
Linda Dubilier - Owner
 Category: Health & Wellness
 Description: Woodstock Spa was developed with one thought in mind; everyone deserves to relax and rejuvenate. Our boutique facility mixes luxury products with the nature of the Catskills. Located on 3 wooded acres, Woodstock Spa takes you out of the fast paced day to day and lets you simply enjoy the moment.

WOODSTOCK WOOD, INC.

1795 Route 212
Saugerties, NY 12477
www.woodstockwood.net
Santiago Pietra - General Manager
 Category: Furniture Maker
 Description: Rough cut lumber, custom furniture, design, live edge slabs, friendly and welcoming environment for those who are just getting started in the industry.

For information on Chamber Membership, email Jess Davis at Jess@UlsterChamber.org

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