

## NEWSLINE

A Publication of the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce supports our members and our region as a partner for business, workforce, and tourism development.

#### WELCOME 2024 AND A NEW YEAR FOR OUR BUSINESSES AND OUR REGION!



THANK YOU to our sponsors for helping us celebrate the holidays with our businesses at downtown Gloversville's <u>The Eccentric Club</u> on December 13. We had a full house, where participants enjoyed the tasty offerings from Megan Ryder and her staff from <u>Megabites Catering</u>, and the festively decorated Club put everyone in a holiday mood!

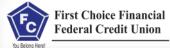














#### John & Sunday Blackmon



Below: On December 2, we helped celebrate the completion and naming of the Montgomery County SPCA Shelter/Veterinary Center in Amsterdam with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! The Neena Rao Family generously donated to the building and thus the building was named in their honor. Dozens of people turned out for the event, took tours of the new state-of-the-art facility, and were excited to talk to staff about the process. Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara was able to secure funding for the project from the State Assembly.



At right: The Mayfield Central School District's Athletic Department hosted a Grand Opening of its newly renovated gymnasium floor on Thursday, Dec. 7 with a ribbon-cutting event with the Chamber. The previously dedicated Rovito Gymnasium serves as a hub for physical education and athletic programming and the new floor is expected to enhance students' experiences there for years to come. In 2021, the gym was renamed the Rovito Gymnasium in honor of longtime physical education teachers, Kevin and Eileen Rovito. Athletic Director Jon Caraco greeted the audience, thanking them for attending and again recognizing the impact the Rovitos had on Mayfield school.



The new gym floor was made possible by the voter approved 2023-24 Capital Outlay Project and insurance proceeds for water damage in 2021. Mayfield CSD is thrilled to welcome its students and school community back to the Rovito Gymnasium.



#### REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2 N. Main Street, Gloversville, NY 12078 (518) 725-0641 | fultonmontgomeryny.org

#### NOMINEES FOR 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS\*\*

Chair—Geoff Peck, Nathan Littauer Hospital & Nursing Home

Vice Chair—Elizabeth Bridge, *Liberty ARC* Secretary—Carl Marucci, *Community Bank* Treasurer—David Jankowski, *Joley Re Holding Corp*. Immediate Past Chair—Vacant

Dan Fogarty, Fulton-Montgomery Community College Ryan Heck, Alpin Haus Colleen Ioele-DeCristofaro, Howard Hanna Real Estate Lillian Johnson, HTCP, Healing Touch Practitioner Gaetano Lanzi, Lanzi Restaurants Mike Schaus, THNK Tank Media/WENT Radio Janet Stanley, Lee Shops at Wagner Square David Ziskin, HFM BOCES

New Directors
Seth Brown, Brown's Ford
Ashley Capobianco, Townsend Leather Company, Inc.
Ashley Delaney, The Wesson Group
Janine Dykeman, Mental Health Association in Fulton &
Montgomery Counties
Peter Lawrence, The Family Counseling Center
Jeffrey Methven, St. Mary's Healthcare

#### **CHAMBER STAFF**

Anne Boles, Executive Director

Mark Bolebruch, Finance Janet Davis, Director of Membership & Member Services Jennifer Hammons, Special Projects Assistant Natalie May, Business & Education Partnership Coordinator Terry Swierzowski, Newsline Editor/Reporter

Nicole Tennant, Executive Assistant
Nicole Walrath, Director of Workforce Development

#### THE FULTON MONTGOMERY CHAMBER IS A MEMBER:

- ♦ Business Council of New York State
- ♦ Center For Economic Growth—Capital Region
- ♦ Chamber Alliance of New York State
- ♦ Fulton County Center for Regional Growth
- Fulton County Farm Bureau
- ♦ Montgomery County Farm Bureau
- New York State Farm Bureau

#### \*\*OFFICIAL MEETING NOTICE

**Annual Meeting of** 

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce-

Thursday, January 11, 2024, 8:00AM

NEW LOCATION: Fulton Montgomery Community College, Large Lounge | Student Union 2805 State Highway 67, Johnstown, NY 12095 Please watch your email for proxy or access it <a href="here">here</a>



## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Chamber Members,

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Executive Director. Thank you to our dynamic Board of Directors, our community partners, county governments, and our incredible Chamber staff for your faithful service. I am grateful for the opportunity to carry on the vision in 2024. It brings me so much joy to support our local businesses to ensure Fulton Montgomery Region continues to be a thriving community.

We, at the Chamber, recognize that to serve you with the same excellence you serve our community, we need to be listening. It is a top priority to continue to show you the value of your membership and why it is important to be a member of YOUR Chamber of Commerce. Many of you have expressed needs for increased communication regarding changing legislation, information about available resources, and local partners to help your businesses develop and expand. We are currently building committees, continuing our strong workforce development initiatives, refining our events, and broadening our networks to better benefit you as Chamber members. While those efforts are already underway, please know that we welcome your continued feedback to guide our efforts and enrich your experience as a Chamber member. We are bringing back time honored and valued events, such as the legislative breakfast and business expo, along with seminars and workshops to help you thrive. Our well-attended business after hours events are a member benefit as well, as the time spent at these in-person events can build relationships and your networking circles. Our Business Education Partnership initiatives are ground breaking and continue to be "one of a kind" in the region. It is a privilege to work with our youth, school administrators, educators and staff, to continue to present jobs and opportunities in the region, and the excitement continues to build, as state of the art concepts and programs are coming to our area.

The business expo will be making a comeback on Thursday, March 21 at the HFM BOCES campus, and will also include the prestigious Chamber annual awards. We will be celebrating businesses in these categories:

TOURISM AWARD: The Barbara V. Spraker Tourism Partner Award is given to a Chamber member who has excelled in the past year at bringing visitors to our region while promoting the positive aspects of our community. The award honors Barbara V. Spraker for her innumerable efforts in support of area tourism including spearheading initiatives such as the Canajoharie Information Booth, the bicycle path, and having served as commissioner for the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission.

#### Welcome New Members

December 2023

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#### HIGH ROLLERS

4313 State Highway 30 Amsterdam, NY 12010 (518) 843-0783| https://www.facebook.com/ highrollersskating

High Rollers has been part of the community for over 35 years. Recently under new management, High Rollers provides atmosphere for the entire family. Come and roller-skate on our wood floor, play in the arcade, visit the stuff shop and enjoy our snack bar. During the summer there is an outdoor Go-Kart track. Skaters can rent roller skates, roller-blades, or speed skates. Skate lessons on the first three Saturdays of each month.

#### THE MEAT LOCKER BBQ AND BURGERS

34 West Main Street, Johnstown, NY 12095 (518) 557-8049 https://www.facebook.com/TheMeatLockerBBQ

Quick service BBQ/Burger restaurant specializing in Southern BBQ staples and the build your own burger. We are also the home of the "Q" balls.

## MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

Janet Davis, Director of Membership & Member Services



Happy New Year!

First of all I would like to thank all of our members for your continued support. The Chamber appreciates each and everyone of you. It does not matter if your business is big or small, please take advantage of what your membership offers you!

Referrals- We love to refer our members. We receive calls daily-we only refer members!

Events- Please come and network, events are back!

Social Media- Keep us informed, we would love to post for you.

Destination One- Please feel free to drop off information (business cards, brochures) so we can display at our Visitors Center.

Newsline- Take advantage of advertising or having your business showcased in our newsletter.

These are just a few advantages your membership offers you. We are here to help, take advantage! Have a safe, healthy New Year!

Please read detailed information about referrals and publicity opportunities through the Chamber!





## MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES December 2023



#### Thank you for your continued support!

#### **51-60 YEARS**

Gabriel Contractors of Amsterdam, Inc – 58 Brown's Ford of Johnstown - 52 WEST & Company, CPAs, PC - 51

#### 41-50 YEARS

C.T. Male Associates, Inc. - 50 Castiglione Gem Jewelers - 50 Kingsboro Lumber, Inc. - 50 Law Offices of Heidi Gifford - 50 National Grid - 50 SWANY America Inc. - 50 Apollo Northeast Sales & Service - 49 Stewart's Shops - 49 First Presbyterian Church - Johnstown - 48 Romana's Pizzeria - 44 Santos Construction - 42

**31-40 YEARS** Philip Beckett, CPA, PC - 40 Spagnola & Spagnola Accounting Firm LLC - 40 Gary DiSanto-Rose, DMD - 39 Amsterdam Auto Parts (Car Quest) - 37 City of Johnstown - 37 JAG Manufacturing, Inc. - 37 Family Counseling Center of Fulton County - 35 Fulton County Community Heritage Corp. - 35 Gloversville Enlarged School District - 35 Kucel Contractors, Inc. - 35 Fulton County Sheriff - 34 Holland Meadows Golf Course - 34 Jones and Naudin Leather - 34 Arkell Museum/Canajoharie Library - 33 Betz, Rossi, Bellinger & Stewart Funeral Homes - 33 Broadalbin Manufacturing Corp. - 33 Broadalbin-Perth Central School District - 33 Gloversville -Johnstown Joint Wastewater Treatment - 33 Jackson & Betz Funeral Home - 33 Lenz & Betz Funeral Home - 33 Mackenzie & Tallent, Attorneys at Law - 33 Partner's Pub - 33 Town of Broadalbin - 33 Adirondack Lakefront Retreat - 32 Pineview Commons, LLC - 32 Plaza's Italian Bistro - 32 Lanzi's on the Lake, Inc. - 31

#### **21-30 YEARS**

Northville Public Library - 30
Peking in Johnstown Corp. - 30
Rich Szumowski Window Cleaning Service - 30
United Way of Fulton County, Inc. - 30
Colonial Overhead Doors - 29

Fiber Conversion - 27 Sacandaga Valley Arts Network - 27 Sport Island Pub - 27 Amsterdam Overhead Door - 26 City of Gloversville - 26 Daily Gazette - 26 The Eccentric Club - 26 First Choice Financial Federal Credit Union - 26 Putman Enterprises - 25 Say It with Signs - 25 FMS Workforce Development Board - 24 Fox Run Golf Club - 24 J. H. Buhrmaster Co., Inc. - 24 The Glove Theatre - 24 Abdella & Sise Law Offices - 23 Cranberry Cove Marina, Inc. - 23 Derby Office Equipment - 23 Euphrates, Inc. - 23 Roger's Family Orchard - 23 Steven J. Bruning, CPA - 23 Beckmann Converting, Inc. - 21 Fuel-N-Food - 21 St. Mary's Healthcare - 21

Townsend Leather Co., Inc. - 29

#### 11-20 YEARS

St. Johnsville Chamber of Commerce - 19 KeyBank Johnstown - 18 Perfection Cleaning Service - 17 Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region - 15 Life Christian Center - 15 Easterly Woodwork & Design - 14 Community Bank - Canajoharie - 11

#### **1-10 YEARS**

OB1 Insurance Agency, Inc. - 10
Johnstown Historical Society - 9
Mohawk Valley Economic Development District - 9
NBT Bank - Gloversville Financial Center - 9
Studio Herbage Florist - 8
Dollar General (Warehouse) - 5
Bike Barn Cycling & Fitness - 2
Higher Ground Distilling Co. - 2
Johnson Hall State Historic Site - 2
LJ Hand Farm Center Inc. - 2
Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market - 2
St. Peter's Health Partners - 2
Adirondack Shipping Center - 1
Salute to Service Veterans Coalition, Inc. - 1
Slate - A Rustic Tayern - 1



## LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Your local representatives will be attending and answering your questions. We will be discussing ALSO INVITED: pertinent issues pertaining to our region. Congresswoman Elise Stefanik; Senators

CONFIRMED Assemblymembers Bob Smullen and Mary Beth Walsh

Mark Walczyk and Neil Breslin, Assemblymen \$35 FOR MEMBERS \$50 NON MEMBER PRICE

Angelo Santabarbara & Matt Simpson FRIDAY JANUARY 19TH, 2024 BREAKFAST TO BE SERVED @ 7:30AM,

PANEL STARTS @ 8:00AM

@ THE BRIDGE WALK

135 PERTHSHIRE DRIVE AMSTERDAM, NY 12010

Moderator: Mike Schaus THNK Tank Media/WENT 1340AM Radio FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR TO RSVP PLEASE EMAIL: **FULTONMONTGOMERYNY@GMAIL.COM** 

OR CALL 518-725-0641

What questions do YOU want the panel to answer?





**Email Anne Boles your questions** or call her at the Chamber!

#### Business Resources You Can Use:

#### EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT

#### Resources for Businesses in New York State

Small businesses make up 98 percent of New York State businesses and employ 40% of New York's private sector workforce. Empire State Development's Small Business Division supports the development and expansion of businesses with under 100 employees – directing an array of programs and initiatives supporting small business growth and helping entrepreneurs maximize opportunities for success:

- Download A Beginner's Guide to Starting a Business in New York State—whether you're looking to start a business or strengthen an existing one, this 61-page, free downloadable booklet provides information about everything from planning and financing a business to marketing, keeping records and understanding government regulations. It also contains what you need to know about expanding an existing business. In addition to providing a solid overview of small business ownership, this guidebook serves as a reference to the many programs and resources that are available to new business owners. Download the booklet here.
- 2. Access the New York State Directory of Small Business Programs. This directory is designed to help small businesses access valuable resources for business planning, operations and growth. Use the table of contents or follow the navigation bar at the top of the page to find the many resources listed in this guide. This directory is a PDF file with active hyperlinks. If you read this on a computer with open access to the internet, clicking on the website URLs and email addresses will take you directly to the selected webpage or address an email message. The directory can also be printed and read as a self-contained guide.
- 3. New York Business Express is a comprehensive resource for starting, running, and growing a business in NYS, including a Business Wizard and information on support programs and incentives. You can access COVID-related help for your business here, the New York State Job Bank where you can post positions for free, the New York Small Business Development Center, which provides free help for NY businesses, a Checklist for starting a business in New York State, and more. Here is the link for this information: <a href="https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/app/home">https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/app/home</a>

- 4. Lending Programs and Financial Resources for Businesses—whether your business is seeking a loan or venture funding, NYS offers a variety of small business programs and financial resources to help you start, grow and succeed. There is an Alternative Lenders Directory, Job Development Authority Direct Loan Program, Global NY Fund Loan Program, Linked Deposit Program, New York State Surety Bond Assistance Program, Regional Revolving Loan Trust Program, Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Revolving Loan Fund Program, and more. This information can be found at <a href="https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/small-business-hub">https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/small-business-hub</a>
- 5. Technical Assistance for Businesses—check out the technical assistance programs that can help your small business start, retain or regain a competitive edge. Included here is information about programs such as the NY Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Entrepreneurship Assistance Centers, Procurement Assistance Program, Small Business Environmental Ombudsman, and more.
- 6. How to Navigate the Lending Landscape—helps you to understand your options for getting a small business loan, make informed decisions, and find reputable small business lenders. Access this information here.
- 7. View Annual, Regulatory, Budgetary and Legislative Reports <u>here</u>.
- 8. NYS Division of Small Business contact information: 1-800-STATE NY (1-800-782-8369)
  Small Business Liaison (212) 803-3149
  nylovessmbiz@esd.ny.gov
- In addition, for businesses of all sizes you can find information about MWBE, Tax-Based Incentives, Operational and Innovation Support, Growth Support, Export Assistance, International Investment, Venture Capital, Workforce Development. Find this information here.
- 10. Empire State Development contact information: Mohawk Valley Region
  207 Genesee Street, Utica, NY 13501
  (315) 793-2366
  (315) 793-2705 (fax)
  nys-mohawkval@esd.ny.gov



#### **FULTONMONTGOMERYCHAMBER**



## PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, March 21, 2024 4:00pm to 7:00pm
HFM BOCES Conference Center, 2755 State Highway 67, Johnstown

#### An Unrivalled Platform for Business Networking and Expansion, and Celebrating our Business Community!

The merging of two of the Chamber's most popular events, this Business Expo and Annual Awards Presentation will have so many opportunities for Chamber members:

## JOIN US TO NETWORK WITH CHAMBER MEMBERS, THE PUBLIC, AND CHAMBER AWARD WINNERS...

Come experience the camaraderie of your fellow business owners and representatives, learn about other businesses at the Expo, and honor the Chamber's Annual Award Winners at this great event! Enjoy refreshments provided by the HFM BOCES Culinary Arts program and students, and FREE admission for the evening! An event not to be missed!

#### EXHIBIT, ENGAGE, AND EXPAND YOUR

BUSINESS! Purchase booth space to promote your services and products to hundreds of people over the course of 3 short hours! For a \$50 fee, you will get one booth space (10 feet wide by 8 feet deep), an 8-foot table, linen and chairs to use to promote everything your business is all about! The Business Expo is an impressive platform for fostering connections, widening your business horizons, and gaining insights into the current business landscape. Engage in rich conversations and build valuable connections.

Learn from other entrepreneurs, gain insight into market trends, and discover new methods to adapt and thrive in our regional business community!

#### HONOR AND CELEBRATE YOUR FELLOW CHAMBER MEMBERS AND OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY!

At this event, we will also take time to celebrate this year's Annual Chamber Business Award winners! Learn about them, and what makes them successful and celebrate their accomplishments—as well as yours!

This Business Expo/Annual Awards Presentation is an event with a difference. It seamlessly blends business with pleasure, providing an enjoyable yet purposeful experience to enhance your prospects. We invite you to join us, exhibit your enterprise, engage with other professionals, and seize the opportunity to expand your business footprint.

We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming you to the Business Expo. Let's make the 2024 Business Expo/Awards Presentation a milestone event in fostering regional business growth and development! For details or to register for the Expo portion of the evening, please call the Chamber at (518) 725-0641 or email Anne Boles at anneb@fultonmontgomeryny.org for an application.

anneb@fultonmontgomeryny.org for an application. You won't be sorry!

#### Chamber Member

## BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT BUSINESS REFERRALS AND PUBLICITY FOR YOUR BUSINESS PROVIDE VALUE FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

The Chamber is committed to helping promote local businesses and supporting the communities where we live, work and play!

The Chamber of Commerce is a unique organization. By definition it is a voluntary association of business, industry, community, professional and other interested persons. A growing regional Chamber such as ours is expected to be as diverse as the people it represents.

Our Chamber puts lobbyist, sales representatives, public relations, marketing, goodwill ambassadors and informational consultants on your payroll through your membership!

#### **REFERRALS:**

The Chamber receives thousands of inquiries annually about businesses, products and more, and when people call the Chamber office or request information through the Chamber website, on social media, e-mail, fax or mail about local businesses, our policy is to only refer Chamber members. This service ensures that your business has an edge over your competitors. The Chamber is ready to promote your business to anyone one looking for your products or services! The Chamber is working for your business every day.

#### **PUBLICITY:**

Publicity opportunities through the Chamber are many. Publicity brings heightened name recognition for your business. Here are some of the ways you can get free publicity for your business through the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce:

#### **SPONSORSHIPS**

Sponsorships can help promote a company and its brand and image through targeted exposure. For example, a Chamber member can sponsor an event to generate publicity to other members and to the general public. Sponsorships vary in price and for every event, there is a sponsorship that any size business can afford. Contact us and we can give you a sponsorship "menu" for any event in which you are interested.

#### **WEBSITE**

Thousands of prospective customers access our business' information on our website when looking for goods and services. Please make sure your information is updated and refreshed. Need help? Contact Nicole Tennant at the Chamber who is ready to do so.

#### **NEWSLINE**

Are you a new business? Expanding? Offering a new product or service? Hire someone whose information you want to share? Send an email with any information about your business to Terry Swierzowski at new-sline@fultonmontgomeryny.org. She'd love to have the info to promote your business in the newsletter!

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

We are always looking for content—want us to share one of your posts on Facebook or Instagram or want us to create a post for you for the Chamber's social media outlets? Contact Nicole Tennant who can help!

#### RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

New member of the Chamber? Something you want to promote? We can come to your business with our group and hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony that we will promote on social media and in our newsletter.

#### NETWORKING EVENTS

You can be the best publicity for your business at our business after hours, seminars, and more. Use your attendance at these great events to best benefit your business—network, hand out your business cards, and more!

There are so many ways to promote your business through the Chamber—it's what we are here for and what we are good at. Please connect with us to give us an update on what you're doing at your business and we can use many publicity avenues to get the word out to drive customers your way!





#### MOHAWK VALLEY LAUNCHES THE MOHAWK VALLEY FARM AND AGRIBUSINESS NETWORK

The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc. (MVEDD), in partnership with Visit Schoharie County and the Office for Agricultural Development of Schoharie County, has launched a new initiative called the Mohawk Valley Farm and Agribusiness Network (MVFAN).



Our food system is composed of farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, restaurants, emergency food programs, consumers, as well as the businesses and agencies that support them. These groups comprise a network that has uniquely important and interrelated impacts on the health of our environment, our economy, and individuals.

MVFAN's mission is to provide Mohawk Valley farms and agribusinesses with the industry resources necessary to create a robust, diverse, productive, and efficient agricultural landscape. By being an advocate for economic development efforts that focus on these value-added business opportunities, MVFAN wanted to help create agriculture jobs, and increase access to healthy foods for all residents.

MVFAN has created a space that consolidates several types of value-added business opportunities to bolster economic development in the agribusiness sector, with the goal of creating a more resilient food system in the Mohawk Valley. MVFAN can provide information and support on the following topics:

Grant & Loan Opportunities: (including those from NYS Grown & Certified, NYS Farmland Protection Implementation, the US Department of Agriculture, many local grants and the Small Business Loan Fund from MVEDD)

AgriSmart: an MVEDD-led organization aimed at connecting farmers to energy efficiency upgrades, utility upgrades and incentives for equipment, technical assistance to apply for farm energy audits and best practices to save energy

Connections to Local Farmers Markets State and County groups and networks to further visibility of your agribusiness

MVFAN is a collaborative effort, and local agribusiness owners are encouraged to contact MVFAN to discuss your

business needs, wants and project ideas. The experienced team at MVFAN will work with you to connect you to local funding, programs, incentives and opportunities to bolster your business.

"The Mohawk Valley's agricultural sector is strong, but a lot of opportunities have been left on the table," says Heather Devitt of MVEDD. "MVFAN is here to help connect agribusinesses to funding and value-added programs to create a more vibrant system of agriculture," she continues.

MVFAN will be hosting an event in the Spring of 2024 to bring agribusinesses together and present on different opportunities. Please visit MVFAN's website for announcements relating to this in the new year. <a href="https://www.mvfoodaction.org/home">https://www.mvfoodaction.org/home</a>

#### WESSON GROUP RECEIVES AWARD

The Wesson Group received the 2023 Safety Excellence Award at the AGC NY Tech Conference on Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> in Saratoga Springs. It was received by Skip Parry, Construction Risk Manager, Kevin Butler, Director of Safety, Environmental and Quality, and Matt Schuler, Senior Project Manager. Skip Parry says "Safety performance requires the proactive, collaboration between operations along with its imbedded safety program to optimize safety in planning and execution of all our work."

This award is a testament to their dedication to Safety. About the award, The Wesson Group said, "We are proud of all that our team has accomplished, not only this year, but every year!"









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#### COLLEEN IOELE-DECRISTAFARO SELECTED TO HOST A NATIONAL TV SHOW ABOUT OUR REGION

Colleen Ioele-DeCristafaro, Howard Hanna Real Estate Services, has been selected to host a national TV show, with EMMY nominated producers, about Real Estate, Lifestyle, and Community representing the Southern Adirondacks & Capital District. Of this honor, Colleen said, "This is a very unique opportunity for a select few and I am honored to be representing the community I love so much."

She continued, "When I decided to add American Dream TV host to my resume, I was very apprehensive. Being on camera doesn't come naturally for me and I tend to avoid the spotlight. However, I firmly believe that growth occurs when we step beyond our comfort zones. Courage, after all, is the ability to forge ahead despite the fear."

This is a real show, not a staged reality show, and is focused on positivity and the stories of our neighborhoods. The show will be airing on CABLE, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, and Roku. The show will also be accessible through social media, where the content will be repurposed for viewing on these platforms.

The executive producer said specifically that they are looking for Colleen to interview and share the stories of the biggest voices in our area. The mover and shakers, innovators, CEOs, philanthropists, etc. She will focus on those making a positive impact on our community, as the show is meant to combat negative media with real and positive stories.

Colleen is looking for our business community to help her find features about our region: Who should she look to feature on this show? Who do you want to hear from? Also, next season, they are looking for homes going on the market to feature the stories of sellers. Do you know anyone who might be selling? Colleen would love to pitch their listing to the producers for the show. Please reach out to Colleen if you are interested in sharing your story! Reach out to Colleen via her website <a href="https://colleenioele-decristofaro.howardhanna.com/">https://colleenioele-decristofaro.howardhanna.com/</a> on <a href="Facebook">Facebook</a> or via cell phone at (518) 281-4467.

Congratulations, Colleen, on this new venture!



Want your business featured in a story in this newsletter? Send your information to Terry Swierzowski, newsline@fultonmontgomeryny.org EXEUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2:

SMALL BUSINESS AWARD (10 employees or less): Given to a Chamber member who has shown a dedicated investment in the Chamber and/or community, as well as extraordinary participation in Chamber programs.

FAMILY AWARD: Given to a family whose members own, operate, or are employees of a Chamber member business and have shown extraordinary support and participation in Chamber programs.

ENTREPRENEURIAL AWARD: The Thomas B. Constantino Entrepreneurial Award is given to a Chamber member that embodies the entrepreneurial spirit by organizing, managing and assuming the risks of building a business then persevering to see these efforts come to fruition. In memory of Thomas B. Constantino, founder of The Noteworthy Company in Amsterdam, who exhibited exemplary leadership skills, determination, creativity and vision.

CENTENNIAL AWARD: Given to a Chamber member who is an active participant in Chamber programs and has been in business in our region for 100+ years.

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS AWARD: The Agricultural Business of the Year Award is given to an agricultural Chamber member business or event (or related) that has made a positive contribution to the economic growth and well-being of our region.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD: The Young Professional of the Year Award is given to a young professional Chamber member under the age of 40 whose commitment, enthusiasm and positive energy have contributed to the betterment of our region.

INDUSTRY OF THE YEAR: The Edward L. Wilkinson Industry of the Year Award is given to a Chamber member business or industry that has made a positive contribution to the economic growth and well-being of our region as well as extraordinary support and/or participation of Chamber programs. In memory of Edward L. Wilkinson, a prominent attorney and economic development leader, who was a strong believer in the potential of our region.

PLEASE take the time to nominate yourself or a fellow Chamber member! The nomination form is online <a href="here">here</a>. The voting is extended until January 29! Help us celebrate and honor the best of the businesses in our amazing business community!

I am excited to be your Executive Director and be the voice of our businesses. I ensure you that the excellent service you provide to the community is matched with excellent service from us. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at <a href="mailto:anneb@fultonmontgomeryny.org">anneb@fultonmontgomeryny.org</a> if there is anything I can do to support you. I look forward to partnering with you and your businesses in the coming year.

Happy New Year! All the best, Anne

Nicole Walrath,
Director of Workforce Development
nicolew@
fultonmontgomeryny.org







Natalie May, Business & Education Partnership Coord. nataliem@ fultonmontgomeryny.org

UPDATE ON CANAJOHARIE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EDUCATOR RESIDENCY PROGRAM An Interview with Teacher Celia VanDerwerker and Business Owner/Operator Krissy Gilmore, Ricmar Design and Print Shop



Pictured at left is Krissy Gilmore and at right is Celia VanDerwerker

The <u>Canajoharie Central School District's</u> Educator Residency Program is a unique, innovative, and transformative professional learning opportunity in which educators are placed on special assignment for the school year to be immersed in professional learning. Starting in September 2023, accepted teachers began their internship experiences with local businesses to gain a better understanding of the workplace and implement their experiences in their classrooms with their students. They will also report back to their peers to help them gain a better understanding of businesses and what they are looking for in prospective employees.

Celia VanDerwerker is a ninth grade English teacher at Canajoharie High School; previously she taught seventh grade for 10 years. She gave us insight as to how the Educator Residency Program got off the ground. Canajoharie's Superintendent Dr. Nick Fitzgerald sent out communication to all staff to offer the Educator Residency experience to whomever was interested. There was an application process that included interviews with Dr. Fitzgerald and another district administrator. The district was looking for teachers who not only were interested in the program, but who could also creatively communicate the pro-

gram and its outcomes to other teachers who could take it to the classrooms and their students. Celia was excited to be chosen for the program and at the time of our interview was in her third month of her first internship experience at Ricmar Design & Print Shop in Gloversville, mentored by the business' owner/operator Krissy Gilmore. Celia believes that this was a perfect match for her because of her strong English background and because Ricmar is a woman-owned business.

Krissy Gilmore and Ricmar Design & Print Shop have a long history with the Chamber's Business Education Partnership. Krissy has been a mentor/presenter at a number of PTECH and education programs through the Chamber, and she is on an Advisory Council for HFM BOCES' Career & Technical Education program. When contacted by Nicole Walrath, Krissy was excited about the opportunity to be involved in this Educator Residency Program.

Krissy is a strong believer in the Chamber's Business Education programming, and especially with the mentoring pieces. She recalls her high school art teacher who was a mentor to her and who changed the trajectory of her studies. She originally thought she would be a secretary, but her teacher cultivated her interest in design and supported her exploring her graphic design skills. Krissy says that although she wasn't an "A" student, this teacher taught her that she could be successful and would "amount to something." The teacher showed her that there were many other ways to be successful in addition to the classroom – in the community, in business, etc. Krissy recalls proudly that two of the high school interns that she mentored in her business have gone on to study graphic design or make a career in the field. Ricmar has hosted two interns from Fulton-Montgomery Community College, and four from Amsterdam High School. This is her first teacher internship experience.

When talking about Celia and her experience at Ricmar, Krissy says, "This is the busiest time of year for us and Celia has been a tremendous help. Not only does she support us in getting our work organized and getting it out, but she has also been helping me to hone in on things with which I need help and with things that need to be addressed. She is a pleasure to work with and has been so helpful to me and to Ricmar." At Ricmar, Celia has worked (continued on page 12)

(continued from page 11)

on design, print production, bookkeeping, purchasing and more. Celia and Krissy hope to also work together on an internship manual to better help both Ricmar and the interns prepare and execute the internship experience.

Some of the things that Celia is investigating during these internship experiences is looking at what skills employers are looking for in young people as prospective employees. She already has listed communication and customer service skills, soft skills, problem solving skills, bringing tasks to completion. Both Krissy and Celia also emphasized that taking personal responsibility for one's work is another important lesson to be learned by students. Celia will take what she learned at Ricmar and bring this information back to the classroom and work on these attributes with students to set them up for success and to be productive employees for these businesses in our region.

Celia has also created lists of traits needed to be successful in the graphic design and printing businesses like Ricmar. She hopes to apply these to Canajoharie's curriculum, including perhaps putting together a personality quiz to help gauge interest in a career in the field, among other projects that would come out of this Teacher Residency program. Some of the programming that Canajoharie is looking toward for the future that will align with this Teacher Residency program is having student field trips to explore regional businesses, and creating hands on internships at businesses for students in their senior year. She emphasized that there will be a rubric created for students to meet a series of things to be able to have the opportunity for an internship.

Krissy believes that soft skills are as important as design skills in her business and is constantly looking at ways to better mentor interns. For instance, she found that some of her high school interns were timid on the phone when calling customers – current and prospective. She found that when she and the intern worked together on creating a script for the student to use on these phone calls, they were much better at the task, and had more confidence. Krissy admits that this Teacher Residency internship is a very different dynamic from her other internship experiences, and we can tell that both the intern and business owner and enjoying it and finding it very valuable. In fact, Krissy told us that not only has this experience been beneficial to both her as a business owner and her business, but "It has been really cool to work with Celia, and I also feel that I have found a new friend."

If you're interested in hosting a teacher at your business for the Educator Residency Program for Canajoharie, please contact Nicole Walrath at nicolew@fultonmontgomeryny.org or Natalie May at nataliem@fultonmontgomeryny.org

OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMING:

#### **HFM PTECH Glebe Street, Johnstown:**

February 14, 2024- Writing & Developing a Resume

February 14, 2024- Computer Science Pathway Panel Discussion

Time and Location TBD

#### <u>CTE - HFM BOCES Campus, 2755 State</u> <u>Highway 67, Johnstown</u>

1/17/2024- 6-7:30pm @HFM BOCES Cafeteria

HFM BOCES/CTE/Chamber initiative to connect seniors with local employers. See page 15 for details.

Any senior in Hamilton, Fulton & Montgomery counties interested in going into the Health/Medical pathway after graduation

Attention interested 8th graders—applications for PTECH for 2024 are due no later than March 29. Interested applicants can contact Nicole Walrath.



## Healthcare ROUNDTABLE

Wed., January 17, 2024 6:00 - 7:00pm

HFM Career and Technical Center 2755 State Highway 67, Johnstown (East Entrance)





HFM Career & Technical Education and the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce are pleased to host an inaugural Healthcare Roundtable for high school seniors.

Representatives from St. Mary's Healthcare and Nathan Littauer Hospital will be available to discuss the numerous employment opportunities in our region. This event is part of our Career Support Series aimed at expanding regional economic growth and workforce development.

#### Interested in attending?

This event is open to all 12th grade students from component school districts within the HFM BOCES region. Please RSVP by Jan. 10, 2024.

#### **RSVP to:**

Nicole Walrath nwalrath@hfmboces.org Or use this QR code to sign up:



In the event of a snow day, this event will be rescheduled to Thursday, Jan. 18.











## TOURS NEWS & UPDATES

### WHAT THE WALLEYE CHALLENGE MEANS TO OUR REGION Insights from a Hunting/Fishing Writer/Expert and Two Long-time Participants

Amsterdam native Jerrod Vila is a freelance writer and outdoor columnist for the *Amsterdam Recorder* and *Daily Gazette*; and advertising sales rep for New York Outdoor News. He is also an active board member of NYSOWA – New York State Outdoor Writers Association and has written about 450 published articles to date about hunting and fishing. Jerrod grew up in our region, fishing and hunting with his Dad and uncles – it is a family tradition for him. Jerrod has been involved with the Walleye Challenge since it started – 15 years ago. He hasn't missed a year. He has been ice fishing since he was a child – in fact, he still uses an ice skimmer and some tips ups that are 35 years old! He first ice fished on the Great Sacandaga Lake and considers the lake his "home base."

He remembers Lou Stutzke and Beaver Ross running the tournament themselves – back then he remembers it having the feel of a smaller, friendly tournament. It became so popular in the early years and kept growing in popularity that it became too large for Lou and Beaver to handle it themselves and enlisted the Chamber's help with registration and logistics. About this part of the tournament, Vila said, "The normal angler doesn't realize the logistics of a tournament of that magnitude, but Lou and Beaver and the Chamber and their team do a great job of hosting this huge tournament for our region."

Although Vila is primarily a fly guy who loves to fish for trout (he and his friends started the website <u>Eastbound and Trout</u>) he also considers himself a hardcore ice guy, too. "That's why I love the Walleye Challenge," said Vila. "It's one of the best ice fishing tournaments in the state and brings anglers from not only all over NY, but from other states, too. It also bring so much commerce to the area between hotels, bars, gas, and everything else. The Walleye Challenge has been the staple ice fishing tournament/ event in this area. People get really excited for it as soon as they start the registration process – people really want to fish. The prizes are phenomenal, too. It's a pleasure to promote it in my columns because it's such a great event."

Mike Knuetter is a name that Chamber staff recognize from registering him and his friends and family for The Walleye Challenge since the Chamber has been involved with the tournament. Knuetter is from Berlin, New York and has been ice fishing in the tournament since year one, when there were 1000 people who participated. His party has evolved as the tournament has evolved. He and friends and family have gone from making a day trip to the tournament to renting a house for the weekend. "By February, many people have cabin fever and look so forward to the Walleye Challenge to get up there for the weekend and have a great time." The family and friends who join Knuetter have numbered from as many as ten to five or six, the number that will be participating this year. The group brings trailers with their toys – snowmobiles and four-wheelers – which they use all weekend. They are also lucky enough that the landlord from whom they rent lets

them bring their dogs.

Knuetter has also been ice fishing since he was a child; his grandfather first took him ice fishing when he was five years old. He feels lucky to rent the same house year to year and the landlord holds the rental for him and is flexible as to when the group comes up and how long they stay. They usually come up on Friday and leave Sunday morning, but they have come as early as Thursday before the tournament. His group really makes a weekend of it. They cook in, or order out, and have gone out to eat different times. Last year, Knuetter met another visiting angler who gave him a tip about an area restaurant that the group will try this year.

One of his favorite things about the tournament is working with the Chamber to get his group registered. "I have never had anyone at the Chamber not want to help me with my requests. When I call and ask questions if they don't have the answer, they get it for me. I have worked with many staff members from the Chamber over the years and they have all been helpful. "Over the years, I have bugged them all, but they are always so nice. I really appreciate that."

He added, "Louie does a great job with the machines for the raffle and all the outdoor equipment and prizes... and he keeps it moving most of the day." He also likes the idea that the raffle tumbler is now on the deck at Lanzi's so everyone can see. "Everyone up there does a great job. It really is the best fishing tournament around," said Knuetter

In the 14 years that Knuetter has been part of the tournament, they have caught and entered two or three fish and had one of them win a cash prize. They have also won cash prizes during years that there wasn't enough ice to fish. "What we do is if anyone wins any money in our group, we split it evenly amongst us. Makes everyone feel like a part of it and makes it more fun."

Jody Speier is an angler from Pittstown, New York – about one ½ hours away from the GSL. He has a hoodie that he commemorates from his first Walleye Challenge Tournament when it was in its third year. He started his participation with one fisherman friend and it has evolved by inviting fellow fishing enthusiasts that he knows. Now young kids are involved, including his two sons, and cousins, uncles and more. This year, he is bringing 20 people with him to our region to fish in the Walleye Challenge. Most of these folks are from just outside of Troy, Wynantskill and scattered throughout the state.

This hardy group stays out on the ice and the whole experience is "a big production" with grills, food, snowmobiles, 4-wheelers, tents and more. Some of his group doesn't stay overnight – they come up for the day – but many, including he and his two sons are "diehards" staying out on the ice and having a great time doing it. One year, he says, it got so cold and windy on the ice that they slept in their snowmobile trailer. (continued on next page)

(Tourism News cont.)

Speier has had many memorable experiences at the tournament throughout the years, including when his cousin won a Brute Force 750 (ATV). As an outsider, he is relieved to know that the contests aren't rigged – he trusts that the tournament leaders know what they're doing and do it fairly. He and his group have won many prizes over the years in the prize drawings – a 10-inch Eskimo, Besclar Fish Finder, tip ups, pack basket, ski jacket. He feels that his group has been very lucky and that the number of people he brings makes it work in their favor as far as prizes are concerned. Unfortunately, they have never received a first place prize for a fish, but they have had a couple of seconds and a couple of thirds...and they have seen some really big fish caught over the years.

His group doesn't know the lake that well, but fish basically to "make it easy," fishing in front of Lanzi's and the weigh station, and positioning themselves to get to Lanzi's for prize drawings. Just about everyone in their group brings some kind of transportation for using on the lake, so when they do catch fish, it's easy to get to the weigh stations

He also remembers about two or three years ago there was a big windstorm. The day started out super warm and sunny and didn't know why they kept getting notifications on their phones about an incoming storm but then it came with a vengeance. Made it hard to see on the lake with the blowing snow and some of their gear got blown from their area but everyone and everything was okay. He reiterated the importance of paying attention to alerts and heed their warnings – to be prepared for anything.

His favorite part of the tournament is getting together with his group...and the prizes given away at the tournament. He believes that all the prizes sets the Walleye Challenge apart from others. "Get your friends and family involved," said Speier. "It's great to get kids started fishing and ice fishing at a young age." "Make it fun, but watch the weather," he added. Speier and his group also participate in Fuel-N-Food's weekend long contest in March. Vila and Knuetter agree that friends, family and camaraderie are an important part of participating in the Walleye Challenge. Vila feels like the tournament brings some great camaraderie between outdoorsmen and women despite it being a competition and actual tournament. A couple of his buddies who come for the tournament are from New Hampshire and say that this tournament "can't be matched." He also thinks that it's important that it is a catch and release tournament and that proceeds benefit walleye restocking in the lake.

Knuetter added that he has always seen a great sense of camaraderie amongst the participants. "You look around all the time when you're out there and there are no fights, no arguing and it's a mass of people. That tells you all about this tournament right there. At Lanzi's there is a crowd of well over 1,000 and everyone is getting along, having some beers and some food. Everyone gets along – everyone. People who love the outdoors tend to be really good people. I always seem to make new friends when I'm there. I really enjoy it," Knuetter said.

## GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHAMBER

#### LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Friday, January 19, Breakfast 7:30am; Panel Presentations 8am The Bridge Walk 135 Perthshire Drive, Amsterdam \$35 for Chamber members; \$50 for non-members SEE FLYER ON PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS

### BUSINESS EXPO/CHAMBER AWARDS PRESENTATION

Thursday, March 21, 4pm-7pm
HFM BOCES Conference Area
2805 State Highway 67, Johnstown
Promote your business with a booth,
come and see the Chamber business
awards presentations, enjoy refreshments—FREE event to attend (there is a
cost for booth space)

See page 7 for details



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