

Helping-Out By Asking What You Need



With so many challenges facing our members as the result of the Coronavirus, we decided to get down to specifics. Last week our staff began calling every one of our member businesses (1,018 in all) and asking two questions: How are you doing and how can we help? We hope to complete the calls by the end of this week. So far, the responses have been very positive and businesses are doing their best to adjust to a difficult situation. There are many that we have been able to help and others that we're hoping to. A side benefit is that we're also accumulating some great insight from members that will prove helpful as we develop our next Strategic Plan. If, for some reason, you haven't been contacted by a Chamber staff member by the end of the day on Friday, please contact Joe Hurd the following week at (814) 935-6264.

Chamber Website an Important Destination



One question that we hear a lot from members regarding how to effectively handle the challenges that the Coronavirus has thrown in our direction is, "What are other businesses doing?" For that reason, we added two prominent icons to the homepage on the Chamber Website to put businesses in touch with opportunities while also encouraging them to share experiences with one another. "News Alert" offers resources and updates that can help members to stay abreast of

grants, loans and anything that heads them in the right direction. "Stronger Together" was created to encourage Chamber members to share information with other members and the community about things that they're doing to assist or benefit others during this difficult time. If you'd like to post something on Stronger Together, email it to chamber@blairchamber.com. To access the Chamber Website, go to www.blairchamber.com.

Application Deadline for Leadership Youth Extended to May 1st

Ninth grade students in Blair County schools who are interested in applying for the 2021 Leadership Blair County Youth program will now have until May 1st to submit an application. Previously those applications and referral forms could be secured in the guidance offices of the local schools. Since schools are not currently open, both can be found online at www.blairchamber.com. There are also videos on the website that feature previous LBCY students talking about their experiences in the program. Leadership Blair County Youth is a program of the Blair County Chamber of Commerce.



Registration Underway for the Highmark/Chamber Golf Classic

The Highmark/Chamber Golf Classic, originally set for May 4th at Iron Masters Country Club has been postponed and rescheduled for Monday, June 8th. The event remains at Iron Masters. For more information on the Classic or to register, email shoover@blairchamber.com.

Don't Forget to Submit a Success Story!

In the midst of the virus-inspired doldrums are emerging some pretty inspiring success stories as people reach out to help one another. We'd like to make people aware of those stories and the people behind them. If you know of something great happening in the community as the result of someone's efforts, send the information to Joe Hurd at jhurd@blair-chamber.com.

Beginning with this issue we are debuting a few of the Success Stories that have recently been submitted (see below).



Update on April Events and Programs

A few of our events have been updated since last week's newsletter. The status for the remainder of our April calendar is listed below:

•Chamber Finance Committee	April 13th	TBD
•Chamber Finance Task Force	April 13th	Cancelled
•Chamber Ambassadors	April 14th	Cancelled
•Committee of Non-Profit Businesses	April 14th	Cancelled
•Chamber Board of Directors	April 16th	TBD
•YEA! Steering Committee	April 20th	Cancelled
•YEA! Graduation	April 21st	Postponed to 5/18
•Executive Roundtable	April 22nd	Postponed to 6/17
•Breakfast Club	April 23rd	Cancelled
•Non-Profit Legislative Breakfast	April 24th	Cancelled
•Presidents' Forum Steering Committee	April 27th	Cancelled
•Australia/New Zealand Informational Mtg.	April 28th	Cancelled
•BASICS/Rotary Career Fair	April 29th	Cancelled
•Transportation Committee	April 30th	Cancelled
•WE-LEaD Educational Program	April 30th	Postponed TBD



MEMBERcongrats

... to John N. McKeegan, who was unanimously selected to be the 15th President of Mount Aloysius College. His presidency will begin on June 1st.
 ... to Ron Perretta, owner of Professionals Auto Body, who was named Multi-Shop Executive of the Year at the Specialty Equipment Market Association Trade Show in Las Vegas, Nevada.
 ... to Scott Igoe, who was recently appointed as the new President of American Eagle Paper Mills in Tyrone. Scott has been employed at the Mill since 1987.

BENEFact

Chamber Membership can save you money.

For April we are highlighting the POWER Card member benefit. COVID-19 has changed the way many of us do business forcing us to find new and innovative ways to reach potential clients/customers. If your business offers goods or services that can be discounted, placing a POWER Card offer can provide the exposure you've been looking for. With nearly 40,000 cards in circulation, this member-to-member benefit opens the door to thousands of potential customers. Utilize this amazing FREE member benefit by emailing Jessie at jcovert@blair-chamber.com.

Click here for a complete list of benefits exclusive for Chamber Members.



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The Blair County Chamber of Commerce

Rotary Club Donation to Benefit Leadership Youth Program

The Rotary Club of Altoona, through its "Grapes For Good" Fund Allocation Committee, has donated \$2,500 to the Chamber's Leadership Blair County Youth program to help fund an upcoming project. The announcement was made by Traci Naugle, Esq., a member of the Rotary Club and a former Leadership Blair County Adult graduate. "We are extremely grateful to the Rotary Club of Altoona for selecting our application from more than fifty applications received," acknowledged Cindy Cessna off the Blair County Chamber Foundation. "The Club has been a consistent contributor to projects benefitting local youth."



SUCCESS STORIES!

- With so many families struggling due to widespread layoffs due to the Coronavirus, the Blair Regional YMCA teamed-up with the Hollidaysburg American Rescue Workers recently to provide fresh produce to Blair County families in need. More than 6,000 pounds of produce were given away to 258 families!
- The Bishop Guilfoyle Pre-Med Club officers Julia, Giana and Amelia created 500 snack bags with thank you messages for the staff of UPMC Altoona. The families of the officers also helped along with BG students Michael and Leah and Holy Trinity students Rocco and Gina.
- The Altoona Curve donated six propane heaters to James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center to keep hospital staff warm who are screening for Coronavirus before visitors and patients even leave their cars. "The people here at the VA are on the front lines along with healthcare providers across the country," explained Nate Bowen, the Curve's Assistant General Manager. "Anything we can do to make their lives more comfortable and a little bit easier, we're happy to do."
- PS Solutions of Altoona has kicked-off a new campaign to help members of the community as well as local restaurants. Each week, the company will be making cash donations to local restaurants as part of its new Pay IT Forward initiative. The idea is to donate money to the restaurants who in turn will use it to pay for meals of those in need in our community. Restaurants can use it for meals for healthcare workers, first responders or for food to be sent to nursing homes or given to those who have lost their jobs. If you'd like to contribute, simply ask the restaurant if they participate in the Pay IT Forward Campaign.
- ACE Fix-It Hardware has initiated a program to encourage businesses to cease operations at 4:00 p.m. each day for two minutes of prayer to ask God to watch over those who have been impacted by the virus. The program has already gained national appeal.

Chamber Endorses Reduction in Business Closings

The Blair County Chamber has joined chambers from across Pennsylvania encouraging Governor Tom Wolf to permit more businesses that have been closed due to the Coronavirus to be re-opened under certain conditions. In a letter to the Governor signed by more than forty chamber directors and initiated by the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business & Industry, the chambers requested the opportunity to assist the administration in streamlining the process of business closings. One particular area of concern involved outdoor businesses. According to the letter, "outdoor work entails much less risk of transmitting disease than indoor work. Many of our members who perform various outdoor functions believe they can adequately protect their employees in these environments by practicing distancing and avoiding having more than one person in a vehicle."

