

## Chamber Asks Governor Wolf to Open More Retail

**B**lair County Chamber President Joe Hurd has asked Governor Tom Wolf to consider opening more retail establishments in Blair County and to provide greater flexibility to those retailers who have been permitted to open. In a letter to the Governor last week, Hurd encouraged Wolf to “create a more reasonable environment” for retailers who need to aggressively rebuild their customer base. He also advocated for retail businesses that are still shuttered. “Is there any reason,” Hurd asked, “why the Logan Valley Mall has been not allowed to re-open? Other states have allowed malls to open because the capacity for social distancing exceeds that of many other businesses that are already open.” Hurd emphasized to the governor that counties like Blair, which feature a high retail economy, need additional consideration. “As retail struggles, so will Blair County’s economy,” Hurd noted. “I have little doubt that our retailers will do whatever is necessary to keep employees and customers safe.”



## Never Underestimate the Power of Flexibility

The circumstances which have turned 2020 into a year of unpredictability, continue to challenge all of us to be more flexible in how we move forward. From the Chamber’s perspective, we spent the first three months of the year scheduling programs and events and the past three cancelling or rescheduling them. In a couple cases, we rescheduled the same events three different times. We appreciate the willingness of our members to accommodate the many changes to which we have subjected them. We are also grateful to the many venues that have worked with us to keep programs and events on our schedule. It would be easy for all

of us to simply throw up our hands and declare that this period of inconvenience is no longer worth the trouble. Fortunately, we are proving to be a business community that prefers to do whatever is necessary to endure.



## Chamber to Survey Members on Current Challenges

The Blair County Chamber will periodically survey members to determine how each member is weathering the challenges associated with the Coronavirus and what assistance they may need to move forward. “The worst thing for our local businesses is to need help and not know where to find it,” explained Chamber Board Chair Darin Tornatore. “We will be reaching out routinely to get the feedback necessary to target those businesses that can use a hand.” The first survey is expected to be sent to members by the end of this week. “The surveys will be short and sweet,” Tornatore admitted. “They should take no more than five minutes to complete.”



## Committee Meetings

Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) Committee  
May 18th, 1:30 p.m. / Zoom

Public Policy Committee  
May 19th, 8:00 a.m. / Zoom

Executive Roundtable  
May 20th, 8:00 a.m. / Zoom

# Update on May Events and Programs

The status for our May Chamber Calendar is listed below:

•Young Entrepreneurs Academy Graduation	May 18th	Postponed to Aug. 4
•Public Policy Committee	May 19th	Still On (Zoom)
•Executive Roundtable	May 20th	Still On (Zoom)
•Business Before Hours	May 27th	Postponed (TBD)
•Public Speaking Workshop	May 28th	Postponed to 2021
•Business After Hours	May 28th	Postponed (TBD)

## More Signage to Make Your Life Less Complicated!

With all of the restrictions associated with some businesses re-opening, the Chamber last week sent its members a number of signs to use to remind visitors to your business of ways to comply. If you haven't received the email containing those signs, please contact Linda Stotler at [lstotler@blairchamber.com](mailto:lstotler@blairchamber.com). And as a further reminder, all of our Chamber members should have received an email with two attachments that contain very important messages. One, for those who have been permitted to remain open, says "Still Here – and Ready For the Next Challenge"; the other, for those who have been mandated to close but are now being permitted to reopen, says "We're Back – Determined to Be

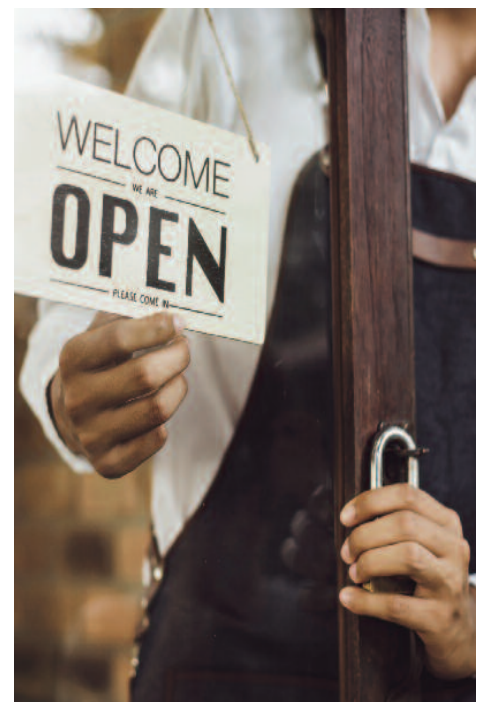
Better Than Ever." If you have not received the email containing the attached messages, contact Joe Hurd at [jhurd@blairchamber.com](mailto:jhurd@blairchamber.com). If you've already posted one of the signs at your business, take a photo and send it to Linda Stotler at [lstotler@blairchamber.com](mailto:lstotler@blairchamber.com). We'll let others share in your happiness!



## Open For Business

## Let the Chamber Know That You're "Open For Business"

As businesses begin to re-open, it's important that we are able to offer both assistance and support. So the Chamber Website now includes a special section called "Open For Business." This is a member's only section and we invite members to let us know when they've opened and any special plans they have to put a little bit of emphasis on returning to active status! Send your "Open For Business" information to Linda Stotler at [lstotler@blairchamber.com](mailto:lstotler@blairchamber.com).



# SUCCESS STORIES

- The Hollidaysburg Area Education Association, when informed that the Tiger Backpack program was struggling to keep pace with the costs associated with feeding students, made a donation of \$500/week for the final five weeks of the school year.
- In appreciation of the great job that employees of UPMC Altoona do in helping the area deal with vital health concerns, Gardners Candies donated 1000 peanut butter Easter eggs.

## BENefact

**Chamber Membership can save you money.**

For May, we are highlighting BRANDbytes. This member's only benefit allows Chamber member businesses to place a full page ad in the NETWORKS DIGITAL NEWS email newsletter the first Monday of the month of your choosing. This member benefit places your brand and message directly into nearly 4,000 inboxes! Both Preferred Placement and Standard Placement are available. Utilize this cost effective benefit by emailing Jessie at [jcovert@blairchamber.com](mailto:jcovert@blairchamber.com).

**[Click here](#) for a complete list of benefits exclusive for Chamber Members.**

**FOR BUSINESS RESOURCES**



**VISIT US  
ONLINE**

**WWW.BLAIRCHAMBER.COM**

## Congratulations...

... to Evolution Expressions and Service Paws of Central PA, who will be the recipients of the Leadership Blair County Youth Grants for 2020. The Blair County Chamber Foundation provides \$500 and the LBC Youth Class worked the tickets booths at the Home Garden and Healthy Living Showcase to earn an additional \$400. The class created the grant application. Evolution Expressions will receive the \$500 grant to help run their Arts for Healing and J.A.M. group, providing art supplies, musical instruments, and food that is needed to facilitate these groups. Service Paws of Central PA will receive the \$400 grant. These monies will be used towards purchasing a service dog to assist a 6 year old boy who has autism.

... to Leslie Estep who was named by the Tyrone School District as its permanent Superintendent of Schools. Estep, who has been serving as Interim Superintendent, is a member of the Blair County Chamber's Board of Directors, co-chairs the Chamber's BASICS Steering Committee and serves on the BASICS Subcommittee for Early Childhood Education and the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) Committee.

**LIKE US**

**Like us on Facebook at  
The Blair County  
Chamber of Commerce**