

Leadership Adult Class to Graduate Wednesday

The 26th class of the Chamber's Leadership Blair County Adult program will graduate on Wednesday at a ceremony held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park. The class consist of nineteen graduates: Taylor Canole of Kooman & Associates, Jeffrey Hackenberg of Penn State Extension, Emily Hall of First Commonwealth Bank, Brad Hatch of Altoona Area School District, Joe Elle Heinbaugh of Blair Image Elements, Robert Hess of Ward Transport and Logistics, Lori Hetrick of UPMC Home Health Care of Central PA, Jessica Hunter of Vet Advisor/Three Wire Systems, Jamie Johnson of Young, Oakes, Brown & Company, Liesl Kapfhammer of ARC Federal Credit Union, Shasta Langenbacher of Leonard S. Fiore, Inc., Jonathan Rice of American Eagle Paper Mills, Laura Runk of Reliance Bank, Mariah Turiano of Okonak Dean Lechner, PC, Derek Vaughn of Joshua House, Patrick Wills of Family Services, Inc., Abigail Wisor of NPC, Inc., Gregory Woelfl of James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center, and Jocelyn Wolf of Evolve Insurance Group.



Gift Card Sales Continue to Help local Bars, Restaurants

The Chamber's effort to help local bars and restaurants stay financially afloat during a difficult time is gaining momentum as more businesses recognize the need to assist one another by participating in the "Eat. Drink. Help." Initiative.

As an offshoot of Buy Here. Thrive Here., this program incentivizes businesses to purchase gift cards from bars and restaurants in exchange for ad space in the Chamber's weekly newsletter. The purchasing businesses must be Chamber members but the bars and

restaurants are not required to be. For more information on how to participate in Eat. Drink. Help., visit the Chamber Website at www.blairchamber.com and click on the Buy Here. Thrive Here logo.



Chamber Executive Committee Approves Four New Members

At last Thursday's meeting of the Executive Committee of the Chamber Board, the following new members were approved: CBD American Shaman of Altoona, PHN-Altoona Behavioral Health of Sharon, PA, Slingers Throw House of Altoona and Swinston Travel of Somerset.

BENefact

Chamber members will have their business listing appear in both the annual print directory and the online directory. This is a great way to reach thousands of potential customers!



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Anticipation Building for "A Day at the Park"

A battered and beaten business community needs an opportunity to step-back and enjoy a night out. Even if that night out has a little bit of business attached to it. That opportunity will take place on Friday, September 11th. From 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., the Chamber and Lakemont Park will partner on an outdoor trade show and community stress-free event, guaranteed to start everyone's weekend on a high note. It's another part of the Chamber's Buy Here. Thrive Here. initiative. There will be food trucks, music and access to local businesses selling products and providing information. For a small fee, businesses can reserve display tables or areas to set-up tents



inside and outside park pavilions. It's also an opportunity for people to stop-by on their way home from work, have dinner, and just distance themselves from pandemics and politics. No cost to attend. For more information, contact the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or visit the Chamber website at www.blairchamber.com.

"Breakfast Club at Noon" to Feature New Pirates GM

Without question, it's been a crazy year and the Chamber is about to make it crazier! Instead of the normal monthly Breakfast Club that would have been scheduled for September 10th at 7:45 a.m., the Chamber is moving-up the date (to September 9th) and moving ahead the time to a noontime start. The reason? So that we are able to have the new General Manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates as our keynote speaker. Ben Cherington, who was most recently the Executive Vice-President of the Boston Red Sox, is now in the position of overseeing the growth of the Bucs. He'll be making his first trip to Altoona and is looking forward to meeting our local community and gaining insight from our



Ben Cherington

many Pirates fans. The cost to attend this unusual Breakfast Club, which will feature grilled chicken salads instead of bacon and eggs, is \$20 for all attendees. Social distancing will be in effect. To register, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or [register online](#).

Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) Recruiting for Next Class



As students return to school in Blair County, recruitment is ramping-up for the 2021 Class of the Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!). The program begins

in October and runs for 25 weeks. If you know of a student in any Blair County school between grades 6-12 who could benefit from building an actual business, contact Joe Hurd at (814) 943-8151 or email him at jhurd@blairchamber.com.

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Young Professionals to Host CEO Panel Discussion

Why should young professionals in Blair County commit to living and working in the



county for the long haul? That will be the basis of a panel discussion hosted by the Young Professionals of Blair County on September 10th beginning at 5:30 a.m. at the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona. The panel discussion is expected to last 45-60 minutes and will be followed by a networking reception featuring light hors d'oeuvres. The panel consists of Ann Benzel of Benzel's Bretzel Bakery, Andrea Cohen of Blair Companies, Jim Kilmartin of Pinnacle Cleaning and Center City Church, and Matt Stuckey of Stuckey Automotive. Moderating the panel discussion will be Steve McKnight, President/CEO of Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation. The cost to attend the panel discussion is \$15/person. To register, contact the Chamber at 943-8151 or [register online](#). Corporate sponsor of the event is CNB Bank.



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WE-LEaD to Hold Empowerment Conference for Women



Dr. Sherry Cain

The Blair County Chamber's WE-LEaD program is holding a half-day Empowerment Conference for Women that will deal with two separate topics featuring one dynamic presenter.

The event will take place on September 15th from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park. Dr. Sherry Cain, Ph.D. will present Session One, entitled "From Burnt

Out to On Fire" which will help women to take charge and make the changes that can immediately have positive effects. Dr. Cain will then present, "Don't Feed the Fears" which focuses attention on the essential elements of living a fearless life. The overall event sponsor for the conference is Benzel's Bretzel Bakery. Session sponsors are Seltzer Financial Strategies and Blair Companies. Cost to attend the conference is \$55 for Chamber members and \$65 for non-members. A breakfast buffet is included. To register, [click here](#).

Non-Profit Best Practices Forum Set for September 18th

Among the groups hit hardest by Covid-19 is Blair County's non-profit community. Many non-profits were unable to continue operating and the resources to fund them practically dried-up. To discuss ways that these essential businesses can get back on their feet, the Chamber's Committee of Non-Profits is holding a Best Practices Forum on September 18th from 8:15 to 9:45 a.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. Chamber President Joe Hurd will facilitate the discussion. There is no



cost to attend but registration is required since no more than twenty-five can attend. To register, contact the Chamber at 943-8151 or [register online](#).

New Member...



The Blair County Chamber welcomed its newest member at the 554th Breakfast Club on August 13. Pictured from left: Sherri Stayer, Blair County Chamber Board of Directors, Angie Yasulitis and Bryce Walter, **The YaZo Group**.

Committee Meetings

Workplace Wellness
September 1, 1:30 p.m.
Devorris Center

Young Professionals of Blair County
September 2, 8:00 a.m.
Devorris Center

Public Policy Committee
September 3, 8:00 a.m.
Devorris Center

BASICS Early Childhood Subcommittee
September 3, 10:00 a.m.
Devorris Center



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Highmark/Chamber Golf Classic Winners Announced

The Chamber's well-deserved reputation for bad weather at the Highmark/Chamber Golf Classic is officially put to rest. This year's event was held on a beautiful summer day (August 20th) at Iron Masters Country Club. A full slate of 144 golfers participated. The top teams in each category were: "A" Division – Wes King, Chris Koren, Kevin Kime and Dylan Link; "B" Division – Pat Orr, Jeffrey Coltabaugh, Dave Biseli and Bruce Baldwin.



"Chamber Chat" Will Help Employers Deal With Wellness Issues

Among the many challenges created for businesses by Covid-19 are those which threaten employee health. To bring specific health issues to the forefront, the Chamber's Workplace Wellness Committee will debut a new initiative called "Chamber Chat," which will provide periodic Zoom programs with expert presenters and the opportunity for attendees to ask questions and



share best practices. The first of seven "Chats" will take place on September 25th from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. "We've limited them to a half-hour so that employers and employees can gain some good insight without tying-up a significant amount of work time," explained Phyllis Baker of Blair Regional YMCA, who co-chairs the committee with Courtney Seidel of Stiffler McGraw. "There is no cost to participate."

Among the six topics will be: Mental Wellness, Exercise, Employee Assistance, Nutrition, Insurance and Attitude. The dates of the Chamber Chats are: September 25th, October 9th and 23rd, November 6th and 20th and December 4th and 18th. To register to attend, [click here](#).

Informational Webinar Set For "Bourbon, Bridles & Bluegrass" Trip

As the Chamber optimistically prepares its travel program for 2021, it will begin the year with an exciting trip to several destinations within the United States. On April 23-30, the trip will be "Bourbon, Bridles and Bluegrass," which begins with a flight to Louisville, Kentucky; includes visits to Lexington; Asheville, North Carolina and Chattanooga, Tennessee; and finishes-up in Nashville prior to flying home. That trip will be done with a partnership between the Chamber, Ketrow KURTZ



Travel and Globus. There will be an informational webinar on September 17th from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. To register for the webinar, [click here](#).



Digital Marketing Virtual Seminars to Begin September 17th

Digital marketing has become a necessity for businesses – large and small – that want to gain a step-up on the competition. Unfortunately, few businesses really do it well or at least to the extent where it impacts the bottom line. For that reason, the Blair County Chamber created a Digital Marketing Roundtable comprised of providers who understand the concept and are willing to share that knowledge to positively impact the business community. Beginning in September, the Roundtable will offer twice-monthly sessions of approximately one-hour each dealing with a particular topic under the Digital Marketing umbrella. The format will be primarily Q&A, will be on Zoom, and will feature providers well-versed on the subject. The first session will be on September 17th at 10:00 a.m. and will focus on "Boosting Website Conversions." There is no cost to Chamber members to participate and non-members can take part for \$15/session. To register and access the Zoom link, [click here](#).



"I just felt compelled to say Thank You for the Chamber team for being Optimistic in these crazy times! We certainly need all the optimism we can get these days!!"

-John Berry, Berry Solutions Group