

Rosser's journey continues to inspire

Judy Rosser has been an effective force in the county's drug and alcohol system since 1986. She is also a person in long-term recovery who has found her passion in helping others get on the right path. Judy has served as Executive Director of Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnership for the past eleven years. She and her husband Lynn have two adult children and two grandchildren.

The Chamber: How would you describe the Blair County Drug & Alcohol Program to someone unfamiliar with it?
Judy: Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnership is the hub in our community that supports the drug and alcohol system of services in Blair County. We are responsible for assessing the needs of our community; expand the capacity to provide a continuum of services through local, state and federal partnerships; planning and implementation of programs that facilitate services for prevention, early identifica-

Chamber Q&A

tion, engagement and referral and recovery supports to include case management and treatment.

The Chamber: What are the greatest misconceptions with what the program does?

Judy: Our office is able to help anyone regardless of their social or economic status, whether uninsured or insured, employed or unemployed. We are the central point of contact for Blair County for anyone seeking help. We are available to help navigate individuals with substance use disorder and their families to care that is right for them. Our services are free. We are available 24/7. In addition, some community perception is that individuals don't recover. This is incorrect. WE DO RECOVER!

The Chamber: How has the program changed



Judy Rosser

most dramatically since you first started there?

Judy: The Single County Authority was held at the county from 1972 to 2010. At that time the SCA contracted all of its service out to private providers. In 2010, the commissioner agreed to allow the SCA to go independent into a 501c3 non-profit. BDAP employed eight employees. We currently have 43 employees; we have centralized the point of contact for people to receive help. Families and individuals don't have to struggle to

find the right door to enter. We centralized prevention services, case management and expanded to intensive case management and certified recovery specialist services (people with lived experience). BDAP increased the amount of funding coming into the county by over 200%. We started in 2010 with a little over 1.8 million dollars annually. We currently are over 4 million in grants and funding to support this work in Blair County.

The Chamber: What impact has Covid-19 had on your program's ability to help people with substance abuse issues?

Judy: When the COVID 19 shut down happened in March 2020, we immediately went to telehealth services for the next 12 weeks till the county went green. It was clear the isolation and shut down of the recovery supports to include the fellowship meetings was having a direct negative impact on those seeking help but also those in early recovery.

The Chamber: Who are

your personal and professional role models and what makes them special?

Judy: Personally, I was fortunate in early recovery to be surrounded with persons who shared their experience and journey of recovery. I especially am thankful for other women who provided me with the guidance in those early years. I engaged in a church community/fellowship that accepted me but also helped me grow in a relationship with my savior, Jesus. I recognize His hand in my journey.

The Chamber: What's on Judy Rosser's "bucket list"?

Judy: Professionally, I hope to leave Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships well-resourced to continue the work we are doing in Blair County prior to my retirement. Personally, one of my passions is traveling and hiking though hiking is not necessarily my husband's passion. So we compromise. We do different trips, some incorporate my passion and other's his.

Young Professionals
—of Blair County

YP event moves south

The Young Professionals of Blair County, a program of the Blair County Chamber, will have its next networking event this Thursday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Spring Dam Brewing Company, 269 E. Main Street in Roaring Spring.

"This is our first networking event in Southern Blair County," acknowledged YP Committee Chair Jared Keller. "We're looking forward to having young professionals (21-39) from throughout the county getting an opportunity to interact and make connections in a relaxed environment."

Attendees can enjoy a variety of appetizers and craft beers. Cost to attend is just \$15. Corporate sponsor of the event is McQuaide Blasko, Inc.

To register, go to www.blairchamber.com.

EMS fills gap as industry leader



Ashley Rogal, Chief Rewinder at EMS rewinds a motor stator. The rewinding process takes more than three days.

The ongoing Chamber effort to encourage businesses and consumers to buy locally (Buy Here. Live Here.) has raised awareness of the impact that local buying has on our economy. But the reality is that the economy also gets a boost from those businesses that have only a small customer base here but who hire local employees and buy products and services locally.

One of those is Electric Motor & Supply, located at 1000 50th Street in Altoona.

"People may be surprised to know that 80% of our business comes from outside a 100 mile radius of Altoona including neighboring states and even overseas," acknowledges Patrick Illig, president and general manager at EMS. Illig and his wife Sandy bought the company in 2004 and it currently has 22 employees.

EMS has been providing quality reconditioning and repair of electric motors as large as 10,000HP, transformers, gearboxes, pumps, fans and related apparatus to heavy industry, around the clock, since 1956. The company also provides new motors, engineering services, predictive and preventive maintenance and process control systems, as well as on-site services.

Not surprisingly, while some employers are looking for warm bodies to allow them to continue operations, EMS has a rigid set of standards that requires extensive training.

"The tasks performed by our technicians are highly skilled," Illig pointed out. "Motor dis-assembly, cleaning, testing, rewinding and repair can be quite complicated, especially given the wide variety of electrical and mechanical machines we are capable of doing. Unfortunately, there are no training programs for the skills required. We

must do all our training in-house. It takes years for a proper candidate to be fully trained."

As Illig looks to the future, he's confident that what EMS has evolved into will continue to move the company forward.

"We will always continue with the current business model," he disclosed. "It's the legacy part of our company. We have an ongoing R&D project to electrify larger road vehicles such as city buses and delivery trucks, which we feel would revolutionize urban and suburban vehicle markets.

"We even plan to expand into electric-powered vehicles that could drive cross-country, essentially have no distance limit. These are proprietary designs, different from anything currently available. We're excited to pursue the potential of so many creative things."

(EMS has been a Blair County Chamber member since 2004.)

Chamber program to feature PA Secretary of Agriculture

When does a Chamber Breakfast Club become a Chamber luncheon? When an important dignitary agrees to speak to the local business community on a topic of considerable interest.

That dignitary is Russell Redding, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture, who will keynote the Chamber event this Thursday, October 14th, beginning at noon at The Casino at Lakemont Park.

"The Secretary is speaking at a breakfast that

morning being hosted by State Representative Jim Gregory," explained Chamber President Joe Hurd. "Jim contacted me and offered to reach out to the Secretary to see if he would stay in the area and share his thoughts on the challenges that agriculture is facing and how it could impact Blair County."

The cost to attend the Chamber luncheon is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. Corporate sponsor of the luncheon is DelGrosso



Russell Redding

Family of Companies. To register, call the Chamber at (814) or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

Young Entrepreneurs Academy welcomes second-largest class



The 2022 Class of the Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy program is hard at work during its opening session on October 5th.

The Blair County Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) program continues to attract students from throughout the area who have an interest in building their own businesses.

The 2022 YEA! class had the first of its 26 weekly

sessions last Tuesday at the Sheetz Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence in Altoona. The class consists of twenty students, the second-largest class in the six years of the YEA! program.

"It's an energetic group with some very creative business ideas," reported

YEA! Program Manager Tim Gildea. "We're looking forward to a great year."

Instructors for 2022 will be Jamie Stumph, Paul Cooney and Matt Stuckey. For more information on YEA! call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or visit the website at www.yeausa.org.

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