

Business Hall of Fame honorees selected

The selections have been made for the 2022 Business Hall of Fame and Awards of Distinction. The panel of judges, all from outside Blair County, met April 21st and finalized the list of honorees. According to Lisa Michelone, the long-time chair of the Chamber's Business Hall of Fame Committee, they had their hands full.

"We had an incredible number of businesses for (the judges) to choose from," she pointed out. "A couple categories were heavily-represented with nominees. And, as always, there were so many deserving businesses that it was difficult to choose just one."

This year's judges consisted of Dr. Randy Frye from Saint Francis University, Gary Heinrich, a consulting firm owner from the Lancaster area, and retired educator Jim Marchesani from Centre County. Frye, who lives and works in Cambria County, has been a Business Hall of Fame judge for the past 25-years.

"I particularly liked the composition of this year's panel," he acknowledged.



Ginny and Jeff Arthur, owners of Blair Mill Outlet in Hollidaysburg will receive the Excellence in Small Business Award at the upcoming Business Hall of Fame event.

"My longtime involvement with the event has allowed me to witness and experience how fair, rational, collegial and interactive the process has been and continues to be. This is the first year that most categories will only honor one winner. That altered the dynamic a little bit."

The only category in which it was possible to choose two honorees was

the Hall of Fame itself.

After much discussion, Altoona Beauty School and Boyer Refrigeration of Bellwood were selected.

The honoree in "Excellence in Small Business" is Blair Mill Outlet in Hollidaysburg. Alto Markets of Altoona will be honored in the "Young Emerging Business" category and Sweat For Vets will take home "Non-profit of the Year."

There were also two award categories in which the judges determined that there were deserving recipients. Mill Hill Farm of Williamsburg will be honored for Sustainability; Leonard S. Fiore, Inc. for Safety.

The Business Hall of Fame Luncheon will take place on June 16th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at The Casino at Lakemont

HALL OF FAME

Altoona Beauty School
Boyer Refrigeration

AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

Non-Profit of the Year
Sweat For Vets

Young Emerging Business
Alto Markets

Safety
Leonard S. Fiore Incorporated

Sustainability
Mill Hill Farm

Excellence in Small Business
Blair Mill Outlet

Park. It is the first time that the event will not be held as a dinner. Frye is hoping for a strong turnout.

"Whether as a luncheon or a dinner, the Business Hall of Fame event is an opportunity to celebrate business excellence and attest to the vibrancy of the Free Enterprise System in the region," he noted. "It's an opportunity for local businesses to come and see

how their neighbors and friends have contributed to the economic success of Blair County. Clap for their success today and strive for the podium tomorrow."

(To register to attend, contact the Chamber at 814-943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com. Sponsorships are also available by calling Jessie Covert.)

Young Entrepreneurs Academy graduates 18

The 2022 Class of the Blair County Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) graduated last Tuesday at a luncheon event held at the U.S. Hotel in Hollidaysburg. The Class is the sixth to participate in the YEA! program. Eighteen students representing eleven businesses were part of the class.

"This was an outstanding class," acknowledged Jamie Stumph of Advantage Resource Group, who was one of the three YEA! instructors. "From day one, their involvement in the class was exceptional. They got involved and stayed involved. That made a difference in how smoothly everything moved."

Matt Stuckey of Stuckey Automotive, another of the instructors, agreed.

"This was a class of young people who took their responsibilities seriously," he pointed out. "The more they learned about what building a business was all about, the more engaged they became. And their businesses reflected that engagement."

Tim Gildea, a retired educator, was in his first year as Program Manager for YEA!

"It was a learning experience for me as well as the students but one made much easier by the incredible co-operation that I got from the



The 2022 Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) Class graduated last Tuesday and are looking for ways to take their businesses to the next level.

business community," he disclosed. "Whether it was asking someone to speak to the class on a particular business topic or recruiting mentors to help move the projects forward, the response was amazing. I don't know that anyone turned me down."

Members of the 2022 YEA! Class were: Austin Beauchamp, Leah Homan, Brennen Myrick and Adam Youssef – all from Bishop Guilfoyle – Spencer Dunkelbarger of Bellwood-Antis, Rebecca Louis of Tyrone and Brian Black,

Ashlyn Brown, George Cummings, Shushant Dahal, Shane Dodson, Zachary Dunlap, Christopher Miknis, Matt Smith, Ethan Stevenson, Kaden Wagner, Alan Wedel and Marisa White – all of Hollidaysburg.

The YEA! program will now accept applications for the 2023 class.

"This year's class will be a tough one to follow," according to Carol Gensimore of Value Drug Company, who chairs the Chamber's YEA! Subcommittee of BASICS. "Each year, the level of interest in the program seems to

increase. During the next few months we'll be talking to local schools about more effective ways to reach interested students. We'll also be fine tuning our processes at the committee level so that we can maintain as well as improve on what YEA! is all about."

For more information on the YEA! program, contact Joe Hurd at the Blair County Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or email him at jhurd@blairchamber.com. Information on the national YEA! program is available at www.yeausa.org.

Career Fair a factor in future employment



Tim O'Brien, Senior Area Director at Young Life, is also an accomplished photographer as he demonstrated at the BASICS/Rotary Career Fair.

If Blair County employers didn't understand the sense of urgency surrounding the local job market prior to Covid-19, they certainly understand it now. Which makes last Wednesday's BASICS/Rotary Career Fair another incredibly important event in helping young people to learn not only about career specifics but about which of the careers are most available in the region.

More than a thousand high school sophomores participated in the Career Fair, held from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Blair County Convention Center. The schools that took part were: Altoona Area, Bellwood-Antis, Bishop Guilfoyle, Central, Claysburg-Kimmel, Glendale, Hollidaysburg Area, Northern Bedford, Tyrone Area and Williamsburg.

Amy Mearkle of Del-Grosso Amusement Park, a member of the Blair County Chamber's Board of Directors, was the keynote for the introductory phase of the event.

"Amy did an outstanding job in helping to acclimate the students to the importance of learning as much as they could about various careers," acknowledged Steve Dalecki of ARC Federal Credit Union who co-chairs the Career Fair Subcommittee and also represents the Altoona Sunrise Rotary Club. The Sunrise Club, the Rotary Club of Altoona, the Hollidaysburg Rotary Club, the Morrisons Cove Rotary, the Claysburg Rotary and the Tyrone Rotary all partner on the annual Career Fair.

"The Rotary Clubs, once again, did an exceptional job in recruiting the presenters of the seventy career categories that the students had access to," Dalecki noted.

Sponsors of the 2022 Career Fair were: ARC Federal Credit Union, DelGrosso Family of Businesses, First Commonwealth Bank, Mount Aloysius College, Sheetz Inc. and South Halls School of Business & Technology.

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