

Kreiser motivated to put community needs first

Andy Kreiser has been General Manager of Lightner Communications since January and he's looking forward to becoming an integral part of his new community. The Myerstown, PA native has been in radio since 2000 and most recently was GM at Forever Media in State College. The Kreiser family consists of Andy, his wife Rachel, his 11-year-old step-daughter Olivia and his two-year-old daughter Harper Rose.

The Chamber: What is it about Lightner Communications that attracted you to your current position?

Andy: Matt Lightner is an independent owner/operator and our 9-station footprint now encompasses Altoona/Johnstown/Kittanning and State College. It is a tremendous opportunity to be in at the ground floor and be a part of a burgeoning company that truly believes in putting the community first.

The Chamber: What would people in Blair County be surprised to know about Lightner

Chamber Q&A

Communications?

Andy: Matt Lightner has been in and around radio stations since he was a teenager. He has a true passion for the business and a genuine desire to connect with people. He understands that radio is an integral part of a lot of people's daily lives and he wants to do his small part to enhance their day.

The Chamber: What would they be surprised to know about Andy Kreiser?

Andy: I am fiercely loyal and competitive. Sports are still my main passion. I am a lifelong Pittsburgh Steelers fan and look forward to hosting a weekly Steelers call in show this fall.

The Chamber: You've been involved in a number of different radio markets. What differentiates the Blair County market from others that you've worked in?

Andy: Harrisburg was a

much faster pace than State College. It was a "big" small city. State College was a slower paced market. In comparison, my early interactions in the Blair County community remind me of growing up in Lebanon County. We had a "hard working", blue collar vibe and I see that same culture here.

The Chamber: What would you consider to be the most significant challenges that radio in general faces?

Andy: Radio needs to remain live and local to stay viable over the next 10-20 years. Our goal at Lightner Communications is to try and bring as much local content to our listeners every day.

The Chamber: Who are your personal and professional role models and what makes them special?

Andy: My mom is my personal role model. She passed away from Lung Cancer 7 years ago. She was a fighter. Life dealt her a lot of tough cards from growing up in an orphanage to being a single mom with 3 kids but she always made



Andy Kreiser, the new general manager of Lightner Communications, plans to host a weekly Steelers call-in show in the fall.

sure that we had just enough of everything we needed. Hard times growing up galvanized our family. My mom never made excuses and held us to the same standard. My professional role model is Tim Tebow. He conducts him-

self with dignity, class and grace in every facet of his life.

The Chamber: What's still on Andy Kreiser's "bucket list?"

Andy: I used to have grandiose dreams on my bucket list like pitching for

the Baltimore Orioles or running a multi-million dollar company but having my first child at age 55 has changed my perspective. Now my bucket list consists of being a great dad and husband each and every day.

Chamber Public Policy event last stop for County Commissioner candidates

While all local elections rate a high priority with the business community, the upcoming primary on May 16th that will determine the ballot for November seems especially important as it pertains to the office of Blair County Commissioner.

"So much of what the commissioners have responsibilities for, directly impacts how effectively our businesses function," explained Lisa Hann of Family Services Incorporated, who chairs the Blair County Chamber's Public Policy Committee. "We've traditionally had a great relationship with the county. We want that relationship to continue."

To gain a sense of how the current slate of County Commissioner candidates feels about issues of importance to business, the Chamber is hosting a Candidate Forum tomorrow night (May 2nd) from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Penn State Altoona Devorris Downtown Center. All six candidates – Scott Barger, Laura Burke, Dave Kessling, Manny Nichols, Carol Taylor and Amy Webster – have committed to attend.

"We're pleased that those who attend the event will



Lisa Hann (left), chair of the Chamber's Public Policy Committee discusses the upcoming Candidate Forum with Debbie Flaig of Penn State Altoona.

have an opportunity to hear what each of the candidates feel about some critical challenges that the county faces now and in the future," Hann pointed out. The Q&A format will feature questions compiled by the Public Policy Committee. The candidates were not provided those questions in advance and there will not be an opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions.

"We've gone to considerable lengths to assure that confidentiality is maintained," Hann acknowledged. "The candidates deserve that consideration. So do the sponsors."

Unlike some candidate events where individual businesses step-up as sponsors, this Forum will have only two sponsors – Blair County Democratic Party and Blair County Republican Party. There will also

be two moderators. Democrat Donna Gority and Republican Steve Howsare, both former county commissioners and current members of the Public Policy Committee, will alternate asking the questions.

"Donna and Steve agreed to work together," said Hann. "Neither of them has any conflict-with or commitment-to any of the candidates."

The doors of the Devorris Downtown Center will be open at 5:30 p.m. The event will be videotaped by Altoona Public Access Television and will be shown at a later time. The video will also be uploaded to the Chamber's YouTube channel. Lightner Communications will also broadcast the Forum on one of its stations on tape delay.

There is no charge for people to attend the Candidate Forum and registration is not necessary.

Next "Breakfast Club" features keynote from retiring superintendent

The next Chamber "Breakfast Club" will focus attention on the important relationship between the business and education communities in Blair County. The event is set for next Thursday, May 11th beginning at 7:45 a.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park.

Keynote speaker will be Dr. Charles Prijatelj, Superintendent of Altoona Area School District, who is retiring from his position at the end of the current school year.

The cost to attend Breakfast Club is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. To register,



Dr. Charles Prijatelj

call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com. Corporate sponsor of the May Breakfast Club is Pennsylvania Highlands Community College.

Coming-Up at the Blair County Chamber

- The WE-LEAD Committee's "Teeling It Up" will be held May 8th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Blair County Golf & Driving Range in Hollidaysburg. John Madey and his staff will provide instruction to women interested in becoming better golfers. The cost to attend is \$30 for Chamber members, \$40 for non-members.
- The Chamber and Epic Journeys will be offering a trip to Peru from April 27 – May 6, 2024. The trip includes Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca. An informational meeting will be held on May 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. Register by calling (814) 943-8151.



- The Safety Committee of the Chamber is hosting an educational program followed by some relevant trivia. The event is set for May 4th from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. at U.S. Hotel in Hollidaysburg. The cost to attend is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. Food provided and a cash bar. To register, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

To register for Chamber events call 814-943-8151, online at blairchamber.com.

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