

A partnership with the Altoona Mirror and the Blair County Chamber of Commerce

Wells Fargo Advisors embrace local community



Albert Masood (left), CFP, Senior Vice President and Branch Manager, discusses client updates with Senior Client Associate Kelly Park.

Wells Fargo was established in 1852 by Henry Wells and William Fargo. The purpose of the company was to provide express and banking services to the West coast. The stagecoach became the symbol of the company because Wells Fargo ran the western portion of the pony express. They delivered gold and supplies back and forth between San Francisco and Philadelphia. The local office is a Wells Fargo Advisors office located in Hollidaysburg, offering investment and financial planning services to individuals, non-profits and businesses. We manage \$250 million in assets for clients here and across the country. No client can outgrow Wells Fargo Advisors. We have lending and investment solutions for those just starting out to the largest corporations in the

MEMBER Highlight

world.

The local office began with the predecessor firm Wheat First Butcher Singer in 1995. Through several mergers and acquisitions, the firm is now Wells Fargo Advisors. The local office consists of 2 Financial Advisors (Albert Masood, CFP® Branch Manager and Bryin Sills), 1 Financial Consultant (Amy Boggs) and 2 Senior Client Associates (Kelly Park and Michael Lykens). Our combined experience is close to 100 years.

Everyone who works in the Wells Fargo Advisors office has similar reasons why we love Blair County. First and foremost are the

people who live here. They are friendly and have a strong core value of trust and respect. The Blair County Business community is also very welcoming, with business owners promoting other local businesses. In addition to those items, we're fortunate to have excellent educational and medical facilities, and many beautiful outdoor areas to enjoy.

Our firm joined the Chamber for all the benefits offered by the organization. There are networking and promotional opportunities, access to educational and cost savings resources, and most importantly, the ability to learn more about the community that we live and work in. We've had great experiences with our association of the Blair County Chamber of Commerce over these many years.

Local student competes at National YEA! Competition



William Zhu presents his Titratesh business to the national YEA! judges at the national convention in Rochester, NY.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy is a national program for high school students interested in learning how to become an entrepreneur and actually start their own real business. The local 2023/24 class recently graduated, but one went on to compete at the national YEA! competition in Rochester, NY. William Zhu is a student at Hollidaysburg. He was one of 30 across the country to make it to the national competition with his proposed Titratesh business. William developed a chemistry instrument for virtual chemistry classes. He was inspired during COVID when teachers and

professors were challenged with leading chemistry labs online. He designed a butte model that directly displays everything a student does onto a computer screen to provide a hands-on immersive experience of an actual lab.

The Blair County Chamber participates in the national YEA! program to help our young people connect with mentors in the business community and to offer them the opportunity to learn everything they need to know to be an entrepreneur!

Congratulations to William Zhu for making it the national level!

Making a regional impact

Our economy is regional. We are not in it alone. That is why Blair and Centre County Chambers are working together, sharing information, and contributing to their respective economic development plans.

"Our counties share a labor force, creating a regional neighborhood with people living and working between counties," said Stephen McKnight, President of the Blair Alliance for Business and Economic Growth.

The Blair Chamber recently convened its Executive Roundtable where Greg Scott, President of the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County (CBICC) discussed Centre County's market trends and their economic development planning efforts; efforts that link with Blair and surrounding counties.

"Our plan will need to consider assets and opportunities that extend beyond State College and Penn State University. That is why we have included Stephen McKnight and several CBICC members from Blair County to join our Economic Development Council," said Scott.

"We welcome this ongoing exchange to identify where we can specifically work together and develop shared programs that benefit our members and the community overall," Scott added.

Since the completion of Interstate 99 in 2006, Bedford, Blair and Centre



Greg Scott, President of (CBICC) discussed economic development trends with the Blair Chamber Executive Roundtable.

County have been growing closer economically. While Centre County uniquely benefits from the influence of Penn State University, other sectors such as health care, manufacturing and tourism are creating new, broader labor force connections and housing market demands beyond higher education.

"The time is right for these regional discussions to take place, as the Commonwealth launches its new economic plan, its first one since 2003," Scott said.

Last fall PA Secretary of Community and Economic Development Rick Siger, spoke to the Economic Development Council and other regional stakeholders about the Commonwealth's plan.

"I encourage all of our economic development leaders across the state to think and plan regionally," Siger noted.

"Those that do will be in

a more competitive position to align for new state program qualifications and investment trends," Siger added.

That state plan emphasizes new site development, main street programs, outdoor recreation, and regulatory reform as key pillars of the plan. It is now moving through the legislative process.

The Blair Chamber is committed to identifying and leveraging regional market opportunities for our members. The Chamber's Executive Roundtable includes senior business leaders across many industry sectors. Member forums like the Executive Roundtable are in the front lines of public policy and private sector industry issues at local, state, and federal levels. To engage, join the Blair County Chamber by visiting www.blairchamber.com and click on Join Now.

Shaping her Narrative, a Professional Workshop

The Chamber's WE-LEAD committee is a group of women dedicated to encouraging leadership, education and development. To help women with some of the tools needed in the business world the committee is hosting, Shaping her Narrative, a Professional Bio Workshop & Headshot Session.

The workshop will take place on Tuesday, July 16th 8am-9:30am at Forno Alto in Altoona. Paula Lamb, owner of LAMB Solutions Advertising Agency, is going to help you get started on writing your own bio.

Come ready to smile! Barbara Fiore is going to provide you with a digital headshot.

The cost is \$25 for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. There will be Coffee and Breakfast Bar set up featuring breakfast sandwiches. You do not need to be a member of the WE-LEAD committee to participate in the workshop. Space is limited to the first 30 people. You can register at blairchamber.com or by calling Megan Rossman at (814) 943-8151.

A big reason to celebrate



After years of planning, The 814 Distillery is Blair County's first legal distillery. Known for its locally sourced, hand-crafted spirits, the distillery is located at the Oak Spring Winery at 2401 E. Pleasant Valley Boulevard, Altoona. Using only locally sourced grains the distillery produces rye whiskey in addition to flavored and unflavored vodka and rums.

For more information go to www.the814distillery.com.

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