

# Blair Business Mirror



August 2019

## Celebrating a milestone

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*A Cooperative Effort of the Blair County Chamber and the Altoona Mirror Advertising Department*

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## Chamber Notes

### Employee health merits more attention

There's a point of emphasis that's becoming standard in American business. It goes like this: Within reason you can do anything. You just can't do everything.

As any employer will readily admit, there's only so much room available on the corporate plate. So much room for programs to effectively impact the bottom line. So much room for mandates that

deal with regulatory compliance issues. So much room for creative initiatives addressing customer expectations.

So how do you prioritize with so many issues demanding your attention? It can primarily focus on workplace recruitment. For sure, finding good employees is essential for

long-term business success. It's also a monumental headache. Yet it's the employers who recognize that talent recruitment is no more important than meeting the ongoing needs of your current employees who are weathering each workforce challenge with justifiable optimism.

Workplace wellness is almost always the linchpin of those businesses. In Blair County, only a small percentage of businesses have workplace wellness programs that amount to much more than a token effort at reducing liability insurance rates. It's not that businesses lack regard for the health of their employees. It's mostly a matter of time and priority. A local business leader, who preferred not to be identified, put the situation in a nutshell when he was asked why employee wellness rated so low on a recent survey.

"We'll get to (a wellness program) at some point," he acknowledged. "Probably. It's in our Strategic Plan. Fact is, it was in our last strategic plan too. Until we commit to get something done in that regard, it's just something else that we didn't have time for. Sad to say, because I really think it would be well-received."

He's not alone. Since the Chamber

started a Workplace Wellness Committee six years ago, the only tangible example of businesses stepping-up has been the Corporate Wellness Challenge that began as a competition in northern Blair County and spread gradually to the south. That event continues although not with the same momentum or level of participation.

The Workplace Wellness Committee and the Healthy Blair County Coalition have partnered on a number of educational programs aimed at inspiring more businesses to pull the trigger on some type of formalized program to look at employee health needs. For the most part, those programs have attracted more curiosity-seekers and health services providers than anyone else.

What's a viable next step?

The next "Wake Up to Wellness" program is set for September 10th at the Jaffa Shrine Center. Through the fine art of thievery, the committee has managed to find a chamber of commerce in Connecticut that developed a toolkit for its members to use to construct their own wellness programs. That toolkit is being modified, with the permission of the Connecticut chamber, to look like we did it from scratch. Please don't tell anyone, especially our solicitor.

How much difference an actual document will have on getting business leaders to see the importance of prioritizing health in their workplace depends, I guess, on whether or not they read it. The data shows us that more and more businesses are at least willing to initiate pilot programs on wellness rather than eating the whole elephant all at once. Those pilot programs also have a tendency to gain more employee support. They are more manageable and less intimidating.

As an organization that also maintains an up-to-date Strategic Plan, the Chamber understands how circumstances can cause certain goals and objectives to tumble to the bottom of the list. It can happen in an instant.

It should never happen where the health of employees is concerned.



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PC Works Plus is also a proud supporter of area youth sports and community events. Working together to promote a safe and healthy environment for our community.

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## New Members



*The Blair County Chamber of Commerce welcomed its newest members at the 544th Breakfast Club in June. Pictured, from left: Darin Tornatore, Board Chair, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Julie Hanlon and Katlin Webb, EDWARD JONES INVESTMENTS-KATLIN WEBB; Becky Romano, PERFECT SMILE DENTAL.*

[www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com)



## Have an opinion?

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## Quaint Corner, Saint Francis collaborate to help kids learn

If young people are to gain a better understanding of STEM careers, it's incumbent upon businesses and educators to provide a heavy measure of the inspiration. A local non-profit business and a local university are doing just that.

Quaint Corner Children's Museum & Discovery Center and Saint Francis University have teamed-up to offer opportunities to children of all ages to learn chemistry through a variety of different educational sessions.

"We want kids to get excited about chemistry," acknowledged Dr. Rose Clark, Professor of Chemistry at Saint Francis. "We do outreach all the time through our ROCK program (Rural Outreach Chemistry for Kids) and the enthusiasm is always high."

Coreena Detrich, Museum Director at Quaint Corner, has seen that enthusiasm firsthand.

"Children really enjoy participating in chemical reactions," she disclosed. "Everyone may give it a try; some just need

some assistance from a parent or guardian."

This summer's most recent programs at the Museum were, "Exploring Molecules in the Gas Phase" and "Silly Putty and Slime."

"It's really amazing how focused young people become when they undertake an activity that stimulates their interest," Clark pointed out. "We need to build on that interest."

Both Clark and her husband, Dr. Ed Zovinka, also from Saint Francis, are board members at Quaint Corner. So it's likely that the collaboration between the Museum and the University will continue. That's fine with Detrich.

"They really have made a positive difference for a lot of young people in our community," she noted. "We look forward to maintaining that relationship."

*Quaint Corner Children's Museum & Discovery Center has been a member of the Blair County Chamber since 2013. Saint Francis University has been a Chamber member since 1969.*



*Dr. Rose Clark, Professor of Chemistry at Saint Francis University, works with children at Quaint Corner Children's Museum & Discovery Center as part of "Hands-on Science Fun."*



*Colin Snyder, Manager of Martin's Center Store in Altoona, and his associates, prepare for the ribbon-cutting that launched the Martin's Direct program.*

## Convenience

### *Martin's Direct helps grocery shoppers save time*

As hard as it is to believe, not everyone enjoys the all-too-frequent task of grocery shopping. For those who have long sought a reasonable alternative, Martin's Foods has come to the rescue.

Martin's Direct was launched earlier this summer to allow shoppers to "shop from wherever you are," according to Colin Snyder, who manages Martin's Center Store in Altoona.

"The idea is an industry change," Snyder acknowledged. "One of our sister companies – Peapod – has been in this type of business for quite a while as a stand-alone business and it was only natural to make this service available at our stores. Currently we have 81 stores with this service with more coming onboard each month."

There is a four-hour window from order to pick-up and pick-up can be made as early as 8 a.m. and as late as 9 p.m.

"People love the convenience. It saves them time and they've been very happy with the selection of products," Snyder pointed out. "Other than controlled items like alcohol and tobacco, you can get everything that's available to anyone actually shopping in the store."

As expected, such a dramatic change in format comes with certain challenges. Most of those impact store employees.

"Proper scheduling of associates to shop the orders can sometimes be tricky," Snyder admitted. "We never know how many customers will use the service each day. By cross-training the associates, we assure ourselves that we can

adjust fairly quickly. It's made us more efficient in a number of ways."

Customers must use credit cards for payment of their orders. Coupons are also accepted. Snyder has been pleased with the comments that he's heard from associates and customers and he's looking forward to what comes next.

"In the world of digital, there really are no boundaries," he explained. "Martin's will remain a leader in providing services and new concepts to our customers and we are committed to making our shopping experience the best it can be. Innovation is exciting but it has to be done right, keeping the customer experience first."

*Martin's has been a member of the Blair County Chamber since 2000.*



## It's Happening!

### Chamber Recognizes "All-Stars" for June and July

The Blair County Chamber's ability to offer quality programming, events, recognition and advocacy efforts depends largely on the willingness of sponsors to step up to help underwrite the costs associated with those efforts. So at the end of each month, we publish a list of businesses or individuals who sponsored anything Chamber-related during the month. They have helped us to make a difference in the business community. All-Stars for June are: ABCD Corp., Altoona Mirror, ARC Federal Credit Union, ArTECH Group, Beard Legal Group, Benzel's Bretzel Bakery, Blair Companies, Central PA Community Foundation, Central PA Physicians Group, FirstEnergy, First National Bank, Forney, White & Wagner Health Ins. Agency, Grannas Bros., Healthy Blair County Coalition, Home Helpers, Irwin Financial, J C Orr & Son, Keller Engineers, Leonard S. Fiore, Inc, M&T Bank, McLanahan Corp., McQuaide Blasko, New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., New Pig, Okonak, Dean & Lechner, Park Home, Presbyterian Village, PSECU, Railroaders Memorial Museum, Reliance Bank, Roaring Spring Water, Seltzer Financial Strategies, Sheetz, Smith Transport, The Hancock Group, The Hite Company — a Division of Mayer Electric, The Teeter Group, Thompson Pharmacy, Young, Oakes, Brown & Company, and Your Building Center. All-Stars for July are: Alex Seltzer Coaching and Bovard, Inc., Division of Goodco.

### Informational Meeting Scheduled for Chamber's Great Britain Trip

The Blair County Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Epic Journeys, is hosting a trip to Great Britain, July 12-21, 2020. The excursion includes guided tours throughout England and Scotland including stops at Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Stonehenge and Edinburgh Castle. Ground transportation from Altoona is included in the tour. An informational meeting will be held on Aug. 21 at 6 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development, 3900 Industrial Park Drive, Altoona. Registration is recommended but not required and there is no cost or obligation associated with attending the meeting. To register, call the Blair County Chamber of Commerce at (814) 943-8151.

### Save the Date: Down on the Farm

One of the Chamber's largest family-type events will take place on October 10th from

5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at 4 Seasons Farm in Tyrone. "Down on the Farm" has been a heavily-attended event for many years as it provides an opportunity for Chamber Members and their children to experience the best of what the Ag community has to offer. The cost to attend Down on the Farm is \$10/person. Children 10-and-under are free. Stay tuned for registration information.

### Have You Given Your Employees Their Power Cards?

The Blair County Chamber has nearly 41,000 members. That's because every employee of every member-business is considered a member. So, technically, there should be 41,000 Chamber Power Cards in circulation. The Power Card program provides Chamber members with the opportunity to offer discounted products and services to other Chamber members, thereby keeping more dollars circulating close to home. The list of participating businesses can be accessed from the Chamber Website or by clicking-on the QR-Code on the back of the card. If your employees don't have Power Cards, contact the Chamber Office at (814) 943-8151 and we'll arrange to get some to you. If you'd like to place a Power Card offer, contact Jessie Covert at the Chamber. There's no cost to Chamber members to place offers.

### Congratulations . . .

. . . to the Chamber Members who were recently named Health Care Heroes by Pennsylvania Business Central Magazine. They are: Jonathan Wolf of Pyramid Healthcare, Jan Fisher of UPMC Altoona, Scott Filler of Encompass Health, Dr. George Zlupko of Altoona Lung Specialists and Cathy Griffith of the Greg and Cathy Griffith Family Foundation/Sideline Cancer.

. . . to PennCrest Bank, which was recently honored by the Tyrone Daily Herald in the "Best Employer Over 25 Employees" category. PennCrest was honored in a special section of the Herald on July 27th.

. . . to Don Delozier, on behalf of Liberty Hall Properties, who was presented the N. Grant Nicklas Preservation Award for outstanding contributions in historic preservation by the Hollidaysburg Historic Preservation Commission.

. . . to the Jaffa Mounted Patrol for taking first place in the Large Unit Category at the Shriners International 145th Imperial Session Parade in Nashville.

## Chamber's Young Professionals help build 'Born Learning Trail'

Among the new attractions for young people at Lakemont Park is a "Born Learning Trail," whose purpose is to help adults interact with children to boost language and literacy development and to help caregivers to better understand how to support early learning in outdoor, everyday moments.

The Born Learning Trail was initiated by United Way of Blair County and sponsorship support was provided by Begin With Us Childcare and Preschool and Point of Fitness Barefoot.

"United Way is honored to be part of the new Lakemont Park," explained Executive Director Melanie Shildt. "We feel that our Born Learning Trail is a perfect fit for the Park's new concept."

Andrea Cohen of Lakemont Park agrees.

"It's been a great experience to work with United Way on this project," Cohen acknowledged. "We think it's neat that this interactive trail provides learning moments at Lakemont Park. We're also grateful to the Chamber's



The re-opening of Lakemont Park also marked the debut of the Park's "Born Learning Trail." Here, Khloe and Isaac Maddox try-out the Trail's Hopscotch sections.

Young Professionals for assisting in the construction of the trail."

Jessica Fisher, who chairs the Young Professionals, was happy to see that her committee members felt that helping out with the trail was consistent with the

group's mission.

"We were excited to volunteer our time for such a beneficial project," she disclosed. "We look for ways to make a positive impact on the community and clearly this was one of those ways."

**The Blair Business Mirror is published on the second Tuesday of every month except January and July.**

**Any suggestions or comments call Joe Hurd at (814) 943-8151 or email him at [jhurd@blairchamber.com](mailto:jhurd@blairchamber.com).**



## bizX

### Booth sales underway for region's largest trade show

The success of the first-ever bizX trade show last September at the Blair County Convention Center made it apparent that bringing together the business communities from Blair and Centre counties was more than just a good idea.

"We thought there was potential for a good event," remarked Stacy Hoover, the Chamber's VP of Events and Technology. "We got a great event instead. We are equally pleased to once again partner with the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County on this event."

bizX moves to the Pegula Ice Arena on the Penn State Campus on September 26th and similar op-

timism abounds. Subtitled, "Your Business. No Boundaries," this year's show will feature 100 exhibitors, a variety of seminars, a keynote luncheon as well as Corridor Cuisine. Reservations are required for the luncheon which will begin at 11:30 a.m. and will conclude at 1:00 p.m. when the show floor officially opens. The show will remain open until 5:00 p.m. Booth costs for this year's bizX are \$200 for small businesses, \$300 for large businesses. The cost of attending the keynote luncheon remains \$25.

As expected the sponsorships filled-up quickly. Hospitality Asset Management will be the Presenting Sponsor; AmeriServ

Bank is the Keynote Luncheon Sponsor and Your Cigar Den is the Seminar Sponsor. A few Supporting Sponsor opportunities are still available. Those who have already purchased those sponsorships are: Advantage Resource Group, First Commonwealth Bank, McCartney's/Steelcase, Moore Power Sales, Okonak, Dean & Lechner, P.C., PSECU, Roberts Oxygen Company, The UPS Store – Altoona & State College and Zito Business.

WTAJ-TV is Media Partner for the bizX show.

Anyone interested in reserving a booth or purchasing a sponsorship should contact the Blair County Chamber at (814) 943-8151.



Deb Campbell (center), Operations Manager at Pegula Ice Arena on the Penn State Campus, discusses the upcoming bizX Trade Show with Nicole Smith (left) of the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County and Stacy Hoover (right) of the Blair County Chamber. Pegula is the site of this fall's bizX.

## Setting the Pace



### Chris Michelone

#### The Chamber Foundation

**Place of work:** McQuaide Blasko.

**Position:** Attorney.

**Years with current position:** 8.

**Positions held in the Chamber:** The Chamber Foundation Board of Directors, Public Policy Committee Member.

**Age:** 35.

**Family:** Wife, Mandy; Daughters, Maria and Carmela.

**Community organizations:** Rotary Club of Altoona, Ronald McDonald House Charities Mid-Penn Region, The Chamber Foundation, Blair County Sports Hall of Fame, Blair County Bar Association, Pennsylvania Bar Association.

**Hobbies/Leisure:** Travel, sports, reading, smoking brisket and salmon.

**Education:** University of Pittsburgh School of Law, J.D., 2010; The George Washington University, B.A., 2007.

**First job:** Sales clerk at Helsel Hardware in Altoona.

**Personal pet peeve:** Incivility.

**Words that describe your personality:** You would probably get a more accurate description of my personality from others, but I hope that those words would be: optimistic, thoughtful, and generous.

**Secret ambition:** I still want to play on the offensive line for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

**I would like to be known for:** Being a good father.

**Business role model:** My law partner Sean Burke and former colleagues Ben Yeager, Mike Rutch, and Tom Reese.

**Your thoughts on the Chamber:** The Chamber does an excellent job of fostering the "community" in business community. In large part because of the Chamber's work, there is a real camaraderie among businesses and professionals in the Altoona and Blair County area. Our Chamber is more than just a confederation of businesses. It is a place where we can all come together.

**Your thoughts on Altoona & Blair County:** Our region is in the midst of a decades-long, sometimes painful, transformation. Fortunately, we are blessed with towering local institutions, breathtaking natural beauty, and talented people. As long as we remain focused on building a better future for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren, the best days for Altoona and Blair County are on its horizon and not in its rear view mirror.

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## Blair County represented at DC Meetings Expo

*Submitted by Explore Altoona*

Explore Altoona Executive Director Mark Ickes attended Smart Meetings meeting planners expo in Washington, DC June 26-28. The event included several networking opportunities with 75 meeting planners and 52 suppliers, one educational session, and fifteen one-on-one appointments with meeting and event planners. Explore Altoona represented the variety of meeting and event venues across Blair County and emphasized the geographically central location of Altoona as a meeting place. Ickes included in each presentation that Altoona is located along Interstate 99 equidistant between the two major east-west corridors across the state of Pennsylvania – Interstate 80 and the PA Turnpike. The cost effectiveness and variety of Blair County's venues were focused upon as well as the vast selection and uniqueness of off-site activities and experiences for team building exercises, evening events and family tours. Each planner was provided with a packet of information on Blair County and an invitation to visit explore-altoona.com to submit any Requests for Proposal to Explore Altoona directly through its website. This packet of information included a copy of the 2019 Blair County Visitors Guide, a meetings profile representing meeting facilities and venues

across the County, as well as a profile of the Blair County Convention Center.

Ickes stated, "With the recent expansion of Explore Altoona's marketing budget, this was the first opportunity which we have had to attend such a meeting planners expo in six or seven years. It was an excellent opportunity to reintroduce the Altoona market to a key group of planners primarily from the Mid-Atlantic region which has the potential of holding some promise in drawing from an audience of 7 million attendees within a three-hour drive radius of our destination."

In addition to the physical presence at the two-day expo, Explore Altoona's participation with Smart Meetings magazine includes two one-half page print placements in its June and September issues; a full-page placement and related narrative on the destination in the expo guide; an online presence on Smart Meetings' web site; and an e-blast to 5,000 qualified meeting planners. Additional 2019 conference and meetings marketing includes online and print placements and additional qualified e-blasts with Northeast Meetings and Events as well as with Conventions, Meetings, and Events magazine.



*Mark Ickes meets with Renee Cash at Smart Meetings DC Expo.*

## Corporate Wellness Challenge crowns winners for 2019



*The Blair County Chamber presented awards to the three businesses that won the 2019 Corporate Wellness Challenge. Left to right are: Christina Biesinger of Appvion, Heather Holzer of Vitro and Ashley Miller of Value Drug Company.*

The Corporate Wellness Challenge for 2019 was once again a success as twenty-four businesses and 480 employees lost a total of 3,855.3 pounds from early January through the end of March. The Wellness Challenge is a partnership between Healthy Blair County Coalition and the Workplace Wellness Committee of the Blair County Chamber.

"Although the number of participating businesses was slightly off from the previous year, the employee numbers stayed high and the enthusiasm was high as well," explained Coleen Heim, Director of Healthy Blair County Coalition.

Phyllis Baker of Blair Regional YMCA, a member of the Workplace Wellness Committee, echoed those sentiments.

"We had some new businesses put teams together," she pointed out. "There are al-

ways a lot of positives that are part of this initiative. The only downside is that sometimes people lose the weight and when it's over, they go back to beer and wings again."

On the corporate side, the winning businesses in this year's competition were Value Drug Company in the Central Division, Vitro (PPG) in the Northern Division and Appvion in the Southern Division. Value Drug was the overall winner. Individual awards went to Lee Schell of Vitro who dropped 77 pounds of Body Mass Index and Ryan Freet of Value Drug who lost 76.7 pounds of Body Weight.

"The results were impressive," acknowledged Tom Marra, Director of Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab at UPMC Altoona and a committee member. "Taking steps toward better health is much easier to do together. A lot of people won't try this on their own.

We've impacted a lot of people."

It's not all about weight loss emphasized committee member Murray Fetzter of Tyrone Regional Health Network. "Our ultimate goal is to get people to their ultimate state of health. It's important that we keep the message out in front of them for the entire year."

Recruiting has already begun for the 2020 Wellness Challenge. One significant change will be that the Challenge will run March thru May instead of at the beginning of the year.

"We're trying to discourage people from bulking-up over the holidays so that they have more weight to lose," noted Heim. "Competition, unfortunately, can sometime cause people to miss the message."

A meeting will be held in the fall for businesses interested in participating in the 2020 Corporate Wellness Challenge.



## New Angel Fund takes flight

By Steve McKnight



A little more than a year ago, The Altoona Blair County Development (ABCD) Corporation launched the First Frontier Network.

The goal of the network is simple: Connect those in Blair County with new business ideas to those who are willing and able to help them along.

We brought together local individuals with diverse experiences in business, investing, technology, construction, and community development who were interested in learning about new business ideas, inventions and products that could be developed right here in Blair County. Network members could work as a group or individually to provide entrepreneurs with seed capital, mentorship, resource development strategies, referrals or all of the above – really whatever it takes to

get to the next level.

Now there is a new regional funding tool available for these new entrepreneurs to access. More than 22 accredited-investor members from all corners of the business community have joined together to pool capital resources and business connections. Earlier this month they announced the formation of the Alleghenies Angel Fund, LLC, a newly-organized Pennsylvania limited liability company formed for the purpose of investing in entrepreneurs in Pennsylvania.

Alleghenies Angel Fund, LLC will focus on seed- to mid-stage investments in companies and entrepreneurs that demonstrate the potential for scalable and profitable operations. While they are seeking investment opportunities in high-growth businesses in any industry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Fund can also invest in any business that the members deem suitable.

"We are very excited that the Alleghenies Angel Fund will become another resource for entrepreneurs in the region. We consider the Angel

Fund to add great value to the Startup Alleghenies mission to bring greater economic vitality, talent and jobs to the Alleghenies region by creating a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. We could not be happier to be partnering with the newly formed Alleghenies Angel Fund," stated Steve Howsare, Executive Director Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission. Howsare continued, "We are grateful that the Appalachian Regional Commission provided us with resources to help us establish this fund, and for all of the support that they have provided for the Startup Alleghenies movement."

For more information about the fund, contact Debbi Prosser, Director of Business Development, Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission, (814) 949-6522. [dprosser@sapdc.org](mailto:dprosser@sapdc.org). To get the ball rolling with the First Frontier Network, contact ABCD Corporation's Senior Master Connector Matt Fox at [mattf@abcdcorp.org](mailto:mattf@abcdcorp.org) or (814) 944-6113.

*Steve McKnight is President/CEO of ABCD Corporation.*

## Young Entrepreneurs Academy recruiting for 2020 Class

A highly-successful Blair County Chamber program is accepting applications for its 2020 Class.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) program will accept up to 24 students in grades 6-12 from any Blair County school. The YEA! program is in its fourth year in Blair County. The program begins in early October and runs 25-weeks with graduation taking place in late April. Each class session is three-hours long during the school day (either 8:15 to 11:15 or 11:15 to 2:15) at the Sheetz Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence in Altoona. Class sessions are each Tuesday.

To date, 53 students have graduated as CEO's from the YEA! program. One of them, Bradley Shaffer, built a business called "Shaffer's Suds to Go," which is a mobile car wash. A recent graduate of Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School, Shaffer is operating his business

this summer as he earns money to attend college in the fall.

"I plan to run the business part-time while I'm at college and my hope is to make it a brick-and-mortar style company after college," Shaffer explained. He credits the YEA! program with getting him off to a great start in following a dream.

"With the connections that I made and the incredible volume of information and materials I received through YEA! it was a tremendous experience," he pointed out. "I would recommend the program to anyone who wants to start a business or who even just wants to have that knowledge for later on."

The cost to participate in YEA! is \$395 until August 31st and \$495 after that. To make application, visit the Chamber website at [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com). For more information on YEA!, go to [yeausa.org](http://yeausa.org).



*Brad Shaffer, who started his "Shaffer's Suds to Go" business through the Chamber's YEA! Program, will take his talents to college later this month but plans to continue his business and eventually expand it.*

## Welcome New Members...

### 10 Seven Marketing LLC

Mr. Kyle Dammann  
5276 Mill Road  
Duncansville, PA 16635  
Phone: (412) 999-1896  
Advertising/Public Relations/  
Marketing

### Altoona District USBC

Ms. Anne Saclaro  
139 Lennys Drive  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648  
Phone: (814) 935-4775  
Non-Profit Organizations

### Angelo's

Mr. James Bon Giorno  
5800 Goods Lane, K003  
Altoona, PA 16602  
Phone: (814) 215-3906  
Restaurants

### Beaps

Ms. Brooke Long-Yarrison  
2324 Cove Mountain Road  
Martinsburg, PA 16662  
Phone: (814) 614-4285  
Retail

### Being Liang

Ms. Liang Bartkowiak  
432 Windsor Drive  
Altoona, PA 16601  
Phone: (814) 937-2107  
Retail

### The Chempistry Store

Ms. Crystal Miller  
1515 E. Pleasant Valley Blvd.  
Altoona, PA 16602  
Phone: (814) 201-2003  
Retail

### The Health Insurance Place

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# Penelec marking 100 years

In a county that has prospered thanks to an incredibly generous business community, it might seem odd that a public utility can be counted among its most spirited investors.

“What Penelec has done for Blair County is a testament to its mission of not only providing an essential service in a safe and professional manner but in contributing in so many meaningful ways to our quality of life,” acknowledged Chamber Board Chair Darin Tornatore. “They’re also a valuable employer that encourages its employees to get involved wherever they can make a difference.”

In June, Penelec celebrated its 100th anniversary. What began long ago as a tiny company in Philipsburg, PA with sixteen customers along two miles of line has evolved into a modern electric utility with more than 700 employees, serving nearly 600,000 customers throughout a sprawling 17,000-

square-mile service territory. The transformation has been both steady and impressive.

“The world has changed immeasurably over the last hundred years and Penelec has been there every step of the way, delivering safe, reliable electric service to our customers,” said Nick Austin, Penelec’s regional president. “Our employees continue to work tirelessly to satisfy our customers’ desire for the latest electric conveniences and technologies.”

It’s not just about the delivery of electricity, Austin emphasized.

“Penelec’s commitment to the areas we call home doesn’t stop with the delivery of reliable electric service,” he pointed out. “Our employees live in the communities we serve, happily volunteering their time, talents and dollars to make each a better place to live, work and raise families.”

Since 2010, Penelec employees, augmented by FirstEnergy Foundation matching gifts, have pledged about \$700,000 to area United Way organizations and collected about \$153,000 and 5,500 pounds of food – the equivalent of nearly 1.1 million meals – for local food banks through Harvest for Hunger. They’ve also participated in walk-a-thons, book drives, coat drives, blood drives and holiday toy and gift collections for numerous other charitable causes.

Much of that altruism takes place in Blair County on a regular basis. There are currently 124 employees working out of Penelec’s Altoona office, which serves Blair, Bedford and parts of Cambria and Huntingdon counties.



**Above:** Among the most significant challenges that Penelec faced during the past 100 years was an incredible ice storm in 1950 that paralyzed Blair County.

**On the cover:** Vince Hite, Regional Supervisor-Line Operations, (standing) watches as linemen Jared Makoczy (left) and Michael Passinger install fault indicators at the Altoona Area High School as part of Penelec’s relocation of underground electric lines.



# ars as a community asset



**Above:** In the early 1960's, Penelec celebrated having 1,000,000 hours worked by employees without a single incident.

**At right:** Penelec, through the FirstEnergy Foundation, has been a consistent sponsor of events in the Blair County community like the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women." The foundation was a Gold Sponsor for that Event.



"Our employees understand that the strength of the areas in which we have a presence requires more than just lip service," explained Beverly Green, Regional External Affairs Consultant. "So many of our people are involved in so many important causes. It's a source of pride that dovetails with the pride that we feel about the job that we do."

That job, according to Green, isn't something that has a high profile, particularly in terms of scope.

"People may be surprised to know that Penelec is more than just line workers in our familiar trucks," she admitted. "It takes an army of individuals with different skill sets to keep the lights on and the power flowing. We employ engineers, substation electricians, circuit designers, truck mechanics, material specialists to keep storerooms stocked, testers to make certain rubber gloves and other rubber goods are intact and one hundred percent safe to use."

"We employ real estate professionals, foresters, safety experts, planners and schedulers, meter technicians and many more. The list is long for all the disciplines necessary for Penelec to keep the lights on for its customers. The faces of our line and substation workers are changing as many seasoned veterans with 30-plus years are retiring and we are welcoming a new generation of employees."

Green hasn't formed her opinions by sitting on the sidelines. She has personally represented Penelec in a variety of community-related enterprises and has made sure that the company always has a prominent seat at the table. Among her greatest involvements has been with the Blair County Chamber where she has the distinction of being the organization's first-ever female board chair. Chamber membership for Penelec, in Green's estimation, has always made sense.

"We see the Chamber as a forward-looking organization that looks to drive business growth and excellence in the communities that we serve," she noted. "Penelec earns its living by transporting electricity to homes and businesses through its wires. The more electricity we move, the better our bottom line. So it makes perfect sense to support the Chamber's mission to grow area businesses and make the communities we serve more attractive to retain and recruit businesses as well as their employees."

As Penelec moves confidently into its second century, it does so by continuing to embrace the qualities and standards that its customers have come to expect.

"We can never say it enough: Safety for our employees and the public is job #1 for Penelec," Green concluded. "Why change what's working?"

*Penelec has been a member of the Blair County Chamber since 1959.*



## Working Together

### Teamwork second nature for Beatty's

Ron and Kathie Beatty both came from hard-working, self-employed families so working together wasn't much of an adjustment when they teamed-up in the carpet cleaning business 40-years-ago.

"We've really never known it any other way," Kathie disclosed. "We work as a team and make up for one another's shortcomings. At some businesses, that would be a recipe for disaster. At this one, it's been a winning combination."

Ron Beatty Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning opened for business in 1990 although Ron has been cleaning carpets in the region since 1976. He and Kathie have built an outstanding reputation for quality and service. They do residential, commercial, institutional, hospitals and schools. Besides carpet cleaning, the company cleans upholstered furniture, mattresses, area rugs and oriental rugs, ceramic tile and grout, luxury vinyl floors and partition cubicals. Admittedly, the Beatty's



Ron and Kathie Beatty have worked together for more than 40 years.

don't do it alone.

"We have eight really great employees," Ron acknowledged. "All of our employees are ma-

ture, responsible people that have no criminal or drug history. Most are customers of ours who retired early and wanted

another job to keep busy and keep working. They're really our heart and soul."

While work responsibilities

occupy a significant amount of the Beatty's time ("Separating work and personal time can sometimes be difficult," Kathie reports.), they still find time to get involved in the community. Kathie serves on the Blair County Republican Committee and on the board of Blair County Children Youth and Family. Ron serves on the Altoona Redevelopment Authority & Land Bank Board, the Blair County Convention Center Board and was considered for nomination by the Republican Committee for Altoona City Council.

"What happens in our community is important to us," Kathie concluded. "Being able to work with one another has been great. We appreciate the support and the encouragement that we've received and we try to return that support and encouragement whenever possible."

*Ron Beatty Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning has been a member of the Blair County Chamber since 2014.*

## Breakfast Club

### Businesses to be presented certificates for Sustainability

The Blair County business community is slowly beginning to understand the important role that sustainability plays in saving money and conserving resources. At the next Chamber "Breakfast Club," set for September 12th at 7:45 a.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park, that topic will be even more emphatically driven-home.

Autumn Secrest and Jim Price from Sustainable Pittsburgh will talk about ways that sustainable communities can positively impact growth and can also play a role in helping small businesses to become factors in economic development.

"We're grateful for the amount of

help that our committee has already received from Sustainable Pittsburgh and we're looking forward to the insight they'll provide at the Breakfast Club," explained Donna Fisher, who chairs the Chamber's Sustainable Blair County effort. "Their message is one that should resonate with all businesses and we're hoping that we get a strong turnout on the 12th."

With the assistance of Sustainable Pittsburgh, the Chamber's committee put together a Sustainability Survey that businesses could complete to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The businesses that completed the survey will receive certificates at the Breakfast Club that

correspond to their current level of accomplishment. Those businesses receiving certificates are: Great Commission School, Prime Sirloin, Roaring Spring Blank Book, Roaring Spring Library, Stiffler McGraw, U.S. Hotel, Veeder-Root and Advantage Resource Group.

The cost to attend Breakfast Club is \$20 for Chamber Members and \$30 for non-members. To register to attend, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com).

Corporate sponsor of the September Breakfast Club is Gwin, Dobson & Foreman, Inc.



JIM PRICE



AUTUMN SECREST



# Thanks...

## for continuing to recognize the value of Chamber Membership

### Celebrating 56 Years

Union Tank Car Company

### Celebrating 40- 42 Years

Allegro Restaurant

Amtran

### Celebrating 35-39 Years

Ralph J. Albarano & Sons, Inc.

AMED

Blair Mill Outlet

Lawn Doctor of Altoona

Lena's Café

Teeter Group

### Celebrating 30-34 Years

Advantage Resource Group

Altoona Ophthalmology Associates

American Cancer Society

Bettwy Electric, Inc.

Blair County Oil & Supply

Blair-Bedford Builders Association

Brumbaugh Insurance Group, Inc.

Burchfield Organization, Inc.

The Cashman Financial Group, Inc.

Child Advocates of Blair County, Inc.

Consolidated Graphic Communications

Cresson Motors, Inc.

Dick's Pharmacy, Inc.

Image Signs, Inc.

Jaffa Shrine Center

Knisely & Sons, Inc.

Lakemont Park

Mountain Research, LLC

NPC, Inc.

Okonak, Dean and Lechner, P.C.

Joseph A. Oricko, Architect

Rea, Rea & Lashinsky

Reilly, Creppage & Co., Inc., CPA

Roaring Spring Water

Santella Funeral Home

Smith Transport, Inc.

Southern Alleghenies Planning &

Development Commission

L. R. Webber Associates, Inc.

### Celebrating 20-29 Years

Altoona Curve Baseball

Austin's Texas Hot Dogs, Inc.

Carnegie Equipment, Inc.

Corle Building Systems

Elmcroft Of Altoona

Empower Business Solutions

Geisinger Health Plan

The Hancock Group, Inc.

Hilecrest Angus

Inco Beverage, Inc.

Irwin Financial, Inc.

James E. Van Zandt VA

Medical Center

JJAN Financial Group, Inc.

Junior Achievement of Western PA

Kooman & Associates, LLC

Makdad Industrial Supply Co., Inc.

McAleer's Plumbing, Heating

& A/C, Inc.

Overhead Door Company of

Blair County, Inc.

Paradigm Solutions International

Preferred Healthcare System

ProCare Physical Therapy, LP

### Celebrating 10-19 Years

Albemarle Corporation

American Rescue Workers, Inc.

AmeriServ Bank

The Arc of Blair County

Balfurd, Inc.

Bellwood-Antis School District

Blair County Convention &

Sports Facilities Authority

Blair Gastroenterology Associates

CBT Bank A Division of Riverview

Bank

Damin Printing Company, LLC

Drayer Physical Therapy Institute

Electric Motor & Supply, Inc.

William C. Emeigh Excavation

Envision Laser Centers

Freedom Excursions by Scully, LLC

Green Home Goods, Inc.

Dennis M. Hallinan, Optometry

Holiday Financial Services

Home Instead Senior Care

Iron Masters Country Club

Lisa Mancinelli, State Farm

Insurance Agency

The McCabe Group, Inc.

Metzler Brothers Tank, Truck

& Trailer, LLC

The Milky Way

S. Smith Books

Smith's Welding and Fabrication

Snappy Chef Catering

Snare & Associates Mortgage

Services, LLC

South Hills School of Business &

Technology

Valley Auto Service, Inc.

Window World of Altoona

### Celebrating 5-9 Years

Allegheny Real Estate Closings  
Company, Inc.

JW Hoist & Crane, LLC dba

Altoona Hoist & Crane

Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8

Barr's Auto Electric, Radiator &

Air Conditioning, Inc.

Bella Lucia, Inc.

Bennetti Tree Service, Inc.

Canary Labs

Central Blair Recreation &

Park Commission

Chicago Rivet & Machine Co.

City of Altoona

Corl-Grove Services, Inc.

Derman Funeral Home, Inc.

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Discovery House Blair County

Dively, Ronda L. dba H&R Block

Dixon Electric, Inc.

Epworth Healthcare and

Rehabilitation Center

Evergreen Insurance, LLC

Global Live Line, Inc.

Groundhog Solar

HCS Inc. Cleaning Services

Jilco, Inc.

Joshua House, Inc.

Keystone Environmental, Health,

& Safety Services, Inc.

Joe Krentzman & Son, Inc.

McCloskey's Landscaping, Inc.

National Property Inspections

Parks Centre Carriers, Inc.

Peter C. Pham, DDS, PC

Second Avenue United

Methodist Church

Sheehan Ins., LLC 9

US Renal Care of Altoona

Walmart Duncansville #4348

Williamsburg Public Library

### Celebrating 1-4 Years

Altoona Grand Hotel

Altoona Roofing & Sheet Metal, LLC.

ARM Group Inc.

Atlas Therapy

Bedford Candies

Paula Binus

Royce Ann Boyd

BrightStar Care of Happy Valley

Craig Fencing, Inc.

Dale Oxygen, Inc.

Evolution Expressions

Fairfield and TownePlace Suites

by Marriott Altoona

J.W. Fleming, Inc.

Giant Eagle, Inc.

The Giorgio Foundation

Grane Hospice Care and Home Health Care

Hometown Bank of PA

Horseshoe Curve National

Historic Landmark

IPI Security Services

K&D Factory Service Inc

Charles Kaminsky

Marzoni's Brick Oven &

Brewing Co. #203 GW

Microtel Inn & Suites

by Wyndham, Altoona

PA Simple Cremation

Ronald McDonald House Charities Mid-Penn

Southern Airways Express

**Chamber Membership  
is a great investment!  
Call the Chamber  
today at 943-8151.**



# Starting-Off

## Leadership Youth Class gains valuable insight at retreat

The seventeenth class of the Chamber's Leadership Blair County Youth program began its yearlong voyage toward servant-leader status with a two-day retreat on July 29-30 at Laurel Lodge.

The class consists of twenty-four high school sophomores – 18 females and 6 males – from eight Blair County schools.

"It's a class with a great deal of energy," acknowledged Tami Chadick, who has facilitated the program for the past fourteen years. "That usually translates well for good interaction at future sessions."

Dr. Richard Pierce of R.A.P. Consulting, who has facilitated the retreat during those same fourteen years, is impressed with the approach that class members took in staying engaged.

"They were very responsive," Pierce pointed out. "Sometimes groups hold back their opinions



*Darin Tornatore (center), Board Chair of the Chamber, poses with two members of the Leadership Blair County Youth Class who recently attended the orientation retreat. Tornatore also serves as chair of the Ronald McDonald House Charities which has provided scholarships to LBC Youth students. Pictured with Tornatore are Hawke Claycomb and Alissa Walker.*

and don't actively participate. This class had a lot to say about a lot of things. I think they'll

benefit from what they learn and how they use it." Class members seemed to

## Businesses make it happen!

Unlike the Leadership Blair County Adult Program, LBC Youth charges no fee to participate. All of the tuitions (\$1,800/student) are paid through scholarships from the business community. This year those sponsors paid a total of \$43,200.

"Our business community continues to step-up to invest in

its young people, recognizing how incredibly important that is to our future," explained Blair County Chamber President Joe Hurd. "We are grateful for their ongoing support of a program with a considerable upside."

Any business or individual interested in scholarship information should contact The Chamber Foundation at (814) 943-8151.

have similar impressions.

"Some of the things that we did at the retreat under pressure could have divided us," remarked Ashley Brubaker from Williamsburg. "But we were able to come back together. I feel more connected to the people in the class now that we've interacted. I'm looking forward to the future sessions."

Cooper Keen of Bellwood-Antis agreed.

"I really didn't expect to learn the things that we learned at the retreat," he noted. "It definitely improved me as a person. I can now look at social structures and I can understand how people react to certain situations that they're put in."

*For more information on Leadership Blair County Youth, contact the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or visit the Chamber Website at [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com).*

# Ribbon-cutting



# events

## Open Season Outdoors



The Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of Open Season Outdoors located at 2572 East Pleasant Valley Blvd., Altoona. Open Season Outdoors houses indoor archery lanes and an expanded showroom to allow for sales of black powder supplies, fishing tackle and hunting accessories. For more information go to [www.openseasonoutdoors.net](http://www.openseasonoutdoors.net). Pictured at the ribbon, from left: Bonnie Hand, Chamber Ambassador; Amanda Walker, the office of State Senator Judy Ward; Bruce Erb, Blair County Commissioner; Lauren Thompson, Technical Assistance Advisor, JARI; Stella and Chris Fedora, owners; Joe Hurd, President/CEO, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Ted Beam, Blair County Commissioner; Matt Fox, ABCD Corporation; Nita Sanders, the office of State Representative Lou Schmitt; Joe Harteis, Chamber Ambassador.



# Ribbon-cutting



# events

## Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies



The Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the grand opening of the newest retail location of Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies. The new store is located at 1303 Pennsylvania Avenue, Tyrone. Goodwill offers gently-used donated clothing, household items and furniture with an inventory that changes daily. Established in 1962, Goodwill helps individuals, families and communities reach self-sufficiency through work and related services. Tyrone store hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday 12 - 5 p.m. Pictured at the ribbon, front row, from left: Jessie Covert, VP-Sales & Membership Development, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Molly Knepper, Bill Berish, Colleen Finocchio, Randy Riggleman, Cliff Kauffman, Charlene Bloom, Rose Killian, Renee Bailey, Nancy McClelland, Chamber Ambassador. Back row, from left: Chuck Rusnak, Brad Burger, Chip Hanik, Eric Dimemmo, and Mistie Stewart.

## Lakemont Park

In celebration of its grand re-opening, the Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Lakemont Park. From exciting rides to water slides, to beautiful outdoor areas and state-of-the-art sports and recreation facilities, the newly renovated Lakemont Park is the destination to get together with family and friends. For more information, go to [www.lakemontparkfun.com](http://www.lakemontparkfun.com). On-hand for the ceremony were, front row, from left: Joe Harteis, Chamber Ambassador; Mike Hofer, CBRC; Joe Hurd, President/CEO, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Phil Devorris; Andrea Cohen; Nancy Devorris; Melissa Vyborny, General Manager; Andrew; Dominic; Mark Ickes, Explore Altoona; Vince; Steve McKnight, ABCD Corporation; Nancy McClelland, Chamber Ambassador; back row, from left: Tim Clapper, CNB Bank; Bruce Erb, Blair County Commissioner; Sharon Jones, Blair Regional YMCA; Katie Buchanan, the office of State Representative Lou Schmitt; Ted Beam, Blair County Commissioner; Amanda Walker, the office of State Senator Judy Ward.



## Scoop Commercial Cleaning, LLC



A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in celebration of the grand-opening of Scoop Commercial Cleaning, LLC, located in the Devorris Center for Business Development, 3900 Industrial Park Dr., Altoona. Scoop Commercial Cleaning offers a full cleaning service using only green cleaning products. Services include general cleaning for all commercial facilities, carpet cleaning and floor cleaning. They also offer construction clean-ups. For more information, go to [www.scoopcommercialcleaning.com](http://www.scoopcommercialcleaning.com). Participating in the celebration were, from left: Brian Paahana, Chamber Ambassador; Katie Buchanan, the office of State Representative Lou Schmitt; Shawnee Patterson, co-owner; Zane; Zion; Zimyni; Obehi (Scoop) Patterson, co-owner; State Senator Judy Ward; Joe Hurd, President/CEO, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Evelyn Shields, Chamber Ambassador.



# Ribbon-cutting



# events

## Edward Jones Investments-Katlin Webb



*The Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new office of Edward Jones Investments-Katlin Webb, located at 601 Valley View Blvd., Altoona. Edward Jones Investments provides retirement and college savings plans, benefit plans for businesses, investments, insurance and annuities. Customers receive personalized service to help meet each individual's financial priorities. For more information, go to [www.edwardjones.com/katlin-webb](http://www.edwardjones.com/katlin-webb). Taking part in the celebration were, from left: Jessie Covert, VP- Sales & Membership Development, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; State Senator Judy Ward; Anthony Webb; Katlin Webb, Financial Advisor; Julie Hanlon, Branch Office Administrator; Joe Hurd, President/CEO, Blair County Chamber of Commerce.*

## East Freedom Surgical Associates

*East Freedom Surgical Associates, located at 15721 Dunnings Highway, Duncansville, celebrated its official grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. East Freedom Surgical is a multi-specialty surgical center serving the surrounding counties of west central Pennsylvania. The center is equipped to facilitate multiple surgical subspecialties in a convenient, easily accessible location. For more information, call 814-317-0248. Pictured, from left: Sherri Stayer, Chamber Ambassador; Chad Homan, Veronesi Project Manager; Rob Veronesi, Veronesi Building & Remodeling; Katie Whysong, CNB Bank; David Auerbeck, East Freedom Surgical Associates; Luke Yanoshak; Dr. Stephen Yanoshak, East Freedom Surgical Associates; Emily Yanoshak; Claire Yanoshak; Danelle Berg, Director of Nursing; Tarin Sill, Physician's Assistant; Brian Goss, Physician's Assistant; Tina Burke, East Freedom Surgical Associates; Brian Stiffler; Dan Giarth, Freedom Township; Amanda Walker, the office of State Senator Judy Ward; Steve McKnight, ABCD Corporation; Darin Tornatore, Chair, Blair County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; Pete Mitchell, Chamber Ambassador.*



## The Film Center



*A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in celebration of the new ownership of The Film Center located in the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center, Altoona. The Film Center is a full-service camera store that develops C-41 film in-house, print photos from digital media, phones, negatives and slides. They also offer a wide variety of signs and banners, card stock printing, copies and gift items. There is also a full-service USPS counter inside of the store. Participating in the ceremony were, from left: Nancy McClelland, Chamber Ambassador; State Senator Judy Ward; Becky Nearhoof, Associate; Trent Gutshall, co-owner; Cheri Beard, co-owner; Bruce Erb, Blair County Commissioner; Joe Hurd, President/CEO, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Debbie Eckenrode, Chamber Ambassador.*



# Ribbon-cutting



# events

## Forney Group/Fulton Financial Advisors



The Blair County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Forney Group/Fulton Financial Advisors located at 3018 Pleasant Valley Blvd., Altoona. Whether you need to build a personal strategy or plan for your business, experienced financial advisors will take a consultative approach to understanding your unique needs. Personalized comprehensive wealth management and pension plans are just a sample of the many services offered through Forney Group/Fulton Financial Advisors. Taking part in the celebration were, from left: Nancy McClelland, Chamber Ambassador; Katie Buchanan, the office of State Representative Lou Schmitt; State Representative Jim Gregory; LeAnn Verica, intern; John Forney, Financial Advisor; Greg White, Financial Advisor; Paige McCreary, Financial Advisor; Alicia Smith, Sales Assistant; Steve Campbell, Senior Vice-President; Debbie Lawson, Sales Assistant; Bud Fulton, Financial Advisor; Bruce Erb, Blair County Commissioner; Sherri Stayer, Blair County Chamber Board of Directors; Joe Harteis, Chamber Ambassador.

## Forney, White & Wagner Health Insurance Agency

The Blair County Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Forney, White & Wagner Health Insurance Agency located at 3018 Pleasant Valley Blvd., Altoona. Forney, White & Wagner is a full-service insurance agency dedicated to helping customers develop personalized plans for individual and employer health insurance needs. Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony were, from left: Nancy McClelland, Chamber Ambassador; Katie Buchanan, the office of State Representative Lou Schmitt; Sherri Stayer, Blair County Chamber Board of Directors; Bruce Erb, Blair County Commissioner; Julie McGeary, Executive Assistant; Joyce Wagner, Health Insurance Manager; Sherry Forney, CFO, Insurance Agent; John Forney, Insurance Agent; Ernie Peterman, Insurance Agent; Greg White, Insurance Agent; State Representative Jim Gregory; Debbie Eckenrode, Chamber Ambassador.



## Skills of Central PA Respite Home



A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in celebration of the new Skills of Central PA Respite Home located at 4000 Beale Ave., Altoona. The Home will offer short-term relief for those who provide support for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The Respite Home provides a safe place for people to stay when their primary supporter is in need of a break to travel, seek medical care, take care of personal tasks, or simply need to relax and rejuvenate. For more information go to [www.skillsofcentralpa.org](http://www.skillsofcentralpa.org). On-hand for the ceremony were, from left: Debbie Eckenrode, Chamber Ambassador; Katie Buchanan, the office of State Representative Lou Schmitt; Donna Freet; Al Sagaities; Shauna Freet; Mayor Matt Pacifico, City of Altoona; Cathy McFee; Jim Judak, MHID County Administrator; Ted Beam, Blair County Commissioner; State Representative Jim Gregory; Joe Hurd, President/CEO, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Marty Malone; Mary Rhodes; Becky Aungst; Penelope Spalding; Billie Willits; Bruce Erb, Blair County Commissioner; Renee Johnsonbaugh; Val Barner; Sarah Shaw; Laura Biggs; Amanda Walker, the office of State Senator Judy Ward; Bonnie Hand, Chamber Ambassador.



# 'Wake Up to Wellness' event to unveil Chamber toolkit



*Heather Chestney, Facilities Sales Coordinator at Jaffa Shrine Center, is pictured in the newly-renovated Arabian Room that will serve as the site of the Chamber's "Wake-Up to Wellness" on September 10th.*

Six years ago, the Blair County Chamber formed a Workplace Wellness Committee to help local employers direct programming to employees that would encourage healthier lifestyles resulting in less absenteeism and greater productivity.

One issue that has consistently been raised by employers is the difficulty in creating meaningful strategies to address employee health. A viable solution may be on the way.

On September 10th at 8:00 a.m., the Chamber will hold a "Wake Up to Wellness" program at the Jaffa Shrine Center in Altoona. The event will feature the unveiling of a toolkit that the Workplace Wellness Committee has put together to provide direction to employers as well as identifying available resources. Keynote speaker for the event will be Greg Drew, President of Value Drug Company, who will explain

how and why his company initiated a wellness program and the results that have made an important impact on his employees.

"This event is for representatives from businesses of all sizes," explained Coleen Heim of Healthy Blair County Coalition. "We hear employers all the time talk about how their employees are their number one priorities. Wake Up to Wellness will validate that and give some good suggestions for moving forward."

The Wake Up to Wellness will take place in the newly renovated Arabian Room at the Jaffa Shrine Center. The cost to attend is just \$12/person and a continental breakfast is included. To register, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com).

Corporate sponsor of Wake Up to Wellness is McCartney's Office Supplies.

## Business Hall of Fame recipients announced *Greenbean Coffee House first to win two awards*

The Blair County Chamber has announced its 2019 Business Hall of Fame and General Business Awardees. All award recipients will be honored at the Business Hall of Fame Dinner on October 21st at the Blair County Convention Center.

Four businesses will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Those are: Beard Legal Group of Altoona, City Beverage of Altoona, Presbyterian Village at Hollidaysburg and Tender Love for Children of Altoona.

In the category of Excellence in Small Business, the honorees are: Altoona Curve, Andrea's School of Dance of Bellwood and Okonak, Dean & Lechner, PC of Altoona. In Young Emerging Business, Delaney Insurance of Martinsburg, Greenbean Coffee House of Altoona and Trade Secrets, LLC of Altoona will be honored.

AnswerLinks of Hollidaysburg and

Veeder-Root Company of Duncansville have won Technology Awards; Armed Forces Mothers will receive the Committee Choice Award and Greenbean Coffee House gets the award for Community Service. Greenbean becomes the first business to ever receive two awards in the same year. The Business Hall of Fame started presenting awards in 1990.

"Humbling, honored, appreciative are just a few of the words to describe our reaction when notified of the awards," admitted Greenbean Coffee House co-owner Travis McCabe. "Simply to be nominated for an award is a huge accomplishment but to be nominated and receive, not one, but two awards has filled us with a great deal of pride. We never imagined that our business would make this kind of impact in such a short amount of time."



*Catherine and Travis McCabe, owners of Greenbean Coffee House in Altoona, were happy to learn that their business will be the first ever honored in two separate categories at the Business Hall of Fame Dinner.*