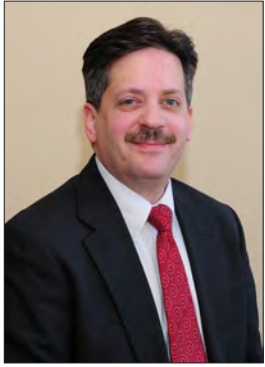


insight

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

Chamber Highlights & Accomplishments



Michael DiAcetis
2016 Board Chair

With the end of the year almost upon us, I look back at 2016 and my time as chair of the Chamber's Board of Directors with a sense of accomplishment. It's been a busy year for our members, our board, and our staff, as we worked together to tackle challenges and reach new heights of success. Best of all, through our ongoing events, member

benefits and professional resources, the Chamber's mission of advocating for the community really shines through. Whether it's helping with a referral, connecting members with one another, providing educational opportunities, supporting economic development, or expanding cost-saving programs, the Chamber is all about YOU.

During 2016 we focused on following our three-year strategic plan to navigate the short-term future and keep our organization moving forward responsibly and purposefully. Thanks to our previous plans, we've accomplished major goals and our new plan will continue to make this possible.

The Leadership Institute graduated its 11th class in March with 26 regional professionals joining the ranks of our alumni. In September, we launched the Class of 2017 with an overnight retreat. More than 275 alumni have graduated from this award-winning, skills-based leadership training program and are applying their skills within their professions and in their communities.

A redesign of the Chamber's website at renscochamber.com is well underway and should be completed by the spring of 2017. The new website will build on our growing online presence and give visitors, both members and non-members, even easier access to regional information, connections and resources.

This year's popular CEO Roundtables provided a much-needed forum for the presidents of businesses and organizations to meet, talk and tell the Chamber how we can best assist them.

The Chamber's 2016 events brought members face-

to-face with government representatives, educational leaders and cutting-edge entrepreneurs. Our programs informed you about the Department of Labor's new overtime rules and the impact of a creative economy, while professional development workshops featured top presenters in sales training, intentional communication, legal strategies for small businesses and marketing. The Chamber's high-impact Empowerment Series featured dynamic panel discussions and "Wonder Women" mentoring programs. The Chamber's Economic Development Partnership (EDP) was more in demand more than ever in 2016, assisting businesses, start-up companies and entrepreneurs with resources and guidance as they expand, relocate and revitalize our local economy.

We finish 2016 with a robust retention rate of 91%, compared to the national average of 85% among comparable chambers. We also extended our trend of attracting increased numbers of new members for a third straight year. Forty-seven companies supported our events in the past year, including a 30% increase in the number of new or newly re-engaged sponsors.

There's no secret to our success: maintaining quality, communicative relationships with our members is the key. Like a business concierge, the Chamber listens and responds, treating each member as an important individual and doing our best to customize solutions that fit our members' needs. While some members ask for personal introductions, others want energy savings or website SEO assistance. Successful programs like this year's "Inside the Mind of a Young Professional" and "How to Wow" were presented because members requested them. More and more professionals are joining our Chamber for networking, professional development and cost-saving benefits. Why not share the good news? If you know of a business or nonprofit that would benefit from membership, contact our Membership Manager Maureen McGuinness today at 518.687.1244 or at mmcguinness@renscochamber.com.

As I make way for 2017 Chair John M. Ahearn of Rifenburg Construction, Inc., let me express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve this past year. The Chamber is an exciting organization and I encourage you to actively participate. The more involved you are, the more benefits you'll realize. Best wishes for health and prosperity during the holiday season and in the new year!

SAVE THE DATE

2017 County Executive's Breakfast on Jan. 19



Reserve your seat for the County Executive's Breakfast with Rensselaer County Executive Kathleen Jimino. This popular annual event features County Executive Jimino's report on the status of Rensselaer County, including economic development initiatives and news about what the future holds for the region. Be sure to save the date for this informative way to start the new year. Make your reservations early; this event sells out each year and 2017 will be no exception!

Register now for the Chamber's annual **County Executive's Breakfast** on Thursday, January 19 at the Comfort Inn & Suites, 99 Miller Road in Schodack. Sign up online at renscochamber.com/events. Registration and breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; program 8-9 a.m.

\$35 for members; \$50 for walk-in members; \$70 for future members. Sponsored by the Rensselaer County IDA.

RENSSELAER COUNTY

life looks good from here™

ASK THE EXPERT:

Managing a Business or Non-Profit Budget

Patrick Hughes is a partner with UHY LLP and a managing director for UHY Advisors NY, Inc. He is a trusted advisor to clients in the public and private sectors, specializing in the financial services and not-for-profit industries, commercial entities and employee benefit plans. He works with clients' executive management teams to review management's strategic plans and initiatives and share a "best practices" approach to operations.



Q: What are some building blocks for budgets?

A: Understanding your company's strategies and goals is the starting point. As you budget for the current year, be sure to allow for unexpected surprises and allocate a cushion of money. Don't spend ahead of time. If you must spend before you planned to do so, postpone something else in the same time period to make the bottom line balance. Effective budgets need to be reviewed and revised frequently. This is particularly true if your business is growing and you are planning to move into new areas.

Q: Name the key differences between a business budget and a non-profit budget.

A: A nonprofit's duty is to drive its resources toward its mission, while the goal of a for-profit company is to maximize profits and financial benefits for its owners and/or shareholders. A nonprofit's cash flow fluctuates from grants, donations, etc. A business gets its revenue from products and/or services.

Q: How about some budget tips for 2017?

A: Take time to review where your money is being spent so you can determine where to reduce or eliminate ineffective expenditures. Using up-to-date budgets enables you to be flexible and also lets you manage your cash flow and identify what needs to be achieved in the next budgeting period. Do some strategic planning. How do you think your business will change in 2017? Will it grow? Will you be adding new services, processes, products, employees or technologies? Will you be moving? Adding new offices? Any of these changes require planning of your resources to achieve success.

"Ask the Experts" is a monthly Q&A featuring members of the Chamber's Board of Directors.



The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce is a business, civic and economic development alliance that strives to enhance the economic vitality of Rensselaer County and the neighboring Gateway communities of Cohoes, Green Island, Waterford and Watervliet. The Chamber seeks to improve the quality of life within the community for both residents and businesses.

"insight" is published monthly. Submissions are considered for publication based upon content and space availability.

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● NEW MEMBERS

Cruise Planners

Travel Agencies & Bureaus
Rep: Allison Roney
14 South Lake Drive
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: 518.626.8583
generationvacation.com

Edward Jones

Investment Securities
Rep: Nicole M. Gendron
13 Averill Avenue
Suite C
Averill Park, NY 12018-2571
Phone: 518.674.3061

Evergreen Country Club

Banquet Facilities/Golf Courses
Rep: Joe Bove
92 Schuurman Road
Castleton, NY 12033
Phone: 518.477.7921

Jean's Greens

Retail
Rep: Holly Applegate
225 River Street
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: 518.479.0471

Special Event Promotions, LLC

Marketing Consultants
Rep: George Reagan
251 River Street
Suite 301
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: 518.221.3051

CloseUP Conversation w/



Stephanie Fitch has held the position of controller at the Chamber since 2000. She manages all internal financial operations, including

cash flow, investments and budget preparation. She holds a B.S. in finance from Siena College.

What is the fundamental value of Chamber membership? Simply said, membership is a smart business investment. Our Chamber members rely on us to provide the resources, communications and connections that enable them to achieve more.

We inform members — through e-communications, on our website, in our monthly newsletter — about important business issues, timely events and member news that gives them a distinct advantage over the competition. *Where else* can you receive top-notch training at a fraction of the cost? *Who else* can help you navigate business incentives such as loan programs and venture capital opportunities? *How else* can you meet and develop high-impact relationships with clients, mentors, advisors and industry experts? **Only through Chamber membership.** The more you use your membership benefits, the higher the return on your investment.

The Chamber is a non-profit organization. Money from dues and other revenue streams is invested back into the Chamber, providing more events, training and services than ever before. Doing this on membership dues alone would be impossible. We rely on our generous member-sponsors who see the value in supporting what the Chamber does for the entire community.

Your membership is an investment in your business or non-profit organization as well as in the future of the Rensselaer County region.

● MEMBER NEWS

GreyCastle Security hosted the 4th Annual Cybersecurity Symposium (photo below), titled “Privacy vs. Protection: The Battle Between Convenience, Freedom and Security.” The event considered how privacy and technology impact national security efforts and examined privacy rights in data disputes between government and business. Visit greycastlesecurity.com.



Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center, Inc. announced a “Campaign for Smiles” to support a \$2 million renovation of its Albany Dental Practice. The campaign will provide modern equipment and a greater capacity to serve low-income populations, particularly children. Visit wmyhealth.org.



Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) Foundation honored H. Carl McCall with its Leadership Award during a “Golden Opportunities” gala that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). Photo above (l-r): State University at New York (SUNY) Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, HVCC President Andrew Matonak, SUNY Board Chairman H. Carl McCall, EOC Executive Director Lucille Marion, HVCC Foundation Board Chairman Frank Sarratori and HVCC Foundation Interim Executive Director Regina LaGatta. Visit hvcc.edu.



The Doane Stuart School held a ribboncutting ceremony for its new Lower School STEAM Room, focused on learning Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (photo above). For the youngest students, the STEAM Room uses small machines, magnifying glasses, microscopes, an incline board, a light table and a mammoth water table with working locks to encourage understanding of our physical world and to promote systems thinking. Visit doanestuartschool.org.

John Ray & Sons, Inc. has donated a portion of the proceeds from more than \$110,000 in heating fuel to the Northeastern



New York affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure during the past eight years. Donations are part of the company’s “Fueling a Cure” initiative to raise funds for continuing education, screenings and treatment in local communities. A trademarked pink and white truck acts as a moving billboard to promote breast cancer awareness. Visit johnray.com.

CEO (Commission on Economic Opportunity) raised more than \$40,000 to benefit the nonprofit’s programs and services at its annual Taste! fundraiser, sponsored in part by **CAP COM Federal Credit Union** and **Hilton Garden Inn** in Troy. More than 200 guests sampled signature dishes from local restaurants and participated in a special auction that raised \$4,800 to provide winter coats for children, holiday meals for families and supplies for CEO’s food pantry. Visit ceoempowers.com.

Kinderhook Bank appointed Monofer Usman as assistant vice president and branch manager for the bank’s Latham branch. He brings to the position his experience in customer service and sales management, as well as leadership skills. Visit kinderhookbank.com.

events calendar 2016

DECEMBER	JANUARY 2017	ADDITIONAL INFO
<p>Sunday • 12/4 34th Annual Troy Victorian Stroll The region’s premier holiday event, attracting thousands of visitors from all over the Northeast. Food, fun, live music, theatre, crafts, shopping, and more. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For a full schedule, visit victorianstroll.com. The Stroll is presented by the Chamber and the City of Troy and funded entirely through the generosity of individual and corporate donors, including our PlatinumPlus sponsors, Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.; and MVP Health Care. Platinum sponsors are ACE Hardware of Troy; Dunkin’ Donuts; E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy, LLC; KeyBank; Pioneer Bank; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; The Sage Colleges; Saratoga Eagle Sales & Service; City of Troy; Troy Business Improvement District (BID); and Troy Local Development Corporation (LDC). Silver sponsors are Express Scripts, Judge Development Corporation, National Grid and Rifenburg Construction Company. Media sponsors: B95.5 FM; <i>Capital Region Living Magazine</i>; <i>The Record</i>; <i>Times Union</i>; and WNYT-NewsChannel 13.</p> <p>Thursday • 12/15 Holiday NetworkingPlus Luncheon Jump start your holiday season, get connected, develop leads and build relationships at this fast-paced, structured networking event. Bring a door prize to spread holiday cheer! More than 60 door prizes will be given away. Bring plenty of business cards; enter to win a free Spotlight article. Registration 11:30 a.m.; program 12-1:15 p.m. At The Century House, Route 9 in Latham. Sponsored by Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.; Groff NetWorks, LLC; and Saratoga National Bank and Trust Company. Coffee bar is sponsored by Northeast Shuttle Services, Inc.</p>	<p>Wednesday • 1/11 Member Benefits Breakfast This no-cost program is great for new members, your employees or anyone who wants to make the most of Chamber membership and discover all of our valuable benefits. Meet our staff and bring plenty of business cards to distribute. Great networking opportunity! No charge; registration requested. At the Chamber, first floor conference room. <i>Sponsorships available.</i></p> <p>Thursday • 1/19 County Executive’s Breakfast Find out what’s ahead in 2017 for businesses in Rensselaer County and the status of significant local economic development initiatives. Reserve your seat now; this popular event sells out each year. At the Comfort Inn & Suites, 99 Miller Road in Schodack. Sponsored by the Rensselaer County IDA.</p> <p>Wednesday • 1/25 NetworkingPlus Luncheon Get connected, develop leads and build relationships at this fast-paced networking event. Topic-driven themes, ambassador facilitators and three table rotations make for more opportunities. Registration 11:30 a.m.; program 12-1:15 p.m. At The Franklin Terrace Ballroom, 235 Campbell Avenue in Troy.</p> <p>SAVE THE DATES! Tuesday, February 7 The Humor Project Presents “The Laughing-Leading Link: Taking Your Job Seriously and Yourself Lightly” Breakfast Thursday, February 16 Meet the Legislators Luncheon</p>	<p>TIMES: <i>All breakfast events have registration and breakfast at 7:30 a.m., with the program from 8-9 a.m. (unless otherwise noted).</i></p> <p><i>All luncheon events have registration and lunch at 11:30 a.m., with the program from 12-1 p.m. (unless otherwise noted).</i></p> <p>COSTS: <i>All programs are \$35 (unless otherwise noted) for members who have pre-registered. The cost for walk-in members is \$50. The cost for future members is \$70 (unless otherwise noted).</i> No-shows will be billed; 24-hour notice is required for all cancellations.</p> <p>Register online at: renscochamber.com/events</p> <p>Questions? Contact Gabrielle Polce Events Coordinator 518.687.1238 gpolce@renscochamber.com</p> <p><i>If you have special requirements, please contact us one month prior to event to ensure we are able to provide for your needs.</i></p>

UAlbany Renames East Campus in Rensselaer

New Health Sciences Campus Launches Major Initiatives



University at Albany unveiled a new Health Sciences Campus to advance the college's major academic, research and economic development initiatives.

The announcement included the launch of new academic programs, the formation of a UAlbany Innovation Center and enhanced START-UP NY opportunities for business partnerships.

The newly named Health Sciences Campus is a redesignation of UAlbany's East Campus in Rensselaer. The name emphasizes the collaborative relationships of academia, government and the private sector found at the campus that further innovations in health sciences. "We are the region's only comprehensive public research university," said President Robert J. Jones. "Our enhanced presence will attract a new cohort of high achieving students and world-class faculty."

"The new name will more clearly highlight the tremendous strengths already existing on the campus, and show the university's potential for enhancing the biomedical sector of the regional economy," said Laura Schweitzer, Ph.D., vice president for Health Sciences and Biomedical Initiatives.

Through agreements with Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, students on the new campus can pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, a master's in Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and/or a master's in Cytotechnology and Molecular Cytotechnology. These new offerings will be added to the University's current 12 health science degree programs.

The Health Sciences Campus has been named the first home to the UAlbany Innovation Center, which is designed to strengthen and accelerate the commercialization of university research and innovative ideas. The center works to connect research and education with industry leaders to collaborate on real-world solutions in biotechnology.

The newly named campus also offers new space to advance the University's START-UP NY plan. Through START-UP NY, the campus is able to provide businesses with access to laboratories, core facilities and faculty experts. The businesses, in turn, create collaborations for researchers and internships and jobs for students.

Home to the largest concentration of individual health science-related entities in the Capital Region, the Health Sciences Campus is anchored by the University's School of Public Health and Cancer Research Center with its Center for Functional Genomics. Other campus residents include Regeneron, Albany Molecular Research, Taconic and select research divisions of Albany Medical College and Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, as well as a dozen start-ups and biomedical organizations.

The Health Sciences Campus also enjoys a 30-year partnership with the School of Public Health and the New York State Department of Health. Visit albany.edu/healthsciences.

ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL PRESENCE

Pioneer Bank Moves Into New HQ and Banking Center

Pioneer Bank opened its new headquarters and Banking Center, a state-of-the-art, mixed-use space located at the corner of Albany-Shaker Road and Wolf Road in Colonie. The facility was built specifically for the growing company and provides Pioneer Bank with a centralized location as the institution grows its reputation throughout the Capital Region.

The 60,000-square-foot office space allows the Pioneer team, as well as Pioneer's Commercial, Municipal and Financial Services team members, to work under one roof for the first time in the organization's history. The majority of the organization's 130 employees who previously worked out of three offices in Troy have made the transition to the new headquarters. The facility offers Pioneer's growing Wealth Management team, as well as the recently acquired Anchor Agency, to work closely in space designed for cohesiveness and creativity. The new headquarters includes a Banking Center on the first floor with a drive-up interactive teller machine. A remote ATM is also located on the premises



for convenient use by the public. There is also an on-site learning center called ImagineU to facilitate the training of Pioneer employees. Additionally, the new headquarters offers approximately 9,000 square feet of retail space for lease on its first floor. Pioneer Bank will continue to operate the bank branch located at its former headquarters at 21 Second Street in Troy. Visit pioneerbanking.com.

Coffee-to-Go & Much More at The Shops at Pioneer Bank



The Shops at Pioneer Bank are blurring the line between banking and convenience shopping. While cashing checks or making deposits, visitors can also pick up a small boutique gift, stationary supplies, gift cards and even mail letters and packages. It's all about convenience, according to bank representatives, and since all proceeds from The Shops benefit local communities through Pioneer Bank's "Making Change Movement" charitable program, the innovation is a win-win. The Shops are located at the Albany, Glenmont, Schenectady and Wolf Road branches and will be included in Pioneer Bank's new Watervliet branch.

A QUARTERLY REPORT
OF THE CHAMBER'S



Economic
Development
Partnership

VISIONARY INVESTORS

KeyBank



Unlock your possibilities

KeyBank helps clients and communities thrive through informed choices made to the highest ethical standards for the benefit of shareholders, customers, employees and communities. KeyBank Foundation invests in education and the workforce to build thriving localities. With its Community Development Lending and Investment business, Key makes construction affordable and attractive to developers, stimulating local economies. KeyBank is the only U.S. national bank among the 25 largest to hold an "Outstanding" Community Reinvestment Act rating for eight consecutive review periods. Visit key.com.



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makes quick work of landfill expansions and closures, site work, highway and bridge expansion and utility installations. Since 1958, Rifenburg satisfies customers with dedication to projects, an emphasis on safety and the ability to take on big challenges while getting the job done on time and on budget. Visit riftenburg.com.

CHAMPION INVESTORS

BBL Family of Companies

PIONEER BANK

SEFCU

INNOVATOR INVESTORS

NBT Bank

TRAILBLAZER INVESTORS

Kinderhook Bank

NAI Platform

Pattison, Sampson, Ginsberg & Griffin PC

List reflects investors as of press time.



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THE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP

is a department of the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce. EDP assists new and existing businesses to develop and expand in our region. We provide resources and information to connect you to regional, national and international marketplaces. The mission of EDP is to enhance the economic vitality of Rensselaer County and establish greater awareness of its high quality of life.

JOIN EDP TODAY

Looking for a smart investment? With the Chamber's EDP you can invest in the success of our regional business community. In conjunction with the Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency and the Center for Economic Growth, we serve as a catalyst for businesses starting up, expanding, or looking to make a profitable move. EDP's high-impact marketing attracts regional, national, and international attention to our county's dynamic quality of life and thriving business environment. Are you ready to join us?

CONTACT US

Interim President Kate Ollier
kollier@renscochamber.com
ph: 518.274.7020



Economic Development Partnership

MEET OUR INVESTORS:

BBL Hospitality

BBL Hospitality is a full-service hotel management company offering hotel owners and developers a single, high-quality source for construction, financing and management services. The company has built more than 40 hotel properties in 20 states and currently owns 17 properties, providing hotel management for a dozen of them.



BBL recently opened its newest Recovery Sports Grill (RSG) on Route 4 in East Greenbush, the company's 13th restaurant (photo below). A 14th RSG is under construction in Port Saint Lucie, Florida.



"BBL has always built hotels and we've owned our own hotels since 2000," said President Steve Obermayer. "We've answered our customers' needs by expanding our expertise in hospitality development and operations. It's all about personal attention and quality people devoted to producing satisfied hotel customers. Nobody understands this better than BBL Hospitality."

These values have enabled BBL to win loyal customers for 40 years. As seasoned hotel designers, builders, developers, and owners, the BBL team understands the hospitality business from the inside-out and knows that success is dependent on quality people and quality partners. The company is a preferred hotel manager for owners of top global brands, including Courtyard by Marriott, Residence Inn, Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Fairfield Inn & Suites, Springhill Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Excelsior Springs, Homewood Suites and Four Points by Sheraton.

"We're a world class partner with a small business orientation," said Obermayer. "We combine innovative management techniques with consistent attention and communications to produce stellar results. From our leadership team to our associates in the field, we are hands on and committed to the success of our customers."

BBL Hospitality and the affiliated BBL Family of Companies are deeply involved with local communities, and charitable efforts. BBL supports and encourages its employees to give of their energy and talents to deserving causes and is an active corporate sponsor for major charities through the BBL Charitable Foundation. Visit bblhospitality.com.

\$3.1 MILLION ESPLANADE

City of Rensselaer Breaks Ground on Riverfront Walk

Local leaders and government officials gathered to break ground (photo right) on the future site of the Rensselaer riverfront esplanade, a new 1,000-linear-foot walk located at 575 Broadway. The groundbreaking marked the start of the \$3.1M project which will be transformative for city residents and visitors, providing a boost for tourism and the local economy.

The City of Rensselaer has received grants from New York State to support plans to design and build a riverfront esplanade along de Laet's Landing and is pursuing funding to continue it north to the city boat launch off of Forbes Avenue. The new 1.5 acre park and esplanade will offer green space, a bike path and the potential to hold outdoor summer concerts while offering sweeping views of the City of Albany across the Hudson River. There are plans to have commercial and residential development along the waterfront on the remaining 20 acres.



"Rensselaer County and the City of Rensselaer are quickly becoming known for new and dynamic opportunities for developers and businesses," said City of Rensselaer Mayor Daniel Dwyer. "The riverfront esplanade will add to the exciting economic development and welcoming atmosphere of our community." Completion of the esplanade is expected by May 2017. Visit rensselaer.ny.gov.

IN MEMORY OF OUR BOARD MEMBER

Bob Horan Initiative for Workforce Readiness



Photo credit: Albany Business Review

All Chamber workforce readiness initiatives and programs have been renamed "The Bob Horan Initiative for Workforce Readiness," in honor of Bob Horan (photo left), a member of the Chamber's board of directors who passed away on July 4, 2016. Superintendent of the Schodack Central School District, Bob served on the Chamber's Executive Committee and was vice chair of our Economic Development & Government Affairs Committee. "Bob was the driving force behind the Chamber's business and education collaborations and events," said Interim President Kate Ollier. "His creative spirit, enthusiasm and friendly personality was matched only by his acumen for innovative ideas. We honor him and work to continue his legacy."

LINIUM JOBS INDEX

High-Tech Hiring Forecast Shows Strong Market

The good news is that Capital Region employers remain optimistic about hiring and expect tech jobs to grow. The bad news? A skills gap continues to make recruiting and hiring a challenge. According to the latest Linium Index of High-Tech Hiring, businesses want to hire but finding qualified employees is a challenge due to ongoing skills gaps on the part of the workforce. The region's leading recruiter for technology-based positions, Linium Recruiting, surveyed 100 hiring and human resource managers at companies throughout the area. Fifty-two have more than 100 employees and 48 have fewer than 100.

Tech workforces will either remain steady or grow in the fourth quarter, according to 98% of employers, which is identical to last year. The number planning to add jobs dipped slightly, however, from 63 to 51%. Expectations for high-tech job growth over the next year remained strong, with 72% of employers either optimistic or very optimistic, a slight decrease from 77% in 2015. In addition, 65% of employers said the Capital Region's economy, including high tech, was either better or much better than the nation's compared to last year's 69%. The figure is sharply higher than 42% reported from the previous quarter.

Filling tech jobs continues to be difficult. Seventy percent of employers characterized recruiting and hiring as either challenging or a significant challenge, similar to last year's 75%. The skills gap remains the biggest challenge – though it fell from 52% a year ago to 34% this year – followed by corporate finances, overall business climate and health care costs, which at 12% were the highest since the survey began. The Linium Index is designed to help companies better understand the technology job market, and to assist hiring managers in developing strategies to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce. Visit liniumrecruiting.com.

Troy Finds Keys to "Zombie Properties" & Parking Needs

The City of Troy was awarded a \$250,000 New York State grant to combat abandoned, vacant and so-called "zombie" properties that hamper neighborhood revitalization efforts. The funds will be used to expand the capabilities of the city's Code Enforcement Department with necessary hardware and technology upgrades. The funding will also increase Troy's ability to enforce compliance against chronic code violators and leverage existing local and state resources to improve the quality of life in areas most impacted by blight and abandonment. Troy's Planning and Community Development Department applied for a \$250,000 assistance grant through the Zombie Remediation and Prevention Initiative earlier this year to develop a program focused on the Lansingburgh, North Central and South Troy neighborhoods, areas of the city which have been most affected by vacant and zombie properties. Troy was one of 76 cities, towns and villages awarded nearly \$13 million in funding through the initiative by the state Attorney General.

Results of a Downtown Parking Study show the City of Troy has enough parking but it needs to be utilized more efficiently. Funded with assistance of the Troy Local Development Corporation, the study takes a comprehensive look at how downtown parking functions, how it is managed and how it should be improved. The study examined the area bounded by Federal and Liberty Streets, from 6th Avenue to the Hudson River. While the public generally feels that there is insufficient parking downtown, the study found sufficient parking that needs better management. For instance, the study showed high demand for on-street parking near Monument Square but underutilization of existing parking lots and structures. In response, the City of Troy is implementing several short-term solutions: additional parking kiosks, better signage, more consistent parking regulations and striping of on-street parking spaces to better delineate their locations. The study also recommended a review of residential parking options. Visit troy.ny.gov.

ENTER TO WIN PRIZES!

Chamber Says ‘Thanks’ to Members

We're giving thanks for our members by launching an exciting contest for two members to win customized Chamber marketing packages valued at \$1,000 each! It's our way of saying "Thank You" for your continuous support of the Rensselaer County



Enter to Win a Customized Marketing Package Values at \$1,000 for Your Business in 2017!

Regional Chamber of Commerce. We are fortunate to have such wonderful members! Marketing packages may include digital and print marketing, tickets to events and opportunities to showcase your business as a sponsor or expo booth participant. The two winning businesses will meet with the Chamber's marketing staff prior to January 1, 2017 to develop a package to meet their specific marketing and business goals.

Enter online at renscochamber.com for a chance to win (one entry per business only). Eligible entrants must be Chamber businesses or nonprofits in good standing and members since November 2014 or earlier. Winners must maintain their membership through 2017 for the prizes to remain valid. Marketing packages are effective January 1 through December 31, 2017. Deadline to enter is Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at 12 p.m. Winners will be announced at the Chamber's Holiday NetworkingPlus Luncheon on December 15. Enter to win today!

INVEST IN OUR REGION

Give to the Van Rensselaer Fund

Looking for a great way to make a corporate or personal investment in the quality of life of our communities? A gift to the "Van Rensselaer Fund - Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce" allows the Chamber to receive funding for member-focused initiatives, helping our organization to provide scholarships for educational and entrepreneurial programs as well as supporting the arts and culture. Donations assist The Leadership Institute scholarship program and support the annual Troy Victorian Stroll. Best of all, your gift can be designated for a specific purpose. Gifts of all levels make a valuable difference and donors enjoy the tax benefits of a charitable contribution. Please contact the Chamber at 518.274.7020 for more information and assistance.

The Chamber is proud to announce that gifts are being accepted through the Van Rensselaer Fund to benefit the "Bob Horan Initiative for Workforce Readiness," in honor of our late board member Bob Horan, superintendent of the Schodack Central School District (see article on page 4). Donations will carry on Bob's vision to create dynamic partnerships between the business and education sectors of our economy to create a vibrant, workforce-ready community. We appreciate your support!

HOMETOWN SUCCESS

"Good News" Rensselaer County

The Chamber had the pleasure of publicly honoring the 2016 recipients of our "Good News" Rensselaer County Awards, in partnership with Rensselaer County. The awards recognize businesses, nonprofits and community organizations that make a significant impact on the area's economy and quality of life. Congratulations to this year's winners: **Brown's Brewing Company, LLC - The Walloomsac Brewery; Capital Roots; Center for Internet Security; The Troy Savings Bank Music Hall; and Woodland Hill Montessori School.**



Photo credit: Joan Heffler Photography

Photo (l-r): Jon Elbaum, The Troy Savings Bank Music Hall; Garry and Kelly Brown, Brown's Brewing Company, LLC; Carole Montepare, MVP Health Care; Amy Klein, Capital Roots; Kate Ollier, Chamber Interim President; Kathleen Jimino, Rensselaer County Executive; Susan Kambrich, Woodland Hill Montessori School; Lisa Henderson, Duncan & Cahill, Inc.; and Steven Spano, Center for Internet Security.



RENSSELAER COUNTY

life looks good from here™

Sponsored by Duncan & Cahill, Inc. and MVP Health Care.
Coffee bar sponsored by CEO (Commission on Economic Opportunity).
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CHAMBER MEMBER

spotlights

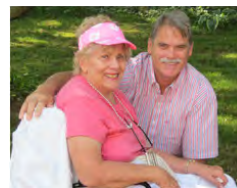
Ludder's Country Homes is unlike any senior-care model most people have ever come across. That's due to its owners, Ginny and Peter Ludder. The couple, with their supportive and experienced staff, have created a business that reflects a compassionate brand of care giving in an atmosphere that can only be called HOME. "Our goal is to provide family members with relief from the day-to-day responsibilities of care giving so they can tend to other obligations," said Peter Ludder. "We provide quality and compassionate 24/7 eldercare that allows your loved one who is trying to live independently to remain in a comfortable, supervised home setting with the dignity and peace of mind that they deserve." Residents enjoy private bedrooms, activities, exercise and socialization. Ludder's provides home-cooked meals and snacks



customized to individual diet plans, laundry, skilled personal assistance, and help with mobility and memory care. Visiting nurses, OT and PT are available with physician orders. Local physician Lisa Thorn, M.D. has been particularly supportive and helpful, said Peter and Ginny Ludder.



The Ludder's journey began with caring for their own elderly family members before starting their professional service five years ago. Today, the couple operates three cozy homes in West Sand Lake with room for 13 residents. Ludder's also offers hourly day care and overnight respite. Ludder's Country Homes is New York State Certified and fully insured, with references available. "People appreciate that we are not a mini-facility. We provide a real home with personalized care, at about half the cost of an institutional setting," said Ludder. "We treat everyone like family."



LUDDER'S COUNTRY HOMES
10 DENVER DRIVE | WEST SAND LAKE, NY 12196
PH: 518.674.5369 | LUDDERSCOUNTRYHOMES.COM



Saratoga National Bank and Trust Company is an industry leader known for quality service, personal attention and a commitment to the communities it serves. With nine offices

throughout the Capital Region, including a Troy location that opened in late 2015, this growing company says its unique approach to banking has been well-received. "Quality customer service isn't just an empty promise at Saratoga National; it's a way of life," said President and CEO Dave DeMarco. "Anyone who has ever bought a home, planned for their retirement or taken out a business loan to grow their company knows how important these decisions are. We take that to heart and make sure we're there with guidance and solutions that bring clients closer to their financial goals."

The opening of the Troy branch on Hoosick Street (photo right) further strengthened the bank's presence in the Capital Region and in Rensselaer County. The Troy team, led by Branch Manager and Vice President Karen Mason, provides a full range of services, from banking to insurance to wealth management. Saratoga



National Bank is especially committed to assisting small businesses, earning the U.S. Small Business Administration's "Top Small Community Lender" designation for the past two years. The bank is currently featuring a small business five-year term loan with a special rate through the end of the year. See a branch for details.

"Every day we deliver value to the individuals and businesses we serve. We know we can do the same for you and your business," said DeMarco.

SARATOGA NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST COMPANY
120 HOOSICK STREET | TROY, NY 12180
PH: 518.953.0109 | SARATOGANATIONAL.COM

Complimentary Spotlights are awarded by random drawing at Chamber events. To purchase a Spotlight, contact Staci O'Neill at so'Neill@renscochamber.com. Members must be in good standing and not have been featured within the past 24 months.

insight into...

Great Holiday Gift Idea

The Chamber's money-saving NetworkingPlus Series pass is available now. For just \$175 you can lock in all six of the Chamber's popular NetworkingPlus programs in 2017 — that's six events for the price of five. These passes make great holiday gifts for business professionals, co-workers, employees and special clients. Or treat yourself! Passes are transferable among co-workers for even greater value. Networking is the number one reason why members join the Chamber! Give the gift that keeps on giving all year long. Contact Events Coordinator Gabrielle Polce at 518.687.1238 or gpolce@renscochamber.com for information and pass purchasing.

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Thank You to All 2016 Sponsors

The Chamber extends its sincere thanks to our major sponsors*** whose generous support made the Chamber's 2016 schedule of programs and events such a success!



*Sponsors at the \$250-plus level, in addition to Golf Classic eagle and birdie sponsors.

**Does not include sponsors of the 34th Troy Victorian Stroll, who will be recognized in an upcoming issue.

Would you like to join our sponsor list for 2017? Sponsorship opportunities for upcoming events, starting at just \$315, are available now by contacting Events Coordinator Gabrielle Polce at 518.687.1238 or gpolce@renscochamber.com.

UPCOMING IN DECEMBER

Troy Victorian Stroll Sunday, Dec. 4th

Join us on Sunday, December 4, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the 34th annual Troy Victorian Stroll. The region's premier seasonal event attracting nearly 25,000 visitors from all over the Northeast, the Stroll features more than 100 performances, shopping, food and activities for all ages. This event is a great opportunity to promote your own business or non-profit organization in Troy. For a full schedule, visit victorianstroll.com. The Stroll is presented by the Chamber and the City of Troy and is funded entirely through the generosity of individual and corporate donors. This year's major sponsors are:

PlatinumPlus - Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. | Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.; MVP Health Care.

Platinum - ACE Hardware of Troy; Dunkin' Donuts; E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy, LLC; KeyBank; Pioneer Bank; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; The Sage Colleges; Saratoga Eagle Sales & Service; City of Troy; Troy Business Improvement District; Troy Local Development Corporation.

Silver: Express Scripts, Judge Development Corp., National Grid, The Rifenburg Companies.

Media sponsors: B95.5 FM; Capital Region Living Magazine; The Record; Times Union; WNYT-NewsChannel 13

Holiday Networking Luncheon Dec. 15th

Enjoy networking with a seasonal flair at the Chamber's Holiday NetworkingPlus Luncheon on Thursday, December 15 at The Century House, Route 9 in Latham. With facilitators, table rotations and more than 60 great door prizes, our holiday networking event is a sell out every year, so reserve your seat early! Bring plenty of business cards; guests are also invited to bring door prizes for giveaways. Register for this exciting networking event online at renscochamber.com/events. Registration and lunch at 11:30 a.m.; program 12-1:15 p.m. Cost is \$35 for members; \$50 for walk-in members. Sponsored by Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. | Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.; Groff NetWorks, LLC; and Saratoga National Bank and Trust Company. Coffee bar is sponsored by Northeast Shuttle Services, Inc.

