

insight

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

Chamber Highlights & Accomplishments



John M. Ahearn
2017 Board Chair

As 2017 draws to its end, so does my term as chair of the Chamber's board of directors. It has been a pleasure to serve such a dynamic organization during a time of real progress for our members, our board and our staff, as we worked together to deliver results. Whether it's helping with a referral, networking, professional development or cost-saving benefits, the Chamber is all about serving you and the needs of your business or organization. Let's review this year's highlights and accomplishments.

Workforce Development

Preparing a job-ready workforce is a priority for our membership and the Chamber has taken a lead role in collaborative efforts to close the skills gap and develop a pipeline of talent to ensure economic prosperity. In 2017, we hosted the Chamber's **Third Annual Future of Workforce Readiness: Education & Business Partnerships**, bringing together educators, business professionals and key stakeholders. We're connecting business with education — with not only higher education but also K-12 schools — where the future of our workforce is learning and developing. As you will read on page 4, the Chamber, Questar III BOCES and our members are partnering to produce highly-effective online videos to promote career choices to students, parents and educators. If you'd like to be involved with this initiative or be connected with education in another way, give us a call and we will give you a personal introduction. Area schools are seeking business representatives to partner with them for student and teacher internships, tours of businesses, in-class speakers and more. With your input on shaping career readiness, we will build and retain a strong workforce now and into the future.

Redesigned Website

The Chamber's website at renscochamber.com received a new look in 2017, with the emphasis on providing tools to match our membership's wants and needs. The result is an easy-to-navigate, attractive and

interactive website that offers more than ever before, including a commercial real estate board where you can showcase properties for potential buyers and lessees. We also added Member Spotlight Videos for you to reach potential customers by telling your business's story in your own words. Ramping up our social media offerings, we added "Where to Work Wednesdays" to showcase employment opportunities at member businesses.

Training & Professional Development

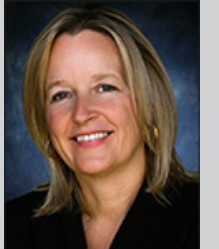
In 2017, the Chamber provided valuable opportunities for you and your staff to receive training needed to stay competitive. We introduced **Ask the Experts** events featuring professionals teaching such topics as team building, developing a perfect sales pitch, grant writing for nonprofits and the latest HR issues. Additional Chamber events explored bridging generation gaps in the workplace and learning to take your job seriously and yourself lightly. Through a partnership with MicroKnowledge, Inc., we provided **Quick Learn** training sessions for WordPress, PowerPoint and Advanced Excel. The Chamber's popular and powerful **Wonder Women Mentoring** events brought together top women professionals for candid conversations about successful strategies, overcoming roadblocks, the art of negotiation and balancing life and work. **The Leadership Institute** graduated its 12th class in March with 26 regional professionals joining the ranks of our impressive alumni. To date, more than 300 alumni have graduated from this award-winning, skills-based leadership training program and are applying their skills within their professions and in their communities. The Class of 2018 is well underway.

Join the Conversation

What can the Chamber do for YOU? Come to any of our events and be part of the conversation that drives our business community forward. Let our staff provide the solutions you are looking for to get past your challenges. As I make way for 2018 Chair Nicole Stein, senior vice president of marketing at SEFCU, let me express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve this past year. The Chamber is an engaging organization and I strongly encourage you to actively participate. The more active you are, the more benefits you'll realize and the more success you'll achieve. Best wishes for health and prosperity during the holiday season and in the new year!

ASK A BOARD MEMBER: Marketing on a Budget

Susan Kambrich has served as head of school at Woodland Hill Montessori School since 2000. She has been a Montessori educator since 1989 and holds a Master's of Education degree in Early Childhood Education from Kent State University. She serves as chair of the Chamber's Program and Marketing Committee.



Q: From your experience, how can the Chamber help members on a budget reach new customers?

A: At Woodland Hill, most of our families come to our school by hearing about us from others. Businesses looking to reach customers need to be networking, attending Chamber events, meeting people and encouraging them to come to your location or use your services. The Chamber website and its social media are also a valuable and inexpensive way to promote your business. In addition, sponsoring Chamber events that are meaningful to the mission or goals of your business is a good way to find like-minded clients or customers.

Q: What value will I get for my investment?

A: The Chamber recently launched a new, visually appealing website, which attracted 40,000 visits and 146,000 page visits this year. When Woodland Hill purchased a homepage Spotlight on the Chamber's website, the ad drove traffic directly to the school's website and increased our exposure. We've also used newsletter inserts, which cost only \$250 and have a reach of 12,000. The Chamber's e-newsletter has open and click-through rates that surpass national averages. This means your ad will be seen!

Q: Will the Chamber customize a plan for my business or nonprofit?

A: The Chamber's staff wants to see your business or organization succeed. They utilize marketing and advertising analytical data to develop a customized plan to best help you reach the 43,000 people employed by Chamber members. The staff listens to what you need and provides a cost-effective solution that works.

Ask a Board Member 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.

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MEET THE NEW RENSSELAER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

State of the County Breakfast on January 10

It's a new year and a new Rensselaer County Executive at the Chamber's State of the County Breakfast. Meet the newly-inaugurated county executive and learn about the new administration's plans for economic development and business initiatives in the coming year. Register early; this event sells out each year and 2018 will be no exception!

Register now for the Chamber's annual **State of the County Breakfast** on Wednesday, January 10 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 235 Hoosick Road in Troy. Sign up online at renscochamber.com/events. Check-in and breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; address 8-9 a.m. \$35 for members; \$50 for walk-in members. Sponsored by the Rensselaer County IDA.

RENSSELAER
COUNTY

life looks good from here™



● NEW MEMBERS

Adirondack Technical Solutions
IT Solutions Provider
Rep: Joshua Koons
5457 State Route 40
Argyle, NY 12809
Phone: 518.638.2020
adktechs.com

Cole's Collision Centers
Auto Body Repair
Rep: John Cole
97 North Greenbush Road
North Greenbush, NY 12180
Phone: 518.213.2070
colescollision.com

Dinosaur Bar-B-Que
Restaurant
Rep: Meredith Van Corbach
377 River Street
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: 518.308.0400

Hunt Real Estate ERA
Real Estate
Rep: Deborah Varcoe
340 Columbia Turnpike
Rensselaer, NY 12144
Phone: 518.366.9600
getcindsold.com

CloseUP Conversation with



Maureen McGuinness,
Membership Manager

New contacts, new customers, new business in the new year! The Chamber offers a variety of cost-effective marketing strategies to help you reach your business goals and stay within your budget. By working individually with our members, we're able to customize high-impact marketing and advertising packages that will get results and save you time and money:

- » For only \$250, our popular print newsletter inserts are ideal for organizations on a limited budget. Direct-mailed with no postal costs to you, inserts have a reach potential of 12,000 individuals.
- » The Chamber's e-newsletter is a high-engagement option with open and click-through rates that surpass national averages and prices that are more than competitive. Unlike other pricey business outlets that often charge thousands of dollars, we can design an affordable digital marketing package that won't break the bank and delivers real results.
- » Our redesigned website offers visually appealing options: choose a show-stopping homepage photo that links directly to your site or be a featured content expert on a subpage. The website is visited by users from across the Capital District, New York State and beyond.
- » All Chamber members can take advantage of a FREE listing in our online Membership Directory. The directory is open to all members and the public at no charge. Make sure your listing is up to date so potential customers can find you.

Now is the time to secure your 2018 marketing opportunities. Contact me at 518.687.1244 or mmcguinness@renscochamber.com today!

● MEMBER NEWS



The Sage Colleges received a \$1.2 million gift from Chester and Karen Opalka in support of the Opalka Gallery on the Albany campus (photo, left). The gift will support

exhibitions and special events during the gallery's 2017-2018 season and create a \$1 million endowment fund, according to Dr. Christopher Ames, the college's newly-inaugurated president. *Visit sage.edu.*

Tri-City ValleyCats General Manager Matt Callahan was awarded the 2017 New York-Penn League Robert Stedler Executive of the Year Award, one of the league's top individual honors. Award recipients are chosen by executives from each of the 14 teams in the New York-Penn League. Callahan has served as the ValleyCats general manager since 2015 and is an alum of The Leadership Institute's Class of 2015. *Visit tvalleycats.com.*

CAP COM Federal Credit Union President and Chief Executive Officer Paula A. Stopera was appointed to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council for a three-year term. Council members provide insight to the New York Federal Reserve Bank from the perspective of community bankers and credit unions. *Visit capcomfcu.com.*

DeCrescente Distributing Company and Saratoga Brewing raised \$16,000 in support of the Saratoga WarHorse Foundation (photo, below), which provides support and assistance to veterans who struggle with the transition to life after military service. *Visit decrescente.com.*



Beauty with Julie at BAR Beauty & Co. held a ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening

celebration at 11 State Street in Troy (photo, above). Owner Julie Occhino and her team specialize in customized make-up applications, airbrush makeup, eyelash extensions, haircare, microblading, skincare and waxing for special events and occasions, including photo sessions, galas, parties, showers and weddings. *Visit barbeautyandco.com.*

Kinderhook Bank Corp. appointed Harry Kabalian, CPA, MBA as treasurer of the company and senior vice president - chief financial officer for the bank. He brings a depth of financial experience in the banking and private sectors to the position. *Visit nubk.com.*



Wojeski & Company CPAs, PC named Dylan Devino (left) to staff accountant and Michael Germano (right) to client bookkeeper. Devino provides tax compliance services

and Germano assists clients with QuickBooks and general bookkeeping services. *Visit wojeskico.com.*

Unity House of Troy, Inc. and its Domestic Violence Services program presented the 2017 Coordinated Community Response Award to Barbara Devore, director of development of the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, for her work on behalf of victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault who are living with a disability. *Visit unityhouseny.org.*

Sandler Training promoted Lauren Valentine to executive associate, responsible for facilitating the Sandler Leadership Forum, the Sandler Sales Mastery Program and delivering training focused on the patient care experience to the healthcare market. *Visit sandler.com.*



events calendar 2017

| DECEMBER | JANUARY | A LOOK AHEAD |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Sunday • 12/3 35th Annual Troy Victorian Stroll The region's premier free holiday event, attracting thousands of visitors from all over the Northeast. Enjoy food, fun, live music, crafts, shopping, dining and more. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. For a full schedule of activities, visit victorianstroll.com. The Stroll is presented by the Chamber and funded entirely through the generosity of individual and corporate donors, including: Platinum: Dunkin' Donuts; E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy, LLC; KeyBank; MVP Health Care; Pioneer Bank; Saratoga Eagle Sales & Service, Inc.; Troy Local Development Corporation (LDC). Gold: Franklin Hospitality; Rensselaer County. Silver: Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.; National Grid; The Rifenburg Companies; RPI Athletics; The Sage Colleges; SEFCU. Media sponsors: B95.5 FM; <i>Capital Region Living Magazine</i>; <i>The Daily Gazette</i>; <i>Times Union</i>; WNYT-NewsChannel 13.</p> <p>Thursday • 12/14 Holiday NetworkingPlus Luncheon Jump start your holiday season! Get connected, develop leads and build business 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 two-night stay for two at the Mirror Lake Inn, Lake Placid. Check-in and luncheon 11:30 a.m.; networking 12-1:15 p.m. Cost is \$35 members; \$50 walk-in members. At Hilton Garden Inn, 235 Hoosick Street in Troy. Sponsored by Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. / Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.; Community Resource FCU; MicroKnowledge, Inc.; St. Peter's Health Partners.</p> | <p>Wednesday • 1/10 State of the County Breakfast Meet the new Rensselaer County Executive and discover what's ahead in 2018 for businesses. The new executive will report to us about local economic development initiatives, job growth and business opportunities. Register now; this popular event sells out each year. Check-in and breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; address 8-9 a.m. Cost is \$35 members; \$50 walk-in members. At the Hilton Garden Inn, 235 Hoosick Road in Troy. Sponsored by the Rensselaer County IDA.</p> <p>Tuesday • 1/16 NetworkingPlus at Night Get connected, develop leads and build business relationships at this fast-paced networking event. Topic-driven themes, ambassador facilitators and three table rotations make for more opportunities. Check-in and appetizers 5:30 p.m.; networking 6-7:15 p.m. Cost is \$35 members; \$50 walk-in members. At Pat's Barn, 110 Defreest Drive in Rensselaer. <i>Sponsorships available.</i></p> <p>Wednesday • 1/24 Ask the Experts: Your Business Before, During & After a Cyber Hack Learn the latest cybersecurity tips and actionable advice to defend your small business. We'll discuss the latest threats and solutions for security challenges, beginning with an analysis of cybercrime trends. Presented by Reg Harnish, CEO of GreyCastle Security. Check-in and breakfast at 7:30 a.m.; training 8-9:30 a.m. Cost is \$35 members; \$50 walk-in members. At The Century House, Route 9 in Latham. Sponsored by SEFCU.</p> | <p>Coming in February 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Member Benefits Breakfast » Meet the Legislators » Wonder Women Mentoring Event <p>Sponsorship Opportunities Available Now Contact Maureen McGuinness at 518.687.1244 or mmcguinness@renscochamber.com</p> <hr/> <p>ADDITIONAL INFO</p> <p>Register for events online at: renscochamber.com/events</p> <p>No-shows will be billed; 24-hour notice is required for all cancellations.</p> <p>Questions? Contact Events Coordinator Rachael Murray at 518.687.1238 or rmurray@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> |



A QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE CHAMBER'S



Economic Development Partnership

VISIONARY INVESTORS



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. Visit key.com.



Rifenburg is one of upstate New York's oldest and largest family-owned construction firms. Specializing in earth moving and restoration

of all kinds, Rifenburg 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



INNOVATOR INVESTOR

Turner Construction Co.

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP is a department of the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce. EDP assists 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.

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. Join the Chamber in this economic development initiative.

CONTACT US:

President Kate Manley
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 ph: 518.274.7020

Hoosick is "Rising" & Building on Investments and Momentum

It's a small town with very big plans. Hoosick Falls is open for business with at least seven new businesses breathing life into the heart of downtown, a motivated community of diverse partners, a resurrected opera house and investors who are reaping dividends while bringing jobs and prosperity to the region.

"We have a lot of very good news here with more on the horizon," said Village of Hoosick Falls Mayor Robert Allen. "Businesses are realizing that the risks they took are paying off quickly and that's attracting further investment. With an engaged and diverse community to support them, Hoosick Falls is developing a culture all its own."

A recent road trip to the village, organized by the Chamber, gave board members, ambassadors and Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino the opportunity to meet with Hoosick Falls businesses and experience the dynamic renewal. The trip was the Chamber's inaugural economic development bus tour* organized through our Economic Development and Government Affairs committee.

"We have been working with Hoosick Falls officials and their Hoosick Rising initiative since its inception," said President Kate Manley. "We brought key stakeholders to the village to visit businesses and gain insight into their challenges. We will continue to advocate for what these businesses need to succeed."

The village boasts a cafe, a wood fired pizza shop, a hobby art studio and a coffee shop. Other recently established companies include a steel manufacturer, a catering company and a packaging business. The steel manufacturer, with headquarters in Rochester, is considering expanding into a new facility at 1 Mechanic Street, adding 6-9 jobs. The 75,000-square-foot building would also offer space for future tenants.

CiviCure (Civic & Cultural Restoration Corporation) is a Hoosick Falls non-profit organization that purchased the historic Wood Block Building in April. It's mission is to drive community revitalization through active stewardship of Hoosick's rich heritage, rural environs and the art inspired by them. The block-long brick structure (photo, above) at 1-5 Main Street anchors the north end of downtown and was originally known as Wood's Block Opera House. Built in 1878, it is the last surviving structure of the historic Walter A. Wood Company and features an opera house on the top floor. CiviCure plans to renovate the vacant second and third floors with gallery and performance spaces that promote economic revitalization and build community ties. Visit hoosickrising.org.

*Special thanks to Northeast Shuttle for bus transportation.



Students Ready for College and Work

When students graduate from the Hoosick Falls Central School District, they are prepared to head off to college or take their place directly in the workplace, thanks to programs focused on workforce development and college readiness.

"We've teamed up with Questar III BOCES to connect with businesses and technology all over the Capital District," said Superintendent Kenneth A. Facin. "Our teachers and students

have opportunities to go to job sites and learn from business professionals. We also invite professionals to bring their knowledge and experience into our classrooms. The results are engaged teachers making the curriculum relevant to students and students who can make better-informed decisions about career pathways that suit their interests and talents. It's a formula for success."

The district's College Completion Project introduces students to career options and helps them develop the skills and the knowledge to successfully complete post-secondary studies and attain a degree or professional certification. It's companion program is Hometown Mentoring, which pairs college-bound seniors with successful Hoosick Falls alumni from around the country (photo, below). Mentors share their experiences, time and insight to help students complete college and transition successfully to a career. Visit hoosickfallscsd.org.



THE FUTURE OF CRAFT BEER

Brown's Brewing Shifts to Cans, Leading Local Industry

When Brown's Brewing Company introduced its award-winning beers in cans earlier in 2017, it was a bit of a risk. But the eponymous beer company, founded in 1993, trusted craft beer drinkers were savvy enough to appreciate the innovation. The leap of faith has placed Brown's, with locations in Troy and North Hoosick, ahead of the competition and ushered in the next phase of the changing craft beer industry. Successful sales of the cans in Brown's taprooms led to the purchase and installation of \$1.2 million in German-made canning equipment in the North Hoosick warehouse. The new canning line has a 200-can-per-minute capacity and the brewhouse can produce 20,000 barrels of beer annually. Brown's is also continuing its successful bottled beer production and sales. Visit brownsbrewing.com.



DESIGNING THE NEW BRAND

id29 Uses Retro Look to Draw Customers to Cans



Moving from 12 oz. bottles to 16 oz. cans presented a design challenge for Brown's Brewing products. "We saw it as a design opportunity," said id29 Principal + Design Director Doug Bartow. The firm worked with Brown's to develop a cohesive product packaging line that would stand out in the crowded craft beer world. Using bright colors and geometry with a wrap design, the look is "bold and new, with room to grow as Brown's continues to release their latest creations in cans to a wider audience," said Bartow. Visit id29.

MEET OUR INVESTORS:
Pioneer Bank

Pioneer Bank offers customers a comprehensive array of products and services, with competitive rates and the latest banking options. With 22 locations, ITMs and ATMs throughout the Capital District, Pioneer delivers a suite of sophisticated, secure and easy-to-use eBanking tools, mobile banking apps and other solutions, with some branch offices providing special services to fill community needs. Locations include new Pioneer branches at Greenbush Commons in East Greenbush, Mohawk Street in Cohoes and Upper Glen Street in Queensbury.



Pioneer is a leader in local lending, with quick turn-around times for business and personal loan needs. Decisions are made by local banking professionals who know the communities they serve and go beyond customer expectations.

“The current industry trend is one of consolidation and closure, but we have been focusing on opening new branches and expanding our service offerings... Our focus has been, and continues to be, meeting the banking needs of the Greater Capital Region.”

– Tom Amell, President and Chief Executive Officer

Pioneer Bank’s business model is simple: engaged employees create an environment of customer advocacy, resulting in financial success. Pioneer employees, motivated to succeed and do what is best for customers, in turn create customers who promote the bank and its services, creating financial success for the bank. Pioneer Bank’s success then translates into increased opportunities to create a world-class working environment for employees, a world-class banking experience for customers and the ability to make a real difference in local and regional communities. Visit pioneerbanking.com.

NOW PLAYING: CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Chamber Debuts New Videos at Workforce Event

Workforce development is among the top challenges facing businesses today and the Chamber is responding with proactive strategies to advance regional efforts. Through collaborations with business and education leaders, we’ve initiated several job-readiness projects, including the production of videos designed to show advantageous career paths in trade jobs to high school students, parents and educators.

The videos, created in partnership with Questar III BOCES, feature various Chamber businesses discussing the high-tech changes in 21st century trade jobs in the electrical contracting, construction, auto repair and manufacturing industries. The videos debuted at the Chamber’s **Third Annual Future of Workforce Readiness: Education & Business Partnerships** event and can be viewed on the Chamber’s website at renscochamber.com/develop-chamber/workforce-development.



“The videos provide a refreshing look at workforce development for students in our area,” said Shadrach Treat, account executive, Siemens Industry, Inc. “Each story is unique but with the same clear message: these career paths provide long-term profitable employment opportunities. The development of strong employees in trade industries is critical for companies like Siemens. If we are to continue to build infrastructure that improves the quality of life in our region, we need to embrace this message.”

Brian J. Williams, principal employment and training coordinator for the Rensselaer County One Stop Career Center, said reaching students with career information is necessary to combat skills gaps in the workforce. “Technology is just as important to trade occupations today as in professional careers,” he said. “It is important to expose students to the

multitude of career options.”

To participate in a video, contact the Chamber’s Membership Manager Maureen McGuinness at 518. 687.1244.

LEARNING TOMORROW’S LANGUAGE TODAY

Experience in Coding Crucial for Next-Gen Employees

One of the most important job skills is computer coding. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that seven million job openings in 2016 were in occupations that required coding skills, across a wide variety of industries. Coding is the language of our world.

“Our region is the third largest sector in the nation for software development jobs. Apart from the technology sector, there are increasing numbers of industries relying on computer coding, including finance, manufacturing, health care, retail and government,” said Chamber President Kate Manley. “Our members are telling us that when it comes to workforce readiness, coding is a crucial skill for qualified employees.”

The Chamber is working with education leaders and legislators to advocate for coding as a language in school’s curricula. As more industries expect employees, regardless of their field of education, to have the skills to write instructions to a computer instead of using established applications, the more coding literacy will be in demand.

“We want our students and families to know that coding can be fun and that our graduates can have great careers in the software sector that exists right here

in their own backyard,” said East Greenbush Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey P. Simons. The district partners with Albany Can Code, a nonprofit working to ensure a qualified workforce to fill programming and software-related jobs.

The East Greenbush district offers student before and after-hours coding clubs at all grade levels, including Ozobots in grades 3 and 4. The purpose is to raise the interest levels of students and engage them in activities that bring about coding literacy and help sharpen critical thinking skills. More coding initiatives are planned for the district.



BRINGING THE REAL-WORLD INTO THE CLASSROOM

Fusco Personnel Gives Teachers a Broader View of Jobs



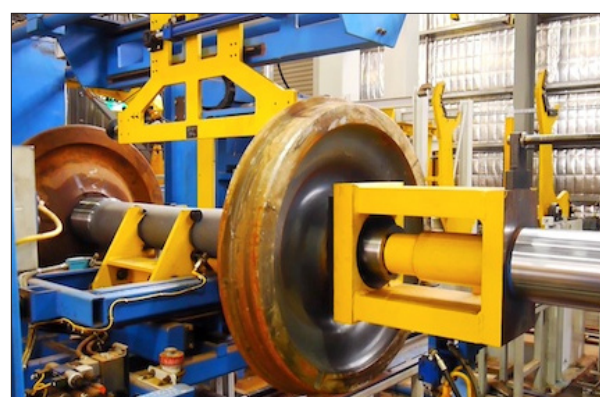
Teachers make great job candidates: they are educated, highly-motivated and have a great work ethic, says Patricia Fusco (photo, right), president and CEO of Fusco Personnel, Inc. Each summer, Fusco Personnel works to place teachers who are on break into contract positions until the start of the fall school semester. “They are an extremely talented pool of professionals who are looking to earn money, expand their skills base and try something new, such as state contract work, law firms or other opportunities outside their usual scope.”

For teachers, summer jobs outside the classroom can widen and inform their experience and knowledge base, enabling them to return to the classroom with new perspectives to share with students. This allows students to get a real-world view of job opportunities which can spark interest in career choices and help provide a pipeline of qualified candidates in the workforce of the future. It’s a win-win-win, said Fusco.

“The job market has expanded so much in recent years that we are able to introduce teachers to positions they didn’t know existed,” said Fusco, who founded her award-winning executive search, recruiting and staffing firm in 1994. “They can take that knowledge back to their students. Ideally, I’d like to be placing teachers in externships for a whole semester so they can soak up new technology and make business contacts that, in turn, would benefit schools. For those of us interested in a future pool of job-ready workers, that would be a great start.” Visit fuscopersonnel.net.

EDUCATION & BUSINESS JOINT EFFORT

Filling Manufacturing Jobs with Qualified Workers



Hudson Valley Community College established a new Manufacturing Technology Pathways program, a short-term training opportunity for those interested in joining the Capital Region manufacturing workforce. The intensive, multi-level program is designed to allow participants to earn stackable credentials to qualify for jobs or to build on with additional coursework. It will also provide access to a variety of local manufacturers who have indicated difficulty filling positions. The project is being created through a SUNY workforce development grant, with additional support from the New York State Workforce Development Institute, the Center for Economic Growth and local manufacturing employers. Visit hvcc.edu.

HURRICANE RELIEF

Members Help Hard-Hit Regions

The Chamber and our membership responded to the needs of hurricane-ravaged regions of the United States, following a series of natural disasters that included hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Board members **Lisa**

Despart, president and chief executive officer of AWCplus and **Susan Kambrich, head of school at Woodland Hill Montessori School**, traveled to hurricane-hit areas following Hurricane Harvey. Despart, who has a son living in Houston, connected with the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce to offer help on behalf of our Chamber and to learn about the region's enthusiastic "Back to Business" efforts (photo, right). Kambrich traveled to Florida in the wake of Hurricane Irma to help a family member and met with representatives from the Greater Sebring Chamber of Commerce to extend our Chamber's support.



The Mohawk Hudson Humane Society (MHHS) joined rescue efforts by helping pets relocate. Within an eight-day span, MHHS accepted 40 dogs and 15 cats from shelters displaced by hurricanes Harvey and Irma. "It was a lot of extra animals to manage at once, but our staff, volunteers and supporters really came through to ensure we could provide the best care for them," said Todd Cramer, MHHS president and CEO.

Employees from **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany** volunteered for a two-week deployment to Houston where they assisted with clean up and disaster recovery work. Catholic Charities USA hosted its annual national conference in Houston, which gave agencies from across the U.S. the opportunity to work together during relief efforts. Further deployments are planned.

Since the beginning of the hurricane season, more than 95 volunteers from the **Eastern New York Chapter of the Red Cross** have been deployed to help with relief work in the wake of the three historic, back-to-back hurricanes. The volunteers are working in Texas, Florida, Georgia and Puerto Rico with damage assessment, shelters and meal distributions. In addition, the Red Cross benefited from more than \$7,000 generated by the **Tri-City ValleyCats** during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

The Friends of Little Italy in Troy sponsored a street fundraiser to benefit victims of Hurricane Maria. Held in cooperation with **Joseph's House & Shelter** and the Puerto Rican community, "Stick it to Hurricane Maria" featured stickball, music and activities. Donations of batteries, flashlights, cases of water, baby products and more were sent to the hard-hit communities of Puerto Rico.

The Chamber is proud of our membership's response and generosity to the plight of those affected by the natural disasters of the past months. To everyone who helped in any way, thank you.

HOMETOWN SUCCESS

"Good News" Rensselaer County

The Chamber honored the 2017 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.

Recipients are not only significant achievers in their industries but also community-minded stakeholders who are invested in the success of our region.

Congratulations to this year's winners: **Bella Napoli**; **Community Resource FCU**; **Man of Kent Tavern**; **Martin Electric, Inc.**; and **Tech Valley Center of Gravity**.



Photo (front row, l-r): Jon Bombard, owner, Man of Kent Tavern; Kate Manley, president, Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce; Amy Becker Grabek, director, small business/individual markets, MVP Health Care; (Back row, l-r): Holly Cargill-Cramer, executive

director, Tech Valley Center of Gravity; Marc DeNofio, vice president of marketing and retail delivery, Community Resource FCU; Hon. Kathleen Jimino, Rensselaer County Executive; Kendra Hart, business development manager, Martin Electric; Mario Mainella, owner, of Bella Napoli Italian American Bakery & Cafe. *Photo by Joan Heffler Photography.*

Sponsored by MVP Health Care and presented in partnership with Rensselaer County.



CHAMBER MEMBER

spotlights

Celebrating its 100th year, **Bryce Funeral Home, Inc.** is an independent, family owned, fourth generation business serving all faiths with a full compliment of funeral services, earth burial, direct cremation and memorial services.



"It's one thing to be in business for 100 years, but it's truly remarkable to have the exact same family in business for 100 years," said L. Craig Bryce, director and grandson of founder (below, left). The centenary milestone was reached through a true team effort, he said, including David Merrick Cluett, great-grandson of the founder (below, right), and dedicated staff members. "We are all honored to be a source of consolation to the communities and individuals we serve. We really care about the families we assist. For me, there couldn't be a more wonderful profession to be in."

Throughout the century, the Bryce family has balanced the importance of traditions with the ever-changing challenges of the funeral industry and their clients. "We've done it all, from Irish wakes to cremation scatterings," he said. "In this profession, you need to be flexible but the traditions are very important. Families trust us with their loved ones generation after generation. Even families who move out of the area come back to us."

The first funeral home in the area to launch a website, Bryce continues to bring technology innovations to their clients, including family videos for viewing and online obituaries and condolences. All work is done in-house, from printing memorial cards to embalming and preparations. A second location, DeGraaf-Bryce Funeral Home, Inc. at 4392 Route 150 in West Sand Lake, was established in 1959 and continues to serve individuals and families in Rensselaer County.



BRYCE FUNERAL HOME, INC.
276 PAWLING AVENUE | TROY, NY 12180
PH: 518.272.7281 | BRYCEFUNERALHOME.COM

Walter S. Pratt & Sons, Inc. is in the business of solving BIG problems. Pratt provided the powerful drills that bore 100 feet into the ground for rebuilding at the World Trade Center. When the same site flooded during Superstorm Sandy in 2015, Pratt supplied nine tractor trailers filled with generators and massive pumps to solve the water problem.



"We get calls from all over the U.S. for our specialty equipment to provide solutions to problems," said Wayne Pratt, who represents the second of three Pratt generations in 60 years of business. "The general public doesn't know about us, but we're involved in a lot of projects and places they'd recognize."

From Globalfoundries in Malta to the arsenal in Watervliet, from the Eisenhower Lock on the St. Lawrence Seaway to the subway tunnels of New York City, Pratt heavy equipment, including pumps, drills, generators, sandblasters, air compressors, rock splitters, all-terrain fork lifts, abrasive cleaning equipment and more, clear the way for significant economic development projects and keep large-scale operations



running smoothly. The company partners with more than twenty major manufacturers to supply equipment sales, rentals and services in the fields of construction, manufacturing, chemical, petroleum and solar energy to customers in the private and public sectors. Founded as a small business in the 1940s, today the company offers cutting-edge equipment from all over the globe, including Brokk robotic demolition equipment for remote drilling.



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To purchase a Spotlight, contact Maureen McGuinness at mmcguinness@renscochamber.com. Members must be in good standing.

Member Milestones

35 YEARS

Clement Frame & Art Shop, Inc. (1982)

20 YEARS

Erdman Anthony (1997)

15 YEARS

Michael A. Tobin & Associates, CPAs, P.C. (2002)

Guardian Life Insurance Company (2002)

Mansions at Technology Park (2002)

10 YEARS

Veterans of Lansingburgh c/o Dalle Accounting (2007)

Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown Albany (2007)

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The Chamber extends its sincere thanks to our major sponsors*** whose generous support made the Chamber's 2017 schedule of programs and events such a success!



*Includes sponsors at the \$250-plus level, in addition to Golf Classic eagle, birdie and challenge sponsors.
**Does not include sponsors of the 35th Troy Victorian Stroll, who will be recognized in an upcoming issue.

NetworkingPlus Pass 2018 locks in all six of the Chamber's networking events for the year for the price of five, making it a money-saver. Passes are great holiday gifts for business associates and are transferable among co-workers for even greater value. Contact Rachael Murray at 518.687.1238.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE DECEMBER EVENTS

Troy Victorian Stroll Set for Sunday, Dec. 3

Join us at the 35th Annual Troy Victorian Stroll on Sunday, December 3, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The region's premier free holiday event attracts nearly 30,000 visitors from all over the Northeast to downtown Troy. For a full schedule, including the day's events, parking information and where to eat and shop, visit victorianstroll.com. The Stroll is presented by the Chamber and funded entirely through the generosity of individual and corporate donors. This year's major sponsors are:

Platinum - Dunkin' Donuts; E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy, LLC; KeyBank; MVP Health Care; Pioneer Bank; Saratoga Eagle Sales & Service, Inc.; Troy Local Development Corporation (LDC).

Gold - Franklin Hospitality; Rensselaer County.

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

Holiday Networking Luncheon Dec. 14

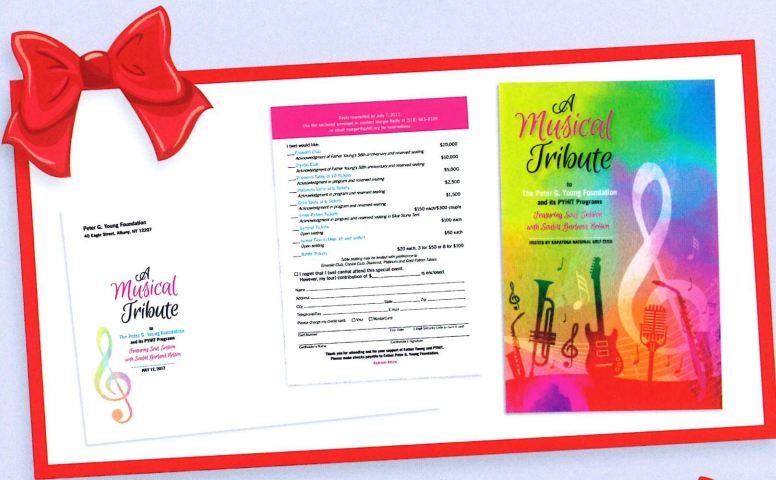
Enjoy networking with a seasonal flair at the Chamber's Holiday NetworkingPlus Luncheon. Get connected, develop leads and build business relationships at this fast-paced, structured networking event. Bring plenty of business cards to distribute. Guests are encouraged to spread holiday cheer by donating door prize giveaways. Enter to win a grand prize, two-day getaway for two at the beautiful Mirror Lake Inn, Lake Placid (mirrorlakeinn.com). **Register today** for this sell-out event!

Holiday NetworkingPlus Luncheon on Thursday, December 14 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 235 Hoosick Street in Troy. Sign up at renscochamber.com/events. Check-in and luncheon at 11:30 a.m.; networking 12-1:15 p.m. Cost is \$35 members; \$50 walk-in members. Sponsored by:





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