



RENSCONNECT

WHERE BUSINESS + COMMUNITY CONVERGE

RESPONSE, RECOVERY & REOPENING

A Conversation with Heather Briccetti



Chamber President Kate Manley recently caught up with Heather C. Briccetti, Esq., president and chief executive officer of The Business Council of New York State. Ms. Briccetti is an appointed member of the New York Forward Reopening Advisory Board, tasked with guiding the state’s decisions on reopening strategies amid the COVID-19 virus.

Kate: How do members of the New York Forward Reopening Advisory Board formulate and communicate recommendations to the governor?

Ms. Briccetti: We’ve been communicating with the governor’s team since day one, starting with closures and determining what businesses were essential and needed to stay open and what were non-essential. Next, we focused on identifying

businesses that could retool and adapt to produce the PPE equipment that was needed for health care workers. We then shifted our focus to address phased reopenings to get businesses back on track and people back to work. Our conversations are with businesses from virtually every industry, finding out what they need, what their challenges are and what their ideas for reopening are. No one knows business like business owners; their ideas about how to meet the challenges of reopening and keeping people safe from the virus are crucial to the conversation. We’re distilling their industry-specific questions, ideas and challenges and communicating all of it to the governor’s representatives.

Kate: What impact are businesses having on the strategies of reopening, particularly in the Capital Region?

Ms. Briccetti: Businesses are on the front lines and know best what the challenges are and what the possible solutions should be. I’ll give you an example: the owner of a salon in Troy developed a reopening plan on her own that showed how she could service her customers safely while complying with the appropriate health guidelines. Her plan influenced the outcome of the guidelines for phase two reopenings. That’s the kind of initiative, creativity and talent that is making a difference in our reopening strategies and in recovery efforts.

Kate: What will our economic recovery look like and what should businesses expect?

Ms. Briccetti: Of course, we can’t recover lost revenue. But lost revenue doesn’t occur in a vacuum and different parts of the economy have been impacted in different ways. Some industries, such as durable goods, have surged. It’s unclear if you look across industries what the overall impact has been and economists agree it will take a while to quantify. Certainly, there has been a loss of GDP and we’ll have to climb out of it. On the plus side, businesses are re-opening and many people have disposable income. Savings rates have been high during this pandemic. We need to focus on where we go from here and how we can make New York more business friendly, especially our tax environment, and make sure we are encouraging businesses to stay, grow and compete here.

Kate: What are the Capital Region’s priority needs for short-term and long-term economic recovery?

Ms. Briccetti: We haven’t dealt with a pandemic in 100 years. It seems the measures we took (closures, masks, etc.) have been impactful in deterring the virus from spreading. What we’ve learned about heading off this type of threat can serve as a playbook going forward. All of us in the business community need to think about how to reposition our industries. The U.S. needs to develop a supply chain to manufacture the goods required by the health care industry. New York and the Capital Region can and should be part of the supply chain. For instance, we have a very robust paper industry in New York -- how can we use it to make masks? How do we encourage and incentivize the repatriation of pharmaceuticals, talent and facilities necessary to manufacture the medicines we need? Our short and long-term job is to recognize these opportunities, position business and industries to answer the need and advocate for supportive change among the policy advisors to the governor.

Kate: What have we learned during these months that affects the business community going forward?

Ms. Briccetti: The social unrest that has come on the heels of the pandemic is changing everything, including how we do business. We are not the same society or the same people we were before. We need to find ways to strengthen communities from their core, so there is equity and respect. Businesses have to address how their company culture is encouraging these values at every level if they are going to achieve the success they desire.

Chamber President Kate Manley is talking with some of the key leaders in our business community about response, recovery and reopening in the wake of COVID-19. This is the second in a series of conversations published in our digital newsletter. For COVID-19 resources, visit renscochamber.com/coronavirus-resource-guide.



ASK A BOARD MEMBER:

Strong Responses to COVID

Christopher J. Nolin is Director, Community and State Relations in the Office of Government and Community Relations at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He works to promote partnerships with the local community and with New York State entities.



Q » How has Rensselaer responded to COVID-19?

A » At the start of the pandemic response, Rensselaer transitioned to remote instruction while also incorporating COVID-19 into our curriculum. From modeling its transmission, forecasting its potential spread and developing solutions to mitigate its impact, everything our students, faculty and staff are doing recognizes that solutions require creative collaboration. Our considerable scientific resources and expertise are continually seeking ways to advance the global effort to combat the virus and save lives.

Q » What are some of these collaborations?

A » COVID is a “big data” problem and artificial intelligence is a crucial tool for finding answers. Rensselaer is working with government and researchers to use the supercomputing power of AiMos — the most powerful supercomputer housed at a private university — which allows researchers to model the virus at a molecular level. Cleveland Clinic is using AiMOS in the hunt for a vaccine and to learn what medical procedures work best for different populations. Rensselaer IDEA has created COVIDMinder, a tool that helps states and counties understand and combat the pandemic regionally (covidminder.idea.rpi.edu).

Q » What about prevention and treatment?

A » Rensselaer researchers working on viral detection, therapy and inhibition have developed a viral trap, a DNA-based nanotechnology that they hope to tailor to COVID-19 to capture and kill the virus in the bloodstream. Rensselaer scientists are also developing various CRISPR-based detection systems by partnering with a local company that produces a digital detection tag for biological testing. The tag shows promise in detecting corona and other viruses in minutes, using a handheld device.

Q » What about masks and PPE equipment?

A » Rensselaer engineers are working under a National Science Foundation grant to give antiviral properties to N95 respirator masks and to improve their durability for sterilization. Tackling PPE challenges, our engineers are working with Industrial Tool & Die Company of Troy to manufacture face shields for Albany Medical Center. In addition, we’re using plastic injection molding and laser-cutting machines that can manufacture an average of 50 face shields per hour. As the pandemic wages on and the world continues to fight it, the research and breakthroughs from Rensselaer will continue to make a difference.

THE RENSSELAER COUNTY REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS ITS

Virtual Celebration

120th ANNUAL DINNER

(with a twist)

& BUSINESS EXPO

THE ULTIMATE *twist*

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Please join us in welcoming our newest members by patronizing their businesses. You can invite businesses and organizations to join our growing Chamber by contacting us at 518.274.7020 or info@renscochamber.com.

Member Milestones

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20 Years

HMA Contracting Corporation
A.M. Jones Construction, Inc.

15 Years

Dunkin’ Donuts

10 Years

Gally’s Albany Clothing & Promotions, Inc.

Member News

GLOBALFOUNDRIES secured a purchase option agreement for 66 acres of land adjacent to its Fab 8 manufacturing facility in Malta, near the Luther Forest Technology Campus. The agreement gives the company the flexibility to expand the Fab 8 facility for future growth locally, strengthening U.S. leadership in semiconductor manufacturing. [VISIT *globalfoundries.com*](#)

Alaant Workforce Solutions was named by *Forbes* as one of America’s Best Recruiting Firms for 2020. It is the fourth consecutive year Alaant has received this prestigious recognition. Alaant is the only recruiting firm in the Capital District to be included in the list, which is based on reviews from thousands of external recruiters, HR and hiring managers nationwide. [VISIT *alaant.com*](#)



SEFCU awarded \$50,000 in scholarships to 41 high school and college students throughout the Capital District, Syracuse, Binghamton and Buffalo as part of the credit union’s annual program. Students are evaluated on academic achievements, proven

leadership, a written essay and community service. This year, recipients completed a combined 14,000 hours of volunteer services. The scholarships were awarded in an online ceremony. [VISIT *sefcu.com*](#)

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany adapted its annual “Night at the Museum” fundraiser into a virtual event featuring videos, music, special speakers, curbside pick up for dinners and a wine pull. The organization’s premiere fundraiser honored the



Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York’s Executive Director Mark Quandt and Tom Roohan of Roohan Realty. [VISIT *crcda.org*](#) and [regionalfoodbank.net](#)

First New York Federal Credit Union opened a new branch at 31 Jordan Road in North Greenbush. The 2,100-square-foot, full-service location is designed to accommodate the credit union’s growing membership in Rensselaer County with ample parking, two 24-hour express drive-up teller machines, two more teller machines inside and a knowledgeable staff to assist with accounts, loans and the financial needs of members. Construction of the branch was completed by **Wainschaf Associates, Inc.** and **Bergmann Architects, Engineers and Planners**. [VISIT *firstnewyork.org*](#)



Everything UR, LLC, a local start-up company and charitable foundation headquartered in Brunswick, presented a \$1,500 donation to **Vanderheyden** CEO/President Karen Carpenter-Palumbo (photo above). The funds were raised through the sale of “BRAVE” tee-shirts designed by company owner and founder Gregory Cohane. [VISIT *everythingur.com*](#) and [vanderheyden.org](#)

Hatchet Hardware is opening the doors to its fourth ACE Hardware location in the greater Capital District. The family-owned and operated company’s newest store is at 6133 NY-5 in Palatine Bridge. Other locations are in downtown Troy, Brunswick and Waterford. [VISIT *hatchethardware.com*](#)



Troy Waterfront Farmers Market moved to the **City of Troy’s** Riverfront Park and is continuing to operate under state health guidelines. More than 40 vendors participate, with free parking available. To make a reservation for a time slot between 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, go to their website. [VISIT *troymarket.org*](#)

Mohawk Hudson Humane Society held its annual fundraiser, “Hope Grows Here - A Virtual Gala for the Animals,” a livestreamed event that included an auction and gourmet three-course dinner for pick up. [VISIT *mohawkhudsonhumane.org*](#)

The Capital District Transportation Authority announced **CDPHP Cycle!** is gradually rolling out its 2020 summer season, after its delay from COVID-19. Bikes are available near parks and trails for recreational riding with cycling racks located for easy access and proper social distancing. Disinfecting precautions are in place to ensure customer safety. [VISIT *cdphpcycle.com*](#) and [cdta.org](#)

U.S. Representative Antonio Delgado was recognized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce with the inaugural Jefferson-Hamilton Award for Bipartisanship. The award acknowledges members of Congress who have demonstrated a willingness to work across political party lines in support of common objectives. This year’s award was given to 20 members of the house of representatives and 10 senators. [VISIT *delgado.house.gov*](#)



Capture the Moment



Joan Heffler Photography

Joan Heffler Photography is open for business and booking new clients for a full range of services, including corporate headshots, events, portraits, commercial, wedding, real estate and food photography. For ideas and information, contact joan@joanheffler.com. [VISIT *joanhefflerphotography.com*](#)

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION ON EVENTS & FREE WEBINARS

- » 120th Annual Dinner {with a twist} & Business Expo Virtual Celebration [throughout the month of July!](#) Learn how your business can get involved by contacting Rachael Murray at rmurray@renscochamber.com
- » Annual Golf Classic | **Monday, 08/17/20**

Register for Events: renscochamber.com/events



spotlight



Man of Kent
4452 NY Route 7
Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

ph: 518.686.9917
manofkentavern.com

"This place has always been a real team effort and we'll continue doing right by our customers, who have been really great to us. Hopefully, someday soon, we'll be at capacity again."

Man of Kent was serving take-out orders throughout the COVID-19 crisis when owner Jon Bombard took it up a notch. He created a 20' by 30' covered outdoor dining area in time for the state's phased reopenings, giving his loyal clientele more of what they want: a full menu of freshly-made pub fare alongside beers, ales and lagers served by experienced staff in a friendly atmosphere.

"We're doing what so many small businesses are doing — the best we can in a hard situation," said Bombard.

The quaint English Pub on Route 7 stands on the banks of Shingle Hollow Creek, just west of the New York-Vermont border. It's easy to spot: it's the pub with the packed parking lot. A popular draw for all ages, Man of Kent serves everything from wings, burgers and fish and chips to soups, salads and sandwiches named after counties in England. Main entrees include steaks, seafood, chicken, pork, pasta dishes and more. And, of course, there are 16 drafts and more than 130 bottled beers. Add the cozy clutter of sports and English memorabilia (make sure to spot the bobby's helmet) and you've got the Man of Kent experience that keeps so many customers coming back.



News from The Leadership Institute

The Leadership Institute Celebrates Virtual Graduation



The Leadership Institute's Class of 2020 was recognized during an online graduation ceremony and celebration. "Leadership graduates represent the future of our region," said Chamber President Kate Manley. "This year's graduates join more than 400 alumni who use their valuable skills every day to advance their companies and their communities. The talents of these leaders are needed now more than ever and they are answering the call."



The Chamber's award-winning leadership program integrates skill-building with valuable networking opportunities to propel careers to the next level. Taught by accomplished CEOs and professionals, The Leadership Institute is leveraged by businesses of all sizes and industries, as well as non-profit organizations, to develop the potential of exceptional and key staff members. [VISIT \[renscochamber.com/develop-chamber/leadership-institute\]\(http://renscochamber.com/develop-chamber/leadership-institute\)](http://VISIT.renscochamber.com/develop-chamber/leadership-institute)

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