



RENSCOCONNECT

WHERE BUSINESS + COMMUNITY CONVERGE

STATE-WIDE AWARD: 2020 "CHAMBER OF THE YEAR" Chamber Receives Business Council's Top Honor

The Award

Established in memory of regional chamber executive Chuck Steiner, the annual "Chamber of the Year" award honors an outstanding chamber organization in New York State that displays a positive social conscience and commitment to pro-business activities within their community and the state. The award requires the recipient to have an established reputation for delivering a high level of programs and services, while remaining active in state and local business advocacy. Recipients must also show fiscal responsibility and have leadership whose talent, vision, expertise, dedication, and performance have defined them as outstanding chamber leaders.



Chuck Steiner enjoyed a 37-year career leading the Niagara Falls Area

Chamber, the Chamber of Schenectady County and the Capital Region Chamber. He left a lasting impression on the chamber profession and the statewide business community with a legacy of leadership, service and friendship.



The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce received the prestigious "Chuck Steiner Memorial Chamber of the Year Award" for 2020 from The Business Council of New York State, Inc. The award honors the Chamber's exceptional commitment to serving its membership and the business community through leadership, resources and advocacy, making our region a better place to live, work and succeed. With the extraordinary challenges that occurred this year, the Chamber is even more driven to provide timely and effective programs, training and services to its members.



"To all members of the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce – congratulations to YOU! You are the best part of our mission and this award is YOURS," said Chamber President Kate Manley. "We are committed to being your voice, locally and statewide, in times of prosperity and in times of difficulty. We look forward to serving you for many years to come."

"I know my sentiments reflect those of the entire board of directors when I say that I am extremely proud of Kate and the chamber staff for their tremendous work during this very challenging year," said Chamber Board Chairman John Millet. "Under Kate's leadership, the Chamber continues to respond to the evolving needs of our membership and serves as a trusted resource for members needing support and guidance. This award is a fantastic validation of their efforts."

"The Chamber has been a great partner for nearly 70 years," said Heather C. Briccetti, Esq., president and CEO of The Business Council of New York State. "Through continued investment in its members and area businesses, the Chamber promotes a friendly, positive business environment that benefits the entire region. We congratulate the Chamber staff on this well-deserved award."



Since 1900, our Chamber has served its members with programs, resources and advocacy. Representing the needs of over 800 member businesses, the Chamber is the principal business, civic and economic development agency for Rensselaer County and the surrounding gateway communities. The Chamber is focused on building community and our strength is in our members. We look forward to hearing from you! Contact us at 518.274.7020 or visit renscochamber.com

ASK A BOARD MEMBER: Chamber Health Insurance

John Millet, CPA is president of Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc. He has more than 25 years of financial management experience in the insurance, banking and consulting industries.



Q » How can the Chamber assist me with health insurance?

A » As the health insurance benefits administrator for the Chamber, Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc. is committed to enhancing the Chamber's value to members by providing quality health care solutions that are affordable for businesses. Each of your employees can choose the medical plan that works best for them. Employers get a comprehensive benefit offering to meet the health insurance and benefit needs of their diverse workforce. We also keep members up to date on the latest compliance regulations.

Q » What are the advantages?

A » Our team of experts works directly with Chamber member businesses and their employees to navigate options for 2021 and find the right health plan to fit their needs and budget. Employees can choose coverage from various plans with BlueShield of Northeastern New York, Capital District Physicians' Health Plan and MVP Health Care. Plan choices include a wide range of options from co-pay to high-deductible health plans. Bouchey & Clarke helps businesses take advantage of the power of the Chamber to bring affordable value to their employee benefits packages and help attract and retain quality workers. In addition, we provide a range of services to eliminate the administrative burden of managing your employee benefit program. We also have dedicated customer support for benefit and billing issues. We virtually become your designated HR department for health benefits.

Q » How do I get started?

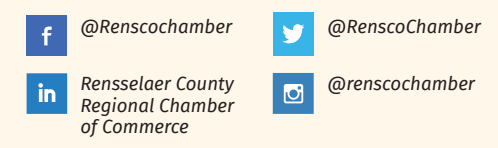
A » November is open enrollment month for coverage starting January 1, 2021. Now is the time to get the facts in order to make the best choices for you and your employees. For more information or to schedule a consultation, Chamber members can visit boucheyclarke.com or email mam@boucheyclarke.com.

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.

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

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Member Milestones

35 Years

Warren. W. Fane, Inc.

United Way of the Greater Capital Region

20 Years

Southern Tier Insulations

15 Years

New York Independent System Operator (NISO)

School Systems FCU

10 Years

Flowers by Pesha, LLC



MEMBER BENEFIT

Let the Chamber Promote Your Ribbon-Cutting Event!

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is an important part of your overall marketing and advertising plan. It's a great way to kick-off a reopening after COVID, a new business, an expansion or relocation. Ribbon cuttings can also mark milestone events or the opening of newly-renovated space. The Chamber assists members to celebrate ribbon cuttings throughout the year. Let us help with your upcoming event by contacting us prior to choosing a date. We'll help you organize, plan and host a high-impact ribbon cutting that will get your business the exposure it deserves.

Ribbon cuttings are presented by the Chamber, in partnership with Rensselaer County IDA. Contact **Tom Engle** at 518.687.1243 or tengle@renscochamber.com.

RENSSELAER COUNTY

life looks good from here™

Member News



Wojeski and Company CPAs, P.C. appointed Rick Jones as the firm's first-ever chief executive officer. The former president and CEO of a leading-edge mechanical technology manufacturer, Jones oversees Wojeski's day-to-day operations, strategic planning and execution, enabling founder and Partner David Wojeski to focus on enhancing client service

and expanding the company's business capabilities and portfolio. VISIT wojeskico.com

Smith & Jones, now powered by **Overit**, released its annual *Healthcare Marketing Trends Report*, highlighting the top 10 marketing strategies, tactics and innovations for leaders to be successful in a COVID economy. "This year's report is so important, especially for systems that have put off their marketing efforts since March," said Vice President Paul Fahey. "It serves as a guide for the short and long-term decisions they'll be making." VISIT smithandjones.com/resources/ebooks

Digital XPress, a company specializing in print and direct mail marketing, announced the hiring of two junior sales associates, Jeremy Pariseau and Joe Romano (l-r). They are responsible for working with local businesses on print, mail and design projects and for developing client relationships. VISIT dxp1.com



Excelsior College partnered with two technology companies to enhance opportunities for its distance-learning students. ed2go, a leader in online adult continuing education and career training, provides Excelsior students in 50 states and more than 16 countries with access to online, non-credit courses to gain marketable workforce skills. In addition, Excelsior offers students free online, 24/7 tutoring services through TutorMe. The partnership gives Excelsior students access to a network of 12,000 tutors in more than 300 subjects. VISIT excelsior.edu

Bob Talham, Inc., a paving, construction and excavation company, donated \$20,000 and a car to **Unity House of Troy, Inc.'s** "Making Child Care Affordable Initiative," part of the nonprofit's Major Gifts Campaign for the Working Poor. The gift helps working families who are ineligible for child care subsidies but who can't afford the full cost of day care to bridge the financial gap and maintain steady employment. VISIT talhaminblacktoppaving.com and unityhousesny.org

Help for Nonprofits

Endorphin Digital Marketing launched a program offering pro-bono website design for local nonprofits. The program's focus is on smaller or newer community-focused organizations that lack a well-developed digital presence, particularly those serving the economically disadvantaged, minorities and women. VISIT endorphindigital.com

The GLOBALFOUNDRIES-Town of Malta Foundation is accepting grant applications for its next round of funding to support local community organizations. Applications can be submitted electronically or downloaded and mailed by November 6. For instructions and links, [VISIT https://sites.google.com/site/gfmaltafoundationorg/home](https://sites.google.com/site/gfmaltafoundationorg/home)

Feasting at Home



Mazzone Hospitality unveiled new catering menus for a variety of fall events, from tailgate parties to pizza nights to family dinners. Discover entertaining ideas and build your own menus online or call 518.690.0293 to place an order. VISIT mazzonehospitality.com

Empire State Development announced a new round of Paycheck Protection Program assistance from the New York Forward Loan Fund. Low-interest, working capital loans are available to small businesses who were previously deemed ineligible or those who received less than \$50,000. Eligible small businesses and small residential landlords can apply for a 60-month, no-fee loan with a 3% fixed interest rate; while eligible non-profits can apply for a 60-month, no-fee loan at 2% fixed interest. The maximum loan amount is \$100,000. VISIT nyloanfund.com

CEO Celebrates 55 Years



CEO is marking 55 years of empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty. As Rensselaer County's Community Action Agency,

CEO offers the tools people need to become self sufficient through more than 20 programs, including Early Childhood Education, Employment and Financial Education, Family and Education Support, Healthy Homes and Health & Wellness. CEO offers its services through collaborations with community partners in government, education, medicine and other non-profit agencies. In celebration of this year's milestone anniversary, CEO is asking for financial support for its Thanksgiving food packages and for the upgrading of its Rensselaer Family Resource Center playground, featuring STEM-focused equipment. Online donations are being accepted or donors can shop through CEO's Amazon wish list. VISIT ceoempowers.com

EventsCalendar 2020 Visit renscochamber.com to register for these upcoming events

NOV 16-20 **"Connect with Careers" Week**
A workforce initiative of the Chamber, we're helping students explore careers and discover pathways to identify and pursue their passions. Featuring a new business professional from a diverse industry each day, these videos will be available online.

📍 **Virtual presentations Monday, November 16 to Friday, November 20.** To view videos, visit renscochamber.com throughout the week. *Sponsored by CAP COM and Hoosick Valley Contractors.*

DEC 06-20 **Troy Victorian Stroll**
Kick off your holiday shopping in downtown Troy! This year's Stroll will be a THREE WEEK celebration of shops and eateries, starting on Sunday, December 6. Shop unique retailers and enjoy dining in a safe, fun and festive holiday atmosphere. Check our Stroll website daily for updated events and special promotions.

📍 **Sunday, December 6 to Sunday, December 20.** For the latest information about special events, visit victorianstroll.com.

THU DEC 10 **College President Virtual Panel Discussion**
Hear from the presidents of area colleges and universities. Bring your ideas to participate in a dynamic, interactive Q&A.

📍 **Virtual event via Zoom, 9 to 10:30 a.m. EST.** Register online at renscochamber.com. *Sponsored by architecture+; Duncan & Cahill, Inc.; Mosaic Associates Architects; and UHY LLP.*

THU DEC 17 **Quick Learn: Maintaining Your Website with WordPress**
Learn how to maintain an existing WordPress site, from content to publishing. This course focuses on updating content, links, images and publishing changes. Capped at 12 attendees, with a limit of one person per company.

📍 **Webinar 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. EST** No cost. Register online at renscochamber.com. *Presented by the Chamber, in partnership with MicroKnowledge, Inc.*

spotlight

Rocky's MUSIC STUDIO

Rocky's Music Studio

564 Bloomingrove Drive
Rensselaer, NY 12144

ph: 518.429.6380
rockysmusicstudio.com

Located on Route 4 in North Greenbush, Rocky's Music Studio is a locally-owned shop specializing in musical instruction for students of all ages, abilities and styles. Rocky's also features an onsite retail store with music books, supplies and instruments. Reopening during phase two of COVID, the small business is providing both remote and in-person music instruction, welcoming students and customers in accordance with

New York's health regulations. "It's been tough, but our music teachers really pulled through and we've lost a minimal number of students," said Rocky Petrocelli, owner. "We've gotten a lot of calls from new people of all ages and most of them want to do in-person lessons. They are ready for the uplifting experience of playing music. That's what we do here — we help people experience the joy of music and performing"

In an encouraging learning environment that emphasizes the fundamentals of music and theory, students from 5 to 80 years old can

start learning an instrument, become more musically proficient or rediscover the joy of playing. Area school band directors recommend Rocky's to students for lessons and supplies and the shop is a magnet for professional players, especially drummers who know Rocky from his own music career. These regional and international musicians

hold clinics and masterclasses for students, passing on their deep expertise to a new generation. Throughout the year, Rocky's hosts student recitals and concerts to give students the opportunity to play in real-life venues. The two largest events are "Winter Mini Jam for Make- A-Wish Foundation" and "Ernie Williams Memorial Blues Camp and Blues Fest," which benefits various children's charities. "The goal is to give them the experience of playing together in a place like Skyloft or Jupiter Hall," said Rocky. "All of their lessons and practicing comes together and they get the thrill of making music and sharing it with others." VISIT rockysmusicstudio.com



POST YOUR MEMBER NEWS

What's New? Send it to the Chamber!

Everyday, online visitors check out our website's Member News page for the latest announcements and noteworthy happenings from our members. Do we have YOUR news? The Chamber wants to share your business or organization's successes with members and non-members alike and help you get recognition for honors, awards, promotions, new hires, milestones, celebrations, relocations, events and employee recognition. New client? Expanding your services? Submit your news to our website by using the Chamber's online form at renscochamber.com/news. Member news items uploaded to the website are also considered for the Chamber's weekly e-Newsletter and monthly print newsletter. For assistance, contact Tom Engle at tengle@renscochamber.com

VIRTUAL TRAINING | DECEMBER 17

Using WordPress for Your Website

If you've got a website through WordPress, our newest Quick Learn virtual class will build your skills and ensure you get the biggest impact possible for online exposure. Learn how to

maintain an existing WordPress site, from content to publishing. This free course focuses on updating content, links, images and publishing changes. Ensure your WordPress site is optimized and driving customers to your business.



THU
DEC
17

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Webinar 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. EST. No cost. The class is capped at 12 attendees, with a limit of one person per company, so register today! Presented by the Chamber in partnership with MicroKnowledge, Inc.

Check Out These Chamber Benefits

Here's a quick reminder of important benefits we offer to you and all of your employees. For additional member benefits, visit renscochamber.com.

✓ ONLINE JOBS & VOLUNTEER BOARD

Find your next employee, intern or volunteer with the Chamber's online Jobs, Intern & Volunteer Board. Post your opportunities at renscochamber.com/develop-chamber/job-internship-volunteer-board, one of our most-visited pages, and reach the right candidates from around the region at no charge. Positions are reviewed before publication.



✓ COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BOARD



Real estate is a critical element in growing your business. If you're looking to expand or relocate, the Chamber's Commercial Real Estate Board offers a comprehensive, searchable database of available industrial and office buildings. In addition, you can post (at no cost) your available commercial

properties for buy or lease. Post your listings at renscochamber.com/develop-chamber/commercial-properties.

✓ MEMBER-TO-MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Our Member-to-Member Discount Program encourages a valuable exchange of discounted business products and services among Chamber members. It's a great way to attract new customers to your business AND enjoy considerable discounts yourself. Use it to shop local and build networking contacts. To view available discounts and to submit a discount from your company using an online form, visit renscochamber.com/member-to-member-discounts.



News from The Leadership Institute



The Leadership Institute's Class of 2021 participated in a "Leadership & Strategic Thinking" session in October (photos at left). The day featured executive presenters, including Guha Bala, president, Velan Ventures, Inc.; Debra J.M. Best, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, owner and principal, Deb Best Practices;



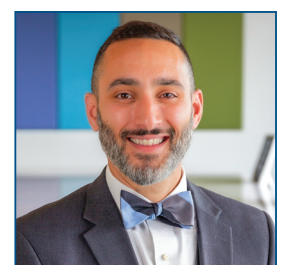
Gary Dake, president, Stewart's Shops Corp; Brian O'Grady, executive vice president, commercial business and CMO, CDPHP; Denise Padula, president, Alchar Printing; and James K. Reed, MD, president and CEO, St. Peter's Health Partners. Special thanks to the Hilton Garden Inn in Troy for hosting the program.

Learn more about The Leadership Institute by visiting renscochamber.com/leadership-institute.



The Leadership Institute is sponsored by CDPHP

Eli Rabinowitz '12 was promoted to Vice President – Agency Manager for Pioneer. Working with senior leadership, he will lead Pioneer's insurance agency, guiding strategy for program growth, training of team members and marketing of resources through collaborative efforts with Pioneer's retail and business banking, wealth management and employee benefit teams. VISIT pioneer.com



Submit your Leadership Institute alumni news to Communications Manager Tom Engle at tengle@renscochamber.com.

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BRIAN WILLIAMS
Rensselaer County Employment & Resource Center

* Executive committee members



Upcoming Events for Your Calendar

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | NOVEMBER 16-20

“Connect with Careers” for Students & Educators



Taking a lead role in building the future of the region’s workforce readiness, the Chamber presents “Connect with Careers Week,” a virtual series for students to explore careers and discover pathways to identify and pursue their passions. Featuring a new business professional from a different industry each day, these videos will continue to be available online as a resource for students and educators during a time when large in-person presentations are limited due to COVID restrictions.

Experts agree — workforce readiness requires collaboration between education and business. Every year, the Chamber’s workforce readiness events seek to find ways to develop a strong pipeline of workers for economic prosperity. “Careers Week” is the result of focus groups and feedback from businesses and educators about the immediate need of students to connect with professionals from a variety of industries and backgrounds. Students will gain insight from the shared stories of these professionals, including the importance of transferable skills and non-linear paths to career success.

This initiative honors the late Bob Horan, superintendent of the Schodack Central School District. We seek to carry on his commitment to foster dynamic partnerships between business and education for a vibrant, workforce-ready community.

Videos posted daily the week of 11/16!

🕒 Keep an eye on the Chamber’s website and social pages for daily videos posted November 16 - 20th. Sponsored by CAP COM and Hoosick Valley Contractors, Inc.



Shop, Dine and Explore Historic Downtown Troy all month long during this year’s ‘Stroll Season’



‘2020 STROLL SEASON’ Begins Sunday, December 6



Visit VictorianStroll.com to learn more!

Sponsored by:



PIONEER | All Together Forward

Presented by:



Mask Up!



COLLEGE PRESIDENTS PANEL DISCUSSION | A

Find Out How Area College Campuses Are Adapting

Discover what’s new in higher education and how local colleges are adjusting to campus life under COVID regulations at the Chamber’s College President’s Panel Discussion.



This extraordinary forum brings you the latest news from the region’s leading colleges and universities as they discuss their academic communities, future plans and challenges in a quickly-evolving world, including the challenges, strategies and opportunities that have arisen as a result of COVID. Our guests will discuss the dynamic ways their faculties, students and administrators have responded to an unforgettable year and what campus life looks like now. Set up as a virtual panel discussion via Zoom, this perennial Chamber event will feature a panel of presidents from local colleges and universities as well as a moderator. A live Q&A will follow the discussion, so come prepared to join the conversation.

Register on renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom. Thursday, December 10, 9 to 10:30 a.m. EST. Sponsored by architecture +; Duncan & Cahill, Inc; Mosaic Associates Architects; and UHY LLP.

architecture+



MOSAIC ASSOCIATES

UHY LLP Certified Public Accountants

Excelsior College Ahead of the Online Education Curve



Online learning? For Excelsior College, it’s business as usual. The 100% online degree completion college is located in Albany and offers nearly 100 degree programs that are readily accessible and safely delivered to students anywhere in the world, 24/7.

During the pandemic, Excelsior has been offering its expertise to other colleges, reaching out through the Chamber to pass along its seamless education delivery and best practices. Meet Excelsior’s new president, David Schejbal, at the Chamber’s College President’s virtual event. Register today!