



RENSCONNECT

WHERE BUSINESS + COMMUNITY CONVERGE

FROM OUR PRESIDENT'S DESK

Chamber Provides Connectivity & Community

Is there anyone who isn't glad to see the end of 2020? Here at the Chamber, we're diving into 2021 knowing that the turn of the calendar holds the promise of new opportunities and a shared commitment to the renewal of our communities. Through serving and advocating for our member businesses and organizations, we strive to grow our local economy in sustainable and healthful ways, bringing a better quality of life for everyone.

Lessons Learned

If we learned anything from last year, it's that connectivity and belonging are necessary attributes for successful communities. Both begin with a decision and continue through actions, making tangible differences in the professional and personal lives of people. In particular,



Joan Heffler Photography

"Great advice for 2021? Engage, engage, engage. Let the Chamber help you navigate a challenging business climate and be an extension, a 'partner' in your success."

Chamber President Kate Manley

we learned from our members that the Chamber is a touchstone, a place of community in itself, where members can get the latest business resources, share experiences, discover new ideas and strategies and be part of something positive that is bigger than themselves. This is what the Chamber's purpose has always been but the pandemic served to heighten both the need and the importance of our organization's mission.

Purposeful Communication

In speaking to members throughout the course of the past year, we learned that some who turned to us for information and resources had never actively engaged with the Chamber before, or had engaged in a limited way. Other members, who were already engaged, intuitively reached out even more, seeking to break their isolation and find out how other businesses were adjusting to the drastic changes brought about by COVID-19. All of our members were looking to us to keep the communication flowing, trusting the Chamber to help them keep a finger on the pulse of local business. We became, like the

hub of a wheel, a center point for the connectivity and belonging of the Rensselaer County business community. It is this real, tangible sense of connectivity that makes all the difference to weathering the storms as they come and renewing opportunities for businesses.

Navigating for New Growth

The Chamber's training, educational and networking programs, which continue in virtual format for now, continue to bring together like-minded business professionals. Our CEO Roundtables, which attracted more than 90 participants in 2020, are an invaluable forum for company owners and leaders as they learn to navigate uncharted business waters. Interestingly, our business community continues to reinvent itself. The Chamber consistently receives phone calls and contacts from entrepreneurs looking to

start new businesses. In just the last two months of 2020, the Chamber attended six ribbon-cutting celebrations. These passionate people are doubling down on following their dreams of owning their own successful businesses.

Building on a Firm Foundation

For more than 120 years, the Chamber has been a steadfast partner to our member businesses, a vibrant center of information, resources, assistance and support. **We are also a community that helps one another.** Thank you for being part of our Chamber. Please contact us with your ideas, challenges and updates — we look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Kate Manley

kmanley@renscochamber.com

ASK A BOARD MEMBER:

Virtual Training & Education



Kathleen Pingelski is the owner of MicroKnowledge, Inc. and president of its affiliated professional development training company, ProKnowledge, LLC. She manages client accounts and new business development for both companies. With 26 years of experience creating

and delivering programs to end-users and professional trainers, Kathleen collaborates with clients to create effective, efficient training plans and regularly presents to customers, associations and community organizations about the use of technology in the workplace.

Q » How have your companies adjusted to the pandemic and changing models of business?

A » We changed our business models for both MicroKnowledge and ProKnowledge in a weekend, from 99% in-person training to 100% remote delivery. MicroKnowledge also has had the opportunity to utilize our skill sets to train and support COVID-19 contact tracers and contact investigators in New York and Colorado on the CommCare application, which is used for contact tracing in both states. It has been a great business opportunity and allows us to do meaningful work during the pandemic. In house, MicroKnowledge and ProKnowledge have been able to maintain our team cultures via MS Teams. Many days, it is like we are all sitting right next to each other, even though we are miles apart. We have also hosted virtual happy hours, holiday activities and informal virtual lunches in the "breakroom." Maintaining our team culture is key to our success and growth.

Q » What makes the Chamber's Quick Learn series so attractive for businesses?

A » Quick Learn sessions are designed to focus on a specific topic, targeting a user's knowledge gap. Rather than overload the learner with a "fire hose" of information, we focus on a topic or feature that is particularly relevant for the learner. Many adult learners can retain smaller chunks of information that build upon one another. So we may need to cover eight hours of content, but by breaking it down into three to four short sessions it works more effectively for the learner. It also fits their busy schedules better to dedicate two to three hours in a day, rather than an entire workday.

Q » What do you bring to your service on the Chamber's Board of Directors?

A » Having worked in training and development for almost 30 years, I am excited to participate on the board's education committee and to share ideas, especially regarding potential educational programs that would be beneficial to members, as well as their employees. I am looking forward to sharing my perspective as a small business, assisting the Chamber in its mission to reach out to all of our members, meeting them where they are in their business challenges and helping them to succeed.

HEAR FROM EXPERTS | FEBRUARY 03

Join the Chamber for a 2021 Economic Outlook

Take an insider's look at how current economic and geopolitical environments will impact markets and this year's financial cycle with the Chamber's "2021 Economic Outlook."

This no-cost virtual discussion with Bouchey Financial Group's investment team will help you navigate important macroeconomic factors and give you the knowledge to make informed business decisions.

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom on Wednesday, February 3, 1 to 2 p.m., EST. No cost. Presented in partnership with Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd. Sponsored by HMA Paving & Contracting.



OUR PRESENTERS



Steven B. Bouchey, CFP® (left), president and CEO of Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd.; **Ryan S. Bouchey**, CFP®, CPA (center), vice president; and **Martin X. Shields** CFP®, AIF (right), vice president.

Member Milestones

15 Years

Country View Diner
NBT Bank, NA
Pioneer

10 Years

Albany Diocesan Cemeteries

5 Years

Summit Living Center
WMHT Educational
Telecommunications

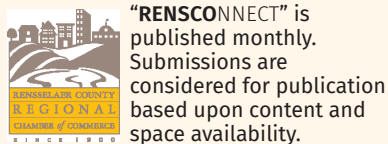
New Members

Academy of the Holy Names
Education
Rep: Nora Ritinski
1075 New Scotland Road
Albany, NY 12208
Phone: 518.438.7895
[VISIT ahns.org](#)

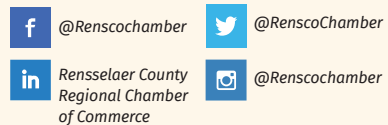
The La'jev Brand
Beauty Consultant
Rep: Latis Vance
600 Thirteenth Street, Apt. 3
Watervliet, NY 12189
Phone: 518.256.6012
[VISIT thelajevbrand.com](#)

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance
Non-profit Organization
Rep: Jim Bonesteel
17 Old Route 66
Averill Park, NY 12018
Phone: 518.712.9211
[VISIT rensselearplateau.org](#)

Please remember to patronize your fellow Chamber members. You can also invite businesses and organizations to join our growing Chamber. Contact us at info@renscochamber.com or 518.274.7020 to learn more.

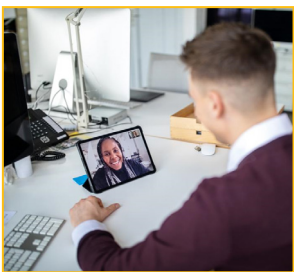


Kate Manley, President
90 Fourth Street, Suite 200
Troy, NY 12180
ph: 518.274.7020 | renscochamber.com
Editor: Doreen M. Ercolano
Co-Editor: Tom Engle
Design: Spiral Design Studio, LLC



The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce is the proud recipient of the 2020 Chuck Steiner Memorial "Chamber of the Year" Award presented by The Business Council of New York State, Inc.

Member News



Questar III BOCES launched "Career Pathways," an ongoing virtual series to connect K-12 school counselors, teachers and administrators with local businesses to explore career paths available to students. The aim is to foster ties between education and local industry

to help educators point students towards greater job opportunities. Virtual tours, keynote addresses and Q&A sessions show how industry and education can partner to address workforce development needs. [VISIT questar.org](#)

LaBella Associates, a leading multi-discipline design firm, acquired **The Chazen Companies**, adding 179 staff members to its growing company. The acquisition furthers LaBella's presence in New York and Tennessee while adding its first West Coast office in Portland, Oregon. [VISIT labellapc.com](#) and [chazencompanies.com](#)

Hudson Valley Community College and SUNY Polytechnic Institute signed an agreement to provide seamless transfers for students in more than 20 degree programs. Students who earn an associates degree at Hudson Valley may transfer as a junior to SUNY Poly through 29 bachelor's degree programs in business and the liberal arts. The agreement gives students access to quality, affordable higher education. [VISIT hvcc.edu](#)

SEFCU's second "No Neighbor Hungry" campaign, in partnership with News10 ABC, raised \$347,300 to help 30 local food pantries and shelters stock their shelves during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To spearhead this effort, SEFCU matched \$167,300 in community donations, committing \$180,000 to the campaign. [VISIT sefcu.com](#)



Excelsior College is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2021. An accredited, non-profit, online college that helps adults complete their degrees and advance their careers, Excelsior has more than 182,000 alumni from around the world. Since its founding, the college has continued to advance the landscape of higher education with its innovative approach of meeting students where they are. Excelsior students earn degrees through credit aggregation, competency-based education and prior learning assessment. [VISIT excelsior.edu](#)

New Hires



eBizDocs appointed Eric Steiner as its newest account manager. His responsibility is to identify potential clients and demonstrate the value of the eBizDocs solution, which helps organizations reduce costs, protect valuable information and improve the accessibility of documents. [VISIT ebizdocs.com](#)

Russell Sage College named Shelly Calabrese executive director of The Women's Institute. She is former senior director of leadership gifts in Sage's Office of Institutional Advancement and was serving as interim director of The Women's Institute since August. [VISIT sage.edu](#)



Building Success



Wiley Brothers, Inc., a quality lumber and home improvement business at 1854 NY Route 40 in Schaghticoke, was acquired by Curtis Lumber as its newest location in Rensselaer County. The store will carry Curtis Lumber's premium products and superior hardware assortment and offer expertise to builders and homeowners. A family-owned and operated business for 75 years, all Wiley Brothers employees were offered positions with Curtis Lumber. [VISIT wileybrothersinc.com](#)

Hill & Markes, an award-winning, family-owned wholesale distributor of food service, janitorial, office and industrial supplies and natural/clean foods, welcomed Ted Jackson to its advisory board. A senior vice president of paper operations for Novolex, a North American leader in packaging, he brings to the board more than 20 years of experience in supply chain, mergers/acquisitions and human relations strategies to support Hill & Markes' planning and development. [VISIT hillnmarkes.com](#)



Stewart's Shops/Dake Family Foundation made a major financial donation to **STRIDE Adaptive Sports** to maintain the nonprofit's sports and recreational programs for children with disabilities throughout 2021. STRIDE plans to conduct 18 innovative and fun programs for individuals with disabilities this year. [VISIT stride.org](#) and [dakefoundation.org](#)

Play Ball!



The Tri-City ValleyCats became the 16th member of the Frontier League, the largest and longest running independent professional baseball league. The Frontier League is an official

Partner League of Major League Baseball (MLB) and annually moves the most players into MLB organizations from any independent league. The league plays a 96-game schedule in 2021, including 48 home games at the Joseph L. Bruno Stadium in Troy. With 81 former ValleyCats reaching Major League Baseball, eight division titles, three New York-Penn League championships and a history of loyal fan support, the team has a consistent track record of success both on the field and in the stands. **For information on new mini plans and season tickets for 2021, visit valleycats.com.**

EventsCalendar 2021

[Visit renscochamber.com to register for these upcoming events](#)

WED
FEB
03

Ask the Experts: 2021 Economic Outlook
An insider's forecast of 2021's economy and the factors that

will shape it. Learn what you need to know to make business decisions in the coming year.

🕒 **Virtual event via Zoom, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., EST.** No cost. Register online at [renscochamber.com](#). Sponsorships are available. Presented in partnership with *Bouche Financial Group, Ltd.* Sponsored by *HMA Paving & Contracting*.

WED
FEB
17

NetworkingPlus
Get connected, develop leads and build relationships at our popular networking event,

gone virtual! Reconnect at this fast-paced event including three breakout room rotations and a system designed to avoid repeat introductions. You are guaranteed to leave with new business contacts.

🕒 **Virtual event via Zoom, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST.** No cost. Register online at [renscochamber.com](#). Sponsored by *Sunmark Credit Union*.

FRI
FEB
26

Meet The Legislators
Hear from key decision makers and voice your opinions on local issues and

concerns. Panel discussion includes New York State Senators Neil D. Breslin and Daphne Jordan and New York State Assemblymen Jake Ashby and John T. McDonald III.

🕒 **Virtual event via Zoom, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., EST.** No cost. Register online at [renscochamber.com](#). Sponsored by *National Grid, Pioneer and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*.


TUE
MAR
02

Ask the Experts: Pivoting Playbook
Evaluate your business for pivoting opportunities and learn tips for success.

Presented by Kate Baker, interim director, New York State Small Business Development Center.

🕒 **Virtual event via Zoom, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST.** No cost; members only. Register online at [renscochamber.com](#). Ask the Experts series sponsor is *CAP COM Federal Credit Union*. Program sponsored by *The Doane Stuart School*.

spotlight



INTiDYN
Integrated Tissue Dynamics

7 University Place • Rensselaer, NY 12144
ph: 866.610.7581 intidyn.com

chronic pain. INTiDYN uses its pioneering ITD-CMA platform to detect disease-related chemical, structural and genetic changes in biopsies of complex tissues, especially human skin. This provides academic, pharmaceutical and biotechnology clients worldwide with expeditious customized research, actionable data and comprehensive interpretative expertise. Based on 50 years of collective biomedical research experience, documented in more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, the company's ability to produce greatly enhanced project outcomes has identified an essential unfulfilled niche market. Further, INTiDYN's small size, collaborative spirit and deep commitment to thinking outside of the box enables the company to be a

INTiDYN (Integrated Tissue Dynamics) is a biomedical research firm founded in 2008 by internationally renowned neuroscientists. The company's purpose is to propel basic and clinical research discoveries into the development of effective and safe therapeutics, especially for

nimble research partner, pursuing discoveries wherever the paths may lead. INTiDYN's ideas have created therapeutics that are entering initial clinical tests. One is for treating fibromyalgia, based on their finding of a rational biological source of pain in the skin. Another is for neurofibromatosis, rooted in their discovery of the source for the disfiguring skin tumors of this rare and debilitating genetic disease. Other discoveries are contributing to potential therapeutics for complex regional pain syndrome, diabetic neuropathy and irritable bowel syndrome. "The skin, with its complex nerve and blood supply, is the site of hundreds of chronic, debilitating diseases that notoriously respond poorly to existing therapeutics," said Dr. Frank Rice, co-founder. "The good news is that the skin, as the body's largest and particularly complex organ, provides a cost-effective and accessible window into what is happening within the body, including the nervous, cardiovascular, immune and endocrine systems. Analyzing complex skin tissue gives us a unique perspective in which to view disease and to discover new effective treatments."



Upcoming Events for Your Calendar

NETWORKINGPLUS | FEBRUARY 17

Discover Business Leads and New Conversations

Get connected, develop leads and build relationships at our virtual NetworkingPlus events. Our one-of-a-kind, fast-paced networking program helps you reconnect with business professionals, including three breakout room rotations and a system designed to avoid repeat introductions. You are guaranteed to leave with new business contacts for maximum impact. Share conversations and discover business strategies as you discuss adapting in a time of social distancing, remote working and more. Take advantage of opportunities to present your business or organization to other professionals. Register for this free program today!

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom on Wednesday, February 17, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST. No cost. Sponsored by Sunmark Credit Union.



LOCAL ISSUES, STATE REPRESENTATIVES | FEBRUARY 26

Meet the Legislators and Join the Discussion

State representatives will participate in an informative panel discussion at the Chamber's Meet the Legislators virtual event. Join us as we meet with these elected officials: (clockwise from upper left) New York State Senators Neil D. Breslin and Daphne Jordan and New York State Assemblymen Jake Ashby and John T. McDonald III. Take advantage of this opportunity to hear from key decision makers and voice your opinions on local issues. Attendees will get a first-hand perspective into the legislative activities at the Capitol. Submit your questions in advance and get ready to join the conversation!

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom on Friday, February 26, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., EST. No cost. Sponsored by National Grid, Pioneer and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.



ASK THE EXPERTS | MARCH 02

Learn a Pivot Playbook

Re-evaluating your business for pivoting opportunities is critical in a Covid-19 era. Welcome to our Ask the Expert's "Pivoting Playbook," a no-cost webinar designed to help you identify the best pivot for your business. Discover a new direction and learn take-away tips for executing a strategy for success. Presented by Kate Baker, interim director of the New York State Small Business Development Center.

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom on Tuesday, March 2, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST. No cost. Ask the Experts series sponsor is CAP COM Federal Credit Union. Program sponsored by The Doane Stuart School.



ASK THE EXPERTS | APRIL 22

Discover Futurescaping

Tired of spinning your wheels? Need a path to the future? Register today for the Chamber's no-cost Ask the Expert's webinar, "Futurescaping: The Entrepreneur's Approach to Strategic Planning." Futurescaping is the newest approach to goal-oriented growth and business development based on purposeful decision making. Presented by Kate Baker, interim director of the New York State Small Business Development Center, this session will give an overview of the futurescaping process, tips for your business and ways to implement a new plan.

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom on Thursday, April 22, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST. No cost. Ask the Experts series sponsor is CAP COM Federal Credit Union. Additional sponsorships are available.



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TIRED OF PLAYING

LOST AND FOUND?



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