



RENSCOCONNECT

WHERE BUSINESS + COMMUNITY CONVERGE

MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW BOARD CHAIR

Welcome to A New Year with New Opportunities



Are you ready for 2021? As the new chair of the Chamber's Board of Directors, I'd like to invite you to a brand new year full of opportunities to market your business, develop your skills and connect with other professionals. At a time when the ongoing COVID virus continues

to confront us with challenges, the Chamber is more committed than ever to providing impactful resources, training and advocacy for our members in every way we can. The Chamber finished 2020 — arguably the most difficult year in generations for businesses — with strong numbers of new and retained members. Our members see value in supporting the Chamber and count on us to help them find solutions to unprecedented workplace challenges. Our mission in 2021 is to help you maximize your membership and ensure that you take full advantage of all the benefits the Chamber offers.

Make Connections that Count

A great way to make the most of your membership is to get engaged through our programs. Chamber events *bring people together*. Thanks to virtual technology, popular programs such as NetworkingPlus, Ask the Experts and CEO Roundtables, as well as signature events like the Annual Dinner and Van Rensselaer Awards, continue to provide practical and informative opportunities to come together, share stories, discuss strategies, learn from top professionals and celebrate successes in our business community. We will continue to offer a free, virtual format for events throughout the first quarter of 2021. Feedback from members tells us there are definite upsides to virtual get-togethers, including convenience for busy schedules and safe access to experiences that enrich your organization. In fact, we're seeing a lot of new faces at our events, members who have never attended Chamber programs before. They bring with them fresh perspectives and diverse backgrounds that enhance the time we spend together.

Market Your Brand

Now is the time to build your core business brand, both during the pandemic and beyond. Clients and consumers are attracted to businesses that show strength through their brands and trust those who present a consistent and accessible message. Deepen customer relationships by leveraging the Chamber's audience online at renscochamber.com. No-cost ways to get the word out about your organization include participating in NetworkingPlus programs, sending us a few lines about your company news (email_tengle@renscochamber.com) and posting to our Jobs & Volunteer Board. You can also post items to our Member Calendar and Commercial Real Estate Board. And make sure you're connected to our social media platforms. In addition, the Chamber offers high-impact sponsorships and advertising in print and online, with affordable options for every budget. For more ideas, visit our website and explore your options.

"Communication is the key to success and we want to hear from YOU. How we can help you find the solutions you need?"

Edwin Anker, RA, AIA,
Phinney Design Group,
2021 Chamber Chair

Leading the Way

As an alumnus and former committee chair, I am particularly proud of The Leadership Institute and the Chamber's role in preparing leaders for today and tomorrow. This award-winning program integrates skill-building with valuable networking opportunities to propel careers to the next level. This March, our

newest graduates will join more than 350 alumni who are transforming workplaces and communities with their enhanced skill sets. If 2020 taught us anything, it's that we need talented leaders to step forward. The Chamber will soon be accepting applications for the Class of 2022. Stay tuned to our website for details and online applications.

Keep the Conversation Going

The Chamber is here to respond to your business needs and challenges. Every day, our staff works to provide resources to help you succeed. Please feel free to contact us with your comments and ideas.

May you and your family have a safe and happy New Year,

ASK A BOARD MEMBER:

Membership & Involvement

Patrice Perkins is Director of Startup Grind NY - Capital Region. Startup Grind is an independent startup community actively connecting more than 3.5 million entrepreneurs in 125 countries. Locally, Patrice leads monthly conversations with successful business leaders who share lessons they learned while building great companies. She has more than 25 years of experience in the private, non-profit and state government sectors as a business analyst, researcher and content creator.



Q » Tell us about Startup Grind.

A » Startup Grind launched in 2010 in Silicon Valley and is the world's largest global community of passionate and creative entrepreneurs. I founded Startup Grind Capital Region NY in 2014 and we've built a community of diverse yet like-minded people who gather to connect, learn and glean from the stories of luminaries across our region. We welcome and promote companies at all stages: new, mature or not-yet-built. During our discussions, my guests share wins, losses and the best practices that have led to their success. Startup Grind Capital Region NY is where students, startup founders, "wantrepreneurs," and mature business owners gather to hear best practices and actionable nuggets that will help them flourish in their lives and companies.

Q » What does your professional experience bring to the Chamber's Board of Directors?

A » First, my experience in private, non-profit and state government sectors, previous service on other boards and chairing a committee at the United Way. Second, I bring strong analytical and organizational abilities to engage key leadership and internal divisional stakeholders from my role as an industry-agnostic business analyst and project manager. Finally, there are several qualities I acquired during my global travels as a youthful Army brat that have already proven helpful in my board work: adaptability, negotiation, humor and resilience. These traits inform my practice today and have proven to be invaluable assets during the past year of unprecedented health and financial challenges and pervasive racial unrest.

Q » As chair of the Chamber's Strategic Initiatives Committee, what's in store for this year?

A » As we enter 2021, we continue in the "business definitely not as usual" vein. The pandemic caused us to realize our ability and greatness to shine, even in our darkest moments. For the Chamber, the 2020 crisis showed our agility to be a leading business resource for the region. Although the Strategic Plan already had a DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) objective, last year's widespread racial unrest prompted a renewed focus on increasing members' awareness of the benefits of a diverse workforce. This year we will continue to work towards accomplishing the Chamber's mission to advance these goals and objectives that directly benefit you, our members, and we invite your input.

Market. Develop. Connect.

RENSCOCHAMBER.COM

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Member Milestones

35 Years

Jeffery L. Adams, DDS

15 Years

H2H Geoscience Engineering, PLLC

5 Years

IzCreations

Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing

Newly Elected Board Members Announced

The Chamber extends a warm welcome to the newest members of its board of directors, elected in December. Each has a three-year term, beginning in January 2021. For a full listing of the Chamber's board of directors, see page 3. We look forward to working with these talented professionals as we continue to grow the Chamber and serve our membership:

ASHLEY CASTLE
GlobalFoundries

CHRISTOPHER CONWAY
AMRI

REEVE HAMILTON
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

KENDRA HART
Martin Electric

CHRISTOPHER LOSZYNSKI
DeCrescente Distributing

KATHLEEN PINGELSKI
MicroKnowledge, Inc.

ELIZABETH REISS
The Arts Center of the Capital Region

STARLETTA R. SMITH
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region, Inc.

CECIL F. STODGHILL
The Doane Stuart School



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Member News



Tech Valley High School appointed Dr. Amy W. Hawrylchak its new chief academic officer/principal, effective January 4. A former assistant principal of Guilderland High School, where she expanded opportunities for students, she has nearly 20 years of teaching and administrative experience in public education. Hawrylchak has a bachelor's degree from the University at Albany, master's degree from Harvard University and a doctorate from The Sage Colleges. She also completed administrative licensing programs at Cambridge College and Canisius College. VISIT techvalleyhigh.org



Wojeski & Company, CPAs, P.C. released a three-part video series, in conjunction with business partner **Greenbush Financial Group, LLC**. The videos explain the essential steps in selling a business, including pitfalls to avoid, and are designed to be a resource to the local business community. The videos are available free of charge and can be accessed on the home page of greenbushfinancial.com. VISIT wojeskico.com

Whitney Young Health announced the appointment of Dr. Deborah Vasquez as chief medical officer. She joined the Whitney Young Health team in 2013 as a pediatric attending physician and most recently served as the associate director of pediatrics before assuming the role of interim chief medical officer. VISIT wmyhealth.org



CDPHP unveiled new and enhanced benefits for fully-insured commercial members starting in 2021, including preventive care digital tools, screening services, fitness options for all ages, digital smoking cessation programs for all forms of tobacco use, no member cost-share for home health care, early prescription medication refills and more. VISIT cdphp.com



Russell Sage College unanimously voted to extend the contract of President Christopher Ames, Ph.D. through 2024. Ames became the college's 10th president in 2017. Under his leadership, Sage has improved its financial position, from a deficit of \$5.5 million to two consecutive years of surpluses in excess of \$2 million. Other achievements include a new Women's Institute and Thrive, a program that emphasizes wellness and well-being across student life. VISIT sage.edu

A Path Forward

UHY LLP released the results of its 2020 Middle Market Survey, a tool for businesses to use as they continue to find a path through the pandemic and its related economic challenges. Among the findings: the majority of respondents are expecting to recover and grow in 2021. A free online summary of the survey is available. VISIT uhy-us.com

EventsCalendar 2021

Visit renscochamber.com to register for these upcoming events

THU JAN 14 **State of the County Breakfast**
Rensselaer County Executive Steven F. McLaughlin presents what's ahead in 2021, including local economic development initiatives and the ongoing challenges of COVID-19. Bring your ideas and questions to participate in a Q&A.
📍 Virtual event via Zoom, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST. No cost. Register online at renscochamber.com. Presented in partnership with Rensselaer County.

WED FEB 03 **Ask the Experts: 2021 Economic Outlook**
Experts will give an insider's forecast of 2021's economy and discuss the impact of COVID-19, a new U.S. administration and other factors. 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 Bouchey Financial Group, Ltd.

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. Sponsorships are available.

FRI FEB 26 **Meet The Legislators**
Our panel includes 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 and concerns.
📍 Virtual event via Zoom, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., EST. No cost. Register online at renscochamber.com. Sponsored by National Grid.

Ribbon Cuttings



my little dog & co. celebrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 264 North Greenbush Road in Troy. The pet boutique offers unique, quality goods, supplies and treats that are made in the U.S.A and eco-friendly. VISIT mylittledogandco.com



funcycled had a grand opening and ribbon cutting at its new location at 336 Congress Street in Troy. Specializing in unique, repurposed furniture and award-winning interior design expertise, funcycled's showroom is filled with repurposed furniture, cabinet painting options and more. VISIT funcycled.com

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



Conquering the Slopes



STRIDE Adaptive Sports' racing team of adaptive skiers with disabilities was awarded a \$3,500 grant from the Killington World Cup Foundation to grow the team and expand its participation in Special Olympics and the Dianna Golden race series. VISIT stride.org

spotlight

ACCENT

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The team at Accent is focused on one thing: helping organizations to do their best possible work. Through smart design principles, quality products and outstanding service, Accent is uniquely positioned to align the workplace goals of clients in corporate, healthcare, education and government with solutions that promote greater connection, creativity and productivity.

“Organizations are being challenged to re-imagine their workplace landscapes as never before,” said Michael Gleason, CEO of the family-owned business, founded in 1980. “Up until now, we’ve been busy helping businesses make a safe return to the office (from COVID). But now, businesses are asking how their workplaces can adapt and change to help people perform at their very best. Our job is to

help clients create more meaningful work environments.”

Through partnerships with quality manufacturers, particularly Herman Miller, Inc., a recognized leader in the research and development of innovative commercial furniture, Accent’s team combines its training, expertise and product lines to stay ahead of the curve in planning work environments. Accent’s

new “Work From Home” is a line of award-winning home office furniture that provides ergonomic comfort, quality, functionality and style to suit home environments, with the convenience of online shopping (<https://shop.sitonit.net/discount/103834>) and at-home delivery. In addition, Accent now offers in stock the two top-rated ergonomic office chairs, Aeron and Embody, in response to demand from walk-in customers. Visit Accent’s newly-renovated showroom on Interstate Avenue, off Central Avenue in Colonie.



Upcoming Events for Your Calendar

STATE OF THE COUNTY | JANUARY 14

Learn What’s Ahead for Rensselaer County in 2021



Join the Chamber at the 2021 State of the County Breakfast and learn what’s ahead for Rensselaer County and the business community in the coming year. Rensselaer County Executive Steven F. McLaughlin will review the challenges of 2020 and present his vision and plans for the future, including the status of significant local economic development initiatives and the ongoing struggle against COVID-19. Attendees are encouraged to have questions ready to join in an interactive Q&A session after remarks.

Register now at renscochamber.com/events

🕒 Virtual event via Zoom on Thursday, January 14, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., EST. No cost. Presented by the Chamber, in partnership with Rensselaer County.



ASK THE EXPERTS | FEBRUARY 03

Join the Chamber for a 2021 Economic Outlook

OUR EXPERTS



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. Bouchey Financial Group’s investment team assists high-net worth individuals, families, businesses and small institutions to grow and sustain their wealth.

Get an insider’s look at how current economic and geopolitical environments will impact markets and this year’s economic cycle with the Chamber’s Ask the Experts workshop, “2021 Economic Outlook.” This virtual discussion with Bouchey Financial Group’s investment team (at left) will help provide clarity in this time of uncertainty and help you navigate economic factors such as a new U.S. administration, the distribution of COVID vaccines, a supportive Federal Reserve, the threat of a weaker dollar, struggling small businesses and the potential for increased global trade.

This presentation is your opportunity to learn about the existing macro-economic factors in place and how they may impact businesses at a local level. This no-cost workshop will give you the knowledge needed to help make informed business decisions in 2021.

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.



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.



2021 Board of Directors

EDWIN C. ANKER IV, AIA*
Phinney Design Group

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GlobalFoundries

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AMRI

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Startup Grind Albany

KATHLEEN PINGELSKI
MicroKnowledge, Inc.

ELIZABETH REISS
The Arts Center of the Capital Region

DANIEL SAUER*
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JEFFREY SIMONS
East Greenbush Central School District

STARLETTA R. SMITH
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region, Inc.

CECIL F. STODGHILL
The Doane Stuart School

JAIME WATSON
Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)

SCOTT WILEY
Hoosick Valley Contractors, Inc.

BRIAN WILLIAMS
Rensselaer County Employment & Resource Center

* Executive committee members

TRANSPORTATION + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + TECHNOLOGY

Historic State-Wide Cashless Toll System Unveiled



The New York State Thruway Authority is modernizing its 570-mile transportation system by converting to an entirely cashless tolling system that went live in November and will be completed in 2021. The cashless tolls are expected to reduce congestion, improve traffic flow, lower pollution emissions and allow for non-stop travel on New York's toll roads, bridges and tunnels. The work is taking place at 52 Thruway interchanges and barriers across New York, making it an historic milestone for transportation and technology in the state.

Chamber members Rifenburg Construction New York and A. Servidone, Inc. are two partners in Cashless Tolling Constructors, LLC, a tri-venture company that was awarded the design-build contract. The third partner is Economy Paving Co., Inc. of Cortland, New York. The \$355 million project, which began on September 1, 2019, is proceeding ahead of schedule.

Motorists are now driving unimpeded under American-made steel gantries with state-of-the-art sensors and cameras that read E-ZPass tags and take license plate images so that vehicles no longer have to stop to pay tolls. Traffic also passes over computerized sensors embedded in concrete slabs in the pavement under the gantries.

Cashless Tolling Constructors installed the gantries at locations across the state, making safety improvements to slip ramps and tandem lot access points to allow motorists to travel more freely along the system. Pre-cast buildings installed near the gantries house computer components and the "brains" of the system.

The switchover to cashless tolling took place simultaneously system wide on November 14, 2020

NO CASH ACCEPTED

Get Ready for Non-Stop Highway Travel

If you are wondering how New York's cashless toll system works, here's a quick look:

For motorists with an E-ZPass, tolls are collected using the same process already in place. If you don't have E-ZPass, you can sign-up online or purchase passes at retail locations. [VISIT the-zpassny.com/en/onthehighway/locations.shtml](https://www.thruway.com/en/onthehighway/locations.shtml)

Motorists without E-ZPass using the New York State Thruway can pay their toll bill online or wait for a bill in the mail. Billing is sent to the name and address on the car's registration. Toll charges are up to 30 percent more for motorists without E-ZPass, plus surcharges. [VISIT e-zpassny.com](https://www.thruway.com/en/onthehighway/locations.shtml)

at 1 a.m. By mid-December, deconstruction of six major toll plazas and road reconfiguration was completed and crews were preparing for a winter shutdown. In the Capital area, toll plazas at Exit 25 (Schenectady – I-890), Exit 24 (Albany – I-87) and the Canaan Toll Barrier (Berkshire Spur) were among the first to be completed and traffic is flowing freely. When work commences for the 2021 construction season, the remaining toll plazas state wide will be demolished and road configuration finished.

The total project spans the Thruway from Exit 16 at Harriman in Orange County to Exit 61 at the Pennsylvania state line, approximately 450 miles of roadway that serves more than 158 million vehicles per year.

Logistically, the large project was broken down into distinct geographic divisions, with project managers reporting to a master project manager. The pandemic outbreak challenged safety managers tasked with keeping healthy the 300-400 craft laborers, managers and other personnel spread across the state. "It's been a great effort to keep workers safe, including ongoing sanitizing of surfaces, tools and facilities, social distancing and other protocol," said Mark Servidone, president of A. Servidone and managing partner of Cashless Tolling Constructors. "This is happening at multiple stations geographically distant from one another."

At the remaining toll plazas, drivers will continue to travel through existing toll lanes at 20 mph speeds (without stopping). Drivers are being urged to slow down and use caution around the toll plazas, which are active construction zones. The entire project is expected to be finished by mid-summer of 2021. [VISIT rifenburg.com](https://www.rifenburg.com) and [asibacc.com](https://www.asibacc.com)

Motorists can download a new Thruway Authority mobile app, available for free on iPhone and Android devices. The app provides hands-free direct access to real-time traffic and construction alerts, navigation assistance and detailed Thruway services information. Features include:

- Toll Calculator to plan trips
- Report a road condition or safety concern
- Request roadside assistance;
- Restaurant and Thruway Service Area locator
- E-ZPass and "Tolls by Mail" information.
- Links to I Love NY tourism app

[VISIT thruway.ny.gov/travelers/mobile-app.html](https://www.thruway.ny.gov/travelers/mobile-app.html)

MEET OUR INVESTORS:

Visionary



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 rifenburg.com](https://www.rifenburg.com)

Champion

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RENSSELAER COUNTY
life looks good from here™

LOOKING FOR A SMART INVESTMENT?

With the Chamber's **WE Advance** program 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.

Our 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 and workforce advancement initiative. [VISIT renscochamber.com/workforce-economic-advancement](https://www.renscochamber.com/workforce-economic-advancement)



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