Campaign ‘19 Is Suddenly Here

Mayoral Candidates Debate at Breakfast

Kingston’s mayoral race has been quiet so far, but things are likely to heat up as two of the three candidates appear at the Chamber’s Sept. 12 Breakfast at the Best Western Plus in Kingston.

The candidates who have confirmed are incumbent Democrat Steve Noble, who is seeking a second four-year term, and Vincent Rua, who is running on the Serve America Movement (SAM) line. Ellen DiFalco, who is running on the Republican and Independence Party lines, declined an invitation to take part in the Meet the Candidates event.

Chamber President Ward Todd said the Breakfast, sponsored by Nuvance Health, is scheduled for 7:30-9 a.m. and will be conducted with the assistance of the League of Women Voters. Todd said both candidates will be answering questions posed by members of the audience.

Noble, 37, a former environmental educator with the city, is touting his reduction of property taxes, while maintaining a healthy fund balance and preserving an excellent credit rating.

I am incredibly proud of the state of our city today, Noble said. Kingston is in its strongest financial position in decades. And thanks to smart fiscal management, tax rates for both residential and commercial properties have decreased every year since 2016.

“I believe that I am the most qualified candidate to be mayor of the City of Kingston. I have a proven track record of building partnerships, finding fair and balanced solutions and getting the job done.”

Mayor Noble is reminding voters he has secured more than $30 million in grant funding for infrastructure, economic development, housing and quality of life; secured funding for new sidewalks; completed a merger of UCAT and Citibus; and invested $2.5 million at Dietz Stadium.

“Critical infrastructure upgrades, deferred for far too long, are now underway across the city,” Noble said. “The Kingston City Land Bank is about to take ownership of over 30 city-owned properties to be renovated to expand affordable home ownership opportunities.”

Continued on page 4

The September Breakfast Sponsor is Nuvance Health

Nuvance Health, formerly Health Quest, continues to transform healthcare in Ulster County and beyond.

This fall, Health Quest Medical Practice (HQMP) will open its new 88,000-square-foot medical facility in the former Macy’s store at the Hudson Valley Mall in the Town of Ulster.

The $20 million project will bring several outpatient services to the area under one roof, including urgent care, neurology, radiology, primary care, physical therapy, oncology and more.

The multispecialty practice site, which separates the former department store from the mall, will also offer clinic space in partnership with Hudson River Healthcare for the three-year family medicine training program at Northern Dutchess Hospital.

In total, nearly 40 healthcare providers and more than 120 employees will call the Ulster facility home.

Plans for the medical space were announced in early 2017. The health system received approval from the Town of Ulster in fall 2018. Across the river in Rhinebeck, Northern Dutchess Hospital was recently recognized by the American Heart Association with a Gold Plus award for following up-to-date, evidence-based treatment guidelines for the timely and appropriate treatment of stroke. The association’s Get with the Guidelines awards recognize hospitals for fast-acting care for patients suffering strokes.

The evaluation is based on how well the hospitals provided brain scans, administered clot-busting drugs and prescribed preventive medications upon discharge, among other

Continued on page 4
UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

September 12 | 7:30 - 9:00 am
Chamber Breakfast Meeting
Meet the Candidates for Kingston Mayor
BEST WESTERN PLUS
503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY
$25 Members-Advanced Pay • $30 Members-At The Door
$35 Non-Members
Sponsor: Nuvance Health

September 18 | Noon - 5:00 pm
2019 Buy Local Expo
The Largest Networking Event of the Year!
Diamond Mills Hotel & Conference Center
25 S. Partition Street | Saugerties, NY
Open to the general public
FREE ADMISSION | FREE PARKING

September 24 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Networking Mixer
@ Hudson River Maritime Museum
50 Rondout Landing | Kingston, NY
There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members.
Reservations are required.
Sponsor: Marshall & Sterling Insurance

October 2 | 5:00 - 7:30 pm
Women Empowering Women to Grow Their Businesses
The Chateau
240 Boulevard (Route 32) | Kingston, NY
The Chamber and Key4Women invite you to an exclusive forum
and networking event about women helping women overcome
the barriers to business growth. There is no charge to attend.
Register by September 25, 2019.
Sponsor: KeyBank | Key4Women

Register for all Events (845) 338-5100
www.UlsterChamber.org
Here Comes The Sun At Next Mixer

Ride Maritime Museum’s Solar-Powered Boat

The Chamber’s September Mixer at the Hudson River Maritime Museum will be powered by the sun. The organization’s new 44-foot solar-powered tour boat, Solaris, will be featured the night of the Mixer, scheduled from 5-7 p.m. Sept. 24. The sponsor for the evening is Marshall & Sterling Insurance.

“We’ll be offering tours at the Chamber Mixer,” said Ellie Burhans, communications and development manager for the Hudson River Maritime Museum. “Chamber members will be able to board our tour boat and we’ll take them on the Rondout Creek. It doesn’t have a diesel engine, or a petrol engine, and it doesn’t plug into the grid. It is 100 percent solar. We’re using it to improve our education programs, increase access to the lighthouses of the Hudson River.

“Our guests will be able to get on this historic and one-of-a-kind vessel and enjoy a tour of the Rondout and Hudson River. It is the only commercial, passenger, solar-powered vessel on the Hudson River. It’s the first of its kind.”

Burhans said the Chamber Mixers are an ideal way to build the alliances that keep the museum going.

“It’s a great chance to meet new friends and old friends,” she said. “Getting invited to the Chamber Mixers to get to meet people and partner with them is a huge asset. This museum would not exist without community partnerships and volunteers so to be able to make those connections is really important to us.”

The museum, which opened in 1980, attracts 25,000 to 30,000 a year to Kingston’s historic waterfront, an area with a rich maritime history. The once-desolate section of Kingston is now thriving with small businesses.

“We’re seeing an increase this year because of our solar boat,” Burhans said. “People are coming from up and down the Hudson River just to take a ride.

“The Rondout is a great place to be between the cute shops and the great restaurants. We’re really lucky to be here.”

The Hudson River Maritime Museum, located at 50 Rondout Landing at the foot of Broadway in Kingston, can be reached at (845) 338-0071 or www.hrmm.org. The museum is open seven days a week through Nov. 18 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Chamber Mixers are a great way to network and promote your business. Be sure to bring plenty of business cards.
Rua began his career as a certified public accountant at Coopers & Lybrand, one of the largest CPA firms in the world, and was later a CEO of several mid-sized companies, including Christopher’s Customer Clothing.

“Today, I am the exclusive designer of custom clothing for the Final Four Coaches Club and assist business leaders throughout the Hudson Valley with their wardrobe needs,” he said. His platform includes attracting new business by reducing property taxes and maintaining the city’s infrastructure and streets “every year, not just election years.”

“Kingston has experienced no real business growth in four years,” he said.

Rua’s platform also includes expanding youth programs launching a broad housing initiative called “Affordable +” that will provide affordable housing for veterans, the physically disabled and low-income; and “slowing down the bomb train that barrels through the center of Kingston.”

Chamber breakfast programs are a great way to network with other local business leaders and stay on top of current events. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. For more information or to register, call the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or go online at UlsterChamber.org.

To learn more about Nuvance Health’s services, visit NuvanceHealth.org.
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Imagine a business where there are no “employees” and everyone in the company is on the same level, all working together for a higher purpose than making money.

That’s what you’ll find at Community Products, a company with two lines of business run by the Woodcrest Bruderhof Community in Rifton, New York.

Community Products, with about 100 workers across the two businesses, includes: Community Playthings, which produces a line of educational equipment sold to daycares, nurseries, and schools. The products include blocks, easels, tricycles, tables and chairs, and other things to set up a childhood center. The business opened in 1948, moving to Rifton in 1954 when the Bruderhof community arrived there.

Rifton Equipment, which opened in 1977, two years after the passage of a federal law guaranteeing a public education to all children, regardless of ability. The Bruderhof began producing special equipment for children with disabilities. “We started producing standers, walkers, chairs, and specialized equipment to service that age group,” says John Rhodes, the president of Community Products.

Community Products also established Community Manufacturing Solutions, a separate company which opened in the Kingston Business Park about a year ago. Rhodes describes the company as a “cut-and-sew operation” that supports Community Product’s two businesses. Unlike Community Playthings and Rifton Equipment whose workers are all volunteers and members of the Bruderhof, this company employs about fifteen people who are not members of the Bruderhof.

“We’ve done a lot of our own cut-and-sew work for years,” Rhodes says. “A lot of our products, especially for Rifton Equipment, require padding and straps. We were pretty much running out of capacity and domestically-sewn product is fairly expensive, so we always had the dream of starting a business in the local community.

“We’re very happy with how that’s going. It’s slowly expanding and totally managed by people outside of our community. We plan to keep growing and expanding that. Our organization donates a fair amount of goods and services into the local community, but it’s so much better to be able to provide employment under good working conditions and benefits and solid pay.”

While Community Playthings and Rifton Equipment are run by the Bruderhof – a group of devout Christians who live in community – Rhodes says they’re not that much different from any other company. They still have to do market research, design products for which there is a need, and make a profit.

“The difference perhaps between us and other businesses is context,” Rhodes says. “Our business is imbedded in our religious community. We don’t have employees. All the people who work here are members of the Bruderhof. They make a lifetime commitment to the organization.”

For example, on the production floor, there is no employer-employee relationship. Everyone is equal and “working for the Lord” (Colossians 3:23).

“The relationships are not defined by money or by status or by position,” Rhodes explains. “Everyone has the same value. Because nobody’s drawing a salary, we don’t have to view a supervisor having a higher or more important position than someone who is putting in a screw. We value everybody’s contribution.”

Rhodes says that the Bruderhof also finds work for the infirm, the elderly, and those with disabilities. “Being able to work keeps people going,” he reasons. “For us, we really don’t have any retirement. We could retire our people if we wanted to, but they love to work. It’s all about service. All of our money is pooled so nobody is working to get ahead of the other. There is no corporate ladder to climb. Everyone works in the area they’re assigned and it’s like one big happy family.”

When it comes to being a member of the Chamber, the Bruderhof sees it as being part of the community. The Chamber has honored the Bruderhof in the past for its commitment to Ulster County.

“We don’t like to isolate ourselves,” Rhodes says. “We feel we are part of the local community, and being part of the Chamber also helps us connect with people and know what the needs are and to find ways to mutually support one another.

“We live in this community and we feel like we need to give back. That’s just part of who we are. We’re not out to make a lot of money. That’s why we have only our own people here. It kind of puts a governor on our growth. We’re not just here to make money, but if our business does well, why shouldn’t the local community benefit as well? It isn’t just about us.

“We love the local community. We enjoy where we’re at, we enjoy the people we live with and it just means a lot to us to work together. We’ve been in this community for 60 years and we want to see it flourish and thrive.”

Community Products, located at 103 Woodcrest Drive in Rifton, can be reached at (845) 658-8351 or www.communityproducts.com.
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