Hello and Welcome to the first “new” issue of Newsline, the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce’s monthly newsletter. For our Chamber members, we hope you like this new format and the opportunities that come with the publication’s new circulation base. Not only is this newsletter sent to every Chamber member, but we have now expanded its reach to include all existing businesses in the Fulton and Montgomery Counties region.

For those businesses who don’t know who we are, we are going to take some space in every issue to give you some information about what we do for our businesses and for the region. For those Chamber members who already know us, please let this serve as a refresher as to all the benefits that are afforded your business as a result of your investment in the Chamber.

To our members, THANK YOU for making an investment in your business, and in our region, with your Chamber membership. To our “future” members – why not join the Chamber and let us help you tell your business’ story in these pages…

• An address from our President/CEO Mark Kilmer
• Information about current Advocacy issues – the Chamber represents the strong voice of businesses in our region in the halls of government with our elected officials on local, regional, state and federal levels
• A column about our Business Education Partnerships with PTECH in Johnstown (Pathways to Technology Early College in the High School), AgPTECH in St. Johnsville (our PTECH that offers agricultural experiences for our region’s students), and other projects within our region’s school districts.
• Tourism News which covers both Fulton and Montgomery Counties – new programs, new events, what’s happening in the industry, and more.
• Chamber Events outlines what Chamber of Commerce-specific events are taking place that month and in the future.
• Chamber Member News – news about Chamber member businesses that is submitted to us each month. If you’re a Chamber member, why not include us in your good news and we can share it in this newsletter, on social media and more. “Future” members – why not join the Chamber and let us help you tell your business’ story in these pages…
• Benefit Bonus – a quick look at individual benefits afforded to businesses that are Chamber members
• Health Insurance News – this column, provided by Bouchez & Clarke Benefits, the Chamber’s health insurance partner, will address health insurance and human resources issues for businesses

We hope you enjoy our new Newsline and its look at business in the Fulton Montgomery Counties region! Questions? Comments? Please contact the Chamber at (518) 725-0641 or via email at info@fultonmontgomeryny.org.

PLEASE NOTE: Because of the new deadlines for our newsletter going forward, there were only two weeks in between preparing content the April and May issues, so you will see there are not a lot of photos for events or new members because of this. We will get back “on track” with the June issue. Thank you for your patience!

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The Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network Meet Up

The Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network (FMYPN) held a Meet Up Event on Wednesday, April 11 at Sharpshooters Billiards & Sport Pub, 35 E. Main Street in Amsterdam. Above, Brian and Brady Barnett (Ehle and Barnett Family Funeral Home) rack ‘em up.

see page 18 for more photos from the event.
Letter from the President

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber is so excited to bring you the first issue of our “new” Newsline. Even more exciting is our new partnership with McClary Media, whose staff is selling the advertising opportunities within these pages, doing the production work, and coordinating the printing of this monthly newsletter. The Chamber will still be providing content about our programs and services, and about our members and their businesses.

Most importantly, the Chamber feels that this new way of publishing our newsletter will give these members a new, enhanced way of marketing their businesses. By growing the circulation from 1,000 to 3,600, which includes every business in Fulton and Montgomery Counties, participating in Newsline will give businesses that much more exposure for their programs, products and services.

In this newsletter, you will find information important to businesses, details about Chamber events and other programs and services, Chamber Member news, and more. We will still continue to publish it monthly, so watch your mailboxes for each issue, which will be published close to the first of each month.

We will continue to produce our weekly e-newsletter, Chamber Connections, that appears in Chamber member e-mailboxes on Mondays. In addition, we communicate our message via our website, www.fultonmontgomeryny.org, our popular Facebook page, in the pages of Focus Fulton Montgomery Region, NY; on Instagram, in our bi-monthly columns in the Leader-Herald and the Recorder; on our monthly radio shows on WVTL and WENT, and more. And don’t forget our great tourism resources for Fulton and Montgomery Counties, where we show off all there is to do in our region, via our tourism websites, www.44lakes.com and www.visitmontgomerycounty.com, on Facebook and Twitter.

Even with all of these different ways that we tell our story, Newsline continues to be our number one communication resource for our members. How great that we are now able to bring our message, and news about our members, to a whole new audience.

Please be patient as both the Chamber and McClary Media work together to produce the best newsletter we can for our business community. This is new to both of our organizations, and we hope that this “new” way of publishing Newsline can be beneficial for all.

Please contact the following resources about the newsletter:

Advertising/Production: Brian Krohn, McClary Media, (518) 843-1100, brian.krohn@recordernews.com
Chamber contact: Terry Swierzowski, (518) 725-0641, terrys@fultonmontgomeryny.org

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The Recorder
McClary Media
Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Fulton Montgomery Regional Newsline, Director of Workforce Development Nicole Walrath
Terry Swierzowski, Vice President, Communications and Tara Ryczek, Tourism Associate
Sarah Hafter, Business & Education Partnership Coordinator
Gina DaBiere-Gibbs, Tourism Director
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Evelyn Piszczek, Kinderhook Bank
Dr. Patrick Michel, HFM BOCES
Wes Ostrander, Randall Implements
Dr. Dustin Swanger, Fulton-Montgomery Community College
Robin Wentworth, St. Johnsville Rehabilitation & Nursing Center

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Juanita Handy, Crum Creek CSA
James Jankowski, Jankowski Agency
Lillian Johnson, HTCP – Healing Touch Practitioner
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Kevin McClary, The Recorder
Amy McCray
John Manzino, Beacon Insurance Agency Group, Inc.
Carl Marucci, Kinderhook Bank
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Terry Swierzowski, Vice President, Communications and Member Services
Nico Walrath, Director of Workforce Development

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1166 Riverfront Center, Amsterdam, NY 12010
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U.S. Census Bureau Mails Economic Census to 4M Businesses in May

(www.census.gov) — The U.S. Census Bureau will mail out instructions for filling out the 2017 Economic Census to businesses nationwide in early May.

Approximately 3.7 million U.S. businesses nationwide, including large, medium, and small companies representing all industries will receive information by mail with instructions to set up an account to complete their economic census online. Starting with the 2017 Economic Census, response will be entirely paperless. The deadline for response is June 12.

Every five years, the Census Bureau collects information about businesses that are essential to understanding the American economy. The economic census serves as the most comprehensive source of data related to business activity and serves as the foundation for the measurement of U.S. businesses and their economic impact. The data businesses provide is compiled into official statistics that are available for companies to use for planning and decision making.

The Economic Census asks for the following information by location:

§ Employer Identification Number
§ Physical location
§ Primary business activity
§ Sales, receipts, or revenue
§ Employment and payroll
§ Industry-specific questions

For more information for those businesses who are asked to respond, please reference the U.S. Census Bureau website at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/economic-census/information.html.

Benefit Corner

Energy Alliance Program Can Save Chamber Member Businesses $$

Through the combined purchasing power of 13 Chambers of Commerce and thousands of their members, the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce is able to offer discounted electrical and natural gas to its members.

There is no gamble. The gas is guaranteed in your pipes and when you flip a switch, the lights will always go on. The savings are realized on a combination of commodity, transportation and sales tax discounts.

The Chamber has retained a consultant, who does not represent a supplier, to recommend actions for this process. This consultant, EnergyNext of Saratoga Springs, a fellow Chamber member, and its Energy Alliance program, examines the markets on a daily basis to determine the timing of the best deals.

This program frees you up from worrying about utility costs and puts an expert on pricing on your staff at no charge to you. You make the final decision, but EnergyNext does all the research at no charge.

EnergyNext, when appropriate, will come back to you with a price comparison. That is when you make your energy decisions.

To join this purchasing pool, simply visit the Chamber website, www.fultonmontgomeryny.org, go to the Membership Menu and you will find the Energy Alliance Energy Savings page. There is an easy-to-fill out form that asks for your business’ your gas and electric account numbers. You are merely giving EnergyNext permission to secure information about your electric and gas usage over the last year. The information will only be used for this program, and will not be shared with anyone. Again, you are not committing to anything.

Once the price is right, EnergyNext will contact you for a decision.

Please fax the form to EnergyNext at (518) 580-9243 or call them at (518) 580-9244 should you have any questions or need further information. Joanne Foresta is our Chamber’s representative at EnergyNext. You can always contact your Chamber for more information at (518) 725-0641 or via email at info@fultonmontgomeryny.org.

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Federal vs. New York Family & Medical Leave Laws

**Provided by Bouchey & Clarke Benefits, Inc.**

Bouchey & Clarke Benefits is the Chamber’s partner in health insurance. For more information about Bouchey & Clarke and their health insurance offerings and programs please contact them at (518) 720-8888 or visit them online at www.boucheyclarke.com

This comparison chart is provided for general informational purposes only. It is not intended to be exhaustive nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as legal advice. Readers should contact legal counsel for legal advice. ©2009-2012, 2015-2017 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved. EM 8/17

Employers covered

Federal Elements

Private employers with 50 or more employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year.

Public agencies, including state, local and federal employers.

Local education agencies covered under special provisions.

State Elements

In addition to the federal FMLA, New York has leave laws regarding (1) pregnancy leave, (2) adoptive parents leave, (3) blood donation leave, (4) bone marrow donation leave, (5) military spouse leave and (6) paid family leave (effective Jan. 1, 2018).

### Pregnancy leave

Employers with four or more employees.

**Adoptive parents leave:**

All employers.

**Blood donation leave:**

Employers with at least 20 employees at one or more worksites.

**Bone marrow donation leave:**

Employers with at least 20 employees at one or more worksites.

**Military spouse leave:**

Employers with at least 20 employees at one or more worksites.

**Paid family leave** (effective Jan. 1, 2018): All employers. Paid family leave will typically be added to the employer’s existing disability insurance policy.

**State Employees**

Polymer was used to repair a covered employee for 26 or more consecutive weeks. A part-time employee (an employee who works fewer than 20 hours per week) is eligible for paid family leave after he or she has worked for a covered employer for 175 days.

**Pregnancy leave:**

Pregnant employees.

**Adoptive parents leave:**

Employees who are adoptive parents following the commencement of the parent-child relationship (unless the child has reached school age or, in the case of a hard-to-place or handicapped child, has reached age 18).

**Blood donation leave:**

Employees who work an average of 20 or more hours per week.

**Military spouse leave:**

Employees who work an average of 20 or more hours per week.

### Federal Elements

Generally, up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period. Up to 26 weeks during a single 12-month period to care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin who is a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

### State Elements

Employees who work an average of 20 or more hours per week and who are the spouse of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves who has been deployed during a period of military conflict to a combat theater or combat zone of operations. Excludes independent contractors.

### Type of Leave

- Federal Elements
- Unpaid leave for:
  - Paid family leave:
  - Pregnancy leave:
  - Adoption leave:
  - Bone marrow donation leave:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Leave</th>
<th>Federal Elements</th>
<th>State Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid family leave</td>
<td>All employers.</td>
<td>All employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy leave</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive parents leave</td>
<td>All employers.</td>
<td>Employers who are adoptive parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood donation leave</td>
<td>Employers with at least 20 employees at one or more worksites.</td>
<td>Employers who work an average of 20 or more hours per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone marrow donation leave</td>
<td>Employers with at least 20 employees at one or more worksites.</td>
<td>Employees who work an average of 20 or more hours per week.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Military spouse leave</td>
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<td>Employees who work an average of 20 or more hours per week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Leave Amount

- **Federal Elements:**
  - Generally, up to 12 weeks during a 12-month period.
  - Up to 26 weeks during a single 12-month period.

- **State Elements:**
  - Up to 26 weeks during a 12-month period.

### Military spousal leave

The total length of each leave is determined by the employee’s physician, but may not exceed 24 work hours for each bone marrow donation, unless the employer agrees otherwise. There is no limit to how frequently an employee may take bone marrow donation leave.

### Bone marrow donation leave

The total length of each leave is determined by the employee’s physician, but may not exceed 24 work hours for each bone marrow donation, unless the employer agrees otherwise.

### Blood donation leave

At the employer’s option, either:

- Three hours of leave in any 12-month period for an employe to donate blood; or
- Blood donation during work hours, without use of accumulated leave time, at least two times per year at a convenient time and place set by the employer, including allowing the employee to participate in a blood drive at the employer’s site.

### Unpaid leave

To be phased in over a 12-month period.

### Federal Elements

Paid family leave (effective Jan. 1, 2018): Paid family leave benefits will be phased in over a four-year period. In 2018, eligible employees may receive up to eight weeks of paid family leave at 50 percent of their average weekly wages. When fully implemented in 2021, eligible employees may receive up to 12 weeks of paid family leave at 67 percent of their average weekly wages.

### State Elements

Paid family leave (effective Jan. 1, 2018): An employee who works 20 hours or more per week is eligible for paid family leave benefits if the employee works for a covered employer for 26 or more consecutive weeks. A part-time employee (an employee who works fewer than 20 hours per week) is eligible for paid family leave after he or she has worked for a covered employer for 175 days.

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- Property Inspection
  - Habitats modifications
  - Exclusion work

- 518-736-1901 for scheduling

- See Health, on page 5
Health, continued from page 4

• Birth of employee’s new-born child;
• Placement of child with employee for adoption or foster care;
• Providing care for employee’s parent, child or spouse with serious health condition;
• Employee’s own serious health condition;
• Any qualifying exigency when employee’s child or parent is on active duty or is notified of impending call or order to active duty in Armed Forces; or
• Caring for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin who is a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

State Elements

Pregnancy leave: Employers cannot discriminate on the basis of sex and must treat disability arising from pregnancy in the same manner as other disabilities. New York has a temporary disability insurance program that requires employers to provide short-term disability insurance for their employees. Employers are required to provide partial wage replacement for up to 26 weeks to employees who are temporarily unable to work due to disability. Pregnancy is considered a disability under the program.

Adoptive parents leave: Employers that permit employees to take leaves of absence upon the birth of a child must permit an adoptive parent, following commencement of parent-child relationship, the same leave upon the same terms (unless the child has reached school age or, in the case of a hard-to-place or handicapped child, has reached age 18).

Blood donation leave: No provision

Bone marrow donation leave: No provision

Military spouse leave: No provision

Paid family leave: Effective Jan. 1, 2018: Paid family leave benefits may be received on an intermittent basis (less than a full workweek), in increments of one full day (that is, one-fifth of the weekly benefit).

Substitution of Paid Leave

Federal Elements: Employees may elect, or employers may require, accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. Employers must follow terms and conditions of employer’s normal paid leave policies.

State Elements: Employee leave:

Pregnancy leave: Employers that permit employees to take leaves of absence upon the birth of a child must permit an adoptive parent, following commencement of parent-child relationship, the same leave upon the same terms (unless the child has reached school age or, in the case of a hard-to-place or handicapped child, has reached age 18).

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Blood donation leave: No provision

Bone marrow donation leave: No provision

Military spouse leave: No provision

Paid family leave: Effective Jan. 1, 2018: Employers

See Leave, on page 6
must maintain group health plan benefits for the duration of paid family leave as if the employee had continued to work.

**Leave Requests**

**Federal Elements**

To be made by employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable.

If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the employee, subject to health care provider’s approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt employer’s operations.

If due to foreseeable active duty of family member, notice must be made as soon as practicable.

**State Elements**

**Pregnancy leave:** Employers cannot discriminate on the basis of sex and must treat disability arising from pregnancy in the same manner as other disabilities.

**Adoptive parents leave:** Employers that permit employees to take leaves of absence upon the birth of a child must permit an adoptive parent, following commencement of parent-child relationship, the same leave upon the same terms (unless the child has reached school age or, in the case of a hard-to-place or handicapped child, has reached age 18).

**Blood donation leave:** No provision, however, the New York Department of Labor has issued guidelines allowing employees to require at least:

- Three working days’ advance notice of the employee’s intent to take leave for off-premises blood donation; or
- Two days’ advance notice of the employee’s intent to take leave for any other blood donation.

The employer may require up to 10 working days’ advance notice as necessary to fill the position if both:

- The employee taking leave is in a job that is essential to the employer’s operations or necessary to comply with legal requirements; and
- Three days’ notice is insufficient for the employer to fill the position for the leave period.

If leave is for blood donation in an emergency, employers must reasonably accommodate a shorter notice period.

**Bone marrow donation leave:** No provision, however, the New York Department of Labor has advised that employers may require notice:

- At least 24 hours in advance of a scheduled bone marrow donation; or
- As soon as possible after receipt of a request for an unscheduled bone marrow donation.

**Military spouse leave:** No provision.

**Paid family leave** (effective Jan. 1, 2018): When the need for family leave is foreseeable (for example, for the birth or placement of a child or for planned medical treatment), an employer may be required to provide his or her employee with 30 days’ advance notice of the intention to take family leave. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable.

**Certification Requirement**

**Federal Elements**

Employer may require certification for the following:

Request for leave because of serious health condition or to care for covered service member with a serious illness or injury.

Request for qualifying exigency leave because of family member’s active duty or call to active duty in the Armed Forces.

To demonstrate employee’s fitness to return to work from medical leave where employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy requiring such certification.

**State Elements**

**Pregnancy leave:** Employers cannot discriminate on the basis of sex and must treat disability arising from pregnancy in the same manner as other disabilities.

**Adoptive parents leave:** Employers that permit employees to take leaves of absence upon the birth of a child must permit an adoptive parent, following commencement of parent-child relationship, the same leave upon the same terms (unless the child has reached school age or, in the case of a hard-to-place or handicapped child, has reached age 18).

**Blood donation leave:** No provision, however, the New York Department of Labor has issued guidelines allowing employers to require proof of off-premises blood donation.

**Bone marrow donation leave:** Employer may require physician verification for the purpose and length of each leave requested by an employee.

**Military spouse leave:** No provision.

**Paid family leave** (effective Jan. 1, 2018): An employee may be required to provide a medical certification completed by a health care provider to support the need for family leave.

**Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees**

**Federal Elements**

These individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an employer does not lose its exemption from the FLSA’s minimum wage and overtime requirements.

**State Elements**

No specific provision.

**Other**

**State Elements**

Registered domestic partners must be treated the same as spouses for most purposes under New York law, including for employee leave purposes.

**Statutes**

**Federal Elements**

29 USC 2601

**State Elements**

N.Y. Exec. Law § 206 (pregnancy leave) N.Y. Lab. Law § 201-c (adoptive parents leave); § 202-j (blood donation leave); § 202-a (bone marrow donation leave); § 202-i (military spouse leave); N.Y. Work Comp § 200, et seq (paid family leave)

Please note that the information in the above chart focuses on statewide laws. Employers must be aware that numerous cities across the country (including New York City) have enacted local ordinances that mandate employers to provide paid sick leave to employees. An employer located in a city with a paid sick leave law must comply with the local ordinance and statewide law, if applicable.

New York State Department of Labor

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Albany, NY 12240

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LEFT – Joshua Thompson, Artistic Director for the Chamber Music at the Chamber series, tells the sell-out crowd at the April 14 concert about the series receiving a Saratoga Arts grant. The series was awarded a second grant for the series, this round presenting a $2500 check for 4 concerts hosted by the Chamber, Gloversville Community Music and the Gloversville Business Improvement District.

SARATOGA ARTS
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French 75 performs at the April 14 concert. For more information visit Chamber Music at the Chamber on Facebook. Saratoga Arts made this program possible with a Community Arts Grant funded by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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Chamber Member Anniversaries

The following businesses realize the value of their Chamber investment and have renewed their membership in the month of April of this year. Please note these member businesses and the year they joined! Thank you to all our renewing Chamber members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>less than 5 years</th>
<th>5 to 9 years</th>
<th>10 to 19 years</th>
<th>20 years or More – Congratulations and THANK YOU!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Wesson Group, LLC</td>
<td>Fulton County Farm Bureau</td>
<td>St. John’s Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Salmon Law Firm, PLLC</td>
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<td>Berkshire Farm Center &amp; Services for Youth</td>
<td>SW The Spa</td>
<td>Neznek Farm</td>
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Flooring Authority Inc.
expands to offer online purchasing

There is a new local option to purchase your commercial flooring needs. Flooring Authority Inc. has added an online store to their website. This allows customers to view current selections we have in stock at our Amsterdam warehouse. Please visit www.flooringauthorityinc.com to view the current selection and find out more about our business.

Currently, the site is updated weekly to offer any surplus material we have available at below cost pricing. Selections include broadloom carpet, carpet tile, LVT (luxury vinyl tile), sheet vinyl, and rubber tile. The next phase will allow customers to place custom orders and will be available by summer.

Flooring Authority Inc. is a small, but growing local business located in Amsterdam at 6 Sam Stratton Rd. We remove existing flooring, prepare substrate, and install a variety of flooring materials for commercial projects.

Flooring Authority Inc. has warehouse and outside storage space available to rent. If your business is bursting at the seams, or you just need a short term storage solution please contact us to see what we have available.

Office hours are Monday - Friday 8-5, material pick-up can be arranged for night/weekend hours as needed. Please call their office for more information (518) 627-4178, or visit them online on their website, or on Facebook.

Chamber Member News

Chamber Member News

Flooring Authority Inc.
expands to offer online purchasing

An ever-changing array of women’s fashions & accessories

Business & Wedding Attire, Designer Names, Casual Dresses, Pants, Capris, Scarves, Cover-ups, Matching Accessories & Much More!

OPEN IN MAY:
Wednesday - Saturday 10-5
Sunday 11 to 3

142 N. Main St. Northville, NY (518) 848-2855
St. Mary’s Healthcare, Amsterdam is one of only two hospitals in the capital region certified as a Safe Sleep hospital for newborns.

St. Mary’s Healthcare in Amsterdam, New York has been recognized by the National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program as a silver level leader for their commitment to best practices and education on infant safe sleep. The hospital is one of only two hospitals in the region certified as a safe sleep hospital for newborns.

According to Julia Shafer, St. Mary’s Director of Women’s Services, “sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the leading cause of death among infants between 1 month and 1 year of age. Although we don’t know the exact cause of SIDS, the good news is that safe sleep practices can reduce the risk for SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death.” Shafer also offered other information about “safe sleep” for newborns.

What is infant safe sleep?
It’s the creation of a safe sleep environment by doing these things:
• Always place a baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night, to reduce the risk of SIDS.
• Use a firm sleep surface, covered by a fitted sheet, a crib, bassinet, portable crib or play yard that conforms to the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is recommended.
• Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else.
• Keep your baby’s sleep area in the same room where you sleep (for the infants first year). Room sharing is not bed sharing. Always place the baby in a safely-approved crib or bassinet for sleep.
• Sitting devices like bouncy seats, swings, infant carriers or strollers should not be used for routine sleep.
• Keep soft objects such as pillows and blankets, toys and bumpers out of your baby’s sleep area.
• Wedges and positioners should not be used.
• Do not smoke during pregnancy or allow smoking around your baby.
• Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep.
• Breastfeed your baby.
• Give your baby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string for naps and at night to reduce the risk of SIDS after breastfeeding is established.
• Supervised Skin to Skin is recommended to all mothers and infants immediately following birth regardless of feeding or delivery, (as soon as mother is medically stable, awake and able to respond to her newborn) and to continue for at least an hour. Once mother starts to get sleepy, return baby to bassinet.
• Follow health care provider guidance on your baby’s vaccines and regular health checkups.

The National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program was created by Cribs for Kids and is endorsed by leading health and safety organizations. Its goal is to award recognition to hospitals that demonstrate a commitment to community leadership for best practices and education in infant sleep safety. By becoming certified, a hospital is demonstrating that it is committed to the mission of making babies as safe as possible in their sleep environments and eliminating as many sleep related deaths as possible.

Julia Shafer, RN, explains, “We have trained the St. Mary’s Birthplace staff on the importance of safe sleep for newborns, and we educate new parents on safe sleep practices. It’s also exciting to reach out to the community to spread the word; this is a great example of small positive changes that can make a big impact. Shafer continued, “I’m thankful and happy to share that Beech-Nut, our local baby food manufacturer, has teamed up to support our safe sleep initiative. Beech-nut lovingly donated safe sleep wearable blankets for our new families, a natural extension of Beech-nut’s theme, Loving Babies for over 125 Years.”

St. Mary’s Healthcare has embraced the Cribs for Kids program due to its belief that (1) it is critical for healthcare institutions to provide consistent infant safe sleep messages; (2) a structured hospital-based program helps achieve the goal of reducing the risk of injury and death to infants while sleeping; and that (3) hospital based Safe Sleep Programs are important for providing consistent infant safe sleep information to hospital personnel including medical, nursing, breastfeeding, child birth education, and nutritional staff, to ensure spread and adoption in the community.

For additional information and education on safe sleep please visit: cribsforkids.org.

To find out more about St. Mary’s Healthcare, visit www.smh.org or call (518) 841-7162.

Mountain Valley Hospice Seeks Nominations for 1st Annual Nancy J. Dowd Humanitarian Award

Mountain Valley Hospice (MVH) seeks nominations for the first annual Nancy J. Dowd Humanitarian Award (NDHA) to be announced as part of a 30th anniversary celebration scheduled for Tuesday, August 14th at their campus at 108 Steele Avenue in Gloversville.

NDHA Task Force Chair Patrick Dowd said of the inaugural award, “My mother was widely known for selfless giving to anyone in need. She spent her career providing care to people facing medical challenges. She always attempted to alleviate the patients’ symptoms, while also calming their anxieties so they could enjoy the highest quality of life possible given the circumstances. She carried this philosophy to the MVH team. It just became what they did.”

These qualities were on display through events such as a middle-of-the-night boat ride by an MVH nurse to a remotely located patient home, the annual picnic held for all MVH patients or loved ones, the mutual support the MVH team members provided each other so they could always ensure they were able to give the patient and family their best.

A fitting tribute for their 30th anniversary, MVH will honor an individual or organization following in Nancy’s footsteps by making a difference in the lives of Mohawk Valley residents. The ideal candidate will display concrete examples of visionary leadership delivering humanitarian services to the community that improve quality of life. Organizational candidates must model a culture of human welfare, social reform, philanthropy, or commitment to volunteerism.

The deadline for nominations is May 15th. For more information, please call MVH President/CEO Kara Travis at 518-725-4545 or email kara.travis@mvhcares.org. For more information about Mountain Valley Hospice, visit www.mvhcares.org.
The Chamber Benefits Your Business

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce offers its nearly 1,000 members many important benefits to help their businesses. The Chamber works with businesses to benefit the community, its residents and economic growth in the area.

While joining the Chamber has many advantages, some of the main benefits offered to local businesses are advocacy, networking, promotion and marketing opportunities.

Advocacy – The Chamber will help to organize a unified voice for your business, whether it’s a local, state or federal issue. While businesses may not need an advocate on a daily basis, the Chamber is always here to fight for you when an issue arises and lobby on your behalf.

Networking – Networking is one of the main reasons that many businesses join the Chamber. Members come from businesses of every size and occupational background, making the Chamber one of the best networks you’ll ever have. There are opportunities like Business After Hours, where a local business hosts a networking event for Chamber members to attend. Chamber members have an opportunity to serve on a committee like our Ambassador Committee or Education Committee. The Chamber also sponsors different events every month where members can network and learn about opportunities being offered locally.

Promotion – Members can promote a new business, grand opening or remodeling with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Chamber promotes its members on social media and through inquiries at our local offices. Each Chamber member gets a detailed business listing on our website that is searched thousands of times a month by people looking for goods and services in our region. We are always looking for ways to promote our members to local residents and tourists coming into the area.

Marketing Opportunities – Chamber members can raise awareness of their business and services through different marketing opportunities. A big advantage members have is with marketing opportunities through the Chamber such as reduced pricing on newsletter advertising, or advertising on our Destination One program at the Vail Mills Visitors Center, on our website and in our quality-of-life magazine, Focus Fulton Montgomery Region NY. Many of our popular advertising outlets are available only to Chamber members.

There are many more beneficial advantages to being a Chamber member. To learn more about joining the Chamber and all the services being offered locally, please email membership@fultonmontgomeryny.org or call Thomas Casale at 518-725-0641.

North Main Street United Methodist Church schedules events

The North Main Street United Methodist Church, located at 316 N. Main Street in Gloversville, has scheduled two events for May:

- **Friday, May 19, 9:30am-12:30pm** (registration begins at 8:30am)
  - **Opioid Prevention and Awareness Summit** (in conjunction with Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties)
  - Presentation from DEA Agent on Fentanyl, Sharing of Personal Experience by Kenneth Hogeboom, Panel of Representatives from Local Agencies. Attendees are encouraged to come early and enjoy coffee and network.

For more information, contact Jenna Mares at Catholic Charities, (518) 842-4202, x3121

- **Saturday, May 20, 4pm-6pm**
  - **Free Concert with The Remnants**
  - The Remnants’ musical styles include bluegrass and southern gospel, contemporary Christian, old favorites, praise and worship with favorite hymns and original songs by group members. The concert is free of admission, but donations are appreciated. For more information, call (518) 725-7323.
  - Visit North Main Street United Methodist Church online at www.nmsumc.org or on Facebook.

Entertainment, Vendors announced for Southern Adirondack Wine & Food Festival; tickets available May 1

**Scheduled for Saturday, June 9 in Downtown Gloversville**

The Gloversville Business Improvement District (BID) has announced vendors and entertainment for its annual Southern Adirondack Wine & Food Festival, scheduled for Saturday, June 9 from 3pm-7pm on Main Street in downtown Gloversville. The event will feature tastings from 13 different New York wineries, distilleries, breweries and cideries; food will be available from 14 food trucks and other food vendors, and there will be 18 arts and crafts vendors. There also will be two stages with live music throughout the event.

Spirits vendors confirmed for the event include Stump City Brewing, Rogers Cideryard, the Adirondack Winery, Cooperstown Distillery, Freefall Sangria, Hudson Chatham Winery, Hummingbird Hills Winery, Kers Creek Distillery, Lakeland Winery, Ledge Rock Hill Winery, Nine Pin Cider Works, Olde York Farm Distillery & Cooperage, Vino Slush and Gourmet Mixes. The musical lineup that will appear on two stages includes The Insolent Willies, Matthew Bosworth, Ellen Keehan, and Our Secret Love Society. Food vendors include AKA Concessions/Hawaiian Ice, Given to Fry, Fudge by Angels, Goodway Gourmet Bakery, Gusto Della Vita, Hidden Hollow Maple Farm, Meme’s Snack Shack, Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market, Pop’s Hot Dog Cart, Something Different Food Truck, Spacey Tracy Pickles, Thrive Life Foods, Under the Nose, Vashti’s Kitchen Delights, and Worldlings Pleasures.

Sponsorships are currently being solicited for the event; please reference more information the Southern Adirondack Wine and Food Festival Facebook page, the event website or the BID website, www.gloversvillebid.org, or contact the Event Chairman and BID President Jim Scheleiser at (518) 332-4912, jks_ent@yahoo.com

Pre-sale tickets are $20 per person and $25 day of event; there is also a non-drinker ticket available for $10. All attendees must have a ticket except for children under 10 are admitted free of charge. There will be no pets allowed at the event. Pre-sale tickets are available after May 1 at the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, 2 N. Main Street, Gloversville, and at the Mohawk Harvest Cooperative Market, 30 N. Main Street, Gloversville. There will be additional ticket outlets that will be announced online at the event website www.southernadirondackwineandfoodfestival.com or the event Facebook page. Tickets are also available online at www.eventbrite.com.

For more information about the event, visit the event website southernadirondackwineandfoodfestival.com, the Gloversville BID website or on Facebook: Southern Adirondack Wine and Food Festival or Gloversville BID.
Chamber Member News

Caroga Arts Collective announces the 7th Annual Caroga Lake Music Festival

Since 2012, Caroga Lake Music Festival has brought the charms of live classical, jazz and pop music to the southern Adirondacks. Now organized as the non-profit Caroga Arts Collective, the festival offers a rich and varied menu of live music, film screenings, and educational music and art gatherings at venues in Caroga Lake and beyond. Most festival events are offered for free, supported generously by area businesses, foundations and private individuals.

2018 Season Highlights

Encore! Jazz Sessions with Kittel & Co. (mandolin, guitar and fiddle, July 27); the Matthew Whitaker Trio (jazz piano, August 4); Rhythm Future Quartet (gypsy jazz, August 11); SAUNDERS FEST (bluegrass, Geoff Saunders & family, August 11).

Artist in Residence Concerts. Musicians of the Caroga Lake Music Festival will be featured guests at venues in Gloversville, Peck’s Lake, Cooperstown (new in 2018), Ghent, Woodstock, Albany, Johnstown, Cobleskill, Mayfield, Lake Luzerne, and Dorset (Vermont). Additional venues may be announced at later dates.

Caroga Chapel Concerts. The original home of the Caroga Lake Music Festival, an intimate setting for mostly classical music performed by festival performers, weekly starting June 16.

The Barge at Canada Lake Concerts. Classical, jazz and folk music performed on a floating barge at Canada Lake Store & Marine, with audience seating on shore. July 22 & August 5. Generously hosted by the Fielding family.

Summer String Project Concerts. The Summer String Projects offer local music students from Schoharie, Fulton and Montgomery Counties the chance to experience, learn and share music with the Caroga Lake Music Festival artists for five days leading up to a finale side-by-side performance at the Arkell Museum in Canajoharie (August 8 for Schoharie County) and at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Cobleskill (August 9 for Fulton & Montgomery Counties).

For more information visit the Caroga Arts Collective online at carogaarts.org.

Wal-Mart DC #6096 Employees assist regional food bank

Employees of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, located at 300 Enterprise Road in Johnstown, recently participated in a community service project at the Food Bank of Northeastern NY in Latham. They worked with other volunteers to package food, diapers and household supplies for needy families in the Capital District, including in our region at places like the Salvation Army and North Main Street United Methodist Church in Gloversville and the NOAH Program at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Johnstown. The group had 62 participants who worked an average of 5 hours and sorted through 52 pallets of supplies. Because of the large turnout, Walmart also will be donating $5,000 to the Regional Food Bank. For more information contact the Wal-Mart DC at (518) 736-3000.
Two Great Locations!

THE Place to Go for the Area’s Best Selection of Vehicles!
Every time you’re away from your business is an inconvenience. Let one of our commercial fleet specialist do the work for you. Whether it’s making sure you have a work ready loaner vehicle while yours is in service or it’s time to talk about adding to the fleet. Our team will come to you to discuss all of your business needs. If it’s at the office or on the job site the commercial team from Mangino Buick GMC and Mangino Chevrolet will make choosing and building the perfect work vehicle a breeze.

From Right to Left: Curt Davis Tim Vadney Tom LaViolette Rich Youngs
Business Council Statement on final enacted New York State budget; Chamber’s advocacy on budget issues for 2018

The Business Council of NY State is the leading business organization in New York State, representing the interests of large and small firms throughout the state. Their membership is made up of roughly 2,400 member companies, local chambers of commerce and professional and trade associations. The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce follows their advocacy issues closely for its own members, and concurs with most of their legislative platform.

Heather Bricetti, Esq., president and CEO of The Business Council of New York State, Inc., released the following statement about the enacted NYS Budget.

“First, we want to thank the Senate Majority for listening to our members and taxpayers across the state in holding the line against several billion in proposed tax and fee increases. We still believe New York State spends too much with unsatisfactory results, especially in education and Medicaid. Increasing taxes would only exacerbate those spending issues.

Policy-wise the budget is a mixed-bag for New York’s employers. While we’re encouraged by the continued funding for workforce development programs, there needs to be transparency, accountability and employer engagement with any workforce development program. If the state is serious about addressing the skills gap, employers need to be involved and there need to be transparent outcomes published for all workforce development programs.

We will maintain our wait-and-see approach to the state’s SALT-mitigation plan. In our own discussions with employers we did not receive positive feedback on the payroll tax proposal, although we do appreciate that the final language made it optional. The effect of the charitable giving gambit is ultimately dependent on IRS determination as to its deductibility.

As we prepare for the rest of the session, one of the key issues the Governor and the Legislature need to address is a more complete response on federal tax conformity. We must de-couple in additional areas where not doing so would lead to stealth tax increases on already over-taxed New Yorkers. We are encouraged that both the Legislature and the Administration have taken initial steps in this budget for both individual and business taxpayers.

We also see the temporary extension of the state’s MWBE program as allowing more time to evaluate the current program and the existing capacity of MWBEs to participate in state contracts. The program, we believe, needs to be operating the way it should. Artificial benchmarks are holding MWBEs back and stifling economic development throughout the state.

Finally, we are deeply disappointed that the state chose to preemptively react to the U.S. Supreme Court’s review of Janus v. AFSCME before the Court issued its ruling, by sharply limiting public employees’ discretion to join or quit unions. Employee choice is vital to a properly-functioning democracy.”

As a reminder, the Chamber’s Legislative platform for 2018 contains the following pro-business initiatives for the year, that are affected by the NYS Budget:

Continue or expand PTECH funding:

PTECH (Pathways to Technology Early College in High School) was first established in NY in 2010 in Brooklyn and deemed a revolutionary concept as a way of educating our students. PTECH is a new model for secondary education that trades classrooms for “innovation spaces” and ditches lectures for group collaboration and hands-on learning. Here, students take the lead role in their learning, choosing pathways to their careers and take college-level, credit-bearing courses from their first year. PTECH aims to look and function more like a hybrid between college and the workplace. The 4- to 6-year sequence emphasizes individualized pathways to completion, workplace experiences, mentorship, in-depth project-based learning and real-world experiences.

In 2014, after receiving a grant from NY, HFMC BOCES was one of eleven regions to establish an upstate PTECH and repurposed a school building in Johnstown to create a standalone PTECH campus. The success of our PTECH has led to the creation in our region of an agriculturally-based PTECH, called AgPTECH, that is in St. Johnsville. The success of the schools is clear, with student success rates at all time highs, and the HFMC BOCES PTECH receiving the prestigious Model Schools Award and recently was recognized by the American Association of School Administrators as one of the top 25 most innovative schools in the country. In addition, you can read in this issue about two new PTECH programs that will begin in our region in academic year 2018/2019 in Johnstown and Gloversville.

Repeal of the Highway Use Tax:

New York State is one of only four states left in the country to levy a weight-distance tax on commercial vehicles. The reporting requirements of the law are burdensome leading to evasion by out-of-state carriers, thus putting NY carriers at a competitive disadvantage. Trucking is crucial to the economy of NY State. According to the Trucking Association of New York, trucks transport 93% of total manufactured freight in the state and nearly 90% of all communities rely exclusively on trucks to move their goods.

Our Chamber has signed on as a coalition member of the Trucking Association of New York’s efforts to repeal this burdensome tax.

Discontinue the unfunded mandates pushed down by the state on to county government:

Unfunded state and federal mandates account for a large percentage of a county’s tax levy in New York State. A “mandate” or a state or federal program that based on statute are required to be operated by lower level government. The most overwhelming mandates for the region are the NYS Welfare Mandate, that accounts for 9-10% of tax bills, and others that include Early Intervention Services, Probation, Indigent Defense, Youth Detention and the Public Pension System. These “other” mandates alone represent 20% of our tax bills. To start, we recommend that the following steps be taken to remedy the situation:

1. The State take over the Medicaid local share
2. The Legislature should take necessary steps to accommodate a phased-in takeover of indigent defense costs.

Maintain budget discipline

Small business tax reform

Continue workers compensation reform

Infrastructure investments

Much of the state’s infrastructure (roads, bridges, water systems, etc.) are outdated, in need of repair replacement. It is difficult to attract business investment here when the infrastructure they so rely on is crumbling. The State needs to make a concerted effort to undertake the needed upgrades through sensible budgeting.

If you have any questions or need further information about the Chamber’s Advocacy Agenda or Advocacy Committee initiatives, please contact Chamber President/CEO Mark Kilmer at (518) 725-0641.
Microenterprise Training Classes

The Chamber is facilitating microenterprise training classes that are mandatory for the Montgomery County Agriculture Microenterprise Program (MCAMP). Twenty-seven people attended the first class presented by Attorney Chuck Tallent, of the firm MacKenzie & Tallent Attorneys at Law located at 42 Church Street in Canajoharie. The classes are being held at the Montgomery County Annex Building, 20 Park Street in Fonda and will run every Tuesday through May 8. This MCAMP grant program will provide $188,000 to Montgomery County agricultural businesses made possible through a grant from the New York State Office for Housing and Community Renewal. For more information about the grant program, which will be administered by the Montgomery County Business Development Center and Montgomery County Soil and Water, visit the MCBDC at www.mcbdc.org.

Upcoming Chamber Events!

May 1 and 8 — 7pm
Microenterprise Grant Classes
For Montgomery County Agricultural Microenterprise Grant Program
20 Park Street, Fonda (Montgomery County Annex Bldg), Room 111
Although these are tailored for agricultural businesses who are applying for the grant program, anyone can take these classes @ $25/class:

**Tuesday, May 1 – Recordkeeping, Accounting, Taxes and Financing – Presented by Neil Thomas, First National Bank of Scotia.**
This class will provide the participant with an overview of necessary business recordkeeping. Additionally this session teaches how to report business activity for taxes, financing, or to evaluate certain business benchmarks.

**Tuesday, May 8 – Developing the Business Plan – Presenter TBD**
Here the attendees will learn how to develop a Business Plan incorporating the previous three sessions. The attendees will work on a step-by-step model taught by business leaders and professionals to create an effective Business Plan.

RSVP required for planning purposes, contact Terry at the Chamber at terrys@fultonmontgomeryny.org

Thursday, May 17 – 8am
Eggs & Issues in Amsterdam
Chamber office, 1166 Riverfront Center
An early morning conversation about what is important to your businesses and communities. Let’s talk with Chamber staff, and fellow businesses, about tourism, marketing businesses/the region, advocacy, and more. We invite businesses, large and small, and their employees to come together for some great conversation and light breakfast. Free of charge.

At this event, we are targeting businesses in Amsterdam and the surrounding areas, but if the event fits into your schedule, we welcome all businesses to attend.

RSVP required for planning purposes, contact Terry at the Chamber at terrys@fultonmontgomeryny.org
Tourism News

Saratoga Arts Grants Recipients

Saratoga Arts recently held a reception for the winners of the 2018 Community Arts Grants Recipients. Thirty-five grants totaling $103,800 have been awarded to support community-based arts events taking place in 2018.

With funding that it is awarded from the New York State Council on the Arts, Saratoga Arts’ Community Arts Grants support artists, non-profit organizations, and government departments in Saratoga, Fulton, and Montgomery Counties, in partnership with qualifying organizations and artists, to present arts and cultural programs of high artistic merit in local communities.

This year’s grant-funded recipients and their funded projects offer the community year-round opportunities to experience a wide array of free or low-cost artistic events highlighting talented local and regional artists. An estimated 34,000+ community members, 6,000+ youth, and 800+ artists will directly participate in these grant-funded events occurring throughout 2018.

For more information about Saratoga Arts, visit the organization online at www.saratoga-arts.org.

The Montgomery County recipients are:

- Amsterdam Waterfront Foundation (Chamber Member), Amsterdam, 2018 Riverlink Music Series
- City of Amsterdam
- Friends of Fort Plain, Fort Plain, The Future of the Erie Canal in Fort Plain Program
- Friends of Schoharie Crossing, Fort Hunter, Not Just For Kids Storytelling Series
- Glen Conservancy, Fultonville, Glen Conservancy Community Concert Series
- Kanatsiohareke, Inc., Fonda, Second Annual Haendelongoose Film Festival
- Mohawk Valley Chorus, Amsterdam, Rutter’s Requiem
- Music on Mainstreet, Canajoharie, Music on Mainstreet Summer Concert Series 2018
- Village of St. Johnsville, St. Johnsville, Concerts in the Park
- The Fulton County recipients are:
  - Caroga Arts Collective (Chamber Member), Caroga, Caroga Lake Music Festival 2018 & the Summer Student String Project
  - Colonial Little Theater (Chamber Member), Johnstown, 2018 Theater Series
  - Fulton County YMCA, with artist Allyson Kaczmarek, Johnstown, Brown’s Raid, a Historical Musical
  - Gloversville BID (Chamber Member), Gloversville, Chamber Music at the Chamber, (held in conjunction with the Fulton Montgomery Chamber and Gloversville Community Music)
  - Gloversville Citizens Band, Gloversville, Summer Band Concerts in the Park
  - Johnstown Citizen’s Band, Johnstown, Johnstown Mid-Summer Concert Series
  - Lexington Foundation at Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts (Chamber Member), Mayfield, Fulton-Montgomery Counties Art Show
  - Sacandaga Valley Arts Network (Chamber Member), Northville, Sacandaga Live: A Celebration of Music in 2018
  - Philip Spaeth, Northville, Adirondack Sketches: Traditional ADK Instruments in Concert Music

Visit our tourism event calendars for more information on these and other events happening in Fulton County, www.44lakes.com/calendar and Montgomery County, www.visitmontgomerycountyny.com/events-calendar.
Visitors Center Extended Hours

The Fulton County Visitor Center, located at the corner of State Routes 29 and 30 in Vail Mills (at the roundabout), will begin extended hours on Friday, May 4. The Visitor Center will be open Friday-Monday weekly until the summer hours take effect the week of May 20 and remain open daily until Columbus Day. Our wonderful Visitor Center staff members Bill VanVoast and Eunie Davis will continue as Ambassadors to Fulton County. Updated tourism brochures are always welcome at the Center and can be dropped off there during the business hours of 10am-4pm.

Great Sacandaga Challenge Triathlon

The annual Great Sacandaga Challenge Triathlon is scheduled for Saturday, June 16 at the Sacandaga Bible Conference Center in Broadalbin. This family event offers an adult sprint triathlon and kids triathlon distances. The goal of the Great Sacandaga Challenge is to introduce new people, of all ages, to the sport of triathlon while providing veteran triathletes a great local race on the Great Sacandaga Lake.

The Great Sacandaga Challenge is a USA Triathlon (USAT) sanctioned Sprint distance (750m swim, 20k bike, 5k run) triathlon, youth triathlon (100yd swim, 3.1 mile bike, 1 mile run), and kids “Splash and Dash.” Youth and adult triathlons are professionally chip timed and managed. Proceeds from the Great Sacandaga Challenge will be used to fund activities and programs to promote a healthy lifestyle for the youth surrounding the Great Sacandaga Lake communities and the greater Fulton County region.

Register by June 1 to guarantee you receive your shirt the day of the race (tee shirts for those who pre-register after June 1 are not guaranteed). Online registration closes at 7pm Thursday, June 14. Registration will be available onsite the day of the race.

For more information about the Great Sacandaga Challenge Triathlon, to register, or to become a sponsor, please visit greatsacandagachallenge.com.

For more information about the tourism programs in Fulton and Montgomery Counties:

Fulton County Tourism

www.44lakes.com | Facebook: Visit Fulton County, NY
Twitter: @SeeFultonCounty

Montgomery County Tourism

www.visitmontgomerycountyny.com | Facebook: Visit Montgomery County NY | Twitter: @MCNYTourism

You can also call the Tourism Department at (518) 725-0641 or email tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org
The Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network Meet Up

The Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network (FMYPN) held a Meet Up Event on Wednesday, April 11 at Sharpshooters Billiards & Sport Pub, 35 E. Main Street in Amsterdam. Special thanks to Ivan and crew from the American Poolplayers Association (APA), who provided free pool lessons to attendees.

The Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network (FMYPN) is looking to connect business professionals in the “20-something to 40-something” age range to connect and participate in events and more. The mission of the group is to foster an environment for young professionals in the Fulton Montgomery Counties region to network, conduct community outreach programs and to interact with community leaders. Although the targeted age range for this group is “20-something to 40-something,” the expertise, participation, and comradery of professionals of all ages is sought, welcomed and encouraged.

For more information about FMYPN, please visit the group’s Facebook page or the Chamber website at www.fultonmontgomeryny.org. Chamber staff liaison for the group is Nicole Walrath who can be reached at the Chamber at nicolew@fultonmontgomeryny.org.
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- Lights
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The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce and HFM BOCES (Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery Board of Cooperative Educational Services) have collaborated to form a BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP (BEP). The BEP connects HFM BOCES school districts and programs with our regional businesses to help support a well-prepared, capable and adaptable workforce. In turn, these partnerships can help improve student achievement and educational competitiveness.

The BEP is looking for businesses to get involved with programs such as

- **PTECH** (Pathways in Technology Early College High School, located in Johnstown) is a new model for secondary education that trades classrooms for “innovation spaces” and ditches lectures for group collaboration and hands-on learning. Here, students take the lead role in their learning, choosing pathways to their careers and take college-level, credit-bearing courses from their first year. PTECH aims to look and function more like a hybrid between college and the workplace. The 4- to 6-year sequence emphasizes individualized pathways to completion, workplace experiences, mentorship, in-depth project-based learning and real-world experiences. At the end of the program, students in completion will receive a High School diploma and a two year Associate’s degree from Fulton-Montgomery Community College completely free of charge. HFM PTECH pathways are in Advanced Manufacturing, Business Management, Information Technology and Health Sciences (Facebook: HFM PTECH, www.hfmboces.org/programs-services/ptech/).

- **Ag PTECH**, a PTECH school with an emphasis on Agricultural Studies and Environmental Sciences, located in St. Johnsville where students can choose from nine Associate’s degrees from SUNY Cobleskill (Facebook: HFM Ag PTECH, www.hfmboces.org/programs-services/agptech/).

- New Programming in a number of HFM BOCES component schools to be announced before the new school year

**Ways in which businesses can get involved:**

**Mentorships**
Mentors are also given the opportunity to meet face to face with students during the school year for networking and other events. Mentors help guide students as they learn the professional skills needed to be a good employee. Mentors are encouraged to participate in “Third Thursday Professional Series” at both PTECH and Ag PTECH to talk with students about diverse topics—from professional skills, dressing for success, to communication skills and technology in the workplace.

**Guest Speakers**
Guest speakers can be asked to attend monthly “Pathway Panel Discussions” at both PTECH and Ag PTECH to highlight each degree pathway available. You may also be called upon to talk about what you do, or how you got to your career paths to a class who may be working on a related project.

**Job Shadowing**
Single- or multi-day work experiences where students learn about a job/career by walking through the work day as a shadow to a staff member at your business.

**Field Trips/Workplace Tours**
Provide a tour of your place of business to students, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.

**Special Projects/Workplace Challenges**
Have students take on a special project or workplace challenge – something from which you will all learn!

We encourage businesses to get involved with the Business Education Partnership to become a partner in education and invest in our region’s future!

**Contact:**
Nicole Walrath, Director of Workforce Development, (518) 725-0641, nicolew@fultonmontgomeryny.org

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New PTECH programs set to open next year

New Foothills PTECH will expand college degree opportunities, enhance regional economic development efforts

The Gloversville and Johnstown school districts have been awarded a $3 million grant to offer a new Pathways in Technology Early College High School. Beginning in the fall of 2018, freshmen in the two districts will have the opportunity to earn their high school diploma and a college degree simultaneously at no cost to their families.

Johnstown and Gloversville school districts are partnering with the Fulton-Montgomery BOCES, Fulton Montgomery Community College, the Fulton-Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to launch the new Foothills PTECH. Foothills PTECH will be open by application to a total of 80 incoming freshmen from the two districts.

“At Foothills PTECH, our students will be supported by their teachers in both their high school and college classes,” Johnstown superintendent Patricia Kilburn said. “This approach increases the chances for each child’s success — as well as their chances to launch their futures — as college educated and employed young adults.”

Following the model of the two successful PTECHs currently in the HFM region, Foothills PTECH will offer a high school education featuring college-level, credit-bearing coursework that allows students to select their own career pathway to high-skill jobs. Through the program, selected students will have the opportunity to earn associate degrees at no cost to their families and will be considered for jobs with partner businesses when they graduate.

The new Foothills PTECH will offer two areas of study at two locations. The Academy of Health and Medical Sciences will focus on the medical arts and sciences, with specific attention centered on laboratory, clinical and patient technician career paths.

“The Foothills PTECH is a remarkable educational opportunity for our students and families,” Gloversville Superintendent Robert DeLilli said. “Regional job growth continues in both of these fields, and there is tremendous room for continued employment and career growth.”

Through the Foothills PTECH program, students will be able to earn one of the following associate degrees: Health Studies, Medical Administrative Assistant, Web and Mobile Applications Development, Digital Media Technology and Design, Computer Information Systems, Business Administration and Business Marketing.

“Expanding the use of the successful PTECH model in our component school districts will transform the educational landscape in our area,” HFM BOCES District Superintendent Patrick Michel said. “In addition to providing more opportunities for students, PTECH is an economic and workforce development initiative that benefits our entire region. We can no longer separate our high schools from our colleges and employers. The expansion of PTECH programs will help us prepare a competent, modern workforce to supply our regional businesses and industries and attract new employers to our area. I’d like to thank the Governor and the state Department of Education for embracing this program for our children.”

Foothills PTECH will be the third PTECH program to launch in the HFM region. HFM BOCES partnered with its component schools districts, Fulton-Montgomery Community College and local business and industry partners to launch the area’s first PTECH school in 2014. Now in its fourth year, PTECH is poised to graduate its first class of students this June, with many of them on track to receive their associate degree and high school diplomas at the same time.

Recognizing the success of the PTECH model, BOCES and its component districts partnered with SUNY Cobleskill to open the agricultural-themed Ag PTECH in 2016.

In addition to Gloversville and Johnstown, HFM BOCES is working with other school districts in the area, including Amsterdam and Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville, to offer college degree and career pathway opportunities for their students next year using the PTECH model.

For more information, visit www.hfmboces.org or to get involved as a business partner with any of these PTECH programs, contact Nicole Walrath at the Chamber at nicolew@fultonmontgomeryny.org.
PTECH is a new model for secondary education that trades classrooms for “innovation spaces” and ditches lectures for group collaboration and hands-on learning. Here, students take the lead role in their learning, choosing pathways to their careers and take college-level, credit-bearing courses from their first year. PTECH aims to look and function more like a hybrid between college and the workplace. The 4- to 6-year sequence emphasizes individualized pathways to completion, workplace experiences, mentorship, in-depth project-based learning and real-world experiences. At the end of the program, students in completion will receive a High School diploma and a two year Associate’s degree from Fulton-Montgomery Community College completely free of charge. HFM PTECH pathways are in Advanced Manufacturing, Business Management, Information Technology and Health Sciences (Facebook: HFM PTECH, www.hfm-boces.org/programs-services/ptech/).

PTECH leader named Principal of the Year

Hamilton Fulton Montgomery Pathways in Technology Early College High School (HFM PTECH)

Mike Dardaris, Principal of HFM PTECH

PTECH is a new model for secondary education that trades classrooms for “innovation spaces” and ditches lectures for group collaboration and hands-on learning. Here, students take the lead role in their learning, choosing pathways to their careers and take college-level, credit-bearing courses from their first year. PTECH aims to look and function more like a hybrid between college and the workplace. The 4- to 6-year sequence emphasizes individualized pathways to completion, workplace experiences, mentorship, in-depth project-based learning and real-world experiences. At the end of the program, students in completion will receive a High School diploma and a two year Associate’s degree from Fulton-Montgomery Community College completely free of charge. HFM PTECH pathways are in Advanced Manufacturing, Business Management, Information Technology and Health Sciences (Facebook: HFM PTECH, www.hfm-boces.org/programs-services/ptech/).

PTECH leader named Principal of the Year

Hamilton Fulton Montgomery Pathways in Technology Early College High School Principal Michael Dardaris has been named the New York State High School Principal of the Year by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS).

This award is given annually to a member of SAANYS who has set the pace, character and quality of education for the students in their school. Nominees are administrators who are committed to students, parents and the community and have shown exceptional contributions to the educational process.

As the principal of the innovative HFM PTECH, Dardaris’ leadership goal has been to completely redefine not only what leadership looks like, but what learning looks like in the public school. Recognizing that vision alone cannot cultivate innovation and school change, Dardaris and his team worked collaboratively to transform the traditional educational system through teacher leadership and student empowerment. “As the school’s leader, Michael encourages teachers and students to take risks, and in doing so has fostered a student-driven culture in which teachers function more like coaches and students take ownership of their education,” HFM BOCES Superintendent Dr. Patrick Michel said.

The PTECH program targets students who might not otherwise consider a college pathway and centers on a project-based curriculum focusing on professional skills in four career pathways: business management and administration, advanced manufacturing, information and technology, and health sciences. Students entering the program work simultaneously toward a Regents high school diploma and an associate’s degree in applied science from Fulton-Montgomery Community College. There is no cost to the student’s family.

Students say they appreciate their principal’s ability to go with the flow. “His willingness to take opinions and put them into action is something we appreciate most,” junior Natalie May said.

Now in its fourth year, HFM PTECH will have its first graduates this year. Among these graduates, 10 to 15 students are expected to graduate with both their high school diploma and associate’s degree. PTECH has been recognized as one of 25 national models of Innovative Successful Practices by the American Association of School Administrators and The Successful Practices Network. “Students and educators from the HFM BOCES made a powerful presentation to the Board of Regents at our meeting earlier in March. It’s very easy to understand why their PTECH model is being hailed as a national model to be emulated by others,” Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa said. “These students are also inspiring us with their service projects that benefit both the local community and the wider world around them.”

Coordinator for the New York State P-TECH Program at NYSED Amy Cox credited the school’s success to the way Dardaris seeks out students whose needs — academic or socio-emotional — are the highest. “It is because of the leadership of Mr. Dardaris and his staff that these students, who once felt like outsiders themselves, are now empowered to be leaders at their college and community,” she said. “Their success is a shared success that continues with each new class at HFM PTECH under the amazing leadership of Mike Dardaris.”

Dardaris earned his bachelor’s degree in music education from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, his master of science in education from LeMoyne College, and his certificate of advanced study in education administration from SUNY Cortland.

Dardaris will be honored for his accomplishments at an awards ceremony on May 4 at the Century House in Latham. SAANYS represents nearly 7,200 school administra-
tors, supervisors, and coordinators. As a professional association, SAANYS is committed to providing direction, service, and support to the membership in their efforts to improve the quality of education and leadership in New York State schools. SAANYS is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

**News from HFM Ag PTECH**

**Agriculture Pathways in Technology Early College High School (Ag PTECH)**

Ag PTECH, a PTECH school with an emphasis on Agricultural Studies and Environmental Sciences, located in St. Johnsville where students can choose from nine Associate’s degrees from SUNY Cobleskill (Facebook: HFM Ag PTECH, www.hfmboces.org/programs-services/agptech/).

**High Tunnel Delivery**

On April 9, Ag PTECH students unloaded the truck delivering the materials for the high tunnel greenhouse that will be built on the school grounds this spring. The structure will be built with funds from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Montgomery and Fulton counties. The students plan to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Montgomery and Fulton counties partnered to apply for funding for the project from the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, which recently approved the application. The local entities secured money for the high tunnel materials, construction, the irrigation and ventilation systems, plants for the inaugural year, and any other expenses the students encounter while getting it up and running.

“Our office believes the next generation is the future of agriculture,” said Julicia Godbout, the agriculture economic development coordinator for the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District. “The benefit of this is that it gets students out of the classroom and gets them getting their hands dirty, doing it themselves and learning.”
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