

NEWSLINE

CG Roxane Plant Expansion Celebrated

By: Jessica Ford
Newsline Editor

A ribbon-cutting to celebrate plans to expand the 176,757 square foot CG Roxane bottling plant in Johnstown was held in the plant's expansive warehouse, with guests including state and local officials; Chamber ambassadors, board members and staff; as well as CG Roxane employees.

The plant's operation began bottling and shipping "Crystal Geyser® Alpine Spring Water®" in 2013. The planned Expansion will allow the company to add 10 new jobs, as well as a third shift to its operation. Guests were treated to a tour of the plant, and officials had the opportunity to thank CG

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CG Roxane Johnstown Plant Manager Bill Galster, with scissors, center, cuts the ribbon to celebrate plans to expand the 176,757 square foot CG Roxane bottling plant in Johnstown. To his right is NYS Senator James Tedisco, and to his left is Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce President Mark Kilmer. Other guests included Chamber ambassadors, board member and staff, as well as CG Roxane employees, area officials and chamber members.

'Healing Journey' Leads Broadalbin Woman to Career in Energy Therapies

By: Jessica Ford
Newsline Editor

Broadalbin businesswoman Lillian Johnson, a Healing Touch Certified Practitioner, is rounding out her practice in complementary therapies with new offerings that can help clients access the energy of the earth to reduce inflam-

mation, enhance mood and decrease pain.

Along with her healing touch practice, Johnson is now a retailer of grounding mats for the desk, or bed, that allow people to reconnect to the earth's energy.

Johnson's journey from a traditional job and work life,

to starting her own practice in energy therapies, began about 8 years ago, while she was a caregiver at Liberty ARC, the organization in Montgomery County's for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She began there after the passing of her mother, who she was a caregiver for during a time when her health issues severely limited her quality of life. She missed that hands-on interaction with others.

"I felt myself getting anxious," she said. Johnson, who has always been sensitive to the needs of others, said, "Finding ways for her (mother) to live her life and still be fulfilled, took me on a healing journey."

Johnson found an advertisement for a class in Healing



Lillian Johnson, a Healing Touch Certified Practitioner, works with a client at her Broadalbin office.

Touch, offered by instructor Sr. Rita Jean DuBrey, CSJ, RN, MSN, HTCP/I who is a direc-

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Letter from the President

I was considering making this month's column a promotional piece, to raise awareness that CHAMBER CHECKS are now available at the Chamber offices and other locations around our community, and I do want to do that. I want to shout to the whole community, that CHAMBER CHECKS are a GREAT WAY to give a holiday gift that EVERYONE can love.

Chamber Checks are like gift certificates or gift cards, but they are valid at any of more than 100 participating member retailers and restaurants in Fulton and Montgomery counties. Each Chamber Check distributed is presented with a brochure that lists each participating member business, so that the recipient can read the list and choose where they'd like to shop. They are issued by the Chamber in the form of a check, and anyone can purchase them in any denomination.

The checks can be purchased at both the Gloversville and Amsterdam Chamber offices, as well as at Ruby and Quiri in Johnstown; and Kinderhook Banks in Amsterdam, Canajoharie and Johnstown.

But I don't want to stop there. There is more to this.

Using Chamber Checks, and shopping locally this holiday season, has a broader impact. It begins with each of us feeling that we have a role and responsibility to commit to this community — our home.

Why shop locally this holiday season? I'd like to quote an interesting organization working in the state of Arizona, to help us all understand why it's so important. Local First Arizona is a nonprofit organization that celebrates independent, locally owned businesses. Kimber Lanning, Founder and Director of Local First AZ, explains: "By shifting holiday spending towards local businesses and keeping the dollars in our local economy, we take control of our economic future through supporting our fellow neighbors in creating entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs in our local communities."

This translates to this community, with each of us, in Fulton and Montgomery counties.

The organization Local First Arizona also describes three ways that our shopping habits can have an effect. "First, it positively impacts your local economy. When you buy locally, a higher percentage of those transacted dollars remains here - up to four times more than when you purchase from a national vendor. This, in turn, spurs a growth in the number of local businesses and jobs. In addition, a higher percentage of tax dollars are funneled right back into the local community."

Second, the organization said, it "decreases the impact to the environment - Every year the United States ships and transports an estimated \$2.2 trillion worth of products from more than 150 countries. Accounting for an annual fuel consumption of 11 billion gallons and accompanies CO2 pollution, shipping products produces approximately 25% of our global CO2 emissions. Clearly there's room for improvement. Furthermore, Industrial level manufacturing accounts for approximately 50% of pollution in the United States. According to eLocal, it was found that if there was a 10% shift to locally sourced meats/produce, it would result in the annual reduction of 310,000 gallons of fuel as well as reduced CO2 production of 7.3 million lbs. Other analyses even found a positive correlation between a higher concentration of small businesses in a community, and a higher level of population health."

Third, shopping locally "Builds a closer and stronger community - Buying locally ensures a greater investment - both social and economic - in our local communities by increasing jobs and keeping more money flowing through local economies. Shopping local also has an effect in strengthening community relationships. Local businesses are more likely to share common interests with you, and are therefore more likely to contribute towards local causes and the betterment of your neighborhood."

As you can see, these arguments can apply to most regions in our country. Let's start right here in our cities and towns.

I will begin by going back to my first comment. I hope it will have more meaning for us all this time:

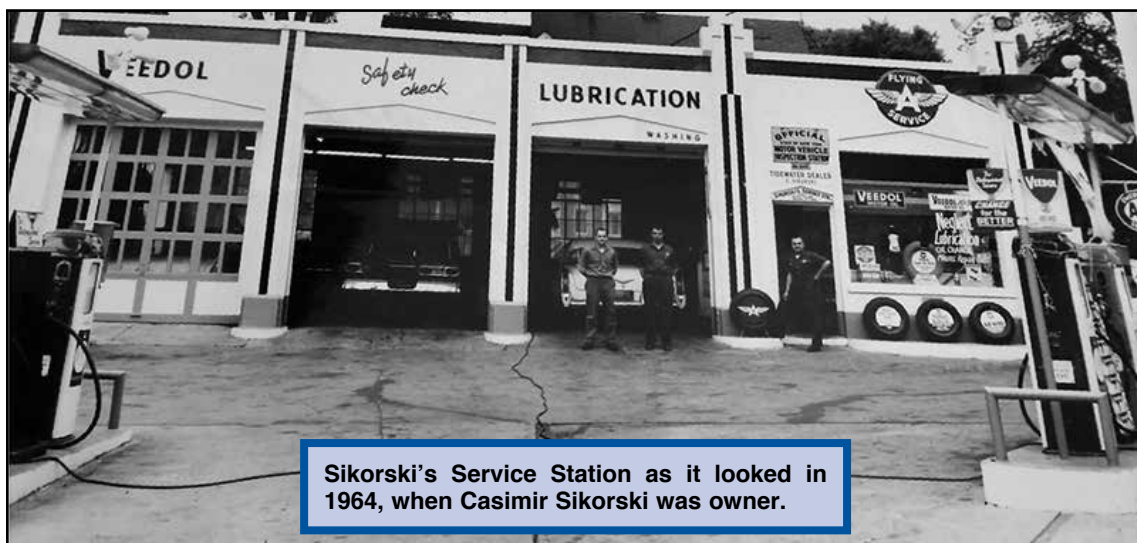
CHAMBER CHECKS are now available at the Chamber offices and other locations around our community, and I do want to do that. I want to shout to the whole community, that CHAMBER CHECKS are a GREAT WAY to give a holiday gift that EVERYONE can love!

Happy Holidays to all our readers, and current and future Chamber members, and the very best to you in 2019.



Mark Kilmer
President/CEO

70-Year Sikorski Station Legacy Ends With New Beginning



Sikorski's Service Station as it looked in 1964, when Casimir Sikorski was owner.

The end of this year will see a legacy come to a close, and a new beginning, when Francis "Fran" Sikorski retires from his family's Sikorski's Service Station on Prospect Street in Amsterdam.

The change in leadership for the company will take place in January, 2019, when a familiar face, James Looman, will take over as owner. Looman has worked at the station for 29 years. The business will operate as Looman Auto, LLC, Doing Business As Sikorski's Service Station.

Looman was honored in 2008 by the then Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, as "Employee of the Year." An article in the *Daily Gazette* at that time quoted Sikorski as saying, "He's very loyal and a real people person, which is important in this business. He's got a big heart and the customers really respect him."

Sikorski's Service Station will mark 70 years in 2019. Longtime bookkeeper, office manager and Fran's wife, Jackie Sikorski, will also retire.

Sikorski's father, Casimir Sikorski, started the business and owned it from 1949 to 1983. Fran Sikorski owned the business from 1983 to 2019,



New owner and long-time employee James Looman, left, stands in front of the station with Jackie Sikorski, center, and Fran Sikorski.

for a total of 35 years.

Jackie Sikorski said, "It brings Fran great pride that the business will continue as Sikorski's Service Station, making a hard transition a little easier. He knows the business will be in great hands, and continue serving the area with great automotive repair service."

She added, "Fran & I want to thank all our customers for their patronage and business, and we thank the businesses that we have dealt with over the years, for their service to us."



Sikorski's Service Station, 33 Prospect St., Amsterdam.

Photo: Google Earth.

Expansion, continued from page 1

Roxane for its investment in the Fulton Montgomery region.

New York State Senator James Tedisco presented the company with a citation, and thanked CG Roxane "for the jobs you've already created for today, and the at least 10 new jobs for the future. Every single job makes a difference."

He said he is "proud to be the Senator that represents this plant," and noted that he favors the Crystal Geyser water bottled in Johnstown.

Dottie MacVean, representing New York State Assemblyman Marc Butler, told the story about her son,

a mechanical engineer, who travels all over the Northeast. When on a job site, he is always proud to say that the Crystal Geyser he is served, is from his hometown. "He is very proud of that," she said.

Chamber President Mark Kilmer thanked CG Roxane for supporting the Chamber and for their great work in the region. Other town and local officials echoed that appreciation for the plant as well, saying "Our water is the best," "CG Roxane is a great company to work with," and that after touring the plant, they were "truly amazed."



CG Roxane Johnstown Plant Manager Bill Galster accepts a NYS Assembly Citation from Dottie MacVean, representing NYS Assemblyman Marc Butler. Standing with them are members of the CG Roxane shipping and production team, many of whom have been with the plant since the operation began bottling and shipping "Crystal Geyser® Alpine Spring Water®" in 2013.

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Customers, Workforce, Local Connection Are Keys to Success

Two business leaders whose companies were recently honored for ingenuity, success and commitment to the local economy, said doing business successfully in the Fulton/Montgomery region involves focusing on customer satisfaction, workforce and connecting to the people who live and visit the area.

Five Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber member businesses were honored in November by the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth at the CRG's Fall Gala.

Winners included SLA Transport, Inc./Universal Warehousing, Inc., for the Established Business (Large) Award; Broadalbin Manufacturing Corp. for the Established Business (Small to Medium) Award; Family Counseling Center for the Expanded Business Award; Caroga Arts Collective for the Start-up Business Award; and Northville 5 & 10 for the Hidden Gem Award.

Customer Satisfaction, Investment in Success

Fred Olbrych, president of SLA Transport, Inc., / Universal Warehousing, Inc., said in a written comment that his company "believes that customer satisfaction is the measure of our success. We invest in the tools, training and leadership to build our team. We are professional, ethical and dependable. We know these efforts will build our success." Andrew Olbrych, Warehouse Manager; and David Groff, Vice-President of Operations, accepted the award at the gala on Olbrych's behalf.

He said, "We always strive to take care of the customer and their needs. Our workforce has longevity and is very strong." He noted they are always looking for future opportunities to grow the business and workforce.

"Fulton County is a prime location for industrial growth," he said. "Industrial and economic growth benefits everyone in the community. Our amazing employees have worked hard to attract new businesses to our facility in the Mayfield Commerce Park, Gloversville and Fulton County." He noted the company has had a great working relationship with will the CRG and will continue to partner with them.

Generate Commerce, Re-energize Community

Kyle Barrett Price, Executive & Artistic Director of the Caroga Arts Collective, said this is the first award for the organization, and it helps not only put Caroga on the map, it validates the efforts of the board, staff and artists of the business. The aim of the collec-



Andrew Olbrych, left, Warehouse Manager of SLA Transport, Inc./Universal Warehousing, Inc., and guest, display the plaque received for the Established Business (Large) Award from the Fulton County Center For Regional Growth.

Photo: Bill Trojan, WATPHOTO

tive is to strengthen the Caroga Lake experience through collective expression of the arts; re-energize the spirit of the southern Adirondacks through music, various artists and gatherings; and generate commerce and tourism in the area by hosting popular events.

Price, a local resident, attributes the organization's success partially to the group's ability to connect the artists with community members, which he said creates sense of "home." He said the energized reception the Collective has received from the community, provides proof that the concept is a good one, and there is demand for the program offerings.

In Fulton/Montgomery counties, Price said holding free and open con-

certs helps enhance community accessibility. A popular aspect includes meet-and-greets for attendees at events. For the musicians who come to Caroga Lake, they may receive stipends for housing and expenses, and also enjoy developing and maintaining working relationships with other artists.

In 2019, Price said goals include holding its first outside-of-summer residency. He will bring artists to the region in January and March, then again through summer and fall. Other projects will include enhanced outreach for education. The group would like to work with local schools to facilitate lessons or classes conducted by Collective members.

Ronald Peters, Fulton County



Broadalbin Manufacturing Corp. owner Michael Deuel, left, is shown with the plaque for Established Business (Small to Medium), with Ron Peters from the CRG.

Photo: Bill Trojan, WATPHOTO



Kyle Barrett Price, left, Executive & Artistic Director of the Caroga Arts Collective, shows off his plaque for Start-Up Business Award, while posing with Ronald Peters, Fulton County Center for Regional Growth's President and CEO.

Photo: Bill Trojan, WATPHOTO

Center for Regional Growth's President and CEO, said, "CRG works closely with a wide array of community members, all of whom share our goal of making the County a premier location for business and investment. This year's award winners are only a small glimpse at the talented, successful enterprises our county has to offer."

Fulton County Center for Regional Growth's (CRG) mission is to strengthen Fulton County's economic base, facilitate sustainable growth, enhance the competitive position of our region, its counties, towns and cities and facilitate investments that build capacity, create jobs, improve quality of life and increase the standard living for all of its residents.



Representatives from Family Counseling Center are awarded the Expanded Business Award from the Fulton County CRG. CRG President and CEO Ronald Peters is at right.

Photo: Bill Trojan, WATPHOTO

Health Insurance News

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Overview

Following the midterm elections, Republicans in the U.S. Senate have indicated that they will no longer attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The midterms created a power split in Congress, with Democrats retaking control of the U.S. House of Representatives and Republicans retaining control of the Senate.

Many Democrats campaigned on health care issues, including retaining the ACA's popular protection for individuals with pre-existing conditions. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky) has recognized that the Democrat-controlled House will not support any proposals to repeal and replace the ACA. Instead, lawmakers have indicated that they may work together, on a bipartisan basis, to make small changes to improve the ACA.

Republicans End Attempts to Repeal and Replace ACA

Action Steps

A Democrat-controlled House will shield the ACA from repeal for at least the next two years. As a result, the ACA will remain current law and employers must continue to comply with all applicable ACA provisions.

Attempts to Repeal and Replace the ACA

President Donald Trump promised to immediately work to repeal and replace the ACA when he took office. Although Republicans controlled both the House and Senate, they narrowly failed to pass bills to repeal the ACA in 2017.

The Republicans' efforts to repeal and replace the ACA came to an end on July 28, 2017, when members of the Senate voted 49- 51 to reject a "skinny" version of a bill to repeal and replace the ACA.

Although Republican lawmakers have indicated that they will no longer attempt to repeal the ACA in its entirety, the Trump administration will likely continue to use the regulatory process to lessen the impact of certain ACA reforms.

Despite these failed attempts to re-

"A Democrat-controlled House will shield the ACA from repeal for at least the next two years. As a result, the ACA will remain current law and employers must continue to comply with all applicable ACA provisions."

peal the ACA, Congress did roll back specific provisions of the ACA, such as the individual mandate, which requires individuals to obtain health insurance to avoid paying a penalty. Also, President Trump and his administration have used the regulatory process to change specific ACA rules, such as:

- Expanding the availability of short-term, limited-duration insurance, which is not subject to the ACA's market reforms;

- Making it easier for small employers to join together to purchase health insurance as an association health plan; and

- Proposing to expand the options for health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs), such as allowing

HRAs to be used to pay for individual health insurance coverage.

Next Steps

Because the midterm elections shifted the balance of power in Congress, the ACA will remain current law and employers must continue to comply with all applicable ACA provisions. Employers should continue to monitor ACA developments because it is likely that the Trump administration will continue issuing regulations that change how the ACA is implemented. It is also possible that lawmakers may work together, on a bipartisan basis, to change specific ACA provisions that are unpopular with voters or negatively impacting the insurance market.

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Healing, continued from page 1

tor at St. Mary's Healthcare in Amsterdam and specializes in therapies that complement the efforts of clinical professionals. St. Mary's regularly utilizes healing touch volunteers to work with patients all over the hospital, especially post-surgery. Patients are impressed with the way that the energy therapy helps with their pain. Johnson became certified after completing the intense training program, in 2013, and took early retirement from Liberty to launch her practice. "I just loved it," she said. "It's like finding yourself."

The Healing Touch Professional Association defines healing touch as "an energy therapy in which practitioners consciously use their hands in a heart-centered and intentional way to support and facilitate physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health ... The goal is to restore balance and harmonies in the energy system."

The association states that the program has been taught since 1989 to more than

100,000 participants worldwide and in over 32 countries. The program was developed by Janet Mentgen, BSN, RN, HNC, HTCP/I, as a medically-based energy therapy training program for nurses. Association information says, "Over the last 18 years Healing Touch has been effective in demonstrating a positive impact in the health care community. It is widely respected and increasingly accepted, not only in the United States, but in many countries around the globe. It is considered one of the leading energy medicine programs in the world."

Johnson's healing touch and personal therapy clients are mainly people over 40 with pain problems and stress in their life. She offers sessions to individuals through an hourly rate or in a package, where she works on their bio-field to help stimulate energy flow and healing.

She also offers "Caregiver's Journey" consultations for caregivers and their

loved ones, as they navigate through health issues and the caregiving process. Johnson does an analysis of the home treatments available and services needed for the patient. "The concept is giving people the best way to live, until they are ready to leave this earth."

The practice of grounding has also been a benefit to her clients, and she uses a grounding mat on her healing touch treatment table. These items are now available to the public through her business, and come in several different sizes for specific uses. Prices range from around \$40 for a desk mat, to \$129 and \$189 for a twin- or queen-size sleeping mat.

Grounding, or earthing, is explained at www.chopra.com, as follows: "The Earth is like a gigantic battery that contains a natural, subtle electric charge – a special kind of energy present in the ground. For safety and stability, most everything in the electrical world is connected to it, whether it is an electric power plant or your refrigerator.

That's what the term 'grounded' means. Being grounded also applies to people. When you are electrically grounded, you feel centered, solid, strong, balanced, less tense and less stressed. Overall, you feel good. If you have pain, you have less of it, or maybe none at all, when grounded."

The description continues, "You are a bioelectrical being living on an electrical planet. Your body operates electrically. All of your cells transmit multiple frequencies that run, for example, your heart, immune system, muscles, and nervous system. With the exception of humans living in industrialized societies, all living things on our planet are connected to the ground's electric energy. In industrialized societies, you rarely go barefoot outside or wear natural leather shoes that allow you to absorb the ground's energy. For many decades, people have increasingly been wearing rubber and plastic-soled shoes that act as a barrier to the Earth's energy, insulating them

from electrical contact with the Earth. People also generally don't sleep on the ground anymore, as many cultures have done throughout history. They live and work above the ground, even far above the ground in high-rises."

Grounding mats have a conductive layer and are connected via a grounding cord to the ground port of an electrical outlet. Most homes built within the past 70 years have a ground wire in the third hole of the outlet that connects to the ground, or to copper pipe. If a building does not have grounded outlets, an earthing ground rod can be purchased. The energy from the earth is conducted back to the user through the conductive copper that is in the ground.

Johnson said, "when we keep that energy flowing through our system, we have the opportunity to heal ... the thing about living here in winter, is that we are so disconnected, and there is a lot of stress and anxiety."

For her clients, Johnson said it has made a difference. For example, she said a client who has a grounding pad for the bed, says they don't have the stiffness and sharp pain in their knees that they had before. She also had a young adult client with disabilities whose caregivers placed a grounding pad on her bed. She used to have outbursts, fueled by anxiety, which forced her to withdraw from her rehabilitative programs and education. After using the grounding mat for 3 months, Johnson said she is back in her programming, doing well, and isn't as affected by the energies of others.

Johnson's healing journey has led her to a number of different practices and techniques. She says she finds it rewarding to know that she can make a difference in someone's life. She said that her path started with "helping herself," but then she was compelled to share that calling, by "not only helping myself, but by helping others."

For more information about the complementary therapies offered by Lillian Johnson, HTCP, or for grounding mats, see www.archerhaven.com, or www.facebook.com/LillianJohnsonHTCP.

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Limited Tickets Available for TEDxFMCC Talk

“Community Leadership” will be the focus of the upcoming TEDxFMCC 2019, held by Fulton-Montgomery Community College in conjunction with the Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network of the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The event, set for Wednesday, January 30, 2019, will take place in the Allen House on the FMCC Campus, 2805 NY Route 67, in Johnstown. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., with speakers starting promptly at 6 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

Launched in 2009, TEDx is program of locally organized events that bring the community together to share a TED-like experience. Some of the best talks from TEDx events have gone on to be featured on TED.com and garnered millions of views from audiences across the globe.

Speakers include Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Senior Vice Chancellor for

Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline for the State University of New York (SUNY). Also Gretchel Hathaway, Ph.D., currently serves as the Dean of Diversity & Inclusion / Chief Diversity Officer at Union College, NY. Maureen Sager is Project Director of Upstate Alliance for the Creative Economy (ACE), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting and growing the Creative Industries in the 8-county Capital Region. Dr. Leslie Ford is Superintendent of Northville Central School District. Dr. Ford has served as guidance administrator, vice principal and superintendent for public schools in New York and California.

Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased through www.eventbrite.com. Simply go to that site and search “TEDxFMCC2019.” Only 100 tickets will be sold.

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Chamber Member News

Lexington Employee Wins Statewide Excellence Award

Brenda Dwyer of Broadalbin was one of four direct support professionals in the state to receive The Arc New York's Thomas A. Maul Direct Support Professional Excellence Award, which recognizes excellence, creativity, commitment and high quality in care and service provided to the people she supports.

Dwyer has worked at Lexington for nearly 10 years. She began her career as a support staff in Lexington's day program. As a co-owner of Adirondack Stained Glass Works in Gloversville and self-taught artist, Dwyer came to Lexington with strong creative skills and many connections in the local arts community, which she used to create new opportunities for the people she supports.

Her innovations in using the arts as a platform for cultivating talent, building self-confidence and introducing new experiences led her to her current role as Lexington's



AT LEFT: Brenda Dwyer receiving her Thomas A. Maul Direct Support Professional Excellence Award at a special luncheon in Albany. Pictured, left to right, are Judy Schelle, president of Lexington's board; Thelma Senecal, a successful artist affiliated with Lexington's Creative Expressions program; Dwyer; Shaloni Winston, executive director of Lexington; and David Miller, a member of Lexington's board.

Environmental and Creative Arts Specialist.

Through Creative Expressions, Dwyer teaches art classes, fosters art appreciation, takes people to museums and galleries, and helps artists exhibit and sell their

work in galleries around the state. Her work with Creative Expressions made Lexington take note of the interest people showed in arts of all kinds and helped inspire the creation of the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts in Mayfield, a nationally recognized, community-integrated center for the creation of, enjoyment of and participation in the arts.

The Nigra Arts Center has opened up even more opportunities to the people Lexington supports. Within the walls of the arts center, they can take classes in fine arts, crafts, music, theater, yoga, cooking and more, attend concerts and special events, and exhibit artwork alongside members of the community. Dwyer teaches a wide range of classes for people of all ages at the Nigra Arts Center and serves as its gallery curator, overseeing its rotating art exhibits, submitting calls for artists and selecting pieces for display and special awards.

Dwyer's work in encouraging and supporting artists to explore and express their creative talents has had an

immeasurable personal impact on countless lives. Her dedication has paid off in concrete ways as well: in part due to her contributions, 43 artists Lexington supports have sold 151 pieces to date. This equals more than \$16,000 in sales for the artists Lexington supports. Her inclusive efforts to make sure the artists she supports are treated no differently than any other community artist were a key factor in the Nigra Arts Center receiving a 2017 Award of Excellence from the Council on Quality and Leadership. This award recognized the arts center's success in creating an environment where artistic expression and diverse creativity can flourish for all aspiring and established artists, with and without disability.

"Brenda has greatly expanded the opportunities for enrichment of the people we support at Lexington due to her deep commitment and vast knowledge," said Shaloni Winston, executive director of Lexington. "Brenda continuously finds new ways to

include people in experiences that make a difference in their lives. She has helped numerous individuals focus on their art and realize that through creating and selling art, they can have a level of success they never imagined. We are very grateful that she has helped them become successful entrepreneurs and respected artists who share their talents and the limelight with other successful artists in our region. Without Brenda, Lexington would be a less colorful place."

Lexington, Chapter of The Arc New York, is a private, not-for-profit agency providing a wide range of services to adults and children who have disabilities in Fulton and Albany Counties. Created in 1953 by a group of concerned parents, Lexington is recognized as one of the leading agencies of its kind in New York State.

For more information about Lexington and its programs and services, visit www.lexingtoncenter.org or "like" us on Facebook: Lexington, Chapter of The Arc New York.

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Chamber Member News

Raffle Winners Announced

A raffle fundraiser to support Montgomery County's Liberty ARC and its work to provide services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities also "feathered the nest" of several local residents. Donna Hall of Sprakers was the winner of the \$10,000 grand prize during the "Feather Your Nest" raffle drawing at Liberty ARC's Day Supports café. A total of \$14,000 in cash prizes were awarded. Other winners included two \$1,000



prizes to Alfred and Mary Doris DiCaprio, Amsterdam and Ron and Angela Rusik of Amsterdam. The event, organized by Liberty Foundation, also awarded four \$500 prizes to Frederic Sober of Gansevoort; Tammy Hunter of Amsterdam; Daniel Pawlik of Hagaman; and Kathleen Smith of

Fort Johnson. Liberty ARC was founded in 1957, and provides top-quality supports and services, and has grown to include employment/vocational, recreational, residential, day, family support and health-related services to nearly 580 individuals with physical, developmental and other disabilities.



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Fulton Montgomery Young Professionals Network



Fulton Montgomery Young Professional Network partnered with Gloversville Housing and Neighborhood Improvement Corporation to help clean up and winterize the community garden. The garden is at 110 Fremont Street. Plots are available to anyone looking to plant a garden. Contact the Gloversville Housing and Neighborhood Improvement Corporation at (518) 620-6276 to reserve a garden plot.



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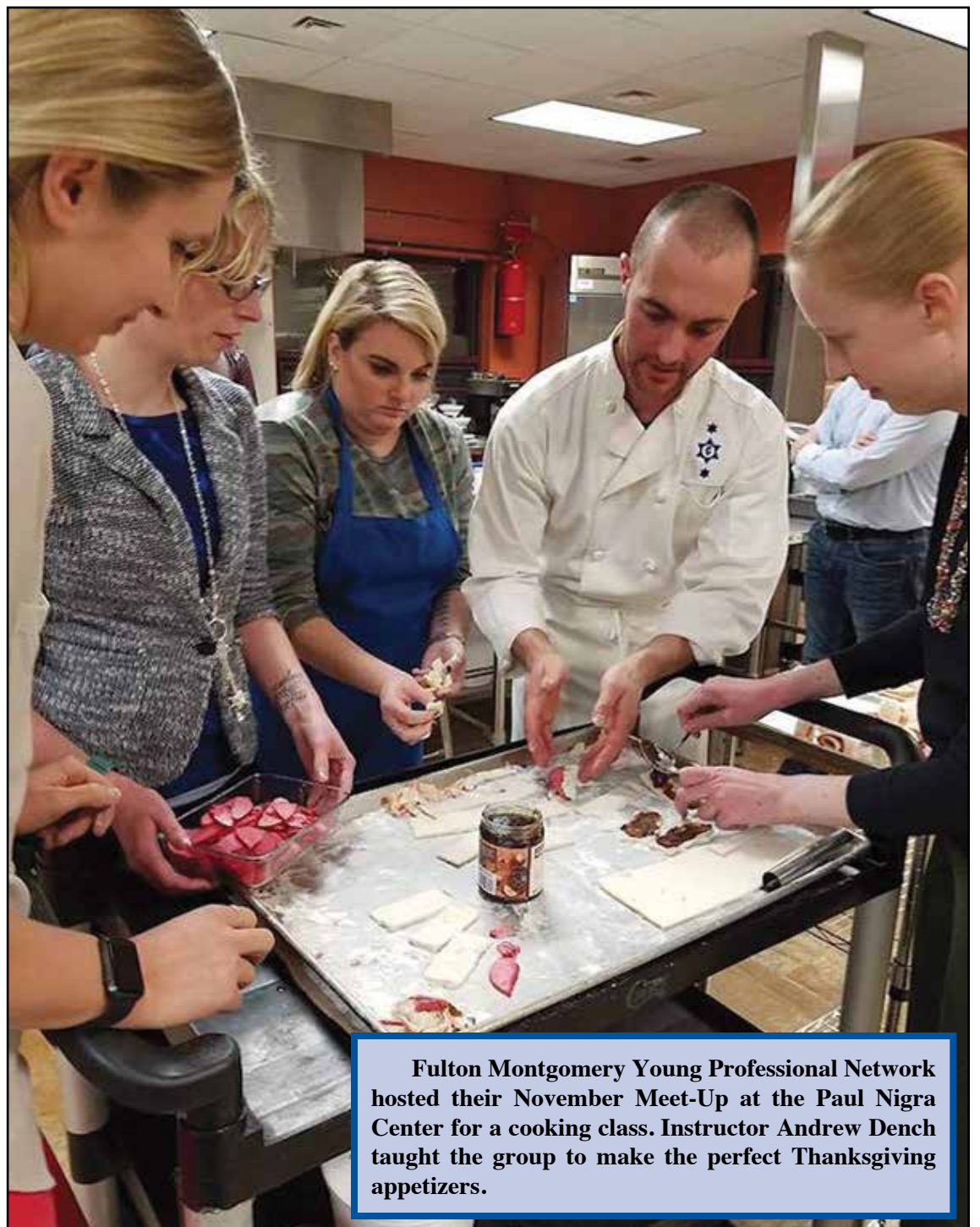
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Fulton Montgomery Young Professional Network hosted their November Meet-Up at the Paul Nigra Center for a cooking class. Instructor Andrew Dench taught the group to make the perfect Thanksgiving appetizers.

Chamber Member News

Mayfield Bloody Mary Shop Wins Best Mix Honors

"Portable, delicious and consistent" Bloody Mary drink mixes are the hallmark of Devil Dave's Bloody Mary shop in Mayfield. Owner Ryan Pakenas' determination to help customers create a classic Bloody Mary in seconds, paid off with a first place plaque for "Best Bloody Mary Mix" at the Rochester Bloody Mary Festival in November.

According to Devil Daves website, Pakenas' Bloody Mary Stick Packs are easy to use and make a perfect drink anytime. The description reads, "How's This Work? Shake it, stir it, toss it with tomato juice & your favorite booze and you have an amazing Bloody Mary – On the go or anywhere! Our mix has everything you would add to a classic Bloody Mary! No more bad Bloodys! No more missing ingredients." The mix has real chunks of horseradish, Worcestershire, celery salt, citrus and other spices that blend quickly, and the heat is described as, "subtle so you don't get overwhelmed."

The Rochester festival featured handcrafted Bloody Marys made by bars and restaurants, and popular Bloody Mary mix companies were invited for the first time this year, to joining in the fun.



Ryan Pakenas, left, owner of Devil Dave's Bloody Mary shop in Mayfield, shows off the first place award for Bloody Mary mix given at the Rochester, NY Bloody Mary Festival. His helpers for the day included Kelsey Ryan, center, and Kerry Powder.

Each attendee received a sheet tasting tickets to try Bloody Mary samples from bars and mix companies. They then voted for which deserved the titles of "Rochester's Best Bloody Mary," "Best

Garnished Bloody Mary," and "Best Bloody Mary Mix."

Devil Daves Shop is located at 2469 NYS Highway 30, Mayfield, Phone is (518) 613-4225, or visit www.devildaves.com.

Townsend, GTM Named Best Places to Work

Chamber member businesses Townsend Leather of Johnstown and GTM Payroll Services of Clifton Park, were honored by the *Albany Business Review* as Best Places to Work during the publication's annual survey of employees.

The *Business Review* stated that more than 165 companies submitted nominations to be considered as a Best Place to Work. Employees are surveyed and can comment on why they believe their employer is the best, in areas of employee satisfaction, team effectiveness, company culture, and other key attributes that contribute to a healthy and positive work environment.

Employees quoted online in connection with the awards cited a family and caring atmosphere when asked about Townsend Leather. "I am able to effect change at Townsend and in partners' lives." Another said, "I work with amazing people doing

what I love." One was quoted as saying, "Impressive culture where employees are put first." Others said the culture and the people who make it that way are important and said, "Townsend is a fun, creative culture that wants to help people be the best they can be."

GTM Payroll Services, a member of the household employment and business payroll industry, was named a Best Places to Work in the Capital Region for the tenth time.

Anne Johnson, GTM Human Resources Manager, was quoted at the company's website as saying, "This award demonstrates the importance of maintaining a great work environment and positive culture. As GTM continues to grow, we strengthen our commitment to this goal and we are honored to know that that our employees believe we are being successful."

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Membership News

A Call to All Members: Let's Ramp Up Business After Hours Events



James Hannahs

Membership Coordinator

Membership@fultonmontgomeryny.org
518-725-0641

Business After Hours events are perfect for local professionals to mingle, network, discuss their business, and promote themselves. Chambers across the country have been coordinating these events for decades, but with a bit of out-of-the-box thinking, we can update our local format and create opportunities within these Chamber-sponsored parties.

The BAH Today

The current structure of a BAH party is typically a two hour get-together hosted by a Chamber member. Usually, there is food, possibly libations, and networking at a location of the host's choice, most often at their business. Sometimes, hosts offer walk-throughs and discuss upcoming business ventures. Typically, the mingling lasts about an hour, guests filter out, and the event may end early. The general function of a BAH is to grant the host exposure, and that is usually achieved, but there is opportunity for more.

Opportunities To Collaborate

The common thread of all

BAH parties is food. Usually, there are light refreshments and finger foods, which the host provides, or has catered. This alone is a great opportunity for local restaurants or cafes to provide their cuisine, which in turn, would give them exposure.

In the spirit of sharing the exposure, the host may also want to co-host with either new, or smaller member businesses. Teaming up with non-competing businesses (those that are in three different industries, for example) would help each alleviate costs and boost attendance. Co-hosting members could each give a short presentation about their organization. Through this format, all hosts could bring their own crowds, talk about their business, split costs, and work with each other for mutual success.

Choose Location Thoughtfully

Holding your company's BAH offsite may help drive attendance. Chamber staff members have found that BAH events in environments such as ballrooms, event spaces and restaurants tend to have higher attendance than those that occur elsewhere. It seems that attendees may prefer to mix and network in places more suited to socializing.

Take Time to Boast

Given that there are two hours allotted for the party, and most often the networking portion only lasts for an hour, the second hour is a great time

for you, as host, to plan a short program to show off the accomplishments of the business in the past year, and outline what you are excited about in the future. This opens the door for attendance at upcoming events and establishes the audience's interest in your future endeavors.

The Possibilities Are Exciting!

Ideally, more cohesiveness and substance would be a great benefit to BAH events. Chamber staff members are proud of our entire member base, and want to give everyone a chance to promote themselves while working towards collective success. Adopting a new and updated BAH structure would check those boxes.

In an effort to stave off the trend of declining attendance that can come from holding too many events in a given month, the Chamber is considering establishing a quarterly schedule of parties, as opposed to monthly scheduling. That way, we can take time to plan accordingly, make the events less common, and therefore boost their value.

Be on the lookout for a survey in the upcoming editions of Chamber Connections. We would love to hear feedback and new ideas from everyone and are looking forward to making some innovative changes. For more information, contact James Hannahs at membership@fultonmontgomeryny.org or (518) 725-0641.

Welcome New Members!

Thank you for making an investment in your business, and in our region, with Chamber membership.

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Tourism News



Gina DaBiere-Gibbs

Director of Tourism

tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org

Harvester

In September, the Fulton County tourism department partnered with Cycle Adirondacks to hold the Harvester cycling event highlighting the beauty and history of Fulton County. The event attracted participants from various parts of New York as well as from Canada, Vermont, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland, Connecticut and Alabama.

A formal survey was con-



Harvester cyclists listen to ride announcements at the start/finish line at Johnson Hall State Historic Site.

ducted asking what other activities and amenities the participants utilized during their stay in Fulton County. From the survey and our informal conversations with attendees, we learned there was interest in other events happening the same weekend such as Bacon

Jam and Fulton County Day on the Farm. Some were riding the Sunday route on their own, and others brought kayaks for Sunday, and many stayed two nights utilizing local lodging facilities and restaurants or grocery stores. The registration bags held travel guides,

rail trail brochures, information on Fulton County Day on the Farm, and Mohawk Valley Path Through History cycling route information along with event sponsor materials. Everyone enjoyed themselves, and many said they would come again next year.

Thank you to Benjamin Moore & Co., Brown's Ford of Johnstown, and Alpin Haus for their sponsorship of the event.

A cycling event is being planned for 2019 with some changes to the routes and attractions highlighted. Watch for more details.



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Tenth Annual Walleye Challenge Ice Fishing Tournament Gives Back To The Great Sacandaga Lake

Representatives of the Tenth Annual Walleye Ice Fishing Tournament presented a \$1,000 check, as well as \$445 from a special raffle raised by event co-coordinator Lou Stutzke, owner of Fuel-N-Food of Mayfield, to the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation for fish stocking this fall. The Walleye Challenge this year was held Feb. 17 on the Great Sacandaga Lake. Director of Tourism, Gina DaBiere-Gibbs, presented the check to Randy Gardinier of the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation at a recent ceremony at the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The tournament registered 1,750 fishing enthusiasts with approximately 54 percent of the registered participants from outside of Fulton County, including ten states outside of New York: Connecticut, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts,



(L-R) Gina DaBiere-Gibbs, Director of Tourism, and Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation (GSLFF) President, Randy Gardinier. Missing from photo: Walleye Challenge Co-coordinators, Hank "Beaver" Ross and Lou Stutzke of Fuel-N-Food.

Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia. The event has sold out in each of the 10 years it has been held.

The 2019 Walleye Ice Fishing Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 16,

2019. Anyone interested in adding their name to the event's mailing list is asked to call the Fulton County Tourism Department at (518) 725-0641 or to send a request via e-mail to tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org.

Chamber Member Anniversaries

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

Less than 5 Years

Secondhand Stork2017
Walter Elwood Museum2016
Raindancer Restaurant2016
Van Horne Properties.....2016
M&J's Lawn Care & Landscaping2016
Black Bear Wine and Spirits.....2015
Mysteries on Main Street2015
CDL Associates Insurance Agency LLC.. 2015
Brown, Mary S.; Law Office2015

5 to 9 Years

Fulton County Barbershop, Corp.....2013
Tonko, Paul; Congressman2012
Cushing Stone Co., Inc.2010
Fit Happens2010

10 to 19 Years

Williams, Donald R.2008
Bio-Tech Mechanical
Plumbing and Heating.....2008
Holy Trinity Parish2006
Peck's Lake Protective Association.....2006
R & D Sales2006
Canajoharie Central School2005
Paychex2004

20 to 29 Years

Arnold's Feed & Grain Service, Inc.1998
American Legion Post 701.....1998

30 to 39 Years

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40 to 49 Years

Simco Leather Corp., Inc.1976
Peck's Lake Enterprises, Inc.....1974



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Business Education Partnership News



Nicole Walrath
Director of
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NicoleW@fultonmontgomeryny.org



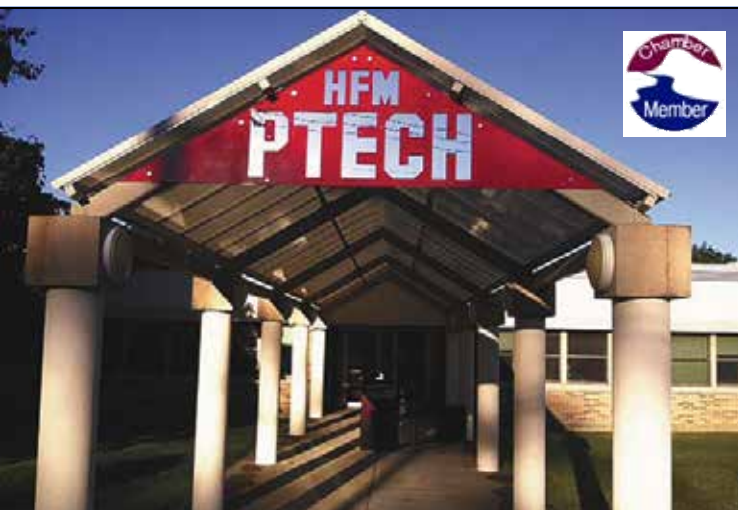
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Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES PTECH freshmen hosted the fifth annual Cancer Awareness Fair in the cafeteria at St. Mary's Healthcare in Amsterdam on October 24. St. Mary's staff members were invited to peruse the projects. The event included interactive booths that showcased the students' research on how different cancers form, early warning signs, treatment, prevention and statistics. Students also had a bake sale, basket raffle and other interactive activities to raise money for cancer research.



Sophomores at FM PTECH toured the facilities at business partner Townsend Leather. BEP organizers said "Thanks to Townsend for being so accommodating to the group and showing us all the impressive things you do."



Are you interested in working with students who will embrace the essential business skills and who will be trained educated employees for the future?

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We are currently looking for mentors who will be willing to communicate online with students weekly. Interested in becoming a partnering business?

Contact Nicole Walrath at

(518) 725-0641 or nicolew@fultonmontgomeryny.org for more information.



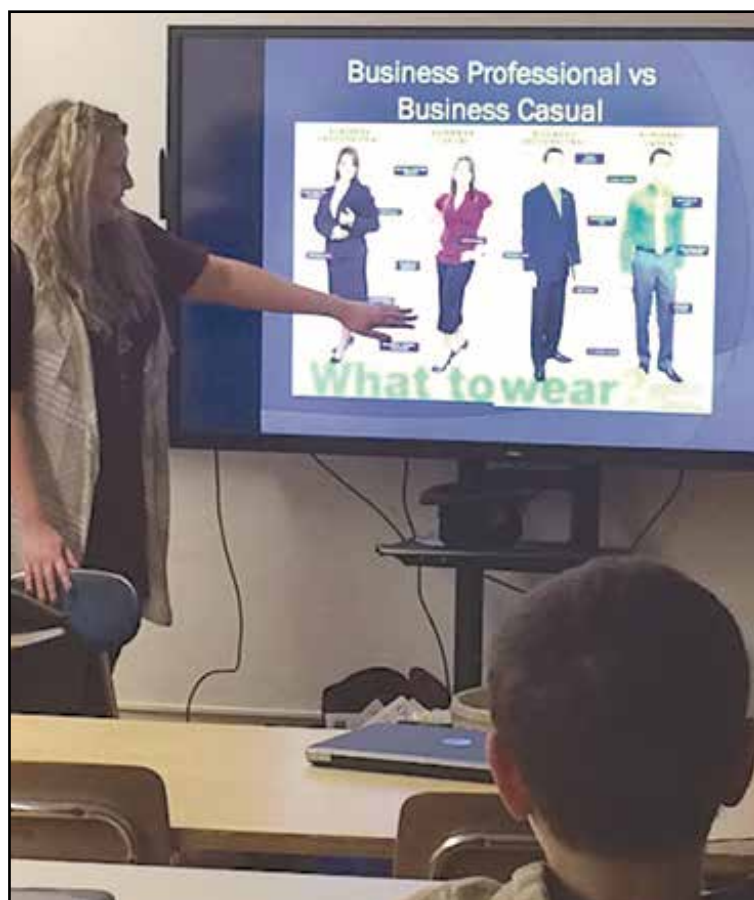
Business Education Partnership News



Business partners who serve as mentors visited for Ag PTECH's "Mentor Monday" in October. Discussions centered on professional presence and dress. In small groups, sophomores talked with mentors, who engaged the students in conversation about not only job-appropriate clothing,

but tattoos and piercings as well. Mentors who attended included Cheryl Fillekes of Mohawk Drumlin Creamery, Gail Breen of FMS Workforce Solutions, Laura Channell of Wemple and Edick's, Patrick Clear of Alpacas at Clear View Farm, and Jared Goderie of Goderie's Tree Farm.

Ag PTECH students in the Introduction to Animal Science class at SUNY Cobleskill worked on a lab assignment in the barn with goats and sheep. They also played a visit to the pigs in the barn next door, which students in the Aquaculture Techniques at SUNY Cobleskill class worked with fish in the hatchery.



Students at Amsterdam PTECH and Oppenheim-Ephratah St. Johnsville PTECH listened to Sarah Hafter and Nicole Walrath of the Fulton Montgomery Chamber present a "Dress for Success" seminar. One of the goals of a PTECH is to instill professional skills for students they can use to be successful in the workforce. The presentation explained that professional dress and presence is on the top of the list. Students are encouraged to dress in business casual attire when they have any interactions with business partners including project presentations and mock interviews.

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