

Century Linen Shows Off Advanced Johnstown Facility

By Jessica Ford
Newsline Editor

Century Linen & Uniform, a legacy company headquartered in Fulton County since 1915, welcomed well-wishers, legislators, community leaders and Chamber members to a ribbon-cutting, grand opening and tour at its technologically advanced health-care laundry facility site, on Balzano Drive in the Crossroads Industrial Park, in Johnstown.

CEO Richard Smith stood with the employees of the facility to cut the ribbon for the site, which was the culmination of almost 6 years of work searching for and building out the right location to accommodate the needs of the state-of-the-art equipment housed there.

Century provides healthcare linens and garments to acute healthcare facilities, surgery centers, nursing homes, assisted living centers, doctors offices and other businesses throughout New York State and western Massachusetts,



Century Linen & Uniform CEO Richard Smith and employees of the company's new technologically advanced facility in Johnstown, welcome visitors for a celebration and tour.

7 days per week, 365 days per year. Current capacity in the new site is 500,000 pounds of laundry weekly, and that is expected to double to a million pounds per week in the future. Among

hundreds of customers are the Capital District's St. Peter's Hospital – St. Peter's Health Partners; Ellis Medicine / Bellevue Women's Center; along with St. Mary's Healthcare in Amsterdam;

and Nathan Littauer Hospital in Gloversville. Most facilities do not utilize their own linens, but rent from Century. This streamlines the system, and makes it operate more like a factory, Smith said, noting this is a change from 30 years ago, when Robison & Smith would have dealt exclusively with "customer-owned goods."

Local economic development officials, who helped the company find tax breaks for the purchase of equipment, and grants to be used whenever possible, said the investment by Century Linen was substantial, and remarked that it was a key goal to help Century stay in Fulton County, if at all possible. This goal was not easily achieved, and Smith said the search for the right location was difficult. But, he said he was "thrilled" to be able to stay in Fulton

**See Century,
on page 4**

Attention to Trends, Response to Demand Pays Off for Mangino Chevrolet

By Jessica Ford
Newsline Editor

A forward-thinking business decision to build a new structure and hire additional employ-

ees is paying off for Mangino Chevrolet in Amsterdam.

The dealership, owned for 15 years by the Mangino family, completed the construc-

tion of a 13,500 square foot addition last year at its 4447 State Highway 30 location. The project created a massive 20-vehicle shop to handle the demand for service, and also includes a smaller section that helps to better showcase the sales department.

Husband and wife team Tina Mangino-Coffey and Mike Coffey, who have been in the automobile business for 41, and 25 years, respectively, said the decision to add on was based both on the anticipation of industry trends, as well as in



response to pent-up demand in the local market.

When asked about the keys to succeeding in business in the Fulton and Montgomery counties area, she said, "We are fair and honest, transparent

and friendly."

Coffey added, "It's the way we do business, we are #1 in customer satisfaction be-

**See Mangino,
on page 6**



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Letter from the President



Mark Kilmer
President/CEO

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce has always recognized the importance and value of small business, not only to our state's economy, but more importantly, to our regional economy, as well.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, employing over half of New York State's private-sector workers. This directly parallels the Chamber's make-up, with the bulk of our membership being small, locally owned businesses, many of which are retailers and service businesses.

Every year at this time, the Chamber reminds everyone of the benefits of shopping locally, and keeping those dollars in our communities. With Black Friday just passed, all retailers look toward the holiday season to define their year as a successful or not. When you shop locally, you not only make it more convenient for yourself by not having to spend time and gas to go and fight the crowds at a large shopping mall, but you also help to ensure the success of our local shop owners, who employ local people, who in turn provide you with the best of customer service. Also remember, our local businesses pay property taxes, and collect local sales tax, which helps to keep the tax base stable, which in turn helps everyone who lives in our region.

The Chamber has initiatives that promote and encourage the shop-local concept. Our most well known and continually successful, is our Chamber Check program. For many years the Chamber has promoted this outstanding program, which has resulted in over a million dollars in Chamber Checks being disbursed to businesses throughout the Fulton Montgomery region. Last year alone over \$110,000 worth of Chamber Checks were purchased and redeemed at participating member businesses all over the region.

Chamber Checks are easy. They can be purchased at either Chamber office (2 N. Main Street, Gloversville, or 1166 Riverfront Center, Amsterdam), or at any Community Bank location (Amsterdam, Johnstown, Canajoharie) or at Ruby & Quiri on Route 30A in Johnstown. They can be ordered in any number or denomination.

And, if you're an employer looking for a holiday gift for your employees, clients, or vendors, Chamber Checks can be provided to you in any quantity or denomination, and delivered to your place of business if needed. With over 100 participating merchants offering a wide spectrum of products or services, one Chamber Check can eliminate the struggle of "what to get," for that special someone on your gift list.

Chamber Checks can be redeemed for everything from shoes to wine, flowers to groceries, hardware to paint, tax preparation services, computer and auto repair, and so much more. Just check out the list on our website (www.fultonmontgomeryny.org/pages/ChamberChecks). If you're a business wishing to order a larger quantity we ask that you call ahead at (518) 725-0641 so we can prepare your order.



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Legislative Officials Discuss Challenges, Triumphs in Albany

Fulton Montgomery Chamber Of Commerce Annual Legislative Breakfast

By Jessica Ford

Newsline Editor

Positives, negatives, challenges and successes were discussed by legislators and their lead staff members during the third annual Legislative Breakfast, hosted by the Fulton Montgomery Chamber's Governmental Affairs Committee in November.

Five fixed questions, taken from the general membership, as well as the Governmental Affairs Committee discussion, were presented by moderator Tom Roehl, News Director for local radio station AM-1340 WENT. The event was held at Hales Mills Country Club in Johnstown.

Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber President Mark Kilmer thanked the panelists and audience for their participation in the event. He noted that the Chamber is active throughout the year in advocacy on behalf of its members. "We are active, and we do listen, he



(L-R): Panelists Doug Breakell, Chief of Staff for NYS Senator George A. Amedore; NYS Assemblyman Robert Smullen; and Jonathan Pirro, Director of Policy for NYS Senator Jim Tedisco; and WENT News Director Tom Roehl address the crowd at the Chamber's Legislative Breakfast event held in November.

said. "If there is an issue that affects our members, we do pay attention and we will fight. It works especially well when we are strong with one voice."

NYS Assemblyman Robert Smullen, whose district includes Fulton, Hamilton and parts of Herkimer, Oneida and St. Lawrence counties, attended, along with staff members Jonathan Pirro, Director

of Policy for NYS Senator Jim Tedisco; and Doug Breakell, Chief of Staff for NYS Senator George A. Amedore. Tedisco's district includes parts of Saratoga, Schenectady and Herkimer counties and all of Fulton and Hamilton counties. Amedore's district includes all of Montgomery and Greene counties and portions of Schenectady, Albany and

Ulster counties.

All state officials who represent the two counties were invited. Those not able to attend due to other commitments, sent their staff members to participate.

A total of five questions were asked, and each had about five minutes to respond.

QUESTION: Single-Party Control of Legislature and Executive

Due to the elections of 2018, 2019 saw both the Assembly and the Senate controlled by a single party for the first time in over a decade. At last year's event, we asked the question, "how do you think the upcoming session and year will go? Virtually all remarks were pessimistic. So, tell us, how did the year go?"

Despite the panelists' opinions that living through 1-party rule has been difficult, even a "disaster," as Breakell described it, the consensus is

that each will continue both to fight laws that they see as detrimental to the region, but also to work within the system whenever possible to effect positive change.

Breakell said within the current climate in Albany, a progressive agenda is being pushed, but he said he believes that checks and balances are required. He encouraged everyone to "get engaged," and noted that it is imperative for members of the community to continue to contact legislators and "be educating these legislators on the impacts of how Upstate will be affected by some of these policies."

Smullen who has been in office for 10 months, noted that using the state processes that are in place already to the best advantage of his district is how he tackles the barriers created by this issue. As part of several

**See Breakfast,
on page 8**

Anne Boles Named Chamber's Fulton Montgomery Tourism Director

Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce President Mark Kilmer has chosen lifelong area resident and marketing specialist Anne Boles to serve as Director of Tourism.

"Anne is coming into this new role with a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and she will be a great addition to the Chamber team. I expect her to be an outstanding asset to both counties' tourism programs," Kilmer said.

She replaces former Tourism Director Gina DaBiere-Gibbs.

Boles most recently served as Director of Community Relations at Johnstown's Community Health Center, where she was employed for the past 14 years. Her duties included creating innovative marketing and advertising strategies; managing the organizations' web and social media presence; serving as liaison to customers and business partners throughout Fulton, Montgomery, Herkimer, Schoharie, Saratoga, Hamilton, and Warren Counties; fundraising; and event planning.

"I love that we have activities



Anne Boles

available in Fulton and Montgomery counties, in all seasons," Boles said. "My family and I thoroughly enjoy all there is to do here. There is apple-picking in the fall, hiking in the spring, boating in the summer, snowshoeing in the winter, plus local shops, craft beverage purveyors and restaurants, just for starters. I am especially excited to help

promote all local tourism businesses, including museums, historical sites, restaurants, shops with hand-crafted items, inns and hotels, the lakes, rail trail and so many others."

She added, "I am a lifetime resident of this community, and my family and I have invested here to create our life and our future. We work, live, and play here, and we want to see the region thrive for our son's generation, and generations to come. I am looking forward to sharing it all with visitors, so that we can continue to move our economy forward and highlight all we have to offer."

Boles received her Bachelor's

See Boles, on page 5

SAVE THE DATE For the Chamber's Annual Celebration in January

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce will honor businesses, individuals and organizations during its annual event, "Cheers to Business! — A Celebration of Business, Collaboration and Progress," set for January 17, 2020.

The event will be held at the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, 2736 State Route 30, Gloversville, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. All members of the community are invited, and proceeds will support the Chamber's mission of improving the region's business climate, economy and quality of life. Tickets are \$75.

Guests at the event will enjoy cocktails, entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, cuisine stations, dessert, and fundraising raffles.

Mark Kilmer, Chamber President, said, "This special annual event is a wonderful opportunity for business people, not-for-profit community members, and individuals to get together, celebrate our region, and honor impressive awardees. It's a night not to be missed!"

The Chamber represents a large group of members in the region, at close to 1,000 strong. The organization's website states, "The Fulton Montgomery Chamber is the leading voice of businesses in the region, providing advocacy, resources and solutions for members."

For more information, or to sponsor or attend the Chamber's annual celebration, contact the Chamber by phone, (518) 725-0641; via email: info@fultonmontgomeryny.org; or visit www.fultonmontgomeryny.org.



FULTON MONTGOMERY REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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County, as all of the company's success has been realized here. He said best practices for Century's success in this region have been "hard work, consistency with our business philosophy, focusing on our core values and having a properly trained and educated workforce."

The company has three production facilities in Gloversville and Johnstown, with an additional location in Syracuse. A brochure created by Century states, "Century is proud to boast that this facility has pushed us over 400 total team members, ultimately contributing over an estimated \$25 million to our local communities."

Century Linen & Uniform was founded in Gloversville as Robison & Smith, and the name was changed in 2015 to mark a new era for the "next 100 years" of the company.

While welcoming guests to the celebration and tour, Smith thanked his family and corporate team, along with some organizations who were

instrumental in making the expansion happen, including WEST & Co., CPAs, PC; local and state legislators and economic development officials; grant writer Nick Zabowski; and local companies Fulton County Electric, L&M Masonry and Adirondack Mechanical, that did most of the infrastructure work inside the facility.

NYS Senator James Tedisco congratulated Smith and his crew on the expansion, saying, "I can say one word about this whole thing. Wow! This is the Taj Mahal of linen cleaning. With 100 jobs created, I want to say thank you for investing in our community."

He joked, "I thought that it was going to take a century but we got it done. YOU got it done. Smith quipped, "You and me both!"

New York Assemblyman Robert Smullen also shared his appreciation, saying the facility is a "great example of Fulton County Positive."

During the tour of the location, Smith explained that



State and local officials, along with CEO Richard Smith, center, do a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for Century Linen's new 50,000 square feet Healthcare linen cleaning facility on Balzano Drive in Johnstown.

the investment in expansion has paid off in several ways. The highly-automated nature of the process has reduced labor costs and the number of

workers. However, the system has allowed the company to take on more customers, which has resulted in the need to hire more people. "It's a

constant balance," he said.

The building includes 5,000 square feet of offices and meeting rooms, a team-member cafeteria, upper observation and training room, and server rooms. There are currently two shifts, six days per week. In keeping with a commitment to green technology, there is LED lighting throughout, and energy efficient boiler and air compressor.

All of the sorting, washing, drying and finishing equipment in the facility is from Europe and is considered the best in the world. There is a separate soiled item sorting area, supported by four loading docks, which begins with an ergonomic cart dumper to prevent stress and fatigue while increasing throughput. Goods are sorted by item to huge blue slings holding about 180 pounds each, that are suspended from the tracks on the ceiling. Carts are run through a technologically advanced cart washer to ensure hygienic cleanliness before they leave the soil room.

Plastic bags from the outside that contained soiled linens are sent through a Plastivac Vacuum System to a baler. The bales are picked up by an out-of-state vendor for recycling, which adds to the facility's status as a Green Sustainable operation.

The large bags containing sorted soiled linen are stored in the overhead rail system, then automatically sent to the Continuous Batch Washer for the wash process. The wash cycle is 28 minutes long and the water is recycled to save millions of gallons of water



Employees feed a finishing machine some of the more than 500,000 pounds of linens processed weekly at Century Linen's plant in Johnstown.



Century Linen employees feed dried linens into a finishing machine at Century's new Johnstown facility.



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on page 5**

Linen, continued from page 4



(L-R): NYS Assemblyman Robert Smullen, Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce President Mark Kilmer, Century Linen CEO Richard Smith, and NYS Senator James Tedisco.

per year.

Fresh water is used for rinsing. The CBW tunnel weighs 40,000 pounds, and produces 5,500 pounds per hour of hygienically clean linens and garments. Wash chemicals are dispensed through the entire cycle and fine-tuned to each of 13 separate washers by product type, to enhance cleanliness and use cycles. A hydraulic power press weighing 64,000 pounds completes the cycle to remove residual water, which is then reused for washing.

Once the press removes excess water, the items are automatically distributed to the dryer line, containing eight gas-fired, extremely energy efficient dryers utilizing infrared technology to determine load dryness.

Once the automatic dryer discharges the clean linens, they are automatically sorted and stored on the overhead rail system to be distributed to finishing equipment, which includes two flatwork irons discharging to smart convey-

ors; one high-speed blanket folder discharging to smart conveyors; and eight small-piece folders discharging to conveyors. The ceiling track system utilizes gravity and momentum to feed through the plant, in another effort to conserve resources.

Visitors will notice that floor carts are used only minimally in the facility, which enhances safety and efficiency. There is also a hand fold area, and wrapping and tying machines.

Once the process is complete, clean laundry is shipped out via four designated loading docks.

Mark Kilmer, president of the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, commended Smith and his leadership team for their commitment to business in the region, saying the facility is "impressive, efficient, and a source of pride for members of the community, legislators, leaders, and employees of Century Linen & Uniform."

Boles, continued from page 3

Degree in communications from Keene State College in Keene, NH, and an Associate's Degree in marketing/public relations from Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY.

The Chamber named Boles "Young Professional of the Year" at its annual event in 2016; and she was awarded the "Sok Nam Ko Rotarian of the Year," award, as well as the prestigious "Paul Harris Fellow Award" in 2017, by the Amsterdam Rotary Club. She has served the community as a Rotarian since 2009.

Boles has served as a member of the St. Mary's Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors, as well as the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities in Fulton and Montgomery counties. She has volunteered as a business mentor for students in the HFM BOCES PTECH program, and was organizer of the Community Health Center Alzheimer's Walk team from 2006-2016.

In her role, Boles will serve as project director for the administration of I Love NY Tourism Matching Funds, which provides a yearly award to New York State Tourism Promotion Agencies for the planning and execution of marketing programs for both Fulton and Montgomery counties. Additional funding for tourism promotion in the two counties comes from each of the county budgets, as well as the Chamber. The common goal for all the involved entities is to stimulate and increase the economic impact of tourism.

By using the most effective and efficient marketing program and media mix to stimulate visitor spending in the local and regional economy, traveler spending is shown to create a significant return on investment. Over the past 5 years, traveler dollars spent in Fulton and Montgomery counties has increased consistently, to reach a 2018 impact of more than \$107 Million on the local economy, according to the most recently released statistics by Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics company – one of the world's leading providers of economic analysis, forecasts and consulting advice.

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Mangino, continued from page 1



Customer Care in the Service Department is a priority for Mangino Chevrolet. Owners dropping off their vehicles are treated to a clean and welcoming space for check-in.



This massive 20-vehicle shop is part of the 13,500 square foot addition built by Mangino Chevrolet in Amsterdam to handle the demand for service and to open a new line of business servicing mid-duty trucks.

cause we do what we say, and say what we do. Each customer is very important, and all are equal in our eyes.”

Mangino-Coffey and Coffey are part of the quartet that owns both the Amsterdam Chevrolet store, as well as Mangino Buick GMC in Ballston Spa. While they concentrate their efforts in Amsterdam, the Ballston Spa location is run by their other co-owners Patti Mangino and Ralph Mangino, Jr.

Coffey said the business has definitely changed in the 15 years since the store’s opening. Today the company focuses on new and used sales; service; parts and leasing. In the beginning, they were selling on average 30 new cars per month, and about 25 used per month. Fifteen years later, the average is around 75 new per month, and 45 used. During that time, the company’s service business has doubled.

The new addition and line of business in service for medium-duty trucks involved the expense of purchasing new lifts, installing overhead doors and specialized equipment. It’s a welcome change from the original 6,000 square foot shop, which is still being utilized, but with a little more breathing room. The new shop is one of the few in the area to be outfitted with air conditioning, and the expansion also included a new parts window, conference room, additional offices and an employee break room.

This investment has allowed Mangino to add 10 new employees to their ranks, bringing the total to 53 full-time employees and several part-time and seasonal staff members.

Watching trends and responding to changing customer needs is a constant focus of the vehicle sales industry, and the Mangino owners work tirelessly to ensure they are on top of the latest developments.

For example, Google statistics show 95% of vehicle buyers use digital as a source of information; and two times as many automotive consumers start their research online versus at a dealer. A summary said, “Today’s automotive consumers are informed and knowledgeable since they self-educate online before they ever

make contact with a dealer.”

Coffey echoed this statistic, saying that the internet has been a game changer. He said, “The average customer goes to 1.2 dealerships when purchasing a vehicle, but when they arrive, they already know what they want.”

Mangino said that although having more savvy customers who search for pricing online might be a detriment to some dealers, they have always prided themselves in transparency in pricing.

These philosophies are working well. Despite the rural location of the Amsterdam dealership, Mangino is the third largest Chevy dealer in the Albany market. Fifteen years ago when they purchased the Amsterdam site, it ranked 7th. In addition, the Ballston Spa Buick GMC site is ranked 2nd in the Albany market.

For the couple, treating em-

**See Dealer,
on page 7**

Franchised Auto Dealers By the Numbers:

16,753: The number of franchised auto dealers in the United States in 2018

17.22 million:
The number of light-duty vehicles sold in the nation in 2018

\$1 TRILLION:

Total new-vehicle sales in the United States in 2018

310 million:
Number of repair orders written by dealerships in 2018

\$116 billion:
Amount of service and parts sales made by franchised dealers in 2018

Source: NADA Data, an annual report on America’s franchised new-car dealerships, covers dealership sales, financial trends and more.

Car Buyers are Encouraged to Visit These Franchised Dealers, That Are Proud Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce Members:

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Brown’s Ford of Johnstown, Inc.
121 North Comrie Avenue Johnstown NY 12095
(518) 762-4609

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310 North Comrie Avenue Johnstown NY 12095
(518) 762-7222

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Dealer, continued from page 6

employees like family, and training family to be great employees, is also a priority that has proven successful. Mangino-Coffey's father, Ralph Sr., who started the Ballston Spa location in 1978 after leaving Salisbury Chevrolet in Scotia, still comes to the office each morning, at age 87.

And, their two 20-something children are already part of the business, as an administrator in the service department, and as a warranty administrator. The parents would like them each to work in each department before embarking on their broader careers.

"We're family-oriented," Mangino-Coffey said. "If someone's child is in the school play – family comes first."

A big pot of Tina's homemade soup offered to employees on the snowiest days, also doesn't hurt.

"We have great employees. We have a great bunch, we really do," she said. "You've got to love what you do, and have a good time doing it."

Vida-Blend Breaks Ground On Production Facility in Montgomery County

Vida-Blend, a manufacturer of pre-mixed vitamin blends, formally broke ground in a special ceremony to begin construction of a new, state-of-the-art production facility in Montgomery County.

The new \$1.4 million, 14,000 square foot new facility is a major step forward for the company. Vida-Blend is the third company to locate at the Florida Business Park Extension, joining the newly completed Dollar General Distribution Center and Hill & Markes.

Vida-Blend will build its new manufacturing facility after purchasing the property and negotiating a PILOT through the BDC. In addition, the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council has awarded Vida-Blend a performance-based, capital grant of \$240,000 through Empire State Development for additional machinery and equipment, in exchange for 11 new jobs.

"We are all looking forward to this new facility as it will open up many more exciting opportunities for us in the near future," said Freddy Luna, founder of Vida-Blend.

The business' expansion is being celebrated by the officials from Montgomery County and the County's Business Development Center as an

exciting addition to the Route 5S corridor which is already home to major name-brand companies like Beech-Nut, Dollar General and Target, as well as long-standing local employers like Alpin Haus and Hill & Markes.

"Vida-Blend is a wonderful local success story and another example of how our county's employers are growing and creating jobs," said Montgomery County Executive Matthew L. Ossenfort. "Montgomery's economy is strong because companies like Vida-Blend, government and local communities are working together to ensure success. We're proud to support companies that invest in our community. Congratulations to Freddy and the whole Vida-Blend team on this exciting next step."

"Vida-Blend has become an important part of the vibrant and diverse Mohawk Valley region by producing quality products and giving back to the community it calls home," said Empire State Development Acting Commissioner, President & CEO-designate Eric Gertler. "This is another great step forward for the company, Montgomery County and the region, and we are proud to have supported its expansion."

"Vida-Blend's development and

expansion is an exciting example of the good that comes from community support for a local entrepreneur who is willing to make investments in our area. Helping businesses construct state-of-the-art facilities that meet the needs of their employees and customers encourages them to stay and grow in Montgomery County. Freddy and the team at Vida-Blend have come a long way and we are proud to play a part in helping them realize even greater potential," said Montgomery County Business Development Center CEO Ken Rose.

Founded by Freddy Luna in 2013, following a successful career in the vitamin fortification industry, Vida-Blend has a long-standing working relationship with the Business Development Center. The company received the globally-recognized "Food Safety System Certification 22000," in 2016. The safety designation helped Vida-Blend reach new customers requiring a larger production facility.

Luna worked closely with the BDC for find a suitable new site. "We're staying here and we're growing here because Montgomery County has always been willing to help us on our road to success," he said.

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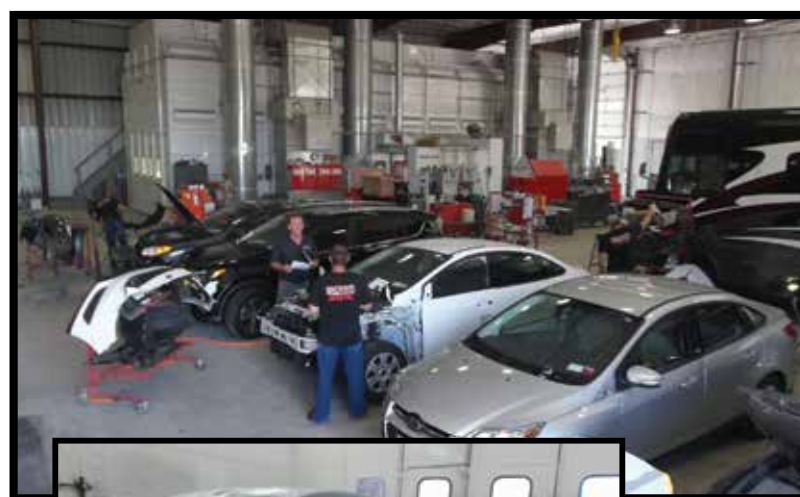
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Breakfast continued from page 3

legislative committees, he has the ability to work on a variety of topics through the committee system, and said he sees that as one place where the minority party can make a difference.

He said the three activities he is able to do consistently within the 1-party system, are voting, serving on committees, and constituent-affairs work. He said, "If the process squeezes out the voices of large parts of the population, it leads to overall dissatisfaction," and that creates a cause for concern for him, when one group of people control the process.

Smullen noted he works to make the case for getting things done, and to air any grievances he hears from constituents. "I am representing all of you to make sure your voice in Albany is heard loud and clear," he said.

He explained that when a law impacts only a few communities, or even only one, exceptions may be made to relieve the unfair burden.

Pirro thanked the audience for being invited, noting that Sen. Tedisco's district

includes Wells and other areas that suffered from a huge storm after Halloween, and was meeting with officials to continue the rebuilding work that needed to be done.

Regarding the question at hand, he said, "The whole purpose of government is to give you a voice. Everybody wants a voice when something important to them, is happening. With one-party control, it's very, very difficult to have any policy put in place that represents the way we do things. We see this proven, because 189,000 people showed us what they think, last year, by leaving." He cited USA Today, which listed New York State as #1 in out-migration at the beginning of 2018.

He noted that keeping a vigilant watch on every piece of pending legislation is an imperative duty for all the representatives' offices.

Another way to continue to be effective in this particular political climate, is to take action like Sen. Tedisco did regarding the proposed license plate fees by Gov. Cuomo. He

"I am representing all of you to make sure your voice in Albany is heard loud and clear."

— Assemblyman Robert Smullen

said the way it was rolled out was "egregious" and not fully developed to show the need for the fee, and he said there was misleading information sent out about it. Tedisco held press conferences to raise "heck" about it, and it was effective, as Cuomo rolled it back. It may be proposed again in the future, but "our vocalism, our presence — they heard us," he said.

QUESTION: Prevailing Wage Expansion

Last year, largely pushed by unions, there was an effort to expand the prevailing-wage regulations to private industry. Studies had shown that this would drastically increase the cost of many projects, both public and private, with the consequences being higher taxes stymied economic development/expansion and lost job opportunities.

The Chamber strongly opposed this effort. Fortunately, it failed to pass, but all indications are that it will be back in the next session. Please give us your thoughts:

"The whole purpose of government is to give you a voice. Everybody wants a voice when something important to them, is happening. With one-party control, it's very, very difficult to have any policy put in place that represents the way we do things."

**— Jonathan Pirro, Director of Policy for
NYS Senator Jim Tedisco**

Smullen said "It's an economic competitiveness issue." He explained that one consideration was to include prevailing wage rules in legislation that would kick into play when Industrial Development Agencies that facilitate public-private partnerships in business were utilized.

Breakell said the prevailing wage laws create problems when brought into the private sector, because it can be "devastating." He said, "Sen. Amedore, being a home-builder privately, understands this issue well and we've talked to many businesses about what impacts this would have on people and economic development upstate in general."

"How do we push back? IDA's are extremely important for private investments to come in, and there's not really monies being given to those projects. There might be a deferment of taxes or sales tax from the state on some of the materials. So what we need to do, is define what 'public work' is. If there is a certain investment from the state into a project, maybe there has to be prevailing wage has to be applied to certain parts. As far as school districts go, it's a huge problem. It's very, very expensive, and the ultimate impact comes down on the residents of that community. So we are trying to fight back."

Pirro said laws such as this "just add to the anti-business climate" in the state. "We're 'open for business,' right? Wages are important, of course, we want to make sure everybody is treated fairly. Just like we always talk about the social justice agenda, social justice is important, to somebody that's represented by government. That's why it's

the future hold, and will the state put a higher priority on this problem?

Breakell said, "Absolutely almost everybody in this room knows someone who has been affected by tick-borne disease. It is devastating, and is not just rural anymore. Sen. Amedore sat on the task force for Lyme disease, and the stories are all the same. It is devastating to families, and debilitating to those affected."

He said during the Senate Republican Conference, when Republicans were in the majority, Lyme disease studies were funded, but last year's budget did away with it.

"So that talks about one-party rule again, they did not understand the impact of that upstate." He said in addition, the Federal Centers for Disease Control is not recognizing Lyme disease as a crisis right now.

Smullen said it's a very serious issue. He was bitten by a tick during Marine Corps training at Quantico in 1991. He made sure when he left the Corps he was checked to see if the disease was there and dormant in his system. He said he was lucky that it was not, and he called for "smart, effective measures."

"It's important that at state policy level that we look at it," he said. "We did do three bills in the past year, they all passed without any hesitation." For the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the bill was for the assessment of state parks, including the Adirondack Park; for the Dept. of Financial Services, for ensuring the adequacy of insurance coverage for the treatment of Lyme disease; and with the Commissioner of Ag & Markets, to develop best practice recommendations for the treatment and prevention of tick-borne illness in livestock and farm property.

Pirro said Sen. Tedisco's office worked closely with Sen. Amedore's office on the issue beginning in 2017. He said there is so much still misunderstood about the illnesses. "It's not a waste of time or resources. We need to truly understand the problem," he said.

QUESTION: Continuing the Push to Legalize Marijuana

Last year we asked your opinion of the efforts to legalize marijuana. Most

**See Questions,
on page 9**

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Questions continued from page 8

businesses are opposed to legalization as was the unanimous opinion of this panel. It seems to have the strong backing of Governor Cuomo and it will most likely be brought back during the 2020 session. Where do you believe it will go?

Pirro said he expects this legislation to be on the agenda again this session. He said legalization of recreational marijuana is a sample of “low-hanging fruit” that may be easy to pass, but he cautioned because he believes the policy that was proposed last year was not well-thought out. He said for example, that the police departments do not want the substance legalized because the policies are not well thought-out and there is no way to test for it when you pull someone over, for example. “To legalize this on a grand scale, recreationally, would be a big problem.”

He said, “Senator has been out in the district saying, ‘What is your form of recreation?’ ... His is bowling, watching movies. Of course, you know, he played basketball. That’s recreation. So they put this label on it, just to get the policy through.” He said the law enforcement agencies have been very successful in voicing their disapproval, and he said, “Obviously, their members listened.” He predicted it will be at the top of the agenda this year but the law enforcement agencies are saying they are still not ready for it to be legalized.

Smullen said, “First of all, smoking (tobacco) is bad for you. How can smoking marijuana be good for you?” In some of the other states that passed it, like, Colorado, he said youth usage has increased. “In 12 to 17-year-olds – these are people who are not adults, these are people not able to make their own decisions in many areas – they are smart, and they are growing, becoming productive members of our society. They are seeing their rates go way up because maybe their parents or their older siblings have it in their homes. He said, “That usage rate is going way up, so there is evidence that kids don’t learn as well if they are using, in this case, marijuana, let alone it being a gateway drug to future things.”

He said, “What I don’t want to see is it to come in the budget, where you have to vote it up or vote it down, in a massive package. There are many other ways to write more effective legislation, to let people do what they want to do in the sanctity of their private property and their homes. In my mind it’s not to go ahead and commercialize cannabis so you can tax it.”

Breakell said, “Whether or not we are going to do legalization of marijuana this year is going to depend on how that budget gap is, as this will not pass as a standalone bill, even under one party rule.”

He noted Sen. Amedore does not support the legislation to legalize recreational marijuana, and he does believe it is a gateway drug. He said, “We’ve done years of work on the heroin epidemic that is devastating every community.” He mentioned the vaping issue, and also noted that Colorado voted to legalize marijuana and they had an increase of about 15% in Driving Under the Influence incidents. “It’s going to be a problem, that’s how we view it,” he said. “The state has spent billions of dollars trying to eradicate smoking. What are we doing to do, we are going to legalize marijuana, and then all of a sudden it’s going to cost us billions to try to stop people from doing that?”

He added that Sen. Amedore does fully support the medical use of marijuana, because he said it’s been studied, and proven to be effective in relieving suffering from certain diseases and chronic pain. He also said Amedore supports the hemp industry.

QUESTION: Rent Control Regulations

New regulations were put forth this year throughout New York that are similar to those in place in New York City. These make it more difficult and costly for Upstate landlords to collect past-due rents, remove unruly tenants, collect for damages, etc. The process has become so difficult and costly that we are hearing of cases where landlords are calling it quits and selling properties and/or not investing in new projects. What impacts

are you hearing about this and give your thoughts:

Smullen said rent control was an emergency measure passed after WWII that became institutionalized in New York, and has distorted the market there.

He said local legislators will be working to make amendments to these bills, to be able to ease some of the restrictions. “Some of them are common sense. You don’t want unscrupulous landlords dealing with tenants in a bad way, for instance retaliating against a tenant for a complaint about the condition of the apartment.”

“By the same token, I don’t believe that a tenant should be able to withhold rent based on an arbitrary criteria.”

He said he hoped that businesspeople who are landlords have been paying attention to the new laws so they don’t get afoul of the civil implications.”

Breakell said, “Rent control did pass, but it does have to be adopted locally. And if you’re a landlord, you’d better get on the phone with your mayor or your town supervisor, or whoever may be. Because I’m going to tell you – devastating.”

He said, “New York City had a housing crisis. We don’t have a housing crisis Upstate, we have people leaving our state. So now we are going to have tenants moving into an apartment, and you can’t evict them if they don’t pay.”

He said the law was the result of a huge movement by tenants’ rights advocacy groups to get this to go statewide.

He said Sen. Amedore’s district includes Kingston, and they plan to be the first municipality to adopt the law. He said the way landlords can fight back is that on a local level the community can adopt certain policies that are different than New York City’s.

“The one thing that everyone needs to understand is that, yes, rent control has been brought statewide, but it’s now going to be up to the municipality to adopt it, where you live or might own property.”

He said, “If municipalities adopt this, you are going to create a housing crisis upstate. For what? It’s like lunacy.”

He noted, “One other thing about tenant rights, is that housing authorities exist for a reason, and complaints can be filed. So we talk about those bad actors, but they’re

“I encourage everyone to get engaged, and be educating these (majority party) legislators on the impacts – of how Upstate will be affected by some of these policies.”

— Doug Breakell, Chief of Staff for NYS Senator George A. Amedore

making everyone a bad actor, and it’s just not fair. That’s what this policy did, and now it is giving more rights to tenants, which I agree with, but there needs to be an approach to tenants where landlords and tenants come together to work those out. So I think this is going to be a failed policy.”

Pirro said this issue affects all of our communities. “We do want to protect people from bad actors, you know but I think to echo what they said, we want to make sure we’re providing an environment for landlords where they can continue to offer apartments,” he said.

“If we make it impossible, or very, very difficult for them to evict people that aren’t paying rent, then that becomes a major issue. We are very, very concerned.”

He said Sen. Tedisco represents Schenectady. He said in Schenectady there is a group

of landlords that has organized that has been in regular contact. “One thing I can tell you is that although it is signed into law, groups are organizing, with other groups. They are starting to mobilize and form a state-wide advocacy group against the current regulations. That is supported by Sen. Tedisco.

He noted, “We are very, very careful though,” because at a recent meeting, there were tenants who also expressed their concerns. He said they made sure the tenants understood that they are interested in making sure there are apartments available to them, and he said they were receptive to this message.

Sponsors of the event included: Bouchey and Clarke Benefits, Inc.; Benjamin Moore Paints; Keymark Corporation; Universal Warehousing, Inc. / SLA Transport, Inc.; McClary Media Inc.; and Townsend Leather.



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Health Insurance News

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It's been over one year now since NYS Paid Family Leave Act (NYS PFL) went into effect on January 1, 2018. The NYS PFL provides eligible employees job-protected, paid time off to 1) bond with a newly born, adopted or fostered child, 2) care for a family member with a serious health condition, or 3) assist loved ones when a spouse, domestic partner, child or parent is deployed abroad on active military service.

Increases for 2020: Benefits

Starting January 1, 2020, employees will be eligible for the same number of weeks of leave as in 2019 (10 Weeks). However, the amount of the benefit they can receive will increase from 55% of the employee's Average Weekly

Wage to 60% of the employees Average Weekly Wage, capped at 60% of the State's Average Weekly Wage.

In 2021, the number of weeks an employee is eligible to take increases from 10 weeks to 12 weeks and the benefit increases from 60% of the Average Weekly Wage to 67% of the employee's Weekly Average Wage, capped at 67% of the State's Average Weekly Wage.

In 2020, the maximum weekly benefit employees can receive will increase to \$840.70 from a maximum weekly benefit of \$746.41 in 2019.

Employee Contributions Increasing in 2020

For 2020, the maximum employee contribution rate for PFL will go from .153%

to .270% of the employee's gross annualized wages capped at the new annualized NYS Average Weekly Wage of \$72,860.84 (previously \$70,569.72) per year. This increase translates to a maximum annual premium contribution in 2020 of \$196.72 per employee vs. \$107.97 in 2019, an increase of \$88.75 per year.

NYS PFL Changes

— Benefit increase to 60% AWW*

— Contribution increase to .270%*

*Subject to wage cap.

Tax Implications

Employees should be aware that pursuant to the Department of Tax Notice No. N-17-12, Paid Family Leave benefits are taxable. Taxes will not automatically be withheld from benefits; however, employees can

request voluntary tax withholding. Employees should consult with their company's carrier of NYS PFL regarding taxes and options available.

First Year Experiences (for more details and graphs, visit www.boucheyclarke.com)

According to the New York State PFL data (www.paidfamilyleave.ny.gov) more than 8.5 million employees in New York State gained access to Paid Family Leave in 2018. In 2018, more than 86,500 employees took an average of 33 days of Paid Family Leave to bond with their new child, while approximately 39,000 employees took an average of 21 days of Paid Family Leave to care for a loved one.

While women represent the majority of employees

taking bonding leave (approximately 58,900 took it in 2018), 26,600 men took bonding leave in 2018.

Regarding claims for Family Bonding Leave taken in a continuous time frame vs. leave taken periodically, 63,600 employees took Bonding Leave on a continuous basis, while 13,800 The number of employees taking Family Care Leave in 2018 was 39,200. Of these, 27,400 were women and 10,900 were men. 17,600 employees took Family care Leave on a continuous basis, while 16,600 took the leave on a periodic basis. The type of frequency of the leave was not defined for over 9,000 employees that took Family Leave.

Who is taking PFL

It appears from a review of the data for 2018 that NYS PFL was used by employees in all salary ranges with the highest salary range of employees taking leave under NYS PFL being \$200K/year and the lowest being \$20K/year. The larger number of employees taking NYS PFL in 2018 (32,900) had annual salaries that fell within the range of \$20K to \$40K.

In 2018, employees took an average 33 days of Paid Family Leave to bond with their new child, while the average number of Paid Family Leave days taken by employees to care for a loved one was 21 days.

What Can Employers Expect

Employers should expect to see an increase in the number of employees who will take time off under NYS PFL leave in 2020 as the benefit amount will increase by 5% to 60%. In addition, employers may also see an increase in the average number of days that employees will use under NYS PFL for Bonding Leave and Family Care Leave. Employers may want to review their Leave Policies to ensure that they are aligned with NYS PFL requirements.



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Mayfield Man's Revolutionary 'Bubbler Jukebox' Debuts at Chicagoland

John Papa, owner of the National Jukebox Exchange in Mayfield, launched a new "Signature Edition" Rock-Ola Bubbler vinyl jukebox at Chicagoland, a staple event for jukebox collectors and exhibitors.

The new jukebox is the result of a collaboration between Rock-Ola – the world's foremost jukebox manufacturer – and Papa, a renowned industry figure with over 40 years of experience in selling and restoring jukeboxes.

During two days in November, Papa and Rock-Ola's CEO, Alexander Walder-Smith, showcased the Signature Bubbler Jukebox at Chicagoland, sometimes known as "the Coin Op Show." The show is America's biggest annual exhibition of jukeboxes, slot machines, and coin-operated machines, alongside a whole host of other antiques and Americana. Now in its 39th year, it attracts exhibitors, collectors and enthusiasts from all over the States and beyond, all flocking to over 300 booths in a single giant 62,000 square foot exhibition hall.

Papa restores jukeboxes, penny arcade games and vintage amusements. A release from the company said, "He and his handpicked team have appeared in museums, TV shows and movies showcasing their expertise, and he has long been an official supplier of Rock-Ola jukeboxes, lending his own prestige to an already globally-acclaimed brand."

Based on Rock-Ola's legendary Bubbler design, the revolutionary jukebox blends its iconic 50s styling with over half a century's worth of advancement in music technology. With up to 200 selections available, its authentic vinyl sound is enhanced by a tube pre-amplifier and projected through a powerful 700-watt



John Papa, left, owner of the National Jukebox Exchange in Mayfield, poses with Rock-Ola's CEO, Alexander Walder-Smith at the Chicagoland jukebox exhibition. The two companies collaborated on a "signature edition" Rock-Ola Bubbler vinyl jukebox designed by Papa.

amplifier, and it can even be controlled from a smartphone thanks to its Bluetooth connectivity – notable as a high tech complement to its authentic coin mechanism.

Walder-Smith said, "John has brought his experience to Rock-Ola and enhanced our standard model, his endorsement of our company is a great privilege and we are very pleased to offer the "Signature Edition" as our premium model."

The release said, "Their separate reputations for craftsmanship are both embodied by the Signature Edition Bubbler jukebox: each one is handmade in Rock-Ola's US headquarters, complete with handpicked Californian woods."

The company is already taking advance orders on John Papa's Signature Rock-Ola Bubbler vinyl jukebox, now available from the official Rock-Ola website.

Chamber Gallery to Exhibit Works by Artist Tammy McCue

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce will host an exhibit by local artist Tammy McCue, titled "Tammy's Treasures" that will be on display in the Chamber Gallery, 2 N. Main St., Gloversville, throughout the month of December.

The Gallery is open for viewing Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. There will be an art show reception on Thursday, December 5 from 5-7 p.m. for the public to meet the artist.

Art has been a major part of McCue's life, and over time she has learned many techniques including stone printing lithographs, air brush painting, and working with stained glass. In college she earned a bachelor's in fine arts, master's in arts and a teaching certificate in art.

McCue was born with



Works by Tammy McCue, titled "Tammy's Treasures" will be on display in the Chamber Gallery, 2 N. Main St., Gloversville, throughout the month of December.

Epilepsy, and the past year has been especially hard on her because the disease has worsened. In May and June

of 2019, McCue endured two major brain surgeries. As a result of that trauma, her art style has changed, and she began working with antique jewelry, which has been a form of rehabilitation for her.

McCue's work will be available for purchase at the Chamber during the show. A release said, "With Christmas right around the corner, you can pick up purchased artwork beginning December 16 to have it home for the holidays."

McCue will donate proceeds from sales of her pieces to the Chamber scholarship program. For more information, or if you would like to inquire about showing your artwork in the Chamber Gallery Rotunda, please call Nicole Tennant at (518) 725-0641 or e-mail info@fultonmontgomeryny.org.



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Membership News

Several Chamber Members Offering Small Business Saturday Events Nov. 30



James Hannahs

Membership Coordinator

Membership@fultonmontgomeryny.org

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American Express's annual Small Business Saturday is upon us once again. On Saturday, November 30, shoppers are encouraged to patronize small, independently owned businesses.

Many Chamber Member store owners, restaurateurs, and other businesses have special events planned. Please make sure you patronize them and support small retailers in our community!

Small Business Saturday Spotlights:



The Northville 5 & 10, located at 122 South Main St, Northville.

Northville 5 & 10: Shopping, Fudge, and Nostalgia

If you've ever crossed the bridge from Rt. 30 into Northville, you can't miss the crown jewel of Downtown: the nation's oldest operating 5 & 10 store. Situated in a beautifully restored, era-appropriate brick building, the Northville 5 & 10 boasts a rich 112-year history. The store was originally established in its current building in 1907 and was the first of four of

its kind to be built in the county. These establishments were known for selling a variety of convenience and novelty items, not limited to toys, apparel, candy, hardware, and more.

Current owners, Brian and Susan Correll, have been operating the store for the better part of a decade. Susan, and her grandfather Nelson Fisher, bought the store in the late 1990's, and Susan has ran it since with her family. Today, the Northville 5 & 10 has kept true to its roots as it still offers those quintessential goods, while spinning in some of their own style and creations.

Above the impressively expansive selection of items, some original architectural snippets peak around the corners. Brian and Susan were able to maintain the building's integrity with the original tin ceiling, hardwood floors, and antique collections. When scanning the first floor, customers can find anything from hardware and seasonal necessities to gift basket assembly and cooking supplies. Although, there is one product that people will keep customers asking for more: the famous homemade fudge. Not only is it a nod to one of the original offerings of a typical 5 & 10, the homemade fudge is a keepsake for the family. Susan and her granddaughter crank out literally tons of homemade fudge throughout the year while keeping true to the family's secret recipe. Without a doubt, the fudge is one of the many reasons the 5 & 10 is a destination that brings you back in time.

The second-floor attributes to the time-warped as well. The original two-toned hardwood floors have been impeccably restored to transform the space back to its original condition. The room is accented with orig-

inal moldings, lighting fixtures, and even doorknobs; a perfect showroom to flaunt their vast apparel selection. The 5 & 10 offers a wide variety of brands including Panama Jack and Lakegirl at an extremely competitive price range so the community can take advantage of cost-savings while shopping locally.

Susan and Brian are looking to continue the tradition of keeping the store within the family. Nicole and Jeremy Sikorski, Susan's daughter and son-in-law, are joining forces to continue operations. Jeremy comes from a family that is well-seasoned in running businesses, as his father's shop, Sikorski's Garage in Amsterdam, is nearing its centennial anniversary. As the succession plan evolves, Nicole and Jeremy will operate the store as partners with Brian and Susan, and their children are becoming invested in the future of the business as well. The future of the 5 & 10 looks bright.

The family is adding another business to their portfolio, as they gear up to open the Northville Five and Dine, an upscale dining establishment directly adjacent to the store. They look to maintain a similar business model of respecting the architectural design of the original building during renovations, while adding a modern twist to their offerings. Customers will be able to enjoy upscale dining options in a bistro-like atmosphere complete with a handmade, locally sourced, cherry-wood bar. They look to open the restaurant in January 2020.

During Small Business Saturday, take a moment to reflect on your gift list because there is a great chance you can find almost everything at the Northville 5 & 10. If your list ends up even a little bit short after your shopping experience, you can still walk out with some truly incredible fudge.

NAC's Meat Market: Neatly Trimmed Customer Service

Most average carnivores

would agree that there is a sacred and measured process to buying the ingredients that will become the focal point of any entrée. The remainder of the meal is typically planned around the protein offering and usually consults a fair amount of thought about the perfect meat option. But when you just can't decide between a lean sirloin, fresh ground beef, or even switching gears to chicken or pork, it comes down to customer service. NAC's Meat Market is the perfect example of a local business setting a high standard for a more personalized approach to doing just that.

Co-owners Josh Guntert and Moe Conte pride themselves on providing the best meats and customer service for our entire region. Their business model is built around the mantra of serving the community with a tailored approach, and outreach that keeps customers coming back.

"It's a level of service you find at a supermarket," Moe said. "Here at NAC's, we offer a more personal, intimate setting and experience. Our customers are able to get different varieties of cuts, quantities, and packaging to order." Moe and Josh are happy to supply orders that wouldn't typically be available in competing larger markets.

"We'll be happy to grind beef per order," Moe continued. "Butchers don't typically do this in larger retail environments."

Moe and Josh also work in tandem with other community driven businesses. Sacandaga Flowers, situated in a plaza just north of the market, has partnered with NAC's just in time for Thanksgiving. Any patron buying a centerpiece at Sacandaga Flowers will be entered into a raffle to win a Thanksgiving turkey provided by NAC's, and the side dishes from Sacandaga Flowers.

Moe and Josh are both natives of the county, and grew up

See NAC's, on page 15

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Josh Guntert and Moe Conte, owners of NAC's Meat Market, pose with the shop's namesakes — their daughters Natalie and Claire.

NAC's, continued from page 14

as friends in the Oppenheim- Ephratah region. They have been best friends for over a decade, and their dream of owning a business together has come to fruition. The two fathers combined their daughters' names, Natalie and Claire, to create the NAC's brand; another example of giving the business a personalized touch.

NAC's offers great holiday specials on a variety of products, including a rib roast.

Small Business Saturday doesn't have to be just for one day. The more you patronize businesses like NAC's, the financial and quality of life quotient is enhanced, and the ripple effect throughout the community support will be multiplied because of your purchase.

Lee's Shops at Wagner Square: Christmas and Much More

Throughout our region, many small businesses have illustrated the idea of giving old space a new life. When independent companies establish themselves in buildings that formerly housed integral parts of a community's economy, it shows that area's true versatility and ability for adaptation.

This out-of-the-box thinking can lead to an enhanced sense of community pride. In Canajoharie, there is retail and tourism powerhouse exemplifying that same concept: Lee's Shops at Wagner Square, located at 24 Hale St.

Janet Lee Stanley, Owner and Operator, opened her doors in 2017. Her father, Fred Lee, established Lee Publications in Palatine decades prior,



Housewares and gorgeous gift items are plentiful in Lee's Shops at Wagner Square.

but always yearned to open a Christmas-themed store.

Dedicating herself to making her father's dreams a reality, Janet chose the former Central National Bank in Downtown Canajoharie as the perfect space to do so, and then some. Central National Bank was originally established in the location in 1855, before acquiring The First National Bank of Edmeston in 1972, and subsequently merging with NBT Bank in 2001.

The original building combines two neighboring spaces, creating an ideal environment for a charming retail space. Today, four stores operate within Wagner Square: Lee's Christmas Corner, Freddy's Bear Den, Crossroads at Wagner Square, and The Clothes Vault and Jewelry Emporium.

Upon entering Wagner Square, shoppers find themselves enveloped in Christmas décor. Ornaments, decorations, and vintage hand-picked Christmas novelties fill each shelf and wall space, allowing the customer to welcome the holiday spirit

it with ease. Santas, stockings, and snow globes are nestled within wreathes, sprigs, and trees, showcasing Lee's Christmas Corner's unique retail concept.

Just beyond the immediate holiday retail floor, The Clothes Vault and Jewelry Emporium sits adjacent to Central National's original vault. The Emporium offers a spectrum of everyday to business-casual items for all looks, styles, and sizes.

A quick observation through the retail floor prompts an invitation towards Freddy's Bear Den, a sanctuary for children's recreation and development. Beyond stuffed animals and toys, Freddy's also offers clothing items, accessories, and captivating puzzles and games. Janet and her staff pride themselves on their efforts to research and acquire their inventory based on high-quality standards that also balance healthy engagement.

A few steps forward lead into Crossroads at Wagner Square, where Janet has selected items with a rich aesthetic flare. Quality household accessories are placed on tiered shelving that presents both vintage and modern inventory. Display windows allow for easy sight lines into an array of kitchenware that makes for an authentic window-shopping experience for any passerby.

While moving through the shops, consumers can relate to the experience of patronizing individual boutiques and novelty stores, and each tempts the senses. Smells and sounds change when crossing through each of Wagner Square's thresholds, allowing shoppers to be engaged into separate environments within a singular downtown shop.

A look at Wagner Square's guestbook reveals regional and out-of-state tourists contributing to the area's commerce, as incoming visitors are welcomed to sign their names and hometowns. The development of downtown Canajoharie is a priority for Janet, but only partly because of her store's ability to entice travelers to shop, eat and stay in the village. She also serves as the President of the Canajoharie-Palatine Chamber of Commerce. Both roles brought the advent of her newest project: The Canajoharie Street Fair, which debuted in September 2019 and saw major success, drawing thousands of people to downtown with a parade, vendors, and community involvement. Janet, and her husband Matt, plan to annualize the event based on the community's undeniable appreciation for Canajoharie's manmade and natural beauties.

When you shop small on November 30th, you allow communities like Canajoharie to reach beyond their brick-and-mortar storefronts. Those transactions give businesses like Lee's Shops at Wagner Square the ability to engage customers throughout the region and inspire locals to appreciate their existing assets. In doing so, communities can come together with a united sense of pride for a place they call home.

Southside Square and DomAdi's: Enhancing the Southside Selection

The industrial corridor on Route 5s in Amsterdam has seen impressive expansion over the past decade. Both local and transplant companies, such as Dollar General, Target, Alpin Haus, Hill and

See DomAdi's, on page 16

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DomAdi's, continued from page 15

Markes, Beech Nut, and more have secured their locations in one of the most accessible thoroughfares in our region.

With the location of these companies in this area, Southside residents and industrial workers realized more consumer-based businesses were needed.

Dominick and Adi Wade built a brand-new shopping plaza to meet that increased demand. Southside Square, located at 1451 State Highway 5s in Amsterdam, offers a convenient location, and customers can knock a few items off their weekend errands list in one convenient visit.

The square includes Pleasant Cleaners, a franchised location of a Capital Region company recently purchased by the Wades. In addition, Adi designed and built Southside Beverage, which specializes in beer. Southside Beverage offers over of thousand varieties of craft, domestic, and import beer options with samples available each weekend. The Beverage Center also offers and extensive line of specialty tobacco highlighted by a 50 cubic foot cigar humidor.

Beyond beer, the Wades also established Bourbon Street Wine and Liquor, which carries an extensive collection of wine and spirits. Bourbon Street is appropriately named because they have the largest inventory of bourbon, scotch, and whiskey in the area. Every Friday, Bourbon Street offers tastings on featured products as well. Other businesses outside of the Wade's portfolio are AAA Northway Travel Center, the single source for the



The team at DomAdi's is ready to serve you!

widest range of travel products and services, and Farmers Insurance Frank Casler Agency, which "ensures what will ruin your day won't ruin your life" through investments and various insurance products.

Perhaps the most frequented and colorful component of the square, is DomAdi's Deli. Dominick and Adi are adamant about providing residents and employees with a quality, creatively-styled deli, filling a void within the area. Combining this need with Adi's passion as a self-proclaimed home-chef, DomAdi's was born.

Dominick and Adi combined their names to create the deli's brand, and they have a passion for creating a clean, inviting, family-friendly business. The deli was named winner of the "Hottest Wings" category in the Amsterdam WingFest in 2019!

Customers can familiarize themselves with the entire Wade family just by walking into the deli. Upon entering, one can't miss the massive mural depicting their two daughters walking on a beach. Menu items are also namesakes based on the family's tastes. For exam-

ple, "The Dom," which is the best-seller, stacks his favorites on a panini: Boar's Head roast beef, Vermont white cheddar, caramelized onions, arugula, and house-made horseradish mayo. "The Adi" combines grilled chicken, baby spinach, peppadew peppers, cucumber, scallion, crumbled feta, and scratch-made honey mustard into a sundried tomato wrap. Even the kids' names make appearances on the menu, ranging from salads like "The Paetyn" and "The Raegyn," to "The Number 3," a nod to the Wade's third child, Sebastian.

While the names are catchy, the quality of the food is really the focus and what makes customers return. They pride themselves on serving only fresh, hand-prepped, never-frozen ingredients with homemade dressings and original flavor combinations and use only Boar's Head meats and cheeses in their sandwiches. Everyday, guests can choose between breakfast and lunch specials as well, allowing DomAdi's to be appealing to any hungry patron, morning or afternoon. Gluten free options, patio dining, online ordering, and delivery are available as well. They do corporate and private catering, and to top everything off, DomAdi's didn't stop at just the brick and mortar restaurant. Yes – the DomAdi's Food Truck exists, and is the perfect addition for any private catered event, whether it's breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Southside Square offers enough options to check a few items off that errand list. While the Chamber is strongly encouraging you to patronize small businesses on Small Business Saturday, extend that purchase beyond that weekend. Southside Square offers a level of ser-

vice, inventory, options, and sandwiches that can't easily be matched.

Say It With Signs: Connecting Memorable Achievements with Local Commerce

Awards and trophies are a great way to celebrate participation, achievements, and victories for any accomplishment. Throughout our region, companies and sports team utilize these timeless keepsakes to recognize individuals and organizations for their efforts, and to show appreciation for hard work, determination, and initiative.

Say It With Signs is a Nelliston company that creates awards for a wide spectrum of business, schools, and private parties throughout our region.

See Signs, on page 17



Any recognition trophy or collectible you may need is available at "Say It With Signs" in Nelliston.



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Signs, continued from page 16

Say it With Signs owner and operator, Ron Dygert, has been perfecting his trade for almost 30 years. First established in 1992, Say It With Signs started in the basement of Ron's home with a pantograph machine, specifically designed for flat-surfaced engraving. Through many years of attending trade shows and self-education, Ron upgraded from the original pantograph machine to a laser engraver and sublimator, expanding his ability to engrave on wood, glass, leather, coated metals, bricks, and more. The sublimation process also allows him to embed a plethora of color onto multiple types of products including shirts, mugs, rubber stamps, plaques, and more.

Ron's products have touched every corner of our region. He has produced tokens of achievement for the Auriesville Shrine, St. Johnsville American Legion, Walmart, Montgomery County, school district sports awards for Sharon Springs, Oppenheim-Ephratah St. Johnsville, Fort Plain, Canajoharie, multiple weddings, personal achievements, and of course, the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce. Ron's work has even gone overseas, producing work for a corporate member of a previous local manufacturer.

Say it With Sign's products may be sold to local organizations, schools, and private events, but they end up in households everywhere. Those accomplishments and momentous translate to memories that folks hold with them for

the rest of their lives.

The next time your company wants to honor an employee-of-the-month, your sports team wins a championship, or your wedding guests deserve a personalized gift, utilize a local company like Say it With Signs.

Small Business Saturday is about patronizing small businesses, and when we can connect personal memories with a hometown business, a new appreciation for our region arises.

Mysteries on Main Street: A Passion For Timeless Literacy

Since the turn of the 21st Century, our computers have gotten smaller, our televisions have gotten slimmer, and our cell phones have gotten smarter. For centuries, one medium has stayed consistently informative, entertaining, and timeless: books.

Various forms of literature have been the source of leading principles throughout mankind's history, as societies have built their cultures based on instrumental books. While our digital devices continue to be victim to their own obsolescence, books of all ages continue to educate and entertain us. One local business has spent the better part of 30 years promoting that mantra to customers.

Mysteries on Main Street, originally established in 1991 on Main Street in Gloversville, offers books of all genres, including fiction, non-fiction, travel, scientific, cooking, mystery, local history, religion, and more that appeal to all ages. Today, they operate in downtown Johnstown and offer separate spaces ded-



Get ready to shop locally at Mysteries on Main Street in Johnstown on Small Business Saturday!

icated to all tastes and ages of readers, from toddlers to adults. Children's books are carefully selected to enhance development while incorporating appropriate illustrations.

Teens can choose from the towering selection of age-appropriate literature as well. Although there are literally thousands of books to choose from, between Mysteries' own selection and best sellers, there is one character that has remained a fan-favorite, and even the inspiration for an annual event.

"Our Harry Potter event draws fans of all ages," said store manager Patty

Locatelli. "We throw a party every year on July 31 in celebration of his birthday." Other events include a Dr. Seuss reading session for kids, occurring on the first Saturday of each month, and local author events, which occur roughly 8 to 10 times a year.

Locatelli, who has been employed with Mysteries since 2004, said she is proud of the extensive collection of local authors including Heidi Sprouse, Rosemarie Shepherd, Mary Reed McCall, Peter Pollak, Sandy Nellis Lane, Richard Nilsen, Alice Peck, Don Williams, and more. Many of the local authors' works, including local history books, are displayed in Mysteries' Adirondack Room, where readers can enjoy quiet space in rustic furniture overlooking Sir William Johnson Park.

Mysteries offers more than just books and extensive literature options. Shoppers can buy gifts perfect for any special occasion including cards, ornaments, novelties, knick-knacks, gift certificates, and more. Over the Small Business Saturday weekend (11/30-12/1), Mysteries is offering a BOGO deal on all in-store cards and ornaments.

There's no mystery why you shouldn't patronize small businesses on November 30th. The inventory at Mysteries on Main Street may be able to help you unwind and enjoy some productive downtime, while helping a locally owned enterprise. Their mission to develop and maintain literacy is only possible by our continued mission to always show support for our region's small businesses.

Upcoming Chamber Events

Be sure to check out our website for more details and updates at www.fultonmontgomeryny.org

Wednesday Dec. 11, 2019 '6 Steps to a Better Business' Seminar

A complimentary seminar, "Six Steps to a Better Business" which will provide local business owners with strategies to increase sales and profits, free up their time, and create amazing teams, will be held at the Fulton Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, 2 North Main St. Gloversville, from 9 - 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 11.

The event will be conducted by "The world's largest Business Coaching Firm," ActionCOACH. Business Coach Dan MacIvor says, "My goal is to follow the company Vision of "World Abundance Through Business Re-education," right here in Fulton County. I am committed to helping businesses focused on financial success and personal freedom, raise the bar and bring a higher quality of life to themselves and their employees"

ActionCOACH emerged as an overnight success in 1993 when founder Brad Sugars, began conducting seminars and workshops for small to medium business owners throughout Australia and New Zealand. For the first time, these business owners had access to hundreds of amazingly powerful, yet relatively sim-

ple and affordable sales, marketing and team building strategies that resulted in dramatic improvements in turnover & profit.

Currently, ActionCOACH is more than 1,000 coaches strong and operating in over 70 countries. A pioneer in the industry, ActionCOACH is the leading business coaching franchise in the world with more than 25 years of experience.

To register for the complimentary seminar visit: danmacivor.synduit.com/SBWE0004 Or call (518) 265-4272

Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019 Chamber Annual Holiday Business After Hours

Bouche & Clarke Benefits, Inc., along with The Century Club of Amsterdam, will host a holiday Business After Hours on Dec. 12 from 5-7 p.m. at the Century Club, 130 Guy Park Avenue, Amsterdam. Join the Chamber for refreshments, and viewing of the beautiful trees throughout the Century Club facility. It's a holiday treat not to be missed.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Nicole Tennant at info@fultonmontgomeryny.org.

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For more information, contact the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, at (518) 725-0641.

Business Education Partnership News



Nicole Walrath
Director of
Workforce Development
NicoleW@fultonmontgomeryny.org



Jenna Patterson
Business and Education
Partnership Coordinator
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HFM PTECH



AT LEFT: Sophomores at HFM PTECH held their Innovations in Food Expo last month where they presented their research and solutions on issues in the food and agriculture industry. In attendance at this expo were business professionals, guests from the community and freshmen from Agriculture PTECH. They gained knowledge and research for their 2050 project.

HFM PTECH's annual Adaptive Living Expo

AT RIGHT: HFM PTECH freshmen will display their innovative creations designed to help those with physical limitations to live life and participate in activities to the fullest. The public is invited to attend at the Paul Nigra Center, 2736 NY-30, Gloversville, on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. For more information, check out the HFM PTECH Facebook event.



Agriculture PTECH



Sophomores at Agriculture PTECH held their second Mentor Monday this past month. Students spoke with business professionals about skills pertaining to Professional Dress and Presence. A special thanks to Tom

Georgia from NextEra, Gail Breen from FMS Workforce Solutions, Christina Hall from New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health, and Matt Sherman from Stump City Brewing.

Foothills PTECH

AT RIGHT: After completing the Via Institute on Character's survey to determine their own character strengths, students at Foothills PTECH worked in groups to design apps that would increase users' awareness of particular character strengths and help people further develop those characteristics.



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Business Education Partnership News

Canajoharie High School Pathway



Students exploring computer science and information technology pathways at Canajoharie High School attended their first workplace tour this October. Students toured the UAlbany main campus and the College of Emergency Preparedness,

Homeland Security and Cybersecurity (CEHC). Professor Berg and a few of his interns from CEHC brought students into the Drone Lab and Makerspace where they were able to operate and fly the drones and other products that were offered at the school.

Mayfield High School Pathway



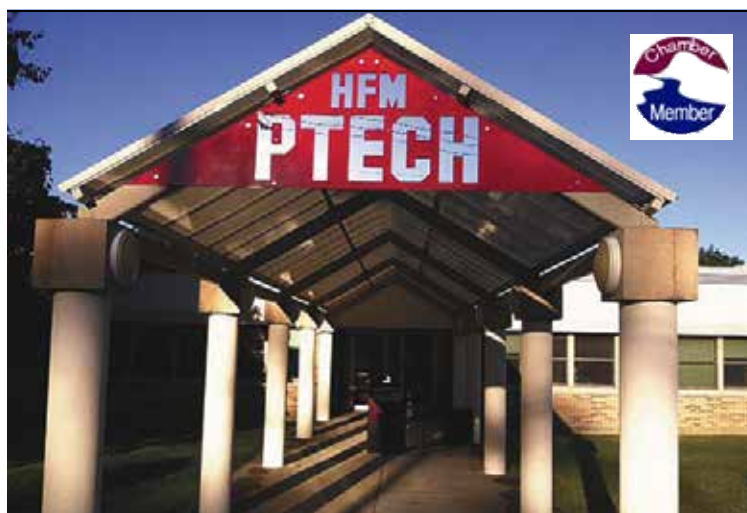
Freshmen enrolled in the Arts in Business pathway at Mayfield High School hosted their first career pathway panel, exploring different careers that are available in their region. Thank you to Russell Gomula, Angel Gracia and Kelly Gracia from Addictive Pain Tattoo, Matt Roth from Roth School of Art and Carrie Benton from Ruby and Quiri for participating in the pathway panel discussion. Additionally, students recently had the opportunity to tour Sticker Mule in Amsterdam. Students were able to learn about the process behind creating stickers, magnets, and other products that are created at the facility.

Amsterdam College and Careers PTECH and Pathways

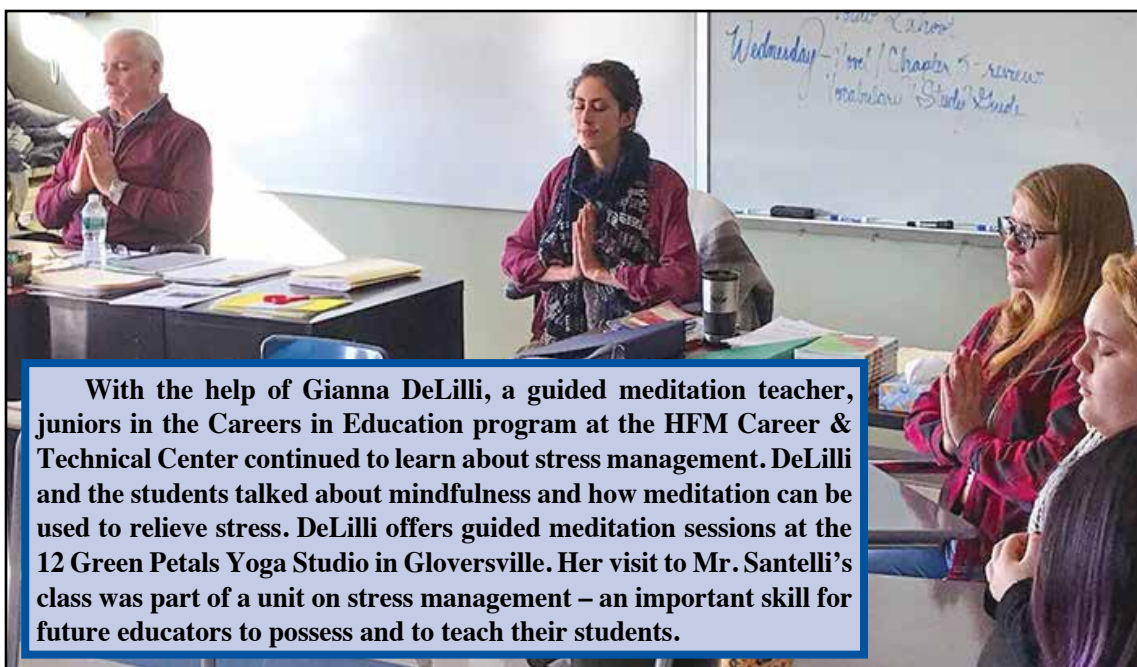


AT LEFT: Amsterdam High School freshmen in the College and Career PTECH Pathways program participated in their first pathway panel discussion. Guests included Adam Dean from GreyCastle Security and Marianne Suchocki from the Early Childhood Services department at Fulmont Community Action Agency. Students gained a better understanding of what businesses are looking for in employees including education, training, and employable skills needed to be successful.

Visit The Chamber online at:
www.fultonmontgomeryny.org



Career & Technical Education (CTE)



With the help of Gianna DeLilli, a guided meditation teacher, juniors in the Careers in Education program at the HFM Career & Technical Center continued to learn about stress management. DeLilli and the students talked about mindfulness and how meditation can be used to relieve stress. DeLilli offers guided meditation sessions at the 12 Green Petals Yoga Studio in Gloversville. Her visit to Mr. Santelli's class was part of a unit on stress management – an important skill for future educators to possess and to teach their students.

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

Well, PTECH is the new future! PTECH is a technologically based early college high school that allows students to gain real-world, project based experiences through partnering businesses in your community.

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.



Chamber Member Events

**Wednesday, Dec. 4,
Saturday, Dec. 7,
Sunday, Dec. 15**

The Fulton County Historical Society will hold its the First Annual Festival of Trees, with a Members Only Preview Party on Wednesday, December 4 from 6-8pm. Light refreshments will be served.

On Saturday, December 7 at 11am, Sally Fancher from the Gloversville Public Library will host a Make and Take Holiday Craft for Kids at the Museum. Make Victorian-inspired holiday ornaments to decorate your tree or give as a gift. Free (donations appreciated).

Sinterklaas will visit the FCHS on Sunday, December 15 at 1 p.m. for a special story time! Enjoy hot chocolate and a treat while Sinterklaas reads some of his favorite seasonal stories. Free (donations appreciated). Sinterklaas, or Saint Nicholas, is the inspiration for our modern Santa Claus. Dutch families in early New York State celebrated the Feast of St. Nicholas on

December 6th.

Open House hours for the Festival of Trees are scheduled for December 5, 6, and 12 from 12-4 p.m.; December 13 from 4-7 p.m.; and December 7, 8, 14, and 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 per adult, children under 12 and FCHS Members free.

The Fulton County Historical Society is located at 237 Kingsboro Ave. in Gloversville.

**Saturday / Sunday,
Dec. 7-8**

Lapland Lake Nordic Vacation Center in Benson will host its two-day annual Open House Dec. 7 and 8 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day.

During the two-day Open House, all in-stock merchandise: ski equipment, apparel, specialty foods and gifts, is 15 – 50% off. Complimentary cookies, hot chocolate, coffee and tea will be available at the resort's Kuuma Feeding Station located in the Finnish Line Ski Lodge. Morning and afternoon discussions of new

XC ski equipment trends and hourly door prize drawings will be held. Lapland Lake Season Passes will be available at early-season rates. Regular Membership rates will go into effect Monday, December 9.

Open House is free of charge. Facility use fees will be half-price both days for those wishing to ski, snowshoe and tube (conditions permitting). If there is no snow, visitors are welcome to enjoy complimentary hiking on the resort's 50km trail system.

A complete cross country ski and snowshoe facility celebrating its 41st winter season, Lapland Lake offers fully equipped rental and retail shops and a comfortable two-story warming lodge with food service. The trail system has 50km of trails for all ability levels. 38km are marked, mapped and snowcat groomed with trackset and skating lanes; 12km are ungroomed, marked, mapped snowshoe trails.

In addition to cross country skiing and snowshoeing, other resort activities include ice-skating and tubing on two junior hills.

Lodging is available in 10 housekeeping cottages, as well as our new studio unit "The Owl's Nest". Lodging packages include use of trails each day and evening including days of arrival and departure, use of the Finnish wood burning sauna and discounted ski lessons. Attractive lodging discounts are offered midweek.

Lapland Lake has been

presented with numerous awards including: Best Cross Country Ski Resort category (#3) in the USA Today 10 Best Readers' Choice Travel Award contest; North America's Top 10 Snowshoe-Friendly Nordic Centers (#4), Snowshoe Magazine; Best XC Ski Resort for Families - Best XC Ski Resort Poll; Top Ten XC Ski Resorts Catering to Families – xcskiresorts.com.

Lapland Lake may be contacted at 518-863-4974, vacation@laplandlake.com and online at www.laplandlake.com.

Saturday, Dec. 14

The Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, located at 2736 State Highway 30, Gloversville, will host its fifth annual Polar Express Celebration event on Saturday, Dec. 14, 12-2 p.m.

This North Pole-themed event will include crafts, games, raffles and other family fun inspired by the classic tale "The Polar Express." There will be opportunities for pictures with Santa Claus from 12-1 p.m. Children are encouraged to wear pajamas.

Admission is \$5 per child to benefit the Nigra Arts Center or a new, unwrapped toy to benefit Toys for Tots. Children age one and under are admitted free.

For more information, please visit www.pncreativeartscenter.org or call the Nigra Arts Center at (518) 661-9932. The Nigra Arts Center's gift shop and gallery

will also be open during the event and attendees are welcome to view the current exhibit at no additional charge.

Thursday, Dec. 19

The Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, located at 2736 State Highway 30, Gloversville, will host a concert of holiday classics featuring musicians from the Caroga Lake Music Festival on Thursday, December 19, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. This event is generously sponsored by John and Sunday Blackmon.

The Caroga Lake Music Festival is directed by cellist Kyle Barrett Price. Its musicians are world-renowned instrumentalists who hail from the Julliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Yale School of Music, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the New England Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music and more. They produce a five-week summer music festival in the Adirondacks each year, offering free performances and community outreach programs in Upstate New York and beyond. To learn more about the CLMF, please visit carogaarts.org/clmf.

Admission to the December 19 concert is \$10. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the concert begins at 7 p.m. There will be a cash bar serving beer and wine. Tickets are available on Eventbrite at bit.ly/2Ocefkz or on the Nigra Arts Center website at www.pncreativeartscenter.org/events.



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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 December of this year. Please note these member businesses and the year they joined! Thank you to all our renewing Chamber members:

James Chevrolet 2000
A. Johnson's Plumbing & Heating, Inc. 1999
Canajoharie Central School 2005
Village of Hagaman 2000
Black Bear Wine and Spirits 2015
Livingston's Furniture & Mattress, Inc. 1974
Mysteries on Main Street 2015
Fulton County Barbershop, Corp. 2013
Mary S. Brown Law Office 2015
Raindancer Restaurant 2016

Cushing Stone Co., Inc. 2010
Maurice M. Farhart 2008
Craftsman Auto Glass 2016
Erie Canal House 2017
Vintage Cafe 2007
Bleecker Snow Rovers, Inc. 2009
Howard Hanna Real Estate Services 2018
Evergreen Construction 2003
Bill's Beverage Company 1998
CDL Associates Insurance Agency LLC 2015
L.G. Boucher 2011
Holiday Inn Johnstown-Gloversville 1974
Twin Pine Family Chiropractic, LLC 2016
Glove City Transportation 2008
C. Gerard Marketing 2012
italyMONDO!, L.L.C. 2006
Tim Derwin, Builders 2010