

NEWSLINE

A BUSINESS PUBLICATION OF THE **Fulton**  **Montgomery**
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



March 2020

Hill & Markes Goes the Extra Mile for Customers, Staff

By Jessica Ford

Newsline Editor

Standing out among your competition is a goal of every viable business. Hill & Markes, the 113-year-old, family-owned distributor based in Amsterdam, has elevated this strategy to a science, and possibly an art.

The company wins over and keeps their customers by not only offering good products at fair prices, but underpinning their experience with extraordinary service, and even value-added mentorship.

The business began in 1906 in the “sweetest way,” as a candy, ice cream, and ice cream cone distributor, via



“Amsterdam is our home. Our only home. Our people, our employees, all live here, and our competitive advantage is our people.”

— Jason Packer,
CEO Hill & Markes

horse and buggy. Founders Amos Hill & Charlie Markes traveled the Northeast in every season, to ensure their customers were satisfied.

In 1947, Harry and Harriet Finkle purchased the business and transformed it into a candy and tobacco distributor. In the 1970s they were joined by

Neal Packer, Jeffrey Finkle and Andrea Finkle Packer, who transformed Hill & Markes once again by introducing paper packaging and cleaning supplies.

Neal and Andrea’s son

**See Hill & Markes,
on page 4**



The Packer Family at the grand opening of their LEED-Certified warehouse & headquarters in 2011.

Investments in Canal to Boost Tourism, Economic Development in Montgomery County

An initiative to “reimagine” the iconic Erie Canal for use by tourists, businesses and residents will result in in-

creasing numbers of visitors to Montgomery County and the rest of the area, according to Fulton and Montgomery

counties Director of Tourism Development Anne Boles.

“Riding on a wave of investment by private individuals and public entities, the plans to highlight the impressive infrastructure that makes up the “moveable dams” in Amsterdam and Canajoharie, along with the reconstruction of the historic Guy Park Manor on the Mohawk River in Amsterdam, will be another exciting and positive step in enhancing this beautiful area we call home, for use by resi-



A rendering shows interactive, hydro-powered illumination of Canal “movable dams” initially in Amsterdam and Canajoharie in the Mohawk River valley.

dents and visitors,” Boles said.

The projects that will enhance tourism and resident experiences in the Mohawk Valley were unveiled during Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s proposal of his 2020 State of the State, which included a \$300 million plan to

reimagine the Erie Canal by creating recreational activities on the Canal to boost tourism, mitigating flooding, enhancing irrigation and recreational fishing and restoring wetlands.

The New York Power

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Newsline is published by the
Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce
in partnership with *Daily Gazette Co., Inc.*

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Emergency Loans Available for Mohawk Valley Producers

Emergency loans are being made available to producers in 43 New York counties, including all six counties in the Mohawk Valley, that have been designated as primary natural disaster areas.

Producers who suffered losses due to recent disaster events may be eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans.

The deadline to apply for these emergency loans is Sept. 29, 2020.

United States Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue designated 43 New York counties as primary natural disaster areas, and producers who suffered losses due to recent disaster events may be eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans.

This natural disaster designation allows FSA to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation or the refinancing of certain debts.

Producers in Albany, Allegany, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Livingston, Monroe, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Sullivan, Tioga, Washington, Wyoming, and Yates counties, who suffered losses due to excessive

rain that has occurred since April 1, 2019, are eligible to apply for emergency loans.

FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

According to an announcement from FSA, the agency has a variety of additional programs to help farmers recover from the impacts of this disaster. FSA programs that do not require a disaster declaration include: Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/emergency-assist-for-livestock-honey-bees-sh/index; Emergency Conservation Program www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/emergency-conservation/index; Livestock Forage Disaster Program www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-forage/index; Livestock Indemnity Program www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/livestock-indemnity/index; Operating and Farm Ownership Loans www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index; and the Tree Assistance Program www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/tree-assistance-program/index.

Farmers may contact their local USDA service center for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at farmers.gov/recover.



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Canal, continued from page 1

Authority Board, which now oversees the Canal Corporation as a subsidiary, approved the \$300 million investment over the next five years at the board's January meeting.

A Governor's Office press release explained that a first phase of funding will start this year that will have two parts: a \$100 million economic development fund to invest in communities along the Canal and a separate \$65 million investment in solutions that will help prevent ice jams and related flooding in the Schenectady area. The remaining \$135 million of the plan's funding will subsequently be allocated to research recommended by the Reimagine the Canals Task Force, as well as to solutions related to flood mitigation, invasive species prevention and ecosystem restoration.

In the first phase of the program, a \$100 million economic development fund will support projects that adaptively reuse canal infrastructure to enhance water recreation, tie the Canal's new recreational improvements to the Governor's Empire State Trail, celebrate historic canal structures, and develop unique canalside attractions and activities. Roughly \$25 million of that will be allocated immediately to a set of initial projects:

— Celebrating "Iconic Infrastructure": Interactive, hydro-powered illumination of Canal "movable dams" – initially in Amsterdam and Canajoharie in the Mohawk River valley – will celebrate the Canal's heritage and its history as an engineering marvel.

— Developing Destination Accommodations: The historic Guy Park Manor, on the Mohawk River in Amsterdam, will be reborn as a hospitality destination and a pedestrian bridge constructed across the already-existing Canal lock will provide access to additional overnight accommodation along the Empire State Trail on the opposite side of the river.

Additional projects in the first phase will include:

— Connecting Communities: The "Brockport Loop" project in Monroe County will connect SUNY College at Brockport to the Empire State Trail and the village of Brockport through the transformation of a canal guard-gate into a pedestrian bridge and overlook, with a supporting grant of \$2 million from the Ralph Wilson Foundation.

— Expanding Water Recreation: A new whitewater destination, at the north end of Cayuga Lake near Seneca Falls, will rely on existing water control infrastructure to construct an active water sports course adjacent to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, to increase eco-tourism and sport visi-

tors to the region.

— Adapting Industrial Property for New Uses: Winner of the Reimagine the Canals competition, a canalside pocket neighborhood, will be developed by Madison County in Central New York at a former industrial property in Canastota along the Old Erie Canal – demonstrating a new model for 21st century canalside living.



An illustration shows the historic Guy Park Manor, on the Mohawk River in Amsterdam, reborn as a hospitality destination, and a pedestrian bridge constructed across the already-existing Canal lock to provide access to additional overnight accommodation along the Empire State Trail on the opposite side of the river.

To help mitigate chronic summer and winter flooding in the Mohawk River Valley, an initial allocation of approximately \$65 million will be used for deploying an icebreaker and undertaking dredging and filling in certain portions of the Mohawk to prevent ice jam formation; developing an Ice Jam Monitoring and Early Warning System to better alert communities to potential flooding; and retrofitting the New York Power Authority's Vischer Ferry power dam in Niskayuna to help mitigate summer flooding and ice jams around the Schenectady and Scotia areas, including the historic Stockade District. At the recommendation of the Task Force further studies will be undertaken to better assess additional approaches to both reducing flood vulnerability in the Mohawk and tackling the rise of aquatic invasive species across the Canal.

The plan also includes establishment of an irrigation district in Western New York to enhance drought resiliency by ensuring that farmers in those counties have reliable access to water during the critical summer growing season. Guaranteed access to water is needed to expand the production of high-value fruits and vegetables, specifically in areas that today cannot access canal water. To ensure water is available during periods of low rainfall, canal outflow infrastructure will be modernized as part of a "smart water management system" that can better respond to changing weather con-

ditions. A new grant program operated by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets will underpin additional private-sector investment in irrigation infrastructure.

Ideas in this plan originated from recommendations made by the Reimagine the Canals Task Force, launched by Cuomo in May of 2019 to pursue a comprehensive investigation of how the 195-year-old Erie Canal could be reimaged for the 21st century.

municipal leaders, stakeholders, local business owners, scientists and other experts, along with community members, to identify opportunities and solutions that support a new vision for future investments in the waterway. Many of the ideas that the Task Force explored came from the completed Reimagine the Canals competition, held last year by the New York Power Authority and New York State Canal Corporation.

SUNY's Rockefeller Institute of Government, on behalf of the Task Force, conducted a series of outreach sessions during the summer in five canal communities – Lockport, Brockport, Schenectady, Utica and Syracuse – to solicit new ideas from the public at large. Ideas were also solicited on a Reimagine the Canals website, offering more distant canal users an opportunity to provide their views to the Task Force.

The "Reimagine" initiative builds on efforts by Governor Cuomo to invest in the canal corridor, including the state's Downtown Revitalization Initiative and Taste NY program, which have stoked new industries, businesses and housing in canal communities. Harnessing the Canal's full potential to attract more tourism and recreation is a key focus of the Initiative.

There are 1.6 million trips taken annually on the Erie Canal Trailway, the former towpath used by mules and horses to pull barges in the canals' early days. The Trailway is part of Governor Cuomo's Empire State Trail, which at 750 miles will be the largest state multi-use trail network when completed in late 2020. Governor DeWitt Clinton began work on the original Erie Canal on July 4, 1817.

Cuomo said, "When the Erie Canal was created in the 19th century it set the state and the nation on a path to prosperity, and this year we will repurpose the canal to fit our state's 21st century needs. This bold and visionary plan to transform this historic waterway will build on the success of the Empire State Trail, grow tourism across Upstate New York, improve resilience of today's Canal communities and ensure the economic sustainability of the waterway into the future."

"As an upstate New Yorker who lives near the Erie Canal and is a frequent visitor to canal communities, I know how this plan to reimagine the canal can unlock even more potential to make it a major tourism magnet," said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. "The canals have played a crucial role in New York's history and growth, and with the implementation of these new exciting projects, the canals will remain a vital force and make a positive contribution to the economic well-being and quality of life in the 225 communities they travel through."

The Task Force set out to: Identify potential new uses for the Erie Canal aimed at improving the quality of life for New Yorkers; evaluate how the Erie Canal can support and enhance economic development along the canal corridor; identify new opportunities to enhance recreation and tourism along the Erie Canal; assess how the Erie Canal can help mitigate impacts from flooding and ice jams to improve resiliency and restore ecosystems in canal communities; and discover opportunities for using Erie Canal infrastructure to expand irrigation for Western New York farms.

The Task Force is chaired by Joanie Mahoney, New York State Thruway Authority chair and former Onondaga County Executive. Mahoney is overseeing Task Force work in Central New York. Former Lieutenant Governor Bob Duffy serves as regional co-chair in Western New York, and Joseph Martens, former Department of Environmental Conservation commissioner, serves as regional co-chair in the Mohawk River valley.

In addition to economic development and operational recommendations, the findings, detailed in the Reimagine the Canals Task Force Report included solutions for strengthening storm resiliency along the waterway, improving irrigation for farmlands, expanding fishing opportunities in Western New York and restoring wetlands in Central New York.

The Task Force engaged with

Hill & Markes, continued from page 1



Third Generation CEO Jason Packer addresses the sales team at Hill & Markes.

Jason Packer joined the company in 2008, and is now CEO. He lived in the Washington, D.C. area for about a decade, working in politics, until he became interested in business. His father's encouragement to come home and join the family at Hill & Markes was realized after he moved back with his wife and they started a family. "We love the area and our friends," he said. He currently serves on the foundation boards of directors for both FMCC and St. Mary's Healthcare.

In recognition of the three generations involved in the operation, the Albany Business Review awarded the Packer / Finkle family with "Family Business of the Year" for the 2019 Achiever awards.

Packer said that he and his family all feel passionately about the community of Amsterdam and the region where so many of their employees live. "Our family's philosophy has always been that the cars in the company's driveway are the reason we are in business. The people in our building are more than just numbers. They're part of our family."

In 2010-2011 Hill & Markes made local headlines when they invested \$12 million into construction of a new 130,000 square foot warehouse and training facility on Route 5S that is LEED gold-level, certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as a facility that is designed, constructed, operated and maintained in an environmentally responsible way.

When asked whether they considered moving to another area for the expansion, he said they were recruited heavily by other communities, including Schenectady. But, he said, "Amsterdam is our home. Our

only home."

"Our people, our employees, all live here, and our competitive advantage is our people. We want to keep them happy, and able to be close to their work." He said his whole family enjoys the region, and is committed to the area. "We wanted to stay within the community, we are very passionate about that," he said.

Packer oversees the 165 employees, and current span of products which range from cleaning and janitorial supplies and equipment; food service products; packing and shipping supplies; to office solutions and safety supplies.

He said current revenue is \$73 million, with a goal and a bigger vision to grow the company to \$100 million in the next 3 years, through organic growth within the current customer base; acquisition of new customers; through eCommerce that will offer a variety of complementary products to those already on offer; and by the possible acquisition of other companies within the industry. He also sees a focus on corporate social responsibility as a path forward for Hill & Markes, with a goal to increase diversity in the company and reduce the carbon footprint of the business.

The Hill & Markes website explains the unique and comprehensive way in which products are supplied for each customer, for example in foodservice: "As the back of the house begins its day in the kitchen, we have all the utensils, appliances, storage, and supplies to make their prep work a breeze. You'll also find a wide selection of cups, cutlery, disposables, and take-out supplies necessary to

ensure the front of the house is running smoothly. Browse our food & beverages section and stock up on all the condiments, snacks, and baking ingredients to round out your offering."

To offer good products at fair prices, and still outpace the competition, which can include the likes of Amazon and Staples, Hill & Markes fulfills 99 percent of their orders out of the warehouse in Amsterdam. Efficient logistical systems allow goods that are ordered one day, to be delivered the next. Hill & Markes customers are located throughout New York State, and just into the borders of Vermont, Massachusetts Pennsylvania and Canada, excluding the urban areas south of the Tappan Zee Bridge. Packer said staying within this relatively contained geographic area allows the company to function at a high level operationally.

Unlike some companies, infusing the customer's experience with extraordinary service is not just a function of a few pleasant customer care employees.

Packer said that the company has the luxury of being in demand as a workplace for sales professionals around the region, and resumes arrive weekly from those hoping to land one of the sought-after positions. He said he believes the demand is due to the fact that aside from just selling products, Hill & Markes rounds out its offerings to its customers to help with all aspects of business.

Compensation levels are also higher than the average in the industry across all employee categories. "Not only are



A Hill & Markes employee demonstrates the unique products the company can offer organizations to help them be proactive in fighting outbreaks of viruses in their facilities.



Hill & Markes 130,000 square foot warehouse and training facility on Route 5S in Amsterdam is LEED gold-level, certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as a facility that is designed, constructed, operated and maintained in an environmentally responsible way.

we super-competitive on the sales side, but also in our warehouse, drivers and customer service. We have invested in being above the pay average in our marketplace and we feel it is important to be a leader."

Packer explained that the Hill & Markes sales team, if compared to any other family distribution company, would include significantly more people per sales dollar. "Our people are given months of training, we invest a lot in that. Our sales team is probably double the size of a comparable company." Members of the sales team are educated to share their expertise, as they serve as trainers and consultants, and can make recommendations that may help the customer save money, maximize profits and fulfill their goals.

Packer gave an example regarding a college located in New York State that suffered an outbreak of norovirus on campus a few years ago. The clean up process that the school's staff had to perform after the outbreak was costly (cited at more than \$500,000), and labor-intensive, as each individual surface had to be wiped down by hand with Clorox.

Hill & Markes team members were able to educate college officials how to help prevent an outbreak the following year, by converting to a proactive product that sprays the Clorox onto surfaces for disinfection. This process takes a quarter of the time in manpower, helped prevent a major outbreak the following year, and saved the school hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Company materials state, "We make it our mission to show customers how to reduce their consumption of paper towels, we show customers how to use chemical dispensing systems that reduce use of chemicals, we introduce cleaning equipment that reduces labor costs. Hill &

Markes knows that if we can reduce your budget issues, if we can reduce your product usage, we will have a loyal and successful customer that can continue to thrive in this super challenging economy."

To support customers who are running businesses in an environmentally-conscious way, Hill & Markes offers "the most sustainable products in the industry and partners with the most sustainable-focused manufacturers in the industry."

The website explains, "We supply dozens of green seal certified, FSC, DFE paper and chemical products. Our partnership with Cascades Tissue Group is proof of our commitment to sustainability. Cascades provides locally produced and delivered products (reducing fuel usage) and has invested in manufacturing facilities that utilize solar and wind power. We partner with companies like Tennant and Ecologic to offer you chemical-free cleaning. Now we can offer you sustainable products you can be confident won't hurt our environment when they go down the drain. Finally, we have made a major investment in a vast inventory of compostable food-service disposables that helps reduce the landfill burden."

Being on the forefront of technology is also a priority. Hill & Markes is the exclusive dealer of Tennant ECH2O and Orbio ECH2O floor care equipment, that generates cleaning solution onboard, without a cost for delivery of chemicals, or additional packaging for delivery of chemicals. Because of their well-trained sales team, Hill & Markes is the top distributor in the country of these products, simply because of the number of H & M people consulting with businesses on ways to improve operations.

The company stays close to its roots by also continuing to

See Team, on page 5

St. Mary's Conference to Explore Balance, Joy, Change

St. Mary's Center for Complementary Therapies will host its 20th Annual Conference, "Falling Together: How to Find Balance, Joy and Meaningful Change" on Monday, March 23, 2020. The event will be held at the Carondelet Hospitality Center in Latham, starting at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m.

Donna Cardillo, MA, RN, CSP, FAAN will be the presenter for the day-long conference. A release about the event said, "She is known as 'The Inspiration Nurse,' and is a powerhouse of energy, wisdom, and humor and has been referred to as a positive force of nature who lights a path for others to follow. Donna is a life-long Jersey Girl with attitude and chutzpah to spare!"

Her program will offer practical strategies for managing energy rather than time, creating, innovating and inspiring those around you, building a "change stamina," cultivating a mindful approach to life, and how to bring more joy and



**Donna Cardillo,
MA, RN, CSP, FAAN**

happiness to yourself and others.

Cardillo is co-host of the Talent Brand Show podcast, a wellness blogger at DoctorOz.com, a Nurse Influencer at American Nurse Today, and the original "Dear Donna" columnist at Nurse.com. Her career combines over 25 years of clinical, managerial, and business experience, not to mention her stint as a professional singer!

She is the author of 4 books including the award-winning Falling Together: How to Find Balance, Joy, and Meaningful Change When Your Life Seems to be Falling

Apart. She is a Certified Meditation Teacher, Reiki Master, Certified Forest Therapy Guide, Labyrinth Facilitator, and advocate for family caregivers.

For more information about the conference or to obtain a registration form, please contact JoAnne Veith, RN, HTCP, Director – St. Mary's Center for Complementary Therapies at (518) 841-7146. Registration deadline is March 13.

Team, continued from page 4

sell to ice cream shops throughout the Northeast. Ice cream is still a "great little niche" for H & M, thanks to the "high-touch, value driven market segment that they excel in," Packer said. The H & M "ice cream catalog" offers the shops everything they could wish for in ingredients, equipment and supplies, from hot fudge warmers, to scoops, to the sprinkles that top a delicious sundae.

Add the sales experts to the mix, and Packer noted that not only can Hill & Markes supply everything for your shop (but the building), "we have the expertise on how to make a profit from it." He explained for example, that at an on-site visit or a training show at the Amsterdam headquarters, the sales team would teach the owner how to make exciting new products like "freak shakes" with tons of toppings on them. They also might explain that purchasing a clear container to serve a delicious hot-fudge sundae in is a smarter bet, because it is probable that when customers in line see the scrumptious concoction, they might snap up one of those higher-profit yielding sundaes, too.

The company's blog, kept up to date by Digital Content Specialist Katie Bruno, also

features value-added information for customers on various timely topics, with tips on how to utilize Hill & Markes products in relation. For example, a post in February titled "Why You Should Offer Takeout on Valentine's Day," made the argument that local restaurants may want to consider expanding their offerings to include takeout options, to follow recent trends. The post not only gave tips on the promotion and logistics of adding takeout, but also offered packaging options available at Hill & Markes for a successful rollout.

Packer said all businesses are welcome at Hill & Markes, and the range of services available are available to companies, large or small. Just in Amsterdam, they serve large companies including St. Mary's Healthcare, to small ones like DomAdi's Deli, and everything in-between, from Beech-Nut to Alpin Haus, to Raindancer and Target.

The H & M website explains, "Hill & Markes is family-owned and operated. There is no bureaucracy. And that means our customers are not just another number. Our customers are important to us and we are flexible in providing customized value added



Hill & Markes fulfills 99 percent of customer orders directly from the Amsterdam warehouse & headquarters on Route 5S.

programs that make our customers' lives easier and their operations more profitable."

Packer said all businesses are welcome at Hill & Markes, and the range of services available are available to companies, large or small. Just in Amsterdam, they serve large companies including St. Mary's Healthcare, to small ones like DomAdi's Deli, and everything in-between, from Beech-Nut to Alpin Haus, to Raindancer and Target.

He added, "No matter if you are large or a small customer, we treat you the same with a high level of customer care and we roll out the red carpet every day."

For more information about Hill & Markes, visit www.hillnmarkes.com.

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HR Insights: Are you using the correct I-9 Form?

On January 31, 2020, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) published a notice in the Federal Register announcing that there is a new version of Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification. The new version contains minor changes to the form and its instructions. The USCIS is encouraging employers to begin using this updated form as of January 31, 2020.

The notice provides employers additional time to make necessary updates and adjust their business processes. Employers may continue using the prior version of the form (with a notation on the left lower corner of Rev.07/17/2017 N) until April 30, 2020. After that date, they can only use the new form with the 10/21/2019 version date on the lower left hand corner of the form.

The new I-9 Form is available from the USCIS website. To download and obtain a copy of the new form and instructions on how to complete the form visit www.uscis.gov/i-9

DOL Increases Civil Penalty Amounts for 2020

On Jan. 15, 2020, the Department of Labor (DOL) released its 2020 inflation-adjusted civil monetary penalties that may be assessed on employers for violations of a wide range of federal laws, including:

- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA);
- The Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA);
- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA); and
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act).

To maintain their deterrent effect, the DOL is required to adjust these penalties for inflation, no later than Jan. 15 of each year. Key penalty increases include the following:

- The maximum penalty for violations of federal minimum wage or overtime requirements increases from \$2,014 to \$2,050 per violation;
- The maximum penalty for failing to file a Form 5500 for an employee benefit plan increases from \$2,194 to \$2,233 per day.
- The maximum penalty for violations of the poster requirement under the FMLA increases from \$173 to \$176 per each offense.

Employers should become familiar with the new penalty amounts and review their pay practices, benefit plan administration and safety protocols to ensure compliance with federal requirements are enforced.

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Littauer Names Goodwill Award Recipient

Nathan Littauer Hospital & Nursing Home named Mary Valachovic Fourth Quarter Goodwill Award recipient for 2019.

Littauer President and CEO Laurence E. Kelly, spoke about Valachovic before surprising her with the award. He said, "This employee is hard-working and organized. Her charming personality and her gracious attitude make her a pleasure to work with. She's helpful to anyone that asks her for assistance. These qualities and her 'can-do' attitude make her the epitomical employee of Nathan Littauer."

Valachovic is an employee of Littauer's Medical Records, Employee Health, and Performance Improvement departments. She has worked with Littauer for 16 years. After hearing Valachovic's accomplishments, staff gave her a standing ovation.

A peer who nominated Valachovic explained: "Mary has an endless supply of friendliness. We're so lucky to have her on our team at Littauer. Her values, work ethic, pleasant personality, and her dependability make her a valuable employee of Littauer."

Along with her plaque, Valachovic receives a monetary gift, as well as a designated parking spot on the hospital's campus.

The mission of The Goodwill



President and CEO of Nathan Littauer Hospital & Nursing Home, Laurence E. Kelly, and Littauer employee Mary Valachovic, recipient of the hospital's Fourth Quarter Goodwill Award.

Award is to recognize goodwill and promote the "People Caring for People" environment toward co-workers, patients and the community of Nathan Littauer Hospital & Nursing Home.

Nominations for the award are made by Littauer employees, providers or patients, and nominees' names are submitted to the Goodwill Committee. The winner is selected in blind format.

Nigra Arts Center To Offer Bus Trips to East Coast Destinations

The Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts released the schedule of its 2020 Bus Trips, a series of excursions to East Coast locales taking place throughout the year. Proceeds from each trip benefit the Nigra Arts Center.

The scheduled trips are as follows:
— MGM Studios Casino, Springfield, Mass. | Sunday, March 22 | \$50 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$55 per person for the general public

— Boston, Mass. | Saturday, May 16 | \$50 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$55 per person for the general public

— Bronx Zoo, The Bronx, N.Y. | Sunday, June 14 | \$60 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$65 per person for the general public (includes admission to venue)

— Mystic Aquarium, Mystic, Conn. | Saturday, July 18 | \$70 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$75 per person for the general public (includes admission to venue)

— Legoland Discovery Center Westchester, Yonkers, N.Y. | Wednesday, Aug. 12 | Ticket prices TBD

— Hampton Beach Seafood Festival, Hampton, N.H. | Saturday, Sept. 12 | \$50 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$55 per person

for the general public

— Salem, Mass. | Saturday, Oct. 17 | \$50 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$55 per person for the general public

— Buffalo Bills Game, Orchard Park, N.Y. | Sunday, Nov. 1 | Ticket prices TBD

— New York, N.Y. | Saturday, Dec. 12 | \$50 per person for Lexington staff and individuals or \$55 per person for the general public

Guests will travel on a Brown Coach bus. Each trip departs from The Center at Lexington, 465 N. Perry Street, Johnstown, at 6:30 a.m. There will also be a pickup at the JC Penney entrance of Crossgates Mall in Albany at 7:30 a.m. Buses will depart their destination at 5:30 p.m. to return home. Buses have full amenities and free wi-fi. Each trip includes a comfort stop on the way to the destination and a fast food dinner stop on the way home.

For more information about these bus trips and to buy tickets, please visit www.pncreativeartscenter.org/events, email Lynette May at mayl@thearclexington.org or call (518) 661-9932. The Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts is located at 2736 State Highway 30, Gloversville.

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Upcoming Chamber Events

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

Fulton Montgomery
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

DATE:
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020

LOCATION:
WINNERS CIRCLE
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2020 STATE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY WITH COUNTY EXECUTIVE MATT OSSENFORT

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\$25 PER PERSON TO ATTEND

MATT OSSENFORT WILL PRESENT A LOOK AT 2020 AND FORWARD TO 2021
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Thursday, March 12, 2020

State of the County: Montgomery County

The Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce will host Montgomery County Executive Matthew L. Ossenfort for his popular "State of the County" address, set for 8-10 a.m. on March 12 at the Winner's Circle, 3293 State Highway 5, Fonda.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m., and a full breakfast buffet will be served at 8 a.m.

Ossenfort will hold a Q&A session immediately following the presentation. Casual attire is acceptable. Tickets for the event are \$25.

Members can register online at the Chamber's website, www.fultonmontgomeryny.org; and future members can contact either Nicole Tennant at (518) 725-0641 or Morgan Frisch at mfrisch@co.montgomery.ny.us.

This event is Sponsored by: C.T. Male Associates & Cancer Prevention in Action for Fulton, Montgomery and Schenectady Counties.

Weekdays in March Art Exhibit to Feature PTECH Students

An art exhibit in the gallery of the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce will feature freshmen PTECH students, whose works are related to the theme, "The Light and Dark side of the Mind."

The exhibit will be displayed in the Chamber Gallery, located at 2 N. Main St., Gloversville, throughout the month of March, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The PTECH students will present personally meaningful artworks that represent differ-

ent sides of mental health, and a few interactive pieces will be available for attendees to participate in.

For more information or to inquire about showing artwork in the Chamber's Gallery Rotunda, please call Nicole Tennant at (518) 725-0641 or e-mail info@fultonmontgomeryny.org.

Thursday, April 23, 2020 Spring Job Fair Planned

Fulton Montgomery Community College, in Conjunction with the FMS Workforce Solutions System and the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, will hold their Annual Spring Job Fair on April 23, 2020 from 12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

The Fair will be located at 2805 State Highway 67 in Johnstown, the Physical Education Building of Fulton Montgomery Community College, Raiders Cove.

Chamber officials said, "If your Company has current or future job opportunities in the local area, this historically well-attended job fair could be exactly what your company needs. Our Job Fair is an excellent way to boost your applicant pool at no charge to you. We will advertise the event and provide the space for you to set up your display, and the event is free and open to the public."

For jobseekers who would like to attend the job fair to meet possible employers, the organizations suggest that potential candidates dress professionally and bring a resume.

For more information, visit www.fmcc.edu/academics/career-transfer/job-fair-employer-registration/ to fill out the online registration form. For additional information, please call Andrea Scribner by phone at (518) 736-3622 ext. 8161 or email andrea.scribner@fmcc.suny.edu.



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W : 8:30-6; Sat : 9-Noon

Chamber Member Anniversaries

The following businesses realize the value of their Chamber investment and have renewed their membership in the month of February 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

FirstLight.....	2019
Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York	2019
Senator Jim Tedisco	2017
Mud Road Sugar House	2017
St. Johnsville Rehabilitation and Nursing Home	2016

5 to 9 Years

State Farm Insurance, Jenny Rulison-Fisch	2015
VanNostrand & Co. CPAs	2014
Wally Hart.....	2011

10 to 19 Years

Friends of Sanford Stud Farm.....	2007
Rockwood Environmental Solutions, LLC...	2007
Community Bank – Canajoharie.....	2006

10 to 19 Years continued

Sandy Maceyka.....	2006
Milligan and Higgins	2006
Advantage Builders.....	2005
Rose & Kiernan, Inc.	2005
Fuel-N-Food Inc.....	2003
St. Mary’s Healthcare	2003
Euphrates, Inc.	2002
Brott Law Office, P.C.	2002
Northville Central School	2002
Rogers Family Orchards, Inc.	2001
Steven J. Bruning, C.P.A.	2001

20 to 29 Years

Say it With Signs	1999
Chris Rizzo Trucking, Inc.....	1999
City of Gloversville.....	1998
Cranesville Block Company, Inc.	1998
Betz, Rossi, Bellinger & Stewart Funeral ...	1998
Jackson & Betz Funeral Home	1998
Lenz & Betz Funeral Home	1998
Fiber Conversion.....	1997
B&M Leather, Inc.....	1997
Adirondack Eye Care	1996

20 to 29 Years continued

Mental Health Association in Fulton & Montgomery Counties	1996
Townsend Leather Company Inc.....	1995
Rich Szumowski Window Cleaning Service ..	1994

30 to 39 Years

Kucel Contractors, Inc.	1989
Family Counseling Center of Fulton County	1989
City of Johnstown	1987
J.A.G. Manufacturing, Inc.	1987
H.F.M. Prevention Council	1986
J. Paul Kolodziej, Attorney & Counselor at Law	1985
Brilliant Design & Print	1985

40 to 49 Years

First Presbyterian Church-Johnstown	1976
NBT Bank-Gloversville Financial Center	1974
Castiglione Gem Jewelers	1974
KeyBank – Johnstown	1974
National Grid	1974
W.E.S.T. & Company, C.P.A.s, P.C.....	1973
Brown’s Ford of Johnstown, Inc.....	1972



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Tourism News

Walleye Challenge Celebrated, Prizes Awarded



Anne Boles
Director of
Tourism Development
tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org

While the stability of the ice didn't cooperate for the contest portion of our ice fishing tournament, we still celebrated the Annual Walleye Ice Fishing Challenge with prize drawings that took place on February 15th at Lanzi's on the Lake in Mayfield.

The tournament once again was a sell out with 1,750 fishing enthusiasts registered.

Over half of participants were from outside of Fulton County, including participants

from eight states including various parts of New York. Even though they couldn't fish for the tournament, many from out-of-the area still came for the prize festivities.

We are grateful to all of them, their families and friends for making our county their destination on that day and weekend and hopefully to return to Fulton County on many more occasions.

The continued success of this event would not possible without the help of our entire Fulton County community and its businesses – Saratoga Eagle, Frank's Gun Shop, the staff at the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, Lou Stutzke and the great staff at Fuel-N-Food, Lanzi's on the Lake and the entire Lanzi family, Powerhouse Motorsports, Outdoor Motor Sports & Trailer Sales, Greenscapes, Kingsboro Lumber, Reale Landscaping, Jim's Bait Shop, Town of Broadalbin, the Town of Mayfield, the Town



Hundreds of Walleye Challenge entrants still showed up to celebrate and collect incredible prizes from organizers of the Challenge.



Left, Scott Bleyl from Saratoga Eagle smiles with Lou Stutzke of Fuel-n-Food of Mayfield, organizer of the Walleye Challenge, during the prize drawings held on Feb. 15 at Lanzi's on the Lake in Mayfield.



See Tourism News,
on page 13



L-R: Mark Kilmer, President of the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, smiles with Megan and Assemblyman Robert Smullen as they enjoy a hot drink during the Walleye Awakening on the Great Sacandaga Lake.

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Tourism News continued from page 12

of Northampton, the Town of Edinburg, the New York State DEC, the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation, Henry D Ross III Memorial Fund, Watercraft Network, Maria and Beaver Ross, and many other individuals and businesses who helped in many ways to make this a great event.

We are thankful to all of these businesses and individuals. And we are thankful to our Fulton County residents who welcome with open arms these and thousands of other visitors as they explore the great outdoor resources of Fulton County.



The winners of various prizes, including Fulton Montgomery County Chamber Checks, got to take home something special.



Peter and Vivienne Cirillo bundled up to join the fun at the Walleye Awakening.



Members of "Our Secret Love Society" prepare to take the outdoor stage at the Walleye Awakening event hosted by the Fulton Montgomery Chamber of Commerce Tourism Department and Fulton County.

2020 Fulton County Restaurant Week – March 7-13, 2020

The 2020 Fulton County Restaurant Week is shaping up to be a delicious event for all involved. Where else can you get delectable meals at amazing restaurants at such a good price?

Fulton County Restaurants that would like to

participate – please call Anne Boles at (518) 725-0641. It's not too late to sign up!

Stay tuned for additional information. Lunch and Dinner menus will be posted on www.44lakes.com and the Fulton County Tourism Facebook page.

Current List of Participating Restaurants include:

308 Prime/Holiday Inn – Johnstown
Brass Monkey – Gloversville
Hotel Broadalbin – Broadalbin
Fritz's Pizza – Broadalbin
Hales Mills Country Club – Johnstown
House of Pizza – Gloversville
Jackie's Diner – Broadalbin
Lakeside Tavern – Mayfield
LaPalma Mexican Grill – Johnstown
Lanzi's on the Lake – Mayfield
Let's Twist Again Diner – Broadalbin
Nicolino's – Broadalbin
Nick Stoner Inn – Caroga Lake
Partner's Pub – Johnstown
Peaceful Valley Maple Farms – Johnstown
Plaza Italian Bistro – Gloversville
Railside Café – Johnstown
Romana's Pizzeria – Johnstown
Sport Island Pub – Northville
Salt American Bistro and Wine Bar
Timeless Tavern – Northville
Vintage Café – Johnstown
Union Hall Inn – Johnstown

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Business Education Partnership News

HFM PTECH



Nicole Walrath
Director of
Workforce Development
NicoleW@fultonmontgomeryny.org



Jenna Patterson
Business and Education
Partnership Coordinator
jennap@fultonmontgomeryny.org



Sophomores and juniors at HFM PTECH in the physics and MAT 101 classes participated in a murder mystery project. Last month they presented their theories on how the (fictitious) murder of Sue Worldman occurred, and who

should be charged with the crime. Thank you to our special guests, State Police Investigator Wayne Matice and Fulton County Coroner Margaret Luck for attending the presentations and for help assessing the students' theories.



Last month Michael Arterberry introduced the Power of Peace program to the freshmen and sophomores from HFM PTECH, Ag PTECH and Foothills PTECH. The students from all of our 3 PTECH schools will be undertaking this

program in the spring. Power of Peace utilizes a variety of experiential workshop activities to promote conflict management, leadership, teamwork and collaboration, decision making, respect for others and self, and diversity.

Amsterdam High School College and Career Pathways

Freshmen enrolled in Amsterdam High School's College & Career Pathways (CCP) program started reading the book *Sold* by Patricia McCormick to focus on unseen issue of human trafficking. Students have partnered with Eyes Wide Open, a non-prof-

it organization that helps victims of human trafficking. This month, students will work with President and Founder of Eyes Wide Open, Debbie Fowler, to create a public service announcement to bring awareness to end trafficking.

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Business Education Partnership

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Business Education Partnership News

Career & Technical Education (CTE)



In addition to working with local businesses and community organizations, various programs at the HFM Career & Technical Center often work together to help students gain experience and sharpen their job skills. Levi, the Veterinary and

Animal Science program's rabbit, benefited this week from one such cross-program project. Thanks to students in the Construction Technology program, Levi now has a new custom-built, multi-level cage complete with a ramp.

Foothills PTECH



Foothills PTECH hosted its second annual career day for freshmen and sophomores. The career day consisted of guests from Amsterdam Printing, Fulton-Montgomery Community College, GPO Federal Credit Union, Mountain Valley Hospice, Nathan

Littauer Hospital, StickerMule and Wells Nursing Home. Businesses prepared an interactive presentation highlighting the company background, education/certification requirements, expectations, job duties and more.



Sophomores at Foothills PTECH served as activists to inform the public about unfair labor practices, while also promoting awareness of products that are produced ethically and locally. Last month, students held an event that hosted members of the business community and public to circulate between ten booths to learn about human rights, child labor and ways to support fair trade practices.

Agriculture PTECH



Freshmen in the Agriculture PTECH program went on a workplace tour to Spring Farm Cares Animal Sanctuary. While at the farm, the students were tasked with studying behaviors of different animals, including horses, pigs, donkeys and chickens. The students also interacted with the farm's 160 cats. This workplace tour was planned as a result of the students' Vet Pet Guide project.

Visit The Chamber online at:
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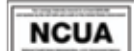
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Chamber Member Events

Saturday, March 21

"15 Miles on the Sacandaga Canal? The Canal Craze," will be presented by the Fulton County Historical Society, hosting speaker David Brooks, Education Director at Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site. The event will begin at 2 p.m. at the Fulton County Museum, 237 Kingsboro Ave., Gloversville. Suggested donation is \$5, FCHS members free.

Through March 31, 2020

The "2020 Women's Movement: Art By, About and For Women" show will be on display at the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts until March 31. The show celebrates the hundredth anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women the right to vote.

Works in a wide variety of media, mostly themed around women and female identity, are on display in this show. In addition to local artists, this exhibition features creators from across New York State as well as Texas, North Carolina and Virginia.

Forty artists are exhibiting 90 pieces in this show. The featured artists include Lynn Armstrong, Kathryn Bartscht, Linda Biggers, Joshua Brooks, Emily Byrnes, Allyson Cornelius-Ferri, Stacey DeLaney, Constance A. Dodge, Tanya Dora, Carollee Duross, Brenda Dwyer, Ron Fiorillo, Gina Freeman, Katey Germain, Bree Girdlestone, Anita Hanaburgh, Alexandra Higgins, Scott Hook, Michele Johnsen, Nancie Johnson, Leah Ketchen, Garlyn MaGinnis, Maryanne Malecki, L. Paul Masto, Gliser Fuentes Mena, Laura Monroe Duprey, Lynda Naske, Caren Pepper, Sandra Peters, Regina Quinn, Kathie Raneri, Vanessa Rhodes, Kimberly Ruggeri-Rios, Cynthia Sheeler, Lisa Spring, Patsy Suydam, Caitlin Sweet, Heidi Van Deusen, Gerald Wein and Janet Marie Yeates.

Through the support of donors, the Nigra Arts Center will offer awards to outstanding submissions. In addition, the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Women's Consortium is sponsoring a special Elizabeth Cady Stanton Award for this show. The

award, selected by members of the Consortium, will be presented to the piece of artwork that most closely aligns with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's ambitions for the progress of women.

The award winners will be announced at a public Meet the Artists Closing Reception on Friday, March 27, 6-8 p.m. The public is welcome to attend this free event, which will also feature special guest speaker Kristen Visbal. Visbal is a bronze sculptor who created the famous Fearless Girl statue that stood temporarily on the Bowling Green in Manhattan's Financial District. At the reception, she will speak about the creation of the sculpture and its cultural significance.

The public is also welcome to view the show at any time during its run. The Nigra Arts Center is located at 2736 State Highway 30, Gloversville, and its hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Gallery admission is a suggested \$5 donation. Members of the Nigra Arts Center, children under the age of 18 and participating artists are admitted for free.

For more information about this show or the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, call (518) 661-9932 or visit www.pncreativeartscenter.org.

Monday, April 6, 2020

Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site in Fort Hunter will open the doors at their Visitor Center this off season on each first Monday of the month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for Museum Monday Programs.

On April 6, the theme will be a discussion on how the federal government rejected funding the NYS project to build the Erie Canal. Learn more about how New York constructed the canal anyway, and some thoughts on how a conspiracy may have been involved.

Each program is open to the public and questions are encouraged. This is not a formal presentation and the idea is to explore the exhibit and discover more about each theme topic.

For information about this program, please call the Visitor Center at (518) 829-7516, email SchoharieCrossing@parks.ny.gov, or visit the site's Facebook page.

Solar Energy and Farming Workshop Planned

A regional workshop on hosting utility and large scale solar farms for farmers, land-owners and municipal officials is scheduled for Saturday, March 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Herkimer College, 100 Reservoir Road, Herkimer.

The event is co-sponsored by Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Otsego County Conservation Association, Herkimer College and Cornell Cooperative Extension – Herkimer County.

The event will help farmers, land owners and municipal officials plan for the development of large, utility scale solar installations in the Mohawk Valley. Currently planned solar developments in Herkimer, Montgomery and Otsego counties are each over 1,000 acres in size and will involve many different prop-

erty owners and towns prior to completion.

The workshop brings together experienced renewable energy professionals in the fields of energy economics, land use planning, leasing law and dual use agricultural practices to give area residents the tools to make informed choices about solar energy developments in their communities.

Attendees will learn best practices in working with solar developers, and how farmers are creating new opportunities through hosting solar installations on their land. They will also have the opportunity to ask questions about land leasing terms and conditions, alternative solar strategies and municipal impacts.

The workshop is free and open to the public by prior registration. For more information contact Barbara Johnson at herkimer@cornell.edu.