

NEWSLINE

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



October 2020

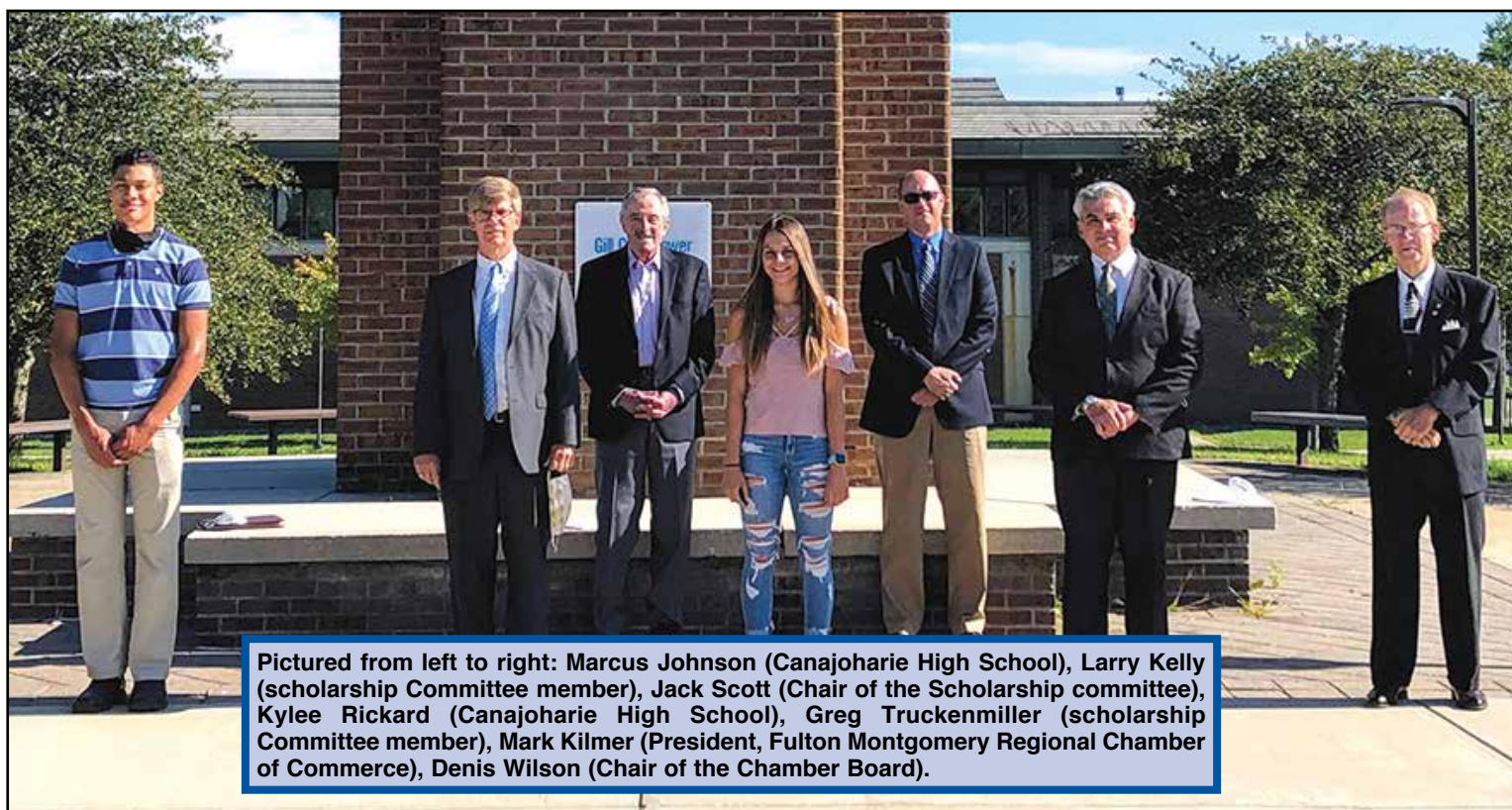
Fulton Montgomery Chamber Awards \$4,000 In Scholarships to local students

By Joanne E. McFadden

Since 1986, the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce has supported local high school graduates as they embark on their college careers. This year's winners are Kylee Rickard and Marcus Johnson of Canajoharie High School, Amanda Clifford of Fonda-Fultonville High School, and Matthew Syzdek of Broadalbin-Perth High School.

The Chamber's Scholarship Committee evaluated the applicants based on essays, academic achievements, community involvement, economic needs, and two reference each. The committee also conducted personal interviews with finalists as part of the selection process. Eligible applicants either had to be high school seniors in Fulton or Montgomery County or graduates from a high school in one of these counties. They also had to be attending or entering a two- or four-year college or university this fall. The Chamber awarded each student \$1,000.

All four scholarship winners have impressive resumes. They graduated at the top of their class and participated in numerous extracurricular activities, athletics, and music. What is striking about this



Pictured from left to right: Marcus Johnson (Canajoharie High School), Larry Kelly (scholarship Committee member), Jack Scott (Chair of the Scholarship committee), Kylee Rickard (Canajoharie High School), Greg Truckenmiller (scholarship Committee member), Mark Kilmer (President, Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce), Denis Wilson (Chair of the Chamber Board).

group, impacted by the experience of growing up in close-knit, Fulton and Montgomery communities, is that their career choices all involve a desire to help others in some unique way.

Marcus Johnson graduated fourth in his class from Canajoharie High School. He served in Student Government and on the Student Council, and he was a member of the National Honor Society. He also belonged to his school's Science and Technology Clubs. As an athlete, Johnson

was captain of the football team and broke two school records in the 400-meter hurdles and triple jump, earning him the distinction of Track Athlete of the Year and Field Event MVP.

Johnson is a freshman at Binghamton University where he is studying mechanical engineering. Living in a rural area was part of the inspiration for pursuing engineering. "Since resources are limiting, whether that is a store that is too far away or the part I need isn't available, this has taught me to think outside of the box and really step out of my comfort zone," Johnson said.

He plans to put this engineering skills to use by creating a global non-profit organization, helping others in areas such as health, marketing, and development. He plans to discover cost-effective methods of production for various items, including glasses and

other medical supplies and well parts, so that they can be provided readily for those who need them. The goal to help others came when he was only eight years old and his grandparents shared with him their photos of a recent mission trip to central Africa. "I saw only extreme poverty at its worst," he remembers. That led him to volunteer for Reach Out and Care Wheels, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides wheelchairs to those who cannot afford them, mostly children. "After working with this organization, they showed me the importance of helping others, considering we have all of the resources, and they have so little," he said.

Johnson's classmate, **Kylee Rickard**, was an avid French student, achieving the highest class average in French. Her pursuit of advanced classes and college courses while in high school

allowed her to graduate with an advanced diploma. In addition to academics, Rickard participated in several extracurricular activities, including her school's Student Council, Yearbook Club, National Honor Society, and Science and History clubs. Rickard is also an athlete, serving as captain of the basketball, soccer, and softball teams as well a volunteer for first- and second-grade basketball teams.

Rickard attributes some of her success to growing up in a small town and being acquainted with "nearly everyone around," who supported both her academics and athletics. "These people pushed me daily to do nothing but my best, and wouldn't accept anything but it," Rickard said. She also said that teachers and

**See Winners,
on page 5**

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Newsline is published by the
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Hill & Markes Hosting Stuff the Truck Event for Community

Local Company collecting food donations for those in need

Hill & Markes, a family-owned wholesale distributor, is hosting a Stuff the Truck food drive for Catholic Charities on Saturday, October 10th from 8 am – 12 pm. A Hill & Markes truck will be parked outside Hannaford in Amsterdam, NY, where donations of non-perishable food items will be collected for those in need. Hygiene products, gift cards, etc. will also be accepted.

“We at Catholic Charities have seen an increase in the number of families who struggle with food insecurity during this time of COVID. We are anticipating that it will get worse as COVID continues; holidays approach and people remain unemployed,” says Mary Carpenter, Executive Director at Catholic Charities. “All donations received in our Food Pantry will be going to our community members, neighbors and loved ones in this time of insecurity and uncertainty. I truly appreciate and am overwhelmed by the commitment and caring that Hill and Markes has shown for those in need now and throughout the year.”

Giving back to the community is important to the Hill & Markes mission and remains a core pillar of the company.

“Hill & Markes is a great community partner that is always looking for ways to give back to the community. I’m grateful for their efforts to collect food items for those in need during these difficult times, and I urge all the residents of Montgomery County to take part,” said Senator George Amedore.

Hill & Markes is committed to bringing much needed support to those struggling during this pandemic. We encourage all members of the community to join us at the Amsterdam Hannaford to show their generosity.

“COVID has exacerbated food insecurity in our country and this region. My family, our employees, and our company are grateful to be able to help feed struggling individuals and families in Montgomery and Fulton coun-

ties at this time,” said CEO of Hill & Markes, Jason Packer. “We are so incredibly thankful for Catholic Charities for the work they do in feeding the hungry and supporting this initiative during this pandemic and beyond.”

Details of event below:

Date: Saturday, October 10th, 2020
Time: 8am-12pm
Location: 115 Hannaford Plaza, Amsterdam, NY 12010

Contact:

Katie Bruno
 Marketing Supervisor
 Kbruno@hillnmarkes.com
 Hill & Markes is a 114-year-old family-owned wholesale distributor servicing the state of New York with

ice cream products, janitorial products, food service, packing and shipping, and office supplies. The Hill & Markes family strongly believes in providing cutting edge solutions for customers and being a good corporate citizen.



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Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful is once again asking the community to become a “QuaranTeam”

Keep Mohawk Valley Beautiful (KMVB), a six-county NYS affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful (KAB) program, is asking the community to stay near home and do a “QuaranTeam” Cleanup, before the end of our scheduled effort that ends October 18. KMVB is a standing committee of the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc.

This year marks KMVB’s 19th annual Great American Cleanup Effort where community volunteers come together to aesthetically improve our environment by creating cleaner parks, streetscapes and public spaces through litter removal and elimination. While the country begins to open back up and more people are spending time outside, KMVB’s “QuaranTeam” Cleanup effort is intended to keep its commitment to bringing people together to beautify our communities, even during a global

pandemic.

The KMVB “QuaranTeam” Cleanup is a project for individuals and families who are quarantined together to break up their day by taking a walk outside alone or as a family to clean up litter along their property/streets and surrounding areas. “We intend to have adults and children in the six-County Mohawk Valley Region take action to work on beautifying and cleaning areas across their communities while adhering to federal, state and local public health guidelines regarding the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Sam Russo, Chair of KMVB Committee.

KMVB reminds volunteers participating in the “QuaranTeam” Cleanup to wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves when appropriate during litter cleanups.

By registering your “QuaranTeam” Cleanup project on the Oneida-



Herkimer Solid Waste Authority’s website at www.ohswa.org, you will be entered in a prize drawing that will take place following the conclusion of the Great American Cleanup on October 18th. **“QuaranTeam” individuals and/or groups must have registered through the www.ohswa.org and submit the reporting form provided upon registration to be eligible to receive prizes.**

Jamie Tuttle, Recycling Educator of the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority and partner in the Cleanup Program, said “While this year’s cleanup effort may not involve large groups gathering together, the actions, large or small, of individuals and families who participate will help KMVB continue its mission to remove litter and beautify the region we call “home” while inspiring generations of environmental stewards. KMVB is cleaning up, yes, but we are also changing behaviors by engaging the enthusiasm of involved young people,” said Tuttle.

To register your “QuaranTeam” Cleanup, visit www.ohswa.org. (Click “QuaraTeam” Cleanup.) You may also contact Mohawk Valley Economic Development District with any questions related to the Cleanup at (315) 866-4671.

Creating connections in a high-tech world: 3 tips to improve customer service

(BPT) — In customer service, as in many other areas of life, as technology becomes more sophisticated, relationships get more complex. While technology makes it easier for customers to interact with businesses, an action

as simple as finding an auto repair shop can quickly overwhelm consumers with multiple channels, opinions, advertisers and behind-the-scenes engagement systems.

What was once a straightforward sales and marketing funnel has become a cycle, with customers consistently in the evaluation stage and customer service reps having to convince current customers over and over of the value they’re providing. Customers expect excellent, fast and personalized service when interacting with businesses, and that puts a lot of pressure on your customer experience team.

“In a world that has become increasingly technology-focused – even more so as a result of the massive move to working from home during the pandemic – the personal, human touch is so valuable for companies seeking to make important connections with their customers and partners,” said Kate Winkler, CEO of Ruby, a premier provider of live virtual receptionist and chat services for small businesses. “Every phone call or website visit is crucial to the survival of a business, so the demands on customer support teams have increased exponentially.”

To help you succeed and grow in today’s business en-



vironment, here are a few best practices you can implement to build loyalty and win new business.

1. Invest in your customer service infrastructure.

It’s essential to serve your customers where they are, not where they used to be, which means investing in a multichannel (or omnichannel) strategy:

- In-store presence (if applicable)
- Live call answering rather than a directory or voice-mail only
- Website chat to interact with customers looking for information in real time
- Social media support and proactive updates about your business

Even if your business isn’t a 24-hour operation, some form of customer support may need to be available 24/7, 365 days a year. Recent developments have redefined the “typical workday,” as more customers are doing business during the evenings and weekends. For

many companies, it isn’t feasible or cost-effective to manage this expanded support in-house, so outsourced communication solutions such as a virtual receptionist service can ensure the needs of your customers and prospective customers are met.

2. Train team members in active listening.

Handling customer concerns is more than providing solutions – it’s making sure customers feel heard. Being present in customer conversations is key to showing you care. Never assume you know what a customer wants or needs, even if you’ve heard the problem 100 times. Practice active listening by offering small verbal cues (“yep,” “that’s right,” “mm-hmm”), taking notes, reiterating what you’ve heard, and responding in ways that indicate you’ve been paying close attention. It’s an art, but one that’s easy to master.

3. Encourage personalized customer interactions.

To build trust with your customers, focus on creating and nurturing relationships. Companies that prioritize customer interactions and provide access to valuable resources and information are more

**See Service,
on page 9**

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Winners, continued from page 1

staff at her small high school were always available to give extra help and prepared her for resume-writing and interviewing. "Overall, I was not worried when I left for college because I knew my small town had prepared me to the best of their abilities," she said.

Rickard is a freshman at Utica College with plans to study animal science and then pursue a doctorate in veterinary medicine. She wants to open her own veterinary clinic within a 40-mile radius of Canajoharie. "I hope to be a huge help to not only animals, but their owners as well," she said.

A third scholarship recipient, **Amanda Clifford**, graduated with a Comprehensive District Diploma from Fonda-Fultonville High School, having earned a spot on the Principal's list during her entire high school career. She won an award for having the highest GPA in 9th through 12th grades. She participated in Student Government, the Key Club, and the National Honor Society among other extracurricular activities.

As an athlete, Clifford was a member of her school's swim team for three years and received the Coach's Award. She received high scores in piano at the New York State School Music Association competition for

three years in a row as well as awards for the most dedicated player and most practiced hours.

Outside of school, Clifford volunteered at the Helping Hands Food Pantry in St. Johnsville and served as an assistant teacher at Saint Cecilia's Church in Fonda. "My mother is a social worker, and I grew up in a family that included foster children, so I learned at a young age the importance of helping others and working to create a better world for everyone," Clifford said.

Clifford is a freshman at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, where she is studying biology and mathematics, both subjects she loves. Since starting college in the close-knit Hamilton community, Clifford also discovered that she enjoys education studies and is considering the degree path that will best allow her to incorporate these three academic interests. She says she is passionate about promoting a fairer, more equal education system "where more than just one type of student can prosper."

Clifford also wants to encourage girls in the STEM fields. "Since I love mathematics and biology so much, I also want to work to end the stereotype that 'math and science fields are for men, not women,' and to allow more girls to feel confident about liking

these subjects and wanting to pursue careers in them," she said.

She also has a great enthusiasm for nature. "I grew up in a very rural environment where I was always directly exposed to the beauty of nature, so I am very passionate about preserving this beauty for future generations to experience," she said.

Like Clifford, the fourth scholarship recipient, **Matthew Syzdek** of Broadalbin-Perth High School loves nature and the outdoors. "Being in Fulton County, very close to the Adirondack Park, I got used to being the outdoors," Syzdek said.

Since he was young, he has been looking for ways that he can apply himself to protect nature. To that end, he is pursuing an engineering degree at Clarkson University in Potsdam, having gained some engineering experience in the University of Maryland's Discover Engineering Program while in high school. "I like building things and working with my hands," Syzdek said. "I hope to make an impact in the world by developing and improving machines and mechanical systems that do not harm the environment," he said.

During high school, Syzdek made an impact in his own community as a volunteer with the Fulton-Montgomery Veterans' Club, Homeward Bound Dog Rescue, the Broadalbin Youth Commission, and Wreaths Across

America.

Like his fellow scholarship recipients, Syzdek excelled both academically and athletically in high school. He graduated fourth in his class and was class president for all four years of high school. He participated in the National Honor Society and served as his school's representative at the New York State Boys' State Program.

As an athlete, Syzdek played four years of football, serving as captain of both the Junior Varsity and Varsity Football teams as well as being selected to three different all-star teams. In addition, Syzdek was an accomplished student musician. He was selected two years in a row for the New York State School Music Association's Area All-State Band, and he played clarinet for the Mohawk Valley Chamber Ensemble.

So far, Syzdek has found attending college during a pandemic as a "definitely interesting" experience. "It's a nice challenge because it forces you to go out of your comfort zone and try new things," he said.

The world can look forward to many new things from this year's scholarship recipients, who are determined to make the world a better place for people animals, and the environment, building on the community and connections they experienced growing up in Fulton and Montgomery Counties.

Chamber Member Anniversaries

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

Cell Phones for Less	2019
Northville 5 & 10	2016
Nadine Bloom, Esq.	2017
Capital City Coffee Roasters	2016
Sandler Training	2017
DeGiulio Brothers Flooring	2018
MVP Health Care	2017
Hazzard Fitness and Tan	2019
NAC's Meat Market	2019
Liberty Tax Services	2019
NextEra Energy Resources, L.L.C.	2019
Upstate Coffee Company	2018
Life at RCIL	2019

5 to 9 Years

Brett A. Preston, Attorney and Counselor at Law	2015
Taco Bell	2014

5 to 9 Years continued

Kwiat Eye and Laser Surgery	2011
Runnings	2014
Country Valley Veterinary Clinic	2012
Top Quality Home Care Agency, L.L.C.	2012
518 Grille	2013
Kimberly P. Travis, CPA	2011
4X Heaven & Krown Rust Prevention.....	2015
Heritage Meadow Farm Bed & Breakfast	2012
Lillian Johnson; HTCP	2015

10 to 19 Years

Ruggerio Realty, LLC	2005
Adirondack Mechanical Corporation.....	2005
John H. Blackmon	2009
Carole Petrelia of Coldwell Banker- Arlene M. Sitterly, Inc.	2006
Microtel Inn & Suites.....	2007
Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 1185	2004
Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties	2002
Miracle Ear.....	2003
The Floor Coverings of the Galleria	2004
Colleen Ioele-DeCristofaro, — Howard Hanna	2004

10 to 19 Years continued

Sacandaga Protection Committee	2009
Bouche & Clarke Benefits, Inc.	2005
C.F.I. Construction, Inc.....	2005
Elma's Tax Service	2005
Empower Federal Credit Union	2005
Hotel Broadalbin	2009
O'Connors Pub.....	2005
Village of Fort Johnson.....	2008
Soroptimist International of Fulton & Montgomery Counties	2004
Frank & Sons Body Works, Inc.....	2005

20 to 29 Years

Judith Ann Realty, Inc.	1995
Proforma	1997
Liberty ARC.....	1998
Edward Valentine, M.D.	1999
Greater Johnstown School District	1991
Walmart-Gloversville.....	1992
Sacandaga Veterinary Clinic.....	1994

30 to 39 Years

Greater Amsterdam School District.....	1981
Robert J. Hoy Agency, Inc.....	1986
Gloversville Palace Diner	1981



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Elizabeth Cady Stanton Hometown Association sponsors voter support group

Since Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the first women in the United States to call for a woman's right to vote, ECSHA has formed a Voter Support Committee to disseminate nonpartisan information to voters.

Chaired by ECSHA Board Member, Jennifer Gardella, the broad-based community group has partnered with the HFM Prevention Council, FMCC, local school districts and other groups to create flyers, postcards and a billboard.

"We are focusing our efforts on various nonprofits serving youth, the Latinx neighborhoods, women heads of households, and non-voters in 2016 with nonpartisan information to help make voting easy and accessible," stated Gardella.

As you drive through Fulton-Montgomery Counties going south on Rt. 30 one mile south of the Route 29 intersection, please look for our billboard encouraging all those eligible to vote.

We have also provided the following informational flyer below to a variety of agencies, civic groups, schools, non-profits and others serving residents in both counties. Please feel free to download and circulate this flyer for your use with clients, customers, colleagues, friends and family.

Today we must keep Stanton's legacy on behalf of voting and activism alive and well. We stand on the shoulders of many women who fought to gain the right to vote.

I'm voting. *Are you?*
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New voters register by **October 9**

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Tourism News



Anne Boles
Director of
Tourism Development
tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org

"Fall into Fulton County" Suggested Plans for Visitors

Fulton County Tourism announces a fall initiative to encourage the community to explore Fulton County. "Fall into Fulton County" is intended to promote local tourism by highlighting local tourist attractions in the area.

Posts and blogs will feature places to visit and explore, as well as restaurants and specialty shops to stop at

along the way. Fall is a wonderful time of year to visit historical landmarks, shop at local specialty stores in our downtown area, and eat at a family-owned restaurant.

"Fall is one of the best times of the year to visit Fulton County," Director of Tourism Development Director Anne Boles said. "It's a beautiful opportunity to drive through the county – to visit stops on the Fulton/Montgomery Quilt Barn Trail, go visit a historical landmark, fish on one of our 44 lakes, hike or bike on a trail. While you are apple or pumpkin picking, or choosing mums for your porch at a local flower shop- stop by a specialty shop in a downtown city or village. It is a perfect time to go visit on a beautiful crisp fall day. Then enjoy a meal at one of the family owned restaurants. I encourage businesses to reach out to me – as I will be happy to promote and showcase what your business has to offer."

Fulton County Administrative Officer Jon Stead also touted the value

of the region's destinations. "Taking a one-day 'mini-staycation' is a great idea right now. This year, everyone is looking for a way to get out of the house and enjoy the outdoors. You do not have to go far to find things to do. You just have to go!"

Please reach out to Anne Boles if you are a business owner interested to be featured. Please call 518-725-0641, or email tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org

Planning your day trip in Montgomery County:

Montgomery County is filled with plenty of activities for those seeking an exciting day trip right in their backyard.

The campaign, intended to promote local tourism, will feature a series of day trips to take throughout Montgomery County. Each trip will include a suggested itinerary with places to visit and explore as well as restaurants to stop at along the way.

The Chamber of Commerce and Business Development Center are partnering to create short videos of each trip. These videos, as well as a blog post, will be promoted through each organization's social media accounts and websites.

If you would like to be featured, please call Anne Boles at 518-725-0641, or email tourism@fultonmontgomeryny.org

Hit the trail for the Canalway Challenge

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor invites New

Yorkers to take part in the Canalway Challenge this fall, tracing history and tracking miles along New York's canals and Canalway Trail. Part fitness challenge, part journey of discovery, the Canalway Challenge is free and registration is open to people of all ages and abilities. Participants set their own mileage goal and walk, run, cycle or paddle to achieve it.

Nearly 1,000 individuals, teams, and organizations have signed up for the Canalway Challenge in 2020, pledging to walk, run, cycle, and paddle 126,000 miles to date.

New this fall, participants are encouraged to take up a quest to discover great food and beverages, historic sites, parks, and communities and discover what's Hot on the Trail while completing the Canalway Challenge.

"Hot on the Trail adds a new element of discovery to the Canalway Challenge, while also supporting small businesses and attractions that have suffered from reduced visitation during the coronavirus pandemic," said Bob Radliff, Executive Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. "It's a win-win for both visitors and for small businesses and attractions that have reopened with safety protocols in place."

From now through the end of October, Hot on the Trail participants are encouraged to visit sites in nine categories—including food and beverage, museums and historic sites, nature preserves, state and national parks, canal structures, and communities. Participants who list their favorite sites in each category by the end

of October will be entered to win a \$50 gift card to the New York State Canal Store.

"The Canalway Challenge is another of countless opportunities – both on and off the water – for recreation and fun along New York State's historic canalway, and I join the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in encouraging all New Yorkers to enjoy all that we have to offer," said Brian U. Stratton, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation. "Governor Andrew Cuomo is committed to supporting the heritage and future of New York's historic canal system, with initiatives that feature local activities that combine some of the best of New York State's historical sights and natural resources with recreational activities that help to support local businesses during this exceptionally difficult time."

For information and sign up, visit: CanalwayChallenge.org

About the Erie Canalway

Nearly 200 years after its construction, the Erie Canal remains an iconic symbol of American ingenuity and determination. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor works to preserve the Nation's extraordinary canal heritage, promote the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and foster vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of waterway. It achieves its mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, local residents, and more than 200 communities across the full expanse of upstate New York. www.eriecanalway.org

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Visit our tourism event calendars for events happening in Fulton County:

www.44lakes.com/calendar

and Montgomery County,

www.visitmontgomerycountyny.com/events-calendar

Membership News



Janet Davis

Director of Membership
and Member Services

Membership@fultonmontgomeryny.org

Welcome New Members!

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

White Cottage Gardens

194 Guy park Avenue
Amsterdam NY 12010

Primary Teeth Pediatric Dentistry

199 South Main Street
Gloversville NY 12078

Microtel Inn and Suites by Wyndham

1393 State Highway 5S
Amsterdam NY 1210

We appreciate the importance of our long term members

This article is about thanking our long term members. Sometimes we all seem to talk about all our new members and forget to mention how important our long term members are.

Every month we list our new members and thank them for their support. We do a ribbon cutting and send out e-blasts and print an article in *Newsline*. I would just like to take the time to thank some of our members in this article, these are the ones that have been with us for over 45 years.

Many of these members have been passed down from generation to generation. The Chamber would like to thank you for your long term support. We have a business Gabriel Contractors of Amsterdam Inc, who have been a member for over 54 years. McDonalds and Brown's Ford have been members for over 48 years. West and Company have been long term supporters for 47 years.

Next in line are NBT Bank, National Grid, Walrath & Stewart Funeral Home, Livingston's Furniture and & Mattress Inc., Ruby and Quiri Inc., *The Leader Herald*, Holiday Inn, Fulton-Montgomery Community, Wood, Seward & McGuire, L.L.P., Castiglione Gem Jewelers, Frontier Communications, Kingsboro Lumber Co., Inc., Law Office of Heidi Gifford, Cherry Valley Memorials, Peck's Lake Enterprises, Inc., Letter Memorial Co., SWANY America Corp., C.T. Male Associates, P.C., Stewart's Shops, Key Bank and Apollo Northeast.

Every month I would like to Shout Out to our long term businesses. You are what keeps our Chamber going and helps us support our businesses both large and small. It is so important to have your support — Thank You!

Last month I did an article on Destination One. I had a great response and want to thank our businesses that have supported us. I do have 6 more slots open if any of our business would like to do some advertising. It's a 1 year advertising slot 11 by 8 ¼ for \$495/year. This is located outside of the Fulton County Visitor's Center in Vails Mills and is an important detail of this destination that sees over 10,000 people annually. We also have spots for your rack cards or brochures. It's a great way for visitor's to come and explore your businesses.

Thank You —

St. Mary's
Mangino Chev.

NLH

Alpin Haus

Rockwood Environmental

Ruby and Quiri

Stockyard Public House

Gloversville Sewing Center

Palmer Pharmacy

Lapland Lake

Inn at the Bridge

Caroga Lake Historial

Service, continued from page 4

likely to weather economic stress and even thrive through word-of-mouth referrals. A few suggestions:

- Use the customer's name
- Establish a customer response goal (e.g., all calls/emails/messages responded to within 24 hours)
- Send communications that are not issue- or sales-re-

lated, such as interesting articles relevant to the customer's business, or congratulations on a recent office move

- Celebrate important milestones such as birthdays, marriages, births, etc.

Alongside (and in some cases in place of) sales and marketing efforts, investing in your customer experience

can have a dramatic effect on customer acquisition and retention. Small businesses without a dedicated support team should consider investing in tools and services — like virtual receptionists and live chat — that can provide a professional, compassionate voice focused on delivering a consistent experience that will make your business stand out from the competition.



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Business Education Partnership News



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

All things virtual for business partners at HFM PTECH

Although this year might look a little different, this will not change the way HFM PTECH offers real-world experiences to scholar students.

One way businesses can partner with HFM PTECH is by hosting a virtual workplace tour. Virtual workplace tours can either be live (via Google Meet) or recorded. During a workplace tour, an employee from each department gives an overview of what a typical day looks like, responsibilities of employees, etc. Workplace tours are designed for students to gain a better understanding of the businesses in their community. In addition, students research the business ahead of time and come prepared with questions that might arise on the tour (if live).

Another way businesses can partner with HFM PTECH is by offering virtual job shadowing and internships. There are several key factors that are imperative for a successful experience, however each experience is customized to the employers needs. Communication is key during any virtual experience. Employers should set clear expectations from day one. Structured training is also needed for a successful virtual internship.

Description of virtual job shadows & internships

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

Two types of virtual internships: can be paid or unpaid (please note an intern does not replace a FT employee)

- **Project based:** give intern a set amount of projects each week
- **Fixed time base:** intern can work online within a certain timeframe (in the office hours)

Best practices for virtual internships

Before your intern starts

- Provide a detailed job description
- Interview the intern
- Assign a supervisor to oversee, counsel, and evaluate the intern as well as conduct supervisory sessions

Structure & Training

- Decide if project based or time base internship, for project-based schedule a weekly set meeting time
- Record training videos, manuals, etc.

Project Management & Communication

- Determine best communication method (email, phone, text, messenger)
- Utilize a project manager such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, etc., and set and communicate project deadlines
- Utilize video-conferencing

Collaboration & Online Systems

- When possible give interns access to software and programs
- Invite intern to virtual team meetings/phone conferences
- Consider utilizing Google Suite (Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Meet, Google Calendar, etc.) which allows for real-time collaboration

To learn more about virtual experiences at HFM PTECH, please contact Nicole Walrath at nwalrath@hfmbooces.org.

Hamilton Fulton Montgomery Career & Technical Education (CTE)

HFM Career & Technical Center training cybersecurity workforce

Training a cybersecurity workforce has been a top priority in the public and private sectors for years now, and the demand for cybersecurity professionals continues to increase around the globe.

“There are definitely jobs out there and for people with talent, training and a good work ethic there are plenty of opportunities for advancement,” said Sean Mahon, who teaches Cybersecurity & Computer Technology at the HFM Career and Technical Center.

The significant need for professionals in the field has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic with computer technology playing an integral role in keeping everyone connected at school, work and in their personal lives.

Even before the pandemic, U.S. job openings in the cybersecurity field were projected to increase by nearly 30 percent by 2026.

Students enrolled in HFM’s Cybersecurity & Computer Technology program have their eyes set on the opportunities available in this in-demand field.

The HFM Cybersecurity & Computer Technology program is a two-year course available to high school juniors and seniors in the HFM area. The program includes coursework in cybersecurity, Information Technology Essentials, and the CISCO Certified Entry

Networking Technician (CCENT) curriculum. The CCENT coursework prepares students for CCENT certification, which validates to employers that students have the skills required for an entry-level network support position — the starting point for many successful careers in networking.

Other independent, third-party certifications are available for students as well. The HFM Cybersecurity program partners with TestOut, an information technology certification company, to allow students to demonstrate their skills in 11 areas including operating systems, PC hardware and software, basic networking, remote access, virtualization, storage, mobile devices, security, malware detection and prevention and troubleshooting. The TestOut exam is 100 percent performance based and provides hands-on problems students must solve to pass.

“By offering these types of independent certifications we’re helping our students stand out when applying for entry-level positions. The certifications also look great on a college application,” Mahon said.

To learn more about the HFM Cybersecurity & Computer Technology program visit: www.hfmbooces.org/cybersecurity-computer-technology/

6 questions to ask when taking your business online

(BPT) — Whether you run a solo small business, or your business is moving from brick-and-mortar to e-commerce, you've likely got a long to-do list — and you may not know where to start. Or if your business is already online, you may be trying to improve your website and stand out from the competition. Do you have the skills and know-how to make that happen?

Not everyone does. Chances are, you know a lot about your products or services, but not necessarily how to promote your business and run it successfully using today's digital tools. And due to the pandemic, increasing your online presence and running your business virtually has become even more crucial.

According to survey data released by Fiverr, 49% of U.S. small and medium-sized businesses are optimistic about their future prospects after the lockdown has passed, but not surprisingly, nearly a quarter (22%) of them do plan to increase their digital marketing spend as a result of COVID-19.

If you're one of the many entrepreneurs trying to figure out your next steps for taking — or optimizing — your business online, here are some questions to ask:

1. What are you selling?

Are you selling a product or a service? This makes a difference in how you run your business. Can your business happen virtually (if it's a service), or do you have to manage manufacturing, inventory and shipping on top of marketing and advertising, online ordering and finances?

2. Do you need your own website or online store?

Many small businesses can succeed — or at least start out — by selling products on an existing platform



like Etsy or Amazon, rather than creating their entire online store from scratch. But it may not be as hard to build your own site as you think.

3. What do you need on your website?

What will best serve your business? "About" and "Contact Us" pages? Do you want to include a blog? Customer testimonials and special promotions for new clients? Do you need a catalog of products and services? Does your business need to include a list of services, rates and shipping costs? Making a list of what your business needs is a useful starting point for whoever you hire to help build your website.

4. What web templates do you see working best for your business?

Are you familiar with WordPress, Wix and Squarespace? Which would be the best to suit your particular business?

5. What type of content do you want to see on your site?

Would you like to see custom-made illustrations or animation? Stock or custom photography? How

about videos?

6. How do you make sure customers can find your website?

There's a lot of competition out there. Unless you're well-versed in SEO and how Google algorithms work, you may not know how to build an online presence others can find using a web search.

Some entrepreneurs find the thought of putting their business online daunting, but with an expert in your corner, it can be simple and hassle-free. Fortunately, there's a service that can help you find the right talent to create a web presence that really reflects your unique brand: Fiverr is a platform connecting businesses of all sizes with skilled freelancers offering digital services in over 400 categories including graphic design, digital marketing, programming, video and animation. You can view professionals according to their skills, along with ratings, reviews and cost of the service you need.

And now there's a new tool to make it even easier to get started building a website for your business — Fiverr's The Shift. This new resource hub includes a website developer matching experience that will match you with a verified, highly-rated professional specializing in web design and development. For those new to creating a website, the matched talent will act as a guiding force throughout the website creation process.

On The Shift hub, you can also browse inspiring case studies, read stories about how businesses have transformed their digital presence and get tips from helpful blogs, podcasts and many other useful resources for small and medium-sized business owners across all industries.

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