

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

## FYI

brought to you by the **future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange**

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### The Importance of Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is the work of making a difference in the life of our communities. It includes things like voting and paying taxes; but it's also how we involve ourselves within our neighborhoods, cities, and regions. In smaller communities, like those in Venango County, we young professionals have a unique opportunity.

When we choose to get involved and practice civic engagement, we can see the benefits of our efforts almost immediately. Whether it's sitting on a board of directors for a local nonprofit, volunteering at the polls during elections, or helping out at a food pantry—being involved in your community is promoting the quality of life around you.

Civic engagement is also taking ownership of your city or region. From picking up trash on the street to reporting a crime in your neighborhood, being engaged is taking care of yourself and the people around you.

Josh Carpenter, Director for the Department of Innovation and Economic Opportunity in Birmingham, AL, says: **“Civic engagement is important because ultimately it's the best version of every single person in the community.”** Living in a community full of people who are the best versions of themselves sounds pretty ideal.

While we know that everyone is busy and it seems overwhelming to take on new activities or volunteer,



doing so is making our region a better place to live, work, and play. Consider making part of your New Years resolution to get more involved.

*Know a young professional who is a great example of this? See below for information about nominations for Young Professional of the Year.*

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### FLEX Presents Now Accepting Nominations

FLEX Presents is an annual event that celebrates the achievements of local young professionals who contribute to their community through civic engagement, and selects one of them as the Young Professional of the Year.

Since 2011, FLEX has recognized future leaders in our area who understand the value of giving back to their community and make a difference in the lives of others.



If you know someone who is an up and coming leader or is making significant contributions to their industry and the community, nominate them for Young Professional of the Year. The form is available online at [bit.ly/FLEXNomination](http://bit.ly/FLEXNomination). Young Professional of the Year nominations will be accepted through February 22.

*“The Future of Venango Area Business!”*



**Damien Cherico** is new to Venango County, but comes from the neighboring town of Clarion. He moved to Franklin and started at Webco Industries in Oil City as a Plant Metallurgist in July 2018.

After graduating from Clarion High School, Damien studied at Penn State University's Main Campus in State College,

where he earned a bachelor's degree in Materials Science and Engineering.

Damien has enjoyed living in our area and appreciates the beauty here, and how nice the people are, especially his co-workers at Webco. He has been busy at work, but plans to get more involved in the community in the near future.

At Penn State, Damien was a member of the Glee Club and still enjoys singing. When growing up, his family would spend weekends at his grandparents' house on the Clarion River and at his family's summer house in Maryland, so he has always loved water activities, like sailing.

He enjoys a variety of other outdoor activities, too, and plans to explore more in the area. Besides being outside, another hobby of Damien's is working on computers and playing video games.

In the future, Damien has goals to go back to school for an MBA or other master's degree, continue working hard at Webco, meet more people, and eventually settle down and start a family here.

We look forward to getting to know Damien even more!

## The Happy Secret to Better Work

With the holiday and new year celebrations behind us, many of us are looking forward to a fresh start—ready to make resolutions and become better versions of our past selves. According to the Business Insider, 80% of our resolutions will fail by February. FLEX wants to help you stick to your goals and one thing that is sure to motivate you are TED Talks.

TED Talks are influential videos from expert speakers on important topics. We are going to be featuring one TED Talk a month for the first part of the year in hopes they will keep you on track and motivated to achieve whatever your goals for 2019 are.

First up is a talk by Shawn Achor, one of the world's leading experts on the connection between happiness and success. The talk, titled "The Secret to Happy Work," is a 12 minute discourse arguing that happiness inspires us to be more productive. He conveys that happiness isn't the destination, but is actually a driving force behind success. It's fast-paced and funny and will leave you feeling energized.

Find it here: [bit.ly/TedHappyWork](http://bit.ly/TedHappyWork)



**Save the Date!**  
**July 20, 2019**



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**Jon Byham** is a Venango County native and works for the City of Oil City as a police officer. He grew up in Cooperstown and Dempseytown and loves the small town feeling of living in an area where everyone knows everyone.

Upon graduating from Oil City High School in 2008, Jon began college at the University of Pittsburgh in Titusville. After two years there he chose to transfer to Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). At IUP, Jon earned a bachelor's degree in Criminology.

Jon then decided to attend the IUP Municipal Police Academy, where he earned his Act 120 Certification in 2014. He has been working for the Oil City Police

Department since April of 2015. Jon says he appreciates the opportunity he has to serve the community and enjoys working with people from many different backgrounds.

Jon's future goals include advancing in his career (he hopes to become a lieutenant) and eventually opening a small business here in Venango County. He enjoys spending time with his friends and family (including 9-month-old daughter Charlotte), exercising, and trying out new recipes in the kitchen.

Among his favorite things to do in Venango County are kayaking, going out to eat, and seeing movies at the local movie theater. Jon is looking forward to becoming more involved in FLEX and meeting new people through the organization.

Jon hopes to see more businesses come to our area and keep the community on a path of growth.

## Contribute to FYI!

Are you a writer or have information you'd like to share with other young professionals? We'd love to include your advice, recommended books, helpful information, or exciting news in an upcoming FYI edition. Even if you have something to share but you're not a fan of writing, we'd be happy to edit the article or meet with you and write it for you. Contact us at [flex@venangochamber.org](mailto:flex@venangochamber.org) if interested.



## FLEX Member Highlight: Rachel Stiller

Please join us in congratulating FLEX President Rachel Stiller on a recent promotion! Rachel works at Borchers Americas Inc in Franklin, where she started in 2015 as the inventory accountant, and has since been promoted to the role of cost accountant at the company's Kentucky plant.



Her new responsibilities include preparing financial reports for management; reviewing rates of depreciation, labor and overhead; classifying business costs accurately;; establishing standard costs for inventory; and analyzing costs of raw materials and other supplies and creating cost-benefit analyses.

Rachel will be visiting the Kentucky plant six to eight times a year, and since it is possible to do accounting remotely, she will continue to work out of the Franklin office.

Originally from the area, Rachel attended Clarion University where she earned her bachelor's degree in accounting and monetary economics. Great job, Rachel!



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In December, FLEX hosted their Ugly Sweater Holiday Party Social at Fox Tales in Franklin, and held the final monthly meeting of the year at Bella Cucina in Franklin. Find more photos and updates on our Facebook page: [Facebook.com/VenangoFLEX](https://www.facebook.com/VenangoFLEX)



### OUR MISSION

FLEX represents the needs and interests of Young Professionals by positioning ourselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and advocates for the sustainability of the Venango Area through civic engagement, leadership development, and networking.

### Upcoming Events & Meetings:

- **Monthly Meeting:** Wednesday, January 19, 5:30 p.m. Venango Area Chamber of Commerce (24 Seneca Street, Oil City)
- **Dinner and a Show Social:** Friday, February 1, 5:30 p.m. (5:30 Cocktails, 5:45 Order Dinner) Bella Cucina, 1234 Liberty Street (7:30 Show) Barrow-Civic Theatre, Franklin

Connect with us:



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming our newest FLEX members:

*Sam Breene*

Interested in becoming a member? Ask for a form at the next event or meeting, or join online at [bit.ly/flexmembership](https://bit.ly/flexmembership).