

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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Nominate a Young Professional

Nominations are now open for our 2020 Young Professional of the Year! All nominees will be recognized at FLEX Presents, an annual event that celebrates the achievements of local young professionals who contribute to their community through civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Nominees must:

- Live and/or work in Venango County
- Be between the ages of 18 and 39
- Participate in activities outside of work that make a difference in the well-being of others
- Have exceptional ethical qualities and strive to improve and preserve the community



Find a nomination form at venangochamber.org/flex-presents. Forms are due by Friday, March 6.



SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, April 17 • 6:30 - 8:30PM
Clarion University - Venango (Suhr Library)

Join FLEX at the Venango Chamber Annual Dinner



FLEX will once again have a table (or two) at the Chamber's Annual Dinner on Wednesday, February 19 at Cross Creek Resort in Titusville beginning at 5 p.m. The event is held to honor the Citizen, Business, Partner in Business, and Volunteer of the Year. It includes hors d'oeuvres, dinner, and a cash bar, along with great networking opportunities.

Tickets usually cost \$50, but FLEX Members only pay \$30. If you would like to attend, please RSVP through Tessa at tbyham@venangochamber.org or (814) 676-8521.

"The Future of Venango Area Business!"



Josh Lewis is originally from Lancaster County, PA, and moved to Franklin with his wife, Emily, after college.

Josh graduated from Slippery Rock University with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and went on to earn a master's degree in Environmental Sustainability from Chatham.

He is now employed as conservation coordinator at the French Creek Valley Conservancy in Meadville. Josh says his favorite work event of the year is the French Creek Clean Up. "I like knowing how excited everyone gets about getting outside and cleaning such a great waterway," he said.

Outside of work, Josh enjoys backpacking, cycling, and going outdoors with Emily and their dog, Bo. They love hiking at Two Mile and relaxing in their quiet neighborhood. He is also a youth ice hockey coach for a travel team of 9 and 10 year-olds based out of Meadville.

Josh noted one of his favorite things about living in Venango County is the great trails and roads for biking. "If I turn left out of my driveway I can ride my bike for over 40 miles without hitting a stop light," he said.

Josh would love to see more sports facilities in our region and wishes he could practice his love of ice hockey without having to travel. Josh's goals for the future include enjoying his new home with his family and seeing what opportunities present themselves.

Professional Development Tip of the Month: Stress Management

By Kat Thompson

Stress is a response to something happening in your life—a stressor. Stressors can act as motivators, but each of us has a point when the stressor starts to decrease our motivation or energy. It can be positive, like moving to a new house or starting a new job, or something nerve-racking, like a project or deadline. You don't have to let it overwhelm you. Here are tips to help you manage the stress in your life:

- **Overcome decision fatigue.** We make up to 35,000 decisions each day. This constant call on our energy is called "decision fatigue." To alleviate some of this, create a routine to decrease the number of little decisions. Schedule harder tasks for earlier in the day to keep yourself from feeling burnt out. Simplify your wardrobe, meal planning, apps on your phone, and daily schedule.



- **Your attitude is your steering wheel.** Having a positive outlook can make stressors seem manageable. So strike a power pose. Turn up your favorite music. Try to see the silver lining and know you'll get through whatever is causing stress.
- **Develop stress-relieving habits.** Create a list of what you can control and an action plan, giving yourself simple rewards as you accomplish tasks, and let go of things you can't control. *Attentional* physical activity helps your brain rest (turn off your music or tv while you exercise—focus on breathing and the world around you). Meditation can also help you stay mindful and centered.
- **Use tools to help in the moment.** Utilize breathing techniques to rebalance when the stress feels like it's taking over. Take a break or walk to remove yourself from a stressful situation. Trick your brain into calming down by visualizing a peaceful place. Calm your environment by engaging senses with herbal teas, candles or essential oils, meaningful photos or trinkets, soothing music, and/or worry stones.



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Lainey Pilewski feels lucky and honored to have been given the opportunity to work as Executive Director at the Venango Area Riding for the Handicapped Association (VARHA). She enjoys watching the program grow and looks forward to sharing the experience with the community.

In Venango County, Lainey enjoys spending her time outside working, hiking, or canoeing when it is not raining or snowing. Two of her favorite past times, since moving to Pennsylvania, include walking the bike trails and canoeing down the Allegheny River.

The people and the community are what Lainey loves most about working in Venango County. Though she hasn't been here long, she has been welcomed in by so many people who have been willing to help.

In the next five years, Lainey's goal is to become rooted into the community. She was heavily involved in the community in her hometown and would love to gain that sense of involvement here in Venango County.

She desires to help others, as they have helped her. Professionally, Lainey would love to grow into a better leader and role model for the younger generation.

Lainey earned her bachelor's degree in Science from Morehead State University in Kentucky. She grew up in Wellington, Kentucky, and moved to Pennsylvania in 2017 with her husband, who is originally from Oil City.

Lainey loves animals and feels lucky to have the opportunity to work in a place that surrounds her with animals all day, and then when she goes home, she has four big pups that love to play.

FLEX Member Highlight: Bobbie Jones



Congratulations Bobbie Jones on the opening of Trailasana Yoga Studio! It is located at 211 Seneca Street in Oil City and opened with a ribbon cutting on January 6. Trailasana offers a variety of classes and workshops for all skill levels.

"January was a busy month for the studio and I am humbled," Bobbie said. "We have three core values: community, kindness, and good deeds. Each night, I lock up the studio with a grateful heart because I feel we are holding true to these values. We (studio, clients, and community) are a community of kind people with good hearts. I cannot wait to see the relationships strengthen."

Bobbie discovered yoga when she was recommended to supplement ultra-running with a yoga practice. She quickly learned the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits and fell in love with the practice. She obtained her 200-hr Teacher Training from Broad Street Yoga in 2017.

Bobbie also works as Human Resources Manager at Webco and has an associate degree in Legal Business from Clarion University and a bachelor's degree in Labor Relations and Employment Studies from Penn State University. She has been involved with FLEX for more than five years and was a Young Professional of the Year nominee twice.

Check out Trailasana at trailasanayogastudio.com, and follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

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FLEX had a fun evening at our **Dinner & A Show** Social at the Barrow-Civic Little Theatre in January! Great job to the many young professionals in the show.



FLEX Leadership had a meet-up in January to discuss goals and ideas for the new year.

This year, we have some new officers. Leadership includes: Kat Thompson, president; Saxon Daugherty, VP/Secretary; Tessa Byham, Marketing/Community Partnerships; Laura Ordaz, Membership; Ashley Smith, Events/Fundraising; and Rachel Stiller, Events/Fundraising.



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:

- **Coffee Chat:** Friday, February 7 | 7:30 - 9 a.m. | Spilling the Beans, Oil City
- **Chamber Annual Dinner:** Wednesday, February 19 | 5 p.m. | Cross Creek, Titusville | \$30 for FLEX members | RSVP to tbyham@venangochamber.org
- **Membership Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, February 25 | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | Oil City Library (basement) | Pizza included!

Find more event details at facebook.com/VenangoFLEX or members.venangochamber.org/events

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Lainey Pilewski
Ashley Rayl

Interested in joining? Email Laura at laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu.

Connect with us:

