

VenangoWorks!

JANUARY 2021



RECOGNIZING OUR COMMUNITY HEROES

Lisa Winger Named Citizen of Year

See page 3

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CHAMBER EVENTS



Grow PA Virtual Gathering

January 14 | 1 p.m.

Visit members.venangochamber.org/events to register.
Grow PA is a statewide initiative to convene people & organizations throughout PA to establish a modern growth agenda.

Our Shift. Sustain. Succeed.
series has ended, but you can
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previous sessions at:



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Recognizing Community Heroes

Lisa Winger Named Citizen of the Year

This year may be different in many ways, but it has never been more important to continue the tradition of honoring the members of our community who selflessly give back.

Each Year, the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes the Citizen of the Year, and this year we are excited to announce our 2020 Citizen of the Year as Lisa Winger.

In her nomination, words to describe Lisa include “impeccable character,” “highly respected,” “leader,” and “selfless.”

“There is no one more deserving of the Citizen of the Year Award than Lisa,” said Heather Motter, teacher at Cranberry High School and friend of Lisa. “She works tirelessly for Venango County and dedicates herself to everything she does.”

Upon starting at her current job at AseraCare Hospice, Lisa was determined to bring their services to Venango County. In her position, she is known to bring compassion and comfort, as well as professional advice, to those she serves.

“Her stunning personality brightens the day of all those she encounters and she is a shining example of what makes our area so special,” said Scott Stahl, principal at Oil City High School. “One hopes to have someone like Lisa in their life. I cannot think of anymore

more selfless and deserving of such an honor.”

Lisa has facilitated an Alzheimer’s Support Group at the Oil City YWCA, where she used her experience to help those going through difficult times. She has also been the Venango County Toys for Tots Program Coordinator since 2014. The program did not exist in our county, so Lisa and her family created the campaign here.

The Oil City vs. Cancer fundraiser in 2019, held to benefit local residents battling cancer, was another way Lisa gave her time to help those in need. As a committee member, she reached out to businesses and solicited donations and sponsorships, going to the Kirtland Foundation.

Other ways Lisa has been involved with local organizations and events include serving as co-chairperson of the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, volunteer for White Out basketball games, member of both Zonta Club of

Oil City-Franklin and Oil City Rotary, and president of the Oil City VFW Post 464 Auxiliary.

Previously, Lisa was also a board member for the Oil City YMCA, treasurer for Tri-County Christian Women Stonecroft Ministry, and fitness instructor at the YMCA, as well as Clarion University.

“I started to volunteer because I wanted to help the community where my daughter was growing up,” said Lisa. “I am incredibly honored by this recognition, and want to be sure to thank the many people who work just as hard volunteering alongside me”

While we will not have the opportunity to gather for our Annual Dinner and Recognition Celebration in February, we will be sharing more about Lisa and her accomplishments in upcoming months, and she will be included as an honored guest at our 2022 Annual Dinner.

Continued on next page



On the Cover: Lisa Winger, the Venango Chamber’s 2020 Citizen of the Year



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Recognizing Community Heroes

Continued from page 3

The 2021 Annual Dinner and Recognition will look a bit different this year. There will not be a dinner. We're making a shift from our usual designations of Business and Partner of the Year, instead taking the opportunity to recognize **community heroes**.

We believe that the best approach to 2021 is one of gratitude and positive spirit.

We want to lift up and recognize those who have served us so well, making Venango County a better place to live, even in a pandemic. These are Venango's Heroes.

What is a hero? Someone who, in the face of danger, combats adversity through feats of ingenuity, courage, or strength, and those who perform great deeds or selfless acts for the common good.

Who is your local hero? It may be a teacher, a nurse or any frontline worker, but it also may be a neighbor, an employee (or employer), a small business owner, or a friend. Heroes can be individuals or whole organizations making a difference here, like a business or nonprofit.

We'll provide a few examples, but we need to hear from **you**. You can submit a name, a few sentences, and your hero's contact information. We'll also need a photo of them, so we'll want their permission. We'll be sharing our region's heroes in our newsletter, website, social media, and through the local media.

Support the Community Heroes campaign by submitting a nomination and/or through sponsorship.



COMMUNITY HEROES
of Venango County

LISA WINGER

Hospice Liaison at AseraCare Hospice,
Community Volunteer & Citizen of the Year

See the insert in this newsletter or visit venangoheroes.org for more details.

Alex Gunter Joins Gunter Financial Group



The Gunter Financial Group of Raymond James in Oil City is excited to welcome Alex Gunter to their team as a Financial Advisor. Alex moved back to the area in 2020 with his wife and son and looks forward to working with local residents and businesses.

Alex holds the Series 7 and 66 securities licenses, PA Life, and Health and Accident Insurance. At their practice, Alex, along with his father Dave Gunter, Senior Vice President, Investments, strives to create comprehensive wealth management plans designed to make the best use of clients wealth today and help ensure its endurance for future generations. They offer an array of personalized services, support, and guidance that can help make a positive difference in the pursuit of your financial goals.

Visit the *FLEX Your Ideas (FYI)* section of this month's newsletter for a professional development tip from Alex.

Gunter Financial Group of Raymond James

2 East Second St. Oil City, PA 16301
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Oil City Rotary Project: Be Kind. Sanitize.

The Oil City Rotary Club received a district grant to fund their latest community project: *Be Kind. Sanitize.*

They placed five heavy duty, automatic hand sanitizer units around Oil City to encourage the community to stay safe. The units will be a permanent fixture in these locations: Oil City YWCA, Oil City Library, City Hall, Venango Museum of Art Science & Industry, and The Pointe Drop-In Center. This is just another way Oil City Rotary is making a difference in the community. Thank you, Rotary!



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Rossbacher Continues to Invest in Region

Since coming to Venango County in 2013 through a partnership with the Urban-Seneca Agency in Cranberry, Rossbacher Insurance Group has been committed to positively impacting our community, and they have recently shown this through a second partnership with Williams Insurance Agency in Oil City.

After retiring in early 2020, Douglas Williams of Williams Insurance chose Rossbacher to acquire his business because of their dedication to our region and similar values to his.

"This partnership furthers our presence and longevity in Venango County," said J.T. Colwell, partner at Rossbacher. "We look forward to keeping everything going like they did, with a strong focus on service and taking good care of people."

Along with the values of Williams Insurance, team members Carol, Sharon, Susan, Joe, and Patrick remain, and Rossbacher is excited to have these knowledgeable, tenured employees on their team. In total, the staff at the Oil City office has 103 years of insurance experience.

Strong relationships and service are something Rossbacher plans to keep at the Oil City location, too.

"We will continue to build on the established deep relationships and practices that existed, while bringing new options from Rossbacher," said Ashley McCauley, Office Manager at the new Williams Agency office.

Not only has Rossbacher invested in our county through this acquisition, but they did so during a pandemic. Systems were in place, even before COVID-19, in which they had cloud-based computer and phone systems.



Team members of the Rossbacher Insurance - Williams Agency office in Oil City. From left to right: Sharon Feltenberger, Sue Fritz, Carol Gilhousen, Joe Triola, Ashley McCauley, and Patrick Pelletier

"We were all able to transition to remote working in one day," said J.T. "We moved that direction years ago for efficiency, but also from a disaster recovery standpoint. We feel we were well-positioned to respond to the challenges of COVID-19."

Although their team can assist clients from anywhere, they are excited for the refreshing downtown feel that their Oil City storefront brings and to be a part of the revitalization of downtown.

Clients can expect to be confident in Rossbacher's services. An annual review process is conducted and they have a quality control department that reviews the processing of all policy changes to ensure processing accuracy. They are also happy to meet with clients for education and review, for those who want to dive deeper.

"We stand behind our clients and help them feel empowered that they have good coverage for themselves and their loved ones," said J.T. "Insurance is complex and you have to have somebody you know and trust to guide you."

Rossbacher has stood by their core values since day one, and recently went through strategic planning with Svetz Consulting to ensure they are on the right path to serving their clients and community.

While they certainly stand out because of their expertise, the culture is something that is also inspirational, as evidenced with the Venango Chamber Business of the Year recognition in 2015. The business has a focus on enhancing the quality of life for their team.

"We are proud of maintaining a culture with a family-first focus," said J.T. "We want to be successful as a business, but also want everyone to be successful in their families. We try to always do the right thing for our clients AND team members."

A few friendly faces have joined Rossbacher recently, including Eric Thompson and Nick Gammello, and the business is always seeking people who would be a great fit. They started with just five team members and now have more than 25.

"Finding good people is the key to any business," said J.T. "And we have to thank Ashley for her help with this transition. She has been with our team for a few years and is an Oil City native, and this wouldn't have been possible without her."

The Rossbacher Insurance - Williams Agency office is at 6 State St. in Oil City. Staff is working remotely, but continue to offer P.S. (Personal Service). Give them a call at (814) 677-4095 or email team@teamrossbacher.com.



Legislative Update from Congressman Glenn Thompson—Defeating COVID



This year, COVID-19 has proven to be a relentless foe, and despite our best mitigation efforts, the vaccine has been the indicator we have all been waiting on to signal a true turn in the tide of this terrible virus.

The pandemic has undoubtedly rocked our country, putting a strain on our physical, mental, and financial health.

As time has passed, it has been easy to focus on the negative, but a recent achievement in the field of science and medicine has emerged as a light at the end of the tunnel.

In early December, we reached a truly incredible milestone in the fight against Coronavirus. The first COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer was administered, and a second vaccine from Moderna was quickly granted emergency authorization from the FDA and began distribution as well.

The timeline of vaccine development, made possible by Operation Warp Speed, is truly a modern medical marvel.

In the 1930s, Dr. Jonas Salk began work on a Polio vaccine at the University of Pittsburgh. It wasn't until 1953 that the vaccine was successfully tested.

Operation Warp Speed has helped shrink the vaccine timeline and knock down barriers and delays. To develop a safe, effective vaccine in under a year is a testament to the incredible scientific progress we have seen over the years, and our refusal to surrender to this terrible virus.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to all the dedicated scientists, doctors, medical professionals, and others who have helped make history.

The most recent Coronavirus relief package included \$30 billion for vaccination development and deployment, and as a former health care provider, I encourage everyone to secure a vaccination as they continue to be made available.

We will defeat this virus. We will restore our way of life, rebuild our economy, and renew the American dream.



Managing Your Energy

In August, our ZingTip focused on recognizing and creating good energy and why it's important. A workplace with good energy can cultivate great customer service, encourage employees to go above and beyond, and ultimately bring your business financial success.

While it's great to know WHY good energy is important, it is challenging to figure out HOW. Not only has it been a difficult year, but as we get into winter, we will have dreary days and many will experience the "winter blues." Sometimes getting back to basics and doing simple things can make a significant difference. If you have low energy, consider any of these ways to manage it:

- Go for a walk
- Grab a bite to eat or a drink
- Make a gratitude list
- Take a few deep breaths
- Turn on an upbeat song
- Light a candle or turn on an essential oil diffuser

We are all in charge of managing (and protecting) our own energy, but sometimes it doesn't hurt to help one another out. If you notice someone has low energy, bring them their favorite drink, suggest they get some fresh air, or provide an encouraging word. Having good energy can help us all and, in turn, positively impact our workplace and community as a whole.

Learn more: zingtrain.com/blog/bring-your-best-self-to-work



SHOW US YOUR TAKEOUT



#VenangoTakeout

With restaurants closed for dining, takeout may make all the difference in businesses reopening in 2021. Let's inspire each other by sharing photos of our takeout orders.

Be sure to include the hashtag #VenangoTakeout and we'll help share images on our Facebook and Instagram to give people ideas for their next takeout meal.

#VenangoTakeout

Grow PA Gathering Focused on Broadband—January 14

Join us virtually on January 14 at 1 p.m. for a Grow PA gathering as we discuss regional and statewide strategies for expanding broadband access. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the forefront the increasing need for high speed internet service to meet our educational, healthcare, and business needs. Venango Chamber President Susan Williams will lead an in-depth conversation with business, academic, and civic leaders, presenting real-time solutions to meet this critical infrastructure need.

Grow PA is a coalition of 70+ chambers of commerce across the Commonwealth working to advance an agenda focused around three keystones for growth:

- Modernizing all facets of our infrastructure
- Accelerating health care innovation
- Transforming post-secondary education



The initiative is aimed at advancing the most critical components of economic growth for the long-term to grow Pennsylvania's jobs, population, and economy.

Find the link to pre-register for the event at members.venangochamber.org/events. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing login credentials for the program.

Participants in this discussion will include:

Dana S. Kubiak, Senior Portfolio Advisor for F.N.B. Wealth Management; Donna Oberlander, PA State Representative; Sascha Meinrath, Palmer Chair in Telecommunications at Penn State; Jill Foys, Executive Director at the Northwest Commission; Albert "Chip" Abramovic, Venango County Commissioner; and Susan Williams, President at the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce (pictured below; left to right).



Leadership Venango Focuses on Community Caregiving

Understanding caregiving in our community was the focus of Leadership Venango in December. The class met virtually and was joined by Kathleen Ellwood and Joe Croskey, favorites of past classes, who led them in a discussion of diversity, privilege, and embracing difficult conversations. Joe and Kathleen encouraged the class to embrace the importance of seeing others' perspectives and realizing that everyone views their reality from a unique perspective.

In the afternoon, Kimberly Robertson from Poverty Solutions, Inc. led the group through an activity that



allowed them to see the struggles of poverty in a tangible way. She spoke about the hidden rules of class and economic status and helped the class understand things from the perspective of

those in under-resourced situations. The class examined their own privilege and shared their personal experiences.

This session is about allowing the class to be vulnerable and explore the viewpoint of those around them. Leadership Venango has moved to virtual classes and will meet in January to discuss Honorable Leadership.

ORLA Returns to Curbside

Oil City, Franklin, and Cooperstown libraries are closed to public access, but still provide resources to the community.

Dan Flaherty, executive director of the Oil Region Library Association overseeing the three libraries, has a list of tips for patrons to use library services, check out books, and more.

How can I choose what I want from the library?

Since browsing inside the library is not permitted, it can be difficult to know what you want to borrow, said Flaherty. Select materials for curbside by searching our online catalog to see what is available and which library has them.

If you have difficulty searching the catalog, call your library. "Staff will help find items. If you are unsure of what you want, we can even give recommendations based on what you like" said Flaherty.

How do I schedule a pickup?

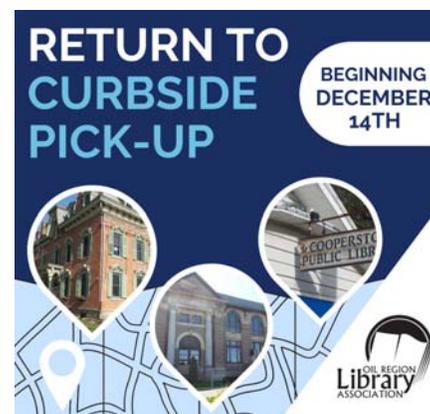
There are a couple of options. Once logged in to your online account, you can place holds on items. When it's available, you will receive an email or text prompting you to call to schedule a pick-up or the library will call you to schedule a pickup (depending on notification settings).

When logging in to your library account, your PIN is usually set to the last four digits of the phone number you provided. If you have difficulty logging in, call your local library for assistance.

How can I print, fax, copy or scan?

You can email your prints to print@oilregionlibraries.org and call the library. The library will confirm they received your prints and schedule a time for pick up.

For faxing, copying, and scanning, call to indicate which service you need. Staff will schedule a time with



you to stop outside. A staff member will meet you at your vehicle and pick up your documents to complete the service for you inside.

Flaherty said the three libraries' digital services and virtual programs are available 24/7 and provided at no cost. "We maintain robust digital resources accessible anywhere, including ebooks, audiobooks, movies, TV, and data bases," he said.

Email info@oilregionlibraries.org or call your library with questions. Learn more at oilregionlibraries.org.

Chamber Welcomes New Leadership

Jake Davis and Lisa Winger were approved as the newest members of the Venango Chamber board of directors at the February board meeting. Both have been appointed to fill open seats for one year terms, eligible to be included on the ballot for their first three year term in 2022.

Jake is a Partner at New York Life and Lisa is the Hospice Liaison for Aseracare Hospice.

Serving their first three year terms are David Snedden and Greg Plowman, and three board members have been seated for their second three year terms—Joyce Luton, Hope Lineman, and Fred Terwilliger.

The Chamber would like to thank Matt Caldwell for recently completing his second three-year term on the Chamber's board of directors, finishing as Chairman of the Board, and Rebecca Beach for also completing her second three-year term. Thank you, Matt and Rebecca, for your service to the Chamber community!



Tech Tip: Creating A Communication Plan

How often do you feel like you fall down a rabbit hole when it comes to marketing and communications? You decide to do a Facebook post, then realize you should update your website first, which leads to creating a graphic to put on your website, then you decide you should share the information with the newspaper through a press release, too. What starts as a simple social media post, can lead to hours of unorganized and unplanned work.

When you have news to share—whether it's an exciting announcement, upcoming event, or urgent message—having a communication strategy can help you share it in a more planned and efficient way.

At the Chamber, we have six steps we take/questions we consider before sharing our message, and we suggest trying them for your own business or organization:

- **Key Messages:** What is the main message you want to get across? Write 1-2 sentences to represent that message, and have all your team members become familiar with it.
- **Audience:** Who is your audience? Where does this audience access information?
- **Goals & Objectives:** What is your goal with the communication and what does success look like? Create SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound. Ex: Get 25 people to register by January 10 for the webinar
- **Strategy:** What approach will you take for getting this information out? Will you share it across online



platforms or maybe rely mostly on traditional direct marketing, like mailings and phone calls? It's important to consider your audience when deciding this.

- **Tactics:** This is where you take action. Most people start with tactics, but it's important to have an understanding of the first four steps beforehand. Create a list of specific tasks, and keep it updated. This can include: social media, email, website, newsletter, email, calls, flyers, traditional media, and events. When you're ready to carry out a plan, use this list as a resource to keep you on track.
- **Measurement:** This step is often skipped, but always make sure to see how your plan worked. Review metrics (Facebook insights, event attendees, etc) and consider how this is different than what your goals and objectives were.

It may seem time consuming to create a plan and follow it, but it can help keep your marketing and communications organized and intentional.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: THE PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

With Sara Rupp, Marketing Director

What services does Primary Health Network offer?

We provide family medicine, behavioral health, and access to telehealth services.

What is the story behind PHN?

Our Oil City Health center opened in January 2020, but we began as one small community health center site in the Shenango Valley in 1984, with a focus on providing the highest quality medical care. Since our inception, we have worked closely with local communities to implement a new model of healthcare—the Community Health Center.

What is a Community Health Center?

Community health centers provide access to quality care in medically underserved areas; however, their resilience and tenacity to serve their communities have transformed them into leaders in the healthcare industry. Community Health Centers have continuously proven to meet and exceed nationally accepted practice standards for treatment of chronic conditions all while receiving a 99% overall patient satisfaction rating. After over 35 years of service, PHN has grown to become the largest in PA and one of the largest in the nation.

What do you love most about being in Venango?

We asked various PHN team members and all mentioned their love of being able to serve the community and help those in need by providing necessary medical services.

Who is your ideal patient?

We provide quality primary care services and access to specialty care commensurate with the needs of the people in the communities we serve. Services are offered regardless of age, race, creed, sex, national origin, or ability to pay. Being a Community Health Center, we participate in most managed care plans, process most insurances, and offers a Sliding Fee Discount Scale to eligible patients.

What are your future plans?

We are committed to serving those in the Oil City community. We have continued to enhance access to care through telehealth and various technologies such as the MyPHN mobile app and patient portal. Our country's future healthcare system will present new challenges and opportunities for growth. PHN stands ready to meet needs of all residents in the communities we serve.



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Trailasana Yoga Studio Celebrates One Year

Running a business is never easy, and the first year of business for Bobbie Jones, owner of Trailasana Yoga Studio in Oil City, definitely brought challenges. The studio will be celebrating one year on January 6, and Bobbie reflected on the past year with us.

"I knew it was going to require time, energy and patience, but I was up for the challenge," Bobbie said. "I have learned to balance my career at Webco with the demands of owning a business, which was an adjustment and taught me the importance of time management."



Bobbie had the misconception that she would be spending most of her time teaching classes, but soon learned most of her time is spent behind the scenes in marketing, sales, education, finance, operations, and more.

"I spend countless hours outside the studio wearing many hats, and my first year has forced me to expand my skillset" she said.

In just one year, Bobbie has expanded by obtaining four additional certifications personally, offering virtual classes and wellness groups (including classes for Clarion University), and adding a boutique and online store for items like apparel and skin care. The studio was also awarded a grant from the Get on the Trail Contest, which will allow them to offer paddleboard yoga and stand up paddleboard classes.

In addition, the studio added five new instructors. "Each instructor has their own unique style and niche. I am proud of their heart, passion, and agility throughout this year," she said.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit less than three months after Trailasana opened and, although it was stressful and scary, Bobbie used it as an opportunity to expand on her skills and get creative, such as taking practices virtual and outside.

The studio had to close twice in 2020. "We chose to close as instructed by our Governor. Our mission is to create a safe and welcoming space. We are not holding true to our mission and core values if we chose to ignore mandates," she said. "To that end, COVID-19 taught us agility and deeper compassion regardless of our opinions on anything. Mindset is everything."

Bobbie is very excited for 2021, which will include paddle board yoga and a few new events. Join us in congratulating Trailasana Yoga Studio on one year of business! Learn more about the studio at trailasanayogastudio.com.



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Wanango Welcomes New GM

Wanango Country Club is excited to announce the addition of new General Manager Josh Archer. Josh is a native of Warren and is familiar with the hospitality industry. He spent most of his 20's training to be a chef, spending time at a top resort on Captiva Island. He then tried his hand as a restaurateur, opening a successful Inn in the Adirondacks and then a wild game steakhouse.



Josh and his wife recently decided to slow things down and found themselves back in the Warren area, and he is excited to be a part of the growth at the club. Wanango is often seen as a golf course, but offers other amenities like a swimming pool, pickleball courts, and bocce ball courts to be completed in the Spring. Josh says he really enjoys the "giant outdoor patio with panoramic views of the course, the ballroom's floor to ceiling fireplace from local stone, and the small-town hospitality."

Wanango is currently open for take-out and curbside delivery Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Josh reported that the Friday night Prime Rib special has been extremely popular, and they hope to get back to indoor dining when the mandates are lifted. Welcome to Venango County, Josh!

SHARE YOUR STORY



Laura Ordaz grew up in Dempseytown and, while in college at Slippery Rock, returned home for summers and holidays. She then lived in Morgantown, West Virginia, for grad school, but returned after graduation to live and work here.

She interned for many years at Komatsu Mining Corp., where she now works as an engineer. In our area, she's often found volunteering, exploring the outdoors, shopping at small businesses, attending yoga, or appreciating local art.

"Success for me is to find a wonderful job in a place where I can be close to my family and have outdoor recreation options, but also have a city within driving distance. Venango County offers everything that I am looking for in that vision," she said.

Learn more about Laura by visiting the Be Here testimonials page at: beherevenango.org/testimonials.

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NPRC Career Services Connects Employers to Local Talent



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Northern Pennsylvania Regional College (NPRC) offers career-focused programs and training that help meet the workforce needs of our regional industries. Many of NPRC's programs also include hands-on or field experiences to supplement coursework and give students real-life learning opportunities.

Working hand in hand with classroom learning, NPRC's new Career Services works to connect students with resources and support to assist them in preparing

for a career, finding a job that "fits" them, and becoming confident candidates.

Career Services at NPRC also offers Employer Resources through a system called College Central Network®.

By registering for a free account, this network gives employers a direct audience of current NPRC students and alumni, as well as other job seekers, and allows them to post open positions and review qualified applicants right in their account.

This is a part of a larger effort to highlight and retain Pennsylvania's diverse emerging job talent. NPRC looks to expand local connections and advance their high-tech, high-touch approach to make it easier for our region's employers to hire the workers they need to keep our economy strong.

For more information on registering for College Central Network®, interested employers can visit regionalcollegepa.org/career-services or contact NPRC at careerservices@rrcnpa.org.

Update Your Business Listing on the Chamber COVID-19 Page

In March 2020, we created a page on our site for business updates during the pandemic, such as updated hours, temporary closures, and new services like appointments, takeout or curbside.

As we enter 2021 and see more restrictions because of COVID-19, we encourage you to ensure your listing is updated, or add your listing if you haven't.

Just click the button that says "Submit Your Updates" at venangochamber.org/corona-updates-2020, and complete the short form with your updates.

Have questions? Contact us at (814) 676-8521 or tbyham@venangochamber.org.



Let us help you get the word out about your business changes during this difficult time. We are #VenangoStrong!

COVID-19 Financial Assistance Available for Individuals

With recent mandated closings, are you or your employees finding it difficult or nearly impossible to pay for utilities, rent, and food?



United Way of Venango County can help! The COVID - 19 Financial Assistance Fund is a one-time grant to be used for housing, utilities, food, and other areas upon approval.

Executive Director Will Price shares that funding for individuals working for restaurants and other recently mandated closed businesses are eligible for immediate consideration for funding, if employees have lost their jobs or had a reduction in hours.

Visit their site at unitedwayofvenangocounty.org/covid-19-relief-fund or call (814) 676-6545 for more details.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Are you planning an upcoming event, either virtual or in-person? Don't forget to share it to the Be Here Calendar of Events!

Find the calendar & complete the form at: beherevenango.org/events

Vitalant to Host Blood Drives in Region

Your blood donation is needed to save lives

COVID-19 put a halt to many things, but it hasn't halted the need for blood. Hospitals need blood to treat trauma and burn patients, premature infants, heart surgery patients, organ transplant recipients, and cancer patients, who require blood transfusions to recover, heal, and thrive.

In Western PA, nearly 600 blood drives were cancelled since April 1, due to the pandemic, and 19,000 anticipated blood donations were lost. Consider donating blood at an upcoming drive:

Monday, January 4 • 1-6 p.m. • Transit Building, Oil City

Wednesday, January 6 • 12 - 5 p.m. • Christ UM Church, Franklin

Monday, February 8 • 1-6 p.m. • Transit Building, Oil City

Thursday, February 25 • 1-7 p.m. • Cranberry Mall

Visit Vitalant.org or call 877-25-VITAL (877-258-4825) to save your spot. While all blood types are needed, there's an urgent need for type O blood donations.



All blood donations are tested for COVID-19 antibodies. This will let you know if you had COVID-19 in the past—even with no symptoms—and help identify convalescent plasma donors. Donors whose blood tests positive for antibodies can help a COVID-19 patient with their plasma, while their other blood components could help additional patients. For additional information about convalescent plasma please visit vitalant.org/COVIDRescueTeam.

The U.S. Surgeon General and FEMA declared blood, platelet and convalescent plasma donation essential activities during the pandemic. All Vitalant drives and donation centers follow strict protocols to ensure safety of donors, patients and staff, including temperatures checks, social distancing, face masks, and sanitizing.

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CHAMBER CHECKLIST

While we haven't been gathering in person, there continues to be ways for members to engage with the Chamber. Here are some ideas:

- Review your listing in the online membership directory (members.venangochamber.org/list)
- Contact us to create an account to update your own listing (chamber@venangochamber.org)
- Nominate an individual or organization as a Community Hero (venangoheroes.org)
- Add your job opening to the Be Here Job Board (beherevenango.org/jobs)

Have questions? Contact us at (814) 676-8521 or chamber@venangochamber.org

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Volume 9 | Issue 1 | January 2021

2021: The Year of Intentionality

For many of us, 2020 brought the opportunity to spend more time at home. You may have used this to get projects done, work on personal goals, strategize for your business, or enjoy some much-needed relaxation.

As we head into a new year, and eventually are able to spend more time out and about, it is easy to overwhelm ourselves with resolutions and things to do. We suggest that you take a step back and consider what you are doing because you feel like you *should*, versus what you could do to live more intentionally.

How often have you been “busy,” but at the same time you don’t feel like you are accomplishing much? It’s easy to fill our calendars with events, meetings, and volunteering, without being intentional about our

involvement. Busy is a term thrown around in both our personal and professional lives and often bragged about, but there is a difference between being busy and doing meaningful work.

“Busy is not a badge of honor. It only leads to greatness if you are working for a purpose and making progress towards goals that serve it,” said Brian de Haaff in an article on Aha! Blog.

We certainly encourage you to give your time and effort to others and for our community, but it’s okay to say no to sometimes, in order to make room for work you can do more purposefully.

Instead of making lists of ways to do more this year, we encourage you to focus on ways to be more intentional in 2021.

Meet the 2021 FLEX Officers



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President



SAXON DAUGHERTY
VP/Secretary



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Membership



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LYNDSEY KING
Events & Fundraising



ZOE OAKES
Events & Fundraising

Professional Development Tip: Setting Financial Goals

By Alex Gunter, Gunter Financial Group of Raymond James

As we enter into a new year, goals are on the minds of many. Alex Gunter with Raymond James has advice for creating financial goals that will impact your life for years to come.

If a young professional hasn't done any financial planning, where should they start?

It's never too late to start, however the earlier, the better. My advice would be to start planning for retirement now. A key component is contributing to an employer sponsored plan. A lot of these match your contributions up to a specified percentage. If your employer does not have a retirement plan, contact your trusted financial professional and discuss what options are available in regards to retirement planning.

Do you have any tips for keeping organized and tracking financial goals?

One thing that I have always done personally and I utilize as a starting point for client conversations is a simple budget. This will keep you organized in regards to income and bills, and can illustrate areas holding you back from achieving goals.

For instance, when looking at monthly expenditures, is there more coming out than going in? Are you noticing that you are "net-negative"? A budget plan can highlight weak areas and provide structure to correct bad habits. There are many budget outlines available, so trial and error may come into play here.

Long-term goals can be overwhelming. What are short-term goals to start with?

First, get your debt under control. If you are able to eliminate debt early, it will benefit you in the long-run.



Circle back to the previous question of developing a budget—this ties right in. Work into your monthly expenditures a plan to pay off debt (i.e. student loans, credit cards, etc.).

Second, begin saving for retirement. Make it less intimidating by breaking it down into smaller chunks. I relate this approach to weight loss. In a previous life, I was a personal trainer and one thing I dealt with was weight loss.

Overall, each client ran into the same problem—the big picture was overwhelming. I simply approached their goal in smaller increments.

For instance, if the goal was to lose 60 pounds in a year, I would break it down to a goal of losing 5 pounds per month, not so bad right? If that wasn't enough, you could break it down even further to a weekly goal.

Saving for financial goals is no different. If you have a goal of saving \$20,000 over three years, break it down to a monthly goal. \$20,000 over 36 months is about \$550 per month. Not so bad. If you need to break it down further, that's \$17 a day or one less lunch out from a restaurant. Simplifying goals can bring financial reassurance to a young individual who is starting their retirement planning journey or saving for a first large purchase.

How can an adviser assist in keeping financial goals?

Accountability. One imperative thing an adviser can do is keep the client accountable. Making sure that once developed, they are abiding by and sticking to the financial plan they agreed to. Life happens, but the more willing the client is to stay true to their financial plan, the better positioned they will be come retirement or time for that goal they have been working towards.

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Amy Mook was born and raised in Franklin and is the Program Coordinator at Bridge Builders Community Foundations.

She will complete her bachelor's degree in Genetics and Developmental Biology in May 2021. She plans to continue her education and begin a graduate program for a Master of Science in Genetic Counseling and Master of Public Health in Fall 2021.

After completing her degree, Amy hopes to work as a genetic counselor and find ways to still be involved with the local community. Her ultimate goal is to be a leader in providing telehealth services to rural areas, including Venango County. There are many geographical, economic, and racial disparities within healthcare, so she hopes to work within that space to improve access to modern medicine and advanced technologies.

Last summer, Amy served as an AmeriCorps member to assist with the COVID-19 response in our area. She is

very grateful to have had this opportunity to serve in a time of need.

Amy enjoys grabbing a cup of coffee and a bagel at Karma Coffee Company before heading into work or having dinner at Leonardo's. Her favorite thing to do in Venango County is to attend unique events, like Applefest, Light Up Night, and Taste of Franklin. Amy's hobbies include photography, baking, and reading.

In our area, Amy appreciates opportunities to connect with so many nonprofit leaders.

"They work tirelessly to provide vital programs and services to our area, so it has been very rewarding to assist them whenever possible," she said. "At the Community Foundation, I have been able to grow my knowledge of the community and facilitate conversations among local leaders."

Three YPs Win Grant Contest

Congratulations to Valerie Perry, Bobbie Jones, and Devin Gold, winners of the Get on the Trail Contest!

The contest, by the Oil Region Alliance, is for new or existing businesses in the Oil Region and concepts must demonstrate ways to improve recreational opportunities along the trails.



Valerie received \$5,000 for her "Oil Region Food Tours" plan. This will be a 2-3 hour experience in Franklin with visits to restaurants and an overview of local history and attractions.

Bobbie, owner of Trailasana Yoga Studio, received \$2,500 for a plan to provide another option for outdoor recreation in the form of Paddleboard Yoga.

Devin, owner of Allegheny River Rentals, received \$2,500 for a plan to purchase and maintain a fleet of E-Bicycles to start a rental program. Bicycles would first be loaned to Two Mile Run County Park for the 2021 mountain bike season.

We're looking forward to seeing these business plans come into fruition. Thank you Valerie, Bobbie, and Devin for your hard work to bring these recreational opportunities to our region!

Learn more about this contest at ORAGOT.com.



Dr. Kate Eckert
 drkeckert@gmail.com
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Congratulations to the winners of our Ugly Holiday Sweater Contest and thank you to everyone who entered and voted! We were able to collect many donations for our food drive and have fun while doing it. See below for contest winners & entries:



Most Hideous
Zack Sheffer



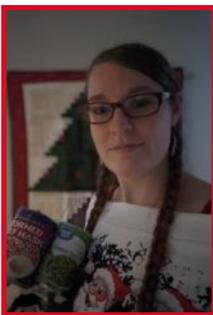
Most Festive
Kat Thompson



Most Likely to Belong to Your Grandma
Ashley Sheffer



Most Beautifully Tacky
Alicia Bidish



Left to right: Elizabeth Yale-Ivell, Adam Brozeski, Megan Weber, Shane O'Neil, Rachel Stiller, Sydney Herdle, Hannah Stiller

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:

Virtual Trivia: Thursday, January 21 • 7 p.m.

Watch on Facebook live and participate through the Kahoot app. Topic is "General Knowledge." Learn more on our [Facebook event](#).

CONNECT WITH US:



WELCOME NEW FLEX MEMBERS

Laura O'Neil

Interested in joining? Email our Membership Chair Laura Ordaz at laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu.

COMMUNITY HEROES

of Venango County

Hero: Someone who, in the face of danger, combats adversity through feats of ingenuity, courage, or strength, and those who perform great deeds or selfless acts for the common good.

Help us celebrate the "heroes" of Venango County!



WHO IS A VENANGO COUNTY HERO?

It may be a teacher, nurse, or any frontline worker, but it also may be a neighbor, employee (or employer), small business owner, or a friend. Heroes can be individuals, or organizations, like a business or nonprofit.

WHAT ARE NOMINATION REQUIREMENTS?

- The organization or individual is located in Venango County
- They have impacted our community within the last year in a positive way
- Nominations must be submitted, including contact information & a photo of the hero

Submit a nomination at:
VENANGOHEROES.ORG

See back for sponsorship opportunities

COMMUNITY HEROES

of Venango County

Sponsorship Opportunities

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\$2000

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Logo in Citizen of the Year video
Mention in all media advertising
Mention in all social media posts
Logo on VenangoHeroes.org
Logo in *VenangoWorks!* Newsletter

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\$1500

Mention in all media advertising
Mention in all social media posts
Logo on VenangoHeroes.org
Logo in *VenangoWorks!* Newsletter

SILVER

\$1000

Mention in all social media posts
Logo on VenangoHeroes.org
Logo in *VenangoWorks!* Newsletter

BRONZE

\$500

Logo on VenangoHeroes.org
Logo in *VenangoWorks!* Newsletter

SUPPORTER - \$100

Name on VenangoHeroes.org & in *VenangoWorks!* Newsletter

**This level is the typical cost of two Annual Dinner tickets*

Complete this form & return to the Venango Chamber
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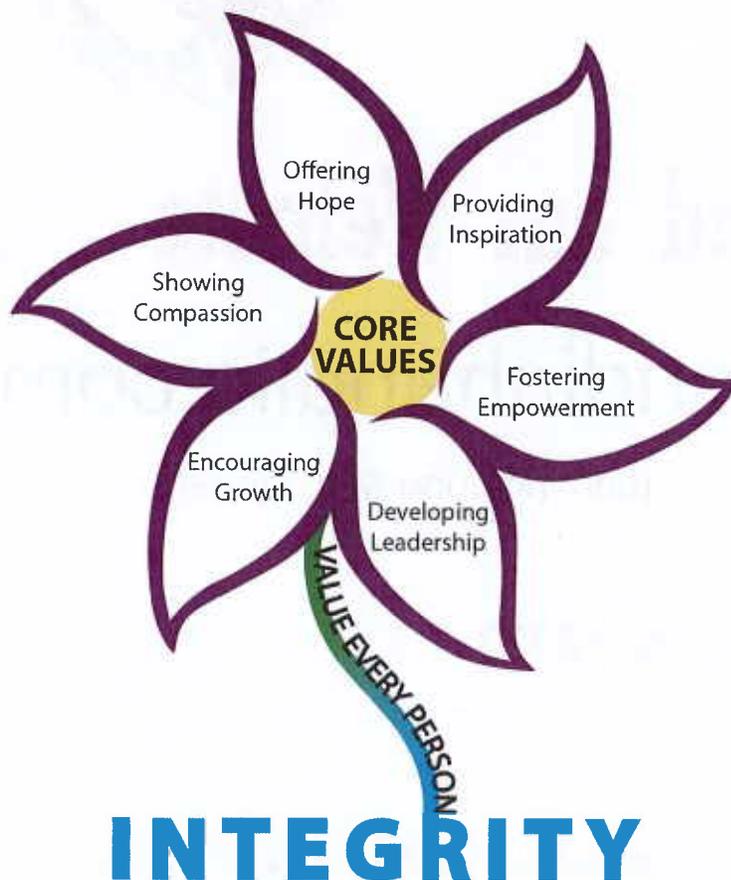
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We exist
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