

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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Students Contribute to Community

As this summer comes to an end, students will soon return to school. Many of them spent their break working or volunteering for local businesses or organizations, benefitting both the student and the community.

Lexi Henry is originally from Knox and attends Slippery Rock University, but spent her summer as an intern at the Venango Chamber. "I wasn't sure what to expect from this internship, but I've gained so much from my time here," she shared with us.

Lexi helped with everyday tasks, like answering phones, assisting visitors, and helping with the newsletter, but was also responsible for specific projects for the Oil Heritage Festival, including posting on Facebook, organizing the parade registrations, and collecting donations and putting together items for the basket raffle.

"This internship meshed well with my interests of planning and managing projects and also allowed me to be part of a team and help others," she said. "I've gained confidence, knowledge about the area, and learned many new computer skills, programs, and technologies."

We asked Emily Coxson, this year's Oil Heritage Festival Queen and incoming senior at Oil City High School, about her time at the festival:

"This experience taught me that our community is so giving, and anyone loves the chance to come together if they have the opportunity," she said.

"It allowed me to push myself out of my comfort zone and taught me to forget about being nervous and enjoy exactly where I was in that moment."

We also talked to Ian Hepler, who is a Cranberry High School graduate and

student at Penn State University. He worked with Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps this summer, and told us:

"My summer involvement taught me that every person, regardless of where they started, where they're headed, or where they are right now, is deserving of dignity and respect. I've enjoyed getting to meet so many people who have lived different experiences."

While FLEX is focused on young professionals around the ages of 21 to 40, we're excited to see younger people already contributing to our community.

If you get the chance, please thank students around you who are getting involved here, and encourage them to continue doing so. We wish the best of luck to those going back to school, and we hope to see you again next summer!



"The Future of Venango Area Business!"

Professional Development Tip: Keep On Learning

By Natalie Cubbon, Projects Coordinator for Oil Region Library Association

When you're consumed with work, it can be challenging to find the time to keep learning new things throughout your career. Sometimes it may not seem practical, but continuing to grow your skill set is incredibly important and can be introduced to your routine more easily than you might think!



earbuds while you work is an almost effortless way to keep learning. Audiobooks are just as easy to multitask with, as they're available on your mobile device (and provided for free through your local library!).

Networking

Going to community events, mixers, and workshops can be great opportunities to network with other professionals and businesses. Networking often leads to making connections locally and provides space for thoughtful conversation. Much of my continued learning comes from attending workshops and events at the Chamber, like Tech Talks!

"Why adapt? We've always done it this way."

The recent global pandemic has taught us that circumstances can change very rapidly. Many businesses and organizations have been forced to adapt to these changes, introducing new modes of outreach and service delivery.

When we adapt to changes, we often learn new things. We learn what works for our community and what doesn't. Staying stagnant in your practices can be a dangerous cycle that leads to being very close-minded. Creating new practices can open up opportunities for real growth.

Podcasts & Books

Listening to podcasts are a great way to learn new things without feeling overwhelmed. If you struggle with putting time aside to introduce yourself to new skills, techniques, and points of view, popping in some

Try Something You Think You May Fail At

Whether it's public speaking, creating a flyer, or giving a presentation, you'll never know whether you're going to be successful doing something until you try it!

If you're not the creative type, try to create something for your business or organization using a free, online designing platform like Canva. Canva allows you to create personalized and professional quality materials in a variety of formats, and even provides easy templates and tutorials for beginners! If you like to fade into the background, try putting yourself out there more. Film a video of yourself for your business or organization's social media platforms in order to promote or inform your audience about services. You'll learn more about yourself, as well as your audience when you take risks!



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Join FLEX at Chamber Events

You're invited to join us at upcoming Venango Chamber events! These include:

Foxburg Mixer: Wed, August 11 • 5-7 p.m. • Foxburg, PA

Steak Fry: Thursday, August 19 • 4-8 p.m. • Oil City Boat Club • \$30

Find more details & register at venangochamber.org/events.



Member Profile: Amariliz Sanchez



Amariliz Sanchez is a Clerk Typist at Clarion University - Venango. She was born in Caguas, Puerto Rico, and moved to The Bronx, NY, soon after. In 2014, she moved to Seneca, PA, and is now a proud homeowner in Oil City.

Amariliz received her Associates in Applied Sciences: Office Administration and Technology from Bronx Community College and is currently working towards her Bachelors of Science in Integrative Studies with a double major in Speech Communications and Sociology at Clarion University - Venango.

During her time working and studying there, she received the Clarion University Venango Campus Outstanding Staff Member of the Year Award, was the recipient of the W.E.B. Dubois Scholarship Award, and won the 2019 AFSCME Non-Instructional Staff Scholarship Award.

Amariliz plans to continue working towards completing her degree in Spring 2022 and to participate in Leadership Venango, the Venango Chamber's leadership program, in Fall 2021 to be further involved in the following year's community volunteer projects

In her free time, she enjoys cooking, dancing salsa and bachata, and getting to meet new people. Another hobby of her's is watching films on ancient civilizations and working on anything related to cultural diversity. Amariliz, her husband Somi, son Wesley, and daughter Catalina enjoy spending time together in the Venango area by going to family gatherings, going on outdoor adventures, attending barbecues and parties, and watching movies while eating local food.

She enjoys working here because of the community atmosphere. The faculty, staff, and students at Clarion University make her feel right at home. The people are what made her want to remain in this area and she knew that it was the best place to raise her family.

YPs Lead Local Food Tours

We shared a highlight of Valerie Perry and her new business *A Bite of History Food Tours* in April, but we're excited to announce that another young professional is now helping lead the tours—Saxon Daugherty, our FLEX Vice President/Secretary.

Valerie is a Cruise & Travel Director for Holland America Line and recently returned to sea after being home since the start of the pandemic. Saxon began leading the tours in July, which take place most Saturdays through October in Franklin.



Saxon also recently began a new job at The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) as safety press officer for the northwest region District 1.

Congratulations Saxon, and safe travels Valerie! Schedule your food tour at biteofhistory.com.

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FLEX had two great events in July! We distributed packages of local craft beer & had a small tasting for our Annual Bike 'n Brew, then served ice cream, cookies, and drinks for the Oil Heritage Ice Cream social. Thanks to everyone who volunteered and attended!



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.

August Events & Meetings:

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, August 10 • 12-1 p.m.

Events & Fundraising Committee: Monday, August 16 • 12-1 p.m.

Membership Committee: Friday, August 20 • 12-1 p.m.

Marketing/Community Partnerships Committee: Tues, August 24 • 12-1 p.m.

Contact us for meeting zoom links at flex@venangochamber.org, or find links in our Weekly Update email.

WELCOME NEW FLEX MEMBERS

Alyssa Riordan

Interested in joining?
Email the FLEX Membership Committee Chair Laura Ordaz at laura.ordaz@mining.komatsu or join online: VenangoFLEX.org.

CONNECT WITH US:

