

VenangoWorks!

DECEMBER 2021



**Small Business Drives
Economic Development**

See page 3

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kontaxesnutrition.com

Artist's Attic, LLC

Contact: *Holly Gibbons*
6945 US 322
Cranberry, PA 16319
(814) 428-3045
artistsatticllc@gmail.com
artistsatticllc.com

CHAMBER EVENTS

Save the Date: Chamber Annual Dinner • February 16, 2022



Mark your calendars for the Chamber's Annual Dinner—set for Wednesday, February 16 at Cross Creek Resort in Titusville. This event is where we celebrate the Citizen, Business, and Partner in Business of the Year, all of which will be announced soon.

Find Chamber event and registration information at:
venangochamber.org/events

Happy Holidays!

We hope you all enjoy the holidays with your family and friends. The Chamber office will be closed from December 24th through January 3rd.

We will be checking emails and voicemails, so you can still reach us if needed. See you next year!

Small Business Drives Economic Development

The holiday season presents an increased opportunity to promote small businesses, especially those who offer unique gifts. This year there is an increased focus on shopping local, to avoid the hazards of the challenged supply chain. The infusion of cash during special events and seasons can be sustaining to the smallest of entrepreneurs.

While there is often a community mindset that large employers are the lifeblood of a vibrant community, small business is really the heart of the ecosystem of successful economic development.

Those who work for large employers in the community, including those who provide infrastructure, local government, healthcare, education, and manufacturing, depend on small businesses to provide the day-to-day needs and wants of their employees. Small businesses also provide additional jobs and in fact, qualify as the largest employer by category.

Most people want to live in a community where they can easily access what they need, including food, household goods, car repair, etc. Community members also value the convenience of places to purchase discretionary goods and services. The quality of life offered by a community will be highly increased by accessibility to leisure activities, interesting places to eat, and fun places to shop.



The pressure has never been greater on small businesses to be at the top of their game. While many are opening with a skeleton crew of employees and often having to make the difficult choice to have reduced hours, customers' expectations are high. It is too often the case that we'll leave the area to do specialty shopping (or shop online), while complaining about the lack of choices locally.

Jessica Carroll, manager of the Franklin Retail Association remarks, "We have been blessed in our community by an incredible group of small businesses who truly champion each other and work together for the common good. Every purchase, shared post, kind word, and participation in an event is an investment in your local economy and in building a happier community. It is truly cyclical. Large businesses want vibrant communities to invest in. Vibrant communities come from small businesses."

The absolute best way to support the local economy is through investment in the creation and sustainability of local business. Those who open and operate small businesses are directly involved in economic and community development every day. Those who support them with their dollars are next in the chain of nourishing economic development. And while every person cannot support every business with spending, we can all support them with our words and our attitudes. By valuing these local investors and being good ambassadors for our business community, we play a part in attracting those larger employers and most importantly those most likely to make the decision to live and work here.

As we approach the holidays and a new year, join us in acknowledging the role each and everyone of us play in economic development and the future of our community.

Pictured on the cover: Nikki and Doug Volmrich, owners of Something Clever and Feldman's Jewelers, are in the heart of the Franklin retail district. Both have been dedicated volunteers and community champions.

Pictured above: Heidi Krug, Christine Manning, and Cheri Pierce shop at the Transit Arts Gallery & Gifts in downtown Oil City.

Chamber Board Members Finish Terms

The Venango Chamber would like to sincerely thank the following Board Members who will have completed their board service at the end of this year: Trenton Moulin of Bridge Builders Community Foundations, Jeannie Henry of Rossbacher Insurance, and Jake Hickman of Hickman Lumber and Allegheny Mountain Hardwood Flooring. ***Thank you Trenton, Jeannie & Jake!***



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NWPA Job Connect Welcomes Lisa Miller

NWPA Job Connect recently welcomed Lisa Miller as their new Executive Director.

Lisa most recently was a business strategy consultant and has also worked in the healthcare and higher education fields. She previously served on the NWPA Job Connect Board for two years where she was on the Youth Committee and served as Co-Chair of the Business Solutions Team.



Lisa will be making her way through the region to meet with people and make new connections. She can be reached at lmiller@nwpajobconnect.org. Welcome Lisa!

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Dave Klapec

Franklin Library Awarded TRL Grant

The Franklin Public Library has once again been awarded the Teen Reading Lounge grant through the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC). Teen Reading Lounge (TRL) is a nontraditional book club for teens ages 12-18.

TRL immerses them in the humanities as a way to build skills and traits that are vitally important for success in school and the workforce, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

The library is anticipating the first session of TRL to begin by early spring, with the main focus of the upcoming year highlighting cultural diversity. With Venango County being a fairly rural area, they aim to provide teens with a new perspective on the subject and present them with a chance to gain fresh cultural appreciation.

Daidre Green, from the Oil Region Library Association, says, "We are very fortunate to continue supplying our teens with these amazing opportunities provided to us by the generosity of the PHC!"

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Oil City Library Debuts New Event

Puzzle masters, get ready! The Oil City Library will be hosting a brand new event in 2022. The inaugural Puzzle Challenge will be held on Saturday, January 29th, 2022 at the Belles Lettres Club.



This challenge will see up to 20 teams of four in two separate divisions face off to complete a jigsaw puzzle in the quickest time. If no team has fully completed their jigsaw puzzle when time runs out, the team who has the most pieces put together will win.

Stay tuned for more information and registration details as the Puzzle Challenge approaches. The library is also seeking sponsors for this event. If you or your business is interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact Emily at the Oil City Library at ekluck@oilregionlibraries.org.

Hagan Welcomes Cullen Wester

Hagan Business Machines of Meadville would like to welcome Cullen Wester as their newest Managed Network Services (MNS) Helpdesk Technical Support Specialist.



Cullen is originally from Greenville, PA and has an Associate Degree in Specialized Technology from Laurel Technical Institute with a certification in CompTIA Network+.

Cullen's hobbies include technology, art, and gaming. His favorite part of working at Hagan so far is being around technology and getting to be in a hands-on role.

His main goal over the next several years is to continue his education in the field of security, as well as system administration. Cullen is currently working towards his Security+ certification, and plans to follow that up with a Cybersecurity Analyst certification.

Please welcome Cullen Wester to the Hagan team of dedicated Managed Network Services technicians!

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Education Update: Chamber Staff Participate in Mock Interviews

Over the last couple of weeks, the Chamber, along with many other volunteers from local businesses, participated in mock interviews for Cranberry and Titusville High Schools. Held both virtually and in-person, these interviews help students prepare for real-world experiences, as they apply for jobs, post-secondary education, or scholarships.

Our staff came away from interviews very hopeful that our schools are preparing students well. The students we had the chance to visit with seemed to have a good grasp of the employer expectations, and many already have solid work experience to list on their resumes. We recognize the need for more conversations with students about how they're experiencing work—what factors are lending to a positive experience and where they're facing challenges that we can help them navigate.

There's so much value as an organization in hearing firsthand what our students think about the world of work. So many times, we view work from our own perspective and years of our unique experience, but when we have these conversations, we can learn about



what has changed in the workplace and what hasn't. Predictability and good communication continue to be valued by all employees, but newer workers have other expectations that may be different than ours.

As we enter this holiday season and find ourselves surrounded by friends and family, we encourage you to talk with young people about their work lives.

You may gain a new perspective on how to be better employers and how to better prepare the emerging workforce.

It's vital for business leaders to be involved with the schools and look for more ways to collaborate on these valuable career experiences for students, but also consider where in your lives you may be able to have conversations with current and future members of the workforce.

If you're inspired to learn about more opportunities for educators and businesses to work together, please join our monthly education email that's sent out the 15th of each month (and please submit content by the 10th).

Subscribe at www.venangoready.org.

Storytelling Through the Business Review & Forecast



As we approach the publishing of The Derrick's 2022 Business Review and Forecast, exploring the story of your business' past, present and future is a timely thing to do.

The Derrick is finalizing details for the Business Review & Forecast, but it's never too early to start brainstorming how to share your story in this edition.

The chance to be included in this annual business edition is unique and free to the business. It provides

the perfect opportunity to review challenges and accomplishments of the past year, and a platform to share your story with the community.

It is also a great time and place to share what you look forward to in the next year.

While we are not yet certain of the deadline for your article to be submitted or the publishing date (usually in February), we'll keep you updated as we know more, but until then we'd love to help you in crafting your story. Contact us at chamber@venangochamber.org or (814) 676-8521.

Legislative Update from Commissioner Sam Breene—Preparing the County Budget



Among the many tasks pressing on businesses in December is preparing a budget for 2022. Venango County, under the leadership of our three elected commissioners, is one of the largest employers in the county, with a budget in excess of 60 million dollars.

Preparation and oversight of the annual budget is the primary responsibility of the commissioners. Chamber President Susan Williams sat down with Commissioner Sam Breene to talk about how the County is doing.

Sam explains that it is the responsibility of the commissioners to approve the budget, appropriate the funds, and oversee the execution of all County spending. Much of the County's spending is dictated by the state or by County code. Additionally, large portions of the budget are allocated to specific functions, such as human services and payroll/benefits of County staff. A portion of the budget is available for discretionary spending, but even that is largely committed to services including the Venango County prison, emergency services (including 911), and the administration of County row offices.

Breene is quick to give credit to Diona Brick, the County's Administrator of Finance and Management Services, for her role in advising and informing the commissioners on all fiscal matters. He is also willing to credit the legacy of good decision making by past commissioners in safeguarding the financial health of the County.

Sam shares that he is extremely confident in the present and future state of Venango County, considering that it holds zero debt, has a fully funded pension, and has not had a tax increase since 2013.

When pressed to reflect on his state of hopefulness for the County's future, Sam remarks: "We have broad goals for building reliable broadband and robust infrastructure, and continuing to be an area that attracts visitors, future businesses, and residents to our county. Our role as commissioners is to continue to shepherd all resources and navigate any barriers to the success of Venango County."



Knowing Names

When's the last time someone greeted you by your name? Or when someone you met only once remembered your name? This probably felt good, and this is something that can be translated to those in your workplace. Knowing names can make people feel like they matter and are respected, but it's often an uncommon practice in the work world.

While it may seem small, it should be seen as an essential skill of effective leadership. Learning names also gives you an opportunity to be a good example.

"When we screw up and forget someone's name, we can simply apologize, and ask again. You're modeling what it looks like to be a lifelong learner, a flexible, confident person who is not afraid to admit a mistake," said Ari Weinzweig of Zingerman's. "Name retention is a muscle you can exercise and, if you're serious about it, strengthen and improve."

Here are some practical tips for remembering names:

- **Pay attention:** Often our minds have already moved on while learning someone's name. Pay attention when they introduce themselves.
- **Repeat it back:** Embed it in your brain by saying: "Nice to meet you, Susan!"
- **Make sure you have it right:** They may prefer a shortened version, nickname, or different name altogether. Also, check your pronunciation.
- **Use it at each contact:** The more you say their name, the more it gets embedded in your head. Add their name when saying "hi!" in person, on the phone, or the beginning of an email.
- **Ask how it's spelled:** Hearing the spelling can help you visualize and remember it better.
- **Write it down:** Sometimes writing names down can better engrain them in your head, especially if you have a lot to remember. Keep a list, on paper or in your phone.

Find more from this topic at zingtrain.com/blog/the-seemingly-small-act-of-knowing-peoples-names-can-make-a-big-difference

Happy Holidays

from the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce



Thank you to every business, organization, community member, and volunteer who help make the holidays special in our region.

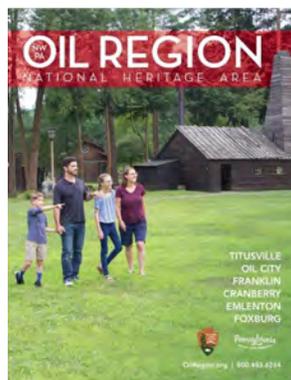


Oil Region Alliance Promotes Local Attractions

Every county in the state of Pennsylvania has a local Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), something that most community members are unaware of. The Oil Region Alliance (ORA) is Venango County's DMO.

ORA Communications and Tourism manager, Emily Altomare, produces content for social media, maintains OilRegion.org, develops print and digital advertising, and partners with fellow tourism marketing organizations to promote the Oil Region, both locally and, most importantly, to those beyond the region.

One of the biggest projects is the annual Oil Region Guide, a 52-page publication that features the area's



heritage, arts and culture, outdoor recreation opportunities, and hospitality amenities. This is the first year that the Guide is being produced completely in-house with help from the ORA's Tourism Promotion Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from area attractions, festival organizers, and other tourism stakeholders, including Venango Chamber President/CEO Susan Williams.

"The process of developing the Guide is valuable because the region works cooperatively to put the piece together," says Susan.

The new 2022 Oil Region Guide is expected to hit shelves in January.

Matric 50th Anniversary Celebration

December 6th marks the 50th anniversary of Matric Limited, an electronics contract manufacturer located in Seneca. To celebrate, Matric hosted an event in October, for its customers, suppliers, equipment vendors, past employees, friends, and families.

The event included a presentation featuring several community leaders, followed by a luncheon and tours of the facility. Close to 200 guests were in attendance.

For those who live in Venango County, many aren't even aware of Matric's existence. Who would think that a global leader in the electronics industry would have an 86,000 sq. ft. production facility in Northwestern PA? So, how did it end up here, and would it matter if it wasn't?

Fifty years ago, in 1971, Andy Maitland and Lee Richey, two electrical engineers turned Vo-Tech teachers, opened an electronics design and repair shop in a basement in Franklin. Fast forward a few years and 10,000 sq. ft. later, Matric was engineering and manufacturing

industrial controls for companies like Conair and Joy Mining, now Komatsu.

By the late '80s, Matric had close to 80 employees and had expanded to include a retail computer store with a training facility and online services. The sky was the limit on what they could do. But with Richey and Maitland approaching their fifties and their interests changing, it seemed like the perfect time to pass the baton.

Enter Rick Turner, a young entrepreneur from New York state looking to purchase an up-and-coming electronics business. One stipulation—the owners requested that the company stay in Venango County. Turner agreed.

By the mid-90s, Matric relocated to the Tippery Elementary School on Hill City Road in Seneca, with a newly renovated building and an additional 10,000 sq. ft of manufacturing space.

Since then, Turner has reinvested in the company with three more renovations, millions of dollars in equipment, and a second facility outside of Pittsburgh.



Not to mention that over the past 27 years, Matric and its employees have contributed close to \$500,000 to the United Way of Venango County, along with supporting many other local non-profits.

In addition, Matric is a huge supporter of the educational system, in which they often donate equipment and participate in internships and co-ops.

So, would it matter if Matric wasn't here? Absolutely.

What started as a side business has become a \$60 million company and the potential for continued growth and success.

Congratulations to Matric on their 50th anniversary. Here's to another 50 years!

UPMC Northwest Encourages Vaccines and Boosters

COVID-19 vaccine boosters help remind your body and reinforce the protection you have from earlier vaccination. Adults can now get a booster with more flexibility – meaning you can choose to mix between vaccines or match what you had before in many cases.

UPMC Northwest encourages patients with questions about their eligibility for a booster or the vaccine in general to contact their primary care physician, pediatrician or obstetrician. “If you have questions, turn to an expert,” UPMC Northwest President Brian Durniok said. “We are here to explain the data and science. We want to share the facts and give you accurate information so that you are empowered to make your own, informed decisions.”

UPMC | NORTHWEST



"Aside from the speakers, having opportunities to get to know classmates has been very valuable. There is a lot of influence in the room, and it's exciting to think of the opportunities that could come from getting to know the others."

- Jarred Heuer, Clarion County Economic Development Corporation

Tech Tip: Using Google Keep & Calendar (Google Apps Part 3)

This is our final tip in our Google Apps series, and we saved the best for last when it comes to keeping organized. Google Keep and Google Calendar are amazing tools to use at work and in your personal life.



If you're a note taker and list keeper, Google Keep can help you do that in an efficient and orderly way.

Tips for Google Keep:

- Make it visually appealing: Keep notes can be a variety of colors for specific topics (ex: blue for work, green for volunteering, red for personal). They recently added fun backgrounds, too. Customize in the note by adding checkboxes, bullet points, and drawing, and also drag and drop notes to different spots.
- Collaborate: Like Docs and other apps, add others to your notes. You can have a joint grocery list with family, create a task list for staff, work together on meeting notes, or share a favorite recipe. Everyone can add text and check items off.
- Set reminders: Stay on task with reminders in notes. Customize when the reminder sends and also set them by location. Make sure your notifications and location are turned on in your phone's settings.
- Search: By typing terms at the top, see where those words are in titles and content of notes, making it easy to find what you need. You can also label notes and search by those, or by colors, collaborators, or topic.
- Explore other features: Some other fun ways to use Keep include taking voice notes, adding images, and pinning notes.

Reminders in Google Keep are great, but when it comes to keeping your schedule organized, Google Calendar is the way to go.

Tips for Google Calendar:

- Create many calendars: At the Chamber, we have a shared calendar for meetings, vacations, events, etc. This is great for an office, but for other parts of your life, too. Maybe you have a calendar for work, a child's sports schedule, and birthdays. View all at once, or show one at a time.
- Think outside the box: Calendars are typically used for events and appointments, but there are other ways to use this app. If you post on social media, organize your content on a calendar before scheduling, or if you have tasks for certain days, add those to your calendar.
- Set notifications and repeat events: Notifications can be added, so you are reminded of happenings. In addition, set up events to repeat, whether it's once a week, month, year, or more specific.
- Share, invite & collaborate: No surprise—Google Calendar lets you share and collaborate! Share an entire calendar with someone, allowing them to make edits, or invite people to individual events, letting them add it to their calendar and allowing you to see RSVPs.
- Customize: There are numerous ways to customize your calendar. You can color coordinate and add location, zoom links, descriptions, and more.

Both these apps can be used across devices. You can create a list or event on your desktop, then access it on your phone, tablet, or laptop. If you're looking to stay on task and be more organized, check out Google Keep and Google Calendar—you won't regret it!

Find our other Google Apps Tech Tips by visiting venangochamber.org/blog and searching "google apps," and contact us if you have questions about using Google for your business.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Cottage Hill Fudge

With Jeannette Demmer Biltz, Owner

Tell us about your business.

We make fresh fudge on the premises using real cream and butter. It's sold by the piece or the pound and we have over 20 flavors! We also offer free local delivery on purchases of two pounds or more.

Why did you start this business?

We would go to Topsail Island in North Carolina every year and purchase delicious fudge. We inquired about making fudge and the owners helped us get started. In 2000, we opened the fudge shop and it was in operation until 2009. In 2019, after being closed for about 10 years, I reopened the shop. So many former customers would mention they wished I were still in business or I would get calls asking if I still sold fudge, so that made me decide to reopen.

What is your favorite part of owning a business?

I enjoy making the product, but I really enjoy the selling end. It gives me such pleasure when customers sample the fudge and show by their expression how they enjoy it.

What do you love most about working in Venango County?

I love the people and customers. So many come and buy fudge, but they like to stay a while and talk.

What is your favorite part of working within your own personal business?

I can manage my own time. Work as hard as I want to or need to and slack off a time or two.

What is one thing about your business that would surprise people?

I have alpacas! Some customers come in and say "Oh, you are the lady with the Alpacas! We stop when you are walking them and pet them." I guess Copper & Griffin are a good advertisement for the fudge shop.

What steps do you plan to take in the future to improve or further your business?

I think Oil City needs a Candy Shop. I am providing fudge, but I would love to work with someone who makes chocolates and offer them at my shop!



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Seven Springs Multi-Chamber Mixer

Kick off 2022 at Seven Springs Mountain Resort on January 7 for a joint collaboration of over 30 first-class Western PA organizations and business networking reception, organized by the Pittsburgh Business Exchange (PBEx).

Enjoy cocktails and light fare at this annual gathering of business professionals. Discounted room rates and lift tickets are available to all participants.



The Venango Chamber is excited to be partnering on this event. See the insert in this newsletter for more information and register at WinterKickoff2022.com.

American Red Cross ReadyRating Program

With the new year quickly approaching, it is a great time to revisit policies and procedures. One plan that tends to be overlooked is an Emergency Action Plan. We hope we won't need it, but it's better to have in place and never need, than to need and not have.

The American Red Cross ReadyRating program is a great tool to see how well you are prepared for disasters and emergencies. We recently did an initial assessment at the Chamber and it allowed us to see where we were already doing great, and where we need to make some improvements.

The assessment is quick and easy to complete—it only took us a few minutes. You are then given the chance to download a report of your initial assessment, a Next Steps report detailing what you should focus on next, and an Emergency Action Plan template you can use to create your own plan.

ReadyRating is free and members are then given a seal (pictured) that can be displayed on their website or in their business. The ReadyRating website is full of resources and training exercises.

The Chamber did a webinar about ReadyRating with Mary Rodgers from the American Red Cross in April, which can be viewed on our YouTube channel. If you've been wondering where to get started with emergency planning, ReadyRating is a great first step. Visit readyrating.org to sign up.



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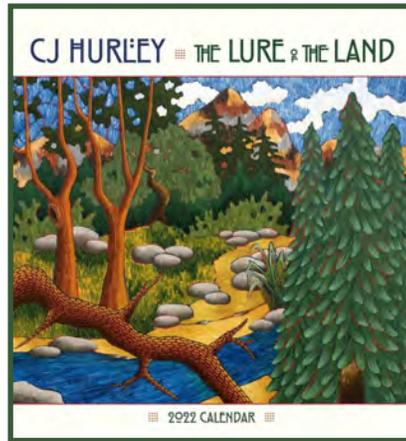
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Calendar Features Local Artist CJ Hurley

Pomegranate Publishing has made a 2022 Art Calendar featuring 12 of CJ Hurley's paintings. The calendar is titled "The Lure of The Land" and showcases the world that CJ paints rich in natural color and texture.

While many of his artworks show the interwoven relationship between natural and built environments, his landscapes, in particular, aim to portray the raw, unrefined environments he so admires. With the 12 scenes in this calendar—from a waterfall among the evergreens to a cliffside house in the mountains—CJ bears witness to the lure of the land.

Calendars and puzzles from CJ's art can be purchased at his studio in the National Transit Building at an Open Studio on December 18 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., or by appointment. They can also be purchased in many online book and gift shops or at pomegranate.com/collections/cj-hurley.



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SHARE YOUR STORY



Anne Bakker has spent years living in many different areas, but found a home in Venango County. "The people, community, location, and beauty of this area is like none other," she told us.

At Christ United Methodist Church, Anne is the Director of Outreach Ministries and Congregational Care,

where she assists people in the community who have needs and connects them to local resources.

She is an avid volunteer with numerous organizations, such as the Oil Region Library Association and Franklin Rotary, and shops and eats locally as much as possible.

Find Anne's full story on the Be Here testimonials page at: beherevenango.org/testimonials. You can share your story, too! Just click the "share your story" button at the bottom of the testimonials page.

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25th Anniversary

Small Ways to Help Small Businesses: Share Good Experiences

Every small business owner, nearly without exception, will confirm that the best way to drive business to them is through word of mouth marketing. This is most effective when done in person, through genuine testimonies of successful business experiences.

When a customer finds the product or service they need, where and when they need it, they may very well tell someone. If they have a unique or exceptional experience there is a better chance they will share, but too often only immediately following the encounter, or if asked.

If you want to know how to be a champion for small businesses and our local economy, making the effort to

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- & -
support local businesses

share positive experiences, from the small and subtle to the extraordinary, has more impact than you might imagine. And to multiply the impact, take it to social media.

Marketing/advertising is one of the biggest yet hardest to measure expenses of any business. Customers turned fans are invaluable!

So, next time you do business, leave a tip if appropriate, but go the extra mile by telling someone about the great service you received or turn that testimony into a post and make sure you tag the business.

Check back next month for more small ways to help small businesses, and remember to shop local!



MEET OUR BOARD Lisa Winger

Lisa Winger is an Oil City native and Senior Hospice Liaison for Aseracare Hospice, based in Waterford. She joined the Chamber Board of Directors in 2021.

Lisa says her work in hospice care allows her to “connect individuals who have been diagnosed with a terminal/end of life medical condition to the most exceptional hospice care team available in our area.” She says she feels blessed to have the opportunity to educate communities about end-of-life care and to empower patients and families to make decisions according to their wishes.

Lisa is a dedicated volunteer and community member. She is a member of Oil City Rotary and the Oil City-Franklin Zonta Club as well as the Oil City VFW 464 Auxiliary President, VFW Auxiliary District 19 Youth

Program Chairperson. She also volunteers for Venango County Toys for Tots and the Kirtland Cancer Foundation. Lisa’s service to her community was a large part of her being honored as the Venango Chamber’s Citizen of the Year in 2020.

In her free time, Lisa said she enjoys spending time with her amazing daughter, family, and friends as well as exercising and watching Steelers football games.

When asked why she is excited about serving on the Chamber board, Lisa said: “I want to be part of the solutions to engage our residents to be more involved with our community. I want to bring the spirit of Oil City back to my hometown.”

Thank you for your service on the Chamber board, Lisa!

DECEMBER 2021 COMMUNITY EVENTS

- 2 Elf the Musical**
December 2-12 | Barrow-Civic Theatre, Franklin
- 7 Healthy Holiday Cooking & Baking Class**
5 - 6:30 p.m. | God's Little Garden, Cranberry Mall
- 3 Oil City's Christmas Past**
December 3-5 | Downtown Oil City
- 11 Breakfast With Santa**
9 - 11 a.m. | The Allegheny Grille, Foxburg
- 7 FLEX Speaker Series**
5:30 - 7 p.m. | Virtual Event
- 21 Adagio Mobile Health Unit**
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Eat'n Park, Franklin

Find more event details & post your own event at: beherevenango.org/events

First Night Oil City Returns

Following a one year hiatus due to COVID-19, First Night ® Oil City will make a jubilant return on December 31st from 5:30 to 11 p.m. This fun-filled, family-oriented, non-alcoholic New Year's Eve festivity coordinated by the Oil City Arts Council will serve as the culminating event of our year-long celebration of Oil City's Sesquicentennial Celebration.



The gala First Night event will include two fireworks displays, an array of live entertainment at multiple venues about town, outdoor bonfires, beautiful ice sculptures, hat-making, a drum circle, and a variety of children's events which will include face-painting, crafting, clowns, balloon characters, and storytelling.

Admission requires the purchase of a First Night admission button. The button cost is \$10 and children 5 and under are admitted free of charge. Button sales will take place at the Oil City Public Library, Transit Arts Gallery & Gifts,

Karma Coffee Company, Venango Museum, and the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, visit facebook.com/FirstNightOilCity.



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Program Manager
Membership & Education Manager
Marketing Assistant

CHAMBER CHECKLIST

We'd love for you to engage with the Chamber and there are many ways to do so! 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)
- Shop small this holiday season... and all year round! Don't forget to leave a positive review.
- Add your job opening to the Be Here Job Board (beherevenango.org/jobs)
- Add your event to the Be Here Calendar (beherevenango.org/events)

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

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Volume 9 | Issue 12 | December 2021

Getting Involved In Bite-Sized Pieces

Another great FLEX Annual Meeting was held in November—an event we host annually to celebrate successes and look towards the next year. While the event was full of networking, free headshots, food and drink, and trivia, it was also a reminder of ways FLEX extends opportunities for young professionals to get involved, no matter how big or small the involvement.

We often refer to FLEX participation as “bite-sized pieces.” As young professionals, we are all busy growing in our careers, volunteering with other organizations, and/or raising families, and we know it is often hard to add another

commitment. Our goal is to offer ways for you to grow, without overextending yourself.

FLEX allows you to practice things in a low stakes environment, no matter your skills or interests. This can include networking, event planning, fundraising, getting sponsorships, running a meeting, writing an article, using technology, public speaking, and much more.

At the Annual Meeting, FLEX President Kat Thompson shared opportunities that have come her way after getting involved with FLEX.

“I’m not showing you this because I think I did anything special or great.

None of these opportunities would have come my way if it wasn’t for FLEX, which gave me credibility and a platform, and it all happened because I showed up. I want that for you, too.”

Showing up could be anything from being an officer and leading a committee, to assisting with just one event. It could be attending each social, or coming to your one favorite social each year.

We want to meet you where you are and help you find the right fit for you. As we enter into 2022, we encourage you to consider how FLEX can help you grow, both personally and professionally.

Welcome 2022 FLEX Leadership!



SAXON DAUGHERTY

President



LAURA ORDAZ

VP/Secretary



LYNDSEY KING

Events & Fundraising



IVY KUBERRY

Events & Fundraising



JOSLYN DECHANT

Membership



JESSICA WILSON

Marketing & Community Partnerships

Professional Development Tip: Finding A Great Book

By Joslyn Dechant, UPMC Health Plan (and avid reader)

The nights are getting longer, the air is getting colder, and the need for a cozy escape can be found in a book, but how do you pick the right one? Luckily, whether you're a bookworm or a casual reader, there are plenty of resources available to you.

Library Resources

One of the best resources is local libraries. If you choose to visit your library, there are often new books displayed prominently on shelves which can help narrow down your choices and keep you up to speed with the latest reading trends. If nothing catches your eye, ask a librarian for recommendations based on your interests.

If you prefer ebooks and audiobooks, the Oil Region Library Association has a great collection of free online resources including Overdrive and Libby, all you need is a library card. The Overdrive homepage provides rotating recommendations. As a Pennsylvania resident, you can maximize your Overdrive potential by getting a Philadelphia Free Library card online and accessing their catalogue as well. Overdrive and Libby are both available in the app store so you can always have a book with you.



Online Resources

Keeping with online book browsing and recommendations, some of my favorite places to seek out recommendations are on social media. There are entire YouTube and Instagram accounts run by book lovers who share books they've read. If you're looking for more of a social network all about books, try Goodreads, where you can track and rate books and see what books friends and family

are picking up. You can curate your own reading lists and search for those created by others. It's by far one of the best resources online for finding your next great read.

Bookstores

Bookstores are still my favorite way to find a book. Aside from browsing stacks, booksellers curate shelves of best sellers and new releases which is a great place to start. Often there are tables throughout the store featuring books by genre or books on sale. There's something for everyone and it helps narrow down options.

I can't write this article without a some recommendations of my own. See below and happy reading!

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Anxious People by Fredrik Backman
- Beartown by Fredrik Backman
- The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid
- The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab
- The Reading List by Sara Nisha Adams
- The Word is Murder by Anthony Horowitz
- Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly
- Ready Player One by Ernest Cline
- Goodbye, Vitamin by Rachel Khong
- 84, Charing Cross Road by Helene Hanff

WEBSITES:

- ORLA Overdrive - oilcreek.overdrive.com/
- Philadelphia Overdrive - freelibrary.overdrive.com
- Philadelphia Free Library Card - catalog.freelibrary.org/MyResearch/register
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Member Profile: Alyssa Riordan



Alyssa is the Assistant Manager at Northwest Bank in Cranberry, and also runs a jewelry business. She grew up in Crawford County, then moved to Venango County to attend Clarion University - Venango. She then transferred to the Main Campus and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Education, in which she is certified in Early Childhood K-4 Education and Library Science K-12.

Alyssa worked as the manager at Woodforest National Bank in Wal-Mart for almost eight years, before taking a position at Northwest in May 2021. She has really enjoyed banking and especially likes working for Northwest, where she looks forward to expanding her banking and lending skills and knowledge and seeing where it takes her with Northwest in the future.

"I love that Northwest is very community oriented. We get to know our personal and business customers and truly care about them and their well-being," she said.

Alyssa's business, Alyssa's Amazing Accessories, is located in the Cranberry Mall and she sells Paparazzi jewelry and accessories. She has enjoyed having a store and visiting other businesses in the mall and said: "I have loved the

mall since I was a kid and my grandma would bring me and my brother to spend the day there. I know it is not what it used to be, but many malls are not. There are quite a few small businesses in the mall right now and they really need the community's support."

Outside work, Alyssa has been a board member for Community Services of Venango County Inc. since 2016, where she also serves as a finance committee member and treasurer. She has really enjoyed volunteering for events that the agency puts on for our community.

She also likes spending time with her new puppy and making wreaths, and she and her husband visit a new waterfall each year for their anniversary. A passion of hers is shoes, purses, make-up, and jewelry, in which she has "an excessive amount of it," but it makes her happy.

Some of Alyssa's favorite spots in Venango County are Freedom Falls, Two Cousins Pizza, Movies at Cranberry, and China City, and she is looking forward to the Log Cabin being open for business again. She told us: "I encourage everyone to support small business, shop local, and bank local!"

Member Highlight: Megan Weber



FLEX Member Megan Weber was elected Mayor of Clintonville Borough in the recent election!

Megan is a lifelong resident of Clintonville and is excited to bring new ideas to the community and will take the concerns of citizens seriously and actively participate in Borough meetings. She has already

started the Clintonville Cat Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) Project and the Clintonville Buy Nothing Group.

She has been an active member of FLEX since 2016 and is a Service Planning Analyst at Komatsu Mining in Franklin. Megan graduated from Grove City college with a bachelor's degree in sociology and is working towards her MBA at Gannon University. She is also in the Leadership Venango Class of 2022, a member of Franklin Rotary, Grove City MOPS, Grove City Pet Rescue, and Zonta International, and serves as a Be Here Ambassador. Congratulations, Mayor Weber!

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We had a great FLEX Annual Meeting in November! Thanks to everyone who joined us as we celebrated successes in 2021 and look forward to new leadership and fun happenings in 2022.



Photos by: Sydney Herdle Photography & Multimedia

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.

December Events & Meetings:

Ugly Holiday Sweater Party: Friday, Dec. 3 • 6-10 p.m. • Trails to Ales II • Bring donations for Winnifred Tonkin Guild • Find more details on Facebook or at venangochamber.org/events

Events & Fundraising Committee: Monday, Dec. 6 • 12-1 p.m. • Zoom

Virtual Speaker Series: Tuesday, Dec. 7 • 5:30-7 p.m. • Topic: Balancing Commitments • Register to receive Zoom link at venangochamber.org/events

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 14 • 12-1 p.m. • Zoom

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Eric Bennett
Kelly Daugherty
Casey Schultz
Josh Tygert
Jessica Wilson

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2021

Barrow-Civic Theatre

1223 Liberty Street, Franklin, PA

(814) 437-3440

 /barrowcivictheatre

Main Stage



The Musical

Elf the Musical

Dec. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, & 11 at 7:30 p.m. | Dec. 5 & 12 at 2:00 p.m.

A title known the world over, Elf the Musical is the hilarious tale of Buddy, the accidental elf on a quest to find his true identity. This modern-day holiday classic will make everyone embrace their inner elf! After all, the best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear. Tickets \$14-20.



Christmas Tree Extravaganza

Lobby

November 20 - December 22

One of Franklin's best holiday traditions! Trees remain for viewing and voting Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through December 22.

The theatre will be closed from December 23 until January 2.

Happy Holidays!

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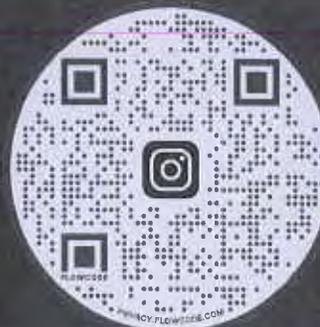
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Discounts at local participating restaurants (with show ticket)	✓	✓	✓	✓
10% concession discount at FCOA events	✓	✓	✓	✓
Invitation to special events and cast meet & greets		✓	✓	✓
Invitation to Members-Only Annual Dinner		✓	✓	✓
Recognition in FCOA Annual Report				✓
FCOA ticket vouchers (redeemable at any 2022 FCOA Mainstage production)		4	8	16

2022 MEMBERSHIP FORM

barrowtheatre.org/become-a-member

Please return your completed form to Barrow-Civic Theatre, PO Box 1089, Franklin, PA 16323.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- Would you like to be contacted to purchase a 2022 Season Subscription?
- Would you like to receive emails about news and happenings at the Barrow?

Complete the debit / credit card form below or enclose a check, payable to Barrow-Civic Theatre.

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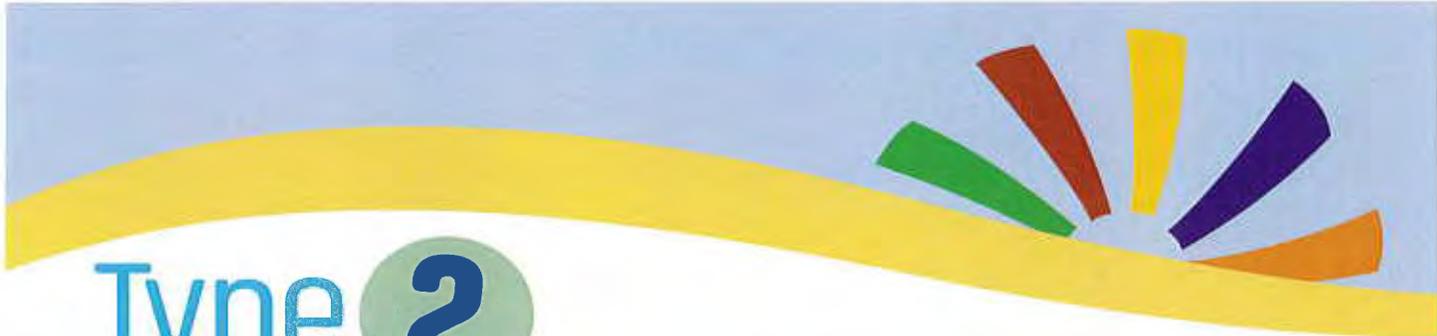
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The Barrow-Civic Theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. FCOA ticket vouchers and concession discounts are redeemable only for FCOA productions.

- Friend of the Barrow \$50-\$99
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Free Informational Session with Refreshments:

Wednesday, January 5th: 5pm to 6pm

***Please call to reserve your seat: 814-455-0995**

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