

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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The Many Ways to Network

When you hear the word “networking,” you may immediately picture a professional event where you make awkward small talk and hand out business cards. Networking, however, can be done in so many different ways.

One of our goals with FLEX is to help young professionals meet one another in a comfortable environment. While we do have some fancier events, like FLEX Presents, and we encourage FLEX members to attend Chamber mixers, there are plenty of opportunities for less formal networking.

FLEX socials are a great example. At our Summer Kick-Off in June, we sat around a campfire, played yard games, kayaked, and camped. On August 12 at our Coffee Chat, we’ll just be hanging out at Iron Furnace Coffee before work drinking coffee and eating pastries.

“I’m from this area, but recently moved home from college and appreciated the opportunity to connect with people this summer,” said Morgan Pifer, Venango Chamber Intern. “By attending Be Here and



FLEX events, I was able to network with so many people while having fun and not feeling pressured to act a certain way.”

Volunteering is another way to network without attending an actual “networking event.” Many connections were made in July while young professionals handed out treats at the Oil Heritage Ice Cream Social and filled beer packages at Bike ‘n Brew.

“At a normal social networking event you have to make a conversation from scratch with people that you don’t know, which can be difficult for an introvert,” said FLEX Member Zach Miller. “Volunteering is a better way for someone like myself because it gives a common activity to work on

or talk about rather than having to generate a conversation from scratch. It’s been nice meeting people in the area that I otherwise wouldn’t have.”

Networking doesn’t have to be intimidating. We encourage you to join us at an upcoming event or social, whether it’s more formal or casual. Here are some opportunities:

- FLEX Coffee Chat: Friday, August 12, 7-8AM, Iron Furnace Coffee
- Lee James Mixer: Thursday, August 4, 5-7PM, Office of State Rep. R. Lee James
- Foxburg Mixer: Wednesday, August 10, 5-7PM, Foxburg Businesses
- Venango Chamber Steak Fry: Thursday, August 18, 4PM, Oil City Boat Club
- Cranberry Festival: Saturday, September 17, Cranberry Mall
- FLEX Speaker Series: Tentatively planned for October

Have questions or want to learn more about these events? Contact us at flex@venangochamber.org or visit [venangochamber.org/events](https://www.venangochamber.org/events).



FLEX Feature:

IA Construction with Maggie Schwabenbauer

Most of us travel on paved roads each day, but do you know how much goes into creating these roads? FLEX Member Maggie Schwabenbauer shared some information with us on her employer IA Construction.

Tell us about IA Construction.

IA Construction Corporation is a paving company based out of Franklin. It is also a subsidiary of Barrett Industries which operates across Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York, and Barret is also a subsidiary of a national corporation called Colas Industries, based out of France. IA has five asphalt plants—four are located in PA and one is located in Corriganville, MD. We also operate four quarries throughout PA and NY.

What is your role at the company?

I am the Assistant Environmental Coordinator, which means I'm responsible for making sure all

environmental permits are in compliance and our employees are following the restrictions outlined within our permits. As the environmental coordinator, I get to travel to all IA locations regularly to make sure all paperwork is in order and our employees do not need any extra support. I have also started taking on more roles in the Quality Control Department of our company. This has allowed me to learn more about the testing of our materials.

What is your favorite part about working for IA Construction?

I love the flexibility it gives me to travel throughout the state and the country. I also enjoy being a member of a small company where everyone is looking out for one another. IA Construction prides itself on keeping our employees safe and producing high quality materials that support our community, and I am very proud to be part of their team.

What is surprising about the business?

Something that I think people would be surprised to learn about IA Construction is all of the planning and coordination that goes into creating the roads we travel every day. There is a lot of thought that goes into constructing a roadway and many moving parts.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

If you are interested in learning more, you can visit the sites below:

iaconstruction.com

barrettindustries.com

colasusa.com

You can also find us on Facebook (facebook.com/IAConstructionCorp) and LinkedIn (linkedin.com/company/ia-construction-corporation).

Thank you for sharing, Maggie!

FLEX FACEBOOK GROUP



If you're a FLEX member, you have access to our Facebook group! Here you can find:

- News or updates from members
- Invitations to events
- Opportunities to volunteer & much more!

Contact us if you haven't been added!

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Member Profile: Kessa Moore



Kessa Moore is the Communication Representative at Central Electric Cooperative, located in Parker, PA.

She grew up in Landisburg, PA, which is in Perry County, and went to Slippery Rock University, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Communication and a concentration in Public Relations.

Being a 2021 college grad, Kessa's most recent achievement was getting hired at Central Electric Cooperative. "They had many applicants and I'm very lucky to work for such a great organization," she told us.

A professional goal of Kessa's is to complete the Certified Cooperative Communicator program in the

next few years.

Her dog just had a litter of seven puppies, so her free time is currently spent taking care of them. I also occasionally get creative with my Cricut.

She's fairly new to the area, but has found some favorite spots already, like Trails to Ales Brewery, her "go-to" for a night out.

The outdoors are something Kessa has learned to love about our region. She likes to kayak and enjoys her scenic drive to work.

In addition, she's a big fan of the small town feel and close-knit work environment she gets to experience.

"I'm always looking for new places to try and things to see," Kessa told us. "Since I'm not from the area it's also nice meeting people!"

FLEX Update: New Promo Video

Have you noticed Devin Zagar of 7 Foot Productions at some of our recent FLEX events? He is gathering footage for a new video promoting our group.

Devin is a FLEX member and his business provides services like videography, photography, 3D tours, social media marketing, and website design.



We're excited to work with Devin and can't wait to see the video come together and show what FLEX is all about. If you have any questions or want to help with future FLEX promotional efforts, join our Marketing & Community Partnerships Committee meeting on Thursday, August 25th.

July Events: Thank You!



We had two successful events in July—Bike 'n Brew and the Ice Cream Social—both part of the Annual Oil Heritage Festival!

Huge thank you to everyone who contributed to these events, through volunteerism, sponsorship, donations, and attendance. Find more photos on the back page of this FYI newsletter or on our Facebook page.

West Park Rehab

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Event Photos: Bike 'n Brew & Ice Cream Social



August Events & Meetings:

Coffee Chat: Friday, August 12 • 7-8 a.m. • Iron Furnace Coffee, Franklin • Stop by for a few minutes or stay the whole time!

Events & Fundraising Committee: Tuesday, August 16 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Monday, August 22 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

Marketing Committee: Thursday, August 25 • 4:15 p.m. • Zoom

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kessa Moore

Interested in joining?
Email the FLEX Membership Committee Chair Joslyn Dechant at joslyn.dechant@gmail.com or join online: VenangoFLEX.org.

FLEX 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.

CONNECT WITH US: VenangoFLEX.org • flex@venangochamber.org

