

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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FLEX Leadership Reflects on Another Successful Year

FLEX started in 2007 and few could have imagined the growth we would see. "FLEX membership has grown by 28 members in 2022 and we plan to continue growing membership in 2023 by offering a variety of events and opportunities for young professionals in the community," said Joslyn Dechant, Membership Committee Chair.

Additionally, Joslyn said: "We hosted two successful Speaker Series, the first with Hind Karns from Wemanig Business Consulting about Foundations for Effective Communication and the second with Jeff Polley from Together We Can and Amariliz Sanchez regarding Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. As we look forward to offering more professional development opportunities in 2023, stay tuned for our announcement of our next Speaker Series."

No matter what your skill level or interest is, FLEX allows you to practice things in a low stakes environment. This can include networking, event planning, fundraising, getting sponsorships, running

a meeting, writing an article, using technology, public speaking, and much more.

According to Ivy Kuberry, past Chair and ongoing Chair of the Events & Fundraising Committee: "With the help of a great leadership team and wonderful committee members, I have become much more comfortable planning FLEX events in the community. My goal is to help young professionals in Venango County connect, strengthen relationships, and work with a fantastic team." Upon joining FLEX Leadership, Megan Sternagel will serve as Vice Chair of Events and Fundraising and is looking forward to collaborating with various businesses and young professionals in our community to promote networking. "I am looking

forward to assisting Ivy in all of our traditional upcoming events as part of the new leadership team. In the upcoming year I hope to bring at least a couple of new events to FLEX to promote our networking and leadership within our community."

Our region's Young Professional of the Year Stephanie Staub was honored along with a group of outstanding nominees who represent only a fraction of the region's successful young professionals (YP's).

Devin Zagar, Chair of the Marketing & Community Partnerships Committee, noted "Last year was a great success, and we are optimistic about the future. We're excited to connect with more young professionals in our community and foster relationships that will help us all grow and have a greater impact."

Become a part of FLEX in a new way this year! Whether you're coming to an event, joining one of our committees, or volunteering, we look forward to seeing you and growing alongside you.



"The Future of Venango Area Business!"



FLEX Feature: Northbridge Environmental with Sarah Merkel

Tell us about Northbridge Environmental.

Northbridge Environmental Management Consultants is headquartered in the Boston area, but has remote workers located all over the country (including me!). Northbridge has contracts with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state environmental agencies in about 20 states. We support EPA and state agencies in implementing the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs, which are financing programs to help cities and towns construct infrastructure for wastewater, drinking water, stormwater and other water quality projects.

What is your role at Northbridge?

I've been with Northbridge for 16 years and am a Senior Associate. My role includes traveling around the country to train EPA and state agency staff on how to run the State Revolving Fund programs. We also work directly with state agencies to help them run their infrastructure financing programs more efficiently and market them more effectively. We are always working on a wide variety of different projects, which keeps the job interesting.

What is your favorite part about working for this organization?

The job requires us to be knowledgeable in a wide variety of subject areas, including environmental regulations, engineering, construction, municipal finance, water quality science and federal policy. It is a very complex area to work in, which also makes it interesting and engaging. Everyone on my 6-person team has been with the company between 8-30 years; we all enjoy the work and enjoy working together.

What would surprise people about this organization?

My team used to work together in an office in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC, but everyone now works remotely in different parts of the country. We have no "home base" but are in constant contact through online chats and video calls, and see each other in person at events a few times each year.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about Northbridge?

I've been working for Northbridge remotely for 13 years, which allowed my husband and me to move back to Venango County. Back then it was more of a novelty to work remotely, but now it has become so common. There are so many opportunities to work for interesting companies or state and federal agencies while staying close to home -- we are not limited by geography anymore!

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Member Profile: Dana Peasley



Dana works remotely as a scientist and developer with the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder. She works closely with NOAA's Weather Prediction Center in College Park, MD to develop winter hazards forecast products for the National Weather Service.

She obtained her PhD in Meteorology and Atmospheric Science in 2020 from The Pennsylvania State University. She also received her M.S. and B.S. in Meteorology from the University in 2016 and 2014, respectively. She is an accomplished scientist in the areas of radar meteorology, precipitation microphysics, and the impacts of winter weather on surface transportation. She is an author on 9 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, and regularly attends national scientific conferences. Dana's goal is to continue to grow as a

research scientist and provide useful, accurate forecast products to forecasters and the public.

Originally from Connecticut, she lives in Franklin with her husband, Kyle Peasley, and their dog, Kino. In her free time, she enjoys powerlifting in their home gym, running in local 5K races for charity, and exploring all that Venango County has to offer. Dana said: "My favorite weekend activity is getting delicious food and coffee downtown, then hiking on one of the many trails nearby, or getting dinner and drinks at one of the many great local restaurants."

Dana says it can be challenging, yet rewarding, to work remotely. "I have to work extra hard outside of my job to make connections here. Luckily, there's always so many different ways to get involved with the community, and plenty of amazing businesses to support. The connections that I do make here are genuine, and it feels good knowing that my job ultimately benefits the people of Venango County, and all across the country."

FLEX Presents Nomination Forms Coming in February

FLEX Presents is an annual event that celebrates the achievements of local young professionals who contribute to their community through civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Like communities across the country, we recognize the value of retaining our talented and motivated young people. A key to this should be recognizing those who choose to work and volunteer here now! FLEX will be opening nominations in February.

We encourage you to pay careful attention to those "under 40" that you encounter each day and help us to celebrate our most valuable assets and the future of our region. Check next month's February FYI for more FLEX Presents nomination information.



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Event Photos: Ugly Holiday Sweater Party



We had a great time at this season's FLEX Ugly Sweater Party! Thank you FoxTales Pub for being such excellent hosts and thank you to everyone who brought donation drive items for the Saint Elizabeth Center in Oil City. Join us in January for our next social!



January Events & Meetings:

Dinner & Show Social: Saturday, January 14 • Bella Cucina & Barrow-Civic Theatre • Registration is full, email flex@venangochamber.org to be put on the waiting list!

Events & Fundraising Committee: Monday, January 16 • 5:30 p.m. • Zoom

FLEX Monthly Meeting: Monday, January 23 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

Marketing Committee: Thursday, January 5 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

FLEX Speaker Series - Local Government: Monday, January 30 • 5:30 p.m.
• Venango Campus, Rhodes Center • More information coming soon!

Find more event details on our Facebook page or in our Weekly Update email.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paige Schamberg
Britney Donato

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

