

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

## FYI

brought to you by the future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange

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## Summer is Here!

As we welcome summer, FLEX is gearing up to make this season not only enjoyable but also meaningful. With two exciting upcoming events, FLEX is inviting young professionals and community members alike to get involved.

Three ways to get involved:

1. **Attend and Experience** - Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere, connecting with fellow young professionals and community members. Expand your network, create lasting memories, and support the community.

2. **Spread the Word** - Be an advocate for FLEX. Share the excitement with your friends, family, and colleagues, inviting them to join in on the festivities. By spreading the word, you contribute to the growth and impact of these events, making them even more memorable.

3. **Volunteer and Give Back** - Volunteer opportunities offer a chance to contribute directly to the community while forging new connections and building your professional repertoire.

The first event on the summer calendar is the highly anticipated Bike n' Brew Saturday, July 15, at the Venango Chamber in Oil City.

Bike n' Brew includes a Biking Scavenger Hunt from 2 to 4 p.m. and a brew portion from 4 to 7 p.m. There are two ways to participate:

- Curbside Pickup (\$40): Pick up a package full of at least 8 craft beers from local breweries in a cooler tote

bag, along with fun swag from brewers and sponsors.

- VIP Ticket (\$50): Includes the package listed above PLUS a tasting of several different craft beers with Scierka's Tavern.

The second event on FLEX's summer lineup is the beloved Ice Cream Social, an integral part of the Oil Heritage Festival. Mark your calendars for Thursday, July 21, as Central Ave Plaza, adjacent to the Oil City Library, transforms into a hub of sweet indulgence. From 5 to 7 p.m., FLEX will be serving up ice cream and beverages to the community during the festivities.

To make these events truly unforgettable, FLEX encourages everyone to get involved in multiple ways. Whether you're an enthusiast of craft beer, a fan of ice cream, or simply looking for a way to contribute to your community, there are several avenues to engage and make a difference.

To get involved or to stay updated on FLEX's upcoming events, visit us at [venangoflex.org](http://venangoflex.org).



*"The Future of Venango Area Business!"*



# FLEX Feature:

## Black Bear Hemp Dispensary with Jesse Worsk

### Tell us about Black Bear Hemp Dispensary.

Black Bear Hemp Dispensary is a retail chain of stores located in Meadville, Grove City, and Clarion. We offer customers high quality hemp products and offer a true dispensary experience. We are able to assist a wide array of customers from those suffering with debilitating conditions, to people who could use support sleeping or dealing with anxiety, and even those who are looking to just enjoy the recreational side of the plant as well. Our staff is highly experienced in the medical marijuana industry and has applied the lessons learned from that industry to Black Bear.

### What is your role at Black Bear?

I am the CEO, I wear many hats from developing overall business strategy, to installing compliance practices, operational excellence initiatives, and of course lead janitor. Overall, "leading the team toward our mission of becoming the local trusted resource for cannabis products" is probably how I would best describe it.

### What is your favorite part about your job?

Building a business with my family, Carrie, my wife is my right hand with the business. Black Bear would not make it far without her. She leads all of our marketing and educational materials and is really the heart and soul of the team. We have been very blessed with great employees and even though are other employees are not related they definitely feel like part of the family.

### What would surprise people about Black Bear?

Black Bear has really been able to help out the community. The people who shop our stores are friends and neighbors that I have grown up around my entire life. Being able to help residents of Venango and surrounding counties feel better though the knowledge I have gained has been amazing. We have been able to improve many people's health. On top of that we donate hours each month volunteering and funds to support local charities when we can.

### Is there anything else you'd like to share about your business?

After nearly two years of being open for business, we still haven't found anywhere else you can get a THC slushie. Come visit us and try one!



## BLACK BEAR

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## Member Profile: Octavia Ice



Octavia Ice is the owner of Ice Cleaning and Painting. Originally from the Slippery Rock area, Octavia established her business in Butler County, but decided to move to Oil City and continue to grow the business here in Venango County.

Octavia has a bachelor's degree in history from Edinboro University as well as her cosmetology license. She says one of her proudest achievements was building her business solely by word of mouth.

Relocating a business has definitely had its ups and downs, Octavia says. She still commutes some days as it's hard to build clientele somewhere new. When

asked about future goals, she said, "I hope to develop my skills and become a more confident business owner, and eventually expand to having a few employees. As a single parent, I want to provide a work environment that's flexible and friendly toward working parents who often need more flexibility than many employers provide."

Her hobbies include collecting books, working on her home and spending time outdoors with her two daughters. She loves Venango County's waterways and wooded areas and says the best backpacking trip she and her daughter ever had was right here in Oil Creek State Park when her daughter was 7 years old. She loves the friendly, small town atmosphere of the area.

*Welcome to FLEX, Octavia!*

## Summer in Venango County

Summer is an exciting time in Venango County! The area is full of things to do, local restaurants are serving fresh food, the trails and waterways are populated, the parks and downtowns are full of beautiful landscaping, and there's an overall positive atmosphere.

A shocking comment that we often hear is: "there is nothing to do here."

With Be Here, our goal is to spread the word about ways to live, work, and play in our region, because many residents and visitors can be unaware of all that we have to offer. Our Play Here page is a great place to find information about things to do in our region.

Here you'll find links to:

Parks, Trails, Canoeing & Kayaking, Golfing, Theater, Art & Music, Museums & Societies, Libraries, Youth & Family Activities, Festival & Events and more!

We also have a community calendar of events, which anyone can add local events to. The Be Here calendar can be found at [beherevenango.org/events](http://beherevenango.org/events) and we also share events on social media and send an email out once a week.

We encourage you to take advantage of all there is to do this summer, and all year long, in Venango County!

(Make sure to take your Be Here sticker with you & share photos with #BeHereVenango)



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## Event Photos: Intern Coffee Chat at Iron Furnace



FLEX hosted a coffee chat for local interns at Iron Furnace on June 20. Ashley Smith, Be Here Program manager, then led the interns around downtown Franklin, touring the area and showing them spots of interest.

Thanks to everyone who attended!



## July Events & Meetings:

**Marketing Committee:** Thursday, July 6 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

**Bike n Brew:** Saturday, July 15 • 2 p.m. & 4 p.m. • Oil City

**Events & Fundraising Committee:** Monday, July 17 • 5:30 p.m. • Zoom

**Ice Cream Social:** Thursday, July 20 • 5 p.m. • Central Ave. Plaza, Oil City

**FLEX Monthly Meeting:** Monday, July 24 • 12 p.m. • Zoom

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

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Miranda Heller**

**Interested in joining?**

Email the FLEX Membership Committee Chair Joslyn Dechant at [joslyn.dechant@gmail.com](mailto:joslyn.dechant@gmail.com) or join online: [VenangoFLEX.org](https://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](https://VenangoFLEX.org) • [flex@venangochamber.org](mailto:flex@venangochamber.org)

