FLEX Your Ideas

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YOU'RE INVITED! FLEX & Friends Annual Celebration!

The FLEX Annual Meeting is just around the corner, and we couldn't be more excited to invite the community to join us for an evening of celebration, connection, and inspiration. This year's event will take place on Thursday, November 12, from 6-8 p.m. at the Belles Lettres Club in Oil City.

Each year, this gathering gives us the chance to reflect on the growth and accomplishments of the past year while also looking ahead to what's next. But it's not just about business, it's about building relationships, recognizing the hard work of our members, and opening the door for new people to get involved. This year, we're making the celebration bigger and better by welcoming all young adults in our community (ages 18 –40), whether or not you're already part of FLEX.

The FLEX & Friends Annual Celebration is truly designed for everyone, whether you're brand-new to the area, looking to meet new people, interested in supporting local young professionals, or simply curious about what FLEX is.

The evening kicks off at 6 p.m. with FREE professional headshots, a perfect opportunity to update your LinkedIn profile or polish up your company bio. Guests can enjoy delicious complimentary food and drinks on us.

FLEX leadership will share a look back at 2026, highlighting the events, fundraisers, and community projects that made this past year so memorable. We'll also take some time to look ahead with a sneak peek into 2027. Plus, attendees will have the chance to help shape FLEX's future by participating in our officer elections, a key part of keeping the organization strong and member-driven.

One of the highlights of the night will be the presentation of the FLEX Member Highlight Awards. These awards recognize outstanding young professionals who have gone above and beyond to make an impact in our community.

After the meeting wraps up, stick around for entertainment and trivia. Whether you're a trivia master or just in it for a good laugh, it's a great way to wind down the evening. And yes, there will be local prizes up for grabs.

The best part? The entire evening, headshots, food, drinks, program, and fun, is completely free to attend. Space is limited, so RSVPs are encouraged.

So, whether you're already a FLEX member or you've never even heard of us until now, consider this your invitation to join us. Come meet friends, build community, and see what FLEX is all about. Meet friends. Build community. Join FLEX.

THE OIL CITY ART SCENE: BY RAVEN NESPOR OF OBSCURE BIRD ARTS

Oil City is a special place for the emerging rural artist. Like any semi-recent college graduate, I thought I would have no luck finding work unless it was in a larger city. To my surprise, I have never been busier in my creative ventures than during my time in Oil City. There is a plethora of opportunities for artists to create, display, and sell their work here all year round.

The year is jam-packed with festivals and events that are always looking for artist participation (ARMA Fest, First Fridays, Oil City Night Market, Mural Fest, and Artist Sunday, to name a few.) It's impossible to look around and not see art: Woods and River and the Exchange are always displaying local work, Town Square is currently decorated with mural monoliths, and dedicated artist-run galleries and shops such as TAGG and the Fallen Shoppe are including more artists' work as time goes on.

With this influx of visibility, the artist community continues to grow– with artist-led groups like Oil City Art Syndicate, it's easier than ever to connect and find community with other creatives. I'm confident that nearly every Oil City resident knows an artist, whether that's a friend, a coworker, or a coffee shop regular– it's undeniable we've cultivated a community that's devoted to uplifting the local art scene.

My advice for any curious artist?

Visit Oil City. Take a stroll and find some art. Chances are, you'll bump into the artist along the way.

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNTITY: TRUNK OR TREAT

FLEX is getting ready for the Boo-Mile Trunk or Treat at Two Mile Run County Park on Friday, October 24, from 6–9 p. Setup at 5 p.

Want to help? There are a couple ways to get involved:

1. Donate candy for trick-or-treaters
2. Join us that evening to decroate and hand out goodies

One of the best ways we can show that young adults are here, involved, and invested in the Venango Area is by being visible at the community events that bring everyone together.

Scan the QR code to sign up and let us know how you'd like to help.

THE FRANKLIN MUSIC SCENE: BY RICHIE DICKSON FROM WEIRD FISH RECORDS

My store initially started as a pop-up shop at Iron Furnace Coffee in Franklin. Quickly gaining popularity, I realized the need for a store like this in town. After a few years and a couple of moves it finally came time to get my own full space. With the assistance of a few great organizations in the area including Small Business Jumpstart, SBDC, The McElhatten Foundation and my amazing family and friends, I made the decision to make the big move right next door.

In August Weird Fish Records moved into 1240 Liberty St in Franklin, right next to the coffee shop. With that move came a full remodel of the space. Revealing the old charm of the building. Showcasing the original metal ceiling tiles, brick wall, a walk-in safe and original columns.

Aside from the changes to the new space, I also greatly increased the current inventory and added a curated selection of new books, including fiction, non-fiction, manga, graphic novels, classics and new releases.

Experiencing the enjoyment my store has brought others has been one of the most rewarding things in my life. Building community around music and literature is so important. I have hosted numerous in-store listening parties for new albums and live music from local musicians and plan to continue doing so.

Franklin is growing in such positive way and I couldn't be happier to be a part of it.

How to Start, Grow & Support a Local Business

Have you ever thought about starting a business, growing something you've already built, or simply want to better support local entrepreneurs? This event is for you!

Join FLEX and the community on Wednesday, October 14, from 6–8 p.m. at Wildcat Mansion for START LOCAL speaker series, featuring a panel of local business owners and small business experts sharing real experiences, challenges, resources, and advice.

Meet the Panel: Dave Grams | Grams Gear, Nick Hess | Printer's Cabinet & Curiosities, Cheyenne Latshaw | PerkUP, and Amy Keth | Small Business Development Center

The evening includes networking and refreshments from 6–6:30 p.m., the panel and Q&A from 6:30–7:30 pm, and tours of Wildcat Mansion Carriage House and the new SIM Room from 7:30–8 pm.

Wildcat Mansion - 4849 US 322, Franklin PA 16323

Whether you're dreaming, starting, growing, or supporting, come connect with the people building businesses right here in our community. Join us!

FLEX Photos - Coffee Chat, Historical Society Mixer, Cranberry Fest, and MORE

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Events Committee Mtg: Wednesday, October 7 • Noon-1pm • Zoom

- Help FLEX plan our upcoming socials and end of year celebration!

Marketing Committee Mtg: Thursday, October 8 • Noon-1 p.m. • Zoom

- Help FLEX write articles for the newsletter, reach out to local young professional business owners, and take photos at events for social media posts.

Speaker Series: How to Start and Support a Business: Wednesday, Oct 14 • 6-8 p.m. • Wildcat Mansion, Franklin

All Seasons Temporary Mixer: Thursday, October 22 • 5-7 p.m. • Franklin

Boo-Mile Trunk or Treat: Friday, October 23 • 5-9 p.m. • Two Mile County Park

Monthly Meeting: Monday, October 26 • 6-7 pm • Zoom

Check out our Facebook page or contact us for meeting zoom invite at flex@venangochamber.org Link: 81256407148

Upcoming Events: FLEX & Friends Annual Celebration (Thur, Nov 12th 6-8p), Ugly Sweater Party (Thur, Dec 10th 6-8p)

FLEX IS GROWING — JOIN US!

Since originated, FLEX Young Professionals has connected with 326 members, with 25 new members so far in 2026 and a goal of 30 new members total this year. Help us meet our goal and grow our network! 💚 FLEX membership is open to anyone age 40 or under who lives or works in Venango County. Whether you're looking to network, get involved, grow professionally, or meet new people in the community, FLEX is for you.

For a $15 one-time fee, you can vote at meetings, step into leadership roles, and get event discounts. Plus, you'll receive a welcome packet to help you get started. Join today and get connected!

"The Future of Venango Area Business!"