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**LAFAVE NAMED INTERIM
STATE FAIR DIRECTOR AFTER
HENNESSEY DEPARTS**

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**MADISON COUNTY RURAL HEALTH
COUNCIL RECEIVES EXCELLUS GRANT**

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RENOVATIONS AT SELKIRK SHORES TO START THIS FALL

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CNYBJ CALENDAR:

March 4 List: Economic-Development Agencies

March 4 Special Report: North Country Business/Agri-Business

March 11 List: Coworking Spaces

March 11 Special Report: Energy/Environment/Sustainability

March 18 List: Architects

March 18 Special Report: CNY Construction Projects

March 25 List: Hotels

March 25 Special Report: Employee Benefits/HR/Insurance

2024 Book of Lists

April 1 List: Commercial Printers

April 1 Special Report: Manufacturing Directory

April 8 List: Staffing Firms

April 8 Special Report: Battle for Talent/Succession/Crystal Ball & CNY SME Awards

April 15 List: Commercial-Property Management Firms

April 15 Special Report: Small Business/Minority and Women-Owned Business Directory *NEW!*

April 22 List: Airports

April 22 Special Report: Employee Benefits/HR/Insurance/Generations

April 29 List: MBA Programs

April 29 Special Report: Banking & Credit Union Report


May 6 List: Technology Companies/Addiction Treatment Programs *NEW!*

May 6 Special Report: Health Care Quarterly

WRITERS/EDITORS:

 **Adam Rombel**
Editor-in-Chief
arombel@cnybj.com
315.579.3902

 **Eric Reinhardt**
Staff Writer
ereinhardt@cnybj.com
315.579.3915

 **Traci DeLore**
Staff Writer
tdelore@cnybj.com
315.579.3907

CNYBJ BRIEFS



The SRC Inc. corporate headquarters in Cicero.

PHOTO CAPTION: ZOEVADVERTISING.COM

SRC wins nearly \$44 million U.S. Army contract

CICERO — SRC Inc. was recently awarded a \$43.6 million cost-plus-fixed-fee contract from the U.S. Army for analysis, production, and process-support services.

Work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Feb. 14, 2029, according to a Feb. 5 contract announcement from the U.S. Department of Defense.

The department stipulated that bids for

this pact were solicited via the internet, with one (SRC's proposal) received. The Army Contracting Command, at the Detroit Arsenal in Michigan, is the contracting authority.

SRC is a Cicero-based not-for-profit research and development company that says it combines information, science, technology, and ingenuity to solve problems in the areas of defense, environment, and intelligence.

Mercy House receives \$75,000 grant for program continuation

ENDICOTT —The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation has awarded a \$75,000 grant to Mercy House of the Southern Tier for the continuance of the Mercy House Admissions Navigator Program.

The Admission Navigator Program allows Mercy House to continue to meet with palliative teams at hospitals, provide informational in-home visits, and help to raise awareness of Mercy House as a community care shelter for the terminally ill. This position also helps ensure that potential residents meet the guidelines to receive care at Mercy House, according to a press release announcing the award.

"We are grateful to the Mother Cabrini Foundation for awarding us this fourth grant," Mercy House Executive Director Linda Cerra said. "Having RN admission navigators on staff allows us to increase the number of people with terminal illnesses receiving end-of-life care."

This is the fourth year Mercy House received a grant from Mother Cabrini. The grant helps support program costs and salaries to expand Mercy House outreach efforts to a larger geographic region, increase screening of potential residents, and provides assistance with admissions.

"One of the foundation's biggest strengths is that we're community driven," Kathryn Ruscitto, the Mother Cabrini Health



Mercy House of the Southern Tier has received a \$75,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to continue an admissions-navigation program.

PHOTO CREDIT: MERCY HOUSE WEBSITE

Foundation's regional grants committee chair, said in a release. "By consistently engaging with our grantees and their communities and letting them take the lead in identifying their needs, our team is better able to pursue responsive grantmaking and understand the common challenges New York's nonprofits face. In doing so, we can better empower our tireless grantees to overcome obstacles, deliver for the needs of their communities, and build a more equitable New York."

Mercy House is a community care shelter for people with terminal illnesses who can no longer remain at home.

Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grants are targeted to specific needs. The foundation is a private, nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable New Yorkers.

First Source FCU names new chair of board of directors

NEW HARTFORD — Raymond L. Philo was appointed chairman of the First Source Federal Credit Union (FCU) board of directors, the nonprofit financial institution recently announced.

Philo is a professor of practice, criminal justice at Utica University, and has been a First Source FCU volunteer since 2013 and board member since 2020. Philo succeeds Robert Jubenville, who will continue to hold a board-member position at the credit union.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed serving on the First Source board since my start over a decade ago," Philo said in a Feb. 12 news release from the credit union. "The board of directors sup-

ports the organizations and champions exemplary service to our members and the communities we serve. I am honored that my fellow board members feel I am ready to take the next step as a leader in this role."

"I have had the pleasure of serving on the First Source board since 2003, holding various positions including board chairman for 10 years," Jubenville, a retired Mohawk Valley Community College dean emeritus of life and health sciences, said. "I look forward to continuing my service with the credit union as a board member under Ray's leadership."

First Source FCU, a full-service credit union, offers savings and loan solutions to more than 60,000 members. It has branch locations in New Hartford, Washington Mills, South Utica, North Utica, Herkimer, and Rome.



Philo

Tompkins Financial Advisors adds new wealth advisor to its team

ITHACA — Tompkins Financial Advisors, a unit of Tompkins Financial Corp. (NYSE: TMP), has added Kevin Joy to its team as a wealth advisor.

Joy comes to Tompkins with more than 14 years of experience in the financial-services industry and will help the company build on the strong relationships it holds with existing and potential clients while working to exceed clients' unique goals, the firm contended in a release.



Joy

Throughout his career, Joy has served as VP of investor relations for institutions such as HPS Investment Partners and Antares Capital in New York City. He has led both firms' largest institutional investors, including clients with billion-dollar global portfolios, maintaining strong relationships and acting as a specialist for billion-dollar global public credit strategies. Joy also served as a leader and mentor for junior team members on the investor relations teams. He earned his bachelor's degree from the School of Management at Binghamton University, with a concentration in finance.

"Kevin's appointment is a testament to our commitment to excellence and our excitement for the future at Tompkins Financial Advisors," Jennifer Green, senior VP and managing director for the firm's Central New York region, said in the release. "We eagerly anticipate the fresh perspectives and contributions he will bring to our dynamic team, and look forward to the support he brings to our clients."

Joy currently resides in the Syracuse area with his wife and their young children.

Tompkins Financial Advisors is the wealth-management arm of Tompkins Financial, an Ithaca-based financial-services holding company. With more than a century of experience, Tompkins Financial Advisors provides customized wealth-management strategies to clients across upstate New York and parts of Pennsylvania.

Lockheed Martin's Salina plant wins \$43M Navy contract

SALINA — The Lockheed Martin Corp. (NYSE: LMT) plant just north of Syracuse has been awarded a \$43.35 million contract order from the U.S. Navy for design and qualification testing of the AN/submarine electronic-warfare equipment.

The cost-plus-incentive-fee delivery order includes options that if exercised will bring the value of the delivery order to \$111.7 million. Work will be performed in the town of Salina, and is expected to be completed by February 2029, according to a Feb. 14 contract announcement from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Fiscal 2024 research, test, development, and engineering (Navy) funds of \$9.96 million (50 percent); fiscal 2022 shipbuilding and conversion (Navy) funds totaling \$9.75 million (49 percent); and fiscal 2024 other procurement (Navy) funds of \$136,000 (1 percent) will be obligated at time of award and will not expire at the end of the current fiscal year, per the contract announcement. The Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington, D.C. is the contracting authority.

Business leaders report improved optimism for 2024

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Banking-industry disruptions, geopolitical risks, and sustained microeconomic challenges continued to plague the business world in 2023, but small and mid-sized business owners, including those in Central New York, have a more optimistic outlook heading into 2024 than in years past.

That's according to JPMorgan Chase's 2024 Business Leaders Outlook survey, released on Jan. 4.



Huhtala

"Business leaders are pulling back from their previous predictions of recession," John Huhtala, market executive for middle-market banking and specialized industries at JPMorgan Chase in Syracuse, says in an interview.

Following a year of economic growth that was better than expected, 40 percent of midsize-business leaders and 51 percent of small-business leaders are antici-

pating a recession this year. That's down from 65 percent and 61 percent, respectively, last year. Additionally, 38 percent of midsize-business leaders and 30 percent of small-business leaders said they don't expect a recession.

"The optimism is still sort of historically low, but things overall seem to be improving," Huhtala says.

Things are still a bit tough out there, he notes, including in Central New York. While rate reductions are expected this year, interest rates are still relatively high. Labor shortages are still an issue, with 54 percent of midsize businesses citing labor-related issues as a challenge. Businesses, however, are adapting, Huhtala says.

For some businesses, automation helps close the labor gap. Others are looking into artificial intelligence to see where it can make business more efficient. "Businesses continue to either adopt or consider to adopt AI," he notes. Among survey respondents, 46 percent of midsize-business leaders are currently using or considering adopting AI, while 46 percent of small-business leaders indicating

they are likely to add some AI.

Some businesses have had to pass rising inflation costs on to customers, finding the right balance between covering costs and not driving customers away. According to the survey, 35 percent of small-business leaders cite inflation as one of their most significant challenges, with 90 percent indicating inflation has had some impact on their expenses.

Many midsize businesses are introducing new products and services and prioritizing the most profitable products, Huhtala notes. Others are looking into strategic partnerships and investments.

Particularly in Central New York, he has seen a lot of strategic acquisitions to drive growth.

"Companies have been strategic and navigated some challenges," he adds.

But above all the concerns, Huhtala says what he has most noticed in the area is a lot more optimism for what's on the horizon.

With Micron and other investments on the way in the greater Syracuse areas, business leaders are a lot more positive

about what the future holds, he says.

According to the survey, midsize-business leaders are almost evenly split on their outlook on the national economy with 31 percent optimistic, 34 percent pessimistic, and 36 percent neutral. Among small-business leaders, 43 percent are optimistic, 25 percent neutral, and 32 percent pessimistic.

Regarding the local/regional economy, 44 percent of midsize-business leaders are optimistic while 46 percent of small-business leaders are confident.

When it comes to their own outlook, 67 percent of midsize-business leaders and 69 percent of small-business leaders are optimistic about their organizations.

JPMorgan Chase's Business Leaders Outlook survey was conducted online from Nov. 9-20, 2023, for small businesses (those generating annual revenue between \$100,000 and \$20 million) and from Nov. 16 through Dec. 7, 2023, for midsize businesses (those producing annual revenue between \$20 million and \$500 million). In total, 1,820 business leaders in various industries participated. ■

Renovations at Selkirk Shores to start this fall

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

RICHLAND — The state is targeting this September to begin a \$9 million improvement project at the campgrounds and facilities at Selkirk Shores State Park on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario.

The project is part of an ongoing reinvestment in the New York State Park system as it celebrates its 100th anniversary, the office of Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Feb. 15.

Selkirk Shores State Park is located at 7101 State Route 3 in the town of Richland in Oswego County.

The campgrounds and cabins at Selkirk Shores will close after Labor Day and remain closed for the 2025 camping season. During the campground closure, the state says campers can vacation at nearby state parks such as Southwick Beach, Fair Haven Beach, Westcott Beach, Whetstone Golf, Burnham Point, and Cedar Point State Park.

Selkirk Shores will remain open for day use throughout the project, Hochul's office noted in a news release.

"Selkirk Shores State Park has been cherished by generations of New Yorkers, and we take great

pride in stewarding its legacy into the next century of Parks," Erik Kulleseid, commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, said in the release. "These renovations represent another significant stride in our multiyear initiative to rejuvenate our parks, operate sustainably, and most crucially, better serve our visitors. We look forward to celebrating our centennial season with our Selkirk Shores campers and welcoming them back to a rejuvenated park in 2026."

Planned improvements

Project plans include the replacement of the park office, and the entrance and exit pattern redesigned for "improved traffic flow and easier check-in and check-out," per Hochul's office.

Crews will also replace the two existing camping restrooms with larger, more accessible facilities "located more centrally on the loops." The new facilities will include accessible showers, baby changing stations, and dishwashing stations.

The new buildings will be more energy efficient than those they are replacing, which is "in keeping with State Parks' mission to reduce the environmental impact of its operations," the governor's office noted.



A rendering of the new office at Selkirk Shores State Park, which will be part of the upcoming \$9 million renovation project at the facility that will begin in September. The project will mean the closure of the campgrounds at Selkirk Shores through the 2025 camping season, the office of Gov. Kathy Hochul said.

PHOTO CREDIT: NY STATE PARKS FLICKR

Enhancements to the campground at Selkirk Shores will be central to the project. They include the installation of crushed stone or pavement at each of the 130 campsites, improving storm-water drainage, adding more water hydrants to the campground loops, and installing new security features.

Crews will also work on accessibility upgrades on the park's 24 cabins, along with improvements to their electrical wiring, masonry, and roofs.

Other improvements will include replacing the park sign and constructing a new playground. Structures built during the Great Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps will be repaired and preserved, Hochul's office noted.

Crews will renovate the two day-use restroom buildings and

make them more accessible, with the replacement of deteriorated logs and the repair of the roof. Plans also call for the "total restoration and preservation to original form and fabric" of the large lakeside pavilion, which is used for picnics, weddings, nature programs and events.

That part of the project involves replacement of sections of deteriorated logs, staining the exterior, reglazing all doors and windows, and roof-shingle replacement with flashing and chimney repointing.

Crews will also improve the kitchen and install an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant, all-season restroom and walkways. Much of the work will be done by the Parks' skilled-trades crews, Hochul's office said.

"I am thrilled to see the commitment from the state to upgrade

Selkirk Shores State Park," New York State Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay (R-Pulaski) said in the news release. "This investment will secure the park's future as an outdoor recreation destination for generations of New Yorkers. This project illustrates the dedication to enhancing the quality of life and opportunities for everyone seeking to enjoy some of the best parts of Oswego County. I look forward to the completion of these additions and sharing in the experience of the long-lasting positive impact this will have on our local community."

Selkirk Shores State Park overlooks a bluff on Lake Ontario. The park is known for its camping, fishing, Great Lakes swimming beach, and trail network. More than 100,000 visitors come to the park annually, per Hochul's office. ■

Madison County Rural Health Council receives Excellus grant

The \$30,000 award is for its doula program

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

CAZENOVIA —Madison County Rural Health Council (MCRHC) Inc. has received a \$30,000 Health Equity Innovation Award (HEIA) from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield to support its doula program, Excellus recently announced.

The awards provide financial support to community programs that address racial and ethnic health disparities across the upstate New York service area of Excellus, Central New York's largest health insurer.

MCRHC's program promotes and provides doula services to community members who qualify as low income and may have challenges accessing prenatal, birth, and postnatal support. Funding will also be used to expand doula services into Oneida County and to have individuals trained as end-of-life doulas.

"Madison County Rural Health Council is thankful for the strong community partnerships and opportunities provide to strengthen our birthing doula program," MCRHC Executive Director Christine Paul said in a news release. "We are for-

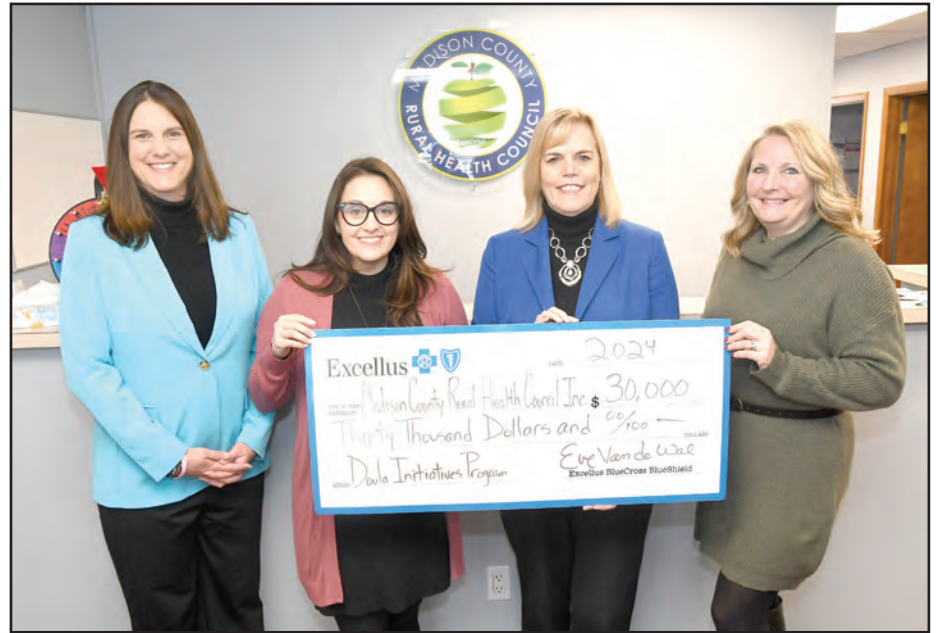
tunate the Excellus BCBS Health Equity Innovation Award has also provided an opportunity to have individuals trained as end-of-life doulas."

Doulas are non-medical professionals trained to provide emotional support to assist and advocate for patients and their families. In the pregnancy setting, doulas provide emotional and physical support, as well as advice before, during, and after pregnancy and childbirth.

End-of-life doulas assist both the dying person and their loved ones before, during, and after death. Along with emotional and physical support, they provide education about the dying process and guidance through the grieving process.

MCRHC is one of 20 nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organizations across Excellus's upstate New York service area that received HEIA funding. Organizations could apply for grants of up to \$30,000 to fund initiatives, programs, and research that specifically target the root causes of health inequities with a focus on addressing structural racism.

"We're committed to using our resources to support community partnerships and initiatives that directly target health disparities, promote access to care, and address the underlying social determinants of health," Excellus BCBS Regional President Even Van de Wal said. "We are



Representatives from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield present a \$30,000 Health Equity Innovation Award to Madison County Rural Health Council to help fund its doula program. From left to right are: Shayna Keller, community investments and partnerships manager at Excellus; Stephanie Henry, Madison County Rural Health Council deputy director; Even Van de Wal, regional president of Excellus; and Christine Paul, Madison County Rural Health Council executive director.

PHOTO CREDIT: EXCELLUS

proud to award the Madison County Rural Health Council with this funding to support the needs of families through their doula programming."

Established in 2013 by a consortium of organizations representing the largest providers of health and social services in the county, Madison County Rural Health Council is organized to wrap around the community's most vulnerable needs. Through the council, local providers are

better able to coordinate the countywide alignment of health-care resources, expertise and services, and evidence-based practices to meet those needs, the release stated.

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. The nonprofit health plan serves 1.5 million members in upstate New York and employs more than 4,200 people. ■

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Le Moyne-themed craft beer Dolphy Day IPA set to hit market

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Dolphy Day IPA, a Le Moyne College-themed craft beer, will be on the market by the beginning of March.

The brew will be available at locations of Meier's Creek Brewing Company (MCBC) in both Cazenovia and the Syracuse Inner Harbor and at retail stores throughout the region, according to Le Moyne's Feb. 13 announcement.

Under the agreement with MCBC, Le Moyne will receive 20 percent of all sales, and the proceeds will benefit the Le Moyne College Fund and "specifically target" the college's wellness initiatives and student scholarship to help offset the cost of attendance.

Those of legal drinking age were able to place pre-orders for the craft beer on the Meier's Creek website as of Feb. 19, with pre-reservations open until Feb. 23 at 5 p.m.

The name Dolphy Day IPA is a "nod to one of Le Moyne's most revered traditions," the college said in its announcement. Dolphy Day is a Le Moyne tradition dating back to 1971 where students spend the first warm day of spring outside enjoying the weather, hanging out, and blowing off some steam before final exams start.

The announcement of the new craft beer is the culmination of a months-long process between MCBC and Le Moyne, the college said. Le Moyne's student marketing firm Heights Global Marketing (HGM) "took the lead in



Le Moyne College and Meier's Creek Brewing Company on Feb. 13 announced that Dolphy Day IPA, a Le Moyne-themed craft beer, will be available by the beginning of March at Meier's Creek locations in Cazenovia and the Syracuse Inner Harbor as well as retail locations around the region. IMAGE CREDIT: LE MOYNE COLLEGE

several areas" related to developing the Le Moyne-themed beer.

Its efforts included conducting market research, creating and executing a survey sent to Le Moyne alumni, and leading focus groups.

HGM sought to gather data from alumni about the preferred type and name of the beer. Once those were selected, HGM students worked on the design of the label, the school said. Those involved have also designed a number of swag items to help with the promotion of the beer, Le Moyne noted.

Dolphy Day IPA was the overwhelm-



Sean Hennessey, former director of the New York State Fair, is leaving the role for a new job with the New York State Department of Labor.
PHOTO CREDIT: SEAN HENNESSEY LINKEDIN PROFILE



Julie LaFave, operations director for the New York State Fair, will serve as the State Fair's interim director as the search for a permanent director continues.
PHOTO CREDIT: NYS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS



Fairgoers attend one of the nights of the 2022 New York State Fair.

PHOTO CREDIT: ZOEYADVERTISING.COM

LaFave named interim State Fair director after Hennessey departs

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

GEDDES — The state has appointed Julie LaFave as the interim director of the New York State Fair.

LaFave, who has been serving as the State Fair's operations director, will assume the duties previously performed by Sean Hennessey.

LaFave will serve as the interim while the search for a permanent director continues, Hanna Birkhead, associate director of public information with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, told CNYBJ in a Feb. 16 email.

A statement provided by the depart-

ment said Hennessey will serve as the state commissioner of labor's regional representative in his home area of the North Country.

"I'm incredibly proud to have directed the Fair since 2022 and to have been a part of the achievements realized during that time," Hennessey said in the statement. "Over the past two years, the team at the Fair has successfully revived the complete Fair experience post-pandemic, helped fairgoers experience an unmatched variety of musical acts — some of which were record breaking, launched new family-friendly exhibits and the inaugural Asian Village, and solidified the Fair's established presence as a hub of entertainment, all while maintaining the

Fair's deeply rooted tradition in New York State agriculture."

LaFave also provided a statement, indicating that the work preparing for this summer's State Fair is ongoing and will continue.

"The State Fair has an incredible, talented staff that is working hard to bring fairgoers the very best State Fair yet this summer. I'm honored to be a part of the team and to provide my support during this transition," she said. "Having had the experience of working closely with Sean over the last year and through an incredibly successful Fair, I feel ready to hit the ground running as Interim Director as we enter the 2024 Fair season. I look forward to building on his work with our team to bring New Yorkers another great year at

the Great New York State Fair."

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball thanked Hennessey for his time and effort as the State Fair's director and "can say without a doubt that we are in capable hands" under the direction of LaFave as interim director, per a statement that the department provided.

Hennessey had served as interim director of the State Fair in 2022 after former director Troy Waffner was reassigned to a newly created position of agricultural fair development director. Waffner has since moved on and is now CEO of the CNY SPCA.

Gov. Kathy Hochul removed the interim tag from Hennessey's title prior to the start of the 2023 State Fair. ■

IPA:

Continued from page 4

ing favorite in the survey conducted by Heights Global Marketing, with about 50 percent of the 2,000 alumni respondents indicating a preference for the name.

Other names considered were Ignatian Ale — for St. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits — and 1946, in honor of the year Le Moyne was founded.

"The project has allowed us to work with a number of talented and dedicated students at Le Moyne, who have been involved in a number of ways to help

make this partnership a success," Crystal Paoelli, director of marketing for MCBC, said in the Le Moyne announcement. "I can say from the team at Meier's Creek and our partners at The Buzz Creative Group, we are very excited to see what this partnership brews next."

The development of Dolphy Day IPA

is in line with a recent trend of universities launching themed beer. Some examples include Indiana University's Hoosier Gameday Lager, East Carolina University's Pirates Brew, Florida State University's Legacy Lager, and Marquette University's '77 Golden Ale, per the Le Moyne announcement. ■

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Wynn Hospital receives trauma center designation

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

UTICA — The Wynn Hospital, part of the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS), has been designated a Provisional Level III Adult Trauma Center by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), making it the newest trauma center in the state, MVHS recently announced.

The designation means that residents of the Mohawk Valley have access to advanced care for patients coming to the hospital after a traumatic injury.

“Our verification as a Level III trauma center recognizes the Wynn Hospital’s dedication to providing optimal care for injured patients, and we are proud to offer exceptional trauma care to those within our community,” MVHS President/CEO Darlene Stromstad said in a news release. “I applaud the dedicated members of our team, includ-

ing emergency care, surgical services, orthopedics, and neurosurgical care for their contributions to this designation.”

Wynn Hospital is the only trauma center between Albany and Syracuse, providing rapid access to medical care, which is associated with better outcomes and survival rates after a traumatic injury, MVHS said.

Maurizio Miglietta was named trauma medical director for the trauma center.

“This designation is crucial to providing our community the level of care we need and deserve,” Miglietta said. “I am proud of our team for their work to receive this new designation and for the care they continue to provide our patients every day.”

Wynn Hospital opened in October 2023 as part of the Mohawk Valley Health System. MVHS serves Oneida, Herkimer, and Madison counties and employs more than 4,000 people. ■



Mohawk Valley Health System’s (MVHS) Wynn Hospital was recently designated a Provisional Level III Adult Trauma Center, making it the newest trauma center in the state and the only one located between Albany and Syracuse. Shown here is the trauma center team at Wynn Hospital. PHOTO CREDIT: MVHS

Losing Your Identity in Times of Crisis

As the excitement of the new year fades into the rearview mirror, it’s not unusual for business leaders and their teams to find themselves caught in the relentless demands of day-to-day operations by February or March, leaving their grand plans gathering dust on the shelf.



CRYSTAL DeSTEFANO
Strategic Minute

Whether it’s the pressing urgency of immediate needs or simply the allure of familiarity, the reality is

that many of us find ourselves losing sight of our goals as we navigate the business landscape. This can be further exacerbated by a crisis in your organization.

But it is possible to reclaim your focus, even amid a crisis?

In times of adversity, the very essence of a company, its brand voice, focus on business goals, and adherence to its mission can crumble like a house of cards. It’s strikingly reminiscent of the fight-or-flight stress response we experience as individuals.

When faced with a threat, both an individual and a business can succumb to an emotionally-driven knee-jerk reaction. This often leads to a swift and irreparable departure from strategic thinking, causing an organization to lose sight of its mission, goals, and brand voice.

In my extensive experience, I have observed this pattern across various sectors. From the energy industry grappling with environmental concerns to health care navigating public-health crises, the travel and hospitality sector facing unforeseen challenges, and even the nonprofit sector weathering funding uncertainties — the common thread is the vulnerability of identity in crisis.

How can organizations better navigate a crisis while maintaining their identity, strategic focus, and brand integrity? It is tempting to react quickly, and sometimes swift action is needed, but there is always

time for what we call the “Critical 10.”

This could be literally 10 minutes, but hopefully you have a few hours or even days to determine how you want to respond. Regardless of how much time you have, start by taking a collective deep breath, pause to confer with colleagues or trusted advisors, and then determine the steps that you will need to take in order to ensure every action is aligned with the company’s mission and goals. It is precisely in those moments, when you feel like you don’t have time to be thoughtful or strategic, that a deliberate and strategic approach is most paramount.

In one example, think about a major health-care organization facing a crisis related to patient data security. Rather than hastily responding to media inquiries and escalating tensions, the leadership takes a step back. The leaders engage in open and transparent communication, acknowledging the issue, outlining immediate corrective actions, and communicating a commitment to ongoing improvement. This measured response not only protects the organization’s reputation, but also demonstrates a steadfast commitment to its mission of patient care.

There is an additional challenge when your team is too close to an issue. This is where trusted external advisors can provide invaluable perspectives and guidance. A fresh set of eyes, with expertise in navigating crises and unclouded by feelings of personal attachment, can provide strategic insights that help your team respond in a way that aligns with long-term goals.

Responding to a crisis shouldn’t deviate from your organization’s established communication practices. It should reinforce them. Organizations that are strategic and always stay true to their brand voice build trust with their audiences and emerge from crises with their reputation intact, if not improved.

As a parting piece of advice, I urge business leaders to engrain in their crisis-management playbook a simple yet powerful mantra: “Breathe, Reflect, Align.” When faced with adversity, take that deep breath collectively as an organization. Reflect

on your mission, goals, and brand voice. Ensure that every action, and every statement, is aligned with the core identity of your company. In doing so, you not only weather the storm, but also emerge stronger — with your organizational identity

not just preserved but fortified.

In a crisis, remember: It’s not about fighting against the opposition. It’s about fighting for the enduring identity and mission of your organization. ■

Crystal DeStefano is president of Strategic Communications, which says it provides trusted counsel for public relations. Contact DeStefano at Crystal@stratcomllc.com, or visit: StratComLLC.com.



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The Syracuse office of Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC, which saw a pair of leadership changes to begin 2024.

PHOTO CREDIT: ZOEYADVERTISING.COM

Bond law firm announces Syracuse leadership changes

BY ADAM ROMBEL
arombel@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC made a pair of leadership changes in its Syracuse office at the start of this year.

The law firm announced that Colin M. Leonard assumed the position of managing member and Suzanne M. Messer became deputy managing member in Syracuse.

Leonard previously served as Bond's deputy managing member. In his new role as managing member of the Syracuse location, he succeeds Brian Butler, who ascended to chair of the law firm's management committee on Jan. 1.

Butler had this to say about Leonard and his new role. "Colin is the natural choice to



Leonard



Messer

lead Bond's largest office, with more than 85 attorneys and 170 staff. He and I worked together closely over the past three years managing the office. He is a smart lawyer and visionary leader, well respected by his peers, and I'm happy to see him take over leadership of the Syracuse office," Butler said in a Bond news release.

Butler also lauded Messer as she steps into her new role.

"I've also worked closely with Suzanne, as we both are litigators and have worked on a number of cases together," he said. "I have the utmost respect for her as a lawyer, a litigator and a leader. Together, Colin and Suzanne are poised to continue the growth of the firm in Central New York, provide guidance to the attorneys and develop our staff so that we can all better serve

our clients. I'm thrilled for them both."

About Leonard and Messer

Leonard is a management-side labor and employment lawyer, who works with clients throughout Central New York, the Mohawk Valley, and the Southern Tier, Bond said. His practice includes traditional labor-related work, including collective bargaining, labor arbitrations and agency matters before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and New York State Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). Leonard also represents employers in federal and state anti-discrimination litigation and counsels human-resources professionals on wide-ranging legal issues. Outside of Bond, Leonard serves on the boards of directors of the Landmark Theatre as VP and Nascentia Health as secretary.

Messer represents clients in commer-

cial, higher education, employment and civil rights disputes, and litigation. She has counseled and litigated in these subject areas for more than 15 years and regularly appears in federal and state courts, the release stated. Messer has tried both jury and non-jury trials, argued before appellate-level courts and assisted clients in resolving disputes through mediations and arbitration proceedings. Messer is chair of Bond's Women's Initiative, which promotes the professional development of women attorneys throughout the firm, Bond said.

Bond, Schoeneck & King has more than 300 lawyers serving individuals, companies, nonprofits, and public-sector entities in a broad range of practice areas. Bond has 16 offices, including 11 in New York state, with the others in Florida, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Kansas. ■

NYS deadline for filing unlawful-discrimination claims is extended

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

ALBANY — The time New Yorkers have to file a complaint for unlawful discrimination has increased from one year to three years under a new statute of limitations that went into effect on Feb. 15, Gov. Kathy Hochul recently announced.

“This new statute of limitations adds another layer to our collective responsibility to protect one another and create an environment that makes survivors feel safe,” Hochul contended.

The new statute of limitations gives people three years to file an unlawful discrimination claim with the New York State Division of Human Rights.

“This bill provides a more reasonable window of time for survivors of discrimination to bring their claim forward,”

Division of Human Rights Commissioner Maria L. Imperial stipulated in a Feb. 14 news release from the governor’s office. “While a three-year statute of limitations for sexual harassment in employment has been in effect since 2020, today’s amendment applies to all forms of discrimination under the state Human Rights Law. It significantly broadens the rights of all survivors of discrimination and helps raise the responsibility and liability of employers, housing providers, public accommodations, and educational institutions to abide by the State Human Rights Law at all times.”

The New York State Human Rights Law provides protection from discrimination in areas such as employment, education,



Imperial

credit, and purchasing/renting a home or commercial space based on race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, sex, age, marital status, domestic-violence victim status, disability, immigration/citizenship status, pregnancy-related condition, predisposing genetic characteristics, prior arrest or conviction record, gender identity or expression, familial status, lawful sources of income (in housing only), and retaliation for opposing unlawful discriminatory practices. That’s according to the Division of Human Rights website (www.dhr.ny.gov).

Prior to the change, the law allowed survivors of discrimination one year from the date of the alleged incidents to file a claim. Now, for claims for incidents occurring on or after Feb. 15, people have three years to file a claim. The change does not apply to incidents that occurred on or

before Feb. 14.

Advocates for the extended statute of limitations referenced studies showing that survivors of discriminatory experiences often have difficulty processing discriminatory incidents within the prior filing timeframe, leaving them without legal remedy after the personal healing process.

“Until now, victims of unlawful discriminatory practices have had an insufficiently short time period to file administrative complaints within the Division of Human Rights,” State Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal (D-Manhattan) said. “As we learned through the Adult Survivors and Child Victims Act, processing violence or harassment can take time, and we should not deprive people of a chance at justice simply due to a deadline that is extremely difficult to meet.”

Oneida County funds exhibit at new Utica Children’s Museum

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

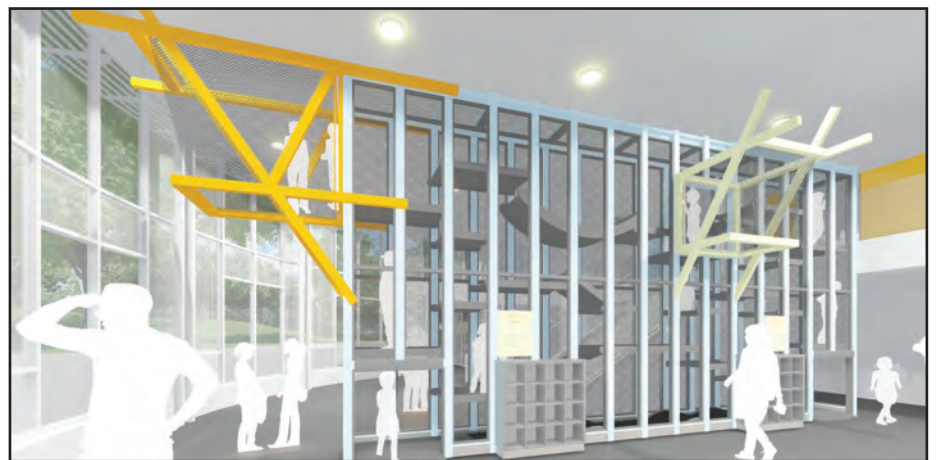
UTICA — Oneida County recently awarded \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding to the Utica Children’s Museum to construct a climber exhibit in its soon-to-be-completed new facility on the Memorial Parkway.

“The climber exhibit will be the signature feature of the new Children’s Museum rotunda,” Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. said in a news release. “It’s the first thing visitors will see when they enter, creating a wall of fun adjacent to the main staircase, and it will also be seen from the outside, signaling to passersby the spirit of adventure that awaits inside. Oneida County is proud to provide this attraction at what will become a premiere desti-

nation for local families, schools, and tourists alike.”

At 30 feet long and 16 feet high, the climber will provide children with a variety of physical challenges and safe risk-taking opportunities such as navigating up and down a series of ramps, platforms, and curves, and climbing up and reaching two lookout nests at the top. It’s designed to assist in developing gross motor skills and building a sense of understanding and confidence in their physical capabilities.

“We are so thrilled and grateful to receive this funding from Oneida County,” Meghan Fraser McGrogan, the museum’s interim director, said in the release. “This demonstrates the county’s commitment as a true partner as we work to build our all-new Utica Children’s Museum. We look forward to continuing to work together



Oneida County has awarded \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding to the Utica Children’s Museum for construction of a climber exhibit, depicted in this rendering, in the new museum set to open later this year. RENDERING CREDIT: ONEIDA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

to make Oneida County a great place for families.”

The former museum location on Main Street in Utica closed in 2020, and the new facility is being built at the corner of Holland Avenue and Memorial Parkway. Gallery and exhibit design and fabrication are currently in progress and the

new Utica Children’s Museum is expected to open later this year. It is part of a larger project of the nonprofit Integrated Community Alternatives Network (ICAN) to develop a family resource center that houses ICAN family-based programs, a community room available for other organizations, and the museum.

Bowers CPAs & Advisors makes a pair of Rochester moves

Acquires Rochester firm, relocates office in that market

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

ROCHESTER — Syracuse-based Bowers CPAs & Advisors says it has acquired a Rochester accounting firm and has also relocated its Rochester office.

Bowers believes the acquisition will help expand its office in the Rochester market, per its Jan. 19 announcement.

Bowers & Company CPAs — which provides tax, audit, and client accounting and advisory services — is headquartered at 120 Madison St. (Equitable Tower II) in Syracuse. Besides the Syracuse and Rochester offices, the firm also has a location at 1120 Commerce Park Drive East in Watertown.

Michael D’Avirro and Carl Austin are managing partners of Bowers.

Established in 1977, Bowers CPAs &

Advisors says it has grown from fewer than 10 employees to its current count of 130 employees in its three offices.

Acquisition

Kasperski Dinan & Rink CPAs joined Bowers in a transaction that adds to its tax, audit, and client accounting and advisory services teams in Rochester.

The accounting firms didn’t disclose any financial details of the acquisition agreement. The deal became official on Jan. 1.

Tracey Rink and Rick Kasperski founded their accounting practice in 2005.

“Although on January 1, 2024, our name was updated to Bowers CPAs & Advisors, Tracey and I will remain stationed at the office, as Partners, supporting our clients and our team as we enter a new era,” Kasperski said in a Bowers news release.

Rink, Kasperski and four additional partners are now partners in the Bowers firm, Jessica Foley, marketing coordinator at Bowers CPAs & Advisors, tells CNYBJ in an email. A total of 10 employees of the Kasperski firm have joined the Bowers

Rochester office, she adds.

“Joining Bowers will allow us to expand our operational capacity, along with providing additional resources to assist our current and future clients,” Kasperski said in the release. “We see a deep value alignment with Bowers and a matched level of commitment to clients, service, and relationships that have guided our practice over the decades.”

Office relocation

Not long after Bowers announced the acquisition of Kasperski Dinan & Rink CPAs, the firm also revealed the relocation of its Rochester office to 200 Meridian Centre Blvd.

“This transition underscores our unwavering commitment to delivering excellence in accounting services,” Michael D’Avirro, co-managing partner at Bowers CPAs & Advisors, said in the firm’s news release.

“The relocation to our new, more spacious office not only reaffirms our dedication to exceptional client service but also sets the stage for countless exciting opportunities on the horizon. The move to a larger space



Syracuse-based Bowers CPAs & Advisors announced it has moved its Rochester office to a new space. PHOTO CREDIT: BOWERS CPAS & ADVISORS

is crucial as it allows us to accommodate our growing team, foster collaboration, and enhance operational efficiency. It positions us to continually serve our clients to the best of our abilities, provides the room we need to innovate and thrive in a dynamic business landscape.”

“This move is a testament to our dedication to excellence. The new office not only reflects our commitment to providing exceptional accounting services but also sets the stage for exciting opportunities ahead,” Tracey Rink, Rochester office partner, said.

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Gillibrand bill seeks to draw grocery stores to food deserts

Syracuse's Valley neighborhood could benefit

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's (D-N.Y.) proposed Healthy Food Financing Initiative Reauthorization Act is a law she believes would help end so-called food deserts, such as one on Syracuse's south side.

The lawmaker on Jan. 22 visited the Valley Plaza to announce her proposal, speaking at Food Access Healthy Neighborhoods Now Winter Market.

When CNYBJ asked Gillibrand if she felt this was a proposal that could get to President Joseph Biden's desk in 2024, she replied, "yes," noting that she wants to get it included in the Farm Bill.

"So, the Farm Bill we write every five years, and food security is the number one issue in the Farm Bill this year. It's not always bipartisan. For some reason, our Republican allies often cut food security money, so we just have to advocate and convince them that this is a really important investment to well-being but also to economic growth and to sustainability for communities and families. I'm very optimistic that I can persuade some

of my colleagues that this is the right type of investment," Gillibrand contended in responding to the CNYBJ question.

In her remarks explaining the proposal, the lawmaker said in communities across New York and the U.S., people don't always have access to healthy, nutritious foods.

"Food deserts are far too common and they disproportionately impact communities of color. And barriers to food access have become even more common with [COVID-19] and inflation," Gillibrand said. "Here in Syracuse, we have an unacceptably high rate of food insecurity. Across Onondaga County, over 46,000 people, or nearly 10 percent of residents, were food insecure in 2021. According to the USDA, thousands of Onondaga County residents live in food deserts."

Food deserts are areas where a significant portion of residents don't have easy access to a grocery store and affordable, nutritious food, as described in Gillibrand's news release. Instead, they are forced to rely on corner and convenience stores, which often sell "little to no" fresh produce, meat or dairy, and "whose prices are higher" than those of a typical supermarket.

Gillibrand's legislation would provide \$50 million annually in mandatory federal funding for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI). HFFI is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program that offers loans and grants to incentivize grocery stores to establish



U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), speaking at the podium, on Jan. 22 announced her proposal titled, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative Reauthorization Act. Gillibrand spoke at the Food Access Healthy Neighborhoods Now Winter Market at the Valley Plaza at 4141 S. Salina St. in Syracuse. Besides Gillibrand, also speaking at the event were, from left to right: Karen Belcher, executive director of Food Bank of Central New York; Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh; and Rhonda Vesey, co-founder and project director of Food Access Healthy Neighborhoods Now.

locations in underserved communities, such as Syracuse's Valley neighborhood.

That area of Syracuse has lacked a large grocery store since the local Tops supermarket in the Valley Plaza shut down in 2018.

HFFI was authorized in 2014 as part of the Farm Bill, Gillibrand noted in her remarks.

"It provides grants and loans to fresh food retailers and grocery stores to help improve access to nutritious food in underserved areas. It is deeply effective and popular and it is consistently and unfortunately oversubscribed and underfunded," she added.

Gillibrand believes lawmakers should also make HFFI a "mandatory" program, "meaning that we don't have to go back and ask for the funding every year."

"We're also asking to double the amount of money from \$25 million to \$50 million," she noted in her remarks. "That would really help."

During her Jan. 22 announcement at the Valley Plaza, Gillibrand was joined by Rhonda Vesey, co-founder and project director of Food Access Healthy Neighborhoods Now; Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh; and Karen Belcher, executive director of the Food Bank of Central New York. ■

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Dannible & McKee's Vaccaro joins OHA board of directors

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Victor W. Vaccaro, Jr., partner-in-charge of assurance services at Dannible & McKee, LLP has been appointed to the Onondaga Historical Association (OHA) board of directors.



Vaccaro

He will also serve on the finance committee and facilities committee for

OHA, where he'll lend his expertise on both topics, according to a news release from Dannible & McKee, a Syracuse-based accounting and consulting firm.

OHA is a private, nonprofit educational association of heritage-related services, museums, research, education centers, and retail. It provides a number of educational opportunities, including off-site exhibits, educational programming, events, and research and educational centers.

Vaccaro has more than 34 years of experience in assurance, accounting, and financial-consulting services. He specializes in working with architectural and engineering firms and manufacturing companies, and his expertise includes Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) overhead audits, business valuations, ownership transitions, mergers and acquisitions, and forensic accounting, per the release. Vaccaro also focuses on consulting engagements designed to enhance business profitability, including

the implementation of performance-management techniques, project-management training, activity-based costing projects, customer-profitability analysis, improved budgeting, and strategic-planning initiatives.

Vaccaro is actively engaged in several nonprofit organizations, including serving as treasurer and board member for the NUAIR Alliance, and as a board member for the Manlius Family YMCA.

Vaccaro earned his bachelor's degree in 1990 from Clarkson University. ■

Security Mutual Insurance names liability-claims specialist

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

ITHACA — Security Mutual, an Ithaca-based insurance company, recently announced it has appointed Kyle Coin as a liability-claims specialist.



Coin

In this role, Coin will play a key role in the investigating, evaluating, declining, negotiating, and resolving liability (3rd party) claims against Security Mutual-insured clients, the firm said in a news release.

Coin brings six years of experience in the insurance industry. He previously served as a claims examiner at Utica First Insurance Company in Oriskany since 2018, according to Coin's LinkedIn profile. He also formerly worked as a teller at Access Federal Credit Union in Clinton. Coin holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Marcy.

"We are thrilled to welcome Kyle to Security Mutual. His experience and dedication to excellence align perfectly with our commitment to providing exceptional service and support to our clients," Ron Wilder, president of Security Mutual Insurance, said in a news release.

Organized in 1887, Security Mutual Insurance says it writes more than \$50 million in premiums and provides property and casualty insurance for home and business. The insurer is represented by a network of more than 400 independent agents throughout New York state. ■



ASK THE EXPERT

The New Rule for Independent Contractors – Are You Ready?

Katherine E. Gavett, Esq.
Ferrara Fiorenza PC

Effective March 11, 2024, the US Department of Labor will change the analysis it uses to determine whether an individual is an employee or independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. This change reflects the Department's intention to strengthen worker protection.

When announcing the new rule, Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su stated, "Misclassifying employees as independent contractors is a serious issue that deprives workers of basic rights and protections... This rule will help protect workers, especially those facing the greatest risk of exploitation, by making sure they are classified properly and that they receive the wages they've earned."

This new six factor economic realities test replaces the 2021 two "core" factors test which was viewed as a business friendly test. The US Department of Labor identified the following six factors it will use to determine whether a company has properly classified an individual: (1) Opportunity for profit or loss depending on managerial skill; (2) Investments by the worker and the employer; (3) Degree of permanence of the work relationship; (4) Nature and degree of control; (5) Extent to which the work performed is an integral part of the employer's business; and (6) Skill and initiative.

Businesses will need to pay close attention to Department's interpretation and application of the six factors under the new 2024 Rule and should consider re-examining their relationships with independent contractors, including written agreements, documents used, and work provided. Also, businesses should be mindful of the shift on a federal level. The National Labor Relations Board recently revised its rule to determine joint employment, which was viewed as a pro-employee change. The US Department of Labor has also announced revisions to the Fair Labor Standards Act "restoring and extending over-time protections".



FERRARA FIORENZA PC

Syracuse Office 5010 Campuswood Dr., East Syracuse, New York 13057 315-437-7600
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Dermody, Burke & Brown names CFO of Custom Accounting Solutions team

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Dermody, Burke & Brown, CPAs, LLC has appointed Ronald Mucci as the CFO of its Custom Accounting Solutions unit.



Mucci

He has more than 20 years' experience providing accounting and CFO services, such as managing cash flow, planning, forecasting, and overall financial reporting, according to a Feb. 15 announcement from Dermody, Burke & Brown.

Mucci leads the Custom Accounting Solutions team at the Syracuse-based accounting firm, providing outsourced

CFO services including financial-statement preparation, accounting services, and other key financial solutions to a variety of industries, the announcement stated. That includes contractors, manufacturers, professional-services firms, distribution companies, nonprofits, and small-business clients. He strives to maintain key relationships with banking and insurance companies, along with other financial professionals.

Mucci graduated from Syracuse University with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

Dermody, Burke & Brown, which has been serving the Central New York business community since 1956, has offices in Auburn, New Hartford, and Rome, in addition to its Syracuse headquarters. ■

IAED appoints new board members, officers

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

ITHACA — Ithaca Area Economic Development (IAED) appointed its 2024 board of directors at its first quarterly meeting of the year in early February.

New three-year appointments include Jason Leifer from the town of Dryden and Peter Dugo of Arnot Realty, along with a new one-year seat for entrepreneur Charlie Mulligan, according to a press release from IAED.

Lisa Whitaker of CFCU Community Credit Union, Tom Robinson from BorgWarner, and Brian Noteboom of North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters were all reappointed to three-year terms.

New annual appointments include Margo Martin of Groton Central School District, Anne Koreman of Tompkins County, and Robert Cantelmo of the City of Ithaca.

"IAED board members represent every sector of our economy from education and health care to government, nonprofit, and industry," IAED President Heather McDaniel said in the release. "They contribute to the organization's culture, strategic focus, effectiveness, and financial sustainability, as well as serving as ambassadors and advocates. I look forward to the insight, foresight, and oversight of the new and returning members."

During the meeting, the IAED board also voted to elect officers including Cathy Hart of the Ithaca Marriott as chair, Joel Malina of Cornell University as vice chair, Jeff Gorsky of Sciarabba Walker as treasurer, and Jodi Denman of Knickerbocker Bed Company as secretary.

Ithaca Area Economic Development is a private, nonprofit economic-development organization serving Ithaca and Tompkins County. It works to grow, retain, and attract companies and create a supportive environment for businesses and entrepreneurs. IAED says it is New York state's first and only accredited economic-development organization, and one of only 71 across North America. ■



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The Central New York BUSINESS JOURNAL

Engel now leading Mackenzie Hughes as managing partner

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Syracuse-based law firm Mackenzie Hughes LLP is doing business in 2024 under a new managing partner.



Engel

The firm elected attorney Richard Engel for the role. He succeeds attorney Anne Ruffer, who stepped down as managing partner on Dec. 31, after having served in the role for six years.



Ruffer

As managing partner, Engel will oversee Mackenzie Hughes' operations, chair the executive committee, and guide the strategic vision of the law firm, per its announcement. He joined Mackenzie Hughes in 2003.

Engel concentrates his law practice in business and corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, securities law, banking, commercial development, and IDA (industrial development agency) financing. He also

handles securities litigation and arbitration before FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority), private securities offerings, and federal and state regulatory compliance relating to securities and corporate governance.

Outside of his legal work, Engel also periodically lectures on business and securities-law topics and serves as a judge for the Syracuse University College of Law and New York State Bar Association moot court competitions.

He also participates in numerous local and state pro-bono programs. Engel has recently served on the board of directors for organizations that include the Onondaga County Public Library, Christian Brothers Academy (as chair), Hiscock Legal Aid Society (as chair), Century Club (as president), and Central New York Biotechnology Accelerator, Mackenzie Hughes said.

Ruffer's time in role

During her time as Mackenzie Hughes managing partner, Ruffer oversaw the day-to-day firm operations, worked in supporting its various practice areas, and



Syracuse law firm Mackenzie Hughes LLP is located at 440 S. Warren St. in Syracuse.

ERIC REINHARDT / CNYBJ

managed its fiscal responsibility.

She also "successfully navigated" Mackenzie Hughes through the pandemic and its many challenges, the law firm said. Ruffer has served in the firm's management since 2007, when she was elected to join the executive committee.

In addition, while managing partner, Ruffer continued her law practice providing legal services in the firm's estates department. She will continue her law practice, where she'll work with clients on their estate planning, estates and trust administration, special needs and elder law planning, guardianships, estate litigation,

and related matters, Mackenzie Hughes said.

Over the years, Ruffer has served in many board leadership and member roles for a variety of community and law-related organizations. She presently serves on the board of directors of CenterState CEO.

Besides the change in managing partner, Mackenzie Hughes also announced that attorney James Nicoll will serve as chair of the business department. Nicoll joined Mackenzie Hughes in 2014 and is a partner in the firm's business department. ■

Former Auburn contractor sentenced on tax charges

Receives two years of prison time

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

A former construction and remodeling business owner in Auburn has been sentenced to serve two years in prison for filing a false federal income-tax return.

Timothy Blackman — currently of Daniel Island, South Carolina — was sentenced on Feb. 15, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that day.

Blackman was a self-employed contractor providing construction and remodeling services in Auburn, the DOJ said, citing court documents and statements made in court.

From 2007-2010, Blackman did not file income-tax returns with the IRS or pay income taxes. After learning of a criminal investigation delving into his income taxes in June 2010, Blackman late-filed a false 2007 personal income-tax return. The filing underreported his construction and remodeling firm's total gross receipts and income, the DOJ said.

In addition to the term of imprisonment, U.S. District Court Judge David Hurd for the Northern District of New York ordered Blackman to serve one year of supervised release.



ASK THE EXPERT

House of Representatives Passes \$78 Billion Tax Package

Nicholas L. Shires, CPA, Partner-in-Charge of Tax Services
Dannible & McKee, LLP

On January 31, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024, a tax package worth \$78 billion. The bill was approved with bipartisan support and will temporarily expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and restore several business tax benefits. This package aims to offer tax relief to millions of families nationwide.

Enhanced Child Tax Credit

The proposed CTC provides a tax break for qualifying households with children and can be claimed even by families who do not typically file a return. Currently, the credit is \$2,000 per child, but the maximum refundable amount of that credit is \$1,600. Under the new legislation, the refundable amount will increase to \$1,800 for tax year 2023, \$1,900 in tax year 2024, and \$2,000 in tax year 2025. The maximum limit will also increase with inflation.

Tax Relief to Businesses

As part of the deal, several business tax benefits originally included in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) will be temporarily restored, which is expected to provide relief to many businesses.

Businesses of all sizes will be able to immediately deduct domestic research and experimental expenditures for the 2022 – 2025 tax years. Previously, the TCJA required companies to capitalize these amounts and amortize over a 5-year period, beginning with the 2022 tax year. Additionally, full and immediate expensing for machinery, equipment, and vehicle investments will be restored, and the amount of investment

that small businesses can immediately write off will be increased to \$1.29 million.

The bill also addresses the treatment of business interest expense and bonus depreciation. Bonus depreciation has begun its phaseout period, with only 80% of eligible fixed asset purchase cost deductible if the assets were placed in service in 2023. The bill would restore 100% bonus depreciation for qualified property through 2025.

Additionally, it tackles fraud in the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) program by accelerating the deadline for filing backdated claims to January 31, 2024, instead of April 15, 2025. Furthermore, it increases penalties for fraudulent promoters of the ERTC and any businesses that have taken this credit improperly, which will help offset the cost of this \$78 billion tax bill.

Outlook

The bipartisan tax package now moves to the Senate, where it faces an uncertain future. No specific date has been set for a vote on the bill.

With the bill potentially changing individual and business tax benefits that apply to the 2023 tax year, many are wondering if they should hold off on filing their taxes. The IRS advised that individual tax filers should not hesitate to file their tax returns, and eligible taxpayers will not have to file amended returns to claim the enhanced CTC included in the bill. However, business taxpayers and individual taxpayers impacted by the business provisions may wish to follow how the bill fares in the Senate before filing—at least for now.

DM DANNIBLE & MCKEE, LLP
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Former Throop supervisor admits guilt, repays \$11K stolen from town

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

THROOP — The former supervisor of the Town of Throop in Cayuga County has repaid the \$11,000 that he stole from the town.

The repayment is part of the sentencing of William Tarby, according to a Feb. 16 announcement from New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, New York Attorney General Letitia James, and the New York State Police.



DiNapoli

Tarby was sentenced in Cayuga County Court by Judge Thomas Leone.

The former Throop supervisor had pled guilty to grand larceny and official misconduct in January, and as part of his plea agreement, cannot seek public office again.

"William Tarby scammed town residents by abusing his position for personal gain," DiNapoli said in the Feb. 16 announcement. "I thank Attorney General James and the New York State Police for their work in partnering with us to bring him to justice. My office will continue to work with law enforcement agencies across the state and country to protect taxpayers from corruption."

Tarby, 58, was the town supervisor of Throop from 2004-2019. In 2020, based upon concerns from town officials,

New Year, New OSHA Reporting Rule for Employers

A new Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) rule, “Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses,” recently took effect on Jan. 1, 2024. This rule requires certain high-hazard employers with 100 or more employees to electronically submit OSHA Forms 300 and 301 by March 2 of each year — starting this year. Below is a list of general questions and answers relating to the new rule.

Who is considered a “high-hazard employer?”

Among the long list of high-hazard employers, many short-term and long-term health-care providers are covered. Specifically listed is: (i) ambulatory health care services, (ii) general medical and surgical hospitals, (iii) psychiatric and substance-abuse hospitals, (iv) specialty hospitals, (v) nursing-care facilities, (vi) residential intellectual and development disability, mental health and substance-abuse facilities, (vii) continuing-care retirement communities and assisted-living facilities for the elderly, (viii) other residential-care facilities, and (ix) vocational-rehabilitation services.

The full list of covered high-hazard employers is contained in Appendix B to subpart E of the rule (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/07/21/2023-15091/improve-tracking-of-workplace-injuries-and-illnesses>).

What is new about OSHA Forms 300 and 301?

Form 300 is the “Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses,” while Form 301 is the “Injury and Illness Incident Report.” Most employers have had to maintain these forms already, and only provide them to OSHA when asked during an inspection. What is new about this particular rule is that it requires covered high-hazard employers to submit these forms — which contain detailed information related to workplace injuries, including the event date and location of the workplace injury, a description of the injury or illness, a description of the injured employee, and details of how the event occurred — annually to OSHA. (Note: OSHA had previously issued a rule in 2016, which was challenged and eventually significantly changed in 2018 to require covered employers to provide only summary information via OSHA Form 300A; this new rule is similar to what OSHA previously sought in 2016.)

How should a covered high-hazard employer submit OSHA Forms 300 and 301?

The rule requires covered high-hazard employers to submit OSHA Forms 300 and 301 by March 2 of each year.

The forms must be submitted to OSHA’s new Injury Tracking Application (ITA) website. The three ways to submit the forms are: (1) the webform on the ITA, (2) submission of csv file to the ITA, or (3) use of

an application programming interface feed.

What will OSHA do with the information?

OSHA will use the information contained in the forms to analyze workplace injuries. In addition, the information will be made available for public access.

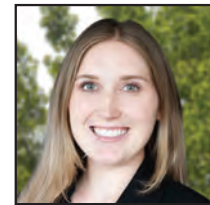
How will an employee’s personally identifiable information be protected?

Covered high-hazard employers should not submit information that could directly or indirectly identify an employee, including an employee’s name, phone number, address, email, and Social Security number. While an employer must include a worker’s date of birth, the ITA will automatically convert all birthdates to age.

Moreover, OSHA states that it will use automated information technology to detect and remove any remaining information that could reasonably be expected to identify employees before posting the information to the public.

How does this rule impact employers who file OSHA Form 300A?

The rule retains the requirement for annual electronic submission of Form 300A (Annual Summary of Work-Related Injuries) by certain employers. Therefore, employers with 250 or more employees that are required to routinely keep OSHA injury and illness records, and employers with 20-249



**MICHAEL D. BILLOK
& NATALIE C. VOGEL**
Viewpoint

employees in certain high-hazard industries, must still file OSHA Form 300A. Similarly, the long list of high-hazard employers includes many short-term and long-term care providers such as hospitals, ambulatory care facilities, nursing facilities, assisted-living facilities, continuing-care communities, and other residential facilities. The full list of covered high-hazard employers is contained in Appendix A to subpart E of the rule.

Next steps

Initially, employers must determine whether they are subject to the new rule. Thereafter, covered employers should begin preparation of OSHA Forms 300 and 301 and ensure they are submitted to the ITA on or before March 2, 2024, and annually thereafter. ■

Michael D. Billok is a member (partner) in the Saratoga Springs and Albany offices of the Syracuse-based law firm of Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC. Contact him at mbillok@bsk.com. Natalie C. Vogel is an associate attorney in Bond’s Albany office. Contact Vogel at nvogel@bsk.com. This article is drawn and edited from the New York Labor and Employment Law Report blog on the law firm’s website.

CNY BUSINESS JOURNAL

BEST  2024

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FMF&E CPA, P.C. announces two new partners

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

SYRACUSE — Firley, Moran, Freer, and Eassa CPA, P.C. (FMF&E) has announced the promotion of two of its accountants to partner — Cheryl Wentworth and Brian Crowley.

Wentworth joined the accounting firm

in January 2007. Her more than 15 years of public accounting experience providing accounting, business advisory, audit, and review services primarily in the energy, construction, and wholesale distribution industries. She holds a bachelor's degree



Wentworth



Crowley

in accounting and an MBA from SUNY Oswego.

Crowley, CPA, joined FMF&E in November 2010. He has over 15 years of experience, providing tax and tax-accounting services. That includes corporate, partnership, and multistate

compliance, advisory, and tax-accounting services for clients in the manufacturing, energy, and construction industries, as well as small-business consulting and compliance. Crowley holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Northeastern University and an MBA from SUNY Oswego.

FMF&E was founded in Syracuse and has been serving Central New York businesses since 1980. Since then the firm has expanded its services and reach to clients located across the U.S.

BLACKMAN: *Continued from page 13*

Stuart Goldberg, acting deputy assistant attorney general of the Justice Department's tax division, and Carla Freedman, U.S. attorney for the Northern District of New York, made the announcement. The IRS Criminal Investigation division investigated the case.

John Kane, acting section chief of the Justice Department's tax division, and Michael Perry, assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of New York, prosecuted the case, per the DOJ announcement.

TARBY: *Continued from page 13*

DiNapoli's office started an audit of the town's finances, which found "financial irregularities."

A subsequent investigation found that from January 2017 to December 2019, Tarby pocketed almost \$11,000 from the town, DiNapoli's office said.

Investigators determined Tarby made unauthorized cash withdrawals from Town of Throop bank accounts, took cash back on checks made out to the town, and kept for himself cash paid to the town for scrap metal, fines, and the sale of equipment — among other things. Following the audit and investigation, the state comptroller's office referred the case to the state attorney general's office for criminal prosecution.

"Every New Yorker should be able to trust that the officials elected to serve them are operating in the public's interest, not using their office to enrich themselves," James said in the announcement. "William Tarby exploited his position to steal thousands of dollars from the town he was supposed to be serving. Today, we are ensuring that he will be held accountable."

CNY BUSINESS JOURNAL
revitalize
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Ranked by No. of CNY Tax Preparers

Rank	Name Address Phone/Website	CNY: Tax Preparers CPAs Employees	Returns Prepared for 2023	Services	Key Local Executives	Year Estab.
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2.	The Bonadio Group 432 N. Franklin St., Suite 60 Syracuse, NY 13204 (315) 476-4004/bonadio.com	59 40 131	3,692	financial-statement audit and accounting services, information risk-management/cybersecurity, internal audit, tax preparation, accounting software installation/support, cost-segregation studies, business valuation, forensic accounting, mergers and acquisitions, management consulting, bookkeeping, wealth management	Bruce Zicari II, Managing Partner & CEO Kristen Gill Clark, Syracuse Managing Partner Richard Zweifel, Utica Managing Partner	1978
3.	Dermody, Burke & Brown, CPAs, LLC 443 N. Franklin St. Syracuse, NY 13204 (315) 471-9171/dbblc.com	50 29 70	NA	accounting/taxation/audit services, business taxation, business valuations, custom accounting solutions, employee-benefit plan audits, family business services, fraud/forensic accounting & internal controls, litigation support, payroll services, QuickBooks/Quick, retirement-plan design/administration, sales & use tax consulting, trusts & estates	Carolyn S. Sturick, Member, CEO Karen M. Matticio, CFO	1956
4.	Firley, Moran, Freer & Eassa, CPA, P.C. 125 East Jefferson St. Syracuse, NY 13202 (315) 472-7045/fmfecpa.com	47 48 88	1,622	audit, accounting, & tax services, business valuations, employee-benefit plan consulting, income-tax consulting, mergers and acquisitions, estate & financial planning, internal audit, financial-institution regulatory compliance, fraud, and forensic-accounting services	Daniel T. Gilhenny, Managing Partner Andrea LaBarge, Audit Partner Lead Jean R. Cole, Tax Partner Lead	1980
5.	Dannible & McKee, LLP DM Financial Plaza Syracuse, NY 13202 (315) 472-9127/dmcpas.com	41 63 109	3,000	accounting, tax and audit services, business valuation, forensic accounting, ownership transition planning, litigation support, federal acquisition regulation overhead-rate audits, Security Operations Center services, estate planning, bankruptcy and trust accounting, employee benefit plan audits, internal audits, bookkeeping	Christopher Didio, Managing Partner Victor W. Vaccaro, Jr., Partner-in-Charge of Assurance Services Nicholas L. Shires, Partner-in-Charge of Tax Services Joseph Chemotti, Partner, CFO Peggy J. Rowe, Partner-in-Charge of Accounting Services Jennifer G. Whalen, Director of Marketing and Business Development	1978
6.	DiMarco, Abiusi, & Pascarella, CPAs, PC 4 Clinton Square, Suite 104 Syracuse, NY 13202 (315) 475-6954/dimarcocpa.com	40 25 40	3,000	income tax and audit services, real estate, construction, low income housing credits, doctors & medical groups, forecasts & projections, tax controversies, trusts & estates, partnerships & limited liability companies, business valuation & consulting	David R. Snyder, Managing Shareholder	1956
7.	D'Arcangelo & Co., LLP 5000 Brittonfield Parkway East Syracuse, NY 13057 (315) 475-7213/darcangelo.cpa	40 38 75	6,000	accounting, tax, auditing and assurance, business consulting, business valuations, and estates & trusts	Robert R. Ritz, Partner-in-Charge Jerome C. Burnham, Partner M. Louis Kruth, Partner Arthur Liberman, Partner Frank Squadrito, Jr., Partner Tricia L. Lucas, Managing Partner	1950
8.	Piaker & Lyons, PC 92 Hawley St. Binghamton, NY 13901 (607) 729-9373/pnlcpa.com	28 16 36	2,400	accounting, auditing, consulting, commercial businesses, governmental entities, real estate, nonprofits, business valuations, estate planning, management-advisory service	Janeen Schranz, President and Co-Manager Richard Lynch, CEO and Co-Manager	1955
9.	Grossman St. Amour CPAs PLLC 110 West Fayette St., Suite 900 Syracuse, NY 13202 (315) 424-1120/gsacpas.com	27 33 46	3,200	accounting, audit & attest, business formation/valuation, retirement & financial planning, eldercare services, fraud exam/deterrence, internal-control review, mergers/acquisitions & succession-planning, consulting, historic tax credits, peer review	Steven J. St. Amour, Chair Mgt. Committee Adam E. Panek, Co-Managing Partner Linda Gabor, Co-Managing Partner	1957
10.	Peters & Associates, CPAs, P.C. 731 James St. Syracuse, NY 13203 (315) 476-1616/peterscpas.com	21 6 23	3,500	accounting services, tax preparation for businesses, individuals, estates and trusts, payroll services, nonprofits, business startups/valuations, reviews, audits, compilations, college cost planning, Empire Zone consultations, financing assistance, forecasts & projections, investment advice, QuickBooks	Mark C. Peters, President	1985
11.	Sciarabba Walker & Co., LLP 410 E. Upland Road Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 272-5550/swcllp.com	20 19 47	2,598	audits, financial planning, tax services, accounting, international tax, high-tech, consulting, mergers & acquisitions, peer reviews, financial services for fraternities and sororities, outsourced accounting	David E. Iles, Managing Partner	1976
12.	Fitzgerald, DePietro & Wojnas, CPAs, P.C. 291 Genesee St. Utica, NY 13501 (315) 724-2145/fdwcpa.net	20 14 25	4,000	estate planning, business valuations, retirement plan audits, litigation support, trust administration, succession planning, mergers and acquisitions	Michael J. DePietro, President	1920
13.	Mondorf & Fenwick, PLLC 523 Columbia Drive Johnson City, NY 13790 (607) 797-4339/mfcpas.com	14 7 14	NA	business valuation & litigation support, accounting, auditing, tax preparation & planning, consulting & advisory	John G. Mondorf, Partner William P. Fenwick, Partner Kirk Blackman, Partner	1985
14.	Insero & Co. CPAs, LLP 1400 Whalen Road Penfield, NY 14526 5126651612/inserocpa.com	14 18 38	1,592	corporate and family businesses, small business, governmental, nonprofit, business valuation, outsource internal audit, international tax, trusts & estates	Nancy Stage, Managing Partner John H. Dietershagen, Office Managing Partner	1985
15.	Daley Lacombe & Charette PC 116 Fayette St. Manlius, NY 13104 (315) 692-4033/dlccpas.com	12 6 15	1,500	estate planning, audits of retirement plans, audits of nonprofits, retirement planning, tax preparation, financial statements, QuickBooks consulting	Jacqueline Charette, President	1955
16.	Gustafson & Wargo CPAs LLP 3264 Seneca Turnpike Canastota, NY 13032 (315) 697-2345/gandwcpas.com	11 5 14	1,450	full-service accounting firm, providing tax and compliance services for individuals, businesses, and nonprofit agencies	T. Charles Chambers, Managing Partner Julie A. Steale, Partner Elizabeth A. Scully, Partner Ronald J. Wargo, Partner, Utica Barbara A. Devendorf, Partner Nancy A. Beadle, Partner, Utica	1977
17.	Syracuse Wealth Management LLC 8135 Soule Road Liverpool, NY 13090 (315) 925-5500/syracusewealthmanagement.com	6 1 10	1,000	financial planning, personal & business tax preparation, accounting, bookkeeping, insurance, investment consulting, business startup, tax planning	Gary D. Lucas, Registered Principal, Partner Ronald J. Pratt, Jr., Partner/CPA	2001
18.	Cuomo, Winters & Schmidt, CPAs, PLLC 6315 Fly Road Suite 108 East Syracuse, NY 13057 (315) 471-0465/cpacws.com	5 3 5	1,642	tax preparation, tax planning, and tax consulting for businesses, nonprofits, and individuals; compilations and reviews; audits for nonprofits and employee-benefit plans; full-service bookkeeping and QuickBooks support; business-valuation services including purchases and sales	Mark A. Schmidt, Partner Mark S. Strong, Partner	2015
19.	D.K. Griffith & Company 2108 Genesee St. Utica, NY 13502 (315) 793-9354/dkgriffith.com	2 0 4	NA	resolving tax problems, IRS & NY State tax notices, transferring assets into trusts, tax consulting, obtaining Tax ID numbers	David K. Griffith, President & CEO Kurt F. Gruenewald, Registered Financial Consultant Mallory Tine, Lead, Customer Service	2006
20.	Deyo & Rabideau, CPAs PLLC 345 Harry L Drive Johnson City, NY 13790 (607) 724-6784/deyoandrabideaucpas.business.site	0 2 0	NA	individual and business-tax preparation, bookkeeping services and estate and trust-tax returns and planning	Julie Anne Rabideau, Partner G. Russell Deyo, Partner	2011

THE LIST

Research by Vance Marriner
vmarriner@cnybj.com
(315) 579-3911
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UPCOMING LISTS:

March 4
Economic-Development
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March 11
Coworking Spaces

ABOUT THE LIST

Information was provided by representatives of listed organizations and their websites. Other groups may have been eligible but did not respond to our requests for information. Organizations had to complete the survey by the deadline to be included on the list. While *The Business Journal* strives to print accurate information, it is not possible to independently verify all data submitted. We reserve the right to edit entries or delete categories for space considerations.

Central New York includes Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Seneca, Tioga, and Tompkins counties.

WANT TO BE ON THE LIST?
If your company would like to be considered for next year's list, or another list, please email: vmarriner@cnybj.com

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NEWS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Adam Rombel
arombel@cnybj.com

STAFF WRITERS

Traci DeLore
tdelore@cnybj.com

Eric Reinhardt
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Erin Zehr
ewebb@cnybj.com

RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Vance Marriner
vmarriner@cnybj.com

COLUMNISTS

Will Barclay
Crystal DeStefano
Lee Hamilton

SALES

Kelly Bailey
kbailey@cnybj.com

Steve Pollock
spollock@cnybj.com

CIRCULATION

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Raviv Neshet
(315) 579-3927
circulation@cnybj.com

ADMINISTRATIVE

PUBLISHER

Marny Neshet
mneshet@cnybj.com

OFFICE MANAGER

Patty Martino
officemanager@cnybj.com

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Preserving New York State's Farmland is the Right Thing to Do

Both for our economy and our legacy

New York state's agriculture industry is in the midst of a total upheaval, and a recent report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) highlighted some major concerns coming out of this new normal.



WILL BARCLAY
Opinion

According to the USDA report, New York lost 2,788 farms and 363,885 acres of land between 2017 and 2022. Statistics like these prompted U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to sound the alarm as he expressed concerns about food production in the U.S.

There are several reasons for this sharp decline. The consolidation of farms and other financial hardships that have driven some out of the industry are key culprits, said agricultural economist Christopher Wolf of Cornell University. Thankfully, for now, output and production have remained stable through the downsizing, but the Assembly Minority Conference has grave

concerns about this disturbing trend.

One major concern we have repeatedly expressed regards the difficult regulatory environment New York farmers are asked to endure. For example, recently, the number of hours farm workers are required to work before earning overtime has been reduced from 60 to 56, and by 2032 that number will drop all the way down to 40. New York is already well-documented as one of the least business-friendly states in the nation, and our farming policies have done nothing but illustrate why we are at the bottom of the regulatory barrel.

As these farms close, consolidate, and repurpose, we are not only risking irreversible damage to our supply chain, but we are also losing a huge piece of the history and fabric of New York. Generational family farms were once a staple of New York's economy, but they are fast becoming forgotten relics. Production levels may be afloat for the time being, but at some point, the system will not be able to handle any more fiscal and regulatory strain.

We can see the crisis looming, and now is the time to do something about it — rather than wait until all the farmland has evaporated. In 2022, our conference expressed concerns after another report, this one from Farm Credit East, indicated

"Generational family farms were once a staple of New York's economy, but they are fast becoming forgotten relics."

rising labor costs and food prices would begin to threaten the supply chain. Well, consider it threatened.

We have a rich history of production here, and it is socially and economically irresponsible to ignore that legacy. Like most problems, this impending farmland crisis will be much easier to mitigate before it grows. We have that opportunity now, and I call on my colleagues in the New York Legislature and governor's office to do something immediately before it is too late. ■

William (Will) A. Barclay, 55, Republican, is the New York Assembly minority leader and represents the 120th New York Assembly District, which encompasses all of Oswego County, as well as parts of Jefferson and Cayuga counties.

The Big Decisions that have Shaped American History

Big decisions have shaped the United States. We wouldn't be who we are as a nation without the decisiveness shown by America's founders and by our leaders in times of crisis. It's an essential quality of successful countries: the ability to make big, consequential decisions.



LEE HAMILTON
Opinion

We can start at the beginning, when the colonists made the enormous decision to break away from Britain and form an independent nation. Then, 85 years later, U.S. leaders decided it was essential to preserve the Union against secession by the Southern states.

Another big decision came in the 1930s and 1940s when President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) persuaded Americans to abandon isolationism and engage with the world. U.S. participation in World War II and our leadership in creating security and economic institutions shaped the post-war international order.

This isn't an all-encompassing list of big decisions. There are many others we could mention. But these decisions stand out for their influence on American history.

The colonists' decision to break with Britain wasn't inevitable, nor was it easy. It meant defying the most powerful empire in the world, and it put the colonists at severe risk. Benjamin Franklin supposedly said, "We must all hang together or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

Inspired by Enlightenment principles and prodded by British oppression, the Continental Congress voted to declare independence and ratified the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Thomas Jefferson's idealistic words — "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights" — set a high bar.

The founding ideals were tested when divisions between North and South led to the Civil War. While Confederate leaders made it clear that protecting slavery was their primary objective, Abraham Lincoln framed the conflict as a battle to preserve the Union. Again, there was nothing preordained about this. There were strong forces pulling the country apart.

Lincoln, celebrated as the Great Emancipator, insisted his duty was to maintain the Union, not to end slavery. In 1862, he declared: "If I could save the union without freeing any slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that."

Preserving the Union was a big, costly decision. By the time the Civil War ended, 617,000 Americans had died. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free Southern slaves in 1863. And slavery was, in fact, abolished with the 13th Amendment.

Over 100,000 more Americans died in World War I. When FDR took office in 1933, the country was exhausted by war and suspicious of foreign entanglements. Isolationism was at a high level. Roosevelt

spoke forcefully about freedom and democracy, but his foreign policy was cautious, deferring to popular sentiment.

But when World War II broke out, the president pushed America to support our allies. Pulled into the conflict by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. played a leading role in fighting and, later, in creating the institutions that would rebuild Europe and Asia and restore peace and security. The postwar world order owes much to FDR's decision to engage assertively with the world.

What big decisions does America face today? It's an open question, but issues that called for tough decisions in the past are still with us. With the nation deeply divided, can we unite and preserve the Union? With many Americans increasingly skeptical of involvement in international conflicts, will we engage with the world or return to the "America First" attitudes of the 1930s.

Successful countries must make big decisions, even when they involve risk and controversy. Our well-being and that of the world depend on our ability to make these decisions when necessary. ■

Lee Hamilton, 92, is a senior advisor for the Indiana University (IU) Center on Representative Government, distinguished scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, and professor of practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Hamilton, a Democrat, was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years (1965-1999), representing a district in south-central Indiana.

BUSINESS CALENDAR

Email us at movers@cnybj.com

FEBRUARY 29

■ **Greater Oswego-Fulton Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting** from 12-1:30 p.m. at Lakeview Event and Conference Center at 26 East 1st St. in Oswego. Join the Greater Oswego-Fulton Chamber of Commerce (GOFCC) as it explores the theme "Momentum." During this gathering of business and community leaders, the chamber will celebrate the impact that small, local, and community-minded companies are having throughout Oswego County. The meeting also features keynote remarks from Joe Nehme, senior manager of external affairs at Micron Technology, Inc. Nehme will provide an overview of Micron's New York megafab project, its community and workforce commitments, and how

the impact of this significant investment stands to benefit all of Central New York, including Oswego County. The GOFCC will also present several awards. For more information and to register, visit: <https://centerstateceo.com/events/2/2024/greater-oswego-fulton-chamber-commerce-annual-meeting>

MARCH 5

■ **2024 Legislative Agenda Rollout & Advocacy Day** from 7:30-9:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Binghamton, 2 Hawley St., Binghamton. Join Leadership Alliance CEO Stacey Duncan and Upstate United Executive Director Justin Wilcox as both organizations unveil their legislative agenda for this year. For more

information and to register, visit: <https://business.greaterbinghamtonchamber.com/events/details/2024-legislative-agenda-rollout-local-advocacy-day-9352?calendarMonth=2024-03-01>

MARCH 6

■ **CNYSME Headshots & Networking** event from 3-7 p.m. at Collegian Hotel & Suites, 1060 E. Genesee St. in Syracuse. Need a new professional headshot? Sign up to get yours taken by Ali, of Excel Media Solutions. He'll snap a photo of you and you'll have your copy in 1-2 weeks. This opportunity is open to anyone. Just sign-up for your time slot, and you're good to go. Don't need your headshot refreshed but still want to mingle? CNYSME has you

covered. The headshots program runs from 3-6 p.m., and the networking event is from 5-7 p.m. Headshots cost \$25 for CNYSME members, \$40 for non-members (includes networking event). The networking event by itself is free for members, \$10 for non-members. For more information and to register, visit: https://cnysme.org/cb_home/#/event/2024/3/6/headshots-networking

MARCH 8

■ **CNY Women's Summit** from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Oncenter in Syracuse. Celebrate International Women's Day at the largest event in Central New York for women in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ▶

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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE NEWS

BANKING

KeyCorp (NYSE: KEY) recently announced that **ADAM GOULD** has joined Key Private Bank as a wealth planner in its Syracuse office. Gould will be working with a team to provide financial-planning advice and a comprehensive set of strategies to further build, manage, protect, and transition clients' wealth. Gould has more than 12 years of experience in wealth planning and is a certified financial planner, or CFP.



Gould

EDUCATION

Manlius Pebble Hill (MPH), a prominent Central New York independent school, announced that **PORTIA MCGEE** will join its executive staff as its new director of development, effective Feb. 26. She will lead MPH's advancement efforts for the school's 6,000-plus alumni, families, faculty, staff, and friends of MPH. McGee brings 15 years of fundraising, alumni engagement, and events experience to MPH. She worked most recently as the director of development for USRowing, where she oversees fundraising operations for the nonprofit national governing body for the sport of rowing in the U.S. A 2008 Olympian, McGee is a seven-time member of the USA national rowing team. Prior to her work at USRowing, McGee worked in advancement at the Hun School of Princeton in New Jersey, and the Bush School in Seattle, Washington — both independent schools. In addition to building relationships with donors, including alumni and families, McGee will provide leadership for and strategically manage MPH's fundraising programs, including the annual fund, capital and major-gift campaigns, and planned giving. She will also oversee special events and alumni relations.



McGee

HEALTH CARE

Slocum-Dickson Medical Group in New Hartford has announced the addition of two nurse practitioners: **MICHELLE PALUMBO** and **ASHLEY PARMENTIER**.

Palumbo holds a master's degree in nursing from Utica University and board certification as a family nurse practitioner. She works in collaboration with Dr. Apruva Shah in internal medicine. Parmentier most recently worked alongside Dr. N. Marino Selvarajah as a nurse before earning her master's degree in nursing from Utica University and board certification as a family nurse practitioner. She now works in collaboration with Selvarajah in family medicine. Slocum-Dickson Medical Group is a physician-owned, multi-specialty group practice that employs more than 100 providers and several hundred staff members.



Palumbo



Parmentier

MARKETING

CODY KAY has joined Cooley Group, Inc., as a brand specialist in its Syracuse office. In this role, he is responsible for understanding customer needs and finding solutions to help them showcase their brands. With 12 years of sales and customer-service experience, Kay is known for fostering strong relationships and delivering exceptional service and is committed to learning and meeting the unique needs of clients. Cooley Group provides customized promotional, print, and fulfillment solutions to its customers.



Kay

MARKET RESEARCH

MARJORIE PIATKOWSKI has been promoted to multicultural health care administrative associate at Research & Marketing Strategies (RMS), a full-service market-research firm located in Baldwinsville. In her current role, Piatkowski is responsible for adhering to strict CMS guidelines while preparing patient-survey distribution and data collection for various CAHPS surveys. Piatkowski brings experience in



Piatkowski

health-care-related duties and functions, including data analysis and patient-satisfaction measurement. She also serves in a vital capacity, assisting the organization with Spanish translations and various aspects of Spanish auditing of print materials and client communication. She is also instrumental in ensuring all Spanish callers adhere to various CAHPS survey scripts when speaking with patients and/or caregivers. Piatkowski holds an associate degree in business administration, with a concentration in marketing from the University of Guayaquil, Ecuador. RMS has also promoted **MELISSA LEWIS** to the new role of intercept projects supervisor. As the newest member of the RMS Research Analytics team, she will be coordinating the management and fieldwork activities associated with contracted intercept fieldwork for various national airports, public transportation, and other intercept work conducted by RMS. Lewis brings a diverse skill set, knows how to get projects done, is passionate about exceeding client expectations, and works diligently to manage complex intercept projects, RMS said. Lewis joined RMS in April 2022 as QualiSight supervisor, where she managed the day-to-day operations of RMS's onsite call center and focus group facility, known as QualiSight. Before joining RMS, Lewis oversaw revenue-recovery agencies for a span of 19 years. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Phoenix.



Lewis

NONPROFITS

Liberty Resources has announced the promotion of two employees. **SARA JONES-PERSONS** is stepping into the role of program director of children's health home care management at Liberty Resources. She will oversee operations in five counties while optimizing services delivery and collaborating with community partners. Jones-Persons will also support the care management efforts of Liberty POST, the agency's early childhood division. Jones-Persons is a licensed



Jones-Persons

master social worker and has nearly eight years of experience. She was previously a program supervisor at the agency. **MAURA ASELTINE** has been promoted to school-based mental health director. Aseltine was previously a supervising therapist at the agency. In her new role, she will oversee Liberty Resources' school-based mental-health programming and advocate for the psychological well-being of students in schools across Onondaga County. Aseltine is a licensed marriage and family therapist. She has been with Liberty Resources for six years.



Aseltine

REAL ESTATE

BellCornerstone has announced the hiring of **NOAH T. WILLIAMS**. Williams earned a bachelor's degree in business management with a concentration in financial economics from Norwich University. Prior to working at BellCornerstone, Williams was a full-time student athlete at Norwich University on the men's hockey and golf teams.



Williams

RETAIL

Tops Friendly Markets — a full-service grocery retailer in New York, northern Pennsylvania, and Vermont — has promoted **BRANDON COX** to customer-experience specialist. Cox has been with Tops since 2012 and has served in many different capacities including assistant customer-service manager, customer-service manager, operations manager, and most recently the assistant manager at the Tops store in Syracuse. He resides in Rome. Tops Friendly Markets has also formally promoted **CHRIS CATHOLDI** to store manager of the Tops in Elbridge, after he served as interim store manager for the Elbridge location. Catholdi also previously was an overnight manager, dairy/frozen manager, grocery manager, and an operations manager at Tops. He lives in Waterloo. ■



Cox



Catholdi

CALENDAR:

Continued from page 18

business. The CNY Women's Network plans to use this event to spread the message that leadership comes in all forms. Whether you are an entrepreneur, a high-level executive, running a household, or in the early stages of your career, every woman has something to gain from the CNY Women's Summit. Cost is \$197-\$250. For more information and to register, visit: <https://www.cnywomensnetwork.com/summit>

MARCH 12

■ **Successful Successions: Learnings from Rochester Family Firm Leaders and Their Journeys to the Top** program from 5-8 p.m. at Cleary Family Auditorium in Kearney Hall on the campus of St. John Fisher University in Pittsford. Attendees will hear panelists' invaluable insights, lessons learned, and advice for families navigating the intricate process of succession planning. The program will include a networking cocktail hour and dinner. Carol Wittmeyer,

director of the Family Business Program at Fisher, will moderate the panel, which includes Jack Doyle (fifth generation), president and CEO of Doyle Security Systems; Jon Spacher (fifth generation), co-owner and CEO of Fee Brothers; and Kate Hildebrandt (fourth generation), president and CEO of Leo J Roth Corporation. Additionally, Alexandra Justis (fifth generation), director of marketing and engagement at Doyle Security Systems, is serving as the event chair. Online registration is now open and closes on Friday, March 1 (also the last day to request a refund). For more information, email: Carol Wittmeyer at cwittmeyer@sjf.edu or call (585) 385-8238.

MARCH 13

■ **Tompkins Chamber Business After Hours** event from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Tompkins Cortland Community College, 170 North St., Dryden. Co-hosted with the Cortland Area Chamber of Commerce. Tour TC3's exciting new spaces, including science labs, food and clothing pantry,

and Health and Wellness Center. Snacks and beverages will be available, and TC3 alumni will get special recognition. Please be sure to indicate if you are an alum, when you register online or in-person. Cost to attend is \$10 for chamber members, \$15 for non-members. For more information and to register, visit: <https://business.tompkinschamber.org/events/details/business-after-hours-at-tompkins-cortland-community-college-192516>

MARCH 21

■ **Speed Networking for a Cause 2024** event from 5-7 p.m. at Holiday Inn Binghamton. The goal is for nonprofits to recruit new volunteers and board members for their organizations. Business professionals will have 1 minute to talk about what kind of nonprofit volunteer opportunities interest them. Nonprofits (limit one person per nonprofit) will have 1 minute to pitch their organization to the business professional. After 2 minutes the business professionals move on to the next nonprofit. After the Speed

Networking, attendees are invited for light hors d'oeuvres, sponsored by the BLI Alumni Association, United Way of Broome County, and VAST. Cash bar will be available. For more information, including registration, visit: <https://business.greaterbinghamtonchamber.com/events/details/speed-networking-for-a-cause-2024-9354?calendarMonth=2024-03-01>

MARCH 26

■ **"Women Rising: Motivate. Connect. Empower!"** event from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at Everson Museum of Art, 401 Harrison St., Syracuse. Join CenterState CEO for an extraordinary gathering celebrating women's strength, resilience, and ingenuity. This half-day event is filled with enriching workshops and a lineup of empowering speakers who have overcome obstacles and achieved remarkable success in their careers. Cost is \$40 per person. For more information and to register, visit: <https://centerstateceo.com/events/3/2024/women-rising-motivate-connect-empower>

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