



UHS WILSON MEDICAL CENTER TOWER PROJECT PROGRESSES

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PHOTO CREDIT: UHS HOSPITALS & FLICKR



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NATUR-TYME TO CLOSE AFTER 'INSURMOUNTABLE' FINANCIAL LOSSES

ERIC REINHARDT / CNYBJ



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BASSETT, ONEONTA YMCA PARTNER TO KEEP FOXCARE FITNESS OPEN

PHOTO CREDIT: FOXCARE FITNESS WEBSITE

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May 8 Special Report: Health Care Quarterly

May 15 List: Commercial Property Management Firms / Minority-Owned Businesses

May 15 Special Report: Construction/Luxury Living

May 22 List: Web-Design Companies

May 22 Special Report: Cybersecurity/Family Business/Small Business

May 29 List: Environmental Firms

May 29 Special Report: Energy/Environment/Sustainability

June 5 Special Report:

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June 12 List: Financial Planners

June 12 Special Report: Wealth Management

June 19 List: CPA Firms

June 19 Special Report: Law/Accounting/Taxes

June 26 List: Engineering Firms

June 26 Special Report: Engineering/Architecture Directory

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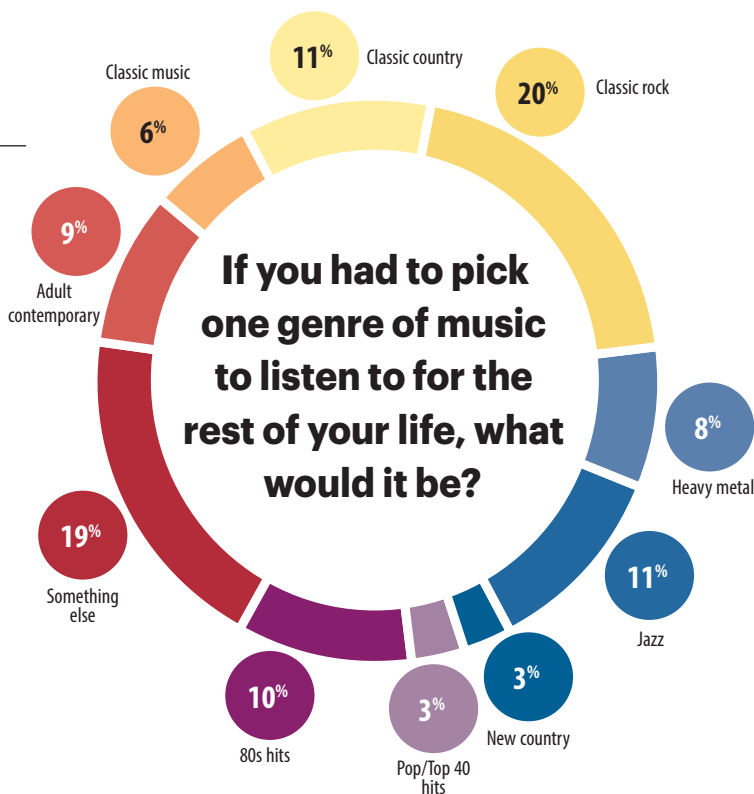
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CNYBJ Briefs



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Lockheed Martin Owego wins nearly \$30 million Navy order modification

OWEGO — Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems in Owego has been awarded a more than \$29.5 billion firm-fixed-price modification to an order against a previously-issued basic ordering agreement.

This adjustment exercises options to procure 228 Generation 3i/5i mission computers (MCs) (210 for the Navy, 11 for the government of Australia, four for the government of Saudi Arabia, and three for the government of Denmark); 210 Generation 3i/5i flight management computers (FMCs) (196 for the Navy, nine for Australia, three for Denmark, and two for Saudi Arabia), according to a March 27 contract announcement from the U.S. Department of Defense. The contract modification also procures 40 aircraft wiring kits; 1120 Lynx licenses; 4

Gm5i-MCs; and 541 RedHat licenses for the Navy in support of upgrading Generation III, V MCs and Generation VI MCs configuration to GEN 3i and 5i MC configuration, as well as Generation III and V FMCs configuration to GEN 3i and 5i FMC configuration for MH-60R/S aircraft retrofit.

Work will be performed in Owego (97 percent) and Clearwater, Florida (3 percent), and is expected to be completed in March 2026. Fiscal 2023 aircraft procurement (Navy) funds totaling nearly \$27.1 million and foreign-military sales customer funds of \$2.5 million will be obligated at the time of award — none of which will expire at the end of the current fiscal year. The Naval Air Systems Command in Patuxent River, Maryland is the contracting activity.

State comptroller report: Value of IDA projects increased 10 percent in 2021 to \$126 billion

ALBANY — New York state's 107 local industrial development authorities (IDAs) reported 4,324 active projects with an aggregate value of \$126 billion in 2021, a 10.4 percent, or \$11.9 billion, increase from 2020.

That's according to a report issued by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli on April 11. The number of IDA projects increased by 1.5 percent in the period.

"IDAs can play an important role in helping local economies and businesses expand. This report provides taxpayers with a look at the financial and project data reported by local IDAs so they can track their activities," DiNapoli said. "The tax breaks IDAs provide can impact local taxes so it's important to ensure these projects are creating or retaining the jobs and economic benefits they are supposed to. Publishing this information, including IDA costs, helps to increase their accountability."

Since 2011, the number of active IDA projects has remained relatively stable, but total project value has been rising. Average project value over the period increased 76 percent from \$16.5 million per project in 2011 to \$29.2 million in 2021, per the comptroller's report. County IDAs were responsible for 61.4 percent of all active IDA projects in 2021, followed by towns (18.5 percent), cities (12.3 percent), New York City (7.4 percent), villages (0.5 percent), and city-town IDAs (0.1 percent).

DiNapoli's report summarizes data as reported by IDAs for fiscal year end 2021 through the Public Authorities Reporting Information System (PARIS) and is not independently verified by his office. The full comptroller's report is available at: https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/publications/pdf/ida-performance-report-2023.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Syracuse Opera announces four new board members

SYRACUSE — The board of directors for Syracuse Opera, Central New York's only year-round professional opera company, recently announced it has appointed the following four new board members.

Casey Barduhn has been a member of the Syracuse Opera Chorus for more than 30 years. He served as an educator for 35 years, including as superintendent of schools for the Westhill Central School District. Barduhn is a graduate of Syracuse University, with degrees in music education, elementary education, and education administration.



Barduhn

Dayle Burgess most recently served as an assistant to the president at St. Lawrence University. She previously served as the chief of staff to a New York State assemblymember, as well as a Board of Education member, and past president for the Gouverneur Central School District. Burgess received her bachelor's degree from Cornell University.



Burgess

Henriette Carvalho is a lead manager in underwriting intelligence at Equitable. She has been with the company for 23 years. For the past six years, Carvalho has been the chair of an employee resource group. She previously served as secretary and VP with the Rochester Western New York Chapter of Prospanica: The Association of Hispanic MBAs & Business Professionals. Carvalho is a graduate of Universidade de São Paulo, USP with a pharmacy degree, and holds an MBA from SUNY Oswego.



Carvalho

Kathleen Roland-Silverstein is the author of "A Performance Guide to the Songs of Jean Sibelius" (Oxford University Press, forthcoming) and "Romanser: 25 Swedish Art Songs with Guide to Swedish Lyric Diction" (Gehrmans Musikförlag, 2013). She serves as the music reviewer for the Journal of Singing and regularly contributes to the Opera Journal. Roland-Silverstein is a highly regarded concert soloist and specialist in the music of the 20th and 21st centuries, and has performed internationally with many music festivals, the Syracuse Opera said. She is a faculty member at Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music and has served on the board of the National Opera Association.



Silverstein

The Syracuse Opera was founded in 1974.



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UHS Wilson Medical Center tower project progresses

BY TRACI DELORE
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JOHNSON CITY — Construction on the UHS Wilson Medical Center’s six-story expansion project is more than 25 percent complete with work moving forward on the 183,375-square-foot main tower that will serve as the new front entry for UHS’ health and medical services.

With the majority of the structural steel in place as of February, crews are working on framing and prepping interior walls in the basement and first-floor emergency department and running mechanical, electrical, and plumbing lines through the walls, according to a UHS news release.

When complete, the tower will hold four inpatient medical/surgical units, each with 30 private patient rooms. It will also hold the new emergency department, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) suite, and a rooftop helipad.

Workers have completed several phases of the Wilson project including an upgrade to the facility’s generators, waste farm, and oxygen bulk farm, and the development of two trauma rooms and relocating the post-anesthesia care unit. That space will serve as the new corridor linking the existing hospital with the new tower, UHS says.

The rest of the expected project timeline calls for the completion of upgrades to radiography/fluoroscopy rooms and imaging support space in August, 28 emergency department rooms in April 2024, the third-floor medical/surgical unit with 30 private patient rooms and the MRI suite in the spring of 2024, medical/surgical units on the 4th through 6th floors with 90 patient rooms in the fall of 2024, and 19 additional emergency department rooms in the summer of 2025.

The expected completion date for the project is the summer of 2025, UHS says. ■



A recent construction photo of the UHS Wilson Medical Center’s six-story expansion project.

PHOTO CREDIT: UHS HOSPITALS/FLICKR



PHOTO CREDIT: FOXCARE FITNESS WEBSITE

Bassett, Oneonta YMCA partner to keep FoxCare Fitness open

BY TRACI DELORE
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ONEONTA — Bassett Healthcare Network and A.O. Fox Hospital announced they have reached an agreement with the Oneonta Family YMCA to keep FoxCare Fitness open to the public.

Beginning June 6, Bassett will lease the space to the YMCA, which will operate the facility without any disruption in service, the health-care system said in a release.

“Over the past couple of months, many members of FoxCare Fitness and the Oneonta community have shared with me how important this facility is to them,” Dr. Tommy Ibrahim, Bassett Healthcare Network President/CEO, said. “I am thrilled that we are partnering with the Oneonta Family YMCA to preserve this unique facility and service to the community.”

The two organizations say they are currently working to finalize details on

operations, membership, staffing, specific space features, and other provision for the Oneonta Family YMCA’s oversight while preserving key services to the community. The facility will continue to offer cardio exercise machines, weightlifting and body-building equipment, a fitness studio, a strength and conditioning studio with functional training amenities, and pool facilities including a lap pool and therapy pool. A.O. Fox will also keep operating outpatient cardiac, physical, occupational, and pulmonary rehabilitation services within the FoxCare Fitness space.

“The Oneonta Family YMCA is very excited to enter into this partnership with Bassett Healthcare Network and A.O. Fox Hospital,” YMCA Executive Director Frank Russo said. “This is a true community collaboration that will benefit Oneonta and its surrounding communities.”

The nonprofit Oneonta Family YMCA was founded in 1883. ■

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Natur-Tyme to close after insurmountable financial losses

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

DeWITT — The owners of Natur-Tyme — a store that describes itself as serving the health and wellness needs of Central New York — plan to close the location in the coming months after 40 years of operation.

The store is located at 3160 Erie Boulevard East in DeWitt.

In its April 14 statement, Natur-Tyme cites “ongoing changes in consumer behavior accentuated by the pandemic” and rising operational costs, which has resulted in reduced revenue and “insurmountable” financial losses.

The closing will affect 30 employees, including 22 full-time and eight part-time workers, Natur-Tyme owner Andrew Fox tells CNYBJ in an email.

On its website, Natur-Tyme describes itself as “much more than your average health food store.” It carries grocery products, supplements, health and beauty products, as well as an art gallery and a salon.

The Natur-Tyme store in DeWitt will continue to operate with business as nor-

mal through the remainder of April. The store will not be purchasing additional inventory, so it is “highly recommended customers come in soon and purchase the products they have been utilizing for years before these items are no longer available on the store shelves,” per the announcement.

Additional e-mails and social-media messages will follow in the next couple of weeks highlighting Natur-Tyme’s “Going Out of Business” sale, which will begin in early May and could continue into early June if products are still available in the store.

Natur-Tyme also notes that all store fixtures, café equipment, salon equipment, office furniture, and merchandising racks and materials are available for sale and “reasonable purchase offers will be considered.”

Natur-Tyme owners Fox and Wendy Meyerson issued the following message to their customers on April 14.

“The decision to close Natur-Tyme was extremely difficult since this local business has been part of our family for more than 30 years. We want to express our gratitude to our dedicated and loyal



ERIC REINHARDT / CNYBJ

Natur-Tyme, located at 3160 Erie Boulevard East in DeWitt, on April 14 announced plans to close after 40 years in business. The store cites consumer-behavior changes after the pandemic and rising operational costs for “insurmountable” financial losses. Natur-Tyme offers health-food products, supplements, health and beauty products, a salon, and an art gallery.

employees for their many years of service. They are the true heroes of the Natur-Tyme legacy!” the owners said. “We also want to acknowledge and thank our many Natur-Tyme customers who shopped in our store over the years as it grew tremendously and relocated to three different buildings throughout the Syracuse marketplace. It has been an

honor and privilege to be a part of your lives and we thank you for your loyalty and patronage.”

Meyerson and Fox went on to say, “Although saddened by this announcement, we are very proud of what we have accomplished in our efforts to improve the health and wellness of tens of thousands of customers over these many years.” ■

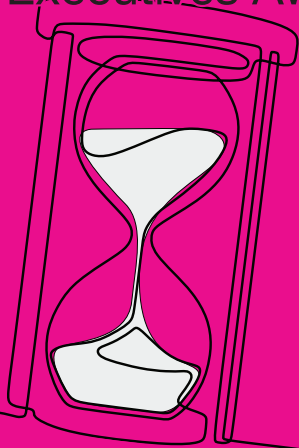
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Visions holds annual meeting, announces board appointments

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

ENDWELL — Visions Federal Credit Union elected three directors to its board of directors during the credit union’s 57th annual meeting, which was held recently at its headquarters located in Endwell.

In addition, a special reorganization meeting following the annual meeting included the election of new officers and appointments, per an April 11 news release from Visions.

Jill Bennedum was elected and James Lewis and Laurie Schorno were reelected to three-year terms on the Visions board during the annual meeting. Its board of directors also includes Christopher Marion, chairperson; Mary Robinson, vice chairperson; Kelly Roche, secretary; and directors Kenneth Kidder III, Michael Mullen, and Denise Stoughton.

Besides the election, Marion also recognized retiring board treasurer

George Bobinski, Jr. for his dedication and commitment throughout his 14 years of volunteer service, Visions said. Mullen and Marion were also recognized for five years and 10 years of volunteer service, respectively.

During the special reorganization meeting, the board reelected executive committee members. They



included Marion as chairperson; Robinson as vice chairperson; and Roche as secretary; and Stoughton was

elected treasurer. Marion appointed Bobinski and Alan Hertel as director emeriti, Visions noted.

The board also reappointed Douglas Camin, Stephanie Jerzak, and Mark Wasser — members of the supervisory committee — to two-year terms as well as John Koniuto to a one-year term as alternate. The board also appointed Mary Anne Benedict to a one-year term as alternate on the supervisory committee, which also includes Fermin Romero III and Gordon Thompson, Visions said. ■

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SPECIAL REPORT:

BANKING & CREDIT UNION REPORT



A Community Bank, N.A. branch office in Oswego.

ADAM ROMBEL/CNYBJ

Community Bank earnings drop after securities-sale losses

BY TRACI DELORE
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DeWITT — Community Bank System, Inc. (NYSE: CBU), parent company of Community Bank, N.A., recently reported that its earnings plummeted in the first quarter, with net income falling nearly 88 percent to \$5.8 million from \$47.1 million a year ago, in the wake of a balance-sheet repositioning.

Earnings per share dropped nearly as much, declining 85 percent to 11 cents per share in the quarter from 75 cents in the first quarter of 2022, according to the banking company's April 25 earnings report.

Community Bank System announced in February that it had completed a balance-sheet repositioning related to its investment-securities portfolio. It included the sale of \$786.1 million in book value of its lower-yielding available-for-sale debt securities with a pre-tax realized loss of \$52.3 million. Community Bank used

\$733.8 million in proceeds to pay down overnight borrowings with rising and comparatively high variable interest rates. It says it expects to recoup the loss within two years.

"We are pleased with the core revenue performance of both our banking and non-banking businesses despite the company's first-quarter operating expenses being a bit elevated due to higher compensation and benefit-related expenses and other factors," Mark E. Tryniski, president and CEO of Community Bank System, said in the earnings report.

Total revenue for the quarter, at \$124.5 million, decreased \$36 million, or 22.4 percent, from the prior year's first quarter, primarily driven by the securities-sale loss. Total operating revenue, which excludes securities gains and losses, was \$176.6 million, up \$16.2 million, or 10 percent, from a year ago. That was driven by a \$16.2 million increase in net interest income, which to-

taled \$111 million, and a \$500,000 increase in financial-services business revenue. Those gains were partially offset by a \$600,000 decrease in noninterest revenue, which totaled \$16.4 million. Interest income and fees on loans totaled \$100.4 million, up 38.4 percent from \$72.5 million a year ago, per the earnings report.

"Despite solid operating revenues in the quarter, the company's operating earnings per share decreased a penny compared to the prior year's first quarter, largely due to an increase in the provision for credit losses and higher operating expenses," Tryniski said. "Although asset quality remains strong, the company recorded \$3.5 million in the provision for credit losses during the first quarter of 2023, a \$2.6 million increase over the prior year's first quarter, primarily due to an adverse change in the economic outlook."

Community Bank System's operating expenses increased \$14.2 million to

\$114 million, driven by higher salaries and employee-benefits expenses along with an increase in other expenses that included the impact of the second-quarter 2022 acquisition of Elmira Savings Bank.

Total assets at Community Bank System, as of March 31, stood at \$15.26 billion, down almost \$370 million from one year ago and down nearly \$580 million from the end of 2022.

Community Bank operates 210 offices across New York, northeastern Pennsylvania, Vermont, and western Massachusetts. The banking company also offers financial-planning, insurance, and wealth-management services through Community Bank Wealth Management Group and OneGroup, NY, Inc. Its Benefit Plans Administrative Services, Inc., subsidiary provides employee-benefits administration, trust services, collective-investment-fund administration, and actuarial-consulting services. ■

Financial literacy is a business must, banker says

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

DeWITT — Often thought of as something for individual consumers, financial literacy can be an important element of business ownership, according to one area banking professional.



Mattice

There are really two prongs to financial literacy for business owners, says Laura Mattice, Community Reinvestment Act officer at Community Bank, N.A.

The first prong is really understanding finances as a business owner, she notes. “It’s hard to be a successful business if you don’t know your finances.”

Her recommendation is that anyone considering opening their own business have a good working knowledge of basic business finances including cash flow,

budgeting, and more. “Just basic accounting for any business is good,” Mattice says.

While many businesses will either employ someone full time or hire an accountant to help with finances, a business owner needs that basic knowledge, she says, to make sure that accountant is doing his/her job and to avoid being taken advantage of.

Knowledge of basic lending practices can ensure that business owners make the best financing decisions for their business, and budgeting knowledge will help them prepare and plan for necessary expenditures, Mattice says.

To find financial literacy help, there are several options for business owners and entrepreneurs including reaching out to their regular financial institution and checking with area small-business groups and the local chamber of commerce.

Just as important as having business

financial know-how is making sure employees also have some basic financial literacy, Mattice says. Community Bank provides financial literacy education for its own employees, she notes, with the understanding that not everyone who works at a bank is a banker.

Nationally, only about 20 percent of employers try to help their employees with financial literacy and money management, she says, but the benefits to doing so are huge.

“You end up with a happier and healthier workforce when you provide financial education,” she contends. Financial difficulties can lead to stress, absenteeism, and other issues in the workplace.

By working with the same resources they might tap to bolster their own financial knowledge, employers can put together some basic financial-literacy resources for their employees to cover things such as budgeting, understanding

credit cards, planning for retirement, and more.

But employers “shouldn’t make it mandatory or make it where people have to sign up for something,” Mattice cautions. Often, bundling it with an employee assistance program (EAP) is an easy way to make information available for those who want it.

“Businesses that invest in their employees — it’s a great benefit that doesn’t cost a lot of money,” she says.

In her role at Community Bank, Mattice makes sure the bank is reaching out into the communities it serves. A huge part of that outreach is offering financial-literacy education to businesses, to customers, and to organizations that serve the community.

Community Bank operates more than 210 branches across upstate New York, northeastern Pennsylvania, Vermont, and western Massachusetts. ■

Solvay Bank announces promotions in branch administration

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

SOLVAY — Solvay Bank announced the recent promotions of Caitlin Wynn and Jan Lighton in its Branch Administration Department.

Wynn has been promoted to retail operations specialist at Solvay Bank. She has

previously held the roles of head teller, banking-solutions representative, and assistant branch manager. Wynn graduated from Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College.

Lighton is starting a new position as assistant VP, branch manager at Solvay Bank. She previously held the title of assistant branch manager and has 15 years of banking experience. Lighton

is a graduate of Onondaga Community College.

Founded in 1917, Solvay Bank says it is the oldest community bank established in Onondaga County. Solvay Bank has nine branches in Solvay,



Wynn



Lighton

Baldwinsville, Camillus, Cicero, DeWitt, Liverpool, North Syracuse, Westvale, and downtown Syracuse. Solvay Bank Insurance Agency, Inc. is its full-service general insurance agency. ■



PHOTO CREDIT: AMERICU CREDIT UNION

Ronald Belle (at podium), president and CEO of Rome-based AmeriCU Credit Union, addresses the organization’s annual membership meeting held March 13.

AmeriCU CEO says the credit union remains financially strong

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

ROME — Rome-based AmeriCU Credit Union “remains financially strong and well-capitalized.”

That’s part of the message that Ronald Belle, president and CEO of AmeriCU, delivered to the credit union’s annual membership meeting held March 13. John Stevenson, chairman of the AmeriCU board of directors, also addressed the current membership on the credit union’s financial performance and successes during 2022, per a March 16 news release about the meeting.

As Belle looked ahead to 2023, he reviewed the organization’s growth and financial strength, highlighting what he called the “credit union difference.”

“Being a not-for-profit, credit unions have a different governance model, meaning AmeriCU exists to return value to

their collective membership through competitive pricing and enhanced services vs. a small group of stakeholders. This places a higher importance on wisely managing and investing those funds,” Belle said in the release. “At AmeriCU our number one priority is always our members financial well-being and we have several checks and balances in place to ensure the credit union keeps our financial ratios and key performance indicators balanced. Our strategic team stays attune to market shifts and meets on a regular basis to make adjustments as needed.”

As for operational highlights in 2022, AmeriCU noted its new logo and brand, an updated modern financial-center design, interactive teller machines, online chat feature, redesigned credit cards, and rewards program. AmeriCU also was voted a “Best Company” to work for in New York State, the credit union added. ■

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Berkshire Bank parent's Q1 net income rises 37 percent

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

Berkshire Hills Bancorp (NYSE: BHLB) — the parent company of Berkshire Bank, which has a major presence in the Mohawk Valley — reported first-quarter net income of \$27.6 million, or 63 cents a share, up nearly 37 percent from \$20.2 million, or 42 cents, in the year-ago quarter.

While the results matched those forecast by Zacks Equity Research, Berkshire's net revenue, at \$114.14 million, fell 2.15 percent short of Zacks' expectations. However, that figure is still up substantially from revenue of \$89.74 million for the same quarter last year.

"Overall, we made steady progress despite the headwinds and turmoil in March, and remain on solid footing overall," Berkshire CEO Nitin Mhatre said during an April 20 investor call. He was referencing the financial turbulence in global banking markets in March when three banks failed and raised concerns about a recession or a banking crisis.

Mhatre says he is optimistic about what he sees happening in Central New York.

"In markets like Syracuse, we're excited about the investments being made through local government and private companies like Micron that are investing over \$100 billion in creating one of the largest microchip plants in the nation," he said on the call.

Berkshire Hills Bancorp remains focused on its Berkshire's Exciting Strategic Transformation (BEST) plan to improve customer experience, deliver profitable growth, enhance stakeholder value, and strengthen the company's community impact, Mhatre said. "We continued to make steady progress on our BEST plan while responding prudently to recent market turbulence in the quarter," he noted. "Our teams continued to provide exceptional

service to our clients, generating diversified loan growth and managing shifting deposit demand."

Berkshire already reached its targeted loan growth for the year, but has no plans to revise that target, he said. Mhatre anticipates that deposits will trend lower, offsetting some of the loan gains.

During the quarter, Berkshire welcomed several new executives including David Rosato as chief financial officer,



CNYBJ FILE PHOTO BY ZOEYADVERTISING.COM

James Brown as head of commercial banking, and Philip Jurgeleit as chief credit officer.

"We are pleased with our financial performance in the first quarter," Rosato said.

Berkshire Hills Bancorp's net interest income for the quarter totaled \$97.5 million, up from \$69.1 million in the first quarter of 2022. Non-interest income was \$16.6 million, down from \$20.7 million a year ago.

Average loan balances were \$8.7 million, up from \$7.3 million a year ago, while deposits decreased slightly in that time period from \$10.7 million to \$10.1 million.

While Berkshire Hills Bancorp did not

provide earnings guidance for the coming quarters, Zacks forecasts that Berkshire will produce earnings per share of 63 cents on \$117 million in revenue for the second quarter with full-year earnings of \$2.44 per share on \$466.05 million in revenue.

Headquartered in Boston, Berkshire Hills Bancorp has about \$12.3 billion in total assets and a community-based footprint of 100 financial centers in Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Locally, Berkshire has branches in DeWitt, Rome, Whitesboro, New Hartford, North Utica, Ilion, and West Winfield. ■

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*Visions business/organizational membership required with a \$1 minimum deposit – certain restrictions apply. Check with a Visions Federal Credit Union representative for membership eligibility details. Applications subject to approval. Bonus reportable for tax purposes. Offer valid on new Visa Business Cash Rewards credit cards opened by December 31, 2023. Federally insured by NCUA.

Visions FCU opens newly rebuilt branch in Tioga County

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

NEWARK VALLEY — The newly reconstructed branch office of Visions Federal Credit Union (FCU) in Newark Valley in Tioga County is now open.

The branch opening concludes a year-long project to tear down and rebuild the structure at 7198 State Route 38, Visions FCU said in its April 5 announcement.

The new office includes all services that were available at the prior branch, including a full-service teller line, walk-up ATM, and office space to assist with lending, account services, and business services.

Visions has also added a drive-up ATM at the location and is planning to install a free coin-counting machine for credit-union members.

The Newark Valley location has four employees, Visions tells CNYBJ in an email.

“We have strong roots in Newark Valley, and this construction project was our way of reinvesting in the community,” Jessica Blaha, branch manager, said. “Our new building has more space, updated equipment, and it’s at our familiar location on the corner of Routes 38 and 38B.”

Visions noted that it will formally celebrate the newly rebuilt office with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the beginning of June.



PHOTO CREDIT: VISIONS FCU

Following a year-long project, Visions Federal Credit Union (FCU) says it has opened a new branch office in Newark Valley in Tioga County.

bon-cutting ceremony at the beginning of June. ■

Pacos joins Five Star Bank, parent company as chief risk officer

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

WARSAW, N.Y. — Financial Institutions, Inc. (NASDAQ: FISD), parent company of Five Star Bank, recently announced that it has added Gary Pacos as chief risk officer.



Pacos

In his role, Pacos is responsible for all aspects of the organization’s risk-management function including identifying, measuring, monitoring, and managing risk throughout the company.

Pacos arrived at Five Star Bank with 34 years of progressive experience in banking, including spending the first 17 years of his career in compliance,

consumer credit, audit and operations roles at HSBC Bank USA. In 2006, he took the role of deputy chief compliance officer at M&T Bank, and then joined First Niagara Bank, where he ascended to chief compliance officer, according to a Financial Institutions news release. After KeyBank’s acquisition of First Niagara, Pacos stayed on with KeyBank as the SVP, compliance executive for fair & responsible banking, risk evaluation & assurance, overseeing fair lending and compliance testing, until 2020.

For the last two and a half years, Pacos has been serving as the chief compliance officer of Bank OZK, a public bank based in Little Rock, Arkansas with more than \$27 billion in assets. He made significant contributions to strengthen that

bank’s compliance-management systems, worked closely with regulators and supervisors on behalf of the bank, and led and developed a team of professionals, per the release.

Pacos had a distinguished career serving the nation in the United States Army as a senior army aviator rising to the rank of major. He continued his service to the country for many years, remaining in the New York Army National Guard until he ultimately retired in 2008, according to Financial Institutions.

A native Western New Yorker, Pacos is based in Five Star Bank’s Buffalo-area regional office in Amherst. He is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia.

As chief risk officer, Pacos succeeds Randy Phillips who chose to transition to

the newly created position of deputy chief credit officer for Five Star Bank.

Financial Institutions, based in Warsaw in Wyoming County, has about \$5.8 billion in total assets, offering banking, insurance and wealth-management products and services through a network of subsidiaries. Its Five Star Bank unit provides consumer and commercial banking and lending services to individuals, municipalities, and businesses through its Western and Central New York branch network and has commercial loan-production offices in Syracuse and Baltimore, serving the Central New York and Mid-Atlantic regions, respectively. Five Star Bank’s CNY branches include offices in Auburn, Waterloo, Geneva, Ovid, Horseheads, and Elmira. ■

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¹Total assets as of 12/31/2022. ²Commercial loans as of 12/31/2022. ³Dollars originated in 2022. ⁴Ranking by growth, credit quality, and profitability among the country's 100 largest banks and thrifts.

NBT Bancorp's first-quarter earnings dip 14 percent

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

NORWICH — NBT Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ: NBTB) reported net income of \$33.7 million, or 78 cents per share, in the first quarter of 2023, down nearly 14 percent from \$39.1 million, or 90 cents, in the year-ago quarter due to securities losses and acquisition expenses.

"NBT's first-quarter results reflect the strength of our balance sheet and our consistent and traditional banking franchise," John H. Watt, Jr., NBT's president and CEO, said in his company's April 24 earnings report. "During a quarter characterized by heightened market volatility, we grew loans and deposits, maintained strong asset quality, increased our capital position, and continued to deliver high-quality and timely customer service."

During the quarter, shareholders of Connecticut-based Salisbury Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ: SAL) approved NBT's plan to acquire the banking company in an equity transaction valued at

\$204 million.

"The merger is expected to close late in the second quarter, subject to customary closing conditions, including receipt of required regulatory approvals," Watt said. NBT incurred about \$600,000 in acquisition expenses during the quarter.

NBT Bancorp recorded a \$5 million securities loss on the write-off of a subordinated debt security of a failed bank in the first quarter. In March, both Signature Bank in New York and Silicon Valley Bank in California failed.

NBT also recorded a higher provision for loan losses at \$3.9 million, up from \$600,000 for the same quarter a year ago.

The Paycheck Protection Program, enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, netted \$2 million of income for NBT during the quarter, which also saw an 18 percent increase in net interest income to \$95.1 million due to higher yields on earning assets.

NBT's net interest income was \$95.1 million in the first quarter, up 18.3 percent from \$80.3 million for the same quar-



ADAM ROMBEL/CNYBJ FILE PHOTO

NBT Bank's branch office on West Genesee Street in Camillus.

ter a year ago. Noninterest income was \$31.4 million, down from \$42.7 million a year ago.

Total loans, at \$8.26 billion, were up from \$7.6 million a year ago, and total deposits were \$9.68 billion, down from \$10.5 billion a year prior, but up from \$9.5 billion at the end of 2022.

Norwich-based NBT Bancorp is a financial holding company that operates NBT Bank, N.A., a full-service bank with 140 branches; as well as Rochester-based EPIC Retirement Plan Services, a benefits-administration firm; and NBT Insurance Agency, a full-service insurance agency. It has about total \$11.8 billion in assets.

Oswego County FCU donating \$25K to selected nonprofits

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

OSWEGO — Oswego County Federal Credit Union (FCU) says it's donating a total of \$25,000 to a variety of area nonprofit organizations.

The effort started in April and will continue throughout May, per its April 11 announcement.

Now in its second year, the credit union developed this initiative to increase "employee involvement and presence" within the communities the organization serves, Oswego County FCU said.

The selection of the recipient organizations involved employees at each of the credit union's five branches suggesting nonprofits or charities, which were then voted upon within each branch to determine which organizations would receive a check personally delivered by Oswego County FCU employees.

This year, the credit union is delivering funding to the following organizations (listed as branch location with recipient[s] in parentheses): Oswego east branch (Human Concerns and Oswego County Hospice), Mexico (Mexico food pantry), Fulton (Oswego County Humane Society

and Kristina's House of Hope), Oswego west branch (Oswego County Historical Society and Peaceful Remedies), and Phoenix (Phoenix Public Library and Friends Forever Animal Rescue).

To be eligible to receive funds, an organization must be a 501(c)(3), the credit union noted.



In 2022, Oswego County FCU donated \$20,000 to local nonprofits. The credit union increased the total dollar figure awarded this year, following the addition of its Phoenix branch in late 2022.

"At Oswego County Federal Credit Union, we take great pride in supporting the communities we serve. This initiative is just one way that we can support nonprofits that are doing incredible and much-needed work in our area," Bill Carhart, CEO of Oswego County Federal Credit Union, said in a statement. "I would also like to thank our wonderful employees for taking the time to nominate causes that are near and dear to them."

Founded in 1975, Oswego County FCU is a member-owned, nonprofit financial cooperative association, with about 12,600 current members throughout Oswego County.

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PHOTO CREDIT: AMERICU CREDIT UNION

Members of the AmeriCU Credit Union investment team accept the 2022 Perspective Program Award of Excellence from the Credit Union National Association (CUNA) Mutual Group. From left are Sean Ryan, financial advisor; Kimberly Griffiths, investment-services coordinator; Ethan Spelman, CUNA advisor manager; Cara White, AVP of insurance and wealth services; Brianna Komondor, investment-services coordinator; Steven Horyl, financial advisor; and Raymond Acosta, financial advisor.

AmeriCU investment team wins industry award

BY JOURNAL STAFF
news@cnybj.com

ROME — AmeriCU Credit Union's investment team recently received the 2022 Perspective Program Award of Excellence from the Credit Union National Association (CUNA) Mutual Group.

CUNA Mutual Group is a mutual-insurance company that provides financial services to cooperatives, credit unions, and their members. A selection committee used information from sales leaders, managers, and CUNA Brokerage home-office leadership to review 275 financial-service programs across the country to select honorees.

AmeriCU's program was honored for its high standard of ethics and professionalism, overcoming adversity to achieve

goals, and being a true partner of CUNA Brokerage Services, Inc., the credit union said in a news release.

"Achieving this honor demonstrates the commitment and dedication of our team," Cara White, AVP of insurance and wealth services at AmeriCU, said. "Our number one priority is always our members' financial well-being. Our team works hard to get our members to plan and pursue their financial goals."

The credit union's investment team says it offers a full range of financial advisory services to people of all ages, income levels, and life stages.

AmeriCU serves more than 157,000 members in nine counties in Central New York and Northern New York through its 20 offices.

Citizens Business Conditions Index bounces back in Q1

BY ERIC REINHARDT
ereinhardt@cnybj.com

The national Citizens Business Conditions Index (CBCI) rose to 53.9 in the first quarter, “reflecting continued strength in the labor market, more new business openings and positive corporate revenue trends.”

The CBCI had dipped below 50 during the fourth quarter of last year and the bounce-back during the first quarter “signaled a return to positive business conditions,” Citizens said in its April 26 report.

The labor market has remained resilient despite aggressive Federal Reserve interest-rate hikes aimed at slowing the economy to curb inflation, the banking company said.

Citizens’ proprietary data on client revenue grew across industries during the first quarter with consumer services and health care among the top sectors due to their ability to pass on rising costs to customers. The manufacturing sector slowed as higher borrowing costs impacted expansion by limiting capital expenditures.

“The U.S. economy bounced back during the first quarter and, despite the disruption in the financial sector, there are several positive signs going forward such as improving inflation measures and still-strong labor numbers,” Eric Merlis, managing director and co-head of global markets at Citizens, said. “Policy-makers are still trying to thread the needle amid heightened recession concern, but companies that have made it through the pandemic and recent headwinds continue to prove their resiliency.”

Relief from inflation surprises

The CBCI’s underlying components indicated “improving dynamics” in the business environment. Three of five components boosted the index level while one was neutral and one “weighed on the reading.”

The proprietary activity data of Citizens’ commercial-banking clients, a key component of the index, was “very strong” across regions, suggesting that the con-

ditions at middle-market and mid-corporate businesses remained positive. The ISM non-manufacturing component grew as consumers spent more on services, and companies in these sectors were more able to pass on any increased costs. New business applications increased, helping to boost the index. Citizens said.

Employment trends, which are measured by initial jobless claims as an index component, were “flat” for the quarter, but nationally, the number of jobs gained overall was “surprisingly high” despite much-publicized corporate layoff announcements.

The ISM manufacturing index decreased as the sector is more “sensitive” to rising interest rates.

The mix of trends captures a quarter where demand for goods was lower while demand for services was steady amid broader employment stability, Citizens said.

The first-quarter CBCI revealed a business environment that “continues to adapt” to the year-long rate hike campaign from the Fed. The strong labor market continues to have a “stabilizing effect” as businesses search for a new “post-tightening normal.”

“The first-quarter CBCI showed a business environment where activity has adjusted as interest-rate hikes seem to be working to curb inflation,” Merlis said. “The still-strong job market continued to be a source of support during the quarter.”

Citizens Financial Group, Inc., parent company of Citizens Bank, describes itself as “one of the nation’s oldest and largest” financial institutions with \$222.3 billion in assets as of March 31.

Headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island, Citizens Bank offers retail and commercial-banking products and services to individuals, small businesses, middle-market companies, large corporations, and institutions. In consumer banking, Citizens provides mobile and online banking, a customer-contact center, and about 3,400 ATMs and more than 1,100 branches in 14 states and the District of Columbia.

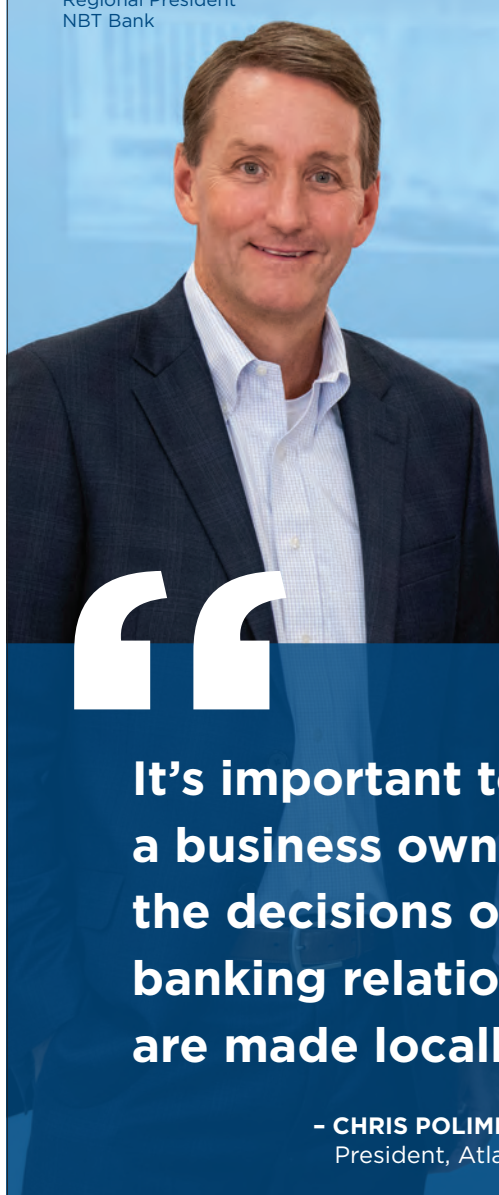
Citizens Bank ranks No. 11 in deposit market share in the 16-county Central New York region, with \$1.1 billion

	NY	Footprint	US
Q1 - 2014	56.11	53.78	53.74
Q2 - 2014	52.98	52.64	52.66
Q3 - 2014	52.19	52.57	56.51
Q4 - 2014	52.15	54.38	48.29
Q1 - 2015	52.01	52.51	52.37
Q2 - 2015	51.99	52.42	54.26
Q3 - 2015	52.44	52.26	52.26
Q4 - 2015	51.42	49.20	53.02
Q1 - 2016	52.72	52.74	48.83
Q2 - 2016	51.37	51.29	51.38
Q3 - 2016	50.79	51.10	51.04
Q4 - 2016	49.83	51.87	51.82
Q1 - 2017	47.50	50.56	54.67
Q2 - 2017	54.95	55.29	53.38
Q3 - 2017	53.09	53.57	51.69
Q4 - 2017	55.82	53.77	55.83
Q1 - 2018	54.86	54.58	54.61
Q2 - 2018	54.78	54.58	54.56
Q3 - 2018	54.30	54.38	56.50
Q4 - 2018	53.48	52.22	52.10
Q1 - 2019	51.00	53.34	53.27
Q2 - 2019	52.89	50.55	52.49
Q3 - 2019	51.63	51.33	53.42
Q4 - 2019	48.73	51.06	50.96
Q1 - 2020	47.07	47.57	51.46
Q2 - 2020	50.24	52.37	52.79
Q3 - 2020	55.21	53.22	51.21
Q4 - 2020	54.11	54.33	56.34
Q1 - 2021	58.05	58.26	58.36
Q2 - 2021	55.30	51.64	53.76
Q3 - 2021	52.26	54.78	57.00
Q4 - 2021	55.15	57.28	57.39
Q1 - 2022	54.75	57.48	53.53
Q2 - 2022	53.38	53.10	51.09
Q3 - 2022	51.84	56.03	53.94
Q4 - 2022	50.53	50.58	50.44
Q1 - 2023	53.60	51.89	53.94
QoQ	6.1%	2.6%	6.9%
YoY	-2.1%	-9.7%	0.8%

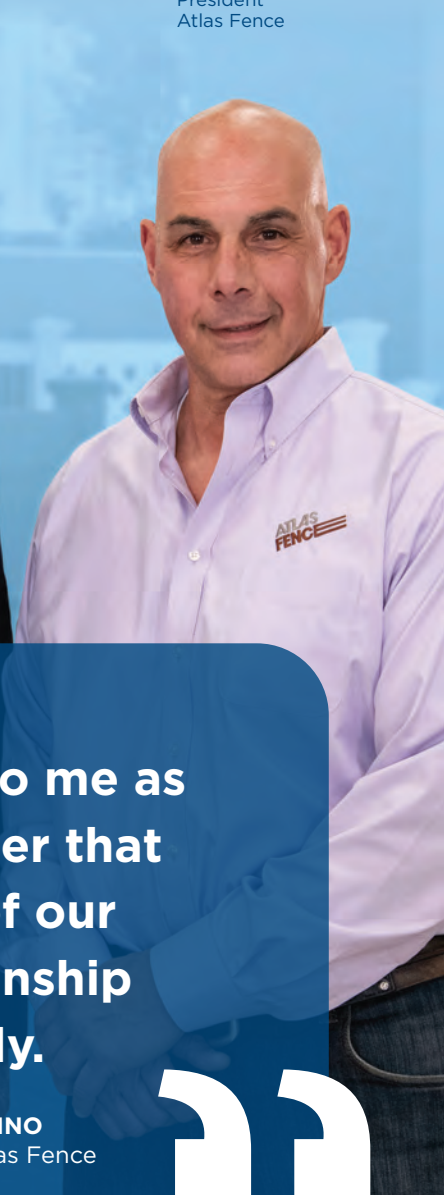
IMAGE CREDIT: CITIZENS FINANCIAL GROUP

in deposits and a 2.85 percent share of total market deposits, according to the latest FDIC data, as published in the 2023 Book of Lists. ■

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It's important to me as a business owner that the decisions of our banking relationship are made locally.

- CHRIS POLIMINO
President, Atlas Fence

”

MBA PROGRAMS

Ranked by Spring 2023 MBA Program Total Enrollment

Rank	Name Address Phone/Website	Spring 2023 MBA		Types of MBAs Offered	No. of Faculty	Program Directors/Deans	Year MBA Program Estab.
		Total Enrollment FT/PT	Tuition Per Credit Hours				
1.	Syracuse University, Whitman School of Management MBA Program 721 University Ave., Suite 315 Syracuse, NY 13244 (315) 443-4327/whitman.syracuse.edu/mba	601 63/538	\$1,802 54	full-time MBA STEM-designated with specializations in accounting, business analytics, entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, real estate, and supply-chain management; MBA@Syracuse - an online MBA program for working professionals	NA	Alexander McKelvie, Interim Dean	1968
2.	Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University Sage Hall Ithaca, NY 14853 (607) 255-4526/johnson.cornell.edu	587 587/NA	\$2,610 60	two-year MBA in Ithaca; Cornell Tech MBA; Cornell Executive MBA in Metro New York; Cornell Executive MBA Americas; Cornell-Tsinghua MBA/FMBA. dual degrees: MEng/MBA, JD/MBA, MILR/MBA, MD/MBA, MHA/MBA and MPS/MBA	60	Mark Nelson, Dean & Professor of Accounting Glen Dowell, Senior Director of MBA/MPS Programs & Professor of Management	1946
3.	SUNY Oswego MBA Program 138 Rich Hall Oswego, NY 13126 (315) 312-2911/oswego.edu/mba	296 86/210	\$625 ¹ 36-57	MBA-management; MBA-health services administration; MBA-online; MBA-public accounting; five-year combined degree in Accounting (BS/MBA); five-year combined degree in Psychology (BA/MBA); five-year combined degree in broadcast & mass communication (BA/MBA)	33	Dr. Irene Scruton, Assistant Dean & Director for MBA Programs	1992
4.	Binghamton University School of Management MBA Program P.O. Box 6000 Binghamton, NY 13902 (607) 777-2317/binghamton.edu/som/graduate-programs	235 ² 225 ² /10 ²	\$765.70 per credit, \$8,735 for 12+ credits (full time) ¹ 51-57 for full-time, four-semester MBA	full-time MBA (fall admission—57 credits); full-time MBA one-year option (summer admission - 51 credits); nine-month MBA for undergraduate AACSB business or accounting major (34 credits)	72	George S. Bobinski, Associate Dean, School of Management	1972
5.	Rochester Institute of Technology, Saunders College of Business 105 Lomb Memorial Drive Rochester, NY 14623 (585) 475-7935/rit.edu/business	187 134/53	\$2,370 48 MBA, 47 EMBA	Master of Business Administration (MBA); executive MBA, on campus; executive MBA, online; specializations include: accounting, business analytics, digital marketing, technology innovation management and entrepreneurship; finance; Innovation Management; international business; management and leadership; management information systems; marketing; project management; global supply chain management; health systems administration; human resource development industrial and systems engineering; management; public policy	68	Jacqueline R. Mozrall, Dean Bill Dresnack, Associate Professor and MBA Director Shal Khazanchi, Associate Dean Research and Graduate Programs	1968
6.	Utica University MBA Program 1600 Burrstone Road Utica, NY 13502 (315) 792-3111/utica.edu	126 82/44	\$700 30	general MBA; accounting MBA	15	Matthew Marmet, Director, MBA Programs	1999
7.	Le Moyne College Madden School of Business 1419 Salt Springs Road Syracuse, NY 13214 (315) 445-4786/lemoyne.edu/mba	101 46/55	\$926 36 (plus prerequisites, if necessary)	general MBA; MBA in management; MBA in leadership; MBA in analytics; MBA in marketing	19	John G. Hunter, Director of MBA Program/Professor of Practice/ Director of Financial Technology	1993
8.	SUNY Polytechnic Institute MBA 100 Seymour Road Utica, NY 13502 (315) 792-7500/sunypoly.edu	79 18/61	\$625 ¹ 48	accounting and finance, health infomatics, human resource management, marketing management, business management	7 full-time, 4 part-time	Arthur Lu, Dean, College of Business	2002
9.	SUNY Empire State College MBA 113 West Ave. Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 (518) 587-2100 ext. 2429/esc.edu/grad	61 8/53	\$625 ¹ 35-45	MBA in business management; MBA in healthcare leadership: master of science in finance	13	Brian Carolan, Dean, School for Graduate Studies	1974
10.	Alfred University College of Business 1 Saxon Drive Alfred, NY 14802 (607) 871-2115/alfred.edu	38 21/17	\$840 31	accounting, business administration	13	Theresa Gunn, Director of the MBA Program	1991
NR.	University of Rochester, Simon Graduate School of Business MBA 305 Schlegel Hall Rochester, NY 14627 (585) 275-3533/simon.rochester.edu	NA ³ 112/NA	\$2,072 (Executive MBA); \$2,229 (part-time MBA) 64 to 68	executive, part time, and full time	92	Sevin Yeltekin, Dean, Simon Business School	1958

THE LIST

Research by Vance Marriner
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UPCOMING LISTS:

May 8

Technology Companies

May 15

Community Property-
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FOOTNOTES

1. In-state tuition
2. 2022 data
3. Not ranked due to incomplete enrollment data being available

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.

For the purpose of this list, we have included institutions in adjacent counties that serve students in our readership area.

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Criminal-Justice Reform Must Fix N.Y.'s 'Career Criminal' Issue

New York state continues to lag the nation in job recovery but creating the new profession of "career criminal" is not the answer. Crime across the state, and particularly in New York City, has become completely entrenched in our daily lives. While the Assembly Minority Conference continues to push our counterparts and Gov. Kathy Hochul to do something about it, there seems to

**WILL BARCLAY**
Opinion

be no real progress on the issue as we move through 2023.

A recent report in the *New York Times* indicates that last year nearly one-third of all shoplifting arrests in New York City featured the same 327 individuals. According to the report, those individuals accounted for a whopping 6,000 arrests. This is proof-positive this state's criminal-justice policies are not working, and the victims of these thefts are clearly an afterthought to the legislators who have allowed this to go on.

In order to combat this unprecedented failure of public protection, Assemblyman Mike Reilly (R,C- Staten Island) has introduced legislation (A.5029) to increase penalties for persistent offenders. The bill would give district attorneys the power to consider the aggregate value of petit larcenies from up to 18 months after the first conviction in order to enforce stricter penalties. If that value is between \$1,000 and \$3,000, district attorneys would be allowed to charge an individual suspected of the thefts with "grand larceny in the fourth degree."

Solving this problem seems straightforward and non-partisan. Individuals who feel emboldened and entitled to take other people's property need to face real consequences. Eliminating those consequences, as Democrats have insisted upon, enables criminals to keep breaking the law. By returning our criminal-justice system to one of accountability, we will no longer be forced to endure the relentless assault on our communities brought by criminals acting with near immunity.

For a state that consistently ranks at or near the bottom for outmigration, the

"For a state that consistently ranks at or near the bottom for outmigration, the issues of crime and quality of life need to take a greater priority."

issues of crime and quality of life need to take a greater priority. Providing law-enforcement agencies with the tools they need to hold repeat offenders accountable is a reasonable first step. Judicial discretion and discovery reform are reportedly part of state-budget negotiations, and I hope those measures are addressed. However, more needs to be done, and I implore my counterparts to consider criminal-justice changes that go beyond the measures being discussed in the state spending plan.

William (Will) A. Barclay, 54, 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.

Balance the Federal Budget? Sure, But It's Tougher Than You Think

There is a lot of discussion in Washington, D.C. these days on what to do about the federal deficit. It continues to grow, and House Republicans in particular have made addressing it a key part of their agenda.

**LEE HAMILTON**
Opinion

Early on, the House Speaker, Kevin McCarthy, told his caucus that it would get a chance to vote on a 10-year pathway to a balanced budget at some point this year. More recently, though, GOP leaders have downplayed that expectation, instead arguing that they should focus on how to keep spending down as a short-term goal. And rank-and-file members are weighing in with their own plans, hoping to gain traction in the splintered GOP caucus. None of this, though, considers the rough sledding that Republican-favored proposals will face in the Democratic-led Senate, let alone negotiations with the White House.

While a balanced budget remains a potent talking point for many politicians, as well as for voters who worry about the impact of growing deficits, there's a reason that coalescing around a plan to make significant budget cuts — let alone reach a balance between federal revenues and expenditures — has proven so difficult. That's because it's not just brutally hard to achieve but may be politically impossible. Especially if, as both Democrats and Republicans have declared, cuts to Social Security and Medicare and possibly defense are off the table.

To understand why this is, I found a

New York Times article from the beginning of March quite helpful. In it, Alicia Parlapiano, Margot Sanger-Katz, and Josh Katz — reporters and graphics experts — lay out what it would take to reach a balanced budget in 10 years.

For starters, they point out, taking things off the table — tax increases, say, or cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or the military — makes things exponentially more difficult. If all of those were to be considered non-starters, then balancing the budget would require cutting everything else by 70 percent. That's everything from food assistance to retirement benefits for the military to transportation and agriculture subsidies and spending on law enforcement and education. "Cuts of that magnitude," the trio write, "would mean the firings of most federal workers in agencies like the FBI, the Parks Service, and the State Department, and huge reductions in food assistance and military retirement." It's hard to imagine something like that could get through Congress.

But that, of course, means that tax increases and changes to Social Security, Medicare, and military spending would need to be part of budget discussions. And every one of them is politically tricky.

This hasn't stopped Republicans in Congress from making a stab at it. The Republican Study Committee, which gathers together most of the GOP caucus in the House, has a plan that relies on deep cuts to Medicaid and other non-defense spending, along with raising the Medicare eligibility age over time to 70, doing the same with Social Security, and reducing Social Security payments to higher-wage earners. The House Freedom Caucus, meanwhile, has its own plan, which in-

volves capping spending at 2022 levels for the next decade, instituting new work requirements for welfare recipients, requiring a congressional okay on all major federal regulations, and other changes.

If you try to look at the issue in a non-partisan manner, it doesn't appear any more palatable. The *Times* article notes that the Congressional Budget Office has a list of more than 100 steps that could make a meaningful dent in the deficit. These range from increasing payroll taxes or creating a new tax on consumption to eliminating itemized tax deductions altogether to deferring spending on military hardware and eliminating some agriculture programs. Each would spark a pitched congressional battle.

My point here is not to say that a balanced budget, or even significant steps to cut the deficit, is impossible. But as members of the House and Senate and President Biden stake out their positions and then get deep into negotiations, it will help to understand why those negotiations are likely to become tense and difficult. The budget, after all, is the blueprint for how the government affects life in the U.S. Everyone wants to balance it — but taking serious steps in that direction will require true sacrifice. ■

Lee Hamilton, 91, 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

MAY 4

■ **2023 Mohawk Valley GEAR Awards** from 5-8 p.m. at Trackside Restaurant in Utica. The event, presented by the *CNY Business Journal* and BizEventz, recognizes companies that are integral to the revitalization of the Mohawk Valley through capital improvements, real estate, manufacturing and technology, workforce development, entertainment, and more. For more information and to buy tickets, visit: <https://www.cnybj.com/2023-mohawk-valley-gear-awards/>

[cnybj.com/2023-mohawk-valley-gear-awards/](https://www.cnybj.com/2023-mohawk-valley-gear-awards/)

■ **CNY ATD Virtual Voyage Open Forum** from 12-12:45 p.m. CNY ATD traverses the world of virtual with ongoing informal conversations providing a resource and opportunity to learn, share, and discuss. This month's topic is: "New Trends in Slide Decks." No charge to participate in this virtual activity. For more information, call (315) 546-2783 or email: info@cnyatd.org. Register at: https://cnyatd.org/virtual_forum

MAY 8

■ **Tompkins Chamber Government & Community Affairs Roundtable** virtual event from 12-1:15 p.m. This month's topic will be: "Food System Plan with Katie Hallas." No charge to participate in this Zoom meeting. For more information, visit: <https://business.tompkinschamber.org/events/details/government-community-affairs-roundtable-05-08-2023-191790>

MAY 10

■ **Tompkins Chamber Business After Hours** event from 5-7 p.m. at Ithaca Farmer's Market, Steamboat Landing, 545 3rd St., Ithaca. Business After Hours is the chamber's premier networking event where attendees can connect with hundreds of chamber members and community leaders. Cost is \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members or at the door. For more information and to register, visit: <https://business.tompkinschamber.org/events/details/business-after-hours-at-the-ithaca-farmer-s-market-may-2023-191904>

MAY 11

■ **Developing Agile and Integrated Marketing Plans for Business Growth** from 9-10 a.m. at 100 Clinton Square, Syracuse. Join Google, CenterState CEO, and Digital Hyve, as they speak

to Central New York businesses and share perspectives around effective marketing strategies, building plans to take on unique marketing opportunities, and being agile in an ever-changing digital space. Panelists will share tactical examples of how businesses can ramp up their efforts to stay ahead of shifting consumer behaviors and economic challenges. Cost is \$20 for CenterState CEO members and \$30 for non-members.

■ **Workplace 2023: Annual Labor, Employment & HR Conference**, presented by Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at the DoubleTree by

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15 ▶

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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE NEWS

ARCHITECTURE/ENGINEERING

MARCO J. ZAPPALA has joined Beardsley Architects + Engineers as architectural designer in its Syracuse office. A recent graduate of Alfred State College, Zappala has three years of architectural experience, working collaboratively to design residential, commercial, governmental, and educational projects. He has been responsible for 3D modeling throughout all design phases and developing designs for new construction and renovations. At Beardsley, Zappala will be working on projects for educational and commercial clients. **CALEB L. SAYERS** has joined Beardsley Architects + Engineers as an architect in the Syracuse office. Sayers has more than 10 years of experience working with residential and commercial clients, both as a contractor and as an architectural designer. Sayers will be working on parks and recreation, commercial, and residential projects.



Zappala



Sayers

BANKING

JEANNETTE ARMSTRONG has been promoted to senior cash management specialist in the customer relations & operations department at Solvay Bank. She has worked at Solvay Bank since 2007 and has more than 35 years of banking experience. Armstrong is a graduate of Ashford College for Medical Billing and Coding. **ANNA SHELDON** has been appointed by Solvay Bank to the new role of lead customer-relations special-



Armstrong

ist in the bank's customer relations & operations department. She started her career at the bank as a teller in 2012. Sheldon is an Onondaga Community College graduate.



Sheldon

INSURANCE

SARA MACDONALD has recently joined CH Insurance as an account executive/marketer. She brings more than 20 years of insurance experience servicing commercial accounts. While not working, she enjoys spending family time with her three children in Marcellus, loves to ride her Harley with friends, enjoys travel, and loves college and NFL football during the season.



MacDonald

LAW

JOHN R. LANGEY has assumed the position of CEO on the executive committee at Costello, Cooney and Fearon, PLLC. He previously served as CFO. Langey began his career with the law firm in 1989.



Langey

His legal work includes providing counsel to all levels of local and countywide governmental agencies, and working with zoning and planning boards, developers, and private property owners. Langey's primary focus in zoning matters is aiding his clients with right-to-build approvals, as well as defending and prosecuting Article 78 proceedings. He graduated from the University at Buffalo Law. Langey completed his undergraduate studies at SUNY Potsdam. Costello, Cooney and Fearon has appointed **ELIZABETH A. HOFFMAN**

as CFO in the firm's executive committee ranks. She began her career with the firm in 2013. Hoffman concentrates her practice in the area of civil litigation with an emphasis on commercial litigation. She has effectively negotiated complex shareholder disputes, contract disputes and business separations resulting in favorable outcomes for her clients. Hoffman earned her law degree from Syracuse University College of Law in 2009 after previously receiving her bachelor's degree from Syracuse University. **MATTHEW W. O'NEIL** has been elected to the partnership at Costello, Cooney and Fearon. O'Neil focuses his practice primarily on contract, business governance, and real property lawsuits, as well as appellate practice. He also provides advisement to clients regarding business disputes and dissolutions and practices mainly in the firm's litigation, commercial real estate and construction practice groups. O'Neil graduated from Cornell Law School in 2015. He received his bachelor's degree from the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany.



Hoffman



O'Neil

NONPROFITS

ALEXIS HULBERT has joined Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central New York as guest-services associate. The nonprofit organization operates the CNY Ronald McDonald House — located at 1100 E. Genesee St. in Syracuse — 24 hours a day, year-round, at no cost for



Hulbert

families whose children are hospitalized with serious illnesses or injuries. Hulbert will handle day-to-day guest services responsibilities, including guest check-ins and hospital referrals, provide operational support, and assist with guest family communications. She previously served as communication director at Weapons of Mass Creation, a marketing organization in Syracuse. Hulbert has a bachelor's degree from SUNY Oswego. Additionally, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central New York has expanded its family services team by adding three weekend relief staff members. The new employees — **EUNICE BRAWNER, LORI CASANOVA,** and **SARA MONTGOMERY LEE** — join seven other staff members currently on the organization's family services team. ■

NEW JOB?

The People on the Move section is the best place to let all of CNY know about your company's new hires and promotions.

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The Central New York
BUSINESS JOURNAL

CALENDAR: *Continued from page 14*

Hilton Hotel, near Carrier Circle in DeWitt. The agenda provides employers the information they need to know to avoid, or at least minimize, the liability associated with their human-resources decisions and comply with regulatory requirements. For more information, including registration details, visit: <https://www.bsk.com/news-events-videos/workplace-2023-annual-labor-employment-amp-hr-conference-upstate>

MAY 15

■ **CNY ATD Employee Learning Awareness Roundtable** virtual program from 12-1 p.m. CNY ATD will hold a roundtable to discuss the importance of highlighting employee learning and for sharing ideas on shining the spotlight on employee learning in organizations. No charge to attend. For more information, call (315) 546-2783 or email: info@cnyatd.org. Register at: https://cnyatd.org/ela_roundtables

MAY 17

■ **2nd Annual Lewis County Economic Development Conference** from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at 3 Willows Event Center in Lyons Falls. This conference offers a full day of leadership-development opportunities, economic-development updates, community building, and networking. The theme is "From The Ground Up," to highlight grassroots efforts that continue to grow local economies. Registration is \$80 for Naturally Lewis member-investors and \$120 for non-members. For more information and to register, visit: <https://naturallylewis.com/events/business/2023-conference>

MAY 18

■ **2023 Crystal Ball Award & Sales & Marketing Excellence (SME) Awards** event from 5-8 p.m. at the Marriott Downtown Syracuse, 100 E. Onondaga St., Syracuse. Join the Central New York Sales & Marketing Executives (CNY SME) in honoring the 46th Annual Crystal Ball recipient and see local companies honoring their best and brightest sales/marketing professionals. Enjoy networking

with the area's premier businesspeople, a silent auction, drinks, a sit-down dinner, and more. For more information and to register, visit: https://cnysme.org/crystalball/?mc_cid=0878da83e5&mc_eid=bb073a1fde#event-register/2023/5/18/crystal-ball

MAY 19

■ **CNY BEST Information Session** at 8:30 a.m. CNY ATD will hold an informational session regarding the CNY BEST Talent Development Program, recognizing excellence in talent development and the awards-application process. Complimentary virtual activity. For more information, call (315) 546-2783 or email: info@cnyatd.org. Register at: https://cnyatd.org/cny_best_information_sessions

MAY 23

■ **Leadership Essentials for Managers Workshop** from 8:15-11:30 a.m. at the OneGroup Center at 706 N. Clinton St. in Syracuse. CNY ATD hosts this workshop for growth and exploring the crucial skills for effective managers. Cost is \$45 for CNY ATD

members; \$60 for non-members. For more information, call (315) 546-2783 or email: info@cnyatd.org. Register at: https://cnyatd.org/upcoming_program2

JUNE 8

■ **CNY ATD Orientation** held virtually at 12 p.m. Learn about CNY ATD (Central New York affiliate chapter of Association for Talent Development) and its activities. No cost to participate. For more information, call (315) 546-2783 or email: info@cnyatd.org. Register at: <https://cnyatd.org/orientation>

JUNE 12

■ **GOFCC 2023 Golf Social** from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Oswego Country Club, 610 W. First St., Oswego. The Greater Oswego-Fulton Chamber of Commerce's (GOFCC) annual Golf Social, presented by Novelis, is an 18-hole, four-person captain and crew tournament that brings together business and community members for a relaxing day of golf and fun. For more information and to register, visit: <https://centerstateceo.com/news-events/2023-gofcc-golf-social>



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Publication Date:
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HONOREE PROFILES

- Assured Information Security (AIS) **3B**
- Giotto Enterprises. **4B**
- Mohawk Valley Community College . . . **5B**
- Utica Zoo **6B**



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Time flies when the gears are turning. Gears, of course, stand for growth, energy, and revitalization. This is our second annual event — taking place this Thursday, May 4 at the Trackside Restaurant, in Utica. It has been exciting to see the Mohawk Valley region continue with such vigor and passion for growth in the area.

On behalf of *The Central New York Business Journal* and presenting sponsor Berkshire Bank, I am pleased to introduce this year’s Mohawk Valley GEAR honorees. Congratulations to: Assured Information Security (AIS), Giotto Enterprises, Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) and the Utica Zoo. These organizations range in size and scope, yet all have contributed to the reimagining of the Mohawk Valley region. They include a local cybersecurity company, protecting us from hackers around the globe; a family-owned business with seven companies and more than 400 employees under the Giotto umbrella; a community college with a reputation, bar none, providing an education and giving students the skills, they need to go in the world and be productive citizens; and the Utica Zoo, a wildly fun experience for people of all ages, and is a great tourist attraction.

I hope you will join us throughout the year for more events. Nominations for 40 under Forty Awards will be open soon. The list of Best Places to Work qualifying companies will be announced shortly — and Family Business awards are back this year. I hope you will nominate a family business. Categories and more information are on our website at bizeventz.com.

I am excited to see the continued growth happening here in the Mohawk Valley region and I look forward to seeing you soon!

All my best,
Jill Allen
Director of BizEventz, Inc.



As a sponsor of the Legacy Awards for six years, Berkshire Bank is now excited to sponsor the Mohawk Valley GEAR Awards for the second year in a row, recognizing businesses in the MV who bring Growth, Energy, and Revitalization to our community.

The Mohawk Valley continues to capture attention from across New York State and beyond with incredible redevelopment, supported by meaningful public and private financial investments. This has resulted in a positive change in perception, attitude, and culture, and each of our four honorees have excelled at proving their commitment to this revitalization into our community.

Berkshire Bank also believes strongly in making a difference in the communities we serve. Over 177 years ago, Berkshire Bank began by meeting entrepreneurs’ and working-class individuals’ financial needs. That heritage still helps Berkshire as we continue to financially empower our communities, reducing wealth inequities and helping everyone with their personal journey. At Berkshire Bank, our Be FIRST values create a culture that fosters belonging, diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility.

Berkshire has been there to help its customers and communities. The most important investment is the one we make in each other — that it is only through lifting each other up that we can make a better future together. We are committed to lending and investing \$5 billion over three years to help transform local communities. We call it our “BEST Community Comeback Plan.”

We are proud to provide big bank resources with the heart and personal attention of a community bank. We have local decision makers experts, and the resources in the Mohawk Valley to you achieve your financial goals. Where You Bank Matters.

Congratulations to our 2023 Mohawk Valley GEAR Award Honorees! — Jim

James J. Morris IV
New York State Regional President
Berkshire Bank



HONOREE

AIS forges a legacy of leadership in cyber research

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

ROME — From their days working at the Adversarial Sciences Lab at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome, the founders of Assured Information Security (AIS) were working in cyber research before it was even called cyber.

With an aim to always do things differently, Charles Green, Dan Kalil, Len Popyack, and John DelMedico founded AIS in 2001 with a pirate flag and a pool table that doubled as a work surface when there wasn't enough money to buy office furniture.

Today, AIS employs 205 people who are located across the United States. The company operates from a 46,305-square-foot headquarters in Rome, which still features a pirate flag out front, and sits at the forefront of the billion-dollar cyber and information security industry.

"We got into this thinking we were getting into a space that we knew," Kalil, the company's chief commercial officer, recalls. The AIS founders knew they

were early on in the industry, but never dreamed what the company would grow into.

"We felt we could make a difference," he says. "That feeling, that belief we had way back when is realized year after year."

AIS landed its first government contract with the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) in 2002, and government contracts remain a large portion of the company's business.

However, AIS is working now to further grow the commercial side of the business including through its GreyCastle Security and AssuredTek subsidiaries, Kalil says.

"We do want to see substantial expansion of our commercial area in the next couple of years." He expects much of that growth will come as AIS works to expand the availability of cybersecurity products developed for government entities into the commercial space.

Kalil says the company will also grow its workforce as well.

"We've been in the hiring mode,"

he notes, adding that the business hopes to add between 40 and 50 new employees to meet the demand of AIS's steady 20 percent year-over-year revenue growth.

Boosting the workforce doesn't just mean adding new people for the culture-conscious company.

"In order for any of us to perform our best, we have to feel appreciated," Kalil says.

That means investing in employees in a variety of ways. AIS says it offers a robust benefit package that features low-cost health insurance, a company contribution of 7 percent into 401(k)s, tuition reimbursement for those seeking higher degrees, and a recently started sabbatical program.

AIS also has an internal research and development program that allows engineers to receive company funding to explore ideas. As a result, the company and its engineers have been awarded 19 patents with several more pending.

The staff is highly credentialed, with many AIS employees possessing advanced degrees in computer science, engineering, mathematics, and operations research.

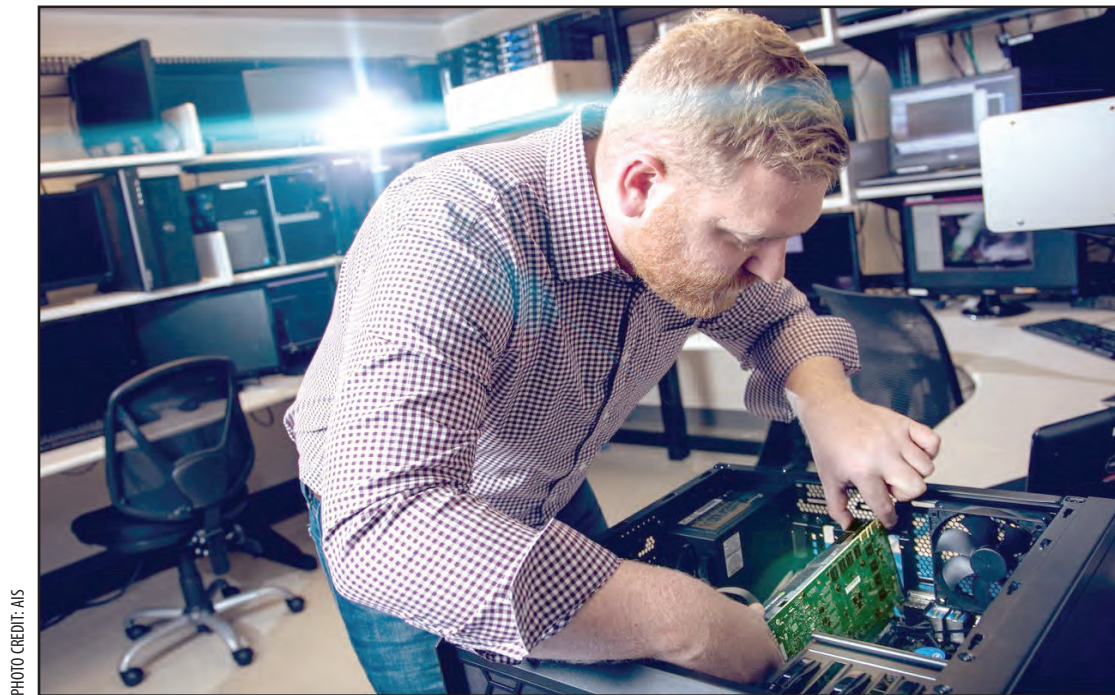


"We do want to see substantial expansion of our commercial area in the next couple of years."

– Dan Kalil,
chief commercial officer at AIS

And what about that pirate flag that flies out front?

It still represents the company's ideal of doing things differently — to work collaboratively, to remember to have fun, to remain creative and innovative. The flag also represents longevity at the 22-year-old company that remains at the forefront of the industry. ■



An employee of Assured Information Security's SecureView unit at work.



Interns at work in the AIS office.



AIS employees collaborate in a staff meeting.



The headquarters office of Assured Information Security (AIS) in Rome.



Officials cut the ribbon in 2019 on a new office that Assured Information Security (AIS) opened at 160 Brooks Road in Rome, across the street from its headquarters. The company's SecureView unit uses the space.

PHOTO CREDIT: AIS

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HONOREE

Giotto Enterprises plots growth on multiple fronts in 2023

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

ORISKANY — If you worked from home at all over the past few years, chances are good that Giotto Enterprises helped make that possible.

Giotto Enterprises is the umbrella organization for seven affiliate companies located in the greater Utica-Rome area, and involved in the manufacturing of components used in the fiber optic, broadcast, automotive, compressor, pump, safety relay, and firearms industries.

The flagship company is Fiber Instrument Sales, Inc. (FIS) in Oriskany. Founded in 1985, the company designs, develops, and sells a range of fiber-optic products — used in industries such as telecommunications, government, education, and research — from its 275,000-square foot facility on a 16-acre campus.

In 2022, FIS added two 10,000-square-foot additions to the campus for its metal bending and cable-production activities.

“We’re adding a third building, which we’re expecting to start any week now,” founder and pres-

ident/CEO Frank Giotto says. The new building will add another 6,000 square feet at FIS.

The structure comes in advance of expected growth from federal investments in delivering fiber-optic cable to homes across the country, he says. “We are projecting good growth in the next three to five years.”

Giotto is also investing in equipment, having added \$1 million in new equipment for its metal-cabinet production operations last year and planning to add two new fiber-optic extruders, for a cost of about \$2 million, this year, he says.

“We are attempting to hire 50 more employees to address our growth demands,” Giotto says. The company currently employs 450 people across all its enterprises.

After two record-breaking sales years, Giotto says he hopes to top the approximately \$135 million in sales the company produced in 2022. “If I could hit \$150 million this year, I’d be happy.”



Frank Giotto



SEE GIOTTO, PAGE 7B ▶



The headquarters office of Fiber Instrument Sales, Inc. (FIS), the flagship company of Giotto Enterprises, in Oriskany.



An employee at work at Giotto Enterprises.

PHOTO CREDIT: GIOTTO ENTERPRISES

PHOTO CREDIT: GIOTTO ENTERPRISES

Celebrating leadership

Congratulations to AIS on this well-deserved recognition. Thank you for your commitment to our community. Your impact across Mohawk Valley and beyond will be felt for years to come.



HONOREE

MVCC remains vital by adapting to region's needs

BY TRACI DELORE
tdelore@cnybj.com

UTICA — Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) says it is always on the forefront when it comes to serving the area's workforce — whether it's through employing people or training them for employment.

The college really sits at the apex of the region's governments, businesses, and people, MVCC President Randall VanWagoner says. "It really puts us at the intersection of everything that's exciting in the re-

gion."

MVCC says its ability to remain nimble and responsive has kept the college vital to the region, even throughout the



COVID-19 pandemic.

During and after the pandemic, the college saw a shift in its student profile, VanWagoner notes, with learning shifting from 60 percent in-person, full time and 12 percent online to almost entirely online during the pandemic. Today, about 25 percent of students opt for online learning.

The other notable change was that about 60 percent of the college's students are now attending part-time, VanWagoner says, as people figured out during the pandemic that online learning was a good option that allowed them to continue to work while also working toward their associate degree.

"We pretty much expect that

to remain stable," he says of the new student profile. Enrollment remains at about 5,000 students per academic year, a slight decline from before the pandemic.

MVCC has experienced strong growth on the workforce-training side, VanWagoner says. "We're seeing almost as many students in the non-credit, workforce space," he says. Currently, the college serves about 5,000 non-credit students through those programs, double the number it served before the pandemic.

To better serve its students, MVCC will spend \$38 million to overhaul its science and

SEE MVCC, PAGE 7B ▶



Randall VanWagoner



A rendering of the revamped science and technology building at Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC).

RENDERING CREDIT: MVCC



The Rome campus of MVCC.

PHOTO CREDIT: MVCC WEBSITE



The Utica campus of MVCC.

PHOTO CREDIT: MVCC WEBSITE

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Congratulations to each of the 2023 MV GEAR honorees! It is a privilege and honor to contribute to the growth of the Mohawk Valley with you.

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HONOREE

Utica Zoo unveils new welcome center, animal exhibits

BY TRACI DELORE
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UTICA — Progress rarely comes without growing pains, and that was certainly the case for the Utica Zoo this past year.

The zoo opened its new admission (or welcome) center in April, just in time for its annual “Eggstravaganza” celebration. For a good portion of 2022 and into this year, zoo visitors had to bypass their usual entrance into the zoo while the building was under construction and use a secondary entrance at the New York Power Authority’s John B. Dyson Energy Zone, located next to the zoo.

The admission-center construction project began last summer and meant the zoo needed to halt a few activities, like birthday parties and education events. Normally, it holds such events in its auditorium, but the zoo needed to use that space for other purposes during construction.

In spite of the inconvenience, the zoo had a good year with solid attendance, says Utica Zoo Executive Director Andria Heath. “We had a great Wine in the Wilderness and Brewfest.” The zoo began a new partnership with Kookie’s Q to provide concession services at the zoo.

The new admission building, at 5,000 square feet, incorporates the original 960-square-foot building and adds two new bathrooms, plenty of room for both admissions, and a 1,400-square-foot gift shop that includes plenty of merchandise and a coffee bar.

“It’s a game changer for us,” Heath says. “It’s really going to create that sense of arrival.”

The building isn’t the only thing new at the zoo this year, she adds. The new animals include a baby gibbon born on Jan. 30 and three new baby goats this spring.

The zoo is building a new habitat area for its emu and Bennett’s wallabies and wrapped up construction on its new river otter habitat in advance of the animals arriving in May.

The zoo’s new “bounce pillow” will be open for the full season this year, and the zoo has rhino, lion, bear, and giraffe scooters and new double strollers available to rent.

Utica Zoo officials continue to take a good look at habitats, signage, and every element of the visitor experience, Heath says, to put together improvement plans for the current year, several years out, and long range — all in an effort to constantly be improving.

With an operating budget of around \$3 million — it varies annually, with \$300,000 coming from Oneida County — and 35 employees (and looking to hire more), the Utica Zoo has become a true destination — not only for city residents, but also for outside visitors.

“We are definitely, from every age range you can imagine, a destination,” Heath contends.

The Utica Zoo got its start in 1914 with just three fallow deer. Today the zoo has more than 99 animal species on the 80 acres set aside for its use in Roscoe-Conkling Park in Utica.

The City of Utica owns the land, and the Utica Zoological Society owns and operates the zoo. The zoo received its Association of Zoos and Aquariums accreditation in 2018.



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Crews at work pouring cement on a project outside the Utica Zoo’s welcome center.

PHOTO CREDIT: UTICA ZOO



The Zoo Mobile parked outside the Utica Zoo’s admission building project.

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GIOTTO:

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Along with growth in its fiber-optics divisions, Giotto anticipates strong sales for its plastics and machine-shop operations. “People are interested in taking off-shore business and bringing it to America again,” he notes.

Giotto Enterprises’ other companies are:

- FIS Blue, Inc., a manufacturer/supplier of fiber optics with broadcast, military harsh environment, and maritime applications. FIS Blue employees have decades of experience meeting the needs of broadcasters for specialized cabling and connectivity equipment. When it was mandated that U.S. broadcasters switch to digital broadcasting, FIS Blue was

established as a new Fiber Instrument Sales affiliate to help make the transition seamless.

- The Light Connection, Inc., a manufacturer of fiber-optic cable and tubing for a wide range of applications such as data centers.

- Force Guided Relays International, the North American distributor for German relay companies Hengstler and Kaco and a designer and manufacturer of PC boards for custom safety-control units used in the elevator, rail, signaling, automated machinery, and other industries.

- Fermer Precision Inc., which specializes in machining high precision, close-tolerance castings, forgings, and turnings used in the automotive, pump, compressor, valve, emission-control devices, and turning industries.

- Molding Solutions, Inc., an injection-molding facility that is a leading contract molder of plastic components used in medical, electronic connector, automotive, and fiber-optic markets.

- Oriskany Arms Inc., which specializes in the design, manufacture, finishing, and assembly of custom components used for electronic equipment racks, instrumentation panels, and specialty enclosures, as well as its Series 1911 line of handguns and components.

Frank Giotto

Frank Giotto’s contributions to the local community go far beyond the manufacturing realm, the company says. He and his wife, Kristine, are avid supporters of many community organizations including those focused on education, childhood and adult disabilities, music

and the arts, and “so many other facets of our community that make it the great place in which we live, work, worship, and raise our families.” the firm says.

Giotto is a graduate of Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) and Utica University. He furthered his graduate-level studies at SUNY Polytechnic Institute. Prior to his private-sector career, Giotto shared this passion for science and math as an elementary school educator in the Utica City School District. Later, and while simultaneously leading Fiber Instrument Sales, he established one of the first fiber-optic programs offered by MVCC.

“It is with that same passion and his entrepreneurial skills today that Giotto continues to dedicate his time, energy and efforts on ensuring the Mohawk Valley’s continued growth and revitalization,” the company says. ■

MVCC:

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technology building, he says. The new space will include a semiconductor and advanced-manufacturing training center to support workforce training for companies including Wolfspeed, Micron, Indium Corporation, Semikron-Danfoss, and Fabmatics. That project is ongoing, working around use of the building, with an expected completion in the summer of 2025.

“That’s a really exciting project,” VanWagoner says.

MVCC — in partnership with Oneida County, the City of Rome, and the region’s American Dentistry Association chapter — is working to fill the need for dental hygienists, with plans to offer an associate in applied science degree in dental hygiene on its Rome campus. VanWagoner expects the program to be up and running by the fall of 2024.

The college is also investing in new

equipment that will double the training capacity of its mechatronics program.

MVCC also recently launched FastTrack, which is an accelerated program that allows students to gain work-ready skills in 14 weeks or less. It is designed for students who want to start or advance their careers quickly and efficiently and offers flexible scheduling, online classes, and personalized support to help students pursue their academic and career goals in a timely manner, the college says.

Between the new offerings and the existing programs, MVCC will continue to be a driving force in workforce training, VanWagoner contends.

With just 53 students, Mohawk Valley Community College opened its doors in 1946 as one of five technical colleges across the state, created to train and educate veterans returning from World War II. MVCC says it was the first community college in the state.

Today, the college says the GEAR Award is “a testament to MVCC’s dedication to

providing a high-quality education and support to its students, and to its efforts to

foster a culture of excellence and achievement on campus and beyond.” ■

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