

# NETWORKS

## DIGITAL NEWS

### Young Entrepreneurs Academy graduates class of 2025



The ninth class of the Blair County Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) graduated last Tuesday at ceremonies held at the U.S. Hotel in Hollidaysburg. All twenty of the Blair County students, who started in the program last October, completed the graduation requirements which included building a business. Throughout the 25-week program, students were instructed and mentored by industry experts through the intricacies of entrepreneurship. Students received guidance in finance, business law, marketing, business management, public speaking, and best practices. The program led up to the Investor Panel event where each student pitched their business plan to a panel of investors for financial backing. The new graduates are now officially CEOs of an IRS-registered business. For more information on YEA! or to register for the 2026 class go to [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com).

#### FOUR MORE DAYS TO REGISTER!

### It's time to grow your career

Discover the keys to unlocking your career potential at Growing Your Career in Blair County. Network with industry experts and fellow young professionals and gain valuable knowledge to advance your career. Join us on Thursday, May 8th, at Curry Innovation Center, 1425 11th Ave., Altoona, for an evening of engaging discussions with industry leaders, networking opportunities, and

complimentary professional headshots. Don't miss this chance to connect and propel your career forward! Doors open at 5:30 p.m., for refreshments and networking followed by a panel discussion at 5:45. Professional headshots will be taken at 7:00. Cost to attend is \$15. Corporate sponsors are Saint Francis University and Stuckey Automotive. Register at [blairchamber.com](http://blairchamber.com).



### Time to be recognized

No two businesses are the same; with that in mind the Blair County Chamber Sustainable Business Certification Program provides varying small businesses the opportunity to achieve sustainable business designation. A survey is available on the Chamber website [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com). Click on the committees tab and select Sustainable Blair County. There are four sustainable business certification levels. Recognition will also be given if a business scores at a high level in any of the major categories within the checklist. A resource list and appropriate marketing material will be provided to all Chamber member participants who complete and return the checklist. Your scores are automatically calculated. For more information contact Megan Rossman at [mrossman@blairchamber.com](mailto:mrossman@blairchamber.com).

Scan QR code for  
Certification Survey



Scan QR code  
for reservations!

## DEP announces new grant program

The Chamber's Sustainability Committee recently hosted its first Pathways to Sustainability event featuring a panel of industry leaders and educational tables providing interaction with businesses focused on sustainability efforts. The keynote address was presented by Louie Krak, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), who unveiled a new statewide grant program.

RISE PA is a \$396 million statewide industrial de-carbonization grant program funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants.

The purpose of the program is to offer grants for small-, medium-, and large-scale de-carbonization projects at industrial facilities to substantially reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutant emissions.

"The program will help industrial companies reduce operating costs and boost their competitiveness all while creating a lot of good paying jobs and ensuring that benefits from these projects flow to impacting communities", Krak said. "It's a tremendous investment in Pennsylvania industry".

A large part of the program is energy efficiency, which is the largest segment



of Pennsylvania's clean energy economy and employs the greatest number of workers that have seen consistent job growth each year.

Through RISE PA, Pennsylvania companies can prepare for anticipated global market shifts by making proactive investments in industrial de-carbonization.

The DEP is now accepting applications for the medium- and large-scale award tracks. Applications are available online at the DEP [RISE PA website](#). Applicants can review the grant program and eligibility criteria.

"I see RISE PA as a very poetic opportunity for Pennsylvania. We were one of the birthplaces of the industrial revolution, and now we have an opportunity to lead the country in the industrial de-carbonization movement," Krak said.

**WEDNESDAY - REGISTER NOW!**

## Saint Francis SBDC to host online seminar on starting a business

Have you always wanted to start your own business but didn't know where to start? Saint Francis University Small Business Development Center and Somerset Trust Company have scheduled a free pre-business planning webinar on Wednesday, April 30th at 4:00 pm. This free, online seminar is for people who are interested in opening and operating their own business. It's designed to help aspiring entrepreneurs to begin the process of successful business ownership. Topics to be discussed are feasibility issues, marketing, record-keeping, business plans, legal issues,



regulations, taxes, and financing. Pre-registration is required. If interested, please contact the Saint Francis University Small Business Development Center at (814) 472-3200 or register online at [pasbdc.ecenterdirect.com](https://pasbdc.ecenterdirect.com).

## CONGRATULATIONS

...to the [Giant Co.](#) Martin's food store at 1000 Logan Blvd., Altoona, for being named as a Top Net Promoter Score for achieving the highest customer satisfaction score.

...to [Sheetz](#) for being named to this year's list of 100 Best Companies to Work For by Fortune Magazine and Great Place to Work.



**15  
MAY**

UPMC ALTOONA  
UPMC HEALTH PLAN

**CHAMBER GOLF  
CLASSIC**

**IRON MASTERS  
COUNTRY CLUB**

Register online at  
[blairchamber.com](https://blairchamber.com)  
or email Brittany Mayer  
[bmayer@blairchamber.com](mailto:bmayer@blairchamber.com)

**DON'T MISS OUT.  
SPACE IS GOING FAST!**

## Do you have a copy?

The Chamber's Experience Guide is fresh off the press. The publication will show you the many reasons

why people want to Visit, Stay, and Play in Blair County. You will also get a full listing of Chamber members. Stop by the Chamber office at 3900 Industrial Park Drive, Altoona, and get your copy today!

