

NETWORKS

DIGITAL NEWS



LBC adult class credits teamwork for successful fundraising event

By April Reilly, LBC class of 2025



Fresh off a successful fundraiser, this year's Leadership Blair County Adult class is reflecting on the power of teamwork. In April, they held a 200 Club Fundraiser at the Bavarian Aid Society to benefit Easter for Eli, an organization that collects and distributes Easter baskets to children and their families in hospitals.

Courtney Hornung, Senior Program Manager at Blair Image Elements, noted that the event exceeded her expectations. However, planning faced challenges, particularly a last-minute change to the benefactor, requiring the class to select a new one about six weeks before the event.

Kyle Sarver, Staff Scientist at Keystone Environmental Health and Safety Services, said, "The unexpected change was probably the biggest challenge." He added, "Having to pivot while keeping our enthusiasm was a struggle, but we came together to create an 'above and beyond' experience."

Anthony Augustine, Fleet Foreman at Ward Transportation and Logistics, expressed pride in his classmates, saying the circumstances helped the group grow as a team.

"I'm proud of my LBC classmates. I would bet there isn't a better group that could do it than us," he said. The class plans to formally present the donation to Easter for Eli in June.



PA Secretary of Agriculture to headline Chamber breakfast

This Spring, the Commonwealth of PA, in partnership with Team PA, released a comprehensive study on the impact Agriculture has on our state and regional economy. That



Russell Redding

analysis will form the foundation for a new strategic approach on how best Pennsylvania can leverage Agriculture through AI, international trade and supply chains for sustained economic growth in the years to come. Simply put, Agriculture is Blair County's largest industrial sector and contributor to our local Gross Domestic output. There is no better time than now for the Blair County Chamber to host PA Secretary of Agriculture, Russell Redding.

Join us on Thursday, June 12, from 7:45 - 9:00 a.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park for an informative Breakfast Club program with Secretary Redding. Cost to attend is \$20 for Chamber Members and \$30 for non-members. A full breakfast buffet is included. Register online at www.blairchamber.com or call the Chamber at 814-943-8151.

NON-PROFIT COMMITTEE “BEST PRACTICES”

You write it, but do they read it?

We all have news to share. But are you sure your news release didn't slide to the bottom of the garbage can? The next “Best Practices” program by the Blair County Chamber's Committee of Non-Profit Businesses will be held on June 13th from 8:15 to 10:00 a.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. Mike Lysakowski, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at [Skills of Central Pennsylvania](#) will present, “Media Relations 101: Why Your News Release Got Trashed.” Learn about the key components to writing a news release that will get the attention it deserves. Not only does it mean writing a compelling story, but targeting the



right media outlets and tailoring your message to your target audience is just as important. The cost to attend is \$10 for Chamber members and \$20 for non-members. Skills is also the sponsor of the Best Practices. To register, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or online at blairchamber.com.

Unlocking Growth: The SBA 504 Loan Program and its benefits

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loan program is a powerful financing tool designed to help small businesses grow while supporting local economic development. Administered by the SBA, this program provides long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets like commercial real estate, equipment, and facility upgrades. Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation is your local Certified Development Company (CDC) and one of eight in the state that works with local businesses on SBA 504 loan requests.

SBA 504 projects include three parties: the business owner, who contributes 10% of the total project cost, a CDC funded by the SBA providing 40%, and a private lender covering the remaining 50%. If the business is a start-up business and/or the property is considered special-purpose, an additional 5% is required from the Borrower for each of these instances. The typical SBA 504 model allows business owners to pre-



serve working capital while locking in below-market interest rates fixed for up to 25 years. The interest rate is set by the SBA monthly and the current interest rate for 25 year-term loans is approximately 6.4% fixed for the life of the loan.

Beyond benefiting individual businesses, the 504 program has a ripple effect on local economies. By enabling businesses to purchase property, expand operations, or invest in new equipment, it fuels job creation and revitalizes communities.

If you'd like to learn more about the program, reach out to Marcus Edwards with ABCD Corp. at 814-569-1112 or marcuse@abcdcorp.org.

A call for young entrepreneurs

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a groundbreaking and exciting program, hosted locally by the Blair County Chamber, that transforms local middle and high school students into confident entrepreneurs. Through the 26-week program, Blair County students in grades 6-12 generate business ideas, conduct market research, write business plans, pitch to a panel of investors for financial awards, and launch their very own companies.

YEA! is often a life-changing program where students learn how to develop and run a real business in a fun, projects-based approach.

“YEA! has given me the opportunity to connect with several local business owners. It has helped me build my confidence and marketing skills and it has given me the tools to run a successful business,” said Sarah Mallery, 2025 YEA! graduate and CEO of a traveling notary business.

Applications are now being accepted for the YEA! class of 2026. Apply online at www.blairchamber.com.



CONGRATULATIONS

...to [Pennsylvania Highlands Community College](#) for earning a 2025-2026 Military Friendly School designation. More than 1,800 schools were evaluated through a proprietary survey with special awards given for those going above the standard.

...to the [DeGol](#) Foundation for being selected as the winner of the 2025 Central Pennsylvania Philanthropy Award by the Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation. Bruno and Lena DeGol started the foundation in 1994.

Anywhere! Any time!

Register for events online at blairchamber.com

AMERICA TURNS 250 YEARS OLD

Join us for a night of Patriotism, Pride & Purpose.



BLAIR COUNTY

KICKOFF GALA

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025, AT 7PM

LIBERTY HALL - US HOTEL

401 SOUTH JUNIATA STREET HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA

Keynote Speaker: Governor Mark Schweiker

Special Guest:

America250PA Executive Director Cassandra Coleman

\$76 - INDIVIDUAL TICKETS

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