

# NETWORKS

## DIGITAL NEWS



### Chamber Office Closed for Independence Day

The Blair County Chamber Office will be closed on July 4th and will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on July 7th. Members can access Chamber information and register for Chamber events and programs on the Chamber website at [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com).

### WE-LEaD COMMITTEE

## Thriving in today's business climate

The Blair County Chamber's WE-LEaD (*Women Encouraging Leadership, Education and Development*) Committee maintains a strong reputation for the many positive things it has accomplished. Each WE-LEaD initiative is driven by one core tenant...supporting and empowering women, of all walks of life, to succeed and thrive.

Continuing with its dynamic series, Women Mean Business, the WE-LEaD Committee has planned a powerful panel event, to be held July 22, from noon to 1:30 p.m., at US Hotel Liberty Hall in Hollidaysburg.

The panel will feature inspiring women who own and lead businesses across a range of industries including real estate, optometry, financial planning, and construction. Whether they have built their businesses from the ground up or stepped into leadership roles through family ownership, these women are redefining what it means to lead in professions where ownership



has traditionally lacked gender diversity.

Sharing their stories of resilience, strategy, and vision will be panelists Stacey Krepps of LSI, Kate Kooman Starkey of Kooman & Associates, Elizabeth Burke of Burke and Company, Michelle Barnes of Michelle Barnes Optometry, and Amy Hite of L&H Realty.

Cost to attend is \$35 for Chamber Members and \$40 for non-members. A light lunch is included. Corporate sponsor of the event is [CNB Bank](http://www.cnb.com). To register, go to [www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com).

## Annual Gala hits the mark

Last Thursday the Blair County Convention Center rolled out the red carpet where partygoers strutted their Awards Gala finery. After starting the evening with champagne toasts, paparazzi, and a gourmet banquet, the event took a celebratory turn when a full slate of awards were presented to the achievers and doers that make Blair County great. The evening wrapped up with dancing to live music from the Big Band Sound. The success of the Gala lies greatly on the generosity of event and award sponsors. Thanks to you, the Chamber hit the mark.



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# Ribbon Cutting



## Shoe Fly

The Chamber celebrated the recent major expansion of Shoe Fly located at 3415 Pleasant Valley Blvd., Altoona, in the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center. The expansion includes an additional 24,000 square feet. The new space is split into two sections including the Shoe Fly Shoe and Appalachian Running Company concepts. The previous space that Shoe Fly occupied will be renovated to serve as the Shoe Fly Work Zone and an Outlet Center. For more information, go to [www.shoefly-stores.com](http://www.shoefly-stores.com). ABCD Corporation and M&T Bank were proud to partner with Shoe Fly on this incredible project. Joining in the celebration are, from left: Donna Gority, Chamber Ambassador; Marcus Edwards, ABCD Corporation; Colton Kensinger, M&T Bank; AJ Kelly, Appalachian Running Company; Megan Rossman, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Melanie Warrender, Shoe Fly Outlet; Marcie Lewis, Women's Accessory Buyer; George Gripp, Co-owner; Abby Biddle, Shoe Fly; Brandon Gripp, Shoe Fly; Todd Lewis, Co-owner; Jake Isenberg, Shoe Fly; Charlie Biddle, Co-owner; Tyler Mertiff, General Manager; Amanda Walker, the office of State Senator Judy Ward; Steve McKnight, President/CEO, ABCD Corporation; Wendy Boone, Shoe Fly; Melissa Brumbaugh, Highstreet Gingrich Insurance Agency; and Sherri Stayer, Chamber Ambassador.

## Chamber adds trip to Austria and Switzerland to its travel itinerary

Planning the logistics of your next trip can be challenging for even the most experienced traveler. That's why so many people put their trust in the Chamber and its travel partners.

On the list of newly added destinations is Best of Austria and Switzerland, scheduled for June 8 - 20, 2026, with travel partner [Epic Journeys](http://EpicJourneys.com).

Your adventure begins when you arrive in Vienna where you will meet your tour director and enjoy a welcome dinner. Scenic Alpine landscape and architecture abound as you explore Salzburg, with plenty of photo opportunities as you continue your travels to St. Moritz,



Bern, Lucern and more.

To learn more about this trip, the Chamber has scheduled an informational meeting on July 17 at 6 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. There is no obligation or cost to attend. Let us know you are coming by calling the Chamber at 814-943-8151.

## Congratulations

...to Hollidaysburg Mayor Joseph Dodson. After several decades of public service in local office, Dodson was recognized as Mayor of the Year by the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs. Dodson was presented the award on June 3 in Hershey at the group's annual conference. He is the first Hollidaysburg mayor to receive this award since the town's creation.



## TAKING A BREAK

**There will be no HD500 or Breakfast Club in July.**

Watch your inbox for information about an exciting Breakfast Club in August.

You don't want to miss it!

## Did you know?

**The Chamber has an Instagram!**



Follow us @theblair\_chamber



# Ribbon Cutting



## Crowned Boutique

The Chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the grand opening of Crowned Boutique, located at 1410 Eleventh Ave., in downtown Altoona. [Crowned Boutique](#) offers a beautiful selection of women's and young women's clothing. Apparel for the entire family, including jewelry, purses, and decor is offered in the vendor section of the store. Crowned Boutique is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Joining in the celebration are, from left: Emily Martin, Chamber Ambassador; Megan Rossman, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Josh Piotti, Dawn Piotti, Shannon Mielnik, owner, Crowned Boutique; Savannah Dodson; Emily Gieg; Addison Mielnik; Dan Parson; Halley Parson; Carter Cerully, Chamber Ambassador.



## Calling all LBC Alumni Time for annual Gifts of Hope project

It is that time of year again, when graduates of the Chamber's Leadership Blair County (LBC) Adult program receive their Membership Dues letter and are called upon to continue their Servant Leadership journey through their support of Leadership Blair County Alumni and its Gifts of Hope Project.

Each fall, LBC Alumni work to help a local organization through Gifts of Hope.

This year, the organization selected Easter for Eli. Elias "Eli" Garrett was three years old when he lost his battle with Non-Hodgkin's T-Cell Lymphoma on May 7, 2009, just shy of his fourth birthday. In his memory, "Easter for Eli" collects Easter basket to be delivered to children who are hospitalized over the Easter Holiday.

We are excited to collect items for baskets to be delivered to children hospitalized next Easter. Items can be delivered to the Blair County Chamber from September 2nd through the 19th. Donations will be presented at the Annual LBC Alumni Breakfast later in September.



*LBC Alumni Committee members talk with Martin Garrett, founder of Easter for Eli.*

"Many LBC Alumni, including myself, are not in a position to be huge philanthropists, but participating in LBC Alumni and supporting its projects, such as Gifts of Hope, allows me and other Alumni to make a difference in the community," said Sherri Stayer, an Alumni of the 2012 LBC Class.

Be on the lookout for your letter and a flyer containing more details about the items being suggested for the Easter for Eli Gifts of Hope donation. Let's show Easter for Eli what the LBC Alumni community can do!!

## It's time your efforts are 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, Program Manager at the Blair County Chamber, at [mrossman@blairchamber.com](mailto:mrossman@blairchamber.com).

**Scan QR code for  
Certification Survey**

