



Important
DATES!

■ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

"Customer Service: How to Keep Clients for Life" business breakfast. First-ever partnership program sponsored by the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition (Chamber of Schenectady County, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce, Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce). Presented by internationally known author and consultant Hal Becker. 7:30 to 10 a.m. The Century House, 997 Route 9, Latham. \$35 per chamber member only.

■ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

"Basics of Export" seminar, sponsored by Chamber of Schenectady County, Capital Region World Trade Center and Global Business Network. 7:30 a.m., Lecture Hall 102, Stockade Building, Schenectady County Community College. Breakfast included. Guest speakers from WTC, GBN, Empire State Development, ExportNY, U.S. Department of Commerce.

■ TUESDAY, MARCH 4

"Business at Breakfast" featuring New York Wired speaking about "e-learning" program that provides local companies/organizations and employees with free access to more than 650 courses via the Internet. 7:30 a.m., Glen Sanders Mansion, One Glen Ave., Scotia. Sponsored by Chamber and Workforce Investment Board.

For information and reservations for any of the above events, call the Chamber at 372-5656, fax 370-3217 or e-mail events@schenectadychamber.org



February 2003
**SCHENECTADY
CHAMBER.ORG**

DeLanson • Duaneburg • Glenville • Niskayuna • Princetown • Rotterdam • Schenectady • Scotia

We Want *You* to Help Shape the Chamber's Future

The entire membership of The Chamber of Schenectady County has been called upon to help organization officials and representatives shape the Chamber's next three years of operation as the board of directors works toward establishing a new strategic plan that extends into the mid-2000s.

"Your input is a key component in this process," writes the Chamber's Strategic Planning Committee as part of a mid-January communication blitz with its members. "We are seeking your thoughts on how we can improve the Chamber's effectiveness, provide better service to our members, and strengthen our role in the greater Schenectady community."

All members have been asked to return a Chamber-commissioned survey via fax or electronically via a special Web site during the first two weeks of February. Any members still wishing to submit a completed survey may contact the Chamber at 372-5656 to determine if the original February 7 deadline for responses has been extended. The majority of Chamber members were sent an advisory notice of the pending survey via a mass e-mail service, known as an e-mail "listserv," that has been developed by the Chamber. Any members who haven't yet submitted their e-mail addresses to the Chamber or don't have e-mail service were sent postcards explaining the survey submission process.

The committee developed an electronic, Web-based survey that gives members opportunities to quickly and easily send their opinions about present programs and services, and their thoughts for the Chamber's future operation. "Tell us what you think, not what you think we want to

hear," says the committee.

Members were being provided directions to a secure Internet site where they can find the survey, along with a code to access the questionnaire. The method ensures that all responses are anonymous and confidential.

The survey asks respondents to list the number of employees they have in their company or organization, and provides space for members to add their own comments and opinions about what they believe should be the top three strategic priorities for the Chamber over the next three to five years. Other questions and topics request members to rate the effectiveness of Chamber special events, the order of importance of regularly scheduled Chamber events to them professionally, and the efficiency of services and programs (such as group health insurance and networking opportunities). Respondents are also asked if there are other programs the Chamber should focus on that are not currently being addressed (for example, participation in or leadership of high-technology development).

Members are asked for their reactions to how the Chamber is administered and operated, including the effectiveness of their communications with staff members.

Chamber officials expect to have the survey results tabulated so that a report can be submitted at the February 20 meeting of the organization's Executive Committee and the February 26 regular board of directors session. The results will be used by the board in shaping a sweeping, three-year strategic plan that will carry the Chamber through 2006.

The Wait is Over! Sole Proprietor Health Insurance Now Available

The Chamber of Schenectady County is now able to offer its members "sole proprietor" health and dental insurance, thanks to legislation signed into law in 2002 by Governor George Pataki. The Business Council of New York State and the Chamber Alliance of New York State were the primary backers of the sole proprietor health bill.

More affordable health coverage is now available for sole business proprietors. The rates for these "groups of one" are considerably lower than direct payment rates.

For all the details, contact Director of Member Benefits Linda Staroba at 372-5656, by fax at 370-3217 or via e-mail, lstaroba@schenectadychamber.org.

Be sure to tell your colleagues and friends that are sole proprietors to contact the Chamber to gain information about this great benefit and lots of other programs available to them if they become Chamber members.

Business Council Outlines 2003 Legislative Agenda

New York State lawmakers in 2003 should focus on creating more jobs in the future, not on the state's recent economic travails, states The Business Council of New York State in its report, *Back to Business: An Agenda for New York State 2003*.

"Our job in 2003 is to look ahead – not back," the Council says. "The recession is waning. New York is back on its feet, and it's time to get back to work on our long-term effort to build a better future for this state and its people. One goal should override all others: more jobs."

Back to Business, which summarizes the Council's legislative priorities for 2003, is posted at <http://www.bcnys.org/03b2b.htm>, or contact Dominic Tom, director of communications and government affairs, at the Chamber office for a copy.

The report urges a legislative agenda with six priorities:

- **Tame spending.** If overall state spending had been held to the rate of inflation over the last five years, the state would have saved \$7.9 billion in the current fiscal year, the report maintains. "Spending is the problem, and spending restraint is the only solution that will genuinely address the problem."
- **Strengthen the foundations of growth.** Back to Business recommends the state site more electricity-generating capacity quickly, enact single-sales factor reform of corporate
- taxes, build New York's university research base, and target education spending to raise performance and give help where it's most needed.
- **Get a grip on healthcare.** The Council urges the state to cut healthcare costs overall by 10 percent and identify a health-insurance policy that could cut employers' costs by 10 percent.
- **Cut the cost of providing jobs.** New York should adopt the approach of Connecticut, which "has a common-sense approach that provides an appealing combination of higher benefits for the injured and lower costs for employers. Labor is better off; business is better off. Why not just copy it?"
- **Revive upstate cities.** Provide targeted aid to help cities attract new immigrants, such as Utica and Schenectady are doing, and enact "brownfield" reform to enable developers to put abandoned but potentially valuable properties to use.
- **Relieve local taxpayers.** The state should take over the local share of Medicaid costs over three to five years - with an ironclad requirement that counties give every dollar of relief back to their taxpayers. The state also should ease localities' burden of runaway lawsuit costs by moving suits against municipalities to the Court of Claims. Officials say claims against the state go there, and the state has no problem with lawsuit abuse when compared to the localities.

You respect her in the workplace... You admire her achievements...

Honor her with a REACH Award.

In every office there are unsung heroines who contribute significantly to the day-in and day-out success of a business. The REACH Award is presented to extraordinary female employees who have been nominated by their employers in recognition of their exceptional qualities and efforts. This is not a competitive award.

The YWCA of Schenectady will hold its annual Women of Achievement and REACH Awards Dinner at the Glen Sanders Mansion in Scotia on Tuesday, March 25th. The deadline for the REACH Award is February 24. Please call Maura Gannon at 374-3394 for nomination forms for the REACH Awards as well as program advertising information and dinner tickets.

High School "Intern of the Month"

Call Crystal Burns a "numbers cruncher" or a "bean counter" and she'll probably take it as a compliment, then ask you for an accounting position with your organization.

The 16-year-old Scotia-Glenville High School junior is in the midst of an internship with 1st National Bank of Scotia, made possible through the Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP), one of several campaigns

coordinated through the School-to-Careers Partnership of the Schenectady County Chamber Foundation. The foundation is the educational affiliate of The Chamber of Schenectady County.

Crystal is busily completing her 108-hour internship with the bank as she considers plans to attend college to major in accounting and, eventually, work in the accounting field - maybe even going on for her CPA designation. For now, she's getting familiar with the bank by working in the mailroom and communications office, but is meeting with bank officials to arrange for a move into the accounts payable/receivable and collections side of the business. "I really like the internship," says Crystal. "I'm a detail-oriented person, so this is a good opportunity. I'm also getting to know lots of people, and lots of people are getting to know me. I'm very comfortable working at 1st National."

But she doesn't stop at the internship in preparing for her career goal. Crystal also is the treasurer of both her high school's student store - TartanMart - and the business club, known as the Future Business Leaders of America. She has added to her resume the director's post of the high school's GIVE program, also known as Building Community Through Service.



Crystal Burns of Scotia-Glenville High School is enjoying her internship with 1st National Bank of Scotia and the duties that come with working in the mailroom and communications office. She'll soon be learning about the bank's other key operations on the way to her career dream of being an accountant.

As if that's not enough, Crystal holds down a part-time job in the "cash cage" at the local Kmart store, where she counts and accounts for cash while also stocking register drawers with cash needed by the retail clerks. The job is a family affair: her mom, Mary Burns, and two of her three sisters also work at Kmart. Dad, Brian, owns and operates Burns Auto Center in Schenectady. Crystal

during a summer or two also has helped out her aunt, a bookkeeper for a construction company in Gouverneur, on the New York-Canadian border.

Participating in CEIP "has helped me make decisions and gives me lots of experience," says Crystal. "It's a good program, and I definitely recommend it for other students."

Welcome Our New Members

1356 Union Corp
Dr. Lloyd Sokolow
2183 Grand Boulevard
Schenectady, NY 12309
(518) 346-0956

Beauchemin Consulting, Inc.
Sharon Beauchemin
104 Bruce Street
Scotia, NY 12302
(518) 393-5811

Community Hospice Foundation
Patricia Stroebel
1411 Union Street
Schenectady, NY 12308
(518) 377-8846

Flood's Welding & Specialties
Milton Flood
324B May Avenue
Schenectady, NY 12303
(518) 357-0326

KT Electric
Ken Tibbitts
131 Vernon Road
Scotia, NY 12302
(518) 370-2052

MLB Industries, Inc.
Bryan Fox
1 Stone Break Road
Malta, NY 12020
(518) 289-1371

Meadowdale Designs
Diane Jordan
272 Brandle Road
Altamont, NY 12009
(518) 861-0404

Niles Marketing
Judith Niles
117 Willow Lane
Glenville, NY 12302
(518) 384-0937

George Owen Used Equipment
George Owen
395 North Lovers Lane
Amsterdam, NY 12010
(518) 882-1761

Walking Tree Baskets
Dianne O'Donnell
2073 West Glenville Road
Amsterdam, NY 12010
(518) 399-1965



Richard Ferro, left, vice president of commercial services for Prudential Manor Homes/Blake Atlantic Realtors, discusses business with several other Chamber of Schenectady County members during a recent "Business at Breakfast" session sponsored by the Chamber's revitalized Small Business

Council and presented by W.A. Mack Financial Group. Guest speaker Brad Davidson later spoke about the importance of business owners holding a valid valuation survey and report for their companies.

The Chamber of Schenectady County participated in grand opening ceremonies for the long-awaited Lowe's Home Improvement Center in Mohawk Commons, site of the former Mohawk Mall in Niskayuna. A Price Chopper SuperCenter opened there during 2002. Participating in the ceremonial ribbon-cutting occasion were, front row from the left, Christopher Smith, Cynthia Jenkins, Natalee Monge, Chamber President Charles Steiner and Paul Suplay; back row, from the left, Bob Reineke, Chris Walsh and Chris Church.



THE CHAMBER ON THE ROAD



A Union College intramural broomball team poses in front of the Chamber's dasher board at Achilles Rink. Their shirts read *I "heart" Schidy!* Last year the team took the co-ed championship and considers the dasher board a sign to be champions again this year! Pictured are Dan Delaughter, Gerris Greene, Karla Strobel, Chelsi Stevens, Ben Jackson, Terra Lederhouse, Weston Lowrie, Jenny Moon, Ryan Megenedy, Justin Sabourin, Lou Iorizzo and Mike Whalen. The Chamber's tourism program helps to promote Union College Hockey through a partnership with Clear Channel Radio.



Chamber Board of Directors Chair Lois Smith-Law, right, presents Scott Donnelly of GE Global Research Center with the 2002 Company of the Year award at the Chamber of Schenectady County's 14th Annual Business Awards Dinner on January 30 at the Glen Sanders Mansion.



Janet Hutchison, left, owner of the Open Door Bookstore, is congratulated by George Robertson of Schenectady Economic Development Corp. on being named the Chamber of Schenectady County's 2002 Small Businessperson of the Year.

Tech Valley Chamber Coalition Visits Texas on High-Tech Venture

Chamber of Schenectady County President Charles Steiner and county business and government leaders were among the more than 30 regional officials that took part in a first-ever trip to Austin, Texas that was organized by the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition. The group visited International SEMATECH and Tokyo Electron Ltd. (TEL), two high-technology companies that already have committed to locating facilities within the 17-county region of upstate New York known as Tech Valley.

The group and coordination for the February 2-5 trip was led by the three chamber presidents of the original Tech Valley Chamber Coalition - Steiner, Lyn Taylor of the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Linda Hillman of the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce. Participants paid their own expenses.

Steiner says he will provide a summary of his experiences from the trip with the Chamber membership in the schenectadychamber.org March newsletter.

In a joint statement, the chamber presidents noted the trip was an opportunity to learn more about the changes Austin experienced following the arrival of SEMATECH in 1988.

“Businesspeople throughout the region are curious about what impact SEMATECH will have on their enterprises, as well as how they can best prepare for the expected growth,” the presidents said. “By

getting a firsthand look at how the landscape changed in Austin following its technology boom, we will be better positioned to assist Tech Valley businesses as they look to reap the rewards of a vibrant high-tech economy.”

The entire group was to meet with senior executives at International SEMATECH and Tokyo Electron Ltd., both of which are locating new operations in facilities at the University at Albany. While local leaders hope to learn more about the impact each facility will have on this region, officials with both research-and-development consortiums have also expressed an interest in finding out more about what the Tech Valley region has to offer.

“The people we’ve talked to from SEMATECH and TEL are as interested to know about us as we are about how they will change the business environment in this region,” said the chamber presidents.

The group was to tour the IC² Institute at the University of Texas at Austin, a “globally interactive organization that uses modern telecommunications and multimedia to link research universities, businesses and other institutional and individual resources in developed and emerging regions for shared prosperity at home and abroad.” The visitors also set aside time for private meetings with representatives in their particular industries.

Assisting the coalition in making connections within the Austin business community is Glenn West, the former president of the Greater Austin (TX) Chamber of Commerce, who has been hired by the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce to foster relationships that have the potential to benefit both Austin and Tech Valley.

Joining Steiner in the Schenectady County contingent were Richard Ferro, vice president, commercial services for Prudential Blake-Atlantic Realtors; Daniel Gentile, executive director of the Capital Region Workforce Investment Board; Schenectady County Legislature Chair Peter Guidarelli; Schenectady Mayor Albert Jurczynski; J. Douglass Klein, director of the Center for Converging Technologies at Union College; John Manning, chair, Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority board of directors; Gary Nicklaus, president, Career Connections; George Robertson, executive director, Schenectady Economic Development Corp.; William Schwarz, director of corporate and government relations for Union College; Lois Smith-Law, director of development/communications for Metroplex and chair of the Chamber’s board of directors.

The Albany-Colonie and Rensselaer County chambers combined to send 23 business, organization and government officials on the trip.

Leadership Schenectady 2003 Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Location
February 11	Diversity	Schenectady YMCA
February 25	Human Services	Maple Ridge, Rotterdam
March 11	Government and History	Glenville Town Hall

Leadership Schenectady is sponsored by the Schenectady County Chamber Foundation, an affiliate of The Chamber of Schenectady County. Call Pat Barney at 372-5656 for program information.



TECHvalley
MARKETING
SYMPOSIUM

Features Expert

Rob Hand, a renowned marketing consultant from Austin, Texas, will present "Shifting Gears to Gain Market Share," the American Marketing Association's 2003 Tech Valley Marketing Symposium, to be held Thursday, February 27 at The Desmond, Colonie.

Hand is the founder of Hand Promotion Management that offers consulting services for manufacturers that sell through channels of distribution all over the world.

"We're thrilled to have Rob Hand as a speaker," says Sandy Pogue, president of the New York Capital Region Chapter of the American Marketing Association. "He's going to talk about the steps he and his clients took in light of SEMATECH's 1988 arrival in Austin, so that they could thrive in the changing Austin economy."

The local AMA chapter and the University of Albany are presenting the symposium, with Capital News 9, Spiral Design Studio, Shenise Video Productions and the *Times Union* newspaper serving as sponsors. The cost is \$119 for AMA members, \$149 for nonmembers and \$99 for students and faculty. Online registration, along with further information, is available at www.techvalleymkt.com.

Chamber Coalition Adds Six Members



Six more chambers of commerce from throughout the Capital Region joined the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition that promotes the 17-county upstate area as a rapidly expanding technology center with a superior quality of life. The coalition was launched seven months ago by Schenectady County, Albany-Colonie Regional and Rensselaer County chambers of commerce.

This largest regional partnership of its kind now includes 15 chambers from nearly every Tech Valley county that totals 15,000 members and more than 360,000 employees. The newest members are the Bethlehem, Greene County, Guilderland, Latham Area, Montgomery County and Schoharie County chambers of commerce. The Adirondack Regional, Columbia County, Fulton County Regional, Plattsburgh-North Country, Greater Southern Dutchess and Southern Saratoga County chambers joined in November.

"Participation in the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition illustrates how businesses in the region are committed to working together as a team to promote economic development," says Marty Delaney, president of the Bethlehem chamber. "We're all in this together."

"Part of our mission statement is to advance the general welfare and prosperity of Greene County by providing a unified voice. We are proud to become part of the unified voice of the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition, to help showcase the Hudson Valley and Capital Region," adds Debbie Zetterlund, Greene

County chamber executive director. "The chamber stands ready to advance the coalition's goals, thereby showcasing the entire region and moving it to the next level."

"We are pleased to be able to be active participants in this exciting endeavor," says Jane Schramm, executive director of the Guilderland chamber. "The potential of what we can do together for our area as a unified entity is limitless."

"I am pleased to have the Latham chamber join the Tech Valley partnership," notes Richard Sleasman, chair of the Latham chamber board of directors. "It is critical that we present a unified, regional perspective as the world of technology begins to more seriously look at the Capital Region."

"The Coalition has many exciting ideas and will bring many developmental opportunities and programs to the region," says Montgomery County chamber President Deborah Auspelmyer. "Being part of this coalition assists us in providing more opportunities to our members and our county, and we are thrilled to be on board."

"We are extremely pleased at becoming a partner with neighboring chambers in the Coalition," says Jim Batsford, executive director of the Schoharie County chamber. "This regional approach to serving and fostering technology industry development will advance the economic vitality of our whole area."

Leadership Schenectady 2003 Takes Flight



Look, up in the sky ... It's a bird ... It's a plane ... No, it's actually Seth Leech, an attorney with Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna, of the Leadership Schenectady 2003 class taking part in a team-building exercise at Girls Inc. during the first program session on January 10. Twenty-four business and organization leaders are participating in this year's program that leads up to their graduation in June.

Leadership Schenectady 2003 class members didn't have much time to relish a delicious dinner buffet at Perrino's Restaurant on January 9 before they got down to some serious learning by taking part in the ensuing "team development day" held at Girls Inc. on Albany Street, Schenectady.

Thus started this year's Leadership class, consisting of 24 local business and organization representatives who will take part in various activities over the next six months in a process designed to broaden their knowledge of and participation in the Schenectady County community.

The dinner featured welcoming comments and encouragement from Lois Smith-Law, chair of the Chamber of Schenectady County's board of directors; Chamber President Charles Steiner; David Bertrand, a Leadership graduate and chair of the group's advisory committee; and graduates of Leadership Schenectady 2002, who presented a photographic recollection of their class adventures and learning programs, and an update on several of the past year's students.

Twelve hours later, the class was at Girls Inc. to introduce themselves, learn about their individual careers and participate in team-building exercises and projects. The team building included an opportunity for each

student to place trust in their classmates by allowing groups of students to hoist each individual by a system of ropes and pulleys that allowed them to safely swing through the air many feet off the ground. The class also met to establish personal and group goals that they believe will positively impact Schenectady County's business and residential communities.

During the six-month class, the students will complete a major project to benefit the community before their June graduation. The daylong project must involve all 24 students, be of benefit to Schenectady County and not involve fundraising of any kind. Leadership officials say that organizations are free to submit their projects for consideration by contacting class coordinator Pat Barney at the Chamber by calling 372-5656 or e-mailing pbarney@schenectadychamber.org.

Leadership Schenectady is a program of the Schenectady County Chamber Foundation, the educational affiliate of The Chamber of Schenectady County.

Leadership graduates and Chamber members wishing to learn more about the program for possible future enrollment are invited to attend an individual session at a cost of \$15, which includes lunch, by contacting Barney.

Business Council Hosting Property Tax Workshop

The Business Council of New York State, Inc. and area chambers of commerce are sponsoring a one-day workshop, "Take Control of Your Property Tax Assessment," on Friday, March 14 at the Holiday Inn, 232 Broadway, Saratoga Springs. Additional presentations will be held in Syracuse and Buffalo.

The workshop is designed to help property owners understand how assessments are determined, including the role of tax and equalization rates. Many people are unaware of the overall assessment process and the opportunities available to real estate taxpayers to address the issue over assessment in New York state.

Guest speakers will include professionals from the Hiscock & Barclay law firm and New York State Electric & Gas Corp. The seminar will be especially helpful to corporate tax, facility and accounting managers, and property tax attorneys.

The seminar costs \$199 per person for Business Council and co-sponsor members, \$249 for nonmembers. The fee covers course materials, breakfast, refreshment breaks and lunch. Attendees are encouraged to bring a copy of their tax bills to enhance the program.

For information and reservations, call 465-7511 or fax 465-9567.

Business Valuation Expert Presents to SBC



Brad Davidson, right, of Maryland-based Securities Pricing And Research, Inc. listens as Angelo Mazzone, left, owner of Glen Sanders Mansion and chair of the Chamber of Schenectady County's Tourism Committee, and Armon Benny, president of Capital Printing, Inc. and chair of the Chamber's Small Business Council, discuss business valuations.

The Small Business Council of The Chamber of Schenectady County sponsored an early January workshop on business valuations, featuring guest speaker Brad Davidson of Securities Pricing And Research, Inc. (SPARDATA), a Maryland-based company that has evaluated thousands of non-traded securities for business and the nation's largest financial service firms.

About 25 people attended the breakfast, presented by Schenectady-based W.A. Mack Financial Group at the Turf Tavern, Scotia.

Davidson, SPARDATA's president, is a recognized expert in the valuation field who has made presentations to the Internal Revenue Service, Securities and Exchange Commission, Department of Labor, Federal Financial Institution Examination Council, and Federal Reserve. The company's valuation reports have

been cited many times by the *Wall Street Journal* and other publications.

The key point made by Davidson is that many business owners don't have a valid valuation made of their companies or their own estimates are in error. He noted national survey results show that valuations established by owners are, on average, incorrect by 50 percent – meaning that some businesses are over- or undervalued by as much as half their actual value.

Davidson recommended that business owners retain an experienced, credible valuation agency to perform a review of their companies, especially in light of the impact that heirs to a business may experience after a family-owned service is handed down to the next generation. He maintained that some heirs aren't prepared for the value placed on a business by agencies such as the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

The Chamber of Schenectady County

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Mission
To drive a strong business climate throughout Schenectady County.

Hours
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Our staff is here to promote your business and enhance the business climate of the county. Please feel free to contact us!

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