

# NETWORKS

## DIGITAL NEWS

### Artificial Intelligence for small and mid-size business

Small to mid-size businesses are increasingly turning to AI as a practical tool—not a futuristic luxury. From automating customer support and streamlining operations to improving decision-making, AI helps smaller teams do more with less.

Even though Artificial Intelligence is rapidly becoming part of everyday business operations—many small and mid-sized businesses feel overwhelmed, skeptical, or unsure how to approach it safely.

The Blair County Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Club on Feb. 19 at the Blair County Convention Center, brought to you by series sponsor, [Altoona-Blair County Airport](#) and [Contour Airlines](#), will offer real-world examples of how small and mid-sized businesses are successfully using artificial intelligence. The discussion, led by industry experts, Wayne Hippo, CEO of Fortiva AI, LLC, and Bruce Moser, Vice President of AI Technology at PS Solutions, will provide a practical framework for getting started while offering a clear understanding of what AI actually is. The speakers are sponsored by [Wells Fargo](#).

Breakfast Club begins at 7:45 a.m. The cost to attend is \$25 for Chamber Members and \$35 for non-members and includes a full breakfast buffet. For more information or to make reservations visit the Chamber on-line at [www.blair-chamber.com](#) or call 814-943-8151.



### Nominate a star! Award nominations are now open

The Chamber is now accepting nominations for a full slate of prestigious awards recognizing outstanding businesses and individuals from across the region. These highly anticipated honors celebrate accomplishments, leadership, and community impact that deserve special recognition. Award recipients will be announced and celebrated at the Chamber's red carpet Gala & Annual Celebration on April 28, 2026, at the Blair County Convention Center.

A description of each award is available on the Chamber's website at [www.blairchamber.com](#) including a link to the [nomination form](#).



This is a great opportunity to nominate a deserving individual or business for their extraordinary accomplishments. The 2026 Awards include: ATHENA, Business of the Year, Small Business of the Year, Non-Profit Spotlight, Donna D. Gority Servant Leadership, George, Joseph P. Rosenhamer Chamber Spirit, and Judith A. Rossi Educator of the Year.

### ★★★★★ January All-Stars

Since sponsorships are such an integral part of the Chamber's ability to offer great events and programs to members, we recognize sponsors each month as "All-Stars."

The All-Stars for January are:

[Altoona-Blair County Airport](#)/[Contour Air](#)  
[Keller Engineers, Inc.](#)

[Lung Disease Center of Central Pennsylvania](#)

[The Casino at Lakemont Park](#)  
[Webber Seltzer Wealth Advisors](#)

See you Thursday!!

### ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

In partnership with Epic Journeys

### Antarctica

Feb. 3-14, 2027

### INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Feb. 5 • 11 a.m.

Devorris Center for Business Development

FEB. 27, 28 & MAR. 1

### BLAIR COUNTY Home Garden & Healthy Living SHOWCASE 2026

**VENDOR SPACE IS SELLING FAST!**

RESERVE YOUR BOOTH NOW

[BlairChamber.com/homeshow](#)

# ABCD Corporation enters agreement to acquire Gable's Building

After more than a decade of planning with external ownership groups, the Altoona Blair County Development (ABCD) Corporation has entered into an "Agreement of Sale" to acquire the Gable's Building, placing future redevelopment efforts in local control.

"ABCD wants to acquire Gables to continue to realize an exciting and aggressive vision for downtown development that includes housing, commercial spaces, and accessible and convenient downtown parking," said Ann Benzel, Board Chair of ABCD Corporation.

An agreement of sale has been executed. ABCD Corporation Board and staff will quickly move through final due diligence steps before officially closing on the purchase.

"We are looking forward to reimaging this important anchor site and building," said Stephen McKnight, President and CEO of ABCD Corporation. "While all



options are on the table, we can say that any scenario must include additional parking."

ABCD officials announced in 2018 that a Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) grant was awarded to help restore the building's façade.

"Much has changed since then and the building condition likely will demand different redevelopment priorities. That is what we need to determine, and we will do that by working with the City and experienced developers," McKnight said.

## Saluting Our Renewals

We would like to thank those members that have continued to invest with the organization by renewing their membership in the month of January.

### Celebrating 109 Years

Goldstein, Heslop, Steele, Clapper, Oswalt & Smith

### Celebrating 50-59 Years

S.P. McCarl & Company, Inc.  
WTAJ-TV

### Celebrating 40-49 Years

Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Altoona  
Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center  
Morefield Communications, Inc.

### Celebrating 30-39 Years

Altoona Community Theatre  
Durbin Companies  
Greenwood Pools & Spas  
Stiffler, McGraw & Associates, Inc.

### Celebrating 20-29 Years

Central Labor Council  
Pennsylvania Economy League, Inc., Central Div.  
Quality Corrections & Inspections

### Celebrating 10-19 Years

Allstate - The Gibson Agency  
American Eagle Paper Mills  
CCS Custom Building & Remodeling Inc.  
ChamberChoice  
Donna D. Gority  
Duncansville Pharmacy, Inc.  
Forsheys Ag and Industrial  
Hollidaysburg Community Partnership  
PHN - Altoona Community Health Center  
RT Contracting, Inc.  
Westmoreland County SCORE, Alleghenies Branch

### Celebrating 5-9 Years

Center City Church  
Escape Altoona Co.  
Fiore Brothers Management, LLC  
Nason Foundation  
Roof Works USA, Inc.  
Sweat For Vets, Inc.

### Celebrating 1-4 Years

3Echo Emergency Solutions  
Central PA Truck And Equipment Sales  
Frederick's Meat Market LLC  
Tender Love for Children

## BEST PRACTICES

COMMITTEE OF NON-PROFIT BUSINESSES



**FEBRUARY 13**

**8:15 - 10:00 AM**

**DEVORRIS CENTER FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

**REGISTER [HERE!](#)**

## Congratulations!

...to [South Hills School of Business & Technology](#) upon receiving a School of Excellence Award from ACCSC for completing the accreditation process with very few findings.

...to Phil Freeman, President/CEO, [Reliance Bank](#), on being elected to the Foundation for Free Enterprise Education board of directors.

...to [WISE Women of Blair County](#) for awarding \$14,128.36 in grant monies to six worthy organizations: ArtsAltoona, Bookworms Against Bullies, Family Services, Inc., The Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation, JUMC Angel Feet Ministry, and the Roaring Spring Community Library.

