

NETWORKS

DIGITAL NEWS

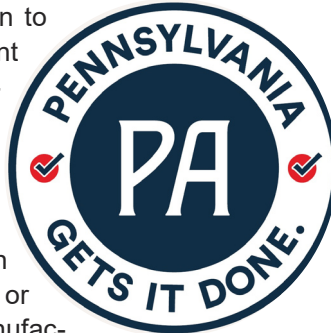
New PIDA rates announced

Blair County business owners have a new reason to take a look at the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) financing program. PIDA has announced updated, competitive interest rates for the first quarter of 2026 as low as 4.25%, making NOW a great time to explore funding for expansion, upgrades or new projects.

The program offers fixed-rate loan options that can be used for things like buying land, constructing or renovating buildings, and purchasing equipment. Manufacturers, healthcare clinics, agribusinesses, and other eligible companies can often pair PIDA financing with bank loans to stretch project dollars further.

ABCD Corp facilitated four PIDA projects in 2025 and partners say the program is a practical way to lower borrowing costs, improve cash flow and support job growth right here in Blair County.

Business owners who are thinking about growing or modernizing are encouraged to reach out to Tom Seasoltz at toms@abcdcorp.org or 814-569-1108 to discuss your financing needs today.



BREAKFAST CLUB 2026 SERIES KICKS-OFF THURSDAY

The State of the County: The year in review & outlook for 2026

Join us this Thursday, as the Blair County Chamber kicks off the new year of its Breakfast Club Series, sponsored by [Altoona-Blair County Airport](#) and [Contour Airlines](#), with a panel discussion on Blair County's economic trends, development projects, workforce conditions and public policy priorities. The panel, sponsored by Keller Engineers, will feature Stephen McKnight, President/CEO, ABCD Corporation; Bradley Burger, Executive Director, Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies—PA Career Link of Blair County; Commissioner

Dave Kessling, President, Blair County Commissioners; and Alex Halpern, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, PA State Chamber of Commerce. The panel discussion will be moderated by Matt Fox of Altoona Blair County Development Corporation. Breakfast Club will be held in the lower level of the Blair County Convention Center and features a full breakfast buffet. Cost to attend is \$25 for Chamber Members and \$35 for non-members. Click [here](#) to register or call the Chamber at 814-943-8151.

RSVP today for After Hours

The Casino at Lakemont Park is opening its doors for a fun networking event on Tuesday, January 27, from 5 - 7 p.m., for the Blair County Chamber's first After Hours of 2026. A highlight of the evening will be delicious food provided by The Casino's preferred vendors: Alto Markets, Mama Randazzo, and Mayfield at the Capitol Hotel. Each will showcase items from their signature menus.

After Hours events provide the perfect opportunity to connect with friends or to even make new connections.

"I love going to After Hours events because they are a great way to learn about the host business, meet people who are new to the Chamber, and touch base with longer term Chamber member friends," said Donna Gority of Arts Altoona.

Cost to attend After Hours is only \$5 per person and includes food, beverages, networking, and door prizes.

Don't miss out! Make your reservations by clicking [here](#).



we're  very  social 
Blair County Chamber of Commerce

Register for events online
blairchamber.com

Linking leaders: Mentorship in motion

The WE-LEaD (Women Encouraging Leadership, Education and Development) Committee is excited to host its first networking event of 2026 on January 29th from 5:00–7:00 PM at Sugar Run Brewery. By popular demand, its bringing back the speed-networking format—an event that sparked countless meaningful connections last year.

What makes this event unique is its mentor/mentee twist. Attendees will identify themselves as either mentors—established professionals eager to share their experiences—or mentees—those newer to their careers and looking to learn, grow, and gain perspective. Throughout the evening, pairs will rotate, giving everyone the chance to engage in focused, impactful conversations that highlight different stages of the profes-



sional journey.

Last year's event was filled with energy, encouragement, and powerful moments of guidance. Participants left with new contacts, renewed confidence, and a deeper sense of community—which is why so many are excited for its return.

If you'd like to take part in this inspiring evening of connection and leadership development, you can register [here](#). We hope to see you there!

LBC session highlights human services and community impact

The Leadership Blair County Class recently completed its third session, centered on Blair County's Human Services agencies. Participants were divided into small groups, with each group visiting three different organizations that continually provide essential support and care throughout our community. These site visits offered firsthand insight into the challenges and rewards of serving Blair County residents.

The class also heard from an inspiring lineup of guest speakers, including Dr. Zane Gates and Jess Brunner of the Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation/Gloria Gates Care, Judy Rosser of the Blair Drug & Alcohol Partnership, Ryan Custead of Rise for Recovery, and Colonel Don Belsey of the St. Vincent dePaul Food Pantry.

In the spirit of the season, attendees brought donations for the Food Pantry,



doing their part to help address food insecurity during the holidays. They even enjoyed “on-the-go” boxed lunches to experience the fast-paced schedules common in human services work.

The class looks forward to kicking off the new year with its January session, which will focus on Diversity.

CHAMBER FOUNDATION

Gerraughty appointed to Foundation Board

In 2002, the Blair County Chamber founded a separate entity to address the needs of the business community in educational programming, particularly programming



James Gerraughty

related to young people. The Blair County Chamber Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funds youth programs administered through the Blair County Chamber.

The Foundation is led by a board of directors who oversee the organization and offer guidance for growth and sustainability.

Approved as a new board member is James F. Gerraughty, Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator Program Manager at SAP&DC. Although he is newly elected, Gerraughty is not new to the Foundation Board. He served as a board member from 2016 through 2023 and has a strong understanding of the mission of the Foundation.

“I'm happy to be a part of the Chamber Foundation again,” Gerraughty said. “I'm proud to be part of an organization that funds significant positive benefits for residents of Blair County.”

Joining Gerraughty in the leadership of the Foundation are fellow board members: Gary Drenning; Jessica Lattanza-DePaolis, Altoona Launch-Box; Dr. Amy Miller, Spring Cove School District; Tracy Plessinger, Altoona-Blair County Airport; Richard Servello, Family Services Incorporated; Craig Wallace, Sheetz, Inc.; Don Yeager, 1st Summit Bank; and Nicole Zernick, Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center.

— VENDOR SPACE IS NOW OPEN! —

BLAIR COUNTY
Home Garden
& **Healthy Living**
SHOWCASE
BLAIR COUNTY
CONVENTION CENTER **2026**

**Feb. 27, 28
& Mar. 1**

RESERVE YOUR BOOTH
BlairChamber.com/homeshow