

# NETWORKS

## DIGITAL NEWS

### Gority to receive Operation Our Town Community Partnership Award

Operation Our Town will once again partner with the Blair County Chamber at a special Breakfast Club this Thursday, March 12. Breakfast Club is brought to you by series sponsor [Altoona-Blair County Airport](#) and [Contour Airlines](#).

Among the presentations that morning will be District Attorney Peter Weeks who will provide an update on current drug trends as well as an overview on the many accomplishments of Operation Our Town.

One of the highlights of the program will be the presentation of the Community Partnership Award which will be presented to Donna Gority for her dedication to our community. Gority is a long-time advocate for the Blair County region and is a former Blair County Commissioner.



**Donna Gority**

There will also be a presentation of the 2026 Law Enforcement Awards to a special group of individuals who are dedicated to keeping our communities safe.

Breakfast Club begins at 7:45 a.m. at the Blair County Convention Center. Cost to attend is \$25 for Chamber Members and \$35 for non-members. Speaker sponsor is [Value Drug](#). Click [here](#) to register.

### Chamber Public Policy Committee welcomes 79th District candidates

This month the Chamber's Public Policy Committee hosted each candidate for the 79th State House District; Andrea Verobish (R) and Caleb McCoy (D).

The candidates presented their vision for the 79th District which includes all of the City of Altoona. Each discussed public policy approaches to achieving those goals. Committee members were able to ask questions which ranged from workforce development, tax structure and environmental policy topics.

Chamber members gain a front row seat for their voice to be heard. Make your voice heard. Join the [Blair County Chamber](#) today!



*Andrea Verobish (R), 79th District candidate.*



*Caleb McCoy (D), 79th District candidate.*

### Galapagos cruise added to travel itinerary

Discover the wonders of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands where you will experience once-in-a-lifetime wildlife encounters, all in their natural habitats. The Chamber has partnered with [Ketrow KURTZ Travel](#) to bring you this adventure scheduled for May 2-9, 2027. Highlights include a 5-day cruise aboard the La Pinta Yacht, luxury hotel stays and seamless transfers.

Encounters with wildlife that are found nowhere else in the world will be led by naturalist guides in a small group experience.

The Chamber is holding an informational meeting, Wednesday, March 18, at 6 p.m., at the Devorris Center for Business Development, 3900 Industrial Park Drive, Altoona. There is no cost or obligation to attend. Click [here](#) to register for the meeting.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OF BLAIR COUNTY  
**March Madness & St. Patrick's Day** **Mar. 19**  
**Trivia**  
Zach's Sports & Spirits  
5:30 p.m.  
**REGISTER HERE**

## Team registration now open

Join us for one of the Chamber's most anticipated events of the year — the UPMC Altoona and UPMC Health Plan Chamber Golf Classic!

The popular classic will be held May 14 at Iron Masters Country Club. New for 2026, the Classic will begin at 8 a.m. with registration and breakfast and will end with lunch following the tournament. The features that make this Classic one of the best of the season will still be part of the event. There will be plenty of snacks, fun, competition, cold beverages, prizes, and networking.

This premier outing brings together business and community leaders for a day of fresh air, friendly competition, and meaningful connections on the course. Whether you're a seasoned golfer or just in it for the networking (and the snacks!), the Golf Classic offers the perfect mix of fun and opportunity.

Not a golfer? Your schedule is booked that day? There are still great



opportunities to promote your brand and business. Contact Jessie Covert at [jcovert@blairchamber.com](mailto:jcovert@blairchamber.com) for more information.

Want the networking but not the golfing? We have you covered. Contact Matt Fox at [mattf@abcdcorp.org](mailto:mattf@abcdcorp.org) to hear about some really fun volunteer opportunities.

So, grab your clubs, rally your team, and get ready to tee up for a day that's all about building relationships and driving success! Register [here](#).

## Students to pitch business plans to local investors

One of the most exciting events of the Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) program is the Investor Panel Presentation. This highly anticipated event will be held at the Penn State Altoona Devorris Downtown Center located at 1431 Twelfth Ave., Altoona. The program will begin at 6 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend. There is no cost.

The YEA! program teaches students all aspects of running a business or a social movement. Through hands-on learning with mentors and business experts, students are equipped with the knowledge to become true entrepreneurs. At the conclusion of the program, each venture becomes an actual IRS-registered business.

One aspect that each student learns



is budgeting and funding. The Investors Panel provides the opportunity for students to take the stage and pitch their business ideas to a panel of local investors. After careful deliberation, the investors then announce the financial awards for each business. The YEA! class of 2026 has fourteen students representing thirteen businesses.

## We'll see you tomorrow at After Hours

Take a well-deserved break from the workday to unwind, relax, and connect with fellow members and friends at the next Chamber After Hours on Tuesday, March 10, from 5 - 7 p.m., at the [Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art](#) located at 1210 Eleventh Ave., downtown Altoona. Conversation and creativity will come together as your \$5 admission includes access to an evening of art, food, doorprizes, and fun. Click [here](#) to register.

## Free event to focus on community

On March 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., stop by the Station Medical Center in the common mall area to experience The Good in our Neighborhood event. There is no cost to attend. Meet and connect with a variety of non-profit organizations serving our local community. Find ways to get involved. While you're there be sure to take advantage of free health screenings and grab lunch from a local food truck. Bring the kids from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. to visit with the Easter Bunny. It's a great opportunity to get those fun Easter photos. No charge!

## Congratulations!

...to five local engineering firms, all Chamber members, that raised \$7,331 during the 17th annual Engineers Fight to CAN Hunger event held in February. Participating firms were: [Gwin, Dobson & Foreman](#); [Keller Engineers Inc.](#); [P. Joseph Lehman Inc. Consulting Engineers](#); [Stiffler McGraw](#); and [The EADS Group](#).

...to [Ritchey's Dairy](#) for their donation of \$3,600 to local FFA chapters which included Central Cove FFA, Northern Bedford FFA, and Williamsburg FFA. The money was collected from the sale of Ritchey's 85th anniversary bottles.

**Anywhere! Anytime! Register for events online**  
**[www.blairchamber.com](http://www.blairchamber.com)**