

# NETWORKS

## DIGITAL NEWS

## Young Entrepreneurs showcase products at trade show

Students from the Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) had an opportunity to showcase their businesses at the recent YEA! Trade Show held at the Sheetz Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence. The students practiced their sales pitches and handed out business cards to community members while conducting cash and carry transactions. The YEA! class of 2026 is made up of 14 students from Blair and Centre counties, representing 13 newly formed businesses.



Through the Academy, students are taught by local entrepreneurs, mentors and business leaders. The trade show is a culmination of weeks of hard work while learning how to own, operate and grow their own IRS-registered business. The event helps spread awareness of this tremendous program while further supporting recruitment efforts.

Another successful year will come to a close tomorrow as the YEA! class of 2026 holds its graduation ceremony.

## Happy Anniversary...to us!

On April 26, 1887, a group of civic leaders from Altoona gathered to officially incorporate a business organization whose primary mission was to support the continued growth of the local business community. After carefully outlining what that organization would look like, the Altoona Board of Trade was established.

Throughout the past 139 years, the Chamber has weathered pandemics, world wars, a stock market crash, and volatile employment markets. It broke a lot of ground and cut miles of ribbon. There have even been multiple changes to the name. One thing, however, has remained consistent; the Chamber's mission. The Blair County Chamber continues to partner with community



leaders and organizations to build on the strength that has been at the core of the organization since its founding. We're proud of our history and excited to see what we will accomplish in the years ahead.



## Engage the Future

Local businesses across Central Pennsylvania face a growing challenge; developing and retaining a skilled, committed local workforce. In response to this issue, the Readiness Institute at Penn State Summer Discovery equips high schoolers with vital skills and knowledge to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Throughout the five-week program, offered through a partnership with IU8 Altoona, students engage with industry professionals, community organizations, Penn State leaders, and their peers through interactive workshops, group projects, and real-world learning opportunities. The program runs from June 29 through July 30.

Each student receives a \$1,500 stipend so they are able to fully engage without worrying about a day-time summer job.

Local businesses and organizations can fund student stipends, ensuring students can participate regardless of financial circumstance. By sponsoring a student, it is a direct investment in the local talent pipeline and future workforce.

To learn more about the program, go to [readinessinstitute.psu.edu](http://readinessinstitute.psu.edu), or contact Sarah Caterson at [skc123@psu.edu](mailto:skc123@psu.edu).

**Your feedback is important to us.**

Contact the Chamber at 814-943-8151  
[chamber@blairchamber.com](mailto:chamber@blairchamber.com)

# Ribbon Cutting



## SpeedPro Central PA

A Chamber ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the grand opening of SpeedPro Central PA located at 526 N. 4th Street, Bellwood. SpeedPro Central PA offers high-impact, large-format printing and visual solutions. Products include banners, signs, window graphics, wall murals, vehicle wraps, trade show displays, and customer branding. For more information go to [speedpro.com/central-pa](http://speedpro.com/central-pa). Joining the celebration are, from left: Christie Yingling, Chamber Ambassador; Rick Boston, the office of State Representative Scott Barger; Brinley Bilthuis; Brenna Bilthuis; Sara and Jake Bilthuis, owners; Brodie Bilthuis; Amanda Walker, the office of State Senator Judy Ward; Megan Rossman, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; and Toni White, Chamber Ambassador.

# Ribbon Cutting



## Blair Wellness & Senior Expo Community Initiative

The Chamber held a ribbon-cutting to mark the first annual Blair Wellness Senior Expo community initiative, a joint venture between Chamber members UPMC Altoona, Care Compass, PA CareerLink, Oasis Senior Advisors, and Better Homes and Gardens GSA Realty. The Expo, held at Station Medical Center, provided the opportunity for residents to connect with trusted health, wellness, and senior-focused resources. On-hand for the celebration are, from left: Amanda Walker, Chamber Ambassador; Carter Cerully, PA CareerLink Blair County; Shay Flanagan, Oasis Senior Advisors; Keri Whitacre, UPMC; State Senator Judy Ward; Mike Corso, President UPMC Altoona/UPMC Bedford; Lora Larimer, Better Homes and Gardens GSA Realty; Jessica Hample, UPMC Altoona; Jeanette Bender, UPMC Altoona; Tara Saltzburg, Care Compass; Megan Rossman, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; and Eva Egler, Chamber Ambassador.



## Reserved your spot for the UPMC/Chamber Golf Classic yet?

Registration is continuing for one of the region's most popular networking events. The [UPMC Altoona / UPMC Health Plan Chamber Golf Classic](#) will be held on Thursday, May 14th at [Iron Masters Country Club](#). As always, the Classic will feature great food and beverages, great prizes and, on occasion, great golf. New for this year's Classic is an early start time. The fun will begin at 8 a.m. with registration and breakfast and will end with lunch following the tournament. Golfers can register as teams or as individuals. If you can't make the Classic but want to cash-in on the great exposure for your business, contact Jessie Covert at [jcovert@blairchamber.com](mailto:jcovert@blairchamber.com) for information on marketing opportunities. The event has sold out in the past so don't wait, register [here!](#)

### BREAKFAST CLUB

# SAVE *the* DATE

## May 21

FEATURING

# Blair County Judges

Blair County  
Convention Center  
7:45 a.m.

**-2026 SERIES SPONSOR-**  
Altoona-Blair County Airport  
& Contour Airlines

Register [HERE](#)