

NETWORKS

DIGITAL NEWS

Hollidaysburg students advance to compete at YEA! nationals

Of the many experiences provided to students participating in the Chamber's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) the annual Investor Panel event ranks high as one of the most exciting.

At the event, each student takes the stage to pitch their business idea to twelve community business representatives. After reviewing each presentation the investors panel deliberates and then awards financial assistance to the students to help advance their businesses. One business is then selected to represent the Chamber's YEA! chapter at the national YEA! competition which will be held in Texas in June. Students across the country will compete for financial prizes.

Josie Watt, a junior at Hollidaysburg High School, and Aamir Azad, a senior at Hollidaysburg High School, were chosen to represent Blair County YEA! at nationals.

Watt and Azad co-own the business [pHyra](#).

"One of the most important things we learned is the power of connections. Our mentors encouraged us to reach out to professionals for business advice," Azad said.

Through mentorships, class sessions, and real-world experiences, the YEA! program focuses on developing the skills young entrepreneurs need to successfully run their own businesses.

"So many people influenced and supported us through this journey. We couldn't have done it without that support. We were both surprised when we were chosen to represent Blair County at nationals. We would like to thank everyone that has helped us as we continue to develop our business," Watt said.

Both credited YEA! for building a confidence they otherwise wouldn't have had.

"This confidence gave us the drive to be pHyra," both said.



Josie Watt (left) and Aamir Azad (right) receive congratulations from Travis Sheetz, President & CEO, Sheetz, Inc.

The clock is ticking — make your reservations today!

The most talked about social event of the season is right around the corner. Don't miss your opportunity to celebrate the best of Blair County. Seats are filling up fast. Make your reservations, [here](#), for the Chamber's Gala & Annual Celebration, April 28, at the Blair County Convention Center. The Chamber will be presenting a full slate of prestigious awards to individuals and



businesses whose leadership, innovation, and service make a lasting impact across Blair County. Celebrations, great food and live entertainment make this evening one you won't want to miss.



March All-Stars

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

The All-Stars for March are:

- [Altoona-Blair County Airport/ Contour Air](#)
- [Breezeline](#)
- [Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation](#)
- [Drayer Physical Therapy](#)
- [Keller Engineers, Inc.](#)
- [Lung Disease Center of Central Pennsylvania](#)
- [Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art](#)
- [Value Drug Company](#)

Welcome new members!

The Chamber would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who share our vision of building a strong business community:

- [Allegheny Township Blair County](#)
- [Fiore Private Wealth, LLC](#)
- [Jason Ebersole](#)
- [Increase Hearing](#)
- [Roberta Klepser](#)
- [Samuel Haines](#)
- [Topical Smoothie Cafe](#)

Correction

**NURSING HOME/ASSISTED LIVING/
RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES**

Bella Rose

969 Bedford Street
Claysburg, PA 16625
814-317-5121

Ribbon Cutting



Tropical Smoothie Cafe

A Chamber ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the grand opening of Tropical Smoothie Cafe located at 216 Park Hills Plaza, Altoona. Tropical Smoothie Cafe inspires a healthier lifestyle offering delicious, made-to-order smoothies, wraps, flatbreads and bowls. Check out their extensive menu at tropicalsmoothiecafe.com. Catering is also available. Hours are Monday through Friday - 7 a.m. - 9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday - 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Joining the celebration are, from left: Donna Gority, Chamber Ambassador; Megan Rossman, Blair County Chamber of Commerce; Oubab Khalil, CEO; Isaac Richmond, Director of Operations; Isaiah Richmond, General Manager; Michele Ivory, the office of State Senator Judy Ward; and Emily Sollenberger, Chamber Ambassador.

Congratulations!

...to Kate Starkey of [Kooman & Associates](#) for being named to the Forbes Best-in-State Top Women Wealth Advisors for 2026.

...to [Pennsylvania Highlands Community College](#) for earning the 2026-27 Military Friendly Schools Designation, being recognized as a Silver Level School.

...[Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8](#) upon being recognized with a Gold ADDY at the 2026 American Advertising Awards for its innovative branding and launch of JoltEDU, the region's microlearning platform. Presented by AAF Midlands, JoltEDU received top recognition in the Brand Elements, Public Service Collateral category.

Our website is open 24/7
 make reservations • find things to do
 make payments • manage your account
www.blairchamber.com

Saluting Our Renewals

Members that have renewed their membership in March.

Celebrating 70-79 years

PennCrest BANK

Celebrating 50-59 Years

Kiwanis Club of Altoona, Inc.
 Saint Francis University

Celebrating 40-49 Years

Doing Better Business, Inc.
 Fiore True Value Hardware & Rental
 Galliker Dairy Company
 John Hill Real Estate
 Klesius & Sheedy, Inc.
 Logan Valley Mall

Celebrating 30-39 Years

American Roofing, Inc.
 J & O
 Boyer Refrigeration, Heating & Air Conditioning
 Blair County Arts Foundation
 Courtesy Ford, Inc.
 Presbyterian Village at Hollidaysburg
 Altoona Area Public Library
 DeGol Organization
 Altoona Shoe Fly Stores
 Holland Bros., Inc.

Celebrating 20-29 Years

Altoona Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center
 Begin With Us Child Care & Preschool, Inc.
 Edward Jones Investments - Jeff Smithbower
 Edward Jones investments - John Barton
 Family Services Incorporated
 Galactic Ice
 Holiday Bowl, Inc.
 Manpower Inc., of Altoona
 Michael J. Wagner
 Attorney at Law P.C.
 Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art
 UPMC Altoona
 Wieland Small Tube Products
 Yeager & Seelye Attorneys At Law

Celebrating 10-19 Years

Altoona Lung Specialists
 Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate - GSA Realty
 Blair County Tax Collection Bureau
 Blair HealthChoices

Bright Ideas Childcare

and Preschool, Inc
 Bryce Saylor & Sons/
 Altoona Crane & Rigging, Inc.
 KMS Interior Design, LLC
 Lake Raystown Resort
 Michelle Barnes Optometry, P.C.
 Monarch Rug Cleaning
 PA CareerLink@ Blair County
 Prime Sirloin
 Tussey Landscaping, LLC

Celebrating 5-9 Years

Altoona Area Business Community
 Beck, Smithbower, Ickes
 Financial, LLC
 Berry Solutions Group
 Bickel's Surplus Too
 Blair County Farm Bureau
 Every Life Matters (ELM)
 Pregnancy Support Services
 Forney Group/Fulton
 Financial Advisors
 Full Motion Technologies
 InspectionGo, Inc.

Just Play - Slinky

LAMB Solutions Advertising Agency
 Park Security & Installations, Inc
 Servello Orthodontics
 Solensky Insurance Agency, Inc.
 Sorge Funeral Home & Crematory
 Spring Cove Container
 Topsy Tulip LLC
 We CARE Foundation
 Wingate by Wyndham Altoona
 Downtown/Medical Center

Celebrating 1-4 Years

Aerial Communications
 Central PA Blinds N Designs, LLC
 Link Service Heating & Cooling
 Marzoni's Brick Oven & Brewing Co.
 Oasis Senior Advisors - Altoona, PA
 Altoona Blair County
 Development Corporation
 The Well Ministry Center of
 Blair County
 Webber Advisors