BLAIR COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FIRST FRONTIER - BLAIR COUNTY, PA

September 21, 2026

NETWORKS
DIGITAL NEWS

Connections for Commerce:
Transportation infrastructure driving regional growth



A strong transportation system serves as the foundational backbone of our economy. On October 1, the Chamber's Breakfast Club program will feature a panel discussion, "Planes, Trains and Automobiles: Connections for Commerce".

Strategic improvements to our transit networks ensure that local businesses can move goods and people more efficiently than ever before. This collaborative focus on modernizing infrastructure is unlocking new commercial opportunities and shaping a vibrant economic future for the entire region.

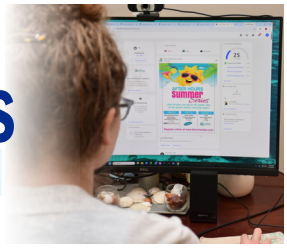
Participating on the panel are State Senator Judy Ward; Vince Greenland, District 9 Director, PennDOT; Tracy Plessinger, Executive Director, Altoona-Blair County Airport Authority, and Robert Gleason, Amtrak Board of Directors.

"Major cross-modal investments in Blair County's transportation system are significantly increasing our region's economic competitiveness. Our panel will highlight those investments and how they are impacting our future economic and community development efforts," said Stephen McKnight, President, ABCD Corporation, and panel moderator.

Breakfast Club, brought to you series sponsor Altoona-Blair County Airport and Contour Airlines, begins at 7:45 a.m., at the Blair County Convention Center. Speaker sponsor is PennStress.

Cost to attend is $25 for Chamber Members and $35 for non-members. Click HERE to make your reservations.

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What's the big idea?



Ben Franklin Technology Partners is hosting a Big Idea Contest for entrepreneurs and innovators with a business idea they want to develop and bring to life. The contest provides an opportunity to pitch an idea, compete for prize funding, and connect with business resources and support.

Do you have an idea sitting in a notebook, a prototype gathering dust, or a business plan you've been afraid to pitch? Ben Franklin's Big Idea Contest has helped entrepreneurs and innovators across Central and Northern Pennsylvania turn ideas exactly like yours into funded, growing businesses.

This year, Ben Franklin Technology Partners is putting $50,000 behind the region's best ideas, plus mentorship, coaching, and connections.

If you're working with a job seeker who has an entrepreneurial idea, or an employer/business owner who is developing a new product, service, or business concept, please consider sharing this opportunity with them. You can find the contest details and application information HERE.

Applications are currently being accepted and will close October 16.

REGISTER THE EASY WAY!
RSVP
TO ALL CHAMBER EVENTS
www.blairchamber.com

Grant opportunity for local non-profit organizations

WISE Women of Blair County, through the Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation, has established a funding opportunity for local non-profit organizations to support efforts that advance its mission of empowering women and encouraging acceptance and inclusion through collaboration, service and education.

Funding opportunities could include workshops, educational events, training sessions and direct service projects targeted toward empowering women and encouraging acceptance of all.

Eligible applicants include tax-exempt charitable organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code or public charity with a 50 percent deductibility limitation. It is anticipated there will be between three to five projects that serve Blair County residents presented in this award cycle.



Access to the Grant Application Guidelines and Forms an be found on the WISE Women of Blair County website at www.wisewomenofblair-county.org or emailing WISE Women at info@wisewomenofblaircounty.org. All organizations submitting a grant application will be notified of their status by early December 2026. Grant applications are due Friday, October 23, by 4 p.m.

Chamber's salute to agriculture

The Blair County Chamber's Farm-City Committee works hard year-round on initiatives that will raise awareness of the huge impact agriculture has on our economy. Agriculture is still Blair County's number one industry.

Get a behind-the-scenes look at life on a working dairy farm when you spend an evening Down on the Farm. This popular event will be held October 1, from 5 - 7 p.m., at Corle Homestead Farm, 283 Corle Homestead Road, Martinsburg. This is a great family-friendly event with hayrides, kids activities, animal encounters, and a great meal. Wide open spaces, fresh air, and unforgettable family memories are waiting for you. Cost to attend is $15 per person. Children 10 and under are admitted free of charge. To make your reservations, click HERE.

Nominations are still being accepted for the annual Agricultural Community Excellence (ACE) Award, a prestigious honor dedicated to celebrating the driving forces behind Blair



County's vital agricultural community. Nominations are not restricted solely to traditional farm families. The community is encouraged to nominate agriculturally oriented individuals, agribusinesses, and nonprofit organizations. Self-nominations are also welcomed.

The ACE Award will be presented at the Farm-City Dinner on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at Morrisons Cove Memorial Park in Martinsburg. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the Chamber's website by clicking here. Deadline to submit nominations is Friday, Oct. 9.

Congratulations

...to South Hills School of Business & Technology's Altoona Campus on being named a 2025-26 ACCSC School of Excellence by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. This marks the second consecutive accreditation cycle the campus has earned this national recognition.

Looking for our servant leaders. Don't forget!

Your continued participation as a Servant Leader following graduation is more important than ever.

Your dues impact LBC Adult applicants who wish to participate but cannot afford tuition as well as local non-profits who apply for WeCare Blair County grants.

Gifts of Hope contributions by LBC Alumni have made a difference to a variety of community organizations throughout the years since its inception.

LBC ALUMNI DUES -
Your dues influence scholarships for the LBC Adult and Youth programs and WeCare Blair County…Helping with the Journey Grants.

LBC ALUMNI GIFTS OF HOPE –
LBC Alumni are collecting items to fill Christmas Stockings for Easter for Eli this holiday season. Please help by contributing coloring books, small children's books, activity books, crayons, Play-Doh, or other small stocking stuffer items, including gift cards. NO FOOD or CANDY!

LBC ALUMNI BREAKFAST –
The LBC Alumni Breakfast is Friday, September 25th at 7:30 am at the Blair County Convention Center. Register now.

Every Dues payment and Gifts of Hope contribution has an influence on our community.