

SULLIVAN COUNTY BUSINESS EDGE

MARCH, 2025

Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development * Sullivan County Industrial Development Agency * Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce * Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association * Sullivan County Democrat



DEMOCAT FILE PHOTO

Resorts World Catskills in Monticello is one of the largest business in the region and a huge contributor to the Sullivan County taxbase.

New York City is poised to see up to three new, full-fledged casinos begin operating within the next 10 years. We've known they were coming ever since our 18-story hotel and casino, Resorts World Catskills, was first built in Monticello, and now is the time to pursue mitigation strategies with the State, with the aim of building those strategies into the gaming licenses these new casinos will possess.

Sullivan County has received between \$2.4 and \$2.5 million each of the past two fiscal years (2023 and 2024) from Resorts World - our cut of the gaming proceeds, as per the State license under which they operate. The Town of Thompson has received the same, and the Monticello Central School District has gotten a smaller amount of those proceeds as

well. Even our neighboring counties have received several million dollars since the casino opened in 2018. Since that revenue is wholly dependent on Resorts World Catskills gaming activity, those monies are at risk of being siphoned away by down-state casinos in an already competitive landscape. Without such funds, Sullivan County alone would need to hike taxes by as much as 3.25%.

As the State's original intent was to site casinos in economically disadvantaged areas, the Sullivan County Legislature and I feel it is appropriate and necessary to ask State legislators to protect us from the negative impacts - lost revenue, diminished tourism, fewer jobs - that may result from the opening of NYC casinos. We cannot let our

Please see **CASINO**, page 3E

think long- term on new casino strategy

BY
JOSHUA A.
POTSEK,
SULLIVAN
COUNTY
MANAGER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TO THE PEOPLE

Economic Development:

A glass-half-full business

Economic Developers are glass-half-full people to their core. They approach challenges as opportunities. They play a long game, plan boldly and invest resources for long-term impact and sustainability.

After all, Economic Development does not provide instant gratification. Rather, it is about vision, planning, and executing strategies that provide long lasting positive impact on communities.

I have found this to be true with all of the peers I have met and worked with for over thirty years. There are times, however, that we must move quickly and apply that glass-half-full approach to matters of significant importance with an all-hands-on deck

approach.

We all have recently learned of the PepsiCo/Frito Lay announced closure of its plant in Liberty, NY. This news hits home as the Partnership attracted Ideal Snacks to the area over two decades ago.

Of course this is devastating news in the immediate. Jobs lost, payroll lost, and how that impacts ancillary businesses, local shops, eateries, and service businesses strikes fear in not only the bearers of this bad news, but also, everyone in the community.

Yet as an integral player on the Sullivan County Economic Development team I am heartened by the quick response the Center for Workforce Development, Sullivan County Chamber, elected officials, and the Sullivan County Partnership has responded.

Already efforts are being made to find jobs for those impacted throughout the county as PepsiCo



CEO/President Marc Baez

works through its process and we have already been fielding calls by commercial industrial representatives both locally and nationally interested in the facility.

In fact, we are meeting with several companies in the same industry that have expressed serious interest in the facility along with the need to maintain employees as well. Great news if we can work it out. We do not know how it will ultimately evolve, but as an economic developer this is positive.

As we vet those that have expressed interest and work through this process I am bullish about being able to land another entity that will invest in the facility and hire workers to meet its demands. We have no time to wallow in despair.

Our goal is to help those impacted,

first and foremost, and transition the facility into its new use. The glass-half -full vision is to understand that the site has many positive attributes. It has size, location, power, infrastructure, very recent improvements, and expansion... a shovel ready site for all intents and purposes.

Be rest assured that we are all working to help those directly impacted while we look to secure a new user and welcome a new business to Liberty in the near future. There are many positive projects on the horizon in Liberty and we will overcome this challenge and turn it into a win.

Sincerely,

Marc Baez
President and CEO
Sullivan County Partnership



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CASINO

Continued from front page

long-sought and hard-won gains be potentially eliminated by the granting of three more gaming licenses in New York.

To that end, legislators have brought on a lobbyist and a legal firm to press our case in Albany, and have directed the Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development to undertake a study to understand and delineate the aforementioned impacts. All that work is now in progress, and I hope to have more to share later this year.

In the meantime, I encourage folks to contact their State representatives to amplify the message that Sullivan County needs the revenue, jobs and tourists that the casino provides. Whether you personally agree with gambling or not, it is indisputable that we have benefitted from Resorts World Catskills' presence, which employs 1,200 people and has a large local economic impact, including local businesses and nearby tourism properties which cater to the guests and employees of the casino. That's worth fighting for.

County, State respond to PepsiCo closure

BY FRED STABBERT III

Responding to the recent news that PepsiCo in Liberty would be shuttering its plant in mid-May, both the county and state officials have been working hard to help the affected workers find new employment – hopefully in Sullivan County.

"This was a huge hit for the Village and Town of Liberty if people move out," Loreen Gebelein, Director of the Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development, said. "Our objective is to keep them [the affected workers] in Sullivan County."

Gebelein said the workers have been offered a severance package and money to relocate to the 32 other PepsiCo facilities in other parts of the country.

According to the WARN notice there were 287 employees affected by the impending closure. The WARN Act requires employers with more than 100 employees to give

60-days' notice before a mass layoff, plant closure, or relocation.

According to Gebelein, the NYS Dept. of Labor will be meeting with employees at the plant this Friday, March 21.

"They are required to go in and do a rapid response where they bring a resume template and go over how to file for unemployment, among other things," Gebelein said.

"And on March 28 we will have a closed Job Fair for PepsiCo employees," she said.

At the closed Job Fair, Gebelein said there will be 40 seats available for pre-registered employers wishing to interview candidates.

"We will have 40 seats available and employers have to pre-register by call 845-794-3340," Gebelein said.

"The concerns we have is how many businesses in Sullivan County can provide Spanish-only speaking employees a job," she said. "The businesses at the Job Fair all have to be in the system – and have to be hiring. I have six interpreters

throughout the county [to help]. There's a lot involved here."

Sullivan County Manager Josh Potosek said, "This is an all-hands-on-deck moment. We've been working closely with everyone involved, so that the impacts of this pending closure can be mitigated as much as possible. Legislators and my office have stayed in touch with the Town and Village of Liberty to coordinate efforts and share information. Our Center for Workforce Development, under our Division of Community Resources, has already assisted displaced employees seeking local employment, and we'll be holding a job fair right at the plant in Liberty later this month. The Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce and the Partnership for Economic Development have led the strategic discussions with PepsiCo and their plans for the property, so that we can be ready to market it to future tenants quickly and effectively."



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Sullivan County led the region with almost 60% hike in closed sales and nearly 18% rise in median sales price

BY FRED STABBERT III

Even with below zero temperatures and one of the most rugged winters in recent memory – the Sullivan County real estate market is red hot.

Today's report from Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR), revealed that Sullivan County garnered the highest percentage with a 59.5 percent rise in sales from January 2024.

Sullivan also took the lead for the largest percentage increase in the median sales price, with a 17.8 percent uptick to \$324,000, over last year's median of \$275,000.

Inventory for almost all property types declined in all regions in January.

Today's report by the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR) is based on data supplied by OneKey® MLS.

The counties reporting include Sullivan, Orange, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland and The Bronx.

"This year, we expect to see more balance in the vibrant Hudson Valley and New York City real estate markets, creating more options and affordability for prospective buyers," said Lynda Fernandez, HGAR CEO. "Our expansive region continues to attract high demand, highlighting our exceptional lifestyle, quality of life, educational institutions, and strong job market. Our region also offers diverse housing types and price points in metropolitan,

suburban, and rural areas."

Sullivan County

Sullivan County's January sales of single-family homes escalated by 59.5 percent – the highest percentage in the six-county region. There were no condo or co-op sales reported.

Sullivan also held the lead for the highest percentage gain in median sales prices at 17.8 percent, to \$324,000.

While Sullivan's condo market remains small, it did experience a 100 percent gain in new listings, from two in January to just one the previous year.

New listings for single-family homes decreased by just 1.4 percent. Inventory for condos soared by 300 percent – from four

condos on the market in January, as opposed to just one last year.

Single-family home inventory rose by 7.5 percent and the co-op inventory remained flat. Months of supply advanced by 11.5 percent to 5.8 months. Pending sales declined by 7.3 percent.

Orange County

In Orange County, only sales of single-family homes experienced an increase, by just 1.1%. Co-op sales fell by 33.3% and condos by 14.3%. The county's co-op market, while very small, did end January on a positive note with a 54.8% rise in the median sales price to \$209,000. The median price for single-family homes grew 9.2% to \$475,000 but dropped by 10.4% for condos to



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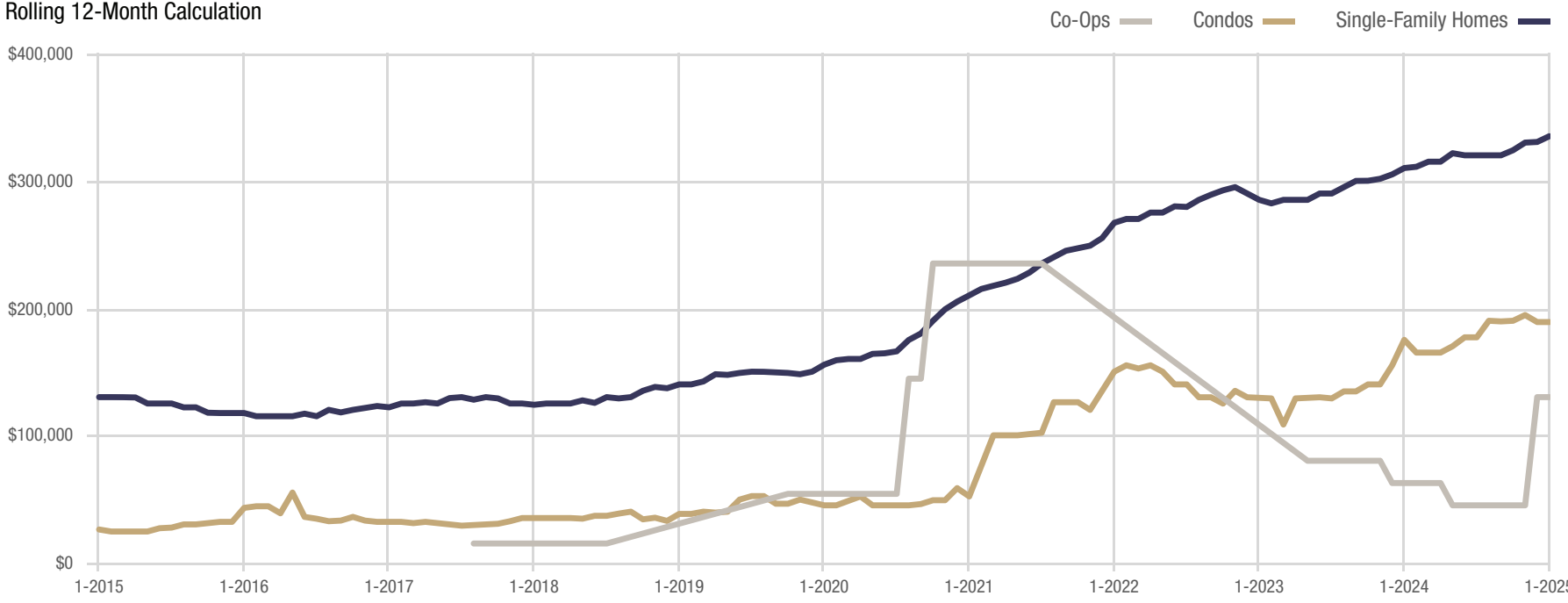
New listings saw a 6.4% rise for single family homes, but a decline

of 25% for co-ops and 22.6% for condos. However, condo inventory experienced a 27.3% gain, but

inventory declined for single family homes by 1.8%. The co-op market inventory remained flat. Months of

supply for all property types was up 3.6% to 2.9 months, and pending sales grew by 5.5%

Historical Median Sales Price by Property Type
Rolling 12-Month Calculation



A rolling 12-month calculation represents the current month and the 11 months prior in a single data point. If no activity occurred during a month, the line extends to the next available data point.
Current as of February 7, 2025. All data from OneKey® MLS. Report © 2025 ShowingTime Plus, LLC.

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Sullivan County home sales are up 60 percent in January, year over year.

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Sullivan Catskills tourism update:

Growth, recognition, and exciting new offerings

The Sullivan Catskills continues to build momentum in the tourism industry, gaining recognition in national publications and expanding offerings to engage visitors in new and exciting ways. From strategic outreach at major industry events to new experiences along the Sullivan Catskills Dove Trail, the region remains a must-visit destination.

The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association (SCVA) has been actively advocating for tourism growth and industry partnerships. SCVA recently attended the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace, a premier event connecting tour operators and travel industry professionals. The organization also participated in the Legislative Networking Breakfast at Resorts World Catskills last week, where

we provided updates on tourism trends and the region's continued expansion. In 2023, visitor spending in the Catskills Region reached an impressive \$2.5 billion, marking a 7% increase from 2022. In 2023, tourism generated \$268 million in state and local taxes. To put this in perspective, without the revenue generated by tourism, the average household in our region would have to pay an additional \$1,931 in taxes. These events serve as key platforms to foster relationships, highlight local attractions, and emphasize the effects of tourism and visitor spending in the Sullivan Catskills.

A fresh and interactive experience has arrived in the Sullivan Catskills — the launch of Geocaching along the Sullivan Catskills Dove Trail. This innovative addition offers a high-tech treasure hunt that encourages

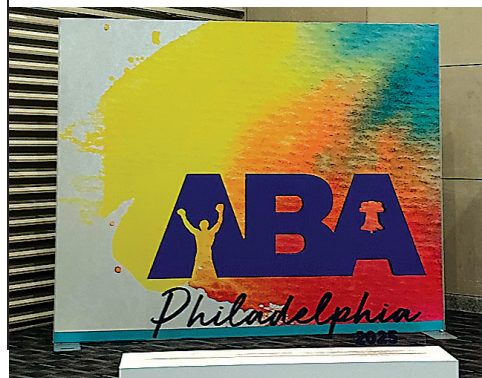


The Robb Report featured Driftwood Ranch as one of the "Most Hotly Anticipated Luxury Hotel Openings of the Year."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Assn. has had a busy winter, going to trade shows, including the American Bus Assn. Marketplace in Philadelphia.

visitors to explore the region while discovering the beautiful, artist-designed doves that commemorate the Woodstock festival's legacy. This engaging activity is expected to attract both new and returning visitors, enhancing their connection



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to the area's history and culture.

The Sullivan Catskills continues to capture the attention of national media, further solidifying its reputation as a top travel destination. Recently, Forbes recognized Holiday Mountain and Villa Roma Resort as standout affordable ski areas in the Northeast, showcasing the region's accessibility for winter sports enthusiasts. Additionally, the Robb Report featured Driftwood Ranch as one of the "Most Hotly Anticipated Luxury Hotel Openings of the Year," spotlighting the area's growing appeal for high-end travelers.

The ranch is located at 49 Kilcoin Rd. in White Lake.

These prestigious mentions reinforce the Sullivan Catskills' diverse tourism offerings and its ability to cater to a wide range of visitors.

As the Sullivan Catskills continues to thrive, SCVA remains dedicated to promoting the region, fostering economic growth, and ensuring visitors have unforgettable experiences. With new developments, growing media attention, and strong industry connections, the Sullivan Catskills is poised for an exciting year ahead.



The SCVA recently launched Geocaching along the Sullivan Catskills Dove Trail, whereby visitors can go on a high-tech treasure hunt.

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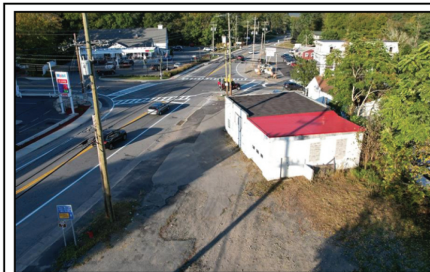
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SUNY Sullivan sees rise in adult learners, tackles rural workforce needs

SUNY Sullivan Community College recognizes the importance of serving and supporting adult learners.

Recent enrollment trends underscore this need: Fall 2024 saw a remarkable 50% increase in adult learners compared to Fall 2022 (283 students in Fall 2024, 164 in Fall 2023, and 141 in Fall 2022).

The college maintains strong partnerships with county government, community-based organizations, and other local groups. Nonetheless, the post-pandemic landscape presents significant challenges to offering evening and weekend programming crucial for this population.

SUNY Sullivan aims to address this gap by leveraging recent data-informed initiatives, including the New York State Department of Labor analysis of workforce needs, adult student surveys conducted, and the potential opportunities presented by Governor Hochul's proposals.

This surge in adult enrollment at SUNY Sullivan, coupled with a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SUNY Sullivan's adult learner enrollment has doubled since 2022.

notable increase in adults seeking their High School Equivalency Diploma at the college's recently opened testing center, reflects

a broader trend seen across the state, highlighting the vital role community colleges play in workforce development, as detailed

in the 2024 NYATEP State of Workforce Development report. For SUNY Sullivan, these rising numbers indicate a clear demand



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from adults seeking to enhance their skills or pursue new career paths within the rural Sullivan County region.

The increase in those seeking their HSE diploma bodes well for college and workforce development, as it shows a dedication to foundational education.

"We're seeing a real demand from adults who want to learn new skills," says Jaime Schmeiser, Director of Workforce Development. "We're working closely with local partners to make sure we're offering programs that meet the needs of our community, including those who need to obtain their high school equivalency."

The college's established partnerships with local government and community organizations are crucial in connecting students with essential resources and support. Juggling work and education is a significant challenge, and SUNY Sullivan is actively seeking solutions.

To overcome these hurdles, the college is adopting a data-driven

strategy. SUNY Sullivan is gaining a deeper understanding of its community's needs by utilizing information from the New York State Department of Labor, analyzing workforce demands, and gathering feedback from adult student surveys.

The college also closely monitors new proposals from the state for opportunities to bolster workforce development.

"We're committed to finding creative ways to make education accessible," Schmeiser states. "By understanding the needs of our community, we can build programs that help people succeed."

SUNY Sullivan's dedication to serving adult learners, including those working towards their HSE, underscores its commitment to strengthening the local workforce and fostering economic opportunity in rural New York.

For more information visit SUNY Sullivan's website or contact Jaime Schmeiser, Director of Workforce Development, at scccworkforce@sunysullivan.edu, or 845-434-5750




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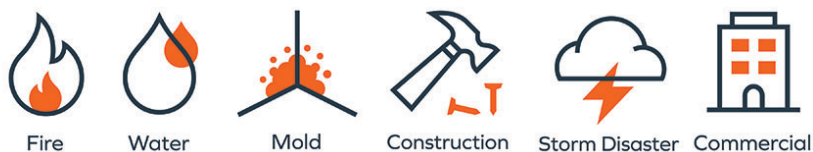
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Fresh inventories of Natural Cleft Elk Brook Bluestone are starting to come in while the new company gets the saws up and running at the East Branch Mill.



Elk Brook Bluestone is the flagship trademark of the Johnston & Rhodes LLC, Aden Mining & Materials company. The East Branch plant can be seen in the background.

Aden Mining & Materials acquires Johnston & Rhodes Bluestone Co.

BY FRED STABBERT III

Aden Mining & Materials has acquired all assets of Johnston & Rhodes Bluestone Company along with several other sites, including the mills located in East Branch and seven quarries in surrounding areas, according to Nick Fitzpatrick, president of Johnston & Rhodes LLC, Aden Mining & Materials, Inc.

The acquisition by the Montgomery-based company totals 1,021 acres.

The 125-year legacy company was founded in 1900 and was operated by four generations of the Johnston family. It is known as the oldest bluestone company in the nation,

with a long-standing history of supplying quality building materials.

The flagship Elk Brook Bluestone has been part of many architectural projects around the world. Elk Brook Bluestone is mined from private block quarries, which produce material of exceptional quality and durability.

Aden's expansion into dimensional stone is a step to build the value and reach of products, but the business will continue to operate under the Johnston & Rhodes brand, according to Fitzpatrick.

Coincidentally, Aden Mining was originally founded by Fitzpatrick, who grew up a short distance

from East Branch in the Town of Neversink.

"Significant improvements are planned for our mills, quarry operations and products. Our focus will be on expanding productions, sales, and distribution, while doing our part to advance and better the bluestone industry," Fitzpatrick said.

More information is offered at 607-363-7595 or info@johnstonandrhodes.com.



Nick Fitzpatrick, President of Johnston & Rhodes LLC and Aden Mining & Materials, Inc., stands in front of two of the diamond saws at the East Branch plant



The East Branch location will still bear of the name of the legacy company – Johnston & Rhodes Bluestone Co.

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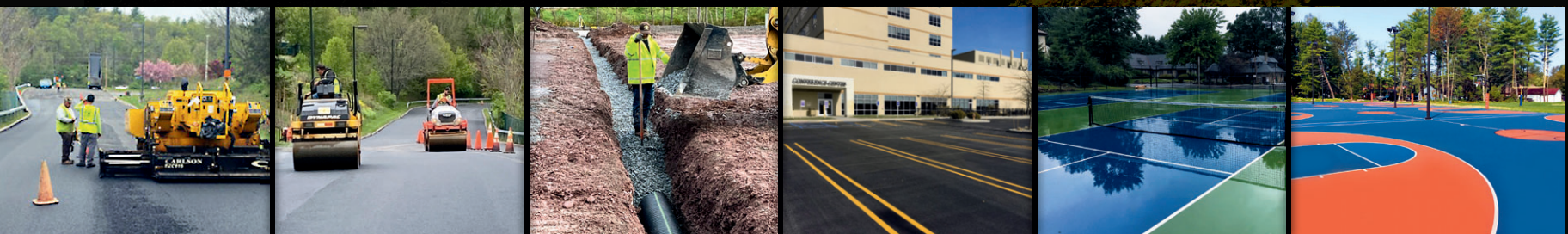
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Strength in Community: Welcoming new businesses and celebrating chamber members



BY ASHLEY LEAVITT
PRESIDENT AND CEO
SULLIVAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

A strong business community is not built on individual success alone but on the collective power of its members working together. The Sullivan County Chamber

of Commerce continues to be a driving force in fostering collaboration, supporting local entrepreneurs, and strengthening the economic foundation of our region. When businesses come together, they create a ripple effect of growth, innovation, and resilience that benefits everyone.

This month, we are proud to welcome new businesses into our growing network. Their presence reflects the ongoing expansion of industries in our region and the shared commitment to economic success.

We encourage the community to support these businesses, as their growth contributes to a thriving Sullivan County.

New Chamber Members:

Catskill Divide TEAL Consulting
Stardust Dance Productions
Monticello Wine & Spirits
Three 20 Creative

Neversink Agricultural Society, Inc.
dba Grahamsville Little World's Fair
JJJ Accommodations
Bethel Buds
Sereno Day Spa
JK Expediting Corp.
Hudson Valley Credit Union
Bethel Sanitation
Pure Motion Pictures

While we celebrate our new members, we also extend our gratitude to our renewing members, whose continued commitment keeps our Chamber strong.

Without their ongoing support, we wouldn't be able to provide the networking opportunities, advocacy, and resources that help businesses grow and succeed. Their investment in the Chamber is an investment in the collective success of our local economy.

If you're ever looking for a business referral, a trusted

service, or a place to work, visit the Chamber Membership Directory at Catskills.com, where you can explore our 500+ member businesses across various industries. The Chamber is proud to serve as a hub connecting businesses, entrepreneurs, and the community for a stronger Sullivan County.

As we celebrate the businesses that have joined and renewed their commitment to our community, we invite all members to stay engaged, build relationships, and take advantage of the resources and opportunities available through the Chamber. Together, we are building a stronger, more dynamic Sullivan County—one business at a time.

For more information on membership and Chamber events, visit Catskills.com or contact us at 845-791-4200.

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SUNY Sullivan Job Fair set for April 1

Advance your career! Explore new career opportunities! Find a job and network with possible employers!

All are welcome at the upcoming SUNY Sullivan Job Fair on Tuesday, April 1, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Conveniently located in SUNY Sullivan's E Lobby, 112 College Road in Loch Sheldrake, a Sullivan Moves bus stop, the job fair brings together more than 40 employers and organizations, all eager to connect with talented and motivated job seekers.

The job fair will feature representatives from various industries, including healthcare, hospitality, government, and community services. Employers confirmed to attend include NYS Dept. of Parks, New Hope Community, Woodloch Pines Resort, St. Lawrence Health, Sullivan County Dept. of Public Health, Sullivan County HR, Sullivan County Workforce



Crowds taking advantage of a great opportunity.

Development, Scouting America, ADAPT, Hudson Valley Long-Term Care, Fidelis Care, ARC Greater Hudson Valley, Bethel Woods, Wayne Memorial Hospital, Garnet Health, NY Air National Guard, NYS Unified Court System, Achieve Rehab and Nursing

Facility, Children's Home, The Center for Discovery, Jeff Bank, and Delaware Valley Job Corps. More employers are expected to confirm participation in the coming weeks, making this job fair an invaluable resource for job seekers in the region.

In addition to meeting potential employers, attendees will also have the opportunity to receive free professional headshots for use on resumes, LinkedIn, and other personal branding purposes. This added benefit will help job seekers present themselves professionally in today's competitive job market.

"We are excited to host this job fair and provide a platform for job seekers to connect with employers actively looking to hire," said Klu Padu, Career Placement and Transfer Advisor at SUNY Sullivan. "With such a diverse lineup of organizations, attendees will have numerous opportunities to find a career path that suits their skills and aspirations."

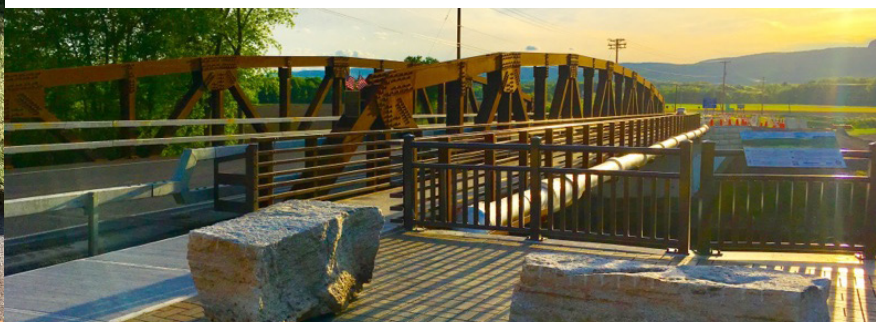
The job fair is free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring their resumes and dress professionally to make a lasting impression on potential employers.



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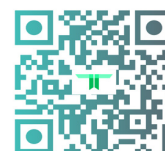


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Garnet Health announces nursing leadership promotions

Garnet Health announces the promotions of three exceptional nursing professionals whose leadership, expertise and dedication continue to enhance the organization's commitment to high-quality patient care and professional excellence.



Jane Giganti

Jane Giganti, MSN, NPD-BC, CNL, CCRN, has been promoted to Administrator of Nursing Professional Excellence and Organizational Development and Learning at Garnet Health Medical Center in Middletown.

Giganti began her career with Garnet Health in 2000, as a registered nurse in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Arden Hill Hospital. Transitioning into the Nursing Professional Development department, Giganti has distinguished herself as a critical-care educator.

During her tenure, Giganti has:

- Helped establish the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT)

- Collaborated on the ICU Early Mobility Project, featured in the Society of Critical Care Medicine Journal

- Implemented evidence-based tools for delirium screening
- Led the Critical Care Fellowship

program

- Presented at the New Jersey AACN Critical Care Conference

From 2018 to 2022, Giganti advanced her career at Nuvance Health System, where she developed an ECMO training program and implemented initiatives for cardiothoracic patient care. Since returning to Garnet Health Medical Center in 2022, she has led training programs for nurses in the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU), including TAVR training, and continues to oversee key programs such as MERT, the Organ Donation Council and Shared Governance.

Board certified in critical care nursing, in nursing professional development and as a clinical nurse leader, Giganti is now responsible for program development, education and interdisciplinary collaboration across the system.



Lashay Houston

Lashay Houston, BSN, RN, CMSRN, CCRN, has been promoted to Nurse Unit Director for Critical Care, overseeing the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU) and Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU) at Garnet Health Medical Center in Middletown.

Joining Garnet Health Medical Center in 2018 as a staff nurse in the MICU, Houston has demonstrated outstanding leadership through her roles as Administrative Director of Nursing for the night shift in 2022 and Nursing Director of the 3 North Progressive Care Unit/Step-Down Unit.

In her new role, Houston will oversee daily operations, performance improvement initiatives, financial management, and the satisfaction of both patients and staff. Known for her exceptional leadership and dedication to excellence, Houston also serves as an instructor at SUNY Orange.

She will complete her Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) from Capella University in December 2025.

Jennifer Malinchak, RN, has been promoted to Manager of Occupational Health and Wellness for the Garnet Health System, bringing a wealth of experience and dedication to her new role.

Joining Garnet Health in 2008 as a registered nurse, Malinchak has also served with Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties. A certified practitioner and member of the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA), Malinchak is also pursuing her Reiki certification and is a member of the American Holistic Nurses Association. Her commitment to holistic and integrative health practices further enhances Garnet Health's dedication to comprehensive employee wellness.

Malinchak holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from Rutgers University, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Chamberlain University and an



Jennifer Malinchak

Associate of Science in Nursing from SUNY Orange.

To learn more about career opportunities, visit careers.garnethealth.org.

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