

Congressional Races Loom Large

Meet The Candidates At Next Breakfast

Chamber members can meet the candidates for the 18th and 19th Congressional districts at the next networking breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. on Oct. 27 at The Venue Uptown at the Kingston Regency Inn. The sponsor is Hudson Valley Credit Union.

Chamber President Ward Todd said the candidates will make opening statements and be given an opportunity to speak and answer questions posed by Chamber members. The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region will facilitate the program.

The 18th Congressional District race features incumbent U.S. Rep. Pat Ryan, D-Gardiner, and Republican challenger Jackie Auringer of Kingston.

Ryan, a former tech entrepreneur, U.S. Army veteran and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, served as Ulster County Executive prior to his election to Congress in a 2022 special election.

Ryan's priorities include "leveling the playing field," protecting foundational freedoms, keeping communities safe and safeguarding the environment by battling climate change. Ryan spearheaded the revitalization of the former IBM site in the town of Ulster, now known as iPark87, and said he brought millions of dollars in investment into the region.

"Working families and small businesses are suffering," said Ryan, a frequent critic of President Trump and an advocate for veterans. "I have fought greedy corporations, cut taxes and brought jobs to New York."

Auringer, who has never run for political office before, grew up in Kingston. She is a project manager and managerial accountant at her family's construction business, Urban Precast.

Her priorities include affordability, accountability and opportunity. She plans to make things more affordable through cutting wasteful spending, lowering taxes to ease the burden on families and "stop policies that make New York harder to afford."

"I am watching the place I call home become increasingly unaffordable for the people who built it," she said. "Families and seniors are struggling to stay, younger generations are



Pat Ryan (NY18)



Jackie Auringer (NY18)



Peter Oberacker (NY19)

Wawarsing and village of Ellenville. Orange County and a portion of southern Dutchess are also in the district.

The 19th District race pits incumbent Josh Riley, D-Ithaca, against Republican challenger Peter Oberacker, currently a member of the NYS Senate.

Riley has a prior commitment and is not expected to attend the breakfast. He is an attorney, a former staffer for the late U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey and ex-U.S. Sen. Al

questioning whether they can build a future here, and local businesses are being squeezed by rising costs, taxes, and regulations."

New York's 18th Congressional District includes the city of Kingston and the towns of Rosendale, Marletown, Rochester, Gardiner, Lloyd, Esopus, Marlborough, Plattekill, Shawangunk in Ulster County, along with the village and town of New Paltz parts of the town of



Franken. Prior to attending law school, he served as a policy analyst at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Among the issues he plans to tackle are high utility bills, championing equality for all, creating opportunities for people with disabilities, cutting middle class taxes, defending abortion rights, empowering labor, ending gun violence, supporting public education and expanding access to health care.

Oberacker, R-Schenenbus, who was first elected to the New York State Senate in 2020, touts himself as an advocate for issues vital to rural New Yorkers. He is a former Maryland town supervisor and town board member and served as an Ostego County legislator prior to joining the Senate.

His priorities include fighting for farmers, taking on high utility costs and improving rural infrastructure and increasing broadband. Oberacker comes from a lineage of sausage makers and got his start working in the family meat market, later becoming a research chef and food scientist.

New York's 19th Congressional District includes Rosendale, Marletown, Rochester, Shawangunk, part of Gardiner, Wawarsing, Hurley, Olive, Shandaken, Hardenburgh and Denning. The district also includes all of Columbia and Greene counties, most of Rensselaer County, and all of Otsego County, Delaware, Sullivan, Broome, Tompkins and Chenango counties.

Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders. Reservations are required. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door for Chamber members (\$45 for non-members.) For more information, contact the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or go online at www.ulsterchamber.org.

Hudson Valley Credit Union is October's Breakfast Sponsor

Hudson Valley Credit Union is a member-owned financial cooperative serving individuals, families, and businesses throughout the Hudson Valley and Capital Region. In Ulster County, HVCU serves members through its branches in Kingston, Highland, and New Paltz, providing

a full range of personal and business financial services, including investments and insurance. Beyond banking, HVCU is committed to strengthening local communities through volunteerism, financial education, sponsorships, and charitable giving. Through the Hudson

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Keegan Ales Hosts Next Mixer

Come And Tour Historic Brewery

The late Tommy Keegan, the founder of Keegan Ales, is considered the pioneer of the Hudson Valley craft beer movement and Chamber members can see where it all started at the next networking mixer from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Oct. 14.

Keegan tragically died in 2021 at the age of 50, but his legacy lives on through Keegan Ales at 20 Saint James St. in Kingston. The 19th-century brewery will be open for tours during the Mixer, sponsored by Naccarato Insurance.

"There will be tours, games, interactive activities and shenanigans," said Keegan Ales General Manager Lisa Hantes.

"We're supportive of the Chamber, and we haven't done a Mixer in a few years. It's a good opportunity to remind people that we're still here and show everyone what we offer.

Hantes said business is good these days at Keegan Ales, a community hub and gathering place for live music and a kitchen with an extended menu.

"We would love people to come to the Mixer to find out what new things are brewing at Keegan Ales," Hantes said.

Tommy Keegan founded Keegan Ales in 2003 after buying an 1830s brick warehouse at 20 Saint James Street in Midtown Kingston. The building previously housed a foundry and the former Woodstock Brewing Company,

and some brewing equipment was still there.

Chamber President Ward Todd welcomed Tommy to the Chamber in the summer of 2003 and immediately offered him the chance to host one of the very first Chamber Mixers, in October 2003, which was a huge success, with more than 150 attendees.

The brewery started bottling its beer in 2004 and opened an onsite pub and restaurant in 2007.

The first batches of award-winning craft beer, Old Capital, Hurricane Kitty and Mother's Milk, remain best-sellers. However, Hantes said one of the newer best-sellers is Blood Orange Lager, a light and refreshing drink. The brewery also offers several non-alcoholic drinks.

Keegan Ales won Best Brewery in New York State and Best Craft-Brewed Beer in New York State in 2009.

Hantes said Keegan Ales also sponsors The Keegan Army, a non-profit organization. The group originally met for a fun run but has expanded to include bicycling, walking, volunteering and fundraising for a variety of causes.

Hantes said she hopes to have a large crowd come out for the autumn event to learn more.

"We'll have some food and drinks available and some new things on tap and ... stay tuned for special news," she said.

Chamber Mixers are a great way to network and



promote your business. Be sure to bring plenty of business cards. Mixers are open to Chamber Members 21 years of age and older. There is no charge for Chamber Members to attend but reservations are required. Call (845) 338-5100 or register online at www.UlsterChamber.org. Prospective Members interested in attending, please contact Jess Davis (845) 338-5100 x5 or Jess@UlsterChamber.org.

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Buy Local ExpoMixer A Huge Success!
Sold Out Event Draws Hundreds to Diamond Mills

The Chamber’s Inaugural Buy Local Expo Mixer drew an enthusiastic crowd of 500 Chamber Members to Diamond Mills Hotel and B L A C K B A R N Hudson Valley in Saugerties on Sept. 16.

Dr. Michael Doyle, the Chairman of the Chamber’s Board of Directors, welcomed the nearly 100 exhibitors and said the event sold out faster than any previous Expo. He explained that this year’s event, which marked 30 years, was rebranded and included an evening Networking Mixer, “combining two of the very best Chamber events that we host.”



“This is the largest business networking event in the Hudson Valley,” Doyle said. “Our goal is to make it the most successful one ever.”

The ribbon-cutting featured a host of public officials, including Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger, who called the event an excellent opportunity to network and connect with the community. She presented the Chamber with a certificate of recognition for 30 years of hosting the Buy Local Expo and said she always does business locally.

“You will never see an Amazon truck in front of my house,” she said. “We have the most incredible businesses and services. We have everything we need in Ulster County.”

The host town of Saugerties was well-represented with village Mayor Bill Murphy calling the location “the coolest village and the coolest town in New York State.” Tom Struzzieri, the owner of Diamond Mills, agreed.

“I couldn’t be more proud calling this my home, and this event really stands out,” he said.

Town of Saugerties Supervisor Fred Costello talked about the town’s friendly reputation, including for business.

“We love to pride ourselves on our small businesses and our family atmosphere, as you all represent, so we’re really excited to host you all this evening,” he said. “We’re also excited about the new format.”

The ExpoMixer’s Presenting Sponsor was one of the town’s most respected businesses—Naccarato Insurance. Owner John Naccarato made a compelling case for buying local.

“When you buy local, it’s much more than just purchasing that product. It’s about supporting the community, the local business economy, and our neighbors,” he said. “I think it’s really important that we give back.”

“I wish everyone here could inspire your friends, family, colleagues before Christmastime to try and get them to buy local.”

While ordering online sometimes seems like the convenient option, Naccarato urged people to look around.

“You’d be surprised how many of these businesses have these products and have so much to offer,” he said.

Chamber Ward Todd, prior to the ribbon-cutting, made the case for mingling and getting to know the other exhibitors.

“In this increasingly digital world, you know and we know, that there is nothing better than face-to-face relationships,” Todd said. “You build trust. You build

relationships and these relationships last for years and years. Thank you to everyone for recognizing the value of doing business face-to-face.”

On the exhibit floor, participants decorated their booth to showcase and display what they offer. Many offered giveaways, including food, pens, and other branded paraphernalia.

Angelina Candelaria of the Phoenicia Diner was on hand to offer small pancake samples like those offered at the restaurant.

We’re introducing new flavors of

networking and meeting new people and making new friends,” she said. “That’s the main thing, along with getting to know other businesses that are here.”

The Chamber presented awards for the best booths and Ulster Savings Bank won Best in Show. Naccarato Insurance was second and Ten Broeck Commons was third.

Other award winners included Rondout Savings Bank for Most Original Booth Design, Cornell Creative Arts Center for Best New Exhibitor, Wiltwyck Golf Club for Most Effective Demonstration, Hudson Valley Hospice for Most Friendly Staff, American Solutions for Business for Best Sales Presentation, and EZ HPS Services/ Next Level Design and Construction for Most Creative Giveaways.

pancake mix available retail and wholesale,” she said.

“We like to make relationships with the community and different businesses that we can partner with and collaborate with and spread our business in any way that we can.”

Lucia Pecore, assistant director of admissions for SUNY Ulster, moved from booth to booth connecting with other businesses and talking about the college’s offerings. Diana Hopper, the college’s director of admissions, was attending her first Buy Local ExpoMixer and said it was well worth the college’s time.

“It’s a great opportunity to engage with the community and share what SUNY Ulster has to offer students of all ages,” she said.

Several banks were in attendance, including M&T’s booth, manned by 36-year teller Jean Carnright. She was there for exposure and to push the programs her bank has to offer.

“I think it’s just about

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UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

Wednesday October 14 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Networking Mixer @
Keegan Ales

20 St. James Street | Kingston, NY

There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members.
Reservations are required.

Sponsor: Naccarato Insurance

Thursday October 22 | 5:30 pm Cocktails 6:30 pm Dinner

Business Recognition Awards Dinner

Diamond Mills Hotel & BLACKBARN Hudson Valley

25 S. Partition Street | Saugerties, NY

Tickets \$125/pp

Interested in Sponsorship Opportunities?
Contact Ward Todd 845.338.5100 x2

Tuesday October 27 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

Chamber Breakfast Meeting

Meet The Congressional Candidates

The Venue Uptown at the Kingston Regency Inn

503 Washington Avenue | Kingston, NY

\$35 Members-Advanced Pay • \$40 Members-At The Door
\$45 Non-Members

Sponsor: Hudson Valley Credit Union

Tuesday November 10 | 7:30 - 9:00 am

Chamber Breakfast Meeting

The Impact of Not-for-Profits on our Economy

Wiltwyck Golf Club

404 Steward Lane | Kingston, NY

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More Info and Registration UlsterChamber.org
Questions (845) 338-5100

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Peace Out!

Woodstock Film Festival Set For Oct. 14-18

This is a year of sentimental change for the Woodstock Film Festival. Gone is the iconic peace sign, which has been the symbol of the festival for 26 years. As part of a visual rebranding, the festival team has replaced it with a more contemporary logo to usher in the next chapter of the highly regarded, "fiercely independent" film festival.

However, perhaps the biggest change to longtime friends and followers was the recent announcement that Executive Director Meira Blaustein would be stepping down at the end of the year. "It's time to make a change," said Blaustein, who co-founded the festival in 2000 with the late Laurent Rejto. "I'm excited for a new adventure."

"A new era is upon us, but the main thing is that we have not changed our personality or our mission," she added.

That mission is to "nurture and support emerging and established filmmakers" and "promote culture, diversity, community, educational opportunities and economic growth," according to the festival website, woodstockfilmfestival.org.

This year's 27th annual festival happens Oct. 14-18 and will present 37 feature narratives, 26 feature documentaries, including nine world premieres, and 110 short films (22 world premieres) at venues across Woodstock, Rosendale, Kingston and Saugerties.

"Every year is special because every year has a whole new crop of films and filmmakers, and this year is no different," Blaustein said.

One of the most anticipated is the premiere of "American Zoo," an investigative documentary directed by Emmy



OCT. 14-18, 2026

Fiercely Independent

nominated filmmaker Tim Travers Hawkins, which looks at the hidden history of the former Catskill Game Farm. It will kick off the festival with a screening on Tuesday, Oct. 13, at the Community Theater, 373 Main St., Catskill at 7 p.m. A post-screening Q & A will follow.

Other highlights at this year's festival include "The Debut," a musical comedy starring Julianne Moore and written, co-produced and directed by Jesse Eisenberg; "I Play Rocky" by Oscar winner Peter Farrelly; "The Life and Deaths of Wilson Shedd" by Tim Blake Nelson; "Sender" by Russell Goldman; "Street Smart" by Catherine Hardwicke; "Their Town" by Katie Aselton; "The Liberation" by Guy Nattiv; and "The Only Living Pickpocket in New York" directed by Noah Segal.

The program will also include the East Coast premiere of the TV pilot for the new independent series "Woodstockers," starring Corbin Bernsen, Stephen Tobolowsky, Maggie Lawson, Oliver Bernsen, Zoe Rosenberg and Henry Bernsen. It will be screened at Tinker Street Cinema on Oct. 14 at 5:30 p.m.

This year also marks the first time that discounted tickets and pass options will be available exclusively for Hudson Valley residents. The packages include "Date Night," two tickets and a discount on dinner; "Film Buffs," six tickets to be used for any festival films with usage fully at the buyer's discretion; and "Reel Deal," a festival pass that grants full access and priority seating to screenings and events.

As far as celebrities go, expect to see Academy Award Nominee and Primetime Emmy Award-winning actress Amanda Seyfried; actor, writer and director Tim Blake Nelson ("O Brother, Where Art Thou?"); Primetime Emmy Award winner Britt Lower ("Unforgettable"); Paul Rudd; Jeremy Sisto, Lake Bell, Tracee Ellis Ross, Katie Aselton, Mark Duplass, The Felice

Brothers and the band Little Feat, among others.

Blaustein said this year's event—her last one at the helm—feels especially meaningful.

"For nearly three decades, this festival has been about creating a home for independent filmmakers, bringing audiences together and championing stories that challenge, inspire and connect us," she said.

"I'm incredibly proud of the program we're presenting this year and of the community that has grown around the festival. As I prepare to pass the torch, I'm excited to celebrate this remarkable group of artists and everything that has made the Woodstock Film Festival so special from the very beginning."

For more information about films, panels, concerts and tickets, go to woodstockfilmfestival.com.

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Mixer

Thurs., Sept 24
The Twaalfskill Club
282 West O'Reilly Street
Kingston, NY

Sponsor:  Rebuilding Together Hudson Valley



Mixer Host The Twaalfskill Club staff and volunteers with Ulster Chamber Vice President Jess Davis.



Our Sponsor Rebuilding Together Hudson Valley Executive Director Joe Ciardi with Ulster Chamber Vice President Jess Davis.



Lynne Versaci and Pari Forood (Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation), Tom Lindgren (UHY Advisors), Lauren Simonetti, and John Heavey (The Twaalfskill Club).



Bill Winters (ClearPath Advisors), Joe Ciardi and Jen Walter (both with Rebuilding Together Hudson Valley).



Leslie Sewell (Rondout Savings Bank), Sean DeBois (Bank of Greene), and Steve Sickler (Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union).



Tina Eckert and Tara Arthurs (both with Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter), Harold Hildred (Mountain Valley Manor Adult Care Home), and Fran DePetrillo-Savoca (Ulster County Department of Economic Development).

Delivering What Matters

The UPS Store Does It All From Packing To Printing

Elise Anderson still remembers the oddball package that The UPS Store helped ship out to Alaska back in 2003—the year she and her late husband, David, started the business. A man came into the store with 50 ears of fresh corn stuffed in an Igloo cooler that he wanted sent overnight to Juneau, recalls Anderson, owner of The UPS Store at 260 Kings Mall Court in Kingston. The team at the store responded with zeal and made it happen. “We’ve had a lot of unusual packages over the years, but this one definitely stood out,” she said. There was also that time when her staff was tasked with meticulously packing and shipping two giant, multi-arm chandeliers with decorative leaves to China. “They looked like big cocoons by the time we were done with them, but they arrived fine. It was quite the endeavor,” Anderson said. While The UPS Store is known for getting unique and hard-to-pack items safely and securely to their destinations, that’s not the only thing it excels at, according to Anderson. “The UPS Store is your local print shop, providing professional printing services to market your small business or to help you complete your personal project or presentation,” she said. “We do a lot of work for people who need flyers or brochures or wide-format printing.” Additional services include marketing materials, postcards, business cards, blueprints and architectural printing, banners, posters and yard signs. The UPS Store further offers secure mailbox and package acceptance services, document shredding, office and mailing supplies, as well as faxing and scanning. Another plus is that The UPS Store serves as a drop-off location for Amazon returns. On top of that, the Kingston store works with regional auction houses to pick up, pack and ship fine art, furniture and luxury goods. Anderson and her husband opened The UPS Store 23 years ago at a 1,500-square-foot space at 230 Kings Mall Court. It was the first one in the area, according to Anderson. In 2019, she relocated to 260 Kings Mall Court, more than doubling her space. “We had outgrown that little corner space, so moving was a great thing to do. It has helped us to continue growing,” said Anderson, who also trains new owners and managers from other locations how to handle daily operations, technical systems and business practices. Right now, the crew at The UPS Store is gearing up for its peak season, which kicks off around Thanksgiving and runs through mid- to late-January. While Anderson said The UPS Store is busy throughout the year, handling regular business and special events like Amazon Prime Day in June, the staff gets a taste of things to come as students head back to college. “It really starts around the middle of August into mid- September. We get some college kids who are traveling a distance, and they want to ship their clothing, linens and basic household goods like pots and pans. Then, October rolls around, and parents come in to send goodie packages to their kids for Halloween.” Anderson said while the store will be undergoing a remodeling over the next few weeks, it will be open to serve customers’ needs—whether that’s shipping corn to Alaska, fancy lighting to the People’s Republic of China or anything in between. “We just want people to know we’re here to help them. We’re problem solvers. We’ll figure out a way to get it done for you,” she said. The UPS Store, at 260 Kings Mall Court in Kingston, can be reached by calling (845) 336-4877 or by going to theupsstore.com/4541.



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The Daily Freeman has partnered with the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce to bring you a monthly publication with specific content from the Chamber President, Board and Members. Support this section while marketing your business to consumers and local business owners!

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