



CHAMBER *Action*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Volume 18

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February 2004

www.mvchamber.org

A Message from the Chair of the Board

Dear Chamber Member:

I am pleased to report that in 2003 the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce made significant advances in many areas. Our membership dues revenues remained even with that of 2002, reversing a several year trend & we have continued to enhance our membership benefits and offer our members a comprehensive collection of membership advantages. In partnership with local media outlets, our chamber has taken part in a positive image campaign for the Mohawk Valley sharing why the Mohawk Valley is a great place to live.



Stephen R. Zogby

The Chamber has served as a catalyst for the City of Utica's planning staff to assist with a design study of the North Genesee corridor area. This past fall, the Chamber's Government Affairs Council led a fair, objective process of endorsing pro-small business candidates for several local political races and we look forward to continuing with this process in 2004. Under the leadership of Treasurer John Buffa and President Jim Roche, your chamber is no long operating at a loss and is now in the black. President Roche and his outstanding team at the Chamber office have done a great job in managing the day-to-day affairs of the Chamber.

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O'Toole "Person of the Year" Award Winner Named: Sister Rose Vincent Gleason

Senator Charles Schumer is Special Guest at Chamber's Annual Meeting

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) will be the special guest speaker at the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce's 108th Annual Meeting, Monday, February 9, 2004, Noon, Hart's Hill Inn. The Chamber will also present its annual O'Toole "Person of the Year" award to Sister Rose Vincent Gleason at the lunch meeting.

Schumer is a first-term senator who is up for re-election in November. O'Toole "Person of the Year" award winner Sister Rose Vincent Gleason is the recently retired president & chief executive officer of St. Elizabeth Medical Center. Sponsors for the annual meeting include Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, Oneida Indian Nation, Workforce Investment Board and NBT Bank. The O'Toole award is sponsored by WKTV NewsChannel 2. Stephen Merren, executive vice president of WKTV, will be the master of ceremonies for the "Person of the Year" award presentation.

Tickets to the Chamber's Annual Meeting and O'Toole Award ceremony are \$25 each. Table purchases and sponsorships are available. Reservations required, 724-2151, ext. 7 or email info@mvchamber.org.

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Member to Member Savings Thru Benefit Card

My Favorite Muffin & Bagel

Savvy Mohawk Valley Chamber members attract new customers by giving discounts to other chamber members and their employees. For instance, at My Favorite Muffin & Bagel, owners Dick and Cheryl Dowe offer a 10% discount to chamber members who show their Member Benefit Card.

At My Favorite Muffin & Bagel (Route 49 in Marcy) you can try not only hot breakfasts and deli sandwiches, but made-to-order salads, gourmet coffees, and fat-free and sugar-free muffins too. Plus, in January the shop opened a new drive-thru window to add convenience for commuters.

"We also have a café, so people can eat in or take out," says Dick Dowe. "We're looking for a second location, too." In addition, staff members make gift baskets that are shipped coast to coast as well as locally, with muffins, coffees, teas and hot chocolate. Some people use them as sympathy and get-well gifts. My Favorite Muffin & Bagel is open from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is now in its seventh year.

Syracuse Crunch

The Syracuse Crunch is offering discounted tickets to its March 20, 2004 hockey game. Tickets are normally \$15, but will be available for \$10 (includes priority seating and group recognition on the Video Scoreboard) to anyone showing their Chamber Member Benefit Card. If you are interested in more information, please contact Jessica Ingro at 724-3151, ext. 227 or Todd Cross at the Syracuse Crunch office, 473-4444.

For a complete list of Chamber members offering discounts, log onto the Chamber's website at www.mvchamber.org and check the updates. Call Jessica Ingro at 724-3151, ext. 227 to add your company's benefit to our list or to request more cards. Help send business to other Chamber members by giving a Member Benefit Card to each of your employees – they'll appreciate the discounts, too!

Chamber Welcomes New Directors

The Mohawk Valley Chamber welcomes **Judy A. Allen, Merritt S. Locke** and **Kenneth M. Tompkins** to its Board of Directors.

Judy A. Allen is partner in the accounting office of Celia & Allen, LLC, located in the New Hartford Shopping Center. She resides in New Hartford with her husband, Michael, and two children, Katelyn and Michael.



Judy Allen



Merritt Locke

Merritt S. Locke, Esq., is a partner with Saunders, Kahler & Locke, LLP. She earned her J.D. degree at George Washington University, and B.A. degree at St. Lawrence University. She served Family Services of the Mohawk Valley from 1994 through 2002 as Secretary, Vice President and President. She joined the Central New York Community Arts Council Board of Directors in 2003. Ms. Locke lives with her husband, William, in New Hartford. They have a daughter, Madeline, and son, Will.

Kenneth M. Tompkins is vice president of business services at Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid Company. His day-to-day responsibilities at the company, which delivers electricity and natural gas, include the overall management of Niagara Mohawk's large-customer, community and municipal relationships in the Mohawk Valley region. He also mobilizes company resources to assist with the region's economic and community development needs.



Ken Tompkins

Chamber Member News

Power Federal Credit Union Gives \$1 Million Dividend

For the third time in five years, Power Federal Credit Union's board of directors declared a dividend and loan interest rebate to its members totaling over \$1 million. The bonus dividend and rebate was credited to the members' savings accounts and IRAs on Dec. 31. This represents 5.70 percent of dividends earned on savings accounts and 5.70 percent of interest paid on loans throughout 2003. Founded in 1939 by employees of Niagara Mohawk Power Corp., the credit union has grown to serve 33,000 members and has approximately \$265 million in assets.

Masonic Laboratory Receives \$800,000 Grant

The federal government has granted \$800,000 to the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory's new Molecular Genetics Wing, due to its record in cardiac research. The molecular genetics program has made the Laboratory one of a handful of centers in the world capable of determining the genetic basis of cardiac problems responsible for sudden death. Dr. Ramon Brugada heads the program. The MMRL also recently received a \$300,000 grant from The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, supporting the same program.

AAA Merger Vote Passes

Members of the Automobile Club of Utica & Central New York approved a merger plan with the Automobile Club of New York at its 101st annual meeting in December. The Automobile Club of New York, with headquarters in Garden City and over 1.3 million members, is now the owner of the local club's assets and assumes its obligations, including the obligation of providing service to AAA members. The merger calls for supplementing the Automobile Club of New York's two downstate call centers with one in Utica, which will add jobs and increase opportunities for the current AAA staff. Members of the Automobile Club of New York also approved the merger.

The Harris Brothers Jewelers Establishes Charitable Gifts Program

The Harris Brothers Jewelers is celebrating its 100th Anniversary. As part of the yearlong commemoration, Harris Brothers will be donating merchandise to benefit charitable organizations in the Mohawk Valley. The goal is to donate up to \$20,000 in merchandise to various local not-for-profit organizations. Eligible agencies may stop by The Harris Brothers Jewelers in the New Hartford Shopping Center Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to pick up an application form. Deadline for submission of applications is February 15, 2004 and recipients will be announced in April 2004.

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Message

(Continued from Page 1)

2004 will be another positive year for our chamber as we continue to focus on the growth of our membership and remain committed to the candidate endorsement process. This year, we will explore the creating of a political action committee, continue to assist with the North Genesee corridor improvement, and actively participate in the potential development of an Armory Square type area in the city of Utica. We will work to develop a bigger and better Mohawk Valley Showcase, and continue our successful monthly workshops organized by our Small Business Council in partnership with Small Business Development Center at SUNY It, the Mohawk Valley Society for Human Resource Management and Mohawk Valley EDGE.

A special thank you to the Chamber Board of Directors for their leadership, guidance and belief that as the leading Chamber in our area, we owe it to our members and community to continue to support businesses so our area can grow and prosper.

Thank you,

Stephen R. Zogby
Chair
Board of Directors

Harden Furniture Certified by Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program

Harden Furniture, located in McConnellsville, has achieved certification of both company-managed timber harvesting activities, as well as its procurement and land management systems through the nationally acclaimed Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program.

Harden joins professional foresters, conservationists, scientists, landowners and other stakeholders who practice and actively promote sustainable forestry on the lands they manage. The SFI program, established by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), requires its members to adhere to a stringent set of harvesting procurement guidelines and practices that will help insure wildlife protection, the maintenance of water quality standards and a wide range of other conservation goals.

Harden Furniture is the first major furniture manufacturer to achieve certification of its forestry activities through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program. As a participant in the SFI program, Harden has reinforced its commitment to ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of their forests and the production of American handcrafted home and office furnishings.

According to Greg Harden, president and CEO of Harden Furniture, "The SFI program, and our certification to the standard, serves to assure the consumers that the lumber used to manufacture their furniture was harvested in a responsible manner. At a point where global industrial activity is placing unprecedented demands on the environment, Harden is making every effort to be a leader in conservation efforts." The company's participation in the SFI program reinforces its position to guard against the deforestation of American timber properties and tropical rainforests.



Harden Furniture's SFI program team members are, left to right: Mike Collins, Bob Steria, Cindy Arquette, Alan Lamparella

Harden Furniture, Inc. is a privately held manufacturer of handcrafted, wood and upholstered furniture for the home and office. Founded in 1844, Harden is now in its fifth generation of family ownership, and is the oldest family-owned manufacturer of furniture in the nation.

Chamber Staff



Jim Roche
President



Eva Aboussleman
Director of Insurance Services



Marge Francis
Director of Finance



Jessica Ingro
Director of Information Services



Marie Suppa
Director of On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Eva Aboussleman is director of insurance services. She handles health care administration for 300 chamber members and their 800 employees, giving quality service to all. Eva also works on many special projects throughout the year, and coordinates much of the property management functions for the Chamber's office building.

Marge Francis is director of finance. She covers all aspects of the Chamber's finances, as well as accounting responsibilities for the Utica Industrial Development Corporation. In addition, Marge works on a variety of special projects including the Choo Choo Open Golf Tournament to benefit Operation Sunshine.

Jessica Ingro is director of information services. She is responsible for all aspects of advertising, web site development, most member communications such as the *Chamber Action* newsletter, and coordination of key events such as the Annual Meeting and Business of the Year events. In 2004, she will work with the Publicity Council to strengthen the criteria of the John T. O'Toole "Person of the Year" and "Business of the Year" awards.

Marie Suppa is director of On-the-Job Training (OJT). Marie works with companies throughout Oneida County to match their employee training needs with federal, state and county programs designed to meet those needs.

Chamber & SBDC Launch Strategic Business Planning for Small Manufacturers

The Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at SUNYIT recently launched "Accelerate New York," a program aimed at strengthening the long-term viability of small manufacturing businesses in Oneida, Herkimer and Madison Counties.

The Accelerate New York program, funded by the New York State Department of Labor and administered by the Mohawk Valley Chamber, will match small manufacturers in the Mohawk Valley with the technical expertise of the SBDC in order to update, modify or create strategic business plans. By doing so, companies are expected to be better able to focus on their core competencies, minimize their weaknesses, increase their competitiveness, and better serve the changing needs of their customers.

"This program gives manufacturers in the Mohawk Valley assistance to become more efficient in their operations and more competitive so they can grow their customer base," said Steve Zogby, chair of the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce board of directors and executive vice president of Scalzo, Zogby and Wittig. "Accelerate New York can help them reach their full potential."

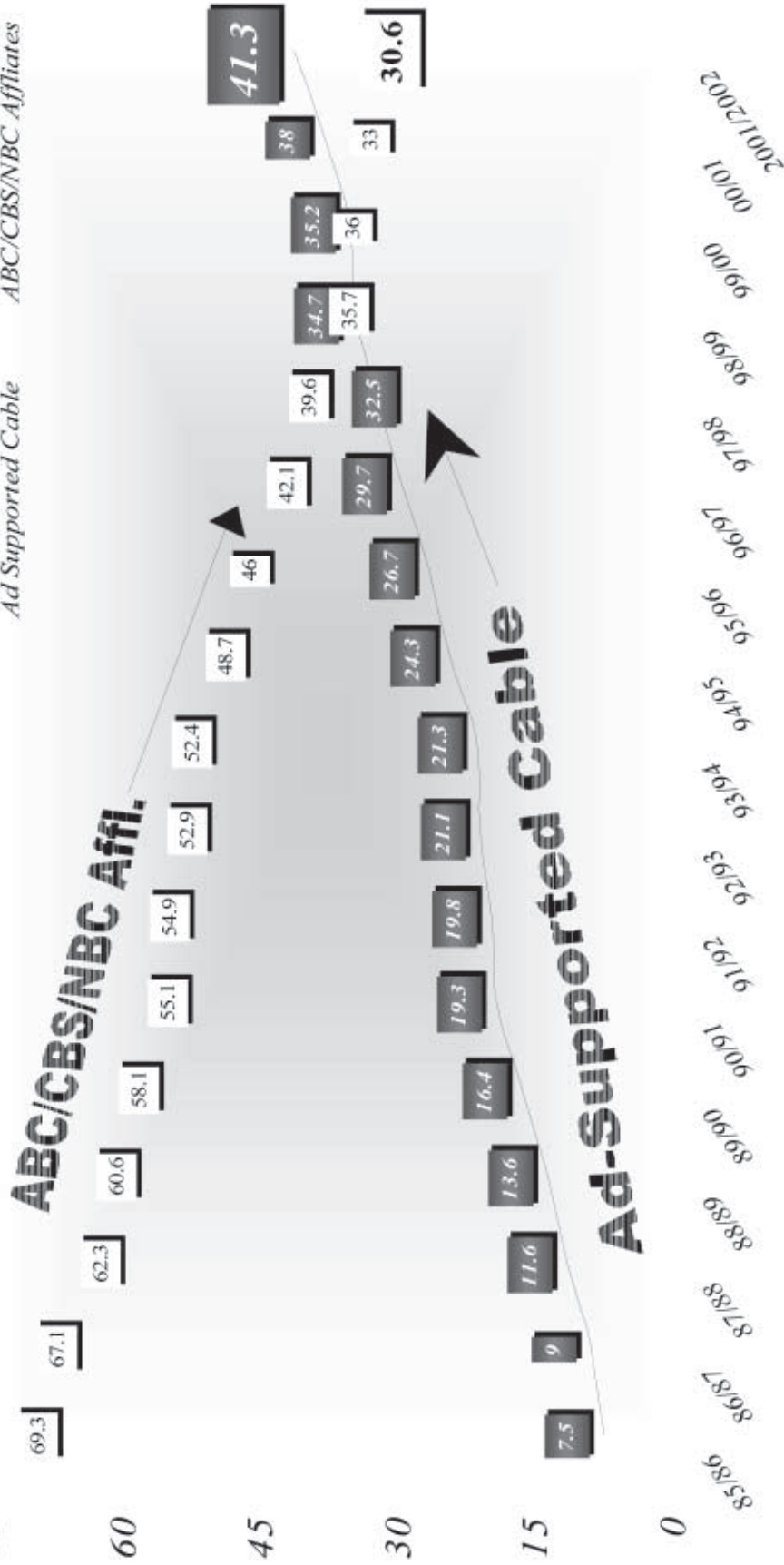
The Mohawk Valley Chamber and the Mohawk Valley SBDC have a goal of working with 40 small manufacturers through 2004 on their strategic business plans. The service is provided free to qualifying businesses. For more information about the program, please contact Bob Dunn, business advisor, Mohawk Valley SBDC, 792-7547.



Long Term Total TV Household Share Trends

October – September Each Year

Ad Supported Cable ABC/CBS/NBC Affiliates



Note: All shares are based on the sum of total US HH Delivery (not HUT).

Choo Choo Open On Track for 4th year

With the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce's 3rd annual Choo Choo Open golf tournament a great event remembered, planning is in the works for the 4th annual outing this September. 2003 Choo Choo Open Chairman Robb D'Apice presented a check for \$4,500 to pleased Operation Sunshine representative Jay Peak (see photo).

"The Chamber's wonderful Choo Choo Open captures the essence of Operation Sunshine: a homegrown, community initiative to help the less fortunate in the Mohawk Valley," said Donna Donovan, president and publisher of the Observer-Dispatch. "Creative commitment like that shown by the Mohawk Valley Chamber is at the heart of the many successes of our community."

Event sponsors included Niagara Mohawk, NBT Bank, Cooperative Magnetic Imaging, Leatherstocking Abstract & Title Corp., Advantage Energy, Access Federal Credit Union, Holland Farms and Presto Print.

The chair of the 2004 Choo Choo Open is Dean Kelly, president of Jay-K Lumber.



Jay Peak, *Observer-Dispatch* market development director; and Robb D'Apice, 2003 Choo Choo Open chairperson.



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Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce

2004 Board of Directors

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Executive Vice President - Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc.

Richard Callahan, Vice Chairman –

Senior Vice President Sales & Marketing - SBU Bank

John F. Buffa, Treasurer –

Vice President Commercial Banking - NBT Bank

Cathy Newell, Assistant Treasurer –

President - Mohawk LTD.

Jim Roche, President –

Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce

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Judy Allen, Partner - Celia & Allen, LLC

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Paul J. Drejza, President - Leatherstocking Abstract & Title Corp.

William C. Edwards, Financial Representative - Northwestern Mutual

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Dr. Todd S. Hutton, President - Utica College of Syracuse University

Merritt Locke, Partner - Saunders, Kahler & Locke, LLP

Brian R. Loughlin, Senior VP & Commerical Lending Officer - Bank of Utica

Maria Marszalek, Senior Sales & Service Representative - Fleet Bank

David L. Mathis, Director - Oneida County Workforce Development

Mary Malone McCarthy, Director of Sales & Marketing - Northland Communications

Thomas Owens, President - Access Federal Credit Union

Morris Pearson, Director of Working Solutions Placement Office - Mohawk Valley Community College

Richard I. Pierce, Owner - Domino's Pizza/Casa Bella Restaurant

Artur Pyrda, Director of Engineering - Automation Experts

Joseph Romanelli, Vice President - Romanelli Advertising/Design, Inc.

Jackie Romano, Vice President of Operations - The Fountainhead Group, Inc.

Al Sassone, Executive Director - Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties

Michael Schafer, President - Mohawk Valley Community College

Valerie Sitler, Senior Vice President - Fiber Instrument Sales

Mason Somerville, President - SUNY Institute of Technology

Louis A. Steppello, Director of Operations - Mohawk Janitorial Service Company

Sheldon F. Storrer, Vice President - Aspen Events Unlimited

Kenneth Tompkins, Vice President - Niagara Mohawk

Brett B. Truett, President - Soft-Noze USA, Inc.

David Wilcox, President - David Wilcox Building Group

Philip M. Williams, Presdient - Utica School of Commerce

Marolyn P. Wilson, Vice President - Hollan Farms Bakery & Deli

February Business After Hours

Business After Hours will be hosted by Marcy Carpet & Design Center on Thursday, February 12, River Road, Marcy. Hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and soft drinks will be available from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The cost is \$5 (\$10 for non-members). Chamber members are encouraged to bring their non-member colleagues to experience the benefits of Chamber networking. Register online at www.mvchamber.org, fax the enclosed flyer to 724-3177, or call the Chamber at 724-3151 ext. 7.

Empire Building at Business After Hours!



Jim Turnbull from Turnbull Insurance Service and Mark Cherry from the Radisson Hotel at a recent Business After Hours.



Paul Drejza from Leatherstocking Abstract & Title Corp., and Bill & Carolyn Fahy from Smartech Golf at a recent Business After Hours.



Henry Morehouse from Morehouse Appliances and Walter Hedderich at a recent Business After Hours.



Megan Manning and Renee' Dugan from Timeless Spa & Salon, Bruce Davis from Adelpia Media Services, David Podos from ComPeer of the Mohawk Valley and Todd Cross from the Syracuse Crunch at a recent Business After Hours.



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William Fahy
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Todd Cross
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Calendar of Events:

- Tuesday, Feb. 3** Tourism & Convention Council, 8:00 a.m., Chamber offices.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4** Free SCORE Consultation, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Chamber offices.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4** Accelerate New York "Strategic Business Planning" Seminar, 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m., The Beeches, Rome, no-cost, registration required, 724-3151, ext. 7
- Thursday, Feb. 5** Small Business Council, 8:30 a.m., Chamber offices.
- Thursday, Feb. 5** Publicity Council, 8:45 a.m., Chamber offices.
- Friday, Feb. 6** Government Affairs Council, 8:30 a.m., Chamber offices.
- Tuesday, Feb. 10** "The Short Course: Human Resource Compliance and Audits", Registration: 7:30 a.m., Program: 8:00 a.m., Holiday Inn, \$15, 733-8311.
- Tuesday, Feb. 10** Board of Directors Meeting, 12:00 noon, Dominique's Chesterfield Restaurant.
- Thursday, Feb. 12** BUSINESS AFTER HOURS, hosted by Marcy Carpet & Design Center, River Road, Marcy, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., \$5 (\$10 non-members).
- Wednesday, Feb. 18** Economic Development Council, 8:00 a.m., Chamber offices.
- Wednesday, Feb. 18** Free SCORE Consultation, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Chamber offices.





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Upcoming Chamber Seminars

- "The Short Course: Human Resource Compliance and Audits," Tues., February 10, \$15, 733-8311
- "Health Insurance Issues," Thurs., March 18, \$10, 338-0393
- "The Law & Your Small Business," April 21, \$10, 792-7547
- "Preventing Employee Theft in the Workplace," May 13, \$10, 724-3151, ext. 7



SBDC



CHAMBER Action
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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The Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce
520 Seneca Street, Utica, NY 13502 • 724-3151 • Fax 724-3177

<p><i>Chairman of the Board</i> Stephen R. Zogby</p> <p><i>Treasurer</i> John F. Buffa</p> <p><i>Vice Chairpersons</i> Thomas W. Burke Joseph Romanelli</p> <p><i>Director of Insurance</i> Eva Aboussleman</p> <p><i>Director of Finance</i> Margaret Francis</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Contributing Editor for Chamber Action</i> Sandra Fentiman, Utica School of Commerce</p>	<p><i>First Vice-Chairperson</i> Richard Callahan</p> <p><i>Assistant Treasurer</i> Cathy Newell</p> <p><i>President</i> Jim Roche</p> <p><i>Director of Information Services</i> Jessica Ingro</p> <p><i>Director, On-the-Job Training Program</i> Marie Suppa</p>
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