



**GREATER
BINGHAMTON**
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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2020-2021 Year in Review

Photo by Drones Over Broome

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Chairman:
Tyrone Muse

Welcome to the 2021 Annual Dinner

While it is great to have our annual meeting back in the month of May, it is hard to believe that we are still in a world that needs to have a virtual component. Still, we are excited to again host this year's meeting in a hybrid format – one that's both virtual for all and available for those who can be present at the DoubleTree.

The pandemic has left our region and the world in an unprecedented state, creating the advent of the virtual hug, defining my personal space as 6', and discovering that the mask has become as much a fashion item as a handbag or tie, meant to color coordinate with your outfit. We are pleased to see that COVID cases have begun to fall, and I want to thank our county for doing an excellent job of distributing the vaccine once it became available in this tumultuous time.

Considering all the challenges we collectively faced, I am proud to report that your Chamber never stopped focusing on bringing you value. We became a resource for information on COVID and even provided free PPE kits. We remained an advocate for our members in governmental affairs, still meeting with legislators at all levels of government to ensure they understood the business needs of our membership. We continued to provide education and development programs while adapting to the virtual approach – without succumbing to the dreaded “Zoom Fatigue.” Instead, we've tried our best to keep things energetic. Our focus on leadership and development is best in class and provides a new and fresh take on important values – all while providing an investment in our future leaders. We have actively sought to tackle the areas that may be obstacles in doing business and looked for solutions in a collaborative manner. This alignment obtained during my predecessor's term between The Agency and the Chamber has clearly been advantageous for our region by bringing the expertise of both groups in a focused manner to ensure we speak in one voice for our community's business needs.

We find that words like “resiliency” keep coming up in 2021. Well, that is one thing we know for sure about the Greater Binghamton area: we are resilient. On behalf of your Chamber team, we want to thank you for your ongoing support and choosing to be part of the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce.

Tyrone Muse
Chairman

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Sheila Doyle

SPONSORS

The following sponsors partnered with the Chamber in 2020 to offer a broad array of business programming and networking opportunities. On behalf of our over 750 members, the Chamber gratefully acknowledges their support.



A Room To Heal, Inc.

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Ameriprise Financial

Anew Dermatology

Antonio's Bar & Trattoria

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Vestal Army Career Center
Vestal Coal House
Vestal Wine and Liquor
Volunteers Administrators of the
Southern Tier
WBNG TV

YEAR IN REVIEW

2020-2021 CHAMBER HIGHLIGHTS

The Greater Binghamton Chamber adapted many of our programs during the pandemic to continue to support our members. Here is a snapshot of what our year looked like:



759
Total # of
Members



With 10 or Less
Employees



With 100 or More
Employees

38

Total # of New
Members



87%

Member
Retention Rate



42,371
Full time
7,198
Part time



49,569
Total # of People
Employed by Members



57
Committee Meetings



5,619
Event Attendees



YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2020-21, the Chamber continued to adapt our programming to strict COVID-19 guidelines while still delivering valuable content in four key areas including advocacy, connections & resources, young professionals and talent initiatives and career exploration in K-12 schools.

Advocacy

Upstate United – Unshackle Upstate changed its name to Upstate United to better reflect changes in the organization and to emphasize the necessity of Upstate members working together.

Experience Ratings – The business community successfully advocated for COVID related layoffs to not impact an employer's experience rating.

Legislative Breakfast – The Chamber hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast in August 2020. Michael Hendrix of the Manhattan Institute presented virtually to over 80 business leaders and elected officials.

Elected Officials – The Chamber provided more opportunities to connect with elected leaders including Congresswoman Claudia Tenney and former Congressman Anthony Brindisi. We also added new ways to communicate with officials through our Meet the Candidate's night, a Local Advocacy Day, and our brand new Always Advocating meetings.

Legislative Agenda Rollout/Advocacy Day – The Chamber facilitated virtual meetings between business leaders and our state representatives at the start of the 2021 legislative session in addition to publishing our advocacy agenda based on member feedback.

Economic Forecast and Building BC Awards – The Chamber hosted its first hybrid Economic Forecast and Building BC Awards in February 2021. In-person and virtual attendees totaled over 180, a sure sign that everyone was eager to know the direction of the economy.

Eggs and Issues – The Chamber hosted a series of bi-monthly events on topics ranging from E-Commerce and COVID Economic Recovery to Childcare and Zoning.

COVID – The Leadership Alliance continued to operate as a triage center for businesses and helped connect them to valuable and much-needed resources.

Advocacy Priorities – In virtual lobby days, the Chamber advocated against issues such as single payer health insurance, the NY HERO Act, employer producer responsibility legislation, and in favor of Nourish NY and continuing middle class tax cuts.



Connections & Resources

BingBizCon was re-imagined to an all-virtual event in early 2021 with breakout session speakers from around the country and London, England, the presentation of the inaugural Family-Owned Business of the Year Award, an interview with a local filmmaker and the new Visit Binghamton Film Office and an interactive virtual business showcase.

The Chamber continued to promote job opportunities in our community. In addition to organizing two in-person job fairs following COVID-19 protocols, we also implemented **Virtual Employer Job Spotlights** to give companies and organizations a safe alternative.

Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" forms the basis of the new 2021 series, **Inside the C-Suite**. This 7-month virtual series gives attendees an insight into how local CEO's utilize these habits in their professional and personal lives.

YEAR IN REVIEW



PPE Kits – Thanks to a grant from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield the Chamber distributed 500 PPE kits to local businesses. The kits included a box of disposable face masks, hand sanitizer, microfiber cleaning cloths and disinfectant to kill COVID-19 on all high touch surfaces.

Savoring the Flavors of the Southern Tier

– In partnership with the Southern Tier Independent Restaurants and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, the Chamber debuted a new video series called Savoring the Flavors of the Southern Tier to support and highlight local restaurants. The videos feature local chefs demonstrating some of their signature dishes and sharing their recipes so viewers can make the dish at home. The demonstrations were shared via Facebook, YouTube and at www.stir-local.com gaining a reach of over 69,000 views!

YP/Talent Initiatives

BingConnect – In 2020, the Chamber adapted its college intern program to a mostly virtual format. We hosted interns from five companies for 6 different events, including a financial wellness workshop and virtual round table sessions with young professionals and CEO's. These events introduced them to our business community from their homes across the state.



HYPE Awards – Our 2nd annual HYPE Awards transitioned to a virtual program and highlighted 26 young professionals selected for outstanding leadership in their industry and in the community. We shared their stories through a social media campaign, reaching a total of 68,879 people. On December 9th, the winners were revealed with 130+ family, friends, and community members watching and celebrating with them via livestream.

YP Summit – The 2020 YP Summit welcomed over 130 attendees, speakers and community leaders to its first year as a 100% virtual conference. With three powerful keynote speakers, eleven breakout sessions, and opportunities to stay connected with each other, they were equipped to do just that.

Experience Bing – We continued our Experience Bing program in partnership with UHS, acting as the community contact for candidates looking to relocate to the area for jobs. Through this program candidates experience a community tour customized for them, including neighborhoods, schools or restaurants. In 2020-2021, experiences are being adapted to meet new safety standards.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – In 2021, the Chamber formed a committee of DEI professionals, non-profit and agency leaders to help businesses implement best practices for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These professionals will steer new programming specific for our local community's needs, including a half-day of learning focused on topics within this field.

HIGHLIGHTS



GBEOP continues to support business-education initiatives in our community, with workforce development at the forefront of discussion. Despite the limitations to personal interactions in 2020, GBEOP was able to maintain business-education engagement within our community.

GBEOP program highlights for 2020-21:

- Graduated 20 individuals in the 34th class of the Broome Leadership Institute (BLI).
- Reached over 225 students grades K-12 through Junior Achievement from the following school districts: Binghamton, Broome Tioga BOCES, Chenango Forks, Chenango Valley, Maine Endwell, Union Endicott and Windsor.
- Assisted with Modern Marketing & Commerce's 11th annual Greater Binghamton Start-up Challenge, Launch Pad, that engaged 130 students and 26 business volunteers.
- Hosted SPARK 2021: Industry Deep Dive Webinar Series with BOCES and SUNY Broome. This virtual webinar series targets 8th grade students and exposes them to all the amazing career opportunities that are right here and how they can prepare for entry in those fields. It creates opportunities for dialogue between students and panelists, who represent training programs and employers in our region.

- o SPARK 2021 highlighted careers in Nursing, Entrepreneurship, Construction/Trades and Dentistry.

- o Upcoming webinars will include IT, and Manufacturing.

In 2021-2022, GBEOP will identify additional engagement opportunities that can be adapted to remote or hybrid formats. In-person events, such as SPARK 2022 and Career Nights, will resume in accordance with event guidelines and restrictions.

Additional 2021-2022 GBEOP initiatives:

- Coordinate local participation in JA Inspire, Junior Achievement's capstone career development program for 8th-12th grade students brought to life by our region's employers.
 - o Digital exhibitor booths allow businesses to upload downloadable career information and on the job videos.
 - o Participating businesses will have exposure to more than 10,000 students in the 25-county area JA Central Upstate New York covers for 90 days.
- Launch of PEAK: The Path to a Successful Future website. The goal of PEAK is to:
 - o Introduce students to career opportunities and develop skills to make informed choices about college, internships, jobs, and opportunities in our region.
 - o Connect local business to students to foster the growth of a successful workforce pipeline strengthening our community and economy for the future.

HIGHLIGHTS



Visit Binghamton

Visit Binghamton is the official destination marketing organization for Broome County. Our mission is to bring regional, national, and international business and leisure visitors to Greater Binghamton for the economic benefit of the county, the community, and our tourism partners.

Visit Binghamton has found new ways to support our tourism partners throughout the pandemic. When I Love New York began promoting “virtual tourism” at the end of March 2020, the Visit Binghamton team quickly shared and promoted the giraffe camera at Animal Adventure Park and virtual tours at the Roberson Museum & Science Center and Phelps Mansion Museum. We remained in constant contact with our tourism partners through emails and calls to share vital information about COVID relief programs and grant opportunities as they were introduced. We also had boots on the ground delivering masks to our hotel partners on behalf of the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association. Our focus changed, but our commitment to our hospitality industry never wavered.



Due to COVID-19, we only hosted 45 events in 2020. These events attracted 10,590 visitors to the area and generated \$7.2 million for the local economy. In a normal year, this activity would be closer to \$30 million. We continued to offer a golf package featuring our local hotels and golf courses that lead to 906 hotel room nights and 2,634 rounds of golf being booked, resulting in a direct economic impact of almost \$245,000. In comparison, the program generated an impact of \$600,000 in 2019.

Some of the bigger organizations that met in Broome County in 2020 include: NY Cup Gymnastics (2500 people), John Mack Memorial Lacrosse Tournament (500 people), NYS District of Kiwanis (300 people), USA Wrestling (400 people), and US Synchronized Swimming (300 people). Helms Briscoe hosted 1350 overnight rooms for a massive computer training for UHS Hospital personnel. Many of our larger conventions had to cancel due to COVID-19, but they have rescheduled again with us for the future.

Due to travel bans, our website, www.VisitBinghamton.org, saw a decrease of 55% in overall traffic and 53% increase in new visitors.

Social media marketing became one of our most important marketing and communication tools during the pandemic. We quickly adapted to the virtual times and used social media to stay connected to our community. We used social media to promote virtual tours, share zoom interview recordings, and promote safe outdoor activities.

HIGHLIGHTS

We saw a 22% increase in followers during this time, including our Facebook following growing from 7,859 followers in April of 2020 to 9,629 in March of 2021.

Visit Binghamton continued to grow our video assets by adding 2 more “stories” to our portfolio in 2020. We shared stories about the area’s amazing golf opportunities and history and the story of the Lost Dog Café. The videos can be found on our website (visitbinghamton.org/bingstories/lost-dog-cafe and visitbinghamton.org/bingstories/golf).



Visit Binghamton Film Office

Visit Binghamton and the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce have launched the Visit Binghamton Film Office: an initiative whose mission is to support film and television production and drive economic growth in Broome County by working closely with the New York State Governor’s Office of Motion Picture & Television Development and Empire State Development to supply locations, permits, permissions, crew, and vendors to the film and television industry. We are the first Regional Film Office in the Southern Tier, serving Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties.

Home to iconic Twilight Zone creator Rod Serling and industry giants IBM and the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Factory, Binghamton has hundreds of versatile and compelling locations ranging from beautifully preserved historic architecture and homes to giant industrial complexes to quaint rural towns and picturesque farms. From the rolling hills of the Appalachian Mountains to the stately parlor homes of the West Side, Binghamton is rich with diversity and history. Plus, the area is known as the



Carousel Capital of the World with a total of six classically restored carousels.

New York State’s film tax incentive program is one of the best in the nation and offers tax credits for film, television, and commercial production and post-production completed in New York (with an additional bump for projects shot Upstate). We are using the tax breaks offered by the state in combination with our natural resources to entice more film and television projects to the area, thereby creating new jobs and revenue sources that will positively impact our community and tourism industry.

The Visit Binghamton Film Office has already wrapped on three film projects and two HGTV Shows. The film projects include the short “Sammy Waits for a Call”, written and directed by Gregg Kearns and starring local director/actor/editor Daniel Masciari (a 2020 Hype Award Nominee and BingBizCon Keynote Speaker); the independent feature film *The Harbinger*, written and directed by Andy Mitton; and the short “Safe House” with Blake Zelensnikar, a Binghamton native and professional dancer turned filmmaker who just finished touring with *Mean Girls the Musical*.

We feel extremely lucky to have landed these projects in a time when most production is at a halt. We are also proud to say all the productions followed strict COVID-19 guidelines to ensure the health and safety of all cast and crew. The budgets of these films suggest roughly \$230,000 dollars was generated for our local economy!

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