

Welcome the Season with Customer Service Training

If you had to pick one form of marketing as the most valuable, what tops your list? Did you choose word of mouth, the original social media campaign? If so, you're right! According to Nielsen, 92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all other forms of advertising. The options to steer these recommendations in a positive direction are many and include delivering jaw-dropping service.

This month's training session – included with your membership – walks your front line supervisors and staff through expectations, processes, procedures, and tips to amaze your visitors, clients, and guests. The two-hour session (see dates/times on page 7) is for full- and part-time, paid and/or volunteer, seasonal or permanent staff and includes ideas to handle these reputation-building opportunities with ease, energy, enthusiasm, and efficiency.

The session will be conducted by Michael Hardy, Executive Director, who has conducted hundreds of these sessions for thousands of frontline partners at hotels, stores, restaurants, including for-profit and non-profit organizations.

Seasoned frontliners often learn something new or are invigorated by professional development. New hires often feel a relief knowing that they don't need to know it all, but they do need to know where to find answers to customer and visitor questions.



Conde Nast: Worthy Waterfalls

In April, Conde Nast Traveler named 8 must-see waterfalls, selecting breath-taking beauties from across the country. On the list: Rainbow Falls, on the more than a dozen waterfalls along the two-mile gorge trail the Watkins Glen State Park. It's almost time to dig out your hiking boots. The rim trails have been open all year, but watch for the gorge trail to open in the coming weeks.



www.ExploreWatkinsGlen.com

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Although shopping is an ideal way to spend a day, sometimes a little help is appreciated. Famous Brands Outlet, in Watkins Glen, has launched a free personal shopping program.

“If you’re strapped for time, looking for someone to brainstorm with because you’re buying for friends or family, or if you’d prefer not to be around people yet because of COVID, our dedicated personal shopper is ready to assist,” said Erin Guild, store manager. “Our goal is to make the shopping experience fun, productive, individualized, and convenient.”

The personal shopping trend is the latest in an evolution that mirrors society’s needs. Dating back to the late 1800s, shoppers perused catalogs and placed

orders by mail, watching the postal service for packages. After World War II, retailers worked hard to make shopping as convenient as possible, recognizing women’s increasing role in the workforce, which explains the rise in supermarkets, shopping centers, and malls. Toward the end of the 20th century, shoppers needed even more convenience, which led to the rise in online shopping. The introduction of personal shoppers continues the trend for convenience.

Cindi Rosse, with Famous Brands since 2019, is Famous Brands’ designated personal shopper. During your initial visit, Cindi will introduce you to the store and create a profile that outlines your contact information, sizes, and preferred styles and brands. After this initial consult, Cindi

or another representative will be ready to assist as needs arise: selecting options and notifying patrons when new items that meet the profile arrive in-store. Famous Brands patrons can also create a “wish list” to share with family and friends.

“Cindi can work with people on-site or manage this process virtually,” said Erin. “We’re looking forward to putting the ‘personal’ back in shopping.”



Education Corner

Last month, we talked about Spring and re-opening; this month, let’s plan for summer. Specifically, what are your plans for your children, ages 8-14? Did you know that SUNY Corning Community College offers a STEM Youth College? Coding? Game design? Javascript? Minecraft? Python?

If any of these are familiar to you or your kids, and it’s something they’d like to do, then the STEM Youth College at SUNY CCC is the right place to be in 2021! Many of the programs offered by STEM Youth College are powered by Black Rocket, a national leader in tech-education. Since there is still some uncertainty about the ability to meet in person, the College is offering a wide variety of virtual summer programs. New this year: Young Authors – create

your own softcover book! Check our website for details.

If you prefer an in-person option, check out the Full STEAHM Ahead! (Girls, Grades 6-7), July 30-August 3, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Commons Building, Spencer Hill Campus, Corning. The Full STEAHM Ahead Summer Workshop is a week-long program for middle school girls that focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Health, and Math education. Approximately 24 middle school girls from Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben counties will be selected based on essay applications to participate in this low-cost workshop. Among the many activities scheduled, girls will learn how to code; explore the night sky at CCC’s Planetarium; perform in a drama production; develop math theory; learn

to meditate and practice yoga for stress release; develop an engineering project that they can wear home, and meet role models. Applications for this program will be sent home with girls enrolled in middle schools in May. For info about Full STEAHM Ahead!, contact Jennifer Sellers at 607-962-9479 or jseller2@corning-cc.edu.

For info about the programs offered by SUNY Corning Community College, contact the Workforce Education & Academic Pathways at 607-936-5501 or email us at ilearn@corning-cc.edu.



**SUNY
CORNING**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Matthew Burr, from Burr Consulting, offers timely information on the legalization of marijuana in New York State. Learn what the new law means for your operations on Burr Consulting's website.

General Info

On March 31, 2021, New York became the 16th state to legalize marijuana for recreational use. Under the new law, it is legal for individuals 21 and older to possess and purchase up to three ounces of marijuana. At their place of residence, individuals are also permitted to possess up to five pounds of the drug. It is anticipated to take the state as long as two years to fully implement this new law, including setting up a system to license marijuana retailers. The law also modifies the state's existing medical marijuana program.



Areas for Employers to Consider: Restrictions on Employers' Hiring and Disciplinary Policies

Of particular importance to employers, the law creates new restrictions on an employer's ability to discipline or terminate employees for using marijuana, as well as limits

on employers' ability to refuse to hire a prospective employee for consuming the drug. Specifically, it is now unlawful for employers to refuse to hire, employ or license, or to discharge from employment or otherwise discriminate against an individual in compensation, promotion, or terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because that individual uses cannabis as permitted under state law. N.Y. Lab. Law § 201-d(2). However, the law allows employers to take action based on an employee's or a prospective employee's use of marijuana where required by federal or state law, or when an employee is impaired while on the job. N.Y. Lab. Law § 201-d(4-a).

These restrictions build on existing provisions of New York's medical marijuana law. See N.Y. Pub. Health Law § 3369.

Please consult the full column, which includes trends in state and local laws and take-aways for employers online: <https://burrconsultingllc.com/whats-new-in-hr/>

Calling All Wineries, Breweries, & Eateries



Are you interested in offering tastings or samples at one of our member-packed mixers? This is a great opportunity to introduce your products to members who can aid in product development, brand loyalty, and sales! Mixers take place on Wednesday evenings from 5 to 7 pm. **Take a look at the dates below and reach out with your availability.** We are looking forward to a great year of mixers!

June 9: Idlwilde Inn (our first live mixer!)

July 7: Summer Rendezvous at Watkins Glen State Park

August 4: Elks Lodge (Food provided by the Bucket)

September 1: International Motor Racing Research Center

October 6: Business Expo: Clute Park Community Center

November 3: Location TBD (Want to host? Let us know!)

December 2: Annual Meeting at Glenora Wine Cellars

If you would like to be involved in a mixer, please contact Abby Lane, Events Manager at (607) 535-4300 or Abby@WatkinsGlenChamber.com

CONGRATULATIONS!

Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce members got the checkered flag: a discount at WGI's downtown store!

20%

THE GLEN

Celebrate the 2021 Season at Watkins Glen International with a discount in the downtown store. Discount available in-store.

VALID THRU 10/31/21

Watkins Glen International Store
300 North Franklin Street, Watkins Glen

2021 Marketing Opportunities

SPONSORSHIP

Please contact Michael Hardy with questions and suggestions of how the opportunities below can help meet your organization's goals and objectives at Michael@WatkinsGlenChamber.com OR (607) 535-4300.



CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT

Thursday, June 17 12-5 pm at Toast Winery/Pompous Ass Wines



	<u>Presenting Sponsor</u> Availability: SOLD	<u>Gold Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$750	<u>Board Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$500	<u>Tournament Bag Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$350	<u>Yard Game Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$350
Sponsor Remarks	✓				
Logo placement	✓ <i>Logo placement on all marketing materials incl. boards.</i>	✓ <i>Logo placement on all marketing materials incl. one set of boards.</i>	✓ <i>Logo on all boards used at tournament.</i>	✓ <i>Provide logoed bags for all players.</i>	✓ <i>Exclusive logo placement on sign for yard games.</i>
Social Media	✓ <i>3 posts and Facebook Event</i>	✓ <i>2 posts, noted in Facebook Event</i>		✓ <i>Company listed on website and Facebook event</i>	✓ <i>Company listed on website and Facebook event</i>
Cornhole Boards (set of 2)	✓	✓	<i>Up this level to \$750 and take a board set with you!</i>		
Cornhole Teams (2 person teams)	✓ <i>3 teams</i>	✓ <i>2 teams</i>			
Hang banner at event	✓				
Tabling Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Event Koozies (two)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Add promo items to goodie bags	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Sponsorship deadline for the Cornhole Tournament will be Thursday, June 3 by 5 PM.
For more information, please reach out to Events & Membership Engagement Manager Abby Lane,
(607)-535-4300 or Abby@watkinsglenchamber.com

We are open to customizing or fine tuning these opportunities and others.

American Flag Protocol Honored

The Schuyler County Veterans encourage all of us to respect the American flag. According to the United States Flag Code, an American flag can be cleaned or mended when necessary. Washing your American flag can prolong its life. Many outdoor flags can be hand-washed using a mild laundry detergent. If your flag has seen better days and needs to be disposed of, the Veterans can help. They have a formalized process to dispose of tattered flags appropriately. For more information, contact Clayton Snow at bjws47@aol.com or Fred Hall at gfhall47@gmail.com or bring them to the Chamber during business hours.

The Schuyler County Veterans Association also holds a Tourism Assistance Program Award for the 2021 season. The funds will be used to expand public awareness for the Schuyler Veterans Memorial Park. Toward this goal, the veterans will continue to publish and distribute promotional materials, place advertisements in local publications, including the OdessaFile, and encourage community use of the Park.

“We hope that this additional promotion will encourage more veterans, their families, and visitors to enjoy the serenity and inspiring environment at the Park,” said Fred Hall. “The Veterans Memorial Park is a place to honor and remember veterans of all wars and conflicts and provides an excellent environment to relax and reflect.”

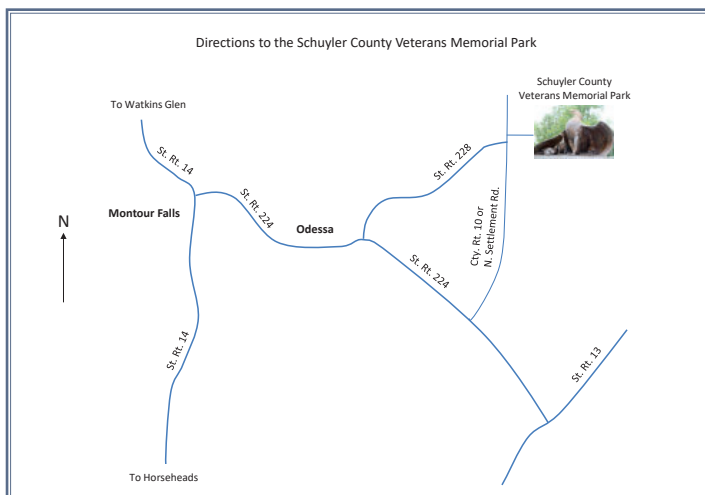
The Park is open to the public year-round. It is easily recognized on State Route 228 near the intersection of County Route 10, by its highly visible array of flags, two large bronze eagle monuments, and a tranquil wooded background.



Together with the American flag is the MIA/POW flag and flags representing each branch of the Armed Forces.

A picnic area furnished with a pavilion that seats up to 75 people with water and electric, a covered barbecue grill, and ample parking are available for all events. The Park provides an ideal setting for weddings, memorial services, high school reunions, family outings, and is a suitable rest stop for Catharine Trail hikers.

To purchase a flag or a commemorative brick, contact Fred Hall (gfhall47@gmail.com).



Bridge Opens New Hiking Option

On Friday, April 30, Montour Falls Mayor James Ryan presided over an Arbor Day tree planting and ribbon cutting in honor of the completion of the Catharine Valley Trail Bridge, a 7.6-mile loop that connects the villages of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen (see map below, right). He was joined in the ceremony by leaders from the State, County, Village, New York State Canal Corporation, New York State Office of Parks and Recreation, and representatives from BC Cate and Hanlon Elementary School. During the ceremony, the bridge was officially named King's Crossing, recognizing the leadership, persistence, and tenacity of former Mayor John King.

Comments were offered by all invited guests, including New York State Senator Tom O'Mara and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano. In addition, New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian Stratton and Fred Bonn,

Finger Lakes Regional Director, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, who provided \$30,000 and \$119,000 in grant money, respectively, shared perspective on the economic value and magic of trails, especially those that are connected to water.

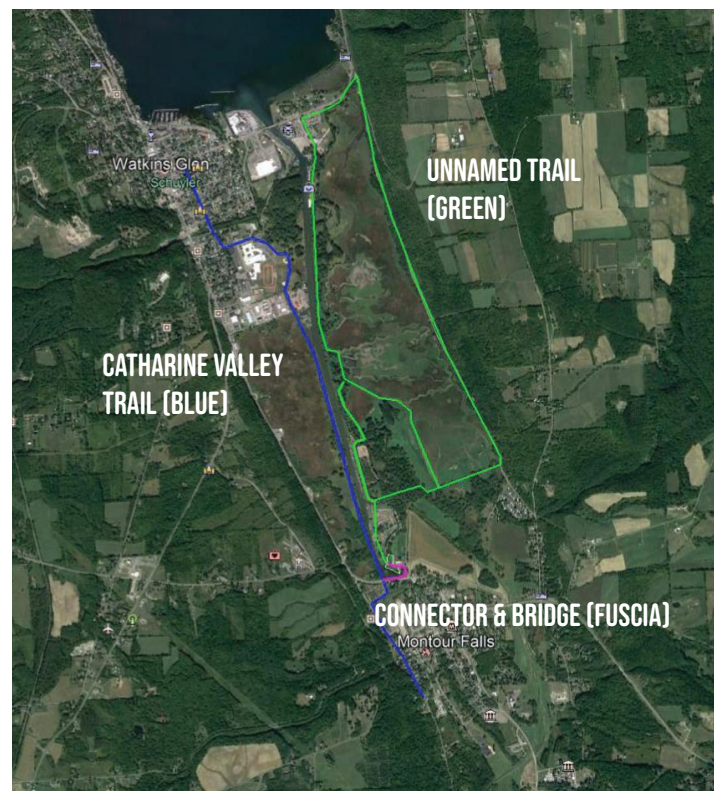
"This is an amazing opportunity for community members and visitors alike," said Stephanie Specchio, Director of Communications and Marketing at the Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce. "A love of nature is what brings – and often keeps – people in the Finger Lakes!"



Students from BC Cate and Hanlon, along with invited guests, helped with a ceremonial tree planting.



(Above) Brian Stratton, from the New York State Canal Corporation. (Below) Carl Blowers (left) and Fred Bonn, the Finger Lakes Regional Director, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation.



2021 Marketing Opportunities

SPONSORSHIP

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DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thursday, August 19th 3 to 5 pm at Castel Grisch Winery

	<u>Presenting Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$1,000	<u>Basket Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$500	<u>Basket #5 or #9 Sponsor</u> Availability: 2 Cost: \$300	<u>Photo Sponsor</u> Availability: 1 Cost: \$250	<u>Scorecard Sponsor</u> Availability: 9 Cost: \$200	<u>Basket Sign Sponsor</u> Availability: 18 Cost: \$125	<u>T-Shirt Sleeves</u> Availability: 2 Cost: \$350	<u>T-Shirt Listing</u> Availability: 11 Cost: \$125
LOGO PLACEMENT	✓ <i>Logo placement on all marketing materials.</i>	✓ <i>Logo on all baskets.</i>		✓ <i>Company name and logo on sign that is in all team photos.</i>	✓ <i>Logo on scorecards given to all players.</i>	✓ <i>Sign at basket with business name.</i>	✓ <i>Logo on right sleeve or left sleeve.</i>	✓ <i>Business Name or Logo on back of T-shirt.</i>
SOCIAL MEDIA	✓ <i>3 posts and Facebook event.</i>							
DISC GOLF TEAM	✓							
HANG BANNER AT EVENT	✓							
TABLING SPACE	✓		✓ <i>Set up a sponsor table at the basket.</i>					



Brushes Ready: Mural Painting Set to Start

The Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce is poised to select a local artist to paint a visitor-getting mural on the Chamber's Information Center at 214 N. Franklin Street. A request for proposals was issued last month that attracted the attention of regional artists. Interviews with three

finalists are currently underway. The Chamber expects to name the artist shortly and work will commence. When completed, the mural will be between 150- and 200-square feet. This project is funded with a grant from the ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes.

Moonlight Venture Becomes Mainstay

Most mushrooms grown today for human consumption develop in controlled, sterilized environments. Steve and Anne Sierigk, of Hawk Meadow Farms, know there's a different way.

"Struggles and challenges make us strong, and they make mushrooms tasty," said Steve. "Mushrooms grown in climate-controlled environments are able to get lazy. They don't have to work. On our farm, we biologically challenge the mushrooms. When they struggle, they become more robust and tastier."

Steve developed an interest in growing mushrooms in the 1980s, after reading articles in Mother Earth News that discussed the healing and anti-cancer properties of Shiitake mushrooms. The articles also explained that these mushrooms were – at the time – 100% imported. When Steve started growing Shiitake mushrooms, he was among the first farmers in the Northeast to try their hand at natural log, outdoor production of shiitake and other wood-digesting mushrooms like Lion's Mane.

Originally, farming was a hobby, an opportunity to explore his interests in forest ecology. By day, though, he was the owner/operator of Acorn Designs, a notecard/journal company. Eventually, his interest in mushroom farming gained traction and Americans were developing a stronger interest in the nutritional and medicinal benefits of mushrooms.

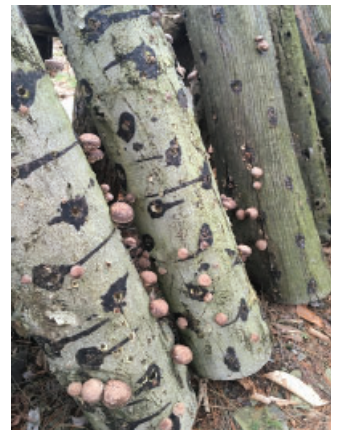
"Our curiosity is growing," said Steve who now focuses full-time on farming. "Visitors to our farm are always interested

in our operation, the techniques we use, the products we produce, and the potential benefits of shiitake mushrooms."

During on-site tours, visitors can check out mushrooms growing on hardwood logs, see inoculation in action, and explore the medicinal and culinary benefits of mushrooms. For example (from sciencekids.co.nz):

- Although not all mushrooms are safe to eat, some species are a good source of vitamin B and other essential minerals like copper and potassium. Bonus: they're low in fat, carbs, and sodium.
- Modern studies suggest mushrooms have antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties. Some may also reduce blood pressure, moderate blood sugar, reduce cholesterol, enhance the immune system, reduce stress, and help fight many types of cancer.
- Mushrooms are made up of around 90% water, although they are known as the "meat" of the vegetable world.

Want to know more? Check out Hawk Meadow Farm, near the southern edge of the Finger Lakes National Forest.



New Parks & Events Manager Sees Tourism on his To-Do List



Craig Bond, the new Parks and Events Manager for the Village of Watkins Glen, has his sights set on attracting newcomers to the village as well as meeting community needs. Newly in charge of the Village's

soon-to-open \$5 million complex at Clute Park, he is eager to host events and activities on the shores of Seneca. Craig and his team are also responsible for events and activities at the Community Center, Lafayette Park, and the pavilion at Clute Park.

Craig joined the Village on April 26, bringing with him more than two decades of experience with arts and cultural organizations in the Denver area. A co-founder of a theater company that currently welcomes more than 21,000 people a year, Craig has also worked with the Denver Ballet and the Colorado Symphony.

Through his career, he has encouraged equality, inclusion, and empathy, noting that the arts and cultural programming can be a force for positive change in our world.

A graduate of Watkins Glen Central School, Craig has family in the area and is excited to "come home." He and his family have had a home in Hector for the last several years and are looking forward to putting down roots.

CHAMBER EVENTS

VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED IN GREEN

MAY

Wednesday, 5/5 • After Hours Mixer • 5:30 to 6:30 pm
(Hosted by Finger Lakes Boating Museum on Zoom)

Friday, 5/7 • Brochure Exchange • 8:30 am to Noon
(First live event of 2021! Grist Iron Brewing Company)

Tuesday, 5/11 • Talking Tuesdays • 10:00 to 11:00 am

Tuesday, 5/18 • Member Simpleview Training • 10:00 am

Tuesday, 5/18 • Frontline Training • 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Wednesday, 5/19 • Frontline Training • 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Wednesday, 5/19 • B2B Meet Up • 2:00 to 3:00 pm

Tuesday, 5/25 • Coffee Connections • 8:30 to 9:30 am
(Live at Chamber offices!)

Tuesday, 5/25 • Talking Tuesdays • Noon to 1:00 pm

JUNE

Friday, 6/4 • Headshot Day • 8:30am to Noon
(Live event- details TBA)

Tuesday, 6/8 • Talking Tuesdays • 10:00 to 11:00 am

Wednesday, 6/9 • After Hours Mixer • 5:00 to 7:00 pm
(Live event- Idlwilde Inn- 50 ppl max)

Tuesday, 6/15 • Member Simpleview Training • 10:00 am

Wednesday, 6/16 • B2B Meet Up • 2:00 to 3:00 pm

Wed., 6/16 • Partnering with the Chamber & Media • 10:00 am

Thursday, 6/17 • Cornhole Tournament • Noon to 5:00 pm
(Toast Winery/Pompous Ass Wines)

Tuesday, 6/22 • Talking Tuesdays • Noon to 1:00 pm

Use the QR code here for more information about registering for events and trainings.

If you have questions please contact Abby Lane, Events & Membership Engagement Manager,
(607)-535-4300 or Abby@WatkinsGlenChamber.com



Snowflakes for Inspiration



We are excited to gift you a snowflake each month in our print newsletter. We hope they will inspire holiday-themed ideas throughout the year. Please save each of the snowflakes: post them to your refrigerator or on a bulletin board in your office! Even better, consider incorporating them into your decorating scheme in your business to remind guests, tourists, and clients that Watkins is open for the holidays, too.

Next holiday season, your Chamber will launch a fun, creative, and competitive art/decoration contest. We're already planning the prizes, including cash, bragging rights, and the joy of beautiful creations made locally to be shared with each other and the world.

Remember !

Save your Snowflakes!

Q&A: COVID-19 Vaccination & Workplaces

Q. Dr. Schamel, why is it important from a public health perspective for all eligible individuals to get vaccinated?

A. The only way out of this pandemic is for every person to get vaccinated as soon as possible. The longer this takes, the more the virus spreads and has the ability to mutate, increasing the risk that there will be variants in the future that are immune to vaccines, or are more deadly in certain populations, etc. Simply put, none of us are safe until we all are.

Q. Brooke, from an employer perspective, what do you see as the advantages to having workers vaccinated?

A. This answer will continually evolve. To start, the advantages will include employees' increased confidence in returning to work. This confidence pours itself into increased engagement, boosted

team morale, and overall positive productivity. Work is the human experience for contribution and purpose. Employees want to feel secure in their environments, and health and safety efforts are stepping stones to achieve this. The long-term advantages include increased employee attendance, reduction of spontaneous PTO, which allows for planned rest and rejuvenation, reduction of health care claims, and ultimately a team that can experience work as designed with interaction, comradery, and contact.

Q. Have you observed any effective strategies, Brooke, in your industry that employers are using to encourage vaccination?

A. New York State has paved the way with paid leave for employees to be vaccinated. An employer



Corning Credit Union Presents Cornhole Tourney



The Chamber of Commerce is pleased to host the first annual Cornhole Tournament, presented by the Corning Credit Union. Bags will fly on June 17, from noon to 5! Registration for two-person teams (\$70/team) is now open and online: <https://tinyurl.com/j6kwdhjb>. Registration includes entry fees, access to oversized lawn games, chicken barbecue lunch, including dessert, Chamber momentos, and 2 entries into the raffle. Cash bar available. The double-elimination competition will be held rain or shine and is a great opportunity to network with fellow Chamber members and enjoy the fresh air and camaraderie. *All COVID health and safety requirements will be followed.*

who provides education and access without pressure or any type of retaliation will go farthest in having a vaccinated workforce. This holds true with encouraging your staff to vote, give blood, join a non-profit board. Give your team everything they need to make their own confident decisions, and they will!

Q. Dr. Schamel, what do you want the community to know about the vaccines currently available?

A. The vaccines we have are safe and carry significantly less risk than contracting the COVID-19 virus. The science used to develop them is not new; it has been established for more than a decade, so I trust the safety and efficacy!