



THE CHAMBER

The Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce

ANNUAL REPORT



2023/2024

Mission statement:

“To represent local employers in supporting vibrant, sustainable communities in Columbia and Montour counties.”

Message from the President

Dear Members,

2023 was a year marked by rapid growth and exciting change at the Columbia Montour Chamber, where, coupled with a move to our new location at The Hub at Mulberry Mill, changes to our team prompted a listening tour among you, our members, and stakeholders. Your feedback and engagement helped us to recommit to our promises on the Chamber's return on investment, and while our focus areas remain the same, we know that you've likely felt the new and palpable energy accompanying them. That energy is evidenced by a 20% increase in engagement at Chamber events and programming, a higher-than-ever membership retention rate (96%), and an 11% growth in membership year over year. We've worked diligently to steward your membership investment, and are pleased to report the strong financial position of your Chamber. Thanks to your investment, we're sure that even greater progress is in store for 2024, and we're anxious to continue the work to represent you in supporting vibrant, sustainable communities in Columbia and Montour Counties.



Sincerely,

Chris Berleth, President
Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce

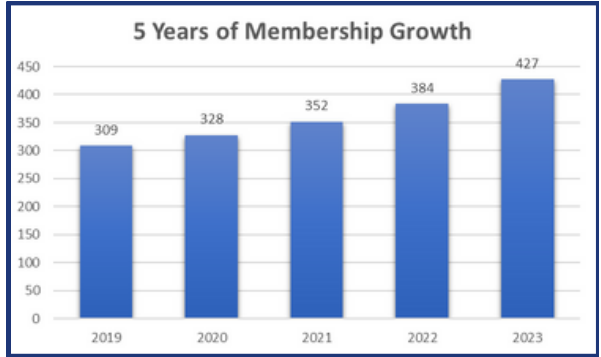
Five Focus Areas of Member Value



Membership

Highlights

- 42 new members April - Dec. 2023, 11% membership growth
- 96% year over year retention
- Members took advantage of more benefits than ever, engaging with advertising, marketing, events, and more
- The Chamber served as a curator of business news for the region, generating 112 pages of curated member news content.



Financial Information

Balance Sheet

Assets	12/31/22	12/31/23*
Cash & Equivalents	\$378,218	\$382,460
Loan Receivables	\$51,466	\$61,733
Fixed Assets	\$198,775	\$193,136
Other Current Assets	\$3,000	\$3,000
Total Assets	\$631,459	\$640,329

Chamber Revenue



- Publications and Advertising 14%
- Events & Programs 19%
- Membership Dues 57%
- Administrative Services 8%
- Energy Program & Miscellaneous 2%

Liabilities & Equity	12/31/22	12/31/23*
Current Liabilities	\$5,889	\$2,790
Long-Term Liabilities	\$45,286	\$45,286
Equity	\$580,285	\$592,254
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$631,460	\$640,330

*December is the end of the third quarter of the Chamber's fiscal year.

+Reflects payments for Chamber's new office space. Closing projected June 2024.

2023-2024 Program Highlights



ADVOCACY

- Wrote letters of support for broadband expansion grants through the Pennsylvania Broadband Redevelopment Authority, and joined the SEDA-COG Broadband Task Force
- Promoted permitting reform, legal immigration reform
- Reaffirmed relationships with I-80 tolling opposition leaders
- Discussed local business issues with Senator Lynda Culver and Representatives Leadbeter and Stender, respectively
- Joined a coalition of 55 Chambers in support of legislative action on childcare
- Engaged members regarding minimum proposed wage increase/tipped wages, mandatory nurse staffing ratios, and a de facto moratorium on new gas development
- Successfully advocated for the continuation of tele-file in PA
- Hosted three County Commissioner Candidate Forums in Montour (general election) and Columbia Counties, and legislative breakfast featuring Senator Culver
- Represented the Foundation and the Chamber at Local Advisory Committees, Occupational Advisory Committees, and Perkins Committees for area school districts
- Supported continuation of StopHopper micro-transit program
- Facilitated connections between members and local, state, and federal officials
- Continued to promote the Chamber's Code of Conduct among local municipalities



BENEFITS PROGRAM

- Partnered with Geisinger to offer free "Rise & Thrive" Wellness workshops, providing expert professional, personal, and business health recommendations
- Fully revised 2024 membership tiers with improved benefits
- The Chamber's Business Insurance offered members a dividend
- Assisted members with access to the PA Council on the Arts CEAP Grants for creators and makers
- Continued to emphasize Chamber's Low-Interest Loan Program for members, loaning \$10,000 to small businesses in 2023.
- Reaffirmed partnership with ChamberChoice programs, including electricity, natural gas, and liquid fuels brokering, business insurance, and employee benefits
- Developed "Membership Mornings", a new networking membership orientation experience
- Developed monthly dashboard, to showcase current Chamber work and to improve transparency



BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

- Hosted 33 events with 1,800 registrations (not including committees), a 20 % increase.
- 2,829 Facebook followers, (+100 since May 2023)
- 21% increase in web traffic to www.columbiamountourchamber.com year over year.
- Industry-leading 37% E-Biz newsletter open rate, with a 9 % click-through rate. (Industry standard is 20 % open, 2.5 % click-through rate.)
- Published and distributed bi-monthly ChamberPack and annual *Membership Directory*
- Redesigned and expanded quarterly *Business Matters*
- Created new information guides, including *Quality Living in Columbia and Montour Counties* in partnership with the Columbia Montour Visitor's Bureau, a new FAQ for the Low-Interest Loan Program, and the Management & Leadership certificate program



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

- More than eighty people heard from inspiring women and discussed leadership concepts while making connections at Leadercast: Amplify and their follow-up events
- Sixty employees completed the Management & Leadership Certificate program with Commonwealth University - Bloomsburg.
- The Chamber and its Foundation partnered to grow youth and adult workforce programs, including Talent Pipeline Management, Leadership Central Penn, CareerReady Central PA, For the Cause's Academy of Young Entrepreneurs, Scouting's Career Exploring program, and more,



STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

- Supported the efforts of Berwick: The Next Step, Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc., and Danville Business Alliance to enhance our downtowns
- Partnering with Community Strategies Group, the Susquehanna Valley United Way, and Columbia County Housing & Redevelopment Authority, the Chamber relocated to The Hub at Mulberry Mill, a collaborative office and community building.
- Grew Montour County Task Force by 80%
- Participated in Montour Preserve Key Stakeholders Meeting
- Supported Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc. via administrative and marketing support
- Supported youth programs and local school districts through the Foundation of the Columbia Montour Chamber
- Engaged with BIDA ThinkTank and Employer Roundtable groups to promote the attraction of workers to the region, and support of Berwick Area employers

Connect with Your Chamber

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Officers

CHAIR

Chris Stamatedes, *PPL Electric Utilities*

VICE-CHAIR

Bob Stoudt, *Montour Area Rec. Commission (MARC)*

TREASURER

Dr. M. Holly Morrison, *Retired*

PRESIDENT

Chris Berleth, *Columbia Montour Chamber*

DIRECTORS

Jeff Cerminaro, *Walker's Jewelers*

Renee Gerringer, *Ronald McDonald House of Danville*

Chris Hill, *Pine Barn Inn*

Jason Huff, *Autoneum*

Jon Littlewood, *First Keystone Community Bank*

Adrienne Mael, *Susquehanna Valley United Way*

Mike Morgan, *Geisinger*

Josh Nespoli, *Community Strategies Group*

Travis Petty, *Law Offices of Grieco & Petty*

Bruce Schlichter, *Kawneer*

Deb Shade, *Elmdale Inn Bed & Breakfast*

Dr. Todd Shawver, *Commonwealth University*

Aaron Stagliano, *McKonly & Asbury*

Tim Wagner, *Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc.*

Jeff Whitenight, *Journey Bank*

STAFF

Chris Berleth, President & Acting Foundation Dir.

Taryn Crayton, Director of Member Engagement

Brenda Flanagan, Administrative Assistant

Deb Sokol, Finance Assistant

Katlyn Brett, Winter Intern

Zack Markowitz, Spring Intern

Chamber Resources

- E-Biz Weekly
- ChamberPack (Bi-monthly)
- *Business Matters* (Quarterly)
- *2023-2024 Annual Chamber Directory*
- *2023-2024 Annual Report*
- *Quality Living in Columbia & Montour Counties*



www.columbiamontourchamber.com

We Moved!

Find the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce, the Foundation of the Columbia Montour Chamber, and Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc. at our new address:

160 W. 6th Street, Suite 103
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
(570) 784-2522

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SUSTAINABILITY



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Our services include:

- A no obligation electric and gas bill review
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- Competitive quotes from reputable suppliers
- Global strength of a fortune 100 company

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