

Commentary

A Publication of the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce

Volume 7, Issue 8 September 2008

30th Annual Warren County Business Awards

Join us in recognizing the "best in the county"

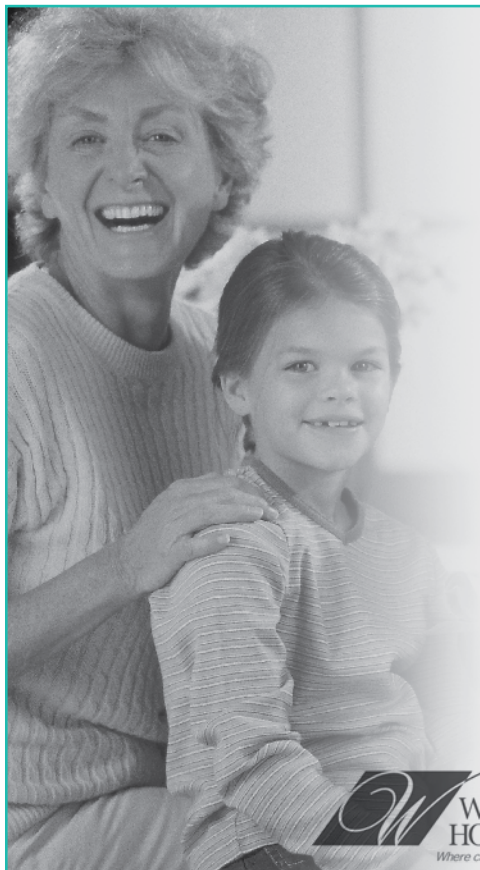
October 16, 2008 6 p.m.
Panther Valley Golf and Country Club
Forest Drive, Allamuchy
\$50 per person

Contact the Chamber at 908-835-9200
for reservations and information



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5th Annual SENIOR EXPO GETTING CONNECTED

LIFESTYLE EXPO FOR THE ACTIVE ADULT

Saturday, October 25th, 2008
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Warren County Vocational Technical School
1500 Route 57, Washington

Sponsorships and Exhibitor Space Available
*Reach hundreds of Warren County Seniors and
Caregivers with your product or service.*
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STATE OF THE STATE

September 24, 2008
11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Hawk Pointe Golf
and Country Club
294 State Rt. 31 S., Washington

Hear what Assemblywoman
Marcia Karrow and
Assemblyman Michael Doherty
have to say about the "state" of
New Jersey and how it affects
your business.

Topics include:

Economic Development
Education
The Future of New Jersey Business

Lunch included
Members: \$25.00
Non-Members: \$35.00

Contact the Chamber office at
908-835-9200 for information
or registration.

Letter from the President



Surprise, Excitement, and Encouragement would be the words I would have to say relate to the month of August for the Chamber. So I wanted to just take a moment to share with you some of the things that have occurred and thank a few people.

AM BIZ, held the first Friday of the month at Warren County Community College, had almost 30 business professionals in attendance. This group continues to build business relationships and provide referrals to each other. New members are utilizing this monthly event to establish themselves in Warren County. A special thank you goes out to the original committee

for your continued assistance in keeping this program alive. Each month, it is great to hear the thank yous and testimonials of how many of you are building customers through the relationships you are building at AM BIZ. September is a great time to start building relationships with others and AM BIZ is a great free way to start that process.

After months of planning and design, the first Masterminds Group was launched. The first meeting left me wanting more and I was just the facilitator. We are now looking to launch the next group in October. Masterminds is a concept of bringing three to six individuals together regularly to discuss goals/issues and to encourage, offer support and insight on issues other group members are working on. The premise is creating a larger thought mechanism to assist in growth and understanding. A special thank you goes out to Jewels Quelly, owner of Angel Food Catering, who gave me the idea to move forward and kick off this program.

Kevin Guyette took the reigns of chairing the Past President/Chairman Luncheons. It was my pleasure to meet with and discuss what the Chamber has accomplished and some of the goals ahead with these leaders of the business community. The Chamber is looking forward to activating many more of our past leaders to assist us with some of our future endeavors and to provide some guidance.

There are so many other individuals that I would like to thank for participating, listening and taking time out of their schedule to utilize the Chamber to assist and help meet the challenges that their businesses face. The Chamber cannot express how much we want to assist your business in its growth and prosperity. Make us your first call when it comes to business and help us, help you.

Make a commitment today that you are going to use your membership to strengthen your business. Call to set up an appointment or attend a Maximize Your Membership Orientation to see all the possibilities.

Focused on the Future of Warren County Businesses,

Robert L. Goltz, I.O.M.

President/CEO

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www.warrencountychamber.org

Robert L. Goltz, Publisher
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Tips on Minimizing Wrongful Discharge Claims

By: Howard A. Vex, Esq.
 Courter, Kobert & Cohen, P.C.

Far too often, businesses are so fearful of potential lawsuits that they allow themselves to be held hostage by problem employees, despite the substantial costs of continued poor performance. On the other side of the coin, businesses will fire an employee, with virtually no analysis of the underlying facts or risks involved, because the employee was “at-will.” Unfortunately, the end result of a poorly orchestrated discharge will often be unwanted, expensive and distracting litigation. Neither of these extremes is an appropriate or economical way to conduct business. Listed below are some tips for minimizing wrongful discharge claims:

1. Investigate and Confirm the Basis for the Discharge.

- General accusations, such as “bad attitude” or “poor performance,” without specifics, are not enough.
- Before taking action, have the decision-maker fully explain the basis and justification for the discharge (preferably in writing).
- Review all relevant documents and interview and obtain statements from all potentially relevant first-hand witnesses, not just those presented by the decision-maker.
- If the decision-maker, the witnesses and the evidence do not provide strong and objective support for the termination, proceed at your own risk!
- Even if the termination is justified, you should further investigate whether the employee has engaged in any protected activity, such as the filing of a discrimination complaint or whistle blowing. Retaliation claims are the fastest growing area of my law practice. Also, determine whether other employees have brought similar complaints against anyone involved in the discharge process.

2. Be Consistent and Fair

- Treat employees consistently and, where possible, rely upon corrective, rather than punitive, measures.

- Consider whether the problems may arise from a disability, family or medical leave needs, or some other underlying issue that could reasonably be addressed.
- Remember that the communication of problems and concerns to employees as they arise will help avoid most misunderstandings when more severe discipline or discharge becomes necessary.

3. Never Underestimate the Importance of Evaluations

- Evaluations are not the time to spare an employee’s feelings.
- Be sure to identify all problems to avoid an employee claim that you manufactured the problem, after-the-fact, to falsely justify the discharge.
- Listen to the employee’s concerns and explain any differences of opinion.
- Provide a solution to the problem or establish a clear improvement plan, with a timeline of expectations. Be sure to follow up! Employees often claim that they thought the problem was resolved, based upon a lack of further feedback.
- Remember that an employer’s assertions of long term “poor performance” or “poor attitude” will almost always wilt in the face of a recent glowing evaluation that glossed over these or other ongoing problems.

4. Keep Your Company Policies and Employee Handbook Updated and Follow Those Policies Consistently

- Be sure to follow your company’s policies in a consistent manner. Inconsistency will provide unwanted support for any subsequent employee claims of unequal treatment or retaliation.
- At least one court has concluded that an employer’s failure to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment and providing for a clear complaint procedure was tantamount to negligence and, thus, employer liability, even where the employer was never informed of the harassment.

5. Document Problems as They Occur

- Write-ups and written warnings should be utilized to address all significant problems as they occur and should be maintained in the employee’s file. Never shortcut this step!
- Where the misconduct was significant, interview all relevant first-hand witnesses and obtain written and signed statements before memories fade. Over time, witnesses will often change or soften their stories, unless bound to a written statement.
- Always get the employee’s side of the story!

6. Conduct the Termination in a Professional Manner

- Do not confront, criticize or belittle the employee in the presence of co-workers, before, during or after the termination. Post-termination statements by management can be used at trial to help establish an improper or retaliatory motive
- At least two members of management should participate in the termination process.
- Do not allow the termination to become personal, irrespective the employee’s reaction.
- Always give the real reason for the termination! You will lose credibility if you are forced to admit on the witness stand that you “lied” to the employee about the real reason for the discharge.
- Give the employee an opportunity to tell his or her side of the story and allow some venting. Remember, you need not respond.
- Where possible, always let the employee exit with dignity.

7. Do Not Hesitate to Ask for Help

- If unsure of any aspect of the termination process, do not hesitate to conduct further investigation or to involve the appropriate human resource or legal professional.

AM BIZ



Warren
County Community College

September 5, 2008 7:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Warren County Community College
475 Route 57 West, Washington

AM BIZ is a year-round power networking program. This is an excellent opportunity for attendees to increase awareness of their businesses in a unique, structured and timely format. Each attendee is given a specific, concise amount of time to provide a thumbnail sketch of his or her company and plug any new features, specials or upcoming events.

Maximize Your Membership

September 3, 2008 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce
74 S. Main Street, Phillipsburg

September 4, 2008 9 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce
10 Brass Castle Road, Washington

Come and see what Chamber membership has to offer. This one-hour orientation covers the benefits, programs and advertising opportunities to assist your business. Make the most out of your membership by taking advantage of this opportunity to get the maximum exposure for your business. To register, contact the Chamber at 908-835-9200 or online at info@warrencountychamber.org.

Women in Business Breakfast

September 12, 2008 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Architects Golf Club • 700 Strykers Road, Phillipsburg
Speaker: Kathy Miller
Members: \$30 Non-members: \$40

Permission to Thrive: In order to be our best, we have to be willing to stand out, let our light shine and allow others to bask in our greatness. But in our society we are trained to fit in, not make waves and avoid drawing attention to ourselves. How does this affect our ability to succeed? In this interactive presentation we will discuss the common ways women disavow their gifts and disclaim their achievements and explore possibilities for claiming and reclaiming the joy, sense of accomplishment and celebration we so richly deserve. Come prepared to go beyond your comfort zone and support others in doing the same. Speaker Kathy Miller is co-founder of Wellness Possibilities, a NJ based company that promotes wellness resources in the community and she also is president of A Good Steward, a prosperity coaching company.

Secrets of Success

September 24, 2008 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Hawk Pointe Golf and Country Club
294 State Rt. 31 S., Washington, NJ 07882
Speakers: Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow
Assemblyman Michael Doherty
Members: \$25.00 Non-Members: \$35.00

The budget has been passed and the legislature has been in session. Come and hear from Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow and Assemblyman Michael Doherty on the state of economic development, education and the future of business in New Jersey. This luncheon is an excellent opportunity for the business community to hear, first hand, from our public policy leaders representing Warren County on the important issues of the day.

New Masterminds Sought

The Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce inaugural Masterminds Group is in full swing and plans now are underway for the formation of second group. The program is targeted at members interested in pooling their talents, ideas and personal and professional experiences to achieve shared growth and success.

The theory behind Masterminds is to bring together the "synergy, energy and commitment" of a group of people with similar business or personal interests, objective and goals. Participants benefit from the challenges, input, honest feedback and support that they give and get back from their peers.

"We are so pleased with the success of the first group, that we are anxious to bring others on board," said Robert Goltz, President & CEO of the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce. "There is no better way to combat these tough economic times than by sharing successful business strategies."

For more information, contact the Chamber office at (908) 835-9200.

Step Up to the Podium:

The Chamber is Looking for Business Speakers

The Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce has established a Speakers Bureau in order to provide a forum for sharing expertise and exchanging ideas among the business communities of Warren County.

Representatives of companies that are Chamber members in good standing are invited to participate at the discretion of the Chamber. A speaker must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of his or her business-related topic and is prohibited from using the forum as a promotional or sales opportunity.

Information and contact numbers for approved speakers will be listed on the Chamber website for access by the Warren County community for civic, educational, organizational and professional engagements.

For information or an application for the Speakers Bureau, contact the Chamber office at 908-835-9200 or send an email to info@warrencountychamber.org.

Memberships Benefits

Affinity Programs That Help You Save!

Membership in the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce affords your business special cost-saving opportunities. Following are just two of the various affinity programs that are available to you. Visit the Chamber website at www.warrencounty-chamber.org for more information.

ChamberClicks is a full service, online marketing vehicle that enables businesses to promote their products and services 24 hours a day to targeted potential customers from more than 30 top search engines. The cost is reasonable - starting as low as \$100 per month - and the results are guaranteed. ChamberClicks manages the entire lifecycle of order management, ad creation (developed individually for each business), deployment and optimization of a small business online marketing campaign.

Glacial Energy offers a savings of up to 20% on your electricity costs. The company delivers reliable energy, high quality service and economical products to business customers and helps businesses both new and established save money on energy costs and improve efficiency. By purchasing power at the best prices and terms, Glacial Energy can offer businesses and non-profits the most flexible contracts.

Point Your Business in the Right Direction

Advertise on the New Warren County Wall Map

Promotional opportunities are available on the official updated Warren County Wall Map. The 26"W x 39"L full color laminated poster published every two years by the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce features a street map of Warren County along with an index. The perimeter of the map affords space for various size advertisements.

This is a very popular item among the general public as well as with real estate agencies," said Robert Goltz, President and CEO of the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce. "It is a great advertising vehicle since it is referenced often and is durable and long-lasting."

Ad sizes range from a slightly modified business card format to a large 8" x 9" design. The map also will be available on the chamber website, www.warrencounty-chamber.org, with options available for links to ads and advertisers' websites.

Anyone interested in advertising on the County Map can contact the Chamber office at 908-835-9200 to set up an appointment with a sales representative. Space is limited. The deadline for advertising is September 26, 2006.

Expertise Sought for Business Seminar Series

Do you have a technique, solution or secret for success that you can share with the business community? The Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce is seeking dynamic speakers with expertise in marketing, networking, hospitality, sales, business start-up and planning and financial planning and management for its series of business seminars and workshops.

"Everyone is struggling in this economy and the need to share information is more critical than ever," said Robert Goltz, President and CEO of the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce. " This seminar series is a great resource for our business owners as well as an optimal promotional and networking opportunity for speakers."

Seminars are open to Chamber members and non-members and are promoted through the Chamber newsletter, brochures and local media.

Anyone interested in hosting a seminar or workshop must send a resume and brief paragraph describing the course offerings by mail to the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce, 10 Brass Castle Road, Washington NJ 07882, by fax to 908-835-9296 or by email to info@warrencounty-chamber.org.

INDUSTRIAL SPACE FOR RENT

200 VALENTINE ST. HACKETTSTOWN

6200 sq. ft., includes office space, 1 tailboard door, 1 drive-in-door, sprinklers, gas, 200 amp-3phase 480 volt, water & sewer.

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Contact: Dave Schwartz 908-459-9211

Watercress Club LLC, Box 139, Hope, NJ 07844

Member Spotlight

SASCO Finds a Home and Fills a Gap in Washington Borough

Washington is welcoming an old friend to Warren County and a new addition to its rejuvenated business district. SASCO Insurance Services, a Hackettstown staple for 25 years, has opened an office on Main Street in the new Midtown Plaza.

With a initial staff of four, under the direction of 11-year SASCO veteran, Katie Beyrer, the company will be offering the same wide range of insurance options, convenient service and customer attention that it has provided in its flagship Hackettstown office.



“We saw this as an opportunity since there was no other selective insurance agency in the community,” said James Travis, co-founder of SASCO along with Peter Kromer and Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce board member Susan Seger. “Local insurance is back.”

SASCO offers commercial and personal coverage plans from a variety of major insurance providers, including Travelers, Harleysville and FMI. Its staff of licensed professional agents assists clients with designing customized plans and with the claims and underwriting processes.

“Our philosophy is professionalism, courtesy and service,” Travis commented. “We also provide one-stop shopping for all types of insurance.”

Travis said that he views the new location as an investment of time and money that can draw more people into Washington Borough and potentially benefit other area businesses.

Beyrer and her staff will be continuing the SASCO tradition of participation in business, community and educational organizations and initiatives.

“I am looking forward to making this office successful and getting to know the Washington community and understanding its needs,” Beyrer said.

New Members

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage - Clinton

186 Center St., Suite 150 • Clinton, NJ 08809
Phone: (908) 735-8080 • Fax: (908) 730-6449
E-mail: alice.oldford@cbmoves.com
Web: www.cbmoves.com
Contact: Alice Oldford
Realtors

Open MRI Of Phillipsburg

430 Memorial Parkway, Ste 2
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
Phone: (908) 213-3600 • Fax: (908) 213-3601
Web: www.openmriofphillipsburg.com
Contact: Lori Caffery
Health Care-Health Care Facilities

Spacesaver Systems of NJ

400 Heckman St. • Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
Phone: (908) 454-8990 • Fax: (908) 454-2454
E-mail: tim@spacesavorsystems.com
Web: www.spacesaversystems.com
Contact: Timothy M. Powers
Business Furniture/Storage Solutions

Stepping Stone School

45 County Rd. 519 • Bloomsbury, NJ 08804
Phone: (908) 995-1999 • Fax: (908) 995-1994
E-mail: bmanager@ptd.net
Web: www.sstoneschool.com
Contact: Gail Woicekowski
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Members in the News

Women's Center Displays Works of Local Sculptor

The Northwest New Jersey Regional Women's Center at Centenary College will be hosting a reception for Evelyn Wilson Sculptures on Friday, September 26, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Centenary's Brotherton Hall. The artist, Evelyn Wilson (1915-2006), was a Blairstown resident. The center recently received the gift of five sculptures from the Ben & Evelyn Wilson Foundation. Wilson's Sculptures also are on display at Rutgers University, Paterson University, Newark Museum, The Horace Mann School, and numerous other locations. For more information, call The Women's Center at Centenary College at 908-852-9365.

NORWESCAP is a nonprofit community action agency that creates opportunities for more than 30,000 low-income people in northwest New Jersey by providing a large portfolio of self-sufficiency and emergency services. The Arc, Warren County Chapter provides support and service to more than 1,100 county-area residents whose lives have been touched by developmental disabilities.

For tickets and sponsor information, please contact Patrick Grogan at NORWESCAP at 908-454-7000 ext.110 or Kevin Guyette at The Arc at 908-689-7525 ext.212. Information may also be obtained by visiting www.norwescap.org and www.arcwarren.org

WCCC Recognized as Successful Training Provider

The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of Morris, Sussex and Warren has cited Warren County Community College's Continuing Education program as the single largest provider of training at colleges throughout the region. WIB training is anchored by

WCCC's Continuing Education program under the direction of Eve Azar.

The report states that "WCCC has embraced its role of providing labor market-response training and employment placement to area job seekers and businesses, excelling at both tasks," and adds that "WCCC is noted for its applicant assessment procedures, soft skills training and intensive trainee job placement."

The recently released report focused on the period July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007. Azar has indicated that WCCC's program has shown significantly higher numbers in the past year, adding that in 2007 the college was able to place 86 percent of its trainees into the workforce.

"We have tried very hard to determine the needs of our community and to act upon those needs," said Azar. "We are also very fortunate in that the business community is very responsive to what we do and is very supportive."

Individuals interested in learning more about the WIB training program should contact Continuing Education at WCCC, 908-689-7613. Many individuals could be eligible for grants to help offset the costs of the program.

Music Fest to Benefit Area Families

Tickets are now on sale for a Family Music Fest to be held Sunday, September 14 from noon to 6 p.m. at Alba Vineyard, Rt.627, Finesville. Sponsored by the Warren County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the day-long event will feature music by renowned local bands, including Cairo and Jambone and individual musicians as well as food and craft vendors, and activities for children. Alba Vineyard will also conduct wine tastings throughout the day.

The Family Music Fest is designed to raise both public awareness and funds for NORWESCAP and The Arc of Warren County. A variety of sponsorship packages provide sponsors a high level of visibility to the 1,000-plus people expected that day.

Tickets are available pre-event at \$15 per person and \$20 at the gate, and children are admitted free of charge. No pets are permitted, but festival-goers are welcome to bring picnic baskets.

Women's Center Co-Sponsors Cancer Research Walk

The Northwest New Jersey Regional Women's Center and Hackettstown Regional Medical Center will be co-sponsoring the 14th Annual 5K Walk for Breast Cancer Research, Saturday, October 4, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at Centenary College. All proceeds from the walk will be donated to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, North Jersey Affiliate, which supports breast cancer research, education, screening, and treatment.

There are three options available to participants: 1) obtain a pledge sheet and be sponsored: 2) make a donation of any amount to support breast cancer: 3) walk to show support.

To obtain a pledge sheet and to get further information about the route and the plans for the event please call (908) 852-9365. Dogs, bikes, baby carriages: all welcome! The Walk will be held rain or shine.

9th Annual Golf Thing

Despite the soggy weather, the 9th Annual Golf Thing went off without a hitch at Minebrook Golf Club in Hackettstown thanks to all of the participants, volunteers and sponsors that contributed to the day's success and fun.





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WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.WARRENCOUNTYCHAMBER.ORG

Focused on the Future of Warren County Businesses

SEPTEMBER 2008 Schedule of Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 ★	4 ★	5 ★	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 ★	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 ★	25	26	27
28	29	30				

- 9/3/2008
4:00 p.m. **Maximize your Membership**
Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Phillipsburg
- 9/4/2008
9:00 a.m. **Maximize your Membership**
Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Washington
- 9/5/2008
7:15 a.m. **AM BIZ**
Warren County Community College, Washington
- 9/12/2008
7:30 a.m. **Women in Business**
Architects Golf Club, Phillipsburg
- 9/24/2008
11:45 a.m. **Secrets of Success**
State of the State Address
Hawk Pointe Golf & Country Club, Washington