



35th Annual Ellwood City Arts, Crafts, Foods & Entertainment Festival Combines Old Favorites With New Features



Jimmy Ross & the Jaggerz will perform on the main stage on Sunday, July 5th from 8:00 to 9:30 pm

For years, Pete Greco was the Chairman of the Festival Committee, but he stepped down earlier this year, expressing his hope that younger committee members with fresh ideas would continue to carry the torch. Tragically, the Festival Committee also lost long-time supporter and newly elected Chairman Darryl Boots, who passed away earlier this year. Becky Guisler, former Co-Chairman, is now serving in the capacity of Chairman along with a strong committee that has helped her keep things running smoothly. This year's committee includes Raylene Boots, Suzanne Bleakney, Beth Kingston, Mike Sinclair, Sam Pawlowski, Cheryl Valvano, Betti Baney DeLoia, John DeLoia, Lori Hilliard, Paul Dici and Allyson Sprague. They are working to ensure that this year's will not only bring back many crafters, artisans and entertainers from prior years, but introduce visitors to plenty of fresh talent.

Old Favorites Returning For Another Run

For visitors who are all about the food, Holy Redeemer will once again be selling shells with meatballs and other Italian favorites and area churches will offer everything from home baked pies to steak sandwiches. Gyros, lemon shakes and other traditional fair foods will draw crowds at lunch and dinner.

New this year will be more ethnic foods and delicious barbeques. The Juried Art Show will once again be featured in Trefoil Lodge and the Children's Area will include hands-on projects for the kids as well as age appropriate crafts and entertainment.

Ellwood City has been hosting a festival over the July 4th weekend for over three decades. It has become such a staple of the summer that residents refer to it simply as "The Festival." This year marks a series of changes for the festival while keeping all of the favorite elements that successfully draw thousands into Ewing Park during the three days of festivities. This year the Festival will run from Friday, July 3rd through Sunday, July 5th and be open daily from 11:00 am to 10:00 pm, with fireworks at 10:00 on Sunday night as a grand finale.

Changing of the Guard

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2015 Festival Combines Old & New
- Ellwood City Crop Walk 2015
- Grow Your Small Business in a Slow Economy
- PA Chamber Testifies in Support of Public Pension Reform
- Chamber Members Help Very Special Dog Get Back on His Feet
- Why Join the Chamber of Commerce?
- 10th Anniversary of Chef, Wine & Ale
- House Passes Thomas Bill to Modernize Second Stage Business Loan Program
- The Chamber has Moved!

Continued on page 2

The annual 10K Run sponsored by the Ellwood City Ledger will once again wind its way through Ewing Park and the streets of Ellwood City with runners crossing the finish line in front of the Ewing Park Memorial Swimming Pool on Saturday. This year's fireworks will be presented by Zambelli Fireworks.

New Elements Will Add Excitement

Returning for only the second time will be the Little Miss Firecracker Pageant, featuring nine girls aged four to seven years old who will compete to win the title. The children will be judged on their stage presence, patriotic costume and their answers to three questions. Organizer Becky Guisler explains, "The Patriotic Pageant is not a beauty pageant. The pageant is designed to celebrate our country and community friendships. Each contestant was required to obtain a \$25 entry fee from a business sponsor. Each participating business will be recognized throughout the pageant. "The idea of a business sponsor is to bring our community and businesses together in yet another way. We're hoping this year's pageant will once again delight the families and friends of our contestants."

Also new to the Festival will be Professor Bubblemaker's Eclectic Entertainments and Preposterous Pastimes all day on Friday, July 3rd. The Professor will delight children and adults alike with his educational entertainment that brings back old-fashioned science, a bit of showmanship and plenty of surprises, including soap bubble demonstrations and a journey back in time to the days of flea circuses and medicine shows.

Film maker Jarod Show, a former Ellwood City resident, will also be at the Festival to sell DVDs of his recent feature-length movie, "Bigfoot: The Movie," which was filmed and set in Ellwood City.

Admission to the Ellwood City Arts, Crafts, Foods & Entertainment Festival is free. The hours are 11:00 am to 10:00 pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 3rd—5th. There will be fireworks at 10:00 pm on Sunday night at Helling Stadium. Parking is just \$5 per car or \$10 for a 3-day pass. There will also be shuttle service available from locations throughout Ellwood City. For more information about this year's festival, visit www.ellwood-city-festival.net. There will be approximately 150 craft vendors and 30 food booths at this year's Arts, Crafts, Food & Entertainment Festival.



Several Area Churches and the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce have already committed to help end hunger! Go to [Ellwood City Crop Walk](#) to sign up your church or business today!

Did you know that CROP stands for Christian-Rural-Overseas-Program?

The name comes from the 1940s', when farmers in the mid-west were encouraged to send their surplus crops overseas to Europe and Asia following WWII. Today the program has out-grown its name, but retains its basic roots of providing food for hungry people both locally and around the world.

If you would like to participate in or help plan this year's CROP Walk for Hunger, please attend the next planning meeting. On Tuesday, June 30, 7PM at Shelter 5 in Ewing Park.

Ellwood City's Crop Walk to End Hunger is tentatively scheduled for 2:00 pm on Sunday, September 27th in Ewing Park. For more information, please contact the First United Methodist Church at 724-758-6278 or visit their Facebook page under "Ellwood City Crop Walk."

Grow Your Small Business in A Slow Economy*

There is no doubt we are facing tough economic times. We see the effects all around us: Consumers are not spending as freely; lenders are cautious; business is slow; and the business owner is worried. The concern is simple – in a time where we seem to be facing a recession, how does a small business owner keep his business running profitably? Following are suggestions to help your business survive during these challenging times.

- Rethink and revise your business plan. Possibly your business plan was written when you were a startup. Do you need to concentrate on the same areas you did previously? Focus your actions and efforts in the direction you want your business to move. Think about your vision; document, in writing, specific goals you want to accomplish; turn ideas into reality.
- Look at your products and services and determine which need to stay and which can be eliminated. Goods or services that have been slow sellers can be cut from your offerings. Analyze the cost of acquiring products and servicing customers; look at your returns. Review your finances and the way you generate cash flow. Concentrate on the area or areas yielding the most return for you. What does your business make a profit on? Once you determine your business' unique manner of generating business, you'll simply need to focus, plan, implement and watch your business prosper.
- Make the most of your current customer base. Communicate with your best customers. Target repeat customers; talk to them; possibly reward them for their loyalty – they can help you during lean times. Consider contacting past customers.
- Be careful not to drastically reduce prices on your products or services; you will undermine the brand you have built over the years. Instead, consider lower cost re-packaging of your products or service offerings that can fit your customers' decreased budgets. Offer multiple price options, different payment options or introduce a new entry-level product.
- Improve sales team training. Employ up-selling techniques such as, 'would you like a beverage with your order?' used by fast food restaurants. Bundle complimentary products or services and offer customers a discount for buying in greater quantity. This has a twofold benefit – you will create goodwill with your customers and, at the same time, increase sales.
- Increase marketing efforts. In down times, businesses often decide to cut expenses; many attack the marketing budget first. Experts suggest marketing dollars should actually be increased in a slow economic environment. Competitors may decrease their expenditures for marketing. If you are increasing your efforts, you may be able to attract your competitors' customers due to your increased exposure. Advise your marketing team to develop messages that hit a nerve with customers trying to pinch pennies.
- Utilize technology. If you do not have a website, consider establishing one. Online ordering and online customer service is becoming commonplace. Although there is a cost associated with the use of technology, it can help to reduce business expenses such as travel, printing and postage, advertising and payroll.
- Consider partnerships with businesses that offer similar or complimentary products or services. This can work as another marketing channel for you.
- You may consider bartering. Organizations like the National Association of Trade Exchanges (www.nate.org) and Green Apple Barter Services (www.greenapplebarter.com) help businesses barter products or services. Visit their websites for more information.
- Network. Build a rapport with your clients, creditors and suppliers. Allow word-of-mouth to help advertise your business. Get out there and talk about your business, your services and products. Attend seminars, workshops and tradeshow.



Continued from Page 3

- Ask past customers to provide testimonials and tell them you are available to answer questions about your products and services to new referrals.
- Diversify your vendors. Sourcing all products through one supplier is risky; they may go under if times get worse.
- Renegotiate loans, contracts and costs. Consider asking for lower prices, longer payment cycles, and reduced interest rates.
- Consider leasing real estate, vehicles, or equipment instead of buying.
- Review your inventory and return unsold products to suppliers, or consider sales or reduced prices for slow-moving or excess items that can't be returned. In a slow economy, you need to be converting your inventory to cash.
- Call in accounts receivable.
- Look at your insurance policies and shop around for better insurance rates.
- Review staffing requirements. As hard as it is, it may be necessary to consider downsizing, attrition or converting full-time positions to part-time.
- Consider exporting your products and services to countries that are experiencing a thriving economy.
- The Duquesne University Small Business Development Center's *Global Business Program* offers consulting services and training seminars for businesspersons interested in exporting.
- Consistently spend a little time on your business each day. Cold call five new customers. Send out three direct mailings. Plan to attend one networking opportunity each month.

***Article reprinted with the permission of Duquesne University's Small Business Development Center. You can contact the Duquesne University SBDC by phone at 412.396.6233, email at duqsbdc@duq.edu or visit their website, www.sbdc.duq.edu.**

PA Chamber Testifies in Support of Public Pension Reform at House Hearing*

On Thursday, June 4, PA Chamber Government Affairs Vice President Sam Denisco spoke in favor of legislation that would significantly reform the current pension systems for state and public school employees at a House State Government Committee hearing. [Senate Bill 1](#) – which passed the Senate last month and awaits consideration by the committee - would change the retirement structure for future employees, as well as for current employees going forward. Under the legislation, all future employees would be enrolled in a 401K-style retirement plan. Employees already in the system would have the option of increasing their contributions in order to maintain existing benefit levels or stay at their present contribution rate and have their benefits return to the level they were before being enhanced several years ago. These changes would only apply to future benefits; the legislation would not impact benefits that have already been earned by current and retired employees. Denisco's testimony was offered at the second of two public hearings that the committee held last week regarding the pension bill.

Denisco told the committee that the \$53 billion and growing pension crisis has been a catalyst to repeated credit rating downgrades over the past few years. In fact, just a few weeks ago Fitch Ratings warned that the Commonwealth's "escalating pension burden poses a key ongoing challenge." The pension debt has negatively impacted school district budgets and employer's prospects for hiring and job growth. Denisco stated that moving state and public school employees to a defined contribution plan will save the Commonwealth more than \$18 billion over 30 years, offer flexibility in retirement funding and put the pension systems on a more sustainable path for the future.

Denisco's full testimony is available [here](#).*

***Article reprinted with permission from the *Sentinel*, the PA Chamber of Business & Industry's News Magazine**

Chamber Members Help Very Special Dog Get Back on His Feet



Quasi Recovers in Style After His Surgery

Quasimodo was an apt name for a pit bull mix dog that was found abandoned after someone tossed him out of a pickup truck back in August of 2014. Fortunately, the animal rescue group that sheltered him after the animal warden picked him up were immediately taken with the dog's sunshiny disposition and loving demeanor despite not being able to walk properly. Because Quasimodo was born with a genetic defect that caused his front legs to bow out severely, he could only crawl around on his elbows.

One very special animal lover, Lianne Hughes, became Quasi's foster parent and quickly decided to raise money in order to pay for the orthopaedic surgery the dog would need to live a normal life. Her compassion was soon matched by that of many others when she launched a Go Fund site and a Facebook page titled, "Quasimodo's Quest." His story soon went viral and he has since been featured on NBC New York, in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and in the Daily Mail in the United Kingdom.

Manager of The Loft at 1876 Coordinates Quasi Fundraisers

That's where Cindy Smith, manager of the Loft at 1876, and Brian Bush, one of the owners of the Loft at 1876, came into the picture. Cindy is passionate about dogs, particularly rescues, and when she read about Quasimodo she knew that the Loft at 1876 could help. After discussing his situation with Brian Bush, Cindy began planning fundraisers to help raise the money needed for Quasi's surgery.

Among the events that the Loft at 1876 hosted to raise money for Quasimodo's Quest were BarktoberFest, where Quasi made an appearance to meet his many fans. Cindy Smith explains, "The minute I read about Quasi and saw his pictures, I knew that the owners of the Loft would understand how important it was to raise the money to literally get this dog on his feet. Before his surgery, he even came and visited us at the Loft and met tons of people who showed up to support him and give money toward his surgery at Ohio State University's Veterinary Medical Center. He was such a sweetheart! We printed tee-shirts with his face on them and they quickly sold out. We also donated the money from hot dog sales to his medical fund. We even began posting updates about Quasi's progress on the Loft's outside electronic sign because so many people called and stopped in to ask about him."



The Loft at 1876 Announces the Good News

Quasi Goes Home

Quasimodo's adoptive family came to know the Loft, Brian Bush and Cindy Smith very well and they are grateful for their support. Liann Hughes noted on the Facebook page for Quasimodo's Quest that she and her family are humbled by the outpouring of support and love they've received from animal lovers across the country. Cindy Smith and the Loft at 1876 have been a major component of that support. The result? In May, Quasi had his surgery at Ohio State and was flown home to the Hughes family in New Jersey by the [Pittsburgh Aviation Animal Rescue Team](#). He'll soon have his leg casts removed on a return visit to Ohio State University's Veterinary Medical Center and his prognosis is excellent.

Although he is well on the road to recovery, Quasimodo and his forever family will continue to have expensive medical bills for follow up care, physical therapy and more. If you would like to make a donation, go to <http://www.gofundme.com/Quasi>. Any amount, no matter how small, will help.

Cindy Smith summed up the reason the Loft at 1876 and her friends in Ellwood City have been so supportive of Quasimodo's Quest quite simply. "Look at him. Look at that sweet face; how could we not help him?"

Cindy Continues to Help Save Canine Lives

Because of her dedication to Quasi, Cindy Smith continues to be approached to help dogs in distress. She was recently contacted by the Pittsburgh Aviation Animal Rescue Team to go with them to Virginia to fly no less than thirty dogs back to the Pittsburgh area so that they can be cared for and given to new owners. Like Quasi, these dogs will no doubt find a permanent place in Cindy's heart.



Why Join the Chamber of Commerce?



Check Out Our New Office!

Four Great Reasons to Join

60%

Percentage of consumers who believe that businesses who belong to their Chamber of Commerce are more likely to have good business practices and care about their customers.

68%

Percentage of diners who are more likely to patronize a national restaurant chain if it is a member of the local Chamber of Commerce.

36%

Percentage of customers who are more likely to think favorably of an insurance agency if it belongs to the local Chamber of Commerce.

49%

Percentage of increase in consumer favorability ratings if a business is a Chamber of Commerce member.

Save the Date!

*It's the Tenth Anniversary of Our
Most Popular Event!*

Monday Evening, September 14th

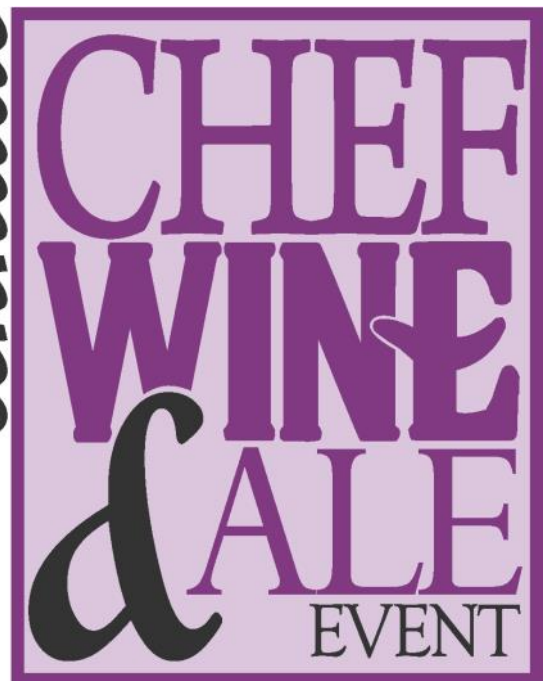
6:00 to 9:00 pm

Shakespeare's Restaurant & Pub

*A Special Thanks to Our Platinum
Sponsor:*



10th Annual



*Tickets Available at the
Chamber, 806 Lawrence Ave,
Ellwood City, PA*

House Passes Thomas Bill to Modernize Second Stage Business Loan Program

HARRISBURG – State Rep. W. Curtis Thomas, D-Phila., announced on June 24, 2015 that legislation he authored to modernize and streamline the Second Stage Loan Program has passed the House of Representatives.

"I'd like to thank my colleagues in the House and especially the members of the Commerce Committee for their support of this effort. Creating an environment that allows businesses to prosper is a vital component of ensuring a bright future for Pennsylvania," said Thomas, Democratic chairman of the House Commerce Committee.

The Second Stage Loan Program, one of eight programs created in 2004 when the Commonwealth Financing Authority was established, provides loan guarantees to commercial lending institutions that make loans to Pennsylvanian businesses in the life sciences, advanced technology or manufacturing industries. The program is intended to help business that are past the startup phase but have not yet matured enough to be able to borrow funds based on their financial strength.

[House Bill 810](#) alters the requirements of the Second Stage Loan Program to allow business that have existed for more than seven years to participate. Currently, only businesses that are at least two years but less than seven years old are eligible for the program. The bill would also give the CFA the authority to determine the maximum loan guarantee and adjust it based on market conditions.

"The restrictions on the age of the businesses and other components proved to be unnecessarily restrictive, which resulted in the program being underutilized. I am glad that my colleagues understood a few small changes in the law could make the program a valuable tool for businesses across the state," Thomas said. "I am optimistic that my colleagues in the Senate will understand the need for this update and pass the bill without delay."

Additionally, Thomas' legislation would add a requirement that participants demonstrate that the loan will result in jobs being created or retained in Pennsylvania. Since its inception, the Second Stage Loan Program has approved eight projects, which have created 138 jobs in the state and retained another 176.



We've Moved!

Our new address is:

Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce
806 Lawrence Avenue
Ellwood City, PA 16117

We hope you'll stop in to see our new office soon!

Monday—Friday

9:00 am to 3:00 pm and by appointment.

724-758-5501

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