

# FLEX

## FLEX Your Ideas

brought to you by the **future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange**

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### Annual Meeting Scheduled for October 26

It's that time of year for the FLEX Annual Meeting, an event where we gather together to celebrate our successes over the past year and discuss our plans for the future.

This year's event will be on Friday, October 26, at 5:30 p.m. at Karma Coffee Company in Oil City. Similar to last year, attendees can expect a fun evening of networking, with hors d'oeuvres and drinks.

A presentation will be given by FLEX leadership, covering a review of 2018, plans for the upcoming year, election of new committee chairs and officers, and the FLEX Highlight

# 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

Awards. After the presentation, we will have trivia, with a variety of fun questions and prizes for winners.

Attendees also have the opportunity to get a free professional headshot taken by FLEX member and photographer Chett DeLong.

"This past year has gone very well for us. The committees have accomplished several goals, such as increasing paid membership, diversifying/expanding our events, and strengthening our social media presence," said Rachel Stiller, FLEX president. "This well-anticipated meeting is unique in that we still take care of organizational business,

but the focus of the meeting is for our members to network with one another. It's an appropriate time for reflection on what we've spent our effort on the past year and it's an exciting event to usher in our new leadership."

We'd like to thank Penelec for once again sponsoring this event, and Karma Coffee Company for supplying delicious food and a great venue.

Any young professionals are invited to attend! Please RSVP to Ashley Cowles at (814) 676-8521 or [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org) by Friday, October 19.



### FLEX Member Survey

We are asking all FLEX members to complete a survey and provide feedback to us, so we can continue to grow and improve our organization.

The survey is online and takes about 5-10 minutes. You can find it by visiting [surveymonkey.com/r/FLEXMemberSurvey](https://surveymonkey.com/r/FLEXMemberSurvey) and the deadline to complete it is **Friday, October 12**.

FLEX MEMBER SURVEY 2018

EVENTS

1. What events have you enjoyed this year? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Chat	<input type="checkbox"/> Peak's Peak Social
<input type="checkbox"/> Happy Hours	<input type="checkbox"/> FLEX Presentations
<input type="checkbox"/> Bowling Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Skirky's Spring Beer Tasting
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Meeting (With Trivia)	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Kick-off
<input type="checkbox"/> Pottery & Sip Social	<input type="checkbox"/> OHF Keg 'n Brew
<input type="checkbox"/> Dineer & Share Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Appreciation Lunch
<input type="checkbox"/> Skier Shredding Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Milling Tour
<input type="checkbox"/> Ugly Christmas Sweater Party	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not attend any of these events.

## Making Connections & Getting Involved

"The mission of all nonprofits boils down to trying to change the world for good," said Trenton Moulin, executive director of Bridge Builders Community Foundations (BBCF). Trenton spoke at the FLEX Speaker Series in September about running a nonprofit, networking, and serving on a board.

Trenton is one of the young professionals who helped form FLEX in 2007 and has gained much experience in the 11 years since. As executive director of BBCF, the community foundation serving Clarion, Forest, Jefferson, and Venango Counties, Trenton knows the ins and outs of running a nonprofit and spends much of his time building relationships and serving our community.

While Trenton reports to not just one Board of Trustees, but also four affiliate boards of directors, he knows the importance of having engaged community members at the board table. He shared advice for reporting to a board of directors, as well as tips for building connections and finding your own fit on a board at a local organization.

"The hardest part of starting a relationship is striking up a conversation," he said. "Most people want to talk, but don't know where to start, so you need to break down those barriers."

When it comes to building connections and networking, some benefits include raising your profile, helping

others, increasing confidence, and even gaining lifelong friends. These connections can lead to opportunities in your professional life, something Trenton referred to as "leadership through connection."

When ready to further the connections you built and join a board of directors, Trenton recommends finding one that is a right fit for you by making sure the organization is something you care about, understanding what you're getting into, and asking questions about their mission and values.

"You learn a lot along the way, but don't be afraid to get out there and start making connections and getting involved in our community," said Trenton.

We appreciate Trenton taking time to provide us with such great advice. We plan to have an event for the FLEX Speaker Series every few months—stay tuned for details on our next one!



## Podcast Recommendation: Serial

By Marissa Dechant

While we typically share more professional-focused content, we changed it up this month for Halloween! If you've heard of at least one podcast, it's likely Serial, the podcast to rule all podcasts and catalyst for every investigative copycat to follow.

For those new to the game, Serial, hosted by Sarah Koenig, originally aired in 2014, and covered the 1999 murder of a Baltimore teen and the controversial conviction of her ex-boyfriend.

Four years later, Koenig is back for season three. Premiering last month (September), this season covers a year inside the Cuyahoga County court system located in Cleveland. A different

case is explained week by week, as Koenig follows judges, attorneys, and defendants through the justice system.

This is investigative storytelling at its best, as Koenig sheds light on people's darkest moments. Do yourself a favor and download season three of Serial today.



Dr. Kate Eckert  
[drkeckert@gmail.com](mailto:drkeckert@gmail.com)  
[www.chirodrkate.com](http://www.chirodrkate.com)

1047 Allegheny Avenue  
Oil City, PA 16301  
P: 814.657.1854  
F: 814.676.6200



206 Seneca St, Oil City  
(814) 677-8687  
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If you attended the FLEX Historical Walking Tour of Franklin, you will recognize our guide **Marlie Manning**, who is executive director of the Venango County Historical Society.

Marlie earned her bachelor's degree in history from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, as well as her master's degree in museum studies from Appalachian State

University. As executive director of the Historical Society, her goals are to expand membership, get younger generations involved, and continue to preserve Venango County's history.

Although she's originally from Meadville, Marlie's family has ties to Venango County dating back to the late 1700s, and she has enjoyed calling our area home. "I enjoy the support the community gives. If you have a problem or need, the community is there to help," she said.

Some of the things Marlie likes to do in her free time include kayaking French Creek and the Allegheny River; biking, hiking, hunting, and fishing around the area, especially at Oil Creek State Park; enjoying entertainment in Downtown Franklin; dining at Trails to Ales Brewery; reading; and spending time with friends and family.

Another passion of hers is traveling. She hopes to someday visit all 50 states and, so far, she has checked New York, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, Colorado, Maryland, Delaware, and Louisiana (in November) off her list.

Marlie encourages young professionals to consider getting involved in the Venango County Historical Society, whether as board members, advisors to the board, volunteers, members, or event participants. To learn more about the Historical Society, visit their website at [www.venangocountyhistory.org](http://www.venangocountyhistory.org).

## FLEX Member Highlight: Ashley Cowles

FLEX has big news! Our very own Ashley Cowles has opened her first business: **Core Goods**

Our mission within FLEX is to promote and support our local leaders and entrepreneurs, so you can imagine how thrilled we are at not only having a new business in the area, but having one of our own members at the helm.

As of September 29, Core Goods (located at 219 Seneca Street in Oil City) will be opened Thursdays-Saturdays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sundays 12 to 3 p.m.

This is not just any type of store, Core Goods will be offering bulk foods, local produce, grab and go meals, kombucha on tap, and other related items.



The focus of her business is sustainable shopping, so customers are encouraged to bring reusable containers for bulk foods. The business is working with local farms to provide its shoppers with produce, honey, and other products from the Venango region.

Make sure to stop by the Grand Opening on Saturday, September 29, to check it out and congratulate Ashley!

**FLEX**  
future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange

We will be highlighting accomplishments and news of FLEX members each month.

Have something you'd like to share?  
Email [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org).

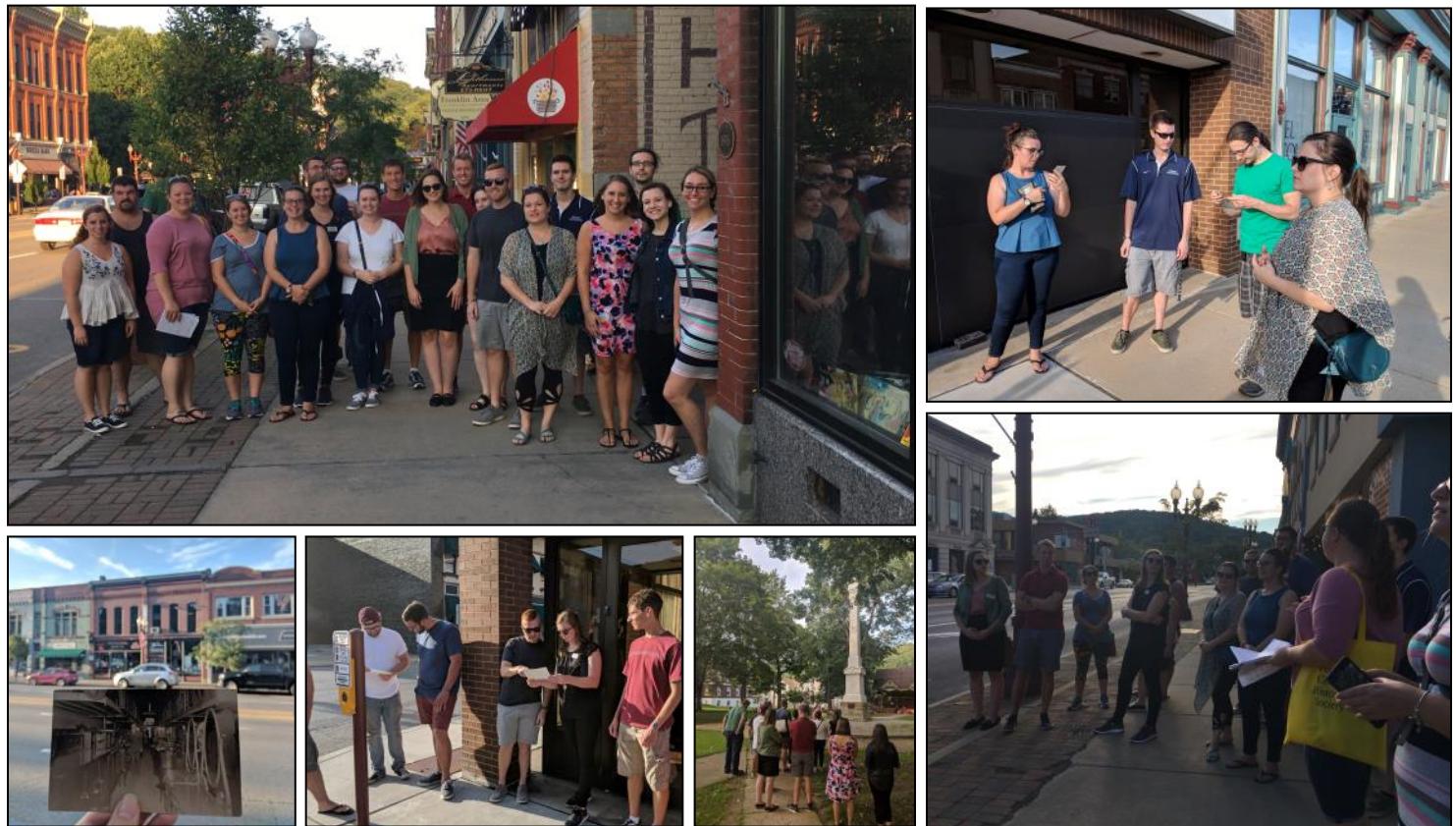
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We enjoyed walking around Franklin and learning about the past of our region at the Historical Walking Tour! Thank you Marlie Manning with the Venango County Historical Society for leading our tour.



## OUR MISSION

FLEX represents the needs and interests of Young Professionals by positioning ourselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and advocates for the sustainability of the Venango Area through civic engagement, leadership development, and networking.

### Upcoming Events & Meetings:

- **Events & Fundraising Committee Call:** Friday, October 5, 9 a.m. | *Call Number: +1-712-832-8330, Access Code: 742 9689*
- **Coffee Chat:** Friday, October 12, 7:30 a.m., Komatsu Mining Corp., Franklin | Coffee and donuts provided
- **FLEX Annual Meeting:** Friday, October 26, 5:30 p.m., Karma Coffee Company, Oil City | Hors d'oeuvres and drinks provided | RSVP by 10/19 to [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org)
- **Marketing Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, October 16, 7 a.m., Karma Coffee Co., Oil City

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming our newest FLEX members:

*Ashley Smith  
Mallory Spence*

Interested in becoming a member? Ask for a form at the next event or meeting, or join online at [bit.ly/flexmembership](http://bit.ly/flexmembership).

