



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE CHAMBER CROWNED 'CHAMBER OF THE YEAR'

Uniontown, PA – The Fayette Chamber of Commerce has been named the 2021 Pennsylvania Association of Chamber Professionals (PACP) Chamber of the Year.

They received the prestigious award, which honors chambers with less than 700 members, during the PACP Chamber Professionals and Leadership Conference in Johnstown, Penn., last week. The honor has also earned the chamber the designation of the October 2021 “Face” in the Fayette County Public Relations Initiative’s monthly “Faces and Places” series.

“In addition to recognizing organization excellence, the PACP Chamber of the Year Award focuses on acknowledging one or more significant achievements/accomplishments that a chamber has initiated, stimulated and/or led in its respective service area at some point during the past 18 months,” a press release from PACP stated. “Organizational excellence is evaluated in the areas of membership, programs, planning and finance.”

Fayette Chamber of Commerce Board President Devan White nominated the Fayette Chamber for its outstanding work in leading the Fayette County COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, which was responsible for fully vaccinating more than 29,000 citizens this past spring.

“In the past 18 months, the Fayette Chamber of Commerce stepped up as a leading advocate for our small businesses and a driving force behind the countywide COVID vaccine clinic. The organization went above and beyond the roles of a typical chamber of commerce when our community needed it most,” White said. “They realize that all facets of our community impact our businesses - be it workforce, health and wellbeing, legislation and more - and they take action and offer support in all of these areas on a daily basis, often in the background without visible recognition.”

Chamber Board Vice Chair Constance DeFazio Slampak accepted the award on the chamber’s behalf, as Executive Director Muriel Nuttall and her team hosted their 96th Annual Chamber Dinner that same evening.

White said she’s “incredibly excited” about the “well-deserved award,” which could not have come at a better time.

“It is so fitting that we received the news on the same night as the chamber’s annual dinner. Each year at the event, the Fayette Chamber gives out awards to hard-working businesses and people in our

community,” White said. “Finally, we were able to turn the tables and give the chamber an award of their own.”

“I was honored to accept the PACP Chamber of the Year award on behalf of the Fayette Chamber of Commerce,” Slampak said. “I have seen first-hand how hard Muriel and her team work to support our county. They are tireless in their dedication and truly set the standard when it comes to multitasking. It was my pleasure to represent Fayette County to PACP members from around the state.”

In addition to Nuttall, the chamber team includes Fayette Business Education Partnership/Member Services Coordinator Kathi Hull; Membership Specialist Wendy Gaither; Finance Coordinator Morgan Hunchuck; Office Assistant Lindsay Pegg; Office Assistant/Intern Andrew Nuttall; Interactive Media Specialist Kristi Kassimer; and Fayette County Public Relations Initiative Writer Jamie Rankin.

Nuttall said winning Chamber of the Year is “gratifying,” although “we don’t do what we do for awards.”

“Our mission is to help our community grow. It is nice, though, to be recognized for a job well done,” Nuttall said. “I try very hard to thank everyone regularly. There are incredible people - staff, volunteers, members, et cetera - that all work together for the greater good. I consider myself blessed to be able to work with these great people.”

Nuttall said the award is also an achievement for Fayette County as a whole, as well as its business community.

“I point out all the time that we do the work of the organization, but our members ARE the chamber. We all work together for the benefit of the whole,” Nuttall said. “This kind of recognition shows that we are making an impact; we are making a difference.”

Prior to winning Chamber of the Year, the Fayette County Board of Commissioners also presented the chamber team with a Certificate of Appreciation for “being the ultimate volunteers and worker bees to bring together our community at a time when the nation has been challenged and facing catastrophic loss.”

“This team was relentless in assuring that the needs of the public be met. Their outreach to provide services and information to the public went beyond their membership - they thought outside of the box,” the certificate stated. “The chamber was, and is, a driving force to advance Fayette County in a positive direction.”

Fayette County Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr said the chamber “does so much, every day, for so many - and it generally goes unnoticed.”

“That’s because the chamber is busy being the ‘head cheerleader’ for Fayette County, but they don’t draw attention to themselves. They just go about their day, doing what they do so well, marketing and advocating for business in our community,” Lohr said. “This award simply confirms what I have known all along - that the Fayette Chamber of Commerce is the best there is.”

Lohr said the award is “an exciting turn of events” for both Fayette County and its businesses, for several reasons.

“I’ve said it for years - good things are happening in Fayette County - and this is just another example. First, it’s simply fantastic to see the chamber and its staff receive the accolades they so richly deserve.

Second, the chamber staff are out there promoting the county and supporting businesses in a thousand and one ways every single day,” Lohr said. “It’s always a challenging job, but never more so than through a pandemic; yet, our chamber never missed a beat. Not only did they keep doing what they do so well even as our whole world turned upside down, but they stepped up and were instrumental in running our COVID vaccination clinic. That’s dedication and perseverance at its finest.”

Lohr said the chamber’s latest accolade also draws more attention to Fayette County and the good things happening here.

“It’s a simple equation. More attention for the county translates to more attention for our businesses, which means more money coming into the county,” he said. “More money coming into the county means that the county is prospering, and that’s a win for everyone who lives and works here.”

Commissioner Vince Vicites said the chamber is a “vital part” of both Fayette County and its business community.

“The chamber works very closely with the county commissioners on various projects that help improve our communities,” Vicites said. “Muriel and her staff have been an asset to our county and they are very deserving of this honor. It’s exciting to see this recognition going to an organization like the Fayette Chamber. Congratulations to them on a job well done.”

Commissioner Scott Dunn said he’s extremely proud of the chamber’s accomplishments, but isn’t surprised they won the award.

“There’s no one more deserving of this recognition than Muriel and her team. What they were able to help the county accomplish with our vaccination clinics was unprecedented. Never before have so many different groups come together for the same cause, and the chamber was the beating heart of that operation,” Dunn said. “I would have been surprised to hear if they didn’t win, having witnessed firsthand their devotion to our communities - not just during this pandemic, but every single day. The award means we have the best chamber of commerce in the state, but I believe they’re the best in the world. I’m honored to work alongside them and extremely grateful to have them representing Fayette County.”

White also congratulated the chamber staff on their latest achievement, adding that it’s “due time” they received this award.

“Thank you for doing your jobs with your whole hearts and for continuing to strive to be innovative, smart and effective in your approaches,” White said. “Kudos to you. Fayette is lucky to have you in our corner.”

For more information about the PACP Chamber of the Year Award, contact Tiffany Fulmer Ott at tfulmer@tlfexecutiveservices.com. For more information about the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, visit www.fayettechamber.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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