

**Meetings**

**Workforce development series planned**

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership will present its workforce development series, a series of seminars designed for human resource professionals and management teams. The goal is to attract and retain top quality employees while creating a positive and effective work environment. The five-event series begins from 8-10 a.m., Friday, Jan. 20 at the Partnership offices, 665 Main St., Buffalo. The guest speaker will be Tom Aurelio, vice president of human resources for Symantec. His topic will be "Compelling Place to Work: Does Your Company Fit the Bill?" The cost for the full series is \$50 for members and \$75 for non-members. The cost for individual seminars is \$20 each for members and \$35 for non-members. To register, call Charlene Janiga at 852-7100 extension 470.

**Arts Council hosts seminar**

The Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County has announced the availability of its Arts in Education Partnership Program. It allows for the development and implementation of Arts in Education programs in schools throughout Erie and Niagara Counties. An information seminar will be held from 3:30-4:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 24 at the Buffalo Museum of Science, 1020 Humbolt Parkway, Buffalo. The final session in the series will be held from 3:30-4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 25 at the Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County, 700 Main St., Buffalo. For more information, call 856-7520.

**United Way 'heroes' sought**

Applications for the Community Hero Awards, sponsored by the United Way, are now available from the agency's Web site [www.uwbec.org](http://www.uwbec.org). The awards recognize outstanding volunteers of all ages in the youth, individual, senior and group categories. Recipients will be announced at a breakfast at the Buffalo Convention Center on Tuesday, April 11. For more information, contact Michele Magaris at 887-2693.

## The Michael C. Casseri State Farm Insurance Agency

*Business provides quality customer service*

by **KIMBERLY M. KARCHER**  
Clarence Editor

From business to homeowners insurance, the Michael C. Casseri State Farm Insurance Agency offers its customers, new and old, more than your typical policies.

The agency is focused on providing the best possible services, as well as promoting a simple idea: "Because Nice Counts."

"The Michael C. Casseri State Farm Insurance Agency is a full-service insurance and financial services agency," Casseri said. "We offer a full breadth of personal and business insurance products, including auto, homeowners, life, disability income, long-term care and coverage for business owners. As well, we offer a complete line of financial services products for retirement planning, educational savings, and banking and loans."

Casseri said he and his team are focused on offering the best services to their customers because the customer is what they're all about.

"In a world that all too often forgets about the importance of excellent customer service — especially in a service-based industry like insurance — we intend to provide outstanding service, along with the finest State Farm products and claims service," Casseri said.

"This is not to say that we don't believe in, or offer, on-line services, because we do," he added. "However, when people need to speak with someone, when they need an advocate, or when they simply want to review their policies, we are available in person or on the phone. When you enter our agency, there is a little sign that simply states, 'Because Nice Matters.' That sign, and those three little words, are very powerful, and embody what my agency represents."

Since taking over the agency in October 2005, Casseri said business has been booming.

"The warm reception that we have received from Clarence, as well as surrounding communities, has been tremendous," he said. "I get a sense that our customers, existing and new, really appreciate our expanded business hours, and our commitment to providing the highest level of customer service."



Michael Casseri, right, with sales associates Gordon Curley, left, and Amber Lockhart.

Casseri replaced Bob Rice, a former insurance agent who ran the Clarence business for the past 30 years.

"Bob Rice is a true gentleman. Every customer that we speak with only has great things to say about Bob Rice," said Casseri. "Words such as fair, honest, knowledgeable, easy-going, and of course fun, are consistently heard when people talk about Bob. Once I learned that I would be replacing him, I tried to spend as much time as I could with Bob and his team members, Midge Struzik and Sandie Menno, all who retired. Bob and his team couldn't have been more accommodating."

Casseri, who earned a bachelor's degree in management from Alfred University and a master's in business administration from the University at Buffalo, said expansion plans are a possibility in the future.

"Our timeframe to expand will be dictated by our customers," he said. "As our business grows, my agency team, which currently includes Gordon Curley, Amber Lockhart, Clair Hurrell, Amanda Boeckel and my wife, Jodi, will grow ensuring that we continue to provide exceptional customer service."

As much as it sounds, Casseri

isn't all about work.

"Maintaining the delicate balance between work and family is extremely important to me," he explained. "In fact, my daughters have painted a number of pictures that hang throughout the office. I am most proud of one of their paintings, which states, 'Welcome to Daddy's State Farm Office ... like a good neighbor

State Farm is there.' The painting hangs over antique schoolhouse desks, which are filled with crayons and coloring books. Children are always welcome at the Casseri State Farm Agency."

To learn more about The Michael C. Casseri State Farm Insurance Agency, call 631-5351.

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## Nesper named chairman of Amherst Chamber

Attorney Paul Nesper of Nesper, Ferber, DiGiacomo, will be installed as the 2006 Chairman of the Board of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce at the annual meeting at noon Friday, Jan. 20 at the Classics V banquet center, 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst.

Nesper will be only the second chairman in the 25 years to serve a second term. He looks forward to participating in the chamber's expanded opportunities for business in the Suburban Solutions Center (SSC).

The SSC, which will officially open in February, is a one stop hub for small business services, featuring the latest in technology.

Also being installed as members of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce Officers Committee are: Colleen DiPirro, president of the Chamber; Maureen Rasp-Glose of Verizon, first vice chairman; Joseph Wild of Manning & Napier Information Services, second vice chairman; William McGowan of AccuMed, treasurer; Richard Cahlstadt of HSBC, chair of the Small Business Council; Laura Zaepfel of Uniland Development Company, chair of the Advocacy Council; Mary Gaulin of PCI, secretary; and Dennis Elsenbeck of National Grid and David Flynn of Phillips, Lytle, as members.

## Company gives real estate market a reality check

WNYbyOwner.com is a new local company developed to enable people to advertise their property for sale or for rent on the Internet, eliminating the middleman and corresponding costly commissions.

It allows an unlimited audience to gain access to a detailed description of the property and view vibrant color photos enhancing all of the home's best features. The property is listed along with other area homes merging the "by owner" search and providing power in numbers.

According to the National Association of Realtors' own research, more than 70% of all home buyers start their search on the Internet.

"It was a case of build it, and they will come," said Robyn Sansone, president of WNYbyOwner.com.

"After selling our home on our own, my husband and I realized there was a real need for a Web site that catered to the 'For Sale and Rent By Owners' in Western New York. Classified ads were costly and didn't allow us to

differentiate our home from all the others," she said.

Sansone, of Clarence, said they saw an opportunity to create a "catch all" site for Western New Yorkers to affordably showcase their property, so they created WNYbyOwner.com

The site charges \$99.95 to list for a full year, including a free yard sign. Monthly rates of only \$29.95 are also available.

For more information call 523-8508.