

HISTORIC 185TH FORUM FOCUSES ON COLLABORATION



Commissioner Richard Ball with outgoing NYS Ag Society President Hans Kunze.

Dr. Danny Klinefelter set the stage nicely for a day-long conversation on collaboration at the 185th annual Forum conducted January 5th. Evaluating what makes farm managers successful across the country, collaborative habits are one of four patterns that consistently surface:

- They anticipate and adapt to the changing needs of their markets, recognizing that the future will always belong to those who see the possibilities before they become obvious.
- They are open to exploring new ideas and consider different points of view.
- They operate more as resource managers than producers.
- They recognize the importance of networking and developing alliances across the value chain.

As the number of farms continues to trend downwards in the US, successful managers recognize that the unwillingness or inability to work with others has and will be the downfall of many of their producer peers. "Therefore, to remain independent, many producers will need to become more interdependent," Klinefelter said. "Agriculture is moving toward coordinated supply chains and qualified suppliers. Canada's study of leading farmers found that 66 percent of the top 10 percent were involved in a formal relationship with processors and/or retailers, while only 13 percent of all farmers were doing so. The same is true in the U.S."

For more information concerning Dr. Klinefelter's presentation, contact Ann Noble Shephard at 315-727-5449.

Afternoon Panels Offer Successful Collaborative Examples

#1 – Capitalizing the Balance Sheet Through Collaboration
Moderator: Tim Veazey, Lincoln Financial Advisors, and panelists:



- Todd Hathorn - Ivy Lakes Dairy/Hathorn Farms
- Clayton Wood - Ivy Lakes Dairy
- Loren Herod - Community Bank
- Tom Facer - Farm Fresh First
- Benneth Phelps - Dirt Capital Partners

Moderator Tim Veazey

A former NYS Ag Society Business of the Year recipient, Farm Fresh First was established in 2006 and consists of 17 owners, 15 fruit/veg growers, and three management personnel. The loss of Birds Eye was the impetus behind the creation of Farm Fresh First. Founding growers came together to make a proposal to take-on inactive processing facilities. They also joined forces with producers in Wayne County, launching Pomona Packing LLC in 2010. Funding for the organization has come from Wayne County IDA and the NYS Excelsior Loan to Grant Program.

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Klinefelter's collaboration examples include producer's pooling resources and forming peer advisory groups to the creation of alternative business models such as management companies, joint ventures, alliances and closed cooperatives.

DEAN BOOR SPEAKS TO SUCCESSFUL TRIPARTITE

According to Dr. Kathryn Boor, the Forum's Anniversary Capnote Speaker, it's vitally important that the tripartite collaboration between government, producers and university research succeeds so agriculture is not left behind in NYS. "We need collaboration at all levels to promote prosperity, efficiency, and to increase human well-being," said Boor, who is Dean of the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences at Cornell University. "Just looking at the impact we are experiencing within the digital revolution, many of our state's farmers don't have the tools needed to benefit from this technology. We must work together to help bridge the gap."

At Cornell, Boor cited numerous successful partnerships that are:

- ▶ Attracting more students to agricultural science and ag education studies
- ▶ Increasing economic development in Western and Northern NY
- ▶ Increasing food safety training for fresh produce
- ▶ Accelerating the implementation of groundbreaking research

Using the highly successful honey nut squash project as an example, which took seven years to develop and launch, Boor said public and private collaborations are producing game-changing results. "By putting plant, data and engineering scientists together with private sector entrepreneurs, exciting things can and do happen that will benefit our region and industry far into the future."



Dean Boor helped acknowledge Patrick Hooker with the Excellence in IPM Award during the Forum. L to R: Jennifer Grant – Director, NYS IPM Program, Dean Boor, Patrick Hooker, Julie Suarez – Assistant Dean, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Cornell University.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT — Beth Claypoole

Greetings from Windy WNY!

I am writing this as several towns in WNY are cleaning up from a wind storm over the last couple of days. Over 100,000 people are without power and electrical service trucks are coming down the highway from both Buffalo and Albany. Although personally not affected, I am thinking good wishes to those who are dealing with this. For all the agricultural businesses, events like this really make you think about your emergency plan and what actions would you take when power is needed to your farm. In addition, fruit farmers are determining damage to fruit trees from a freeze last week after more than a week of warmer weather. What a crazy winter it has been!



NYS Ag Society President
Beth Claypoole

Seems like just yesterday when we were all in Syracuse celebrating the good work of our agricultural colleagues across the state. We had the opportunity to learn from several collaboration groups as to how to make various systems work for you. Our Keynote Speaker, Danny Klinefelter gave us a whole bunch of examples of "requirements" to make your farm business great – and it was probably the most requested presentation we have ever had! I think I sent his presentation to more than 25 people and everyone said that it was packed with information, like what you would find in Business 101 and 102!

We are now starting to plan for next year. Each committee of the Ag Society works throughout the year identifying potential awardees, finding speakers, and seeking donations for the program and the awards. All of this work would not happen without YOU! Although we have 23 board members, there are at least that many additional people involved in our committees. Joining a committee gets you involved at the grass roots level and introduces you to the importance of what we do as a society. We are always looking for people who are interested in learning more about our committees and helping carryout their activities. Please read through the award categories elsewhere in this issue and see if any are of interest to you – we need nominees and committee members to participate in award selection.

Of particular importance is our year-round efforts to recruit members and recruit/nominate people for awards, like the Cap Creal – when you visit with an agricultural community member, take a moment and talk about the NYS Ag Society. If you read an excellent article, editorial, series, etc., in any form of published communication, think about taking a moment and making a nomination. Membership information and nominations for all awards can be made through the Ag Society website.

More information about the nomination process for all awards are on our website. Please consider reaching out to your neighbors and telling them about the NYS Ag Society. Get them to join and support the entire NYS agricultural community!

Best regards, Beth Claypoole, President

Be a member of the NYS Agricultural Society for \$40 and help the Society deliver on its mission of improving agricultural education, leadership development and recognition of industry stakeholders.

Go to www.nysagsociety.org to complete your membership online or send \$40 with your name and contact information to NYS Ag Society at 1818 Linwood Road, Linwood, NY 14486.

Forum (continued)

Based on his experience of securing public funding, Tom Facer of Farm Fresh First offered the following tips:

- Don't make public announcements concerning your project until you have full understanding of public funds
- Visit with the local IDA in early planning stages to identify funding specifics including timelines
- Have a business plan
- Be patient; the process is not fast

Benneth Phelps of Dirt Capital Partners spoke on their business plan of investing in farmland in partnership with farmers throughout the Northeast. Operating in New England, NY and NJ, Dirt Capital Partners promotes sustainability and organic practices. Common partnership scenarios include:

- Relocating existing farm
- Expanding successful farm
- Transferring farm
- Conserving farm
- Transforming farm

Issues for this relatively new company include underwriting in creative ways. Benneth's suggests being able to contrast the flexibility and value of projects to potential banking partners; and when there is an active relationship between parties, all will work hard for mutual success.

Todd Hathorn of Ivy Lakes Dairy is a third-generation farmer. When his four sons were not interested in coming home to the farm, he put the word out to agri-business friends like Loren Herrod of Community Bank to help find a viable succession plan.

Clayton Wood is now a partner in Ivy Lakes Dairy with two friends from Cornell University. The three-some investigated numerous opportunities to work together, but nothing stuck until they talked with Todd in 2013. The two parties took their time getting to know each other; carefully examining their own goals and needs. A working trial was negotiated, including a milk share agreement. Ivy Lakes Dairy is the product of this careful decision-making process.

For more information, contact: Tim Veazey, 585-350-7214

#2 - Growing Agriculture Through On-Farm Investment & Grown and Certified Programs

Moderator: Ehle Shachter - NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, and panelists:

- Mark McMullen - NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
- Christine Costopoulos - NYS Empire State Development
- Lauren Jones - Ironwood Farm
- Dave Walczack - Eden Valley Growers
- Jennifer Trodden - NY Grown and Certified Program



Moderator Ehle Shachter

Discussion focused on work that the Department, led by Commissioner Richard Ball, is prioritizing to support agriculture and agricultural businesses, such as:

- Working with NY licensed dealers to ensure payment to producers and growers for their products
- Managing the specialty crop block grant program that funds research and marketing
- Administering the Taste of NY program
- Administering the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, which focuses on distributing products to individuals in rural and low income areas
- Providing technical support to food hubs

Christine Costopoulos - NYS Empire State Development – discussed the three-year old New Farmers Grant Program. The initiative gives grants to new farmers to expand production, including the purchase of new equipment. There is \$1 million in this year's state budget for the program, which is issued in competitive grants ranging from \$15,000-\$50,000. Lauren Jones of Ironwood Farm, located in Hudson, NY, was a recipient of the New Farmer Grant Program in 2015. Ironwood Farms is a certified organic operation and is a partnership between three women. The farm grows between 40 to 50 different types of vegetables that are outsourced to companies such as Blue Apron, and to consumers residing within the Hudson Valley and New York City.

Jennifer Trodden led discussion on the NY Grown and Certified Program - the first of its kind in the US - that will promote NY state agricultural products and improve consumer confidence in locally grown food. Labelling will do three things:

- Confirm that the product came from a NY farm
- Confirm that the farm has good agricultural practices (GAP certified)
- Confirm that the farm has an environmental stewardship program

Consumers have already shown widespread interest in the labelling. Surveys show 74% would buy a product with this label; 47% stated they would pay more for a product with this label.

For more panel information, contact: Ehle Shachter, 718-722-2891

#3 – Fostering Collaborations Through Educational Institutions

Moderator: Larry Van De Valk, and panelists:

- Cheryl Thayer - CALS Harvest NY Team
- Heidi Mouillesseaux Kunzman - CaRDI and Development Sociology
- Chris Nyberg - Morrisville State College
- Bruce Wright - SUNY Cobleskill

Participants were treated to an inside look at programs aimed at growing the NYS ag economy by maximizing connections between industry players and responding quickly to emerging opportunities. Led by the state's premier educational institutions, collaborative projects across the state are focusing on on-farm needs, developing markets and future employees, and helping industry source good talent.

For more information contact: Dr. Larry Van De Valk, 607-255-7907

NETWORKING IS #1 BENEFIT FOR AMBASSADORS

Fifty-five young adults – ages 18-25 – have had the privilege to be Ambassador Scholarship winners to the NYS Ag Society (NYSAS) Forum. They have included college and graduate students from nine academic institutions on the East Coast and CCE staff. As one of the nation's oldest and largest statewide agricultural meetings, the Forum is a tremendous platform for agriculture's next generation of decision-makers to get their feet wet in terms of issue awareness, exposure to key leadership, and professional development. The Ambassador opportunity can shape current and future educational choices, research assignments, and career paths.



Ambassador Class 2017

2017 Ambassadors:

- Received overnight accommodations and meals without charge
- Were paired with an industry mentor to help facilitate networking and answer questions
- Attended historical and current event presentations sponsored by the Friends of the Witter Museum & Cornell University in addition to the full Forum program
- Had group and one-on-one contact with the LEAD NY program director and participants
- Tasked with Forum meeting responsibilities

Twenty-eight applications were received for 15 positions in the 2017 Ambassador Class. At college, Ambassadors are studying Agriculture Education, Ag Business, Ag Science, Environmental Biology, Animal Science, and Policy Analysis & Management.

2017 Thumbnail Evaluation:

- 100% believed attending the Forum was worthy of their time
- 100% had a positive experience with their mentor
- 90% would appreciate an opportunity to stay a second night for additional programming
- 90% would attend the Forum again
- Networking is #1 benefit cited!

YOUR GIFT COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Training youth to take on future leadership of the NYS ag and food industry is a huge job. The Ambassador program is only whetting the appetite of participants to date. Your financial contribution could lift this initiative to new heights benefitting more 4H and FFA members, as well as young people trying to establish their footing in the industry. In 2017, the NYSAS Foundation launched a \$100,000 Ambassador fundraising effort.

The project vision is to create an even stronger program that will not only motivate farm youth to develop their leadership and networking skills, but attract young adults from outside agriculture's traditional circles of influence, to build new talent and capacity for the agricultural industry. To date, a \$25,000 matching gift from Elwyn Voss has brought in an additional \$16,000. Elwyn and his wife Jennifer have generously agreed to match five gifts of \$5,000 each.

The true cost to support one Ambassador is \$300. Support includes: Forum fees, NYSAS membership, and overnight accommodations/meals. The following itemizes gift opportunities over a 5-year pledge period:

- ▶ \$5,000 will support 1 Class of 15 Ambassadors annually
- ▶ \$25,000 supports 5 years of programming for 15 Ambassadors annually
- ▶ \$50,000 supports 10 years of programming
- ▶ \$100,000 ensures endowment status and naming rights of the Ambassador program for the donor

To make a gift go to www.nysagsociety.org or contact Ann Noble Shephard at 315-727-5449, ann@nysagsociety.org

Ambassador Objectives:

- ▶ Exposure to academic and research opportunities in the ag and food industry
- ▶ A high-level venue and audience to practice professional business skills
- ▶ Connection to future employers
- ▶ A "resume builder" for participants
- ▶ A "pre-LEAD" or feeder program for LEAD NY

NYS AG SOCIETY FOUNDATION & PAVILION CENTRAL SCHOOL PARTNER

In February, the NYS Ag Society Foundation awarded Pavilion Central School with a \$2,500 grant to help launch agricultural-based curriculum and after-school activities for middle and high school students as soon as fall 2017.

"We want to build capacity at Pavilion for agribusinesses," said Sheila Eigenbrod, PCS principal. Pavilion has over 700 students, preK through 12th grade, in Genesee, Livingston and Wyoming counties. "Locally as well as nationally, agriculture is recognized as a proven career path with increasing employment demand. Students need exposure to what modern agriculture is and the opportunities that are available to them in such diverse

disciplines as mathematics, sales, human resources, business and technology. For our district, we've taken a comprehensive look at our courses and involved teachers from numerous disciplines to chart a future course." This fall, the district will launch a number of ag education courses, and as a secondary goal, reintroduce an FFA program for middle and high school age students. Classes under consideration are Environmental Science, Ag Science I, Animal Science, Agribusiness, Food Science, Ag Technology 7, and Precision Ag.

In 2017, the Foundation will support additional projects in Kingston, Central NY, and NYC, which will educate and train youth from ages 3 to 22. In total, 18 grant applications were received.

For more information on the 2017 NYS Ag Society Foundation grant program, go to www.nysagsociety.org or contact Ann Noble Shephard at 315-727-5449, ann@nysagsociety.org.

Foundation Donors Support Organizations Targeting Youth & Young Adults in 2017

1. \$2,500 to NY Animal Agriculture Coalition – Training industry spokespersons at the college level to conduct positive outreach to their non-farm peers on two college campuses.

2. \$2,500 to Pavilion Central School – Launching of agricultural education courses and new FFA chapter for middle and high school aged students in WNY school district.

3. \$2,500 to Concrete Safaris – Training peer mentors and teaching school aged children how to improve soil quality in NYC community garden.

4. \$2,500 to Kingston YMCA "The Dig Kids" – Training "the next generation of growers" through a farm-based youth development program; 20 youth to participate.



Pavilion Central School received one of four \$2,500 grants from the NYS Agricultural Society Foundation for 2017. From L to R: Jenny Harkins, John Pankow, Ken Ellison, Nicole Wittmeyer, Neil Winch, Treasurer Hans Kunze – NYS Agricultural Society Foundation, Sheila Eigenbrod, Melissa Wawrzynski, Matt Roth, Ann Pursel, Catherine Johnston.



All contributions are appreciated and will help grow a positive industry message. Gifts of cash, appreciated securities, bequests, etc. make giving easy. Credit cards can also be accepted. Call or email Ann Shephard for more information at 315-727-5449 or ann@nysagsociety.org. For more information or to make a gift, go to: www.nysagsociety.org



USE OUR WEBSITE FOR QUESTIONS AND NOMINATIONS!

A continuous work-in-progress, the NYS Ag Society website – www.nysagsociety.org – provides a wealth of information on NYS agriculture, membership opportunities, the Forum, the NYS Ag Society Foundation, Ambassadors, and our numerous award programs. Visit today or encourage others looking for assistance with ag related questions.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE FORUM

The NYS Ag Society has a new president – Beth Claypoole, Executive Director of Wayne County CCE! Beth replaces Hans Kunze, who has served as both treasurer and president. Beth is the 121st president of the NYS Agricultural Society and the fourth woman. Previous female presidents have included Eleanor Jacobs, Sandra Prokop, and Diane Held who immediately preceded Hans.

Welcome Gabby Domagala to the NYS Agricultural Society Board. Gabby is a SUNY Cobleskill student and a 2016 Forum Ambassador Scholar. She joins fellow student director Veronique Krohn, who has recently joined Empire Livestock. Veronique was a Class 2 & 3 Ambassador participant.



Thank you to the NYS Wine Industry Association and supporting wineries for contributing wine to our Forum banquet. In total, nearly 25 organizations and businesses supplied food products to the Forum luncheon and banquet.

MEET OUR 2017 AWARD WINNERS

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CITATION

– Jim Trezise, retiring president of the NY Wine & Grape Foundation, received the coveted Distinguished Service Citation, sponsored by NY Farm Bureau Member Services. For six decades, the NYS Agricultural Society has recognized individuals who have dedicated a lifetime of service, resulting in outstanding contributions to NY agriculture. Trezise has served growers and vintners in numerous posts within the state, and has an international reputation as a speaker, industry analyst and professional wine judge.



L to R: Dick Church – Distinguished Service Committee Chair, Commissioner Richard Ball, Jim Trezise, Jeff Kirby – NY Farm Bureau, Hans Kunze – NYS Ag Society Past President.



Mel Chesbro of the NYS Fair received the 2017 Ag Promotion Award from Commissioner Ball.

AG PROMOTION AWARDS - The award recognizes individuals, groups and/or teams of partnering organizations that work to improve the community understanding of agriculture. The individual award winner in 2017 was Mel Chesbro, agriculture manager at the NYS Fair. Mel organizes fair competitions for livestock, wine, vegetables, fruit, honey, maple syrup, flowers, forage and grain. This includes 38,000 total entries. The 2017 group award winner was the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board. With the assistance of 60 volunteers, the Board hosted 200 students from 14 school districts spring 2016 to build awareness of agricultural careers in the greater Geneva area.

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR - The award promotes our state's food system by recognizing the quality, leadership and innovation demonstrated by NY farms and agribusinesses. The 2017 production category winner is Walnut Ridge Dairy, LLC of Lansing, NY. Walnut Ridge is a multi-generational, multi-family dairy operation, milking upwards of 1,400 cows. Founded in 2011, Hudson Valley Harvest of Kingston, NY – the agribusiness category winner - aggregates and distributes fruits, vegetables, proteins, and shelf-stable products from over 50 Hudson Valley farms to restaurants, grocers, and institutions throughout NY, NJ, CT and MA.

CAP CREAL JOURNALISM AWARDS – Named for farmer, Society member, and Assemblyman Harold “Cap” Creal, the Journalism Awards were created to inspire more coverage of the positive aspects of agriculture in NYS. 2017 awards were presented in the following categories: Print – News Story (Debra Groom – Empire Farm & Dairy Magazine), Feature (Liz Robbins – The New York Times), Series (Sue Henninger – Tompkins Weekly Newspaper), Editorial (Bob Confer – Lockport Union-Sun Journal), Audio/ Video – News Feature (Brian Frey – WSKG), Audio/Video for the Internet (“Trellis to Table” Podcast for Farmers and Brewers). The award is sponsored by Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity at Cornell University.

CENTURY & BICENTENNIAL FARM AWARDS - Sponsored by Farm Credit Northeast Ag Enhancement, the century and bicentennial program honors NY farms in continuous operation on the same land by the same family for 100 years or more. In 2017, farms in eastern NYS counties were recognized. A complete list of past winners can be found online at www.nysagsociety.org.

Century & Bicentennial Farm Awards (cont.)

- ▶ Kelder's Farm, Whitfield, NY, Ulster County established in 1779
- ▶ C&W Homesteads, LLC, Vernon, NY, Oneida County, established in 1916
- ▶ Indian Ladder Farms, Altamont, NY, Albany County, established in 1916
- ▶ Arnold Haven Farm, West Charlton, NY, Saratoga County, established in 1914
- ▶ Pin Oak Percherons Farm, Southport, NY, Chemung County, established in 1917
- ▶ Beekman Lane Farm, Beekmantown, NY, Clinton County, established in 1916
- ▶ Brookby Farm, Dover Plains, NY, Dutchess County, established in 1850
- ▶ Haroldly Acres, DeKalb Junction, NY, St. Lawrence County, established in 1910
- ▶ Yancey's Sugarbush & Dairy Farm, Croghan, NY, Lewis County, established in 1844



From West Charlton, NY, Arnold Haven Farm received a 2017 Centennial Farm Award.

FFA CHAPTER OF THE YEAR



The 2017 winner of the FFA Chapter of the Year is Tri-Valley Central School of Grahamsville, NY. The only agriculture program and FFA in Sullivan and Ulster counties, the organization works with over 150 members in grades 6-12. Sponsored by the NYS Grange.

NEXT GENERATION FARMER AWARD - Launched in 2016, this award recognizes both a long-standing operation who is excelling under new leadership and owner/operators who are brand new to agriculture and food production. Shannon Mason, the sixth generation at Cowbella Creamery at Danforth Jersey Farm in Jefferson, NY, was honored. The farm dates back to 1817. Shannon now operates the farm with family, and in 2010 created Cowbella – a farmstead creamery business, producing butter, yogurt, and bottled milk. Kyle Farms of Avon, NY was also recognized. Matt and DJ Kyle, with cousin Nate Hatch, manage a flock of 3,000 ewes for meat and wool production in Avon, NY. The Next Generation Farmer Award is sponsored by The Voss Group.

NYS FARM SAFETY AWARDS – 2017 NYS Farm Safety Award honorees include Ideal Dairy Farms of Hudson Falls, NY and Will-O-Crest Farms, LP of Clifton Springs. Both operations are large dairies, which operate with the assistance of numerous employees involved with livestock, machinery and field equipment. Farm safety programs do far more than reduce injuries and downtime. Rewards often include saving lives. Cargill, Inc. is the award sponsor.

Thank you program and award committee members for a fantastic Forum, which drew a crowd of nearly 500 people. Already work has begun on the 2018 program, which will focus on technology.

EVERYDAY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

On an almost daily basis, a visitor to the NYSAS website – www.nysagsociety.org – will submit a question concerning NYS agriculture which is fielded by either Jennifer Noble or Ann Shephard. Here's a quick sample from first quarter 2017:

A first for NYC?

A *NY Times* reporter sought confirmation for a Staten Island apartment complex – Urby – as having the first ever farmer-in-residence for the greater metropolitan area. In addition to many high-end amenities, the facility boasts of an urban garden tended to by farmer Zaro Bates.

Where is NYS agriculture?

This was asked by a Downstate father who was assisting his daughter with a school-related project. "Agriculture can be found just about anywhere" was the quick answer. Consider first a rooftop garden in the heart of Manhattan. As the discussion continued, we were able to talk about the many agricultural products that NYS is famous for and the diverse geography, natural resources and climate that makes production successful.

How does a dry winter impact agriculture?

This student from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University was looking for a soundbite for a news story on climate change and the impact on agricultural production in Central NY. As is often the case, Ann and Jennifer will recommend follow-up with NY Farm Bureau, the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, and/or Cornell Cooperative Extension.

**NEW YORK AGRICULTURAL
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Attn: Ann Shephard
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**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR FOR
JANUARY 4TH
FOR 2018 FORUM**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT!

Congratulations to Mary Jeanne Packer! For completing a written evaluation at the 2017 Forum, she receives a free registration, lunch and dinner at the 2018 Forum on January 4th. At the 2017 Forum, attendees had the opportunity to participate in instant polling throughout the day. What was the most impactful information you learned at the Forum? See these responses:

- ▶ Egos and personalities prevent or break-up collaboration
- ▶ People change because they feel the heat, not because they see the light!
- ▶ Build on your strengths; outsource your weaknesses
- ▶ Take risks; manage consequences

CAN YOU SUPPORT A FORUM AMBASSADOR? See page 4



Wyoming County was one of 43 exhibitors at the 2017 Forum.

THANK YOU MENTORS!

Thank you to the following individuals for being mentors to our 2017 Ambassadors. The job entails making introductions, answering questions, providing professional guidance and the like throughout the course of the Forum. If you're interested in being a mentor for the 2018 Forum, please contact Katie Carpenter at: 518.480.1978.

Diane Held
Dan Welch
Jean O'Toole
Elwyn Voss
Barb Hanselman
Dick Church
Mark Modzeleski
Eric LaClair
Rick Zimmerman
Todd Lighthall
Daren Phillips
Tim Veazey
Terry Hughes
Jeannette Kreher