

CALENDAR

Today

■ Germantown Planning Board 7 p.m. Town Hall, 50 Palatine Park Rd., Germantown 518-537-6687

Monday

■ Ancram Comprehensive Plan Committee 7 p.m. Town Hall, 1416 county Route 7, Ancram 518-329-6512

■ Ancram Town Board workshop 8 p.m. Town Hall, 1416 county Route 7, Ancram

■ Claverack Planning Board 7 p.m. Town Court Building, Route 217, Mellenville 518-672-7911

■ Clermont Town Board 7 p.m. Town Hall, 1795 Route 9, Clermont 518-537-6868

■ Germantown Fire District 7 p.m. Board of Fire Commissioners. Fire House, 181 Main Street, Germantown

■ Hudson Common Council informal meeting at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 520 Warren St., Hudson, 518-828-1030

■ Red Hook Planning Board 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, 7340 South Broadway, Red Hook 845-758-4606

■ Red Hook Village Board 7:30 p.m. Village Hall, 7467 South Broadway, Red Hook 845-758-1081

■ Rhinebeck Town Board 6:45 p.m. Town Hall, 80 East Market St., Rhinebeck

■ Webutuck School District Board of Education 7:30 p.m. 845-373-4100

Tuesday

■ Claverack Fire District 7 p.m. Board of Fire Commissioners. Fire House, 67 SR 23, Claverack

■ Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties. Board of Directors meeting at 7 p.m. at the Agroforestry Resource Center, Acra.

■ Hillsdale Zoning Board of Appeals 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, Main St., Hillsdale 518-325-5073

■ Hudson Conservation Advisory Council 6 p.m. City Hall, 520 Warren St., Hudson, 518-828-1030

■ Ichabod Crane Central School District Board of Education 7 p.m. High School Library, Route 9, Valatie 518-758-7575

■ Livingston Zoning Board of Appeals 7 p.m. Town Hall, county Route 19, Livingston 518-851-9441

■ New Lebanon Central School District Board of Education 7 p.m. Room 3, Walter B. Howard Elementary School, 14665 Route 22, New Lebanon 12125

■ New Lebanon Zoning Board of Appeals 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, 14755 Route 22, New Lebanon 518-794-8888

■ Rhinebeck Village Planning Board 7:30 p.m. Village Hall, 76 E. Market St., Rhinebeck 845-876-1922

■ Taghkanic Planning Board workshop 7 p.m. Town Hall, Route 82, West Taghkanic 518-851-7638

Wednesday

■ Copake Board of Ethics 4 p.m. Town Hall, 230 Mountain View Rd., Copake 518-329-1234

■ Copake Republicans Club 7 p.m. Town Hall, 347 Mountain View Rd., Copake

■ Ghent Planning Board 7 p.m. Town Hall, 2306 state Route 66, Ghent 518-392-4644

■ Greenport Town Board 7 p.m. Town Hall, Town Hall Dr., Greenport

■ Hudson Common Council Youth & Aging Committee 6 p.m. Arts, Entertainment & Tourism Committee 6:45 p.m. City Hall, 520 Warren St., Hudson, 518-828-1030

■ Hudson Industrial Development Agency 5:30 p.m. City Hall, 520 Warren St., Hudson, 518-828-1030. Tentative.

■ Livingston Planning Board 7 p.m. Town Hall, county Route 19, Livingston 518-851-9441

■ Milan Planning Board 7 p.m. Wilcox Memorial Town Hall, 20 Wilcox Circle, Milan 845-758-5133

■ Millerton Village Town Planning Board 7:30 p.m. Village Hall, Dutchess Avenue 518-789-4489

■ North East Town Planning Board 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, Maple Ave., North East 518-789-3778

■ Philmont Public Library Board of Trustees 7 p.m. Philmont Library, 101 Main St., Philmont 518-672-5010

■ Pine Plains Central School District Board of Education 7 p.m. Stissing Mountain Middle/High School Library, 2989 Church St., Pine Plains 518-398-7181

■ Stockport Town Board 7 p.m. Town Hall, 2787 Atlantic Ave., Hudson 518-828-9389

Home cooking, down to the soda

By Victoria Addison
Columbia-Greene Media

LEEDS — A food truck that might be familiar to Twin County residents continues to dish out home-cooked favorites, but you can now go to them.

Located at 969 Main St. in Leeds, Gracie's Luncheonette is a sit-down restaurant that serves a variety of classic dishes, whether it's a bacon cheeseburger topped with fried onions, barbecue chicken and a side of cornbread, or doughnuts topped with maple-flavored icing and bacon.

"It's American classics, so burgers, fried chicken, waffles, grilled cheese. It's pretty casual," said Andrew Spielberg, who owns Gracie's with his partner, Allyson Merritt.

But the restaurant's home-style dishes haven't always been served to customers inside a dining room that overlooks Main Street. Before the restaurant opened this past June, Gracie's was only accessible on the road.

Gracie's was started in 2014 with an all-black food truck and a dream shared between Spielberg and Merritt.

"Ally and I met at the CIA [Culinary Institute of America] so once we were connected it was always our goal," Spielberg said. "It just made sense."

Between Spielberg's cooking, Merritt's baking, and contributions from staff members, everything that Gracie's serves is homemade — even the American cheese.

Deriving from the historic



Gracie's owner Andrew Spielberg poses inside the restaurant, which opened in June.



Located at 969 Main Street in Leeds, Gracie's Luncheonette opened in June.

Mayflower Restaurant on Main Street in Catskill, Gracie's mixes its own soft drinks.

"We make everything from

scratch so we make our bread, our condiments — from ketchup to mayo to mustard — and we make our own hot

sauce and sodas," Spielberg said.

He added that Gracie's also tries to source their ingredients locally.

"Not much is in season right now, but I'm still getting at least 800 pounds of potatoes a week from Story Farms. We definitely like them," Spielberg laughed.

While all meals were initially cooked and dished out from the food truck, production and storage was done in the same building that would eventually become the restaurant. Spielberg and Merritt rented a commissary kitchen that was located downstairs but, due to production and storage demands, they eventually decided it was time to upgrade.

"We make everything from scratch so we have a lot of production that can't be done on a food truck," Spielberg said. "One day we said rather than bring the food to the truck why don't we just open a restaurant upstairs, and that's what we did."

The food truck is still used by Gracie's and can be seen parked behind the restaurant. Although it's not in season right now because of the weather, it will be back up and running once it warms up. The truck has made stops around the Twin Counties in the past, including Warren Street in Hudson.

"We go pretty much wherever people want," Spielberg said.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner on weekdays, except for Tuesday, and for brunch on the weekends. For more information about hours, catering services, or to view a menu, go to www.graciestruckny.com or visit them on Facebook @graciesny. A list of alcoholic beverages, which includes a selection of craft beers from around the area and wines from New York State, are also available online.

"I think people really appreciate having a home-cooked meal. Even though it's family food, it's done in a way that can't be replicated at chain restaurants," Spielberg said. "It's similar, but different."

To reach reporter Victoria Addison, email vaddison@registerstar.com or follow her on Twitter @VAddison_CGM.

CEDC funding reapproved, with \$22K increase

By Rosa Acheson
Columbia-Greene Media

HUDSON — The Columbia County Board of Supervisors voted to pass 2017 funding for the Columbia Economic Development Corporation recently.

Resolution No. 478-2016 proposed authorization for the county to enter into an agreement with the corporation, marking the first time CEDC funding has been reapproved since appointing new President and CEO F. Michael Tucker of Tucker Strategies. Tucker, who had been serving as interim president following a brief hold on CEDC funding that occurred between April and December 2015, took on the official role last May.

"At the CEDC board meeting, the CEDC board approved the 2017 economic development services contract with Columbia County. The contract renewal demonstrates the strong working relationship that CEDC has with the county, working in partnership for the benefit of all the residents of the county. CEDC sees the supervisors' approval of the 2017 contract as a vote of confidence and recognition of the CEDC's performance this year," Tucker said.

The county suspended its ongoing agreement with the CEDC in 2015, as the result of an audit from the Authorities Budget Office that criticized

conflicts of interest at the agency.

"We had done a review of CEDC based upon a complaint we received from members of the public regarding the Ginsberg project, looking to expand their operations. As a result of that review, we identified potential conflicts of interest with several CEDC board members. There was quite a bit of feedback and uproar among the Columbia County Board of Supervisors, saying they needed to take a look at what was going on and consider restructuring the CEDC," Deputy Director of Compliance Mike Farrar at the state Authorities Budget Office said.

"They put a hold on the funding until they got a better handle of what was going on and during that time, the CEDC underwent a change of management and took on efforts to try to develop better policies and procedures. Later in the year, the board looked at it and said they were happy with the changes made," Farrar said.

"In 2015, there was a short suspension of CEDC monetary support while the CEDC internal structure was reviewed and changed. This suspension was based on several factors, including alleged audit issues, a land contract and reimbursement to the county for the sale of the land," Gallatin Town Supervisor John C. Reilly said.

"Structurally, we wanted to take a look — it was an oppor-

tunity for both us and CEDC to reassess where we were and what direction we wanted to accomplish. The fact that we renewed the contract, with a minor increase, says we're satisfied," Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell said.

The increase from \$437,500 to \$460,000 represents CEDC assistance with county broadband efforts.

"It is a one-year contract and the funding has been increased from \$437,500, to \$460,000, in recognition of the additional role that CEDC has taken on, to support the Board of Supervisors Broadband Subcommittee. We're doing the staffing for that, as was discussed at length at the CEDC meeting several weeks ago," Tucker said.

"In terms of broadband, we're very pleased with the work they've done. They contracted out for someone to do a GIS [geographic information system] and they've done a lot of broadband mapping," Murell said.

Reilly credited much of CEDC's progress to new leadership.

"During 2016, the CEDC, through its reconstituted board and under the leadership of Michael Tucker and Terry Jones

worked with the economic development committee and the county to utterly reinvent the CEDC reporting of budgeting and financial presentations so that we ended 2016 with extremely well supported and truly transparent financial presentations at each EDC committee meeting. It was a tremendous effort on the part of Mr. Tucker and his team. At our final meeting of 2016 there were multiple positive comments by the supervisors on the committee on the tremendous progress the CEDC made over the course of 2016," Reilly said.

"The EDC [Economic Development Committee] recently approved and recommended to the full BOS [Board of Supervisors], a 2017 CEDC contract that included the full 2016 contract amount and reimbursement to the CEDC of some \$22,000 for the staffing expenses for work above and beyond their traditional roles. I think this is money well spent and likely does not come close to accounting for the multiple roles that the CEDC is now playing as a true partner of the EDC committee of the County Board of Supervisors."

Looking ahead to 2017, new farming ventures, small busi-

nesses, affordable housing and senior housing are all topics on the agenda for the CEDC, EDC and Board of Supervisors, Reilly said.

"I am looking forward to 2017 where I hope we can advance that relationship even further to proactively look at not only broadband but other topics raised by the EDC committee including support for new farming ventures, small businesses, affordable housing and senior housing. Mr. Tucker, Mr. Jones and the rest of the CEDC board should be commended for the tremendous strides they made over the last 18 months. They are now in a position to financially aid growing existing businesses and new businesses in the county and take a greater role as the face of well-planned and progressive economic development. The CEDC has attracted new membership, increased SBA funding and developed a bigger marketing presence which reflect positively on the county and the EDC going forward," Reilly said.

To reach reporter Rosa Acheson, call 518-828-1616 ext. 2309 or email racheson@registerstar.com. She is on Twitter at @roacheson_CGM.



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