



your business here

ulster county new york

THE FUTURE OF FILMMAKING

Versatile locations,
abundant talent,
big tax credits

ROOM TO GROW

The craft food
& beverage boom

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Experience what quality
of life is really like

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We are here to help
you relocate and grow
your business

Investing in the Future of Our Community:

\$112 MILLION

INVESTMENT IN MARY'S AVENUE CAMPUS:

24,800 

square feet in a new Emergency Department with a 3,600-square-foot Observation Unit

110,000 

total additional square feet

17,500 

square feet in a new ICU

12,000 

square feet in the new Family Birthplace

89 


newly renovated private rooms

9,800 

square feet in the new Day Surgery Suite

NEW 

main entrance and lobby

52 

private rooms in new medical-surgery tower

\$21.6 MILLION INVESTMENT IN MEDICAL VILLAGE ON BROADWAY

\$5 MILLION ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN STAFF WAGES

Our investment of \$133.6 million over the next five years will transform how healthcare is delivered in Ulster and Delaware counties. All with the goal of keeping your healthcare local and keeping our community strong.



HealthAlliance
Westchester Medical Center Health Network
Advancing care. Here.
hahv.org/investing



EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

Ulster County is amazing! Less than 100 miles from midtown Manhattan, business leaders and entrepreneurs are discovering new ways to successfully manage their businesses, raise families, and enjoy a better quality of life here—all at a lower cost. Ulster County's communities, including Woodstock, Kingston, Phoenicia, New Paltz, Saugerties, Ellenville, and the many others, support and nurture enterprising businesses. In today's networked world, an increasing number of professionals are learning that relocating to Ulster County means liberation, success, enjoyment, profit, and peace of mind.

With quick access to every major market in the Northeast, three NYS Thruway entrances, and close proximity to two major airports, Ulster County is an easy place to do business. Ulster offers lower business costs, an educated workforce, abundant low-cost real estate, stunning landscapes, exceptional recreational opportunities, charming villages and towns, a historic and dynamic city, a thriving cultural scene and history, and proximity to NYC by car, bus, and train. This is a logical choice for four-season living and locating so many types of businesses.

Ulster County is committed to helping your business grow and thrive. We designed the Office of Economic Development to be a one-stop shop for all businesses looking to expand, locate, or relocate here. To learn more about available sites, financing and incentives, and business counseling services, as well as business resources and other valuable programs, please call the office today at (845) 340-3556, email oed@co.ulster.ny.us, or visit UlsterForBusiness.com.

Ulster County's strategic location and exceptional quality of life make this an ideal location to live, do business, and raise a family. I invite you to partner with us, and together we will help you achieve your goals.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hein', written over a white background.

Michael P. Hein
Ulster County Executive



FIND YOUR FUTURE IN ELLENVILLE

IT'S ONE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AWAY.

Surrounded by gorgeous scenery and a tight-knit community, Ellenville is a place to call home – for you and your business.

Looking for assistance to start a new business, or relocate or expand the one you have? Grant funds for infrastructure costs are available to new and growing businesses that are creating jobs within the Village of Ellenville and the Town of Wawarsing. Call 845-340-3556 for more information and an application to the **Ellenville Million Economic Development Fund**.

What does your future hold? Find out in Ellenville, New York.



Michael P. Hein, County Executive
 (845) 340-3556 • oed@co.ulster.ny.us



Introducing: The Metro

Historic preservation, adaptive innovation and community wealth building transforming Kingston's Midtown Arts District

70,000 sq. feet of light manufacturing and maker's space plus **Stockade Works** film studio, post-production and training center



www.rupco.org



COUNTY LEGISLATURE MESSAGE

Dear Business Owner,

Ulster County government is working at every level to cultivate new business and maintain a healthy economic environment for existing companies.

Businesses enjoy bipartisan support and leadership with my colleagues James Maloney (R) and Hector Rodriguez (D) acting as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Legislature's Economic Development, Housing, Planning, and Transit Committee as well as serving with the Ulster County Economic Development Alliance. Working closely with the County Executive's office and focusing on successful and business-driven programs, we have developed outstanding services to assist and support your business.

Whether you are a manufacturing firm employing hundreds or a tech business working from your basement office, Ulster County is ready, willing, and able to meet your competitive needs. Our Office of Economic Development can be your gateway to dozens of programs, from the latest grants and tax incentives to helping you find, fund, and train new and existing employees.

We invite you to contact our Office of Economic Development to discuss how Ulster County can help your business efforts grow and flourish here in the heart of the Hudson Valley. Call them today at (845) 340-3556, email oed@co.ulster.ny.us, or visit UlsterForBusiness.com.

It is a pleasure doing business with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Ronk', written in a cursive style.

Ken Ronk, Chairman
Ulster County Legislature



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your business here ulster county new york



PERFECT SITES



AVAILABLE FUNDING



EDUCATED WORKFORCE

(845) 340-3556 • oed@co.ulster.ny.us • UlsterforBusiness.com



Outdated
an antique café
coffee · breakfast · lunch · bakery

Outdated Café, Kingston



Photo courtesy of ColorPage

Ulster Savings Bank



Photo by Seth Smoot

Josh Vogel of Blackcreek Mercantile & Trading Co., Kingston



Lynn and Mario Callaway,
Ollie & Otto, Glenford

Photo by Hillary Harvey



SUNY New Paltz

10 REASONS

Ulster County Works

- 1. STUNNING** Ulster County is a spectacular four-season playground, with the Shawangunk Ridge, the Catskills, the Hudson River, and fertile farmland throughout. **Access to free outdoor enjoyment is never far away.**
- 2. DELICIOUS** Ulster County is home to the farm-to-table movement. With hundreds of farms, over 30 craft beverage producers, amazing restaurants, and innumerable small-batch food and dessert makers, **it is a delectable place to live and work.**
- 3. EDUCATED** Ulster County's schools, together with SUNY New Paltz and SUNY Ulster, fuel businesses throughout the region with bright, talented workers in dozens of industry sectors. **Our schools are ready to help your business now.**
- 4. CREATIVE** Ulster County is defined by its creative community. Many of the nation's most acclaimed artists, musicians, and writers call the county home. With a competitive tax credit for filmmakers, **the area is primed to take center stage on the silver screen.**
- 5. PRODUCTIVE** Business is booming! The county is seeing significant growth in many job sectors, including technology, tourism, food and beverage, manufacturing, professional services, and many others. **Any industry can succeed in Ulster!**
- 6. GREEN** A firm commitment to the environment has made the county a national leader in sustainability. Ulster was featured in the December 2016 issue of *National Geographic* for the innovative work it has done in environmental preservation, efficiency, and outdoor recreation. We are proud to be the **first and only net-carbon-neutral county in New York State.**
- 7. WORLD CLASS** Some of the greatest events in the Northeast take place in Ulster County! From the Horse Shows In the Sun (HITS) in Saugerties, which includes top notch horse-jumping competitions, to Kingston's O+ art and music festival, to the Phoenicia Festival of the Voice and the Woodstock Film Festival, **the best of everything is right here.**
- 8. AFFORDABLE** Ulster County's reasonably priced real estate allows for a lower cost of living and doing business. From dollhouse Victorians to modern industrial lofts, **there is something for everyone in our charming towns, villages, city, and hamlets.**
- 9. FUN** You will never run out of exciting things to do in Ulster County, home to over 350 miles of hiking trails. From arts and cultural events and festivals to biking, kayaking, hang gliding, rock climbing, and skiing, **Ulster County will keep you entertained.**
- 10. INDISPENSABLE** The County's economic development experts are eager to help your business grow and thrive. We offer business counseling and assistance finding the best sites, the right partners for funding, and info on available programs and incentives for business development.



Where modern medicine meets compassionate care.

At Northern Dutchess Hospital, better care is happening close to home. We offer spacious private rooms big enough for you and your family, as well as an expanded emergency department for greater comfort. Plus, our state-of-the-art operating suites are equipped to handle the latest surgical techniques. Discover the modern hospital that puts patients first. **Learn more at healthquest.org/NDH**

NORTHERN
DUTCHESS HOSPITAL
HEALTHQUEST

ULSTER COUNTY IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Expert Assistance to Facilitate Solutions

From offering financial assistance to streamlining approvals, Ulster County is working to open doors and help locate your business here. The Office of Economic Development can connect you with the right partners for funding and the right programs for businesses development. The aggressive incentives locally and statewide (including START-UP NY) make Ulster County a great place to operate a business. Please call us at (845) 340-3556 or email oed@co.ulster.ny.us to see how we can assist you.

Federal and New York State Grant & Tax Credit programs assist businesses that create jobs and make infrastructure investments.

The Ulster County Industrial Development Agency offers bonding as well as sales, mortgage, and real property tax abatements for qualified projects.

The Ulster County Revolving Loan Funds provide gap financing at low interest for qualified projects.

The Ulster County Ready2Go Program matches public sector funding and technical assistance with private sector investment to proactively encourage site plan approvals.

The Ulster County Shovel Ready Program offers municipalities access to funding for road, water, sewer, and other infrastructure needed for industrial development.

The Mid-Hudson Small Business Development Center offers free business counseling.

Ulster County's Workforce Readiness Programs offer resources for businesses striving to find the perfect employees and improve the skills of their employees through collaborations between the County, SUNY Ulster, and Ulster BOCES.

The Ulster County Chamber of Commerce, the New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with other local chambers provide a network of support for county businesses.



Ulster County Facts

to support your business

100 MILES FROM NYC ENVIABLE QUALITY OF LIFE LOWER COSTS
EDUCATED WORKFORCE CONNECTED BY TRAIN, BUS, AND NYS THRUWAY
WORLD-CLASS RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
GROWING TECH SECTOR 4 SEASONS RECREATION TOURIST DESTINATION

TOP PRIVATE INDUSTRY SECTORS

Ranked by total workers



Education and Health Services



Trade, Transportation and Utilities



Leisure and Hospitality



Professional and Business Services



Manufacturing



Construction



Financial Activities



Information



Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

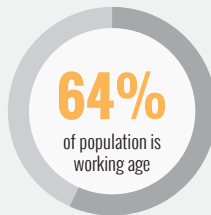


Other Services



182,493

TOTAL POPULATION

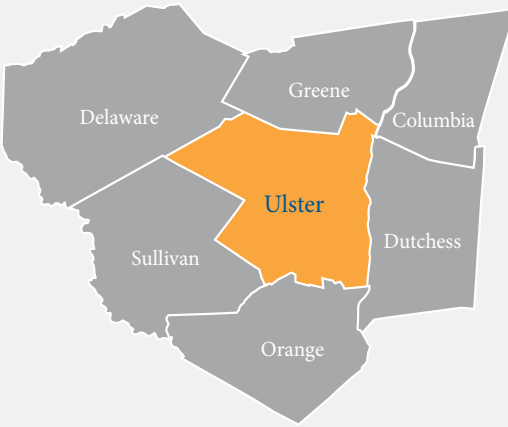


8.4%

Projected population growth of 25-40 year olds from 2013-2020

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2015 ACS; NYS Department of Labor, Division of Research and Statistics; EMSI Analyst; United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics QCEW.

EXPANSIVE LABORSHED



Ulster County's labor pool includes residents of Ulster, Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, and Sullivan counties in New York State, with a combined population of over

**680,000 RESIDENTS
BETWEEN THE
AGES OF 18 AND 64**

Ulster County residents work where they live: two-thirds of County residents commute within the County.

LOW COST OF
DOING BUSINESS

\$

\$31,045

average private annual salary

\$58,918

median household income



69%

homeownership rate



\$222,800

median home value



HAVE IT ALL IN ULSTER COUNTY

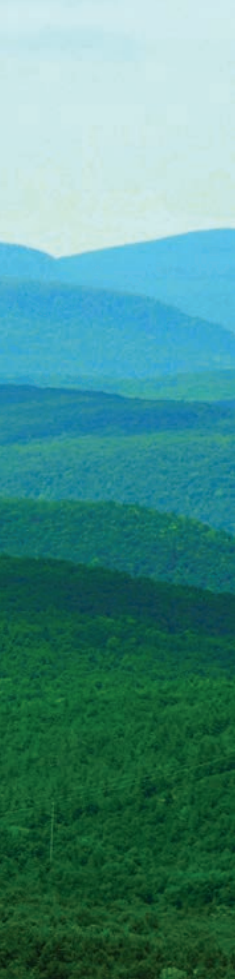
Hang gliding in the Rondout Valley



Redwood Bar + Restaurant, Kingston



Honor's Haven Resort, Ellenville




Hard at work in the Mohonk Preserve

Restore the life side of your work-life balance.

Ulster stretches over three spectacular geographical regions: the Hudson River Valley, the Catskill Mountains, and the Shawangunk Ridge. Beyond the natural beauty of its landscape, Ulster's diverse cultural fabric weaves together accomplished artists, musicians, chefs, farmers, thespians, and entrepreneurs in a creative and innovative community. With so much to see and do, Ulster offers plenty of opportunities to restore your work-life balance.

The county houses beautiful towns, from the quaint charm of New Paltz to the industrial architecture of Saugerties, to the towering murals and Revolutionary War-era stone houses that exist side by side in the city of Kingston. Museums and cultural heritage sites capture the county's ample history. Every place has its own distinct personality, but they are all called home by generations of professionals in tech, manufacturing, hospitality, the food and beverage industry, and so many more—who know how to enjoy life when they are not working.

Many of the best restaurants in the region can be found here as well. Farm-to-table is the rule, not the exception, and restaurateurs make it a point to use ingredients grown by their neighbors. It all pairs perfectly with locally made hand-crafted beer, wine, hard cider, or spirits, so you can pick your pleasure.

Just 100 miles north of New York City, Ulster has access to the biggest markets in the Northeast, making it the perfect place when you are working, and when you are not. **Call the Office of Economic Development and we will help you make it happen.** 



KINGSTON

Renaissance Machine

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS IN KINGSTON

The Kingston Waterfront on the Rondout Creek

Visitors from around the world amble around the Stockade District, dipping into art galleries, one-of-a-kind shops, bars, and farm-to-table restaurants under towering murals from world-renowned artists. Just across town, the Rondout neighborhood bustles with activity, with boats coming and going on the river and people strolling along the revitalized waterfront promenade. With the arrival of new, visionary pioneers, Kingston is in the throes of a renaissance.

The new Kingston is not about one person or one company. It is made up of the collective stories of creative entrepreneurs who sensed an opportunity. The movement is embodied by people like Michael Drapkin, who moved here three years ago to start Kingston Wine Company. “The idea to open up was a dream of mine,” he says. Drapkin also says the community welcomed him warmly. Drapkin was excited to see Brunette Wine Bar open just a couple of doors down from his store. “Their success is our success, and I think they feel the same way,” he says. They do, says Brunette co-owner Tracy Kennard. “There’s no doubt that having so many great businesses in the area has helped to make our city a destination,” she says.

Karina Cousineau could not agree more. “More is better for everyone,” she says. She founded Karina Dresses almost 10 years ago. Although most of her sales are done online, Cousineau jumped at the opportunity to move her Brooklyn-based business to a storefront in the Stockade District. “Kingston had all the right parts,” she says. “Once we were here we didn’t want to go back. It’s a better quality of life.” While the beginning of Kingston’s latest renaissance can be traced to a number of different sources, they all seemed to coalesce seven years ago with the first O+ Festival.

The O+ Festival has become a mainstay of the Kingston community, bringing artists and musicians together with healthcare practitioners, who provide health services free of charge. Co-founder Joe Concra says, “I’ve never lived anywhere else where a bunch of doctors and caregivers would get together and do something like that.” In the first five years, the festival facilitated 7,000 hours of dental and clinic visits to over 750 artists and musicians. World-renowned artists like Baltimore-based Gaia are invited to the city every year to adorn buildings with evocative murals. Gaia’s massive *Artemis Emerging*



Michael Drapkin, Kingston Wine Company



Micah Blumenthal, O+ Festival



Artemis Emerging from the Quarry mural by Gaia, part of the O+ Festival



Community conversation on gentrification at the Lace Mill, Kingston




from the Quarry spans four stories of a former opera house. Micah Blumenthal is the Festival’s creative and technical director. He moved from Astoria seven years ago, and has become one of Kingston’s greatest advocates.

“I prefer to refer to Brooklyn as Kingston South,” he says regarding the trope of dubbing upstate towns “the new Brooklyn.” Blumenthal says “In Astoria—though I loved it—there wasn’t a sense of community. This area has a greater sense of community than any place I’ve ever known.” What defines Kingston, he explains, is not only its creative spirit, but its willingness to give back. Many in the community donate their time and effort to reinvest in the city.

Few have done as much as the Rural Ulster Preservation Company, or RUPCO. For over 35 years, RUPCO has assisted thousands of people with housing opportunities, and has preserved the city’s architectural heritage along the way. The not-for-profit purchases and renovates buildings, retrofitting them to conserve energy and provide great places to live for people at any income level. One such project is the Lace Mill, an old factory that sat abandoned for 20 years before RUPCO converted it into lofts for artists. The Lace Mill has become one of the hubs of the city’s Midtown Arts District, set to benefit from over \$3 million in state funding.

RUPCO is also developing another Midtown property into The Metro. It is partnering with actress and director Mary Stuart Masterson to convert the 70,000-square-foot building into a sound stage for film production, complete with post-production facilities and a robust training program to solidify the County as a hub for the film industry. Called Stockade Works, the project promises to bring hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of investment to the City and County. The rest of the building will host affordable space as a business incubator for entrepreneurs.

As Kingston’s community is enriched by more and more artists, musicians, and businesses, the city looks forward to unprecedented growth and prosperity. “The future looks very bright,” says RUPCO CEO Kevin O’Connor. Kingston is in the midst of its latest renaissance, and this one may be the greatest yet. 

One in a Million

County Investment Promises Big Returns in Ellenville

For decades, Ellenville was a gateway to the Hudson Valley. Visitors flocked to the Catskill resorts to bask in the region's splendor. Though it has been a while since these hotels flourished, the area has maintained its beauty. Lately, the village is expanding organically, with extended programming at Shadowland Stages, new shops and restaurants, and better access to gorgeous trails. The Ellenville Million offers the capacity to elevate the village of Ellenville and the town of Wawarsing to new heights. Brendan Burke, art director at Shadowland Stages, says, "Ellenville has always been about one word: potential."



The Ellenville Million—an initiative by County Executive Mike Hein—includes a million dollars to revamp the economy. The initiative offers assistance with major development in infrastructure, architecture, recreation, and support for new and expanding businesses. A \$150,000 economic development fund is "designed to defray engineering costs and other necessary infrastructure expenses associated with potential new development," explains County Executive Mike Hein. It "provides cash incentives for job creation." There is also a grant program to help businesses on Main Street renovate their facades. And \$100,000 was dedicated to promotion and marketing of Ellenville. Lastly, water and sewer infrastructure is being expanded to meet the needs of resource-intensive industries.

"Living here is a lifestyle," says Julie Cohen-Lonstein, a local lawyer and proprietor of the Lonstein Law Office. As chair of the Ellenville Million Committee, Cohen-Lonstein helped shape the program. It is amazing to have "the ability to hike after work every

day,” she explains. Outdoor activities include hiking the 4,600 acres of Sam’s Point Preserve, home to Verkeerderkill Falls, the highest waterfall on the Shawangunk Ridge. Nearby Lippman Park has some of the best technical mountain biking trails in the Northeast. Many frequent Northeast Off-Road Adventures for off-roading classes on the 68-acre facility. It caters to everyone, from beginners to experts, with a fleet of modified Jeep Wranglers. Ellenville is also known as the hang gliding

capitol of the Northeast, offering lessons at Mountain Wings hang gliding school. Along with this plethora of outdoor activities, there is plenty going on in the village as well.


Shadowland Stages has been a community anchor for almost a century. Hosting world-class shows at affordable prices, it is a Hudson Valley gem. Brendan Burke is happy to see the community develop. He says “there’s a little more vibrancy” over the past few years. The theater provides an influx of visitors who frequent Ellenville’s numerous restaurants for a pre-show dinner.

Aroma Thyme Bistro is a mainstay, serving inspired dishes alongside an award-winning wine list since 2003. “Ellenville has changed drastically,” says chef/owner Marcus Guiliano. His restaurant is doing better than ever, as more people visit the area. “It’s a community I can not only happily live in, but make money in,” Guiliano says. His neighbors at Gaby’s offer Mexican dishes that go perfectly with a margarita. At the Publik House, guests enjoy comfort food done right, whether it is chicken etouffee or a house-made burger.

Ellenville offers inexpensive real estate, waiting for new owners to make their mark. With the Ellenville Million, there has never been a better time for businesses to set up shop. But there are intangible benefits to relocating here as well. Julie Cohen-



Aroma Thyme Bistro

Lonstein says being a member of the community has shaped her success. “Living here gave me so many opportunities,” she says. It is like “unpacking and un-complicating your existence.” The O&W Rail Line has been reborn as a rail trail, introducing visitors once again to the area’s natural beauty. With reasonable real estate, beautiful views, and business-friendly local government, Ellenville can once again claim its mantle as a gateway to the Hudson Valley. 



Judd Hirsch performing at Shadowland Stages



The weekly drum circle on the Woodstock Village Green

Greater than the Sum of Its Parts

ULSTER COUNTY TOWNS OFFER SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

From New Paltz's college-town vibe to Woodstock's vibrant arts community, Ulster County towns come in a variety of different flavors. Each has its own distinct personality, but all offer breathtaking scenery and access to outdoor recreation. The area is renowned for its creative spirit, shaping the stories of our towns and villages into something unique, and imbuing each with a real sense of place. Whether you are looking to mingle with artists and musicians, soak in centuries of history, or get right down to business, Ulster has the perfect town for you.

Woodstock: America's Most Famous Small Town

For decades, **Woodstock** has been an artists' enclave, famous for inspiring sculptors, painters, and of course musicians. The same spirit that attracted Bob Dylan and The Band remains, drawing everything from weekly drum circles in the Village Green to international musicians at the Bearsville Theater. The town is also home to incredible events, such as the Woodstock Bookfest and the Woodstock Film Festival, which draw A-list actors, producers, and directors from around the world. When these stars want to film in Ulster County, The Hudson Valley Film Commission is here to help. Woodstock also hosts the Byrdcliffe Guild, one of the nation's oldest and most renowned centers for the arts. The Village Green sits at the center of walkable streets with restaurants, shops, and galleries, and the town is surrounded by lush, verdant woods. Just 15 miles east in the town of **Shandaken** lies the hamlet of **Phoenicia**, one of the coolest small towns



Photo by Eva Deitch

Shopping on Partition Street in Saugerties

in America and home to the acclaimed Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice, drawing thousands of visitors every year for nationally acclaimed operatic and classical performances. The Emerson Resort and Spa is also nearby. It is no surprise many visitors return to make this area their home.

Saugerties: Big Charm in a Small Package

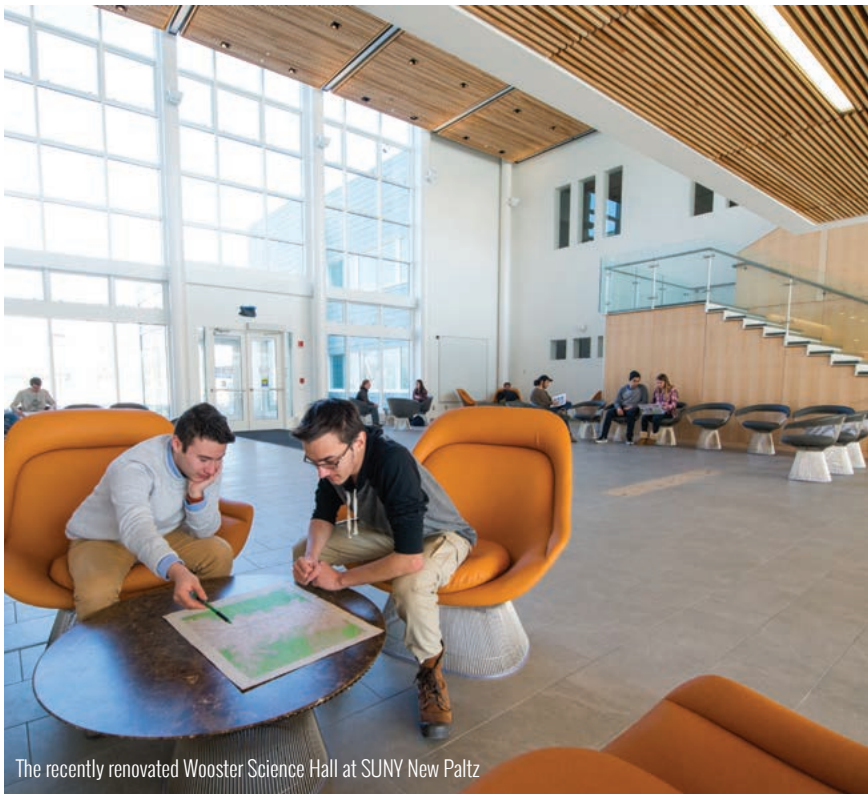
As an old mill town, **Saugerties** has held onto its hard-working ethos and infused it with a hearty dose of the arts. Acres of brick buildings now house destination resorts like Diamond Mills, performance spaces, and a dazzling array of antique shops. The town has its own festivals and events, including the world-renowned HITS-on-the-Hudson horse show, which draws national talent for a horse jumping competition on its 100-acre facility. Epicures should not miss the Hudson Valley Garlic Festival, a two-day celebration of the beloved bulb that is the second-largest of its kind in the country. Saugerties has an ideal location sitting on the Hudson River, and still within an hour of several ski resorts, such as **Belleayre** and **Hunter Mountain**. It is perfect for those who spend their winters skiing and their summers on the water.

New Paltz: An Outdoor Playground

New Paltz is a quintessential college town. SUNY New Paltz has steadily climbed the rankings for the value and quality of its education. Students infuse the town with



Ryan Cronin in his New Paltz studio




optimism and a down-to-earth, welcoming ethos, populating its many cafés, galleries, and restaurants. The school contributes steadily to a ready and able workforce, and as our industries develop, the County retains more and more graduates, keeping talent in the area. Assisting those industries is the college's Advanced Manufacturing Center, including the region's largest 3D printing lab, which works directly with local manufacturers and entrepreneurs to help their products take shape. And there is much more to the area than a great college. With its pristine natural beauty and vibrant community, it draws visitors from all over the world. The famous Mohonk Preserve, just a few miles out of town, boasts 8,000 acres of biking, hiking, and cross-country trails, along with some of the best rock climbing in the Northeast. The Mohonk Mountain House is a pillar of the community, and has been delighting visitors for decades with its old-world luxury. New Paltz is also one of the best places to eat in the Hudson Valley, whether you are looking for an organic egg scramble from Main Street Bistro or wild boar ragu over hand-rolled ricotta gnocchi from A Tavola. New Paltz also sits at the center of Hudson Valley's wine country. It boasts three vineyards at the foot of the Shawangunks and close access to **Marlborough's** incredible wineries and cideries tucked between its rolling hills. North of New Paltz is the village of **Rosendale**, a hub for festivals and home to the Rosendale Theatre and the Rosendale Trestle, a refurbished pedestrian walkway spanning the picturesque Rondout Creek.

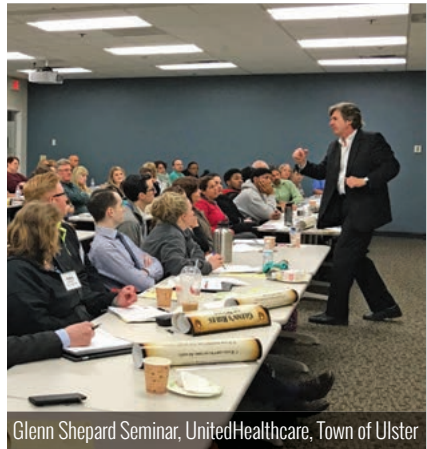
Town of Ulster: Commercial Capital

Sharing a border with Kingston and the Hudson River, the **Town of Ulster** is the County's retail center. Known as the Business Hub of Ulster County, the town features millions of shovel-ready square feet for businesses looking to settle in the area's commercial cluster. The town's government is business-friendly, accommodating, and willing to go the extra mile. Aside from massive stand-alone structures for shopping markets and big box stores, there is a notable complex primed for development. Tech City, a former IBM campus, is the beneficiary of a comprehensive development strategy and offers a diverse set of resources to suit just about any business, including industrial-scale water and electricity infrastructure, as well as both regular and dark fiber communication trunks. From massive warehouses to modern offices, the property is a blank slate waiting to be imprinted upon.

And So Many More...

Ulster County's towns and villages offer charming downtown centers that enhance their sense of community. Much of **Hurley** lies within the designated Catskill State Park. The Hurley Historic District contains 10 original houses dating to the 18th century. Hurley's Annual Stone House Day in July offers visitors and residents the chance to step back in time. The town of **Marlborough** is right on the Hudson River. It is home to Buttermilk Falls, a luxurious spa and inn and the Falcon Underground New York Taproom. Just north is **Highland**, an up-and-coming small town that is seeing a variety of new shops, restaurants, and breweries moving in. Highland sits at the western edge of the Walkway Over the Hudson, which drew over 500,000 from around the world in 2016 and is home to Rocking Horse Ranch, America's favorite family resort.

West of Highland is the town of **Gardiner**. Along with acres of beautiful farmland, Gardiner boasts a charming downtown area with exceptional farm-to-table restaurants and Tuthilltown Spirits, the first distillery in New York State since Prohibition. Lastly, **Esopus**, much like **Marbletown**, **Olive**, **Plattekill**, **Rochester**, **Denning**, **Hardenburgh**, and **Shawangunk**, has some of the most beautiful scenery in New York State, with access to acres of parks and forests to explore. With so much variety, there is a town in Ulster for everybody to call home. 

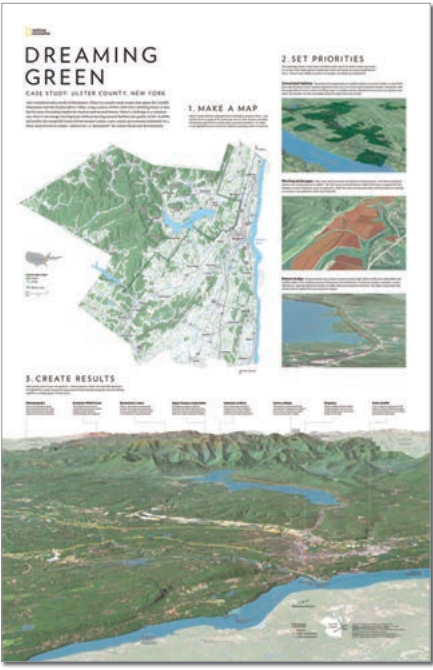




GOING GREEN

Ulster County is the most environmentally friendly county in New York State.

Ulster is leading the way as the most environmentally friendly county in New York State, and its commitment to clean energy has garnered national attention. The County earned a spot on the EPA's list of top 30 local governments for green energy. In December 2016, it was featured in *National Geographic* (graphic on right) for its ongoing efforts in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and nature conservation. The article highlights the County's tremendous successes, like the




Above: In 2015, Ulster County installed nine free electric car-charging stations at locations across the County

John Burroughs Black Creek Corridor, which filled a gap in the wildlife pathway for blueback herring and provided acres of trails for hikers. Ulster recognizes the benefits of preservation not only to the ecosystem, but to the local economy, and 2015 generated more than \$500 million in tourism spending.

From border to border, Ulster County government converted its bus fleet to biodiesel, switched to LED lighting and is installing solar arrays to become even more efficient. It purchases 100% of its electricity from renewable resources, making it the first and only net-carbon-neutral county so far in New York State. Ulster also boasts more than a dozen electric car-charging stations, the most municipal-sponsored locations in the state. It is also steadily converting its vehicle fleet to fuel efficient and electric cars to cut emissions.

SUNY Ulster's Kingston Center was renovated from a former elementary school to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and boasts energy-efficient heating and cooling, LED lighting, car-charging stations, and permeable pavement and bioretention ponds that reduce stormwater runoff. County Executive Mike Hein envisioned and oversaw the project. "Ulster County is leading the way as the most environmentally friendly County in New York State," he says. "I firmly believe that government must lead by example."

"In Ulster County, people don't have to choose between fiscal responsibility and social responsibility. They can have both by embracing innovation and change through thoughtful planning and forward thinking," says the County Executive. 



**100% ELECTRICITY
PURCHASED FROM
RENEWABLE SOURCES**



**HIGHEST NUMBER OF
MUNICIPAL-SPONSORED
ELECTRIC CAR
CHARGING STATIONS
in New York State**



**RANKED 26TH
NATIONALLY FOR
GREEN POWER USAGE
among local governments**

As reported by the U.S.
Environmental Protection Agency



**FIRST & ONLY
NET CARBON NEUTRAL
COUNTY IN THE STATE***

*As of December 2016

A photograph of three healthcare professionals standing in a hospital room. On the left is a woman in a black lab coat with a stethoscope around her neck. In the center is a woman in blue scrubs with a name tag that reads 'Amy Galt' and 'Ulster County Hospital'. On the right is a man in green scrubs. They are all smiling and standing in front of medical equipment and a hospital bed.

The Hudson Valley's Healthiest County

HEALTH SERVICES IN ULSTER COUNTY

A robust fitness and healthcare infrastructure is an important part of choosing a place to live and do business. With some of the best health services in the region, Ulster County residents know they will be taken care of. Ulster was recently named the healthiest county in the Hudson Valley and 15th healthiest in New York State by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. With hospital campuses in Kingston and Ellenville, dozens of health service facilities, and many independent practices to choose from, Ulster County has you covered.

Investment in programs rolling out over the next several years will further bolster the County's quality of care. HealthAlliance, a member of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network, announced a \$133 million expansion of its two hospitals in Kingston. The Marys Avenue campus is undergoing renovation, along with the addition of 110,000 square feet of space. Once the renovations and expansion are completed, it will be one of the most advanced community hospitals in the nation.

The \$133 million investment is projected to generate more than \$319 million in economic impact over the next five years. The Broadway Campus is being converted into a medical village, with space for health and human services providers to open practices and adjacent businesses. The model provides opportunities for entrepreneurs

in the health industry. It is supported by Kingston's educational corridor, including a unique SUNY Ulster campus housing the acclaimed Hudson Valley Pathways Academy Early College High School. P-TECH provides hands-on training for high schoolers to graduate with an associate's degree as well as a Regents diploma, along with career training in a variety of STEM-related industries. The city and surrounding area are known for their fine physicians, and more than 350 of the doctors are credentialed at HealthAlliance Hospital.




From left to right: Eric Stamberg, MD, and Lee Isabell, DO, of Health Quest

Health Quest, the County's other main health provider, is planning investments of its own. While the company's flagship hospitals are in Dutchess and Putnam counties, it has a substantial footprint in Ulster. "We want individuals to stay close to home for their care, rather than driving down to the city or up to Albany for great doctors," says President Dr. Glenn Loomis. Current locations include seven separate physicians' offices throughout the county. These offices include access to primary care, obstetrics, gynecology, neurology, cardiology, rheumatology, cancer care, and medical imaging, offering many residents the care they need close to home.

Health Quest recently announced a \$22 million investment to open two new locations—one in Lloyd, and a multispecialty healthcare facility in the Town of Ulster. The latter, set for completion in 2019, includes urgent care, cancer care, diagnostic imaging, and many other services. The expansion comes shortly after the \$1.8 million Kingston Plaza location, a 15,000-square-foot office with OB/GYN, primary care, rheumatology, and cancer care, opened in 2016.

Health Quest and HealthAlliance are joined by Ellenville Regional Hospital, a rural center offering award-winning care to thousands of patients. The county is also home to dozens of private practices and family practitioners. Much like how impassioned, accomplished people in other industries choose to relocate to Ulster County, doctors who visit the area often choose to make it their home.

With so many options for care, Ulster County's residents do not need to make compromises where it counts: with their health. The County's health providers and hospitals offer wellness services and top-notch quality care for any ailment, helping residents stay healthy and happy. And, with hundreds of millions of dollars of investment planned, the quality of care in Ulster is set to get even better. 



Alec Baldwin is interviewed outside the Woodstock Playhouse before the world premiere of *Blind* at the 17th annual Woodstock Film Festival

Hollywood-on-Hudson

THE GROWING FILM INDUSTRY IN ULSTER COUNTY

Ulster County is no stranger to the big screen. The area’s historic city, quaint towns, verdant farmland, towering mountains, and, of course, its famous river have co-starred in films alongside A-list actors like Tom Cruise, Matt Damon, and Denzel Washington. Dozens of productions have been shot on location here, including *Taking Woodstock*, *Super Troopers*, *The Bourne Legacy*, and *American Gangster*, as well as a Martin Scorsese production in Kingston and Saugerties. With ample accommodations, easy access, and a huge range of ecological and scenic diversity, Ulster County is becoming a destination for big-budget and independent films alike. Last June, State officials announced a 40% film tax credit in Ulster County, making the area nationally competitive. Though Ulster has hosted a number of big-budget films, the next few years are expected to see a tremendous boom in production. Two organizations in particular have built a strong foundation for growth: the Woodstock Film Festival and the Hudson Valley Film Commission.

Meira Blaustein and Laurent Rejto launched the Woodstock Film Festival over 18 years ago. Rejto now heads the Hudson Valley Film Commission, while Blaustein continues to run the festival. The festival has grown into a cultural tour de force, attracting big names from across the world. Every year, actors like Alec Baldwin, Paul Rudd, Jane Fonda, and Steve Buscemi gather with famous directors and producers for a celebration of independent film. “It’s not a red-carpet, stretch-limousine kind of thing,” explains Blaustein. “People come here for the love of film and the love of filmmaking.” And many end up staying. Dozens of visitors buy homes, or come back for their next production. “People fall in love with the area,” she says. “They come for the festival and then come back to make films.” The result is steady growth in the industry, and no one knows that better than Laurent Rejto.

As head of the Hudson Valley Film Commission, Rejto's mission is to make Ulster County an easy choice for filmmakers. "We will do anything within our power to make sure you film your next production here," Rejto says. "Whatever it takes." He helps producers scout locations, hire crew members, find




Jason Lee and the cast of *Growing Up Smith* filming in Kingston

accommodations, negotiate tax credits, and with anything else they need. Convincing film crews to choose Ulster County is an easy sell. "It's the magic here. It's the beauty of it. It's hard not fall in love with it," says Rejto. Apart from its natural beauty, the area has a range of practical benefits to offer to filmmakers.

With scenery ranging from Kingston's urban, industrial architecture to Woodstock's small-town village feel, Ulster offers a huge variety of settings. "We have a completely different take on the landscape," explains Rejto. "The region has just about any scene you want." He recounts the time he traveled from a rural set outside of Kingston to one within the city center. "In the same day I traveled from 1920s to 1980s Texas, and I only had to drive 12 miles," he says. Kingston is also one of the only places upstate with the hotel capacity to support an entire film crew. Ulster's close proximity to New York City and affordability are no secret, but the relationship is mutual; film benefits the local economy.

In the past nine years, filmmakers have spent more than \$70 million throughout the region, including over \$8 million in 2016 alone. Rejto points out that the numbers only account for direct spending, and indirect spending at local businesses is likely many millions more. Rejto encourages filmmakers to hire as many locals as possible. "You're crazy if you don't," he says. "You're not just hiring one person. You're hiring everyone they know." Local workers may know the perfect spot for the next scene, or have a cousin with that crucial 1950s convertible or even know the best places to grab lunch. "Locals will be able to get you everything you need," Rejto explains. Currently, filmmakers hire 15 to 20 percent local. "We're trying to increase that," says Rejto.

Ulster County is excited about the announcement that a 40% tax credit was recently extended to the Catskill and Hudson Valley region. Ulster County has other tax benefits that make it among the least-expensive regions to do business. The impact could be substantial. Rejto says we may see "up to 10 times the production we've had in the past." If the region realizes even a portion of the projected growth, it could mean a tremendous boost to the local economy, including hundreds, if not thousands, of new jobs.

Ulster County has already come a long way since the Woodstock Film Festival began 18 years ago. With the 40% tax credit and other benefits, Ulster County can now compete on a national stage. Many in the area are excited for see what the future brings. Ever the optimist, Laurent Rejto says "I'm waiting for Daniel Craig to say 'Let's film the next James Bond movie here.'" Perhaps he will not have to wait much longer. 



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ULSTER Stockade Works

Mary Stuart Masterson's illustrious career in film spans several decades and countless projects. From her debut role in *The Stepford Wives* at only eight years old, Masterson has been lighting up the silver screen. She has starred in modern classics like *Fried Green Tomatoes* and *Benny & Joon*, and, more recently, as a recurring character on *NCIS* and *Law and Order: SVU*. Her latest project, however, is behind the camera. Since recently moving to the Hudson Valley, she and a team of film industry veterans are hard at work, laying the foundation to make the region the next big thing for filmmakers.

Masterson and chief operating officer Beth Davenport are the driving forces behind Stockade Works, a not-for-profit dedicated to creating a Hudson Valley filmmaking ecosystem on par with production hubs like Atlanta and Toronto. "I would say the biggest goal would be that we effectively transform this region to be the go-to place for television production," says Davenport. Headquartered in Kingston, Davenport and Masterson say that choosing Ulster County as the base


for their endeavor was a no-brainer. “We love the County,” Masterson says. “The coffee is great, the beer is great, the food is great, the people are great, the music is great, the schools are great. Obviously, the setting is great.” Apart from the food and the beer, there are a number of reasons Ulster holds a lot of potential for the film industry.

First and foremost is the recent extension of a new 40% tax credit to Ulster. The initiative was spearheaded by Masterson and County Executive Mike Hein, and makes the County competitive with other film destinations. “Mike Hein really worked hard to push the tax credit through—he’s been an amazing partner in laying the groundwork for the regional film ecosystem,” says Masterson. Coupled with a cheaper cost of doing business than New York City and a tremendous variety of architecture and scenery, Ulster holds tremendous opportunity.

Getting filmmakers to come to Ulster is only part of the story, however. Getting them to stay and hire locally is a different challenge. Traditionally, says Davenport, people will “bring their crews in, they’ll create a little bit of flourish, and then they’ll leave.” At the core of Stockade Works’ mission is to train and cultivate local talent, so that the money that filmmakers bring with them will stay in the community. If they are successful, Davenport explains, “the future of this region will have productions coming and hiring their crews locally, so we have a robust workforce.” Eventually, she says, “people will come up from the city to work here.”

While it is ambitious, Masterson and Davenport are up to the task. Along with plans for a complete production facility, they are planning to run a comprehensive training program, working directly with film projects to place trainees on the sets of films. This spring, they are planning a boot camp with 25 trainees on an independent film being filmed here. “The filmmaker read about [Stockade Works] and is all about it. She really believes in the boot camp idea,” says Masterson. She explains that trainees will “touch everything, and do a mock shoot of a few scenes, and experience all the different ways we communicate with each other, and how we organize ourselves.” Davenport says the boot camp will accommodate both novices and people with experience who are “looking to take it to the next level.” While they are starting small in 2017, the program is designed to scale up over time. “Imagine the future,” says Davenport. “We’ll have a crew production boot camp. We’ll have a post-production boot camp, and we’ll have a technology boot camp.”

Similar programs throughout the country have met with wild success. In Georgia, tax incentives and workforce development contributed to a staggering 500% expansion in the film industry since 2009. In 2016, film contributed over \$7 billion to the State’s economy. Often it is not enough just to extend a tax incentive. “You find in really healthy film ecosystems,” says Davenport, that “it’s not enough to just say, “We have an increased tax incentive, come and shoot here,” Really successful areas have schools and workforce support to create a robust network of talent.

So, while their work is cut out for them, Masterson and Davenport are committed to Stockade Works’ success. “All these things take time,” Masterson says. “They don’t happen overnight. It takes nurturing. It takes the support of Ulster County—which we have—which is amazing.” Davenport says the true mark of success would be a shorter commute. “I would love to be able to work where I live,” she explains. “And a lot of people feel that way.” 



Digital Evolution

ULSTER'S THRIVING TECH SECTOR

Two hundred and fifty tech sector experts are gathered in a renovated 1921 factory amid exposed brick, open ceilings, and modern, industrial light fixtures. Web developers rub shoulders with programmers and government officials, networking, recruiting, and waiting to hear from a curated series of speakers. Next up is Dennis Crowley, founder of Foursquare, who will walk the crowd through what it was like founding one of the world's most successful start-ups while strings of Edison bulbs twinkle outside over the courtyard of the historic Senate House, site of New York State's first government. The Hudson Valley Tech Meetup, as it is called, hosts the region's tech workers on a monthly basis. This time, they are at the Senate Garage in Uptown Kingston.

Hundreds in the tech industry have made the move and now call Ulster home. While it was easy to anticipate the beautiful scenery and near-instant access to outdoor recreation, many were surprised to see how robust and integrated the community has become. Much of the credit goes to the Hudson Valley Tech Meetup, cofounded by Kale Kaposhilin and Dan Stone of Kingston's Evolving Media Network, or EMN. Since 2003, EMN has been developing everything from web design, to branding, to mobile apps for national and local clients.

While Kaposhilin knew there were other people in the area doing similar work, there was no infrastructure for likeminded people to get together. In 2014, he and a couple of friends decided to do something about it, and Hudson Valley Tech Meetup was born. Since its inception, it has acted as the connective fabric for the local tech sector. "For me," says Kaposhilin, the Tech Meetup "was about gathering a community for people to

Ulster County is #1 in Startup Job Creation in the Northeast.
— U.S. Census Report

innovate together.” Today it has taken on a life of its own and is the definitive resource for members of the tech industry to network, find new opportunities, and get to know their neighbors.

Much like the Meetup, the tech industry has been steadily growing year over year. “It gets easier and easier every year to get away with working from home and working remotely,” says Dennis Crowley, founder of Foursquare, who recently relocated to Ulster. “That’s the way it’s done now,” adds Stone Ridge resident Kate Bradley Chernis. “You don’t always need to be in the same room” as your coworkers. Chernis recently launched Lately, a digital marketing software platform. Abe Uchitelle, president of Dragonsearch in Kingston, says that compared to just a few years ago “there’s absolutely more talent in the workforce here.” And, he adds, “it’s growing.” Dragonsearch opened its doors in 2007 as one of the first digital marketing firms specializing in search engine optimization. The original staff of 15 has grown to 25 employees, many recruited locally. “Our team is stronger now than it’s ever been, and the community is a big part of that,” says Uchitelle.

Although local tech companies like EMN and Dragonsearch are expanding, many locals work remotely for companies all over the country. Eileen Uchitelle, Abe’s wife, is one of the country’s leading coders in Ruby on Rails. She works for Github, an international company that hosts one of the world’s largest collections of open-source



Dragonsearch, Kingston

software. “Where you live isn’t necessarily determined by where you work anymore,” says John Fanning while sitting in Outdated, a cafe in Kingston that is an unofficial office of Ulster’s tech community. As co-executive director of the China-American Psychoanalytic Alliance, Fanning coordinates hundreds of professors from across the country to offer online-learning courses to the nascent psychoanalytic field in

China. “A place like Kingston is the perfect fit for me,” he says. “It’s relatively affordable and sustainable to live here.” Fanning did not expect to stay long when he moved here almost two years ago, but the vibrancy of the community drew him in. “It has a lot of amazing people and a lot of amazing things happening,” he says.

The community is one of the region’s greatest assets. People here are welcoming and are just excited to be a part of something. “Community was always something that my wife and I talked about wanting more of,” says Aaron Quint, chief scientist at Paperless Post, which designs digital stationery across a variety of mediums. “When we were in Brooklyn, there were people all around us but it was hard to feel really connected. In less than a year of living here we’ve become friends with all of our neighbors and we’re talking about starting a block party.” Kate Bradley Chernis could not agree more. “My neighbors are the most wonderful people,” she says. “If we knew they were coming with the house we would’ve paid more.”



One Epic Place, a co-working space and business incubator in New Paltz



National Business Technologies, Kingston

Besides just spending time with one another, many in the community are trying to make a difference. Matt Stinchcomb, the former Vice President of Values and Impact at Etsy, recently created the Good Work Institute with the goal of educating and helping thought leaders and entrepreneurs expand their idea of the bottom line beyond simple profit or loss. Like many in Ulster County, he believes that businesses should do their part to make the world a better place. Jordan Koschei is the lead product designer at Agrilyst, an intelligence platform for indoor farms. Koschei, who lives in New Paltz, is one of the region's greatest advocates. "Ten years from now, I won't be surprised if the Hudson Valley is a byword for a startup culture with a particular ethos," he says.

Gorgeous views, great trails, and the creative community contribute to Ulster County's quality of life, but, ultimately, businesses still need to turn a profit. "People want to be part of a community but also need to be able to do business," says Kale Kaposhilin. "If you can do that you can have it all." Luckily, in this interconnected day and age, many are able to do just that. Chris Skroupa founded Skytop Strategies, a company that hosts global forums on diverse topics ranging from cybersecurity to women in the boardroom. Initially, he considered opening his office in Long Island City, but, eventually landed in New Paltz. "You've got inexpensive real estate, you've got a stream of talent coming through the university, and you've got proximity to the city and airports," he says. He is currently saving 80% in overhead just on rent alone, and is scouting the area for a new building. "It gives us much more room to develop under much less pressure," he explains. "So many other businesses are missing the boat."

Skroupa's sentiments echo resoundingly among tech workers throughout Ulster County. "Why not live somewhere with a great community, for a lower cost of living?" Abe Uchitelle asks. "We can be somewhere beautiful and we don't have to make any compromises." Kale Kaposhilin agrees, saying, "We have certain freedoms and quality of life. We have access to markets in New York City and Boston. Distance isn't really a barrier." Kate Bradley Chernis is even more enthusiastic. "This is heaven. We live in heaven," she says. Like many others in Ulster County's tech industry, Chernis finds that 90 miles to Manhattan is not very long at all. "When people say I have to live in the city, I tell them 'No, I don't. Welcome to this century.'" 

View videos about Ulster County's exceptional work/life balance at UlsterforBusiness.com





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The 3D Printing Lab at SUNY New Paltz offers a Digital Design and Fabrication certification program, a joint venture between the schools of Science & Engineering and Fine & Performing Arts

Education & Workforce Training

Ulster County is home to excellent educational institutions. They work closely with the business community to develop a skilled and well-trained workforce.

SUNY NEW PALTZ

Committed to providing high-quality affordable education to students, SUNY New Paltz is the only residential four-year public university in the Mid-Hudson region that includes graduate programs. *US News* ranked it in the top 20 regional schools in the north, and Kiplingers named it one of top 100 best values among public colleges. The addition of a state-of-the-art 3D printing facility makes SUNY New Paltz a national competitor.

SUNY ULSTER

SUNY Ulster is a two-year community college with a dedicated, top-notch facility that specializes in workforce development. It offers over 50 degree programs and multiple industry training programs. The nationally recognized college was named by EDSmart as one of the Top 10 community colleges in New York State.

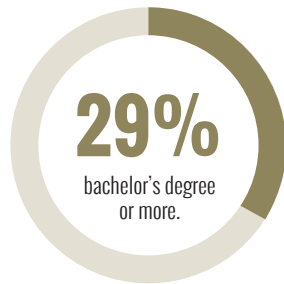
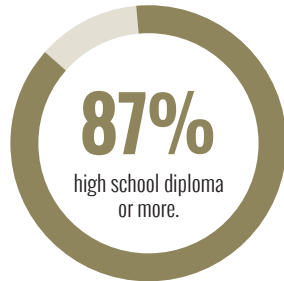
ULSTER BOCES

Providing career and technical education programs as well as adult education within the County, Ulster BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) opens doors to innovative and exciting programs for hundreds of students and adult learners each year. The acclaimed Hudson Valley Pathways Academy Early College High School provides hands-on training in STEM-related industries.

ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

(UCOET) provides job seekers and employers with the needed assistance to create a highly skilled and qualified workforce for Ulster County. Business services include job postings, employee screenings, tax credit information, customized training, and on-the-job training.

An Educated Workforce for Your Business



SUNY Ulster offers courses in solar energy for installers, sales specialists, and engineers



Healthy Business

Rick Alfandre and Vicki Koenig built their New Paltz office from the ground up to be a healthier, more efficient building, and the effect is palpable. The first thing you will notice (after Guinness, their affectionate Labrador Retriever greets you), is how easy it is to breathe inside. The air feels fresh and clean and flows freely throughout the sun-drenched space. Alfandre is an architect specializing in green buildings, and Koenig is a registered dietitian and nutritionist. The couple has found their niche in Ulster County, operating successful businesses that help people live healthier lives.



“When we talk about green buildings,” says Alfandre, “we’re talking about the health of people and places. We’re talking about wellbeing.” He is one of the region’s most knowledgeable green builders, and serves as the principal organizer of the Hudson Valley Green Building Expo, now in its sixth year. “A building that’s thermally comfortable, with good ventilation, built with non-toxic materials, can actually help people be more productive and healthier,” says Koenig. “We’re one of very few privately owned offices in the country with a LEED Platinum Certification.” Through his architecture firm and construction business, EcoBuilders, Alfandre has designed, built, and renovated hundreds of health- and environmentally conscious homes and commercial buildings throughout the Hudson Valley.

As a nutritionist and dietitian, Koenig works directly with her clients to help “people create health in their lives through nutrition and health counseling.” She uses a research-based approach to weight loss, diabetes, heart health, integrative medicine, and probiotics. “I offer people support that’s grounded. If I want to work


with a supplement, I want to make sure there's research to support it," and, she adds, "I've seen some tremendous results. I've helped people lose over 100 pounds." Koenig takes a holistic approach to her work, and often considers aspects of people's lives that other professionals may have ignored. It helps her offer more comprehensive, lasting solutions.

Alfandre also brings a more inclusive approach to his work. "I'm particularly focused on the connection of our built environment with the natural environment," he says. Alfandre is focused on creating harmony between the two, and constructing buildings in ways that are not just "less bad," but can give back over time. "These buildings are taking less from the environment," he says. "Moving forward, we're actually looking toward how we can restore the environment." Alfandre is a huge proponent of solar energy, and also installed equipment to collect rain for the office's non-potable water. Not only are there benefits for the environment, but the setup saves a lot of money. Taken in tandem, the building actually generates more power and collects more water than it uses.

Alfandre's commitment to the environment is inspired in part by the area he lives in. He says that the region's beauty actually informs his approach. "Given that we spend most of our time in buildings," he asks, "how can we reconnect ourselves with the beauty and wonder of where we live?" While Ulster County's natural assets abound, Koenig emphasizes that the community offers tremendous benefits as well. "There's an awareness and progressiveness around what's going on in the world, whether people have the same politics or not," Koenig says.

That awareness extends toward the food that people eat. Ulster's community is increasingly invested in eating healthier and buying local. "There's a lot of CSA farms and farmers' markets in Ulster County," she says. "There's a lot of awareness and interest in supporting local food." Koenig is also one of the organizers of the Wisdom of Women conference through the New Paltz Chamber of Commerce, which offers support and guidance to women in the area. "It reflects the uniqueness of New Paltz and Ulster County," she says. "It's an opportunity for women to support each other professionally." As a member of the New Paltz Chamber, Koenig advises that businesspeople give back to the community. "That's always a good way to become known as a new business," she says.

County government, say both Alfandre and Koenig, has been a valuable asset. "The County is definitely supportive," Alfandre says. "They've been doing all kinds of projects to become more efficient in various aspects." Ulster is currently the first and only County in New York State to buy its power from 100% renewable resources, and is currently underway on a number of environmentally minded projects (see *Going Green*, page 24). "One critical factor that influences people's overall health is their natural surroundings. Ulster County is blessed with a pristine environment and we have fought hard to protect and foster it," explains County Executive Mike Hein.

Like Koenig, Hein also recognizes the importance of nutrition to overall health. Since he took office, he has campaigned for the support of local food and beverage makers, who can now take advantage of a low-interest loan program, making fresh local produce more readily available. It is shared values like these that help define Ulster County. "What gets me up in the morning is being grateful that I'm able to help people," Koenig says. 



Harvesting hearty greens at the Farm Hub in Hurley

Farm-to-Fabulous

ADDING VALUE TO AGRICULTURE

For more than a century, Ulster County was known as the breadbasket for New York City. The County's farms continue to be an important part of the region's economy and its identity. Ulster contains high-quality farmland supporting over 500 farms, dozens of farmers' markets and CSAs, and hundreds of thriving businesses using fresh local produce. Food producers in the County benefit from ready access to 60 million consumers within a five-hour radius. Ulster not only has access to an abundance of local food, but also to food-processing facilities, and offers easy distribution to the largest markets in the Northeast. County Executive Mike Hein explains, "From Fruition's 'best-in-the-world' chocolates to the award-winning wines of Whitecliff Vineyard to our abundant apple orchards, which make Ulster County the 14th-largest producer in the nation, Ulster County's food and beverage industry is very successful."

Ulster is offering low-interest loans coupled with a new, streamlined application process for the food and beverage cluster. Ulster also supports the efforts of the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, which assists local farms with everything from public advocacy to marketing development.

Supporting farmers and food producers is crucial to Ulster County, and one valuable way to do that is through the creation of value-added products. One stellar example is the Farm Bridge located at Tech City in the Town of Ulster. The Farm Bridge partners with local farmers to create value-added, shelf-stable products, helping them sell what they grow without it spoiling. They offer over 50 farm production facilities, assistance with food regulations, and vast experience to create products under each farmer's



brand. The Farm Bridge also buys local produce for a variety of other goods, like surplus tomatoes for salsa, basil-tomato sauce, or tomato juice. “We’re a bridge between farmers and the people who want their products,” says Jim Hyland. Hyland began the Farm Bridge 10 years ago when he moved to New Paltz with his family. “Ulster is just an ideal spot,” he says. “We’re close to the city, Albany, and Boston. People can get to us very easily.” Over the past decade, he has had a front-row seat to the changing food economy in the region, and Farm Bridge’s output expanded by 55% between 2012 and 2015. “People are much more interested in where their food comes from,” he explains. Today, Ulster County is “a destination for people who care about their food.”

Few are more invested than Ulster’s diverse restaurateurs. Residents almost take it for granted that their meals are sourced from local produce. Many restaurants list proudly the farms they partner with for their produce, and even many of our pizzerias source their vegetables, cheese, tomato sauces, and other products locally. For Kingston restaurateur Maria Philippis, buying local is almost taken for granted. Philippis opened Boitson’s, a popular New American restaurant in 2010. She celebrated the launch of Kovo, a casual Greek spot last year. “Using local ingredients is a given,” she says. “I have a personal relationship to the farmers growing my food.” Those relationships are easy to cultivate in Ulster County. “There are farms all around,” Philippis explains. “Some will grow things specifically for you.”

Regardless of whether you are eating authentic French food at Le Canard in Kingston, or locally smoked trout at the Phoenicia Diner, your meal will pair great with locally made beers, wines, liquors, or ciders from one of Ulster’s dozens of passionate craft beverage producers. Ulster is the birthplace of New York’s burgeoning craft beverage industry. In 2003, Ralph Erenzo and Brian Lee set out to create the first New York State whiskey distillery since Prohibition. Through meticulous research, they uncovered an obscure piece of legislation that allowed them to get their license for just \$1,450, and Gardiner-based Tuthilltown Spirits was born. Since then, they have championed legislation that makes it easier to do business in New York State. It is easier than ever



Tuthilltown Spirits, Gardiner



Fruition Chocolate, Shokan

to open a brewery or distillery here, and with access to fresh local ingredients and an outpouring of support from County officials, there is no better place than Ulster County. Along with craft beverage producers throughout the County, Tuthilltown is seeing demand for their products increase year over year. Aficionados love their award-winning Baby Bourbon, a 100% corn whiskey aged in American oak. It goes great in a Manhattan, an Old-Fashioned, or even on the rocks. Others in the area, however, are finding more inventive uses.

Bryan Graham, cofounder of Fruition Chocolate in Shokan, says his best seller is the Hudson Valley Bourbon Dark Milk bar, made with Tuthilltown's Baby Bourbon. "We're using a lot of local ingredients," he says. In 2016, Graham was elated to hear Fruition's Maranon Canyon dark milk chocolate bar won best in competition at the International Chocolate Awards, held annually in London. "That was a surprise," he said. "It was a world competition and we were up against fifth-generation chocolate makers." Fruition Chocolate is also working with Westwind Farm to produce limited-run chocolate bars based on seasonal ingredients. "There's so many great farms," Graham says. "We've got such a bounty of great food." Staff at the Ulster County Office of Economic Development are working with Graham to help him not only secure a site for expansion, but to identify and support funding opportunities.

One of the biggest contributing factors is the outpouring of support from County officials for farmers and food producers. "They've been really helpful," says Graham, and a litany of other voices in the community say the same. Jim Hyland adds, "they've been supportive since the very beginning. They're there for you if you have an issue." But County support goes farther than simply picking up the phone. Business owners have access to a variety of financial assistance, including tax abatements and grants. When one of the County's largest employers in the food industry needed to expand, a supportive local government stepped up.

Bread Alone got its start way back in 1983, with the simple mission of baking old




Bread Alone, Lake Katrine

world bread from “flour as close to the natural state of the grain as possible. Good flour from good earth,” said founder Dan Leader in his 1993 book *Bread Alone: Bold Fresh Loaves From Your Own Hand*. Leader met with success and expanded over time, but by 2012 his business was taking off rapidly and he needed room to expand. County Executive Mike Hein stepped in. “I visited Bread Alone in 2011 and learned about their expansion needs,” he recalls. “I immediately went into action to assist the company. Ulster County does over \$500 million a year in agriculture and \$540 million in tourism, and the quality of Bread Alone attracts other businesses in those areas, which we need.” Today, Bread Alone’s 26,000-square-foot facility in Lake Katrine is complemented by four other locations. They employ over 140 people and can be found in over 30 farmers’ markets throughout New York State.

Last year, Ulster County targeted a low-interest loan program toward the food and beverage industry, and simplified the application process. “The availability of lower-interest loans coupled with the new streamlined application process will allow people who qualify to move quickly in today’s competitive business world,” says Suzanne Holt, Ulster County Office of Economic Development Director. Businesses are already feeling the impact. “I applied for the small loans immediately,” says Jim Hyland, who will take advantage of the opportunity to grow his business.

There are countless stories of County officials supporting other businesses in other ways as well. They will frequently offer their assistance for identifying and applying for grants, including the highly competitive Consolidated Funding Application grants through New York State. One such recipient was Charles Ferri, who chose to open the Star Distillery and Estate right in the town of Esopus (see Rising Star on page 44). The County Executive and Ulster County’s Office of Economic Development helped Ferri secure over \$1 million through state funding. “Without all of them working together, we might not be where we are now,” he says.

With vast and fertile farmland, incredible local farmers, a welcoming community, and local government willing to go to bat for business, Ulster County has earned its reputation as one of the epicenters of the farm-to-table movement. More and more people are making the move to Ulster County. Jim Hyland has never looked back. “I’ve been really happy since we’ve been here,” he says. “It’s been the best move I’ve ever made, for my business and for my family.” 

RISING STAR



CHARLES FERRI'S HANDCRAFTED ULTRAPREMIUM VODKA

Charles Ferri sits on the edge of his seat, talking animatedly about how his vodka is made. It begins, he says, with non-GMO corn, which is distilled and filtered five times through charcoal and lava rock for a vodka he insists will rival any in the world for quality. "I'm going to make the smoothest, most refined vodka in the marketplace," he expounds.


As for marketing, he says “I won’t put a celebrity’s face on it. It should speak for itself,” and Ferri is no stranger to celebrity. After leaving a lucrative Wall Street gig in 2004, he successfully opened several nightclubs, including the largest in the Hamptons, dubbed the Star Room. In 2014, he was even on the cast of a reality show on the Esquire Network called “Lucky Bastards,” following the lives of six bachelors living the high life in New York City. Today, however, you would never guess this happily married man was a reality TV star. Ferri’s defining characteristic is his passion. “My dream was to create a destination distillery,” he says. Now that he has found the perfect spot in Ulster County, that dream is closer than ever to reality.

Ferri created Star Vodka five years ago, looking for a gift he could leave with VIP clientele at the Star Room. Eventually, however, the project took on a life of its own and Ferri devoted himself to it full time. He even went to Moscow to see firsthand how some of the world’s most renowned brands made vodka. He left underwhelmed. “They were creating something as inexpensively as possible and telling people to mix it,” Ferri explains. He wanted a vodka so smooth you could drink it on the rocks, and learned quickly he would have to make it himself.

At first, he was reticent to come up with the massive capital needed to open his own distillery. Luckily, he found a willing and able partner in a small Oregon distillery that shared his values, and small-batch, handcrafted production began. Now that the brand has its footing, Ferri is excited to open his own production facility in the Ulster County town of Esopus. Ferri envisions the Star Estate and Distillery as a destination distillery and resort offering on-site accommodations and fine dining to enliven everything from weekends to weddings. As the plans come together for the distillery, he anticipates they will have their first batch of Hudson Valley-made vodka and gin in 2018. Almost immediately, he says, they will begin producing and barreling whiskey in the hopes of launching a new line as soon possible.

Opening up in New York State was part of the plan all along, but Ferri was delighted that the stars aligned to bring him to the Hudson Valley, not far from his childhood home in East Fishkill. “We’re right on the Hudson River, the most iconic river in the country,” he says. Apart from the region’s beauty, its resources made it a perfect fit. “It’s about the water,” Ferri says. “The Northeast has some of the best water in the country.” It’s also resistant to drought or shortages that plague other areas.

The location, he says, could not be better. “The great thing about the Hudson Valley is you’re right between Albany, Saratoga, and New York City,” he explains, and with easy access to interstates and several regional airports, markets in Boston, Philadelphia, or even Canada are within a reasonable distance. Another unexpected bonus was the outpouring of support from local government across the Hudson Valley, but especially from Ulster.

From the moment Ferri considered opening in Ulster, County Executive Mike Hein and Suzanne Holt, the Director of the Office of Economic Development, did everything in their power to make the process as painless as possible. “They have really made this a nice and pleasant experience,” Ferri says. “Suzanne and Mike welcomed us with open arms, and that makes it a lot easier. When you’re coming to a new region as a business owner it’s so important to be welcomed.” County officials offered more than just their welcome, they included financial incentives. Last year they even helped Ferri secure \$750,000 in highly competitive State funding. “Without all of them working together, we might not be where we are now,” Ferri says. 



POPULATION BY MUNICIPALITY*

Denning, town	551	New Paltz, village	6,818
Ellenville, village	4,135	Olive, town	4,195
Esopus, town	9,041	Plattekill, town	10,499
Gardiner, town	5,713	Rochester, town	7,313
Hardenburgh, town	238	Rosendale, town	6,075
Hurley, town	6,314	Saugerties, town	19,482
Kingston, city	23,893	Saugerties, village	3,971
Kingston, town	889	Shandaken, town	3,085
Lloyd, town	10,863	Shawangunk, town	14,332
Marbletown, town	5,607	Ulster, town	12,327
Marlborough, town	8,808	Wawarsing, town	13,157
New Paltz, town	14,003	Woodstock, town	5,884


* Source: 2010 U.S. Census

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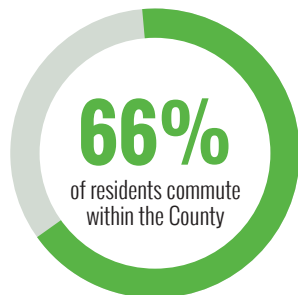
Ulster County provides quick and easy access to all major markets in the Northeast and eastern Canadian provinces. In fact, nearly one-third of the U.S. population and two-thirds of Canada's population are within a day's drive of Ulster County. Ulster County's strategic location makes it well positioned for all types of industries. With three exits along the New York State Thruway and easy access to Interstate 84, businesses in Ulster County serve markets in Albany, New York City, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and beyond. From centrally located New Paltz, Manhattan is only 90 minutes away and Albany is about an hour. Doing business in Boston or Philadelphia? Plan a three-and-a-half hour drive. Albany International Airport, to the north, or Stewart International Airport, just south, are a short drive away. The Poughkeepsie and Rhinecliff rail stations offer access to Metro-North and Amtrak. Pine Hill Trailways and the Shortline buses make commuting comfortable.

REGION'S LOWEST COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Ulster County is the only county in the Lower and Mid-Hudson Valley where employers do not have to pay the Metropolitan Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax ("MTA" tax). Ulster County has a competitive wage structure, with an average private annual salary of \$33,558, compared with \$53,733 in the Hudson Valley or \$64,007 in the state. The cost of living is reasonable, too. The median home value is \$237,500, as compared to \$295,300 across the state, while the County's homeownership rate is 69% and the state's is only 55%. 



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100 MILES to NEW YORK CITY
90 MILES to HARTFORD
60 MILES to ALBANY



*Approximate distance measured from Kingston.



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