

ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK USA

Schools taking part in national campaign

By KIP DOYLE

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High Schools from Allegany and Cattaraugus counties will take part in EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA from Feb. 24 to March 3 in Olean, joining a national campaign urging young people to consider becoming start-up business owners.

State Sen. Catharine Young, R-Olean, has endorsed the EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA program. Sen. Young said independent entrepreneurs are key to economic improvement in the region.

"Economically independent entrepreneurs are engaged citizens who work to improve the economic environment in their local communities, to provide better opportunities for businesses to operate and a better environment for the human resources they need to advance their business dreams," she said.

Sen. Young said the success of local entrepreneurs like Chris Napoleon, owner of Napoleon Engineering Services, a start-up engineered bearing products company from Olean, should inspire local

business owners.

EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA officials said hundreds of area business leaders and organizations will take part in the event to "inspire and encourage young people to consider entrepreneurship as a career choice and to celebrate America's unique culture of inventiveness."

Sponsors include NASDAQ, DECA, the National Science Foundation, the National Venture Capital Association, the National Governors Association, the Corporation for Enterprise Development, the Council on Competitiveness, and the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education.

Inspired by the theme, "What's Your Big Idea? Take it On!," EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA participants will stage events and provide curriculum to schools and educational programs throughout the country.

New York Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (NY REAL), a program of Cattaraugus-Allegany County BOCES, will allow local high schools to participate in events such as "America's Next Top Entrepreneur" where students

competition to determine who has the greatest potential to succeed as an entrepreneur.

Other programs, like "Geo Jam," test students' math and science abilities, while another program, "To the Beat of Your Own Drum," encourages students to organize a music festival.

Allegany-Limestone Central School, Belfast Central School, Bolivar-Richburgh Central School, Friendship Central School, Genesee Valley Central School, Olean City Schools, Salamanca Central School, Scio Central School and Wellsville Central School will take part in EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA events.

These schools will also participate in the NY REAL Entrepreneurship Business/Marketing Competition, which will take place on April 27. Participants will design, develop, and present a business plan for a locally-based business.

St. Bonaventure University is helping the campaign by opening up its fitness center on West State Street in Olean for EntrepreneurshipWeekUSA events, and through the volunteer work of the Students in Free Enterprise program.