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For Immediate Release

CBICC connecting young professionals in the community

New group aims to cultivate next generation of leaders in Centre County

STATE COLLEGE, PA, March 16, 2016 – The Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County announced a new program, CBICC Connect, with a mission of identifying, connecting, and programming with and for new college graduates, young professionals and next generation leaders in Centre County.

“By 2030, Millennials will make up the majority of the workforce,” explained Vern Squier, CBICC President and CEO. “It’s important for the health of our local economy to better understand this demographic and make a proactive effort to incorporate them into CBICC programming, as well as in other places within our community.”

CBICC Connect’s first order of business will be to conduct a survey to gauge priorities for this demographic in the categories of Live, Work and Play.

“We often hear people in leadership positions around the county – both business and governmental – say that they want to know what is important to young professionals,” Squier said. “With the results of this survey, we will provide a sample snapshot that identifies the areas of opportunity to strengthen the three pillars of Live, Work and Play in order to create a more balanced and robust community for all generations to thrive.”

This group will strive to connect the business community with the next generation of leaders to create a vibrant local economy.

“There are pockets of young professionals throughout the community,” continued Squier. “This group will provide a space for them to collaborate and expand their professional network – among themselves and also with the more deeply rooted business community.”

Members of the business community are encouraged to spread the word among their younger employees. Peer-to-peer networking and networking across hierarchical levels are each necessary to bolster the local economy.

“We’re looking forward to hosting more events geared toward the CBICC Connect crowd, both from a networking perspective and with regard to the topics of our programming,” noted Squier.

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The CBICC Connect working group is currently advised by three local young professionals, who are looking for more ideas and energy to quickly grow the scope of this group. Those young professionals are:

- **Vinh Vuong** is Chief Executive Officer of VUONG PR, a global digital communications consulting firm, the head of digital for The Torrenzano Group, a global public relations firm, Chairman of Vuong Holdings, Inc., a diversified holding company, and is a co-author, frequent speaker and host of an online talk show and podcast.
- **Janet Santostefano** is Vice President of Advertising & Marketing at *Centre Daily Times*, a position she has held since 2011. A 2003 graduate of Penn State University, Janet is also a graduate of Leadership Centre County, and volunteers with numerous community organizations.
- **Irene Miller** is Development & Events Coordinator at Centre Foundation. A five-year resident of Centre County, she is a member of State College Young Professionals, and is a graduate of Leadership Centre County Class of 2015.

Young professionals can join Connect, take the survey, and learn more at cbiccconnect.com, or by visiting the Connect Facebook page. For more information about CBICC Connect, please contact lkistner@cbicc.org.

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