

## A ‘State Of The City’ Preview Mayor Noble Addresses Chamber

Mayor Steve Noble’s official “State of the City” address isn’t until next month, but Chamber members will be getting a preview at the next networking breakfast on Dec. 11 when the city’s Chief Executive is the special guest.

“It’s a great end of the year opportunity for me to go over some of the key highlights of what’s been going on in the city of Kingston over the last couple of years,” Noble said. “Since I last updated the Chamber, we’ve worked on some really incredible projects that I think will be of interest.”

The breakfast, scheduled from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. at The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus Kingston and sponsored by Rondout Savings Bank, will also feature the Kingston High School Choir singing songs for the holiday season. The morning will also include recognition of several outgoing Chamber board members and 2024 Corporate Sponsors.

Noble said his remarks will focus on the recently completed Dietz Stadium project, ongoing streetscape upgrades to improve traffic flow and, of course, affordable housing.

“We’ll also talk about some of the other plans for the upcoming 2025 year that we have in store, kind of a sneak peak to my State of the City address that normally happens in January,” Noble said. “We’ll talk about some of the exciting improvements around the city of Kingston that we think will help, particularly our local businesses.”

One of those improvements is a new “wayfinding” initiative, where the city will install new signage at prominent entryways to

the city, highlighting the city’s business districts. Noble said the new signage will be “very Kingston-oriented” and point people to major shopping areas.

“We think that’s going to help visitors find all of our great local businesses that are here,” he said. “Right now, our business districts really have no identification of where they are. We actually did a study that rebrands our business districts and will have color-coded signage.”

Meanwhile, the \$21.5-million renovation of Dietz Stadium in Uptown Kingston was completed in time for fall sports in the city.

Noble is also expected to talk about the Broadway Streetscape Project, which included many improvements such as a new lane configuration, benches, trees, shrubs and more.

One of the city’s most pressing needs is housing, and Noble said he would update business leaders on the myriad of projects going on around the city, including the Golden Hill project at the site of the former Ulster County Jail. Construction began about a month ago on 164 affordable units.

Noble said it’s critical for the city to have housing for its workforce and he will update the Chamber on the efforts.

“I think that’s really critical to be able to make sure we continue to attract and maintain jobs here in Ulster County,” the mayor said.

Noble, a Democrat and a former environmental educator for the city, first took office in January 2016 and won a third four-year

term as Mayor last year. He is no stranger to addressing the Chamber and is looking forward to the breakfast and taking questions from the audience, which promises to be a large one this time of year.

“It’s always a special breakfast with the holiday theme and music and caroling. We’re definitely going to have a very upbeat and positive look at what’s been happening and where we’re headed in this city,” he said.



Mayor Steve Noble

*Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders and are open to Chamber members as well as the general public. Tickets are \$30 in advance or \$35 at the door for Chamber members, \$40 for non-members. Reservations are required. Call (845) 338-5100 or register online at www.UlsterChamber.org.*

## Rondout Savings Bank To Sponsor December Breakfast

For over a century and a half, Rondout Savings Bank has been a cornerstone of Ulster County, embodying a steadfast commitment to its community. Established in 1868, the bank has grown alongside the region it serves, offering personalized banking solutions to businesses and consumers while fostering a culture of giving back.

Cheryl Bowers, President and CEO of Rondout Savings Bank, explains, “At Rondout Savings Bank, we prioritize relationships over transactions. Every interaction is an opportunity to understand our customers’ needs, offer tailored solutions, and strengthen the bonds that make our community thrive. Our success is rooted in helping others succeed—whether that’s through community involvement, innovative banking, or unwavering support for local businesses and nonprofits.”

This enduring philosophy is on full display at Rondout’s newest branch at 267 Wall Street in Uptown Kingston. The state-of-the-art facility blends modern convenience with the personalized service that has long defined the bank. At the heart of the new branch is the “Experience Center,” a welcoming space where visitors can explore community events, discover

banking solutions, and take advantage of special offers. The branch also features a comfortable lounge with complimentary coffee, fostering a space for customers to connect with bank representatives or engage with fellow community members.

“We designed our Uptown Kingston branch to reflect the vibrant, innovative spirit of our community,” said Bowers. “It’s more than just a place to do banking—it’s a space where relationships grow and ideas flourish.”

In addition to its customer-focused banking services, Rondout Savings Bank plays a vital role as a local employer and community partner. By investing in its employees and prioritizing economic stability, the bank contributes to the region’s long-term growth. Rondout’s commitment to social responsibility is exemplified by its “Dividends to the Community” program, through which it donates 10% of its annual earnings to local nonprofits. This initiative has supported countless causes over the years, from education and health care to arts and environmental sustainability.



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## It’s The Hap-Hap-Happiest Mixer Of All Ole Savannah Looks Ahead To Big Changes

Dave Amato and his team at Ole Savannah Southern Table and Bar will usher in the holiday season by hosting the final Networking Mixer of the year on Dec. 4 at the popular waterfront restaurant, which will transition to The Cornell next spring.

Normann Staffing is sponsoring the Mixer at 100 Rondout Landing in Kingston from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.—the holly jolliest Mixer of the year that’s guaranteed to get everyone in the Christmas spirit. Young Ulster Professionals will also be collecting new throw blankets for People’s Place.

Amato, who always lays out a dazzling spread for his fellow Chamber members, said the event will be a good time to get the word out about Ole Savannah’s transformation, which he called an “exciting new chapter for the restaurant while honoring the rich maritime history of Kingston.”

The Cornell, he said, will “redefine the dining experience in Kingston by offering a menu emphasizing innovative global fusion cuisine grounded in comfort food, but inspired by contemporary flavors and techniques.”

The shift reflects patrons’ evolving culinary tastes, combining popular Ole Savannah menu favorites for loyal customers, along with fresh and exciting dining options to entice newcomers, Amato added.

As part of the transformation, the restaurant will undergo interior and exterior renovations guided by design team Jackson Creative Group. The updates will celebrate the city’s history and commitment to the community and provide a vibrant,

welcoming environment for diners while continuing its current restaurant operation.

“Over the years, Ole Savannah’s menu has evolved, and we want to reflect this development in our brand, too. With the reimaging of an essential downtown destination, The Cornell will pay homage to Kingston’s rich maritime history in the same way that Brickmen pays homage to the area’s historic brick industry,” Amato said.

The longtime restaurateur is collaborating on the project with Jessica Mino, who played a crucial role in the operation and success of Amato’s newest restaurant, Brickmen Kitchen + Bar in Uptown Kingston. During its transition, Ole Savannah will remain open to serve, cater and host events and parties.

The Chamber Mixer on Dec. 4 will go out with a bang. Ole Savannah, a 19th-century industrial-chic building that once served as the Cornell Steamboat Company’s boiler shop and later as a steel fabrication shop, is an impressive place to ring in the holidays.

It’s decorated to the hilt with greenery and poinsettias and a 20-foot tree inside—a perfect Instagram spot to pose with Chamber friends and business colleagues.

Amato said the holiday Mixer is hands-down the most cheerful one of the year as friends and colleagues gather to reflect on past successes and look ahead to new and exciting business endeavors.

“We love doing the Chamber Mixer right before the holidays,” he said. “It’s such a great time to be together, celebrate and

network, so it’s always fun to welcome everybody back.”

For more information on Ole Savannah Southern Table and Bar, located at 100 Rondout Landing in Kingston, call (845) 331-4283 or go to [olesavannah.com](http://olesavannah.com).

*Chamber Mixers are a great way to network and promote your business. Be sure to bring plenty of business cards. This free networking event is open to Chamber members and prospective members. Reservations are a must and can be made by calling the Chamber at (845) 338-5100 or by registering online at [www.ulsterchamber.org](http://www.ulsterchamber.org).*

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# The Salvation Army's Time To Shine

## A Helping Hand For The Holidays

The holiday season is here, and that means you'll be seeing those familiar red kettles as The Salvation Army raises much-needed funds to feed the hungry and distribute Christmas presents throughout Ulster and Northern Dutchess counties.

Captain Erik Muhs, who leads the Kingston Salvation Army, said the season of giving actually started the day before Thanksgiving when hot meals were distributed at The Salvation Army at 35 Cedar St. in Midtown Kingston. Members of the Ulster County Italian American Foundation helped prepare the meals.

"We're trying to emphasize people coming in person to see The Salvation Army," Muhs said. "We want them to see where we are and what we do and that there's people who care about them and love them."

For the second year in a row, The Salvation Army will partner with another Midtown non-profit, People's Place, to provide a turkey and toys for Christmas.

"It's a combined effort so that everyone in Ulster County gets something for Christmas and no one goes without anything," Muhs said.

Every child will also receive a hat, gloves and scarves, Muhs said.

The Salvation Army will also hold its annual Angel Tree program, which allows people to be someone's "angel" and purchase toys for a child in need. That program will involve the Ulster County Sheriff's Department and the Kingston and Napanoch Walmart locations.

"We are motivated by the love of Christ to not only share His love during the season of Christmas, but throughout the entire year," Muhs said. "The Salvation Army is here to meet human needs without discrimination in every season, but it's during the Christmas season when we are looked at the most and in the spotlight. We try to take that spotlight and turn it toward what we believe in and who we believe in."

While the holidays are when The Salvation Army really shines, the organization is on the frontlines of the battle against food insecurity in Kingston all year long.

The Salvation Army offers a food pantry from 9:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2:30 p.m. every Monday to Thursday. There's also a soup kitchen from noon to 1 p.m. Monday to Friday featuring produce, meats, dairy, pastries, and baked goods. With few large grocery stores in the area, the programs are critical for many in

Midtown Kingston.

"We have been seeing record numbers since July," Muhs said. "Our highest day was almost 90 people during the summer months when the kids were out of school. The Lord provides abundantly for us here in Kingston."

The Salvation Army also goes out with its mobile canteen to feed people and give out toiletries, clothing, and other goods. It's also the place to go for utility assistance.

Muhs said the outreach events give him and others from his congregation the chance to discuss the church's regular programming and even summer camp opportunities at Star Lake Camp in New Jersey. Close to 20 children from Kingston got the chance to go last year, along with a record number of seniors who attended a respite week of boating, skee ball, and other activities.

"The seniors were so excited to be part of a group and learn from



each other and meet new people and next year we hope to open it up to even more members of the community to go for a week and just get away," Muhs said.

Besides Sunday church services, The Salvation Army is an ideal place for youngsters to learn a musical instrument, timbrels, singing, and other arts and music. The church will also host a Cub Scout pack in 2025.

Muhs said he and his wife, Captain Barri Vazquez-Muhs, have enjoyed building partnerships with the other non-profits and organizations in Ulster County to help serve the downtrodden.

"We are so grateful for our community partners and all those who have the same mission-mindedness as The Salvation Army," Muhs said. "They want to give not because they want accolades, but because they truly care about their brothers and sisters here in Ulster County and beyond."

*The Salvation Army, located at 35 Cedar St. in Kingston, can be reached at (845) 331-1803 or [www.facebook.com/Kingstonsalvationarmy](http://www.facebook.com/Kingstonsalvationarmy).*

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**Wednesday December 4 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm**

**Networking Mixer @ Ole Savannah Southern Table + Bar**

100 Rondout Landing | Kingston, NY

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**Wednesday December 11 | 7:30 - 9:00 am**

**Chamber Breakfast Meeting**  
**Kingston Mayor Steve Noble**

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### Soyuzivka Ukrainian Heritage Center A Place For Everyone

The name may be hard to pronounce, but the vibe at the Soyuzivka Ukrainian Heritage Center in Kerhonkson rolls off the soul like a sweet summer breeze.

Soyuzivka, meaning “community” in Ukrainian, defines the overall feeling at the combined cultural center and serene retreat for tourists, wedding parties, business teams and just about any other group looking for a spot to gather or celebrate.

“It’s a cultural center, but there’s certainly that social aspect here,” said Stephen Barankewicz, managing director at the Soyuzivka Ukrainian Heritage Center. “We promote and preserve Ukrainian culture such as dance, music, language and the arts, but we also offer a number of lodging accommodations, a full-scale dining room and a 250-person event hall, so we do weddings and other functions like business retreats and summer camps.

“We also have an outdoor deck with that million-dollar view overlooking the Catskill Mountains, so what we’ve been doing is expanding on events for our local community,” he added.

The resort, on the western edge of the Shawangunk Mountains, was bought in 1952 by the Ukrainian National Association and is under the management of the Ukrainian National Foundation. The majestic vistas were a reminder of the Carpathian Mountains in the homeland, and scores of Ukrainians found their way to the hotel during the heyday of the Catskill Borscht Belt resorts.

Today, the staff remains intent on preserving Ukrainian culture while also expanding its offerings to a whole new generation of people looking to unwind in the wilderness.

The center, colloquially known as “Suzy Q,” features 80 guest rooms, including efficiency units with mini kitchens, 11 cottages with mountain views, an outdoor pool and tiki bar, hiking trails, volleyball and tennis courts and onsite Wi-Fi. It also offers a luxurious honeymoon suite with a jacuzzi and fireplace.

In recent years, the staff has been redesigning and updating the buildings, some of which date back to 1906 and just after World War II. Barankewicz described the structures as rustic

European with architectural embellishments from famous woodcarver Chernivsky.

“It has that comfortable home feel,” he said. “Our tagline for many years was ‘Welcome Home,’ and we still say it feels like coming back home.”

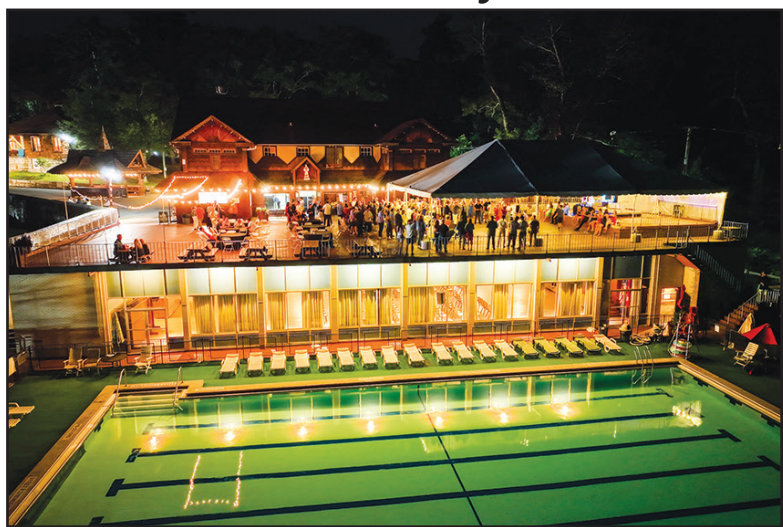
During the summer months, the resort bursts with life, hosting events like the Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian dance academy as well as a borscht cook-off, heritage studies, art exhibits, annual cultural festival in July and the Ulster County Football Club, a two-week camp for local youth soccer players. In the winter, the resort welcomes scores of skiers and hosts a wellness retreat, a Polish hiking club and ballroom dancing.

In recent months, Leadership Ulster participants stayed at the resort for the kickoff of the yearly program. It has also hosted banquets for local fire departments and holiday parties. A live performance of a “Christmas Carol” is set for Dec. 21 and is open to the public. Lunch will be served at the event.

As far as the current war in Ukraine, Barankewicz said Soyuzivka has focused solely on raising money for medical supplies for Ukrainian soldiers. Another way it has helped is by employing Ukrainian refugees whenever possible as cooks, housekeepers and grounds and maintenance workers.

“We’re supporting our Ukrainian community, but, at the same time, we have a pretty robust local staff,” he said.

Barankewicz, who has been in his current role for more than



two years, said his latest thrust has been to get the word out about the resort and all that it offers to the public.

“We’re one of the area’s best kept secrets, so we’re trying to change that with more advertising and a redesign of our website to portray that messaging that we all know and live by,” he said. “We’re doing a good job expanding our outreach, and some of the feedback I’ve gotten since Labor Day is that people are seeing more of our social media posts, so it’s brought in a nice element of awareness.”

Soyuzivka Ukrainian Heritage Center, located at 216 Foordmore Road in Kerhonkson, can be reached at (845) 626-5641 or [www.soyuzivka.com](http://www.soyuzivka.com).

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