

Lecture to emphasize success stories

By Sharon Narcisse
Our Town Reporter

The John B. Gunter Community Leadership Initiative Program of the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce continues to launch programs.

A new lecture series, Torchbearers Regional Success Stories, will highlight regional success stories from the leaders who created them. The first lecture begins at 7 p.m. on September 27 at the Holiday Inn on Market Street.

The series is meant to inspire and motivate all who attend, according to Jane Gleason, Vice President of Gleason Inc.

"We feel this program is so important to our community as it highlights all that is good about living and working in Johnstown. With all of the recent attention on 'brain drain,' we wanted to highlight success for those who chose to stay and work in the area," Gleason stated.

The John B. Gunter Community Leadership Initiative program has graduated



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The first success story will be William Polacek, founder and president of JWF Industries more than 200 individuals from the area's most progressive companies/organizations over the past eight years.

"The program is designed to develop leadership for the Greater Johnstown and Cambria County area by honing leadership skills and promoting community volunteerism," Gleason said. "The program explores leadership roles in both the area's community organizations and corporations."

Gleason, alongside her team of Brian Moyer, Bill Crans, Craig Duppstadt, Graham Crowe and Delores Columbus, developed the lecture series to run through May 2008.

The first success story for the series comes from William Polacek, founder and president of Johnstown Welding & Fabrication (JWF) Industries.

Gleason stated, "Polacek was born and raised in Daisytown and decided to remain in the area and grow JWF Industries in the community because of the great work ethic and superior work force."

Polacek's business began with the purchase of Johnny's Welding in 1987 from his father, who used the business as a supplemental income to help support his nine

children. JWF has since grown from a two-man shop, to a company with over 700 employees in two states.

Proceeds from the lecture series will go to the Challenge Program, which recognizes academic excellence in students from the area.

For more information or sponsorship opportunities contact Jane Gleason by email: jegleason@gleason-inc.com. Tickets for the lecture are available at the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce office for \$15.00 each.