

ALBANY BUSINESS REVIEW

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Apprenda in hiring mode

The Troy software developer is adding 50 people. A maturing industry is contributing to the growth.

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THE LIST

Tomorrow's hot jobs won't be in government 8



10 MINUTES WITH

BIG POWER IN THE LETTERS Y-E-S 23

ALBANY REAL ESTATE

A TIPPING POINT FOR DOWNTOWN?



Sixty new apartments are coming. More than 550 are in the pipeline.

That's triple the activity seen over the past 15 years. Turns out, people do want to live in downtown Albany.

MICHAEL DeMASI, 14

COVER STORY

REWRITING HIGHER ED'S PLAYBOOK



UAlbany President Robert Jones and his counterparts see the threats firsthand: Fewer students, more debt, rising tuition. This is what they're doing about it.

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NEWS TICKER



One reason to fly to Minneapolis

If you fly out of Albany, that's the destination you're most likely to reach on-time. Take a look at the best and worst performers. **TODD KEHOE, 3**

Home sales bounce, thank the weather

Let's not forget that brutal winter, which had its own impact on the economy. After slowing sales, the weather is now giving back.

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Lyft: 'I'll be back'

The ride sharing platform says it's frustrated with the lack of action in Albany. No matter. Lyft will make another push in '16 for a law allowing it to operate here. **MICHAEL DeMASI, 22**



MONEY

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"EXCELLENT" CHOICE!

*NCQA's Private Health Insurance Plan Rankings 2014-2015.



DiscoverMVP.com/employers

10 MINUTES WITH ...

‘The answers lie in saying yes’

ANGELA McNERNEY HAS MADE A LIVING HELPING PEOPLE SETTLE DOWN HERE



“If you looked at relocation, it’s a disease of isolation,” says McNerney.

DONNA ABBOTT VLAHOS

Angela McNerney thrives on creative problem-solving. It’s a large aspect of her role at Tech Valley Connect, which works with companies to help job candidates and their spouses settle into a community. McNerney started Tech Valley Connect after spending time as a freelance writer and adjunct instructor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. There, she managed a grant that inspired the company’s business model, which improves retention and is used as a recruiting tool. An avowed seeker of the “next interesting thing,” McNerney started a Friday night event to discuss ideas and the challenges of the day. Her path to where she is today, McNerney says, begins with saying “yes.”

You grew up in Guilderland. Did you plan to stay in the area? No. I went to Steamboat, Colorado, when I was 18 with 14 of my friends. We were going to go and ski for a season. That was the year it didn’t snow. They had a big sign outside of town that said, the last person to leave Steamboat, turn off the lights.

I came back and had a bunch of odd jobs, mostly waitressing or bartending. I wasn’t very interested in sitting still. I stayed home for maybe a year or two

ANGELA McNERNEY

Title: President and CEO of Tech Valley Connect

Age: 53

Grew up: Guilderland

Resides: East Greenbush

Education: Bachelor’s in public communications from The College of Saint Rose in Albany

Family: McNerney has three sons and a stepson

and then I went back to Colorado.

Then you came back to the Albany area and went to college. Why? It would stabilize me, I thought. I had a hard time stabilizing. I was just so interested in the next interesting thing. It was very difficult for me to be in a statistics class, when I knew there was somewhere to be that was going to light up my intellect in a different way. I had a meandering way of finishing college.

You moved around a lot. That’s brave. Brave or stupid. I was always thinking I was going to find my answer somewhere else. I think the answers lie in saying yes to things. Especially for women. Women don’t tend to be bold when it comes to advancing their professions. They’ll talk people out of them, more than they talk people into them. When I was working at RPI [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy] and managing a grant that helped women faculty advance through the ranks, I had a chance to read all this research about what holds women back. A lot of it is themselves; we have a hard time telling people we’re a little awesome.

How did you end up managing that

grant at RPI? I kept saying yes at a point in my life where I was more afraid to say no. One of them was teaching at RPI. I did it for five semesters and loved it. My department chair came to me and said I lost the person who was directing my National Science Foundation grant, would you be interested?

What was the premise of the pilot program the grant funded at RPI? The idea was the informational interview. If you looked at relocation, it’s a disease of isolation. People have no networks. It’s not that they’re not talented, it’s that they don’t know anyone. The informational interview gets them in front of people, talking about the context of who they are. That, we thought, would accelerate their ability to get jobs. That became true. We had come across something that wasn’t necessarily a new idea, it was just about putting walls around an idea that had been around for a long time.

How does Tech Valley Connect work? If your partner accepts a job with one of our consortium members, you’re referred to us. Our program coordinator sets up a two-and-a-half hour intake, asks you all the questions the employer isn’t allowed to ask. It’s about taking root in the area. If you don’t find things that can make this home for you, which are things that you love, it’s easy to bounce to another shiny offer somewhere else. We not only want to accelerate professional networks, we wanted to accelerate personal networks. We all need to be connected to where we are.

I kept running around the country and trying to find connections and really it’s about finding things you love and doing that a lot, whether it’s your work or outside your work. After five years, our employers came back to us and said, all right, we get that it’s about retention, we had about 92 percent retention of the referrals that came in, but this is a hell of a recruitment tool.

You’re really into creative problem solving and have started a Friday night event to talk about building a place that’s attractive for professionals. Why is that? You can ‘bricks-and-mortar’ the whole place, but if you’re not creating this subliminal cultural infrastructure that makes a place interesting intellectually, then you’re saying, ‘Why are they bouncing?’

You have so many different interests. What has your attention now? I’m always looking for the next idea. It’s hard for me to be doing the same thing every day. This world is so damn interesting.

—Megan Rogers, @AlbBizMegan