

Holiday Gift Guide

2025



Winter Wonderland at Williams Lumber & Home Center in Rhinebeck – Giving back to the community for 80 years!

Experience the magic of the season with the Winter Wonderland at Williams Lumber and Home Centers — a joyful holiday tradition for the whole community!

Each December, the Rhinebeck location is transformed into a festive showcase filled with beautifully decorated faux trees, sparkling lights, and the largest selection of ornaments in the area. From timeless classics to fun and whimsical designs, there’s something to brighten every home and inspire every holiday decorator.

Adding to the enchantment are four mesmerizing model train sets, delighting visitors of all ages with their detailed scenes and nostalgic charm. Together, the displays create a warm, inviting atmosphere that captures the simple joy and wonder of the season.

“This is our heartfelt gift to the community,” shares Kim Williams, SVP of Retail Operations. Crafted by more than a dozen dedicated associates, the Winter Wonderland has become a beloved December destination, drawing thousands from across the Hudson Valley and beyond.

This year’s celebration is especially meaningful as Williams proudly enters its 80th year. The Winter Wonderland is one way the Williams family gives back to the community that has supported them for generations.

Stop by this December and immerse yourself in the holiday spirit at Williams Lumber and Home Centers.



Daffodils Gift Shoppe

43 N. Eastdale Avenue • Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
daffodilsgiftshoppe.com
(845) 765-7700

- Top 10 Reasons to Shop at Daffodils Gift Shoppe this holiday season
1. Complimentary gift-wrapping all day, everyday! Your packages tied in a bow and ready to go. No last-minute hassle here!
 2. Our online store is the perfect way to take the stress out of holiday shopping! Choose from convenient in-store pickup (grab it wrapped and ready when you're free!) or ship direct to your door!
 3. Jellycat obsessed! We are the premier destination for Jellycat in the Hudson Valley, offering the largest Jellycat selection in the area!
 4. Shop the beauty of Brighton in-shoppe with us! From the latest jewelry to the chicest handbags to homegoods and travel, we have all the best from your favorite brand!
 5. Stack your style with eNewton! 18K gold-filled and completely waterproof, it's the fastest growing brand in the Northeast. Perfect for any age!
 6. Cozy up with Barefoot Dreams! This stunning luxury line has all your snuggly necessities, including socks, blankets, robes, sweaters and more!
 7. Cards for every occasion! Birthdays, holidays, special occasions to go with your perfect gift for your BFF, teacher, and friends & family!
 8. We're proud to be Best of the Hudson Valley winners for Best Baby & Children's Clothing Store and Best Gift Store by Chronogram readers!
 9. Our friendly team is always passionate about treating you and those you love! We're here to serve you.
 10. We're proud to be a local business built by lifelong residents! Come visit us in the vibrant community of Eastdale Village as you dine, drink, and shop!



Daffodils Gift Shoppe has gifts for everyone in the family – from toys and Jellycat selections for the kids to jewelry and much more. Courtesy photos

Treat yourself and those you love!

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK! | COMPLIMENTARY GIFT-WRAPPING! | PROUD TO BE LOCAL!

43 EASTDALE AVE N
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY

CALL US AT
(845) 765-7700

Help Around the Home Handyman Services

Carol & Rick Gabrielly, The Handy Couple
CALL US TODAY! 914-715-8909

Top Ten Reasons to shop with
“Help Around the Home” for the holidays

- 1. Give the gift of home repair
- 2. Organize your space for the New Year
- 3. Eliminate your honey-do list
- 4. Get your house ready for holiday company
- 5. Last-minute seasonal care
- 6. Tis the season for inside projects
- 7. We make wishes come true
- 8. Expert stocking hangers
- 9. Seal up Winter drafts
- 10. We help you “Love your home again”



Before



After

Renegades host Holiday Toy Drive to benefit Children’s Home

The Hudson Valley Renegades, the High-A affiliate of the New York Yankees, are hosting a Toy Drive to benefit the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie between now and Wednesday, Dec. 17. The Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie has been providing a range of services for children and families, including foster care and adoption programs since 1847. Their mission is to empower children and families to achieve optimal health and well-being to create a world where every child and family have access to the tools, skills and support they need to thrive. Donations to the toy drive can

either be made in-person at Heritage Financial Park during Renegades business hours or by purchasing gifts through the Renegades Toy Drive Wish List on Amazon. Renegades Staff will deliver the toys to the Children’s Home of Poughkeepsie on Thursday, Dec. 18. Each person who donates a new toy will receive one (1) General Admission ticket to the Renegades 2026 home opener on Tuesday, April 7 (limit one ticket per person). Guests wishing to donate items in-person may park in the Pinstripe Lot at Heritage Financial Park while dropping off items.



Before

After

Before

After

Before

After



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- Lightbulbs
- Filters
- Touch-Ups
- Squeaks
- Closet Doors
- Organization
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- Window Treatments
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- Winterization
- Property Support & Maintenance
- TV Mounting
- Small Drywall Repairs
- Ring Doorbells
- and more.

You get our 18 years of experience.
Relax and enjoy life again.



Carol & Rick Gabrielly, The Handy Couple

CALL US TODAY! 914-715-8909

The Refillery Storehouse

23 Eastdale Avenue S.
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
Mon - Sat | 9 AM to 7 PM
Sunday | 9 AM to 5 PM
therefillerystorehouse.com
info@therefillerystorehouse.com

Top 10 reasons to shop at The Refillery Storehouse

1. You cut down on food waste by just buying what you need.
2. You eliminate packaging waste by refilling your own containers.
3. You're supporting locally sourced and small businesses.
4. You save money by buying what you need.
5. You're helping the environment by shopping more sustainably.
6. You receive a more intimate shopping experience than you would at a big box store.
7. You can try and sample products before committing to a larger size.
8. We offer locally made craft beverages with a unique hands-on tap system.
9. We have over 250+ non-perishable food items, along with local dairy products and meats.
10. Overall, shopping at The Refillery Storehouse is a fun and unique experience!



The Refillery Storehouse in Eastdale Village offers a variety of gift baskets for the holidays and many ready-to-mix items. Courtesy photos

Empowered By Nature

Located in the Hudson Valley Regional Airport,
Wappingers Falls

For information visit: EmpoweredByNature.net
lorraineughes54@gmail.com / 845-416

Top 10 reasons to shop with Empowered By Nature

1. Gift yourself or love ones this Season with the Gift of Relaxation; Reiki, Reflexology and /or Aromatherapy
2. Supporting a healthy lifestyle
3. Integrative health support with challenging or chronic health concerns
4. Clarity regarding choosing a dietary lifestyle best suited for you
5. Supporting a Small Local Business
6. Explore the many benefits of integrating herbs as food medicine into your kitchen
7. Are you tired of being sick and tired?
8. Need an alternative to flu and cold remedies; I offer my own crafted cough and elderberry syrups
9. Assist with Seasonal Change by strengthening the immune system
10. Tap into your Vagus nerve capabilities through breath and mindful movement.

The Refillery Storehouse is committed to providing a sustainable shopping experience that supports your low-waste lifestyle. As your premier package-free bulk food grocer, we offer over 250+ non-perishable food items, everyday household essentials, personal care products, local dairy goods, and a unique tap system featuring local and national craft beers for carry-out consumption.



845-795-8099

23 Eastdale Ave S, Poughkeepsie, NY

www.therefillerystorehouse.com



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Located in the Hudson Valley Regional Airport,
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For information visit: www.EmpoweredByNature.net
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Vital Health IS your best defense!

**S&S Vac, Appliance
and Sewing Center**
420 Violet Avenue (Rt. 9G)
Hyde Park, NY
845-452-6122
ssvac.com

Top 10 reasons to visit S&S Vac, Appliance and Sewing Center

- 1. Locally owned business for 50 years
- 2. Come meet Loni, Bunny and Stu
- 3. Customer Friendly & knowledgeable on products we sell
- 4. Authorized & Trained personnel
- 5. Great selection of Quality Vacuums and Sewing Machines
- 6. Authorized sales and service of Bernina & Elna Sewing Machines
- 7. All repairs and service done in our store.
- 8. Lessons included with sales of sewing machines
- 9. Unique Gifts and Collectables
- 10. We will even wrap Gifts for Free



Stu and Bunny Davis offer a great selection of sewing machines, vacuums and much more at S&S Vac, Appliance and Sewing Center in Hyde Park. Photo by Curtis Schmidt

Historic Village Diner
7550 North Broadway
Red Hook, NY 12571
845-758-6232
www.historic-village-diner.com

Top 10 Reasons to visit the Historic Village Diner

- 1. A real Silk City Diner treasure
- 2. Open 6 days 6 am-8 pm, closed Mondays
- 3. Always greeted with respect and a smile
- 4. Daily specials listed on Facebook and web site
- 5. Delicious breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks
- 6. Bottomless cup of coffee
- 7. Many special home-made desserts
- 8. Eat in or take out
- 9. Quality food takes quality time
- 10. The original diner in continuous business for 42 years.

The Original Diner - 44 Years

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DINER
DUNKERS
& FLAVORED
COFFEES

**RED HOOK
DINER**

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ORDERS

The "Historic" Village Diner
Arleen, Melissa and Sam

Enjoy Wine & Beer with your dinner
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

OPEN Tue-Sat 6am-8pm Sun 6am-2pm Closed Mon
7550 North Broadway—Red Hook, N.Y. 12571
Historic-Village-Diner.com Like Us



Top 10 Reasons To
Shop Local

- 1. Personal friendly service
- 2. Gifts featuring work by local artisans
- 3. Shop in a relaxed atmosphere, instead of the online rush
- 4. Shop Wappingers Falls
- 5. Shop Fishkill
- 6. Shop Beacon
- 7. Shop Hopewell Junction
- 8. Shop Millbrook & Pleasant Valley
- 9. Shop Hyde Park
- 10. Shop Rhinebeck/Red Hook

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HIDDEN TREASURES!**

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- Service
- All makes & models
of vacuums
- Gifts & Collectibles

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chef@TheJessicaExperience.net
845-478-JESS (5377)

The Jessica Experience

Meal Delivery Service
Homemade Meals Delivered
Right To Your Door
www.thejessicaexperience.net
chef@thejessicaexperience.net
845-478-JESS (5377)

Top 10 reasons to choose The Jessica Experience during the holidays and year-round

1. Stress-free hosting: We cook — you enjoy the holiday.
2. Chef-crafted menus: Fresh, delicious dishes everyone loves.
3. Drop-off or full service: Perfect for any style holiday party.
4. Great gift idea: Gift certificates make wonderful presents for friends, family, teachers, and employees.
5. Local & women-owned: Made with care by two sisters who love what they do.
6. Fresh ingredients: No shortcuts, no mass production — ever.
7. Reliable & consistent: You can count on us during the busiest season.
8. Easy weeknight meals: Our delivery service solves the “What’s for dinner?” problem.
9. Fits any group size: From family dinners to 60-person celebrations.
- 10 Customizable menus: We tailor dishes to your preferences, dietary needs, and event style.

Doctors’ tips to stay healthy and safe this holiday season

(StatePoint) The holiday season is a joyous time to reconnect with family and friends, but it can also throw your wellness routines out of alignment. Doctors advise prioritizing healthy choices now so you can start 2026 feeling your best.

“Amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it’s easy to lose sight of our well-being, overindulge in food and drink, and feel stressed. A little awareness and a few healthy habits can go a long way in helping you and loved ones enjoy the season in good health,” says Dr. Bobby Mukkamala, president of the American Medical Association (AMA).

For a healthy and happy holiday season, the AMA recommends the following tips:

1. Watch what you eat. Pay attention to labels and avoid ultra-processed foods, especially those high in added sodium, saturated fats and sugar. Consider having a healthy snack before the big meal or offer to bring a healthier dish for the holiday spread. Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, and eat nutri-

tious, whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables alongside richer holiday dishes.

2. Prioritize your mental health. Factors such as holiday spending and navigating time with extended family can bring on extra seasonal stress. Get sufficient sleep and exercise, and don’t hesitate to talk to a mental health professional when you need help managing stress.

3. Prioritize physical activity during this busy time of year. A good rule of thumb for adults is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity each week. Brisk walks, bike rides, hikes and family-friendly sports like basketball and touch football can provide easy, fun ways to get off the couch and elevate your heart rate. If you’re traveling, don’t forget to pack your sneakers!

4. Be prepared when traveling. Whether you’re flying or taking a road trip, you might be tempted to grab convenient yet unhealthy food for the journey. Consider packing your own snacks, such as fresh fruits and vegetables or small portions of

dried fruits and nuts. When flying, pack your medication in your carry-on bag instead of your checked luggage so it’s easily accessible. Keeping medication handy will help you avoid missing a dose on busy travel days, especially amid flight delays. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water during your flight as air travel can cause dehydration. And keep your body moving in-flight to avoid blood clots.

5. Make smart choices and plan ahead if you’re driving. In December 2023 alone, 1,038 people died in alcohol impaired-driving crashes in the United States. If you plan to drink, always arrange for a sober driver or alternative transportation. And if you are the designated driver, commit to 100% sobriety. Also make sure to get plenty of sleep before your road trip as drowsy driving is responsible for an estimated 100,000 car crashes each year nationwide.

6. Vaccination remains the best protection against several serious respiratory viruses circulating this fall and winter, par-

ticularly as people are spending more time indoors and gathering for the holidays. The AMA encourages you to speak with your physician or other health care professional to determine which vaccines are best for you. The AMA offers infographics to help patients and physicians cut through vaccine confusion and foster open, honest conversations with each other. The infographics can be found at <https://ama-assn.org>.

7. Start New Year’s resolutions early. Speak with your doctor or other health care professional about quitting tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarettes, and declare your home and car smoke-free to protect loved ones from secondhand smoke exposure.

“While you’re celebrating this holiday season and reconnecting with family and friends, remember to take care of your health. Eating well, staying active, and taking precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses can help you enjoy the season and start the new year strong,” says Dr. Mukkamala.

Hackett Farm Supply & Country Store

2297 Salt Point Turnpike Clinton Corners, NY 12514
(845) 266-3494
hackettfarmsupply.com

Top 10 reasons to visit Hackett Farm Supply & Country Store

1. We are not a box store – We are an independent small business
2. Check out Haywire Custom Gifts – inside our store
3. Largest selection of baby chicks in the area
4. We stock a “little bit of everything” - from household, farm & pet supplies, meats and ice cream and great homemade pies - to seasonal decorations – and even gift cards
5. Knowledgeable & friendly staff
6. We support many local small businesses and resell their products
7. New-age products with old-fashioned values
8. Our employees attend nationwide trade shows to keep a variety of innovative and fresh products in stock
9. We support local youth agriculture programs
10. Gifts for all ages - from bird feeders to children’s toys, we have it all!



Hackett Farm Supply and Country Store can fill all your needs for the holidays and year-round with great baked goods to decorative items to cozy chick clothing and so much more. Photos by Curtis Schmidt

845-266-3494

POULIN GRAIN
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Country Store

We have gift ideas for the entire family!

Christmas Trees
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Seasonal Produce
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HackettFarmSupply.com **Text 845-309-8686**



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(845) 758-1054 sales@bayhorse.com

WWW.BAYHORSE.COM

Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store

58 Cottage Street
Salt Point, NY 12578
845-266-0084

[www.https://www.hummingbirdranch.biz](https://www.hummingbirdranch.biz)

Top 10 Reasons to Shop at Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store

1. We are a local independent business with over 30 local vendors and our own products.
2. Conveniently located 2 miles from the Taconic Parkway, Salt Point exit.
3. Old-fashioned toys, great fun...Slinky, Jumbo Jacks, Marbles, hand puppets, balsa wood gliders, games, puzzles & more.
4. Old-fashioned candies - honey stix, maple drops, maple caramel popcorn, variety of honey patties.
5. Many gifts priced to suit every budget.
6. Jewelry, beeswax candles, incense, holiday decorations.
7. We make our own honey, maple syrup & the only one who makes the Hive Mix Honey!
8. Gift Certificates make a perfect present.
9. Easy parking and great customer service with a smile.
10. SPECIAL HOLIDAY HOURS: Open every day from 9am-6pm until December 23!



The Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store is a great one-stop shop for the holidays and year-round with honey and syrup, art work, Harney Teas, games for the kids and even soaps and jewelry. Courtesy photos and photos by Curtis Schmidt



Our new location is packed with goodies! Hummingbird Ranch Farm Store

Great Gift Ideas to Celebrate Old-Fashioned Holidays!


For the
Holidays

We have the widest selection of Unique Holiday Gifts in the area!



Find those special kid, friend & family Holiday Gift ideas... Our store is filled with unique Christmas goodies & handmade products from us & other local vendors ... Old-Fashioned Candies, Puzzles, Holiday Decorations, Fishing Lures, Cute Signs, Local Honey, Maple Syrup, Maple Peanut Brittle, Beeswax Candles, Fine Teas, Incense & more...

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This holiday give more than a gift – give meaning. At Peony Design Studio, every bouquet, candle and curated bundle is chosen with care for the planet and our community.

PEONY DESIGN
STUDIO

1583 Main Street
Pleasant Valley, NY
845-723-4600
www.peonydesignstudio.com

local delivery available upon request

Peony Design Studio

1583 Main Street,
Pleasant Valley, NY
(845) 723-4600

peonydesignstudiollc@yahoo.com

Top 10 reasons to shop at Peony Design Studio

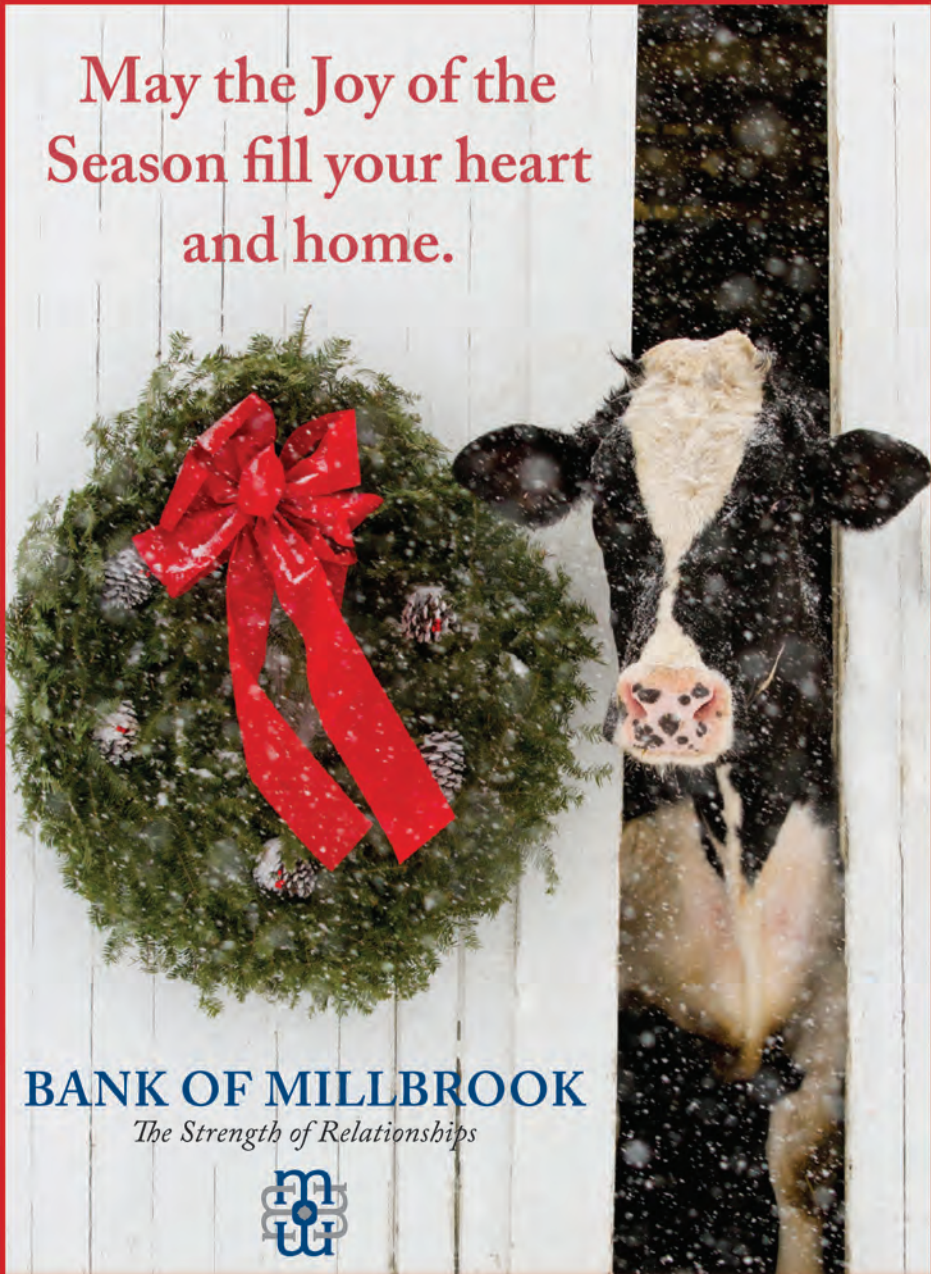
- 1. Fresh Holiday Arrangements & Cut Flowers
- 2. Scented Soy Candles
- 3. Journals & Sketchbooks
- 4. Flower Presses & Seed Collecting Kits
- 5. Organic & All-Natural Skin Care
- 6. Harney and Son Teas
- 7. Greeting Cards
- 8. Puzzles and STEM Toys
- 9. Children’s Organic & All-Natural Skin Care
- 10. Organic All Natural Plant Fertilizers & Plant Care Items

We invite you to experience a warm and friendly shopping environment. In addition to flowers and plants, we offer gifts made in the Hudson Valley or in the United States with a mind toward sustainability and social responsibility. Your purchases help support brands that give back to local Hudson Valley charities, support the recovery of human traffic victims and many other causes. Feel good about shopping local!



Peony Design Studio in Pleasant Valley offers a wide variety of fresh holiday arrangements, flowers and gift items.
Courtesy photos

May the Joy of the Season fill your heart and home.



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Eat Local Shop Local

DISCOVER RED HOOK

Visit Red Hook Hudson Valley community web site with info & events calendar:
redhookhudsonvalley.com



All these shops and more await your visit throughout the holiday season!

Flatiron • H.A.S. Beane Books • The Corner Counter • Petals & Moss • Apotek • Shoppe Girl • Hudson Valley Vintage • Cavallo Jeweler • Yum Yum Noodle Bar • Bliss • Little Pickles • Medica Magica • Crows Nest • Red Hook Stationery Co • Bubby's Burrito • Equis Art Gallery • Holy Cow Ice Cream • Hana Sushi • Ben & Gracies • Subway

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Infinite Digital Marketing & Web

845-448-9496

april@infinitemarketingnweb.com
www.infinitemarketingnweb.com/

Top 10 reasons why local businesses
choose Infinite Digital Marketing & Web

1. We're Local — We Know the Hudson Valley.

We understand the towns, neighborhoods, and customer behavior because we live and work here too.

2. We Are Your Customer Base.

We shop local. We eat local. We hire local services. When we market your business, we already think like the customers you're trying to attract.

3. Personal, Owner-Led Service.

You don't get passed to a different rep every month — you work directly with April and a hands-on local team.

4. Real Hudson Valley Data, Not Generic Templates.

We use local search trends, local competitor research, and regional insights to craft strategies that actually work here.

5. We Specialize in Small Business Growth.

We understand the realities of small-business budgets, busy schedules, and local demand cycles.

6. You Get Proactive Communication & Real Transparency.

We don't disappear — you get consistent updates, clear reporting, and communication before you even have to ask.

7. We Build Relationships, Not Contracts.

Most clients stay because they want to, not because they're locked in. Our work earns loyalty.

8. We Support the Local Economy.

Hiring us keeps your marketing dollars in the Hudson Valley and supports the same community you serve.

9. We're Close Enough to React Fast.

Whether you need new photos, an urgent update, or a same-day promotion, we're right here and can step in quickly.

10. We Understand Local SEO Better Than Big Agencies.

We know your towns, zip codes, landmarks, and competitors — and we optimize specifically for the areas you serve.

LOCAL MARKETING THAT ACTUALLY WORKS

Because no one understands
Hudson Valley small
businesses better than the
people who live, shop, and
work right here.

Our Services:

- ✓ SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING
- ✓ SEO & CONTENT MARKETING
- ✓ PAID ADVERTISING
- ✓ STRATEGY & WEBSITES


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Top 10 Reasons to Bank Local with BANK OF MILLBROOK

[1] People you know.

Our customers know who they are dealing with: We were born and raised here. We are your neighbors and friends. We care about the same things: our families, our communities, and our collective prosperity.

[2] Relationships we build.

We know that relationships are what builds a community. We've been building relationships over generations since 1891.

[3] Services we provide.

We are a full-service community bank offering a full range of personal and business banking services — from free personal checking, HSA and savings accounts to debit and credit cards, loans and mortgages, we have you covered!

[4] Online banking.

We are committed to providing our customers with the latest, most user-friendly mobile banking services available including ZellePay, Insights, Card Management, and more.

[5] Wealth management.

Our Trust & Investment Services Division is top-notch! We take a proven and conservative approach to growing and preserving your wealth, and we learn what you want by getting to know you first. It's that simple!

[6] Trusts and estates.

Our Trust & Investment Services division provides comprehensive services for trustees and executors. Know your trust will be well run and its future is in good hands.

[7] Commitments we keep.

The bottom line is this: your loans, mortgages and accounts aren't for sale.

[8] Invested in our communities.

We proudly sponsor local charitable organizations and events every year. We believe in our communities, and we help to make them stronger.

[9] Experience you trust.

For 144 consecutive quarters, Bauer Financial has ranked us a five-star banking institution. While it's nice to be recognized for 35 years of five-star banking, what we value most is your trust that the Bank of Millbrook is the best place possible for your money.

[10] Our personal touch.

We are committed to superior customer service. Whether it's in person at any of our five branches, or on the phone, you will speak to or see a human being. It's the one old-school philosophy we will never abandon.

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MILLBROOK AMENIA MILLERTON PINE PLAINS STANFORDVILLE
MEMBER FDIC

Baright Realty

15 East Market St., Red Hook, NY 12571
845-758-5006

BarightRealty.com for commercial & residential
space

Top 10 Reasons to Visit Our Friendly Village of Red Hook

1. Walk to stores, banks, Post Office, etc.
 2. Dine at fine restaurants or casual bistros.
 3. Churches of many denominations.
 4. Easy access to trains and major thoroughfares.
 5. Visit the many historic homes and mansions along the beautiful Hudson River.
 6. Enjoy endless outdoor activities, golfing, biking, skiing, fishing and much more.
 7. Savor the scenic views and inspirational sights.
 8. Museums, galleries and Performing Arts Centers.
- Check RedHookHudsonValley.com for information*

Red Hook has it All

Watch out for fraud in Holiday Shopping

(StatePoint) While gifts are being wrapped and lights are being hung, fraudsters are devising ways to leverage the holidays to scam you out of your money. Because an urgency to buy gifts and find deals make the season a time of high risk, it is more important than ever to exercise caution and to know that scams can come in-person, by phone, by email, by text or even via social media.

A Norton Cyber Safety survey found that around a third of Americans have been targeted by a holiday shopping scam, and around half of those targeted actually fell victim.

What are some of the most prevalent seasonal scams?

Gift Card Scams. Pre-paid gift cards can be taken off the rack, drained of the funds and then repackaged, meaning you buy a gift card that has no value. Criminals attempting to scam you may also ask for payment via gift card, realizing payment is instant and your money will be irretrievable.

Package Scams. Scammers may make false claims about a returned package or other delivery issues to convince you to give them personal information.

Criminals may even go as far as sending a package you didn't order to force you to engage with them with an aim to elicit your personal information or a payment.

False Claims. Holiday fraud attempts are often made by making false claims that either a credit card was declined or that you are owed a refund of some sort, prompting you to engage and provide information.

Online Scams. Fake online shopping websites and too-good-to-be-true sales or offers are widely promoted by email and on social media. A lot of these deals will highlight a limited window of opportunity to force immediate action and create a sense of urgency.

Charity Scams. Scammers create phony charities to exploit the generosity of people during the season of giving by creating professional and legitimate-looking material online, complete with branding, photos and compelling stories.

Here are some ways to help protect yourself and your wallet:

- **Be Suspicious.** Maintain awareness that there are a lot of fake offers and false claims during

the holiday season and take the time to carefully investigate anyone you don't know who contacts you or sends packages and asks for your personal or payment information.

- **Stay Alert.** Check gift cards to make sure the PINs aren't exposed with the coverings already scratched off before you purchase them. Keep track of your accounts and flag any suspicious transactions for your financial services provider or bank. If needed, freeze your account and have cards reissued. Setting up alerts with your bank enables them to flag these issues for you, too.

- **Don't Rush.** Even if the deal or

gift offered online or on social media seems like a great value, pause before clicking. Research the organization and stick with trusted brands and points of sale when making purchases whenever possible.

- **Check Charities.** Research charities before giving by utilizing a reliable charity checking site like Charity Navigator, Charity Watch or GuideStar.

For more information on best practices to help prevent fraud, visit PNC's Security and Privacy Center.

A little extra caution around the holidays can make for a season that is merry and bright.

Unlock holiday cheer: Here are 5 DIY decorating tips to spark joy this season

(StatePoint) Research shows that everyday surroundings can make an impact on your overall mood—and when is a better time to foster some happiness than the holiday season? From warming up your space with cozy details to mastering the art of a quick room refresh, the right décor sets the tone for making magical, mood-boosting memories during the holidays.

Follow these simple, budget-friendly tips from Duck brand to create a warm, festive space that brings the spirit of the season to life.

Tip #1: Lay a cozy foundation. Make small, intentional swaps in your living space to create coziness in cold weather. Rather than harsh overhead lighting, drape glowing strand lights from the ceiling, and line tables and counters with battery-powered tapered candles. Play soft, seasonal music anywhere by using removable, double-sided tape to mount mini speakers; toss a couple extra blankets over the sofa to promote snuggling (bonus points if they're in red or green!); and leave a stack of seasonal books or movies in sight to encourage unwinding in the living room.

Tip #2: Pile on personal touches. Science says that decorating with handcrafted pieces can evoke a sense of both accomplishment and connection. Display beloved childhood holiday crafts and family heirlooms, like ornaments or glassware. Then, carve out time to make your own unique focal point. With a little imagination and duct tape, you can DIY your own Instagram-worthy decor.

Consider cutting red and green Color Duck Tape into letter shapes to personalize a festive banner for your fireplace, then use duct tape to make holiday-themed frames to display family photos from over the years.

Tip #3: Refresh your hosting hotspot. For family and friends who are visiting over the holidays, cement your kitchen as a go-to gathering space with a quick makeover. Cheer up countertops with a display of holiday mugs, hang festive towels and spruce up cabinet shelves and other surfaces with removeable, patterned shelf liner like EasyLiner Removeable Adhesive Shelf Liner. For a non-committal DIY that lasts only as long as you want it to, use the weathered wood pattern on a backsplash or kitchen island to add charming texture.

Tip #4: Engage the senses. Select seasonal scents to infuse into your surroundings. For a DIY alternative to candles, boil water with aromatic ingredients, like cinnamon sticks, cloves, orange slices and vanilla, in a simmer pot for a nostalgic scent, or place bags of dried pinecones in bathroom and coat closets. And of course – baking cookies will create a fantastic aroma in your home, too.

Tip #5: Bring the spirit outside. As you make your holiday updates, don't forget about the exterior. Try adding simple touches to high-traffic areas, like placing decorative trees or poinsettias on the porch, hanging a wreath on the front door, tying garlands to beams or hanging lights on the patio or garage.

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How to support the military community during the Holiday Season

(StatePoint) During the holiday season, Americans look forward to spending time with family. But thousands of service members will be spending the holidays deployed overseas – far away from their families and loved ones.

The USO supports service members throughout their deployments. Here is how USO Holidays programming delivers a piece of home to them, along with ideas for how you can get involved:

1. Care Packages: A care package might seem small in light of the challenges of deployment, but for many service members, they're a reminder that they're not forgotten by Americans back home. In addition to the contents of a standard USO Care Package, such as snacks or toiletries, USO Holidays Care Packages have festive treats and goodies, such as holiday can-

dies, cozy socks and warm beanies, helping bridge the gap between home and the frontlines. This year, the USO will deliver thousands of holiday packages to service members deployed around the globe.

2. Holiday Traditions: Giving up treasured family traditions can be difficult. That's why USO Centers and USO Mobile teams host holiday meals for service members and their families, complete with special treats ranging from pumpkin and sweet potato pie to hot cocoa bars. The USO's annual Cookie Week celebrates the time-honored tradition of baking and decorating cookies, putting service members and military families in the holiday spirit wherever they are located. Other seasonal programming can include tree decorating, arts and crafts, holiday-themed movie nights and ugly

sweater competitions.

Through these activities, service members stationed far from home can still make holiday memories. Bringing everyone together on special days fosters camaraderie and positivity, and provides a welcome break from the demands of military life.

3. Connections to Home: Staying connected to family during the holidays can be challenging for service members stationed overseas. The USO Reading Program enables deployed service members to record themselves reading a book to their child. Then, the recording and a copy of the book are sent to that service member's family.

4. Travel Support: As most people know, holiday travel can be especially taxing. Thousands of service members and trainees from military installations across

the country participate in the Holiday Block Leave period, many traveling through some of the busiest airports in the United States to be with their families during the holidays. USO airport centers can alleviate some of that stress by providing a place to relax and unwind before the next leg of their journey.

To learn more about these programs and how to support them, and for ideas on how to reach out to the military community to express your thanks during the holidays and throughout the year, visit USO.org.

The holiday season can be an especially tough time of year for military families. Thankfully, anyone can get involved in the effort to help connect service members to the traditions and people they love back home.

How to maximize the impact of charitable giving

(StatePoint) Charitable giving and helping communities provide many of us with a sense of purpose and joy. However, giving back looks different for everyone. No matter your charitable giving goals, thoughtful planning can help tailor your strategy to best help your chosen charity and your own finances.

To help you make the most of your charitable giving, the professionals at Edward Jones are sharing some tips and advice:

Choose Wisely - Selecting a

deserving organization is a personal decision and depends on what's meaningful to you. Would you prefer your donation stay in the community, or would you like it to have national or global impact? Whatever you choose, make sure the charity is trustworthy.

Check Tax Deductibility - Qualified nonprofits include religious, charitable, educational, scientific and literary charities, as well as those dedicated to helping children and animals. Political

organizations and candidates are not eligible. To claim a charitable tax deduction, you must donate to qualified organizations in good standing with the IRS. Go to IRS.gov to find out if contributions to the organization you select are tax deductible.

Support Comes in Many Forms - If you aren't able to contribute financially, consider donating time, clothes or household items that are in good shape but no longer used. Many organizations have lists of needed things on

their websites.

Keep Records - If you plan to itemize charitable deductions, the IRS requires that you substantiate them. For amounts less than \$250, records such as a canceled check, bank statement or credit card receipt can suffice. For donations of \$250 or more, you must obtain a receipt or other written acknowledgement of the donation from the charity.

Marlene Kryza Caricature Artist

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www.kryzamelot.com

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- 8. Hand & lip balms
- 9. Holiday candles
- 10. Winter wear and more...



Quattro's Farm Store on Route 44 in Pleasant Valley is a great one-stop store for local products for the holidays and all year. Courtesy photos



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