

# Berkshire Property Agents reports successful 2017, looks ahead to 2018

GREAT BARRINGTON — Berkshire Property Agents has reported a successful 2017 and is looking ahead to 2018 with great optimism. “It was excellent,” Tim Lovett said, founder of the company. “It was a very productive year.”

According to Lovett, Berkshire County Board of Realtors has just released their 2017 statistics and is reporting that all of Berkshire County did well in 2017, “especially south county,” Lovett said.

In 2017, Berkshire Property Agents added three new agents who Lovett says are “proving to be quite successful.”

Among those new agents are Jackson Liscombe, Robin Bann, and Fintan Hanley, who was actually added just after New Year’s of 2018.

Looking ahead to 2018, the company has big things cooking. Berkshire Property Agents is always developing new ways to market, Lovett said, and to reach their audience.

“We’re currently working with technology providers, and we’re looking to launch something midsummer,” Lovett said.

In 2018, things are looking “very positive and very busy.” According to Lovett there are a good deal of buyers in the area looking, and there are a lot of options.

“There are a lot of offers being made, things are looking quite positive,” he said.

With a great year dipping their toes into Columbia County, Berkshire Property Agents is looking to continue their expansion into Columbia County and the eastern New York market in 2017.

“We were the top-selling realtor in Hillsdale in 2017,” Lovett reported.

For prospective homebuyers, Lovett recommends interviewing buyer’s agents, “or buyer’s brokers as we call them.”

“It’s a long term relationship,” Lovett said. “You want to like and trust each other.”

From there, it’s best to find out what your mortgage requirements are and to find out how much you can spend and how much you can put down.

Another tip Lovett gave was to get pre-approved so that

when you’re ready to make an offer the seller can trust that you can follow through.

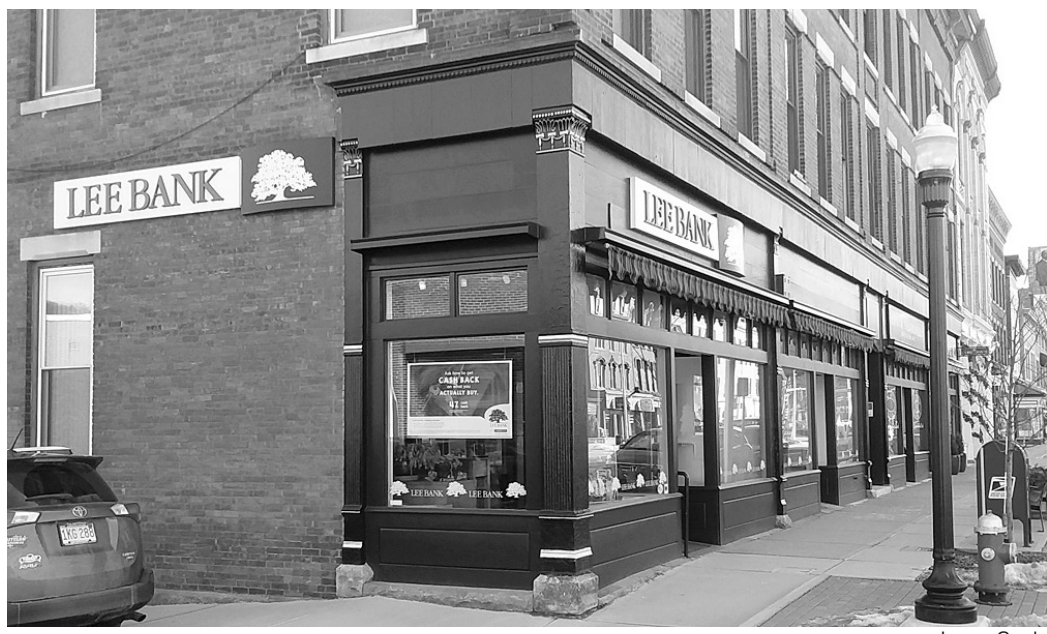
“That can give you an advantage over other buyers that want the same property,” Lovett noted.

For prospective homebuyers, especially young couples who are looking to buy their first home and build equity, Pittsfield is proving to be a very lucrative area, Lovett said.

For those looking for a weekend house, Lovett said that south county is a great place to look.

“The towns don’t really differentiate by price, it’s more where you want to be and what sort of amenities you want nearby,” Lovett said.

Berkshire Property agents is located in downtown Great Barrington on 12 Railroad Street and specializes, as the name would suggest, in Berkshire County properties, whether it’s a home, land, condominium, commercial property, rentals, or waterfront properties. Visit their website at [berkshirepropertyagents.com](http://berkshirepropertyagents.com) to browse hundreds of listings with their easy-to-use search function. Feel free to contact one of their friendly and personable agents about any of their listings.



James Grady

The hallmark of a new, three-year strategic plan for Lee Bank is quality over quantity, says President and CEO Chuck Leach, as well as a continued focus on its customers.

## Lee Bank cites local businesses as reason for success, will focus on customer base in 2018

LEE — Having recently completed its strategic plan for the next three years, Lee Bank is poised to continue doing what it does best: focus on its clients and customers, according to President and CEO Chuck Leach.



Chuck Leach

“The emphasis moving forward is not on scaling up with Lee Bank, but doing what we already do best with an even greater focus on our customers and clients,” Leach said. “Larger banks tend to pursue a model of scale and thus have to keep moving into new geographical territories through a volume approach. Lee Bank is about quality over quantity.”

Despite some concerns within the county about a shrinking and ever-aging population, Lee Bank is pushing forward and continues to grow, Leach said. This is due to a combination of a strong brand and a desire to buy local that runs through many here in the Berkshires, Leach said. “Our earnings, asset

growth, loan volume and our investment management arm were each up near record amounts in spite of what many would say is a challenging backdrop in Berkshire County. I think the reason for that is we are an economy that is very locally oriented, we are invested in our own ecosystem” Leach said. “We are a bank that is well-positioned to serve the small and medium-sized local businesses that are really the driving force in the economy right now.”

Leach went on to say the sleeve comprising small-to-medium local businesses continues to build strength and remain healthy.

“We are seeing the continuation of strength from 2017. There is strong loan growth, significant interest in the investment management arm, October Mountain, and just overall significant net customer growth,” Leach said.

Leach believes this strength will continue on in the year ahead, crediting state Sen. Adam Hinds, D-Pittsfield, for this outlook.

“Looking ahead I am encouraged by the energy from Adam Hinds and his focus on economic development and business development in our

own back yard. I think he is a fantastic politician for Berkshire County,” Leach said.

Leach is a Lee resident who served as senior vice-president of wealth management at Berkshire Bank and in senior management roles with TD Bank Wealth Management Group in Pittsfield and the Gilder Technology Group in Housatonic prior to taking on his current leadership position at Lee Bank.

According to the CEO, the bank’s commercial lending continues to improve after an excellent 2017.

“In terms of commercial lending, 2017 was one of our strongest years ever,” Leach said. “We have a great team of lenders and a lot of local businesses interested in working with us.”

In 2016, Lee Bank partnered with St. Germain Investment Management, a privately owned and independent firm out of Springfield. The partnership, which led to the creation of the October Mountain Financial Advisors, continues to grow alongside the bank’s other endeavors.

“The October Mountain brand grew another 90 percent last year on top of the significant growth it saw in the first year,” Leach said.

## Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation: A closer look at our region

By Peter Taylor

In some important ways, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation is in the knowledge business. Donors are more effective in their philanthropy and non-profits can be more successful in their work when information on critical issues and trends is readily available to them. Our region is stronger when all community members are informed voters, volunteers and board members.

The report we released last summer, A Closer Look, is the first step in Berkshire Taconic’s efforts to provide our donors, nonprofit partners and residents with data that can inform decision-making. Viewpoints from over 2,300 people from focus groups and surveys informed the findings, in addition to an analysis of existing reports and datasets from



government and other non-profit organizations. (Learn more at [berkshiretaconic.org/ACloserLook](http://berkshiretaconic.org/ACloserLook).)

The net result is a deeper shared understanding of the critical issues we need to pay attention to, along with an opportunity to take stock of what is unique and special about the region. This last point is important to underscore. The issues highlighted in the report, such as jobs, demographic changes and income inequality, are not unique to our region since most rural areas are facing these challenges, too.

The solutions to these issues will come from our region’s singular strengths and assets, most notably our dynamic mix of people, whose creativity, drive and strong commitment to this place are visible every day in our communities, businesses, schools and nonprofits. And there are already many efforts underway across our region to test promising approaches. It’s our aim moving forward to successfully connect people and resources to the strategies,

organizations and initiatives that are advancing a positive vision for the future.

This learning process has reinforced our belief that our region will be stronger if all residents have the opportunity for economic mobility and a high quality of life. To move toward this vision, we also believe residents need access to training and career opportunities to improve their economic well-being, as well as the rich amenities and opportunities this region inherently offers.

In the year ahead, Berkshire Taconic will turn our assessment results into positive actions that make our communities stronger. History has shown that local action is the only guarantee for change at the local level. With great optimism and a commitment to focusing on solutions, we will get there together.

*Peter Taylor is president of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, which serves Berkshire County, Mass., Columbia and north-east Dutchess counties in New York, and northwest Litchfield County, Conn.*



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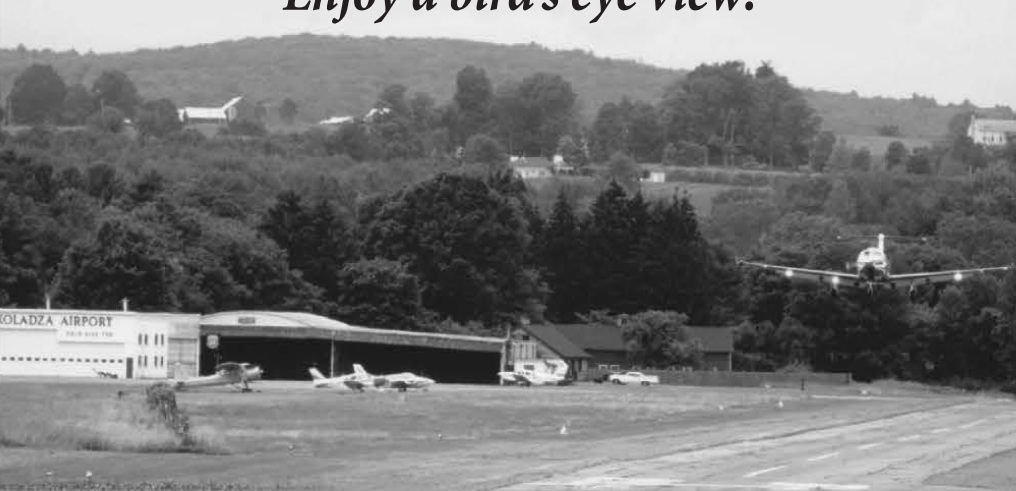
Lee Founders Weekend, September 15-17

Taste of Lee, Sept. 15 • Hometown Parade, Sept. 16 • Festival Latino, Sept. 16

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