



**Message from the President**

Christie Ransom,  
President & CEO

Today, as I write this, I am reminded of the businesses that make our Winona Area unique and I am very grateful for the opportunity to work hard on their behalf. Leaders all over the world are facing issues never seen before. Unprecedented conditions require remarkable responses from all of us. I see decisions being made in our community and state that put the welfare of people and community first. That is inspiring! How we as businesses support each other, commit to each other, will lay our foundation for moving forward.

Now, more than ever, we are here to be your voice, represent our businesses, sustain business, be a part of a robust plan for recovery. As we move forward building strategic plans for our community's

recovery, we need your voice, your investment to move us all forward.

The COVID-19 virus represents an unprecedented crisis that will have lasting economic impacts the likes of which cannot be fully quantified at this time. This crisis has the potential of significantly disrupting the small ecosystem that has fueled the Winona Area economy and supported our community for generations.

We recognize that the situation on the ground is fluid, and the conditions are changing day-by-day. As Chambers of Commerce we stand ready to serve as the eyes, ears, and voice of this community, and we pledge to work with all stakeholders to ensure that reasonable solutions are implemented on the ground. Our community is still open for business, planning for recovery. We are the center of business; sustainability is our focus. Business hasn't stopped and YOUR Chamber hasn't either!

Check out the COVID-19 resources on our website  
[www.winonachamber.com](http://www.winonachamber.com)



**Immersion for REACH Juniors**

Nicole Schossow,  
B.E.N./REACH Program Manager

The juniors in the REACH program at Winona Senior High School experienced their second set of immersions in late February. During an immersion, students spend the afternoon at a local business exploring the myriad of career options available. Businesses included in the February immersions included Bluffview Montessori School, Fastenal, Home & Community Options, Winona Health, Winona ORC, and Winona State University Athletic Training Department.

For many of our students, the full depth of options available in any career field is unknown. Even as adults, it can be difficult to understand until you are actually working in that field. By offering immersions to the students in fields they have expressed interest in, REACH is able to share that insight with students before they make final decisions on a career after high school. Each immersion includes a career-specific tour as well as hands-on experience in as many departments as possible. Students end each immersion excited and encouraged by the clarity they have gained.



Fastenal Immersion Feb. 2020



Athletic Training Immersion Feb. 2020



Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Immersion Feb. 2020

**REACH**  
YOUR FULL POTENTIAL



**Main Street News April 2020**

Ben Strand, Main Street  
Program Manager

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the restrictions the State of Minnesota has put on large gatherings/events for the foreseeable future Touch-A-Truck 2020 will be postponed to a later date. We have not decided on this date yet, but we plan to announce the new date as soon as there is clarity on when large gatherings can ensue again.

Touch-A-Truck is one of the most popular events our program organizes, but the Winona Main Street Program prioritizes the safety of our community and its people.



You can stay up-to-date on all things Main Street by visiting our website at [winonamainstreet.com](http://winonamainstreet.com) or our Facebook page Winona Main Street Program, or emailing Ben Strand at [bstrand@winonachamber.com](mailto:bstrand@winonachamber.com)

**About the Chamber**

**Our Vision:**

To be the premier business advocate in Southeastern Minnesota.

**Our Mission:**

To provide value to our members through business advocacy, training, economic development and the support of tourism.

**Officers:**

- Dave Jensen - Chair
- Michael Charron - Chair Elect
- Corey Hancock - Past Chair
- Jolene Vaselaar - Treasurer
- Scott Rodeghier - At Large

**Retiring 2020:**

- Dave Erickson
- Corey Hancock
- Scott Rodeghier
- Dan Welsh
- Terry Klonecki

**Retiring 2021:**

- Ben Adank
- Joanne Thompson
- Dave Jensen
- Rebecca Lamberty
- Jolene Vaselaar

**Retiring 2022:**

- Michael Charron
- Danny Rivers
- Kyle Rupprecht
- Randy Skarlupka
- Ellen Smith

**Staff:**

- Christie Ransom – President & CEO
- Kay Mathews – Vice President of Finance and Operations
- Amanda Steine – Membership Development and Programs Manager
- Ben Strand – Main Street Program Manager
- Nicole Schossow – B.E.N./REACH Program Manager

**CHAMBER CHAMPIONS**

- VISIONARY -



- PREMIER -



- EXECUTIVE -



**BE SEEN • BE HEARD • BELONG**  
**JOIN THE CHAMBER!**

## April is national Volunteer Appreciation Month! How important are volunteers? Critical!

From charities to faith-based organizations, from service clubs to business associations, volunteers are the common denominator that binds them all. Without volunteers, where would leadership and financial support for these types of organizations come from? Where would we be without the volunteer hands that do the work, or the creative thinkers that find the solutions? We would be nowhere, that's where.

Why we are so grateful to the hundred and fifty (or so) active volunteers who give of their time and talent each month to the pursuit of the chamber's mission? We know that most of these same individuals also volunteer throughout our community. We find that to be priceless!

Volunteers in our community provide help to the needy. They make a difference in the lives of our kids. They improve the lives of the elderly. Volunteers in our community bring smiles to the disabled and feed the hungry. They add beauty to our community. They build homes for families. Volunteers support the arts. They lead community decisions. They give a voice to those who may not have a voice. They provide financial support to important community initiatives and programs. Volunteers in our community give of their time, talent, heart, money, and yes they sometimes also give blood, sweat and tears.

The Winona Area Chamber of Commerce is in fact a business organization with an agenda to help create an environment that allows businesses to prosper, grow and add jobs. But the Chamber is also collection of people, friends and neighbors who are invested in the betterment of the community at every level. We salute and thank the talented individuals with whom we have the privilege to work with here at the Chamber. We thank them even more for all of the ways, through volunteerism and philanthropic giving, that these same business leaders give back to Winona.

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, and there is no better way to say Thank You than to join in. Find something important to you and volunteer your time and talent to make a difference.

### Thank you from the Chamber Board of Directors and Staff.

#### Benefits of Volunteering:

- Make a difference
- Make new friends
- Impact the life of someone else
- Learn a new skill
- Expand your horizons
- Improve the community where you live, work and play

## How to Set Up Your Social Media for Success

Tuesday, April 21st Noon- 1:00 pm via Zoom Call  
Check-in starting at 11:45 am

### Don't know how to use social media for your business? Confused about which platforms to use?

Join us for a presentation by Business & Productivity Coach Karen Grill as she explains how to:

- Choose the correct social media platform for your business
- Set up your social media profiles for business success
- Shift your mindset from using social media as a personal platform to a professional avenue to generate business
- Understand how to strategically showcase your businesses' products and services



**Karen Grill** is a Business & Productivity Coach for Entrepreneurs and a Certified Fix This Next Advisor. Having started her first online business over 10 years ago, she knows the struggles of entrepreneurs and has learned the strategies for creating a successful business.

She loves helping business owners manage their time, overcome their tech issues, create systems and strategies to work less and earn more so that they can run the business they love while still having time for their families and themselves.

Register at [www.winonachamber.com](http://www.winonachamber.com)  
or email [info@winonachamber.com](mailto:info@winonachamber.com)

## Biz Bites



**Anesthesiologist John Sill, MD**, has joined the **Winona Health** medical staff and will work with the surgeons and staff in Winona Health's Surgery Department. "Quickly, very quickly, following my arrival at Winona Health and touring the surgical suites, I realized that I was visiting an outstanding institution. My most immediate impression was the excellence of the quality of care. Patients can be confident in the providers at Winona Health. My second immediate impression was the warmth and generosity of the staff, encountered in meetings and walking through the halls of the hospital. Definitely, Winona Health is a well-organized and happy institution." Dr. Sill grew up in northern England and earned his Medical Degree from University College London Medical School in London. He completed an internship at St. Charles Hospital Imperial College in London, and residencies at University College London, Imperial College London and at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Rochester where he completed a residency in cardiac anesthesia and Intensive care. Dr. Sill was an assistant professor at John's Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland.



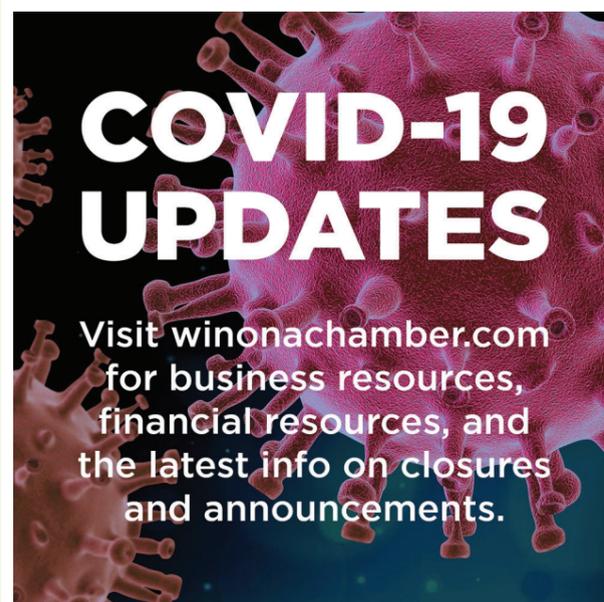
To a standing ovation from tourism officials from across the state, the Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (MACVB) awarded **Pat Mutter**, executive director of **Visit Winona**, with its highest honor, the Roger Toussaint Award, at the annual Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference in Alexandria, Minnesota, this week. Taking the helm of Visit Winona in 2002, Mutter has shepherded the organization through dramatic changes in the Winona tourism market over the past 17 years. In presenting the award, MACVB officials noted that under Pat's leadership, Visit Winona has blossomed into a powerful marketing force, keeping step with the Winona region as it, too, blossomed into an exceptional destination since 2002. Mutter was acknowledged for having been at the forefront of helping to lay the groundwork and support network for the festivals and events that have enhanced Winona as a destination in recent years, and she was praised for being at the center of the consensus-building conversations that moved those efforts forward.



**Xcel Energy** has been named one of the 2020 World's Most Ethical Companies® by Ethisphere, a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices. The company was chosen for its culture of ethics, its corporate compliance program, leadership, governance and reputation, among other attributes. "We're honored to be named one of the 2020 World's Most Ethical Companies," said Ben Fowke, president, chairman and CEO of Xcel Energy. "Xcel Energy takes great pride in not only leading the clean energy transition, but in maintaining high ethical standards in our business practices and how we engage with employees, customers and other stakeholders."



**Bremer Bank** is excited to announce **Jim Vrchota** has joined its Winona Branch as a Market President. In this role, Jim will be serving the Winona Community with his commercial, agricultural, and SBA lending expertise. Jim has 40 years of banking experience, most recently as a VP for Merchants Bank. Jim is committed to the Winona Community, serving as President of the Winona County EDA, President of the Winona Workforce Development Board, VP for the Winona ORC Board, Vice Chair of the St. Anne of Winona Board, Member Winona Rotary Board, Member Minnesota Business Finance Corporation SBA 504 Loan Board, with further involvement in Winona Chamber Ambassadors and Winona Chamber EDA. He also serves on the Community Partners for a Healthy Winona County, and as a Junior Achievement volunteer teacher. Jim has completed the Blandin Leadership Training Program twice and was recently honored as the 2019 Chamber Volunteer of the Year. When he isn't volunteering in one of these other capacities, you'll find him involved in community theater projects.



**It's not just business as usual in Winona. The potential dividends from an investment in the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce are unlimited, because what develops at the Chamber is every one's business.**

If you are interested in leading the way with us, go to [www.winonachamber.com](http://www.winonachamber.com) and complete the online form. To set up an appointment to explore the advantages of Chamber membership or to learn more about available resources at the Winona Chamber contact us at (507) 452-2272 or email [info@winonachamber.com](mailto:info@winonachamber.com)