

April 2021

www.winonachamber.com | (507) 452-2272 | 902 E. Second St., Suite 120, Winona, MN



Reflecting on the past 12 months

Christie Ransom, President & CEO
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce

Today, as I write this, I reflect on the past 12 months and the adversity and struggle that our businesses have gone through at varying degrees. Never in my wildest imagination would I have expected to still be facing this pandemic and fighting for the survival of our businesses one year later. Over this time we have seen adversity rock our businesses, non-profit organizations, civic leaders, and community. And while none of us feel certain of a lot these days, what I am certain of is that we are strong, resilient, innovative, and overcomers.

I have never been prouder to lead an organization that works so tirelessly on behalf of the businesses that make our Winona Area unique. Over the past year, the connections I have made with our business owners have helped me to realize what I needed to do at every turn. Every day seemed to bring new

struggles and new opportunities to serve them in a greater way. I tend to wake up each day asking myself, "how can I do more". My purpose and passion for the work that we do at the Chamber is so solid and after this past year, our hope is that we have done well to ensure that our businesses and community feel the same.

With capacity restrictions still in place and businesses still struggling, we know that our fight continues. How we continue to support each other and commit to each other, will lay our foundation for moving forward.

We recognize that the situation continues to be fluid, and the conditions are changing day-by-day. We continue to fight for a pathway to fully reopening our economy. This crisis has already significantly disrupted the ecosystem that has fueled the Winona Area economy and supported our community for generations. At the Winona Area Chamber, we stand ready to serve all of you and we pledge to continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that reasonable solutions are implemented. We are here, ready for recovery.

ABOUT THE CHAMBER

- OUR MISSION -

To Serve Businesses How and When They Need Us

- OUR VISION -

Be the Foremost Resource and Advocate for Businesses in the Winona Area

Officers:

- Michael Charron – Chair
- Andrew Puetz – Chair Elect
- Dave Jensen – Past Chair
- Jolene Vaselaar – Treasurer
- Kyle Rupprecht – At Large

Retiring 2021:

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

Retiring 2022:

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

Retiring 2023:

- Andrea Northam
- Dave Pederson
- Kelly Pronschinske
- Andy Puetz
- Mike Dieter

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 -



Dine Out Downtown Touch-A-Truck

Ben Strand, Program Manager
Main Street Program

Last year, the Main Street Program worked with the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Winona to bring expanded outdoor dining opportunities to downtown via Dine Out Downtown. Every Friday from 4-10 p.m., a portion of 3rd Street was closed off to allow for downtown restaurant and bars to have access to expanded outdoor seating.

We are planning to promote Dine Out Downtown again this year, and we would love to hear back from anyone who attended one (or more) Dine Out Downtown events last year. If you would like to give feedback on Dine Out Downtown and about your experience(s), please email Main Street Program Manager Ben Strand at bstrand@winonachamber.com

or call the Chamber at 507-452-2272. As we prepare to put together our City Council proposal, it would be great to inform them of the positive benefits it had on our community!

Additionally, we are still working on finalizing a detailed plan for Touch-A-Truck this year. While we do not have everything quite in place yet, we have decided on a date of Saturday, May 22nd. Stay tuned to the Main Street Program's Facebook page for updates with more details about the event! If you are interested in participating in this year's event or would like to learn more about potential sponsor opportunities, contact Ben.



REACH Awarded Youth Skills Training Grant

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

Once again, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) has awarded a 2-year Youth Skills Training (YST) grant to the REACH program. The YST program was signed into state law in 2017 with bipartisan support to create and provide employment training for student learners ages 16 and older in high-growth, high-demand occupations. The Winona Area Chamber of Commerce received one of the first grants through the program for the school years of 2018-19 and 2019-20 and has again been named as one of the eleven recipients of a YST grant for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

With our previous YST grant, the focus was on manufacturing opportunities in Winona for students at Winona Senior High School. Not only was the REACH program launched in the manufacturing sector, but students under 18 were

not allowed to work or intern for manufacturers. By partnering with DLI, REACH has been able to allow high school students to hold supervised and safe internships at our local manufacturers. Since the inception of REACH, both industries (healthcare, human services, building trades and agribusiness) and schools (Lewiston-Altura and Wabasha-Kellogg) have been added to the program. With the continued support of DLI through the YST grant, we will continue to provide soft skill and technical training to a growing number of area high school students so they may safely work at even more approved internship sites in our area.



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

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 everyone's business.





**THANK YOU
SUGAR LOAF FORD LINCOLN
& CHRYSLER WINONA!**



The Winona Area Chamber of Commerce and the Winona Chamber Ambassadors would like to extend the biggest THANK YOU to Sugar Loaf Ford Lincoln and Chrysler Winona for their larger-than-life donation of a brand-new food trailer! The Chamber Ambassadors have been looking for a new home for their long-standing Brat Booth down at Winona Steamboat Days; Sugar Loaf Ford Lincoln and Chrysler Winona heard about this and **generously gifted the Winona Chamber of Commerce with a brand-new food trailer to be used for the Ambassadors Brat Booth, as well as other endeavors throughout the year.** We cannot thank them enough for this donation and are eager for everyone to come and see it in action at this year's Steamboat Days!

NEW MEMBERS



Spectrum Reach®, the advertising sales and production services offered by Charter Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ:CHTR), provides custom solutions for the modern media landscape. Operating in over 30 million households, nearly 100 DMAs, and 41 states, Spectrum Reach provides scalable advertising and marketing services utilizing national cable networks, internet advertising, and promotional events backed by marketing, research, and award-winning creative services. Driven by insightful research to understand consumer behavior, Spectrum Reach develops measurable, data-infused marketing solutions for businesses of all sizes. More information about Spectrum Reach can be found at spectrum-reach.com.

BIZ BITES



Sarah Cates, DO, joined the **Winona Health** medical staff and will care for people in the Emergency department. "Emergency Medicine requires that we're always ready to care for the variety of issues patients come in with," said Cates. "What's most rewarding is being able to help someone who is at their most vulnerable, and maybe having their worst day, by providing the care they need and connecting with them beyond the medical issue that brought them in." Dr. Cates earned her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree, graduating with honors from the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) in Blacksburg, Virginia, and completed her residency in Emergency Medicine at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pennsylvania. She is board certified in Emergency Medicine by the American Board of Emergency Medicine. Dr. Cates also has a doctorate in Philosophy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia. Dr. Cates's experience includes serving as an ABWE International missionary at the Hospital of Hope in Mango Togo, West Africa, where she was initially a World Medical Mission volunteer. She has also cared for patients at Kaiser Permanente in Kennesaw, Georgia.



An end to the coronavirus pandemic still isn't quite in reach, and Winona State University graduate and Wisconsin native **Jackie Henderson** has joined the **Winona Area Public Schools** team to help lead the way through the hardest hours yet to come. Henderson is the district's new COVID-19 coordinator, which means she is present in the community and ready to help with contact tracing WAPS students and staff, following up with close contacts, and setting up bi-monthly staff COVID-19 screenings. The screenings she helps conduct are possible due to the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education, which supports the screenings in the hopes of finding any possible asymptomatic staff cases before they expose the district's communities. Her experience is packed, with her having planned an educational program for the American Red Cross, helped with COVID-19 programming with Bridges Health Winona, and completed an internship that was COVID-19 response related with Live Well Winona and Winona Health.



Kyle Rupprecht has been promoted to Market President for **Minnwest Bank** in the Lewiston, Spring Valley and Wykoff Market. Kyle joined the Minnwest Bank, Lewiston team in 2017 as an Ag Loan Officer and carries 15+ years of experience in Ag lending in the Lewiston, Spring Valley and Wykoff Market. Kyle is an active community member currently serving on the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce Board and is the Chair of the Chamber's Agribusiness Committee. Kyle is an Adult Leader of the Altura Sky Rockets 4H Club and volunteers as a member of the Winona County 4H Federation. Kyle is also an active member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Lewiston. As Market President, Kyle will oversee the Ag and Commercial lending activities within the Lewiston, Spring Valley and Wykoff markets. Kyle will also be charged with promoting and supporting the Retail team to grow Minnwest Bank's deposit base. "Kyle is highly respected for his knowledge of financing including dairy operations, row crop operations and meeting the commercial needs of our customers as well as providing crop and dairy insurance services for many clients," said Dan Koster, Ag Division Leader in Redwood Falls. "Minnwest Bank is excited to see Kyle's transition to Market President, and we look forward to great things coming from the Lewiston, Spring Valley and Wykoff markets," said Dan.



The Science You Build On.

Braun Intertec Corp. is proud to be an employee-owned geotechnical engineering, environmental consulting, and testing firm which has grown to over 1,000 employee-owners. Our workplace is full of engaged employee-owners who value and encourage a healthy workplace. At our firm, we promote employee health to encourage a productive lifestyle both at work and at home. Our wellness initiatives continue to have a positive impact on the lives and well-being of our people. We offer a variety of health management resources and tools focused on diet, nutrition, exercise, education, and disease-management. In addition, we continue to identify tools that address the health needs and priorities that are important to our employee-owners. To learn more about Braun Intertec Corp. visit them online at braun-intertec.com or call them at 608.781.7277.

97% of employers agreed that soft skills impact job performance

Only 31% of employers reported that their job candidates have satisfactory soft skills



Preparing high school students for the future is about more than just teaching skills. REACH graduates are valued members of your team as a result of soft skills gained through classroom learning and live interactions with local employers.

Learn more about REACH at www.hotjobscoolcompanies.com



Young Professionals Program

Mikaela Mohr,
Chamber Intern B.E.N./REACH

Through our Young Professionals program, we can connect monthly through social and professional development events (all virtual for now). If you are interested in becoming a YP or offering a membership for your employees, please contact Christie Ransom at cransom@winonachamber.com.



"Being authentic does not mean you have to follow your every impulse or express every thought. It's about being in full choice about your actions." This was one of the key thoughts written by Mary Abbajay, author of *Managing Up*, and our February Speaker for the Winona Area Young Professionals (YP). Living in such a "digital world" for the past year has not only changed our personal perspective, but also the workplace perspective.