

July 2021

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Workforce is a hot topic right now

Christie Ransom, President & CEO
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce

Workforce is a hot topic right now and our goal is to work diligently on multiple facets to help bridge that gap. Everyone is in desperate need of employees, from small retail to large manufacturing and everything in between. A few things are clear to me from many conversations with legislators and business owners. One is that we need to address the unemployment benefits and rather incentivize those that are returning to the workforce. Second is that we need to be innovative in our support from the Chamber to assist businesses. Third, it is time to be creative in our approach to attracting and growing a better workforce. Solutions like REACH are designed to do just that and disrupting that program to be bigger and better will create a solid foundation to fill the needs of our business community. The MN Chamber recently held its annual Workforce Solutions Forum. Below is some information from that event. The time to change and adapt to our business needs is NOW.

Workforce: a persistent challenge takes innovative solutions

Recently, the Minnesota Chamber held its annual Workforce Solutions Forum to talk about a fundamental challenge that faced employers for years before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and is likely to continue long after: workforce. The Minnesota Chamber Foundation's Center for Workforce Solutions is a business-led initiative to ensure employers and employees possess the necessary tools for jobs of the future. Workforce moves far past admiration of workforce challenges. We focus on innovative solutions; to fill positions now and to change the long-term process that can develop a pipeline of workers and meaningful employment in Minnesota for generations to come.

How can the private and public sectors innovate to address workforce challenges?

Here are some tips from national and local experts:

Putting the individual at the center of learning and training

Jamie Merisotis keynoted the Workforce Solutions Forum to touch on how his organization - the Lumina Foundation - is working to design an affordable, new learning landscape that is easier to navigate, especially for people of color who often encounter barriers to success in existing education systems. He is a globally-recognized leader in philanthropy, education, human work and talent development, and public policy.

Jamie laid out the problem facing Minnesota employers. "I think it's clear that we have a tale of two Minnesotas. In the 35 years from 1970 to 2004, Minnesota job growth outpaced the national average in 27 of those years, the GDP growth followed. But since 2005, GDP and job growth had been running at barely one-third of their previous pace. Population in labor force growth have slowed and are projected to keep slowing. And as the **Minnesota: 2030** framework makes clear, Minnesota needs more people available to work. And even as the state's population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, Minnesota's racial achievement gaps are among the worst in the nation."

So what can Minnesota do now to help businesses find workers to fill open jobs and help the economy thrive?

"The days of performing the same job, the same way for much of one's career are over. Workers today not only need some education after high school, they also need to frequently re-skill and up-skill. We need a system that puts the individual at the center. One that focuses on learning rather than education, the individuals rather than the institution and on work rather than jobs. The good news is a growing number of businesses get it."

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

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- Nicole Schossow – B.E.N./REACH Program Manager

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Main Street July Newsletter

Ben Strand, Program Manager
Main Street Program

Main Street is very excited to announce that we have partnered with WINONArts, River City Ballroom Dancers, and Merchants Bank to bring 'Swingin' in the Streets' back this year! Get your dancing shoes ready, because 3rd Street outside Blooming Grounds and newly opened Peter's Biergarten will be filled with live orchestral music and happy feet on Friday, July 16 from 6-9 p.m. The event will also provide an important chance to talk with the planning consultants from the Cultural Planning Group, who will be in town to gather community input and ideas for the city's Arts and Culture Strategic Plan.

Sweet Stroll is also set to return this year on Thursday, July 22, followed by Crazy Days Weekend July 23-24. If there was a weekend to spend time shopping at some of your favorite downtown businesses, that would be the weekend to do it! A special thank you to Merchants Bank and MN Secured Title for sponsoring the Sweet Stroll this year!

... but wait! **There's MORE!** The Big Muddy Brew 'N Que returns this year after a hiatus in 2020. Our annual Labor Day weekend fundraiser will be bigger and better than ever, and we hope to see you all at Levee Park this year! Sponsorship opportunities are still available for the Que. If you or your business/organization are interested in supporting this event contact Main Street Program Manager at bstrand@winonachamber.com or call 507-452-2272.



REACH Scholarships Announced

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

Each year, REACH awards scholarships to students who will continue their education at a local college/university in a related field of study (agribusiness, building trades, healthcare, human services, or manufacturing.) Congratulations to the recipients of the 2021 REACH Scholarship.

Alex Charles
Studying Biochemistry at Winona State University

Shirley Kukowski
Studying Pre-Med at Winona State University

Hannah Lee
Studying Pre-Social Work Transfer Pathway at Minnesota State College Southeast

Aurora Magnuson
Studying Nursing at Minnesota State College Southeast



Alex



Shirley



Hannah



Aurora



Young Professionals Program / REACH

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

During June, the Young Professionals attended "How to Be A Team Player", presented by Mike Dieter from Express Employment Professionals. We learned about how an "Ideal Team Player" is made up of three character traits: humility, hunger, and intelligence. As this was our first in-person YP educational event since Covid, seeing everyone come together and laugh, understand, brainstorm, and show vulnerability was an amazing reminder on why this program exists. A huge thank you to Mike Dieter for not only teaching us about qualities to look for within ourselves, but also for those around us! If you're interested in learning more about our Young Professionals program, or applying to become a YP, don't hesitate to reach out!

As we wrapped up our 2020-2021 REACH program, I took some time to look back on my own experience within REACH. The support and push for career goals is something many students never look for, but

are grateful for once it's happened. Without the REACH program, in my own experience, I wouldn't have been able to find my own calling, nevertheless this internship! Because of REACH, I learned not only the curriculum provided during my time in the program, but life-long skills to enhance my experience within my own career field. I've spent time thinking of creative and unique approaches to the program, so we are able to further our initiative and impact even more students in and out of the classroom. Throughout this month of July, and into August, our main focus is to reflect on what has happened in the program thus far, and plan to strive within what's to come.



BIZ BITES



John Tschida '90 is rounding third and heading home to **Saint Mary's University of Minnesota**. Tschida, hailed as the coach with the highest winning percentage of all NCAA Division III softball coaches, is returning to his alma mater — where he FIRST led his fastpitch team to a national championship in 2000. Tschida brings with him a remarkable overall 27-year coaching record of 999-193. He's just one game away from being one of only 25 active NCAA softball coaches to reach 1,000 victories. "I feel winning is a by-product of having disciplined student-athletes who take pride in what they do, on and off the field," Tschida said. "With having coached 43 All-Americans, I am continuously amazed that nearly all of them also achieved Academic All-American status. Better people make better Saint Mary's softball people. Tschida, voted into the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Hall of Fame, is also a two-time National Coach of the Year and has been named MIAC Coach of the Year in 13 of his 26 seasons at Saint Mary's and University and St. Thomas. In addition, Tschida and his staff have been named the 2014, 2016, and 2019 Division III Midwest Regional Coaches of the Year by the NFCA. He's twice been inducted into the Saint Mary's Sports Hall of Fame, first as the coach of the championship team in 2005 and again for his success as a coach in 2010. A respected clinician and speaker, Tschida travels the country and the world to promote fastpitch softball and educate fellow coaches on fine points of training and competition. Due to time commitments away from coaching, he turned down invitations by two different countries to coach their national teams in the 2008 Olympics Games.



Custom Alarm was recently recognized by Workforce Development Inc. with the title of "Best Places to Work in Southeast MN", for the fifth straight year. The purpose of the program is to recognize some of the best employers in our local area and provide vital information to companies about the practices they use to attract and retain employees. Each company participating was required to complete a 40-question survey that allowed their employment practices to be analyzed by the consulting firm of Personnel Dynamics Consulting of Florida. The data was measured on parameters as: turnover, rate of growth, promotion rates, employee evaluations and feedback, percentage of employee injured, diversity of management, benefits offered, training expenditures, paid days off and increase in pay. "Finding out we received this recognition for the 5th straight year was even more rewarding after the year we have all endured," states Custom Alarm CEO **Melissa Brinkman**. "The team here at Custom Alarm is one I am extremely proud of and grateful to work alongside. We do our best as an organization to provide an overall healthy and positive culture. In a year of so many unknowns we persevered stronger together and weathered it well, all things considered. Each year named amongst the other leading companies is humbling and we look to them to learn how we can continue to build on what we have and grow to be a stronger company."

RIBBON CUTTINGS



The Winona Chamber Ambassadors held a ribbon cutting to honor the grand opening of the new **Ellie Family Services** office here in Winona! Ellie Family Services provides individual and couples counseling, child, teen and family therapy, medication management, psychological testing & evaluation, ARMHS & CTSS, embedded programming & organizational mental health support, and additional customized services both in-office and in-home. Ellie Family Services Winona clinic is conveniently located right off the main bus hub and Highways 35 and 43 on the north side of the Mighty Mississippi River on Levee Park on the first floor of the 111 Riverfront Building.

As an agency, Ellie Family Services is new to the Winona area, but their staff here are not- all of their therapists are from, and live in, the Winona area. Community is something they value (A LOT!), and they believe that their care is much more effective when their providers are most invested in the wellness of their own families, neighborhoods, and cities. At Ellie, they also value family and treat their employees and community-partners as such.

For more information on Ellie Family Services contact them at 507.479.3079 or visit them online at elliefamilyservices.com.

Pictured with Chamber Ambassadors: Lacy Osborne, Clinic Director and Therapist; Erin Anderson, Clinic Manager and Therapist; Kathryn Jargo, Manager-Community Based and Therapist; Octavia Brown Community Based Mental Health Practitioner; Linn Polyak, Community Based Mental Health Practitioner; Lisa Rogers, Therapist; Rachel M. Slough-Johnson, Bilingual Spanish/English Therapist.



The **Winona Chamber Ambassadors Food Trailer** kicked-off down at Winona Steamboat Days with a ribbon cutting to commemorate the grand-opening of the new Food Trailer donated by **Sugar Loaf Ford Lincoln and Chrysler Winona**. The Chamber Ambassadors have been serving brats, cheeseburgers, and hot dogs out of their old Chamber Ambassadors Brat Booth for longer than most of us can remember. The Ambassadors are serving the same delicious food, just out of a new structure! Come check them out next year at the 75th Winona Steamboat Days held down in Levee Park!

Pictured with Chamber Ambassadors: Mike Puetz and Andy Puetz, Sugar Loaf Ford Lincoln and Chrysler Winona, and Christie Ransom, Chamber President/CEO.



Winona Steamboat Days held a ribbon cutting to celebrate the kick-off of this year's event held in Levee Park on Wednesday, June 16th (the first day of Steamboat Days 2021). The ribbon cutting followed the introduction of Dean Beckman as the 2019-2021 Winona Steamboat Days Harbor Master. Please, join us in congratulating Dean on his title and the Winona Steamboat Days Committee on another successful event!

Pictured with Chamber Ambassadors: Dean Beckman, 2021 Harbor Master; Past Harbor Master's, City Officials, and members of the Steamboat Days Committee.



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GRAND PRIZE
Black 2021 Ford Bronco Sport 4WD
Must be 18 or older to purchase ticket or win prize. Winner responsible for any applicable fees or taxes. Permit #: X-93936-21-005

Join us for a live drawing on Sunday, September 5th at 4:00PM at Big Muddy Brew 'n Que in Levee Park - need not be present to win.

For more info or to purchase tickets contact The Winona Area Chamber of Commerce
507.452.2272 | info@winonachamber.com | winonachamber.com

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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.