

June 2023

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



Thank a Dairy Farmer this Month

Christie Ransom, President & CEO
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce

June as Dairy Month has been a tradition in the U.S. since 1937. It was established by grocers’ organizations as a way to distribute extra milk during the warm months of summer. By 1939, June became the official “Dairy Month” and has since transitioned to a sales promotion program for milk and dairy foods.

During National Dairy Month, we pause to commend and celebrate Winona County’s hardworking dairy farmers and the dairy foods that nourish people, strengthen communities, and foster a sustainable future.

Today and every day, dairy farmers are committed to producing the delicious and nutrient-packed dairy foods we all know and enjoy. They work around the clock to care for their animals and protect the environment because it’s what they love to do!

June Dairy Month reminds us of dairy’s benefits and connects us to the farm, so we know where dairy foods are produced and the farm families behind them.

Our Winona Area Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committee works hard to ensure that we are celebrating farmers and agriculture throughout the year. To celebrate Dairy Month, the committee began creating Dairy Buckets a few years ago. This has become a sought-after initiative by businesses, the entire community, and beyond. We look forward to putting these together again this year, filled with dairy products from area creameries that our area dairy farmers partner with and those that support this amazing initiative.

We have so many sponsors that help to make our Dairy Buckets possible and help us keep the costs far below the value of the bucket. We cannot thank them enough. I want to take a moment to recognize a few of them: Behrens Metalware, Winona Sign & Design/Formgraphics, Sugar Loaf Ford Lincoln, Chrysler Winona, Bremer Bank, Northwestern Mutual, Advanced Dairy, California Haulers, Home Federal, Horihan Insurance, Hy-Vee, Merchants Bank, Minnwest Bank, WA Group, and Wagner Oehler, LTD, plus many, many more. Thank you all and **THANK YOU, WINONA COUNTY DAIRY FARMERS!**



Synergy Update!

Emma Ebbinger, Director of Workforce
and Business Development

Synergy Academy is a continued evolution of the previous REACH program, a workforce initiative of the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce. This is a career academy pathway program to teach transferable skills and begin career and college pathways in desirable fields for high school juniors and seniors. This program is designed to prepare students and to provide employment ready, skilled workforce for major industry sectors. It will use an academy structure to ensure a fully rounded education and provide students with a credentialed certificate in their desired field within 1 year!

There are currently 3 certificate programs including CNC Engineering, CAD Basic Drafting, Electronics and 3 course bundles including Construction, Health and Human Services, and General Education. With recent news of programming additions, we will be adding Welding and Automotive Certificates and a Mechatronics Course Bundle!

Our partnership with MSCS has made it possible to expand offerings to surrounding schools through much of Southeast Minnesota and Southwest Wisconsin. We are excited to further our partnership with Minnesota State College Southeast and continue to create countless opportunities for students, educators, and businesses.

If you know of a student interested in Synergy Academy, contact Emma at eebbinger@winonachamber.com or call the Chamber at 507.452.2272 for more information or to register.



Main Street Corner May 2023

Anna Sibenaller, Director of
Main Street Programs

It was great to see so many of you at Parade of Trucks on Saturday, May 20! It’s always a delight to see the joy on families’ faces when they get to sit behind the wheel of the big rigs. Thank you again to our main event sponsors, Allstate Peterbilt, MBM Logistics/TLM Express, Rihm Kenworth, and Winona Health; as well as our Civil Service Sponsors, Merchants Bank and Port 507.

This summer we’ve revamped Dine Out Downtown into our Winona in the Street series – one Friday a month from June through September we’ll close a few blocks of 3rd Street and have entertainment and curiosities for all ages to explore and enjoy (at a very affordable price – free!).

June 9, 6-9 p.m. – Swinging in the Street: Get a quick dance lesson, then twist and turn the night away!

July 21, 5-8 p.m. – Books in the Street: Like the Scholastic Book Fair of your childhood – but with more excitement and variety.

August 18, 5-8 p.m. – Art in the Street: Try your hand at all kinds of crafts during an Art Crawl and check out other makers’ wares.

September 22, 6-9 p.m. – Salsa in the Street: Learn to salsa (the dance) and get your swish on until the sun sets!

If you’re interested in learning more about getting involved with the Main Street Program, don’t hesitate to reach out to me at (507) 452-2272 or asibenaller@winonachamber.com



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:

Katrice Sisson – Chair
Stan Breitlow – Chair Elect
Andrew Puetz – Past Chair
Amber Hamernik – Treasurer
Andrea Northam - At Large

Retiring 2023:

Andrea Northam
Dave Pederson
Kelly Pronschinske
Andy Puetz
Mike Dieter

Retiring 2024:

Dr. Marsha Danielson
Janneke Soback
Katrice Sisson
Jared Literski
Kendra Maggert

Retiring 2025:

Stan Breitlow
Amber Hamernik
Jason Gamoke
Kevin Ritz
Mandy Hansel

Staff:

Christie Ransom – President & CEO
Kay Mathews – Vice President of Finance and Operations
Emma Ebbinger – Director of Workforce and Business Development
Kateri Petry – Director of Marketing and Communications
Anna Sibenaller – Director of Main Street Programs

CHAMBER CHAMPIONS

- VISIONARY -



- PREMIER -



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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.

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BIZ BITES



Schmidt Goodman Office Products, Inc. is proud to announce that we are certified as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) through the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the nation's leading third-party certifier of businesses owned and operated by women.

The WBENC Certification process has confirmed that our business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by a woman or women, and has the appropriate structure and strategic business planning and implementation in place. By including women-owned businesses among their suppliers, corporations and government agencies demonstrate their commitment to fostering diversity and the continued development of their supplier diversity programs, which in turn empowers women as leaders and brings about a more diverse, balanced, and sustainable economy.

Schmidt Goodman provides design/space planning, office furniture, office furniture installation and project management.



Merchants Financial Group, Inc. (MFGI) announced first quarter net income of \$7.18 million according to MFGI President & CEO **Gregory M. Evans**.

The continued strength of Merchants allowed the MFGI Board of Directors to authorize an increase in the Company's semiannual dividend to shareholders to 34 cents per share, at its April meeting earlier this month.

"Like the vast majority of banks in the country, Merchants is safe, strong and resilient," Evans said. "Turbulence in our industry has generated some misinformation and market disruption.

"As always, we simply remain focused on our mission of helping our customers and communities realize hopes and dreams. The loyalty of our customers and shareholders is not something we take for granted, and we will continue to work hard to earn trust at the highest level."

Net income is \$830,549 ahead of MFGI's plan for 2023 and but \$166,639 behind first quarter performance in 2022. The largest driver of Merchants' performance for the first quarter of 2023 was continued strong commercial loan growth. Loan growth was 4.4% in the first quarter to a total of \$1.93 billion, a year-over-year increase of 21%. Evans said Merchants deposit franchise remains strong with total deposits of \$2.18 billion and that the Bank continues to maintain a healthy liquidity cushion, selling consistently on average more than \$100 million of excess deposits on a nightly basis to the Federal Reserve Bank.



Parker Kelley, PA-C, has joined the **Winona Health** medical staff and cares for people of all ages in the Emergency Department.

Kelley is a firm believer that for a care plan to be helpful, it must work for the patient. "Something I want to know about my patients is: What is your life like? Your care plan has to fit who you are and what you can do. Maybe the ideal care plan is not realistic for you, but what can we do to make things work for you and your life? It comes down to designing a plan that is going to be functional."

Kelley earned his Bachelor of Science in Physician Assistant Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He also has a graduate degree in Biochemistry/Bacteriology from the University of Montana, in Missoula. He is certified by the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants.

Prior to joining Winona Health, Kelley cared for Neurosurgery patients at Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse and also served as an Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science.

For information about healthcare providers at Winona Health, visit winonahealth.org and click Find a Provider.



Dawn Stenberg, Mortgage Lender at **Merchants Bank** in Winona, was named a Top Producer by Minnesota Housing for her homeownership program loan production volume during 2022.

"Being a mortgage lender is incredibly rewarding for me, especially during this past year," shared Stenberg. "As homebuyers faced unique challenges with low housing inventory and a changing interest rate environment, I was so honored every time a client trusted me to educate them on the best financing options available. Nothing is better than those smiles on closing day, especially if it took a while to find that perfect home."

Housing is a foundation for success, and Minnesota Housing Top Producers, like Stenberg, are committed to helping homebuyers build equity and wealth through successful homeownership.

"Our values really align with Minnesota Housing's commitment and we at Merchants don't take our role lightly," explained Andrew Guzzo, Chief Banking Officer & President-Winona. "Being a partner in fulfilling homeownership dreams starts by educating our clients on all the options available to them – and if they're not in a position to buy now, helping them understand what they may need to work on to get there."

Minnesota Housing supports and strengthens homeownership by working with local loan officers like Stenberg to provide affordable homebuyer loans.

The Merchants Bank Mortgage team, which can be found at www.merchantsbank.com/lenders, is available throughout our regional footprint, backed by our in-house mortgage processing, underwriting and loan servicing teams. In addition to traditional mortgage loans, Merchants mortgage lenders can assist with mortgage pre-approval, construction loans, and specialized mortgage programs such as first-time homebuyer, VA, FHA, Rural Development and more. We're committed to being there for our customers after loan closing and service nearly \$2.6 billion in residential mortgage loans. You can reach Stenberg by calling (507) 457-1109 or emailing dmstenberg@merchantsbank.com.



The **Winona Health Simulation Lab** received the Minnesota Hospital Association's Pipelines and Partnerships Team Award, one of the association's new Workforce Innovation Awards.

"There is incredible work being done every day to address the workforce shortage and provide the highest quality care to patients," said Minnesota Hospital Association CEO and president Rahul Koranne. "It's important to honor the teams and individuals doing this work."

The Winona Health Sim Lab supports ongoing education and development for all caregivers, from students to experienced staff given the rapid changes and advancements in medicine and technology. The goal is to create a highly competent and confident workforce, ensuring excellence in patient care and experience.

The Simulation Lab, which is equipped with several high-fidelity manikins, provides dynamic, clinical education for current caregivers, community members, students, EMS and Fire Department staff. Since opening in September 2022, various community groups have also toured the Sim Lab.

"The Sim Lab is designed not only for our own Winona Health community of caregivers but we have also been intentional about inviting the community to use the Simulation Lab to develop skills and introduce other individuals to healthcare careers," said Karla Eppler, director of learning and development. "And, through our partnership with Winona State University, we share this innovative, technology rich, resource to foster collaboration with students and educators. We consider them to be our local partners in caregiving."

"With our high-fidelity manikins, they can practice a skill repeatedly without making a real patient uncomfortable. They can practice until they achieve mastery of a skill, which increases their confidence in real-life scenarios with our patients and residents. This is especially helpful when practicing a scenario that rarely happens but that you want to be prepared for if it does," said Eppler.

Currently practicing professionals can connect and mentor the next generation of caregivers; everyone learns from each other regardless of experience and education level. Students are given the opportunity to experience Winona Health as a potential employer and may choose to stay in the community.

For more information about Winona Health, visit winonahealth.org. For more information about the Winona Health Simulation Lab, contact Courtney Wieser at 507-474-3208 or visit winonahealth.org/SimLab.

NEW MEMBERS



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National Dairy Month
THANK A FARMER AND A COW



JOIN THE CHAMBER!

If you are interested in leading the way with us, go to 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



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