

December 2022

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



### Workforce – You need people. We hear you!

Christie Ransom, President & CEO  
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce

When businesses can find and retain the right people to innovate, compete, and grow, and when people have the skills and opportunities to put their talent to work, there is no limit to what we can all achieve.

Workforce is the challenge facing all businesses, across all industries, and has no singular solution. For this reason, we at the Chamber know it is our responsibility to do all that we can to be the convenors that create opportunities and solutions to meet the demands facing businesses today.

Through a multi-pronged approach, we are working on a myriad of things to serve workforce shortages. We know that training our high school students with employable skills in high demand fields that they are passionate about is the first piece of the workforce puzzle. Because of this, we have paired up with Minnesota State College Southeast to put together our newest program, Synergy Academy. This academy approach offers training, and, in some fields, certificates, that will get them ready to work during and immediately following high school in the fields of CNC Machining, CAD Drafting, Electronics, Construction, core health care and human service bundle, and core bundle for general degrees. This program will expand in the future to include even more fields. Students in this program will attend as a PSEO student with the ability to get help financially with mileage, lost wages, and tool assistance, if needed. They will also have the opportunity to see inside area businesses through immersion, internships, and more.

We are also partnering with our other higher education institutions to find ways to bring the businesses and

students together to build relationships, engage in their development and growth, and seek ways to share the amazing culture in the businesses of our region. Our goal is to find opportunities that will be the perfect fit for their future in the Winona area.

Another important piece of this workforce puzzle is attracting talent to our area from other areas of the state or outside of our state. We are working on an amazing project and website designed to do just that. This is going to take some time, but we are well on the way and hope that we will have it up and running in late 2023. This will be an awesome tool to attract talent to our region.

We are also working with organizations to support our workforce through non-traditional ways, such as on the job training with veterans, mentoring and working with organizations such as The Redemption Project, which helps in closing the door on inmate recidivism, and finding ways to diversify the workforce with our immigrant population and moms who are seeking ways to re-enter the workforce.

Finally, we realize that technology and automation are the way of the future and necessary in this workforce crunch. We are working with DEED and legislators to find ways to support and incentivize automation. Automation will not replace people, as some fear. It will instead offer higher paying jobs and more opportunities to upskill the employees that businesses already have.

Workforce isn't just a buzz word—it's the No. 1 concern we hear businesses tell us is keeping them from growing. The problem stems from the fact that growing economies like ours are literally going to run out of people to hire. We at the Chamber are excited to step up and do what we can to address their concerns. After all, this is what chambers of commerce were made for.

## 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:

**Andrew Puetz** – Chair  
**Katrice Sisson** – Chair Elect  
**Michael Charron** – Past Chair  
**Randy Skarlupka** – Treasurer  
**Kyle Rupprecht** – At Large

#### Retiring 2022:

Michael Charron  
Dan Rivers  
Kyle Rupprecht  
Randy Skarlupka  
Ellen Smith

#### Retiring 2023:

Andrea Northam  
Dave Pederson  
Kelly Pronschinske  
Andy Puetz  
Mike Dieter

#### Retiring 2024:

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

#### 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

## 2022 RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

At the Board of Directors meeting in December, we will have the pleasure of honoring five directors who are retiring from the board. We are grateful for their dedication to the Chamber and their support of the business community. Please join us in reflecting on their contributions and thanking them for their time and talents.



**Dan Rivers**  
Rivers Hotel Group



**Ellen Smith**  
WNB Financial



**Kyle Rupprecht**  
Minnwest Bank



**Michael Charron**  
Hope Lutheran High School



**Randy Skarlupka**  
Miller Ingenuity

## CHAMBER CHAMPIONS

### - VISIONARY -



### - PREMIER -



### - EXECUTIVE -



## SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER

## SUPPORT LOCAL THIS TIME OF YEAR!



### Main Street Corner

Anna Sibenaller, Director of  
Main Street Programs

Despite less sunlight during the winter season, downtown really lit up in November! Minnesota State College Southeast students created Santa's sleigh to join the 17-foot tree in Peter's Biergarten, and our downtown businesses saw many of you out and about on Shop Small Saturday. Thank you for continuing to shop local this season, it does wonders for our community!

Throughout the month, don't forget to visit downtown to make sure you see all the beautiful window displays that the businesses put together for the Holiday Window Walk – voting continues through Friday, December 16.

It is the season for reflection; I started this position two and a half months ago, and I am endlessly grateful for the warm welcome to the role. I am so appreciative of the Chamber staff, City staff, business owners and managers, downtown patrons, and community members who have helped me feel settled. It's so wonderful to feel the energy and excitement about the growth that downtown is seeing, and I'm looking forward to exploring all the opportunities there are for our beautiful downtown to continue to thrive!





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## BIZ BITES



**WNB Financial** is pleased to announce that **Erica Jerowski**, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, has been selected as a Finance & Commerce Top Women in Finance for 2022. This is the 22nd year the magazine has celebrated accomplished women in finance from around Minnesota. Honorees will be profiled in the magazine and honored November 10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for dinner. "On behalf of the entire team at WNB Financial, I'd like to congratulate Erica on being selected as a Top Woman in Finance for 2022," said David Vaselaar, WNB Financial President and Chief Executive Officer. "Erica is an extremely talented banker, and throughout her career, she has proven to be a gifted financial advisor to her clients. She's always willing to share her time and talent with numerous organizations in the community. We're fortunate to have such a strong leader at WNB." "Finance & Commerce Top Women in Finance award winners are the top achievers in the finance industry and community," said Bill Gaier, Publisher of Finance & Commerce. "We are proud to honor each of our nominees, finalists, and our incredible winners, all of whom are committed to the profession, their clients, and their communities." Jerowski's career with WNB spans 23 years. She currently serves as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer but has also held the roles of Chief Credit Officer, Business Banking Manager, and Mortgage Manager. She also serves the WNB Financial Board of Directors. As a community volunteer, Jerowski serves as a board member for both the Winona Area Youth Hockey Association and Cotter Schools, where she also contributes to the Finance Committees.



**WNB Financial** is pleased to announce the promotion of **Scott Ulik** to Vice President of Mortgage. In his new role, Ulik will manage both the Mortgage Origination and Consumer Loan Operations Departments of the Bank, allowing for better process efficiencies and an enhanced customer service experience. He brings an extensive background as both a lender and manager and is experienced in implementing customized products, marketing, and pricing strategies in multiple markets. Ulik has served as a Mortgage Loan Officer at WNB's Holmen Office since April 2022 and brings over 20 years of industry experience into his new role. "The VP of Mortgage is a new position at WNB Financial," said David Vaselaar, President and Chief Executive Officer. "Our residential mortgage business has grown significantly over the last several years. The Leadership Team felt it was important to have someone with a deep understanding of mortgage origination, pricing, and operations to lead this area, and we're fortunate to have someone like Scott with all of those abilities and more." Ulik is a long-term member of the La Crosse Area Realtor's Association, La Crosse Area Builder's Association, and member and past treasurer of St. Patrick's Knights of Columbus. He and his wife, Paula, reside in Onalaska. The couple has five children, with only one still living at home. In his free time, Ulik enjoys running, hiking, kayaking, golfing, reading, and writing.



**WNB Financial** is pleased to announce that **Michael Garves** has joined the Bank as a Private Banking Officer in Winona. In his new role, Garves will provide service and solutions to WNB Financial's Private Banking customers. He brings 10 years of experience in a variety of banking roles, including teller, personal banker, retail banking management, and treasury management. Garves most recently served as Treasury Management Specialist at Coulee Bank. "Throughout his career, Michael has a proven track record of being a trusted financial advisor, which makes him a tremendous resource for WNB Financial and our Private Banking customers," said Mark Kulig, Senior Vice President and Chief Retail Officer. "His level of experience and commitment to customer service fit well with our brand of Service, Solutions, and Community." "It's my pleasure to join WNB and its long history and commitment to the customer experience," Garves said. "I look forward to visiting with customers in all the communities we serve." Garves grew up in Western Wisconsin and has spent the past 20 years living in La Crosse. He enjoys golf, softball, and billiards.

## RIBBON CUTTINGS



We celebrated a new business in town with a Chamber Ambassador Ribbon Cutting!

**Muddled Thyme** is an upscale cocktail bar with great food, wine, and beer, all of which are crafted with high attention to detail and taste in an atmosphere to match. Amy Jo hired a mixologist consultant to train staff on classic cocktails and worked with Tattersall to curate a special cocktail menu. At Muddled Thyme, you will find a variety of wines from around the world and locally offered Midwest beers and spirits. The menu includes appetizers, salads, and homemade Neapolitan artisan brick oven pizza, everything made from scratch and local sources. "Our hope is you find this a place to relax, slow down, and enjoy the finer things in life, such as food, friendship, and community. Welcome."

To learn more about Muddled Thyme, visit their website at [www.muddledthyme.com](http://www.muddledthyme.com), give them a call at (507) 474-2002, or stop in at 75 West Third Street to enjoy the food, drinks, and atmosphere. Hours of operation: Wednesday-Saturday 4PM-11PM

Pictured with Chamber Ambassadors: Amy Jo Marks (owner)

## NEW MEMBER



**Semireg Industries LLC** designs, builds, and integrates hardware and software solutions to wireless hardware and mobile applications. They have developed award-winning software applications that integrate with hardware using Bluetooth Low Energy, WiFi, and USB. Applications developed by Semireg enable users to understand complex systems with intuitive control of sensors and data visualizations.

To learn more about Semireg Industries LLC, call 701.772.2777, email [caylan@semireg.com](mailto:caylan@semireg.com) or visit [www.semireg.com](http://www.semireg.com).

# LEADERSHIP WINONA



### 2022 CLASS PARTICIPANTS

**Andrea Northam** - Winona State University  
**Anissa Nelson** - Minnesota Marine Art Museum  
**Anna Kreofsky** - RTP Company  
**Anna Sibenaller** - Chamber of Commerce  
**Brittany Anderson** - Altra Federal Credit Union  
**Casey Pfaff** - Watlow  
**Chris Livingston** - Merchants Bank of Winona  
**Chris Thrune** - Merchants Bank of Winona  
**Chris Callahan** - WNB Financial  
**Christopher Rand** - WNB Financial  
**Christy Miller** - RTP Company  
**Dennis Vasquez** - HBC, Inc.  
**Javon White** - Watlow  
**Jay Schroepfer** - HBC, Inc.  
**Jon Cleven** - HBC, Inc.  
**Kateri Petry** - Chamber of Commerce  
**Kelsey Campobasso** - Itechra  
**Kyra Creeley** - Winona Sign & Design  
**Matthew Hardt** - Benchmark  
**Melvin Woods** - HBC, Inc.  
**Sarah Vanderzee** - RTP Company  
**Suzanne Redepinning** - Winona Family YMCA  
**Tim Jensen** - WNB Financial  
**Vanessa Southworth** - Live Well Winona  
**Wendy Kuehn** - Altra Federal Credit Union

**CONGRATULATIONS ON THE COMPLETION OF LEADERSHIP WINONA 2022! THANK YOU TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AND EMPLOYERS FOR YOUR INVESTMENT IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THIS ANNUAL CLASS**



## Keeping the dollars in the Winona area is good for business!



**Order Winona Bucks for Staff Bonuses, Incentives and Gift Giving.**

Winona Bucks are the perfect gift. They can be spent at any participating member business and there are no fees to give or use them. Help support local business and give a gift that everyone will love!

Winona Bucks are universal gift certificates good at any Winona Area Chamber of Commerce business. Anyone can purchase Winona Bucks and they come in increments of \$5 and \$10.

Our chamber member businesses have purchased the Winona Bucks for:

- Gifts and bonuses for their employees
- Raffle drawings at an open house
- Bonuses for their sales staff
- Awards to their staff for safety records and incentives
- Recognizing their employees for years of service

**Remember to shop local and look for the Winona Bucks Redeem Here decals at your favorite retailers.**

To order, or for more information, call Kay at 452.2272 or e-mail [kmathews@winonachamber.com](mailto:kmathews@winonachamber.com).

Annual banquet and awards ceremony

*January 27, 2023*  
5-9PM

**at Winona State University  
in Kryzsko Commons Ballroom**

*2022 Award Winners*

**BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD**  
SPONSORED BY  
**HAWKINS|ASH**  
Part of your business. Part of your life. CPAs

**RIVERSIDE**  
INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

**Bluff View Estates**  
An Independent Senior Living Community

**RISEING STAR AWARD**  
SPONSORED BY  
**WATLOW**  
Powered by Possibility

**WNB FINANCIAL**  
MORE THAN A BANK

**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BEST PLACE TO WORK AWARD**  
SPONSORED BY  
**CHRYSLER WINONA**  
Sugar LOAF



**MAIN STREET BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD**  
SPONSORED BY  
**WNB FINANCIAL**  
MORE THAN A BANK