

► RECORD BREAKING YEAR Building Owatonna's Future | Brad Meier, President/CEO

2021

► Believe the Hype, Owatonna Breaks Its Own Record:

\$100M in development was a big milestone for Owatonna in 2020, only to follow up with \$155M in development in 2021 (including the new Owatonna High School). Putting pieces in place for continued growth.



► High Time This Road Opens:

Highway 14 cut the ribbon on a key segment of road in 2021 opening four lanes from Rochester to Owatonna and completing all the way to Mankato. The road signals safer, faster connections to key communities and has been a priority of the Chamber and City for 40 years.



► Snubbed for 3 Years, Workforce Center Re-open:

Funding changes forced WDI to close Owatonna's workforce center making this community the only of its size to be without. Pleas from the chamber, businesses, WDI, Representative Petersburg and Senator Jasinski resulted in direct funding from the state and it is open here.

► Future is Now, Students Sign on to Work:

SteeleCoWorks an initiative of the Chamber, United Way and Workforce Development Inc. along with multiple business partners and school districts of Owatonna, Blooming Prairie and Medford celebrates students entering the workforce after graduation. The 'Signing Day' marked this key occasion in May.



► Amidst Worker Shortages, Covid:

The pandemic creates major challenges for all businesses and organizations from concern over employee illness, to productivity, mandates on testing and vaccination. This challenge is still before us.

2022

► New Year Marks Milestone for Owatonna Business Organization:

Your chamber turns 75 years old in 2022 and the Chamber Ambassador's turn 50! In 1947 Steve Pfiel became the first chair of the board and he believed that together businesses had a big voice in making Owatonna a great place. When Ted G. Ringhofer created the Ambassadors 50 years ago with their cacophony of color blazars it started a long standing way for business to welcome new business to the area.



► Many Voices, One Solid Message:

What should people know about Owatonna? How will we attract top tier talent to our community? Bringing the voices of Owatonna together for a Community Brand and message is a key initiative of the chamber moving forward.

► Restore the Core Takes Another Step:

The City's EDA and Chamber Board have agreed to expand the MainStreet program by hiring a full time director and adopting a larger plan of work.

► What's the Livability of Owatonna?

Capitalizing on the economic achievements of the last two years, the Owatonna Partners for Economic Development have been working with Livability.com to feature the community.



2022

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

▶ **Kelly Boomgarden, Past Chair & Tourism Rep**
Country Inn & Suites-Owatonna

▶ **Todd Trout, Chair**
US Bank

▶ **Syd Briggs, Treasurer**
Steele Waseca-Cooperative Electric

▶ **Deb Gillard, At-Large**
RE/MAX Venture

▶ **Doug Betti**
Viracon

▶ **Shannon Cliff**
Mayo Clinic Health System-Owatonna

▶ **Bonnie Cole**
Cole Electric & Torey's Restaurant & Bar

▶ **Brian Deml**
Deml Heating & Air Conditioning, LLC

▶ **Randy Doyal**
Al-Corn Clean Fuel

▶ **Mike Herman**
Driessen Water, Inc.

▶ **Taylor Herman**
Profinium

▶ **Jolene Kunkel**
Federated Insurance

▶ **Oscar Mazariago**
American Family Insurance – Oscar Mazariago Agency & Lava Burgers & Wings

▶ **Doug Meier**
Christian Bros. Cabinets

▶ **Scott Mohs**
Mohs Contracting, Inc.

▶ **Tom Peterson**
Climate By Design International

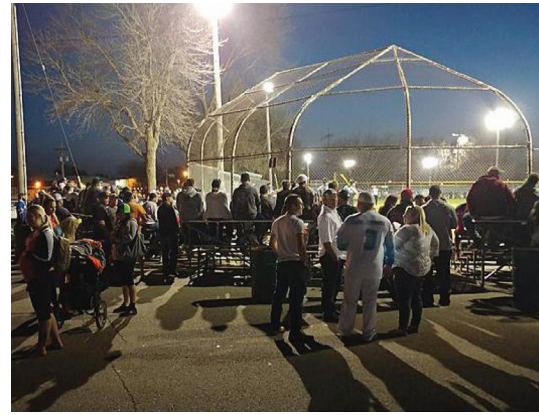
▶ **Rich Pettet**
Rich's Window Cleaning

▶ **Wayne Starman, Ex-Officio**
Cash Wise Foods



Slow But Steady Rebound

The tourism industry has started to rebound thanks to tournaments and other events like the SCFF. The pace of the recovery remains slow and uneven across the region due to high oil prices, vaccination rates and traveler confidence. But the future looks brighter for the tourism industry. The start of 2021 was bumpy with the month of January being the lowest occupancy we've seen (22%) since the beginning of the pandemic 20 months ago. Once the winter months passed and vaccines were released, we saw occupancy climb up to 63% by June of 2021. Sporting tournaments and events like Corky's Early Bird Classic and the Steele Co Free Fair lead the way and helped our hotel occupancy rate along with generating a steady stream of visitors for our local shops and restaurants this year.



Attendance, Spending in Tourism Looking Up

- There is strong evidence that concerts, festivals, sports, and other bigger events are expected to return to pre-pandemic attendance numbers. The forecast is showing a perfect storm in these area from pent up demand and the savings rate among those that have not lost their jobs and are making up for lost time.
- The 2021 Steele County Free Fair

attendance numbers were down from 2019 but, vendors saw an increase in revenue this year.

- Sustainability will be the focus in the future of tourism. It's not just about the environment and lowering carbon emissions, it will be about working on being more diverse and inclusive, using technology for the greater good and of course our environment.

▶ EVENTS | Julia Seykora, Events Director

Want To Keep Your Young Employees? Get Them Connected Through Y-PRO

Become a Young Professional! 2022 is the year to join the Young Professionals! Lunch and Learns, Social events, fitness and outdoor activities, and community engagements. Engage in your community and be seen!! Become a Y-PRO Passholder is 2022!

*End of the Year Social
Event, December 17th.
Eagles Club*



Moving Owatonna Forward

I'm both excited and looking forward to being the Chambers Chairperson for 2022! Although we've had to weather through a challenging/ever changing business environment over the last couple of years, Owatonna has continued to have record expansion over that timeframe.

In 2022, we will focus on 2 key initiatives in order to continue this trend: 1) Community Branding, and 2) Communications to our members and the community. I consider this an honor and look forward to hearing from the membership while continuing to work on moving Owatonna forward!



► BOARD MEMBERS Update

Thank you to Outgoing Board Members For Your Time and Energy to the Chamber



Nathan Dotson
Dotson Woodworking
2017-2021



Paul Smith
Federated Insurance
2019-2021

Welcome New Board Members

The New Board Members will officially start their time on the Board at the January 28th Annual Dinner.



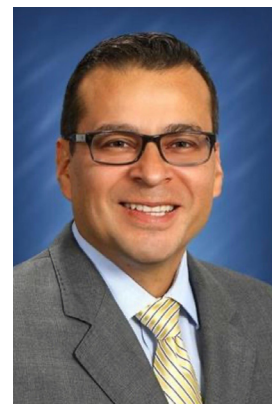
Jolene Kunkel
Federated Insurance



Bonnie Cole
Cole Electric & Torey's
Restaurant & Bar



Shannon Cliff
Mayo Clinic Health
System-Owatonna



Oscar Mazariego
American Family
Insurance – Oscar
Mazariego Agency &
Lava Burgers & Wings

Radio Network Grows to 19 Stations

The power of local radio has always been a priority of Blooming Prairie Farm Radio. With its roots dating back to starting the Linder Farm Network in Willmar, Minnesota, Lynn Ketelsen has been serving local communities for over 40 years. In 1996 Lynn and his partner John Linder were able to build KOWZ FM in Owatonna, Minnesota. From there Blooming Prairie Farm Radio was able to acquire KRUE FM and what is now KFOV AM.



Thanks to incredible support from the local communities in south central Minnesota, Blooming Prairie continued to see robust growth. Lynn and John were able to add stations in Rochester and Fairmont, Minnesota in the coming years. In 2018 Lynn Ketelsen and David Linder merged all their markets together and Lynn began helping with operations of the stations in Mankato and Marshall, Minnesota.



Today, Blooming Prairie Farm Radio helps operate 19 radio stations in Southern Minnesota. It also has a digital presence and is responsible for many events throughout the year. Lynn Ketelsen is still going strong as the “Voice of Minnesota Agriculture” on the Linder Farm Network.

Radio is an industry with an exciting past, but an even more exciting future. It is the one true media partner that is free and available 24 hours a day. Our stations feature a variety of formats, but we always emphasize staying local and serving our listeners with local, regional and national information. We are proud of our history in the radio industry, and excited about what the future holds for this vibrant medium of radio.

Today, Lynn is joined with a partnership with Matt Ketelsen, David Linder and David Legault to grow our stations into what they are today. Blooming Prairie Farm Radio is still committed to its heritage of local broadcast service.

There is no doubt that the strength of the Owatonna Chamber and the Owatonna Business Community was one of the main driving forces behind the success that the radio group has seen over the past several years. The relationships that were and continue to be forged by showing up to meetings and helping each other is what makes Owatonna special.



► CHAMBER EMPLOYEE Update



Welcome Mary Jo

Welcome to our newest employee Mary Jo Robbins who started with the Chamber on November 29th.

She will be responsible for office support, answering phones, welcoming visitors and filling gift certificate orders. Welcome to the team Mary Jo! You can reach her at mrobbins@owatonna.org.

► **Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Owatonna**

Cassie Kohn
6092 SE 54th Ave, Owatonna
507-213-6891
cj.kohn2010@gmail.com



► **Healthfinder Collaborative, Inc.**

Candy Taylor
134 Southview ST, Owatonna
507-646-8964
Taylor.candy@healthfindersmn.org



► **Courtyard Owatonna Downtown**

Brian Billington
225 N Cedar Ave, Owatonna
612-369-2120
Brian.billington@courtyardowatonnadowntown.com



► **TMM, LLC**

Tim McManimon
2075 Linn DR, Owatonna
507-475-0070
Tmcmanimon72@gmail.com

► **Guaranteed Rate**

Aubrey Meier
124 North Cedar, Owatonna
651-251-1742
Aubrey@rate.com



► **WA Group**

Erik Christensen
560 Summit Ave, Dundas
507-321-8111
echristensen@walivebig.com



► WANT A SEAT AT THE TABLE?

Chamber Growth Breakfast Series

Get your Season Tickets for only \$120.00! First event is January 20, 2022, at 7:30 am at Torey's upstairs event space. Breakfast included. Legislative Preview Panel. For details and to register go to www.owatonna.org Inquire about sponsorship opportunities!



~Bring together business and academic leaders, providing a platform for national, state and local speakers to present on cutting-edge topics relevant to our community.

Chamber: Growth Breakfast Series

Every Third Thursday from
7:30 to 9:00am
Torey's Event Space
January-June 2022



► CHAMBER EVENTS Update

► CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

January 20

7:30 -9:00 AM

Location: Torey's (Upstairs Event Space)

208 N. Cedar, Owatonna

Sponsors: Fastenal & HomeTown Credit Union

Topic: Legislative Kick Off Event



► BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

January 25

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor(s): Principal Financial – Geoff Stamp & Graif Clothing

Location: 202 Bridge Street, Owatonna

► MINNESOTA CHAMBER SESSION PRIORITY DINNER

January 31

4:00 – 8:00 PM

St. Paul RiverCentre

► CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

February 17

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Torey's (Upstairs Event Space)

208 N. Cedar, Owatonna

Topic: Economic Forecast

► BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

February 22

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor: Guaranteed Rate

Location: 124 North Cedar, Owatonna

► ANNUAL MEETING | Brad Meier, President/CEO

Join us on January 28th, 2022, at the Owatonna Country Club for the Annual Meeting. This annual celebration reflects on the years successes, recognizes outstanding volunteers, and looks ahead to the next years plan of action.



For ticket information, to purchase tickets or to become a sponsor, contact Julia Seykora, jseykora@owatonna.org or at www.Owatonna.org

Headline Sponsor



Time: Friday, January 28, 2022
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Owatonna Country Club,
1991 Lemond Road,
Owatonna

\$65 (Individual ticket price)

BUSINESS
after **HOURS**

January 25
5:30 – 7:00 PM



Sponsors: Principal Financial – Geoff Stamp & Graif Clothing

Location: 202 Bridge Street, Owatonna

February 22
5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor: Guaranteed Rate

Location: 124 North Cedar, Owatonna

guaranteed **Rate**

Chamber Pack Deadline

Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert by for March/April mailing; \$150 by **February 24th.**

◀◀ Watch for Updates on Social Media & Owatonna.org ▶▶



AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM

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Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 AM–5 PM

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6 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022 BUSINESS BRIEF Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

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www.riverland.edu