

## ► Timing is Right in Owatonna for Branding Initiative

As Owatonna builds for its future, the list of amenities grows. What are we telling others about this place? As the workforce pool has tightened, talent attraction is competitive.

Branding and marketing is part of the effort to send a clear and consistent message. The Chamber and multiple partners including business, city, economic development, MainStreet and Tourism are part of the effort. The entire community will be involved. It's an exciting initiative and there is more coming soon.



## ► Owatonna Takes Over Livability eNewsletter



Sent to over 25,000 emails, the Owatonna newsletter take over features 5 key articles about this booming community. The 'All Eyes on Owatonna' edition features articles on 'Open for Business', 'Explore Downtown', 'Crafty Collaboration', 'Move to Owatonna' and 'Top of the Class'. This media push by the Owatonna Partners for Economic Development have generated a 21.2% open rate (national average of 17%), 4,428 people opened the email and the story with the most clicks was the 12 Reasons to Move to Owatonna story!

Random tidbit: 2% of the audience email was in Sweden.

## ► Students Start Career Locally

At the recent signing day event, the culmination of work by students, businesses, school teachers and counselors come together. As SteeleCoWorks Workforce Coordinator Megan Horton says, "It's a celebration of the students



who are ready to get going on their career after high school graduation. This is their next step." Signing day featured 13 students who are joining 6 businesses locally. "Many students are ready to work after they graduate and career pathways at OHS are there to prepare them for that next step," said Brian Coleman, Career Navigator at OHS. 235 students were served through the SteeleCoWorks program during the 2021-22 school year and hundreds more in the career pathways program.

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Cash Wise Foods



In less than two short weeks, the new Courtyard Owatonna Downtown will open their doors to visitors. The new hotel features 106 rooms, workout facility, pool, bistro and bar. The hotel will be a magnet for downtown and it's opening will coincide closely with the opening of the new streetscape

project on Cedar Avenue. Historically properties like this are a major boon to the businesses around the area creating a 1 for 1 economic impact to the area. So for every dollar spent at the hotel another is spent at a nearby business.

## ADVOCACY Update | Brad Meier, President/CEO

The end to the legislative session left Millions of dollars on the table for Owatonna. Bonding funds for the new wastewater treatment facility, dollars for the school district and \$1M for the Learn to Earn initiative all were left for the end of year deal that didn't materialize.

One major piece of legislation-and a key initiative for the Owatonna Chamber-was the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund fix. Legislation was passed to fill the entire gap for that fund and pay back the federal government. This saves every business thousands of dollars in this unemployment tax. Thank you to Sen. Jasinski and Rep. Petersburg for their work on this one!



## ▶ 'Learn to Earn' Funding Stalls at Legislature, Local Committee Presses Forward

When talks broke down at the end of the legislative session the \$1M for Owatonna's Learn to Earn initiative was left unfunded. The effort to elevate higher education programming in Owatonna is not dying with that bill however. A local

committee of business and education has come together to steer this forward locally. Here's the initial objectives:

- 1) Conduct a higher ed needs assessment for Owatonna (last one was done in 2004),
- 2) Fund mechatronics equipment at the new Owatonna High School and the Riverland-Owatonna campus,
- 3) Funding for 2 year degrees.



## ► Don't Miss the Last Downtown Thursday of the Summer!

Meet in Downtown Owatonna for our final Downtown Thursday event of this summer on August 4th. Cedar Avenue will be very close to being completed and we look forward to having a wide open view from Central Park to the Showmobile in the 300 block - right in front of The Kitchen. A couple of new food vendors, along with a few of our favorites and our locally owned restaurants will be joining us at this event, so there will be plenty of food choices for all. Market vendors will again be on Cedar Avenue and downtown businesses will be open extended hours. For our entertainment, from 5:00-7:00 on the Showmobile we will have Christa Bohlman. Christa plays the fiddle, electric and acoustic guitar, ukulele and sings. And on our stage in Central Park, beginning at 7:00, it's The Murphy Brothers. The Murphy Brothers Band is well known and they bring brilliant guitar, percussion and vocals to the stage plus high energy each time they perform.



## ► **MAINSTREET** Update | Lisa Cochran, MainStreet Director



### ► Is the "Construction Mess" Worth It?

It would be very hard to find someone in Owatonna that isn't aware of the construction we have happening downtown. Most of those people have an opinion about the construction as well as frustration of the process, length of time for the project to be completed and the inconvenience of the project. So...is it worth it?

We are creating a downtown that embraces being stewards of our earth, restoring "old things," leading an active lifestyle and having an appreciation of simpler things – bigger is not always better. We will have a more pedestrian-friendly downtown area. It will be easier to maneuver a stroller or walker, encouraging people to spend more time in the downtown area walking our wider sidewalks or relaxing at one of the café tables or benches. All the while enjoying gorgeous landscaping and green spaces that add to the beauty of the streetscape. We continue to work on adding more choices for shopping, dining, and services right in our downtown area-keeping people in town. Supporting our locally owned businesses-making Owatonna a destination

spot. And it all started with a vision of a new streetscape – creating the backdrop for so much more to come. So yes, it's worth it – just be patient and we'll all enjoy (and benefit) from the outcome!

► **BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

**July 26** 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor: Solld Studios

Location: 1400 South Oak Avenue, Owatonna



► **CHAMBER GOLF EVENT**

**August 2** 9:00 am Registration

10:00 am Shot Gun Start

Owatonna Country Club

► **DOWNTOWN THURSDAY**

**August 4** 5:00 – 8:30 PM

Sponsor: Metronet

Cedar Avenue & Central Park

5:00 – 6:30 pm: Cedar Avenue Stage

Music by Christia Bohlman

7:00 – 9:00 pm; Central Park Stage

Music by The Murphy Brothers



► **BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

**August 12** 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor(s): Berkshire

Hathaway HomeServices

Advantage Real Estate,

Block Plumbing & Heating,

Cash Wise Foods and Steele County Free Fair

Location: SCFF Beer Garden



► **BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

**August 23** 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Sponsor: Courtyard Owatonna Downtown

Location: 225 N Cedar, Owatonna



Sponsored By:



► **60 Businesses & 250 People Part of This Year's Chamber Golf Event!**

The Chamber Golf Event continues to be recognized, year after year, as the premier golf event of the season! Fast paced, organized and fun, the chamber golf event has cultivated an electric atmosphere with themes, games, gifts, and prizes!

This annual golf event is the perfect playing field for networking, marketing, and a break from the daily grind. There are many ways your business can be a part of this event, whether it is by becoming a sponsor or getting a team together to hit the course!



**Dress up for the theme this year...VEGAS**



► **Latest Graduates Giving Back**



The OCLA advisors added an element to the program to have the class participants give back to the community as part of the nine-month program. Recent graduates spent two separate evenings prepping ground, replacing shrubs and adding fresh rock at Benedictine Living Community to enjoy for years to come.

► **YOUNG PROFESSIONALS EVENTS**

**DO-IT YOURSELF INVESTING**

Young Professionals  
Lunch & Learn

**JULY 21**  
HY-VEE CLUB MEETING ROOM  
NOON TO 1:00PM

Panel topics featuring: Taxes, stock Market, Investing

**MSB**  
MINNESOTA SPRINGS BUSINESS

Pickleball  
Morehouse Park  
5:30 - 7:30  
July 14th  
Happy Hour to follow at  
MSB!!

**yp**  
young professionals  
of Owatonna  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM

Let's meet at the FAIR!  
Y-Pro Fair Social  
August 18th  
5:30-7:00 at the Beer Garden

**yp**  
young professionals  
of Owatonna  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM

► **CHAMBER Update** | Brad Meier, President/CEO

► **Haarstad Joins Chamber As Summer Intern**

Welcome to Hillary Haarstad who will be working with us as a Summer Intern. She will gain a myriad of experience by working with each staff member while she is here.



Hillary just graduated from Owatonna High School and will be heading to UW-La Crosse in the fall to major in marketing. She was involved in many activities in high school, one being DECA.

The internship was made possible through a grant from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

► **Welcome New Chamber Ambassadors**



Vicki Jensen  
Jensen Agency



Julie Rethemeier  
Federated Insurance





## ► Leading the Outdoor Industry for More Than 60 Years

Cabela's is more than just a store. It's an immersive, interactive experience with a towering display of taxidermied wildlife mounts and a stately buck statue that immerse guests in the excitement of the outdoors as soon as they arrive.

A leader in the outdoor industry for more than 60 years, Cabela's brought its team of dedicated Outfitters to the Owatonna community in April 1998. Customers trust Cabela's for their expertise in outdoor sporting equipment and their commitment to service and value.

In 2017, Bass Pro Shops acquired Cabela's to create a "best-of-the-best" experience. The company is committed to offering the best assortment of outdoor gear anywhere – from hunting and fishing to hiking, boating, apparel and gifts – all backed by a low-price guarantee.

The store offers free signature events and experiences for the whole community. From free photos with Santa Claus to kid's fishing ponds, these family-friendly events provide fun for all ages throughout the year. Guided by the visionary leadership of Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris, the company is creating an unprecedented alliance of over 200 million passionate customers, team members, industry partners and

leading conservation organizations to make a significant impact in our communities and the future of the outdoors. The Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund allows customers at any retail location or online to round up loose change at checkout to make real change for the outdoors.

Learn more about upcoming events and special offers by selecting Owatonna, MN at [stores.cabelas.com](https://stores.cabelas.com).

## ► Owatonna's Jewel Box Featured on National TV

A feature starring the National Farmers bank in downtown Owatonna just aired on national TV. Why a Minnesota bank building in Owatonna ranks among the nation's most significant architecture.

The PBS special report: **Why a Minnesota bank building ranks among the nation's most significant architecture | PBS NewsHour**





## ► Summer Events Bring 3,500 Visitors to Owatonna



*Big Sky Circuit NCHA Days*

The month of June brought many visitors to Owatonna with several solid weekends of youth baseball tournaments, Group Tours, Smokin' in Steele, Harry Wenger Marching Band Festival, Minnesota State Eagles Convention, and for the first time hosting the Big Sky Circuit NCHA Days. Visitors came from throughout the state, as well as Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Owatonna welcomed over 3500 visitors over the course of these events in June! Our National Farmers' Bank (Wells Fargo) continues to receive national attention for its rich history and architectural expertise.



*Harry Wenger Marching Band Festival*



*Harry Wenger Marching Band Festival*

As we move into July, we look forward to the Steele County Historical Society's annual Extravaganza event at the Village of Yesteryear on July 10, and Gus' Car Show on July 16.



*Extravaganza*

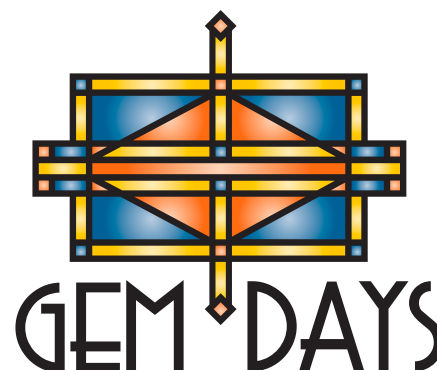


*Gus' Car show*



Owatonna's Gem Days kick off July 21, and will bring several days of festivities to our downtown.

And of course, our largest festival of the year, the Steele County Free Fair is gearing up for August 16-21— a week of showcasing our county with both 4-H and open class projects and livestock shows, music and other entertainment, rides and hundreds of vendors.



► **2U Entertainment**

Dan & Tamara Hoy  
Owatonna  
507-475-1449  
Thoy1219@gmail.com



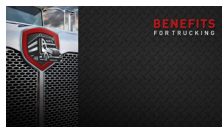
► **PharmD Financial Planning**

Derek Delaney  
1540 8th Ave NE, Owatonna  
507-200-0233  
derek@pharmdfp.com



► **Benefits for Trucking**

Danelle Spaar  
670 Crestview Lane, Owatonna  
507-213-0943  
danielle@benefitsfortrucking.com



► **Renovo Financial Partners**

Chris Fiske  
103 W Front ST, Owatonna  
507-361-3999  
chris@renovofp.com



► **Farmers Feed & Pet Supply**

Patricia Klecker  
616 N Cedar Ave., Owatonna  
507-451-2363  
patricia@farmersfeedandpetsupply.com



► **Shoe Sensation**

Patrick Johnson  
1293 21st Ave NW, STE 400, Owatonna  
812-288-7659  
pjohnson@shoesensation.com



► **Farmers Insurance - Jake Bean Agency**

Jake Bean  
550 20th ST NE, Owatonna  
507-214-0688  
Jbean2@farmersagent.com



## ► MEMBER OPPORTUNITY

### ► Not Planning a Booth at the Steele County Free Fair? Can't Commit the Time, But Would Like Some Visibility?

Wear your company logo shirt, bring a handout and promote your business along with promoting Owatonna. No cost to participate and instructions will be provided. Also, the Family Truckster is sure to be a hit.

**Watch for the Tuesday Talk to sign up for a spot.**



### Chamber Pack Deadline

Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert by for September/October mailing; \$150 by **August 25th.**

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



AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM

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