

BUSINESS BRIEF

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Update

Brad Meier, President/CEO

\$110M in Building Permit Value New Record

Not taking inflation into account, Owatonna has hit a new number in building value during 2023. \$110M has been invested in new projects this year.

This eclipses the old record of \$104M hit in 2020.

Key projects in the number include, KAMP Automation (industrial), CDI (Industrial), new apartment complex, new houses, and general renovations.

This will mark 4 straight years of close to \$100M in annual investment.



KAMP Automation



Climate By Design International

ANNUAL DINNER Update

Julia Seykora, Events Director

Where the Extra Mile Takes You

Friday, January 26, 2024, 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 2024 Plan of Action. This event is full. Watch social media and Tuesday Talk for highlights.

Thank you to Headline Sponsor:
Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

How 6 Key events impacted the Chamber in 2023

1) A big community project takes time, planning, and energy. Led by the tourism department and an active committee, the **communitywide brand**, phase 1, was successful. We have our brand and message. Now we tell it.



2) Leaving behind the history and comfort of the chamber office at **320 Hoffman Dr.** to make way for the new Riverfront project.

3) Exploring Owatonna's hunting heritage by hosting the **Governor's Pheasant Opener**. The event put a spotlight on Owatonna and the community stepped up big to showcase.

4) Direct appropriation of \$1M from the state legislature to grow **Learn & Earn**. Dollars fund advanced manufacturing equipment and get the Owatonna Opportunity off the ground.

5) Adding an event, especially one as big as **Downtown Thursday**, can be challenging. Not for the Owatonna Main Street program adding a 4th event and breaking attendance records.

6) Promoting the United Way of Steele County as the **Community Campaign leader** has been an honor for the Chamber. Goal of \$815,000.



Chamber Measures Its Work - 2023

- Membership: Goal to add 42 members and net 12 (after dropped members).

Added 50 members and net 14



Love to Lift Ribbon Cutting

- Member Communication: Achieve an average of 43% open rate on weekly e-newsletter

50% average open rate

- Events: Grow annual attendance to 2,250

2,907 participated in Chamber Events



Urban Loft Business After Hours

- Branding: Raise \$900,000 to fund the branding efforts

\$780,000 raised to date

- Tourism: Attract 4 new events to Owatonna

United Way, Governor's Pheasant Opener, National Cutting Horse Association Events and Model T Convention



National Cutting Horse Event

- Main Street: Have downtown businesses apply and use all \$100,000 forgivable loan from City EDA
- (8 projects will account for \$105,250)**

- Workforce: 90 businesses and 235 students participate in the program

½ Through the Year, 150 Students, 50 Businesses

Congratulations to 20+ Years

Ambassadors who reach 20 years serving as an Ambassador are awarded emeritus status. We thank the following for their dedication and involvement that spans over two decades. Congratulations to the Mike Hamilton & Sue Wavrin!



Mike Hamilton
Owatonna Motor
Company
(2002-2023)



Sue Wavrin
Gillespie Beauty
Salon
(2002-2023)

BOARD Update

Thank You to Outgoing Board Members Deml & Peterson

The Chamber appreciates the insight and direction from our member businesses who serve on the board. Thank you to Brian Deml and Tom Peterson for serving a 3-year term on the Chamber Board of Directors.



Brian Deml
Deml Heating and
Air Conditioning,
LLC



Tom Peterson
Climate by Design,
International

Welcome New Board Members

In February, two new board members will start their 3-year term on the Chamber Board of Directors.



Lori Lair
Carroll Seating



**Sammy
Miranda**
Lakeside Foods



OWATONNA

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

Syd Briggs, Chair
Steele Waseca-Cooperative Electric

Deb Gillard, Vice Chair
RE/MAX Venture

Mike Herman, Past Chair
Culligan ULTRAPURE, Inc.

Todd Trout, At-Large
US Bank

Kelly Boomgarden, At-Large
Country Inn & Suites-Owatonna

Oscar Mazariego, Treasurer
American Family Insurance – Oscar
Mazariego Agency

Shannon Cliff
Mayo Clinic Health System-
Owatonna

Bonnie Cole
Cole Electric & Torey's
Restaurant & Bar

Randy Doyal

Megan Jenniges, Young
Professionals Chair
Federated Insurance

Jolene Kunkel
Federated Insurance

Lori Lair
Carroll Seating

Doug Meier
Christian Bros. Cabinets

Sammy Miranda
Lakeside Foods

Scott Mohs
Mohs Contracting, Inc.

Rich Pettet
Rich's Window Cleaning/Destiny
Christian Church

Christy Tryhus
Riverland Community College

Please Join us!

Owatonna's 2024 Tourism Kick-off Day Tuesday, January 30



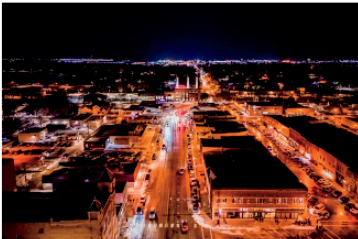
How does tourism impact Owatonna?

Learn more on January 30, 2024

Owatonna Public Utilities

8am - 10am or 11am-1pm

*choose one of the times above when registering to attend



Scan to Register

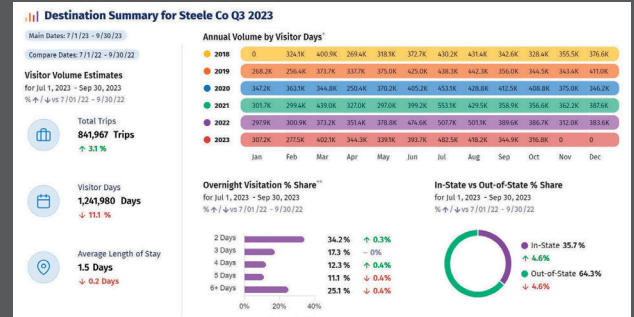


Topics we'll cover

- What is the role of tourism in Owatonna?
- How does tourism support marketing Owatonna's businesses and organizations?
- What ways can tourism be a resource for your business or organization?
- Find out ways you can take advantage of Owatonna's tourism marketing activities in 2024.

Who Visited Steele County in 2023 (Jan-Oct) & how long did they stay?

| County | % Trip Share | Total Trips |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Hennepin, MI | 8.9% | 72,753 |
| Dakota, MN | 3.8% | 30,794 |
| Polk, IA | 3.7% | 30,004 |
| Ramsey, MN | 3.6% | 29,097 |
| Anoka, MN | 2.5% | 20,380 |
| Washington, | 2.3% | 18,431 |
| Cerro Gordo, | 1.7% | 13,473 |
| Scott, MN | 1.3% | 10,632 |
| Carver, MN | 1.3% | 10,324 |
| Wright, MN | 1.3% | 10,321 |



Top 5 Ways to Enjoy Winter In Owatonna

Encourage family, friends, colleagues and co-workers to get out & about in Owatonna this winter. Check out the top ways to embrace Owatonna's winter.



Check out Inside Swing's Golf Simulators or book a lane at SpareTime Entertainment



Book an Igloo at MSB or play Trivia at Foremost Brewing Cooperative



Take to the trails

- cross-country skiing
- snow shoeing
- fat tire biking



Catch a Steele County Blades Hockey Game

BOLD & COLD
OWATONNA'S WINTER FESTIVAL

January 22-28, 2024
VISITOWATONNA.ORG

- Sculpture Building Contest
- Medallion Hunt
- Bold & Cold Shopping Deals
- Carry-out Soup Supper
- A Winter Walk with Beverages, Bites and Bingo
- Winter Weekend Out

Scan for Details

Celebrate Owatonna's Bold & Cold Festival



Enjoy the winter...plan for summer!

The Minnesota Field Trip & Activity Library's Summer Resource Fair held January 9 invites summer youth programs and adult group tour coordinators to explore Owatonna as an option for summer activities. January 13 & 14 Minne-Road Trip is on the road to Chicago sharing attendees all the great ways to enjoy and include Owatonna in their summer vacation plans.

SPOTLIGHT MEMBER | LIFE FITNESS

Brad Fischer, Membership Director

Life Fitness...Inspiring Healthier Lives



Life Fitness is a global company dedicated to delivering world-class exercise experiences to fitness professionals and exercisers everywhere. For more than 50 years, the company has been manufacturing and selling strength and cardiovascular equipment through its iconic Life Fitness, Hammer Strength and ICG brands. Its equipment is distributed to over 250,000 fitness facilities in more than 160 countries.

The Owatonna facility joined Life Fitness in 2016, and today, it is the lead cardio production facility for the company. Each week, over 1,000 pieces of cardio equipment are produced onsite – including treadmills, elliptical cross-trainers, Arc trainers, upright and recumbent cycles and more. In fact, there's enough steel tubing cut here to stretch from Owatonna to Phoenix on an annual basis!

The 275-member local team proudly enjoys an average tenure of 14 years. Onsite production roles include machinists, welders, robot operators, powdercoaters, assemblers, material handlers and shippers. The team loves what they do, and they care deeply about doing great work for Life Fitness customers. The Owatonna facility and its team are vital to Life Fitness, and they strive to be an employer of choice in the community.

For more information about Life Fitness products and services, visit www.lifefitness.com. To learn more about employment opportunities, visit <https://www.lifefitness.com/en-us/careers>.



EVENTS Update

By Julia Seykora, Events Director



Want to Keep Your Young Employees?

Get Them Connected Through Y-PRO. Become a Young Professional! 2024 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! (Pictured are some of the 70+ 2023 Y-Pro passholders after a Pickleball match. Thank you to all 2023 Sponsors)

MAINSTREET

Lisa Cochran, MainStreet Director

Reflecting on 2023: A Year in Review of Main Street Owatonna

With 2023 being my first full year as the Main Street Director, I looked forward to planning events and starting our strategic plan from the beginning to the end. The Main Street Advisory Board, committees, and volunteers had a successful year. Here are some highlights:

Key Events: Clean-up Downtown, 4 Successful Downtown Thursdays, Small Business Saturday promotion, and our Annual Holiday Lighted Parade.

With generous donations, we supplied 130 flower baskets for downtown, ordered holiday banners, and accepted 10 FREE metal banners for Central Park.

Main Street, along with EDA, allocated \$105,250 in Forgivable Loan funds for 8 downtown projects. Check [//owatonna.org/mainstreet](https://owatonna.org/mainstreet) for updates on funds available in 2024.



Thrivent Facade Updates



Main Street Synergy: Collaborative Partnerships and Community Growth in Action

While Main Street takes the lead on projects, promotions, and assistance, we also have great relationships with other organizations in Owatonna. Collaborations in 2023 included The Jefferson Highway Group (Tourism), Farmer's Market (City of Owatonna, OBP), GEM Days (OBP), Homecoming Parade (OHS, City of Owatonna), Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener (Tourism), Downtown Trick or Treating, and Shop Local promotion (OBP).



STEELECO WORKS

Missy Koch, Workforce Development Coordinator

Made In Owatonna



Over 65 students attended this year's first Made in Owatonna Day in October. This day focused on careers in the areas of Art, Audio/Visual Technology, and Communications. Students started by visiting Federated Insurance and learning about different positions within Federated around these careers. Students went to the Owatonna Arts Center followed by the Little Theatre of Owatonna to learn about career options.

In the afternoon, students participated in roundtable discussions with professionals in the areas of photography, marketing, public utilities, newspaper, radio, and information technology.

Student feedback indicated they would like to further their learning within software, communications, marketing, journalism, radio, and photography.

The next Made In Owatonna Day will focus on Health Care careers on February 21.



College and Career Fair

Owatonna High School held its first **College and Career Fair** in the new building, with over 70 vendors representing a variety of college and career options. The over 600 students and staff who attended responded that they really enjoyed the opportunities available, especially that the colleges and universities as well as employers were all mixed together.

We look forward to hosting a second career fair that is scheduled for May 1, 2024.



Career areas covered to date include Natural Resources Conservation Services, Real Estate, Health Sciences, Certified Public Accountants, Engineers, and Dental. Upcoming areas in January include Chiropractor and Mechanic/HVAC, Heavy Equipment, Central Farm Services, with more to follow.



Students interested in Healthcare Careers also have the opportunity to attend SCRUB Club.

Internships, Job Shadow, and Work Experience

These opportunities along with individualized options are available for all students. If students have an interest in job shadowing, internships or work experience, contact:



Brian Coleman
bcoleman@isd761.org
507-444-8814



Missy Koch
mkoch1@isd761.org
507-444-8854

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



BRIAN BULOW TRUCKING
Brian Bulow
17698 620th ST, Dodge Center
612-669-2960
Bulow330@yahoo.com



FARMERS INSURANCE D STRAND AGENCY
Dave Strand
634 W Bridge ST, STE B, Owatonna
507-977-7846
dstrand@farmersagent.com



KO STORAGE OF OWATONNA
Rick Bothun
1210 East Frontage Road, Owatonna
507-735-6510
rbothun@kostorage.com



LANGUAGE INCORPORATED
Ibrahim Hussein
120 W Broadway, STE 102, Owatonna
507-573-1427
Qtcompany2015@gmail.com



LUCKY DICE
Anthony Quintero
117 N Cedar AVE, Owatonna
507-412-9476
Anthonyquintero58@hotmail.com



QUALITY HOME HEALTH CARE, INC.
Ibrahim Hussein
120 W Broadway, STE 104, Owatonna
507-573-1427
qhhcare@gmail.com



QUALITY TRANSPORTATION COMPANY
Ibrahim Hussein
120 W Broadway ST, Owatonna
507-573-1313
Qtcompany2015@gmail.com



STRAIGHT RIVER FAMILY DENTAL
Karisa Bollinger
170 NE Landmark DR, STE A, Owatonna
507-451-3090
michellefalgren@straightriverfamilydental.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

January 23

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor(s): Torey's Restaurant & Bar,
208 N Cedar AVE



ANNUAL DINNER

January 26

5:30 – 8:00 PM

Location: Owatonna Country Club,
1991 Lemond Road, Owatonna
Theme: where the extra miles takes you



CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

February 15

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar
Topic: New Minnesota Department of
Employment & Economic Development
Commissioner (Matt Varilek)
Sponsors: Cole's Electric, Keen Bank and
Riverland Community College



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

February 27

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor(s): Owatonna Businesswomen,
Plaza Morena Campestre Grill and Steele
County Historical Society
Location: Steele County History Center,
1700 Austin Road, Owatonna



CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert by for March/April mailing; \$150 by **February 27th.**



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

120 South Oak Ave | Owatonna, MN | owatonna.org
P: 507.451.7970 | E: oacct@owatonna.org
Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 AM–5 PM



Business Brief is published by the Owatonna Area
Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Riverland
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Success
Starts **Here.**

www.riverland.edu