

BUSINESS BRIEF

MARCH/APRIL 2024



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



OWATONNA
where the extra mile takes you

Branding Next Steps: Awareness

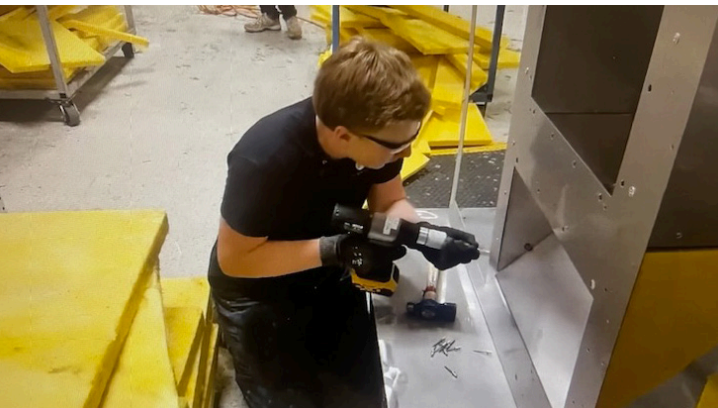
You have likely noticed a few things throughout the community

displaying Owatonna's new brand. The main organizations driving the process (Owatonna Chamber, Visit Owatonna, Main Street, City of Owatonna and Owatonna Economic Development) continue to update materials reflecting the new brand, and we love seeing our local businesses integrating the brand into their marketing!

While the process of creating the brand is complete, the implementation is far from done. Partner organizations will be re-designing websites over the next few months to integrate the brand, seasonal digital marketing campaigns will kick off throughout the state and region this spring, billboards are secured, and new visitor guides will soon be delivered. Over the next two years, the branding will continue to be integrated within our typical marketing plans. You will continue to see special initiatives promoting Owatonna as a great place to visit, work, own a business and live! Videos, tradeshow materials and additional marketing will continue to be developed as part of the 2024 roll-out of the community-wide brand.

Learn & Earn Approved

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has approved the Chamber Foundations plans for the \$1M legislative appropriation. The funds will purchase advanced manufacturing equipment for both Owatonna High School and Riverland Community College - Owatonna. Additionally, about \$100k of the dollars will support the creation of the Owatonna Opportunity scholarship fund.



Carter Stawmatt working at Climate by Design International

Workforce Grant Pays for Students to Work at Your Business

The Chamber Foundation has dollars to pay for your student employee. The grant will pay for up to 10 students to gain work experience at local business. The chamber will cover up to \$15/hour of the wages for 160 hours of time on the job. The process is simple, so contact the chamber with questions. First come, first serve.

MARCH/APRIL 2024

STEELECO WORKS

Missy Koch, Workforce Development Coordinator

Steele County high school students are excited to have a variety of opportunities to explore careers across many industries this spring.

SteeleCo.Works Spring Upcoming Events:

- **April 8** – Blooming Prairie Career & Job Fair
- **April 17** – Made in Owatonna – Agriculture Careers
- **April 22** – Owatonna Public Utilities Day
- **May 1** – Owatonna High School Career Fair
- **May 10** – Field Day with Seykora Asphalt
- **May 15** – OHS Business Mixer
- **May 29** – SteeleCo.Works Signing Day
- **More to come!!**



On going opportunities for students are available in a variety of ways to connect your business from job shadows, career round tables, paid work experiences, just to name a few. Also, if you are looking for student work be sure to ask about grants available to support student wages. Currently we have a grant to help fund 10 student positions from the Greater Twin Cities United Way.

If you would like more information about any of the events or opportunities, please reach out to Missy Koch mkoch@wdimn.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

March 21

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar, 208 N Cedar, Owatonna (Upstairs)

Topic: Housing First Minnesota

Sponsors: Cole's Electric, Keen Bank and Riverland Community College



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

March 26

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor(s): Destiny Christian Church and Central Park Coffee

Location: Pillsbury Campus, 350 Academy Street, Owatonna



HOPS FOR HABITAT (YPro Volunteer Opportunity)

April 6

3:00 – 7:00 PM

Four Seasons Centre,

Food from El Rey Del Taco and Music by Paul Hanna

Chamber Day at the Capitol

April 11

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Minnesota State Capitol

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

April 16 **note one week earlier**

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor(s): Culligan ULTRAPURE

Location: 125 W Front ST, Owatonna



CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

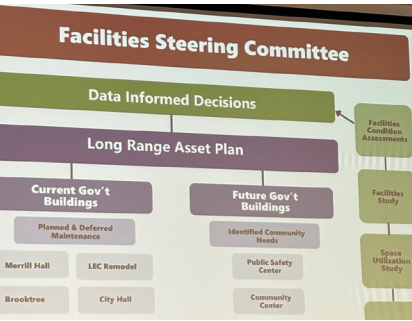
April 18

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar
Topic: Higher Education featuring Minnesota State Colleges & Universities Chancellor Scott Olson and Riverland Community College, President Kat Linaker

Sponsors: Cole's Electric, Keen Bank and Riverland Community College





City Council Discusses Facility Needs

The city council is having serious conversations about facilities. Specifically, around what to do regarding an emergency management facility (police, fire) that will situate the departments for the future. Secondly how to tackle the ever-growing desire

of the community to have a community center. The chamber policy committee attended a recent council study session where consultants outlined some preliminary facility items for discussion.

How past decisions are impacting Owatonna Today

It would've been impossible to understand how the decision by Cybex over a decade ago to build a new, state-of-the-art facility in Owatonna would impact the company's fate in Owatonna today. The company has been purchased since the new building was built. It is now Life Fitness and because the facility and workforce are so solid here, the company has moved work from other facilities around the country to our community. Something that most likely would NOT have happened if they didn't make that significant investment.



Conference space available for member use

The Chamber recently remodeled the conference space in the new building. There's seating for 20 comfortably. Kitchenette, refrigerator, and coffee makers are available. As a member, you can reserve time to use this space at no cost.



Next steps at Chamber building

The Chamber Board has approved additional work on the new building at 120 S. Oak Avenue. This spring the exterior will get a new coat of paint and new signage.



OWATONNA

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Mohs Contracting, Inc.

Rich Pettet
Rich's Window Cleaning/Destiny
Christian Church

Christy Tryhus
Riverland Community College

Explore Minnesota Tourism unveiled livability campaign at February's conference

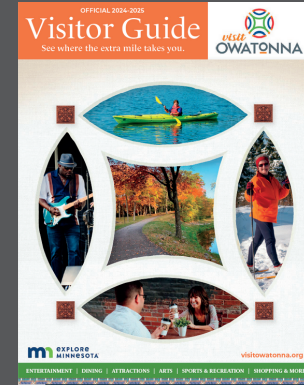
Explore Minnesota's livability campaign highlights recent transplants from other states to Minnesota focusing on their choice to move here because of job opportunities, high standard of living, and a great place to raise a family.

The ads in the new "Star of the North" campaign, aim to draw more visitors and new residents, launched March 4 in 22 states and Canada.

This is the first time Explore Minnesota is marketing beyond tourism, hoping to inspire Americans to consider relocating to Minnesota, with digital, TV and radio ads targeting communities such as Seattle, Boston and Austin, Texas. Separate tourism ads will air mostly in the Midwest as well as cities including Denver and Dallas.

\$11 million of the new state funding to Explore Minnesota is dedicated to starting a new division called Explore Minnesota for Business, focused on economic development. The first phase is focused on attracting residents, followed by campaigns to bring new businesses and encourage students to stay in Minnesota for college and after graduation.

Watch for the 2024 Visitor Guide!



Our visitor guide has a new look to reflect our community wide brand that rolled out in October. Be on the lookout for delivery of the new guide to your business. If you aren't on our delivery list and would like to be, please contact Mary Jo at the chamber to be added to the list.

Check out these can't-miss spring events in Owatonna!

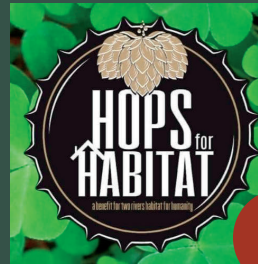
Scan for all events



The North American Farm & Power Show, March 14-16 serves as a midwestern hub for exhibitors and the farming community to learn from and network with each other.



Spring is in the air! It's time to start thinking about all your spring and summer projects! Check out the KOWZ/KRUE Home Show March 22-24



Get the best of both worlds with fantastic samples of craft beers, seltzers, wine, ciders & coffee while you support a great organization, Habitat for Humanity, on April 6.



The 44th Annual Corky's Early Bird Softball Classic kicks off Owatonna's summer in a big way! Make sure you get to the ballfields to catch a game May 3-5!



From the Heart Run is back this spring with the 5K benefitting our local families affected by cancer. Bring the entire family for a 5K walk/run on May 4 through our trails from Lake Kohlmer to Morehouse Park and back again!



Rustic Mamas Market brings over 150 of the best vendors to Southern Minnesota on May 4 at the Four Seasons Centre!



Smokin' in Steele brings in professional and backyard BBQ to Owatonna May 31-June 1! Mix in amazing Blues Music and you have a full weekend of festivities.

Sign up for Owatonna's Shop & Dine Challenge

Visit Owatonna launched the first of Owatonna's Extra Mile Adventures in February. The shop and dine challenge encourages visitors and residents to visit participating restaurants and retail stores to earn points for Owatonna branded prizes. Now through May 5, you can earn points for a pint glass- 5 points, a sling bag- 15 points and a pizza/charcuterie board- 20 points.

If you have not signed up for the challenge, scan the QR code to get started! Businesses interested in participating can contact Glenda Smith at gsmith@owatonna.org





Viracon

Great Buildings Deserve Great Glass™

After five decades, over 100,000 buildings, and more than 500,000,000 square feet of glazing installed in some of the most remarkable buildings throughout the world, Viracon has established itself as a recognized leader in architectural glass for commercial buildings. With a network of over 3,000 architects and designers, Viracon is a premier single-source resource for not only fabrication capabilities but for consulting and technical help as well. Every day, customers rely on Viracon's employees for design assistance, budget costing, return on investment costing, quoting, specification writing, project coordination, job site inspections, product performance information and detailed technical assistance for their projects.

In 1970 construction of Viracon's first building, a 45,000 square foot glass fabrication plant was completed. Employing twenty people, Viracon fabricated insulating and laminated glass for commercial buildings. Throughout its 50 years, Viracon continued to invest in additional equipment, facility space and employees expanding its capabilities to provide high-performance glass products, including tempered, heat soaked, laminated, insulating, silk-screened, digital printed, hurricane-resistant, acoustical, blast-mitigating, electronic eavesdropping mitigating, smart glass and a broad selection of proprietary solar coatings for North American and international markets.

Today Viracon is the nation's only single-source architectural glass fabricator with 1.2 million square feet of manufacturing space and employing over 1,000 people serving not only the architectural glass

community but also its home community of Owatonna. Throughout the years, Viracon employees have engaged with and supported the local branches of the United Way **contributing over \$1,000,000 over the past 10 years**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Strings of Hope, volunteering in local schools and more. These employees indicate that the time and talent they share through these programs is rewarding in ways that cannot be measured.

Fundamental to the company's culture is investment in all its employees, fostering an environment where they may grow in their careers and recognizing their achievements along the way. Viracon is a dynamic company with a wealth of career opportunities. We believe Great People Deserve Great Opportunities. You can find out more about Viracon by visiting www.viracon.com.

The company is a subsidiary of Apogee Enterprises, Inc. (NASDAQ: APOG). Apogee, headquartered in Minneapolis, is a leader in technologies involving the design and development of value-added glass products and services.



Exclusive Access to the Community

The Owatonna Community Leadership Academy (OCLA) is a leadership program designed to enable candidates to learn about Owatonna resources, values, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. A learning experience geared toward providing an in-depth look at eight key elements of our community: education, economic development, government, healthcare, public safety, quality of life, agriculture, and culture & diversity. This program will provide opportunities for candidates to exchange ideas, build networks and begin the process of identifying and solving important community issues. ...Exclusive Access

View the complete OCLA brochure online at Owatonna.org or contact Julia Seykora @ jseykora@owatonna.org for questions and to apply for 2024-2025!



Heerema Works Hard, Earns Ambassador of Year Recognition

Chamber Ambassadors welcome new members to the organization, new businesses to the community, and are the overall welcome arm of the Chamber. Each ambassador earns points for attending visits, events, and conducting retention visits. The one who earns the most points receives the 'Wayne Starman Ambassador of the Year Award'. The 2023 winner is Barb Heerema, Owatonna Granite & Monument. Thank you Barb!



Kyle and Lauren Kozekla (left) and Nick Lewis and Scott Kozelka (right) present the Sweetheart Raffle to Steve Cole, Cole's Electirc

Ambassadors raise \$'s support Scholarship, Chamber

Chamber Ambassadors recently held the Golden Opportunity Dinner to support the Ted G Ringhofer scholarship and the Chamber. The event is a night out with a great meal and a chance to win excellent prizes.

Young Professionals

Want to Keep Your Young Employees?

Get them connected through Y-Pro. Plug into the community with other young professionals with so many opportunities to love where you LIVE, WORK & PLAY! Lunch and Learns, Social events, fitness and outdoor activities, and community engagements.

Are you a young professional looking to take your career to the next level? Do you want to learn from experienced mentors who have been where you are and can help guide you towards success? Look no further than our new Young Professionals Mentorship series. This three-part series is designed exclusively for young professionals who are eager to learn and grow in their careers. You will have a chance to get up close and personal and spend time talking to prominent leaders of our community. Each session will be 90 minutes, and lunch will be provided.



MAINSTREET

Lisa Cochran, MainStreet Director



Blooms of Generosity: Join Main Street in Cultivating Beauty with our Flower Baskets!

The simple beauty of flowers has the extraordinary ability to uplift spirits and bring joy to those who see them on a regular basis. While the intrinsic value of flowers is undeniable, the act of donating money to support the creation and distribution of flower baskets can carry a deeper significance. By donating to the Main Street flower fund, you are actively participating in spreading happiness!. You can also donate in someone's honor or memory and all donations are tax deductible. Each basket costs approximately \$125 to purchase, plant, and maintain for one season. Please consider assisting Main Street in continuing a tradition started in 2004 and brighten up Downtown Owatonna! Donations forms can be found on Owatonna.org/MainStreet



Main Street Director in Dancing with the Stars

Good Luck Lisa Cochran who is dancing with Roy Koenigsberg to support Healthy Seniors of Steele County! The event is Saturday, April 13th at 6PM at the OHS Theater.

Cinco de Mayo Celebration: Igniting Tradition with Owatonna's First Fiesta in Central Park!

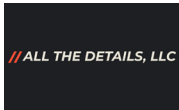
Join us as we embark on a journey to embrace the rich heritage, delicious cuisine, and lively traditions of Mexico in the heart of our community. The Cinco de Mayo celebration is a family affair! From face painting and piñatas to dancing and games, we'll have a range of family-friendly entertainment to ensure there is something for everyone. More than just a party, the Cinco de Mayo celebration aims to foster a sense of community unity. As neighbors come together to embrace and appreciate the cultural richness that this event brings, we hope to strengthen the bonds that make our town a diverse and vibrant place to call home. Save the date, May 4th, 11am-9pm in Central Park and let's make this fiesta a tradition to remember!

Hosted by El Rey Del Taco Food Truck, Alliance for Greater Equity, and Main Street Owatonna



MAIN STREET
OWATONNA

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



ALL THE DETAILS, LLC
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Kreutta@gmail.com



OWATONNA GLASS COMPANY
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APEX PRO KWIK LUBE
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(NEW OWNERSHIP, FORMERLY KATH MOVING)
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(ASSOCIATE MEMBER)
Owatonna
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CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert by for May/June mailing; \$150 by **April 30th.**



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Success
Starts **Here.**

www.riverland.edu