

# BUSINESS BRIEF

MAY/JUNE 2024



## Owatonna Finalist for City of the Year

Facing stiff competition from Farmington, Rosemount, and Chisago Lakes, Owatonna was a nominee for the City of the Year award. The recognition comes from the Minnesota Real Estate Journal a statewide economic development organization. Not surprisingly, the City of Rosemount, who landed several big development projects, including the new Meta data, won the recognition.



Todd Trout, Greg Kruschke, Kris Busse, Brad Meier, Syd Briggs, and Mayor Tom Kuntz attended awards event.

## Engage Owatonna Contracts Arnold



The community-based collaborative to develop an online engagement tool called Engage Owatonna recently contracted with Andrea

Arnold to move the project forward. Two key items, more users and more projects are the immediate focus.

## Members Meet with Legislators on Rising Costs

Business leaders from Owatonna recently traveled to St. Paul to meet with law makers about the rising cost of business. Presentations by the Minnesota Chamber kicked the event off and meetings with Sen. Jasinski and Rep. Petersburg completed the day.



Members of Owatonna, Mankato, Faribault, and Blooming Prairie Chambers meet with Senator John Jasinski during Business Day at the Capitol.

## Which are the Best Descriptors of Owatonna?

Answers from Branding Survey:



MAY/JUNE 2024

## WORKFORCE

Brad Meier, President/CEO

### Made In Owatonna Day Makes an Impact

Two hundred students learned from over 36 businesses during three Made in Owatonna Day events this school year. Made in Owatonna gives students an inside look at careers inside Owatonna businesses. The three events focused on Audio/Visual Communications, Arts, Health Care, and Agriculture. The goal of the SteeleCoWorks program is to give students a window into opportunities in their own backyard. The program is funded through a grant from the Bosch Community Fund and organized in partnership with United Way of Steele County, Junior Achievement, Owatonna Schools, and the Owatonna Chamber.



### Signing Day Features Students Entering Workforce

Celebrating students who choose to join the workforce after graduation, Signing Day will take place on Wednesday, May 29th at 4 pm at Torey's Conference Space.



### 10 Businesses Gain Work Experience Student with Help From Chamber Grant

The Owatonna Chamber of Commerce received a grant through the Greater Twin Cities United Way to encourage local businesses to offer work experiences to high school students through the summer months. The grant will help by paying a portion of the students wages up to 160 hours per student. Experiences include but not limited to, accounting, customer service, business administration, floral design, surveying and project management.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



#### CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES May 16

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar,

208 N Cedar, Owatonna (Upstairs)

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



#### YOUNG PROFESSIONALS MENTORSHIP LUNCH May 21

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Location: Owatonna Arts Center,

435 Garden View Lane, Owatonna



#### YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PICKLEBALL May 23

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Morehouse Park Pickleball Courts



#### BUSINESS AFTER HOURS May 28

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Co-Sponsor(s): Owatonna Foundation, Steele County Free Fair

Location: Owatonna Foundation Building on the fairgrounds



#### STEELECOWORKS SIGNING DAY May 29

4:00 – 5:00 PM

Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar (Event Center)

#### CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES June 20

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar,

208 N Cedar, Owatonna (Upstairs)

Topic: Legislative Preview

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



#### YOUNG PROFESSIONALS 0.5K BEER RUN (See flyer in the chamber pack envelope) June 22

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Mineral Springs Brewery, 111 N Walnut St, Owatonna

#### BUSINESS AFTER HOURS June 25

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sponsor: Climate by Design International

Location: Climate by Design International, 200 Festal Place NW, Owatonna (New Facility)





## EVENTS Update

By Julia Seykora, Events Director

### Competitive Application Process Now OPEN!

The Owatonna Community Leadership Academy is in its 23rd year. This program is designed 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. Get exclusive access to your community, build your network, be part of solving community issues and learn ways to give back to build a stronger community. Questions? **Contact Julia Seykora, [jseykora@owatonna.org](mailto:jseykora@owatonna.org) before application deadline on June 14.**



2023-2024 Class participants helped clean-up Willow Creek Nature Center as part of their "Class Project" this spring.



OWATONNA COMMUNITY  
**LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY**

## MAINSTREET

Lisa Cochran, MainStreet Director



### Grand Rapids Visitors Impressed with Downtown Owatonna

Visitors from Grand Rapids, Minnesota came to Owatonna to learn about downtown. The Grand Rapids team included representatives from the city, chamber, brewery owner, development corporation, real estate, food cooperative, and health care. Main Street Director Lisa Cochran coordinated a presentation and walking tour of the downtown area.



**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**  
Destiny Christian Church

**Christy Tryhus**  
Riverland Community College



# TOURISM Update

Glenda Smith, Director of Conventions and Tourism



## Branding Owatonna



Owatonna's new community wide brand is showing up around the community, online, around the state and down the road.

As we continue to roll out Owatonna's brand, marketing initiatives move forward including a new billboard near Faribault, and a new collective community site pointing to helpful websites within the community.



## MARKETING 101

Register by May 17

Monday, May 20  
11am-1pm  
Owatonna Public Utilities



OWATONNA  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



OWATONNA - AREA  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER



Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

When you are running a business, it can be hard to set aside time to put together a comprehensive marketing plan, however it is a critical component to the success of your business. Get started with this 2 hour workshop presented by the Owatonna Business Development Center in partnership with Minnesota's Small Business Development Center, and the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. This workshop will provide small businesses, event organizers and non profits with the following:

- Walk away from the session with a simple marketing plan
- Learn about free marketing tools to utilize in your business
- Find out about free resources available to small businesses through Owatonna Area Business Development Center

Register here



Marketing 101's presenter, Wendy Anderson is the Owner of Little Wendy Bird and Co-Founder of Aurora Web Solutions, a web development and digital marketing agency based in southern Minnesota. She offers clients a variety of services, from developing their entire digital marketing plan, to managing individual pieces, such as social media. Wendy is also a digital marketing consultant for the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).



Get your friends and family together to experience Owatonna's great summer events! Whether it's a family or class reunion, meeting, or another group gathering, contact us for ways to entertain your group during your stay! We'll put together your summer itinerary that fits your budget and interests.



Scan for all events



## You're invited to CELEBRATE TOURISM WEEK

May 19-25 is National Travel & Tourism Week  
We invite you to celebrate Tourism in Owatonna!

Wednesday, May 22

Foremost Brewing Cooperative

5:00 PM Social

5:45 PM Award Presentation

6:30 PM Tourism Trivia

Join us for a fun evening celebrating Tourism in Owatonna with appetizers, drinks, trivia and prizes

RSVP to [gsmith@owatonna.org](mailto:gsmith@owatonna.org) by May 18





## SPOTLIGHT MEMBER | AVIMOE

Brad Fischer, Membership Director



### We help you take care of the people who take care of your business

At Avimoe, our mission isn't just a statement- it's the guiding principle that drives every aspect of our work: "We help you take care of the people who take care of your business."

Founded in 2020, Avimoe stands as a beacon of innovative workforce solutions, tailored to address the evolving challenges faced by organizations across all industries.

Avimoe offers a next-generation professional employment strategy meticulously crafted to address the core pillars of modern HR: branding, employee engagement, and recruitment. With a keen focus on reducing turnover, our strategic labor equation is engineered to elevate retention rates while optimizing labor costs. We believe that by nurturing a thriving workforce, businesses can unlock their full potential and achieve sustainable growth.

At the forefront of Avimoe is Gauher (Mo) Mohammad, a visionary entrepreneur with a passion for empowering communities. Born in Pakistan, Mo migrated to Owatonna, Minnesota in 1988, where he became an integral part of the local fabric. Mo holds a bachelor's degree in human resources management from Minnesota State University Mankato, complemented by an honorary Doctor of Education Degree from Riverland Community College. With over 50 years of combined industry expertise in staffing and recruiting, Mo and the Avimoe team are dedicated to delivering unparalleled excellence in workforce solutions.



#### What Are Clients Saying About Avimoe?

“



The level of communication, professionalism, and effectiveness is superior. When we have a need in the future, I will be reaching out to the Avimoe team with an elevated level of confidence that they will meet and exceed our expectations.

-Plant Manager, Austin, MN

”

[avimoe.com](https://avimoe.com)



Beyond our commitment to businesses, Avimoe is deeply invested in giving back to the community we call home. Through our partnership with Beacons of Influence, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting education, we actively contribute to shaping the future of our communities. By providing scholarships to students pursuing post-secondary education at technical colleges, we strive to nurture the next generation of talent and foster a brighter tomorrow.

Whether you're a community member seeking opportunities or a business looking to unlock the full potential of your workforce, Avimoe is here to help. Discover the difference of personalized workforce solutions tailored to your unique needs. Together, let's build a brighter future, one employee at a time.

## EVENTS Update

By Julia Seykora, Events Director

### YPro Hosting "Ultimate Sprint"

This 0.5k is a unique event that offers a fun and laid-back atmosphere for participants. Whether you are a seasoned runner or simply want to have a good time, this event is perfect for you. The best part? All proceeds from the event will go towards supporting the Steele County Humane Society.

We encourage you to bring your friends and family along to enjoy the festivities. There will be food trucks and drinks available for purchase, and plenty of opportunities to socialize and have fun.

Registration fee is \$25 and includes a pint glass and free beer!  
***Check out the flyer inserted in the Chamber Pack this month.***



### Join the "White Out"

It's one of the Chamber's most popular events, so now is the time to get your spot locked in for the 2024 golf event.

We are having a White out! Whether you are golfing, sponsoring, or just cheering, We will wear white!! Tuesday August 6th at Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road, Owatonna.

**Contact Julia Seykora,**  
**[jseykora@owatonna](mailto:jseykora@owatonna) to**  
**secure your spot.**



Title Sponsor





## MAINSTREET

Lisa Cochran, MainStreet Director



### New Bands Open Downtown Thursday in June

A new season of Downtown Thursday events is coming to the community, and meeting the Main Street objectives to bring people to the central business district. People's perspective about downtown are closely linked to the experience they have in that space. The feedback on the fun of Downtown Thursday's is positive and helping capitalize on a revitalized area.

**The events are held on June 6, July 11, August 1st, and September 5th from 5:00-7:00PM in Central park and along Broadway and Cedar Avenue.** Atari, an 80's cover band and Fender Bender, country band, will headline the June opening night.

Businesses and organizations looking to get in front of several thousand people either with a sponsorship or a booth, contact **[LCochran@Owatonna.org](mailto:LCochran@Owatonna.org)**.

### New Banners and Flowers to Decorate Downtown

- **Hanging Flower Baskets:** Keep an eye out for these beautiful additions to Downtown Owatonna at the end of May. Tax-deductible contributions are welcomed for funding future baskets. Forms can be found on the website, **[Owatonna.org](http://Owatonna.org)**

- **New Banners:** Thanks to a grant from MN Main Street, new banners will be going up this spring, adding to the vibrant atmosphere. Contributions to the Banner Fund are also tax-deductible.

For businesses looking to maximize their presence and support the community, becoming a sponsor or participating as a vendor can be excellent opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Downtown Thursdays offer a chance to enjoy local entertainment, food, and shopping while soaking in the charm of Main Street Owatonna.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



### AMERICANA INSURANCE

Kiana Gumbusky  
114 5th AVE W,  
Ellendale  
507-684-2314  
kianag@americanainsurance.com



### COURT SPORTS....AND MORE

Chet Macht  
1414 S Oak AVE, STE 1,  
Owatonna  
507-451-0567  
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### HOTWORX OWATONNA

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### HUNTER ALEXANDER FRANK MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

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### MUST LOVE DOGS

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### OWATONNA ACE HARDWARE

Tyler Swenson  
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### ROTARY CLUB OF OWATONNA

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### THE CLUBHOUSE

Matt Olson  
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507-676-6464  
matt@hmbarebell.com



### THOMPSON SANITATION, INC.

Kari VanRavenhorst  
1255 Kilworth DR NW,  
Owatonna  
507-568-0755  
kvanrav@thompsonsantiation.com



## CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

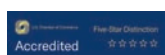
Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert by for May/June mailing;  
\$150 by **June 26th**.

Chamber office will be closed  
on **Monday, May 27th** in  
observance of Memorial Day.



**OWATONNA**  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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P: 507.451.7970 | E: oacct@owatonna.org  
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM



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**www.riverland.edu**