

BUSINESS BRIEF

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Candidates Take the Stage to Earn Local Votes

How do candidates think on business issues? Do they align with your values? Are they knowledgeable about the issues?

During the upcoming series of 6 candidate forums, you'll have the chance to learn where each one stand. In partnership with the Rotary Clubs and Owatonna People's Press, the Chamber is excited to present these opportunities to our members.

Check out the calendar of Chamber Events for more details on lunch costs and times.

CANDIDATE FORUMS 2024

September 30 - School Board

October 7 - County Commissioners

October 14 - Mayor and City Council Ward 2

October 21 - City Council at Large and City Council Ward 4

October 28 - 1st Congressional District

November 4 - State Representative 19B

Hosted by:



OWATONNA
People's Press



Rotary Clubs
of Owatonna

11:30am-1:30pm

Owatonna Country Club

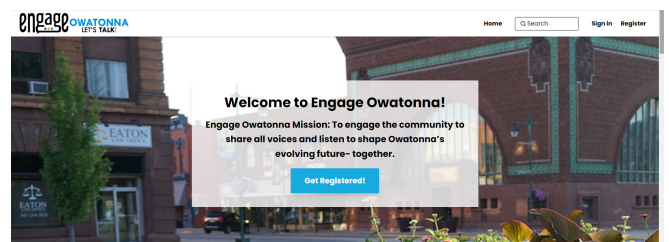
Lunch: 11:30am | Forum 12-1:30pm

Register for lunch and to reserve your seat at owatonna.org

Submit Your Candidate Questions Through Engage Owatonna

EngageOwatonna.com, a tool for input from all of the community, is looking for questions to the candidates. One or two will be selected for each of the forums to be asked to the candidates.

Signing up for Engage Owatonna is simple, your email will gain you access to the platform. The Chamber along with many business and community partners are part of getting this platform off the ground.



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024

Businesses Provide Work Experience Through Chamber Grant

Sixteen (16) students and businesses partnered together this summer in a mutually beneficial partnership. Students earned a paycheck and got great work experiences, businesses worked with high school age students to provide meaningful work and guidance. The program was funded through a grant obtained by the Owatonna Chamber from the Greater Twin Cities United Way.

About Work Experience

Q:What is the Value to the Company to provide a work experience for a high school age student?

A: We can offer a hands-on work experience in woodworking to hopefully develop future employees for our industry.

Q:How has this experience been beneficial to the business?

A: It has helped up improve our safety awareness and training procedures.

Q:What has the Student learned by working at the business?

A: Kooper stated that he enjoyed having a hands-on experience and working along with other employees

Q: How will this experience help the student decide on a career path?

A: Kooper stated that it helped him know that he wants to work with his hands, not sit behind a desk.



Kooper Schroer, Advantage Cabinets, Inc.

Workforce Initiative Takes New Step



The SteeleCoWorks program, a partnership between the Chamber, United Way of Steele County, and Workforce Development, Inc., has made changes to the Workforce Coordinator position. After Missy Koch took a position as a Career Navigator at the Owatonna High School, the SCW partnership decided to make some changes to the position to better support businesses. The position is now structured to focus on working with businesses to help you provide job shadows, internships, and work experiences. The position will work with school contacts to bring resources into the classroom as speakers and presenters.

The new Workforce Coordinator should be hired very soon.

EVENTS Update

By Julia Seykora, Events Director

How Does MN Ensure Fair/Secure Elections?

Join us for the first Growth Breakfast of the next season on **September 19 from 7:30 – 9:00 am at Torey’s Restaurant & Bar featuring Minnesota Secretary of State, Steve Simon.**

Steve Simon is Minnesota’s 22nd Secretary of State. He was sworn into office on January 5, 2015, and as Minnesota’s chief elections administrator pledged in his inaugural address to “work with anyone, of any political affiliation, from any part of our state” to protect, defend, and strengthen the right to vote in Minnesota.

October 17th: Implementation of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act -Minnesota Chamber.

Powerhouse Workshop that will leave you feeling engaged with Tangible Takeaways



Delivering Exemplary Service set for October.

Erik Therwanger is the visionary founder of Think GREAT leveraging his extensive background as a U.S. Marine, executive business leader, sales professional, and entrepreneur to drive organizations towards unprecedented success. His innovative approach integrates leadership development, team building, sales training, and goal-setting into comprehensive strategies that empower both team members

and leaders to surpass their goals.

Erik has delivered inspirational messages to diverse audiences, including prominent companies like U.S. Bank, Sam’s Club, Shutterfly, RE/MAX, Hubbard Broadcasting, Thomson Reuters, and U.S. Foods. He has also spoken to various armed services commands, such as the Air National Guard and the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as organizations in healthcare, education, law enforcement, government agencies, and charities like The American Cancer Society.

Date: Wednesday, October 30th

Time: 9 AM - 1 PM

Location: Torey’s Restaurant & Bar (Event Space),
208 N. Cedar ST, Owatonna

Topic: Delivering Exemplary Service by Erik Therwanger

Check owatonna.org to register.



OWATONNA

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

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Mazariego Agency

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Owatonna

Bonnie Cole
Cole’s Electric & Torey’s
Restaurant & Bar

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Mohs Contracting, Inc.

Rich Pettet
Must Love Dogs

Christy Tryhus
Riverland Community College

Turning Clicks into Visitors: Owatonna Chamber Websites Plan Revamp to Help Fuel Tourism and Community Growth

Over the past year visitowatonna.org has seen significant increase in web traffic with an 86% increase in users, and 90% increase in sessions. This positive trend suggests a growing awareness and interest in Owatonna as a destination.

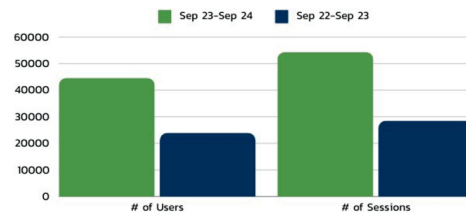
Over the next year we will be updating our websites to help capitalize on this online engagement, and convert interest into visitation and further establish Owatonna as a thriving tourist destination.

In addition to visually updating the site to include new branding elements the site will focus on:

- Creating a user-friendly design that is visually appealing, easy to navigate, ADA Compliant, and accessible on various devices.
- Developing high-quality content to share compelling and informative reasons to visit Owatonna, including high-quality images, and videos, that showcases Owatonna's best features.
- Implementing SEO best practices to improve the website's visibility in search engine results.
- Include features that encourage user engagement, such as social media integration, contact forms, and interactive elements to enhance the user experience and create a deeper connection with Owatonna.

AWARENESS - RESULTS

visitowatonna.org GA4
Overall Users & Sessions



86%
Increase in users
90%
Increase in sessions

Implementing Owatonna's new brand in a mix of advertising is credited to bringing the increase in traffic to visitowatonna.org



Congratulations to our Steele County Free Fair Trivia Winners!

- Thanks to all who participated and enjoyed learning more about Owatonna!
1. Christine Behne-SCFF
 2. Carrin Kath-Steele County History
 3. Chris Fiske-Economic Development
 4. Melissa Hall-Owatonna Chamber
 5. Val Seath-Owatonna Tourism
 6. Joshua Brocker- Owatonna Mainstreet



Anne Peterson, Owatonna Chamber of Commerce & Tourism's Group Tour Coordinator, helped share all of the great group opportunities available at the Minnesota Field Trip Library Expo held August 12 at CHS Field in St. Paul



Chances are if you are from Owatonna or the surrounding communities, you are familiar with AmesburyTruth or Truth as it's more often referred to locally. In fact, you might be hard pressed to find someone in Owatonna that hasn't worked at or had a family member work here.

Truth Hardware's history dates back to the early 1900s when we were known as Truth Tool Factory, which began in Ellendale. After a brief pause in Mankato in the 20s, Truth moved to Owatonna and began shifting our focus to window hardware products. With the growing popularity of our Window and Door Hardware, we quickly outgrew our original facilities on Rose Street and moved to our location on Bridge Street that you see today. In 2013 after we were purchased by Tyman we were merged with Amesbury to become AmesburyTruth. And on August 1st 2024 we were recently acquired by Quanex Building Products.



AmesburyTruth was the first company in our Industry to complete the certification to become ISO 9001 certified. We have been at the forefront of innovation with our ever-changing product line. Chief among our products is one of our proudest achievements, the WOCD or Window Opening Control Device. Used primarily in commercial applications such as apartments or businesses – it can prevent windows from opening beyond a limit of 4" to help address window fall prevention.

In the last few years AmesburyTruth has really put more focus on our employees by engaging and fostering their potential. We recently implemented the first of many planned Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and **began with a Women's ERG**. Our Women's ERG has worked



in our community through projects such as the Red Cart Program which addresses period poverty in our schools, we have supported local Women's Shelters around our plants, and supported local Owatonna Business Leaders by attending the Women of Achievement Event. Internally we met to celebrate Women's Heart Health, talked with Dr. Cindra Kampoff to discuss Grit and met to support each other around Caring for the Aging. We have coffee talks to engage with each other as women and not just as employees. We have been active with the WiM – Women in Manufacturing group in Minnesota, attending their tours and other online offerings. This past Spring three of our employees graduated from the 1st Owatonna Women's Leadership Program.

To learn more about AmesburyTruth please visit our website at [AmesburyTruth.com](https://www.AmesburyTruth.com) or you can contact us by phone at 800-866-7884 or by emailing innovation@AmesburyTruth.com.

Fresh Look for Main Street: New Design Elements Bring Vibrancy to Downtown

Main Street is getting a fresh new look just in time for the changing seasons. In an effort to brighten up the downtown area, spotlight our streetscape, and create a welcoming atmosphere, Main Street has introduced several new design elements that are sure to catch the eye of residents and visitors alike.



New Banners: The first noticeable change is the installation of new banners that line the streets. These banners feature colors from the Owatonna Branding Initiative along with the logo for Main Street. The banners add a touch of charm and character to Downtown. They not only beautify the area but also serve as a reminder of the town's community pride. We will also be showing off some new banners for the holiday season, with four different designs, that compliment the new banners that are up now. And speaking of the holidays....



Holiday Lights: As the holiday season approaches, Main Street will again be aglow with holiday lights. Our Design Committee has set goals for a long-range plan to update the look while using the decorations we have. The snowflakes will continue to be seen throughout the streets and we will be adding lighted greenery on N. Cedar Ave. one block at a time. New this year – Businesses are encouraged to decorate any trees in front of their buildings. We've waited until the trees have grown strong enough to handle decorations and lights and I can't wait to see the boulevard come to life with lights along the street.



Flower Baskets: Our Flower Baskets have been a tradition in Downtown Owatonna for years. This year, we tried a few different varieties. Overall, they look quite nice; however, we ran into some infestation on one of the varieties. We've ordered the flowers for next year and we are sticking to the tried-and-true plants for maximum beauty. We are increasing our baskets from 130 to 150 since we want to cover more areas in the Main Street District.

Main Street keeps these programs going only by donations and grants. If you can contribute to any or all these efforts, please contact me directly at lcochran@owatonna.org or (507)475-3451. Each contribution is tax-deductible.

Together, we can keep transforming Main Street into a vibrant, welcoming destination. Main Street is the place to be.

MAINSTREET

Lisa Cochran, MainStreet Director

2024 Holiday Lighted Parade Traveling Trophy Up for Grabs: Who Will Take Home the Prize?

Even though we are several months from our Holiday Lighted Parade, (December 6th), excitement is growing as I receive daily inquiries regarding the parade.

Registration forms will be available online beginning October 1st. If you participated in the parade last year, you will receive an email on October 1st with the form attached.

The Holiday Lighted Parade has long been a cherished tradition, with local businesses, community groups, and residents coming together to create spectacularly lit floats that light up the night.

The 2024 Trophy. The 2024 parade will feature float competition, won last year by Life Fitness. They are ready to defend their title and would like nothing better than to keep the traveling trophy in their building.

What It Takes to Win. To claim the coveted trophy, participants will need to bring their A-game. It's not just about the lights—judges will be looking for originality, creativity, and overall impact.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



AOK LIFE COACHING, LLC

Andrea Oyloe
PO Box 667, Owatonna
507-213-0558
aoklifecoaching@gmail.com



GRAPEFUL WINE BAR

Stacy Hanson
306 N Cedar AVE -STE 2, Owatonna
507-363-1503
stacy@grapefulwinebar.com



HAVANA DOG TRAINING

Megan Wimer
2020 S Cedar AVE, Owatonna
507-291-8107
train@havanadogtraining.com



HAVANA HILLS GOLF, RANGE & EVENT CENTER

Mark Langlois
2213 NE 34th AVE, Owatonna
507-517-0249
havanahillsgolf@gmail.com



LORI LAIR -ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Lorilair65@gmail.com

OAK HILL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Gregg Draeger
134 Southview, Owatonna
507-456-7939
greggdraeger@gmail.com



PAPA MURPHY'S

Kate Peterson
641 W Bridge ST, STE 103, Owatonna
507-455-3700
kate.peterson@mnpapamurphys.net



TONE MUSIC

Mara Schack (New owner)
114 N Cedar AVE, Owatonna
507-451-5196
mara@tonemusicstore.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

September 19
7:30 – 9:00 AM
Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar, 208 N. Cedar, Owatonna
Topic: Featuring Secretary of State – Steve Simon

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

September 24
5:30 – 7:00 PM
Sponsor(s):
Spherion Staffing & Recruiting
Location: 134 E Vine ST, Owatonna



CANDIDATE FORUM

(SCHOOL BOARD)
September 30
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Lunch Cost: \$16/per person, no lunch-free of charge
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

CANDIDATE FORUM

(COUNTY COMMISSIONERS)
October 7
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Lunch Cost: \$16/per person, no lunch-free of charge
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

CANDIDATE FORUM

(MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL WARD 2)
October 14
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Lunch Cost: \$16/per person, no lunch-free of charge
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

October 17
7:30 – 9:00 AM
Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar, 208 N. Cedar, Owatonna
Topic: MN Chamber – Paid Family and Medical Leave Act

CANDIDATE FORUM

(CITY COUNCIL AT LARGE & COUNCIL WARD 4)
October 21
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Lunch Cost: \$16/per person, no lunch-free of charge
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

BUSINESS *after* HOURS

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

October 22
5:30 – 7:00 PM
Sponsor(s): Spare Time
Entertainment
Location: 333 18th ST SE,
Owatonna



CANDIDATE FORUM

(CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1)
October 28
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Lunch Cost: \$16/per person, no lunch-free of charge
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

DELIVERING EXEMPLARY SERVICE

October 30
9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar, 208 N. Cedar, Owatonna
Presenter: Erik Therwanger, Founder of Think GREAT

CANDIDATE FORUM

(STATE REPRESENTATIVE 19B)
November 4
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Lunch Cost: \$16/per person, no lunch-free of charge
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert by for September/October mailing; \$150 by **October 30th**.



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 AM–5 PM



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Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Riverland
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Success
Starts **Here.**

www.riverland.edu