

BUSINESS BRIEF

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Update

Brad Meier, President/CEO

Industrial Projects Support Tax Base

TIF Decertification Nets City \$429K in 2025

At the last city council meeting of 2024, three key industrial expansion projects ended their Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements. The decertification puts \$429,380 back on the tax rolls in the coming year.



Which Companies?

Vision Processing Technologies (now Kerry): In 2013, invested over \$1.5M to add 15,000 sq ft to accommodate the need for growing demand. \$43,230 will be added to tax capacity from this project.



Daikin Applied: In 2014 they invested over \$8.4M adding 122,616 sq ft to their Owatonna site. \$173,388 will be added to tax capacity from this project.



Cybox (now Life Fitness): In 2016 invested over \$10M to add 150,000 sq ft to their manufacturing facility. \$212,762 will be added to tax capacity from this project.

What is TIF?

TIF uses the additional property taxes paid because of development in the district to pay for part of the development costs.

Why is it Important?

The city is able to use TIF to incentivize projects at no actual cost. It is a delay in realizing the full value of the new project until now. In the meantime, these businesses continue to grow employment and output while supporting the community through contributions.

City Development Valuation hits \$94M in 2024

The numbers show the amount of investment made over the course of the year into the community. Not all of investment comes from business, this includes home renovations and commercial building renovations as well. Some of the primary drivers of \$94 million were the Ascend/West Bank/Mineral Springs Brewery/Olmsted Medical Center projects valued over \$13.8M (in 2024) along the river and new Scooters Coffee.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

Chamber Measures Its Work - 2024

Membership: Add 44 New Members and net increase of 12

Actual: 52 New Members, Grew 13



Events: Grow to 3,000 participants

Actual: 3,202 participants



Development: Work with 25 prospective/expanding businesses

Actual: 25

Advocacy: Policy committee attends 90% of City Council & County Commissioner meetings

Actual: 91.7%



Member Engagement: Complete 6 micro polls and 50 retention visits

Actual: Conducted 6 micro polls; Completed 73 Retention Visits (Thank you Board & Ambassadors)

Attract Talent: Obtain 1 NEW grant to support workforce efforts

Actual: Received \$40,000 Work Experience grant

Attract Tourism: Present to 24 local organizations who could bring events to Owatonna

Actual: Met with 24 groups netting 2 events

How Will Legislative Shake Up & Budget Year Impact Your Business?



Control of the MN House and Senate is up in the air, with the recent untimely death of Senator Kari Dziedzic (D) and the challenge of two House seats, power in the legislature is tight. At the time of printing, the House is currently tied and the senate is a tie until a new election happens for Dziedzic's seat.

So, how will this impact you? It certainly looks like compromise and bi-partisanship will be required

this session. Which means the budget process should be much more moderated than the 2023 budget session where the budget expanded by billions of dollars. Compromise should mean better government and a better outcome for business. Session starts January 14th.

Thank You to Five Outgoing Board Members

The Chamber appreciates the insight and direction from our member businesses who serve on the board. Thank you to Randy Doyal, Megan Jenniges, Jolene Kunkel, Rich Pettet and Todd Trout for serving on the Chamber Board of Directors



*Randy Doyal,
Associate Member
(Retired Al-Corn)*



*Megan Jenniges,
Federated Insurance
(Young Professional Chair)*



*Jolene Kunkel,
Federated Insurance*



*Rich Pettet,
Must Love Dogs*



*Todd Trout,
U.S. Bank*

Welcome New Board Members

After the Annual Dinner, five new board members will start their 3-year term on the Chamber Board of Directors. Thank you for serving!



*Matthew Hughes,
Kowz & KRUE Radio*



*Cole Johnson,
Haute & Company, LLC*



*Sara McKay,
Owatonna Foundation,
Inc.*



*Rylee Muhr,
West Bank
(Young Professional Chair)*



*Annie Priebe,
Federated Insurance*



OWATONNA

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

Deb Gillard, Chair
RE/MAX Venture

Syd Briggs, Past Chair
Steele Waseca-Cooperative Electric

Oscar Mazariego, Vice Chair
American Family Insurance – Oscar
Mazariego Agency

Rylee Muhr, Treasurer
West Bank
(Young Professional Chair)

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

Shannon Cliff, At-Large
Mayo Clinic Health System-
Owatonna

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

Mike Herman
Culligan ULTRAPURE, Inc.

Matthew Hughes
Kowz & KRUE Radio

Cole Johnson
Haute & Company, LLC

Lori Lair
Associate Member

Sara McKay
Owatonna Foundation, Inc.

Doug Meier
Christian Bros. Cabinets

Sammy Miranda
Lakeside Foods

Scott Mohs
Mohs Contracting, Inc.

Annie Priebe
Federated Insurance

Christy Tryhus
Riverland Community College



Please Join Us!

Owatonna's 2025 Promoter Summit Tuesday, January 21

Owatonna Public Utilities

8am-10am or 11am-1pm
*choose one of the times above when registering

Scan to Register



Topics we'll cover

- Owatonna Tourism 2024 recap
- Tourism Goals & Plans for 2025
- Tourism Toolbox: new resources
- Owatonna Promoter Panel
- Ways to partner in 2025

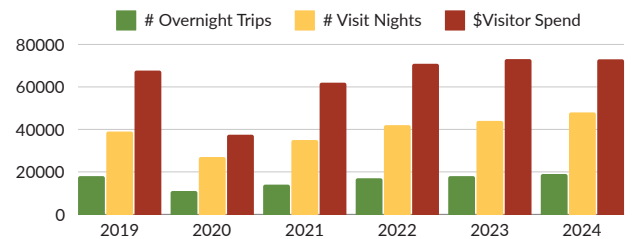
New Tools Help Analyze Visitor Trends

Placer.ai is a new tool we will be utilizing in 2025 to better understand visitor behavior to make informed decisions for marketing Owatonna and planning for sustainability and growth. Placer.ai is a location analytics platform that provides valuable insights into consumer behavior at physical locations. A few examples of how destinations can benefit from using it include:

- Understanding Visitor Behavior
- Measuring Event Impact
- Benchmarking and Competitive Analysis
- Attracting Businesses and Retailers
- Informed Decision-Making

Placer.ai will help gain a deeper understanding of Owatonna's visitors, optimize our offerings, and ultimately drive tourism.

5-Year Owatonna Visitor Trends



Analysis of people traveling from their primary residence visiting Owatonna for up to 31 days. Visitor spend is based on in-market spending associated with visits to locations within visit, and only includes spend of visitor from >50 miles away. *2024 Data may not yet be complete.



January 21-26

Scan for a full list of events



3 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.

1



Check out Inside Swing or The Clubhouse Golf Simulators or book a lane at Spare Time Entertainment.

2



- Try a new activity!
- cross-country skiing
 - snow shoeing
 - fat tire biking
 - curling

3



Book an Igloo at MSB, play Trivia at Foremost Brewing Cooperative, or enjoy a glass of wine at Grapeful Wine Bar.



SPOTLIGHT MEMBER | CULLIGAN ULTRAPURE



Culligan Ultrapure – Your Local Water Quality Experts

For over 60 years, Culligan Ultrapure has helped families and businesses achieve peace of mind with pure, refreshing water. Renowned for their water quality

expertise, the Culligan Ultrapure team provides products and services to ensure quality water is provided in homes, offices, and businesses.

At Culligan Ultrapure there is no sales pitch – it is about finding the right equipment for your specific water needs. They do that by offering a free water test and consultation so that all your concerns about your water are addressed. Whether a problem is small in scope for an individual household or large-scale for a commercial-industrial client, they provide effective water treatment solutions to solve it, with the goal of minimal environmental impact.

Culligan Ultrapure’s team is passionate about water quality. Several of their employees serve on the Minnesota Water Quality Association Board and the National Water Quality Board, actively shaping awareness and education around water quality issues. It is more than just a job -- it is a calling for a company with an everyday purpose “to enhance the quality of life for all that we serve.”

Culligan Ultrapure President Mike Herman says: “Every day each of us has the opportunity to impact someone else’s life. It can be a simple thing like a greeting, a smile, lending a helping hand or just supporting one another. Our ‘simple’ purpose statement means just that – how can I enhance someone else’s life in a positive way today?”



Culligan Ultrapure’s commitment to the community extends far beyond water treatment systems. Culligan Ultrapure’s encompasses 30 locations located in nine states and is headquartered here in Owatonna. Their heart is in their hometown, where they actively support local businesses and initiatives. Their upcoming sponsorship for the Annual Chamber Golf Event and other community events are examples of how they give back to the communities they serve.

Let’s face it, water quality can easily be neglected. It is invisible, so it is easy to forget its importance. But clean, safe water is essential for health and well-being. Contaminant levels can even fluctuate with the seasons. That is why

Culligan Ultrapure offers free water testing year-round. It is important to know exactly what is in your water, so you can make informed, healthy decisions.

Schedule your free water test today at www.culliganiswater.com, call (507) 451-1010, or visit 125 W. Front St. Owatonna, MN 55060.

Main Street 2024 – By the Numbers: A Year of Growth and Impact

The Owatonna Main Street program has had an incredible 2024, making a significant impact on the vibrancy of Downtown Owatonna. Let's take a closer look at the numbers behind their success:

• 18,000 Visitors Added

Main Street events brought over 18,000 additional visitors to Downtown Owatonna in 2024. This figure doesn't even include the events Main Street supports but does not organize directly, showcasing their vital role in boosting local foot traffic and community engagement.

• 700+ Volunteer Hours

Community involvement is key to Main Street's success, with volunteers contributing over 700 hours to specific Main Street opportunities throughout the year.

• \$90,000 in Forgivable Loans

In collaboration with the Economic Development Authority (EDA), Main Street awarded \$90,000 in Forgivable Loans. Of these, \$59,501 funded completed projects, \$20,000 is allocated for upcoming projects, and three additional applications are in the pipeline. These loans have been critical in the revitalization of Downtown Owatonna.

• \$20,000 Upper-Level Grant

New in 2024, Main Street and EDA introduced a \$20,000 Upper-Level Grant to help businesses enhance or utilize the upper levels of their buildings. This year's winner is set to invest more than five times the grant amount into their downtown property.

• Net Gain of 10 Businesses

Despite losing seven businesses in 2024, Downtown Owatonna gained 17 new businesses, resulting in a net gain of 10. A diverse mix of retail, insurance, restaurants, and other businesses contributes to a thriving downtown district.

• Beautification Investments

Main Street used donor funds to make downtown more inviting for all. In 2024, \$9,456 was invested in flower baskets, \$4,406 in branded banners, and \$5,584 in holiday decorations.

Main Street's contributions extend far beyond events, ensuring the long-term vibrancy of Downtown Owatonna. As the program looks ahead to 2025, it is clear the dedication of volunteers, business owners, and community members will continue to make downtown the heart of Owatonna for residents and visitors alike.

Here's to another year of growth, innovation, and community spirit!



The Board Welcomes New Young Professional Chair

As a young professional born and raised in Owatonna, I grew up walking the trails to get ice cream on hot summer days, spending hours riding rides at the Steele County Free Fair, and ice skating down the river during the chilly winter break. Those cherished experiences inspired me to stay in Owatonna and join the Owatonna Young Professionals, a group dedicated to creating similar opportunities for others.

I am grateful to be a part of a great organization that focuses on developing the next generation of leaders in the community. The Owatonna Young Professionals highlight our community as the perfect place to start a career, forge connections, and raise a family. We provide our members with opportunities to develop new skills, build relationships through social networking events, and give back to the community through volunteer activities.

As we look forward into the New Year, pave your path and create new experiences in Owatonna. Build relationships that will last a lifetime. Learn new skills that you can use at home or in the office. Volunteer with an organization and make a difference. Become an Owatonna Young Professional.



Rylee Muhr, West Bank
(Young Professional Chair)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ASCEND

ASCEND

Jason Worke
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AUTO DETOX

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FORWARD MINDED MEDIA

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OWATONNA NEIGHBOR'S MEATS

Amber & Don Lewer
216 W Bridge St, Owatonna
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neighborsmeatsllc@gmail.com



THE URBAN GROW STORE

Zobec Ness
1820 South Cedar AVE, Owatonna
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DAISY BLUE NATURALS

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DIVERSIFIED PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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jworke@divproms.com

TOM SEXTON

(ASSOCIATE MEMBER)
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EVENTS Update

By Julia Seykora, Events Director

Annual Dinner-Largest Event of Business Community

Learn How Owatonna's Livability is Changing

Owatonna's quality of living continues to improve as business leaders and entrepreneurs continue to invest in the bright future of this community. Join us on Friday, January 24, 2025, along with 225 other business leaders to celebrate recent successes, recognize outstanding leaders, and look ahead to what's in store for 2025. Registrations are filling fast.

Thank you Headline Sponsor:  **MAYO CLINIC**
HEALTH SYSTEM

Livability



CALENDAR OF EVENTS *BUSINESS after HOURS*

CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST

January 16
7:30 – 9:00 AM
Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar (Upper Level)
Topic: State of the City featuring Assistant City Administrator Jenna Tuma and newly elected Mayor – Matt Jessop

ANNUAL DINNER

January 24
5:30 – 8:30 PM
Headline Sponsor: Mayo Clinic Health System - Owatonna
Location: Owatonna Country Club, 1991 Lemond Road

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

January 28
5:30 – 7:00 PM
Sponsor(s): Torey's Restaurant & Bar
Location: 208 N. Cedar AVE, Owatonna



STEELECOWORKS QUARTERLY EMPLOYER MEETING

January 30
8:30 – 9:30 AM
Location: Ted G. Ringhofer Conference Center,
120 South Oak AVE, Owatonna

CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST SERIES

February 20
7:30 – 9:00 AM
Location: Torey's Restaurant & Bar (Event Center),
208 N. Cedar, Owatonna
Topic: Economic Development

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

February 25
5:30 – 7:00 PM
Sponsor(s): Steele County
Historical Society & Hy-Vee Foods
Location: 1700 Austin Road, Owatonna



CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

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



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 AM–5 PM



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



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