

**EMBRACE CHANGE • DRIVE MOMENTUM • CHAMPION GROWTH**



WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



TAYLA BOERSMA  
MINNWEST TECH CAMPUS

TRACY LUNDY  
LAKE REGION BANK

MATT SCHRUPP  
JENNIE-O

BRITTANY VANDERBILL  
B. VANDERBILL CONSULTING

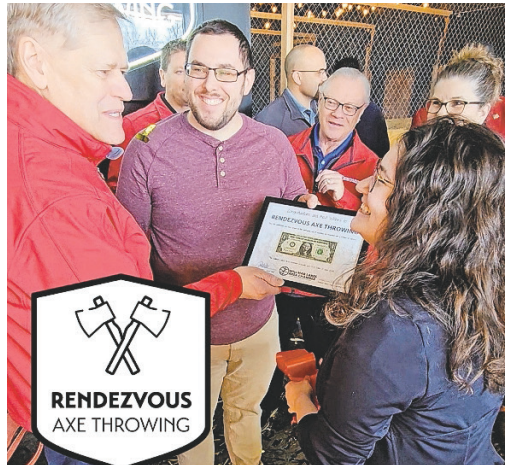
## CHAMBER CHAT

THURSDAY MORNINGS @ 10:00AM  
With Chamber President James Miller



Thursday mornings on Open Mic, Chamber President James Miller hosts Chamber Chat. Recordings are available on KWLM's website or on Spotify. Representatives from Willmar Indoor Golf, West Central Technology, KCEO, Rendezvous Axe Throwing, and CDS are featured in January.

## RIBBON CUTTING



### Rendezvous Axe Throwing

Congratulations to Hans and Victoria Hibma, owners of Rendezvous Axe Throwing on their ribbon cutting! Their dream, sparked at a marriage retreat, has officially become a reality! On behalf of the business community, we wish you continued success as you grow your business and bring fun for people of all ages to the Willmar Lakes Area!

## EMPOWERING A HEALTHY ECONOMY

The Willmar Lakes Area business community was well-represented at the kick off to the legislative session with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. This premiere gathering united business leaders and policymakers from across the state for an exclusive preview of the legislative agenda from those at the forefront of shaping it. The sold-out crowd heard from Governor Walz and all four legislative leaders, as well as the priorities of the business community. Pictured front to back: Brittany VanDerBill (B. VanDerBill Consulting), Mary Baker, Nancy Miller (Vinna Human Resources), Mike Beard (Bollig Engineering), Suzanne Hass (Allstate Insurance), Representative Dave Baker, Chamber President James Miller, Senator Andrew Lang, and Ivan Parga (Southwest Initiative Foundation).



## BUSINESS EDUCATION NETWORK



The Business Education Network and the Willmar Senior High School welcomed Westberg Eischens in mid-December. Students had a chance to spin the wheel to win a prize while learning about accounting. Zero Hour is the first hour every other Wednesday for students to catch up on tests or missing work. Those that do not have work to catch up on are in the commons area until classes start. This provides an opportunity to showcase all the fantastic businesses in the Willmar Lakes Area.

## NOMINATE OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADERS

[WILLMARAREACHAMBER.COM/VOLUNTEER-LEADERSHIP-AWARDS](http://WILLMARAREACHAMBER.COM/VOLUNTEER-LEADERSHIP-AWARDS)

### 2024 RECIPIENTS

#### EMERGING YOUNG LEADER AWARD

Kelsey Heedof, Hormel

#### MILO AWARD

Doug Kuelmnast, United Prairie Bank

#### LEGACY AWARD

Dr. Jeff Halm, Willmar Public Schools

#### EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Jennifer Lindquist, BEN + LEAD



## CHAMBER CONNECTIONS

Join us Friday mornings to network and learn more about Willmar Lakes Area businesses!

February 7

February 14

February 21



[willmarareachamber.com/chamber-connection](http://willmarareachamber.com/chamber-connection)

## MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE



**10 YEARS**

### Vibes Cut + Color

Congratulations to Teri Feist, owner and operator of Vibes Cut & Color on 10 years of membership! Teri specializes in color, blinding, lashes, and more. She also offers cuts and fades for men. Pictured representing the Chamber Board and/or Diplomats Committee: Jessica Hanson (Willmar Hypnosis), Chamber President James Miller, Suzanne Hass (Allstate), Andrew Kveene (Edward Jones), Tracy Lundy (Lake Region Bank), Lexi Kopacek (Christianson PLLP), Carla Kahle-Miller (Design West Ltd), Jeff Martinka (United Prairie), and Terri Wood (Woody's Trucking).

## STRATEGIES FOR THE AI AGE



Generative AI is transforming the business landscape. Paula Skoviera of Princess Paula Consulting met with local businesses to share insights and tools to embrace AI and enhance operations. Together, they explored the history and background of generative AI, discovered practical, easy-to-apply AI strategies for business, and left with actionable insights that could be implemented immediately.

## THRIVING THROUGH TENSION



Kim Madsen helped young professionals navigate workplace challenges with confidence in a neXt educational presented earlier this month. neXt members were motivated to recognize their individual strengths and weaknesses, to bring solutions instead of complaints, look for the good, and to ask questions to understand ... all actionable steps to conflict management and resolution.