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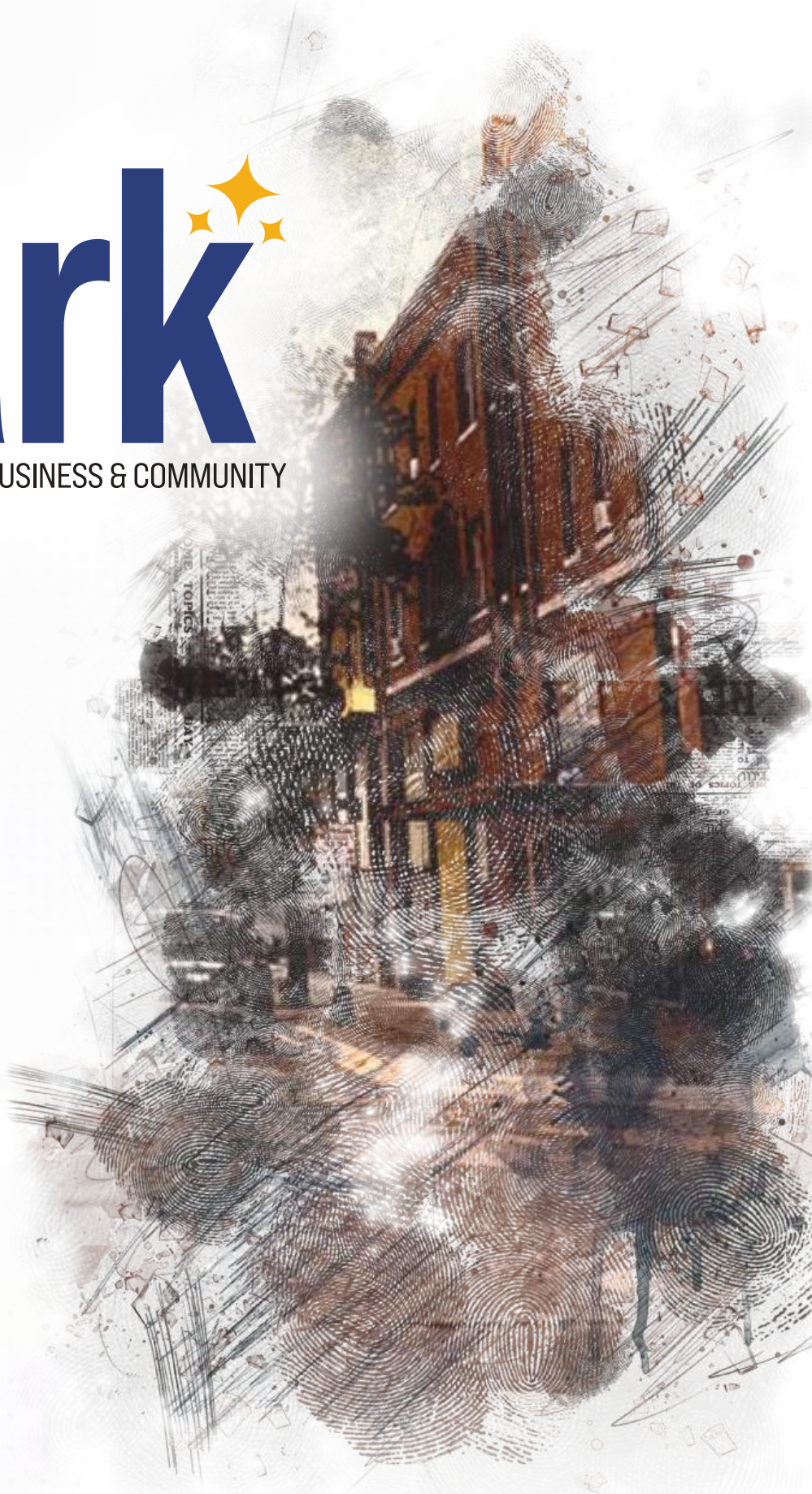
IGNITING INNOVATION IN BUSINESS & COMMUNITY



A publication of

Tribune WEST CENTRAL

Digital Edition also available at WCTRIB.COM



Embrace Change | Drive Momentum | Champion Growth

THANK YOU

to all of our fellow
chamber members
for supporting the
Chamber magazine.



We are incredibly grateful for the support. Your contributions make it possible for us to continue providing valuable content and resources to our community. We are committed to showcasing the incredible work and achievements of our members, and your support is vital in making that happen. Together, we are building a stronger network and fostering growth and success for everyone involved. Here's to more collaborations and shared successes in the future!

Thank you,



Christie Steffel
Advertising Director
West Central Tribune

WEST CENTRAL ▶▶
Tribune



Pictured: Rooted Ink

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As President of the Chamber, I have the privilege of working alongside our dedicated Board, staff, and volunteers, supported by an incredible network of members who share a common vision for economic growth and a thriving community.

Over the years, we have embraced challenges and evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of our business community. Recent events have only strengthened our commitment to advocating for businesses of all sizes, serving as a trusted resource for information and guidance, and acting as a powerful connector throughout our region.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber is poised for continued growth. We're excited about our updated website, refreshed branding, and expanded opportunities for engagement designed to foster stronger connections and provide even greater support for our members. Thank you for your continued support in making the Willmar Lakes Area a place where businesses and people can truly thrive.

James Miller
President & CEO
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber



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WORDS FROM OUR LONG STANDING MEMBERS



“The West Central Tribune has been a long-standing and active member of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. This partnership reflects the Tribune’s commitment to the local business community and its recognition of the Chamber’s role in promoting economic growth and development in the Willmar Lakes Area.

The NEXT program has proven to be a valuable resource for our staff, fostering a sense of community and belonging. It has been particularly beneficial for those who are new to the area and have not yet had the opportunity to establish a social network, as well as for long-time residents who are looking to

expand their social circle and forge new connections.

At the West Central Tribune, our commitment extends beyond simply delivering local news content. We firmly believe in the profound value that local news brings to our communities, fostering a sense of connection, awareness, and engagement.

In line with this belief, we also recognize the importance of actively supporting our local community. The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce stands as a prime example of an organization that shares these values, working tirelessly to promote and enhance

the economic vitality and overall well-being of our area.

By partnering with and supporting organizations like the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber, we aim to create a synergistic relationship that benefits all stakeholders. Together, we can amplify our impact, ensuring that our community remains informed, vibrant, and prosperous.”

Kelly Boldan
Editor/Site Manager
West Central Tribune

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Tribune



Why I Belong

“I drove an hour to attend a Chamber Connection, and it paid for itself with just one event. The quality of the connections that I made just in that first day were amazing! I have been back several times, and I have yet to leave an event feeling like it wasn’t worth my time. I have made several connections, clients, and even friends that I wouldn’t have if not for attending Chamber Connections!”

Desiree Petrich, Intentional Action LLC

Fresh Look, Bold Future:

REBRANDING THE WILLMAR LAKES AREA CHAMBER

The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber is excited to unveil our new logo and branding, marking a fresh chapter in our connection to the business community across Kandiyohi County. Our goal was to craft a modern minimalistic design that reflects the dynamic, collaborative spirit of our members and the broader business community.


The design process began nearly two years ago, with a dedicated group of stakeholders coming together to discuss updating the Chamber's visual identity. We started by analyzing our existing logo, color palette, and branding elements, carefully considering how they could evolve to better represent our mission and vision.

The new brand features a dynamic and modern aesthetic, with clean and bold colors that symbolize growth, innovation, and connectivity. The circle itself is a powerful representation of how Chamber member businesses form an interconnected system, working together to achieve mutual success.

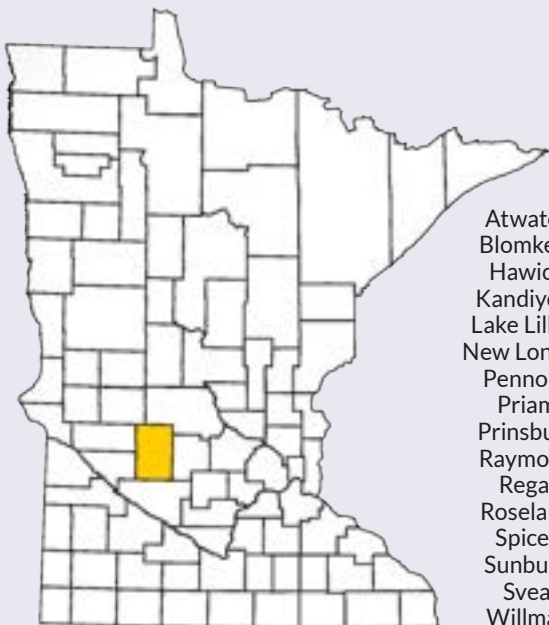


As part of the rebranding, we're thrilled to share that we also launched a new website in January. The redesigned site features a modern, user-friendly interface, making it easier than ever for visitors to access valuable information, resources, and opportunities to engage with the Chamber.

This milestone would not have been possible without the dedication and guidance of our staff, board members, and stakeholders. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed their time, expertise, and vision to this transformative process. We look forward to building on this new foundation as we continue to serve and support the thriving business community of Kandiyohi County.






James Miller
President & CEO

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CHAMBER TRIVIA

History

In 1929 the Willmar Commercial Club reorganized and became the Willmar Chamber of Commerce. It became incorporated in 1932. In 1959 the Chamber purchased the building on Litchfield Ave (currently the African Development Center). In 1985 the name was changed to Willmar Area Chamber of Commerce, and in 2002 became the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to be inclusive of all of the communities within Kandiyohi County.

What year did the Chamber move into its current facilities?

December of 1994

How many Chamber managers/presidents have there been in the history of the Chamber? 21

Who has sold the most Chamber memberships?

Milo Halberg - Over 100

What business is the longest standing Chamber member?

Peterson Brothers Funeral Home - 1889



Why I Belong

"I am part of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce because it is a place of belonging, community building, people connecting, learning experiences, advocacy champions, and leadership growth!"

Pablo Obregon, City of Willmar

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I believe in the magic...



Recently while listening to the oldies, I heard a song by the Loving Spoonful, an American folk-rock band formed in Greenwich Village in 1964. Yes, I googled it. The band was popular in the United States for a brief period in the mid-sixties and sang their big hit song on the Ed Sullivan Show – “Do you believe in Magic? And yes, I watched the video on YouTube. It was a catchy little tune. Do you believe in the magic of rock ‘n’ roll? It makes you feel happy like an old-time movie. Who does not believe in that kind of magic?

Sometimes when James, your Chamber president, and I get together to work on Chamber business we talk about the music magic. The music we love, the concerts we have seen, and the milestones that music marks off for us. Today I want to talk about the magic of chamber membership, the community we love, the events we have seen, and the milestones of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber, and what that magic can do for your business.

I spent many years working in the corporate world for large businesses. I was always active in the chamber wherever I lived. I knew the value of the chamber for large businesses. When I opened my business in Willmar seven years ago, the first thing I did was something I knew – joined the Chamber. I have found there is even more value for a small business when you decide to join your local chamber.

Starting, running, and growing a business can be intimidating and exciting. When you decide to join



"The Chamber means creating a vibrant supportive community of business leaders committed to their own growth as well as the health and growth of our local business community."

- Suzanne Hass

your local chamber, you open your business to a network of potential partnerships. Business contacts from your local chamber become your supportive community. The chamber can give your business a positive perception and as this positive perception establishes credibility and brand recognition, your membership investments will pay for themselves.

In addition to networking events, the chamber offers affordable professional development training

sessions to improve your skills and increase your knowledge. Do you know we have over 50 businesses who have over 50 years of experience in their industries and in your community? The magic of networking with local experts.

It is not just joining, and they will come. You must know why you join. It is important to understand what you want to get out of your chamber membership. Do you want to connect with like-minded entrepreneurs? Do you want more visibility for your business? What is your primary motivation? This will help you determine which events and which resources to invest in as a business owner or manager. You also will have marketing opportunities. Take advantage of every opportunity you can to promote your business. Participate regularly and attend different events and make it a point to get to know other members. You might also consider volunteering for a committee or even sponsoring an event.

So how do you create magic for your business? Each business must define what magic means to them before joining the chamber. The Chamber means creating a vibrant supportive community of business leaders committed to their own growth as well as the health and growth of our local business community. As we begin another new year, join us in taking things to the next level and creating something magical for your clients, customers, employees, and our local community.

Suzanne Hass
2025 Chamber Board Chair

2025 CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Kandiyohi County



Jean Geselius
CDS



Dan Jacobs
Marcus Construction



Jaime Martinez
CentraCare



Tayla Boersma
MinnWest
Technology Campus



Tracy Lundy
Lake Region Bank



Matt Schrupp
Jennie-O



Brittany VanDerBill
B. VanDerBill
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CHAIRMAN'S INVESTORS

A Chairman's Circle membership represents a bold investment in the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber. Members at this level are deeply committed to the prosperity and growth of the region and its community members. Their significant investment enables the Chamber to fulfill its mission of promoting and protecting the area-wide business community. By being part of the Chairman's Circle, these businesses play a crucial role in advancing economic development, fostering strong community relationships, and ensuring a vibrant future for the region. Their dedication helps support the Chamber's initiatives and ensures that local businesses have the resources and support they need to thrive.



2025 CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Christianson PLLP
Chair-Elect



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Bethesda
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Woody's Trucking, Inc.
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Stephen Gardner
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Past Chair



The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber Board of Directors is composed of business owners and professionals from across our community. They play a vital role in shaping the direction of our organization by leading various committees. Serving on the Board of Directors is a rewarding three-year commitment that allows members to make a lasting impact on the growth and success of our organization and our region.

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MEET THE STAFF



James Miller
President & CEO



Jami Tanner
Director of Member Services



Jennifer Lindquist
Business Education Network Coordinator



Mission

To promote and advocate for the area-wide community.

Vision

The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber will foster a thriving community by cultivating leadership, strengthening relationships, and championing local businesses as the trusted resource for community and business insights.

Core Values

Embrace Change | Drive Momentum | Champion Growth

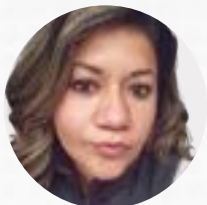
INFORM - inform investors of important business and community information

PROMOTE - promote our investors, the business community, and the Willmar Lakes Area

ADVOCATE - advocate for our investors and our business climate at local, state, and national levels

CONNECT - provide opportunities for businesses to connect with other businesses

EDUCATE - provide educational opportunities for businesses and their employees



Why I Belong

"It is an honor to be part of the Willmar Lake Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber provides many resources for businesses that we often ignore. As a Latino, I feel proud to know that diversity is something very valuable to the Chamber, and to feel that support as a business owner in this country is fundamental."

Solange Cooley, Ag Jobs LLC | MEMBER SINCE 2022



Chamber Chat, the Voice of Business

Every Thursday, the airwaves of KWLM (1340 AM and 96.3 FM) and Spotify come alive as Chamber President James Miller sits down with local business leaders for a candid conversation. These chats offer insights into the diverse enterprises that make up the Willmar Lakes Area business community, shedding light on both triumphs and challenges. It's like

eavesdropping on a coffee shop conversation, minus the guilt. One of the standout features of Chamber Chat is its accessibility. There's no cost for Chamber members to participate; it's a first-come, first-served opportunity to showcase their business to a broader audience. This platform not only amplifies individual business stories but also fosters a sense of

unity and shared purpose within the community.

Chamber Chat is more than just a radio segment; it's a reflection of the Chamber's commitment to connecting and elevating its members. Alongside other initiatives like Chamber Connections and Business After Hours, Chamber Chat plays



Why I Belong

"The networking is phenomenal. The support from businesses, non-profit organizations and local programs has secured our continued membership and has helped in our success. The Chamber Connections, luncheons, and speakers have helped grow connections for Advocacy and Inclusion Matter of West Central Minnesota (AIM). The Chamber staff is wonderful to work with. I called with an idea, and they put me in contact with the right people to make that idea become a reality."

Valoris Anderson, AIM | MEMBER SINCE 2015



a pivotal role in fostering networking and professional development. These programs are designed with the understanding that people do business with those they know, like, and trust. By providing platforms for meaningful interactions, the Chamber helps turn contacts into customers. Whether you're a listener seeking to learn more about local businesses or a Chamber member ready to share your story, Chamber Chat offers a unique and engaging platform. It's a testament to the Chamber's innovative approach to community building and economic development. So, tune in every Thursday, or better yet, reach out to James Miller at jmiller@willmarareachamber.com to schedule your own Chamber Chat.



Listen on



Why I Belong

"Being a chamber member allows Northern Radiator to network and connect with fellow members and professionals in the community, keeps us in the know on government actions that could affect our business, gives us a bigger voice in those concerns, allows for peace of mind knowing we have support if we need it, and offers local visibility when we are hiring."

Hope Thompson, Northern Radiator | MEMBER SINCE 1989

We've Got Committees

Promote your business, network with other professionals, learn about other businesses in the Willmar Lakes Area, and become more acquainted with your Chamber by taking part in one of our many committees. With over 100 volunteers that proudly serve on the committees to create successful events and membership programs, we have a fit for every interest.



Agri-Business



Ambassadors



Diplomats



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INTUITION BREWING:



THE HEARTBEAT OF WILLMAR'S CRAFT SCENE

In the heart of downtown Willmar, nestled on 4th Street, sits a craft beer haven that has quickly become a staple of the local community, Intuition Brewing. While its doors may have only opened in December 2023, the roots of this venture trace back years before, driven by a mix of passion, gut feelings, and a relentless pursuit of brewing perfection.

A Hop-Fueled Beginning

For co-founder Micah, the road to brewing was an unexpected one. His journey started with a reluctant attempt at homebrewing, prompted by his younger brother's wedding gift: a beer-making kit. "I didn't want to do it," Micah recalls with a laugh. "It sounded like too much work when we could just go to the liquor store." But after two failed attempts at making drinkable beer, his curiosity took over. Research turned into an obsession, and

brewing beer became more than a hobby—it became a calling.

With a background in finance, Micah was brewing as much as possible on the side while working full-time as a financial analyst. Then came the pandemic, and like many, he began rethinking his career path. A job opening at the legendary Schell's Brewery caught his attention. He applied, landed the gig, and spent two and a half years learning the craft professionally.

During that time, fate intervened. Micah met Liz, his now-wife and business partner, and together, they started dreaming about something bigger. Their shared love for brewing - and more importantly, for the Willmar community - planted the seed for what would become Intuition Brewing.

A Leap of Faith

For Liz, the decision to open their

own brewery felt like destiny. "Micah was making these incredible beers that you just couldn't find on the shelves," she says. "I wanted people to experience his recipes and creativity."

Their opportunity arose when Foxhole Brewhouse, a beloved local brewery, decided to move locations. Without hesitation, they jumped at the chance. Liz's immediate "yes" to Micah's pitch came almost too quickly. "I think he was expecting a little more hesitation," she jokes.

The name 'Intuition' is more than just a catchy title - it's the very ethos of the brewery. Liz recalls a powerful moment when they were contemplating their future. "We were out on a walk, talking about Micah's next move, and I got this overwhelming feeling when I saw a fox statue. I blurted out, 'There's something at Foxhole.' A few weeks later, we learned that the space was opening up. It felt like a sign."

Building Community, One Pint at a Time
From day one, the mission of Intuition Brewing has been clear: to be more than just a place to grab a beer. It's a hub for connection, creativity, and community.

Liz, the mastermind behind their events, initially swore off trivia nights. "We said we wouldn't be a trivia place," she admits. But customers had other ideas. "They kept asking for it, so we caved. Now, it's one of our biggest nights." The same organic approach has shaped much of their programming, from the Initials Game and open mic nights to kid-friendly experiences like the Bippity-Boppity Salon, where children can get a Disney-style makeover.

But beyond fun events, the brewery's culture is deeply rooted in inclusivity. Their motto, "We're not for everyone, but everyone's welcome," encapsulates their belief in creating a space where all feel comfortable, where people can be themselves, and where they can build community and connections.

Beer with a Personal Touch
The heart of Intuition Brewing is, of course, the beer. Micah takes an experimental approach, blending science with instinct. "There are beers I love that don't sell well, and ones I'm lukewarm on that fly off the shelves," he admits. "It's all about learning the palates of our customers."



One of their more unique creations was the Banana Nut beer. Surprisingly, it contained no actual banana - just a carefully selected yeast that mimicked the flavor. "People were convinced there was real banana in it," Micah laughs. "It's crazy what yeast can do."

Currently, the brewery keeps around ten beers on tap, rotating through a diverse mix of IPAs, stouts, lagers, sours, and seltzers. They also take customer input seriously. "We regularly ask people what they want to see next," Liz says. "Cucumber Kölsch? S'mores Stout? If it's possible, we'll give it a shot."



Collaboration and Growth
Beyond their own creations, Intuition Brewing thrives on partnerships. From collaborating with Vinje Church on a special brew to working with other local breweries like Goat Ridge Brewing Company and Foxhole Brewhouse, they embrace a team mentality. "The craft beer community is incredibly supportive," Micah notes. "It's about lifting each other up."

A particularly exciting milestone is their upcoming collaboration with Schell's Brewery. "Schell's has only done a few collabs in their history, and we're honored to be one of them," Liz says. "It's a full-circle moment for Micah."



Support from the Chamber and Community

From the beginning, Intuition Brewing has been deeply connected to the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber. “We were members before we even opened,” Liz says. “It just made sense. The Chamber supports both small and large businesses in the community, and we knew we wanted to be part of that.”

The support has been invaluable. Attending Chamber events like the Friday morning Chamber Connections helped spread the word about Intuition Brewing early on, and being invited to join the Chamber Ambassadors provided even more opportunities for networking. “At first, we were hesitant—being a Chamber

Ambassador sounded like a lot of responsibility,” Micah admits. “But it’s been a great way to meet other business owners and get to know the community better.”

The Chamber also played a crucial role in helping Intuition Brewing navigate the complexities of opening a business. “We knew James before he became the Chamber President, back when he was our banker,” Liz adds. “He went to bat for us then and supports us today, and he genuinely believes in our idea. That trust and support means the world to us.”

Looking Ahead

As for the future, Micah and Liz have no plans of becoming a massive brewery empire. Instead, they’re focused on sustainability

- both for the business and their personal lives. “We’d love to reach a point where we can take a vacation,” Liz jokes. “But really, it’s about making this space the best it can be.”

Their dreams also extend to downtown Willmar as a whole. “We want to see more businesses open up,” Micah says. “More boutiques, more gathering spaces - just more reasons for people to come downtown and stay downtown.”

With their passion, creativity, and unwavering belief in community, Intuition Brewing isn’t just a place to grab a pint - it’s a place to feel at home. So the next time you’re in Willmar, trust your gut, follow your intuition, and pull up a chair at this one-of-a-kind brewery.

The Chamber Golf Classic

This competitive scramble is held at the Eagle Creek Golf Club. It's tradition for the Golf Classic Champions to take a photo in the retro Chamber Ambassador jackets.

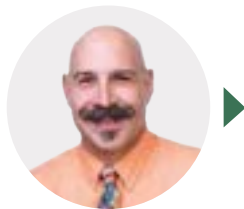
SAVE THE DATE »
August 18, 2025



The Aggie Open

This scramble features many of our area's agri-business related companies, vendors, and producers. A portion of the proceeds provide scholarships to Ridgewater College students pursuing ag-related careers.

SAVE THE DATE »
June 16, 2025



Why I Belong

"As a new business owner, the Willmar Lakes Chamber continues to be a very supportive organization that assists new and established business organizations grow and thrive. The resources and connectedness the Chamber provides is vital to the success of the regional business community."

Jeff Miller, J Miller Custom Building & Remodeling



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TOP 5 PLACES TO MEET MEMBERS

1

Chamber Connections



4

neXt



2

Business After Hours



5

Golf Tournaments



3

Special Events



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Chamber Community LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence in the Willmar Lakes Area



Jeff Jensen
West Central Technology

Milo Award

The Milo Award is named after long-time Chamber volunteer, Milo Halberg who passed away in 2001. The award was established in Milo's name to recognize local business leaders who exemplify Milo's leadership in the areas of volunteerism, community leadership and involvement, and dedication to the Chamber.



Michelle Marotzke
Kandiyohi County Economic Development

Exemplary Leadership Award

The Exemplary Leadership Award (ELA) honors someone who has achieved recognition in their field and made significant contributions to the respective profession and business or organization of which the individual is a part of.



Ross Marcus
Marcus Construction

Legacy Award

The Legacy Award honors someone who has made significant contributions to the Willmar Lakes Area Community. In honor of long-time Chamber President Ken Warner who retired in 2023, the award is presented to a person that has persevered in a community leadership role and has made the Willmar Lakes Area a better place to work, live, and raise a family.

5 UNDER 45 EMERGING LEADERS

These awards recognize individuals 45 and under who demonstrate outstanding leadership that benefits the community and its citizens.



Kelsey Baker
Kandiyohi County



Amber Barber
320 Real Estate Co.



Naomi Hinz
Main Pointe
School of Dance



Griffin Leitch
Anderson Larson
Saunders Klaassen
Dahlager & Leitch PLLP



Brittany VanDerBill
B. VanDerBill Consulting

Every year the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber honors exceptional leaders who make a lasting impact on our region's success and vitality. The Community Leadership Celebration is an opportunity to reflect on the past year's achievements, look ahead to future initiatives, and recognize key contributors to our community. In addition to presenting awards, we celebrate retiring Chamber Board members and Membership Milestones. It's a time to network, celebrate, and support the Chamber's efforts in building a thriving community!

Strengthening Local Businesses and the Community



"Lakeland Media recognizes the immense value of the Chamber and firmly believes that its mission serves the broader community effectively."

- R.J. Linder

"As a long-standing member of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber, Lakeland Media recognizes the immense value of the Chamber and firmly believes that its mission serves the broader community effectively.

I am very grateful for the Chamber. When I moved to the Willmar area, the events held by the Chamber allowed me to build relationships I most likely would not have been able to without the Chamber.

The Chamber has provided Lakeland Media with opportunities to foster relationships through events and programs, resulting in enduring business friendships. Additionally, the Chamber has facilitated personal growth for our employees, enabling them to learn more about the community and the businesses that support it, such as through the Leadership Perspectives program. Our community would not look the same or might not even be viable without local businesses.

From amenities to services, we need local businesses, and we need someone advocating for businesses,

just like our local chamber does. A healthy community is much like an ecosystem and businesses play a vital role in the sustainability of our community.

The Chamber is here to help. There is no way to be connected to all people and all benefits that there may be out there for a business to succeed. From events to meet people, to programs to grow as an individual, or volunteering to give back, the Chamber is great investment.

I think you must look at this membership as an opportunity to grow and it's up to you how much you want to put in. From my experience, it's not what the Chamber can gift you in terms of business referrals, the potential business partnerships and friendships are there, are you willing to show up?"

R.J. Linder
General Manager
Lakeland Media





Picture: Hawk Creek



Ribbon Cuttings

Ribbon cuttings are an opportunity for the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Committee to celebrate the grand opening of an area business. Follow the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce on social media to view pictures of the latest events. If you would to schedule a ribbon cutting for your business, please contact the Chamber. Ribbon cuttings

are a complimentary service provided by the Chamber for members only.

Ag Tours

Every year the Chamber's Agri-Business Committee hosts Fifth Grade Ag tours for students to learn about and experience dairy farming first hand. For many, it's their first time visiting a farm! Additionally, the committee hosts Adult Ag Tours at different ag-focused businesses in the community such as NextNest Hatching.

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MEMBERSHIP

A FEW FLASHBACKS



Restorative Sleep Solutions | 10 Years



United Community Action Partnership | 20 Years

2025 MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES

5 YEARS

- Little Crow Golf Resort
- SouthPoint Insurance Agency
- Waste Management
- Money Matters Accounting Solutions
- Kristin Gulbrandsen
- Goodness Coffee Company
- Max's on the Green
- West Central Dental
- CentraCare - New London Clinic
- CentraCare Hospice

- Kwik Trip #944
- Riley School Bus LLC
- GlenOaks Senior Living Campus
- New London-Spicer Schools

10 YEARS

- JMD Manufacturing Inc
- Vivid Image Inc
- Taatjes Financial Group
- Velocity Public Affairs
- Foxhole Brewhouse
- CentraCare -

- Willmar Surgery Center
- Total Glass, Inc
- Ryan Buer Electric
- AIM of West Central MN
- Farm-Rite Land, LLC
- Kandiyohi County Farm Bureau Federation

Membership Milestones

Membership Milestones are an opportunity for the Chamber Diplomats to visit member businesses and thank them for their continuous support and membership investment. Follow the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce on social media to view pictures of the latest milestones.



Insurance by Strehlow | 50 Years

MILESTONES



Bolton & Menk | 30 Years



40 YEAR Eagle Creek 2023

20 YEARS

- Rebel Campers, Inc.
- Elite Insurance Group Agency, LLC
- Janning ENT Center
- Jerry Gesch
- Wireless World
- Life-Science Innovations, LLC

- Nova-Tech Engineering
- Reading Therapy Center of Willmar, LLC
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota
- Willmar Ten Investors
- CentraCare Foundation
- Co-op Credit Union
- Schwanke Museum

30 YEARS

- Calvary Lutheran Church
- Slumberland Furniture
- Vreeman Construction
- Bremer Trust

- & Schmiesing, PLLP
- South 71 Veterinary Clinic

50 YEARS

- Runnings
- Willmar Municipal Utilities
- West Central Industries

40 YEARS

- Conway, Deuth



Fenstra Insurance | 30 Years



Country Inn & Suites | 20 Years

50+ YEAR MEMBERS

Peterson Brothers Funeral Home.....	1889
West Central Tribune.....	1929
Lakeland Media.....	1941
Perkins Lumber.....	1955
Life-Science Innovations/Select Genetics.....	1958
American Legion.....	1958
Trouw Nutrition.....	1961
Jennie-O Turkey Store Inc.....	1963
North Risk Partners-Corneil-Elkjer.....	1963
Elmquist Jewelry.....	1965
Minnesota Gun Class - Maracom.....	1966
AgCountry Farm Credit Services.....	1966
West Central Steel/Central MN Fabricating.....	1966
Willmar Electric Service.....	1966
Harvey Anderson & Johnson Funeral Homes.....	1966
Hanson-Fonkert Dental Clinic.....	1966
Thrifty White Pharmacy.....	1967
Chappell Central.....	1968
Walt's Soft Cloth Car Wash.....	1969
Floor to Ceiling.....	1970
Border States.....	1970
Colleen Thompson-Michels.....	1970
CentraCare-Rice Memorial Hospital.....	1971
Bernick's Pepsi.....	1972
Haug Implement.....	1972
TPI Hospitality.....	1973
Cash Wise Liquor.....	1973
Willmar Bus Service.....	1973
Hansen Advertising.....	1973
Insurance by Strehlow.....	1974
Lakes Area Dental.....	1974

2025 LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES CLASS



Leadership Perspectives students will graduate as more informed, dynamic, qualified and motivated business leaders. This program would not be possible without the support of all the local businesses that welcome the class into their facilities, and the financial support of the City of Willmar, Kandiyohi County, and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.



Bill Adams
Willmar Public Schools



Kayla Berg
Bremer Bank



Kelly Brunkhorst
Minnesota Department of Transportation



Justin Cardinal
Christianson PLLP



Christopher Corbett
City of Willmar



Riley Cronen
Christianson PLLP



Tanner Dahle
Christianson PLLP



Jenny Danielson
Life-Science Innovations



Joshua Dierks
Heritage Bank



Jacklyn Frericks
Dooley's Petroleum



Molly Gardner
CentraCare



Forrest Gibson
Marcus Construction



Lora Handt
Willmar Bus



Heather Hanson
United Way of West Central Minnesota



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Hormel Foods



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Nick Hinz
Nova-Tech Engineering



Jonathan Jungclaus
West Central Industries

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AgCountry



Matt Kubesh
Bethesda



Vernae Larsen
City of Willmar



Melissa Lauck
Dooley's Petroleum



Jennifer Lindquist
Coordinator L.E.A.D.,
BEN Coordinator,
President of Willmar
Aquatic Racing
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Jared Osterlund
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Lindsey Peters
MinnWest Technology
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Alyssa Sitz
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Jon Solberg
Marcus Construction



Cameron Tewari
Jennie-O



Joe Veeder
Jennie-O



Racheal Walz
Heritage Exteriors



Marcia Zylstra
CentraCare

Willmar Lakes Area Leadership Perspectives

The Willmar Lakes Area Leadership Perspectives program is designed to develop effective community leaders with vision and insight. Session topics include individual and team-building; heritage and diversity; government and media; health, human services, and volunteerism; law and justice; education; industry and tourism; entrepreneurship and opportunities. Each session focuses on the issues critical to our region's future success. Over the past 32 years, nearly 1,000 people have graduated from Leadership Perspectives.

WHY INVEST IN THE CHAMBER?

Networking, Advocacy, & Growth

The Chamber hosts many networking events throughout the year so members can meet and exchange ideas, develop business relationships, and increase their professional network.

Business After Hours provide a welcoming atmosphere to network with the business community, showcase what you offer, and provide tours outside of the typical workday.

Chamber Connections are professional networking events hosted at member locations every Friday 7:30-8:30am (except January and July).

Lunch & Learns are free quarterly meetings on a variety of topics impacting the business community such as broadband, economic development, and legislative updates.

Volunteer Committees are where our members share their talents to make things happen. Let us know if you would like to be involved. The Chamber offers a wide variety of interest-based committees: Agri-Business, Ambassadors, Diplomats, Public Policy, Grow MN!, and Special Events.

neXt is an affiliate organization for young adults to build connections, learn new skills, and develop as leaders through fun social activities, structured educational opportunities, and local volunteer events. Whether you're looking to grow professionally or personally, odds are that neXt has an upcoming event that will help you do just that.

Business Education Network develops our community's future workforce by providing students with a deeper understanding of career opportunities and aligning skills with current workforce needs; engaging employers directly with students, education, and training providers; and better aligning programs and curriculum to the realities of the West Central Minnesota and overall Minnesota economy.

Grow MN! is a private-sector-led business retention and assistance program that conducts confidential, comprehensive one-on-one site visits with businesses, tracking on-the-ground business conditions, collecting data on what it takes for businesses to stay and grow in Minnesota, and identifying business concerns.

Advocacy - The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber actively advocates for the business community, ensuring its interests are effectively represented in public policy decisions at the local, state, and federal levels. As a trusted convener of community leaders and influencers, the Chamber fosters collaboration and provides a platform for meaningful discussions on policies that impact businesses. Through public policy forums, legislative receptions, and direct engagement with elected officials, we equip our members with valuable insights and proactive strategies to navigate emerging challenges and opportunities at every level of government.

Mid-Minnesota Builders Exchange Whether you are seeking construction data or want to get information out to the trade community, our exchange is here to help make that happen! The Builders Exchange provides plans and specifications on various building projects. A weekly bulletin is sent to each member notifying them of the plans that are available. The bulletin includes the location of the project, the bid date, and the architect for the project.



Promote Your Upcoming Events

Share your upcoming events with other members and the community by posting them on the Explore Willmar Lakes Area's Community Calendar! Simply go to the Events page and select Submit an Event.

Marketing & Promotion

Looking to connect with potential customers, build your business or promote your brand? Make sure to use the Chamber as a resource! Our website, newsletters, magazine, Chamber Chat, and sponsorships can help you accomplish your goals!

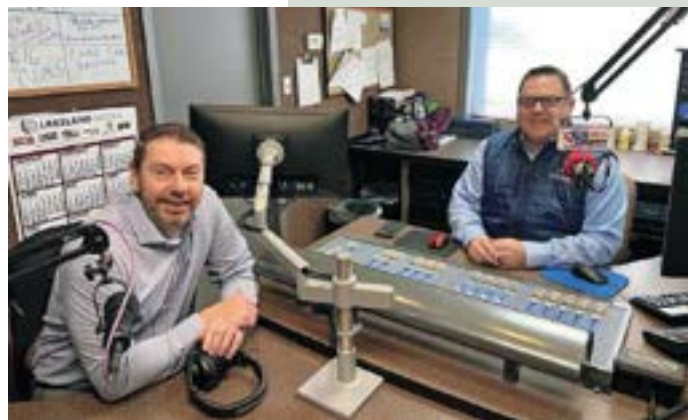
The Chamber's website serves as an informational portal to the Willmar Lakes Area community. As a member you receive a free **online business directory listing**. Chamber members may increase their exposure by selecting additional listing categories at no extra cost.

The Chamber publishes a monthly **newsletter** in the West Central Tribune which highlights upcoming events, membership milestones, and other business news. It also produces a **weekly e-newsletter** that is distributed to over 1,500 subscribers! The e-newsletter serves as an update on the business community and Chamber news. Jobs posted on the **online job board** are also featured at no cost. There are also opportunities for **email marketing**.

Every year the Chamber publishes a magazine highlighting the events of the past year and goals for the year ahead. There are opportunities for member businesses to advertise in this publication.

Every Thursday, Chamber President James Miller talks with a member of the Willmar Lakes Area business community about their business and issues that are important to them on KWLM - 1340 AM and 96.3 FM. **Chamber Chats** are available to members on a first come first served basis at no cost. Recordings are also available on Spotify.

The Chamber hosts many events in which **sponsors** are needed. These sponsors are included in signage for the event, along with any print advertising and web presence. Sponsored events include: Chamber Community Leadership Celebration, Student Job Fair & Career Expo, Aggie Open, Golf Classic, Fifth Grade Ag Tours, Chamber Connections, and Business After Hours.



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ADVOCACY

Advocacy at the Heart of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber

The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber has long stood as a pillar of advocacy, championing the interests of businesses within Kandiyohi County and extending its influence through state and national platforms. Through a diverse array of initiatives and collaborations, the Chamber has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to fostering a thriving business environment.

Local Initiatives:

Strengthening Community Bonds

At the core of the Chamber's advocacy efforts is the Public Policy Committee, dedicated to being a proactive voice for the business community on governmental issues. This committee facilitates communication between government entities and businesses, ensuring that members are informed and represented.

Their mission includes educating members on public policy impacts, supporting legislative priorities, organizing legislative breakfasts, town hall discussions, and candidate forums to engage the community in the democratic process.

Complementing this, the Diplomats Committee focuses on membership development and retention. By promoting programs that add value



to members, they work diligently to understand and meet the evolving needs of businesses, reinforcing the Chamber's role as a supportive and responsive organization.

The Leadership Perspectives program exemplifies the Chamber's dedication to nurturing informed and dynamic leaders. Established in 1992, this program immerses participants in critical regional issues, fostering a network of individuals equipped to drive positive change. Topics covered range from government and media relations to health, human services, and volunteerism, ensuring a holistic understanding of the community's needs.

Collaborative Efforts: Amplifying Advocacy

The Chamber's influence extends beyond local initiatives through strategic collaborations with state and national organizations. Working closely with the Minnesota Chamber and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber ensures that the concerns and aspirations of local businesses are heard and addressed at higher levels. These partnerships amplify advocacy efforts, providing members with a broader platform and more robust resources.

Looking Ahead: A Continued Commitment to Advocacy

As the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber continues to evolve, its focus on advocacy remains steadfast. By nurturing local leadership, fostering strategic collaborations, and engaging with the community through various media channels, the Chamber ensures that the voices of Kandiyohi County businesses are heard and valued. This approach not only strengthens the local economy but also enriches the fabric of the community, paving the way for a prosperous future for all.



For more information on the Chamber's programs and initiatives, visit willmarareachamber.com.

FIRST DOLLARS

First Dollars are an opportunity for the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Committee to welcome new businesses to the Willmar Lakes area and thank them for locating their business here.

Follow the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce on social media to view pictures

of the latest events. If you are a new business owner or would like to nominate someone to receive a First Dollar presentation, please contact the Chamber. First Dollars are a complimentary service provided by the Chamber and are available to members and non-members.



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REDEFINING REAL ESTATE:

The Enduring Impact of New London Real Estate

Real estate is more than just buying and selling properties - membership investment is about trust, relationships, and the communities we call home. In New London, Minnesota, one firm has made it its mission to go beyond transactions, providing an unparalleled experience for buyers and sellers alike.

New London Real Estate is not just a business; it is a cornerstone of the community, dedicated to guiding clients through one of the most significant financial and emotional decisions of their lives. Under the leadership of Kelly Baeth, the firm has built a reputation for integrity, expertise, and personalized service, making it a trusted name in the industry.

A Unique Path to Real Estate

Kelly's journey into real estate was unconventional but deeply intentional. A native of New London, he initially pursued a career in elementary education, teaching for eight years before transitioning into real estate. Though the industries differ, the core principles of education -



guidance, patience, and the ability to simplify complex processes - have significantly influenced his approach to real estate.

"As an educator, I was responsible for guiding students through learning processes. In real estate, I do the same, but with buyers and sellers," Baeth explains. "It's about ensuring clients are informed, prepared, and confident in their decisions."

Baeth's father, a retired banker, encouraged him to explore real estate. What began as a potential short-term endeavor soon became a lifelong passion. "I never looked back," Kelly reflects. "Real estate offered the flexibility, challenge, and human connection I was searching for."

Cultivating Trust and Relationships

Real estate transactions are inherently emotional. Selling a home can mean parting with decades of memories, while buying one represents the start of a new chapter. Understanding the

emotional complexities involved is a core tenet of New London Real Estate's philosophy.

"I don't just view myself as a real estate agent," Baeth states. "At times, I take on the role of counselor, negotiator, and advocate. Every sale has a story, and our role is to ensure that process is as seamless and stress-free as possible."

A key challenge in real estate is pricing. Emotional attachment often leads homeowners to overestimate their property's market value. New London Real Estate navigates this challenge with transparency and data-driven insights. "By presenting market statistics and comparable sales, we help sellers understand the true value of their property," Baeth explains. "It's about setting realistic expectations and ensuring informed decisions."

The Evolution of Real Estate Marketing

The digital era has transformed real estate marketing. Today, a home's

first showing is not in person - it is online. Recognizing this shift, New London Real Estate prioritizes high-quality digital marketing strategies that enhance visibility and engagement.

Jayne Sczublewski, a marketing expert and realtor on the team, spearheads the company's branding initiatives. "Every home has a story, and our job is to tell it compellingly," she says. "Through high-resolution photography, virtual tours, and strategic social media campaigns, we ensure that each property is showcased at its best."

Jayne's transition into real estate was fueled by her passion for design, storytelling, and client engagement. "I've always loved homes and helping people," she shares. "Real estate allows me to merge my expertise in marketing with my enthusiasm for connecting buyers with their ideal properties."

Personalized Guidance for Buyers and Sellers
For prospective buyers, New London Real Estate employs a



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structured yet flexible approach. “We encourage clients to distinguish between their ‘needs list’ and their ‘wish list,’” Baeth explains. “Real estate is about compromise, and setting expectations from the outset is essential.”

During property viewings, Kelly and the team encourage buyers to focus on the home’s feel and suitability while he assesses structural integrity and potential concerns. “I handle identifying any red flags, so buyers can concentrate on envisioning their future in the space,” he says.

Sellers, on the other hand, receive tailored guidance to prepare



their homes for market. The team collaborates with industry experts, such as interior designer and master stager Kathie Linder, to ensure optimal presentation. “The first impression is crucial,” Jayme emphasizes. “Buyers form opinions based on online images, so we invest in ensuring that listings are visually compelling.”

A Community-Centric Approach
 What distinguishes New London Real Estate is its unwavering commitment to the community. “We are not in this business for quick transactions,” Baeth asserts. “Our goal is to build long-term relationships, earn trust, and establish a legacy of excellence.” This philosophy has contributed to the firm’s sustained growth and reputation for integrity, expertise, and personalized service. By blending traditional values with modern innovation, New London Real Estate continues to set a high standard in the industry.

Community is just one of the reasons New London Real Estate joined the Chamber. Investing in the Chamber allows the team



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to stay connected with fellow business owners across the county. According to Jayme, “We love the opportunities to network, volunteer, and give back. All of those things are values of our team, and we appreciate how hard our Willmar Lakes Area Chamber works to advocate and support on our behalf!”

*Connect with
New London Real Estate*

For individuals considering buying or selling a home, the team at New London Real Estate encourages proactive engagement. “Starting the conversation early ensures a smooth and informed process,” Jayme advises.

Follow New London Real Estate on Facebook and Instagram for market insights and property listings. Visit their website at newlondonrealestateinc.com, or contact them at (320) 354-5494 to begin your real estate journey with a team that prioritizes trust, excellence, and community.



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WHAT IS BEN? Business Education Network



Mission:

To develop our community's future workforce by providing students with a deeper understanding of career opportunities and aligning skills with current workforce needs; engaging employers directly with students, education and training providers; and better aligning programs and curriculum to the realities of the West Central MN and overall MN economy.

Classroom to Career:

A wide variety of business professionals visit classes across Kandiyohi County to engage with students and help them

understand that through the power of education and personal choices, they are in control of their future. Presenters help students realize the many job opportunities that exist - with or without a college degree - right here in the Willmar Lakes Area.

Zero Hour:

The Willmar High School starts every Wednesday with Zero Hour. This time is intended for students to catch up on school work. It also gives the Business Education Network an opportunity to have one or two businesses set up

tables in the commons area to engage with students. These are not hiring fairs but time spent building relationships to grow our workforce.

Student Job Fair & Career Expo:

A workforce development program that brings together area employers with high school students in an interactive environment that allows them an opportunity to inform students about their company or organization. Businesses are able to recruit for full-time or part-time jobs and internships while identifying long-term prospects.



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Kandiyohi County Fair	Lake Region Bank - Sunburg	Magnifi Financial Loan Services	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Kandiyohi County Farm Bureau Federation	Lake Region Bank - Willmar	Magnum Companies	Minnesota Gun Class
Kandiyohi County Food Shelf	Lake Region Financial Services	Magnuson Sheet Metal, Inc.	Minnesota Reds Whites and Brews Inc.
Kandiyohi County Housing & Redevelopment Authority	Lake Region Insurance	Mainstream Boutique	MinnWest Technology Campus
Kandiyohi Power Cooperative	Lakeland Media	Marco	Money Matters Accounting Solutions
KCEO (Kandiyohi Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities)	Lakes Area Dental Ltd.	Marcus Construction	Motor Sports of Willmar
Ken Warner	Lakeview Inn	Matheson Tri-Gas, Inc.	Myron & Myra Behm
Kensington Bank	Lange Agricultural Systems	Matson Ins. Agency, LLC	Nationwide Glass of Willmar, Inc.
Kent's Auto Body, Inc	Les Heitke	Max's on The Green	Nesbit Agencies
Koronis Motors / Paynesville Chevrolet Buick	Les Schwab Tire Center	McKale's Catering, LLC	New London Real Estate
KRA Speedway	Life Link III	McMillan's Restaurant	New London-Spicer Schools
	Life-Science Innovations, LLC	Medical Supplies Inc/ TruCare Pharmacy	Next Nest Hatching
	Little Crow Golf Resort	Mel's 7-71 Corner Stop & Liquor	Nordic Brick and Fireplace
	Little Crow Resort and Conference	Michael Gardner DDS	
	Little Crow Ski Team	Mid-MN Development Commission	
	Loffler Companies, Inc.		

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Northern Radiator	RELCO Industrial Development LCC	State Farm Insurance - Radel	Waechter & Gustafson
Northern Services	RELCO, a Kovalus Company	Sterling Water Culligan	Walmart
Nova-Tech Engineering	Rendezvous LLC	Steve Gardner	Walt's Soft Cloth Car Wash
Oasis Aero, Inc.	Representative Dave Baker	StoreX Self Storage	Waste Management
OBrien's Power Washing LLC	Restorative Sleep Solutions	Subway 1st Street	Wayne Nelson
On the Run Promotions	Rice & Associates LLC	Subway East Side	West Central Association of Realtors
Oxygen Service Company	Rick's Cycling & Sports Center, Inc.	Suite Liv'n	West Central Dental
Paffrath & Son Jewelers	Ridgewater College	Summit Carbon Solutions	West Central Industries
Palmer Bus Service	Ridgewater College Foundation	Super 8 by Wyndham Willmar	West Central Interpreting & Consulting Services, LLC.
Papa Murphy's	Riley School Bus LLC	Surestay Hotel by Best Western Spicer	West Central MN CEO
Pat Solheid	Riverview LLP - Meadow Star Dairy	Taatjes Financial Group	West Central Roofing Contractors, Inc
Patrick O'Rourke	Ross Magnuson	Ted L. Anderson DDS	West Central Sanitation
Perkins Lumber Company, Inc.	Ruff and Co.	Ten Oaks Design Studio	West Central Steel
Perry Custom Designs LLC	Ruff's Wings & Sports Bar	TerWisscha Architecture and Construction	West Central Technology
Peterson Brothers Funeral Home	Rule Tire and Auto	The Barn Theatre	West Central Tribune
Pete's Surplus Inc	Runnings	The Fortress	West Central Trophies
PFF	Russ & Sandi Bennett	The Goodness Coffee House	Westberg Eischens, PLLP
PHP Agency	Ryan Buer Electric	The Oaks at Eagle Creek	Westside Market & Liquors
Pioneer Heritage Insurance	Safe Avenues	The Salvation Army	Westwood Cafe'
Pioneer PBS	SafeAssure	The Village, Inc.	Whitcomb Brothers Grain Systems, Inc.
Pizza Ranch	Samah Home Health Care LLC	Thrifty White Pharmacy	Willmar Area Community Foundation
Planned Parenthood of MN, ND and SD	Sand Electric Inc	Tidal Wave Auto Spa	Willmar Bus Service
Point Lake Properties	Schueler Farms Inc	Torkelson's Lock Service	Willmar Community Education
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Public Affairs Company	Somerset Properties	United Way of West Central Minnesota	Willmar Public Schools
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Rambow	Southwest West Central Service Cooperative	Vista Prairie at Copperleaf Senior Living	Wireless World
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Rebel Campers, Inc.	State Farm Insurance - Holwerda		Youth for Christ
			Ziegler Ag Equipment
			Ziegler CAT

This listing of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce membership was published in good faith and is current as of March 18, 2025. If your business was missed, please contact the Chamber.

CHAMBER LEADERSHIP

The Chamber staff is available Monday through Friday to assist our investors and the general public interested in finding out more information about business and resources in the Willmar Lakes Area.

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2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber Board of Directors is comprised of prominent business owners and professionals from across Kandiyohi County. They play a vital role in shaping the direction of our organization by leading various committees and initiatives. Serving on the Board is a rewarding three-year commitment that allows members to make a lasting impact on the growth and success of our organization and region.

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BOARD MEMBERS

Tayla Boersma (MinnWest Technology Campus), Caroline Chan (Kandiyohi County), Jean Geselius (CDS), Dan Jacobs (Marcus Construction), Tracy Lundy (Lake Region Bank), Jaime Martinez (CentraCare), Matt Schrupp (Jennie-O), Brittany VanDerBill (B. VanDerBill Consulting LLC)



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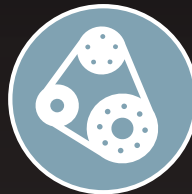
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