



CHAMBER CHAT

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



Thursday mornings on Open Mic, Chamber President/CEO James Miller hosts Chamber Chat. Recordings are available on KWLM's website or on Spotify. CDS, Westberg Eischens, Reading Therapy Center, Allstate, and Vinna Human Resources were featured this month.

A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS

We're Moving!



EXPLORE
WILLMAR LAKES AREA



Exciting changes are on the horizon — the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber and Explore Willmar Lakes Area are relocating to the MinnWest Technology Campus! Our new home will be a modern hub designed for collaboration, training, and community connection. The expanded space will feature enhanced technology and larger meeting areas, allowing us to better serve local businesses, partners, and visitors in fresh and innovative ways. To bring this vision to life, we've launched a \$100,000 capital campaign to support the build-out of the new space. If you'd like to be part of this exciting next chapter, we'd love to connect with you. Stay tuned — more details and an open house date will be announced soon!

CHAMBER CONNECTIONS

October 31



November 7



November 14



November 21



Join us Friday mornings from 7:30–8:30 at rotating member locations! Introduce yourself, share updates, and connect with fellow professionals. Each week wraps up with a host business spotlight and door prize drawing — don't forget your business card and \$1 for a chance to win! Learn more at willmarareachamber.com/chamber-connections

NEW MEMBER WELCOME



THE POWER OF PERSONAL BRANDING



neXt hosted a full-house at Life-Science Innovations for the Power of Personal Branding Lunch + Learn. Marketing expert panelists Grace Adams and MaryElin Macht of Lakeland Media, Jayme Sczublewski of New London Real Estate, and Julia Contreras of JR Business Solutions inspired young professionals to take charge of their personal brands, grow their networks, and elevate their careers.

RIBBON CUTTINGS

Glacial Lakes State Trailhead



While you are out and about enjoying the natural beauty of our region, make sure to check out the exciting updates at the Glacial Lakes State Trailhead in northeast Willmar located east of the Willmar Civic Center on Civic Center Drive. What's new: shelter and picnic tables, an expanded parking lot, updated landscaping, and a self-contained Green Flush Restroom. The trailhead also connects to the Willmar Trail and Eagle Lake Trail.

Lofts on 7th



United Community Action Partnership, along with Marcus Construction, Northstar Systembuilt, and city and county officials, hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Lofts on 7th on October 24. The new emergency shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness was made possible through a \$4.4 million grant from the State of Minnesota's Emergency Shelter Facilities Capital Funding program, which supported the construction of a four-plex and an eight-plex. The event took place one year and one day after the project's groundbreaking in 2024.

Kitchen Fair - Grand Re-Opening



Kitchen Fair has proudly served Central Minnesota for over 40 years. Family-owned and locally operated in Downtown Willmar, the team specializes in custom cabinetry, countertops, and beautiful home design. From new builds to remodels, their certified designers make every project seamless — offering free estimates, personalized design services, and delivery. They're dedicated to helping homeowners create the spaces of their dreams.

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES



Originally founded and headquartered in Marshall, MN, Runnings operates 91 stores across 12 states. Throughout decades of growth and change, one thing has remained constant—the company's unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction. Each Runnings location offers thousands of dependable everyday essentials at great value, supported by knowledgeable team members who provide expert advice and friendly, hometown service. Runnings takes pride in being the trusted home, farm, and outdoor store, with its Willmar location recognized as the largest Runnings store in Minnesota, employing 71 dedicated team members.



Calvary Lutheran Church was organized in 1872 and dedicated its first facility in 1874 on the northeast corner of what is now First Street and Litchfield Avenue in Willmar. As the congregation grew, the church moved to its current location, where a new building was constructed in 1903. Throughout its history, Calvary has remained dedicated to sharing God's love and the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ.



For 16 years, Ryan Buer Electric has been a trusted name in residential, commercial, and agricultural electrical work, earning a reputation for quality service and reliability. Ryan takes pride in serving the local community and believes strongly in the power of supporting local business — one of the many reasons he's proud to be a member of the Chamber.



Stewards Planning Group is an independent tax-intelligent financial planning firm located in Willmar that serves values-driven clients across the country. Founded by President and CEO Ben Taatjes, CKA®, the firm has long been driven by a desire to help clients steward their wealth (in all its forms) to maximize the experiences and impact of their lives. With a proprietary process designed to uncover the best use of clients' time, talent and treasure, the firm works with pre-retirees, retirees, individuals, and families, as well as business owners, to plan for purpose-driven use of their wealth today, in retirement and for generations to come.



Kris Gulbrandsen

Kris Gulbrandsen marks two milestones this year—five years of retirement and five years of dedicated involvement with the Chamber. Following her retirement as Occupational Medicine Manager at Affiliated Community Medical Centers (ACMC), Kris has continued to invest her time and energy into the community. Through her involvement as a Chamber Ambassador, member of the Special Events / Rock the Dock Committee, and many other community organizations, Kris exemplifies what it means to lead with purpose and passion.

FIRST DOLLARS

K'nyaw Asian Market



K'nyaw Asian Market is a family-owned grocery store located in the former Subway on Highway 12 West in Willmar. The market offers a wide selection of authentic Asian groceries, fresh produce, and specialty ingredients that are hard to find in the area. With friendly service and a welcoming atmosphere, Agg Moo Thaw "Pen" and her family bring the flavors of Asia to the Willmar Lakes Area.

Willmar Junk Removal



Willmar Junk Removal is a local, family-owned junk removal business. Cody and Nathalie Johnson take pride in their honest work, fair prices, and fast service. Whether it's a single item or a full cleanout, Cody's ready to make junk disappear—so you don't have to lift a finger—turning your piles into smiles!