

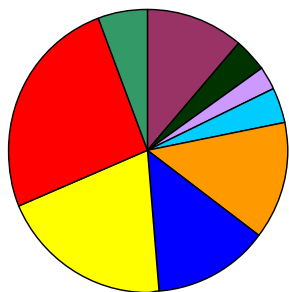
2016 Year End Review



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

To Enhance the Economic Climate and Quality of Life in the Sauk Valley Area is the mission statement of the SVACC. Kris completed her 2nd full year as Executive Director as she continued to learn about chamber operations, she was able to focus more on the work of the chamber; giving time and attention to the membership development and retention, committees, events, and community collaborations. Brenda Van Horn continues as the office manager and financial specialist. It is due to her organizational skills, financial background, and great personality that the Chamber office operates effectively and efficiently. In March, Melissa Vlakancic was hired part time as the Marketing and Advertising Manager. Our Website and Newsletter layout and content have strengthened and social media presence-promoting our chamber members and events has increased greatly under Melissa's direction.

Membership Breakdown by Sector



- Insurance & Financial
- Agriculture
- Education
- Manufacturing
- Not For Profit
- Other
- Retail/Restaurant
- Service Businesses
- Healthcare

Led by a 15 member board of directors of local business men and women, the SVACC worked diligently to continue to address the mission of the chamber. This year we held 5 BBB, 4 BAH, 28 Ribbon Cuttings, and presented 9 Customer Service Awards. There were 4 signature events in 2016 including the SVACC Annual Dinner, the 50th Annual Golf Outing, the 32nd Annual Steak Fry in the Country, and the 2016 Chamber Week celebration. These events brought together over 650 people from our member businesses and organizations. Other events included 3 PWN workshops with a total of 134 persons attending, and 2 Lunch & Learn Events with 56 people attending. 166 member companies participated in events.

Committee Highlights

Ambassadors Committee: The Ambassadors committee of the SVACC continued to be actively engaged in promoting the Sauk Valley Area. Our Ambassador group consists of 20 volunteers from our member businesses or organizations who act as the public relations arm of the chamber. In addition to attending Ribbon Cuttings, CSA's, BBB's and BAH's, Ambassadors connect with new members to welcome them to the chamber and answer any questions they may have. They also help in connecting with members who are celebrating an anniversary with the chamber to thank them for their membership as we work to improve retention of our active members.

Agribusiness Committee: This year, the Agribusiness committee held the 32nd Annual Steak Fry in the Country with 253 people attending. This event brings together the Ag Community to raise funds to support Ag Scholarships. In 2016, 5 scholarships of \$1500.00 each were given to 5 graduating seniors pursuing a degree in ag-related fields. In addition, donations were made to Whiteside County 4-H and Ag in the Classroom. Several members of the Ag Committee participated on an Ag Advisory board for Sauk Valley Community College as they worked to bring an Ag Curriculum back to SVACC for fall 2017 semester. In addition, the Ag Committee met with the SHS FFA Club and made a donation to the club to assist with member FFA dues.

Hispanic Business Leaders Committee: The committee continued to organize and implement the 64th Annual Fiesta Days Parade which was held on September 10th, 2016. There were 86 parade entries and it is estimated that over 2,000 people watched the parade. HBLC revised its mission statement and created an action plan for 2017.

Professional Women's Network: PWN hosted 3 workshops in 2016 including a workshop on preventing Identity Theft sponsored by the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, a Speed Networking event, and a presentation by Minda Harts; former SHS graduate and entrepreneur. Attendance at these events totaled 134 participants. PWN is planning several workshops for 2017.

Sights and Sounds Committee: The committee worked with Sterling Main Street to plan Seasonal Sights and Sounds 2016. The Chamber was in charge of "Santa's Workshop" at Dale Park and 11 youth groups/service clubs/members of the SVACC were present with games and activities for children. There was a variety of music and entertainment throughout downtown, a vendor event at Champs Banquet Hall, lighting of the tree at Sterling Theatre, and fireworks. The chamber mobile provided rides around town for no charge.

Education Committee: The Education committee continued to grow as more of our members from education, not for profit, and the business community began attending the meetings. We have about 25 members participate in this committee. Our focus has been in two specific areas. 1) Being part of the conversation regarding workforce development in the Sauk Valley and helping to improve the connection between business and education. 2) Positive youth development and promoting the 40 developmental assets within all areas of the community. We have partnered with SVCC in developing and implementing the Sauk Valley Leadership Program. We continue to build our relationship with the CEO program as an investor, site visit location, as well as working with the students on the Annual Dinner.



Axis Seed Direct



Educators of Beauty



Annual Steak Fry in the Country



Homeowners Financial Group