

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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**IACCE 2019 Outstanding  
Chamber of the Year**

2019

# Annual Report



**Sauk Valley Area**  
chamber of commerce

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saukvalleyareachamber.com

## Our Mission:

To Enhance the Economic Climate and Quality of Life in the Sauk Valley Area.

### Strategic Priorities:

- Provide Value to Membership
- Strengthen the Local Community
- Enhance Community Leadership

### 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Amanda Baron ~Ward Murray Pace & Johnson
  - Lance Buser ~ Wal-Mart D.C. #7024
  - Jim Cesarek ~ RE/MAX Sauk Valley
  - Tim Determan~ Pinney Printing
- Brian Hawkins ~ Hawkins-Cassens Insurance
- Josh Johnson~Whiteside Area Career Center
  - Dave Knie ~ Knie Appliance and TV
  - Mike Loos ~ Edward Jones Investments
- Steve Nunez ~ Sauk Valley Community College
  - Sheila Martinez ~ US Bank
- Rebecca Munoz Ripley~YWCA of the Sauk Valley
  - Steve Munson ~ The Medicine Shoppe
  - Claudia Sauer ~ CGH Medical Center
  - Rick Turnroth ~ Turnroth Sign Company
  - Mary White ~ Community State Bank

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I want to thank you for investing in and supporting us throughout 2019. Thank you for participating in our committees, for volunteering, for hosting educators and students in our workforce development projects, for attending and sponsoring our events, and for being engaged in YOUR chamber. We continue to develop and participate in programs and opportunities that promote growth for the Sauk Valley. We have represented you, our members, in conversations regarding how to keep the Sauk Valley a thriving and vibrant area. The programs and services we provide are meant to help our members' businesses and organizations continue to be successful. We encourage the community to use local Chamber members when purchasing goods or services; and know that money spent locally is recycled back into the community in many ways. We exist to be a **catalyst** for business growth, a **convener** for leaders and influencers, and a **champion** stronger communities. We will continue to follow our strategic priorities and encourage you to partner with us to help move the Sauk Valley forward in 2020.

*Kris Noble*

2019 was another year for the record books for the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce. It began with being accredited as a 5 star organization by the US Chamber of Commerce and it ended with us being awarded the Outstanding Chamber of Commerce of the Year for the State of Illinois! As my term as President comes to an end, I would like to thank our board of directors and committees for donating their time and energy. I would also like to thank our exceptional staff for their tireless dedication. Last but not least I would like to thank each of our members for supporting this organization. Every accolade given to us is a tribute to the quality of our membership. Thanks again for all you do and let's make 2020 a great year!

Mike Loos, Board President

# Your Chamber: By the Numbers

**393 members representing employees in 23 cities**

**29 New Members in 2019**

**93% retention rate**

**8 Customer Service Awards Given to Members for outstanding service**

**35 Ribbon Cuttings Celebrating new members, grand openings, expansions and landmark occasions**

Membership Breakdown



## Networking and Building Relationships

- **9 Business After Hours and 1 Breakfast Before Business event hosted 404 members.**
- **Professional Women's Network, Lunch and Learn events, and breakfast workshops provided networking and educational opportunities for 230 members and guests.**
- **Signature Chamber Events- The 2019 Annual Dinner, Manufacturing Dinner, Golf Outing, Steak Fry in the Country and Chamber Week Celebration brought together over 956 community members .**

## Marketing and Communications

Marketing assistance for members

Website:  
45,238 page views  
15,587 New Users

Use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to promote members

Adblast sent to over 1037 emails

**Community Investment:**  
**\$22,500.00 given back; including:**

**\$13,750.00 in Scholarships**

**\$3,700.00 to education**

**\$5,000.00 to not for profit organizations/service clubs**

**\$100.00 in misc. donations**

# Your Chamber: Making It Happen

**Committees and Collaborations do "the work" of the chamber.**

**153 Individuals Volunteered on a Committee in 2019 and 243 people volunteered for Chamber Community Events.**



## Ambassadors

These are our members in **RED** that you see at our events! Ambassadors act as the public relations arm of the SVACC; giving their time and energy to attend ribbon cuttings, customer service awards, act as greeters at business after hours, assist with registration at events, call on new members to welcome them, and promote retention by contacting members on their anniversary month. It is truly an amazing group of volunteers!



## Agribusiness Committee

The Agribusiness committee is one of the chambers longest standing committees; with over 35 years of supporting the Agribusiness community in the Sauk Valley. In 2019 the Steak Fry in the Country served over 300 people and raised over \$14,000 to support Ag Education. Members of the Agribusiness committee also serve on the Sauk Valley Community College Ag Advisory Board.

## Education Committee

This committee continues to grow in members, as it provides a platform for Workforce Development Initiatives. Our members to make connections and develop strategies and action plans to bridge the gap between education and employment while providing real life experiences for career pathways exploration. This committee developed an Essential Skills Training that was piloted in fall 2019. Six businesses participated in the workshop and worked with high school students engaging in discussion and activities about the essential (soft skills) needed in the workforce. Through our involvement in the 60x25/Inspire MORE initiative, the CEO program, the MEIP MutliCraft program, and ROE #47 we continue to be committed to developing creative ways to create talent pipelines, create bridges between education and employers/business, and impact change for our future workforce. Through various collaborative projects, Chamber businesses and organizations gained exposure through providing tours, participating in discussions, and providing information on current workforce needs with local educators.



# Your Chamber: Making It Happen



## Golf Committee

The Annual SVACC Golf Outing was held on June 14th at Deer Valley Golf Course. 112 member enjoyed a great day of golf. This event, which has been around over 50 years, provides funds for general chamber operations and the the Charles Farnham Business Scholarship. The SVACC golf outing is a Chamber signature event!

## Hispanic Business Leaders Committee

HBLC members plan and implement the Annual Fiesta Day Parade; an event that celebrates the strong Hispanic History and Heritage of this community. HBLC also works with the local High School Spanish Clubs and SVCC to provide resources and support to their organizations. In the fall of 2019 HBLC began planning how to educate the community and promote the 2020 census.



## Professional Women's Network

PWN is a group that exists to provide resources, support, education, and networking for women. 2019 workshops included financial tips for women and a self defense demonstration. An evening networking event was also held. At each monthly meeting, a relevant topic is discussed to help women develop both professionally and personally.



## Manufacturing Dinner

As the first event was such a success, the chamber held the 2nd Annual Manufacturing Dinner in May 2019. This event validates that even though times have changed manufacturing still has a large presence in the area and manufacturing remains a primary contributor to the success of the Sauk Valley. The dinner celebrates the manufacturing industry, develops connections between our manufacturers and others in the business community, and promotes manufacturing as a viable career path to our students in the Sauk Valley. Through collaboration with Sauk Valley Community College Morrison Institute of Technology, the Whiteside Area Career Center, and local manufacturers, we will work to continue to develop strategies to promote manufacturing pathways.



# Your Chamber: Making It Happen

## Seasonal Sights and Sounds

Seasonal Sights and Sounds 2019 provided so much to do! Events included a Community Concert, A fun run Santa Dash for children, Downtown Christmas Walk, Santa's Workshop, Horse and Carriage Rides, and Fireworks! Partnering with Sterling Main Street and The City of Sterling, the chamber is proud to be part of this amazing community event.



**Collaboration and Partnerships-** It is through building relationships that communities will impact change. We exist to be the voice for your business/organization and worked on your behalf to be part of conversations relevant to business growth and issues impacting the Sauk Valley. Some of our local partners include Sterling Main Street, Greater Sterling Development Corporation, Sterling Today, The City of Sterling, The City of Rock Falls, Whiteside County Economic Development, Rock Falls Tourism, Sauk Valley Community College, Morrison Institute of Technology, Sterling Public Schools, Rock Falls School District 13, Newman Central Catholic High School, and CGH.

**Community Leadership-** Throughout 2019 we continued to be engaged in the Sauk Valley Leadership program; the 2019-2020 class includes 18 participants representing all areas off the Sauk Valley. This program is a collaborative effort with SVCC, Dixon Chamber of Commerce and Main Street and the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce.

**Critical Conversations...Taking Action** In 2018, partnering with Sterling Main Street, we worked to engage Millennials in conversations about how to keep the Sauk Valley vibrant and moving forward. In 2019 this group continued to meet and share ideas, discuss solutions, and take action to impact change. Several members formed a subcommittee and moved forward to bring a dog park to town. working with Sterling Park District; Dogwood Acres will be a great addition to the community. With a name change - now the **Keystone Group**- this group moves into 2020 with commitment, passion, and energy to partner with community leaders to address community issues!

**Legislative Advocacy-** This year we worked diligently to keep our members informed and engaged in legislative issues as the state, local, and national level. There were many legislative issues to be addressed and through our collaboration with the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, the United States Chamber of Commerce, and our local, state, and national legislators we provided opportunities for our members to learn and to share about legislative issues of concern to them. Several legislative update workshops were held throughout the year and Representative McCombie participated in a downtown walking tour to visit with downtown merchants.

SVACC Staff

Brandi Langner ~ Office Manager and Financial Specialist  
Dallas Knack ~ Marketing and Advertising Coordinator