



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED



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Partnering for Success

JANUARY 2022

The SVACC and the 2022 CEO West Class invite you to the:
Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and Meeting

Hollywood Glitz & Glamour

Thursday, January 27, 2022

Red Carpet Location:
Days Inn Rock Falls
2105 1st Ave., Rock Falls

Social hour: 5:30pm
Dinner: 6:00pm
\$30.00/person



*Awards to be presented:
8th Annual SVACC Chamber Champion
The Lavonne Colloton Ambassador of the Year*

Register by January 21
online at <https://bit.ly/3IPTpZX>
or call 815-625-2400

Attire: Whatever makes you feel glamorous!

IDPH/WCHD recommended Health and
Safety Guidelines will be followed




When you're **ready** for a
vaccine we're here for you.
(Safe for pregnant & breastfeeding women.)

CGH MEDICAL CENTER
MAIN CLINIC

Open Monday - Friday
Call (815) 632-5298 to make an appointment
Learn more at: www.cghmc.com/vaccine

GET VACCINATED

January Meetings

January 5 Executive Board
January 13 Ambassadors
January 14 HBLC
January 11 Board
January 19 PWN
January 18 Ag

Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Directors & Staff

Executive Committee

President: Lance Buser
First Vice President: Sheila Martinez
Second Vice President: Jon Mandrell
Treasurer: Pam Fluck
Past President: Mike Loos

Board of Directors

Term Ends January 31, 2022

Geoff Wright, CGH Medical Center
Rebecca Munoz-Ripley, YWCA of the Sauk Valley
Josh Johnson, Whiteside Area Career Center
Dr. Jon Mandrell, Sauk Valley Community College
Alejandro Rivera, Re/Max Sauk Valley

Term Ends January 31, 2023

Mike Loos, Edward Jones Investments
Sheila Martinez, U.S. Bank
Rick Turnroth, Turnroth Sign Company
Pam Fluck, Sauk Valley Bank

Term Ends January 31, 2024

Dave Knie, Knie Appliance & TV
Tim Determan, Pinney Printing
Lance Buser, Wal-Mart DC #7024
Ryan Olson, Ward Murray Pace & Johnson
Amy Williamson, Holiday Inn Express & Suites
Steve Munson, Retired, The Medicine Shoppe

Staff

Executive Director—Kris Noble
Marketing Coordinator— Dallas Knack
Financial Specialist/Office Manager—Bailey Dorner

A Message from the Director

Happy NEW year; NEW being the key word. 2021 was interesting to say the least, with many challenges and also some great opportunities. The word I will choose to use when thinking of 2021 is resilience. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact our lives in so many ways our chamber members and the Sauk Valley community showed amazing resilience. There was, and probably will continue to be, much uncertainty and frustration as we continue address the impact of this pandemic. Yet, as I visited with many of you, as employers, employees, customers, and consumers, there is a true sense of resiliency. Resiliency is defined as the ability to withstand or recover from difficult conditions. All of our industries- manufacturing, health care, education, retail, restaurants, agriculture, banking, professional services, not-for-profits have shown grit and a determination to bounce back in order to continue to serve the people of the Sauk Valley. For this, I thank you.

The SVACC believes it is so important to celebrate people, businesses, or groups that have impacted change in 2021. One way to do this is through the SVACC Chamber Champion award. Please visit our website (or click [here](#)) for more information and to send in a nomination. Nominations are taken until January 7, 2022.

Also, throughout 2022 we will continue to take nominations monthly for our SVACC Customer Service Award. The CSA has been a part of the SVACC for many years and is another way in which we can celebrate our members and honor the service they provide. To nominate any chamber member throughout the year, please email knoble@saukvalleyareachamber.com or call 815-625-2400. I would like to thank the sponsors of the 2022 CSA Award: Sauk Valley Bank, Edward Jones-Nick Lareau, Hawkins -Cassens Insurance, and McFalls, Berge and Associates.



Investor Update January 2022

NEW INVESTORS

Anahata and Soul
208 E 4th St Sterling
815-677-2034

Davis Gisi
10930 Hoover Rd Rockfalls
815-564-2081

Campos Construction
1201 12th St Rockford
815-394-1414

Fringe Co Salon&Western Boutique
315 1st Ave Sterling
815-718-2854

Brother Daryl's
406 Ave G Sterling
815-590-8513

MEMBER RENEWALS

1st Gateway Credit Union
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Compeer Financial
Cora Physical Therapy Sauk Valley
Corner Gallery
Country Ins. & Financial Svcs.
Culligan Water of Dixon
Holiday Inn Express & Suites
James S. Ferris, DDS, PC

Large Marge BBQ
Moments Leadership
Nelsen Insurance
Ready Nation Illinois
Regency Care of Sterling
Scholl Insurance Agency, Inc.
Select Employees Credit Union
Sterling Main Street
Thompson Truck & Trailer

Turnroth Sign Company, Inc.
US Bank
Wal-Mart D.C. #7024
WQAD

We would like to give special recognition to the following groups who provide extra support to the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce. This extra effort and support is truly appreciated. If you have the opportunity to express your sincere appreciation to these members, please do so!

Investing over \$1000 in Dues

CGH Medical Center
Community State Bank
Farmers National Bank - Morrison
Midland States Bank
Sauk Valley Bank
Select Employees Credit Union
Sterling Federal Bank
US Bank
Wahl Clipper Corp.
Wal-Mart DC #7024
Ward, Murray, Pace & Johnson

150% Club

Allstate Insurance Agency	LK Design Source
Altran Magnetics	Loescher HVAC
Amazing Grace of Sterling	Mattox Insurance Agency
Green Bee Energy Efficiency	Moore Monument & Granite Co
Happy Tails Humane Society	Select Employees Credit Union
Helm Civil	Smoked on 3rd
Hill's Electric Motor Service, Inc.	Sterling Rock Falls Child Care
Illinois American Water	Sterling Township
James S Ferris, DDS, PC	The Spa At Central Park
Johnson Oil Company	United Craftsmen, Ltd.
Lance's Plumbing	

110% Club

1st Gateway Credit Union	Marv Lofgren & Sons Contractors	Showplace Antiques & Treasures
Bollman Auto Center	Mertes & Mertes	Simply Hair Studios
Cassens Drainage	Mike Sprague State Farm	St. Mary's School
Central Heating & Cooling	New Millenium Directories	St. Vincent DePaul
Central Park Yoga	Reitzel Roofing Company	Stahr Media
Compeer Financial	Rock River Lumber & Grain	Sterling Chevrolet
Dennis Electric of Tampico, Inc	Rock River Ready Mix	Sterling Commercial Roofing
Farmer's National Bank	Rosemeyer Management Group	Sterling Optimist Club
Folsom's Bakery	Sauk Valley Food Bank	Steve Munson
Hawkins-Cassens Insurance, LLC	Scholl Insurance Agency	The Cornerstone Agency, Inc.
Imprintable Memories	Sedona Staffing	Vintage Cousins Emporium
Kelly's Restaurant	Servicemaster	Wendler Engineering Services, Inc.
Kiwanis Club of Sterling	Shelly Dambman CPA	Willy's Restaurant
	Sherwin Williams Company	

Chamber Ambassadors

Allie Johnston – University of Illinois Extension
Amy Tessman – Frary Lumber
Angie Delhotal— Sauk Valley College Foundation
Cassandra Salmon – Sauk Valley Bank
Chandra Meyer – Re/Max Sauk Valley
Christina Bystry – House in the Country
Janell Loos – Heritage Woods
Jennifer Alvarez – Surf Broadband
Jon Byar – Midland States Bank
Justin Wiggins – Wiggins Computing, LLC

Karen Voss – Morningside of Sterling
Mary White – Community State Bank
Melissa Ryan—Rock River Hospice & Home
Nicole Bollman - CGH Medical Center
Pam Fluck – Sauk Valley Bank
Roy Dern – State Farm
Sheila Martinez – U.S. Bank
Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation
Skip Dettman—LSSI

Ambassador Spotlight — Jennifer Alvarez

I currently work with Surf Broadband bringing fiber internet connectivity to my hometowns and surrounding areas. I am a Sterling native and currently still reside in the Sauk Valley Area with my family. I have twelve years in telecom, previously having to commute to Rockford or Dekalb to reach my office. I joined Surf Broadband to be able to be more involved with the community I live in. I hope to provide the same opportunity to others in the area. Not only to commercial businesses but bringing fiber to the home as well. As we all know, internet connectivity has become essential in our day to day lives.



I work in fiber development and Business to Business sales, I also take part in many of the community events. Community involvement is one thing that stood out with Surf Broadband. You have probably seen me at one of our many booths in the Sauk Valley Area. I have twelve years in telecom, previously working for Frontier Communications and Comcast. I use my experience in the sales field and background in construction development to bring fiber internet to rural underserved areas.

Another event that I am part of is Touchdown for Tata's. For those of you that don't know what it is, it is an all girls flag football tournament. Organized to raise funds for local cancer treatment facilities here in the Sauk Valley Area. This year we were able to raise \$12,432.00, with the help of other local businesses and people committed to the cause. All the funds raised stayed right here in our community and went to organizations such as: CGH Foundation, Home of Hope, Rock River Hospice, Serenity House, Believe Foundation, American Cancer Society, Gaffey, and Team Jess. A big thank you to Rashaad Lane, Mandy Hinkey and Sarina Venier for organizing this event each year.

On December 1st, the Sauk Valley Leadership Program cohorts met with Steve Nunez, President of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, to continue the conversation about strategic planning, and both mission and vision statements. December's panel discussion included Tom Demmer, Illinois State Representative; Li Arellano, Mayor of Dixon; and Kaitlyn Ekquist, City of Sterling Alderperson-At-Large. After a short activity to highlight, review, and discuss past class content, we enjoyed a delicious lunch from Sophie's Cafe.



2021 Sights & Sounds

December 3 | Downtown Sterling

A big thank you to the sponsors that made it possible: CGH Medical Center, Sterling Rock Falls Community Trust, Sterling Federal Bank, ComEd, Surf Broadband, Schreiber Auto Family, Illinois American Water, Rock Falls Tourism, SBM, Select Employees Credit Union, Johnson Oil Co., Showplace Antiques & Treasures, Midland States Bank, Willet Hofmann & Associates, and CIVIL Constructors (Helm Group).



Member Spotlight

Thompson Truck & Trailer is a full-service commercial truck dealership serving customers in 6 locations across Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois. We are an authorized International and Isuzu dealer and are proud to carry a wide selection of new and pre-owned inventory. When you're ready to invest in a truck, our friendly and knowledgeable sales, service, and parts departments are prepared to make sure your experience is outstanding, from assisting while you're making your choice to ongoing maintenance and customization. Thompson is equipped to handle ALL your truck needs – from **sales and leasing**, to **parts and service, body shop and paint booth**, and **tire and retread** options.

Thompson has been family owned and operated for nearly 25 years, and those family values are demonstrated every day with our commitment to customer service and strong customer relationships. We reward and value honesty, integrity, and hard work within our high-performance workforce of more than 200 people.

Thompson by the Numbers:

- 24 - Number of years Thompson has been family-owned and operated
- 6 - Number of locations across Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois
- 3 - Tire & Retread locations across Eastern Iowa
- 77 - Total number of service bays across all locations
- 11 - State of the art body shop bays in Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- 126 - Foot long paint booth - the largest in the state!
- 140 - Years of combined body shop experience
- 9 - Average years of experience per diesel technician
- 4 - Million dollars of stocked parts inventory
- 76 - Trucks in the Thompson Idealease fleet



Congratulations to Shoe Sensation for receiving the Customer Service Award!

They were nominated for their excellent customer service and courteous staff!

4311 E. Lincolnway, Sterling.
224-765-4160

CSA Sponsored by:



Written by: Molly Riffle—Morrison High School

Happy Holidays everyone! CEO class has definitely been a huge blessing in my life. We have had many ups and downs especially during the holidays. The Holiday bakery was a success, although we did have many obstacles that we are still currently overcoming. That is okay because overcoming difficulties is still a very important lesson to learn.

There were many presenters that helped me learn valuable lessons. Matt Prescott is an amazing person who helped us learn balance and how to adapt to change. He also said that your community is very important and you need your community. Building a sense of community with your peers gives you confidence and a place of security. In the business world your community is your number one asset to making your business successful. They will support you, and everything you believe in. Matt Prescott also said “You succeed because of your team, you fail because of you.” If you fail you only have yourself to blame. When he said this it really stuck with me. I often find myself blaming other people for my failures. I am a huge procrastinator and when I get overwhelmed at the last minute I start to get frustrated with my family because they didn't help me. I know that it is my fault and I should have done the task when it was asked of me. In CEO I really learned how to reflect on my choices and decide if it was a valuable choice.

Another inspiring speaker was AJ GaBaldon. AJ GaBaldon helped me learn to be patient. I often heard him say that good things take time to grow and you can not be successful without failure. AJ GaBaldon is a very positive guy who promoted positivity. Small changes can make a huge difference. People often will slowly give up on their goals. Giving up just doesn't happen, it takes time. AJ mentioned that if you make small positive choices, it can help you reach your goals. Also being aware that it can be the small things that make you succeed or fail. AJ also said “Everyone is great, you have so much potential for greatness.” I really felt worth it when he said this. Being kind to people is very important. Spreading a little kindness can make someone's day a little bit better and just might change their whole day around.

I have so much respect for all of our wonderful presenters who take time out of their day to come educate us. Personally, the presenters are my favorite part about being in CEO. I appreciate them all. CEO has been a great experience and helped me with personal growth. I am not the most verbal person but I do use the advice given to me every single day. We will all have difficulties but it's how you overcome them that makes you fail or succeed.

Written by: Matt Megli—Rock Falls High School

This past month our CEO class has been working hard at our class business. For our business, we decided to sell frozen Apple Pie and Country Cinnamon Swirl Bread for the holidays, so families can spend more time together and less time in the kitchen. It was a success; however, that did not come easily. The first thing we had to do was sell our product; we had to sell about 300 pies and 500 bread to reach our profit goal. One speaker that really helped us was Doug Gamm, the director of North American sales for OXBO. Before he came in, we were doubtful about whether or not we would reach our goal. However, Doug broke it down for us and made us realize that if we each sold a small amount each day, we could reach our goal easily. He also gave us the idea to go around to businesses in the area to sell to them, and think outside the box. We sold the goods and reached our goal, but then we needed to make everything. Throughout the year, we have been building skills such as team communication, leadership, and collaboration, and the need for these skills came to a climax on the day we decided to make everything. Our class needed to make 500 loaves and assemble 300 pies in one day. Many of us had little prior experience cooking in this way, and we all needed to work together. I, for one, did not realize beforehand how many loaves of bread 500 loaves actually is. It was much more work than any of us expected. Although there were some struggles, we were successful at the end of the day, and we learned some valuable lessons about working with a team composed of some very different personalities. By the way, if anyone ever needs help making a large batch of bread for a fundraiser, call me up. On second thought, don't. I have made enough bread to last a lifetime!

Workforce Development

Written by the Illinois Department of Labor



Illinois' Minimum Wage Set to Increase Again in 2022

On Jan. 1, 2022, the state's minimum wage increases to \$12 per hour. The rate will continue to increase on Jan. 1 each year until it hits \$15 per hour on Jan. 1, 2025.

In 2019, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed legislation into law providing a path to increase Illinois' minimum wage rate to \$15 per hour and \$9 for tipped workers by 2025. There have been three increases in the minimum wage since the legislation was signed in 2019. During 2020, most residents saw two minimum wage increases -- first to \$9.25 in January, then to \$10 in July.

According to a study by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute at the University of Illinois in 2020, more than 1.4 million adult hourly workers in Illinois make less than \$15 per hour. The new minimum wage law also states that tipped employees can be paid 60 percent of the hourly minimum wage, but they must make the minimum wage limit after tips, or their employer has to make up the difference.

Workers under the age of 18 who work fewer than 650 hours in a year will also earn a minimum wage of \$9.25 per hour beginning Jan. 1. That rate will gradually increase to \$13 an hour by 2025, according to the governor's office.

RIBBON CUTTING



Brother Daryl's
406 Avenue G, Sterling
815-590-8513



Healthcare Plus
3917 E. Lincolnway Suite B, Sterling
815-655-2888

Congratulations to Woodlawn Arts Academy, Sauk Valley Food Bank, St. Vincent DePaul Society, and Hope Life Center for being chosen as recipients of the 2021 SVACC Ambassador Holiday Donations. Thank you for all you do for our community.



Government Affairs Update

Written by: US Chamber of Commerce



The Latest on the Vaccine Mandate Lawsuits and What Employers Need to Know

As you know, the Biden Administration announced sweeping vaccine mandate requirements for large employers over the summer. The ETS issued by OSHA has been litigated recently in the courts.

Here's the latest on where those court rulings stand:

- On December 17, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit reinstated the OSHA ETS requiring employers with 100 or more employees to ensure their employees are fully vaccinated by January 4 or allow employees to submit weekly negative test results. This was a reversal of the previous stay by the Fifth Circuit.
- On December 22, the U.S. Supreme Court scheduled oral arguments for the ETS to occur on Friday, January 7.
- To account for the litigation uncertainty, OSHA updated their enforcement policy stating that it "is exercising enforcement discretion with respect to the compliance dates of the ETS." It will not issue any citations before January 10 and will not enforce the vaccine or testing requirement until February 9 "so long as an employer is exercising reasonable, good faith efforts to come into compliance with the standard."
- Click [here](#) to read more about the OSHA ETS, Federal Contractor Mandate and CMS Rule.



The Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for an individual or group to receive the 8th annual Sauk Valley Area Chamber Champion Award.

The SVACC Champion Award will be given to an individual or group who "goes above and beyond" to improve the quality of life for the people of the Sauk Valley. This award recipient can be someone who has made an impact through his/her/their work as an individual, organization, or business to make a positive difference in the community either through volunteer efforts or outstanding contributions through their business efforts.

Click [here](#) to submit your nomination by January 7.

Guest Editorial

Written by: Brenda Helms, Director of Business Training & Community Education



Business and Community Education: Sauk Valley Community College's Lifelong Learning

Sauk Valley Community College offers something for everyone. One of the hidden gems of Sauk Valley Community College is the Business and Community Education department which offers a variety of lifelong learning opportunities online and in-person to adults and youth. There are endless possibilities in lifelong learning. People can improve their professional skills with computer, food sanitation, phlebotomy, or safety classes or take a personal enrichment dance or special interest class or even go on a trip to Chicago or Italy.

Before I started working at SVCC, I was always excited to receive the spring and fall catalog in the mail to see what types of classes were going to be offered. During that time, I enrolled into a Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel class to increase my professional skills and I even enrolled in a class on how to sell items on EBay. Over the years, my children have enjoyed many College for Kids classes such as: cupcake decorating, math games, first aid/CPR, and YouTube Content Creators.

Recently the class offerings have expanded to over 300 online professional development and personal enrichment courses that can be taken in 6 weeks or self-paced in 3 months. There are also online career training courses such as Real Estate, Personal Trainer, Paralegal, and Lean Six Sigma courses to name a few.

Before COVID-19, we were expanding our travel destinations locally and abroad. In 2019, we went to Hamilton four times, taking over 200 people from the Sauk Valley, and traveled to Florence, Italy. In April 2022, we will be traveling to Galena and hopefully add more trips in the fall.

There are three parts to Business and Community Education:

- Part one is offering the community non-credit professional development and personal enrichment courses and trips.
- Part two is offering businesses customized training opportunities. Customized training is a great way for businesses to invest in their employees to help enhance their professional skills. These classes can be conducted at SVCC or at the business.
- Part three is offering career services. Career Services assists SVCC students and the community with resume writing, interview skills, and soft skill training. We host virtual and in-person job fairs and post job openings on SVCC's online job board. Businesses are able to upload their job listings directly on the SVCC website. Check out svcc.edu/jobsearch to view the local job openings.

Business and Community Education offers something for everyone. You are never too old to learn something new, whether it is planning for your retirement or learning how to play the ukulele. Everyone should enhance their skills and never stop learning.

The spring 2022 catalog is available online and will be mailed out to Sauk Valley residents the first week of January. Go to svcc.edu/ced or like us on Facebook at SVCC Community Education.

Sauk Valley Community College is dedicated to teaching and scholarship while engaging the community in lifelong learning, public service, and economic development.