



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED



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Partnering for Success

JANUARY 2023

Please join us for the
SVACC Annual Meeting & Dinner

hosted by the CEO Class of 2023

Join us in celebrating 10 years of the WACC CEO Program and for the special announcement of our 2022 Chamber Champion!

Thursday, January 26

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. | Dinner starts at 6:00 p.m.

Deer Valley Banquets

3298 Hoover Rd, Deer Grove, IL

Tickets - \$30

Purchase online by 1/20/2023

bit.ly/3B3CNoW

or call 815-625-2400

**SVACC MEMBERS ARE
OUT OF THIS WORLD!**



CGH TeleUrgent Care

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Whether at home or traveling, TeleUrgent Care connects you with our local CGH healthcare providers 7am-7:30pm, 7 days a week. Following a brief video visit with one of our providers (over your smartphone), lab tests can be ordered and prescriptions can be sent to your pharmacy, if necessary.

- Bladder Infections
- Boils
- Cold/Flu Symptoms
- Insect Bites
- Upper Respiratory Infections
- Minor Burns/Rashes
- Pink Eye
- Poison Ivy
- Ringworm
- Sinus Infection
- Sore Throats
- Sprains & Strains



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January Meetings

January 3 Executive Board
January 10 Board of Directors
January 10 Education
January 12 Ambassadors
January 17 Ag
January 19 HBLC

Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Directors & Staff

Executive Committee

President: Dr. Jon Mandrell
First Vice President: Pam Fluck
Second Vice President: Tim Determan
Treasurer: Sheila Martinez
Past President: Lance Buser

Term Ends January 31, 2023

Mike Loos, Edward Jones Investments
Sheila Martinez, U.S. Bank
Rick Turnroth, Turnroth Sign Company
Pam Fluck, Self Help Enterprises

Term Ends January 31, 2024

Dave Knie, Knie Appliance & TV
Tim Determan, Pinney Printing
Steve Munson, Retired, The Medicine Shoppe
Lance Buser, Wal-Mart DC #7024
Ryan Olson, Ward Murray Pace & Johnson
Violet Nava, Sauk Valley Bank

Term Ends January 31, 2025

Alejandro Rivera, RE/MAX Sauk Valley
Geoff Wright, CGH Medical Center
Josh Johnson, Whiteside Area Career Center
Dr. Jon Mandrell, SVCC
Rebecca Munoz-Ripley, YWCA

Staff

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

A Message from the Director

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a fabulous holiday season and are ready to jump into 2023.

This month, I will be working on compiling the SVACC 2022 Annual Report which will be released at our Annual Meeting & Dinner on January 26th (please join us!). We will also be announcing the 2022 Chamber Champion at the Annual Dinner, but there is still time to nominate an individual, group, business or organization that has impacted change in the Sauk Valley in 2022!

Visit saukvalleyareachamber.com to complete the nomination form.

Additionally, we will take time to recognize those who have served on the SVACC Board of Directors as their terms come to a close this year. I want to highlight and thank these three board members for their service to the Chamber: Rick Turnroth, Turnroth Signs; Sheila Martinez, US Bank; and Mike Loos, Edward Jones. Rick, Sheila, and Mike were part of the board that gave me the opportunity to lead the chamber as Executive Director in early 2015. Throughout the past eight years, I have learned so much from each of them, and will be forever grateful to them for their patience, knowledge, and commitment to making the Sauk Valley an area where business has a voice. The SVACC is an incredible organization and works to impact change for the better. Much of this is due to the guidance of a board of directors who truly understands, and is committed, to our community.

Lets get ready for an amazing 2023!

Kris



Metro by T-Mobile
603 Freeport Rd, Suite C, Sterling
815-632-3017

Ribbon Cuttings



Birth to Five Illinois Region 47
137 N Walnut St., Byron
309-393-2541

Investor Update January 2023

NEW INVESTORS

Sauk Valley Pride
316 W 1st St., Dixon
563-209-6187

X Golf Sauk Valley
13464 Galt Rd., Sterling
815-629-4653

INVESTOR RENEWALS

1st Gateway Credit Union
Bartini's
BEST, Inc.
Culligan Water of Dixon
DD Homes Network
Duncan Land and Auction
Large Marge BBQ

MCR Technologies Group, Inc.
Moments Leadership
NICIL
ReadyNation Illinois
Richter Ranch Designs
Savant Wealth Management
Sjostrom & Sons, Inc.
Sotelo Media

Sterling Fence Company
Sterling Main Street
TBK Bank
The Butcher Shop
The IFH Group
UOI Boutique
Wal-Mart D.C. #7024
Whiteside Area Career Center

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!

Over \$1000 Invested

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

Altran Magnetics
Amazing Grace of Sterling
Bushel Basket Candle Co.
Green Bee Energy Efficiency
Happy Tails Humane Society
Helm Civil
Hill's Electric Motor Service, Inc.
Illinois American Water
James S Ferris, DDS, PC
Lance's Plumbing
Lee Ogle Transportation System
Lil Smoked

LK Design Source
Loescher HVAC
Mattox Insurance Agency
Moore Monument & Granite Co
Rock River Hospice & Home
Roy Dern State Farm Insurance
St. Vincent DePaul Society
Sawdust N Dreamz
Select Employees Credit Union
Sterling Rock Falls Child Care
Sterling Township
The Toy Store
T-Mobile
United Craftsmen, Ltd.

110% Club

1st Gateway Credit Union
Allstate Insurance Company
Astec Mobile Screens Inc
Bardier & Ramirez Real Estate
Bollman Auto Center
Candlelight Inn
Cassens Drainage
Central Heating & Cooling
Compeer Financial
Dennis Electric of Tampico
Farmer's National Bank

Folsom's Bakery
Hawkins-Cassens Insurance
Imprintable Memories
Jim Prescott's BBQ Shop
Johnson Oil Company
Kelly's Restaurant
Kiwanis Club of Sterling
Marv Lofgren & Sons Contractors
Mertes & Mertes
New Millenium Directories
Reitzel Roofing Company
Rock River Lumber & Grain

Rock River Ready Mix
Rosemeyer Management Group
Sauk Valley Food Bank
Scholl Insurance Agency
Sedona Staffing
Servicemaster
Shelly Dambman CPA
Sherwin Williams Company
Showplace Antiques & Treasures
St. Mary's School
St. Vincent DePaul

Stahr Media
Sterling Chevrolet
Sterling Commercial Roofing
Sterling Napa Auto Parts
Sterling Optimist Club
The Cornerstone Agency
Wendler Engineering Services
Willy's Restaurant
Winter Construction

Chamber Ambassadors

Allie Johnston – University of Illinois Extension
Angie Delhotal— Sauk Valley College Foundation
Brock Burlack – T-Mobile
Cassandra Salmon – YWCA
Chandra Meyer – Re/Max Sauk Valley
Christina Bystry — House in the Country
Janell Loos — Heritage Woods
Jennifer Alvarez — Surf Broadband
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 – Self Help Enterprises
Roy Dern – State Farm
Sheila Martinez – U.S. Bank
Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation
Skip Dettman—LSSI
Tygen Bausman—Sterling Federal Bank

Ambassador Spotlight—Pam Fluck, Self Help Enterprises

As many know I am now the Executive Director at Self Help Enterprises. After being on the Board of Directors for 11 years, I felt compelled to take this new position. In my brief time as an employee of Self Help, I have encountered many questions about what exactly we do. I felt this article would be a great opportunity to expand on that.



Self Help began in 1965 by Reverend James Crangle. At that time, they served 5 men with developmental disabilities. To give them a purpose, they began to build birdhouses to sell to the community. Reverend Crangle was able to find more opportunities for not only the 5 original men but many others in Whiteside County. As the need grew and more individuals served, they needed a larger space. After a couple of moves the current building located at 2300 W LeFevre Rd in Sterling was built in 1979, and is where we continue to serve those individuals with developmental disabilities today. We continue to provide work opportunities from various companies in our community, programs are designed to help the individuals with life skills in effort to assist those able to live independently, and we provide day habilitation services. In addition, we also have two residential group homes.

Stage 2 Resale Shop on St. Mary's Road in Sterling is another venture that is run by many volunteers and employees. If you have a need to drop off clothes or household goods, we would gladly accept them. All proceeds go back directly to Self Help.

I invite you to stop by Self Help for a tour any time.

The Ambassadors Committee presented contributions to four chamber member organizations to celebrate the holiday season.

Thank you to Sauk Valley Foodbank, Woodlawn Arts Academy, YWCA of the Sauk Valley, Sterling Public Library for all you do to make this community a better place.



Member Spotlight

Written by *Brady Booker, Manager, Plotner Insurance Consultants*

We are an Independent Insurance Agency, which means we have made available some of our best companies for your [online quick quotes](#).

We service clients in the **Sterling Illinois** areas. At Plotner Insurance Consultants, each one of our clients is given a dedicated team that works together to proficiently address all your concerns.

We offer all types of [Personal Insurance](#) coverages to our clients in Illinois including: [Auto Insurance](#), [Homeowners Insurance](#), [ATV](#), [Boat & Watercraft](#), and [Collector Car](#).

Give one of our agents a call to save money on your [Business Insurance](#). Some of our Commercial insurance coverages include [Agribusiness](#), [Apartment Building Owners](#), [Auto Body Shops](#), [Auto Dealers](#), and [Employee Benefits](#).

Brady Booker
Manager
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SAVE CONTACT

Business After Hours | Sterling Federal Bank

Thank you to Sterling Federal Bank for yet another wonderful Business After Hours.

In lieu of a January Business After Hours, we will be hosting our Annual Meeting & Dinner on January 26. Please join us!



Northland Mall Winter Open House *December 9*

Thank you to all who came out to support shopping local this holiday season by joining us at Northland Mall.

Workforce Development



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Written by the US Chamber of Commerce

The “Calling on Congress” series is highlighting priorities that can and must be addressed in the 118th Congress. One urgent priority is easing the worker shortage crisis and ensuring we have a competitive workforce for the future.

Right now, there are too many open jobs without people to fill them. We have double the number of open jobs in the U.S. than unemployed workers. The result is that too many businesses can’t grow, compete, and thrive.

Fixing the Worker Shortage

Labor force participation remains below pre-pandemic levels, meaning we have over 3 million fewer Americans working today compared to February of 2020. There are number of different factors causing this gap: lack of access to childcare, an increase in savings during the pandemic, early retirements, declining legal immigration, a spike in new business starts and flexible work options, and COVID-19 health concerns.

Congress should focus on:

Removing barriers for working parents

According to a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation study, 58% of working parents reported leaving work because they were unable to find childcare solutions that met their needs.

Here are a few things Congress can do to help: increase funding and expand eligibility for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program, give states more flexibility to spend childcare funds, reinstate the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) expansion, and simplify and expand employer tax breaks that help employees access childcare.

Enacting policies that incentivize work

Changing the current framework would allow employers to fill open jobs and maximize productivity while also ensuring beneficiaries can reach self-sufficiency, build assets, and increase net worth. Policy changes that help achieve this balance include clear work requirements, changes in the phase out of benefits, and implementing transitional benefits.

Skilling a Competitive Workforce

Simply growing the workforce is not enough. We also need to ensure those looking for work have the skills and training for the jobs businesses need to fill. We need a system that develops the talent companies and communities need and ensures Americans are educated and have the skills required for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Congress should start with:

Supporting education and training programs

We must expand access to programs that lead to good jobs—including short-term credentials, upskilling, boot camps, and earn and learn programs like apprenticeships.

Congress should allow Pell grants to be used for short-term training programs, expand eligible training provider lists under WIOA so more innovative programs are included, and make changes to the registered apprenticeship program to be more inclusive of a variety of earn and learn programs.

To help end the bias toward higher education being the only pathway to success, government should work with the private sector to develop new and innovative financing mechanisms, like skill savings accounts, to invest in the economy’s most important resource—human capital.

Fixing the K-12 education system

K-12 students today make up the workforce of tomorrow and it is crucial that we are adequately preparing them. Learning loss and K-12 education shortcomings existed long before the pandemic—and the pandemic only accelerated this steady decline in achievement, erasing two decades of progress in math and reading scores in just two years. The US. Chamber Foundation this year launched a working group to develop policy recommendations to improve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) focused on all students, especially those who have been historically underserved by the system.

Congratulations to 7:24 Fitness on the Rock for receiving the Customer Service Award!

7:24 Fitness was nominated for their outstanding staff who are committed to helping people achieve their goals.
For more information about
7:24 Fitness on the Rock
call 815-564-9000.



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Governmental Affairs

Press Release



SPRINGFIELD - Governor JB Pritzker announced an historic agreement to pay off the remaining \$1.36 billion unemployment insurance loan balance, replenish the fund for the future, and protect benefits for working families. The agreement will save taxpayers an estimated \$20 million in interest costs that would be due next September and preserves hundreds of millions of dollars in future federal tax credits for Illinois employers.

The agreement between representatives from business, labor, bipartisan members of the General Assembly, and the state, will contribute more than \$1.8 billion in state funds to the unemployment insurance trust fund, which includes the payment of the remaining federal loan balance borrowed under Title XII of the Social Security Act. The remaining \$450 million will be placed into the trust fund from state funds as an interest-free loan. As the loan is repaid over the next ten years, funds will be deposited directly into the state's rainy-day fund.

"I'm proud to announce that together, we've reached a historic, bipartisan agreement to eliminate pandemic-induced UI Trust Fund debt, replenish the fund for the future, protect benefits for working families, and further fuel Illinois' strong economic trajectory," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Republicans and Democrats are delivering a historic state investment of \$1.8 billion to the Unemployment Trust Fund. This bipartisan agreement eliminates the final portion of the \$4.5 billion debt forced upon our state during the pandemic and saves Illinois businesses and taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars over the next decade."

The agreement strengthens the state's trust fund, alleviates a burden looming over businesses, and ensures there are no reductions in both the standard number of weeks of unemployment benefits and the amount a person can claim. The agreement is expected to pass via bipartisan legislation during upcoming legislative sessions.

The unemployment trust was forced to borrow \$4.5 billion in federal funds to provide economic relief to the unprecedented number of unemployed workers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.



The Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program and the WACC CEO classes gathered at Sauk Valley Community College to engage in dialogue with Senator Win Stoller, Representative Tom Demmer, and Representative-Elect Brad Fritts. Each panelist talked about his background, what led him to politics, and the goals he currently has. Panelists also discussed personal victories in their political careers thus far. Stoller stated that our state needs good people to get more involved, and encouraged students to find ways they can do that beginning at a local level.

The next session for the day included Dixon Councilwoman Mary Oros and Sterling Councilwoman Kaitlyn Ekquist who discussed their own passion projects and the challenges faced today by local government officials. Both panelists maintain that being a good listener and flexibility are key components to a strong city council member.

This year’s cohort then shared lunch from Jimmy Johns of Dixon.



Guest Editorial

Written by Nicole Bollman, Professional Women’s Network Co-Chair



Since March of 2007, the Professional Women’s Network (PWN) committee has been dedicated to offering women in the Sauk Valley area the opportunity to meet, grow, and strengthen their knowledge in professional development.

While the words may have changed over the years, the mission of PWN has remained the same – The PWN was created to facilitate more interaction and networking among Sauk Valley area’s female professionals. While not exclusive to females there is also not any age requirement to participate in this Chamber group. The PWN hosts quarterly luncheons focusing on a number of issues important to today’s female professionals.

Over the years, PWN has hosted quarterly luncheons on personal/professional development such as stress management, time management, organization, communication skills, personality testing, and more. We have also hosted fun events – like gardening, Paula Sands, women’s self-defense, and our annual summer networking event.

PWN will continue to be a vital part of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce. Based on the results from a survey and other feedback, we will begin a new format in 2023.

Our in-person meetings will be quarterly on the **third Wednesday of the month at 12:00 pm** at the SVACC office with a reduced 30-minute duration to fit our professional women’s busy schedules. The meeting format will be a discussion format on topics/issues/opportunities/challenges for today’s professional women. The goal will be for women in the workforce to have an opportunity to build relationships with, and learn from, peers about issues relevant to women. The 2023 meeting dates are: February 15, May 17, August 16, and November 15 PWN Events will continue to be offered 3 times per year: One summer networking event and two workshops on professional development/personal growth in spring and fall – exact dates to be determined.

A separate PWN event planning taskforce will meet as needed to effectively plan these events. This separation will allow the quarterly meetings to focus on our discussion topics and networking.

If you or someone in your business is interested in being a part of the Professional Women’s Network Committee, please contact Kris Noble to be added to the PWN email list. We would love to have you join us.

Written by: Josh Greenfield—Sterling High School

“Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities.”

“CEO is a student driven business class that tours businesses in the Sauk Valley Area.”

“You get to make your own business and make money.”

These are the most frequent quotes I heard when asking people about this class. As a sophomore turning into a junior last summer, who had no idea where he wanted life to take him, these quotes meant very little to me. It was brought to my attention that this class was available to me by my mother. I started to ask around my school to see if anyone knew about it or had any more input for me. It turns out, a girl in one of my classes was in it and she told me a ton about it. This got me interested so I applied and luckily, I got accepted. Little did I know what I was getting into. The “teacher” or “facilitator” as she likes to be called is Le Hartman. Le is truly an amazing person and a great leader. Even though we are a student driven class, Le is always there to support us and keep us on track. She also does all of the planning of the entire year to make sure we gain the knowledge we need to make us successful. This class wouldn’t be possible without her and all of us students are very grateful for her.

CEO has already impacted my life so much in a short amount of time. I feel like I have grown as an individual and a student. I am more determined, more involved in school, and have an idea of what I want my life to look like in the future. One of speakers that talked to our class and inspired me the most was Kris Noble. Going to the Chamber of Commerce and learning about what they do for our community, and the plans they have to make it better truly inspired me. It made me think of ways I could be better in the future, and ways I could give back to those around me. This class is truly an amazing opportunity for the youth to grow out of their comfort zone and to blossom into adults. It gives you knowledge and experiences you will never get inside of a classroom. If you or anyone you know has the opportunity to enroll in this class take it from me, do it.

Written by: Kiayana Washington—Rock Falls High School

In the middle of November our class started brainstorming ideas for our class business. Eventually we narrowed it down to three options but in the end we chose to host a movie night at the movie theater in downtown Sterling. We decided to host it on December 20th even though that meant only a month of planning; however, we ran into a problem when it came to ticket sales. We were having trouble hooking up an account to where the money would be transferred when someone bought a ticket. Working on this process set us back about a week and a half on time, leaving us only a week to sell tickets. This is where I think we failed in our class business. We weren’t able to meet our goal of profit we wanted and also didn’t get the amount of people we wanted to attend. My class went too fast into a business when we had too many questions and not enough time. Overall I think this experience taught us what we did well and what we’ll need to focus and work on more in the future. I know my class is super grateful for all the help from the community and sponsors that made our class business possible and it’s amazing to see all the support. I’m glad I chose to join CEO because it’s already been one of the memorable experiences in my high school career.

WE ARE CURRENTLY
ACCEPTING
APPLICATIONS FOR
SVACC AMBASSADORS.



Do you have a staff member who would be a good fit for this committee? Be part of impacting change while getting publicity for your business/organization !

THE AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE OF THE SVACC HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CHAMBER FOR MANY YEARS. THIS COMMITTEE ACTS AS THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ARM OF THE CHAMBER.

AMBASSADORS HELP WITH:

- **WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS**
- **RIBBON CUTTINGS**
- **BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARDS**
- **& SO MUCH MORE!**



EMAIL
KNOBLE@SAUKVALLEYAREACHAMBER.COM
FOR MORE INFO OR TO APPLY