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IN THIS



PAGE 4



PAGE 5



PAGE 6

Partnering for Success

NOVEMBER 2023



Join us BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

HOSTED BY STERLING WOODWORKS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 5:00 6:30 PM

Ribbon cutting @ 5PM

Sterling Woodworks, Custom Kitchen and Furniture Builders 1307 W. 4th St, Sterling





November Meetings

November 2 Executive Board

November 7 Sights and Sounds

November 9 Ambassadors

November 14 Board of Directors

November 15 PWN

November 16 HBLC

November 21 Ag

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: Geoff Wright Past President: Lance Buser

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

Term Ends January 31, 2025

Pam Fluck, Self Help Enterprises Sandi Cavazos, US Bank Katie Whitehead, HALO Branded Solutions Kristina Kaecker, Kunes RV

Staff

Executive Director—Kris Noble

Marketing Coordinator — Dallas Knack

Office Manager/Financial Specialist—Janie Fisher

The views expressed by any member of the Chamber do not represent the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce in any official endorsement or support of any specific elected official or political party. Any products, events, statements, views or opinions offered or expressed by members are not the products, events, statements, views or opinions of the SVACC, nor endorsed by the Chamber or its membership at large.

A Message from the Director

As we enter the holiday season, it is important to remember the impact of shopping local. Supporting small and local businesses is essential to maintain a vibrant community and a robust economy. Small businesses are the heart of our community, and your support can help them thrive.

Local businesses create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and foster a sense of community. They offer personalized service, diverse products, and increased expertise. Their continued support and contributions help our local non-profits and events, with data indicating that nonprofits receive 250% more support from small businesses than large ones (according to Metro Family Magazine). Your purchases at a small business cause a regional ripple. By supporting a local business you're not only supporting your friend and neighbor, but the Sauk Valley area.

This season, let's come together and celebrate the spirit of community by prioritizing local businesses. Your choices can make a world of difference for our town and its entrepreneurs.

Together, we can ensure their success and strengthen our local economy.





Please welcome Janie Fisher to the SVACC. Janie began her role as the Office Manager and Financial Specialist in October.

As a lifelong resident of Sterling, Janie is excited to embark on this new role to learn more about Sauk Valley area businesses and organizations.



Investor Update November 2023

NEW MEMBERS

AJ Sharp—Edward Jones 102 E Route 30 Suite 2, Rock Falls (815) 535-0776

1620 Sauk Road, Dixon (815) 677-9059

Grace Point Church

OnCall Imaging 1609 1st Ave, Rock Falls (815) 625-1718

INVESTOR RENEWALS

Abiding Word Church Allure of Sterling Alternative Ag Services & Consultants (AASC)

AM Disposal Birth to Five Illinois Region 47 **Bradford Supply Company** Bushel Basket Candle Co., Inc. Central Heating & Cooling, Inc. CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP) Crown Exterminator, Inc. Culver's of Rock Falls DD Homes Network

Folsom's Bakery, Inc.

Fringe Co Salon & Western Boutique Rock Falls High School Greencastle of Sterling, an Embrace

Living Community

Heritage Woods of Sterling Hueber/Dekalb Feeds K's Korner Trading Post

Kunes RV McDonald's

Moore Monument & Granite Co.

Moore Tires

Petersen Health Care

Pinney Printing

Regional Office of Education #47

River Ridge Animal Hospital

Sauk Valley Media

Sauk Valley Pest Control

Shoe Sensation

Sterling Federal Bank

TBK Bank

Total Construction Services

United Electric **US Postal Service**

Whiteside County Senior Center

Woodlawn Arts Academy

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

Central Bank Illinois **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**

Ward, Murray, Pace & Johnson

150% Club

Altran Magnetics Bushel Basket Candle Co. Candlelight Inn

Helm Civil Hill's Electric Motor Service, Inc.

Illinois American Water Lance's Plumbing LK Design Source Loescher HVAC

Lutheran Social Services of IL **Mattox Insurance Agency**

McDonald's

Moore Monument & Granite Co

NICIL PC Tech 2U

RE/MAX Sauk Valley Rise Broadband

Rock River Hospice & Home Select Employee Credit Union Sterling Commercial Roofing Sterling Rock Falls Child Care

Sterling Township Surf Internet

United Craftsmen, Ltd.

110% Club

Wahl Clipper Corp.

Wal-Mart DC #7024

1st Gateway Credit Union Astec Mobile Screens Inc Bardier & Ramirez Real Estate **Bollman Auto Center Compeer Financial** Dennis Electric of Tampico Hawkins-Cassens Insurance

Hill Fastener James S. Ferris DDS, PC Kelly's Restaurant **Kiwanis Club of Sterling** Mary Lofgren & Sons Contractors McCormick's Nursey

Mertes & Mertes

NAMI Sauk Area New Millenium Directories Rock River Lumber & Grain Rock River Ready Mix Scholl Insurance Agency Servicemaster ServPro of Sterling **Showplace Antiques**

St. Vincent DePaul Sterling Chevrolet The Factory **Trinity Insurance** Winter Construction

Chamber Ambassadors

Allie Johnston – University of Illinois Extension

Arnulfo Valdivia—Sauk Valley Bank

Cael Sanders—Sterling Federal Bank

Cassandra Salmon - YWCA

Chandra Meyer – Re/Max Sauk Valley

Christina Bystry — House in the Country

Jennifer Alvarez — Surf Internet

Karen Voss – Morningside of Sterling

Mary White – Community State Bank

Nicole Bollman - CGH Medical Center

Pam Fluck – Self Help Enterprises

Rene Betts—Plotner Insurance Consultants

Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation

Skip Dettman—LSSI

Stepheni Chandler—Hughes Resources

Ambassador Spotlight — Rene Betts, Plotner Insurance Consultants

I am proud to serve as an insurance agent at Plotner Insurance Consultants, and I have been a dedicated member of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce since January of this year. Over the past year and a half, my focus has been primarily on personal lines of home and auto policies. However, I am also in the process of expanding my expertise to include commercial business policies.

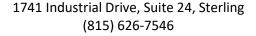


My approach to insurance is centered around tailoring plans to precisely meet the unique needs and goals of each client. I am committed to providing comprehensive coverage while ensuring cost-effectiveness, giving my clients peace of mind in an ever-changing world.

Beyond my professional life, I find joy in spending time with my wonderful family. At home, I have had the privilege of being a parent of five incredible children, two that are still home. Lilly, at 16, is an avid athlete who excels in volleyball and softball, and Darin II, aged 10, is a lover of Legos and a dedicated Fortnight enthusiast.

Congratulations to Creative Cuisine for receiving the Customer Service Award!

Creative Cuisine helped to make the CGH Employee Appreciation event a big success! Their nominator said: "They are very easy to work with and made sure all of our questions were answered, their communication and prompt responses were much appreciated and the food was amazing."







Congratulations to Deer Valley Banquets for receiving the Customer Service Award!

Deer Valley Banquets was also nominated for their work on the CGH Employee Appreciation event. Their nominator said: "They ensured that our event went off as smoothly as possible."

> Deer Valley Banquets: 3298 Hoover Rd., Deer Grove (815) 499-2911

CSA Sponsored by:











Ribbon Cuttings



Sterling Systems & Controls New building addition 24711 Emerson Rd., Sterling 815-625-0852.



OnCall Imaging 1609 1st Ave, Rock Falls 815-625-1718



AJ Sharp—Edward Jones 102 E Route 30 Suite 2, Rock Falls (815) 535-0776



Jake Gerdes - State Farm Agent 3307 E. Lincolnway Suite 1, Sterling 815-625-5012

Workforce Development

The SVACC is excited to provide another series of the Certificate of Employability workshop with students from Rock Falls and Sterling high schools.

The Certificate of Employability Workshop consists of six sessions and works to help bridge the gap between students/education and employers/businesses. Students who participate in the workshop are given the opportunity to gain information about the local businesses in the area and the various career pathways available right here in the Sauk Valley. They also learn about the importance of essential skills in the workplace. The six session topics include: How to get the Job, Work Ethic, Professionalism, Communication, Teamwork and Collaboration, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, and Creativity.

Thank you to the following SVACC members who participated in the series: IFH Group, Culvers, Verifacts, Sterling Rock Falls Family YMCA, Sauk Valley Bank, CGH Medical Center, Castor Home Nursing, Walmart Supply Chain, University of Illinois Extension, YWCA of the Sauk Valley, Micron Industries.

For more information about this initiative and to get involved, contact Kris Noble, SVACC.









Business After Hours

Thank you to Plotner Insurance for hosting the October Business After Hours at Champs on Light Street. It was a wonderful way to connect and network between members.

Join us on Thursday, November 16 at Sterling Woodworks for the November BAH.















5th Annual Manufacturing Dinner

The support this community has for manufacturing is incredible! On October 12, SVACC hosted the 5th Annual Manufacturing Dinner to celebrate the industry and support our local students.





Thank you to everyone who joined us, sponsored the event, and bought desserts. Your generosity enables the chamber to provide scholarships for local students and continue our efforts in workforce development in the Sauk Valley.

Guest Editorial

Written by Trish Klaver, Sterling-Rock Falls Family YMCA

The Sterling-Rock Falls Family YMCA is busy with fall programming for the whole family to enjoy. During the school year, the YMCA offers Before & After School programming for children Grades K-5th. This program is designed to help provide child care for families outside of school hours. We also offer a variety of youth sports programming for children to stay active during the school year and monthly swim lessons. If the group swim lesson times don't work for your family's busy schedule, you can register for family or private swim lessons.

In November we will also be running our annual Turkey Day 5k! Our 5k takes place on Thanksgiving Day at 8 a.m. and is fun for the whole family. Register as an individual for \$10 or a family (up to 4 people) for \$15. Another program in line with the holidays, is our Turkey 2 Tree Fitness Challenge. This program runs November 13-December 15 and is a fun way to stay active through the holidays.

The YMCA truly does have something for everyone to enjoy! As we are preparing for fall, there has never been a better time to join the YMCA. We offer 35+ water and land fitness classes a week, have a pool, hot tub, sauna, steam room, cardio room, weight room, state of the art spin room and Wee Care Child Watch. You can check out more details about membership and upcoming events on our website: www.srfymca.org.





Workforce Development

press release



Gov. Signs EO to Initiate Transition, Education Expert Ann Whalen to Lead Effort

October 24— Governor Pritzker was joined by Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, Deputy Governor Grace Hou, Deputy Governor Martin Torres, elected officials, and state agency directors at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning to announce a proposal to create a new state agency to house all early childhood programs and funding. The new unified agency will provide a more equitable, integrated, and holistic system of services for young children and families in Illinois.

"We need a governance system that is unified in its approach to serving families, working with providers, and promoting equity," said Governor JB Pritzker.

To initiate the multi-year process, Governor Pritzker is signing an Executive Order, and will work with the General Assembly on legislation in the spring of 2024.

Education expert Ann Whalen will serve as Early Childhood Transition Director, working out of ISBE and in close collaboration with state agencies and the governor's office. Ann Whalen has served as the Director of Policy for Advance Illinois since 2019, where she works on education advocacy issues including addressing Illinois' teacher shortage, the improved use of data to drive decision making, social-and-emotional learning, education funding, and more. She has an extensive background in education policy and implementation at the local, state, and federal levels.

Governor Pritzker is establishing an external advisory committee to seek input from stakeholders across the state in preparation for the proposal. The committee will be chaired by Bela Moté and work closely with Ann Whalen. Bela Moté is the Chief Executive Officer of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, one of the largest early childhood and youth development organizations in Chicago, serving close to 2,500 children through their childcare centers and affiliate programs. She previously led the Early Childhood Funding Commission.

Early Childhood State Agency Proposal

The new unified agency will unify the following programs under a single agency:

- The Early Childhood Block Grant at ISBE, which funds Preschool for All and the Prevention Initiative home-visiting program
- The Child Care Assistance Program, Home-Visiting, and Early Intervention services at DHS
- Day care licensing currently managed by DCFS

The unified agency will address the difficulties that providers and families experience when navigating three different agencies. Having a governance system that is unified in its approach to serving families, working with providers, and promoting equity is why several states already created new state agencies dedicated solely to early childhood.

The change will further advance the Pritzker administration's transformative investments in comprehensive early childhood education and care, including Smart Start Illinois. Smart Start Illinois demonstrates the state's ongoing commitment to children, families, teachers, and childcare providers. The \$250 million investment in FY24 includes:

- \$75 million additional for the Early Childhood Block Grant to put Illinois on a path to creating more than 20,000 new Pre-K spots for every child who wants one
- \$130 million for nation-leading Childcare Workforce Compensation Contracts that will stabilize providers and give childcare workers a raise
- An additional \$40 million for Early Intervention programs to enhance services for families and give providers a raise
- \$5 million to expand the Illinois Department of Human Services' Home Visiting Program so more families who want it can receive this early support

In addition to Smart Start investments, other investments being made in the early Childhood Education Space include:

- \$100 million in capital dollars for early childhood providers to expand existing facilities and build new facilities
- \$70 million for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- \$12 million in new funding for scholarships and apprenticeships to expand the childcare workforce
- \$1.6 million to launch the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, a statewide literacy initiative to send free books to children from birth-through age five



Written by: Owen Farral, Prophetstown High School

"It's mandatory to grow old, not to grow up." This quote has stuck with me since the second day of CEO when Gary DeVore first spoke to our class. As a senior this year, growing up is something that I have been very afraid of. Thinking about what colleges I want to go to, whether to stay close to home or move out of state, attend a four-year university or get my associate degree somewhere local, it is all very daunting to me. The thing I am most afraid of is having to move away from some of my closest friends, the people that I have known since pre-school, and the relationships built along the way. But I can not take for



WACC CEC

granted the enjoyment I have with everyone, and CEO has brought great relationships with people I didn't know just 2 months earlier. CEO has been one of, if not the most, beneficial class I have ever taken. Walking into class on my first day was one of the most nerve-racking experiences I have ever been put in. I sat around a group of 17 different individuals I knew nothing about, not even half of their names. If I am supposed to build relationships with these people by myself, I would've called you crazy. But to see how far CEO has pushed me out of my comfort zone is unexplainable. I used to be a very shy person who didn't like to start conversations, but thanks to this program, I have been opened up to a whole new reality at the ripe age of 17. In my case, people say I am "lucky" for being able to have these experiences so young. But I do not think anything about being chosen for this class was luck. Each individual had to fill out applications and find trusted references to refer us to the CEO Board's selection committee. For me to be able to say that I love coming to this class everyday is an understatement. Yes, there are days where I struggle to wake up in the mornings and dress up each day, but I wouldn't trade it for any other class. CEO has helped me build many relationships with my peers and business owners that no class at school would ever allow me to do. I do not have enough words to talk about the best things about CEO class, but my absolute favorite is the people I have met. With that being said, I can't wait to continue building relationships in our class and see where the road takes us to the end of the year.

Written by: Maliah Grenoble, Milledgeville High School

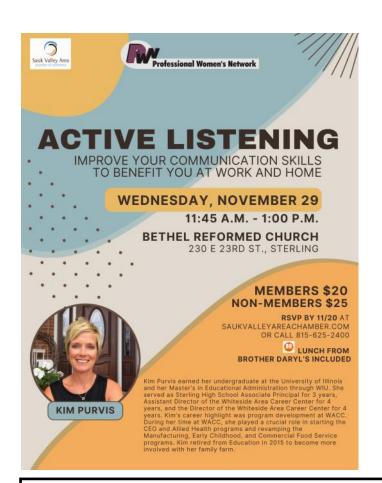
I have matured more in the last 3 months than I have in the past 17 years. CEO supplies students with so many unique opportunities that no education system can provide. Schooling has always been easy for me, and I was never truly faced with any challenges. A multitude of successful figures state that it only gets harder as life goes on.

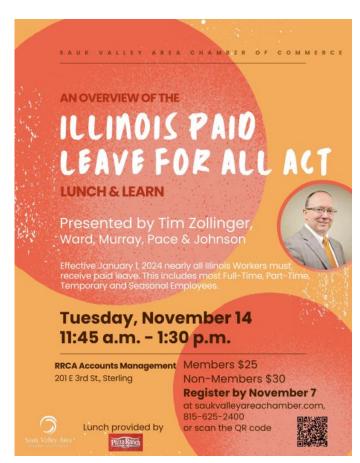


However, I lived my life stress free because I was never truly challenged. That is until I walked into CEO. As we introduced ourselves, I quickly noticed that the people surrounding me were just like me, high achieving students. I then realized that this was not going to be like the schooling that I am used to.

Rather than being lectured then taking a test on the information "learned", we have discussions. Stepping foot into the classroom is like taking a step towards adulthood. Everyone in CEO respects one another and we all have a drive to become better individuals. However, a transition this large does not come with ease. I was suddenly put into a mature environment where I was pushed to be responsible for myself.

I live 50 minutes away from our meeting place, meaning I must leave my house by 6:45 in the morning. Being involved in sports makes this significantly harder. I usually do not get home until 9 o'clock on game days, with physics and other homework still needing to be completed. Transitioning into adulthood and remaining reliable and disciplined was the biggest struggle for me. However, every lost hour of sleep is worth it for the CEO program. I have met so many figures in our community that opened my eyes to the beauty of the Sauk Valley area. Although there have been struggles, applying for CEO is by far the best decision that I have ever made. I am incredibly grateful and cannot thank the community and the program enough for providing me with this opportunity.





Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program



October 4th's SVCLP class began with riveting discussion on Ethical Leadership, led by Dr. David Hellmich, President of Sauk Valley Community College; and Rev. Dr. Christina Berry, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Sterling. Students were challenged to consider ethical dilemmas and guided to make decisions within the five different ethical paradigms.

Students then explored the Northwest Territory Historic Center (Dixon's own Smithsonian-affiliated museum). Class concluded with a delicious lunch from Baker Street of Dixon.

On October 18 in Sinnissippi Center's conference room, class began with an insightful Q & A with Dr. Bill Bird, CGH Vice President and Chief Medical Officer; Amy Boss, Speech – Language Pathologist, Florissa; Linda Clemen, Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer, KSB Hospital; and Kim Gaffey, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Gaffey Home Nursing & Hospice.

Our next panel included the following mental health professionals: Dr. Linda Hellmich, licensed Clinical Psychologist; Natalie Moeller, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional Coordinator of Academic Advising and Clinical Counseling at Moeller, Myers & Associates, PC; and Dr. Emily Padgett, Clinical Psychologist, Florissa. The cohort learned of the greatest leadership challenges of these health professionals, especially now in our post-pandemic world.

Finally, Charis Allen, SUPR (Substance Use Prevention & Recovery) Services Supervisor, Sinnissippi Centers; and Destiny Yeager, Associate Director of Medical Services, Sinnissippi Centers provided us with the varied services within the non-profit organization of Sinnissippi Centers.

Jimmy John's, Dixon, provided a great lunch to conclude our morning.



SATURDAY, NOV. 4th • 7 AM-12 noon 2300 W. LeFevre Rd - Sterling IL 61081

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BUSINESS LEADERS, MENTORS, PARENTS, INVESTORS, CEO ALUMNI AND GUESTS

CEO ALUMNI EVENT

NOVEMBER 22, 2023 CHAMPS BANQUET VENUE 5-7 PM

11 East 3rd St Sterling, IL

JOIN US FOR A SHORT PROGRAM AT 6:00 PM

