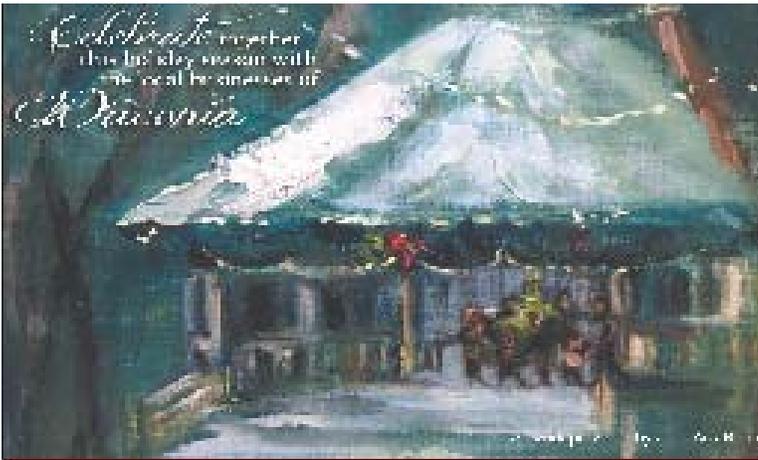




CHAMBER NEWS

A publication of the Waconia Chamber of Commerce

December, 2013



gather, shop & celebrate
this holiday season

- 12.05 Candlelight Stroll and Tree Lighting**
6-8pm. Enjoy the city tree lighting at 6:30pm in City Square Park. Shopping and treats throughout town. Free cocoa, caroling and warm fires!
- 12.07 Homespun Holiday**
Shop small town charm from 9 - 5! Carolers, kettle korn, Candy Cane Hunt at 10am in City Square Park, pictures with Santa at the Fire Station 1-4pm.
- 12.08 Holiday Skate at Waconia Ice Arena**
12:00-1:30 pm. Bring in a new, unwrapped gift or children's toy for the Waconia Toy Drive and receive a free youth skate admission with every toy donated - 4 free admissions per family.
- 12.14 Stocking Stuffer Saturday**
Find stocking stuffers that will delight everyone on your list.
- 12.21 Merry Marathon**
Be merry knowing you can get all your last-minute shopping needs locally.

Holiday Coffee Connection

Thursday, December 5
7:30-9:00AM FREE!



Join us for the LAST Coffee Connection of 2013 at Clearwater Clothing. Jill and her crew of elves have decked out their shop in their holiday finest-it is sure to be a festive atmosphere!

Drop in when you can and stay for as long as you like...you may even want to start a "Wish List" or pick something up for someone you love!

Clearwater Clothing-132 S Olive St, Waconia

Welcome New Members:

Caim Center
*Pam Braunwarth

141 W 1st Street
Waconia, MN 55387
612-201-8989
pbraunwarth@aol.com
www.caimcenter.com

Place of learning

Freshwater Community Church
*Courtney Rodriguez

138 W 1st Street
Waconia, MN 55387
952-446-9090
courtney@freshwaterchurch.org
www.freshwaterchurch.org

Church

The UPS Store
*Tom Fromm

712 Vista Blvd (opening 1/14)
Waconia, MN 55387
952-797-6736
tfromm2@yahoo.com

Shipping & receiving

New for 2014!

Refer a business to the Chamber and if they join, we'll buy you lunch!

Shop Waconia

ICE ICE BABY

Coming soon, ice fishing on Lake Waconia!

Check in with the InTowne Marina before you head out on the ice...

952-442-2096

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Catching Fire

By Kellie Sites, President



At the end of each year we evaluate our Chamber programs and talk about what is great and what is not. We are always looking for new ideas and ways to improve on what we do. One of the ways that we infuse new ideas is to bring on new committee members, from our Board of Directors to our Ambassadors to our Retail committee, Golf, EXPO and Nickle Dickle Day.

Have you been thinking about ways to improve your leadership skills and/or opportunities to work together with people in the business community who you may not know? What are you going to be doing in the new year that will help you “Catch some Fire!”

For those of you who have not yet seen “Catching Fire”, let me just tell you that the ground swell of support for Catniss, the lead character, is pretty impressive. The people are ignited with hope and are ready to stand up for good. I guess you should see the movie... and read the Hunger Games books!

There have been times in my life where I am so “On fire” for what I’m doing, and times when I am really not on fire for any particular purpose. I ask myself, what motivates me, what catches me on fire? When I’m passionate about something, it’s surprising the amount of energy I have. I know that I’ve written about finding your passion before, but now I just want to know how to light your fire.

If you are attending events, what do you like about them? I have witnessed a number of conversations where the energy picks up and there is a fire lit! Ideas, referrals, dreams are sparked.... I love helping you light your fire! Our speaker at the November luncheon, Stevie Ray, lit a lot of fires for new ways to introduce yourself and be real. No more elevator speeches! Be real, and love what you do.... know how to convey that to people you meet. And listen to the people you meet ~ are they up for a long conversation or maybe just a quick “how do you do?”

I have been hooked on the Hallmark Christmas shows of late... And I’m feeling pretty inspired to deck the halls and make some cookies! And maybe go to a lodge in Maine for Christmas... but wait, we’re helping to make that happen right here in Waconia. When all the people gather together to watch the lighting of the tree, whether you’re in Whoville, or you’re New in Town, or you’re at the White House or your own house... lighting up the lights is like Catching Fire.... It’s inspiring and heart warming.

I hope you find that something that lights your fire in 2014 ~ inspiring you to do something new, do something better, make your corner of the world a better place.

Join me at the tree lighting this Thursday night at City Square Park... For hot cocoa, (thank you St. Joe’s) and Caroling (Thank you, Marlene Rolf) and Fire (thank you Bill Sites and the fire team) and thank you to the City of Waconia for putting up all the lights! Caroling starts at 6, lights go on at 6:30pm. See you there!



Immigration reform critical to state economy

By David C. Olson

MINNESOTA
CHAMBER of
COMMERCE

Look around nearly any Minnesota community, and you'll see the "human capital" of our immigrant populations.

In downtown Worthington, storefronts on 10th Street bustle with activity at immigrant-owned businesses. They used to stand vacant.

In St. Cloud, savvy business owners know that Asian and Latino residents bring more than \$45 million a year in buying power. Even in Faribault and Austin, Asian and Latino buying power is more than \$30 million a year.

In Rochester, a 2011 survey by the African Development Center of 30 African-owned businesses found they had created 100 full-time jobs and 74 part-time jobs. African-owned businesses are popping up in Willmar, too – at least 10 within the past six years.

Yet, as important as immigrants are to our state's economic success, the breadth of their contributions could be much greater with changes in federal policy, says a new report issued by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce as leader of the Minnesota Business Immigration Council.

"The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Minnesota" identifies the role of Minnesota immigrants in every segment of our economy:

- **Workers:** Immigrants comprise 37.2 percent of lower-skilled workers and 8.5 percent of college-educated workers in Minnesota. Immigrants are only 7 percent of Minnesota's population, but make up 9 percent of the total workforce.
- **Entrepreneurs:** Immigrants are more likely to start businesses than American-born individuals. An estimated 44,500 Minnesota businesses are immigrant-owned.
- **Consumers:** Immigrant households in Minnesota have an estimated buying power of more than \$5 billion a year – a boon to businesses and communities across the state.
- **International bridge:** Immigrants increase Minnesota's ability to do business with the world. Immigrant-owned businesses are more likely to export; immigrant professionals help Minnesota companies navigate foreign business environments.

The report wisely encourages policy-makers to take a long-term perspective. In the short run, immigrants may impose a cost: For example, the education of immigrant children is a cost on the state's school system. However, those children are future workers, taxpayers and consumers, and our companies need them to be part of the next generation's workforce. When you look over two or more generations, the evidence shows that immigrants bring a significant net benefit.

The report adds ammunition to the current debate over federal immigration reform. The U.S. Senate passed a bill with bipartisan support; next stop is the House. Please urge your representatives to pass a bill this year.

Businesses that regularly deal with immigration laws say the system is broken. Two changes in federal law would be particularly helpful to keep us competitive in the global economy: First, create a system of work visas that responds to domestic economic conditions. Second, provide a path for individuals currently in the United States to gain permanent residency.

It's short-sighted public policy to shortchange the contributions of immigrants. They fill jobs. They shop. They start companies. They pay taxes. In short, immigrants strengthen and stabilize our communities. Make sure your representatives know it. For a copy of the report, go to <http://mnbiz.cc/1jmICMQ>.

David Olson is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce – www.mnchamber.com.

Ambassador Visits

Backyard Wishes

Laura Cowley - President

www.BackyardWishes.org

Laura@backyardwishes.org

When Laura Cowley found herself with some extra time, she thought of a way to help local kids who may need a little extra help. Her idea became Backyard Wishes, which is a newly formed 501(c)(3) non profit designed to help children within the Waconia 110 school district. They help pay for things that go beyond life's necessities; they help a child to belong to a team, to thrive in their talent and to feel the self esteem that comes along with doing something you love. If you would like to know more, please contact Laura and/or check out their website above.



The Ambassadors present President Laura Cowley and Vice President Linnea Brown with their first dollar of non-profit. Welcome to the Chamber and thanks for your good works!

To be an Ambassador....you must possess the following:

- ◆ A curious nature
 - ◆ 2 hours every month, on the 3rd Thursday
 - ◆ The desire to do more business
 - ◆ The ability to refer a new business
- ◆ Does that describe you? Give us a call! We need more Ambassadors!

Thanks so much to our current Ambassadors:

Gerry Kirby Gk2 Promotions; Darla Holmgren KleinBank,
 Joyce Willems Peterson & Company; Cathy Nielsen CD Products;
 Wendy Petersen-Biorn Carver County Historical Society; Blake Pool Budget Blinds
 Jeff Schulz The Jeff Schulz Team RE/MAX Advantage Plus
 Danielle Alexander Danielle Alexander Designs



Local Toy Drive Deadline 12/9

Bring collected toys and or cash/donations
 to City Hall by Monday, 12/9.

If you need a flyer to post with details on use of this program,
 contact Sarah Wabbe with Waconia Women of Today at 952-442-8262 waconiaareawt@yahoo.com

Still looking for volunteers to help with distribution on Dec 13!

(Especially if you can speak Spanish!)

Member News & Happenings

Lutefisk Dinner at Westview Acres-Wednesday, December 4 Seating @ 11:00am or 12:15pm

Good Samaritan Society/Westview Acres will host its 27th Annual Lutefisk Buffet. All you can eat! Plus Swedish meatballs & lefse. Music provided by Terry Larson
\$15 per person Reservations required. 952-442-7191



Westview Acres-433 W 5th Street, Waconia

A Holiday Affair at the Arboretum-Thursday, December 5 6-9pm

Along with Savvy Magazine, the Arboretum will be hosting A Holiday Affair on Thursday in the Oswald Visitor Center. Find unique gifts, enjoy holiday décor, demos and lively music by Jazziblu. Wine tastings too! \$15, cash bar & refreshments. Free swag bag of offers and goodies to first 300 guests. Bring a toy to donate to Toys for Tots and get a \$5 Shop Buck. Tickets can be ordered at www.savvy.mn For more info on holiday events at the Arboretum, visit www.arboretum.umn.edu



Christmas in Crown Chapel-Dec. 6-8

The Crown College Music Department invites you to celebrate the birth of Christ as the traditional carols and beautiful settings of Christmas come together for this annual favorite of family and friends.

This year's theme is *The Heart in Waiting*.

Begin the evening with a delicious candlelit dinner buffet followed by a concert featuring an amazing line-up of talented vocalists and musicians.

Tickets are \$16 for dinner, plus \$15 for the concert...however, if you order 4 or more combination tickets, you can SAVE \$7 each! For tickets and performance times, click here: www.crown.edu/christmas.



Holiday Open Skate-Sunday, December 8 Noon-1:30

Help Waconia Park & Rec put presents under the tree for local families in need at the annual Holiday Skate! Bring a new unwrapped gift or children's toy to be donated to the Waconia Toy Drive & receive a FREE youth skate admission with every toy donated (max. 4 free admissions/family). \$2.50 skate rentals (free if you bring your own skates!) \$3.50 Entrance fee for Adults, \$2.50 Entrance fee for Youth/Seniors (without donation)



FREE Health Screenings-Tuesday, December 17 8:30am-2:00pm

Ridgeview Medical Center was the recipient of a generous grant from the Penny George Foundation on Health and Healing. Part of their grant money is being spent by giving away FREE biometric health screenings to businesses within their service area.

The Waconia Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a day of "Merry Maintenance- Know Your Numbers" health screenings at the Waconia City Hall for ANY employees of ANY Chamber member business that would like to participate in this screening.

Why might your company benefit? Do you want to:

- Lower company health care costs?
- Increase employee productivity?
- Reduce rates of illness & injury?
- Raise job satisfaction & retention?
- Encourage healthy lifestyles?
- Help your employees identify health risk factors?

The blood sample will be done with a simple finger stick and they will be able to get you your cholesterol numbers. If you choose to fast (nothing to eat for 10 to 12 hours and nothing but water to drink) you will also get your blood sugar number. Along with the blood test results, they will also check your blood pressure, get your pulse and calculate your BMI for you.

Again this is FREE, confidential and open to any employee of a Waconia Chamber of Commerce member business. **This will only take 15 minutes/person and you will get immediate results that you will take with you when you leave!**

You can call or email Sarah Molnau 952-442-2191 x2517 or sarah.molnau@ridgeviewmedical.org at Ridgeview Medical Center to schedule your screening for Thursday December 12th. Time slots are available every 15 minutes, from 8:30am until 2pm.

If your business has more than 3-5 employees that you wish to have screened, Sarah is happy to schedule a time to come to you!





Waconia Chamber of Commerce

Holiday Party

Thursday, December 19, 2013

5:00-8:00pm

Green Olive Catering & Mocha Monkey

Enter through Green Olive-37 West First Street • Waconia

Celebrate the Holidays with your fellow Chamber members. Enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages in a festive atmosphere!

Be Joyful • Be Festive • Be Social!

Event Cost: \$25.00 per person

Includes wine/beer/non-alcoholic refreshments and heavy hors d'oeuvres.

Bring your co-workers, staff, and/or significant other.

R.S.V.P. by Friday, December 13, 2013



Chamber Calendar-December 2013

Saturdays in December: Homespun Holidays in Waconia-Shopping & Special Events all over town

- 5 Coffee Connection at Clearwater Clothing (132 S Olive St) 7:30 - 9am**
Tourism Board Meeting at City Hall 9:15-10:15am
- 10 Retail Committee 2014 Marketing Meeting 6:30pm AmericInn Meeting Room (bring a snack to share)**
- 11 Board of Directors Meeting 11:45-1:00pm in Oak Conference Room**
- 19 Ambassadors Meeting 8:45am in Chamber Office**
Annual Chamber Holiday party at Green Olive Catering & Mocha Monkey 5:00-8:00pm
RSVP to Chamber by FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13!! (Please note: After hours event replaces December Luncheon)

Holiday Hours: The Chamber office will be closed December 24 & 25 and noon on December 31-January 1 for the holidays. Enjoy the holiday with your friends & family!