



CHAMBER NEWS

A publication of the Waconia Chamber of Commerce

March, 2014

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Coffee Connection-March 6 from 7:30-9:00AM @ Keepers of Waconia

People like to do business with people they know...Join us before you hit the road for spring break!

FREE! Coffee, morning snack & business connections! Keepers of Waconia-524 South Elm, Waconia



Welcome New Members!

Chiropractic Solutions

**Dr Angela Bremer*

4080 Tower St #1080
St Bonifacius, MN 55378
952-446-1212

info@chirosolutionsmn.com
www.chirosolutionsmn.com

Chiropractic Care & nutrition

Keepers of Waconia, LLC

**Betty Covington-Nego*

524 South Elm Street
Waconia, MN 55387
952-442-2576

keepersofwaconia@gmail.com
www.keepersofwaconia.weebly.com

General Store, Dollar Store & Shoe
Emporium

**Shop
Waconia**

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Improvising Business

By Stevie Ray



I would guess about 90 percent of the services I receive from people could be replaced by automation. There are ice cream dispensers to replace the guy behind the counter. Reservation websites can hold your theatre tickets as easily as the box office personnel. In fact, the battle rages as to which people prefer; someone answering the phone and directing you to the appropriate department, or a phone menu that lets you self-direct. Which-ever side of the issue gets your vote; there is one reason that so many jobs will never be automated with any success. It is the answer to the question I ask groups at workshops all the time, "What is the only difference between you and automation?"

When I ask that question I get the usual answers, "speed," and "greater accuracy," but the only real difference is emotion. Why would anyone go to a store to buy a shirt when you can find virtually thousands of options online? Purchasing online saves time and gas money, and avoids parking hassles, crowds, and the stress of not finding what you want. With all that efficiency, why deal with people?

The reason is described in the book, Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect. The author, Matthew D. Lieberman, cites research in the field of social-neuroscience. The findings discovered that, without social interaction, our brains literally begin to break down. Every human's brain has a default setting; a type of thinking that engages whenever the brain isn't actively thinking about something or figuring out a problem. This default thinking takes over whenever the brain is at rest. The brain's default setting is social thinking. Even when given only a few seconds rest between problems, the brain will immediately revert to thinking social thoughts; "How do I fit in?" "What do people think of me?" "How will I resolve that personal issue?"

The fact that our brains are wired to engage socially forces us away from our computers, with their highly efficient yet soulless options, and into places where people gather. As a friend once said, "Every now and then we need to breathe the same air." So what are you doing to make sure that, when people make the decision to interact with your business on a personal level, they get something personal? Most of the places I call might as well use a robot to answer the phone. Even worse that a robot, some people sound audibly upset that I interrupted them. "Joe's Body Shop" could be replaced with "Joe's Body Shop, what do you want!?"

And, to those companies trying to train empathy; it isn't working. If I hear one more customer service rep recite, "I am very sorry you are experiencing this problem and I will do my best to rectify the situation" I am going to reply with the same monotone, "I am very sorry that you have to repeat this phrase, especially when you so obviously don't mean it. Is there a human with whom I can speak? Preferably someone who still possesses a pulse?"

Connecting with another person is not that difficult, but it does take work. It takes training your staff to understand the true purpose of their job, connecting with someone. It takes looking at the person behind the sale, the problem, or the request. I think every phone in every company should have a sign above it that reads, What if it was your mother on the other end? And the benefit to a more human workplace pays off for staff as well. The human brain has an internal time clock. The clock either drags or flies by. Our clocks drag when we are engaged in repetitive tasks, but speeds up when we engage in conversation. If you want your staff to feel like the day flies by, don't have them read a script or recite policy, have them actually talk to someone.

Reciting demands no brain power, so ideas come more slowly (resulting in poor solutions). Conversing draws from the highest functioning cortexes of the brain, making problem solving easier. Conversation creates a better human connection, which translates to sales.

What are you doing to bring the human element into human interactions? Listen to phone calls; not just for accuracy, but for connection. Real human connection is easy to track, there will be more laughter, a greater range in the pitch of the voices (rather than monotone), greater forgiveness for inconvenience (for instance, a long period of time on hold), and a conclusion that is more than just "Have a nice day." Human connection is not as subjective as you might think, but it is better business.

Stevie Ray is a nationally recognized corporate speaker and trainer, helping companies improve communication skills, customer service, leadership, and team management. He can be reached at www.stevierays.org or stevie@stevierays.org.



Let's focus on what's best for children

By David C. Olson

MINNESOTA
CHAMBER of
COMMERCE

More than 250 individuals gathered in February at the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Education Summit. The participants represented a diverse cross-section of Minnesotans from business leaders, parents, students, teachers, school administrators and leading education advocates for school change at the state and national levels.

By introducing high-caliber national figures with ideas for common-sense reforms in Minnesota, and highlighting several promising local initiatives, our goal was to ignite a greater urgency for changes to the education system. The summit served as a springboard for the Minnesota Chamber and our local partners across the state to advance common-sense solutions at the 2014 Legislature to ensure a world-class workforce.

Minnesota has a tradition of exceptional schools and exceptional students. We boast high scores on national and international tests. Some of our kids are doing great. But if you look a little deeper, as The Education Trust's Kati Haycock showed us at the event, there is trouble. The gaps in academic achievement are narrowing in the elementary schools, but any traction there is being lost as students advance in the high schools.

Addressing Minnesota's distressing achievement gap between white students and students of color has been something the community has been talking about for a long time, but so far we've only made slight gains. We have a long way to go to ensure that all students have opportunities for lifelong success.

The summit had its detractors – those who charged that this was just another attempt by big corporations to run schools. It's disappointing that the rocks were thrown before the first speaker stepped to our podium. In truth, the ideas advanced echoed exactly what we are hearing from citizens across the state.

A poll recently conducted by the Minnesota Chamber showed strong support to: Provide opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school; give parents easy-to-understand data on how their students are doing; evaluate teacher performance, and use the results as a key factor in determining teacher tenure and pay; improve the performance of the college programs preparing teachers.

The collective message from speakers at the summit was clear: Put politics aside and do what's best for the children. The 2014 Legislature is about to begin, and we're ready to move forward again with common-sense ideas like staffing flexibility that will keep "rising star" teachers in the classroom and expanded dual credit options to lower college costs.

Improving the strength and effectiveness of our education system so that all Minnesotans are prepared for success will strengthen our workforce and strengthen Minnesota's economy. As we heard clearly at our summit, it's time to stop talking about the problem, and put a full-court press on embracing solutions that are good for all our children.

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

Ambassador Visits



Lindsey Fromm accepting her 1st Dollar of Clear Profit from the Ambassadors.

The UPS Store

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store6485@theupsstore.com

www.theupsstorelocal.com/6485

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WestSideCarpetCleaningMN.com

Call or email for an estimate
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Covering the West Metro from Minneapolis to Hutchinson, Rogers and Gaylord. Mark recommends having your carpets cleaned annually. He is bonded & insured with 18 years of experience.



Mark Karstens with his First Dollar of Clear Profit and the Ambassadors.



Minnesota Chamber Session Priorities Event

Pictured at left is the Waconia Chamber of Commerce delegation that attended the annual Session Priorities event. Joining us was MN DOT Commissioner Charlie Zelle, Representative Ernie Leidiger and Minnesota Chamber Transportation & Healthcare lobbyist Bentley Graves. The evening provided a great opportunity for networking and learning more about the business priorities and how the legislature plans to address them. Q & A led by Tom Hauser.

Member News & Happenings

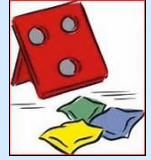
Bean Bag Tournament Fundraiser at The Saloon-Saturday, March 1 @ 5:30pm

Join the Saloon in supporting Brianna McLay who is going to volunteer in South Africa. A portion of the money raised will help support her efforts. Come, have fun and there will be prizes to the top 4 bean bag teams!

Cost: \$20/team

Pre-register (preferred) by calling 952-442-9072 or at the door.

The Saloon-16 South Elm St, Waconia



Memorial Blood Drive –Monday, March 18 Noon-7PM @ Trinity Lutheran Church

This blood drive is held by Chamber member, Memorial Blood Center, will support Chamber member, Ridgeview Medical Center, and will be hosted at Chamber member, Trinity Lutheran Church. Donating blood only takes about an hour. With the bad weather, cold weather and flu season, blood donors have had to cancel many appointments and supplies are low. The need is always great, but they really need your help now.

Please consider make blood donation a part of your life. 952-913-6624 or memorialbloodwaconia@gmail.com to schedule an appointment-walk ins only if slots are available.



LIVE baby bunnies at Taylor Hubbard Photography Mar 15 and April 5

Make your appointment now for your keepsake photos! Orders guaranteed by Easter.

Call 952-442-2711

Taylor Hubbard Photography-44 West First Street, Waconia

www.taylorhubbardphoto.com



Ridgeview Friends & Family Come Together Event-Saturday, March 22 9am-Noon

Join Ridgeview Foundation, Ridgeview Medical Center, Safari Island and more than 35 other community organizations for a FREE, interactive healthy living event that promotes the health, wellness and safety of the entire community.

Enjoy a wide range of activities and presentations designed for children and adults of ALL ages, including health screenings, community and personal health and safety information and much more!

Safari Island Community Center, 1600 Community Drive, Waconia. This is a free event and advanced registration is not required.

For more information, call Ridgeview Foundation at 952-442-6010 or visit www.ridgeviewfoundation.org



14th Annual Dollars for Scholars Campaign underway!

District #110 Dollars for Scholars program awards scholarships to Waconia High School graduating seniors to assist with tuition at a post secondary education institution or costs associated with military enlistment. All money raised will be distributed through scholarships to 2014 graduating seniors. Last year almost \$10,000 was raised for 39 scholarships and this year, with your support, they hope to be more generous.

For your convenience, you may now donate directly online. Visit www.district110foundation.org to make your tax-deductible donation. **Donations are requested by March 28** to determine the number of scholarships to be awarded in May.

Jobs-Jobs-Jobs Do you have a position you need to fill or know someone looking for a job? Check out the Chamber website www.DestinationWaconia.org. "Job Search" is located at the very bottom of the page.

Click the link! If your business would like to post a job, you can post under your member login.

Questions? Contact the Chamber @ 952-442-5812 or ksites@destinationwaconia.org.

Monthly Chamber Luncheon

Thursday, March 27, 2014

11:30am Registration Begins

Program: Noon -1:00PM

Location: Rey Azteca

Address: 813 Marketplace Drive, Waconia



Topic: The Metropolitan Council

What is the Met Council and how their decisions impact business

\$25 per member, \$30 for general admission RSVP Required!

Walk-ins will not be guaranteed.

Please RSVP by Friday, March 21

cgesinger@destinationwaconia.org or 952-442-5812

*Payment will be accepted in advance or at the door.

Please note that you will be billed for all meals reserved and walk-ins not guaranteed.



Chamber Calendar-March 2014

- 1 **Escape to the Islands-Discover treasures all over Waconia! Shop-Dine-Play! 9am to 5pm**
- 6 **Coffee Connection-Keepers of Waconia 524 South Elm 7:30-9:00am**
- 12 **Chamber Board Meeting-Maple Conference Room 11:30am-1:00pm**
- 13 **Retail Committee Meeting-Maple Conference Room 8:00-9:30am**
- 19 **Business Day at the Capitol- leave Waconia at 7:30am return by 6pm RSVP today! Call Kellie**
- 20 **Ambassador Meeting Chamber Office Time 8:45 am**
- 27 **Chamber Luncheon at Rey Azteca 11:45-1:00 Topic: Metropolitan Council**