

Waconia Area Chamber of Commerce  
& Visitors Bureau

# MEMBER GUIDE

2026



a 501c6 non-profit organization  
[DestinationWaconia.org](http://DestinationWaconia.org)

# WELCOME



## Contents

- 2 Who We Are  
Letter from the President
- 3 What We Do
- 4 Networking Events
- 5 Committees
- 6 Get Involved
- 7 Chamber Snapshot
- 9 What Members are Saying
- 10 Membership Investment
- 11 Maximize Your Membership
- 12 Chamber-Led Community Events
- 13 Marketing & Sponsorship Opportunities
- 14 Get Connected



# WHO WE ARE



## Thank you for doing business in the Waconia community!



Thank you for choosing to do business in the Waconia area, part of the fastest growing county in the state of Minnesota! We're grateful for your contribution to our local economy and the role you play in building connections within our community. Local businesses create job opportunities and are an integral part of growth and development. Your involvement in events, community initiatives, and strong commitment create a meaningful impact. Because of you, our business community continues to grow and thrive.

We'd like to take this time to express our sincere appreciation for your membership. Your partnership allows us to support the mission of promoting a positive business environment and enhancing the quality of life in the Waconia community. Your financial investment makes it possible and we're committed to work for your return on investment (ROI) through 4 key initiatives and strategic priorities.

**Community Connection:** *Promoting, expanding, and contributing to meaningful partnerships and collaboration through growth and retention; as well as establishing strong internal processes and procedures.*

**Waconia Prosperity:** *Contributing to shared community prosperity by expanding our networking and connecting opportunities.*

**Talent Forward:** *Driving Workforce and Economic Development for the betterment of the area by growing local partnerships. Watch for details on the Career Exploration Fair & Community EXPO!*

**Destination Waconia:** *Showcasing the Waconia area as a destination to live, work, and play by enhancing marketing and communications.*

The work you do is valuable; we want to continue to preserve our historical roots while also working together to build a thriving and supportive local environment. Again, thank you for choosing to do business here and for your continued support of the Waconia Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau.

Wishing you continued success and prosperity!

### Christine Fenner

President

Waconia Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau





# WHAT WE DO



## MISSION

The Waconia Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit, member-driven organization with a mission to promote a positive business environment and to enhance the quality of life in the Waconia community.

## VISION

To be a thriving community where people love where they work, live, and play.

## KEY INITIATIVES



## QUICK FACTS

Original Articles of Incorporation were filed on March 9, 1962 by Paul Melchert.

The Board of Directors, representing a variety of industries, are the governing and policy-making body of the organization.

The Waconia Convention & Visitors Bureau was established in 2000 and is also governed by a separate board of directors.



# NETWORKING EVENTS



## **Coffee Connection** 1st Thursday of month

Join us each month at a different business location. Connect with business and organization professionals and community leaders, build new partnerships, make new friends, and exchange ideas in a casual setting. No rsvp required, stay for as long as your schedule allows.



## **Chamber Luncheon** typically 4th Thursday of month

Provides members with networking and educational topics, including: Annual Waconia Chamber of Commerce Meeting, State of the City, State of the County, Candidate Forum, Economic Development & Workforce, Impact of Nonprofits, Manufacturing Tours, Public Speaking, Health & Wellness, and more!



## **Women's Connect** quarterly

A focused network designed to encourage, support, and create resources for professional women entrepreneurs and leaders.



## **Chamber Advantage** semi-annually

Learn about the programs, benefits and services that are available to chamber members. Whether you are a new member, a longtime member, or just want to learn more about membership this is an event for you.



## **Business After Hours** quarterly

Networking for members, guests, and colleagues in an informal setting. Build relationships and share what's new with you and your organization.



## **Events Calendar**

Details on the above programs or more fun events in the Waconia community.

# COMMITTEES



## Ambassadors

monthly

Welcomes new members, as well as promotes membership and attendance at chamber events and programs.



## Grow! Minnesota

dates vary

Works on economic development by visiting businesses every year under the Grow! Minnesota program through the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

## Public Policy Committee

ongoing

Keeps members informed of public policy issues that affect local and member businesses. Committed to providing member businesses access and a voice in city, county, and state governments.

## Retail Committee

monthly

Promote the businesses of Waconia in downtown and on the Hwy 5 corridor. This group is active in event planning and advertising and is an excellent place to network with other business owners.

## Tourism Committee

every other month

Develops an overall tourism plan that incorporates marketing strategies in order to increase the economic impact to Waconia.

## Business Education Network – Mfg & Trades

monthly

Develops partnerships and builds future workforce connections through program development, skills, and real-world, hands-on learning experience. In collaboration with Waconia Public Schools Industrial Technology & Engineering teachers, administration, area business leaders, and the Waconia Chamber of Commerce.



## SPECIAL EVENT COMMITTEES

### Nickle Dickle Day

Plan and execute Nickle Dickle Day.

### Golf Tournament

Plan and implement the Chamber Golf Tournament.

### Career Exploration Fair

Plan and execute the 2026 Career Exploration Fair for Waconia High School students to gain exposure to post-high school career paths.

### Community Expo

Plan and execute the 2026 Community Expo to encompass business, home and family services.

Interested in joining a committee?  
Reach out to Christine at  
[cfenner@destinationwaconia.org](mailto:cfenner@destinationwaconia.org)



# GET INVOLVED



The Waconia Chamber hosts a number of programs for members and the community. Involvement in the Waconia Chamber is a great way to further your professional network and grow your business.

## MAKE CONNECTIONS

The chamber provides quality networking programs and events for members. The events and programs help members showcase and promote their businesses. Drop in to a Coffee Connection or register for a Chamber Luncheon. Share what's new with you and your business.



## HOST AN EVENT

One of the many chamber-member benefits is the exposure that your business gets from being involved in events that the chamber promotes. Host a Coffee Connection or a Business After Hours to increase your business name recognition and develop relationships within the community.



## SERVE ON A COMMITTEE

Committees are a great way to network with other business people while sharing your expertise with the chamber. Committee membership is not limited to the chamber contact person representing the business but is open to all employees of the business.



## VOLUNTEER

Get in front of the community throughout the year by volunteering at a special event or participating in a committee. Volunteering opportunities are available during the Carver County Fair, Nickle Dickle Day, Chamber Golf Tournament and more.



## SECOND SATURDAY AFTER LABOR DAY

The Waconia Chamber of Commerce started Nickle Dickle Day in 1961 as a sidewalk sale to promote local spending and keep a vibrant downtown. Many items were a nickel!

**Nickle Dickle Day** and the **Nickle Dickle Eve Street Dance** continue to support our local businesses and are the largest fundraiser of the year for the Waconia Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations.

Get involved: Consideration of your contribution and/or time is appreciated and helps our community to thrive and grow.

[DestinationWaconia.org/NickleDickleDay](http://DestinationWaconia.org/NickleDickleDay)







# WHAT MEMBERS ARE SAYING



Joining the Waconia Chamber was one of the best decisions we made for our new business. Staff and fellow members of the chamber are very welcoming and supportive from day one. The connections and knowledge gained from chamber events greatly impacted the growth of our business.



**MATT DOSTAL**

Owner, Dostal CPA & Tax Consulting

I'm so grateful to the Waconia Chamber and the amazing team for helping make my dream of opening Ruthie's House Vintage a reality! With their fantastic resources, connections, and fun events, I was able to promote my business and meet with so many wonderful people in the community. It truly wouldn't have been possible without the Chamber.



**ASHLEY KLATTE-OLSON**

Owner, Ruthie's House Vintage

We have been a Waconia Chamber member ever since the beginning. With each and every year, I see our chamber getting stronger and stronger. Even through the tough years, the chamber has adapted to help us all.



**KIM MACKENTHUN**

Owner, Mackenthun's Fine Foods

The chamber's dedication to supporting local businesses through advocacy has been invaluable. The support and camaraderie among members creates a collaborative environment that fosters growth and success. We are proud to be part of the Chamber and highly recommend it to any business looking to thrive in the community.



**ANDY STRONG**

Owner, Waconia Dodge

Waconia is an amazing place to work, live, visit, raise a family and be in business. I very much appreciate the leadership of our area chamber, advocating for our communities and businesses at large.



**SARAH URTEL**

VP, Ridgeview

## TOP 10 REASONS TO JOIN

1. Visibility
2. Networking
3. Advocacy / Gov't Relations
4. Economic Workforce
5. Education & Professional Development
6. Promotion & Publicity
7. Community Involvement
8. Tourism
9. Information
10. Get Involved!



# MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT



## INVESTMENT\*

Number of Employees	Rate
1-3 (includes owner)	\$420
4-9	\$545
10-20	\$710
21-30	\$890
31-40	\$1,000
41-50	\$1,150
51-99	\$1,270
100-250	\$1,385
251-499	\$1,490
500+	\$1,655

Retail • Service • Industrial • Education  
Entertainment • Real Estate  
Hair and Personal Care  
Financial • Institutions • Hospitality  
Utilities • Hospitals • Healthcare

*Please note: Two part-time employees equals one full-time employee.*

**Online Membership Application:**  
DestinationWaconia.org and click  
Chamber → Become a Member

Scan to join!



Civic Organizations • Churches  
Charitable Non-profit (1-3 emp)

\$325

**Seasonal**

(open 6 months per year)

\$225

**Individual**

(Community Member,  
Retired Business Executive)

\$100

**Second Location**

(add-on)

\$100

\*Rate discounted if paid in full by check or ACH.

## MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE

### VISIBILITY

- ☒ Enhanced online membership listing & links on DestinationWaconia.org
- ☒ Free advertising in weekly communication
- ☒ Add your events to the chamber website
- ☒ Increased visibility through added social media presence

### NETWORKING

- ☒ Networking event opportunities
- ☒ Join committees & special event committees
- ☒ Volunteer opportunities

### PROMOTION & PUBLICITY

- ☒ Member window decal for business
- ☒ Accept Chamber Bucks at your business
- ☒ Subscription to weekly membership communication, including monthly newsletter

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ☒ Opportunity to sponsor and/or volunteer at chamber events
- ☒ Participation in chamber-led events
- ☒ Ribbon Cuttings & 1st Dollar Ambassador Visits

### ADVOCACY & WORKFORCE

- ☒ Post open jobs on the chamber website
- ☒ Talent Development: Access to programs and partnerships that connect businesses with local talent pipelines and workforce resources
- ☒ Voice for Business: The Chamber represents your interests at the local, regional, and state levels to ensure a business-friendly environment

connect  
support  
grow

## The Real Value of Joining the Chamber

- > If a company is highly involved in its local chamber, consumers are **12%** more likely to think that its products stack up better against its competition.
- > When consumers find out a company is involved with a local chamber, they are **19%** more likely to think favorably of that company.

*The Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber  
of Commerce: A Research Study  
The Schapiro Group*



# MAXIMIZE YOUR MEMBERSHIP



As a new or longtime member, you can maximize your membership and get engaged immediately by taking advantage of chamber events, committees, programs, and benefits that will impact your business.

## ✓ MEMBER PROFILE

DestinationWaconia.org had 100k views last year. Take a minute to update your business directory listing on our website. Add a logo, contact information, photos, videos, and more.

## ✓ DISPLAY WINDOW DECAL

Promote your membership by displaying a window decal on your front door or other high visibility spot. Studies show consumers say they are more likely to buy from a chamber member.

## ✓ ACCEPT WACONIA BUCKS

Waconia Bucks can be accepted at any chamber member business. Just like a personal check, Waconia Bucks spend like cash. Display a “Waconia Bucks Accepted Here” sticker on your front door.

## ✓ MAKE CONNECTIONS

The chamber’s networking events and programs help members showcase and promote their businesses. Drop in to a Coffee Connection or register for a Chamber Luncheon. We’d love to hear what’s new with you and your business.

## ✓ ADVERTISE IN FRIDAY COMMUNICATIONS

Submit announcements, job openings, events, deals and more in weekly Friday communications sent to all members. Submissions run for two weeks and you can submit 10 times each year as part of your membership.

## ✓ ATTEND CHAMBER 101

Learn about the programs, benefits and services that are available to chamber members. Whether you are a new member, a longtime member, or just want to learn more about membership this is an event for you.

## ✓ POST EVENTS & JOBS

Submit upcoming events or job postings to DestinationWaconia.org. You can also post in the Facebook groups or submit a 50-70 word blurb to the weekly Friday Facts email to members.

## ✓ GET SOCIAL

Follow us on social to stay up to date on all that’s happening. Post your events or get featured in a #MemberSpotlight. Tag @DestinationWaconia in your posts and stories so we can share it to help spread the word.



# CHAMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS



**Saturday, May 9, 2026**  
MN Walleye Fishing Opener  
A shopping and dining day

**Sister Saturday**

**April 10-11, 2026**  
Waconia High School  
Connect with students & the community



CAREER EXPLORATION FAIR  
**WACONIA**  
COMMUNITY EXPO

**Monday, July 13, 2026**  
Island View Golf Club  
Golf, sponsors, network, and/ or volunteer

**WACONIA  
OPEN GOLF  
SCRAMBLE**



**Friday, September 18, 2026**  
Downtown Waconia  
Live band

**NICKLE DICKLE EVE  
STREET DANCE**

**Saturday, September 19, 2026**  
Downtown Waconia  
Originated by the Waconia Chamber  
in 1961 to celebrate shopping local.  
The chamber's biggest fundraiser of  
the year!



**October 8-18, 2025**  
50+ scarecrows  
Tour them all and vote



**Saturday, November 7, 2025**  
MN Deer Rifle Opener  
A shopping and dining day



**Friday, November 27, 2025**  
City Square Park, Waconia  
Christmas carols, hot chocolate,  
holiday characters, and Santa Claus!



**Saturday, November 28, 2025**  
'Tis the season to shop local  
(and all year!)





# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Plan your year and reserve optional sponsorships now or invest your time by volunteering at one of the many chamber-led events.

## SUPPORT

### CAREER EXPLORATION FAIR AND COMMUNITY EXPO

April 10 & 11, 2026

Two events for one price. Educate students about your industry on Friday, then promote your business to the community on Saturday.

### CHAMBER GOLF OPEN

Monday, July 13, 2026

Accomplished, amateur, and wanna-be golfers welcome.

### NICKLE DICKLE DAY

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Street Dance: Friday, September 18, 2026

Originated by the Waconia Chamber in 1961 to celebrate shopping local, the chamber's biggest fundraiser of the year!

## CONNECT

### COFFEE CONNECTIONS

1st Thursday of the month

Casual networking at your business that brings 40-50 members together, showcases your space.

### CHAMBER LUNCHEONS

Typically 4th Thursday of the month (except July and December)

Short networking time, lunch and engaging speaker and location identified by the chamber.

## GROW

Join these annual **co-op marketing events** to help your advertising dollars go further.

### WACONIA SCARECROW TOUR

October 8-18, 2026

Create a scarecrow outside your business and drive the community to your door during the tour! Winning scarecrows win prizes.

### RETAIL EVENTS

Sister Saturday - May 9, 2026 | D.E.A.R. Day - November 7, 2026

A sip, shop, and dine event for retail, hospitality, restaurants

Learn more about sponsorships and co-op marketing events in our **Sponsor Guide!**



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### CARVER COUNTY FAIR BOOTH

August 12-16, 2026

2-3 hour shifts to promote your business

### NICKLE DICKLE POP BOOTH

September 19, 2026

2-3 hour timeslots to engage with the community.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Ways to get involved throughout the year! Reach out for opportunities.





# GET CONNECTED



*Follow US*

@DestinationWaconia

@WaconiaEvents @WaconiaChamber

DestinationWaconia.org

**Waconia Chamber of Commerce**  
209 S Vine Street  
Waconia, MN 55387  
**DestinationWaconia.org**  
952-442-5812

Meet the  
Chamber Team



Board of  
Directors



**Proud Members:**



U.S. Chamber of Commerce





Stay  
connected!



a 501c6 non-profit organization  
[DestinationWaconia.org](http://DestinationWaconia.org)