



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED



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Partnering for Success

DECEMBER 2024



**Sterling federal
Bank**



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

Sterling Federal Bank along with
Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce
invite you to attend

Business After Hours

Thursday, December 12th

5:00-7:00

110 E 4th St., Sterling, IL

Cocktails & Hors d'oeuvres




CHOCOLATE
Rendezvous
02.15.25
SVCC.EDU/CHOCOLATE



December Meetings

- December 3 Exec
- December 10 Board of Directors
- December 12 Ambassadors
- December 17 Ag
- December 19 HBLC

Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Directors & Staff

Executive Committee

- President: Pam Fluck
- First Vice President: Geoff Wright
- Second Vice President: Alejandro Rivera
- Treasurer: Tim Determan
- Past President: Dr. Jon Mandrell

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, 2026

- Pam Fluck, Self Help Enterprises
- Sandi Cavazos, US Bank
- Kristina Kaecker, Kunes RV

Term Ends January 31, 2027

- Tim Determan, Pinney Printing
- Lance Buser, Wal-Mart DC #7024
- Ryan Olson, Ward Murray Pace & Johnson
- Bailey Schneiderbauer, Sauk Valley Bank
- Mike Ceruzzi, Moore Tire
- Josh Knie, Knie Appliance & TV

Staff

- Executive Director—Dallas Knack
- Kris Noble

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 2024 comes to a close, I want to express my gratitude for your continued support of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce. This year, we've made meaningful progress on initiatives like workforce development, and working with local students, as well as advocating for the needs of our business community. These efforts reflect the power of collaboration and the strength of our members.

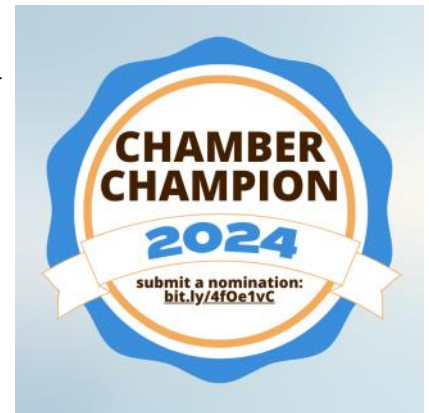
As we look to 2025, our focus remains on fostering growth, supporting Sauk Valley area businesses, and enhancing opportunities for all. Thank you for your commitment to making the Sauk Valley a great place to live and work.

Happy holidays!



The SVACC is seeking nominations for an individual or group to receive the 11th annual Sauk Valley Area Chamber Champion Award.

The Chamber Champion Award honors an individual or group that goes above and beyond to enhance the quality of life in the Sauk Valley. This award recognizes impactful contributions made through volunteer efforts, organizational initiatives, or business achievements that create a positive difference in the community.



[Click here](#) to make a nomination by January 6.



SAVE THE DATE!

SVACC Annual Meeting & Dinner

Thursday, January 23 at Deer Valley Banquet

Join us to celebrate the SVACC, acknowledge our wonderful members, award the Chamber Champ & more!

Investor Update December 2024

NEW INVESTORS

Grot Imaging Studio
1119 Palmyra St., Dixon
815-284-3211

Primo's Bar & Grill
1711 W. 4th St., Sterling
779-297-7080

INVESTOR RENEWALS

Allure of Sterling
Axiom Wealth Advisors
Bartini's
Bushel Basket Candle Co.
Central Heating & Cooling
Clifton Larson Allen LLP
Duncan Land and Auction
effectv
Fraternal Order of Eagles #2783
Hueber/Dekalb Feeds
K's Korner Trading Post
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Manpower
McDonald's
Midland States Bank
NICIL
Raymond James & Associates
Renewal By Andersen
Rosemeyer Management Group
Sauk Valley Pest Control
Sauk Valley Pride
Schilling Funeral Home & Cremation
Scholl Insurance Agency, Inc.
ServPro of Sterling
Shoe Sensation
Showplace Antiques & Treasures

Sjostrom & Sons, Inc.
Sterling Hearing Aid Center
Sterling Landmark
Sterling Rock Falls Family YMCA
Surf Internet
TBK Bank
The Barkery
Total Construction Services
Treja Management LLC
Wahl Clipper Corporation
Ward, Murray, Pace & Johnson
Wesley United Methodist Church
Willy's Restaurant

Over \$1000 Invested

Central Bank Illinois
CGH Medical Center
Community State Bank
Farmer's National Bank
Midland States Bank
Sauk Valley Bank
Select Employees Credit Union
Sterling Federal Bank
The IFH Group
US Bank
Wahl Clipper Corp.
Wal-Mart DC #7024
Ward, Murray, Pace & Johnson

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!

150% Club

Altran Magnetics
Helm Civil
Hill's Electric Motor Service, Inc.
Lance's Plumbing
LK Design Source
Loescher HVAC
Micron

PC Tech 2U
RE/MAX Sauk Valley
Rise Broadband
Sterling Commercial Roofing
Surf Internet
The Cornerstone Agency
United Craftsmen, Ltd.

110% Club

Adobe Acrobat	Frantz Manufacturing	New Millenium Directories	Sinnissippi Centers
Best Cob	Grace Point Church	River Ridge Animal Hospital	St. Vincent DePaul
Bollman Auto Center	Hollyhock Hill Farms	Rock River Energy Services	Trinity Insurance
Bushel Basket Candle Co.	Kelly's Restaurant	Rock River Lumber & Grain	Twin Cities Sunrise Rotary
DeJonge Tax	Kiwanis Club of Sterling	Scholl Insurance	
Dennis Electric of Tampico	McCormick's Nursey	ServPro of Sterling	
	Mertes & Mertes	Showplace Antiques	

Chamber Ambassadors

Allie Johnston – University of Illinois Extension
Brian Hawkins—Brian Hawkins Insurance
Cael Sanders—Sterling Federal Bank
Carmina Lopez—Shay Brown State Farm
Chandra Meyer – Re/Max Sauk Valley
Christina Bystry — House in the Country
Esther Salazar —CGH Medical Center
Hannah Krahn—Sauk Valley Bank

Jennifer Alvarez — Surf Internet
Karen Voss – Morningside of Sterling
Lyndsey Kelly—Sauk Valley Community College
Mary White – Community State Bank
Pam Fluck – Self Help Enterprises
Sami Wiggins — Allure Health Care
Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation
Tygen Bausman—Exquisite Floral and Party Decor

Ambassadors

As the most visual working group within the Chamber organization, the Ambassadors are vital in contributing to the overall success of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce. Be a community leader, expand your network, and promote local businesses. Ambassadors welcome members, attend events, and enhance connections in the Sauk Valley area.

Do you have a staff member who would be a good fit?

Applications are now open for Ambassadors!

Email Dallas at director@saukvalleyareachamber.com for the application.



Business After Hours

November’s Business After Hours was hosted by OnCall Imaging. Members had a chance to tour and check out OnCall’s facilities while mingling and making connections.

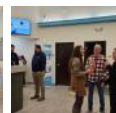
Additionally, the event featured free headshots provided by the SVACC’s **Professional Women’s Network**. In an effort to increase awareness of the group and promote their upcoming events in 2025, all attendees were invited to pose for a free professional headshot.

Please join us on December 12 at Sterling Federal Bank for the last BAH of 2024!

Professional Women’s Network

Save the date for PWN’s next event: January 29 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Details to come.

If you’re interested in supporting PWN in 2025, sponsorship opportunities are now available! Email Dallas at director@saukvalleyareachamber.com or call 815-625-2400.



Government Affairs

New DOL Overtime Rule Halted Nationwide.

Excerpt from jdsupra.com:

Judge Sean D. Jordan of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas ruled that the Department of Labor (DOL) exceeded its statutory authority with the 2024 rule, which would have raised the salary threshold from \$35,568 to \$43,888 effective July 1, 2024 and to \$58,656 effective January 1, 2025. The rule also included automatic triennial updates to the threshold. This increase could have made approximately 4 million workers eligible for overtime pay.

What does this mean for employers? Employers do not need to adjust salaries or reclassify employees to comply with this now-invalid rule. The current overtime threshold remains at \$35,568 (for now). The court has ruled both the July 2024 and the anticipated January 1, 2025 increases exceed the DOL's authority under the FLSA and has invalidated them both.

This ruling is likely to be appealed, which could result in future changes.

Ribbon Cutting



First Onsite Property Restoration
815-908-0285
firststonesite.com

College and Career Fair at Amboy High School

February 10

8:30—11:15 a.m.

Share your insights and spread the word about your business or organization! If you'd like to participate, please click [this link](#) to register.

For more information, email Janet at Jcrownhart@amboy.net

Workforce Development

This fall saw the completion of two Certificate of Employability sessions. One at Rock Falls High School, with 20 students, and one at Milledgeville High School, with 9 students. This program works to bridge the gap between students and educators with employers and businesses. It gives our members a chance to share what they do with a pool of local talent, while enlightening students on what careers are available right here in the Sauk Valley area.

In addition, students learn more about essential skills in the workplace, including communication, problem solving, critical thinking, accountability, and teamwork. Upon completion of the workshop, students receive a certificate of employability that can be added to their resume.

If you would like to be a presenter for the 2025 school year, or sponsor the Certificate of Employability program, please reach out to Dallas at director@saukvalleyareachamber.com or 815-625-2400 by January 15.



Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program



On the day after a divisive national election, Dr. David Hellmich led the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program cohort in a discussion to debrief the results of the 2024 election. Dr. Hellmich and the SVCLP members spoke honestly, addressing the tensions and issues raised by the long campaign season and the election itself. After a short break, Dr. Lori Cortez, Vice President of Advancement at SVCC, presented the Organizational Frames, developed by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal, a way to view an organization from four different perspectives. Bolman and Deal's four-frame model can help leaders identify the root causes of problems, understand the needs of different stakeholders, and design appropriate solutions.

After Dr. Cortez's presentation, Dr. Hellmich led a conversation about the expectations of holding a position on an organization's board. Our cohort added their own experiences on different boards, and we all came away with information and possible options about future opportunities. The morning wrapped up with an overview of Sinnissippi Services by Susan Carlson, LCSW, Internship Coordinator and Clinical Trainer. The vast array of available services certainly support their mission statement: Together we inspire wellness. Jimmy Johns delivered sandwiches, pasta, and cookies for our lunch.

Later in the month, Nik Jakobs, partner, Jakobs Brothers Farms, and Katie Pratt, Lee County Farm Bureau's Agriculture Literacy Coordinator, led a fantastic morning of learning. Together Nik and Katie presented on the agricultural issues that face today's farmers and the world. Nik then facilitated a discussion with a panel of ag experts that included Ashleigh Erbes, manager of the Lee County Farm Bureau; Whitney Mitchell Dewitte, of Mitchell Farm and Mitchell Melons Tampico, IL; and Steve Sheaffer, local farmer and retired Financial Officer for Compeer Financial. Our final discussion included a panel of ag educational experts including Natalie Pratt, SVCC AG student; John Heiser, District 1 coordinator, Illinois Agricultural Education (FCAE); and Kevin Larson, professor, SVCC AG. The culminating learning experience of the morning included a Precision Agriculture Demonstration by Larson, who taught us the vast uses for technology and drones in

farming. We left the morning energized, with a deep appreciation for all those involved in agriculture!



Agri-business Committee Spotlight

During November's Agri-business Committee monthly meeting, committee members presented checks to WACC CEO, Sterling High School FFA, Palmyra Hillbillies 4H, and the Dixon Ag Program. Funds were presented to support ag students, education, and initiatives in the Sauk Valley area.

This committee works to support ag students and programs to ensure a robust future for the ag industry. All are welcome to join the Agri-business Committee; call 815-625-2400 for details on the next meeting.



CEO Program

Written by: Charles Johnson, Sterling High School

As the weeks go by, many knowledgeable speakers have come to class. I noticed that I have incorporated some of the lessons I have learned into my life. I found myself getting out of my comfort zone and looking for ways to innovate my personal business ventures. It's always inspiring when someone comes to class and talks about what they have accomplished.



A little bit about me, when I was younger my mom got me a fish tank for Christmas and I have been hooked since. Let's say that I don't have one fish tank anymore. Now I breed fish, grow aquatic plants, and make terrariums. Recently I have begun to sell my products at an aquatic fish swap in the Quad Cities. CEO class gave me the extra confidence to step out of my comfort zone and apply to become a vendor. I just sold at my second swap, I was happy with how much product I sold. I doubled what I did at the first swap and plan to further my success. My next step is to use some of the teachings I have learned from the CEO class. A few weeks ago Frantz came into our class; they talked of the importance of taking on new business ventures. For my next swap, I plan to incorporate a few new products and ideas. Now I plan to meet and discuss with my mentor a few ideas.

CEO has been beneficial for me in understanding the business environment while understanding the entrepreneurial mindset. As this year has gone on I find myself incorporating things from CEO into my life. I am excited to further myself in this through the teachings of the class.

Written by: Hiram Zigler, Newman Central Catholic High School

After months of wonderful business visits and profound speakers, the CEO West class is ready to use the knowledge they've learned to embark on the CEO class business. We are planning to have the event in early February and we hope to see you all there!



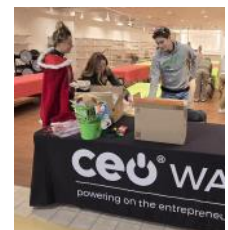
The CEO West class has been preparing and practicing their team skills through the Festival of Trees event. We planned our "Santa's Bake Shop" business which was on November 23 and intend to use our successes and failures to create a beautiful and bountiful class business.

Personally, CEO has helped me develop my professional business skills, whether it is through how I dress or how I speak to real business professionals. CEO puts you through an insurmountable amount of uncomfortable situations which develops you as a person and prepares you for the future. I would recommend CEO to every student who wants to get ahead of the game compared to their fellow students or simply wants to start their own business in the future. I absolutely love CEO and am very thankful that I have this extraordinary opportunity.

Santa's Bakery

"This project helped CEO students continue to work on their team efforts--communicating and problem-solving. CEO West definitely learned some things along the way. We can't wait to present a check to Festival of Trees/Hospice.

Thank you to everyone who supported our project!" Le Hartman, CEO West facilitator.





Meeting Update!

We are cancelling all NAMI Sauk Area Connection Support Group meetings due to lack of staffing. Each meeting requires two trained facilitators. We are focused on sending more individuals to trainings.

In the meantime, we are offering those looking for a NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group meeting to use the virtual meetings offered by both NAMI Northern Illinois and NAMI Illinois.

Virtual Support Group Offerings

NAMI Northern Illinois offers VIRTUAL Connection Meeting:

Every Sunday, 2:00PM

Virtual, Zoom

Every Wednesday, 5:30PM

Virtual, Zoom

NAMI Illinois offers VIRTUAL Connection Meeting:

Every Monday, 7:00PM

Virtual, Zoom

Every Thursday, 7:00PM

Virtual, Zoom

Pre-registration required.

SAVE THE DATE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

Sights & Sounds



Downtown Sterling Christmas Walk

Scan this code for details



Festivities begin at 5 PM for late night shopping, tree lighting, horse & carriage rides, entertainment, kids activities & more!

Sponsored by:



Showplace Treasures & Antiques • Castor Home Nursing • Sterling Woodworks
Northern Illinois Home Medical Supply • Open Door Community Church



For more information visit
www.sterlingmainstreet.org

