



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED



IN THIS
ISSUE:



PAGE 2



PAGE 5



PAGE 6

Partnering for Success

JANUARY 2025

MASQUERADE

SVACC Annual Dinner
and Meeting



Join us for a fun night of masks, mingling,
and mystery at the annual dinner hosted by
WACC CEO and SVACC

Thursday, January 23

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

@ Deer Valley Banquets

3298 Hoover Rd, Deer Grove, IL

\$40 per ticket

Register online at bit.ly/49f1gYp
or call 815-625-2400 by January 16



ceU WACC
powering on the entrepreneurial spirit



INTRODUCING DIANA ALANIS, MD

FAMILY MEDICINE

Now accepting new patients! CGH Dixon Medical Center is pleased to welcome Diana Alanis, MD, to the Family Medicine Department. Dr. Alanis most recently worked in a traditional family medicine practice in Rockford. She is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and provides care for patients of all ages in both English and Spanish. Dr. Alanis sees patients at the CGH Dixon Medical Center, 1321 N. Galena Ave. in Dixon (behind Culver's). To make an appointment, please call 815-284-1600.



(815) 284-1600 • 1321 N. Galena Avenue, Dixon • www.cghmc.com

January Meetings

- January 9 Ambassadors
January 14 Exec
January 16 HBLC
January 21 Board of Directors
January 21 Ag

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
Ronda Borgmann—Financial Specialist
Abby Sandoval—Office and Member Relations

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

Happy New Year! As we welcome 2025, we are filled with gratitude for the opportunities and connections that made 2024 a memorable year. Your support, collaboration, and dedication to our shared vision have been invaluable, and we thank you for being an essential part of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the possibilities this new year brings. Together, we will continue to strengthen our community, foster business growth, and create meaningful connections. Whether through innovative programs, impactful events, or new partnerships, 2025 is poised to be a year of progress and success!

Cheers to embracing new beginnings and making this our best year yet! We look forward to working together and achieving great things for the Sauk Valley area.

With best wishes for a prosperous New Year,

Dallas Knack

Happy Holidays from the SVACC team! Dallas (Director), Abby (Office Manager), and Ronda (Finance Specialist) extend their warmest wishes and heartfelt thanks to our members, community, and supporters near and far.



Welcome, Abby!

Abby Sandoval is our new Office and Member Relations Manager at the SVACC. She is a University of Dubuque graduate with a background in Communications and Marketing. Abby and her husband spent the last 3 years exploring Downtown Denver. They moved back to Sterling, her husband's hometown, to start a family. She runs the social media for her husband's business Bagels by Toast and Plate. They just welcomed a baby boy, Arthur James, in August.



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!

[Click here to register](#) or call 815-625-2400.

Investor Update January 2025

NEW INVESTORS

M5 Industries
407 E. 7th St., Rock Falls
815-590-3114

Mosaic Theatre Troupe
Mosaictheatretroupe.org

Solstice Salon and Scalp Spa
17 E. 3rd St., Sterling
309-752-3218

INVESTOR RENEWALS

Advocare Independent Distributor
Avonlea Cottage
Behrz Bloomz
Brent's Upholstery & Auto Accessories
Cora Physical Therapy Sauk Valley
Crown Exterminator, Inc.
Davis & Gisi
Holiday Inn Express & Suites
Imprintable Memories
McDonald Funeral Home & Crematory

MCR Technologies Group, Inc.
Mosaic Theatre Troupe
Planet Fitness
River Country 101.7, WIXN 1460AM, Sky 95.7FM
Shay Brown State Farm Insurance
Stahr Media
The Butcher Shop
Trinity Insurance & Financial Services
US Bank
Wal-Mart D.C. #7024
Whiteside Area Career Center
Whiteside County Senior Center

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
M5 Industries

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

Best Cob

Bollman Auto Center

Bushel Basket Candle Co.

DeJonge Tax

Dennis Electric of Tampico

Frantz Manufacturing

Grace Point Church

Hollyhock Hill Farms

Kelly's Restaurant

Kiwanis Club of Sterling

McCormick's Nursey

Mertes & Mertes

New Millenium Directories

River Ridge Animal Hospital

Rock River Energy Services

Rock River Lumber & Grain

Scholl Insurance

ServPro of Sterling

Showplace Antiques

Sinnissippi Centers

St. Vincent DePaul

Trinity Insurance

Twin Cities Sunrise Rotary

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

Ambassador Spotlight

My name is Carmina Lopez, and I'm excited to share that I joined the Chamber just a couple of months ago! Growing up in Rock Falls, I have always felt a deep connection to this community, and I'm eager to become more involved and contribute to its growth and vitality.



Currently, I work at Shay Brown State Farm, where I am dedicated to helping individuals and families protect what matters most to them. It's incredibly rewarding to assist clients in navigating their insurance needs and ensuring they have the right coverage for their unique situations.

Beyond my professional life, I am passionate about community engagement and look forward to collaborating with fellow members of the Chamber to drive positive change. I believe that being actively involved in local initiatives helps strengthen our community and creates lasting relationships. In my spare time, I love exploring the great outdoors and spending time with friends and family, sharing laughs and creating memories.

If you're interested in learning more about how Shay Brown State Farm can support your insurance needs or if you want to connect and collaborate on community projects, please feel free to reach out. I'm looking forward to the journey ahead and making a meaningful impact in Rock Falls!

My contact is: 815—625-5100, Carmina@shaybrown1.com

313 1st avenue

Rock Falls, IL 61071

Business After Hours

We rounded out the year with Business After Hours at Sterling Federal Bank. It was a festive time for our members to get together and chat about goals for 2025.

Our next Business After Hours will be February 20 at Sterling Main Street. Please join us!



Government Affairs



Minimum Wage Increase & Pay Transparency January 1, 2025

On January 1, 2025 workers will see an increase of \$1 per hour from \$14 to \$15. The minimum wage for tipped workers will rise to \$9 per hour and youth workers (under 18) working fewer than 650 hours per calendar year will see their hourly wage increase to \$13 per hour.

This is the seventh and final increase in the state's minimum wage that was included in legislation signed by Governor Pritzker in 2019, establishing a schedule of increases resulting in a \$15 per hour minimum wage in 2025.

Additionally, The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) is reminding job seekers and employers that, effective January 1, 2025, all job postings made by employers with 15 or more employees will need to include pay scale and benefit information.

This amendment to the Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003 (IL EPA) was contained in HB 3129, passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker in 2023.

The amendment brings greater transparency to the hiring process by giving prospective employees the opportunity to learn about what compensation and benefits the employer will offer for an open job position.

Ribbon Cutting



Selmi's Formal Wear
2900 E. Lincolnway, Sterling
815-441-0643



Mosaic Theatre Troupe
Check out their facebook page
for more information!



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

Congratulations to Culver's of Rock Falls for receiving the Customer Service Award!

They were nominated for being a great partner in fundraising and giving back to their local community. Additionally, their nominator said "the staff is always so helpful and friendly. Plus their food is delicious!"



CSA Sponsored by:



Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program



What a great morning of learning for the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program cohort and the WACC CEO Class on December 4th. We shared some quick introductory discussions before diving into thoughtful, small-group discussions with the following state and local government representatives: State Representative Bradley Fritts; Li Arellano, newly elected Illinois State Senator; Tom Kitson and Bob Olson, Lee County Board members; Kaitlyn Ekquist and Josh Johnson, City of Sterling - City Hall alderpersons; Mary Oros, Mike Venier, and Dennis Considine, City of Dixon Councilpersons. The Dixon Park District Facility staff were incredibly gracious hosts and Good Time Johnny's Grille catered the perfect lunch to share after we laughed our way through the "Favorite Things Swap." You can learn more about the adult leadership program at <https://www.svleadership.org/>



Agri-business Committee Spotlight

During November's Agri-business Committee monthly meeting, committee members presented checks to Prophetstown Lyndon Tampico FFA, Fulton FFA, Bureau Valley FFA, Oregon FFA, and Amboy FFA 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.





Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce
& Sterling Main Street invite you to

YOUNG LEADERS CONNECT & CULTIVATE

for individuals under the age of 40

Wednesday
January 15

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Elevate Youth Center
505 W Lynn Blvd, Sterling

Hear from your peers! Discover social clubs and leadership opportunities in the Sauk Valley at an engaging "speed networking" mixer event.

RSVP for this free event:
forms.gle/Riuus6aeVWVkJscA



Questions? Email Dallas at director@saukvalleyareachamber.com



LUNCH & LEARN

HOW CAN I FIND MORE TIME AND MONEY?

Bottom line: No matter how much money in the world you have there is one thing that no one can buy – TIME.



We all have the exact same amount of time no matter your career, income, or state of affairs.

There is a lot of power in realizing this. **The key is using this to your advantage.** This presentation will give you real life examples in how to best utilize your time and review your resources.

Wednesday,
January 29

Time and money are very intertwined. The goal is to take advantage of this intersection. Several strategies will be shared that you can immediately take back with you to both your office and home that will have an impact in the new year and years to come.

SUZANNE RAVLIN

Suzanne Ravlin, a lifelong resident of the Sauk Valley area, is the **Chief Executive Officer for Serenity Hospice and Home** in Oregon, IL. With a deep passion for healthcare and end-of-life care, her career spans manufacturing, healthcare, law, and entrepreneurship, including teaching Business Law at SVCC. Suzanne holds a finance degree from the University of Illinois and a juris doctorate from Michigan State College of Law. She is licensed to practice in Illinois and Michigan, and is a certified mediator. Her goal is to make sure no one day of work is ever the same.

She lives in Dixon with her husband, Luke, and daughter, Rachel, and actively volunteers with the Sauk Valley College Foundation, Junior Achievement, and St. Patrick's Parish. Suzanne enjoys basketball, golf, pickleball, and family adventures.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
BETHEL REFORMED CHURCH
230 E. 23RD ST., STERLING

\$25 members | \$45 non-members
Lunch included.

Register by 1/22 at bit.ly/3Dly7Pi
or scan the QR code



Questions? email Dallas at director@saukvalleyareachamber.com