



Sauk Valley Area  
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**ACCREDITED**



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ISSUE:**



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# Partnering for Success

JUNE 2024

## BUSINESS *after* HOURS

HOSTED BY NORTHERN ILLINOIS CANCER TREATMENT CENTER

**Thursday, June 20  
5:00 to 6:30 p.m.**

**Northern Illinois Cancer Treatment Center  
327 IL Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021**

We realize the battle against cancer is more than just physical – it is also emotional, psychological and spiritual. We are here for the community when cancer strikes. Join us for Business After Hours to enjoy tours, refreshments and networking.



**NICANCER.COM | (815) 284-1111**

**COLLEGE**  
*for kids*  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
AVAILABLE

Make summer  
memorable with classes  
offered through SVCC.  
**June 3 – August 8**  
Visit [svcc.edu/CFK](http://svcc.edu/CFK)  
or email  
[dana.j.chacon@svcc.edu](mailto:dana.j.chacon@svcc.edu)

## June Meetings

June 6 Exec Board

June 11 Board of Directors

June 13 Ambassadors

June 18 Ag

June 20 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—Kris Noble

Marketing Coordinator — Dallas Knack

Office Manager/Financial Specialist—Janie Fisher

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

I started my journey with the SVACC in September 2014 as the project coordinator, and in January 2015 became the executive director. This happened because a group of people, including the board of directors at the time, and Kim Ewoldsen, saw something in me, that I wasn't even sure I had in me, to lead an organization and continue the amazing work that has been done for this area since the Chamber started in 1912!

It has been almost 10 years on this incredible, humbling, fun, and exciting journey, but I am announcing my resignation from the SVACC. It has been an emotional past few weeks but, I have been given the opportunity to work for the Midland Institute of Entrepreneurship Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (MIE-CEO) program at the national level. I am leaving a job I truly love, which has been a difficult decision, but it is just time to take on this opportunity and new challenge.

I cannot put into words what this job and this community mean to me. I have met some of the most fabulous, intelligent, funny, kind, interesting, committed, and enthusiastic people through this work. There are so many amazing leaders whom I have learned from. I thank you all for your willingness to answer my questions (often many, many questions), to challenge me, to encourage and support me, and to help me grow professionally and personally.

I want to thank you, our members, for your commitment to this organization. We truly could not do all of the work we do without your investment and support. It seems cliché, but a chamber, any organization really, is only as strong as its membership, and this chamber has been able to accomplish so much for the Sauk Valley because of all of you.

We will soon be announcing the plans for moving the organization forward. The executive board has been meeting and discussing the future. I will be moving to a part-time role with the Chamber through the summer/fall to support the transition and will be working 15 hours per week.

My position with MIE-CEO is remote, so we are able to stay in the Sauk Valley!

You can continue to contact me at my email: [knoble@saukvalleyareachamber.com](mailto:knoble@saukvalleyareachamber.com).

With gratitude,



# Investor Update June 2024

## NEW MEMBERS

Ana's Café  
901 First Ave., Rock Falls  
815-626-4294

## INVESTOR RENEWALS

Astec Industries	Petersen Health Care
Axiom Wealth Advisors	Radio Ranch, Inc.
Bethel Reformed Church	RiverWorks Coworking LLC
Dennis Electric	Rock River HR Professional Assoc.
Edward Jones—Haas	Showplace Antiques & Treasures
Fringe Co Salon & Western Boutique	Sterling Hearing Aid Center
Green Bee Energy Efficiency	Sterling Steel Warehouse
Happy Tails Animal Shelter	Surf Internet
PC Tech 2U	Willy's Restaurant

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!

### Over \$1000 Invested

Central Bank Illinois  
CGH Medical Center  
Community State Bank  
Etnyre & Co.  
Farmers National Bank - Morrison  
Midland States Bank  
Sauk Valley Bank  
Select Employees Credit Union  
Sterling Federal Bank  
US Bank  
Wahl Clipper Corp.  
Wal-Mart DC #7024  
Ward, Murray, Pace & Johnson

### 150% Club

Altran Magnetics  
Bushel Basket Candle Co.  
Candlelight Inn  
Helm Civil  
Hill's Electric Motor Service, Inc.  
Illinois American Water  
Lance's Plumbing  
LK Design Source  
Loescher HVAC  
Lutheran Social Services of IL  
Mattox Insurance Agency  
McDonald's

Moore Monument & Granite Co  
NICIL  
PC Tech 2U  
RE/MAX Sauk Valley  
Rise Broadband  
Rock River Hospice & Home  
Select Employee Credit Union  
Sterling Commercial Roofing  
Sterling Rock Falls Child Care  
Sterling Township  
Surf Internet  
The Cornerstone Agency  
United Craftsmen, Ltd.

### 110% Club

1st Gateway Credit Union	Hill Fastener	Mertes & Mertes	Showplace Antiques
Astec Mobile Screens Inc	Imprintable Memories	NAMI Sauk Area	St. Vincent DePaul
Bardier & Ramirez Real Estate	James S. Ferris DDS, PC	New Millenium Directories	Sterling Chevrolet
Bollman Auto Center	Kelly's Restaurant	Rock River Lumber & Grain	The Factory
Compeer Financial	Kiwanis Club of Sterling	Rock River Ready Mix	Trinity Insurance
Dennis Electric of Tampico	Marv Lofgren & Sons	Scholl Insurance Agency	Winter Construction
Hawkins-Cassens Insurance	Contractors	Servicemaster	
	McCormick's Nursey	ServPro of Sterling	

## Chamber Ambassadors

Allie Johnston – University of Illinois Extension

Arnulfo Valdivia—Sauk Valley Bank

Brian Hawkins—Brian Hawkins Insurance

Cael Sanders—Sterling Federal Bank

Cassandra Salmon – OnCall Imaging

Chandra Meyer – Re/Max Sauk Valley

Christina Bystry – House in the Country

Esther Salazar –CGH Medical Center

Jennifer Alvarez – Surf Internet

Karen Voss – Morningside of Sterling

Lyndsey Kelly—Sauk Valley College Foundation

Mary White – Community State Bank

Pam Fluck – Self Help Enterprises

Rene Betts – Plotner Insurance Consultants

Sami Wiggins – Allure Health Care

Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation

Skip Dettman—LSSI

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### Esther Salazar - CGH Medical Center

My name is Esther Salazar, and I recently joined the Chamber as an Ambassador in February of this year. I work for CGH Medical Center in the Auxiliary department and the Marketing department. I've been at CGH for over four years and am happy to be part of an organization that is constantly working to improve its patient care and be involved in the community.



In the Auxiliary department, I work with CGH Auxiliary volunteers. The volunteers generously give their time to help with a variety of tasks at CGH. They provide wheelchair transport, help people find where they need to go, assist at fundraisers, blood drives, and much more. I help make sure the volunteers have what they need to be successful. I also take part in planning events for the Auxiliary, such as our recent Spring Banquet to celebrate everything the volunteers do for CGH. If you're interested in volunteering for CGH you can call 815-625-0400 ext. 5727.

In marketing, I work with my department to promote CGH services and the exciting and new developments happening at the hospital. I look forward to all the projects and updates CGH has planned. Keep an eye out for our next HealthLines newsletter for all the newest information.

Outside of my work at CGH, I love sewing and crafting in my spare time. I often attend yearly conventions and renaissance fairs. I like taking walks through Sinnissippi and Kilgour. I also have a big sweet tooth and love stopping at Sophie's Café for a white chocolate hot chocolate or La Michoacana for some ice cream.

# Ribbon Cuttings



Sterling Township—new location  
505 W. Lynn Blvd., Sterling  
815-625-3990



Milledgeville Church of the Brethren  
25257 Dutchtown Rd., Milledgeville  
815-225-7812



Sterling Federal Bank- East Lobby  
3200 E. Lynn Blvd, Sterling  
815-626-0614



Paul Bonnell Creative  
[www.paulbonnell.com](http://www.paulbonnell.com)



Ana's Café  
901 First Ave., Rock Falls  
815-626-4294



Radar Free Press  
117 W. 2nd St., Rock Falls  
[theradar.online](http://theradar.online)



Central Bank Illinois  
2928 E. Lincolnway, Sterling  
(815) 564-2010

## Business After Hours

Thank you to Central Bank Illinois for hosting this month's BAH.

Please join us next month at Northern Illinois Cancer Treatment Center on June 20.



## Member Spotlight

The Jake Gerdes State Farm Agency, your premier source for comprehensive insurance in Sterling, Illinois and the surrounding communities. Our dedicated team of insurance agents is here to assist you in protecting what matters most to you.

Conveniently located at 3307 E Lincolnway, Sterling, our office is ready to serve you. Whether you're planning for the future with life insurance, looking to protect your vehicle, home, rental property, or business, our knowledgeable team is here to provide personalized service. You can reach us at 815-625-5012 to discuss your insurance needs and get started on finding the right coverage for you.



We understand that navigating the insurance market can be overwhelming, which is why we offer complimentary insurance quotes for all our products. This allows you to compare options and make informed decisions based on your specific needs and budget. At the Jake Gerdes State Farm Agency, we strive to deliver a personalized and stress-free experience, ensuring you feel confident and secure in your insurance choices.



## Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program



The topic for the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program's May 1st class was "Resilient Leadership." Our first keynote speaker was Sauk Valley Community College's Dr. Lori Cortez, who discussed her own resilience in the face of overwhelming odds, while also providing many teachable moments on her journey to the Sauk Valley area. Our second speaker of the morning was Scott Hibbard, owner of Hibbard Builders and managing partner of Sterling Woodworks. Hibbard helped the cohort examine their need to embrace adversity, be mission-focused, and learn through the process. The class then toured Hibbard's impressive Sterling Woodworks, where the perfect cabinets for any need can be designed, built, delivered, and installed for a competitive price. The Factory Pub 'n' Grub delivered a delicious lunch right to the showroom.

The finale for the '23-'24 Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program was Wednesday, May 8, 2024, in the Riverview Conference Room at Sauk Valley Community College. The culminating task for SVCLP students is a "Call to Action." Students discussed the various lessons and information they learned from the program and how they will apply these experiences to create and meet new goals moving forward. These students articulated inspiring, humbling, and creative reflections on their ten months together. What a great group of passionate and talented Sauk Valley community members!

We look forward to the good things you'll all do!

**Want to know more? Applications for the 2024-25 cohort are now open!**

Click [here](#) for more information.



Front row (l-r): Cyndi Starr, Sara Root, Addison Perales, Gina Smith, Art Van Zuiden, Joe Stouffer

Back row (l-r): Facilitator Laura Carbaugh, Brandy Muntean, Lyndi LeMay, Lauryn Henson, Heather Waninger, Anita Carney, Katie Baker, Rebecca Green, Stephanie Richardson  
Absent: Eric Valdez

# Congratulations to our 2024 scholarship recipients!

The Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce awards scholarships to students pursuing a college degree in a variety of fields. Four scholarship opportunities are available: The Charles Farnham Scholarship, The Agribusiness Committee Ag Scholarship, the SVACC Manufacturing Scholarship, and the Hispanic Business Leaders Scholarship.

**This year, 27 scholarships were awarded totaling \$32,750**



Dana Merriman  
Illinois State University  
Ag Scholarship



Marisa Folkers  
UW Platteville  
Ag Scholarship



Sean Fitzpatrick  
Iowa State University  
Ag Scholarship



Emma Dinges  
Iowa State University  
Ag Scholarship



Emma Stabler  
Iowa State University  
Ag Scholarship



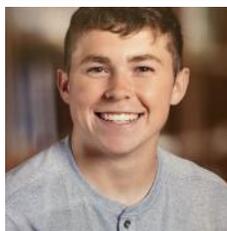
Jace Urish  
Highland Community College  
Ag Scholarship



Katelyn Stoller  
UW Platteville  
Ag Scholarship



Katie Shafer  
University of Illinois  
Ag Scholarship



Landon Whelchel  
NIU  
Ag Scholarship



Briann Spoerlein  
Blackhawk  
Ag Scholarship



Lane Near  
SVCC  
Ag Scholarship



Molly Ziegler  
Blackhawk  
Ag Scholarship



Troy Anderson  
Iowa State University  
Ag Scholarship



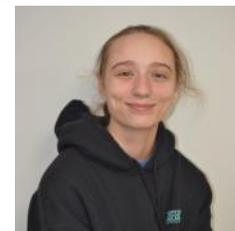
Owen Farral  
Blackhawk  
Ag Scholarship



Wyatt Wessell  
Illinois State University  
Ag Scholarship



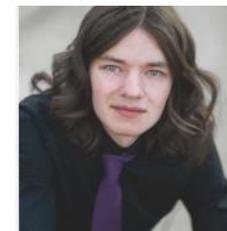
Bart Piper  
SVCC  
Manufacturing Scholarship



Izabelle Camp  
SVCC  
Manufacturing Scholarship



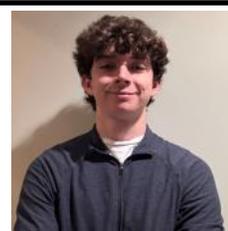
Niklaus Joseph Nardini  
Morrison Institute  
Manufacturing Scholarship



Owen Miller  
Morrison Institute  
Manufacturing Scholarship



Brecken Peterson  
undecided  
Farnham Scholarship



Carver Grummert  
undecided  
Farnham Scholarship



Ben Munoz-Ripley  
undecided  
Farnham&HBLC Scholarships



Servando Diaz  
University of Illinois  
Farnham&HBLC Scholarships



Josue Arreola  
undecided  
HBLC Scholarship



Diego Zaragoza  
undecided  
HBLC Scholarship

## Congratulations to Manufacturing Scholarship recipient, Michael Jenkins on his graduation from SVCC!

Michael Jenkins '24 graduated from Sauk Valley Community College with an Associate of Applied Science and seven certificates. Born to a mother struggling with addiction, Michael's early days were marked by challenges, including being on the autism spectrum and facing educational barriers. Despite lacking resources, his grandmother homeschooled him, instilling a thirst for learning. Moving to the Sauk Valley area, Michael found opportunity in adult education programs, earning his GED swiftly and excelling in college transition courses. With determination, Michael maintained a 4.0 GPA, completed honors projects, and actively contributed to campus life. He graduated from the Multicraft Technology program with a job in his desired field, ensuring stability for himself and his family. Michael's story is one of resilience, perseverance, and the transformative power of education.



## Workforce Development

### Signing Day 2024

In partnership with Regional Office of Education #47, Whiteside Area Career Center, Rock Falls High School and area employers, the first annual Signing Day was held for local students entering the workforce in manufacturing and trades pathways.

These students participated in classes offered through WACC or RFHS to gain skills in the manufacturing pathway. As part of the class, students were eligible to have an internship during their senior year. Local employers provided these internships and some offer full time employment to these students upon graduation.

Thank you to SVACC members IFH and Douglas and Frye for your commitment to supporting career pathways and investing in our local students.



## Congratulations to Pest Control Consultants for receiving the Customer Service Award!

They were nominated for being friendly and knowledgeable. Their nominator said, "they were willing to answer every question I had and explained in detail the services they offered."

For more information visit [pccil.com](http://pccil.com) or call 815-421-1885.

CSA Sponsored by:



Mike Sprague  
State Farm



## Government Affairs

*Written by Molly A. Arranz and Michael M. Chang*

### **BIPA Reform on the Horizon: Illinois Legislature Passes Significant Legislation Eliminating Per-Scan Damages**

The first—and a significant—amendment to the Illinois Biometric Privacy Act (BIPA) has just passed both chambers of the Illinois legislature and is headed to Governor Pritzker for approval. SB2979 amends BIPA to address the troubling trend of litigants seeking per-scan damages under BIPA, where a handful of enterprising attorneys have, and continue to file, single-plaintiff cases seeking damages on a per-scan basis that exceed six-figures for a single individual.

Imagine on any given day one likely clocks-in and out at least four, if not more, times—and these plaintiffs are seeking either \$1,000 or \$5,000 each time they did so. The implications if such damages are imposed are clear, yet not unfounded. To the contrary, per-scan damages were green-lit by the Illinois Supreme Court in *White Castle*, with the caveat that a trial court has the discretion to fashion a damages award so that it does not drive businesses into the ground, which is hardly any respite for businesses facing these lawsuits.

Yet, even in the absence of this disturbing trend, almost all BIPA cases are pled seeking relief on a per-scan basis, and it is a common tactic to drive-up both the costs in discovery and settlement value. Recognizing this alarming strategy, the Illinois legislature appears to have (finally) stepped in to tamp down this often wielded cudgel.

Specifically, SB2979 amends damages as it pertains to two subsections under BIPA concerning: (i) the collection or capture of biometrics identifiers or information, and (ii) prohibiting their disclosure, without consent. Under the proposed amendment, an entity would potentially commit a single violation under each subsection but relief would be limited to “at most, one recovery[.]” The bill provides that the amendment is to take effect immediately upon becoming law.

If the bill is signed and goes into effect, it would provide much needed guidance and be a welcomed development. It would appear that plaintiffs could no longer seek such ruinous damages upon behalf of a single individual (let alone a class of them), and better yet, could not use the threat of them to drive-up costs and settlement. But there are still some open questions that will need to be addressed, likely by the courts. Among them: can this amendment be applied retroactively to businesses already in the throes of litigation? Is there an argument that there can only be one recovery if a scan violates both subsections simultaneously? Certainly there will be debate and argument over these issues and litigants may be incentivized to pursue damages under each separate subsection of BIPA, of which there are five.

Even with this development, the best defense is a good offense and businesses operating in Illinois must be proactive by analyzing whether BIPA applies to your business practices—or could arguably apply such as in the case of recordings made of employees. Companies should take the necessary steps to ensure compliance, in order to stave off these lawsuits all together. While per-scan damages appear to be on the way out, it is a certainty that creative litigants will continue to try to maximize the value of these cases, under BIPA, however they can.

## Guest Editorial

*Written by Carrie Melton, Executive Director of April House*

Many of you have heard of April House, but don't know what we do! So here is a bit about our important work as a child advocacy center (CAC) in Whiteside County. We are a non-profit organization/charity serving all of Whiteside County, occasionally other parts of the state/country; have 3 staff members: Director, Forensic Interviewer, and Advocate; and conduct case coordination of child abuse cases that involve child sexual abuse, severe physical child abuse, risk of abuse, child abuse materials & youth witnesses to violence. April House is a child-friendly place for children and their non-offending caregivers to receive advocacy, forensic interviews & referrals. We work closely with a multi-disciplinary team of professionals that includes 11 law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, DCFS, medical professionals, and therapists.

**Forensic Interviews:** our highly trained & experienced forensic interviewer provides a safe place for children to tell about what happened to them in their own words, at their own pace. These interviews are a major part of a child abuse investigation and many times is the first step in an investigation. The interviews can help avoid a child being questioned multiple times and/or testify in court.

**Advocacy:** our experienced & inclusive advocate connects non-offending caregivers with resources for their child to help support them in their healing journey. These include forensic medical exams, trauma-informed therapy, and other local services.

In 2023, We provided 158 new children with services (27 physical abuse, 131 sexual abuse), conducted 141 forensic interviews, offered other support to 361 family members, assisted with 105 DCFS investigations, and referred 85 children to counseling.

### **Other information you may not know about April House CAC:**

- April House is one of 41 Child Advocacy Centers in Illinois
- We host monthly case review meetings to discuss case updates & barriers.
- We are funded by local, state and federal grants, United Way, Fines, fees, fundraisers and donations. All donations are tax-deductible.
- We provide each child with a new blanket & toy as they leave April House.
- We are nationally accredited by the National Children's Alliance.
- We will present to your organization, workplace, church group, etc.



**1 IN 5 CHILDREN IS  
SEXUALLY SOLICITED  
WHILE ON THE INTERNET**



# JAYCEES FIREWORKS SHOW & INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

## ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### COUNTRYMAN \$75

- Company logo displayed in downtown area on sign.

### PATRIOT \$150

- COUNTRYMAN Benefits
- +  
▪ Media promotions and Inclusion in advertising

### HERO \$500

- Patriot level benefits
- +  
▪ Hero Banner displayed in downtown area
- Radio Promotions



Contact: [srfjaycees@gmail.com](mailto:srfjaycees@gmail.com) or 815-564-8711

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE BRADLEY FRITTS



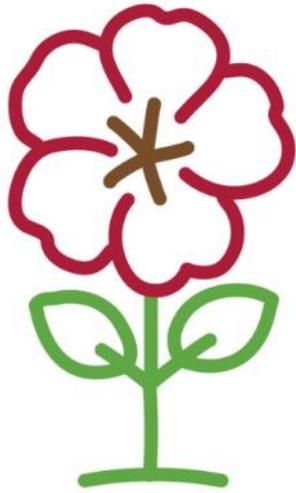
**JUNE 8  
9 - 11 A.M.**

**Self Help Enterprises  
2300 W Le Fevre Road  
Sterling, Illinois**

Join Rep. Bradley Fritts and Self Help at this FREE shredding event! Participants should follow all directions when entering the parking lot. This is a drive-up event, but participants may exit their vehicles to watch the shredding. Only residential paper documents without paper clips will be accepted. Brochures on state and local programs will be available.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT  
REP. BRADLEY FRITTS 815-561-3690 | [repfritts.com](http://repfritts.com)**





# Pop-Up MARKET

DOWNTOWN STERLING

*Live Music • 30+ Vendors • Community*

2nd & 4th Thursdays

5:00-8:00 PM • Dale Park

*Scan for  
More Info!*



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BOSTON LEATHER • CGH MEDICAL CENTER  
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Northern Illinois Home Medical Supply  
Majeski Motors

[WWW.STERLINGMAINSTREET.ORG](http://WWW.STERLINGMAINSTREET.ORG)

## Entertainment Schedule

June 13

Pat Jones

Acoustic Assassin

June 27

New Shoes

July 11

Todd Lorenc

July 25

Bobbi White + Co

August 8

Shaylyn O'Laughlin

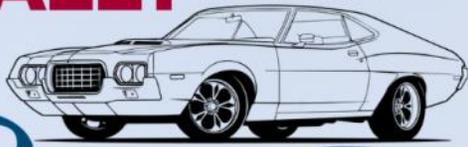
August 22

Folk n' Stages



STERLING MAIN STREET'S

**RALLY** *on the*



**Rock** *CRUISE NIGHTS*

*Presented by*



**AUTO & TRUCK PARTS**



at the  
**Sterling  
Marketplace**

Friday Nights 6-8 PM  
June 7 • July 5 • August 2

*Live Music. Cool Cars. Food Trucks.*

June 7

**UNRESOLVED**

August 2

Howard and the White Boys



July 5

Todd Striley & the Noize



*Additional sponsorship provide by:*  
Micron Industries • CGH Medical Center  
Boss Roofing-Siding Experts  
Majeski Motors • TBK Bank  
Showplace Antiques & Treasures



[WWW.STERLINGMAINSTREET.ORG](http://WWW.STERLINGMAINSTREET.ORG)

