



Sauk Valley Area  
chamber of commerce

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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# Mission

**To Enhance the Economic  
Climate and Quality of Life in  
the Sauk Valley Area.**

- Provide Value to Membership
- Strengthen the Local Community
- Enhance Community Leadership

# Strategic Priorities

## A letter from the Director:

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the collective achievements of our chamber and the incredible spirit of collaboration that defines the Sauk Valley community. Your unwavering support, dedication, and shared commitment to our mission—*“To Enhance the Economic Climate and Improve the Quality of Life in the Sauk Valley Area”*—have been the driving force behind our successes.

This year, we reached significant milestones together. We saw increased engagement with events such as the Manufacturing Dinner and Steak Fry in the Country, while projects such as Certificate of Employability and the Childcare Taskforce received increased support. These initiatives highlight the desire for growing our local talent and providing resources to our community.

Our advocacy efforts focused on issues that matter most to our members, including workforce development, childcare solutions, and the riverfront development. We also provided vital resources and insights on legislative topics at the local, state, and federal levels.

Looking ahead to 2025, we remain committed to serving as a resource, advocate, and connector for the businesses and organizations that call the Sauk Valley home. Our priorities include:

- Driving member engagement through dynamic events and programs.
- Advocating for policies that benefit our local economy and quality of life.
- Supporting professional development and workforce readiness.
- Playing an active role in critical community discussions, from childcare solutions to the revitalization of the Sterling Riverfront.
- Continuing to champion shop-local initiatives to support our region’s businesses.

The work we do would not be possible without the passion and dedication of our members, investors, and partners. Thank you for your trust and commitment to this organization and to the future of the Sauk Valley. Together, we are building a vibrant, prosperous, and resilient community.

Here’s to continued growth and success in the year ahead.

**-Dallas Knack, Executive Director**

## A Letter from the Board President:

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible support and engagement of our members and the Sauk Valley community. This past year, together, we celebrated milestones, overcame challenges, and continued to strengthen the foundation of growth and opportunity in our region.

With over 400 members, the Sauk Valley Area Chamber is more than a network—it's a powerful collaboration of businesses, organizations, and individuals dedicated to driving progress and fostering innovation. Your contributions have not only advanced our mission but have also made a lasting impact on the quality of life in the Sauk Valley.

Now, as we step into 2025, we are excited to build on this momentum. The year ahead promises fresh opportunities, meaningful partnerships, and continued success for us all. We are inspired by your commitment and proud to stand alongside you as we work together to create an even brighter future for our region.

Here's to a successful and rewarding 2025!

**Pam Fluck**

Self Help Enterprises

## 2024 Board of Directors:

**Lance Buser** - Walmart DC #7024

**Sandi Cavazos** - US Bank

**Mike Ceruzzi** - Moore Tires

**Tim Determan** – Pinney Printing

**Pam Fluck** – Self Help Enterprises

**Josh Johnson** – Whiteside Area Career Center

**Kristina Kaecker** - Kunes RV

**Josh Knie** – Knie Appliance and TV

**Jon Mandrell** – Sauk Valley Community College

**Rebecca Munoz-Ripley** – YWCA of the Sauk Valley

**Ryan Olson** – Ward Murray Pace & Johnson

**Alejandro Rivera** – RE/MAX Sauk Valley

**Bailey Schneiderbauer** - Sauk Valley Bank

**Geoff Wright** – CGH Medical Center



### Membership at a glance:

**410 members representing 14,366 employees in 30 cities**

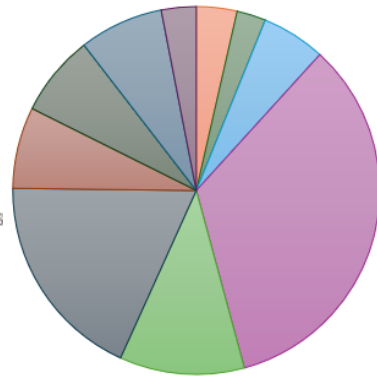
**91%** retention rate

**29** New Members in 2024

**34** Ribbon Cuttings celebrating new members & landmark occasions

**12** Customer Service Awards given to members

#### Members by Category



## PROVIDE VALUE TO MEMBERSHIP

In 2024 we focused on providing outstanding value to our members through meaningful opportunities to connect, grow, and engage. Networking flourished at events such as Business After Hours and the Annual Dinner. We championed member interests through robust advocacy efforts at local, state, and federal levels and through our Childcare Taskforce and Manufacturing roundtable meetings. Professional development expanded with impactful Lunch & Learn sessions, while ribbon cuttings celebrated member milestones. Our committees championed the work of the chamber, leading the way in driving initiatives and fostering collaboration, ensuring a prosperous year for all.

#### Our committees include:

- Ambassadors
- Agri-business
- Education
- Golf
- Hispanic Business Leaders
- Professional Women's Network
- Sights & Sounds





## Community Investment:

In 2024, the SVACC and its committees gave **\$94,624** back to the community. Those dollars include:

- \$32,750 for scholarships
- \$61,874 to education, non profit organizations & service clubs

In addition to raising funds for generous financial contributions, countless individuals went above and beyond by donating their time and talents to the SVACC. They served on committees, created meaningful opportunities within our community, volunteered at events, and inspired the next generation through engaging with students in the classroom.

## STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



SVACC continued its commitment to strengthening our local community through impactful initiatives and events. Our Golf Outing and Steak Fry in the Country raised vital funds for scholarships, supporting students pursuing careers in agriculture and business, while the Manufacturing Dinner, with over 200 attendees, highlighted the importance of this vital industry.



We also advanced workforce development through the Certificate of Employability Workshop, equipping high school students with essential skills and career insights. The Chamber remained actively engaged in the Sterling Riverfront Reimagined project, collaborating with community partners to revitalize this transformative space for future generations.

Through these efforts, we worked to build a thriving and vibrant Sauk Valley in 2024 and will continue these efforts into 2025.



## ENHANCE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce continued to prioritize the growth and development of community leadership in 2024. The **Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program** empowered local professionals, combining leadership and community oriented lessons into the 8 month long program.

The **WACC CEO Program** provided high school students with invaluable professional and entrepreneurial experiences, shaping the next generation of business leaders. Through the program, our members have the opportunity to provide tours, speak to the class, and even act as a mentor to a student.

Additionally, the SVACC began discussions of revitalizing the **Keystone Group**, bringing together individuals under the age of 40 to determine new goals and projects for the group.

Through these initiatives, we are nurturing a strong network of current and future leaders who will drive the Sauk Valley's continued success.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

