



Sauk Valley Area  
chamber of commerce

2025  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

211 Locust St., Sterling, IL 61081  
[saukvalleyareachamber.com](http://saukvalleyareachamber.com)  
(815) 625-2400

# 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 deep appreciation for the shared purpose that continued to define the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce. Your continued engagement and commitment to our mission—to *enhance the economic climate and improve the quality of life in the Sauk Valley Area*—remained a steady force throughout the year and helped guide our collective progress.

Throughout the year, we reached several meaningful milestones together. Member engagement continued to grow through signature events such as the Manufacturing Dinner and Fiesta Day Parade. Initiatives like the Certificate of Employability program saw high school students engage with local leaders while Professional Women’s Network gained increased participation and raised support for women-owned businesses. The Keystone group went through a rebrand to Sauk Valley Under 40 which lead to double their engagement. These efforts reflect our shared focus on developing local talent, strengthening our workforce, and providing practical resources that benefit our region.

As we look ahead to 2026, the Chamber remains committed to serving as a resource, advocate, and connector for the businesses and organizations that call the Sauk Valley home. Our priorities for the year ahead include:

- Strengthening member engagement through impactful events and relevant programming
- Supporting professional development and workforce readiness initiatives
- Instating a program that engages our youth outside of the classroom
- Providing a space for meaningful support for our members

None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our members, investors, and partners. Thank you for your trust in the Chamber and your ongoing commitment to the Sauk Valley. Together, we are building a community that is vibrant, resilient, and positioned for continued success.

Here’s to another year of progress and opportunity ahead.

**-Dallas Knack, Executive Director**

## A Letter from the Board President:

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2025, we extend our sincere appreciation to our members and the Sauk Valley community for their continued engagement and support. This past year was one of collaboration and forward momentum as we worked together to advance economic vitality and strengthen our region.

With more than 400 member businesses and organizations, the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce serves as a unifying voice and trusted partner for growth. Through advocacy, programming, and community connection, our members play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life and business climate throughout the Sauk Valley.

As we enter 2026, we do so with optimism and purpose. The year ahead presents new opportunities to deepen partnerships, support local enterprise, and build on the strong foundation already in place. We are proud to represent such a dedicated membership and look forward to continuing this important work together.

Here's to a productive, impactful, and successful year ahead in 2026.

**Pam Fluck**

Sauk Valley Bank

## 2025 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

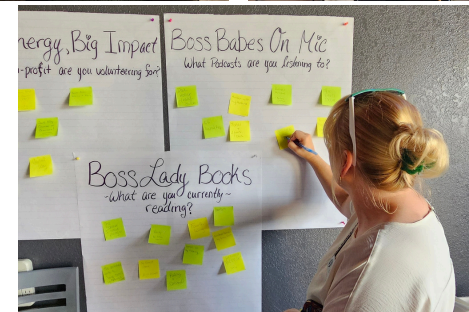
**Rebecca Munoz-Ripley** - YWCA of the Sauk Valley

**Emily Buikema** - Ward Murray Pace & Johnson

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

**Bailey Schneiderbauer** - Sauk Valley Bank

**Geoff Wright** - CGH Medical Center



# SVACC

YOUR CHAMBER BY THE NUMBERS

## Membership at a glance:

**417 members representing 15,773 employees in 40 cities**

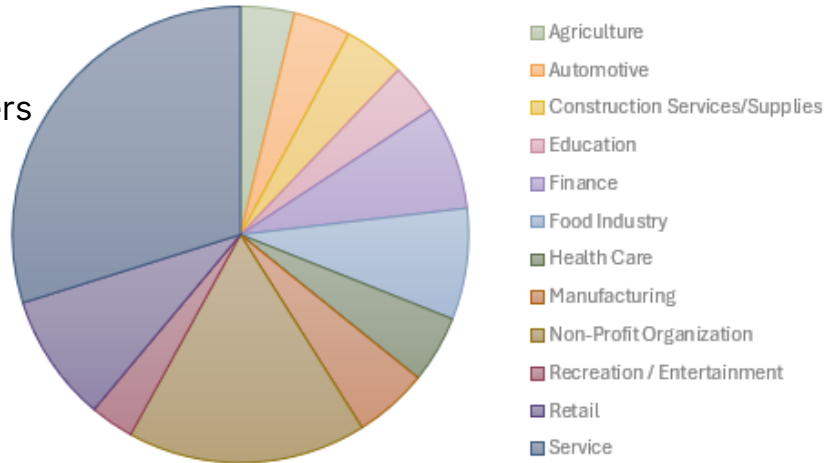
**92%** retention rate

**43** New Members in 2025

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

**12** Customer Service Awards given to members

Members by Category



## PROVIDE VALUE TO MEMBERSHIP

In 2025 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, Ribbon Cuttings, and Chamber Week Celebration.

Our **Ambassadors** lent a hand at various non-profits including the Sauk Valley Foodbank and YWCA, which gave the Ambassadors a sense of pride in our community while providing much needed help to our local organizations.

A new found passion was realized when the **Hispanic Business Leaders Committee** launched a mentor program at Elevate Youth Center.

**Professional Women's Network** saw tremendous growth, doubling attendance at workshops by increasing access to affordable educational programs for women in the workforce.

Our committees championed the work of the chamber, leading the way in driving initiatives and fostering collaboration.



## Community Investment:

In 2025, the SVACC and its committees gave **\$106,448** back to the community. Those dollars include:

- \$29,000 for scholarships
- \$77,448 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 educational programs and scholarships, supporting students pursuing careers in agriculture and business, while the Manufacturing Dinner, with over 200 attendees, highlighted the importance of this vital industry and supported students at Sauk Valley Community College and Morrison Institute of Technology.

The 72<sup>nd</sup> annual Fiesta Day Parade brought the community together for an uplifting event to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month while raising funds for our scholarship program.

We also advanced workforce development through the Certificate of Employability Workshop, equipping high school students with essential skills and career insights.

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



## ENHANCE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce continued to prioritize the growth and development of community leadership in 2025. 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 saw Keystone through a rebrand to **Sauk Valley Under 40**. Along with a name change and reinstating a steering committee, the group held quarterly events seeing incredible growth from single digits to 55 attendees engaged in personal and professional growth opportunities. Sauk Valley Under 40 graciously received the Organization Approach Recognition Award from Illinois Main Street in 2025 for their rebrand and new approach.

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 2025

