



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED



IN THIS ISSUE:



PAGE 5



PAGE 6



PAGE 7

Partnering for Success

AUGUST 2025

Sauk Valley Area
Chamber of Commerce
& RiverWorks Coworking
invite you to

**BUSINESS
AFTER HOURS**

Join us for
appetizers, drinks,
door prizes, &
networking!

Thursday, August 21
5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

RiverWorks Coworking
114 E Everett St, Dixon

 Questions? Call the SVACC at 815-625-2400



THINK Sauk FIRST

svcc.edu

August Meetings

August 12 Exec
August 12 Sights & Sounds
August 14 Ambassadors
August 19 Board of Directors
August 19 Agri-business Committee
August 21 Hispanic Business Leaders
August 21 Business After Hours

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, 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

Term Ends January 31, 2028

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

Staff

Dallas Knack—Executive Director
Ronda Borgmann—Financial Specialist

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

August is here, and we're in the full swing of event season at the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce! This time of year is always busy—and exciting—as we come together to support our community, celebrate local industries, and build connections across the region.

We're kicking things off with the annual Steak Fry, our signature fundraiser for ag education and workforce development, on August 7. This event is not only a great time—it's also a vital way we recognize and support our agriculture community, which remains a cornerstone of the Sauk Valley economy. We're grateful to everyone who helps make this event a success!

Looking ahead, preparations are well underway for the Fiesta Parade and Celebration, returning to downtown Sterling on September 20. This vibrant community tradition highlights the rich culture and spirit of the Sauk Valley, and we're excited to welcome families, businesses, and organizations to be part of the celebration. To register for the parade, visit saukvalleyareachamber.com/fiesta.

And mark your calendars—our Manufacturing Dinner is coming up on October 9. This event honors the critical role of our manufacturing sector and brings together industry leaders, educators, and partners to recognize excellence and look ahead at workforce opportunities.

We know many of you are involved in these events—thank you. Your participation and enthusiasm help us create meaningful experiences that benefit our entire community.

As always, if there's anything we can do to support you or your business, please don't hesitate to reach out.



Investor Update August 2025

NEW INVESTORS

Aurelio's Bake Shop
2907 Locust St., Sterling
815-626-2253

Busy Bee Drone Company
309-738-1486
Busybeedroneco.com

Coco's Prom
314 Light St., Sterling
815-213-7066

**Melissa Reyes and Associates—
American Family Insurance**
2308 E. Lincolnway, Ste A, Sterling
815-280-6317

Savy's Chic Bridal Boutique
313 First Ave., Sterling
815-677-9579

Spotlight Media
Cityspotlightmedia.com

Total Phone Repair
106 W. 2nd St., Rock Falls
815-564-2300

INVESTOR RENEWALS

Allure of Sterling
Bargain Exterminators
Carpetland USA
Compeer Financial
Cork and Brews LLC
Esthetics by Darla White
First Congregational Church
Gaffey Health Service, Inc.
Halo Branded Solutions
Hill Fastener
Jakobs Bros. Farms Inc.

Loescher Heating & Air Conditioning
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
Mary Kay - Julie Gallentine
McCormick's Nursery & Landscaping
Moore Monument & Granite Co.
Republic Services
Rock River HR Professional Assoc.
Rock River Ready Mix, Inc.
Sauk Valley Community College
Select Employees Credit Union
Self Help Enterprises

Sherwin Williams Paint Store
Sterling Township
The Mertes Law Firm, P.C.
The Wellspring Medical Spa
T-Mobile
Zoeller Ag Services, Inc.

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
Mattox Insurance

PC Tech 2U
RE/MAX Sauk Valley
Reagan Mass Transit
Rock River Hospice & Home
Select Employees Credit Union
Sterling Commercial Roofing
Surf Internet
United Craftsmen, Ltd.

110% Club

Adobe Acrobat
Allure of Sterling
Bargain Exterminators
Best Cob
Bollman Auto Center
Bushel Basket Candle Co.

DeJonge Tax
Dennis Electric of Tampico
Frantz Manufacturing
Gold Star Cleaning
Grace Point Church
Hollyhock Hill Farms
Kiwanis Club of Sterling

McCormick's Nursey
Mertes & Mertes
New Millenium Directories
River Ridge Animal Hospital
Scholl Insurance
ServPro of Sterling
Showplace Antiques

Smeltzer Insurance
St. Vincent DePaul
Trinity Insurance

Chamber Ambassadors

Allie Johnston – University of Illinois Extension

Brad Lucas—Rouse Consulting Group

Brian Hawkins—Brian Hawkins Insurance,
The Cornerstone Agency

Cael Sanders—Sterling Federal Bank

Cassi Pistole—Allure Healthcare

Chandra Howard – RE/MAX Sauk Valley

Christina Bystry – House in the Country

Ethan Harrington—Ken Nelson Auto Group

Esther Salazar —CGH Medical Center

John Kelly—Culver's of Rock Falls

Karen Voss – Morningside of Sterling

Lyndsey Kelly—Sauk Valley Community College

Mary White – Community State Bank

Sami Wiggins — Castor Home Nursing

Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation

Tygen Bausman—Sauk Valley Bank

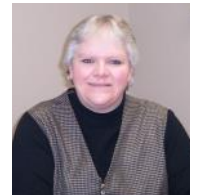
Welcome New Ambassadors!



The SVACC is excited to welcome two new ambassadors to the group: (pictured left) Ethan Harrington, Ken Nelson Auto Group (pictured right) Brad Lucas, Rouse Consulting Group

Ambassador Spotlight: Karen Voss, Morningside of Sterling

Karen Voss is the Business Office Manager at Morningside of Sterling, an assisted living and memory care community.



Morningside of Sterling is an assisted living and memory care community with compassionate team members available 24 hours a day to deliver personalized service for every resident. Residents can enjoy restaurant-style dining, a range of social and educational activities, in house beauty salon, activity room, transportation for errands and appointments, laundry, and housekeeping, and is pet friendly.

The Memory Care Unit supports residents and their families using the Bridge to Rediscovery Alzheimer's and Dementia care programming, that provides individualized attention for each resident, including recreational and occupational activities that keep them engaged.

Karen became an ambassador in 1999, wanting to be connected to the community and its leaders. Since becoming involved with the chamber she has served on the Golf, Sights & Sounds, Bowling, Carnival, and 100th Anniversary Committees over the years and served 9 years on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. She is also a member of the Rock Falls Rotary Club, the Dixon Elks Club, Messiah Lutheran Church and served on the board of directors at Christ Lutheran School. She believes in the mission of helping businesses and organizations in all sectors in the Sauk Valley area grow and prosper.

Ambassador Spotlight: Sherry DeWalt, CGH Foundation

As I approach my "retirement" from the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassador group I can look back on the last 20+ years and see how the chamber has evolved and adapted to address the changing needs of our community. From recognizing that "commerce" should include all types of business, industry, agriculture and not for profit entities, to addressing the importance of education, attracting and retaining a qualified work force, adequate child care, and the special needs of a diverse population, the chamber always steps up and steps in to do their part. I'm proud to have been a member of the group that enhances the visibility of the SVACC's contribution to the Sauk Valley area.



Ribbon Cuttings

Rosemeyer Management Group —new location
3009 E. Lincolnway, Sterling
815-857-8080



Coco's Prom
314 Light St., Sterling
815-213-7066



Spotlight Media
cityspotlightmedia.com

Congratulations to Ale from Air Play Espresso & Bakery the Customer Service Award!

Ale is a phenomenal addition to the Air Play team. They take time to get to know their customers and go out of their way to make the customer's day. Whether it's making recommendations based on the customer's tastes, knowing their order by heart, or just going out of their way to say hi, Ale makes everyone they come across feel special. Ale is very passionate about the Sauk Valley area and is active in the Hispanic Business Leaders Committee and Sauk Valley Under 40.

Visit Air Play's main location at 115 E 3rd St, Sterling.

CSA Sponsored by:



Business After Hours

Our members enjoyed a beautiful evening on the West Mall Plaza at Sauk Valley Community College. Thank you to SVCC for hosting the five Chamber summer business after hours!



Government Affairs

Big Beautiful Bill Passage Impacts Small Businesses

The "Big Beautiful Bill" was signed into law by President Trump on July 4, 2025. The law included changes that will impact small businesses. A few of those changes are listed below.

Small Business Deduction (Section 199a deduction)

The 199a deduction which was 20% was scheduled to expire at the end of 2025. Provisions in the "Big Beautiful Bill" not only increased the rate to 23%, but also made the deduction permanent. Millions of small businesses across the country claim this deduction annually.

Small Business Expense Cap (Section 179 deduction)

The Section 179 deduction allows businesses to deduct the full purchase price of qualifying equipment and software up to a certain limit in the year it's placed in service. The "big beautiful bill" increased the expense limit of this deduction to \$2.5 million. This change allows businesses to deduct more of their smaller capital purchases upfront.

Marginal Rate Cuts

Another provision contained in the law make permanent the 2017 marginal rate cuts. Without doing this, the National Federation of Independent Businesses believes 5 out of 7 marginal (individual) income tax rates would have risen at the end of 2025. 9 out of 10 small businesses are organized as pass-through businesses and pay regular income tax rates as opposed to the C-corporation rates.

Small Business Estate Tax Exemption

The "Big Beautiful Bill" also increased and made permanent the small business estate tax exemption. The new legislation sets the exemption threshold at \$15 million for individuals and \$30 million for joint filers. Given all of the changes resulting from the passage of the "Big Beautiful Bill" all small businesses should consider contacting their accountants in the third quarter to schedule a discussion on how changes might impact their 2025 tax returns.

Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses and Thomson Reuters

Save the Date

Thursday, August 7: **40th Annual Steak Fry in the Country**

Saturday, September 20: **72nd Annual Fiesta Day Parade and Celebration**

Thursday, October 9: **Manufacturing Dinner**

Guest Editorial

MOSAIC THEATRE TROUPE by the Mosaic Team

Founded in 2024, Mosaic Theatre Troupe is an ensemble-style theatre founded by a group of friends who value collaborative creation and making a greater community impact through art. We produce vibrant, defiant theatre that celebrates diversity. We cherish what unites us as artists as well as what makes us different, and we feel that our art is better because of it. Artists in the troupe are actors, directors, producers, and designers. We're dedicated to creating accessible experiences that showcase social awareness, enriching our local and surrounding communities through art.

Our core values at Mosaic are Accessibility, Charitability, Inclusivity, Diversity, and Community. In keeping with these values, we've offered Pay-What-You-Can and ASL-interpreted performances, partnered with local organizations to provide tangible donations to those in need, visited local assisted-living facilities and nursing homes to carol during the holidays, and sought out material that was written by or highlights the experiences of marginalized groups. We hope you'll join us in embracing the power of stories that connect and inspire us all!

We have been so proud to put up two fantastic shows since our inception last year, and we hope to continue to produce theatre as well as go out into the community and bring our art to the people. You can see us next at the Fall & Fantasy Festival on September 20 & 21 at Granny Rose Animal Shelter. We are also beyond excited to be partnering with The Dixon: Historic Theatre to perform a shadow cast of Rocky Horror Picture Show on the big stage! Join us on October 24 at 7:30, and also be on the lookout for audition information at our website mosaic.ludus.com or on our socials @mosaictheatretroupe.

We are so appreciative of the love we have received from the community so far and cannot wait to continue to bring you theatre like only Mosaic Theatre Troupe can. Keep checking our website and socials for opportunities and upcoming performances!



Hispanic Business Leaders Committee

The SVACC's HBLC participated in Grandma Bonnie's school supply drive at Elevate Youth Center. HBLC is working towards providing bilingual services for local students and bridging the gap for Spanish-speaking parents. Thank you to Jose and Tygen for representing HBLC and handing out school supplies.



Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program (SVCLP)



We're excited to welcome the newest cohort of the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program! This year, 25 participants representing a wide variety of industries have joined the program. Their enthusiasm and commitment to leadership and community involvement is inspiring. We're proud to continue this impactful partnership and look forward to the growth and connections this year will bring.



Members in the News

From Sauk Valley Community College:

Sauk Valley Community College would like to announce the retirement of President Dr. David Hellmich. Dr. Hellmich will retire from his position in May of 2026 after serving the College for eleven years.

Dr. Hellmich has continuously transformed the education, environment, and economic development within SVCC and the Sauk Valley area, providing expanded opportunities for the individuals who build our local communities.

Reflecting on his time at SVCC, Dr. Hellmich shared, "For 60 years, the faculty, staff, and trustees of Sauk Valley Community College have been instrumental in improving the lives of countless people in the Sauk Valley. I am proud of what we and community leaders have accomplished together over the past ten years and what we will accomplish together over the next several months. After that time, however, it will be time for me to retire so Linda [my wife] and I can spend more time with our family, in particular our grandchildren. I thank Board Chair Bob Thompson for the opportunity to lead such a wonderful College and for his support and the support of all of the trustees."



On behalf of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Hellmich on his upcoming retirement. His leadership at Sauk Valley Community College has had a lasting impact not only on the college, but on the entire Sauk Valley region. Dr. Hellmich's dedication to education and community collaboration has helped shape a stronger, more vibrant future for all of us. We thank him for his service and wish him and his family all the best in this next chapter.



Professional Women's Network



Sauk Valley Area
chamber of commerce

WORDS AT WORK

Words matter. They shape trust, influence morale, and can either strengthen relationships or create division, depending on how they're used. This presentation will focus on how tactfully choosing the right words can engage others, drive change, and build rapport. You'll leave with tools and language you can use to begin transforming your organization today!

WITH DR. JON MANDRELL

Dr. Jon Mandrell serves as the Vice President of Academics and Student Services at Sauk Valley Community College, where he is the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Chief Student Services Officer (CSSO). In this role, he provides leadership to the college's academic departments and Student Services. His previous roles include serving as the Dean of Instructional Services and Criminal Justice faculty member at SVCC. Prior to his community college career, he served as a police officer in Oregon, Illinois. He holds an Ed.D. in Community College Leadership from Ferris State University and a Master of Arts degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration from Western Illinois University. He and his wife, Kelly, live in Polo and have two daughters, Laynie and Macie.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

SAUK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DILLON MALL & MATHIS THEATRE

173 RT 2, DIXON, IL



\$25 members | \$45 non-members

Lunch Included

Register by 9/17/25

at bit.ly/4keeYyB or scan the QR code

Questions? Email Dallas at
director@saukvalleyareachamber.com



PWN series sponsors



PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Lunch & Learn

Workplace Wellbeing



Join Sauk Valley Under 40 for an insightful panel discussion focused on Workplace Wellbeing. Designed for young professionals under 40, this event brings together experts from human resources and mental health fields to explore the challenges and opportunities of maintaining balance at work.

Topics Include:

- Navigating mental health in the workplace
- Recognizing and preventing burnout
- Understanding company culture
- Knowing when it's time to make a change



Brent Reuter

former HR professional
& current Dixon
Township Supervisor



Sarah Cleary

Service Excellence
Coordinator,
Sauk Valley Bank



Mercedes Mancera

Behavioral Health
Clinician,
Sinnissippi Centers

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Riverview Conference Room
Sauk Valley Community College
173 Rt 2, Dixon, IL

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 8 | \$20/PERSON

VIST [BIT.LY/3I94KFE](https://bit.ly/3I94KFE)
OR SCAN THE QR CODE



sponsored by:



Questions? Email Dallas at director@saukvalleyareachamber.com

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**



THE 72ND ANNUAL

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 20, 2025

PRESENTED BY THE
SVACC HISPANIC
BUSINESS LEADER
COMMITTEE

1PM | SATURDAY

PARADE STARTS IN ROCK FALLS
& ENDS IN STERLING

CELEBRATION AT STERLING MARKETPLACE

3:00 - 6:00 P.M.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD VENDORS, KIDS ACTIVITIES & MORE!

VISIT **SAUKVALLEYAREACHAMBER.COM/FIESTA**
FOR MORE INFORMATION