



Sauk Valley Area  
chamber of commerce

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**ACCREDITED**



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# Partnering for Success

MARCH 2025

**25**

**SVACC EVENTS**

**JUNE  
13**

**GOLF OUTING**

**AUG  
7**

**HOT DOG DAY  
STEAK FRY**

**SEPT  
20**

**CHAMBER WEEK  
CELEBRATION  
FIESTA PARADE**

**OCT  
9**

**MANUFACTURING  
DINNER**

**DEC  
5**

**SIGHTS & SOUNDS**

## **MONTHLY BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

February 20, March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19, July 17,  
August 21, October 16, November 20, December 18

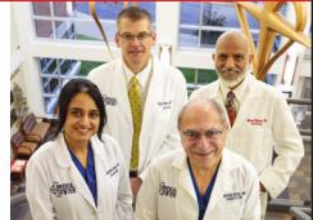
### **CGH Expands Cardiology Team:**

*Comprehensive Cardiac Care as a Cornerstone of Our Strong Community Hospital*

Unfortunately, heart disease is very common in Northern Illinois, but the cardiology care you can receive at CGH Medical Center is far from common. Whether you need preventive care for a congenital form of heart disease, urgent cardiac care for a heart attack, or cardiac rehab to help you recover after open-heart surgery, our cardiology team has your heart well in hand.



(L-R): Dr. Twinkle Singh, FACC, FSCAI; Dr. Peter Sharis, FACC; Dr. Hassan Kleso, FACC; and Dr. Qaiser Rasheed, FACC



[www.cghmc.com/cardiology](http://www.cghmc.com/cardiology) • (815) 625-4790

## March Meetings

- March 10 Golf Committee
- March 11 Exec
- March 13 Ambassadors
- March 18 Board of Directors
- March 18 Agri-business Committee
- March 20 Hispanic Business Leaders

## 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

At the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, we are committed to serving our members and strengthening our community. We connect businesses, advocate for growth, and champion a thriving local economy. Whether it's workforce development, policy advocacy at all levels of government, or providing opportunities to stay informed and engaged, we are here to support you.

One of the ways we help keep our members and the community informed is by hosting local candidate forums. In April, voters will have the opportunity to elect two individuals for the position for Alderman at Large in Sterling. To ensure you have the information you need to make an informed decision, the SVACC is hosting a Candidate Forum on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Sterling City Hall. This event is open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

**We invite you to submit questions for the forum by March 5, 2025.** Questions can be emailed to Dallas at [director@saukvalleyareachamber.com](mailto:director@saukvalleyareachamber.com). This is your chance to hear directly from the candidates and engage in the decision-making process that shapes our community.

Make the most of this opportunity to stay informed, ask questions, and be part of the conversation. Your vote and your voice matter!



2025 CANDIDATE FORUM  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

AT 6PM  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC @ STERLING CITY HALL  
(212 THIRD AVE., STERLING)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
CANDIDATES FOR  
ALDERMAN AT LARGE

THE EVENT WILL INCLUDE MODERATED QUESTIONS.

QUESTIONS WELCOME.  
PLEASE EMAIL TO  
[DIRECTOR@SAUKVALLEYAREACHAMBER.COM](mailto:DIRECTOR@SAUKVALLEYAREACHAMBER.COM)

THE CHAMBER DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY CANDIDATE.



# Investor Update March 2025

## NEW INVESTORS

The Dixon: Historic Theatre  
114 S. Galena Ave., Dixon  
815-508-6324  
dixontheatre.com

Rouse Consulting  
422 16th St., Moline  
309-762-3589  
go2rcg.com

## INVESTOR RENEWALS

1st Gateway Credit Union  
Advocare Independent Distributor  
April House Children's Advocacy Center  
Campos Construction Inc  
CGH Medical Center  
Crescent Electric Supply  
Destinations Travel Services, Inc.  
E.D. Etnyre & Co.  
El Jacalito  
EnerNova Partners  
Faith Baptist Church  
Folsom's Bakery, Inc.

Gripp Custom Inc.  
Harvest Time Bible Church  
Melton Seed & Service LLC  
Momentum ABA Services  
Morningside of Sterling  
Nelsen Insurance  
Resthave Home  
Rock River Energy Services Co.  
SBM  
Showplace Antiques & Treasures  
US Postal Service  
Wal-Mart Supercenter #891

### 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  
United Craftsmen, Ltd.

### 110% Club

Adobe Acrobat  
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  
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,  
The Cornerstone Agency

Cael Sanders—Sterling Federal Bank

Carmina Lopez—Shay Brown State Farm

Chandra Howard – RE/MAX Sauk Valley

Christina Bystry — House in the Country

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

Pam Fluck – Self Help Enterprises

Sami Wiggins — Castor Home Nursing

Sherry DeWalt – CGH Health Foundation

Tygen Bausman—Sauk Valley Bank

### New Ambassador



We are excited to welcome a new ambassador to our group: John Kelly. John is the General Manager of Culver’s of Rock Falls. Welcome, John!



Thank you to Emerson’s Pub for hosting the Ambassador’s February meeting!

### Ambassador Spotlight: Chandra Howard, RE/MAX Sauk Valley

Chandra Howard is a dedicated Realtor with RE/MAX Sauk Valley in Sterling, where she and her husband, Ryne, work together as a team to help clients navigate the real estate market. She has been a licensed Realtor since 2011 and has been serving the Sauk Valley area full-time since 2015.



A Sterling native, Chandra graduated from Newman Central Catholic High School before earning Bachelor’s degrees in Business Administration and Marketing from Carthage College. With years of experience and a deep passion for real estate, she takes pride in helping individuals and families find their perfect homes.

As a Chamber Ambassador, Chandra loves connecting with local businesses and fostering a strong, vibrant community. When she’s not working, she enjoys spending time with her dogs and embracing all that the Sauk Valley area has to offer.

### Ambassador Spotlight: Brian Hawkins—Brian Hawkins Insurance, The Cornerstone Agency

I have been involved with the Chamber since 2011, serving on the board of directors, executive board, and board president. My current roll is as a chamber ambassador, and I work on the golf committee and enjoy helping with that annual event. Being a part of the SVACC has been one of the best investments of my time in terms of getting to know the people and businesses of the Sauk Valley. The SVACC is a great organization, and I enjoy doing my part to help with all the good that it does for our community.



As an independent insurance agent, I work with multiple companies to help assist with your personal, business, life, and farm insurance needs. I am proud to be a part of a locally owned insurance agency and look forward to helping you with your insurance needs.

## Ribbon Cuttings

**Autism Center of Illinois**  
1319 N Galena Ave, Dixon  
815-440-6134



**Emerson's Pub**  
3312 W. Rock Falls Rd., Rock Falls  
815-625-2600



**The Dixon: Historic Theatre**  
114 S. Galena Ave., Dixon  
815-508-6324

## Save the Date!

59th Annual Golf Outing  
**Friday, June 13**

Deer Valley Golf Course  
[saukvalleyareachamber.com/golf-outing](http://saukvalleyareachamber.com/golf-outing)  
Sponsorships now open!

### Congratulations to El Jacalito for receiving the Customer Service Award!

They were nominated for the service they provided while catering a holiday party. Their nominator said "The food was amazing, and staff truly went above and beyond to make sure all of our needs were met. They were very easy to work with and we would highly recommend El Jacalito to all residents and visitors of the Sauk Valley!"

CSA Sponsored by:



### Written by: Mason Landes, Rock Falls High School

My personal CEO experience has been quite the eye opener for me. The West class is currently working on our personal businesses which has been a very enjoyable experience, but it has definitely come with some challenges. Most juniors and seniors are not worrying about writing a business plan worthy of being approved for a loan, or coming up with marketing campaigns for a business, but these are very normal tasks for a CEO student. For me personally this has been quite an enjoyable task, because school has never really pushed me the way I needed it to until this class. Now I refer to my CEO experience as an eye opener because I never expected my business to be going the way it is right now. When I learned we would be making our own personal business I almost immediately knew I wanted to do something with baseball because it is something I am very passionate about. As I kept brainstorming ideas, making mini wooden bats like you would buy at an MLB game came to me, but instead put our local high schools logos on the bats, because of the love I have for my community. After setting my mind on what I wanted to do my next task was figuring out how I actually wanted to carry this out. I bounced around ideas like buying bats on Amazon and seeing if a local woodworker would make them for me, but neither of these were super realistic. Then one night I decided to email Louisville Slugger on a whim and see if they would be willing to help me, but I truly did not expect a response at all. To my surprise the next day I got an email back from Louisville Slugger saying how much they would love to help me out, and how awesome of an idea they thought my business was. I was truly in shock to this. I had zero expectation that a multi million dollar company would be willing to help this random high school kid with a glorified school project. This story is the perfect example of what this class has shown me the most. The power of just doing it. Before this class I never really put myself out there at risk, and sometimes didn't try things out of the fear of failure or someone telling me no. This program has completely changed that for me. CEO has shown me how important it is to put yourself out there and take the risk because you never truly know the outcome. This lesson is truly something I would not have been able to learn in a regular school class, and it is something that will tremendously help me out as I continue forward throughout my life. I am so grateful that I am fortunate enough to be a part of the CEO class, and gain the knowledge and experiences I have had.



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### Written by: Blake Geuns, Prophetstown High School

As a member of the West CEO Class, I can confidently say that this program has already had a noticeable impact on my life. The way I handle my everyday tasks and how I interact with certain people are the most evident. This class has shown me a level of professionalism that I hope to maintain for the rest of my life. Through the tours that we go on, the speakers that we listen to, and the first-hand experience from making decisions as a class, I have seen not only personal growth but growth among my peers as well. When you pair up this great group of kids with a program like CEO, it is bound to have a big effect.

We, the West CEO Class, have finally concluded our class business and are now transitioning into an even more exciting phase of this program, our individual businesses. We were very successful in our class business and would like to thank everyone who supported us for our Horses and Hats event. We will now be switching things up though and directing our focus towards each of our own individual businesses. We are now starting to go through the process of drawing up business plans and researching our desired markets. The lessons we have learned from past experiences in this class are going to help us tremendously in creating a successful business. I personally look forward to seeing everyone else's ideas and more importantly hopefully seeing all of you there. Please come out to Northland Mall on April 23rd from 4:30-7:30 and on April 24th from 4:30-6:30 for the 12th Annual WACC CEO Trade Show. I know my class has put a lot of effort into each of their own businesses, and we would all love to see you there.

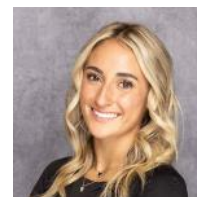




## CEO Program continued

### Written by: Isabella Scachette, Morrison High School

Hi, I'm Isabella Scachette. Currently in CEO I am working on my individual business plan! I never thought at sixteen I would be learning how to start up my own business. My business is a build-your-own bouquet stand named "Bella's Bouquet Bar". At my booth you will be able to personalize your dream floral arrangement or have the choice of a premade bouquet. These bouquets are the perfect gift for the start of summer! The hardest part for me is the finance side; figuring out how many stems I need, the profit margin and the break even point. I'm excited to pitch my idea to the bank and start putting all of my planning into action! Without the support of our community, our facilitator, my classmates and I wouldn't be able to do any of this. I hope to see all of you at our trade show on April 23-24.



## Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program



Kreider Services and staff generously hosted the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program cohort on February 5, 2025. We began our morning with Jeff Stauter, Executive Director of Kreider, showing us a short video and discussing the amazing things Kreider and their clients are doing in the community. Amanda Carroll, former member of the SVCLP and Director of Community Services at Kreider, gave us a tour of the building and told us of their varied programs available in our community. The next interactive session, led by Rebecca Muñoz-Ripley, Executive Director of the YWCA of the Sauk Valley, included activities geared toward opening our eyes to our implicit biases in the workplace and the world. Muñoz-Ripley then joined Dawn Olds, retired HALO Sr. VP of Industry Relations & DEI, and challenged us to remember that all people carry loads of bricks (oppression) that we cannot see and that mutual professionalism is a vital component in any diverse team.

Rashaad Lane, Retail Area Sales Manager at US Cellular and member of the Sauk Valley Diversity Alliance, and Aaqil Khan, Director of Patient Accounts at OSF St. Katharine Medical Center, then led a discussion of their experiences and how to best show up as an ally for any marginalized person. They also challenged the group to attend an event outside of their cultural comfort zone. Lena's Social Club of Dixon delivered wonderful sandwiches and salads for the cohort.



WACC CEO Class east and west students collaborated with the Sauk Valley Community Leadership Program cohort on 2/18/25. First, Le Hartman, facilitator of the WACC CEO Class west and Laura Carbaugh, facilitator of the SVCLP class, led discussion on generational differences and how to understand motivations in the



workplace and in life. Le also facilitated a discussion on the intricacies of Gen Z and Gen Alpha. A panel of local professional leaders then discussed the need to recognize generational differences in the workplace, including Emily Hammer and Denise Garcia from the Whiteside County IL Senior Center; Josh Knie, Knie Appliance, Furniture, and Mattress; Dr. Jon Mandrell, Sauk Valley Community College, Vice President of Academics and Student Services; and Joe Strabala-Bright, Sauk Valley Community College, Dean of Student Services. A delicious lunch from Arthur's Garden Deli sent us off to the rest of our day.



## Government Affairs

Written by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce



### Court Reinstates Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) Reporting

On February 18, a federal court lifted the injunction that was preventing FinCEN from enforcing Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) reporting requirements under the CTA.

With this decision by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in Smith, et al. v. U.S. Department of the Treasury, et al., 6:24-cv-00336 (E.D. Tex.), beneficial ownership information (BOI) reporting requirements under the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) are once again back in effect. However, because the Department of the Treasury recognizes that reporting companies may need additional time to comply with their BOI reporting obligations, FinCEN is generally extending the deadline 30 calendar days from February 19, 2025, for most companies.

#### What are your Next Steps?

Learn more about The Federal Requirements for small and mid-sized businesses, or file your BOI report [here](#). For more information, click [here](#).

## Guest Editorial

Written by Brandy Muntean, Community Service Assistant Manager, Kreider

Are you aware of a program in your community that helps local employers find talent to meet their business needs? We'd like to make you aware of Kreider Services' Thrive Program!

This program matches jobseekers with employment opportunities. Kreider staff support employers and employees through the hiring and training process.

Benefits of working with Kreider Services Thrive Program include accessing jobseekers who want to work, and make loyal and dependable employees. We have trained staff members, called Job Coaches, who will work with you and your business to identify your needs, and who will assist your new employee in learning their job skills, and meeting your expectations. Our staff member is also a resource for your team!

We support individuals in many different businesses in our community, depending on the interests of each jobseeker.

An example of someone Kreider has supported is Doug. Doug has worked at Granny Rose Animal Shelter for four months. We simply helped Doug with learning his routine and worked with him on perfecting some of the tasks on his to-do list. His boss, Shannon, says "Doug brings a new perspective to things and helps problem solve in ways we didn't think of" and "he works hard while he's here and does it with a smile."

Please enjoy a short video on Doug's story -> <https://youtu.be/fgwhmGxZc0A>

We look forward to working with our local community employers! **If you would like to learn more about Kreider Services Thrive Program please contact Brandy Muntean** at [munteanb@kreiderservices.org](mailto:munteanb@kreiderservices.org) or call 815-288-6691.





# PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK

SAUK VALLEY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Learn from dynamic speakers, network, and engage!

## Emotional Intelligence and Leadership presented by Le Hartman

Wednesday, April 30

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

\$25 for SVACC members, lunch included

## Summer networking event

Thursday, June 26

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. - Bartini's, Rock Falls

FREE for SVACC members

## Conflict Resolution presented by Dr. Jon Mandrell

Wednesday, September 24

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - SVCC Mathis Theatre

\$25 for SVACC members, lunch included

For more information  
on PWN, or to register  
for events,  
scan the QR code  
or visit



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or call 815-625-2400

