

BUSINESS BRIEF

JULY/AUGUST 2026



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Major Events Bring Nearly 13,000 Visitors to Owatonna

Owatonna hosted two signature events the week after Memorial Day registering nearly 13,000 visits between the two to get summer started. Together, these events brought visitors from across southern Minnesota and beyond, with 35–40% of attendees traveling from more than 50 miles away and many spending two hours or more enjoying Owatonna's festivities. Visitor movement data showed attendees supporting local restaurants, retailers, breweries, grocery stores, and convenience businesses before and after each event, extending the benefits well beyond the event footprint.



Spring Into Summer's first year re-envisioned a long-standing favorite, Smokin' in Steele, and attracted approximately 8,000 visitors. The three-day celebration included two ticketed/paid events plus free events open to public including a 2-day line-up of musicians, food trucks and midway favorites. The event rounded out with a softball tournament including local and visiting teams.

Owatonna's first Downtown Thursday of 2026 welcomed almost 5,000 visitors for its season opener highlighting Owatonna's downtown, local businesses, food trucks and family-friendly music and entertainment.



Owatonna Business Owner to Open Medford Event Center

Casa Morena Campestre Grill owner Jose Herrera has started renovations on what will be known as the Medford Event Center. The location, formerly the KC Hall, will be a multipurpose facility offering Mexican and American breakfast fare in the mornings and a venue for live music at night. An \$800,000 investment will completely renovate the 6,200 square foot venue from warehouse to event space. Herrera is targeting an October 2026 opening.

Owatonna, Blooming Prairie High Schools Celebrate Students Going to Work, Military

It's a recognition of students choosing to enter the workforce after high school graduation. This year, 12 students participated in the recognition at Owatonna High School and three at Blooming Prairie High School.

The students will be working at local businesses learning in electrical, farming, real estate, manufacturing, ethanol, and the trades. Students were also recognized for their commitment to joining the military after graduation. Congrats to the students and thank you to the businesses that have provided work experiences to them!



DC Fly-In Has Strong Local Connections

Connecting with members of Minnesota's congressional delegation provided an excellent opportunity to discuss key issues affecting businesses, including trade agreements with Canada and Mexico, immigration, and the rising cost of doing business.

A highlight of this year's Fly-In was a visit to the Daikin Sustainability & Innovation Center, an interactive showcase featuring cutting-edge technologies and sustainable solutions. The visit was especially meaningful for Owatonna, which is home to a major Daikin Applied manufacturing facility and plays an important role in the company's U.S. operations.

Representing Owatonna on the Fly-In were Casa Morena Owatonna owner Jose Herrera and Chamber President Brad Meier. The group also met with representatives from the Canadian Embassy to discuss trade and economic partnerships. Canada is Minnesota's largest international trading partner, making the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the continued strength of cross-border trade important topics of discussion.



Are You or Someone You know Considering Running for Office?

Filings for the four seats up for election for city council and school board are July 14-28, closing at 5pm on July 28.

- City: Wards 1, 3, 5 and At-Large
- School Board: 4 At-Large seats

A guide to running for office can be found on the chamber website (Owatonna.org) click Advocacy, then Running for Office. County and state filings have closed.



How did Legislature Impact Business?



At the recent Chamber Growth Breakfast, local legislators highlighted some wins for business, the most notable provisions included immediate R&E Expensing for pass-through entities, Section 179 Expensing,

Bonus Depreciation and changes to the Business Interest limit.

Minnesota Chamber lobbyist Andrew Morely noted as is often the case, much of the work was put into stopping legislation like additional workplace mandates.

In the end, it was agreed that getting a bonding bill and tax bill passed were good outcomes for the session.



OWATONNA

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026

Oscar Mazariego, Chair
American Family Insurance – Oscar Mazariego Agency

Deb Gillard, Past Chair
RE/MAX Venture

Shannon Cliff, Vice Chair
Mayo Clinic Health System- Owatonna

Rylee Muhr, Treasurer
West Bank
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Bonnie Cole
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Brett Doreck
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Grapeful Wine Bar

Matthew Hughes
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Cole Johnson
Haute & Company, LLC

Sara McKay
Owatonna Foundation, Inc.

Sammy Miranda
Lakeside Foods

Annie Priebe
Federated Insurance

Christy Tryhus
Riverland Community College

Visitor Spending Creates Local Opportunity

Owatonna continues to attract visitors from near and far, driving economic activity for our hotels, restaurants, retailers and attractions

Visitors by the numbers 12 month report (March 25- Feb 26)



449.2K
Visitor Trips

↑
9%



520.7K
Visitor Nights

↑
11.7%



2.7 days
Average Length of Stay



311.5K
Overnight Stays



Top Origins

Minneapolis-St. Paul, La Crosse-Eau Claire,
Chicago, Des Moines-Ames, Rochester-Mason
City, -Austin, Sioux Falls (Mitchell), Kansas City,
Duluth-Superior, Fargo-Valley City



Visitor Snapshot

What they do while they're here



Shopping 34%



Restaurants 24%



Hotels 23%



Grocery & Supermarkets 11%



Recreation & Entertainment 3%

Why Visitors Matter

More Spending in our community



Visitors stay at our hotels, eat at our restaurants, shop local and support attractions fueling our economy.

Stronger Businesses



Increased tourism means more customers, higher sales, stronger bottom line for our members

A Vibrant Owatonna



Events and experiences make Owatonna a better place to live work and visit!



Fastenal in Owatonna

Four Decades of Helping Local Businesses



Fastenal wasn't always a global organization. We started as a 1,000 square-foot store in Winona with one employee and a few dozen boxes of fasteners.

To go from small-town store to Fortune 500 company, we focused on you, the customer. Many think our job was to sell bolts, but our real job was to listen and evolve. Those two simple steps paved the way for everything Fastenal did next.

All the products and better ways of managing them, all the control over the supply chain and technology that simplifies processes, everything stemmed from the idea of Growth Through Customer Service.

Owatonna has a special place in Fastenal's history. In 1979, the city became home to the 11th Fastenal ever. And even more importantly, Will Oberton worked in Owatonna in the early '80s. He would go on to become CEO and chairman of Fastenal.



Today, Owatonna's Fastenal is led by Kody Ebner. Between the main branch at 2929 Park Drive and four Onsites throughout the community, 25 Fastenal employees work to keep area businesses running. Fastenal may not be a local hardware store, but it is a local team dedicated to helping local businesses.

In the end, the story is pretty simple: Fastenal is a Minnesota company with deep roots in Owatonna that has gone on to become a global industry leader.

Let's Talk! If your organization could use supply chain help or a productivity boost from industrial vending, contact Kody and his team at MNOWA@stores.fastenal.com or 507-455-0731.

Owatonna Main Street Receives Designation as a 2026 Main Street America Accredited Program



This highest national designation recognizes Owatonna's exceptional commitment to community-based revitalization and positive local impact.

To qualify for Accredited status, communities must demonstrate a proven track record of achieving outcomes in alignment with the Main Street Approach and exceptional performance in six areas: broad-based community commitment to revitalization; inclusive leadership and organizational capacity; diversified funding and sustainable program operations; strategy-driven programming; preservation-based economic development; and demonstrated impact and results.

Granite Replaces Crumbling Limestone, No Additional Cost to City

After phone calls, meetings, mediation, and legal discussions, the City of Owatonna reached a settlement that allows them to move forward replacing the crumbling limestone with granite - at no additional cost to the city. Work began the week of May 26, and the finished project will provide a stronger, longer-lasting downtown for everyone to enjoy for years to come.

The Downtown Owatonna Streetscape began with community input on everything from benches and landscaping to trees and decorative features. The result has been a beautiful, pedestrian-friendly downtown that receives compliments from visitors almost every day.

Durable granite was selected to better withstand Minnesota's weather while reducing future maintenance.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays through October 31

7:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Central Park

DOWNTOWN THURSDAY

August 6 and September 3

5:00 - 9:00 PM

Location: Central Park and North Cedar

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FITNESS EVENT

Pickleball

Wednesday, July 22

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Tuesday, July 28

5:30 to 7:00 PM

Location: All the Details

2020 Austin Road - Owatonna

Co-hosted by Auto Value Owatonna



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Friday, August 14

5:30 to 7:00 PM

Location: Ye Olde Beer Garden, Steele County Free Fair

Co-hosted by: Berkshire Hathaway Home Services

Advantage Real Estate, Block Plumbing & Heating,

and Cash Wise Foods



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SOCIAL

Wednesday, July 18

Location: Ye Olde Beer Garden,

Steele County Free Fair



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Tuesday, August 25

5:30 to 7:00 PM

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton

2365 43rd Street NW



Last Chance to Apply: Shape the Future Through the Owatonna Community Leadership Academy

Applications for the Owatonna Community Leadership Academy close July 10.

The Owatonna Community Leadership Academy is one of the community's premier leadership development programs, bringing together emerging and established leaders who are committed to making a difference. During the nine-month experience, participants gain an in-depth understanding of the people, organizations, businesses, and systems that shape Owatonna while building lasting relationships with fellow community leaders.

The experience continues long after graduation. Academy alumni become part of an engaged leadership network with access to exclusive educational programs, networking events, and opportunities to stay connected and involved in the community. Expand your leadership. Grow your network. Help shape Owatonna's future.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



ANDREW'S PRO CLEAN

Andrew Bonilla
50 Fairway Place, Owatonna MN 55060
hello@andrewsproclean.com
(507) 508-8894



ORTIZ FINANCIAL SERVICES

Kelli Ortiz
515 Young Dr, Owatonna MN 55060
Ortizfinancialservicesmn@gmail.com
(507) 884-0535



AQUARIUS HOME SERVICES

Ryan Kahl
303 Mineral Springs Rd,
Owatonna MN 55060
ryan.kahl@aquariushs.com
(888) 741-9025



PREGNANCY OPTIONS LIFE CARE CENTER

Gina Little
1015 W. Frontage Road #104,
Owatonna MN 55060
gina@pregnancyoptionsfbo.org
(507) 990-4377



FIRST MAINSTREET INSURANCE -UNITED PRAIRIE

Jennifer Frazier
110 W Rose St,
Owatonna MN 55060
jfrazier@firstmainstreet.com
(507) 599-6363



THEE BARBERSHOP

Bobby Gutierrez
316 N Cedar, Owatonna MN 55060
rcg1164@yahoo.com
(507) 214-7830



GREEN'S CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

John Green
3315 Hoffman Dr NW, Owatonna MN 55060
greensconstruction@yahoo.com
(507) 271-1797



Relive It or Discover It: A Caddyshack-Themed Annual Chamber Golf Event

To inquire about Sponsorships, email Julia @
jseykora@owatonna.org
Tuesday, August 4th, 2026, at the Owatonna
Country Club

Title Sponsor:



Cinderella Story... It Could Be Your Foursome

Don't miss this year's Caddyshack-themed Chamber Golf Outing—a day of golf, business connections, and unforgettable fun.

Join us on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at the Owatonna Country Club for a day you won't want to miss! This year's event features a 10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start and the always-popular Big Cup Format, make the day fun and exciting for golfers of all skill levels.

Teams will compete for prizes while enjoying interactive sponsor games and special themed activities throughout the course. It's the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow Chamber members, entertain clients, and celebrate summer.

As our Title Sponsor, Mike Herman, says: *"We belong to many Chambers and attend many golf events, and the Owatonna Chamber Golf Event is by far the best! That's why we support it!"*

CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

Supply 550 copies of your promotional insert for September/October mailing; \$150 by **August 24th**.



OWATONNA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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P: 507.451.7970 | E: oacct@owatonna.org

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 AM–5 PM



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Riverland
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Success
Starts Here.

www.riverland.edu