

# BUSINESS BRIEF

MAY/JUNE 2026



**OWATONNA**  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Owatonna Visitor Guide at Mall of America

## Tourism Unveils New Visitor Guide, Selfie Station

The 2026 Visitor Guide recently went out to travel spaces across the region including Mall of America. Even with large digital presence, more than 12,000 Owatonna guides are distributed annually.

Just in time for summer events, the new selfie-station is making its way around town. It's a way to show your love for Owatonna and visitors to share their time here.



## Good Day Car Wash to Replace Salvation Army Building

When the Salvation Army closed its thrift store in August of 2024, the building, located on the prominent corner of 18th Street and S Cedar Ave, sat vacant. Close to a year ago, that location caught the eye of a regional developer who was looking for a spot for a car wash. The Good Day Express Car wash will locate on that corner after demolition which is scheduled for June. The owners have locations in Otsego, Hutchinson, Monticello, and Waconia.



## Guthier Retires After 25 Years at the Chamber

A job well done! Rhonda Guthier started her journey with the Chamber as an administrative assistant in 2001. During her 25 years since then, she has worked in every role in the organization including the interim President/CEO three times. Her willingness to take on new responsibilities was a hallmark of her career. Thank you Rhonda for giving the Chamber your very best! The organization is left in a much better place because of your work.

## Signing Day to Recognize Students Entering Workforce

The SteeleCoWorks initiative, recognizes students who choose to enter the workforce following graduation and the businesses who are hiring them. This year, students from Owatonna will be recognized at OHS and Blooming Prairie will host at the high school. These celebrations are a culmination of a year of work to connect students with work experiences locally.



## Development Event Recognizes Owatonna Projects

Members of the Owatonna Partners for Economic Development nominated projects for the REJournal Development awards. 2025 project nominees included: Olmsted Medical Center, Marthaler Honda, Wastewater Treatment facility, City of the Year, and Developer of the Year. Greg Kruschke walked away with the Developer of the Year Award-Congrats Greg!

## Halverson Earns Ted G. Ringhofer Memorial Scholarship

**Logan Halverson** has been named the 2026 recipient of the Ted G. Ringhofer Memorial Scholarship, an award that honors leadership, community involvement, and a commitment to pursuing a business-related field of study. Established in 1998 by Tom and Terri Effertz in memory of longtime Chamber of Commerce President Ted G. Ringhofer, the scholarship recognizes graduating Owatonna High School seniors who embody the same spirit of service and civic leadership that defined Ted's legacy.

Sponsored through North Risk Partners and the Owatonna Area Chamber Ambassadors, the scholarship has supported local students for nearly three decades. The Chamber congratulates Logan Halverson on this achievement and wishes him continued success in his future educational and professional endeavors.



## Why Businesses Like Yours Are Members

Success today depends on more than simply running a good business. It depends on strong connections, workforce solutions, community investment, advocacy, and a healthy local economy.

**One of the Chamber's greatest strengths is creating relationships that help businesses grow.** Through networking events, educational programs, ribbon cuttings, and leadership opportunities, businesses build connections that often lead to new customers, partnerships, and long-term growth.

**The Chamber also plays an important role in workforce development.** Through SteeleCoWorks initiatives — partnerships with schools, employers, and regional organizations — efforts are focused on attracting and retaining talent, promoting career pathways, and helping businesses build the workforce needed for the future.

The Chamber works with local leaders, developers, and businesses to support investment, expansion, housing initiatives, and continued economic growth throughout the region. Tourism efforts also help bring visitors and additional economic activity to local restaurants, retailers, hotels, and attractions.

**Through Main Street initiatives,** downtown engagement, beautification, events, and business support help create a vibrant community where businesses want to invest and people want to live, work, and visit.

**The Chamber also serves as a unified voice** for local business on issues that impact economic growth, workforce, infrastructure, and the overall business climate.

Chamber membership demonstrates a commitment to the continued success of the Owatonna area. **Businesses like yours are members because they understand that when businesses work together, the entire community benefits.**



**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  
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Owatonna

**Rylee Muhr**, Treasurer  
West Bank  
(Young Professional Chair)

**Kelly Boomgarden**, At-Large  
Country Inn & Suites–Owatonna

**Bonnie Cole**  
Cole's Electric & Torey's  
Restaurant & Bar

**Brett Doreck**  
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**Steve Glynn**  
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**Doug Meier**  
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**Sammy Miranda**  
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**Annie Priebe**  
Federated Insurance

**Christy Tryhus**  
Riverland Community College

## The Power of Volunteers in Building Community Pride

When events are supported by volunteers, not only are memorable experiences created, they amplify the economic impact these events have on our community, helping sustain the traditions that make our community unique.

Volunteers maximize the economic impact of local events by helping organizations reduce operational costs while creating added exposure and authentic community engagement for businesses, organizations, and individuals alike.

Beyond supporting events, volunteering creates valuable personal and professional connections throughout the community. Working alongside fellow volunteers, business leaders, organizations, and community members helps build relationships, expand networks, and strengthen a shared sense of community pride.

### The following local events are just a few examples of events where volunteers are critical to their success:

- Corky's Early Bird Softball Tournament
- USBC Bowling Tournament
- Spring into Summer (formerly Smokin' in Steele Backyard BBQ & Blues Festival)
- Downtown Thursdays
- Harry Wenger Marching Band Festival
- Memorial Day Parade
- Extravaganza
- Orphanage Museum Fall Celebration
- Steele County Free Fair
- Main Street Lighted Parade

There are countless opportunities to get involved and contribute not only to the impact of these events, but begin creating a network of friends, colleagues and connections you may not cross paths with in your daily work.



**If you are interested in volunteering or connecting with organizations and events seeking support, contact the Chamber office to connect you with opportunities that match your interests and availability.**

## Traveling sign creates Instagrammable photo opportunities



Increase your social media engagement, community pride, and destination visibility! As the recognizable sign moves between local businesses, attractions, and events, it encourages residents and visitors to explore different areas of the community and share their experiences online.

The repeated appearance of the sign across social media platforms helps strengthen Owatonna's brand identity while providing authentic promotion through user-generated content. This collaborative effort also supports local businesses through increased exposure, cross-promotion, and stronger community connection.

The sign is available for reservation by businesses, organizations, attractions, and event organizers throughout the year. Contact the chamber to inquire about it being at your business or event!



### Allina Health - Owatonna Hospital

For more than a century, Allina Health Owatonna Hospital has provided trusted, high-quality care to residents across Steele County and surrounding communities. While health care has evolved over the years, the hospital's commitment to caring for neighbors close to home has remained constant.

Located near Interstate 35, Allina Health Owatonna

Hospital works in collaboration with the Owatonna Clinic, operated by Mayo Clinic Health System, to deliver coordinated inpatient, outpatient, and emergency care.

#### Caring for Women, Families and our Community

Owatonna Hospital offers a wide range of women's health and family-centered services, supporting patients through every stage of life.

The Allina Health Owatonna Women's Health Clinic, located on the hospital campus, provides obstetrics and pregnancy care, gynecology, family planning, and menopause care. Services are provided by Owatonna Hospital and supported by convenient phone and online scheduling.

Families welcoming a new baby are cared for in the hospital's Birth Center, which offers personalized, compassionate care in a safe and welcoming environment. Parents also have access to Baby Café, a free, drop-in breastfeeding support program led by trained lactation professionals, offering guidance and connection during pregnancy and throughout a baby's first year.

#### Expanding Access to Preventive Care

In addition to maternity and women's health services, Allina Health Owatonna Hospital continues to expand access to preventive screenings, including colonoscopies available locally in Owatonna with Dr. Schwalbe. Having this service close to home makes it easier for community members to receive recommended screenings and focus on prevention.

#### The campus offers the following specialty care services:

- Women's health and pregnancy care
- Birth Center services
- Baby Café breastfeeding support
- Colonoscopy and preventive screening services
- Surgery Center (inpatient and outpatient)
- Mental Health and Addiction Care
- Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute
  - o Aquatic (pool) physical therapy services

Recent recognitions include awards for patient safety, stroke care, quality, and environmental excellence. Designed to promote healing, the campus features indoor and outdoor walking paths, gardens, and a Reflection Center.



Allina Health Owatonna Hospital is proud to partner with the community to improve health and well-being and is grateful to the staff, physicians, volunteers, and Auxiliary members who help carry out its mission each day.

# MAINSTREET

Lisa Cochran, Main Street Director

## New Energy, New Growth: Downtown Owatonna Starts the Year Strong



Main Street saw strong momentum in Quarter 1, highlighted by the return of a retail store, Hidden Rose, along with a new owner of Fresh Café – both conveniently located in the same building. Congratulations to Melissa Ward on her next adventure in Downtown Owatonna.

We had the demolition of three buildings along Hoffman Drive to make way for future development and growth with the second Ascend project.



New initiatives like a community food tour and the first-ever Fix-It Clinic brought fresh energy downtown, while events such as Winter Walk with Beverages, Bites and Brrr-ingo drew great participation, even bringing in groups from outside Owatonna.

Main Street progress was also supported behind the scenes through strong leadership and community involvement. Owatonna earned the designation as an Accredited Main Street for 2026, the Advisory Board held three monthly meetings this quarter and added 3 new members, while volunteers contributed a total of 42 hours dedicated to advancing district goals.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



### AMERICAN WAY REALTY THE 507 GROUP

Ryan Boerner  
1650 Madison AVE, STE 101, Mankato  
507-456-3330  
ryan@mankatorealestate.com



### SMITH AND SONS BARBERSHIP

George Castaneda  
159 18th ST SW, STE 1, Owatonna  
507-413-0243  
Gccasta1@gmail.com



### BARNWOOD CUSTOMS

Joshua Clemens  
5877 SW 18th ST, Owatonna  
612-715-1671  
twinstacksenterprisellc@gmail.com



### SNELL MOTORS – BUICK

Melissa Bradley  
1900 Madison AVE, Mankato  
507-304-6747  
mbradley@snellmotors.com



### CHOICE TECHNICAL ACADEMY

Cortney Leyden  
731 N. Cedar AVE, Owatonna  
507-400-4009  
cleyden@technicalacademies.org



### STATE FARM INSURANCE – MOLLY MCGILLEN AGENCY, INC.

Molly McGillen  
920 Hoffman DR, Owatonna  
507-451-4619  
molly@mollymcgillen.com



### DISCOVERY FINANCIAL

Cody Buck  
211 22nd ST SE, Owatonna  
507-451-8362  
cbuck@discoveryfinancial.com



### THE PAW SALON, LLC

Evelin Heckman  
1524 S Cedar AVE, Owatonna  
507-214-2648  
Evelincuellar15@gmail.com

## EVENTS Update

Julia Seykora, Director of Events



### Leadership Academy Applications Now Open

The Owatonna Community Leadership Academy is a leadership program designed to enable candidates to learn about Owatonna resources, values, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges.

A learning experience geared toward providing an in-depth look at eight key elements of our community: education, economic development, government, healthcare, public safety, quality of life, agriculture, and culture & diversity. This program will provide opportunities for candidates to exchange ideas, build

networks, and begin the process of identifying and solving community issues. Applications are being accepted now! Deadline - June 30th! Contact Julia @ [jseykora@owatonna.org](mailto:jseykora@owatonna.org) or 507-451-7970.



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

To inquire about Sponsorships, email Julia @ [jseykora@owatonna.org](mailto:jseykora@owatonna.org)

Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the Owatonna Country Club

Title Sponsor:



### Annual Chamber Golf Outing

Join us for a summer tradition that brings the business community together in a fun and memorable way. This year's Caddyshack-themed tournament promises a lively atmosphere, strong connections, and a day you won't forget. With limited team and sponsorship availability, early registration is highly encouraged.

### Go Big. Run Small. The 0.5K for Special Olympics!

The most epic (and shortest) race of the year is back! Join us for the annual 0.5K Beer Run on Saturday, June 20th at Mineral Springs Brewery!

Whether you're a season runner or just in it for the fun (& the beer!), this event is perfect for everyone! There will be food trucks and drinks available for purchase, and plenty of opportunities to socialize and have fun! Coming back in 2026 are the fun runs, door prizes, seltzer-mosas, and bloody mary beers available before and after the race! All proceeds will go to the Owatonna Area Special Olympics.

Registration is \$30; Please indicate your T-shirt size during registration; T-shirts will be available for those who register **before June 1st**.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## FARMERS MARKET

May 2 – October 31  
7:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
**Location:** Central Park

## CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST

May 21  
**Location:** Torey's Restaurant & Bar (event space),  
208 N Cedar AVE  
**Topic:** What's Really Happening to Our Economy?  
**Speaker:** Erick Garcia Luna, Regional Outreach  
Director, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

## BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

May 26  
5:30 – 7:00 PM  
**Location:** Michaelson Funeral Home  
1930 Austin RD



## DOWNTOWN THURSDAY

June 4, July 2, August 6 and September 3  
5:00 – 9:00 PM  
**Location:** Central Park & North Cedar

# BUSINESS *after* HOURS

## CHAMBER GROWTH BREAKFAST

June 18  
7:30 – 9:00 AM  
**Location:** Torey's Restaurant & Bar (Events Space),  
208 N Cedar AVE, Owatonna  
**Topic:** Legislative Wrap Up  
**Featuring:** Senator John Jasinski, Representative  
Tom Sexton and the Minnesota Chamber. Past  
Board Chairs will also be recognized

## BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

June 23  
5:30 – 7:00 PM  
**Location:** Eagles Club Aerie #1791  
141 E. Rose ST



## CHAMBER PACK DEADLINE

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

## OFFICE CLOSINGS

The chamber office will be closed, Monday,  
May 25th for Memorial Day



**OWATONNA**  
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Business Brief is published by the Owatonna Area  
Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

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