

Business Monthly

Message from Executive Director, Rhonda Jordal



As someone new to Albert Lea, looking through my eyes is different than someone who has lived here for years. Many times we overlook things in our own backyard or grow used to them. I am so proud and glad to now be an Albert Lea'n.

In the short time that I have been here I have enjoyed so many things. The beautiful lakes, I have enjoyed looking where the dredge boat is at, as I would drive by the lake or go out to the park. My 8th grader, myself and Honor, (my yellow Lab), enjoyed the dog park and saw more wildlife at the launch. Enjoying 43 parks in Albert Lea and I have not been to all of them yet. The ones that I have been to are so relaxing and beautiful! I have enjoyed the wildlife on and around the lakes. I love to see the egrets, pelicans, herons, gulls, ducks, eagles, cranes and so many more. My husband and I have been looking at houses. We are looking for something with a little land so we can have horses again and we would love to be by one of the lakes so we can enjoy the beauty and wildlife.

I think about all of the restaurants we have. So many great eateries in Freeborn County! April loves it because each week we can choose somewhere else to try! It is so wonderful to have all the choices we have and then so many of them deliver! We all have the days that we get home from work and really do not want to cook. Many times I just want to curl up on the couch and what a great option to be able to have something delivered!

Special points of interest:

- Chamber Business After Hour
- Gourmet Auction
- Ambassador's Visits.
- Number of referrals.

The people I have met are warm and welcoming. I have met so many but yet I know there are so many more that I want to meet. The businesses we have are amazing! I love all the choices we have of merchandise, the retail shopping and home businesses as well as all the types of service businesses. Then look at the manufacturing companies in Albert Lea and Freeborn County. All of these produce jobs for us that I am so thankful for. I am thankful for this community, for the volunteers of all the Chamber committees, the board and staff! Thanksgiving is past but I am reminded that we need to continue being thankful for so much that we have, especially right here in Freeborn County and Albert Lea.

Minnesota Chamber's 2019 Business Benchmarks Highlights Economic Rankings and Workforce Challenges

By Doug Loon

A talented workforce remains a foundation of growing Minnesota companies and the overall state economy, according to the 2019 Minnesota Business Benchmarks report. But the difficulty of finding skilled and qualified workers and our business climate are threatening growth.

The mounting challenge of filling job vacancies is a common thread in the 2019 Business Benchmarks report. It also underscores the importance of strengthening Minnesota's overall business climate, a message that resounds from business leaders highlighted in the report.

[The 2019 Business Benchmarks report](#) was released at the Minnesota Chamber's Annual Meeting on November 15. It is produced by the Minnesota Chamber and local Chamber Federation partners, and was distributed statewide as an insert in the December edition of *Twin Cities Business* magazine.

This annual report compiles key indicators that define our business climate – where Minnesota ranks compared with other states – to identify the state's strengths and areas for improvement for Minnesota to compete in the global economy. Comprehensive, objective data were compiled from sources such as state and federal agencies.

Among the key findings:

- Innovation remains a strength of the state's homegrown economy.
- Minnesota's economy is growing but at a slower pace compared with many other states.
- Minnesota saw a slight improvement in tax rankings, but it still is in the five highest tax rates for both corporate and individual taxes.
- Minnesota continues to make progress in infrastructure improvements – an important factor in the ability to compete in a global marketplace.

The 2019 report tells the story of Minnesota's economy differently, through real business leaders representative of the types and sizes of companies that make up the economic fabric of communities across the state.

Their voices also help lay the groundwork for the chamber's 2019 legislative agenda.

Eric Gibson, president of UMC Inc. at Monticello, says an uncertain and uncompetitive business climate kills investment. "We need clarity in the tax code. Conformity to the changes enacted at the federal level would be a great start. Minnesota is one of the top five highest-taxed states. We don't need to be the lowest, but a move toward the middle would level the playing field."

Deepinder Singh, founder and CEO of 75F in Burnsville, says public policy could help in encouraging investment in technology. "People feel the state has decided to invest in innovation. That's a key message."

Shelly Peterson, executive vice president and general manager for Minnesota operations of The Boldt Company in Cloquet, says quality infrastructure looms even more important when combined with other competitive disadvantages facing Minnesota companies. "Minnesota is not known to be business friendly. We need to find a way to figure that out."

This report is a great tool to frame constructive conversations on how Minnesota can remain competitive in today's ever-changing global economy. It's especially timely as Minnesota has elected a new governor. The new administration will lead a state that has tremendous strengths such as a talented and highly educated workforce, high innovation and a diverse economy. We must protect those strengths by addressing public policies essential to growing businesses and the overall state economy.

We look forward to the partnership of Governor-Elect Tim Walz and all lawmakers in enacting public policy to grow Minnesota together.

Ambassador's Visits



Mary Kay – Lori Arnold



Leadership Resources Development

Thank You

The following members renewed their memberships in November:

Cafourek Insurance Agency

Martin's Cycling & Fitness

Northstar Powersports & Marine

Mike Funk

Skyline Plaza Associates

The INTERCHANGE Wine & Coffee Bistro

Total Security of Southern Minnesota

AmeriNat



Referrals

We had 128 referrals during the month of November.

Committee Updates

CHAMBER BOARD – met on November 28. The Board discussed updating the website, went over the 2018-2019 budget and the Main Street Program. Rhonda has scheduled a Board Retreat for January.

AMBASSADOR'S - No Meeting in November.

GREEN COMMITTEE – No Meeting in November.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – met on November 8. Working on an Eggs & Issues Event for late January/early February on the child care issue. The Committee will take a more active role with Legislation, mainly on child care, I-90 Corridor, Workforce and affordable housing.

WORKSITE WELLNESS COMMITTEE – met on November 16. New 'Tobacco Free' signage will be going up at the school and city parks. Personnel from Hastings, MI came for a community tour. A Worksite Summit will be held March 13 with Joel Spoonheim as the quest speaker.

ALFC Chamber December
Business after hours

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

Downtown Albert Lea
Robert Hoffman Realty, Inc.
212 Broadway Ave. S. | Albert Lea, MN
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

SILENT AUCTION
available to raise money for
downtown Christmas decorations

HOSTED BY:

Albert Lea
Tribune

—RHR—

ROBERT HOFFMAN REALTY INC.
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ALBERT LEA
magazine

Fishers & Fine Jewelers

BRING MANY
BUSINESS
CARDS FOR
PRIZES



2019 Gourmet Auction

This event is sponsored by the Big Island Rendezvous and the Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce. The event brings together some of Freeborn County's finest chefs in one room where they stand ready to dazzle you with their creations. Money raised will support Education Days at the 2019 Rendezvous and community projects of the Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber. Join us! Bring a friend, bring your family and don't forget your appetite.

Date: January 25, 2019

Time: 5:30-10:00 p.m.

Location: Wedgewood Cove

Contact: Chamber Office for more information 373-3938

Board of Directors

Patricia Dahl, Board Chair
Mayo Clinic Health System
Albert Lea and Austin
373-2384

George Gonzalez, 1st Chair
Dave Syverson Auto
373-1438

Kathy Sabinish
Dave's Phone
Booth/Frames-R-Us
377-0848

Dr. Mike Funk
Albert Lea Area Schools
Superintendent
379-4802

Kelly Goskeson
Mrs. Gerry's
373-6384

Angie Kolker
Freeborn-Mower
Cooperatives Services
373-6421

Brandon Stevens, 2nd Chair
Cargil Cooked Turkey and Meats
377-2526

Beau Hartman
Hartman Law Office
507-200-0301

Catherine Buboltz
Director of Sales & Marketing
Thorne Crest Senior
Living Community
373-2311

Kim Nelson, Past Chair
Riverland Community College
433-0607

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