

Shopping Local Keeps **OUR** Community Strong

The decision to buy local is a lifestyle choice that reflects your commitment to the whole community. By shopping local we increase our prosperity, preserving our one-of-a-kind businesses that add distinctive character to our local economy. It impacts local decision making, supports our schools and municipalities and let's not forget to mention jobs and economic growth! For every \$100 spent with an independent store, \$68 stays here in our community. For every \$100 you spend at a local branch or chain store, \$13-\$43 remains right here in Morrison County.

For those hard to buy for individuals on your shopping list, Chamber Bucks make a great gift. Chamber Bucks are a gift certificate to every Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce member. Chamber Bucks can be redeemed with member utility companies, gas stations, grocery stores, specialty stores, insurance agencies, car dealerships and more. Chamber Bucks come in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and have no expiration date. Give the Chamber a call for your Chamber Bucks order (320) 632-5155.

Think local first, shop local first.

Friday Morning Coffee

Friday, December 21

7:30 - 9:00 am

Highland Senior Living, 1012 3 Ave NE, Little Falls

sponsored by:



Highland Senior Living is an active adult community that offers independent living, assisted living and memory care. They are committed to promote independence and individuality for their tenants in a supportive environment.

Networking is a powerful tool. After announcements, at 8:00 am, attendees will have the opportunities for 30 second testimonials for another Chamber Member business.

Small Business of the Year; Large Business of the Year and Chamber Volunteer of the Year Nominations are now being accepted



Pictured above from the left: 2018 Chamber Large Business of the Year, **Kevin Kapsner, Spectrum Marketing Services**; Chamber President /CEO **Debora K. Boelz**, **Maggie Shearer** and **Amber Rausch, Spectrum Marketing Services**.

In an effort to celebrate our members and the numerous individual volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to the Chamber, the Outstanding Service Committee is now accepting nominations for our Chamber Volunteer of the Year, Small Business of the Year and Large Business of the Year awards. Each award has a specific criteria to assist you in the nomination process.

Nominations are due to the Chamber of Commerce, by Friday, January 25, 2019. Awards will be bestowed at the Annual Meeting, Thursday, February 28. Please consider making a nomination in one or more category. Recipients will receive the public recognition and a plaque noting the honor. Their names will also be displayed on permanent plaques in the Chamber Lobby. Nomination forms are available on our website at

www.littlefallsmnchamber.com/pages/NominationForms

From the Desk of the CEO

Debora K. Boelz



The merriest of the holiday season to one and all! With all the help wanted signs posted in businesses, it should be a good holiday season with nearly zero unemployment and expendable income in everyone's pockets. My wish list to Santa this year includes more childcare options for working families.

*Morrison County has a workforce that needs more childcare options. Job training opportunities are available **IF** people truly want to make a better life for themselves and their families. Another item on my wish list to Santa is that government assistance programs would be more accommodating to families, offering benefits on a step system that allows parents to work and fill in the gaps with assistance as needed with the goal of self-sufficiency. The current all or nothing approach is impractical and counterproductive to instilling a work ethic in this and future generations.*

Congratulations to the newly elected Board of Directors Laurie Whitlow, **PrimeLending**, who was elected to serve a second 3 year term; Peter Mooney, **The Source Computing** who was elected to his 1st full 3 year term after being appointed to fill an open seat in 2017. Joining the Board of the first time are Nancy Berg, **Berg's Bug Removal** and Brian Gapinski, **Rural MN CEP**. Tom Hoggarth, **Golfers Organized for Little Falls** has been appointed to complete the one year term left open by Jill Moore's resignation as she left her employment with Great River Arts. *Welcome all!*

Thank you to Cindy Brey, SweetWater Resort and John Thielen, Thielen Meats, for their service on the Board for the past 3 years. *I (we) appreciate your willingness to serve! John will remain on the board as the immediate past chair, non-voting member.*

Looking ahead to 2019, my crystal ball is a little fuzzy. *Consumer confidence appears to be high; prices at the gas pumps are low (OK, maybe not as low as we would like!). New businesses are locating in the area and existing businesses are expanding and investing in infrastructure.*

I would be amiss if I did not add my usual think and shop local message this holiday season. *You know the words by heart too! And Chamber Bucks are a wonderful gift that can be used all over the community. Chamber Bucks are available in \$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50 denominations. Contact the Chamber to place large orders so we can have them ready for you. For smaller orders just stop by Depot between 8 am and 4:30 pm.*

In closing, *the Depot has some new holiday decorations this year having finally retired items that were purchased in 2003. Mary has spearheaded a new, fresh look for the North End meeting room space, enhancing the event experience this season. From the Chamber staff to you, our wishes for a holiday season filled with family and friends, good cheer and good memories!*

Congratulations to our December Employee of the Month

Patricia Steinert,
McDonald's



The Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce our December Employee of the Month, *Patricia Steinert, McDonald's*. Patricia has been a Cashier for the past 5 years with McDonald's.

Jared Allord states about Patricia: "Patricia is a delight to have working here. She is customer

obsessed and very friendly to anyone who walks through the door. Her outgoing personality and compassion for others makes her the perfect person to train our newest employees. Patricia's ability to work in a fast pace environment with others when things are extremely busy is truly amazing. Congratulations Patricia!"

Patricia states: "Our regular customers are like family to me. I enjoy the time I get to spend with our customers and treat them like I would want to be treated. Thank you to the person who nominated me for this honor."

Thank you to our December Employee of the Month sponsors: **CHI St. Gabriel's Health at Home, Design Electronics, Dominos, Fitness Connection, Fresh Hair Professionals, GoldSmith Jewelers, Great River Arts, Minnesota Fishing Museum Hall of Fame & Education Center, The Royal, ServiceMaster Clean by Retka, Silker Studio, Vacuum Cleaner Outlet & Service Center.**

Congratulations Patricia Steinert!

Membership Directory

The Chamber is in the process of updating our member listings prior to the publication of the 2019 Member Directory. To ensure we have accurate information about your business please review your information via our website

<http://www.littlefallsmnchamber.com/list/> If you have updates, let us know or login and make the changes yourself. We appreciate your help ensuring the information we are publishing is accurate.

Lunchtime on Location (LOL) Punch Cards

If you attend Lunchtime on Location (LOL) but don't always have ca\$h, no problem. Punch cards are available. A punch card is a convenient way to pre-purchase lunches making attending LOL even easier. Punches don't expire and carry over from year to year until used. You determine the amount you would like on your punch card and we can send you an invoice. If you would like a punch card, let Gina know by emailing her at ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com or call the Chamber (320) 632-5155.

Thank you to our November Friday Morning Coffee sponsor Knute Nelson Home Care



Pictured above from the left: *Emily Bush, Treavor Wichner and Kayla Andreasen, Knute Nelson Home Care.*

Thank you to our November Lunchtime on Location (LOL) sponsor Initiative Foundation



Pictured above from the left: *Carl Newbanks, Brenda Gugglberger and Mike Burton, Initiative Foundation.*

Lindy Greeters Visits

Thank you for your membership! Photo's are from member visits made in November. Lindy Greeters *Aubrey Hoggarth Cook, Edward Jones; Chris Kruschek, ReMax Central MN; Roy Nouis, Nouis Home Care* and *Shelly Stoner, ReMax Central MN* visited the following members to thank them for their continued membership. The businesses were treated to a Chamber mug full of treats.

Highland Senior Living



Pictured left: *Debbie Evans*, Assistant Director; *Jessica Hilmerson*, Administrative Assistant/Marketing Director, **Highland Senior Living**; Lindy Greeters *Aubrey Hoggarth Cook, Edward Jones* and *Roy*

Nouis, Nouis Home Care.

At Highland Senior Living you will experience the comfort and convenience of home. Their individualized services, experienced staff and their Inspire Wellness Program feature activities to keep life fun! Their mission is to enrich the lives of those they serve because the journey matters. For more information visit <http://www.twsl.com>

JT Storage



Pictured left: Lindy Greeters *Roy Nouis, Nouis Home Care* and *Aubrey Hoggarth Cook, Edward Jones* with *Dusty Girtz, JT Storage.*

JT Storage is your storage solution for your

household extras, pontoons, boats, cars, campers motor homes and more. Call for reasonable rates (320) 632-9626 or visit <http://jtstoragemn.com>

Schlenner Wenner & Co.



Pictured left: *Steve Schueller, Schlenner Wenner & Co.*, Lindy Greeter *Chris Kruschek, ReMax Central MN; Brian Mackinac, Julie Heinen, Dore Arnold, Schlenner Wenner & Co.* and Lindy Greeter *Shelly Stoner, ReMax Central MN.*

Schlenner Wenner & Co. can help you with all your tax and audit needs. Come visit us at our new location, 118 Wood Street, Suite 101, right across from the dam. For more information visit www.swcocpas.com

ThingamaBOB's



Pictured left: Lindy Greeters *Shelly Stoner, ReMax Central MN* and *Chris Kruschek, ReMax Central MN* with *Adelle Starin, ThingamaBOBs.*

ThingamaBOB's Toy Shop, formerly known

as the Gumdrop Tree, is located in historic downtown Little Falls and is your one stop shop for all things toys and candy. Not just for kids, you'll find a vast selection of jigsaw puzzles and all the latest and greatest toys, science and art sections, baby toys and adult games and gifts ranging from the classic to the absurd. ThingamaBOB's is a place where kids can play while parents shop, they have a newly designed playhouse filled with toys to intrigue their imaginations. Stay tuned for our featured kids play nights such as our "paint and pizza" or other crafts and activities. ThingamaBOB's is mom run and each toy is carefully picked and "mom and kid approved." For more information visit babysonbroadway.com/thingamabobs-toy-shop/.

Save the date

Thursday, February 28
Chamber Annual Meeting

Welcome New Businesses

Lindy Greeters *Chris Krushek, ReMax Central MN* and *Shelly Stoner, ReMax Central MN* visited the following new business and welcomed them to the Little Falls and Morrison County Business community.

Little Falls Hearing Clinic



Pictured left: Lindy Greeter *Chris Krushek, ReMax Central MN*; *Heather Van Stone, Little Falls Hearing Clinic* and Lindy Greeter *Shelly Stoner, ReMax Central MN*.

Heather is licensed to test, diagnose and

treat hearing loss for people of all ages. She is your local expert in all hearing aid technology and works with all brands of hearing aids. Hearing loss is a serious problem, and you should put your trust into a professional with the education to back you and your communication needs for years to come. To schedule your next hearing appointment call (320) 616-6850.



Recent Board Action

- ✓ Heard the ex officio report from Little Falls City Administrator Jon Radermacher
- ✓ Continued the discussion on sponsoring a Cone Zone event in downtown Little Falls during the summer of 2019 road construction
- ✓ Accepted the resignation of Jill Moore, Great River Arts, from the Board of Directors due to a change in employment
- ✓ Appointed *Tom Hoggarth, Golfers Organized for Little Falls - GOLF*, to fill the board seat vacated by J. Moore that runs through December 2019
- ✓ Approved the 2019 operating budget with projected income of \$284,885 and expenses of \$284,417
- ✓ Reviewed the 2018 financial report on the Arts & Crafts, Market Place and Man Cave Fairs that had \$166,283 in income, \$76,046 in expenses and a net income of \$90,237
- ✓ Accepted the bid from Spectrum Marketing Services for printing of the 2019 Membership Directory
- ✓ Elected new members Rustic Diamond Boutique and Kensington Bank
- ✓ Ratified the election of board of directors for term years 2019-2021: *Nancy Berg, Berg's Bug Removal*; *Brian Gapinski, Rural MN CEP*; *Pete Mooney, The Source Computing* and *Laurie Whitlow, PrimeLending*

Chamber Board / Staff Listing

2016-2018

Cindy Brey, SweetWater Resort
Pete Mooney, The Source Computing
John Thielen, Chair of the Board, Thielen Meats
Laurie Whitlow, PrimeLending

2017-2019

Tom Hoggarth, Golfers Organized for Little Falls - GOLF
Tim Matros, Five Pines Senior Solutions
Rosi Przybilla, Treasurer, Marshik Insurance Agency
Rob Ronning, Pine Country Bank

2018-2020

Steve Andres, Past Chair of the Board, Design Electronics
Dr. Allison Girtz, Secretary, Allison Zak D.C., LLC
Patrick Watercott, Vernon Sales Promotion

Chamber Staff

Debora K. Boelz, President/CEO
dboelz@littlefallsmnchamber.com
Mary Bednarek, Office, Arts & Crafts Fair and Financial Coordinator
mary@littlefallsmnchamber.com
Gina Vetter, Project & Volunteer Coordinator
ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com

Snow Removal

Snow removal on our city streets and parking lots can be a challenge. In an effort to efficiently communicate with property owners, the City of Little Falls is collecting email



addresses for snow removal alerts. To be added to the list, please email Greg Kimman, Public Works Director/City Engineer at gkimman@cityoflittlefalls.com



As Little Falls prepares for the Highway 27 road project in the summer of 2019, a group has formed to get ahead of the disruption for the downtown businesses called the Downtown Council. The group meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at Great River Arts from 8:00 - 9:30 am and all are welcome.

As a Chamber, the Board of Directors discussed over 2 meetings how we can best serve our members and the community during the construction project. One option is for businesses impacted by the road construction to use the Chamber meeting space on a short term basis to meet with clients. Taking it to the next step, are there other businesses, churches or schools that would be willing to share their space on the same short term basis?

To entice residents and visitors to downtown on Thursday nights, events under the heading of Cone Zone are being planned. Businesses are going to be asked to stay open until 8:30 pm on these nights. Starting on June 6th and ending on September 7th, events will be planned to entertain and amuse! These family friendly events will be posted on the Big Dig Facebook page. Think Summer Time by George on a smaller scale.

Are there any businesses that would be interested in sponsoring or co-sponsoring a Thursday night Cone Zone event?

Businesses, churches, nonprofits and service organizations are encouraged to pick a date and let Sabrina at the Convention & Visitors Bureau know the details. She can be reached at (320) 616-4959. There may be funding to assist in covering the costs.

Businesses can plan on less foot track making your online presence even more important. Please check your information on the Chamber's website at www.littlefallsmnchamber.com to ensure that we are accurately describing your businesses, services offered and hours of operation. You can update your information yourself; if you need to be reminded of your password, contact the Chamber office.

City of Lights



We flipped the switch on the City of Lights in historic downtown, November 23. The City of Lights will remain lit until January 1, providing you some added holiday cheer.

Happy
New
Year

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.

Doug Loon is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce – www.mnchamber.com.

December Calendar of Events

The Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce events and meetings are in bold. For an expanded list of community events, visit our website at <http://www.littlefallsmnchamber.com>

December

- now - Jan 1 ~ **City of Lights**, historic downtown Little Falls. *Sponsored by the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce*
- now - Dec. 2 ~ Christmas Tree Lane, noon - 7:00 pm, MN Fishing Museum Hall of Fame and Education Center, 304 W Broadway, Little Falls
- now - Dec. 2 ~ Christmas at the Mansions, 1 -7 pm Mon. – Sat., 11 am - 6 pm Sun., Linden Hill Historical Event Center, 608 Highland Ave., Little Falls
- now - Dec. 2 ~ Nutcracker Christmas at the Rosenmeier Home, 1 -7 pm Mon. –Sat., 11 am - 6 pm Sun., CVB, 606 1 St SE, Little Falls
- now - Dec. 2 ~ A WW1 Christmas, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Lindbergh Historic Site, 1620 Lindbergh Dr. S., Little Falls
- 1 ~ Advent Day of Reflection, 9:30 am - 3:00 pm, St. Francis Hall, St. Franciscan Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 1 ~ Petite Picasso Art Class, 10:30 am, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 1 ~ Mini Monet Art Class, noon, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 4 ~ **Lindy Greeter Committee Meeting**, noon, West Side Bar, 115 W Broadway, Little Falls
- 4 ~ Holiday Baking with the Knotty Pine Bakery, 6:00 - 8:30 pm Sprout Marketplace, 609 13 Ave NE Ste. 8, Little Falls
- 5 ~ Little Falls Business Association, noon, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 5 ~ St. Nick Night, 4:00 - 8:00 pm, downtown Pierz
- 5 ~ Bead Bracelets, 6:30 - 9:00 pm, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 6 ~ Holly Day, 4:00 - 7:00 pm, downtown Randall
- 6 ~ Taize Prayer, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, Gathering Space, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 6 ~ Open Mic Night, 7:00 pm, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 7 ~ Michael Shynes, 6:30 pm Doors Open, 7:30 pm Show, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 7 ~ St. Francis Music Center Fa la la la la la la, 7:00 pm, Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 8 ~ Growers & Makers Markets, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm, Sprout Marketplace, 609 13 Ave NE Ste. 8, Little Falls
- 8 ~ Free Art 2nd Saturday, 11:00 am, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 8 ~ Saved by Strength, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm, St. Francis Health & Wellness Center, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 8 ~ Jason Schommer Happy Ha-Ha-Ha-lidays: What the Elf?, 6:30 pm Doors Open, 7:30 pm Show, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 9 ~ Winter Fun with Santa, noon, LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation, 16543 Game Farm Rd., Little Falls
- 12 ~ Bilingual Liturgy, 11:00 am, Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 13 ~ Downtown Council The Big Dig, 8:00 am, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 13 ~ **Chamber Board of Directors**, 11:00 am, Chamber of Commerce, 200 1 St NW, Little Falls
- 14 ~ Christmas Cookie & Tree Walk & Sale, 7:00 am – noon CHI St. Gabriel's Health Cafeteria, 815 2 St SE, Little Falls
- 14 ~ Harper's Chord: A Classic Christmas, 6:30 pm Doors Open, 7:30 pm Show, Great River Arts, 122 1 St SE, Little Falls
- 14 ~ St. Francis Music Center Sounds of Christmas, 7:00 pm, Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 15 ~ Santa Day in Swanville, 10:00 am - noon, Senior Center, 305 DeGraff Ave., Swanville
- 20 ~ Centering Prayer, 6:00 pm, Gathering Space, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 21 ~ **Friday Morning Coffee**, 7:30 - 9:00 am, Highland Senior Living, 1012 3 Ave NE, Little Falls. *Sponsored by: Highland Senior Living*
- 25 ~ Merry Christmas (*Chamber Office will be closed*)
- 25 ~ Christmas Day Mass, 8:30 am, Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 30 ~ 24-Hour Year-End Prayer for Peace Vigil, 6:00 pm, Sacred Heart Chapel, St. Francis Convent, 116 8 Ave SE, Little Falls
- 31 ~ Candle Light Snowshoe & Hike, 5:00 - 8:00 pm, Lindbergh Historic Site, 1620 Lindbergh Dr. S., Little Falls

LITTLE FALLS AREA



Proudly Serving Morrison County Since 1888

200 1 St NW

Little Falls MN 56345