2017 BOARD MEMBERS
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Hometown National Bank

Vice President- Justin Lamboley
Central Bank

Past President- Scott Stavrakas
News Tribune

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Jonathan Allen
IVCH

Dan Aussem
Illinois Valley Contractors

Jennifer Bias
Ficek Electric & Communication System

Jeff Borelli
Connecting Point Computers

Mark Cross
Peru Elementary School Dist 124

Steve Dullard, DVM
Ancare Veterinary Hospital

Phillip Hileman
Peru Mall

Frank Kobilsek
St Margaret’s Hospital

David Loveland
W.H. Maze Co.

Beverly Malooley
Malooley Dahm Realty

David Murch
PDQ Logistics

Byron Veech
Dynegy Hennepin Power Station

Steve Wroblewski
LaSalle-Peru Twp High School

OFFICERS
2017 AMBASSADORS

Nikki Baer - President
Imprintable Memories, Inc.

Kevin Folty - Vice President
The Digital Store

Kimberly O’Connor - Secretary
Innovative Staffing Solutions

Bob Suarez - Treasurer
First State Bank

OTHER AMBASSADORS

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Jeff Perry Buick-GMC Inc

Kelsey Brannan
City Center Rehab

Ken Credi
Coronet Dodge Inc

Danielle DeCarlo
IV Construction

Isaac Escobar
Crossbridge Community Church

Dawn Farneti
Malooley Dahm Realty

Kris Fredrickson
Rainbow Internatl. Restoration & Cleaning

Chad Gilbreth
Edward Jones

Neal Hodges
Hartauer Insurance Agency

Kayla Janz
Dakota Street Insurance

Michele King
Heartland Bank & Trust Co

Rachel Krug
First Federal Savings Bank

Brian Phillips
PDQ Logistics, Inc.

Jenny Roulston
Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center

Laura Sampson
Eureka Savings Bank

Nate Washburn
Zukowski Law Office

STAFF

Joni Hunt
Executive Director

Amy Abbott
Communications/Media

Penny Volkert
Chamber Operations/Membership
Dear Friends,

The Illinois Valley Area Chamber of Commerce (IVAC) is pleased to share our progress over the last year. Our 2016 vision statement has been to foster good will and promote economic successes within our business community, encompassing regional partnerships and creative collaboration among public, private, and non-profit entities. To date, IVAC was able to accomplish that vision. Some of our significant successes include:

• IVAC rolled out our Resource Guide, helping our community to grow and our partnerships to grow.
• Held 56 business events and 21 ribbon cuttings, providing networking, skill acquisition, and showcasing of area businesses. Even more are planned for next year.
• Assisted Shane's Shine Shop and Central Bank to expand in the Illinois Valley, creating 9 new jobs and plans for more.
• Assisted with investor visits looking at redevelopment of a site in Spring Valley and another at the former Hennepin Steel Plant.
• Partnered with IVCC to market their Certified Production Technician (CPT) training, nearly tripling enrollment for this high-demand skill. More partnerships supporting business development are planned next year.
• Our Social Media presence is up 30% on Facebook as well as over 40,000 visits to our website. We continue our focus on adding useful content to help businesses.
• IVAC membership welcomed 46 new members in 2016, a 170% increase over last year. This is a new membership record and shows the increasing value of IVAC in the Illinois Valley.

Three key committees are made up of IVAC members: Public Relations, Fundraising, and Membership. These committees contribute ideas, planning, knowledge, and energy in executing the IVAC mission. Making sure our stakeholders are heard is an important IVAC value. During the last year, our stakeholders offered 32 objectives for implementation, and 29 were completed. Also, 17 objectives were offered by IVAC staff and 14 of those were implemented. Of my 12 objectives as Executive Director, 7 were implemented. This is an organization dedicated to continuous improvement.

Although very active in the business community, IVAC and its members also volunteer and contribute to the well-being of the area through annual coat drives, card drives, blood drives, and Toys for Tots. We also had great success with the Steve Brust Memorial Golf Outing and donated $1,000 to the Lighted Way.

As the Executive Director of IVAC, I am encouraging you to take advantage of the many resources and networking opportunities available to help develop and grow your business. The Illinois Valley Chamber is committed to our mission of promoting the Illinois Valley economy by attracting new jobs and enhancing existing businesses while valuing quality of life.

We are always looking for new ideas, different perspectives, or new partnerships to keep our programming fresh and relevant to the needs of our members. As always, I am available to assist you in your efforts.

Thank you and have a prosperous new year!

Joni
One of IVAC’s many projects for 2016 was creating a resource guide for the communities it serves. It was time to update and share the Illinois Valley Area’s story. In the past, the Chamber used an outside resource for their printed magazines and maps, but this year, we wanted to “shop local”. The IVAC staff and Public Relations Committee, along with MCS Advertising, worked on the project to design and create the perfect Illinois Valley marketing piece. Illinois Valley Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development unveiled its new resource guide, Advantage, at its annual dinner earlier this month.

The project brought a challenge of compressing data for a three county region into eighty pages of relevant information that showcases the assets of the Illinois Valley. The goal was to have the guide be used for relocation, economic development and as a marketing and recruitment piece for numerous organizations and businesses.

Advantage serves as a directory of Illinois Valley Area Chamber Members, but also as a resource guide for the community. It contains data about member cities and villages, regional health care, education, and workforce. The Guide, also includes fun facts, things to do and beautiful photography of the area.

You are welcome to pick up a hard copy of the publication at the IVAC office, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm, or you may view the magazine in its entirety from the IVAC website, www.ivaced.org.

“All I have to say about the Advantage publication is WOW. The whole magazine is full of fantastic information of our area. But I or we in Hennepin feel very honored to have a photo of our fireworks display on the cover. I can’t wait to show everyone on the village board next week. The other photo’s and the articles about Hennepin and The Wetlands Initiative are fantastic. Great job to all.”

Kevin Coleman, Hennepin Village President
Illinois Valley Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Director, Joni Hunt has partnered with, W.D. Boyce Council, AKA, Boy Scouts of America, and Inspire Illinois Career Cruising this year to help promote and interactive career exploration program that assists all area high schools and IVCC students. This collaboration enables students to extend their learning outside the classroom walls with on and off site interaction with professionals from the local community, exposing students in La Salle, Bureau, and Putnam counties to career interest identification and professional career demonstrations. Area company volunteers provide accompany profile for students, serve as online career coaches, and offer work-based learning activities such as providing company tours, conducting mock interviews and offering job shadows.

Illinois Valley Area students will be given the opportunity to learn from well-trained and valuable mentors in the community. Students will gain experience in a real life work environment that will allow them to develop a sense of workforce expectations, networking opportunities and area employers to see students in action. Each exploring experience will aide in guiding them through their continuing educational decisions.

By becoming a company volunteer, you increase your company's visibility in the community, actively invest in the future fulfillment of your workforce needs, and assist other companies in the area to have access to qualified, engaged and sustainable workforce. To find out more about becoming a volunteer, or visit www.ivcc.edu/inspire.
MSSC has developed 4 standards based assessments to evaluate the core competencies of entry-level production workers. IVCC offers the training courses, which combine interactive online training with instructor-led material. Individuals will learn the basic skills and knowledge required for manufacturing jobs and will be prepared to pass the national certification tests to become a Certified Production Technician. CPT is endorsed by 16 area manufacturers as the preferred credential for employment with their companies. Average local wage for a technician is $15.85 an hour and most companies offer increases after 90 days as well as healthcare and other benefits.

**STEM Education**

*Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics* is an education principle and curriculum choice used in schools throughout the Illinois Valley schools to improve competitiveness in science and technology development. STEM focuses on these areas together not only because the skills and knowledge in each discipline are essential for student success, but also because these fields are deeply intertwined in the real world and in how students learn most effectively. It has implications for workforce development, national security concerns and immigration policy.
After a slow decline over the past several years, IVAC has since seen an increase in membership, bringing membership up 4% compared to last year.

Our membership is the driving force for everything we do. Our members involvement and input is what makes us one of the largest chambers in the area. We understand the importance of knowing our membership and tailoring what we do to best serve their needs. In 2016, the number of new members increased to a level not seen in over a decade.

NEW AND REJOINED MEMBERS OF 2016

- Malooley Dahm Realty
- Reaska Media
- Staples
- Jade Magnafici
- Wilson Landscaping
- Chicago for Rent.com
- Happy’s Super Service
- Judge Chiropractic
- Nicole Norris MD, Medical Spa
- Dynegy
- Personal Finance
- State Representative 76th District
- Beard Brothers
- Glenn Shepard Seminars
- WestPoint Financial Group
- Cyr Financial
- The Root Beer Stand
- Ivan Baker
- Illinois Valley Super Bowl
- Confident Currency Inc.
- Clarks Run Antiques
- Scout Outdoor Apparel
- Shane’s Shine Shop
- Clarks Run Creek Gifts & Wine
- Bernardi Securities
- Girl Scouts of Central Illinois
- Rural King
- Nick Ballestri
- Ottawa Savings Bank
- Partners Property Preservations
- City Of Ottawa
- Arthur J Gallagher & Co
- Pleasant Creek, LLC
- Tony’s Buttshack BBQ
- TME-Technology Made Easy
- Illinois Valley SHRM
- Starved Rock County Community Foundation
- Family Heritage
- Color Point
- Illinois Valley Acupuncture - Chronic Conditions
- Edward Jones - Chad Gilbreth
- LaSalle Office Supply
- North Central Regional Betterment Coalition
- Mueller-Pagani Funeral Home
- Compassus Hospice
- Illini Valley Association Of Realtors
- Educators of Beauty
- Imprintable Memories
IVAC has had the opportunity to be a part of more area *ribbon cuttings* in 2016 than it has seen in at least the last five years, a 320% increase from last year.

Clark’s Run; Shed Some Light; Shane’s Shine Shop; Utice Rte 178 Grand Opening; Christy’s Kitchen; JJR Next Level; TME - Technology Made Easy; Nicole Norris, MD; Roxie’s Sweet Confections; Maven Makeup Artistry and Salon; Flutterby; Lander’s House; Central Bank; Ottawa Savings Bank; XL Fitness; Personal Finance; Representative Skoog; Sweet Bar; Innovative Staff Solutions (pending); Educator’s of Beauty (pending). Compassus Hospice (pending)
At the 2014 Annual dinner, the PR committee asked attendees to like IVAC's Facebook Page, which is demonstrated in the graph to the left. PR Committee worked again in 2016 to increase Facebook likes and saw a 30% increase over the previous year.

**30% Increase**

PR Committee worked again in 2016 to increase Facebook likes and saw a 30% increase over the previous year.

**65% Increase**

www.ivaced.org has seen a 33% increase in users in 2016 which is a 65% increase in users since 2013.

**32% Growth**

IVAC's website had 16% growth in pageviews since 2015, and an overall increase of 32% since 2013.

**Up 60%**

The number of sessions of users for the IVAC website is up 25% compared to 2015 and 60% from 2013.

IVAC Connect had its first meeting on August 19, 2015 and has been going steady ever since. Each meeting has continually seen new faces with attendance consistently between 20 and 30 participants. The perfect size for this type of venue. IVAC continues to evaluate its marketing openings and critiques its format in order to enhance the overall experience for attendees.
Maybe we are a little bit bias, but we at IVAC think we have the best members around, and to prove it, here are just a few awesome things we caught our members doing over this past year.

**Starved Rock Lodge donates $3,000 to Relay for Life and the American Cancer Society** – Starved Rock Lodge held a series of fundraising events in the month of October, like “Hike for a Cure” and Pink Bucket Sales. Along with staff and community donations, they were able to raise $3,000.

**Crossbridge Community Church & Debo Ace Hardware raise funds for “Feed His Children” - TWO Members Doing Great Things!** Debo Ace Hardware has always been an advocate for charitable organizations in the community throughout the decades. They are partnering with Crossbridge Community Church to bring food to children in need. Crossbridge Community Church “Feed His Children” program has joined with several area schools to provide supplemental groceries to families who may be struggling.

**All Web Promotions Wins Google Partner Mobile Challenge** - Google challenged its partners to increase the number of mobile friendly client websites to their AdWords client management account within the second quarter. All Web was one of the top 10 Google Partners in the United States and Canada for the contest and were jetted to Google headquarters to meet with representatives and record marketing videos in the Google studios.

**Building Trade Organizations Support IVCC’s scholarship campaign** - Illinois Valley Building and Construction Trades Council, Illinois Valley Construction Industry Labor Management Group and Illinois Valley Contractors each donated $1,000 to IVCC to go toward its scholarship campaign.

**Maze Nails Receives The Rural Builder Gold Key Award** - Receives The Rural Builder Gold Key Award has been awarded 34 times and Maze Nails has just received it for the 33rd time. Maze Nails, a Peru company in the business of making nails since 1922 receives the 2016 Rural Builder Gold Key Award. Maze Nails...Helping keep our community growing strong.

**YMCA Receives National Honor for Aquatics** - At the 2016 Association of Aquatic Professionals Conference in San Diego, Illinois Valley YMCA was honored as a finalist in the “Best of Aquatic Programming” for 2015.

**IVCC and Goodwill industries make a great team** - Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois President and Goodwill’s Ottawa Store presented IVCC with a $10,500 scholarship donation earlier this year to provide scholarships for students with disabilities. The donation is made possible through Goodwill’s “Round Up” program wherein customers round up their purchases to the next dollar at checkout. A total of $81,588 was raised from 11 stores, including Ottawa’s Goodwill, to fund scholarships for IVCC and six other community colleges.

These are just a few of the examples of our amazing members. Remember though, we only know if you let us know. Check out more great stories from our members on IVAC’s Facebook page, [https://www.facebook.com/Illinois-Valley-Area-Chamber-of-Commerce-and-Economic-Development-170983159610734/](https://www.facebook.com/Illinois-Valley-Area-Chamber-of-Commerce-and-Economic-Development-170983159610734/).

Whenever you have a fantastic story about your company, share it with us by emailing ivaced@ivaced.org.
UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2017

JANUARY
Wednesday, January 11, 2017
7:15 am - 8:30 am
BBS ~ Career Cruising
Mario's Maples

Thursday, January 12, 2017
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
IV Construction After Hours
Celebrations

Thursday, January 19, 2017
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
IVAC Connect (Networking Luncheon)
Peru Community Room

February TBA
State of the Cities

MARCH
Friday, March 3, 2017
5:30 - 10:00
Ambassador Fun Night
Senica's Oak Ridge

Wednesday, March 8, 2017
7:15am - 8:30am
BBS ~ Cyber Security
Mario's Maples

Thursday, TBA
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Illinois Cancer Center After Hours

Thursday, March 16, 2017
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
IVAC Connect (Networking Luncheon)
Peru Community Room