



Chamber of Commerce
LA CROSSE AREA

CONNECTION

MAY 2016

WHO

WE ARE.

WHAT WE ARE.

WHERE

ARE WE

GOING?



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Who We Are. What We Are. Where are We Going?

BY THE CHAMBER TEAM

Telling “the deep story” is a tool Rick Kyte (Viterbo University) used at a recent Servant Leadership class at the Chamber to stop the decline of people who have lost connection with the business they work for as it has grown and lost its original small, entrepreneurial feel. By going back and telling why the business was created – and continuing to do so over the life of the organization, you keep people rooted in the business’ reason for existing.

The La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, with its nearly 150 years, is going through that same process.

“We are refocusing on our most core principles as an organization,” said Vicki Markussen, executive director of the Chamber. “We connect businesses and work through challenges. When those problems involve the community and government, we are pulling them into the conversations.”

Markussen said the Chamber is evaluating every program, service and operational component to ensure it is the best experience the organization can provide, but also assessing if those activities are meeting the needs of business.

“If you’re doing business in the La Crosse area, the Chamber is working for you.” says Steve Bissen, business outreach director. “The Chamber is listening to the needs of business – whether its workforce concerns or connecting with other businesses. We are developing programming around those needs.”

Bissen says the Connect in 60 sessions that are beginning May 17 came directly from feedback that businesses want more opportunities to meet and learn from other

businesses. A featured business will speak for 20 minutes and then other attendees will offer their experiences and challenges for group conversation and best-practices sharing.

“It’s not just getting people in a room and telling them to mix,” Markussen said, “it’s about gathering them around a topic and having them share information no one other than a fellow business owner can provide.”

Bissen adds, “That is where our Chamber Government Action Committee or Education Committee may design programming around what is being heard,”

The Chamber now has The Lyle & Norma Anderson Education Center as a place for meetings, conversations, and education sessions

“With our technology upgrades, ample parking, and catering options, it fills a need in the community, and also offers businesses the chance to meet off-site if needed,” said Bissen

Chamber Finance & Young Professionals Director Bobbi Schoh said the space worked perfectly for a visionary session for the Young Professionals of the Coulee Region (YPs) group. “The community wants to know how to attract, keep and grow young talent. This session at the Chamber provided great feedback directly from these 21-40 year olds on how to achieve this.”

The Young Professionals (YP) group is growing quickly. With 60 members one year ago and 155 today, the group is expected to be at 180 by year end. A young professional can join the group for \$40 for the year if their employer is a Chamber member or \$100 if they are not.

Schoh said she sees businesses using the group in three ways: by attracting talent saying they will engage them in the YP group, in retaining talent by investing in the young professional with the YP membership, and by using it as a marketing tool.

“Sponsors of the YP group see this as an opportunity to support the talent they see as their company’s future,” Schoh said.

The YPs bring new energy to the Chamber at a more grass roots level than the Chamber generally has engaged says Kelly Castady, marketing and events director with the Chamber.

“We are breaking the mold and the very incorrect stereotype that the Chamber is only for the top leaders and only the largest businesses in the area,” said Castady. “YPs are engaging the marketing, the HR, the day-to-day operational side of businesses.”

The YPs truly reflect the diverse businesses that are Chamber members says Castady. There are chiropractors, utilities, hotels, insurance companies, promotional item companies and much more as YP members. It reflects the 88% of Chamber members who have 50 or fewer

**“IF YOU’RE DOING
BUSINESS IN THE
LA CROSSE AREA,
THE CHAMBER IS
WORKING FOR YOU”**

**Steve Bissen,
La Crosse Area Chamber
of Commerce Business
Outreach Director**

full time employees.

Because of the young audience, the way the Chamber communicates and what it communicates is changing and how people interact with it as well.

Castady is moving the Chamber's monthly publication to more of a magazine style and evaluating if less frequency helps us grow content by allowing for business spotlights. Our social media reach is growing rapidly and with it the investment into online software that makes it easier for members to register and additional ways to connect and promote their business.

"As our member's needs have changed, so have their expectations of the Chamber," Castady said. "My goal is to have our Chamber be a reflection of our largest businesses to the benefit of our small businesses with high quality events and information.

The Chamber's executive director says the Chamber feels like a startup company again in that innovation requires experimentation. In a fast moving organization with limited resources, it's often trying new things live. That feels a bit bumpy at times.

"We're building something new and our members are embracing it," said Markussen. "It truly is re-energizing the Chamber and the response has been very positive," said Markussen.

The Chamber team leader said there will always be a culture of innovation at the organization – a drive to constantly improve but the next six months will move beyond operational improvements and towards identifying and meeting the new needs of our members.

She says 90% of the Chamber team is new in the past two years. They are energized and eager to engage our members in creating our next version of "the deep story."

Recent Events



CHAMBER CHAIR-ELECT TESTIFIES IN DC

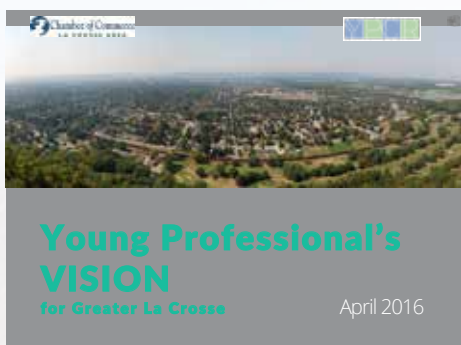
La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce Chair-elect of the Board, Joe Poehling (First Supply) testified before the US Office of Management and Budget armed with feedback from our Chamber members on the impact of the proposed overtime for salaried employees change.

The proposal would require that all companies with salaried employees earning less than approximately \$52,000 a year be required to pay overtime. The proposal significantly impacts nonprofits who cannot quickly adjust pricing but must raise donations in order to adjust to the change. It also impacts price-sensitive companies such as restaurants and hotels where sudden increases can kill businesses. Our Chamber delegation headed to Washington DC in early May will continue to advocate on behalf of businesses on this issue.



ENGAGE IN GOVERNMENT

A small group learned how to government impacts them and how they can be a voice for themselves and their business at the "Engage in Government" session held April 19.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NEWS CONFERENCE

The Chamber unveiled results from the Young Professional's visionary session at a news conference where Mark Hughes (Candlewood Suites), Ajay Jayakumar (Mayo Clinic Healthcare), Dr. Jennifer Pintz (Chiropractic First of La Crescent), and Dillon Bean (Gerrard Hoeschler) spoke on their experience with the visionary session and the YP group.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS VISIONARY SESSION

April 12th – The La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce along with their Young Professionals Organization held a creative, collaborative session that brought together young leaders in our community to assess where we are now, where we want to be and what we need to do to get there. With more than 40 in attendance, the positive energy and ideas were flowing.



THE FORUM

Airport manager Clinton Thorp shared that La Crosse has some of the most filled planes of regional airports in the state. A shortage of pilots is causing airlines to only fly larger planes, which is causing problems throughout the system. See our facebook page for a graphic shared on how many seats on a plane it takes to break-even on the flight, and how many are left for profit.



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS AT ALLERGY ASSOCIATES

Attendees at the Business After Hours at Allergy Associates were treated to a tour of this company, whose innovation and growth in allergy solutions earned them the Chamber's Small Business of the Year Award.

Handyman Needed

The Chamber needs a building maintenance person to assist with light upkeep of our building approximately two to five hours per week. Tasks include lightbulb changing, grounds upkeep (not mowing), light repairs, vendor contacting, and supplies ordering. Contact Vicki Markussen at 608.784.4880 or vicki@lacrossechamber.com for more information.

YPs Cast Their Vision

More access to the river

is what will move La Crosse from good to great, according to approximately 40 Young Professionals gathered at the Chamber in mid-April. YPs, defined as 21-40 year olds, were asked how to attract, keep and grow young professionals along with their vision for how to move La Crosse from good to great in the next five to 10 years.

Nearly half of the group voted that access to the river both from land and boat are needed to move the greater La Crosse area forward.

The group of Chamber and non-Chamber members were from a wide variety of professions, small and large. Those not growing up in the region accounted for 64% of attendees. Those owning their own home was 69%.

To the question of how to attract talent, the Young Professionals said to use

our access to outdoor recreational opportunities and our close proximity to nearby lakes and forests as get-aways.

The group loved La Crosse's big-city feel but small town life with the local shops and restaurants ranking high. The young professionals value the La Crosse area's small businesses, believe, these owner-run businesses are part of the area's entrepreneurial atmosphere, and are key to the County's appeal.

Housing is a problem for young professionals. The difficulty in finding quality rental units along with wanting more housing variety came up as a barrier to talent attraction.

Also key to talent attraction is the job attractiveness and diverse opportunities.

Mentorships and apprenticeships are areas the Young Professionals want to see developed to grow themselves. They are looking for opportunities to

volunteer and serve in leadership roles. Learning about other businesses is part of these learning opportunities.

The YPs are also concerned about retaining our large businesses, wanting to see more done to keep and attract large businesses.

The process involved every idea being presented, then attendees voted on their top two responses in each of the four questions (attraction, retention, growth and vision).

The Chamber Board of Directors will review the ideas to ensure resources can be devoted to moving the concepts forward. Once approved, teams will form to research and develop what is heard into strategies. Each team will then launch/implement the strategies, engaging the community.



Upcoming Events



THURSDAY, MAY 12, 5:15 - 6:30

**ANYTIME FITNESS, CARTRIDGE WORLD
& OTHERS IN CROSSING MEADOWS,
ONALASKA**

This is a private event for business leaders.
Business cards will be required to enter.

INTRODUCING

CONNECT IN 60

MAY 17 | 9:00-10:00 A.M.

**PEPSI BOTTLING, 1900 WEST AVENUE, LA
CROSSE**

20 minutes for a Chamber member to
share best practices + 40 to connect and
share with fellow businesses.

"Innovating Your Product with Changing Consumer Demands"

Steve Beg, director of marketing at
The Gillette Group, Inc. Pepsi-Cola Bottling,
will speak on how Pepsi successfully
diversified its product line when
consumers tastes changed. Steve's talk
will spark the conversation for the next
40-minutes, which will be on your business
connecting with others to find innovation
on regarding your offerings and changing
consumer demand.

Give "**EOPPORTUNITY KNOCKS**" a Try.
"eOpportunity Knocks" is an immediate,
simple, and cost-effective opportunity
to share your business news, special
events, and promotions with other
Chamber members through email. The
"eOpportunity Knocks is incorporated
into the Chamber's eNewsletter the third
week of each month. The next email date
is Tuesday, May 17. For more information
visit www.lacrossechamber.com or contact
608-784-4880.

Ribbon Cuttings



Dublin Square Irish Pub and Eatery celebrating their 5 year anniversary and their new enhanced patio.



Goodwill Donation Express now open at 91 Copeland Avenue to make donating even easier. Drive up and drop off - open at 7:00 AM weekdays.



Allergy Associates / Allergy Choices expansion to serve their growing client base and announcing the Morris Center for education.



THE BEST **Business-to-Business Golf Outing**

Some of the area's top business leaders make
a point of attending the Chamber golf outing.
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August 29

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Young Professionals
of the Coulee Region

We're excited to announce our first annual "YP Summer Speaker Series"

A three-part series bringing you together with passionate leaders and business owners in our community. These round-table style sessions will discuss topics to help you grow as an individual and a professional.

40 spots available.

Register @ lacrossechamber.com

Price: YP Member \$99

Non-Member \$149



Connect



***Entrepreneurship and
Starting your own Business***

Grow



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Executives***

Advocate



***Building Your Brand and
Self-Promotion***

JUNE 21

3:30 - 5:00PM

TURTLE STACK BREWERY

**125 2ND STREET SOUTH,
LA CROSSE, WI**

Speakers - Amy and Vince Stodola

Vince Stodola is a graduate of Western Technical College with an Associates in HVAC and also a graduate of Viterbo University with a Bachelors degree in Business Management. Stodola worked in a Research and Development Lab at Trane where he received a Green Belt Certification in Six Sigma. After Graduating from Viterbo, Stodola opened a Craft Brewery, Turtle Stack Brewery. He is a Rotarian of Rotary After Hours and is also a board member of a non-profit organization HorseSense.

Amy Stodola has been a financial advisor with Edward Jones since January 2005. A UW-La Crosse alum, Amy has earned her Accredited Asset Management Specialist (AAMS) Standing. She sits on the boards of the YWCA and HorseSense for Special Riders. Amy is also a member of the Women's Alliance of La Crosse and the 7 Rivers Referral Group. Recent accomplishments include qualifying for the first annual Edward Jones Women's Conference hosted in St. Louis in Feb. 2016.

The Stodola's are parents to three children, two boys and a baby girl.

JULY 19

3:30 - 5:00PM

THE CHARMANT HOTEL

**101 STATE STREET,
LA CROSSE, WI**

Speaker - Don Weber

Don Weber is an entrepreneur, philanthropist and exemplary supporter of our military. Weber's goal is threefold: to create local jobs, support Service members and strengthen our community. Weber is the founder and Chairman of LHI, a La Crosse-based health care innovator that has grown to more than 1,200 employees in 15 years. LHI nurtures a company culture of community service, and has become a major sponsor and invaluable volunteer source for numerous local causes. Community service has long been a part of Weber's life; he currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Viterbo University and La Crosse Area Family YMCA, and also serves as a Board Member for UW-L Foundation. Weber is a Marine Vietnam War combat Veteran, and for his distinguished service he has received many awards, among them the Purple Heart and two Bronze Stars. Don and his wife Roxanne have four children: Nick, Libby (spouse Jacob Spierer), Max and Augie. They have two grandchildren: Hayden and Gus.

AUGUST 16

3:30 - 5:00 PM

MISTY'S DANCE UNLIMITED

**980 12TH AVENUE SOUTH,
ONALASKA, WI**

Speaker - Misty Lown

Misty Lown is the founder and president of More Than Just Great Dancing™ - which impacts over 60,000 dance students each week. Misty has been a speaker at the PULSE Teachers Convention, Hollywood Connection, Dance Teacher Web, Dance Teacher Summit, the DanceLife Conference and keynote speaker for the Australian Teachers of Dancing Convention. Misty is on the staff of Dance Revolution Convention, a faith based dance convention, and has authored over 40 industry articles. She has been recognized as "Teacher of the Year" by Eclipse, "Outstanding Businesswoman of the Year" by the YWCA and awarded the "Pope John XXIII Award for Distinguished Service" by Viterbo University and the "Philanthropy Award" from the Red Cross. She is the author of One Small Yes and creator the One Small Yes podcast. Misty's favorite part of the day is spending time with her husband and five beautiful children.

Connecting Members to Members

The **FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER (FSC)** presents "The Spirit of Golf: A Retreat for Men" from June 17-19. Includes 45 holes of golf. Cost: \$325 for full retreat (overnight stay and all meals) or \$250 for commuters (two dinners, one lunch included). Contact 608-791-5296.

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SPRINGBROOK COMMUNITY ASSISTED LIVING, LLC is pleased to announce its first annual Spring Open House on Friday, May 20 from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. and on Saturday, May 21 from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Group tours will be offered approximately every 30 minutes. SpringBrook is located at 861 Critter Court, Onalaska.

STATE BANK FINANCIAL invites you to a chicken Q on Tuesday, May 10, 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., at State Bank Financial, 401 Main Street. Meal is \$8 and will be prepared by Pogy's Catering. Proceeds to benefit The Salvation Army's Summer Lunch Program.

Plan your education and career advancement at **VITERBO UNIVERSITY's** Adult Education Fair on Thursday, June 9 in Viterbo's Reinhart Center Board Room from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. For more information, contact adultlearning@viterbo.edu, 1-888-VITERBO or visit <http://www.viterbo.edu/adult-learning>.

Earn your associate's degree with evening or online classes with the **WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE** Supervisory Management program. Classes designed for working adults who want to improve their managerial, supervisory, and leadership skills. For more information, contact supervisorymgt@westernnc.edu or visit www.westernnc.edu/superman.

WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE Business and Industry Services will host "When Generations Connect: Communicating With Four Generations of Employees", presented by David Stillman, author and generational expert. This event is Tuesday, May 17, 7:30-noon, at the Lunda Center, La Crosse. <http://www.westernnc.edu/PD/Generations.aspx> or Kim at 608.789.6021.

GUIDELINES FOR THE "CONNECTING MEMBERS TO MEMBERS" SECTION OF THE NEWSLETTER. Share your business developments with your fellow Chamber members. Submit items before the 10th of the month, no more than 40 words in length and limited to personnel news or changes, new ownership, merger or acquisitions, awards, change of location, expansions, remodeling, or sponsorship of community events. The Chamber reserves the right to edit items over 40 words in length. Submit your information to Dawn Honken at dawn@lacrossechamber.com.

Highway 16 Closing May-July

Highway 16 between the landfill and Veteran's Park (approximately three miles) will be completely reconstructed with new pavement and improved intersections through November. Work began March 7 with single lane closures and lane shifts for initial cleaning.

- The road will close between Pierce Rd. and Moos Rd. utilizing I-90 as a detour from May until July. The primary reason is to blast into the rock alongside the road.
- Individual lanes will open in August and September.
- Median work will take place in September-October.
- Single lane closures are expected through November as work is completed.
- The goal completion date is November

For more information go to: <http://projects.511.wi.gov/wis16/>



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