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LA CROSSE AREA

CONNECTION

JULY, 2016

Spotlight on: *Local IT Firm*

DEPENDABLE SOLUTIONS

**COULD LACK OF INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY
BE HOLDING YOUR BUSINESS BACK?**



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Executive Director's Message:

The Power of Why

Since our last newsletter I have found the amazing power of the word why. It began with once again watching the TED talk by Simon Sinek called "Start with Why". The point behind this marketing guru's 20-minute presentation was that people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it.

Sinek provides the company Apple as the example. Apple could say they build computers that have great features like x, y, and z but they realized their brand is why they do it. They want to challenge the norm, and they happen to make really cool computers. It is a brand that has allowed them to diversify their products because people want Apple because it doesn't do what other products do. Apple fans buy because of the why.

Interestingly I watched that video the same day Chamber Marketing & Events Director Kelly Castady and I were struggling with adding some "feeling" into the Washington D.C. Fly-In article. It was a laundry list of what we did. Sinek's use of "why" caused us to tell the story of Wettstein's as an example of why we took eFairness as a topic to D.C. -- i.e. The 5.5% savings online retailers have because they do not charge sales tax is significantly impacting our brick-and- mortar local stores. It's not about what we did in D.C., it's about why we went there.

"Why" comes up in a lot of meeting with Kelly, and we love it. "Why do we do that?" is often her question. It's the most important one. It refocuses where our conversation is going to what matters the most. Lastly, "why" was an innovation for The Forum this month. After two years of struggling



with RSVPs in advance and accurate food counts, a great colleague of mine asked the most important question because of budget constraints, "Why do you charge \$12 for The Forum? I'd like to come but I can't do it every." I explained that it includes breakfast, but her concern caused us to try something new in July with this long-time full-breakfast event. The food, the cost of it, and the RSVP-ing was getting in the way of why we held The Forum - to have healthy conversations from our elected officials. Next month, we're cutting the cost to \$5 and providing coffee and more snack breakfast items.

Why does your company do what it does? What is getting in the way or has taken you off path? Try starting with the "why."



Vicki Markussen,
Executive Director
La Crosse Area
Chamber of Commerce

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Recent Events



THE FORUM

Underdog Onalaska Mayor Joe Chilsen gives a "State of Onalaska" highlights. Winning a write-in campaign is nearly impossible, people told incumbent mayor Joe Chilsen after missed information on his nominating papers forced him to run as a write-in candidate.

"There's a lot of good people who helped it work out, not just me," Chilsen said after winning the renewal of his position by a wide margin. "I was smart enough to listen to them."

Chilsen entered the office with a vision for change. He set his sights on the merging of the tourism entities -- achieving it just a few months ago. He discovered early on he had an ally in La Crosse Mayor Tim Kabat.

"We have the opportunity here to really move the needle, so he and I sat down and created a platform for what we wanted to accomplish. He is a great partner. The best is yet to come."

La Crosse and Onalaska Fire Departments are now buying hoses together to save costs. There are boundary agreements in place with Holmen and the Town of Onalaska with similar agreements to come with La Crosse and Medary. "It was hard work," Chilsen said but the result is they know how and where they will grow. "What is unique is we put in writing how we will treat and communicate with each other."

With his new term came major changes in the position that were self-created. The Onalaska Mayor's position became part-time and the city planner's position eliminated to make room for the hiring of a full-time administrator. "The staff needs someone they can go to who is the boss. Right now that administrative function is a little awkward to say the least," said Chilsen. The position should be filled in the next few months.

One project sure to keep the administrator busy is the riverfront development. Chilsen said there is a lot of work being done down below on the hill where Main Street hits Highway 35. Archaeology finds have slowed the project a bit. The goal is that the project will be completed by October. In the meantime, Chilsen says people are enjoying the view of having the building there and some trees cleared. "We have a gem that was hidden far too long."

The next project will be to add trails and access from the property to the area below. The challenge is working with the railroad for people to be able to get to the river and the assets down below. The trouble is finding a way for people to cross the tracks down below safely.

That may be a project for the third possible term for this against-all- odds mayor.



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Business After Hours at Pearl Street Brewery - June 9, 2016 - Guests enjoyed a fun evening with live music, delicious food catered by Pogy's, and fantastic prizes. Business After Hours is held on the second Thursday of the month from 5:15 - 6:30 p.m.



YPCR QUARTERLY SOCIAL

YPCR Quarterly Social at the Loggers Home Opener - June 2, 2016 - More than 50 of our YP members enjoyed a great evening at the Loggers home opener. Our quarterly socials are a great way to connect with members in a relaxed setting.

Upcoming Events



BEST OF LA CROSSE COUNTY

Celebrate the very best of La Crosse County in over 180 categories in art, music, dining, and shopping.

2016 Voting Starts June 1, 2016

June 1-22 Nominations

July 1-31 Final Voting

Sept 1 - Winners Announced

Vote at
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BUSINESS AFTER HOURS AT VALLEY VIEW MALL

JULY 14

5:15 - 6:30 PM

Join the Chamber of Commerce for the July Business After Hours at Valley View Mall in the center court.* Meet and mingle with other members of the business community and enjoy catered food and beverage. Live music will be playing and great door prizes will be won!

*Center court is located near the children's play area and Macy's Department Store



2016 GOLF OUTING

AUGUST 29

LA CROSSE COUNTRY CLUB

Registration is open for both morning and afternoon flights; however, space is limited. There are also limited sponsorship opportunities available.

THE FORUM

JULY 11

7:00AM - 8:15 AM



Lyle and Norma Anderson Education Center @ La Crosse Chamber of Commerce. Hear what's happening in Madison from your local elected official and share feedback.

YP EDUCATIONAL LUNCHEON

JULY 13

LUNDA CENTER - WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Connecting With Your Community. Join the YPCR for a luncheon to learn about a variety of ways you can get involved with local organizations and make a difference in your community.

YP COMMUNITY TO CONNECT

JULY 21, 2016

Welcome aboard the authentic La Crosse Queen paddle-wheeler for 1-1/2 hours of scenic delight on the upper Mississippi River! As the La Crosse Queen paddles the main channel of the river your guide will explain facts and trivia of the historical and present day river, along with local points of interest. Watch for eagles and other wildlife as we cruise past steep bluffs adjacent to the Great River Road - designated by AAA as one of the most scenic areas in America! As we near Lock & Dam No.7 in Dresbach, Minnesota, we will learn about the locking process. Connect with your community and other local young professionals while taking in the some of the most gorgeous views the Coulee Region has to offer!

Young Professionals
of the Coulee Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: Dependable Solutions

COULD LACK OF INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY BE HOLDING YOUR BUSINESS BACK?

DEPENDABLE SOLUTIONS is a high-level IT consulting firm specializing in a wide range of services, including tailored IT services and solutions for small and medium businesses (SMBs), local government, police departments, K-12 school districts, retail facilities, and medical clients. They are committed to providing each of their clients with high quality service and support. Their dedicated IT team is incredibly friendly and is available to help every step of the way in growing your business.

Dependable Solutions expertly combines their services to provide you with customized help and support, so you only get what you need and only what you want. Their innovative approach starts with a thorough investigation of what your company's specific objectives are so they can ensure a perfect fit between you and their services.

"Our clients benefit greatly when they choose to partner," said owner Joe Ruskey. "Current clients have discovered they have more energy and time to focus on growing their businesses while we handle their IT needs, which ultimately leads to a happier and more productive staff." Ruskey added.

Ruskey says Dependable Solutions' top priority is to ensure your business' technology runs smoothly, and that your computer systems and electronic assets are optimized, maintained, and protected.

Dependable Solutions offers services that will work in concert with your company and staff. Dependable can even function as an extension of your current IT team assisting on projects and lightening workloads. For other businesses that may need more support, Dependable Solutions offers Managed Services in which Dependable can "be" your entire IT team—from help desk to network engineers. And for those that simply need help with a single technology challenge, Dependable is able to assist as well.

RUSKEY'S PERSONAL MANTRA — THAT HE REGULARLY SHARES WITH HIS TEAM — IS TO ALWAYS "CHASE THE RELATIONSHIP AND NEVER CHASE THE DOLLAR." THAT BELIEF IS AT THE CORE OF DEPENDABLE'S CULTURE.

SERVING DEPENDABLY SINCE 2003

Joe and Tina Ruskey started Dependable Solutions in 2003. Joe had previously owned and operated a technology consulting firm in Chicago, and after relocating to Wisconsin, felt the environment

in the area was right—and the need was strong—to support a firm that provided the experience and expertise that he brought

with him. His beliefs were confirmed when Dependable immediately started acquiring clients not only in the business market, but also with school systems and local government.

Over the next few years, Dependable Solutions continued to grow. In March 2008, it became apparent that Dependable had not only outgrown its home office, but the office space that they were renting as well. It was time for more space, more presence, and most importantly, more staff. On March 15, 2008, Dependable moved into their 5,000 sf office space located at 115 E. Blackhawk Avenue in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

The next few years, Dependable started to feel the pull of many businesses and entities in the Grant County area. They felt the best way to serve their clients was to open a second office. In March 2011, they opened the doors to their second consulting office in Boscobel, Wisconsin, allowing them to serve customers more efficiently helping their partners take advantage of high level services and reasonable prices.

The growth didn't stop there. Within a couple of years, Dependable started to feel the pull to not only the La Crosse area, but clients in Winona, Minnesota, and surrounding areas were reaching out for technology help, too. Dependable has a reputation of superior work, fair prices, and customer relationships. Ruskey's personal mantra—that he regularly shares with his team—is to always "Chase the relationship



and never chase the dollar.” That belief is at the core of Dependable’s culture. Many businesses from the La Crosse region began reaching out to Joe and his team. Once again, Dependable expanded to the La Crosse area and opened their doors, located at 3815 Mormon Coulee Road, in December 2013.

With the La Crosse growth, Joe and Tina are focusing their business and future growth in the greater La Crosse area. They feel the types of clients that fit well with Dependable, the need of Dependable’s expertise, and the desire of so many companies in the area to have an IT firm with Dependable’s reputation is a natural fit.

You may have seen Ruskey around at the chamber events, at a local Rotary club meetings (Joe will serve the La Crosse Rotary Dist 6250 as District Governor during 2017-18), or out with Tina enjoying the area restaurants or shopping. They feel that the chamber is a natural fit to

help with not only the growth of their business, but providing opportunities to get involved and serve the community and learn what Coulee-region leaders are truly looking for in a local business and IT consulting firm.

Dependable Solutions has not only grown in their physical locations, but in staffing as well. With more than 12 fulltime employees and six part timers, they are looking to increase fulltime staff in the next few months. “We have grown because of our reputation and focus on the customer,” says Ruskey. “It’s about finding out what they need to solve their business challenges. We don’t sell them what’s best for Dependable; rather what’s best for their company.”



DEPENDABLE SOLUTIONS CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS WITH:

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- Cost Benefit Analysis
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- Business Process Consulting
- Making your Technology Manageable
- Managing Internet Access
- Wireless Campus
- Server Setup
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CPC PRINTING & PROMOTIONS (Crescent Printing) received highest honors in The Great Lakes Graphics Association 2016 Graphics Excellence Awards. CPC received multiple Best of Division, Awards of Excellence, and Certificates of Merit recognitions.

Contact Caitlin from **EMMONS BUSINESS INTERIORS / COMPLETE OFFICE OF WISCONSIN** at cpodd@cowiweb.com with a list of 10 or more office/janitorial items to quote on. Receive a \$20 restaurant gift card. Tickets to Wisconsin State Fair will be given away after the first order is placed.

EO JOHNSON BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES Locknet® Managed IT Services ranks among the world's most progressive 501 Managed Service Providers states Penton Technology's 9th-annual MSP 501 list. Companies on the list represent the most agile, flexible, and innovative organizations in the industry.

FOWLER & HAMMER, INC. is pleased to announce the addition of Mike Allen

and Ryan Burke as Project Managers/ Estimators. Together they bring over 16 years of experience to their project team. For more information, contact 608-782-6849 or visit www.fowlerhammer.com.

HAWKINS ASH CPAS, LLP, a public accounting firm with eight offices in Wisconsin and Minnesota, marks 60 years of business on August 1. The firm was founded in La Crosse. To see how you can help us celebrate, visit www.hawkinsashcpas.com.

HAWKINS ASH CPAS, LLP is hosting an open house celebration on August 4 from 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. in honor of their 60th anniversary. Join them for drinks, hors d'oeuvres and networking. For additional details, visit <http://hawkinsashcpas.com/about-hawkins-ash/60th-anniversary/>.

Tanya Binning joins **HAWKINS ASH CPAS, LLP**. Tanya is a state and local sales tax expert (SALT) who previously worked for the WI DOR. Tanya is assisting clients with reverse audits, sales taxes, utility studies and more. Contact Tanya at tbinning@hawkinsashcpas.com.

Dustin Hanson joined **MUTUAL OF OMAHA** as a sales representative. Hanson will offer the company's wide range of products and

services to residents of the tri-state area. He is associated with the Eric Guth Division Office in La Crosse.

NATURALLY UNBRIDLED WELLNESS, LLC opens a second Onalaska location. The NUW Holistic Therapies Center is now offering acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, massage, zone therapy and Reiki. NUW will continue to offer homeopathy, holistic wellness programs, nutrition, and biofeedback. Details at www.naturallyunbridled.com.

UW-LA CROSSE Continuing Education and Extension offers three online degree programs: Master of Science - Data Science, Bachelor of Science - Health Information Management & Technology (HIMT), Bachelor of Science - Health & Wellness Management (HWM). Visit www.uwlax.edu/conted/online to find out more.

Complete your associate's or bachelor's degree in the classroom or online with **VITERBO UNIVERSITY**. Programs are designed for busy working adults, with classes beginning every 8 weeks. Contact adult.learning@viterbo.edu, 1-888- VITERBO, or visit www.viterbo.edu/adult-learning.

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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.honken@lacrossechamber.com.



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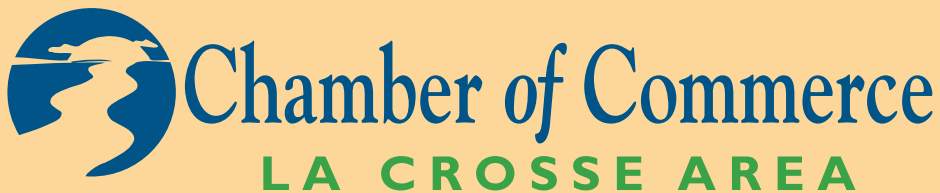


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Nominating Committee Seeking Candidates

The Chamber's Nominating Committee is working to select candidates for the 2017 Chamber Board of Directors. Chaired by Chair-Elect Joe Poehling of First Supply, LLC, the committee will present a slate of nominees to the Chamber membership as per the by-laws of the Chamber.

Anyone interested in being considered or wishing to nominate an individual is asked to contact:

Joe Poehling, Chair-Elect, at 608-791-3650 or jspoehling@1supply.com or

Vicki Markussen, Chamber Executive Director, at 608-784-4880 or vicki@lacrossechamber.com.



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Dave Cornell
Owner of Fox Hollow Golf Course



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