

Leadership LindyLand Graduation

The ninth Leadership LindyLand Class will graduate Wednesday, May 12. The afternoon celebration will begin at 2:00 p.m. at the Initiative Foundation, *405 1 St SE, Little Falls*. Congratulations to the following

2009 – 2010 Leadership LindyLand graduates:

Sgt. Daniel Bednarek, Camp Ripley	Phil McCoy, Minnesota Power
Mavis Buker, Minnesota Fishing Museum	Kristen Nelson, MCICC
Jenifer Drill, Morrison County Public Health	Jessica Raad, Elder Care of Minnesota
Jane Eliason, Bieganek Insurance	Lisa Thielman, St. Camillus Place
Nancy Henderson, Little Falls Community Schools	Cathy Tryggestad, Mid State Education District
Doris Illies, Productive Alternatives	Theresa Sweeney, Morrison County Social Services
Amy Kelash, Morrison County Technology Services	

A big thank you to our Leadership LindyLand session sponsors: Camp Ripley, Dominos Pizza, Horizon Health, Linden Hill Historic Event Center, Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union, Pine Country Bank, St. Gabriel's Hospital and St. Otto's Care Center. As a session sponsor, the business has the opportunity to the Leadership LindyLand participants with a brief overview of their business.

Thank yous also are extended to our day chairs. Day chairs facilitated the day and ensured that everything ran as smoothly as planned. Volunteers listed below took time away from their busy schedules to spend either a whole or partial day with the Leadership LindyLand participants making the LindyLand experience even more beneficial. The day chairs for 2009 – 2010 were:

Sr. MaryPat Burger, **Franciscan Sisters** ° Nan Brossoit, **Morrison County Technology Services**
 RuthAnn Cheney, **St. Otto's Care Center** ° Doug Dahlberg, **Spectrum Marketing Services**
 Tammy Jopp, **Horizon Health** ° Paula Kampa, **RA Randall Insurance Agency**
 Robbin Keehr, **Schlenner Wenner & Co.** ° Gregg LeBlanc, **LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation** ° Barb Lyons, **Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union** ° Barb Miller, **St. Gabriel's Hospital**
 Aaron Olson, **Kinship of Morrison County** ° Vicki Villebro, **Horizon Health** ° Jodi Weaver, **The Gumdrop Tree**

This year's Leadership LindyLand program entailed community learning, developing personal leadership, discovering your own leadership style and team building. A special thank you to **Century 21/New Horizons Realty** and **Camp Ripley** for the use of their vans this past year as the Leadership LindyLand participants toured the community. The program includes site visits to many places in the community and being able to travel as a group makes it more enjoyable!

If you would like to participate in Leadership LindyLand or want to sponsor a session contact Deb or Gina at the Chamber by calling 320.632.5155. The 2010- 2011 class will begin in October.



Greeting from the desk of the CEO! This is the time of year that I get on my soap box about sprucing up the town in preparation for our summer visitors.

Let's put our best foot forward! As the summer tourist season is rapidly approaching, I encourage business owners to make our community as welcoming as possible. This welcome can come in many forms from good customer service to the overall impression of our community.

Having employees who are knowledgeable about what the area has to offer in the way of attractions certainly is the first step. The Visitor & Relocation Guide produced by the Convention & Visitors Bureau is a wealth of information as is the city map. If you don't have these items, please contact the CVB or the Chamber for copies.

This welcome goes deeper than the face-to-face contact. Is the area immediately surrounding your business clean and free of hazards? Look at our community with the eyes of a visitor. Take the time to pick up a piece of litter on the sidewalk or parking lot, do a 'once around' your property and neighborhood and spruce things up! Weeds only grow bigger and seed out if not removed! I practice what I preach around the Depot, so I know it is a never-ending job!

Speaking of welcoming people to Little Falls, a thank you goes out to the West Side Improvement Association for providing the funds to install a "Welcome to Little Falls" sign on Highway 27 west of town. The sign will be same design, only slightly smaller, than the ones installed on Highway 10 last summer. Thank you to Gary and Mary Sowada for allowing this sign to be placed on their property.

As funding is available, welcome signs will be placed on Highway 27 east of Little Falls and on Highway 76 from the north.

Happy Birthday to Us! The Chamber of Commerce was organized on May 15, 1888 with the filing of the Articles of Incorporation, constitution and bylaws for the stated purpose of "advancing the commercial, mercantile and manufacturing interests of Little Falls and the surrounding country". Listed on the initial membership roster were 42 businesses.

For the past 122 years, the Chamber has been instrumental in the development and expansion of business in Morrison County. The foresightedness of the founding fathers of the area laid the foundation for the Chamber as we know it today.

There is little recorded history for the Chamber from the years 1888 to 1954. The Chamber's first paid staff came in the form of administrative support by Mrs. W. J. Bellefeuille from 1954-1960 and Lorrie Virnig from 1960 – 1961. Since 1964, Sylvia Ryden has been taking care of the Chamber's office duties.

G. Harmon Klemme was the first paid administrator serving 1960 – 1962. Following Klemme was W. J. Vondrashek from 1963 to 1967. The Glen Kraywinkle tenure was from 1967 – 1984; Dave Hochhalter from 1984 – 1995; Elaine Westerdahl-Delaney from 1996 – 2003. Starting in 2004, Debora K. Boelz has been the President/CEO for the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

In 1972, the Chamber took over the planning and implementation of the Little Falls Arts &

Crafts Fair. This event has grown to include hundreds of vendors from 25 states. It annually attracts crowds of shoppers numbering over 140,000. Proceeds from the Arts & Crafts Fair enable the Chamber to keep its membership dues at very reasonable rates and is able to support community projects and improvements.

In 1984, the Chamber of Commerce changed its name to Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce to demonstrate the importance of developing an area wide approach to attract new commercial and industrial businesses.

In 1989, the annual golf outing was started.

In 1991, the Chamber moved into its current offices located in the historic Cass Gilbert Depot. The results of a community-wide effort saved the historic train depot from demolition and it is now used not only to house the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, but contains a community room that is enjoyed by many people on an annual basis.

In 2004, Friday Morning Coffees were started.

In 2006, the tag line "Proudly serving Morrison County since 1888" was added and the logo revised.

In 2006, Sporting Clays networking event was started. In 2007, an expanded, full-color membership directory was published. In 2008, the Chamber website was redesigned and the City of Lights retro fit with energy efficient LED bulbs. In 2009, the value-added benefit of programming titled Meet Me @ the Chamber was started.

***In closing,** 2010 will bring more valued added programming to our members through a member-to-member buying program. Watch for details in the June newsletter!*



Arts & Crafts Fair Volunteers Needed

Be part of the Arts & Crafts Fair festivities September 11 & 12 by being a block host. Block hosts greet and welcome crafters to Little Falls, ensure that crafters are comfortable with their surroundings and ready to sell their merchandise. Block hosts are an essential part of the Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair and are well received by our hundreds of vendors. If you only have a few hours or the whole weekend to block host, contact Gina at the Chamber, 320.632.5155, for more information.

A local (located in Morrison County) non profit group is needed to work the large food court located in the Little Pig Lot behind Sears during the Fair. The chosen group will be responsible for keeping the area clean, emptying the garbage cans, wiping tables and sweeping up the French fries dropped by our shoppers. There is a job description available by contacting the office. The stipend paid for this task is \$200. Please contact Deb if you are interested in being considered.

Legislative Update

Wednesday, May 26 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Little Falls City Hall - Council Chambers

100 7 Ave NE, Little Falls

Representative Al Doty and Senator Paul Koering will review what took place this past legislative session, look forward to the 2011 session and take questions from the floor. If you are unable to attend and would like to pose a question, please email the question to Deb at

dboelz@littlefallsmnchamber.com

Chamber Golf Outing

Monday, August 2, 2010

Pine Ridge Golf Club 34500 Hillcrest Rd., Motley

Plans are now underway for the 21st Annual Chamber Golf Outing. This scramble format Golf Outing accommodates golfers of all skill levels. Take advantage of the early bird discount by getting your team or individual registration in before June 25. Prior to June 25 cost is \$72 per golfer. After June 25 cost is \$80 per golfer. Included with your registration fees are 18 holes of golf, cart, boxed lunch, dinner, 2 beverages, prizes, networking and a day of fun!

Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Hole sponsorship is \$65 per hole and includes signage at the Golf Outing event, acknowledgement in event materials, recognition in the Chamber newsletter, name recognition to over 150 potential new customers, recognition in the Chamber's Annual Report and much more.

Corporate sponsorships are still available. For \$500 you can register your team and receive logo and name recognition for this event. Become a Corporate Sponsor and receive the following: Foursome in the Golf Outing, 8 drink tickets, 4 dinners, carts, logo inclusion on event materials, acknowledgement the day of the event, recognition in the Chamber newsletter and Annual Report, professionally designed banner with your logo included, the exposure of your business name and logo to over 300 Chamber members.

If you are not a golfer but would like to be part of the festivities join us for dinner. Cost is only \$10 for dinner.

If you would like to register for golf, dinner, or become a sponsor, visit The Chamber's website at www.littlefallsmnchamber.com. If you would like more information about the Golf Outing contact either Deb or Gina at the Chamber by calling 320-632-5155 or emailing Gina at ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com.

Chamber Meeting Room Now Is Wired!

Thank you to Shane & Debbie Cole of Dominos Pizza for donating a Linksys wireless modem to the Chamber. This will enable anyone using the Chamber meeting room to have Internet access – a must in today's tech world!

May Guests on Meet Me @ The Chamber

Watch Meet Me @ The Chamber every Friday at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. on channel 6 in Little Falls.

*May guests are **Larry Lindblad**, president, and **Rebecca Best**, dean of **Workforce, Economic and Regional Development for Central Lakes College** and **Linda Burggraff**, owner and **Becky McClain**, sales manager of **Lin Furniture**.*

Recent Board Action

- ~ Approved the 2010 - 2011 Membership Fee Schedule
 - ~ Approved funding for a Board planning retreat scheduled for June 10th
-

Looking ahead...

38th Annual Little Falls Arts & Craft Fair

Saturday, September 11 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, September 12 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Located in historic downtown Little Falls

Sporting Clays

Tuesday, September 21, 2010
LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation
4:30 p.m. Shotgun Start

Your 2010 Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

2008-2010

Shane Cole, **Dominos Pizza**
Carl Vaagenes, **St. Gabriel's Hospital**
Doug Veillette, 2010 Chair of the Board
Dairy Queen
Tom West, **Morrison County Record**

2009-2011

Bridget Britz, **Horizon Health**
Paul Kapsner, **Royalton Lumber**
Julie Zupko, **Bieganek Insurance Agency**

2010-2012

Jim Birchem, **St. Otto's Care Center**
Lori Kush, **Kush State Farm Insurance**
Barb Lyons, **Mid MN Federal Credit Union**
Roxanne Matsen, **Larson Abstract**
Sandy Smith, Immediate Past Chair
GoldSmith Jewelers

Chamber Staff

Debora K. Boelz,
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Gina Vetter,
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Lindy Greeter Member Visits

Thank you for your membership. Photos are from Member Visits made April 28. Greeters present the member with a Chamber mug filled with sweets, and thank them for their support of the Chamber and community.



CASEY'S GENERAL STORE – NORTH

Lindy Greeter Carmen Meyer, Morrison County Record, middle, with Manager Jodi Lenarz, left, and 2nd Assistant Manager Erin O'loughlin, right, at Casey's General Store - North. In addition to providing gasoline, Casey's offers fresh baked goods and many items of convenience. They are running a cookie promotion in May. They encourage you to stop in for a fresh baked cookie.



ENVIRONMENTAL CARE NURSERY & LANDSCAPING

Lindy Greeter Carmen Meyer, Morrison County Record, second from left, with Maria Rausch, left, Owner Paulette Wozniak, and Todd Waldoch at Environmental Care Nursery & Landscaping. This is a home town design built company for all your greenscaping and hardscaping projects. Complete nursery and garden center that includes a great variety of statuary and garden art.



PREMIER FINANCIAL RESOURCES LLP

Lindy Greeter Roxanne Matsen, Larson Abstract Company, second from right, with Jerry Januschka, Ron Hinnenkamp, and Jackie Januschka at Premier Financial Resources LLP. In business since 1984, they offer a full array of financial planning and investment options. Not Pictured: Cary Blechinger

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CHAMBER MEMBER!

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Friday Morning Coffee

Friday, May 21 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.

Sponsored by: **Atomic Learning** 15088 22 Ave NE, Little Falls (North Bluff Business Park)

Kick off your weekend by joining us for a cup or two of coffee and a donut while making business connections. All Chamber members and their employees are invited to attend. Friday Morning Coffees are the third Friday of each month from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Introductions are made around the room starting at 8:15 a.m.

Business After Hours

Tuesday, May 18 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Sponsored by: **Grand Casino Mille Lacs**

Location: Chamber of Commerce, 200 1 St NW, Little Falls

Join us for some fun informal networking, hors d'oeuvres and beverages hosted by Grand Casino Mille Lacs. This is a come and go event to accommodate all schedules. All Chamber members and their employees are invited to attend.

*Please note that we take a summer vacation from Business After Hours for the months of June, July and August. We will resume regularly scheduled Business After Hours in September 2010.

CONGRATULATIONS!

May Employee of the Month

In May, Wendy Rutz, Little Falls Community Schools, is being honored. She is a paraprofessional with the Little Falls School District and is the lead person for the Kids Korner Program at Lincoln Elementary. Wendy has worked for the Little Falls School District for the past 23 years and for the Kids Korner program for 5 years. Wendy has been married to Dave for the past 33 years and they have 2 boys and 2 granddaughters. In her spare time she enjoys baking, doing crafts, spending time with her granddaughters and shopping. Wendy also serves on her church council and is an alter guild. "I feel very honored to be given this special award. It only takes a smile or a hug from any student to remember why I am paraprofessional".



We're All in this Economy Together

By David C. Olson

Businesses are watching their bottom lines with guarded optimism as Minnesota slowly climbs out of the recession. The recovery comes as many companies have made difficult choices to position themselves for future growth and their employees for future employment.

The economic downturn has meant a change in business strategy. During the boom times the focus is on servicing customers who keep coming through the door. Today, the focus is on any efficiency just to keep the doors open. It's a golden opportunity to realign a company's mission, priorities and the resources needed to achieve them. Results are measured on a daily basis, and changes are made quickly if they don't measure up.

The Legislature should heed the message.

A recent survey of the Brainerd Lakes Chamber members reflects what businesses have done to remain viable by focusing on core priorities. In fact:

- Seventy percent froze wages.
- Fifty percent laid off workers.
- More than 20 percent cut wages.
- More than 60 percent reduced employee hours.
- Thirty percent reduced employee benefits.
- More than 80 percent reduced costs beyond personnel.

These are sobering statistics. Yet, as painful as the human impact of these decisions, employees recognize the challenge to cut costs and focus on needs instead of wants. Witness a business owner who said he can't walk his shop floor without an employee telling him, "Thank you for making the tough decisions that keeps this business operating; I'm grateful for a job." They are grateful at a time when leaders have to make these difficult decisions. They recognize that we're in it together.

Brainerd Lakes Chamber businesses underscored that they expect state government to take similar actions. More than 90 of survey respondents strongly opposed any increase in government taxes, fees or regulation. They expect government to evaluate its priorities, measure the results, and live within its means.

"A businessperson's response to shrinking revenues is to cut costs and focus on priorities," wrote Brent Gunsbury, president of Bercher Design & Construction and chair of the Brainerd Lakes Chamber Board of Directors. "The political response is often to raise revenue and/or mortgage the future by increasing debt."

We need our elected officials to prioritize budgeting and then manage for results. The "lean" operating system successfully adopted by businesses can help government increase the productivity of existing services by redesigning the way the services are delivered. And it's never too late to ask: "Is this service relevant?" or "Is it government's job to tax citizens so we can provide this service?"

The urgency for changes to the spending and budgeting processes cannot be ignored any longer. Minnesota faces a \$994 million shortfall for the remainder of this biennium and \$5.8 billion for FY 2012-13. Businesses and households don't have the ability to collect higher taxes to fund their wish lists. Government must follow suit by seeking greater efficiencies in its operations and focusing on true statewide priorities. We're all in this together.

David Olson is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit the Web at www.mnchamber.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS & CHAMBER MEETINGS May 2010

(Chamber events and meetings are in bold print). For an expanded listing of community events, check the Chamber website at <http://www.littlefallsmnchamber.com/whatsnew.cfm>

MAY

- 4 Lindy Greeter Committee Meeting - Noon - Zylka's Red Bull Bar**
- 5 Little Falls Business Association - Noon - Depot
- 10 Leadership LindyLand Steering Committee Meeting - Noon - Depot**
- 12 Leadership LindyLand Session - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Initiative Foundation**
- 12 Leadership LindyLand Graduation - 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Initiative Foundation**
- 13 Board of Directors Meeting - 11:00 a.m. - Depot**
- 13 Sporting Clays Committee Meeting - 3:00 p.m. - Depot**
- 13-15 MN Fishing Museum Garage Sale - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - MN Fishing Museum
- 15 Spring Bird Tour - 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. - Crane Meadow Wildlife Refuge
- 18 Business After Hours - 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. - Depot Sponsored by Grand Casino Mille Lacs**
- 20 Membership Development Committee Meeting - 7:45 a.m. - Depot**
- 21 Friday Morning Coffee - 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. - Atomic Learning**
- 22 Ripley Rock and Run Sponsored by HCC - Camp Ripley Recreational Center
- 26 Legislative Update - 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. - City Hall**

