

DECEMBER 2023



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# CHAMBER NEWSLETTER

STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL CHAMBER EVENTS, REMINDERS, AND MORE!





# Downtown Wonderland

## A NEW CHRISTMAS TOWN TRADITION



Downtown Wonderland started with a fun lighting ceremony at the Train Depot. Santa Claus did the countdown to the official lighting of the brand new lights provided by the Chamber this year!

After the lights were on, people were able to take photos under the penguin arch with Santa and Mrs. Claus and next to all the light displays including a train full of toys, a snowman inside a snowglobe, a "Let it Snow" sign, and Santa in his sleigh being pulled by his reindeer.



**Christmas Characters  
were available for  
photo ops!**

Other activities to kick off this 3-day event were horse carriage rides provided by Merlin and Donna Sandbulte and cookie decorating with The Grinch at The Lunch House. There were nearly 100 people in attendance at these events! The weather was beautiful, and everyone was in the mood to start celebrating the holiday season together!





# DOWNTOWN WONDERLAND

## MERRY LITTLE MARKET



The Merry Little Market was held on Friday, December 1st at Parkview Event Center. It was so much fun to watch the kids shop for their loved ones!

This event was an opportunity for our local Chamber members to provide items that kids could shop through in order to get their parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and more a Christmas gift. Items ranged between \$5-\$25.



**A weekend favorite!**

We had 18 participating stores in this event, and all of the proceeds for their items purchased were given directly back to that store, although some of them decided to donate their proceeds back to the city park renovation project. This event brought in nearly \$3,000, and we know it will continue to grow in the years to come!

Kids were able to shop with Santa's Elves, Rudolph, and even all the characters from Frozen! After they bought their gifts, they had the option to get them wrapped as well.

While the kids shopped, the parents were able to sit down and relax in the other side of the event center and enjoy a drink from Parkview's beautiful bar.





# DOWNTOWN WONDERLAND

## Breakfast with Santa

On Saturday morning, we held a Breakfast with Santa event at The Lunch House! Residents and staff from Riverview Ridge Assisted Living came and helped serve pancakes and sausage made by Stone Soup Cafe.

It was a free-will donation event with the proceeds paying for care packages sent to military members away from home this holiday season. The Chamber was able to raise over \$500 and sent out 5 care packages to local military members who are either deployed or based in another location this year. All items purchased were from our local Chamber businesses!



The care packages included treats and decor from Treasures on Main, a Devotional from Something Special, Linen Spray from Willow Creek, sweets and snacks from Sunshine Foods, and colored photos and letters from our community!



During this event, kids were able to complete a Christmas ornament craft, take a picture with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and color pictures to add into the military care packages. We had almost 150 people in attendance, and we can't say thank you enough to all of our volunteers, vendors, and community members for making this event possible!



# DOWNTOWN WONDERLAND

## MINGO NIGHT & HOLLY JOLLY COOK-OFF



MINGO Night was held on Friday, December 1st as a chance for the parents to get out and have a night of fun before the chaos of the holiday season.

FUN was definitely had by all! MINGO is a music version of the game BINGO, and DJ Kurt Bush even mixed in some fun Christmas tunes for our players. There were over 120 in attendance, and most had their festive sweaters on. The ugliest sweater won a \$50 Chamber Gift Card!



The Holly Jolly Cook-Off was held on Saturday afternoon at the brand-new Shelter House in the City Park. We had 4 soups and 3 sweets this year. Our judges consisted of Stone Soup Cafe owner, Amber Uhrich, Rock Valley Chiropractic owner, Jacob Brosamle, and Ben Heynen, husband of RJ Heynen of Riverview Ridge Assisted Living. The public was also able to pay a \$5 entry fee to come in and enjoy all the food!

After tasting the soups and sweets, the judges chose the top 3 of each category.

Soups: 1st- Ralph Bousema (Crack Chicken Soup), 2nd- Cara and Mike Suter (Suter Soup), and 3rd- Sheri Bousema (Harvest Chili)

Sweets: 1st- Sheri Bousema (Caramel Apple Pie Shooters), 2nd- LaVonne Witte (Holiday Peanut Clusters), and 3rd- Cara and Mike Suter (Hocus Pocus Rolls)





# BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

## Girls' Tournament

Another basketball tournament has come and gone, and this Girls' tournament was our biggest one yet with 27 teams in attendance!

These basketball tournaments are the Chamber's biggest fundraisers every year, helping us to provide all the events that we have throughout the year. This tournament brought in about \$4,000 with concessions, gate fees, and team registrations.

A huge THANK YOU to all teams that participated in this tournament, all volunteers including concessions, gates, and especially our referees! We appreciate all of you for taking time out of your day to help us make these tournaments possible!



## LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Our Leadership Institute participants have been busy the past few months! We've covered topics such as Agriculture, Healthcare, and Manufacturing.

Our days consist of an educational session from the 7 Habits of Effective People, panels, tours, and a fun activity for the group to enjoy together.



Thank you to all businesses and persons who have helped contribute to the program so far. We are thankful that our business owners have welcomed this program into our community with enthusiasm.

Photos include a yoga workout at Pulse 712, tour at A&I Products, and a corn maze activity at Pumpkins on Garfield.



# ROCK VALLEY GIFT CARDS

## WIN YOUR DREAM CHRISTMAS CONTEST



The Win Your Dream Christmas competition from Miconex, the company that the Chamber goes through to use the Chamber Gift Cards, gave people the chance to win a \$1,000 Downtown Gift Card.

There was an opportunity for both a community member to win AND a program to win the same amount of money. Katie Van Ginkel and her family won the competition by applying and stating what her dream Christmas would look like. The Rock Valley Chamber also won by having the most applicants from our community! Katie can spend her money at 44 businesses in town, and the Chamber is able to use their \$1,000 to go toward more giveaways and prizes in 2024!



## GIFT CARD PROGRAM SUCCESS

The Gift Card program has brought back nearly \$50,000 into our community in 2023! It's amazing to see the numbers come through for each store. If you'd like to see the amount that's been spent at your business with these cards, let the Chamber know so they can send it to you!

The Chamber is always looking for ways to give the Gift Cards as giveaways and prizes. For example, back in October, we held a pumpkin decorating contest, and the top 3 winners were able to spend a \$100 Gift Card at any of the Chamber businesses of their choosing. It was so much fun!



# YEAR END REVIEW

## 2023: A year of Growth



### MEMBERSHIPS

We had 91 members this year, with 71 returning members and 20 first time members.



### EVENTS HOSTED

Chamber hosted over 50 different events this year to support our members and bring our community together!



### RIBBON CUTTINGS

We held 11 ribbon cuttings for our members this year! These ranged from brand new businesses, renovations, new ownership, and grand openings!



## Congratulations to the 2023 Chamber Business of the Year: Peoples Bank!





# 2024: WHAT'S NEW?

## MEMBERSHIP TIERS & SUBSIDIARY RULE

Partner

**\$250**

NON-PROFITS/IN-HOME BUSINESSES ONLY

Advocate

**\$500**

Innovator

**\$800**

Champion

**\$1200**

Visionary

**\$2500**

BUSINESSES WITH BOARD MEMBERS:  
\$250 DISCOUNT ON TIER CHOSEN.  
SUBSIDIARIES:  
ONE AT FULL PRICE, SECOND AT 50% OFF



### 2 NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We voted in 2 new Chamber Board Members for 2024. Welcome Katie Van Zee, owner of Rooted, and Brittany Van Roekel of Perspective Insurance!



### NEW MEMBERSHIP ONLINE PROGRAM



MembershipWorks

Automatic renewals, registrations, event calendar, and more. Keep an eye out for more information coming soon!

### Farewell Jeff!

We are saying goodbye to Jeff Elgersma, Board President, at the end of this year! Jeff has been a dedicated board member for 3 years. You can truly see his passion for this community, and we are going to miss him! If you see Jeff around, please tell him THANK YOU for all he has done and continues to do for our town!





# CHAMBER NEWSLETTER



The Chamber Board of Directors **THANK YOU** for your membership in 2023!



**View our  
online 2024  
Membership  
Guide!!**

## PLATINUM



## GOLD



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**QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!**