

Chamber Annual Meeting

Thursday, February 23
 5:30 p.m. Social
 6:15 p.m. Dinner
 7:00 p.m. Program
 Falls Ballroom
 15879 Hwy. 27, Little Falls

Join us in celebrating a great 2011 with Chair of the Board, Bridget Britz, Horizon Health and look forward to 2012 with the official passing of the gavel to 2012 Chair of the Board, Julie Zupko, Bieganek Insurance and Randall State Insurance. At this meeting we will also be awarding the 2011 Chamber Small Business of the Year, Large Business of the Year, Volunteer of the Year and acknowledging our 2011 Employees of the Month. For a nomination form visit our website at <http://littlefallsmnchamber.com> and click on the nominations link.

Annual Meeting corporate sponsorships are now available.

As a corporate sponsor, your business logo will be included on the Chamber website, the event invitations, meeting program and listed as a sponsor in the Chamber weekly updates. Your logo will be included in the Chamber newsletter and Chamber's Annual Report. In addition, you will receive the opportunity to have a business promotion table, in which you can have your business brochures and other materials at the event and available for distribution. Your sponsorship also includes a reserved table and meals for 10 for only \$350.

If you are interested in being an Annual Meeting corporate sponsor contact Deb or Gina at the Chamber (320) 632-5155 or e-mail Gina at ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com. Remember we accept Visa and MasterCard.

Membership has its benefits

Here is just one of many:

FREE listing in the 2012 Chamber Membership Directory!

Business After Hours

Tuesday, January 17
 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
 at Falls Optical at
 Northern Eye Center
 119 1 St NE, Little Falls

Sponsored by:

Falls Optical at



Join us for this informal networking event. Come and see what is new in optical eye wear and meet all the staff at Falls Optical.

Enjoy some hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and great networking.

All Chamber Members, employees and guests are welcome!

Thank you to the following member for renewing their investment in the Chamber of Commerce for the fiscal year 2011 -2012. We appreciate you!

**Cabin Fever
 Saloon & Eatery
 Lindbergh State Park**

From the Desk of the CEO

- Debora K. Boelz

Greeting from the desk of the CEO!



Happy New Year! As we start fresh with new calendars, the possibilities for great adventures in 2012 are endless!

*Closing out 2011, thank you to our Board of Directors for their commitment to the success of the Chamber's programming for our members and the greater community. A special thank you to **Bridget Britz**, Horizon Health, for her leadership as Board Chair this past year, and to **Paul Kapsner**, Royalton Lumber, as he ends his term of service on the board.*

Thank you to our departing committee members who have given so generously of their time and talents to the Chamber. Those individuals are listed in this newsletter. If you see them, thank them for their contributions!

My biggest thank you is saved for Sylvia Ryden who retired in December after nearly 48 years with the Chamber. Daily life at the Chamber will be different without her. She left me her email address and promises to take my calls when we can't figure something out! Hopefully, that will not be more than once a day!

*In with the new! The Board of Directors has new officers including Chair **Julie Zupko**, Bieganek Insurance and Randall State Insurance; Vice Chair **Roxanne Matsen**, Larson Abstract Company; Treasurer **Doug Veillette**, Dairy Queen; and Secretary **Lori Kush**, Kush State Farm Insurance.*

The new Office/Financial Coordinator is Susan Green. Her first day will be January 9th. She comes to the Chamber with 23 years of experience at Morton Building, Inc. Sue will introduce herself to the Chamber community in the February newsletter. Sue will be responsible for the accounting functions of the Chamber, the Outstanding Service Committee, the Arts & Crafts Fair vendors and the front office.

*The Arts & Crafts Fair will have a new logo image in 2012, noting the 40th anniversary of the event. How festive! This is the work of **Stacy Spillum**, SAS Design Haus. Look for this new image in all of our event advertising.*



The new year will also bring a new Membership Directory, which will be printed every other year. For the most current listing of Chamber members, check the Chamber website. Always a good practice to keep informed of upcoming Chamber and community events and programs.

In closing, it has been one year since Jeff and I bought the West Side Bar. What a steep learning curve I have been on! Being a small business owner has given me a whole new view of the world! No textbook could have prepared me for the reality of the real business world. Why do we have to pay royalties to 5 different music unions/organizations? What do you mean a new popcorn machine is \$2,300? Live bands cost how much??? Jeff's life hasn't changed, but mine sure has – and for the better! I have a much better understanding what our Chamber members face everyday as they open their doors for business. Hat's off to all of you!

Leadership LindyLand visits St. Otto's Care Center



Pictured: 2011-2012 LindyLand Participants
at St. Otto's Care Center

The December Leadership LindyLand session was focused on health and human services. Our 15 participants took part in a poverty simulation, toured the Morrison County Government Center, St. Otto's Care Center, Morrison County Food Shelf and Employment Enterprises Inc. In conjunction with this session they also sponsored the December 15 Oasis Share-A-Meal program at First Lutheran Church.

Thank you to our session sponsor Horizon Health, day chairs Beth Hamlin, Morrison County Administration, Tammy Jopp, Horizon Health, Century 21 New Horizons Realty for the use of their van and to St. Otto's Care Center for providing lunch.

Holiday Promotions Thank You

As our holiday promotions wrapped up, we would like to thank the many businesses and individuals who help make this past holiday season a memorable one.

Thank you to Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union for sponsoring the Holiday Movie Matinee, December 3, "Monte Carlo". Also thanks goes to Peter Schoell, Falls Cinema, for opening the theatre to us on a Saturday afternoon.

Thank you to our City of Lights businesses. Without your cooperation we would not be able to illuminate the historic downtown this past holiday season.

Friday Morning Coffee

Friday, January 20

7:30 - 9:00 a.m.

at Highland Senior Living

1012 3Ave NE, Little Falls

Sponsored by:



A new component has been added to Friday Morning Coffee. After announcements, up to 4 people will have the opportunity to give a 30 second testimonial for another Chamber member business. Word of mouth is a powerful marketing tool! Announcements begin at 8:15 a.m.

Legislative Update

Thursday, January 19

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Little Falls City Hall

100 7 Ave NE, Little Falls

The Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring a legislative update with Representative Mike LeMieur and Senator Paul Gazelka. Legislative updates provide our members with the opportunity to have a voice in what will take place this upcoming legislative session. The 2012 legislative session will begin January 24.

Recent Board Action

- ~ Approved the 2012 operating budget
- ~ Elected Officers for the 2012 calendar year
- ~ Revised the Employee Handbook to include Retirement Benefit section
- ~ Approve Board Liaison Committee Appointments

**Congratulation's to our January
Employee of the Month**
Gail Leikvoll, St. Gabriel's Hospital



Pictured left to right: Gail Leikvoll, St. Gabriel's Hospital and Robbin Keehr, Schlenner Wenner & Co., committee member

Gail has been employed at Unity Family Health Care for 32 years as a Patient Account Representative. Her supervisor, Deb Noble, states that "Gail shows initiative by going above and beyond what is expected of her on a regular basis." Gail states "I have always enjoyed working with the public and especially helping people who have concerns and don't understand their insurance and bills".

Gail enjoys antique shopping, especially Red Wing Pottery. She is a member of the Lone Eagle Antique Auto Club.

2012 Board of Directors

2010 - 2012

Jim Birchem

St. Otto's Care Center

Chris Kruschek

ReMax Central Minnesota

Lori Kush, *Secretary*

Kush State Farm Insurance

Roxanne Matsen

Vice Chair of the Board

Larson Abstract Co., Inc.

2011 - 2013

Kyle Hoggarth

Edward Jones Investments

Doug Veillette, *Treasurer*

Dairy Queen

Jodi Weaver

The Gumdrop Tree

Tom West

Morrison County Record

2012-2014

Bridget Britz

Immediate past chair

Horizon Health

Roxanne Thompson

Riitters & Thompson, PA

Julie Zupko

Chair of the Board

Bieganeck Insurance and

Randall State Insurance

Chamber Staff

Debora K. Boelz

President / CEO

dboelz@littlefallsmnchamber.com

Sue Green

Office / Financial Coordinator

sue@littlefallsmnchamber.com

Gina Vetter

Project & Volunteer Coordinator

ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com

**Nominations Being Accepted for
Small Business of the Year, Large Business of the Year and
Chamber Volunteer of the Year!**

In an effort to celebrate our members and the numerous individual volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to the Chamber, the Outstanding Service Committee is again rolling out our nominations for Volunteer of the Year, Small and Large Business of the Year. Each award has specific criteria to assist you in the nomination process. ***Nomination forms are due in the Chamber office by Friday, January 20, 2012.*** Awards will be bestowed at the Annual Meeting, Thursday, February 23.

Please consider making a nomination in one or more categories. Recipients will receive public recognition and a plaque noting their honor. The names will also be displayed on permanent plaques in the Chamber office.

Nomination forms are available on our website at <http://www.littlefallsmnchamber.com> under the nominations link. For more information or to submit a nomination contact the Chamber by calling (320) 632-5155 or e-mail Gina at ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com

Little Falls Area Business Gives 2% Recognition Program

Little Falls Area Business Gives is an excellent way for businesses to receive recognition from their peers and their community for the many contributions they make to their local community.

Businesses are recognized for giving cash and/or in-kind contributions to charitable organizations amounting to 2% or more of their pretax earnings. The program is based on the Minnesota Keystone ProgramSM Standard, criteria established in 1976 by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Best of all, because recognition is based on the percent of income given in cash and in-kind donations, a small business that gives \$1,000 each year can receive the same recognition as one that contributes \$10,000.

Your business can participate by completing a simple form and submitting it to the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. On the form, you certify that during your business' most recently completed fiscal year it gave at least 2% of its pretax earnings in cash and/or in-kind contributions to charitable organizations. (A calculation worksheet is available to help with calculating the 2%) The only information about participants that is publicly released is the name, type of business and location.

In addition to being recognized in its local community, each business receives a letter of thanks and congratulations from the Governor of Minnesota. Recognition of participating Chamber members will be done during the Business Plan Luncheon in March. For more information contact Debora K. Boelz, dboelz@littlefallsmnchamber.com or (320) 632-5155.

Employee of the Month Gift Certificates needed

As a way of rewarding Chamber member employees for great customer service, the Chamber designates monthly Employees of the Month. Individuals are selected by the Outstanding Service Committee based on nominations for the public, co-workers and employers. Any Chamber member can add their own congratulations by providing gift certificates for our honorees. However, it doesn't need to be a gift certificate every month. For example, our member florists rotate a donation of fresh flowers each month for the recipients. In the past, we have had cookbooks to bestow upon the winners. Would you consider doing something similar? This is a great opportunity to connect with another group of customers. If you are interested contact Gina at ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com or call the Chamber office (320) 632-5155.

Welcome to our newest members

Gammello, Qualley, Pearson & Mallak, PLLC

Steven Qualley, *Partner*
100 1 St SE
Little Falls, MN 56345
phone 320-632-3606
steveq@gqlaw.net

Full service law firm assisting clients in the areas of real estate, business, family, probate, and estate planning.

Oasis Central Minnesota

Tim Poland, *Executive Director*
PO Box 542
Little Falls, MN 56345
phone 320-632-9140
oasism@live.com
www.oasism.org

Non-profit organization providing a free weekly meal through Oasis Share-A-Meal to the community, as well as an annual Paint-A-Thon and Fix-A-Home Program.

Thank You Committee Members

We are offering sincere gratitude and hope that all our volunteers know how much they are appreciated. With this in mind, we would like to publicly extend a thank you to our volunteers who have chosen to "pass on the torch" to new volunteers:

Leadership LindyLand Steering Committee

Barb Lyons
Linda Mahlum, *St. Gabriel's Hospital*

Lindy Greeters

Scott Jackson, *US Bank*
Greg Zylka, *Coborn's Superstore*

Membership Development Committee

Jeff Hines, *Aspire Realty*
Brian Mackinac, *Schlenner Wenner & Co.*
Renee Nieman, *Century 21 New Horizons Realty*

Outstanding Service Committee

Debbie Hill, *Fitness Connection*
Julie Kapsch, *Hands of Hope Resource Center*
Denise Vogl, *Morrison County Motor Vehicle*

2012 Business After Hours Sponsors

January 17, 2012

Falls Optical

February 2012

Sponsor Needed

March 2012

Grand Casino Mille Lacs

April 12, 2012

Horizon Health & Linden
Hill Historic Event Center

May 2012

Gold Cross Ambulance

September 2012

Little Falls Lindbergh Lions

October 2012

St. Gabriel's Hospital

November 2012

Sponsor Needed

December 2012

Sponsor Needed

Elevating business advocacy to the next level

By David C. Olson

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is positioning itself to become an even more effective advocate for the statewide business community. Our leadership, and the leadership of our local chamber partners, is needed now more than ever.

And we are responding. Our Board of Directors has adopted a strategic plan that aims to enrich our grassroots efforts, develop a more aggressive public relations strategy, add to the strength of our lobbying team, increase our political clout and grow our membership. The strategic plan culminated eight months of examining where our organization is, where we want to be, and what investments must be made to attain the next level.

Our local partners are an integral cog in carrying out those initiatives. We especially recognize those chambers that are members of the Chamber Federation, including the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. These chambers, by resolution, have committed to be Federation partners in 2012 by formally supporting the business community's top priority issues: Build the state budget with priority-based budgeting; reinstate K-12 high school graduation standards; implement cost-based electricity rates; bring more certainty to environmental review and permitting; create a state-designed health insurance exchange. Federation members also are partners in Grow Minnesota!, our private-sector initiative committed to retaining and creating Minnesota jobs.

The dynamics of the federation approach – the Minnesota Chamber working in tandem with local chambers and our members – has been a successful formula for addressing public policy issues. The network represents and advocates for the interests of all of our members – large or small, whether located in Greater Minnesota or the metropolitan area, and no matter what their service or product.

The Minnesota Chamber is poised and committed to advancing nonpartisan, pro-business and responsible public policy to improve the lives of all Minnesotans. Three principles are essential for our success: Develop the best talent for our workforce; bring certainty to business costs; ensure fairness in state rules and regulations.

Now is the time to build on our record of advocacy and deliver a unified message to policy-makers in St. Paul. The political environment is increasingly polarized. Attacks on businesses are more frequent. And Minnesota companies are increasingly competing in a global economy.

Our relationship with local chambers of commerce is the foundation of the Minnesota Chamber's grassroots network and our success at the Capitol. We pledge to work with everyone to speak as one voice on critical issues that affect our economy.

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

2012 Friday Morning Coffee Dates & Sponsors

January 20, 2012

Highland Senior Living

February 17, 2012

Bank of the West

March 16, 2012

Habitat for Humanity of
Morrison County

April 20, 2012

Franciscan Sisters

May 18, 2012

Morrison County Ag Society

June 15, 2012

Mid Minnesota Federal Credit
Union

July 20, 2012

US Bank

August 17, 2012

Riitters & Thompson, PA

September 21, 2012

Morrison County United Way

October 19, 2012

Fyten Marketing & Promotions

November 16, 2012

St. Otto's Care Center

December 21, 2012

Falls Optical at Northern
Eye Center

January 2012 Networking Events

Business After Hours

Tuesday, January 17

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

at **Falls Optical at Northern Eye Center**

119 1 St NE, Little Falls

Sponsored by:

Falls Optical at



Make valuable business and personal connections by joining us for hors d'oeuvres, refreshment and great networking at this well attended event.

Friday Morning Coffee

Friday, January 20

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

at **Highland Senior Living**

1012 3 Ave NE, Little Falls

Sponsored by:



Kick off your weekend by joining us for a cup or two of coffee while making valuable business connections. Announcements and introductions are made at 8:15 a.m. All Chamber members and their employees are invited to attend.

Legislative Update

Thursday, January 19

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Little Falls City Hall ~ Council Chambers

100 7 Ave NE, Little Falls

By sponsoring the legislative update with Representative Mike LeMieur and Senator Paul Gazelka, the Chamber is providing our members with the opportunity to have a voice in what will take place this upcoming legislative session, which will begin Tuesday, January 24.

Chamber Annual Meeting

Thursday, February 23

5:30 p.m. Social □ 6:15 p.m. Dinner □ 7:00 p.m. Program

Falls Ballroom

15879 Hwy 27, Little Falls

Make the most of your Chamber membership **by attending these events!**

Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

200 NW 1 St, Little Falls MN 56345

320-632-5155

assistance@littlefallsmnchamber.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS & CHAMBER MEETINGS

Chamber events and meetings are in bold. For an expanded list of community events visit our website at www.littlefallsmnchamber.com

January 2012

1 ~ Happy New Year!

11 ~ Leadership LindyLand Session, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation

12 ~ Chamber Board of Directors, noon, Chamber of Commerce

17 ~ Business After Hours, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Falls Optical at Northern Eye Center

19 ~ Legislative Update, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Little Falls City Hall - Council Chambers

20 ~ Friday Morning Coffee, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Highland Senior Living

21 - March 11 ~ Minnesota Homefront, WWII traveling Exhibit at Linden Hill Historic Event Center

21 ~ Candle Light Ski, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., Lindbergh State Park

26 ~ Twins Caravan, 6:00 -9:00 p.m., Little Falls VFW

29 ~ Oasis Central Minnesota Empty Bowl Event, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at First United Church

29 ~ Wedding Expo, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Camp Ripley



Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

200 First Street NW

Little Falls, MN 56345

Proudly Serving Morrison County Since 1888