



Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce

This year has been a big capacity building year for the Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce and a year that we fully reintroduced in-person events. The Chamber works hard to foster a favorable business ecosystem, do meaningful and measurable economic development and downtown projects, maintain and improve the quality of life for the community, sustain a robust and profitable tourism sector, and support the connection of area agriculture to the business community. In 2022, the Chamber was a champion for collaboration and an engine for good work in the Decorah Area:

Serving Chamber Membership & the Community

Meaningful & Measurable Partnerships/Collaborations

The Chamber does critical administrative work for Downtown Decorah Betterment, Nordic Fest, Winneshiek County Development and Tourism, and the Hotel/Motel Marketing Committee. Highlights for 2022:

Dry Run Park Plaza Completion, Decorah Lawn Chair Night Series Expanded to Washington Street, Downtown's Hanging Flower Baskets, North Alley Planning, Downtown Business Awards, 55th Annual Nordic Fest Event, Tourism and small business support together with WCDT.

Educational Programming - Back in 2022!

The Chamber offers member businesses and the community opportunities for learning and professional networking. In 2022 we hosted 20+ gatherings:

Empower Decorah Leadership Program (25 graduates)
Young Professionals (12 events)
Community Connections Program (4 programs)
Professional Development Pop-ups including - Community Website Workshop, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Lunch & Learn Agricultural Webinar w/ Aaron Putze
Chamber Gala, Chamber Golf Outing

Business Recognition & Ecosystem Vibrancy

The Chamber works hard to celebrate our businesses because we believe this impacts Decorah's ability to attract and foster growth. We enhance marketing & promotion and proactively showcase our business ecosystem as a favorable one for entrepreneurs.

More than a dozen new/expanding business events including ribbon cuttings, marketing, and resource connection: Precision Bookkeeping LLC, T'D Up Fitness, Mill Street Mocha, Kozi Pie Shoppe, Hearthside Fireplace, Perfect Edge, ArtHaus Doyle Heyveld Gallery, Riverview Center, Decorah VFW, Plunkett's Pest Control, Driftless Security Solutions, Blazing Star Restaurant, Prairie Lakes Church, Joyfully Empowered, Nagle Signs, ISU Extension Spilde Garden, King Pin Entertainment Center, Timeless Radiance, Scooter's Coffee, Water Street Deli



First Year of Lawn Chair Night on Washington



Ribbon Cutting for King Pin
Facebook Post - Reach 70,850
Engagements - 17,750
Shares - 371

The chamber is supported by a robust board and committee roster with more than 70 area professionals



Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce

Business Exposure & Community Betterment through Tourism & Economic Development Initiatives

The Chamber leads tourism strategies and works closely with county and state partners to showcase Decorah's amazing amenities and businesses. In 2022, the Chamber was a champion for capacity building, increased collaboration, and marketing specificity.

Highlights for 2022:

The Chamber has played a lead role in the planning and welcoming of Viking Cruises. In 2022 staff worked with area restaurants, crafted a bus guide narrative in cooperation with Vesterheim Museum, and will co-host three Shore Excursions.

Inclusion in the State's Soul of Iowa NATIONAL marketing campaign which was launched in the spring of 2022 and runs through year end. As one of the four featured communities, Decorah receives far-reaching benefits.

The Chamber serves as Treasurer for the Hotel/Motel Marketing Committee and works to leverage/match fund dollars into larger more impactful projects. The Chamber also ensures the committee goals are implemented successfully. They include:

- >Manage an Accurate & High Quality Online Presence
- >Collaborate with Top Attractions
- >Be in a Position to Capitalize on Opportunity
- >Serve In-Town Visitors, Ensure Visitor Satisfaction

The Chamber was awarded an Iowa Tourism Marketing Grant to complete a series of promotional videos that blend visitor and resident experience. These are being filmed now and will be used by the Chamber, WCDT, Visit Decorah, partners, and businesses.

The Chamber submitted two area businesses for awards and they were selected as state winners: Driftless Yoga Festival – *Outstanding Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiative* and Luna Valley Farm – *Outstanding Attraction (Rural)*

The Chamber manages and staffs the Decorah Visitor Center to serve the thousands of tourists annually.

The Chamber leads downtown retail events: Women's Weekend Out, Ridiculous Day, Witches Night Out, 6 weeks of Countdown to Christmas, The Lighted Parade



The Soul of Iowa Campaign is the largest tourism marketing effort ever released by Travel Iowa



The Chamber manages Decorah's Visitor Center and serves as a hub for WCDT, Decorah Farmers Market, Visit Decorah



Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce

Connecting Agriculture & the Business Community

The Chamber has long worked to keep local agriculture and local business connected. Highlights for 2022:

The Steak & Shake Drive-Thru served in June and the Annual Stay Safe, Take a Break Event will take place in October. This year it will thank 180 farmers/farm families in the NE Quadrant of Winneshiek County.

The Chamber's Ag. Committee provides scholarships to high school students and helps judge the Herdsmanship Award at the Winneshiek County Fair.

Chamber Director Rilling served as a Judge for the Northeast District FFA Competition.

The Chamber supports Decorah Farmers Market and Farmers Market Board to leverage resources and cultivate entrepreneurship for growers and producers in NE Iowa.



The Chamber Agricultural Committee planning for 19th Annual Stay Safe, Take a Break Event which will serve the NE Quadrant of Winneshiek Co.

Representing the Decorah Business Community

The Chamber has represented the community at local, state, and regional economic development gatherings to network, collaborate, and plug Decorah into opportunities

including the Iowa Rural Summit, Iowa Downtown Conference, Iowa Tourism Conference, and Empower Rural Iowa Task Force Decorah Meeting. Chamber Director Rilling presented at the Rural Iowa Summit on the Empower Decorah Leadership Program at the request of Lt. Governor Gregg.



Decorah participated in the State's Leadership Bootcamp in late 2021 and was a recipient of the Leadership grant.

Ensuring a Robust Online Presence for Businesses

The Chamber knows that Decorah's presence online is key to business recruitment, business viability, and business reputation

The Chamber provides a website platform for its members which boosts individual business SEO and enhances marketing. Staff are working on a new chamber website which will go live in 2023. The new site has a more modern look and feel and has improved features.

The Chamber secured a USDA Rural Business Development Grant in July 2022. This grant will support work that ensures the Decorah and Winneshiek County's online business and attraction content is accurate and works for the benefit of the businesses and the community.



The chamber works within the sphere of Decorah to increase connectivity AND engages with leadership at a regional, state, and national level.