



# 2026 MEMBERSHIP

*Dear Chamber Members,*

The past five years have been ones of strategic growth and thoughtful editing for the Decorah Area Chamber. Ultimately, a pursuit to build organizational capacity, provide both traditional and innovative services to area businesses, and ensure that the excellence visible locally is documented and shared to a broader state and regional narrative. Like our area businesses, the Chamber nonprofit must be adaptive - providing both technical AND creative skill sets to address expectation and need, ensure maximum business and community benefit while being a lean business ourselves. Your memberships, sponsorships, and engagement are the reason the Decorah Area Chamber can work everyday on behalf of our town as it is right now, and the town we hope to have in twenty years. Below are the 2026 goals that our staff and board team have made priority. These goals are crafted with dedication to your success in mind.

*Sincerely, Jenza Rilling*

**Goal: Consistency of Quality Events & Member Engagement**

Chamber work is a direct reflection of the community it serves. We are fortunate to support one of the highest-performing and healthiest business communities in the state. Over the past 5 years, we've made a concerted effort to elevate and increase visibility of what's already happening. In 2026, we will add focus to ensure the Chamber-led events we have created in the past couple of years match the excellence that we call attention to community-wide, that our event & member marketing is fine-tuned and strategic, and the ways we engage with the business community are efficient, effective, and tailored to sector preference. We believe excellence and consistency by our team is a strong method to garner recognition for the Decorah Area.

**Goal: Strengthen the Organization by Further Empowering our Auxiliary Team**

Beyond the work of the staff, the Chamber organization is activated by over 60 volunteers who provide direction and input on all the aspects of Chamber operations. From event expansion, to leadership training, to business development & resiliency, these individuals power a bottom-up approach that helps us develop work plans and make informed decisions. In 2026, the Chamber will invest in the capacity of these volunteers by enhancing information sharing and providing additional spaces for gathering and participation. We will ensure that our volunteers on our board and our committees who represent all business sectors are bolstered by information and connection as they act as advocates for the organization AND the community.

**Goal: Be an Active Content Contributor for Decorah Area's Online Presence**

As digital resources rapidly shift, we know that the more positive information we share about our businesses and community through press releases, social media, photography, videography, event marketing, and educational opportunities, the easier it will be for search engines to create a favorable community profile. Being intentional about and effective with written and digital communications, we can help our area be recognized as a quality destination and a highly livable rural community which ultimately fuels business start-ups, business growth, and benefits workforce recruitment for our area employers.

## CHAMBER STAFF



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**Meg Storkamp**

Hospitality and Reception

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

## 1. OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

The Chamber will host over a dozen opportunities for learning and professional networking in 2026. Educational opportunities like Empower Decorah Leadership class series, focus groups on business-related topics, and the Behind-the-Scenes series are a few of the ways to not only stay informed, but stay connected. See the Calendar of Events for more information.

## 3. A CHAMBER BUSINESS LISTING IMPROVES YOUR GOOGLE SEO

Your chamber membership triggers the creation of a profile/listing for your business on the Chamber's website directory. The listing connects customers to you AND improves the way your business shows up within a Google search (Google favors chamber websites because they are clearinghouses for legitimate business web pages). Chamber staff manage your profile to maximize your SEO.

## 5. STAY CONNECTED TO WHAT'S HAPPENING

The Chamber's connection to the business sectors, other nonprofits, and local organizations makes it an important and trusted partner in information sharing. Direct emails from Chamber staff members, the Chamber e-newsletter, and Facebook page keep our members informed. Content shared in these platforms is reliable, timely, and member-focused.

## 7. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS GARNER COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

The Chamber's partnerships position Decorah to partake in opportunities that are advantageous to the community. The Chamber's work with Downtown Decorah Betterment, Nordic Fest, Visit Decorah, Winneshiek County Development & Tourism, and City of Decorah ensures critical work gets done at a high level of excellence and - most importantly - in an efficient and strategic way.

## 9. CREATIVE CONTENT AND AUTHENTIC STORIES ENSURE BUSINESSES ARE IN THE ONGOING NARRATIVE OF OUR TOWN

Our business members work hard and the Chamber has a front row seat to these efforts. Chamber staff are uniquely positioned to share business news, add a productive and positive voice to the community narrative, and support or lead efforts that tell the story of our Quality of Life -- This makes a difference for workforce recruitment, economic development, and the attraction and retention of residents.

## 2. ENHANCE YOUR MARKETING PLAN, INCREASE VISIBILITY

Chamber sponsorships, shared social media, and participation in Chamber-led/Chamber-supported events are all strategic - Pick the one that's right for you. The Chamber can't be your whole marketing plan, but utilizing the opportunities available can make your plan more robust, add a layer of legitimacy to your new business, and help you reach your targeted audience. Contact Chamber staff to discuss how and when to make the most of what's available to you.

## 4. KEEP MONEY LOCAL, SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES

The Chamber issues more than \$100,000 Chamber Dollars annually - It's our town's best gift card. Chamber dollars can be spent at more than 200 business locations and 100% of the money goes into our local economy. Large employers often gift these to employees for performance recognition or milestones. Your membership supports the administration of this program and allows you to accept this form of payment.

## 6. MILESTONE RECOGNITION - CELEBRATING OUR MEMBERS

Through ribbon cuttings and special events, the Chamber enhances business recognition & business ecosystem vibrancy. Ribbon cuttings are important additions to our community narrative and a long-standing Chamber tradition. The Decorah Area is a good place to start, grow, and maintain a successful business. Helping to lift up these stories improves our area's reputation for business - and that's good for our economy.

## 8. RESOURCES, INFORMATION, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SAVES MEMBERS TIME AND MONEY

The Chamber is a hub for information and can save you time in your pursuit for vendors, services, and resources. Member have access to a bulk mailing permit, access to the Chamber Member Mailing List, and can reserve time in the office conference room. For small businesses - these services can make a big difference.

## 10. TAILORED TRIP ITINERARIES ARE NOW A TOURISM INDUSTRY STANDARD, PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS ARE PROVEN

The Chamber is responsible for the Decorah Visitor Center which welcomes and serves more than 10,000+ visitors every year. Staff drive interest in our small businesses and our downtown district. Chamber also manages the Visit Decorah Tourism brand, represents the town as expert guides (e.g., Viking River Cruises) maintains relationships w/ the Travel Iowa Office, and is positioned to proactively execute special projects.

# LOOKING FORWARD 2026 EVENTS

## JANUARY

- 26** Restaurant Week  
Jan 26 - Feb 1
- 26** Annual January Luncheon  
Luther College  
Peace Dining Room

## FEBRUARY

- ✓ Registration Opens:  
Empower Decorah  
Class Series

## MARCH

- 12** Networking  
Coffee Hour  
The Landing  
Market
- 27** Behind-the-Scenes  
King Pin Entertainment  
Center

## APRIL

- 24** Chamber Gala  
Theme: CLUE  
\*Black-Tie event  
Impact Coffee  
6:30-9 PM

## MAY

- 8** Behind-the-Scenes  
Gossling Woodworking  
Production  
Location: Waucoma

## JUNE

- TBD** Chamber Ag Meal
- 22** Annual Golf Outing  
Oneota Golf &  
Country Club

## JULY

- 13** Herdsmanship  
Judging  
Winneshek Co. Fair  
July 13 - 18
- 23** Nordic Fest  
July 23 - 25

## AUGUST

- 13** Networking  
Coffee Hour  
The Landing  
Market

## SEPTEMBER

- 29** 2026 Business  
Awards Event

## OCTOBER

- 2** Manufacturing Week  
October 2 - 9
- 9** Behind-the-Scenes  
Luna Valley
- 15** Witches Night Out
- TBD** Stay Safe,  
Take a Break  
Ag Appreciation during harvest  
2026 distribution in  
NE Winneshek Co.

## NOVEMBER

- 6** Wellness Weekend  
November 6 - 8
- 13** Holiday Open House  
November 13 - 15
- 20** Peppermint Walk  
Weekend  
November 20 - 22
- 27** Countdown to  
Christmas Begins

## DECEMBER

- 4** Countdown to Christmas  
Drawing #1
- 11** Water Street  
Lighted Parade  
Theme: *It's a Wonderful Life*
- 11** Countdown to Christmas  
Drawing #2
- 18** Countdown to Christmas  
Drawing #3
- 24** Countdown to Christmas  
Drawing #4



Find details and save events to your calendar on our event page!

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

2025 was a great year! The Chamber hosted events for community and business, provided space for learning, organized meaningful networking opportunities, leveraged local collaborations into regional marketing efforts, and created moments to celebrate our members' successes.

## CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

**286 MEMBERS**  
(Includes **22 New Members**)

**93% RETENTION RATE**

*Retention Rate: The Association of Chambers of Commerce Executives published an Operations Survey in 2025. They gathered data from 306 Chambers of varying size across the US, who shared an average industry retention rate of 86%.*

Chamber staff get asked about how our organization is doing in comparison to our counterparts across the state, so this year we did some research. Staff looked for communities of similar size that had community betterment organizations / Chambers with similar structures. Charles City, Waverly, and Pella were most aligned.

### HOW DO WE COMPARE?

**CHARLES CITY (POP. 7,081) 222 MEMBERS**  
**WAVERLY (POP. 10,576) 237 MEMBERS**  
**DECORAH (POP. 7,454) 286 MEMBERS**  
**PELLA (POP. 10,965) 300 MEMBERS\***

\*Note - Pella combines economic development and chamber as one organization.

Our favorite metric of success in 2025 was engagement. **Members showed up for the Chamber organization to support good work and they showed up for each other.** Our business members continue to set a high bar when it comes to connection - proving that a successful local economy finds roots in relationships.

## EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT

**38 Chamber-led Events Hosted**  
(and another **40+** area events supported by staff)

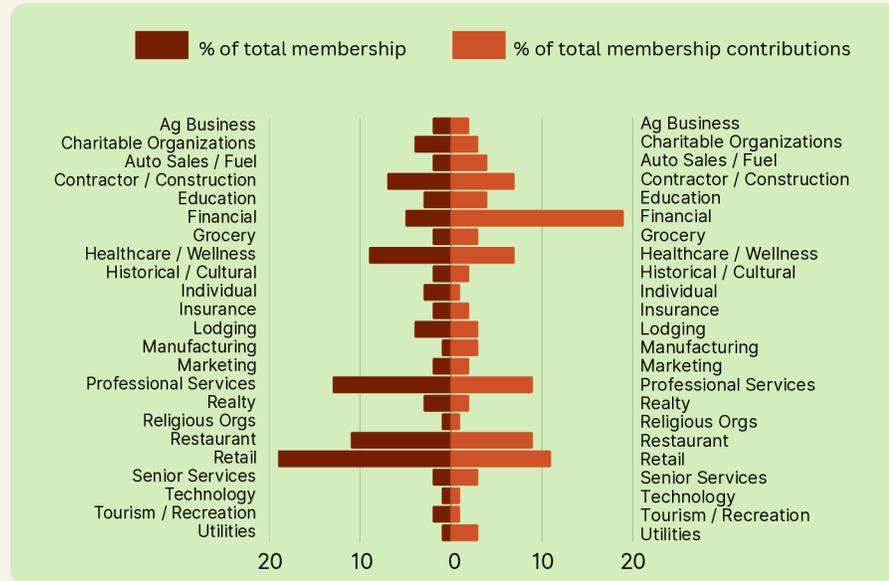
**32 Business Ribbon Cuttings**  
Including **one ROYAL Ribbon Cutting** for the Prince of Norway's visit to Decorah

**1,200+** Total Member Attendance at Chamber-led events

# ORGANIZATIONAL DASHBOARD

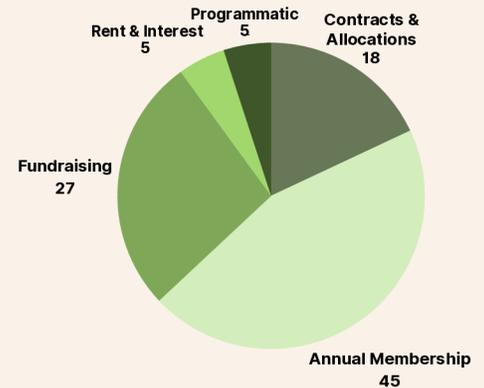
## Membership Sectors

Chamber members are from a variety of business sectors. This table (below) illustrates the various member types alongside the membership contributions to the Chamber by those types.



## Chamber Revenue

Memberships contribute 45% of the organization's budget, the income is bolstered by significant fundraising and administrative contracts, which jointly account for another 45%. Office rental, the EV Charger, and passive income from low-risk investments (CDs & Money Market accounts) contribute an additional 5%, while income from programming.

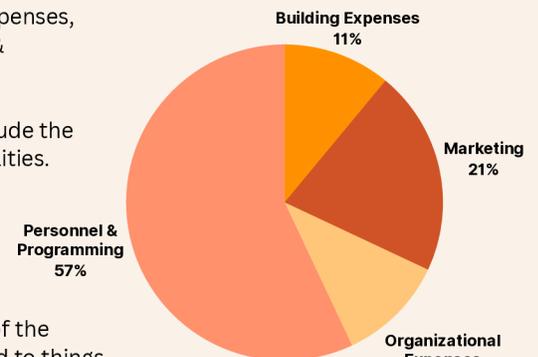


## Chamber Expenditures

Expenditures are varied but can be grouped into 4 main categories: Building, Organizational Expenses, Marketing, and Personnel & Programming.

The Building Expenses include the mortgage payment and utilities. Organizational Expenses include insurance, office supplies, and equipment leases.

More than three quarters of the expenses (78%) are devoted to things that make the organization and our members stand out: Marketing (21%) and Personnel/Programming (57%).



*The Association of Chambers of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Operations Survey published in 2025, provides context. Personnel expenses ranging from 55-75% would be considered "normal" for a Chamber's annual budget. At 57%, this category, which also includes things like continuing education, is at the low end of that range, and for a mid-sized Chamber (200-2000 members), indicates that the DACC has a lean, efficient budget.*

# 2026 MEMBERSHIP FORM



FILL THIS  
FORM OUT  
ONLINE!

**Please complete this form at your earliest convenience and return to the Chamber.** Payment may be issued with this form **OR** the Chamber can issue an invoice when this form is returned. The Chamber has two billing cycles. February and July. If you would like to wait to be invoiced, your billing cycle is:

## **Business:**

- Yes, We'd love to be a 2026 Chamber Member
- Sorry, we'll pass this year.
- Maybe, we'd love more information.

As in the past, our Chamber Membership fee is based on a Full-Time Equivalent Employee count. For example, 2 part-time employees at 20 hrs per week would be considered 1 full-time employee. If you are part of a multi-site company, please use the employee count of your local site. If you have any questions, please call or email!

## **Current Business Tier:**

(Please check below if your business tier has changed.)

- Individual (no business affiliation) (\$100)
- 0 to 3 FTE (\$250)
- 4 to 10 FTE (\$400)
- 11 to 25 FTE (\$650)
- 26 to 50 FTE (\$850)
- 51 to 100 FTE (\$1,250)
- 100+ FTE (\$1,500)
- Bank

## Contact Information:

- My information hasn't changed from previous years.

## **Name of Business Contact(s) & Title(s):**

Phone:

Email:

Additional Email Addresses I'd like to receive the Chamber E-News:

Date Business Established:

Anniversaries or Events I'd like the Chamber to help celebrate this year:

# 2026 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

## BUSINESS AWARD EVENT

Tuesday September 29th, 2026

The Chamber is in a unique position to recognize excellence across all business sectors. Held at Vesterheim Commons. Includes a cocktail social and formal program.

- \$1000: Presenting Sponsor - One Available
- \$500: Supporting Sponsors - Two Available
- \$250: Spark Joy Sponsor - Unlimited

## AGRICULTURE

Keeping Agriculture visible and connected to the business community. Events led by the Chamber Ag. Committee.

- \$500: Ag Partner - Unlimited  
Sponsors all of the Chamber's Ag. work for the year.
- \$250: Chamber Ag. Drive Thru Meal - Unlimited  
June event
- \$250: Stay Safe, Take a Break - Unlimited

## CHAMBER GALA

Our biggest fundraiser and evening of fun!

Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 - 9 @ Impact Coffee

- \$2,000: THE MANSION | Premier Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$1,000: DETECTIVE | Supporting Sponsor - 2 Available
- \$500: MYSTERY | Boosting Sponsor - 4 Available
- \$400: Confidential Case File Envelope Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$200 : Room Sponsors - 6 Available  
Library, Conservatory, Study, Billiard Room, Dining Room, Kitchen
- \$200 : Weapon Sponsors - 6 Available  
Rope, Pipe, Wrench, Revolver, Candlestick, Knife
- \$100: Character Inspired Drink Sponsor - 3 Available
- \$150: Photo Booth Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$200: Dessert Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$500: Live Auction Sponsor - 1 Available

## COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS

Be a Shop Local Partner! One of the Chamber's most rewarding promotions in partnership with the retail sector. Four weeks of Shop Local promotion. Sponsor logo on Countdown to Christmas entry slips (30,000 slips | 4 weeks)

- \$250: 4 Available

## WATER STREET LIGHTED PARADE

Front of parade spot, directly behind Santa!

Dec 11th - 2026 Theme: It's A Wonderful Life

- \$500 : General Sponsor - 1 available

## ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNER SPONSORSHIPS:

Broad, top-level support throughout the year for the Chamber's wide variety of services and programming provided to the professional community. Recognition through prominent logo placement on print and digital media, verbal acknowledgement at events, and guaranteed placement for competitive programming. The Chamber Dollar Sponsorship is included in this umbrella. These sponsorships are typically \$1,000 +

If you would like to discuss Organizational Partnership Opportunities, please reach out to Chamber Staff Directly.

## BEHIND-THE-SCENES SERIES

Curated tours or experiences for a better understanding of the community. Box lunch provided.

- March 27 | King Pin Entertainment Center
- May 8 | Gossling Woodworking
- October 9 | Luna Valley Farm

- \$300: 3 Sponsorships Available

## NETWORKING COFFEE HOUR

Coffee Hour from 730AM - 830AM co-hosted by sponsor and chamber at The Landing Market/The Buzz. Time to network. No registration required. Complimentary coffee.

March 12 / August 13

- \$300: 2 Sponsorships Available

## GOLF OUTING

This is a great opportunity for businesses to market and have fun with co-workers. Held at Oneota Golf & Country Club.

Monday, June 22nd 2026

- \$350 / Team (36 Team Max)  
Team fee covers the four players registration. Golf cart rental is not included. Teams can rent carts directly w/ Oneota Golf & Country Club.
- \$250 : Hole Sponsor - 18 Available  
Promotion, Game & Business Representation at Hole
- \$350 : Hospitality Sponsor - 1 Available  
Patio Host, Includes light morning refreshments
- \$350 : Lunch Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$500: Golf Cart Sponsor - 1 Available  
Business Recognition on Water Bottle Wrap - drink for every golfer.
- \$500 : Beverage Cart Sponsor - 1 Available

## MANUFACTURING WEEK

A week showcasing these large employers as workforce anchors for our area and critical contributors to the health of the local economy.

October 2 - 9

- \$500: Presenting Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$250: Supporting Sponsor - 2 Available

## WELLNESS WEEKEND

A chance to share, promote, and celebrate the Decorah businesses that care for our residents and visitors in body, mind, and spirit.

November 6 - 8

- \$500: Presenting Sponsor - 1 Available
- \$250: Supporting Sponsor - 2 Available

## RESTAURANT WEEK

A week to benefit Decorah's eateries during a slow time of year, but also to strategically market the town as a foodie destination in the state and region.

January 2027

- \$500: Presenting Sponsor - 1 Available