



# CHAMBER HORIZONS

Promoting the Alexandria Lakes Area as the ultimate destination to "live, work, play and prosper."

## Official Newsletter of the Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce

AUGUST 2020 | VOLUME 112 | ISSUE 8

### Building a community of support for Responders

Featuring Silouan Green

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

1 - 2:15 pm at Broadway Ballroom

Speaker event only - no food will be served.  
Virtual attendance option also available.  
Visit [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org) for details.

**Tickets: \$15**

Call 320-763-3161 or email [jess@alexandriamn.org](mailto:jess@alexandriamn.org) to reserve tickets by **Friday, September 25**.

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Member FDIC



Racial tension, political unrest, a pandemic - all add up to extremely challenging times for responders and caregivers who have stressful careers even during the best of times. Join us at the Chamber's Fall Event to learn more about how we can collectively support our law enforcement, first responders, firefighters and caregivers.

### Listen & Learn



#### Strong Start 2020

*Alexandria Public Schools shares information on opening plans.*

Alexandria Public Schools Superintendent Rick Sansted will provide an update on the district's plans for the 2020-2021 school year and how it will operate in the shadow of COVID-19.

**Wednesday, August 19, 12-1 pm**  
via virtual event. Register at [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org).

Listen & Learn is a one-hour virtual event hosted by the Chamber. It offers information, education and resources on topics that impact the overall community. Call 320-763-3161 or email [info@alexandriamn.org](mailto:info@alexandriamn.org) for details. The event is free of charge and open to everyone.

### Upcoming Chamber Events

**Alexandria Area Young Professionals Luncheon**  
*Featuring LifeLink III*  
Thursday, August 6  
from 12 - 1 pm  
Alexandria Airport |  
2604 Aga Dr.

**Wake Up Alexandria!**  
Friday, August 7  
from 7:30 - 8:30 am  
Knut Nelson |  
Virtual Event - Visit  
[www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org)  
to register  
*Nonprofit of the Day:*  
Alexandria Area YMCA

**Listen & Learn**  
*Featuring "Strong Start 2020"*

Wednesday, August 19  
from 12 - 1 pm  
Virtual Event - Visit  
[www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org)  
to register

### Add events to Community Calendar!

Add your events to the Douglas County Community Calendar. It's easy! Visit [www.alexmccalendar.com](http://www.alexmccalendar.com) and click "add an event."

Visit Alexandria MN



Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce



alexakesareachamber

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# Leadership Alexandria

## 2019-2020 Leadership Alexandria Class serves Habitat for Humanity

The Leadership Alexandria program includes a community service project collectively chosen by members of the current class. A variety of projects are brainstormed by the group and then voted on to determine one final project.

This year's class chose to take part in a Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County home build. Due to COVID-19, the 25-member class was unable to work together in this effort and instead broke into four smaller groups that vol-

unteered on two different build days.

Projects consisted of a variety of things including putting up poly, taping around electrical units, putting on siding and building picnic tables.

The 2019-2020 Leadership Alexandria class has two sessions to complete prior to graduation. These were postponed due to COVID-19 and will be made up when the circumstances allow.



Back: Randy Hansen, Habitat Construction Manager; Brian Kakach, Alexandria Police Department; Mark Malingen, Glenwood State Bank; Ryan Forster, Joshua Kietzmann, and Gabe Moore, AmeriCorps Volunteers. Front: Natalie Goodwin, Massage by Natalie; Brooke Mess, Alomere Health; Lauren Johnson, Alexandria Chamber; Ron Lyman, Crew Leader; Roger Schultz, Mentor.



Back: Jillian Reiner, Hagstrom Engineering; Randy Hansen, Habitat Construction Manager; Ryan Forster, Joshua Kietzmann, and Gabe Moore, AmeriCorps Volunteers. Front: Mariah Lysfjord, Studio C Salon; Brooke Hellerman, Pope Douglas Solid Waste Management; Jen Olson, Rainbow Rider; Bob Upton, Crew Leader.



Back: Randy Hansen, Habitat Construction Manager; Chris Dean, Homebuyer; Jim Peterson and Tom Flemming, Crew Leaders; Ted Haar, Thrivent Financial; Lucas Mogenson, Coldwell Banker Crown Realtors; Derek Holt, Bell Bank; Gabe Moore, AmeriCorps Volunteer. Front: Joel Seela, Alexandria Technical & Community College; Ryan Forster, AmeriCorps Volunteer; Matt Stier, Alexandria Industries; Kristin Trosvig and Joshua Kietzmann, AmeriCorps Volunteers.



Back: Chris Dean, Homebuyer; Lance Spychalla, ITW Heartland; Jim Peterson, Crew Leader; Randy Hansen, Habitat Construction Manager; Gabe Moore, AmeriCorps Volunteer. Middle: KaLee Mohrman, Knute Nelson Home Care & Hospice; Joshua Kietzmann, AmeriCorps Volunteer; Jamie DeBoer, Geneva Capital; Amy Christopherson, State Farm Insurance. Front: Ryan Forster and Kristin Trosvig, AmeriCorps Volunteers.

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# Wake Up Alexandria

Wake Up Alexandria is a networking event held the first and third Friday of each month from 7:30 to 8:30 am at a Chamber member location. A dollar gets you in the door, with all proceeds donated to a non-profit Chamber member.

## July Host



Alexandria Motors | July 17

3710 State Hwy. 29 S

Non-profit: Car Care Program

Alexandria Motors is a Chevrolet, Cadillac and Mazda vehicle dealership offering new and certified used vehicles. It also has a service department and body shop that handles all services from oil changes to auto body repairs.

## Most Unique Mask Contest Winners



A "Most Unique Mask" contest was held at the July 17 Wake Up Alexandria event hosted by Alexandria Motors. Winners included Loren Van Wyck of AFLAC (Anderson), Todd Emmons of Innovative Builders, and Mark Grandgenett of Viking Bank. All received \$10 in Chamber Bucks.

# Pot of Gold Winner

## Amy Christopherson - State Farm Insurance wins the Pot of Gold!

The Chamber celebrated a Pot of Gold winner at Wake Up Alexandria Friday, July 17 at Alexandria Motors. Amy Christopherson - State Farm Insurance won the prize package valued at \$3,693! The Pot of Gold is a highly anticipated part of Wake Up. Donations include business items, discounted services, gift certificates and promotional items.

Sponsoring businesses are promoted through Chamber email blasts, at the event and on the Chamber website. All Chamber members are included in the drawing, but a representative of the business drawn must be present to win.



Amy Christopherson, Agent with State Farm Insurance, accepted the Pot of Gold prizes on behalf of the business at the July 17 Wake Up Alexandria.

*Market your business or organization in the Pot of Gold! For details, contact Jess at (320) 763-1489 or jess@alexandriamn.org.*

## Welcome! July new members

### McCarten Design

Courtney Bitzan &  
Kari Ziesemer  
(320) 846-3226  
mcd@mccartendesign.com  
www.mccartendesign.com

### Skill Builderz Pediatric Therapy

Lisa Mitteness  
(320) 760-4061  
lisa@skillbuilderztherapy.com  
www.skillbuilderztherapy.com

*Please consider these new members for your personal and professional needs, and welcome them to our network!*



QUESTIONS?  
OR QUOTES?

Contact:

Bruce Strandskov  
Cell: 320-760-1507  
bruce@rosecityinc.com

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# Membership Team

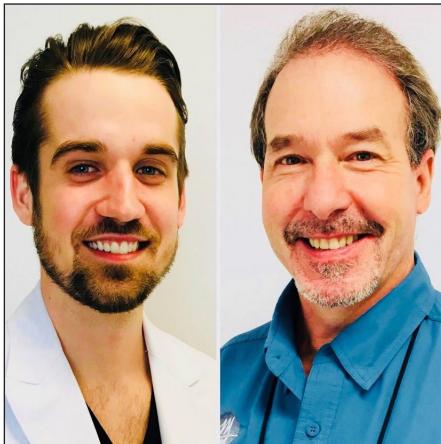
Volunteers on the Membership Team visit new member businesses to welcome them to the Chamber. They also serve as mentors and liaisons, supporting new members with introductions, information, and education on membership benefits.

## July Visits



**COUNTRY Financial**  
Darla Hacker, Independent Agent

COUNTRY Financial is located at 507 N Nokomis St., Ste. D in Alexandria and is operated by Darla Hacker. COUNTRY Financial offers a full array of insurance coverage to its clients including auto, home and life.



**Midwest Clinic of Dermatology  
and Vein Institute**

Elliot Backer, PA-C; Dr. Elieff, MD

Midwest Clinic of Dermatology and Vein Institute is located in Alexandria. It accepts patients for a variety of needs such as skin cancer checks, acne, moles and more. It also offers vein ultrasound and treatment for varicose veins.



**Program of Academic Exchange  
(PAX)**

Karen Johnson, Coordinator

PAX is a global community of people who provide education and exchange opportunities to students. Karen Johnson, local PAX coordinator, works with the exchange students and host families to find a strong match.

## LEADERSHIP ALEXANDRIA

*Today's tomorrow's to tomorrow's leaders!*



**CANCELLED**

It is with regret that the Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Board and Staff have decided to cancel the Leadership Alexandria Program for the 2020-2021 program year. The many tours, bus trips, classroom sessions, and projects would need to be severely modified and amended to comply with current COVID-19 protocols. Therefore, we feel participants would miss out on many of the opportunities and experiences that have made this program successful over the past 28 years. The program will be back next year! Watch for details on the 2021-2022 session next spring.



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# Ambassadors

The Ambassadors are volunteers who extend the public relations arm of the Chamber. They attend business open houses, groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings; welcome new businesses to the area; and commemorate relocations and major remodels. They are out making business visits the second Wednesday of every month.

## July Visits



**Custom Cleaners**  
Tyler and Gail Peterson, Owners

Custom Cleaners of Alexandria offers commercial cleaning, carpet cleaning and transitional cleaning for individuals moving into or out of a home. Services are customizable to the space and quotes are free.



**Range Printing**  
Doreen Thorson, Sales Consultant

Range Printing recently acquired Spectrum Marketing in Alexandria. It has facilities in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Colorado. The company offers print RP, traditional and digital print, apparel, promotional items and more.



**RFS Business Advisors**  
Rhonda Forkrud, Founder

RSF Business Advisors uses the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) to help the businesses it works with get results. EOS uses six key components: vision, data, people, process, traction and issues to identify and fix problem areas.

## YOUR AD BELOW!

*Don't miss your chance to advertise in the Chamber Horizons Newsletter*

Contact Lauren at (320)763-3163 or [marketing@alexandriamn.org](mailto:marketing@alexandriamn.org)

Advertise your business in the **October and/or November** Chamber Horizons newsletter! Contact Lauren Johnson at (320)763-3163 or [marketing@alexandriamn.org](mailto:marketing@alexandriamn.org) for details.

### Introducing the Dermatology Clinic.



**ALOMERE**  
DERMATOLOGY

No more waiting months and traveling hours to see a dermatologist. Dr. Harvey will see you in a comfortable setting where each patient is a name, not a number.



# Understanding downturn leads toward recovery

By Doug Loon, President  
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

It's hard to tell where we are in the COVID-19 journey. Four months after Minnesota's first case, health risks continue, but businesses have endured state-mandated closures, decreased consumer demand, supply chain disruptions and staffing challenges. Through it all, they've innovated and persevered.

On March 6, Minnesota reported its first case of COVID-19. Within two weeks, the virus spread and infected at least another 115 Minnesotans. Office buildings emptied, as employees left to work from home. Malls, schools, bars, restaurants, gyms and other large gathering places began to close, at first voluntarily and then under executive order. Unemployment insurance claims spiked, hitting an unprecedented 95,000. On March 27, a statewide stay-at-home order went into effect, halting all non-essential business activities.

By the end of April Minnesota had lost over 11% of its total employment and nearly 614,000 Minnesotans had filed claims for unemployment insurance, marking the steepest economic downturn in over 70 years.

As businesses scrambled to figure out how to deal with the onslaught of new challenges the Minnesota Chamber and local chambers responded by helping employers navigate the dizzying influx of resources, rules and needs. This outreach provided the following insights.

**Unlike past recessions, this crisis hit our economy all at once.** In March/April, roughly two thirds of businesses reported medium or large negative impacts on year-to-date sales and revenue, and over 45% said they made modest or significant cuts to workforce. Economic data tell a similar story; Minnesota's economy lost over 13% of total employment in April compared to the same time last year.

**Business resiliency addresses uncertainty.** Uncertainty has cast a cloud over businesses' plans and expectations. It is a constant variable, but the COVID-19 experience has been categorically different. In a recent survey, uncertainty about the economy ranked first among barriers to business. This is more critical than decreased demand or high costs of taxes and health care.

We don't know if we're near the end of the pandemic, or merely at the beginning of the related economic challenges. But we do know we've experienced a change unlike anything in recent history. We also know Minnesota businesses are resilient. They've shifted practices and will continue to do everything they can to survive and thrive. The statewide network of local chambers of commerce is here to help. To help them access financial assistance, grow their network to grow their businesses and help them continue to propel the state's valued quality of life.

## Business Buzz

Dave Currens joined the **BlackRidge Bank** team as its new Market President. Currens just moved to Alexandria from Paynesville and has 20+ years in banking and finance.

**Country Blossom Farm** was featured in the August 2020 issue of *Farmhouse Style Magazine* in a segment called "All in the Family." The article focuses on how "one family works together to make their apple orchard thrive." The national publication features home tours, rustic decor and DIY ideas, recipes and more.

Barb Ulmer is the newest physical therapist on the **Advantage Rehab Inc.** team. Ulmer originates from North Dakota and practiced there prior to moving to Kansas and now Minnesota.

**Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County** welcomes Brooke Zabel as Board President. Zabel is Vice President of Human Resources at **Knute Nelson**. She joined the Habitat Board in 2017.

Angie Schmitz, an employee with **Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.**, was named to the Governor's State Advisory Council on Mental Health. She will serve on this council for four years. The council makes recommendations to the governor, legislature and state departments on mental health policies, programs and services.

To include your business news in the Chamber Horizon Newsletter, email information to Lauren at [marketing@alexandriamn.org](mailto:marketing@alexandriamn.org).

## Advertise in 2021 Visitor and Livability Guide!

The Alexandria Visitor and Livability Guide promotes the Alexandria Lakes Area as the ultimate destination to live, work and play. Due to COVID-19, advertising rates have been decreased 40% for the 2021 guide, which is distributed nationwide to tourists, new residents, and those considering a move here. For information on advertising, contact Carol Wenner at 320-491-1175 or [carol@lakesareamagazine.com](mailto:carol@lakesareamagazine.com).

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