

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

MARCH 2021 | VOLUME 114 | ISSUE 3

### Let's change our vocabulary!

By Tara Bitzan, Alexandria Chamber Executive Director

We are approaching the one-year anniversary of Gov. Walz declaring the COVID-19 peacetime emergency for Minnesota (March 13). A lot has happened since then – disruptions to health care, business, education and many aspects of our personal and professional lives. However, with all things considered, Alexandria is faring well.

Other MN communities report more closures, more bankruptcies, over-extended health care systems and educational chaos. To date we've experienced few closures. Our health care and education systems have been proactive since day one and are role models for other areas.

Why are we faring better? I believe it is because we see Alexandria as “we”, “us”, “ours.” We care. One business closure is too many. Our health care and law enforcement workers are valued. Acts of kindness are the norm here. Those are things we need to celebrate, especially now as people are getting tired of the fight.

Often when disasters occur over long periods, people rally early, then support dissipates. We can't let that happen. We need to stay attentive to others' needs and cognizant of the fact that things are still a long way from “normal.” Now is not the time to give up. We need to keep fighting...keep asking others how they are, what they need. If we are struggling, we need to ask for help. This is true personally and professionally, for businesses and individuals.

Let's omit “I'm fine” from our vocabulary and say it like it is: *“I'm not sure I can keep my business afloat... I'm worried about my employees... I'm struggling to be positive... I'm worried my kids are falling behind... I'm afraid of COVID/of the unknowns of the vaccine/for the wellbeing of my family... I'm worried everything I worked for will be lost... I feel alone...”*

On the flip side, some industries are booming, some people aren't worried and are happy with the “new” way of doing things, i.e. working from home, more family time, less hectic schedules. That's nothing to be ashamed of. But it could be impactful to articulate that while offering support: *“I'm enjoying the slower pace and more family time, but I'm worried about you. How can I help? My business is flourishing. How can I support yours? Let's do a weekly social connect. Can I help you find resources/call someone for you?”*

**We need to stick together. That's what makes Alexandria the ultimate destination to live, work, play and prosper.**

### Learn ways to optimize your membership at Chamber 101 session

Join us for a Virtual **Chamber 101 on Tuesday, April 6 from 7:30 - 8:30 am** to learn more about Chamber programs, events and membership benefits. Hear from fellow members as they share their experiences of being involved with the Chamber. For information or to access a meeting link, contact Jess at 320-763-1489 or [jess@alexandriamn.org](mailto:jess@alexandriamn.org).

### Upcoming Chamber Events

#### Wake Up Alexandria!

Friday, March 5 from 7:30 - 8:30 am

CYBERSprout, LLC | Virtual Event -

- register at [alexandriamn.org](http://alexandriamn.org).

*Nonprofit of the day: Runestone Museum Foundation*

#### Listen & Learn (Page 3)

Tuesday, March 9 from 11 am - noon

ICE Alexandria! featuring

Alexandria Mayor Bobbie Osterberg

Virtual Event - register at [alexandriamn.org](http://alexandriamn.org).

#### Wake Up Alexandria!

Friday, March 19 from 7:30 - 8:30 am

Cullen's Home Center | 1620 N Nokomis St. NE

IN PERSON EVENT!

#### Listen & Learn (Page 3)

Monday, March 22 from 11 am - noon

Alex Schools Facilities Update featuring Alexandria

Public Schools Superintendent Rick Sansted

Virtual Event - register at [alexandriamn.org](http://alexandriamn.org).



Visit Alexandria MN



Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce



[alexlakesareachamber](https://www.instagram.com/alexlakesareachamber)

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320-763-3161 | [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org)

# Chamber News

SAVE THE DATE!

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SAVE THE DATE!

SAVE THE DATE!

## SPRING LUNCHEON

Featuring Cindra Kamphoff

Wednesday,  
April 21, 2021  
11:45 am - 1 pm

Generously  
sponsored by:



MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!



MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2021  
ALEXANDRIA GOLF CLUB  
2300 N Nokomis St. NE

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

## AAYP offers opportunities to connect, learn and grow

The Alexandria Area Young Professionals (AAYP) offers opportunities for professionals in their 20s and 30s to meet other young professionals, develop their careers and establish new friendships through a variety of events.

**MONTHLY LUNCHEONS** take place the first Thursday of each month at Broadway Ballroom in Alexandria. Each luncheon offers members the opportunity to network, learn more about the Alexandria area and explore new ways to get involved in the community.

Luncheons include great food, a

variety of networking activities, educational speakers, prizes and business announcements.

The AAYP Leadership Team strives to bring in dynamic, relevant speakers that can help members of AAYP grow both personally and professionally.

**CONNECT GROUP** gatherings take place two times per month and offer opportunities to get to know others on a more personal level in small groups.

The evening connect group meets at The Depot Express the third Thursday of each month at 5 pm, and the morn-

ing connect group meets at Common Ground Coffee House the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 am.

**SOCIALS** provide members opportunities to connect in a more social setting. They take place throughout the year at a variety of locations and include trivia nights, escape rooms, paint-and-sips, local tours and more.

AAYP dues are only \$25 a year! For more information or to join, call (320) 763-3161, email [ypalexandria@gmail.com](mailto:ypalexandria@gmail.com) or visit [ypalex.org](http://ypalex.org).



### Did you know?

We offer professional development courses in management, business writing, digital marketing & mental health.

For more information: [alexandria.ce.eleyo.com](http://alexandria.ce.eleyo.com)



**ALEXANDRIA**  
Public Schools

Community Education  
320-762-3310 Ext 2



# Listen & Learn

Listen & Learn is a one-hour virtual event hosted by the Chamber. It offers information, education and resources on topics that impact the community. Call 320-763-3161 or email [info@alexandriamn.org](mailto:info@alexandriamn.org) for details. There is no charge for the event and it is open to the public.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 9 from 11 AM - 12 PM**

Virtual event: Register at [alexandriamn.org](http://alexandriamn.org).

## ICE ALEXANDRIA!

ICE is the Alexandria Mayor's choice for the community word of the year for 2021.

**I = Integrity**  
**C = Commitment**  
**E = Engagement**

Join newly elected Mayor Bobbie Osterberg as she shares her high-level vision for the City of Alexandria and explains how citizens can participate in the ICE guiding principle.



*Bobbie Osterberg*  
Alexandria Mayor

**MONDAY, MARCH 22 from 11 AM - 12 PM**

Virtual event: Register at [alexandriamn.org](http://alexandriamn.org).

## ALEX SCHOOLS FACILITIES UPDATE

In an effort to have school facilities used as much as possible by community groups to promote educational, recreational, cultural and civic activities of the community and reduce reliance on leased space, Alexandria Public Schools is pursuing a plan for additions to Discovery Middle School and the Early Education Center to house a gymnastics center, gymnasium and community education youth/adult recreation programs. Join the conversation on how these additions will benefit the community!



*Rick Sansted*  
Alexandria Public  
Schools Superintendent

# 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 typically at a Chamber member location. These are currently being held virtually due to COVID-19.

## February Hosts



**AMS Digital Productions | February 5**

Evansville, MN

**Nonprofit: Love In the Name of Christ (Love INC)**

AMS Digital Productions, founded in 1993, specializes in video production for websites, social media and digital marketing. With expertise in interviewing and on-location filming, AMS helps clients tell their stories and takes pride in delivering quality creative that is on target, within budget and effective. Visit [amsdigitalproductions.com](http://amsdigitalproductions.com).

**Pinnacle Consulting Group | February 19**

Glenwood, MN

**Nonprofit:**

**Alexandria Area YMCA**

Scott Gullickson started Pinnacle Consulting Group to make a positive impact and improve the lives and businesses of entrepreneurs to allow them to get more of what they want from their business. He utilizes the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) in this process. Visit [scottgullickson.com](http://scottgullickson.com).



**Leighton Broadcasting**  
A Marketing Company

**VOICE OF ALEXANDRIA**

**BIG DEALS ONLINE STORE**

**KXRA NEWSTALK RADIO**  
1490 AM | 100.3 FM | 105.7 FM

**KX92 CLASSIC ROCK**

**Z99 Today's Hit Music**

**LISTEN LIVE**

# Membership Team

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

## February Visits



### CM - Woodworks

Back: Ken, Derek, Brent, Cameron (shop team), Nick Deters (programmer),  
Front: Wendy Swanson (design sales), Trisha Hoppe (admin. assistant)

CM - Woodworks is a custom cabinetry company located at 7300 39th Ave. NE, Nelson. The company previously operated under the name Collins Cabinets, until Chris Marsden took over in 2015. The company designs custom cabinetry, countertops, and furniture for new builds and/or remodels. Learn more at [www.cm-woodworks.com](http://www.cm-woodworks.com).



### Brother's Market and Sisters Beer Wine and Spirits

Diane Severson, Brother's Market Manager, Carlos  
Heidi Carlsen, Sisters Beer Wine and Spirits Manager, Carlos

Brother's Market and Sisters Beer Wine and Spirits is a local chain of family-owned convenience and liquor stores. All Brother's Market locations offer a variety of convenience items and some offer a full kitchen with made-to-order food such as paninis, tacos, chicken and more. Sisters Beer Wine and Spirits offers a variety of beverage and mixer options. Learn more on Facebook.

## Welcome! *February new members*

**Cedar Rose Inn Bed and Breakfast**  
Brenda Baumtrog | (651) 303-4466  
[brenda.cedarroseinn@gmail.com](mailto:brenda.cedarroseinn@gmail.com)  
[www.cedarroseinn.com](http://www.cedarroseinn.com)

**Lulie Kids**  
Lindsay Gust | (952) 836-7210  
[hello@luliekids.com](mailto:hello@luliekids.com)  
[www.luliekids.com](http://www.luliekids.com)

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

## Visit Chamber's enhanced job board!

The Chamber's online Job Board at [alexandriamn.org/jobs](http://alexandriamn.org/jobs) received an upgrade that includes more visual appeal and easier search functions. Chamber members can post jobs at no charge or upgrade to featured listings to pin jobs to the top of the page, highlight them and publish to the Google Jobs Network. Non-members may post jobs for a fee. Once jobs are posted, employers can see the number of views posts receive, review applicants and renew/upgrade posts. Job seekers may post resumes for free and sign up to receive alerts for new postings. Employers may view posted resumes, allowing them to reach out to potential candidates before they apply.

**STOP  
JOINT PAIN**

**320-762-0399**

**SANFORD**  
ORTHOPEDICS  
SPORTS MEDICINE



**Kaylee  
Miller, DPM**

# 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.

## February Visits



**Club E Fit - New Location**  
Natalie Heckert, Founder and CEO

Club E Fit is a fitness center located in the Viking Plaza Mall, owned and operated by Natalie Heckert. Natalie has been serving the health and fitness industry for more than 25 years. She invented the E-Fit system for an easy way to exercise with minimal equipment. Learn more at [clubefitcrew.com](http://clubefitcrew.com).



**First Western Bank & Trust - Acquisition**

Cory Simonson, VP/Commercial Banking Mgr.; Karrie Bahr, Asst. VP/Sr. Consumer Lender; Dave Currens, Market Pres.; Rich Hawes, Mortgage Loan Originator

First Western Bank & Trust recently acquired BlackRidgeBANK and its branches in Alexandria, Carlos, Milona and others. The acquisition allows the bank to add insurance and trust services to existing services of personal and business banking, loans and mortgages. Learn more at [firstwestern.bank](http://firstwestern.bank).



**Fine Pickins - New Location**  
Donna Robinson and Ann Dahms, Owners

Fine Pickins is located in the Viking Plaza Mall. It offers refurbished and locally produced products such as décor, furniture, signs, jewelry and more, including old fashioned candy. Owners Donna and Ann also offer refurbishing services. Learn more by calling (320) 241-3001 or by visiting them on Facebook.



**Hidden Treasures - New location**  
Judy McNulty, Owner

Hidden Treasures is an antique and collectable retail store in the Viking Plaza Mall. It offers comic books, comic collectable items, antique dishes, stones, trading cards, collectable matchbox cars, planes, trucks, and more. The store also has an EBAY page that allows for online sales. Learn more by visiting them on Facebook.

## Your turn.



**ALOMERE**  
HEALTH

Protecting our community is our number one priority. Alomere Health providers have received their COVID-19 vaccination so they can safely serve you. Join us in protecting the community when it's your turn.

Dr. Dave Odland  
Emergency Department



# Legislative Corner



## MN should conform to federal PPP loan tax law

The federal CARES Act established the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for small businesses suffering losses from the COVID-19 pandemic.

If PPP loan proceeds are used for qualifying costs and 60% of the loan proceeds are used for payroll costs, then the federal government will forgive the loan. For federal taxes, the forgiven loan will not be included in taxable income and the business can continue to deduct expenses related to that loan.

Unless Minnesota conforms to federal tax law, these forgivable loans will be taxed in Minnesota.

More than 100,000 Minnesota businesses participated in the PPP loan program. Without this change, many small and mid-sized businesses – already struggling due to revenue losses – will face further tax burdens.

It is critical to conform to federal tax law as soon as possible in the 2021 session as the final tax payment is due March 15.

Please contact your legislators to urge them to conform to federal PPP tax loan forgiveness and allow deductibility of expenses on Minnesota income tax returns.

### CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS:

**Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen (R) District 8**  
(651) 297-8063 sen.bill.ingebriigtsen@senate.mn

**Senator Torrey Westrom (R) District 12**  
(651) 296-3826 sen.torrey.westrom@senate.mn

**Representative Mary Franson (R) District 8B**  
(651) 296-3201 rep.mary.franson@house.mn

**Representative Jeff Backer (R) District 12A**  
(651) 296-4929 rep.jeff.backer@house.mn

**Representative Paul Anderson (R) District 12B**  
(651) 296-4317 rep.paul.anderson@house.mn

## Business Buzz

**Edina Realty** recently recognized the following REALTORS® from the Alexandria office for outstanding sales performance, market knowledge and customer service as follows: Executive Circle (top 3%) – Stu Wood; President's Circle (top 28%) – Sue Palmquist, Julie and Shawn Olson, Gloria Iverson, Christy Schmitz, Nicole and Mitch Doering, Wendie VanKirk; Leadership Circle (top 42%) – Gail Freitag, Chris Pinatiello.

The **Alexandria Downtown Merchants Association** announced its Board of Directors for 2021. Members include Jackie Holte, **Glenwood State Bank**, Treas; Simone Westerlund, **Creative Touch Boutique**, VP; Lonnie Hanson of **Bon Jos Women's Apparel & Tanning**, Sec; Ron Moritz of **Yesterdays**, Pres; Todd Gieseke, Dawn's Quilt Shop; Heidi Bergerson, **Scandinavian Gift Shop**; Bill Teschendorf, **Magpie**; Mickey Larson, **Larson Insurance**, and Patty Dusing, Trend & Couture by Ann Manning.

**Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County** elected two new board directors: Angie Krebs is a public health nurse with **Horizon Public Health** and has served on Habitat's Homeowner Selection Committee since 2013. Kevin Taylor is a Youth Pastor for Reach Church. Other directors include Brooke Zabel, Pres; Jon Ballou, Past Pres, Tony Loosbrock, VP/Treas; Sandy Susag, Sec; Bill Flaig, Michelle Bethke-Kaliher, Jason Briscoe, Stephanie Lucy, Carmon Watkins and Scott Kluver.

Vicki Doehling will serve as the new **Douglas County** Auditor-Treasurer. She replaces long-time Auditor/Treasurer Char Rosenow who retired in February.

**Love INC** (Love in the Name of Christ) is the 2021 recipient of the **Leighton Broadcasting** Gratitude on Repeat award. The honor provides the non-profit a marketing schedule to help spread the word about what makes them special and how the public can participate in their mission. Love INC is a national program that started in 1977. The Douglas County affiliate started in 2007 and works with more than 30 local churches to provide a clearing house of services and ministries.

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

*"It only takes a split second to Smile and forget, yet to someone that needed it, it can last a lifetime!"*

- STEVE MARABOLI

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