

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

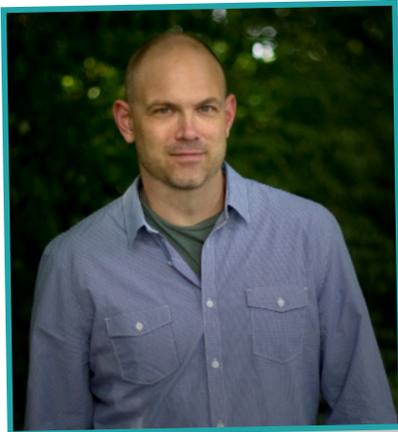
Official Newsletter of the Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce

SEPTEMBER 2020 | VOLUME 112 | ISSUE 9

## BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF

# Support for Responders

Featuring Silouan Green



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.

**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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## Upcoming Chamber Events

### Wake Up Alexandria!

Friday, September 4 from 7:30 - 8:30 am  
United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties |  
Virtual Event - Visit [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org)  
to register  
*Nonprofit of the Day: Rural Minnesota  
CEP, Inc.*

### Listen & Learn

*"Business Guide to the Mask Mandate"*  
Wednesday, September 9 from 12 - 1 pm  
Virtual Event - Visit [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org)  
to register

### AAYP Ditch Clean-Up

Tuesday, September 15 from 4 - 6:30 pm  
Rain Day: Thursday, September 17  
Country Road 81

### Chamber Fall Event

*"Building a Community of Support  
for Responders - featuring Silouan Green"*  
Monday, September 28 from 1 - 2:15 pm  
Broadway Ballroom | 115 30th Ave. E

## Add events to the Community Calendar!

Don't forget to add your events to the Douglas County Community Calendar. It's easy! Visit [www.alexmncalendar.com](http://www.alexmncalendar.com) and click "add an event." Qualifying Chamber member events will be included in the weekly Events at a Glance email blast. For information contact Katie at 320-335-2869 or [membership@alexandriamn.org](mailto:membership@alexandriamn.org).



Visit [Alexandria MN](http://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)

## 20th annual DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS VIRTUAL LUNCHEON

Featuring "Define the Fight" with Mariah Prussia



Wednesday, October 14  
12 - 1 pm | Virtual Event  
Visit [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org)  
for registration link.

2 - \$25 Chamber Buck Drawings!  
*Must be "present" to win.*

Presented by:

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## Submit your job openings to the Chamber Jobs Portal!

Looking to expand your team? The Chamber website offers an online jobs portal for members to post jobs for free. Job listings are available for public view and members have access to view all submitted resumes. Log in to your online member portal at [www.alexandriamn.org/jobbank](http://www.alexandriamn.org/jobbank) with your username and password. If you need assistance, contact Katie at 320-335-2869 or [membership@alexandriamn.org](mailto:membership@alexandriamn.org).

## Relocation Packets

Did you know? The Chamber offers relocation packets to new and potential residents. The packets include maps, the Alexandria Visitor and Livability Guide, an economic development profile, law enforcement and recreational information, sponsor brochures, and information on how to connect with Chamber member businesses for a multitude of services.

We encourage Chamber members to use these FREE packets as recruitment tools during the hiring process or to give new hires to help them settle into the community. To order packets or for more information, contact Katie at 320-335-2869 or [membership@alexandriamn.org](mailto:membership@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 community. Call 320-763-3161 or email [info@alexandriamn.org](mailto:info@alexandriamn.org) for details. The event is no charge and open to the public.

Wednesday, September 9 from 12 - 1 pm  
via virtual event. Register at [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org).

### Business Guide to the Mask Mandate

*How do I make sure my business is in compliance with the mask mandate? How do I handle customers who aren't wearing masks or aren't wearing them properly? What if they say they have a medical condition? Do I need to provide masks? If so can I charge for them?*

It's challenging to know what you should or shouldn't do to stay in compliance while not infringing on consumers' rights. Join us to get your questions answered in this informal educational opportunity!



Presented by:  
Crystal Hoepner,  
Health Educator

Amy Streed,  
Family Health Nurse

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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.

## August Hosts



**Knute Nelson | August 7**

420 12th Ave. E

**Non-profit: Alexandria Area YMCA**

Knute Nelson offers a variety of lifestyle services including independent-living apartments, assisted living, enhanced assisted living, memory care and nursing home. It also includes other services such as catering, hospice, home care and more.



**ICON Business Advantage | August 21**

**Non-profit: Outreach Food Shelf**

ICON Business Advantage partners with other companies to offer products and services at a reduced price. It offers business services such as small business capital, health coverage and merchant processing.

## Advertise in the 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).



## Learn to optimize your membership at Chamber 101 session

Join us for a **VIRTUAL Chamber 101 on Tuesday, October 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. This event will be held virtually. Visit [www.alexandriamn.org](http://www.alexandriamn.org) for a registration link.

For information, contact Katie at 320-335-2869 or [membership@alexandriamn.org](mailto:membership@alexandriamn.org).



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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.

## August Visits



**Dani's Nature Camp**  
Dani Kangas, Founder

Dani Kangas, owner of Dani's Nature Camp, is on a mission to get more youth active and outdoors. Kangas currently offers three-hour camps that include hiking, biking, and kayaking. These camps are done at various parks within the area.



**DJ's Tap House & Grill**  
Doug Jasken, Owner

DJ's Tap House & Grill is located at 3007 Hwy. 29 S, Ste. 130 and is owned by Doug Jasken. The facility offers a full bar and menu, and has 31 beers and ciders on tap. It also offers a backyard grilling menu and grab-and-go refreshments.



**Veterans Memorial Park**  
Jim Conn and Ken Voigt, Committee Members

Veterans Memorial Park in Alexandria was brought to life by a group of local veterans and made possible by many donors. It features veteran name monoliths, veteran wall of honor, story benches and wall, and much more.

**We are here to serve you!**

Call the Chamber Team at 320-763-3161



**Tara Bitzan**  
Executive Director



**Jess Ptacek**  
Program & Events Coordinator



**Lauren Johnson**  
Marketing & Communications Coordinator



**Katie DeGier**  
Visitor & Member Relations Specialist

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HEALTH



# 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.

## August Visits



**Cullen's Home Center | Remodel**  
Jon Cullen and Jana Horstman, Owners

Cullen's Home Center, recently underwent a major remodel. What used to be its light fixture, cabinets, and flooring show room is now a complete home décor show room with endless furniture and accessory options.



**McCarten Design | New Owners**  
Kari Ziesemer & Courtney Bitzan, Owners

Kari Ziesemer and Courtney Bitzan purchased McCarten Design. It is a full-service home design build company that works with builders, subcontractors, and artisans from the beginning design through the building process to the end.



**Farmers Insurance - Todd Jensen Agency | New Location**  
Todd Jensen, Agent

Farmers Insurance – Todd Jensen Agency recently moved to its new location at 901 State Hwy. 29 N, Ste. 104. It offers various insurance services including auto, home, life, renters, business, and more.

## Support local businesses with Chamber Bucks!

Chamber Bucks are a great way to keep dollars local during this difficult time and ALL year long! Consider giving Chamber Bucks for gifts, employee rewards or bonuses. Anybody can purchase Chamber Bucks and they can be spent at more than 200 participating Chamber member businesses!

Chamber Bucks are available in \$5 increments and are valid for 12 months following the issue date. It is an even dollar-for-dollar exchange - the Chamber adds no service charge to the process!

Call the Chamber at 320-763-3161 or email [jess@alexandriamn.org](mailto:jess@alexandriamn.org) to place your order!





**Meet our newest providers.**  
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Dr. Skyler Dahlseng Hospitalist	Dr. Emma Erickson Family Med.	Dr. Allison Juba Family Med.	Dr. Trista Osantoski Internal Med.	Dr. Amanda Wilson OB/GYN	Leann Zimny, PA-C Obstetrics

# Economic data show early signs of Minnesota's COVID-19 recovery

By Doug Loon, President, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

It's hard to put into words the impact that COVID-19 has had on all of our lives. We're all feeling the sting, as employers, employees, parents to young children, children to older citizens and as members of our communities.

Just like we all follow the health indicators as a barometer of the pandemic, understanding key economic indicators will help employers make critical decisions that will make the most out of the new normal for surviving, providing careers to our workforce and thriving into a post-COVID-19 landscape.

New data released on a dashboard from the Minnesota Chamber Foundation shows what local chambers and businesses throughout the state have witnessed firsthand in recent months. This online portal offers indicators and analysis of employment and income, business recovery and consumer and business spending.

Let's dive into some of what these indicators tell us:

First, Minnesota's unemployment is lower than the nation's, and has rebounded slightly since the easing of the stay-at-home order, as many laid off workers have been brought back. Employers have worked hard to make sure they are continuing to keep people safe, while offering products and services, and employing Minnesotans throughout the state.

While that is good news for Minnesota's relative strength, unemployment remains high in regions most impacted by social distancing and government interventions, such as tourist areas in northern Minnesota that rely on hospitality. These companies – and regions – are as important to Minnesota's culture as they are to our economy. We must continue to support their ability to make Minnesota a destination and help sustain these businesses.

Here's a takeaway we can be proud of: Our employment is concentrated high in health care, manufacturing, corporate headquarters, and finance and insurance. Where they helped Minnesota stand out before the onset of COVID-19, they are continuing to be shining examples of innovation, giving our economy a competitive edge and providing excellent quality of life in our communities.

You may not be familiar with "foot traffic" as an economic indicator. It essentially measures where people go, businesses they patronize. These new data show foot traffic has increased in outdoor spaces, sports and hardware. This could be due to stay-at-home orders, which decreased availability of in-person activities and retail.

Understanding the unique strengths of Minnesota's economy means understanding unique metrics, especially as we start to recover from the initial shock of COVID-19. This data dashboard will help us track indicators as a barometer of long-term success.

The Minnesota Chamber and chambers throughout the state will continue to keep their finger on the pulse of our economy as we begin to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. Stay-tuned for more information on how this will impact your communities.

## Business Buzz

**Hannaher's Workplace Interiors** announced that Paul Hannaher, CEO, and Joe Stanger, CFO, sold their commercial furniture business to a group of long-time executives of the company, along with female investors from Atmosphere Commercial Interiors. Omni Workspace Company is a minority investor and Atmosphere's parent company. Both are headquartered in Minneapolis. The new company, known as Connect Interiors, will continue operating three locations in Fargo, Grand Forks, and Detroit Lakes, and has applied for a women owned business certification.

Lori Anderson of **Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County** was re-elected as a member of the Habitat for Humanity International U.S. Council. The U.S. Council was established by the board of directors to serve as the planning and policy recommending body to guide the growth of Habitat for Humanity's work in the United States. Council members serve three-year terms.

Each year, Wallethub ranks more than 650 of the top community colleges in the nation. This year, **Alexandria Technical & Community College** was named #1 Community College in Minnesota, and ranked #8 in the United States. The Minnesota State system was ranked #11 overall.

Doug Houska has joined the **Viking Bank** team in Alexandria as CEO. Houska has more than 30 years of experience in the banking industry.

Residents and staff members of **Vista Prairie at Windmill Ponds** will benefit from a \$10,000 grant from the LeadingAge Minnesota Foundation. The funds will be used for continuing education, stress and emotional support, urgent expense needs, and other services.

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

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