

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



WEBSTER CITY AREA  
Chamber of Commerce





# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Serving on the Chamber Board these past four years has been such a rewarding experience, both personally and professionally. I'm really looking forward to building on that and helping more people in the Webster City area connect and get involved.

2024 was an exciting year for our community, and there's even more to look forward to in 2025. We've taken a fresh look at our events to better serve everyone, and I'm especially excited that JunqueFest is moving to downtown Webster City—it'll create even more opportunities to bring people together. With a stronger ambassador program, we're also working on adding more family-friendly activities to make life here even better.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of our members. I encourage everyone to consider opportunities to collaborate more closely in 2025, contributing to the quality of life in our area. Together, we can elevate the profile of Webster City and strengthen the sense of place that makes our community so special.

**JAMIE  
GRIFFITH**  
Hamilton County Fair



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## ABOUT THE BOARD

The Webster City Area Chamber of Commerce is comprised of a 9-member volunteer board representing the member interests. Per the current board letter of commitment, board members are expected to fulfill the responsibilities to the organization in addition to signing a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement.

- Jamie Griffith, Hamilton County Fair, Board President
- Ryan Williams, Availa Bank, Vice President
- Mark Ferguson, Karl Webster City, Treasurer
- John Harrenstein, City of Webster City, City Liaison
- Jill Burtnett, Neighborhood Realty
- Monica Haberman, Platinum Connect
- Ketta Lubberstedt-Arjes, Kendall Young Library
- Ottie Maxey, Ames Alliance
- Jeff MacRunnel, K.C. Nielsen



# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

## MISSION

Building business and community through access to leaders, promotions, Our mission - Building business and community through economic growth, promotion, and access to leaders, education, and networking

We believe in the benefits business provides. As the Chamber, we are here to advocate, partner, network, and promote you and all you have to offer. Our goal is to further the interests of the businesses we represent for a brighter future within Webster City and the surrounding communities.

## ABOUT THE WEBSTER CITY AREA CHAMBER

In 2024, we celebrated a record-breaking number of ribbon cuttings, not just in new business, but also marking an expansion in our social services, arts and cultural amenities, and improvements to our parks and recreation system. **More than half of the new businesses that opened were women or minority-owned**, and 20% of those new businesses marked a relocation and expansion in our area. We also now have a Giant Doodlebug completed recognizing our local industry's history.

# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Webster City Area Chamber hosts one of the largest summer markets in the multi-county area, drawing visitors and vendors from near and far. Each week, the market features a unique theme, live stage performances, and a wide variety of vendors, offering something new for attendees to enjoy.

Beyond its weekly excitement, the market has become a vital platform for creating visibility and awareness of our downtown district and business ecosystem. It provides opportunities for even our smallest entrepreneurs to thrive and grow.

Last year, the Chamber celebrated the ribbon cutting and grand opening of two businesses that began as market vendors—one from Webster City Market Nights and another from JunqueFest—both of which expanded into year-round brick-and-mortar locations.



## FIESTA NIGHTS

New for 2024, the Webster City Area Chamber partnered with Iowa Central Community College to introduce Fiesta Nights as a monthly highlight at the market. These special evenings provided a unique blend of culture, learning, and fun.

Students from Iowa Central used the market as an opportunity to practice conversational skills with attendees while leading engaging activities such as free salsa lessons, a bag toss, and other fun games. The entirely student-led initiative added a lively and interactive element to the market, showcasing the creativity and talent of our local college community.

**17%**  
Increase in  
Event Revenue

**75**  
Webster City  
Market Nights  
Vendors

**537**  
Event Volunteer  
Hours

**60**  
Chamber Hosted  
Events

**28K**  
Event Revenue

**12**  
Market Nights  
Events

**30**  
New Vendors for  
Webster City  
Market Nights

**962**  
Events on the  
Community  
Calendar



# MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

The data indicates a growing demand for membership in the Webster City Area Chamber of Commerce. Nationally, chamber membership offers significant advantages.

## MARKET ANALYSIS

- \* **Enhanced Business Reputation:** Consumers are 63% more likely to patronize businesses that are members of their local chamber, perceiving them as more reputable and customer-focused.  
[U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)

- \* **Increased Consumer Favorability:** A national survey revealed that two-thirds of consumers believe that chamber-affiliated businesses use good business practices, are reputable, care about their customers, and are involved in the community

**8%**

Membership Growth



**39**

New Members



# ADVOCATE & PROMOTE

JANUARY

## IEDA DIRECTOR DURHAM

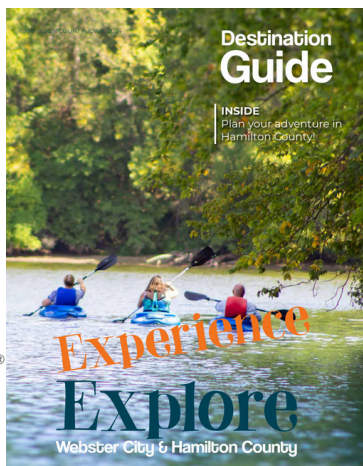
In January 2024, the Webster City Area Chamber welcomed Iowa Economic Development Director Debi Durham for a presentation focused on unlocking new opportunities for the community. Her discussion centered on how the state office can support initiatives like downtown revitalization, workforce housing, manufacturing growth, and placemaking projects.



MAY

## DESTINATION GUIDE

The Webster City Area & Hamilton County Destination Guide is distributed to over 17 Visitors Centers & Welcome Centers across the state, along with other locations in neighboring states.



## APRIL STATEWIDE GUIDE TRAINING

Over 30 communities gathered in Webster City to explore strategies for welcoming visitors and enhancing their storytelling to better showcase the unique appeal of their areas. The meeting was awarded by an application prepared by Hamilton County Development.



## JUNE MYSTERY TOUR

First State Bank's Prestige Club treated tourists to a surprise "trip in their own town." Bank customers visited various bank branches and local attractions, enjoying an exciting mystery tour where the destinations were revealed along the way!



# ADVOCATE & PROMOTE

AUGUST

MAY

## DOWNTOWN DAYTRIP

The Downtown Daytrip united neighboring communities from Story and Hamilton Counties for a presentation by the State Tourism Office. Participants enjoyed a walking tour of downtown Jewell and gained insights into the building rehabilitation projects led by JADE. The event fostered the exchange of ideas and collaboration among attendees.



## IOWA STATE FAIR BOOTH

Chamber staff showcased Webster City and the Hamilton County area as must-visit destinations to attendees of the Iowa State Fair. This opportunity allowed us to distribute hundreds of visitor guides, spreading the word about our community across the state and beyond.



AUGUST

## GUIDE CERTIFICATION

Professional guide certification are credentials awarded by Iowa State University Extension for the successful completion of the training course and examination by peer jury.



OCTOBER

## TRAVEL IOWA MARKETPLACE

Our staff and volunteers showcase the unique attractions and experiences our area has to offer to over 30 trip planners and the group travel industry.



# VOLUNTEER IMPACT

Volunteer help is vital to our mission. Without the dedication of community-minded individuals who generously lend their time and expertise, the Chamber's ability to deliver essential services would not be possible



The economic impact of the volunteer hours for 2024 at the Webster City Area Chamber of Commerce is

## \$16.3K

The value of a volunteer hour is high because it represents not only the time spent but also the expertise, effort, and contributions that volunteers bring to the organization. Here are some reasons why this value is significant:

- **Planning and Hosting Events:** Organizing ribbon cuttings, festivals, fundraisers, and community celebrations requires significant time and effort.
- **Administrative Support:** Volunteers may assist with tasks such as managing correspondence, coordinating schedules, and handling logistics.
- **Community Outreach:** Promoting Chamber initiatives, engaging with local businesses, and recruiting members are time-intensive efforts.
- **Special Projects:** From public art installations to historical preservation efforts, volunteers often dedicate time to unique, impactful initiatives.
- **Board and Committee Roles:** Strategic planning and governance require regular meetings, preparation, and follow-through.

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOUR IN IOWA

## \$28.88

LARNED A. WATERMAN IOWA NONPROFIT RESOURCE CENTER

- Professional Level Contributions
- Economic Benchmarks
- Cost Savings for the Organization
- Commitment and Community Spirit



**MAGGIE BREITENKAMP**  
Chamber Ambassador



\* Maggie has made invaluable contributions to nearly every major community event this year, rallying the entire Availa Bank team to join in and make a difference together.

\* Her dedication has especially shone during our Fall events, where she went above and beyond to coordinate festive décor at Availa Bank Plaza.



**IAN HOLCOMBE**  
Chamber Ambassador



\* During the summer, when helping hands were sometimes in short supply, Ian consistently stepped in to fill the gaps, especially at Webster City Market Nights and JunqueFest. Beyond his hands-on efforts, Ian also supports communication for community events within his department, ensuring everything runs smoothly.

\* Ian generously stepped in to drive the safe-ride home vehicle on New Year's Eve. It was a last-minute ask, after another volunteer fell ill. Ian went above and beyond using his personal time off to help with event set-up and teardown.



# DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The Webster City Area Chamber is committed to serving as a model for Main Street revitalization. After acquiring the former bank building, the Chamber Board took decisive action to address deferred maintenance and develop a preservation plan for this historic structure.

One of the first steps was removing the tin siding, which often conceals underlying deterioration. This revealed vulnerable materials that were promptly repaired, preventing potential catastrophic damage. The restoration included proper care of historic materials, relaying a compromised corner of the building, and installing a 20-foot rod at the top to secure the North façade and brick wall.

Looking ahead, the Chamber plans to enhance the building further with a mural on the prominent wall facing Availa Bank Plaza, adding a vibrant and artistic touch to downtown Webster City. The chamber board continues to evaluate financial incentives and feasibility to convert the upper story to maximize available resources.

Combined with the efforts of LIFT WC, HERO, and individual property owners, the chamber is committed to the preservation of Webster City's Downtown commercial district.



“The health of Downtown has a direct impact upon the entire community’s economic well-being.”

-Downtown Assessment Report Iowa Economic Development Authority

2023's Downtown Assessment was a partnership between the chamber, downtown SSMID district, and City of Webster City. All three entities adopted the IEDA's team recommendations. Below are suggested actions the chamber team has been able to actively be part of the implementation.

- Creation of a business or building inventory list
- Design Grant - Incentive program that helps with building maintenance
- Working with City to review downtown sign ordinances, and creating resources to help inform business owners of the process
- Discuss partnerships with local groups and organizations to stand up bike rides and other downtown events
- Community Events Calendar with local events
- Monthly Chamber Updates at Third Thursday Coffees
- Training Opportunities for Small Business Owners - Financial Readiness, Disaster Preparedness, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Marketing
- Submission of events to the Travel Iowa website
- Working with the City and serving on the Planning & Zoning Board regarding proper business codes
- Working to coordinate extended shopping hours to better serve customers
- Regular communication with local press, city officials, and county supervisors
- Digital landing page dedicated to downtown development
- Working with Planning & Zoning Commission to update ordinances to support positive business growth.
- Work with the Planning & Zoning Commission to pass the Minimum Property Maintenance Commercial Code
- Installation of public art in downtown



# MEMBER SUCCESS STORIES

The Webster City Area Chamber proudly represents a diverse membership of over 200 individuals, businesses, and industry partners. Our members are united by a shared commitment to supporting the local economy and fostering growth in Webster City and the surrounding region.

While our roots are firmly planted in Webster City, our reach extends to regional partners in Fort Dodge, Eagle Grove, Story City, Ames, and Jewell. Together, we're building a strong network dedicated to creating opportunities and driving success throughout the area.

## COUNTRY TWIST BOUTIQUE

*"I went to a couple chamber meetings not thinking I was going to come here. I have had support like no other. Now they have me involved in all kinds of stuff!"*



PEGGY JOSLIN



## PEOPLES CREDIT UNION

*"The Chamber plays a crucial role in driving economic development and connecting businesses. Volunteering and sponsoring shows commitment to things that matter."*



DEBBY PRUISMANN



## AMERICAN SANITATION

*"I always enjoy working with and supporting the Chamber, as they are always working hard to support the community and the small local businesses that make it up."*



BRAD SCHMIDT



# BUSINESS SUPPORT

*The Chamber is proud to commemorate every milestone.*



**\$5K**

Design Grants



**22**

Ribbon Cuttings & Groundbreakings



**109**

Member Visits



**9**

Morning Networking Events



**3.1K**

Online Help Wanted Views

## THE CHAMBER IS PROUD TO COMMEMORATE EVERY MILESTONE

The Chamber is proud to commemorate every milestone along the journey of business growth and success. Last year, we hosted over 60 community events and celebrated ribbon cuttings for 20 different partners.

Chamber membership also brings financial incentives designed to support our members' growth. Our Revolving Loan Fund offers up to \$25,000 for business-related expenses, including working capital, helping organizations bridge gaps and meet their needs. Additionally, our Design Grant Program awarded financial support to 9 member organizations, enabling them to make essential building repairs and improve exterior signage.

We're here to help our local businesses thrive every step of the way!

# FUTURE OUTLOOK

## AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Affiliate programs can significantly benefit volunteer-run nonprofits by providing essential development, fundraising, and event planning support while preserving their autonomy. These programs enable volunteer-operated nonprofits to leverage professional resources, build stronger organizational foundations, and achieve their goals more effectively.

1. **Professional Development Support**
2. **Enhanced Fundraising Opportunities**
3. **Event Planning Support**
4. **Improved Visibility & Community Awareness**
5. **Preservation of Autonomy**

## NEW PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

This year, we're thrilled to collaborate with volunteer organizations and nonprofits to enhance community events like the Fall Festival, OktoberFest, Fall Bike Ride, and Pioneer Life Days. We're also deepening our partnership with Hamilton County Conservation to support their programs and conservation initiatives, connecting our community with nature and outdoor experiences.

## GROWING THE ARTS & CREATIVE CULTURE

The Webster City Area Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce the award of an Iowa Tourism Grant to develop a comprehensive marketing plan aimed at promoting the vibrant local arts nonprofits in our community. This initiative underscores Webster City's commitment to showcasing its rich tapestry of creative culture and establishing the area as a premier arts and cultural destination. This grant will help strengthen the marketing of our arts nonprofits, increase visitor engagement, and position Webster City as a destination where creativity thrives.



**31.6K**

Website Views on  
visitwebstercityiowa.com



**2.7K**

Member  
Directory Views



**20.4K**

Facebook  
Visits



**41%**

Newsletters  
Opened



**3.6K**

Community  
Calendar Views



**214.1K**

Facebook  
Reach