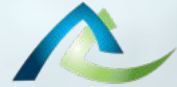


Ankeny Business Journal

THE VOICE OF THE ANKENY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NOVEMBER 2023



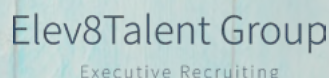
ANKENY
area chamber of commerce



THANK YOU TO OUR INVESTOR MEMBERS



THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIER MEMBERS





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area chamber of commerce

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Dear Readers



Our Total Resource Campaign (TRC) is our number one way we fund the programs here at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce. We rely on volunteers to go out into the community to build relationships that in turn sell sponsorships. This year we had 27 volunteers who sold over \$400,000 in sponsorships. Over the last 5 years we have raised almost \$2 million, which allows us to fulfill our mission. These volunteers spend countless hours working with members to find the sponsorship that fits into their company's marketing and mission.

Our campaign officially kicks off in January, but we get to celebrate 2023 with our incentive trip. Each volunteer can reach incentive levels with the ultimate goal of going on the trip in November. To earn a trip for one they need to sell \$10,000 in sponsorships, bring in two new members and sell to a member who hasn't purchased a sponsorship in the last five years. If they sell over \$18,000 in sponsorship and reach the other two membership goals, then they earn a trip for two.

This year 48 people we will be traveling to Cozumel, Mexico. We had 16 returning members and 11 new members to our group. Of those new members 10 of them are joining us in Mexico. I am beyond proud of our group and couldn't have done it without our team leaders, Aaron Rickelman with Designed 2 Move Spine & Sport, Ann Tiernan with Lincoln Savings Bank and Michael Hidder with Ankeny Real Estate Group. Congratulations to Ann Tiernan for leading her team in selling the most dollars in sponsorships!

There are over 900 opportunities available to members on a first come, first served basis. Events for 2024 include Ankeny Chamber SummerFest, Witches Night Out, Chamber Golf Outings, Lattes and Leads, Chamber Scholarships, and more.

Sponsorships range from \$100 - \$30,000. Our sponsorships run for a three-year term, which means if you sign a sponsorship agreement, you have the first rights to that sponsorship for the following two years. After three years, all sponsorships are up for grabs. This gives all businesses an opportunity to sign up for something new. First rights contracts will be going out at the end of November, so you should be hearing from your volunteer then. If you haven't had a chance to sponsor anything, please reach out to Jamie Anderson at janderson@ankeny.org and she can connect you with a volunteer.

I want to thank all the volunteers in 2023. You all did an amazing job, and I look forward to the success we will have in 2024. I also want to thank two others, Jamie Anderson and Sharlyn Estrem. They put in numerous hours behind the scenes making sure the campaign runs smoothly. It takes a team working together to be successful and we have the best team in the Metro!

Melisa Cox

CEO & President of the
Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce





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KICKING
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50 NEW MEMBERS ANKENY area chamber of commerce **50 DAYS**

**CHAMBER
MEMBERSHIP
DRIVE 2023**

**NEW MEMBERS
JOIN NOW
& GET THE REST OF
2023 FREE**

For More Info Contact:

Jamie Anderson

(515) 964-0685

janderson@ankeny.org

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Did you know....

We are only 50 members away from reaching 1,000 Chamber members? Let's hit our goal of 1,000 members by the end of this year!

A raffle with prizes will be awarded for the following before December 22, 2023!

- The person that brings in the most new Chamber memberships!
- The person that brings in the 1,000th Chamber member!

Your name will be entered into a drawing for every new member you bring in before December 22, 2023!

Drawings will be held on December 22, 2023!

- New Members can join at Ankeny.org and list your name as how they heard about the Chamber
- New Members can stop into the Chamber office and fill out an application in person
- Feel free to connect the potential member electronically to janderson@ankeny.org

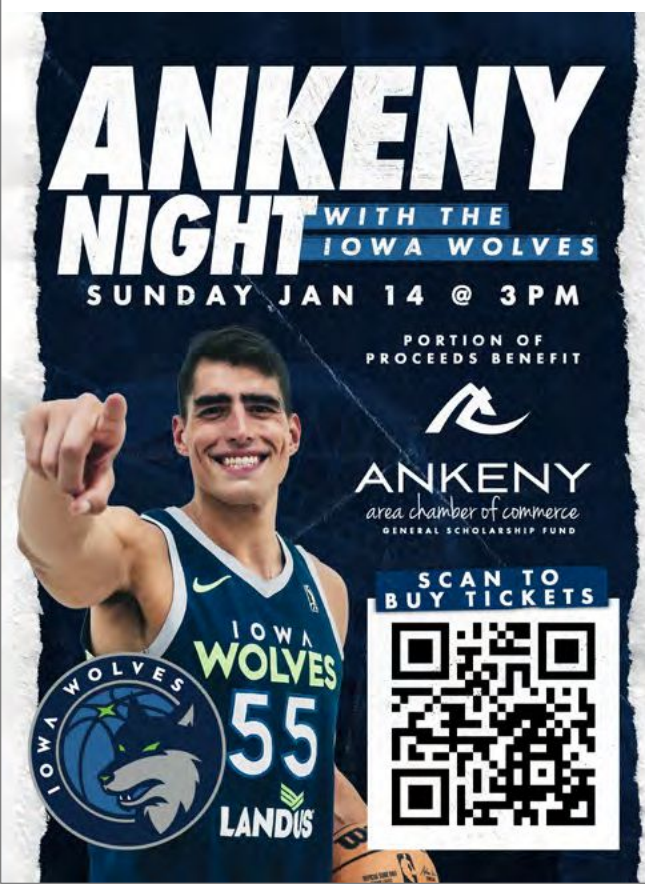
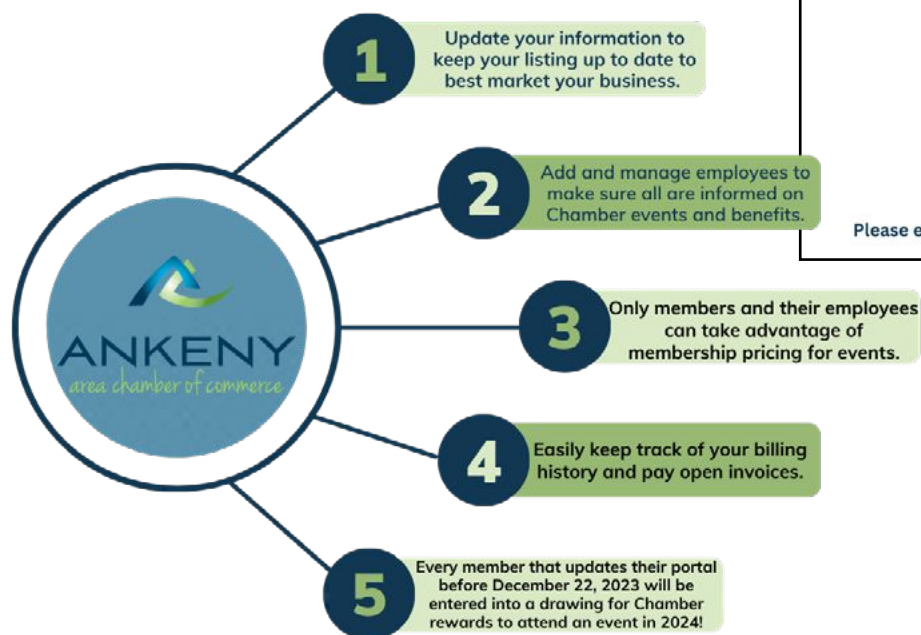
We are also awarding prizes with a raffle to the new Chamber members that sign up!

- Every new member that joins before December 22, 2023 will be entered into a drawing for Chamber rewards to attend an event in 2024!
- ALL new members that join during the 50 New Members in 50 Days period will receive a shoutout in our Ankeny Business Journal, with their logo and link to their business site!

ANKENY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
1631 S.W. MAIN STREET, SUITE 204, ANKENY, IA 50023
(515) 964-0685 | www.Ankeny.org

How To Update Your Member Portal!

Watch This How To Video To Learn How



Sunday, Jan 14th, 3:00 PM
@ Wells Fargo Arena

The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund is created to:

- Assist graduating high school students in the Ankeny community to advance their education.
- Ankeny adult learners for continuing of their education.
- Entrepreneurs to grow their network through membership in the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.

Tickets: \$20 Each - \$10 Per Ticket Benefits Ankeny Area Chamber General Scholarship Fund

Purchase tickets online at: <https://fevo.me/3SecyWv>

Questions? Please feel free to contact Nate Buch at 515-954-4481 or nate.buch@iawolves.com

NOVEMBER



2

Discover Ankeny**4:30 - 7:00 PM****Sponsored by B & G Foods, Inc.**

FFA Enrichment Center, 1055 S.W. Prairie Trail Pkwy, Ankeny

9

Business After Hours**4:00 - 6:00 PM****Sponsored by Revive****Dermatology Clinic and Spa**

1850 S.W. Plaza Shops Ln., Ste. A, Ankeny



14

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Agency Iowa****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

1551 SW Prairie Trail Pkwy

15

AYP - November Lunch & Learn**Noon - 1:00 PM****Sponsored by The District**

17

2023 Joint Legislative Luncheon**11:30 AM - 1:00 PM****Sponsored by Murphy Enterprises LLC**

Courtyard By Marriott Ankeny,

2405 S.E. Creekview Dr., Ankeny



20

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Farmers Insurance - Kelly Bennett Agency****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

3602 NE Otterview Circle Ste C, Ankeny

21

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Abundant Health Massage & Bodywork****Noon - 12:30 PM**

1802 SE Delaware Ave, Suite 107, Ankeny

**November 23-24****Chamber Office Closed For Thanksgiving**

28

Lattes & Leads**8:00 - 9:00 AM****Sponsored by Mainstream Boutique Ankeny**

1450 SW Vintage Pkwy., Ste. 150, Ankeny



28

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Lindo Jalisco Mexican Restaurant & Taqueria****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

1810 SW White Birch Cir Suite 116-118, Ankeny

29

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Mission Cancer + Blood****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

1950 SW Magazine Road, Ankeny

DECEMBER



5

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Exemplar Care****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

105 North Ankeny Blvd, Ankeny

7

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Attivo Trail 55+ in Ankeny****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

1010 SW Magazine Rd, Ankeny

8

AYP - Holiday Party**6:00 - 9:00 PM**

Courtyard by Marriott

2405 SE Creekview Dr, Ankeny, IA 50021



11

Ribbon Cutting ✂️ **Krave Gym****4:30 - 5:00 PM**

1975 N Ankeny Blvd, Suite 112, Ankeny

14

Business After Hours**4:00 - 6:00 PM****Sponsored by Foot & Ankle Center of Iowa**

1200 NW 36th St, Ste 100, Ankeny



19

Lattes & Leads**8:00 - 9:00 AM****Sponsored by Purple Poppy Boutique - Ankeny**

1615 S.W. Main St., Ste. 109, Ankeny



**Dec. 24 - Jan. 1, 2024 Chamber Office
Closed for the Holiday Season**

Joint Legislative Luncheon

Friday, November 17th | 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

It is Ankeny's year to host the Joint Legislative Luncheon with Grimes, Johnston, Polk City, & Urbandale Chambers. Chamber members are invited to join their elected officials for updates.

Chamber Member Pricing \$25
Non-Chamber Member \$35

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NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

25
YEARS



20
YEARS



Albaugh McGovern Post #42



10
YEARS



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Dr. Mindi Dayton

Dr. Mindi Dayton was one of our Mentoring For Women 2023 Mentors

Article submitted by Dr. Mindi Dayton



What factors led you to deciding to open your own business?

My husband (Paul) and I have opened several business, and while they are all very different, the overarching decisions to open them were similar: autonomy, challenge, "owning" your future and not having that controlled by someone else.

Specifically with the development of Foot and Ankle Center of Iowa/Bunion Surgery Specialists, we wanted to be able to focus on the patient experience by being able to spend more time with our patients then we could in large group practices. We also wanted to continue to be actively engaged in research and innovation, while implementing the knowledge we were gaining into our patient care which we found difficult in the corporate medicine and university environment.

We have a passion for bunion surgery, and we wanted to be able to offer the best, state of the art, evidence-based procedure for bunions to our patients. Bunions affect about 1/3 of the population and we had the goal of transitioning this to the primary focus of our practice. Unfortunately, most of the procedures traditionally offered to correct this (often) painful deformity do not work in the long term, and in many cases fail almost immediately. With this many patients afflicted, we wanted to play a role in the improvement of the outcomes for as many patients as possible. This was a big impetus for us opening Foot and Ankle Center of Iowa/ Bunion Surgery Specialists: to become the leading bunion surgery center in the DSM metro and the Midwest and a national leading Lapiplasty® center. Our foundational research on triplane anatomy of bunions was the genesis for the Lapiplasty® system and we participate with ongoing research, development and outcomes for this revolutionary procedure. We are laser focused on continued innovation and improvement for the most common foot surgical procedure performed.

Any advice for someone interested in starting a small business, or in expanding their business?

Starting and growing a business is not for the faint of heart. Let's take our clinical practice: I work more hours now than I ever did as an employed physician, so you must be prepared for long days and weeks. Yet the joy I receive from the above (autonomy, challenge and knowledge that we control our future success and no-one else does) far outweighs any



stress of additional hours in the work week. There is also the opportunity for more flexibility within our schedule. I can work nights and weekends on the business in order to have daytime hours free to do something else. However, on the flip side, there are times I must miss events because the business needs me. As a small business owner, there are times that if you don't do the work, there may be no one else to do it, so it is a trade-off for sure.

One thing we have learned and continue to tap into is the knowledge and experience of other small business owners. Don't feel you have to do this alone. There are wonderful networks of other small business owners and professionals in each specialty, such as accounting, that you can lean on and partner with. You are the expert in the business you are starting, but you don't have to be the expert in all aspects related to "business". However, make sure you are learning the other aspects and asking a lot of questions. Stay engaged with the people you partner with, to make sure you are not being taken advantage of and you are protecting your business.

When dealing with the glass ceiling & overcoming barriers.

Some of the most important things to think about:

For a long time, I didn't want to believe it. I think it is human nature that as professionals, we like to see the good in people that we respect and see as mentors. We don't want to believe there is a "glass ceiling" above us. This unfortunately can lead to a person believing they are not good enough or not achieving the milestones that they are asked to hit; when in fact they may be not just meeting the goals, but actually be exceeding them. Recognize these barriers are still there.

So what if you find yourself in a position where you are doing the work and hitting the milestones but this is ignored by your boss and advancement never seems to materialize? One must work to be self-aware and honest with themselves, and actively seek feedback from others that they trust and know them as a person and a professional. It takes diving deep into yourself and



what you have done to accomplish your goals and believing in yourself. Others can help recognize strengths and weaknesses, but this feedback is not the last word. If you can confidently say after deep self-assessment that you are hitting your milestones and achieving the goals set for you, yet you are continually being told otherwise, then it may be time to move on. By no means am I saying to “jump ship” at the first sign of difficulty and frustration. Yet, if you can honestly say you have put the time and energy into achieving your goals and they seem to be being blocked, then you need to move on for your personal and professional health. But you must be prepared for plan B, C and D. Preparing yourself mentally and skill wise is paramount to success.

To “move on” you must plan, process, and prepare for the next step. This includes having a great support system, preparing for all the “what if’s” before, during and after your move. Let go of the fear that you are not making the right move for you. There is no way to know what will come of your transition to something new. You must go into it open eyed, believing it is the right thing and being prepared to work at it. If that move doesn’t work, you reprocess again, lean on your support system, and keep on moving, growing, and learning.

You must believe there is no barrier you can’t overcome. There are just different ways of overcoming and sometimes it is through, over, around, or in a completely different direction. You must be introspective and aware, while not allowing others to “write your story” that is not theirs to write.

What goes into innovative medicine and teaching the new procedure?

Innovation in medicine, just as innovation in anything takes being inquisitive, not accepting the status quo. It is believing that those you are serving, (in our case patients,) deserve the absolute best that you can provide. It is being okay with saying “*What I am doing may not be the best way,*” and leaving your ego behind, because ultimately it is not about me, but rather about the patient and the result I am giving them. It is interesting how tight we want to hold on to beliefs and procedures that are proven “wrong”. Or to reject a better option simply because it is uncomfortable to try to learn or perform something new. Paul and I often discuss how it is so interesting that as a profession, many don’t want to change. Be it because they learned it in school, answered the questions about the topic right on the test, or their mentors and trainers did it this way. There seems to be this held belief that if they change, it means

Dr. Dayton teaching Lapiplasty



having to admit they may not have been doing something the best they could. That should not be the case, it really is and should be about constant improvement.

For example, take the iPhone, it is constantly going through new iterations. We embrace the changes because it now works better, faster, more efficiently, and we always want the latest and greatest as soon as it comes out. Yet in medicine we hold on to old traditional procedures and treatments because they are comfortable, and we justify them even though the science may not support the old methods. However, I doubt any surgeon still has an old flip phone. This is not to imply we should embrace every new procedure or treatment without review and thought. We need to review new things and be open to their merits. We must fairly assess new approaches and ideas by leaving our traditional thoughts and biases aside, while in many cases embracing being uncomfortable at first.



What does work life balance/satisfaction look like to you and how do you achieve it?

I love that you used “work-life satisfaction” in this question. I don’t believe that there is a set “balance” that is the same for everyone. The “balance” comes in the long term, not necessarily on a day to day or week to week basis. Sometimes work needs you almost all the time during a period, especially as a small business owner. This comes not only in the beginning, but as you may be expanding, or changing processes in your business. This means that the rest of your “life” may have to take a back seat for a little bit. In my opinion there are several keys to this:

1. Open communication with your children, spouse or partner, friends and family- whomever hopes or needs to have your time. It is setting the expectation for and with them of what your time will look like for a period and discussing the whys.
2. It is then knowing yourself and what can you give up so that you can focus on the work without guilt. For example; do you really need to watch that TV series? Or can you use that time to work? Making sure you can accomplish the tasks and goals you are working on frees up time to focus on your life outside of work.
3. Making the time for your life outside of work a priority by scheduling it into your day, week or month. Make a calendar event so that it is reserved and don’t skip that “appointment”.

Don’t fall into believing what others think work-life balance should mean- this is different for every person and every family. Every individual has different emotional needs. Learn what yours are and what those that matter to you are, such as your partner and your children. Once you establish these guidelines, work to meet them, but don’t fall trap to the idea that you must do things the same as every other person. Also, don’t let others make you feel guilty. This is all too easy of a trap to fall into, be it from social media, or seemingly well-intentioned friends or family. You must be true to yourself personally and professionally and it is only between you, your children, and/or partner to do the work to balance and manage it all.



What advice would you give women who want marriage & kids plus a demanding career?

You can have it all, you just need to focus on what I stated above. It may not all be at one time, but you must look at the big picture. You also need to be constantly communicating your goals and dreams to those that matter so they can be on the journey along with you, not just watching it from the outside. You need to be able to articulate why the work matters. This not only helps you achieve better success, but also helps your loved ones to understand and appreciate the work you are doing, and the time spent doing it.

Lean on others. You don't have to do it all, such as be the perfect cook, housekeeper, shuttle bus driver, homeroom parent, etc. If something doesn't resonate with you and bring you joy, then ask for help doing it. Discuss and set expectations of all members of your family to help. You must be okay letting go. If making cookies for your child's class party at 8pm after a

long day is not fun for you and simply creates more stress- then buy the cookies! Spend that time relaxing and focusing on you or reading an extra book to your child. They are not going to care or remember that you didn't bake homemade cookies. Communication and expectations of your partner/spouse must begin early in your relationship and marriage to ensure you are on the same page and that resentment doesn't ensue. You need to think of life as a partnership and there is no reason you must do all the "things" yourself.

What do you love about Ankeny & the metro area?

We have been in Ankeny since 2012 and we absolutely love this town and the entire metro. Ankeny has such a supportive network for small business owners in the Chamber, which we have been proud to be a part of. The schools are fantastic and have allowed so many great opportunities for our children. The community members are truly supportive of each other, from business to personal to school events. While the community is growing, we believe it still has a great small-town feel. We have also expanded Foot and Ankle Center of Iowa to Grimes and Des Moines, and we are excited to expand our roots in those locations as well. The Grimes chamber, much like the Ankeny one, has a fantastic team that supports and empowers small businesses like ours.

The DSM metro has so much to offer with expanding restaurants, shopping, theater, music and cultural events. There is always something new or fun to try out or do. Yet, it is still easy to get around and a safe community.



The Balancing Act Tv Show On Lifetime With Montel Williams

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community

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When you bank with CSB, your money stays in Central Iowa - supporting families, businesses, and projects in our community.

Thank you for being part of our community.

New Chamber Partnership!

Article written by Mackenzie Cowden



This fall the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce a new partnership with Ankeny High School. This new partnership is spearheaded by the Graphic Designer Mackenzie Cowden and Educator Mrs. Alissa Hansen. As part of the partnership between the Ankeny Chamber and Mrs. Alissa Hansen's journalism classes, student journalists are contributing articles to the Ankeny Business Journal.

We will be working on this partnership in 3 parts:

Profile Articles - Based on recorded interviews, students will be ghost writing short autobiography articles with Chamber Members' own words.

Event Coverage - Students will attend Ankeny Chamber events to get quotes and take videos of the events. The students will write stories and produce media content based on these events.

Membership Directory - This pdf will replace the Downloadable Membership Directory currently located at www.ankeny.org/member-directory. All chamber businesses will be listed alphabetically by category with a link to the business's website. However, members will have the option to purchase more ad space & recognition for their businesses. In partnership with Ankeny High School's

student-run news media team, The Talon, this directory will also include articles on the history of Ankeny and its landmarks as well as Ankeny Chamber SummerFest. Tentative publish date of April 1st 2024.

Students will be given professional bylines and credit for all stories written for the Ankeny Business Journal. These stories may be shared in The Talon - The Student-Run News Site of Ankeny High School <https://ahstalonnews.com>, as well as be included in the students' portfolios.

In exchange for these articles, Mackenzie Cowden will help Mrs. Alissa Hansen's Spring Journalism class with creating an InDesign based Talon news magazine. Melisa Cox, President/CEO of the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce, believes "This will be a great partnership with the school."

In this November issue we have articles written by the talented student reporters Vivian Wu, Ava Tomlinson, and Joanna Guerrero. We hope our readers enjoy their contributions!



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Leslie Mayo - From Leaving Corporate America to Joining Next Step Advertising

Leslie Mayo was one of our Mentoring For Women 2023 Mentors

Article written by Joanna Guerrero, based on a recorded interview with Leslie Mayo by Mackenzie Cowden



Tell us about being a mentor?

Zoe reached out first by email to try and convince me to be a mentor. At first, I thought "That's just not my thing." Public speaking and being the center of attention have always made me kind of nervous. Then Diane, Jamie, and Melisa talked me into it. I had some questions for them. Such as, "I'm not going to be the main person, right?" They let me know that I was just going to sit at a table and talk to a few people at a time. Then I decided I'd do it, if it was a small group of people, I was okay.

In the past, to get out of my comfort zone, I forced myself to join a breakfast club and networking group. I've just forced myself to get out of my comfort zone. I forced myself to get up and speak in front of people. Now I always advise people that if there's a Toastmasters group around to join that. I recommend getting yourself out of your comfort zone. You just got to do it. No matter what it is. I had a friend who had a fear of swimming, and he became a triathlete. He just forced himself to get over the fear. So, whatever it is, you'll have to work your way through it.

How did you come to be working with Next Step?

I've been in marketing for about 25 years. When I turned 18, I graduated from high school. My parents moved away, and I needed a job with benefits. This is before you could continue your parents' benefits until you were 26. So, I got a job working for an insurance company in downtown Des Moines. I quickly realized I didn't like being in an office setting and I needed to be out socializing. So, I went into sales, and I've been doing it ever since.

My previous career before Next Step really took a toll on my mental and physical health. I was kind of a mess and a couple of things happened at work that set the tone for me to start thinking about life after that job.

To set the story, when my husband passed away I told my employer I would work until I'm 55. At 48 I knew I needed a career change and left my job. That's when I started with the ladies at Next Step Advertising. Now my life is immensely better as far as work-life balance goes.

My life is so much better after leaving corporate America. I work for myself, make my own schedule, and work with my clients at Next Step. I work out six days a week as well now. It's essential to find that inner peace.

I now recommend to others to just follow your dreams and find a way to make your passion become your career. You need to stay positive; I know we all get in the dumpster sometimes, but just stay positive.

I'm going on five years at Next Step Advertising. We all are

independent contractors, and we do our own thing, we all work from home, and share the Next Step Advertising name. I've been friends with the girls at Next Step Advertising for about 20-25 years.

What is your specialty in advertising?

I primarily focus on construction. I joined the Home Builder Association (HBA) 20+ years ago. I was given the HBA account as one of my first television jobs and I just got super involved in that field. As I started marketing, my specialty kind of morphed into home improvement several of my clients are in the home building industry. I really credit the HBA for the success I've had. I've been on the board of the Home Builders Association of Greater Des Moines for several years and I've also been on several committees and councils.

I have a full team of freelancers who help with my graphic design, commercial writing, and production. I place all the digital, television, and radio advertising, and I do some direct mail. It's a little bit of everything but I do have a stable of people that I can refer business to or work with. I have great relationships with my clients and my vendors. Sometimes a vendor will refer me to one of their current clients who's looking for some help with marketing and advertising. For example, somebody will see one of my client's commercials and the client will say to them "Hey Leslie does that for us, give her a call and she can help you". I've been very blessed.

As a critique, I'm always open to hearing if somebody says, "I don't feel this is working." I always stress consistency and continuity. However, I have turned away projects that I felt weren't in my comfort zone. I usually refer them to somebody that I feel would be a better fit for them if it's possible.

How does the advertising process usually go?

When starting off with a new client we always have a couple of meetings. The first one I learn primarily about their business, their profit margins, and what's worked and what hasn't worked in the past. Then we bring in somebody to help with the digital because that's such an important component of any marketing. We'll put a plan together that will meet their return on investment and get their name out there, reaching their target audience.



How have you seen things change over the years?

Marketing has evolved so much over the last few years. When I started, we didn't even have cell phones or computers. I remember when people first started websites. You could advertise on websites on cell phones. I remember sharing my cell phone with clients saying "This is going to be the next thing. Mark my words," and here we are.

Technology is a constant learning curve. I read a few newsletters daily to keep up with trends. I'm also always open to meeting with vendors to learn more and find out the benefits of new technology that's coming out.

What do you love about the Des Moines Metro?

I grew up on the east side of Des Moines, and I graduated from East High School. I am now on the East High Alumni Board on the scholarship committee. Every year, we give out 240 to 250 thousand dollars in scholarships for students.

When I was growing up, Ankeny was just up the interstate, and it was just that small town that had a Walmart. used to say it was six degrees. But now it's more like two, everybody knows everybody. It really is just crazy. I've lived in Ankeny for 15 years, and I've always felt like I didn't have that homegrown aspect so many people were born and raised here have. But in the last couple of years, since joining the chamber and getting involved that way. I've really spread my sphere of influence and have gotten to know so many more people in the last couple of years than I ever thought I would know in Ankeny.



For the past ten years, I've hosted the Doug Mayo Memorial Golf Invitational. We've raised 250 thousand dollars in the last 10 years to go to scholarships for young



adults who are going into the building industry. My late husband started the Iowa Education Corporation 12 years before his passing. He noticed on construction sites there was a need for the next generation of skilled workers.

Joanna Guerrero is a student reporter contributing to the Ankeny Business Journal as part of the partnership between the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce and Mrs. Alissa Hansen's journalism classes. She is a senior at Ankeny High School. She serves as a social media editor but also specializes in writing stories for The Talon. Outside of The Talon, Joanna serves as president of Key Club, co-president of Mental Health Awareness club, vice-president of Student Council, and secretary of National Honor Society. She also participates in Student Ambassadors and Spanish Honor Society. In the future, Joanna plans to continue her education and pursue Journalism with a concentration in sports media.



BEST OF DES MOINES CONTEST HAPPENING NOW!

VOTE FOR THE ANKENY CHAMBER #247 As Best Local Chamber Of Commerce!

Are you wanting your business to be voted as one of the BEST in Des Moines? Then share the poll today with your customers, employees, vendors, family and friends! Make sure you vote and read through the poll carefully as there may be more than one question that pertains to your business. Include instructions with specific question numbers on what to vote for and share the poll often in emails, newsletters, posters throughout your business, postcards and on your website.

Best of Des Moines 2024 contest is quite simple. Anyone & everyone are eligible. There are no costs to participate, no nominations, no loaded questions. It is simply an open-ended form that our readers fill out. 2024's poll will open in the fall.

You should encourage everyone to vote by sending the link. Many businesses choose to advertise in CITYVIEW to encourage our readers to vote for them, but that is certainly not a requirement. Voters can vote in one category or all 275-plus categories, but they can only vote once.

Cityview's Best Of Des Moines Poll Is Open Through Nov. 13!



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Sheri Hansen Inspires People to Live Every Day Like It's Their Last

Sheri Hansen was one of our Mentoring For Women 2023 Mentors

Article written by Ava Tomlinson, based on a recorded interview with Sheri Hansen by Mackenzie Cowden



Almost 10 years ago, I decided to have Gastric Sleeve Surgery (Gastrectomy). I was mainly focused on my career, and often if you're a female you'll get judged if you're overweight... so I really wanted the surgery. I completed all the classes and everything needed to prepare for the operation. Hundreds of these procedures are performed every week.

I had taken time off from work to have the surgery. During the surgical procedure the machine malfunctioned and the doctors didn't realize it. I ended up getting Sepsis and MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus), my lungs collapsed and some organs were damaged. I spent a lot more time in the hospital than planned. My co-workers were supportive throughout my time away. They stayed in touch and sent me a get-well video wishing me well. My leadership team was very supportive and made sure they stayed in contact and had what I needed.

During my time away, I self-reflect. I thought about my family and my job. *"Life is really short. You can either live it in a positive manner, or you can choose to do it the way I was doing it."* It wasn't so much that I was a bad person if you will; it was more of the fact that I could have just chosen a different way of managing.

So, I prayed a lot because by all accounts I was dying really quickly. I thought, If I ever get out of this, I would like to approach things a little bit differently with people. So, I did.

It took me about four and a half months to recover. When I got back to work I think people were, shocked at my presence. Partially, because I had drastic weight loss but more importantly, my demeanor was different. I just kept telling everybody my story. I was honest with them. I've always been transparent. I've always been the type of person that's been just straight forward. Sometimes that's good, sometimes that's bad.

I was hardcore. I was just a *"You get it done. It doesn't matter how it gets done just do it."* So forth and so on. I was a go-getter. I would make sure things got done. It just might not have been always the right way.

I was an operations manager at that time for Food and Beverage. After a few years in that position, I was approached by our Vice President Ann Atkin who asked me if I had applied for the Assistant Director's position. I am now the Assistant Director Food and Beverage and love what I do.

Tell us about your work at Prairie Meadows?

I absolutely, wholeheartedly love working at Prairie Meadows. I've had bad days and great days, but at the end of the day, they have been my life support for the past 26 and a half years. I couldn't ask for a better leadership team and company to work for.

I try and make sure I support the people that report to me. Do they have what they need? If it's tools, if it's advice, just somebody to talk to... just to be there for that person. I try to find classes if there's certain things that somebody wants to attend or if they're interested in something, I try to help them do that.

I approached things differently I guess. It's a hard thing for people to understand. But at the same time, I'm 57, and I have maybe 10 years left at Prairie Meadows... maybe a few more than that. In that time, I want to have an impact. I want people to remember me for the type of person I am and the good I did.

Prairie Meadows is very diverse and I'm very proud of that. Sometimes we look at things backwards. If the front-line employees aren't enjoying their job, if they don't have the tools to succeed, if they aren't smiling and aren't making eye contact then we're not successful.

Food and beverage is different. It's so up and down. One minute you're slow and the next minute you're just getting totally hammered. You have to be able to fluctuate. You have to be able to do that, regardless of what position you hold. It's our job to make sure we are there for the staff by supporting, mentoring, guiding, leading, and making sure they have the tools that they need to do their job.

I've never asked somebody to do something I'm not willing to do myself. I don't care if it's dishes. I've done dishes, I've scraped plates, I've bussed tables. It doesn't make a difference to me, I just do what needs to be done. I make sure my staff knows that they have a level of support. If they have a question or if they aren't sure what direction to take; if I don't have the answer, I'll find it.

I am so proud to work for Prairie Meadows. We give billions back to the community, building bridges, building hospital wings, building different ball fields and dugouts, exciting things for the community. Our core values are, respect, integrity, teamwork, and excellence. That's what we live by. You don't get things done on your own, we work as a team.



How do you find work life balance in a demanding field?

Food and Beverage is in your blood. If it's not in your blood, you're not in the right position. Most of the time regardless of what position you hold, you're working while everybody else is playing. So, we work the nights, we work the weekends, we work the holidays.

It's our opportunity to make somebody else's holiday great when they come in to see us at Prairie Meadows. Prairie Meadows in the 26 and a half years I've been there, has always been a supporter of work/life balance. Still it's hard, because you have to weigh things out and you have to prioritize. I might not be able to make it to every ball game, but I try to get to as many as I can.

Family has to understand that it's my job. We spend time together in different ways, if you will. Our Christmas might not always be on Christmas, we might do it a week before, or a week after, but we celebrate Christmas.

With Paisley's ball games, that's a tough one for me. She's my oldest grandchild, very active in sports, and she's very good. It is tough, but they face-time me, so I do get to see her bat and I get to see her at shortstop.

I encourage people when I'm interviewing them, to make sure they understand we do promote work/life balance. We encourage taking two days off in a row. That time off is refresher time to recharge and get back to business. Work/life balance is important.

Over the years I have had a lot of students that work for me, and they sometimes come to me because they're torn whether they should work more. I tell them *"That's not a choice, school comes first."* It's school and your other activities, then work. If that means a student works one day a week, it's okay. We work around a lot of students' schedules.

People say it is very easy this "work/life balance", but it's not easy. It's not always easy to take care of yourself and it's not easy to make sure everybody gets that work/life balance. But it is important, it's really important for all of us.

Tell us about being named to the Iowa Restaurant Association's Top 40 Women to Watch?

I was notified in 2022 by the Iowa Restaurant Association that I was nominated. I was able to go the award dinner, where I was recognized. I was fortunate to have all of my children and siblings with me. The nomination is confidential so I will never know who actually nominated me. The award



I received was an honor and it humbled me. As a leader, that's just another reason why I have to make sure I'm always crossing my T's and dotting my I's. To take that little extra breath sometimes, when I need to step back, reflect, and then go back to what I'm doing.

I would say my advice is just be honest, be hardworking, and be empathetic to others. Always understand, regardless of what position you have, you have an opportunity to make somebody's day a little bit brighter. Don't work with blinders on. Understand the big picture and that our employees make us who we are. Work hard.

My support system has been my sister Tina Rorabaugh and my children Ashley Conover, Blake Hansen, Colin Hansen, & Mackenzie Hansen. My kids have been right beside me, they've seen my struggles and have been there for me every step of the way. They've seen me work two or three jobs going paycheck to paycheck to support my family. My daughter Ashley is a Senior Account Director at Two Rivers Marketing, Blake is an Operations Manager for HIRTA, Colin is working on graphic design, and Mackenzie is a teacher at Marshalltown Middle School.

My mom was always my greatest supporter. When I separated from my husband after thirty-nine years, I stayed with her. I had to re-start from ground zero. Mom was there for me and supported me until I was able to get back on my feet. She gave me a roof over my head. I saved my money, purchased what I needed to start over.

Mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer two years ago. Pancreatic Cancer is a silent killer. Usually when you finally get diagnosed, it's too late. Mom chose not to do chemotherapy and said she would live the rest of the time she had left without chemo or high doses of medications. I became her primary caregiver. I took the time off needed and cared for her. I never left her side. We spent the next 20 days together reminiscing. We left nothing unsaid. She wanted to pass away on her own her terms and she did. It was an honor for me to be able to do that for her.

There's always something you can learn from somebody. You know sometimes the advice or direction you need to hear, is not always what you want to hear. You must be able to accept that, then you need to stop, reflect, and say "Okay what part of this advice do I need to use to address the situation."



I would say I'm lucky, I have several female mentors that I have always looked up to. Ann Atkin, Michele Wilkie, Julie Stewart and Gina Vitiritto. They tell you what you need to hear, how to approach situations differently, and how to be a better person. Sometimes they are just an ear. I will never be able to repay these women for their mentorship throughout the years. It's something no amount of money can buy. Each of these women are great representation of women in the corporate world and display what true female leadership should be.



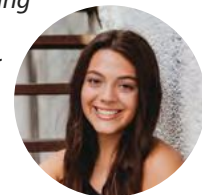
What do you love about the Des Moines Metro?

I live in Altoona, and I actually was thinking about moving to Ankeny. I do spend a lot of my time here. I think Ankeny, Altoona, greater Des Moines... there's opportunity there for networking and just different things that otherwise you wouldn't get in a small town. I think everything's growing, Altoona included. Ankeny is growing really fast. I just think it's an opportunity. It's growth. That's what makes the world go around. I enjoy working in it and I enjoy living in the metro.

My final advice to others is:

Be honest, work hard, respect others.

Ava Tomlinson is a student reporter contributing to the Ankeny Business Journal as part of the partnership between the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce and Mrs. Alissa Hansen's journalism classes. Ava Tomlinson is a senior at Ankeny High School. She works as the co-web/print editor and also specializes in social media for The Talon. Ava plays softball, club volleyball, and throws in track and field. She is a part of the National Honors Society, Spanish Honors Society, and Key Club. In the future, Ava plans on continuing her education with a major in journalism.



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Witches Night Out

Article by Vivian Wu - Talon Reporter

Double, double, toil and trouble; fire burn and cauldron bubble! Long ago, witches were known for casting spells and dark spirits, but nowadays they are touring Ankeny in tennis shoes and charter buses. It is a spell for anything but disaster - it is a Witches Night Out!

"What a fun event! One hundred witches in one place? You're never going to see that anywhere else but in Ankeny, Iowa," Melisa Cox, CEO/President of the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce said. The Chamber of Commerce organized its first annual Witches Night Out on Thursday, Oct. 26, in partnership with local businesses.

"Trying to highlight certain businesses in different areas around Ankeny is the goal, [along with] getting businesses exposed to people who had never been to those businesses," Diane Weber, the Director of Events and Communications at Ankeny Chamber of Commerce and the mastermind behind this idea, said.

The coven of witches gathered in The District at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday. Greeting each other and taking pictures with their costumes, they loaded onto two Majestic buses. The women happily conversed with friends, introduced themselves to each other, and enjoyed complimentary goody bags and drinks.

"Welcome to Witches Night Out!!" Jamie Anderson, Senior Director of Membership and Partnership at the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, said to a bus full of excited voices. Cheers and applause sounded throughout the bus.

"Welcome, everyone, to our new event for the Ankeny Area Chamber Witches Night Out, sponsored by Nova MedSpa!" she said.

The main sponsor of the event, Nova MedSpa, thought it was a great way to spend Halloween.

"[It was] a super cute event that the Chamber thought of. We love the Ankeny Chamber. They really give back to us with all the events we've supported so far," Brook Culbertson, director at Nova MedSpa, said.

Nova MedSpa was invited to take part in the festivities as well. "It was amazing and so much fun," Sarah Crocker, owner of Nova MedSpa, said. Culbertson and Crocker both said the event exceeded their expectations.

At the beginning of the night, each of the witches was given a raffle ticket which they could turn in for a raffle drawing at the end of the night. They collected more tickets by purchasing items at the various businesses around town.

The witches made their way to a total of 12 businesses around Ankeny, in a total of four locations.

Presenting Sponsor:



"[It's] super fun," Beth Gookin, an attending witch, said. "We've seen stores that I've never been in before."

"She did a lot of pushups for tickets," interjected Allison Piazza, a member of the board of directors for the Chamber. "We did some skiing."

Gookin continued, "We got smoothies, bought some fun things at the Spavia."

"We've met a lot of nice other witches," said Gina Costanzo.

The businesses that sponsored Witches Night Out include Rustic Swan, Carmen's Flowers, Real Deals, Uptown Dairy, IV Nutrition, F45 Training, Fresh Fit Meals, The Loft Resale, illie and Co., Spavia, WineSstyles, and Mainstream Boutique.

"We just wanted to have some people come in and see what we have to offer, maybe get some ideas for gifts for the holidays, do some networking, and have a little fun," Emily Thams, owner of Spavia in Ankeny, said.

"We love the Ankeny community, helping people have fun," F45 Ankeny owner Kevin Vaughan-Carber said. "We love showing our gym to everyone because we believe [workouts are] modifiable regardless of your starting point, and we love helping people get healthy."

"I'm so excited to be part of Witches Night Out alongside the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce," Lindsey Foss, owner of the consignment store Real Deals in Ankeny, said. "We wanted to be involved in this event because we knew that it would be a fun time and to just be able to interact with new and potential customers."

Spooky Sponsors:



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THE LOFT resale

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Are you a good witch or a bad witch?

Witches purchased items in stores and helped themselves to complimentary snacks and drinks at each store.

At the end of the night, the witches gathered at Maggie's Irish Pub & Eatery for devilish appetizers and the ritualistic raffle drawing. The pub was packed with howling laughter coming from witches who had had a few potions.

Cox stood on a chair to give a brief expression of gratitude for everyone involved with the event.

"Thank you so much for coming. This has been more fun than I ever could've imagined," Cox said. "We had incredible sponsors this evening. I couldn't be more proud of the Ankeny Chamber right now. This was so much fun. Everybody came out, everybody participated."

This won't be the last time for the event.

"We will bring this back next year," Cox said and cheers erupted from the room.

Raffle tickets were drawn for 12 prizes: \$50 coupons to each of the 12 businesses. Among the winners was a mother-and-daughter duo Angela Weller and Brittany Erickson, who said they will definitely be coming back.

"It was a blast," Erickson said.

"They need to expand to three nights. I'll be

here all three," Weller said.

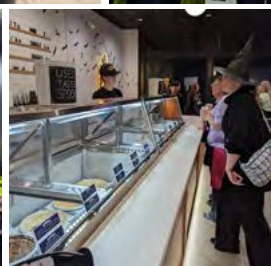
That might not be likely, but the Chamber is planning to top themselves next year. "I think it's only going to get bigger and better," Weber said.

"We're bringing it back, but we're not going to necessarily open up more seats, so if you're going to participate, you better sign up soon!" Cox said. "We want to make this a fun event for anybody who wants to participate here in Ankeny!"

It is fair to say that the first annual Witches Night Out was a success. With the passing of the night, these sorcering soothsayers have put their brooms back in the closet, ready to grab them for another spooky night out...

"I think it was better than my expectations. A lot of good people in the community came around. And a lot of people dressed up, which is great. It makes the event more fun," Weber said.

Vivian Wu a student reporter contributing to the Ankeny Business Journal as part of the partnership between the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce and Mrs. Alissa Hansen's journalism classes. Vivian Wu is a senior at Ankeny High School. She serves as co-web/print/multimedia editor and specializes in multimedia for The Talon. Outside of The Talon, Vivian is president of C.O.R.E., plays center snare for marching band, plays drums for Visual Adrenaline, is a member of the Mayor's Youth Council, and helps lead Reel Ankeny Productions.

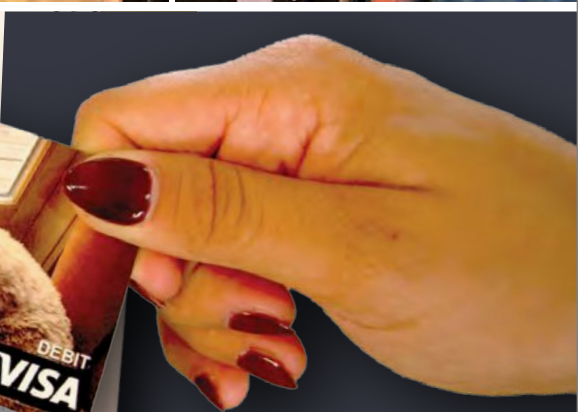
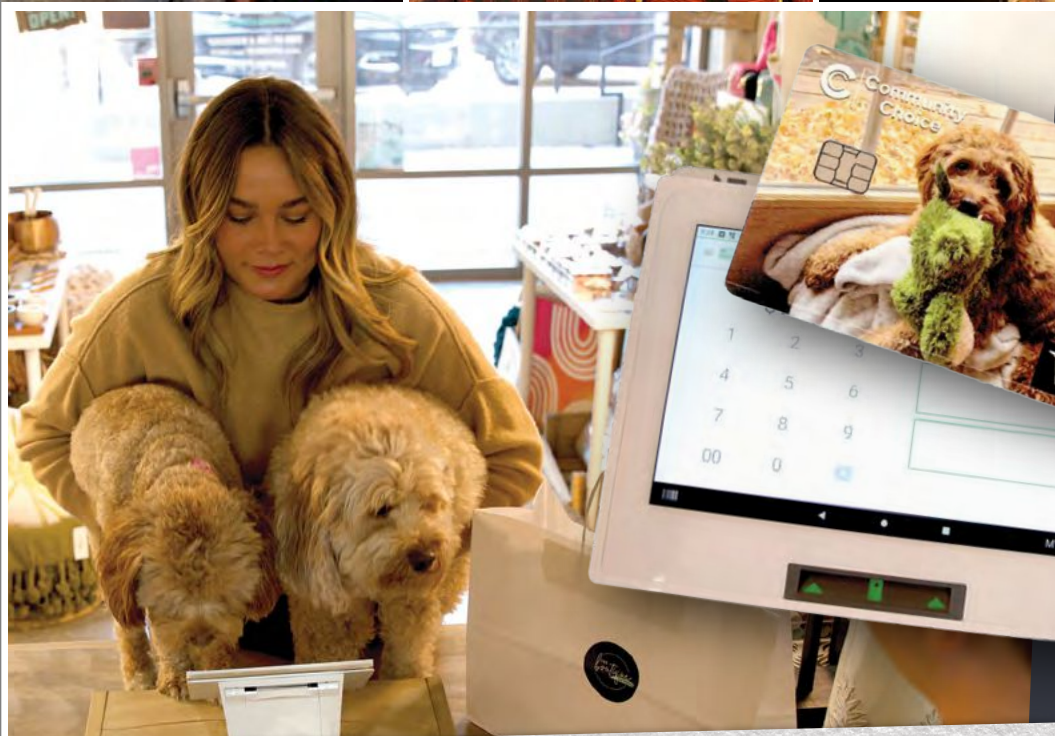




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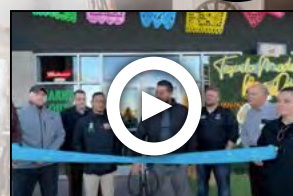
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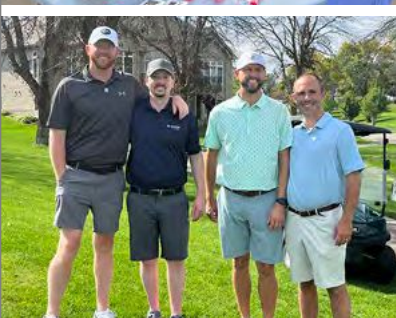
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It was a gorgeous fall day for our members to enjoy a day on the golf course at Briarwood Golf Club for our Fall Ball Golf Tournament sponsored by JB Roofing. Thank you to all the sponsors, golfers, volunteers, and staff who were able to attend and make this ever-popular event possible. If you're interested in golfing with The Ankeny Chamber this spring, save the date for our Spring Fling Golf Outing on Wednesday, June 5th, 2024. Follow us on Facebook @ankenyareachamber for more event dates and be sure to check out our new website at www.ankeny.org.





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Introducing Our New 2024 Board Members



REYNA IMMERFALL

a trainer, moved into leadership and after 12 years, opened an agency to help protect families. Reyna is involved with several community organizations Latinos Unidos of Iowa, Knock and Drop, Latino Trade Network, Greater Altoona Softball and of course the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce. Reyna is married to Craig and has two kids, Grady and Ella and two pups Hawkeye and Coco. When not at the office, she spends time with family, sisters, and watching the Hawkeyes!

Executive Board Member

Reyna Immerfall, State Farm agent, has been part of the Ankeny community for over 4 yrs. She made a career of helping others starting at the State of Iowa as a bilingual unemployment specialist, welfare to work specialist and assisting small businesses. She then joined State Farm as



CRYSTAL WRIGHT

I am Crystal Wright; a wife, mother, and small business partner who enjoys being involved in our local community! With a deep understanding of the financial services industry and a commitment to personalized service, I work closely with businesses to tailor loan solutions that align with their unique goals. My passions include problem solving, relationship building, and getting out on our local bike trails!



JOSH TERRELL

Josh "JT" Terrell is a man of Faith, Family, and community. He believes "How you do anything is how you do everything". Passions include family time, serving, coaching, piano, and golf!



JOE BETHEL

My name is Joe Bethel. I was born and raised in Ankeny along with my wife, Kari. We have 2 boys, Will (10) and Wyatt (8). I am a Financial Services Professional with New York Life and NYLIFE Securities focusing on holistic planning. In my free time I love playing golf and watching my boys compete in all their various activities. Getting involved in the Ankeny Community in all the ways that I have the past few years has truly been the highlight of my professional career.

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Derek Lord is the Economic Development Director for the City of Ankeny, where his primary role is business retention, expansion, and recruitment. Derek's work touches a diverse range of projects and new initiatives aimed at growing Ankeny's workforce. Prior to joining the City of Ankeny nearly nine years ago, he held community and economic development leadership positions with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the City of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Lord has a degree from Simpson College and a Master's degree in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Iowa.

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Laura.Kilian@AnkenyLaw.com



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Partner

William.Strong@AnkenyLaw.com

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Stacey Koeppen

2022 Small Business Person of the Year

Article submitted by Stacey Koeppen

Edward Jones

My journey to being named Ankeny Chamber's 2022 Small Business Person of the Year officially started 10 years ago. That is when I started my financial planning business with Edward Jones and joined the Ankeny Chamber. Like many things in life, both started because someone believed in me, invited and mentored me along the way.

The first person, in a list of many who have invited and mentored, is Terry Peter. He knew I had a strong financial background and wanted a career where I could work one-on-one with people and families to somehow help them improve their 'return on life.' He helped me establish my business and extended the important invitation to join the Ankeny Chamber and Rotary Club of Ankeny.

Terry had a saying on his conference room wall that read "Leave your community better than you found it." This had a significant impact on me because it ties right into the purpose of my business which is to "partner for positive impact, to improve the lives of clients and colleagues, and together, better our community." The saying on his wall, however, intimidated me. I saw his leadership talents, strong community relationships, and the impact of his efforts. While I had a fair amount of volunteer experience, I was starting with no small business ownership or community leadership experience. I also had no "Plan B" -- so was all in to see what I could do with the opportunities!

Looking back, I think of my journey to Small Business Person of the Year as a series of 'behind the scenes' efforts. I've worked on a number of community projects in partnership with, or primarily in support of, some amazing leaders who I truly admire and who have taught me many important leadership lessons.

The second Ankeny Chamber and community leader to believe, invite and mentor me was Todd Wehr. He invited me to co-chair the Summerfest Parade alongside Doug Ripley. They both brought me into the fold of the Chamber's Summerfest which eventually led to multiple years of co-chairing the parade with Amy McNeeley and then the opportunity to serve on the Ankeny Chamber



Board with some absolutely fabulous folks! As a result of these efforts, I was invited to serve on the board of the Ankeny YMCA with Julie Mangels and Matt Davis, create the Rotary Club of Ankeny "Raise the Stakes for Community" annual fundraiser with Laura Luetje, and start the women's fundraising organization called "100 Women Who Care Ankeny" alongside Kerry Walter-Ashby, Julie Mangels, Susan Richardson and the late and beloved Renee Murphy. These connections and efforts led to a board role on Ankeny Community Champions, a group that exists to help people in need connect with the wonderful network of Ankeny non-profits.

The most meaningful part of any contributions I have made, or will ever make, to our community are the people whose lives may be positively impacted along the way. If it's a simple smile, a lesson learned, a hand up, a new connection, a dream pursued or a life strengthened in any way because of something I participated in, then that's a win. As a result of some recent work within my own business to strengthen our ability to reach and serve an increasing diverse pool of clients and to ensure that co-workers can bring their authentic selves to work, I was nominated to participate in a "Developing Leaders" class. The goal of the class was to strengthen emotional intelligence and the ability to partner for positive impact. One of the leaders of our class shared a piece of research that will forever influence me: "The second happiest people in the world are those who are grateful. The very happiest are those who are generous."



The Small Business Person of the Year award has reminded me that many people – from Ankeny Chamber, Ankeny Rotary, the Ankeny community, my family, friends, clients and co-workers -- have generously given of their time, talents and resources to support me and help enhance my "return on life." It has also helped me understand that even in a large, vibrant and growing community like Ankeny, that is filled with talented visionaries, leaders and other small business owners, even the smallest act of generosity can make a difference and somehow have a positive ripple effect.

As a result of my journey of the past 10 years, my wish for every community member, is two-fold. First, confidence. Confidence is the number one driver of success, so be a life-long learner and surround yourself with the tools, people, culture and resources to build confidence. Then, do the same for others. (Note for small business owners – the Ankeny Chamber has a lot of the tools and resources to get you started and move you forward!) Second, courage. In the words of my favorite author and podcaster, Brene Brown, have the vulnerability and courage to learn how to "show up as your authentic self ... don't shrink, don't puff up, just stand your sacred ground ... and show up to be seen" for yourself, your employees, clients, community, family and friends.

Do these things and you'll probably find, like I have, that you will receive way more than you will ever give.



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Ankeny School Board Candidates

Answers collected by Chamber President & CEO Melisa Cox



Every other year, elections for the School Board are conducted, and in the upcoming election, ACSD has five available positions. These five positions, four with a three-year term and one with a two year term. Mark your calendars for School Board Election Day on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, when the polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

We have asked the School Board Candidates the following two questions:

Tax Levy: Overall, the tax levy for Ankeny's 2 governing bodies have included tax decreases the past few years based on Ankeny's continue growth in valuation. What is your vision to the current school levy and do you feel these past decisions have been in the best interest of Ankeny children's needs. If not, what reason would you give for a levy increase and/or further levy decrease?

3rd High School: There has been talk of an Innovative Hub as a 3rd High School- what are your thoughts on advantages to a program like this in Ankeny as it pertains to workforce and small businesses?

Tax Levy: I feel the current PPEL should stay in place for the next 10 years. I hope that the Ankeny voters will vote YES and keep the PPEL in place. Under the current levy Ankeny schools have been able to handle the maintenance upgrades needed to keep up with older buildings, as well as giving the schools the technology tools to help teachers educate the students. Ankeny keeps growing at a very fast rate this levy will help bridge the gap for possible new building expenditures.

-Amber Romans

3rd High School: Introducing an innovation hub program to the high schools in Ankeny can offer several advantages, particularly in relation to workforce development and support for small businesses. Innovation hubs can provide students with hands-on experience in various technological and innovative fields. This can include coding, robotics, design thinking, and entrepreneurship skills. Developing these skills at an early age can better prepare students for future careers. The program can focus on skills that are in demand in the job market, making students more workforce-ready upon graduation.

In summary, an innovation hub program in Ankeny's high schools has the potential to create a pipeline of skilled, innovative, and entrepreneurial individuals who can positively impact the local workforce and small business landscape. It aligns education with the needs of the evolving job market, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration within the community.

-Amber Romans



Amber Romans

Tax Levy: First of all, it is important that we are good stewards of these funds and take into account that we shouldn't over-charge taxpayers just so we have a surplus of tax dollars when it should be in the taxpayers' pockets. Further, it's also the responsibility of the board to forecast future needs of our ever-growing district. With both being said, I do believe the past decisions have been made in the best interest of our schools and our taxpayers. However, we need to prepare for the continued growth of our district. If we keep with a steady decrease, we may be faced in the future with a substantial increase to meet the needs of students, which would then become a weighty financial burden to our taxpayers.

-Amy Guidry

3rd High School: The Innovative Hub is important to the future growth of Ankeny Schools and will serve our students in a brand-new way to provide a path to explore careers, which leads to growing our workforce and supporting small businesses.

I served on the Innovative Secondary School Task Force Committee to participate in developing the framework on what we, as parents, students, and business owners, would like this secondary school to accomplish. One of the discussions was opening the Innovative Hub to 6th through 8th graders, in addition to our high school students. I like to call it "bridging the gap" between Junior Achievement Biz-Town (5th grade experience) and Ankeny's Orbis Program (High School experience).

You can learn more about the Innovative Hub by listening to the podcast I participated in, "We Are Ankeny" with Dr. Pruitt on December 1, 2022 (Episode 18, Season 2), where we went into detail on the committee's vision/framework for the Innovative Hub. [Podcasts – Ankeny Community School District.](#)

-Amy Guidry



Amy Guidry

Tax Levy: Striking the right balance between providing the best possible education for students while respecting the financial constraints of the community is an ongoing process that requires collaboration, open communication, and commitment.

With the growth rate ACSD has seen over the last two decades, I feel the district has made sensible financial decisions that remain in the best interest of students, including but not limited to: new builds, building additions, building improvements, increased staffing, improved



Amy Tagliareni



technology, increased security measures and a focus on the best resources/curriculum for our staff.

Each year the budget process is guided by a set of budget assumptions. Central to those assumptions is a commitment to a stable tax rate based on five-year projection models. From the Certified Budget presented to the board (I changed some wording to make the statement more generalized): "the mutual desire of the Board of Education and District administration is to stabilize the District tax rate, using a 5-year budget projection model that is continually updated to reflect the current and projected enrollment, valuation, and economic variables." I believe this approach is a perfect balance to ensure the district remains fiscally responsible, while also meeting the needs of those that learn and work in our buildings.

I believe we can continue with small school levy decreases over time if we utilize all funding resources effectively and efficiently (this includes SSA, SAVE and PPEL as well as other sources) and continue to evaluate our financial health on a continual basis in all areas across the district.

School budgeting is not done in a vacuum. The District and the Board must keep a close eye on the changes to property and income taxes at the state level. Continually monitoring the impact those changes will have on the school budget is imperative to maintaining financial health.

- Amy Tagliareni

3rd High School: I am proud to be a member of the school board that approved The Secondary Innovative Hub and that approved the Strategic Plan, which laid the groundwork for the Hub.

The Strategic Plan includes 1) Rigorous and Relevant Academics; 2) Talented People and 3) Supportive Environments. The Hub is an integral part of each pillar of the Strategic Plan. Some highlights include:

- Expanded curriculum to include more hands-on work that will further engage students who learn better outside a traditional classroom.
- Targeted education based on student's post-secondary career goals and pathways.
- A flexible space that is designed that allows students to learn in a variety of ways.
- A flexible space that can adapt to the ever-changing demands of the labor market.
- Partnering with area businesses and organizations, utilizing content experts to help develop courses, design learning spaces and provide instruction.
- A chance to be a leader in rethinking and redesigning what education at the secondary level looks like.

The Secondary Innovative Hub is rife with possibilities for an unprecedented partnership between the School District and area businesses, both small and large. Areas including, but not limited to: school-to-work initiatives, apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, district-hosted career events and authentic learning experiences are some of the ways that Ankeny businesses and Ankeny students can form mutually beneficial relationships.

-Amy Tagliareni



Tax Levy:

3rd High School:

At Time of publication ACSD School Board candidates Christian Holtz had not responded to the questions.



Christian Holtz

Tax Levy: This is true. For the last ten years ACSD has lowered the tax levy to a current rate of \$17.05. I've shared this with many, ACSD does a good job of living within its means and I will continue to lead and govern with fiscal responsibility to maintain this. We will need to continue to work with our superintendent, Dr. Pruitt, and our CFO to review revenue funds and expenditures as the community grows. My Vision would be to continue to lower the levy as long as we can continue to provide competitive salaries for all staff within our district in order to attract and retain the best to provide the best education possible for our students.

-Joshua Palik



Joshua Palik

3rd High School: I was one of three board members to serve on the Facilities Master Plan committee from 2022-2023 SY making recommendations for grade level configurations that are supported only if the Secondary Innovation Hub is brought online. Over the next year the District will be working through the curriculums and what the building will look like. I want to continue to serve our community at the Board level as this takes shape for the following reasons.

I believe there are advantages for all students for a school like this within our district: from students looking for careers other than those achieved through 4 year colleges/universities to students who are excelling in fine arts. We can shape this into something for everyone. As it pertains to the workforce and small businesses, I think it will give students the opportunity to be exposed to skilled trades that are currently not offered, or if they are offered, not as available as they could be. I also think a Hub like this can build and strengthen partnerships with businesses in the community we have yet to partner with.

-Joshua Palik

Tax Levy: The board operates with 10 budget assumptions, and the first one reads as follows: *The Board will endeavor to stabilize the tax rate in a 5-year projection model, to balance educational programming needs with fiscal responsiveness, and to make modest decreases when possible.*

I appreciate this assumption because it highlights the balance that school board members try to strike: responsible use of tax dollars while serving students. This aligns with my vision for the school levy-responsible but student-centered fiscal stewardship. I believe the district has and continues

to make decisions that serve in our students' best interests. This is evident through our investments: building new elementary schools, expanding staffing to stay on pace with growing student enrollment and purchasing high-quality instructional materials designed to meet a wide range of student needs.



Katie Claeys

More broadly, the board needs to be mindful of how we balance the funding sources that feed into our budget, including but not limited to SAVE (local option sales and services tax for school infrastructure) and PPEL (Physical Plant and Equipment Levy) funds, as well as supplemental state aid, so we can responsibly plan for the district's financial 5- and 10-year forecasts. But if we continue to make incremental adjustments that keep the school budget financially healthy, we can potentially continue to decrease the school levy rate.

It is important to note that the state expects historic income tax cuts over the next few years, so the school district must be prepared for smaller state aid. It's too early to understand the impact on the school levy rate, but a school board member must at least be aware of the potential impact.

- Katie Claeys

3rd High School: The Secondary Innovation Hub is a vision born from the district's strategic plan, approved in May of 2021. Specifically, the first pillar of the plan is dedicated to *Rigorous and Relevant Academics* and espouses opportunities for all students to have postsecondary plans that are flexible and reflective of their career interests, goals, and aspirations. The Innovation Hub would serve as a center for students from both AHS and ACHS to attend and engage in coursework aligned to their potential careers, such as culinary arts, engineering, plumbing or health care, as examples. Students could even take their core courses (math, social sciences, etc.) needed for graduation at the Innovation Hub if they so choose.

The advantages to the Ankeny workforce and small businesses as a result of the Secondary Innovation Hub are both exciting and invigorating. First, as a result of the new strategic plan, the school district is taking intentional steps to expand student opportunities throughout the K-12 system to build their awareness around careers of interest and invest in resources for students to not only explore but also have experiences in their career fields of interest. This benefits our local workforce because as a part of this work, students have the opportunity to see how these careers can be found right here in Ankeny. Through job shadowing, apprenticeship programs, and other work-based learning experiences, students can connect with and work for businesses in our community to learn about and from our local workforce.

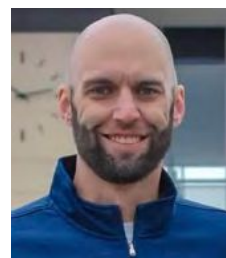
Second, as the district partners with community groups such as the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, the Ankeny Economic Development Council, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, and businesses in Ankeny, it can make informed decisions about what career strands it should offer through the Secondary Innovation Hub in order to meet the labor demands of our community. Additionally, the district can

work with those businesses to develop courses and build classroom environments tailored to match the needs of the workforce. Lastly, the district and businesses can partner to provide students with enriching, on-the-job experiences both in the classroom and on the job site. Inviting in local career experts as guest speakers, providing job shadow experiences throughout Ankeny, and placing students in school-to-work enterprise opportunities locally are just a few ways Ankeny Schools can build strong connections between our students and our business community. This targeted, strategic process not only shapes the workforce of tomorrow, but it also builds meaningful connections that help keep that talented workforce in Ankeny.

- Katie Claeys

Tax Levy: In regards to the tax levy question. This is something I will admit I need to learn more and understand more about. Based on my limited knowledge of this topic, I believe the current objectives and use of the funds have been effective and utilized in the best interest of the students and the school district. I do not know the specifics of how this money has been spent in the past, however I have seen the continued growth in facilities and amenities for the benefit of all within the school system. I believe there is a balance of understanding if there are shortcomings, why there are shortcomings in regards specifically to student needs, and would hope to work with the rest of the board to ensure we are making the proper recommendations. I feel this is a very macro scale question that involves many details and intricacies that I do not have a full understanding of at this time. At face value, it appears the current balancing of the decreasing tax levy has been managed accordingly with maintenance, facilities, and resources available to faculty and staff. I will say, it appears the continued growth has been sufficient to sustain the decreasing tax levy, however time makes everything subject to change. My current vision would specifically be to learn more of the specifics to ensure teachers and faculty alike are properly supported with the current funds available, including ensuring proper staffing to allow the teachers the time and support necessary to impactfully reach all students.

- Nick Bourne



Nick Bourne

3rd High School: A new hub can present multiple opportunities within the community. Again, this is something I am only familiar with at face value, but it would seem to me that a facility of this nature would allow for growth and partnerships within the ankeny business community. The idea itself of this facility lends itself to our goal of providing a broad range of opportunities to our students. With those opportunities and specialty needs of such a facility, I feel there would be great opportunity to work hand in hand with businesses of all types throughout the community. This facility appears to be a win-win for students, the community, and small business owners alike.

- Nick Bourne

Tax Levy: School finance is complex and involves understanding the many funds, how they are used, and balancing different metrics like spending authority and solvency ratio. Financial health is one consideration, we also need to ensure we are attracting, retaining, and supporting our staff while providing a rigorous academic learning environment for all students. For example, I believe we can improve on how we're supporting our teachers in the classroom when dealing with difficult student behaviors. That may mean we need to allocate additional money in that direction, but the answer could also be rethinking how we're using existing resources. Our district has been, and is currently, very efficient with our dollars and has remained in a healthy financial position amidst the tax decreases that began during the 2010/2011 school year. It takes a data driven and analytical approach to ask the right questions and have productive conversations about how to achieve a balance. No district is perfect, there will always be a financial tension to manage, but I have voted in favor of each decrease since I've been on the board because I believe we've been able to do that well. Overall, I do support continuing the trend of decreasing taxes.

- Ryan Weldon

3rd High School: Everyone who has experienced it, has witnessed the positive impact of project based learning within our Orbis program. I believe the Innovative Hub will provide a dedicated space allowing us to continue weaving project based learning into our district and give students an opportunity to experience different post-secondary paths based on their interests.

Our local businesses currently have access to, and maybe have experienced already, a mutually beneficial partnership with Orbis through projects, internships, apprenticeships, etc... The Innovative Hub will provide an opportunity to expand and offer new programs and partnership to students with interests we aren't serving, therefore increasing the number of trained workforce in our community. As we all know, technology is changing our world very rapidly in many ways. The current way we "do" school isn't set up for rapid change. By moving toward a more agile delivery model for education, we'll be better prepared to utilize new technology which allows us to better educate and prepare our students, which then translates into a better trained workforce that benefits our business community.

- Ryan Weldon

Tax Levy: Recent contract negotiations and the move to privatize substitute teachers has definitely hurt students. Whether or not those budget cuts were intended to offset tax decreases is less clear though, so I cannot say definitively if the decreases ultimately harmed students.

As for the future of the levy, that will largely depend on the state. If state funds continue to dry up, we will be forced to increase the levy in order to ensure the continued quality



Ryan Weldon

of Ankeny Schools. I don't consider slashing services to be an option.

-Shelly Northway

3rd High School: I think this is a brilliant idea. Education isn't one size fits all and a traditional 4 year college isn't for everyone.

There is a lot of potential with a non-traditional high school to partner with labor unions and small businesses to provide students with on the job experience (and employers with prospective future hires.)

- Shelly Northway



Shelly Northway

Tax Levy: After reviewing the information that is available to the public, I believe these funds have been utilized for impactful investments in a growing district. When I am elected, this is an area I will want to dive into deeper to understand the bigger picture, district-wide, budget and how these funds are used with all of the other funding available. If, after learning more, I don't feel like we have enough funds to provide the excellent education we strive for, we can't provide a great working environment for our staff and teachers or we don't have the tools and resources needed to prepare our students for future workforce needs, then I will advocate accordingly. Similarly, if I feel like there are opportunities to better utilize funding in impactful ways or we can be more efficient with what we have, I would advocate for a decrease. This is an area of opportunity for education and awareness building for our parents and community to ensure we all know what our vote impacts, which I think the district is working to achieve through a dedicated page on their site, webinars, podcasts, mailings, etc.

-Stephanie Gott

3rd High School: Generally, I love the idea of us exploring innovative ways to approach educating our students to prepare them for future workforce needs. With that comes unique opportunities for our local and regional employers to engage with our students, some of which is already happening in a variety of ways.

Any opportunity we have to expose our students to different industries, cultures, roles, etc. is an opportunity for them to advance their understanding of what pathway they may choose post-high school. This is an important investment in future workforce and a way to build your employment brand within the community, which is mutually beneficial. There are certainly a lot of details to work through to intentionally build programs that will meet future workforce needs and the needs of our students.

-Stephanie Gott



Stephanie Gott



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Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build- Ankeny

Article by Chamber President & CEO Melisa Cox



In October, board members, ambassadors, chamber members and chamber staff participated in the Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build- Ankeny. Our group was split up into teams and we were sent to one of the eight homes being built. A group from Ankeny Real Estate Group were off to site 8 to help set cabinets and hang some doors and trim. Galadriel Cleghorn, Marti Skow and Allison Piazza assisted one of the future homeowners with painting the trim for the house. Chamber staff, Matt Davis, Danielle Fuglsang and volunteers from Neuman Brothers were tasked with doing some demo work and setting walls.

All new experiences for everyone involved. Our take charge group went to work and had a blast doing some heavy lifting of walls, reading blueprints and operating power tools. We helped to create 8 safe, affordable homes and build a stronger community through our service. We joined more than 600 volunteers who participated throughout the week.

Both the mission of Habitat for Humanity and the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce are about supporting our communities and it was a great opportunity for our members to give back to help someone have a safe place to live and call their home.

"I loved the opportunity to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and built a home for someone who is less fortunate. The new homeowner was on the building site and it was great to hear how the organization was helping her and how excited she was to move to Ankeny! I might not be the most gifted home builder, but the onsite employees made me an expert quickly." - Nicole Strom Realtor with Ankeny Real Estate Group & Chamber Ambassador



"Neumann Brothers, Inc. was thrilled when asked if we would volunteer as part of the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce's team to help Habitat for Humanity succeed with their first Blitz Build of 7 affordable houses in Ankeny, Ia. The group of volunteers including Chamber Staff, Board Members and their firms rose to the challenge to help provide opportunities for families to join the Ankeny community, providing a safe and clean place they call home. The volunteers came together with their hard hats and passion to lead change, building high quality homes for those in need. To say we are proud of the commitment and dedication each volunteer provided would be an understatement, this team worked to learn the trade, provide a quality long lasting build and proved to be some of the hardest working community leaders we have had the pleasure of working with." -Matt Davis, Neumann Brothers, Inc. & Chamber Board Member



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IRS Announces Withdrawal Process for Employee Retention Credit Claims



Article posted to <https://www.dickinsonlaw.com/blogs-articles> on 10/19/2023. Written by Cody Edwards, Charles Telk, and submitted to the Ankeny Business Journal by Jeff Baxter the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce Board Chairmen

The IRS has repeatedly warned taxpayers of aggressive marketing and scams regarding the Employee Retention Credit. On October 19, 2023, the IRS announced a withdrawal process for Employee Retention claims, which is a special initiative aimed at helping businesses concerned about an ineligible claim.

According to the IRS:

"This new withdrawal option allows certain employers that filed an ERC claim but have not yet received a refund to withdraw their submission and avoid future repayment, interest and penalties. Employers that submitted an ERC claim that's still being processed can withdraw their claim and avoid the possibility of getting a refund for which they're ineligible."

Who Can Withdraw Their ERC Claims?

All of the following must apply before an employer can use the ERC withdraw process:

- The employer made the claim on an adjusted employment return (Forms 941-X, 943-X, 944-X, CT-1X).
- The employer filed the adjusted return only to claim the ERC, and they made no other adjustments.
- The employer wants to withdraw the entire amount of their ERC claim.
- The IRS has not paid their claim, or the IRS has paid the claim, but they haven't cashed or deposited the refund check.

As it relates to withdrawing the entire amount of the ERC, this should be analyzed on a quarter-by-quarter basis. For example, a business may have legitimately qualified for the ERC for Q1 2021, but did not qualify for the ERC in Q2 and Q3 2021 even though they claimed it for all of these quarters. The employer is only required to withdraw the entirety of Q2 and Q3 2021. The withdrawal procedure does not require the employers to withdraw all quarters of the ERC claimed. Therefore, employers must first determine what quarters it did not qualify before it withdraws its ERC claim.

How to Withdraw Your ERC Claim(s)?

The IRS has provided specific instruction to withdraw ERC claims. The process differs depending on the status of the ERC claim:

Scenario 1: You Haven't Received a Refund and Haven't Been Notified Your Claim is Under Audit.

- Step 1: Make a copy of the adjusted return (e.g., 941-X) with the claim you wish to withdraw.
- Step 2: In the left margin of the first page, write "Withdrawn."
- Step 3: In the right margin of the first page:
- Have an authorized person sign and date it.
- Write their name and title next to their signature.
- Step 4: Fax the signed copy of your return to the IRS's ERC claim withdrawal fax line at 855-738-7609. If you cannot fax the withdrawal form, you can mail it, but it will take longer for the IRS to receive your request.

Scenario 2: You Haven't Received a Refund and You've Been Notified Your Claim is Under Audit.

The steps are the same as described in Scenario 1, but you are required to fax/mail the request to a different location. Specifically:

- If you've been assigned an examiner, communicate with your examiner about how to fax or mail your withdrawal request directly to them.
- If you haven't been assigned an examiner, respond to your audit notice with your withdrawal request, using the instructions in the notice for responding.

Scenario 3: You Received a Refund Check but Haven't Cashed or Deposited it.

- Prepare the claim withdrawal request using the steps in Scenario 1, but don't fax the request.
- Write "Void" in the endorsement section on the back of the refund check.
- Include a note that says, "ERC Withdrawal" and briefly explain the reason for returning the refund check.
- Make copies for your tax records of the front and back of the voided check, the explanation notes and the signed and dated withdrawal request page.
- Don't staple, bend or paper clip the voided check; include it with your claim withdrawal request and mail it to the IRS at: Cincinnati Refund Inquiry Unit
PO Box 145500
Mail Stop 536G
Cincinnati, OH 45250
- Track your package to confirm delivery.

Upon reviewing the request, the IRS will send you a letter telling you whether your withdraw request was accepted or rejected. Your approval request is not effective until you have been notified by the IRS.

Scenario 4: You Received a Refund Check and Have Cashed or Deposited it.

Unfortunately, the withdraw process does not allow for a withdrawal of refunds received that have been cashed or deposited. However, the IRS has indicated there may be a program for this scenario forthcoming.

If you have concerns regarding the validity of your ERC claim or questions about the withdraw process please contact Cody J. Edwards or Charles L. Telk, III.

Questions, Contact Dickinson Law today.

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