

Chamber Review

READY TO ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET

'Showtime' is theme of January 22 Annual Dinner at Baraboo Arts Center



ASPECT MULTIMEDIA

Make sure you're camera-ready for the paparazzi when you arrive for the Chamber's [Annual Dinner](#) on Jan. 22 at Baraboo Arts Center.

This year's theme is "Showtime," celebrating our "Discover Wisconsin" [episode](#) featuring the Baraboo Area, as well as the Chamber's popular social media videos and other promotional efforts undertaken in 2025.

Rick Markley of Aspect Multimedia will be on hand to serve as the paparazzi, operating a photo booth. As you can see from the image above, Rick is adept at using artificial intelligence technology to create incredible scenes.

Each year, the Chamber holds an

Annual Meeting in accordance with its bylaws. But we like to make it more of a celebration than a meeting, noting the previous year's achievements

know other Chamber members!

Around 7 p.m. we'll move from the Moeller Room to the Ringling Room. A brief business meeting will feature remarks by our new Board of Directors President Stefanie Wagner.

Executive Director George Althoff will detail 2025's highlights and will share the Chamber's plans for the coming year. It all leads up to handing

and handing out awards to outstanding members and volunteers.

The party begins before the program. Select Chamber members will serve heavy appetizers and adult beverages beginning at 5:30 p.m. This event is a great opportunity to get to

out the annual awards for Business of the Year, Tourism, Rising Star, Community Service and Nonprofit of the Year.

Individual seats cost \$40. Tables of eight cost \$400. Be sure to [register](#) soon, as this event typically sells out.



BARABOO AREA
CHAMBER & TOURISM

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AND THE NOMINEES ARE ...

Twenty businesses and individuals have been nominated for five awards that will be handed out at our annual

dinner on Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Baraboo Arts Banquet & Convention Center. The nominees are:

Business of the Year

Cell.Plus/US Cellular
Ringling House B&B
Twelve Salon
Thunderbird Lanes

Tourism

Jill Addy/Baraboo Mystery Weekend
Tumbled Rock Brewery & Kitchen
Jed Crouse
Village of West Baraboo

Rising Star

Hether Seymour/Sage Media
Weichert Great Day Realtors
Audrie Pelosi, Downtown Baraboo
Peach Pops
James Blount, Elusive Escape Rooms
Twelve Salon

Nonprofit of the Year

Jane's Journey Home for Dogs
St. Clare Foundation
Friends of Devil's Lake State Park
Pathway Home

Community Service

Jack Adams, Farm & Fleet
Twelve Salon
Amber Giddings, Relish Tray Bistro
Baraboo Children's Museum

A committee of five will determine the recipients, whose identity will not be revealed until the night of the annual dinner. The committee is comprised of Chamber Board President Shelley Mordini, board members Merry Lynn Riek and Jason Grossenbacher, Chamber Executive Director George Althoff, and Chamber Marketing & Tourism Coordinator Ben Bromley.

The theme for the annual dinner is "Showtime" and will highlight the efforts your Chamber undertook in 2025 to promote Baraboo as a premier tourism destination. The program will include a showing of the "Discover Wisconsin" episode that was produced earlier this year and pre-

miered in 10 television markets in three states in October.

Registration will open at 5:15 p.m. Social time with heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages will run from 5:30 to 7:15 p.m. in the Ringling Room. Then the party will move to the Gollmar Room for the program, followed by the presentation of the business awards.

A limited number of sponsored tables of eight are available for \$400, which includes pre-event publicity as a sponsor. If you are interested in a table sponsorship, please contact the Chamber at 608-356-8333. Individual tickets are \$40 and you can register [HERE](#). Please sign up early, because seating is limited.



WINTER QUARTERS CAMPAIGN BEGINS THIS MONTH

The Chamber's newest campaign debuts this month. With grant support from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism and buy-in from our local Ringling properties, we're inviting everyone to [Make Baraboo Your Winter Quarters](#).

This shoulder-season campaign is designed to bring visitors to Baraboo during what typically is a slow time for business. Marketing efforts are under way to bring tourists to town to check out the Al. Ringling Theatre, Circus World, the Al. Ringling Mansion, Ringling House Bed & Breakfast and the International Clown Hall of Fame. While they're here, we hope they patronize local hotels, restaurants and shops.

The Make Baraboo Your Winter Quarters campaign will take place over these weekends: Jan. 16-18, Jan. 23-25, Jan. 30-Feb. 1 and Feb. 6-8.

The Chamber is making a significant investment, targeting its advertising dollars to key markets. Digital and print ads are already hitting Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Green Bay and La Crosse.

We also brought in the social media influencer Wanderin Wisconsin. She visited the participating locations last month, with plans to create posts in advance of the campaign.

How did this campaign come about? As locals know, Baraboo is known as "Circus City" because it's the home of the Ringling Bros. Circus. They launched "The Greatest Show on Earth" in Baraboo in 1884 and made the riverfront their Winter Quarters until 1918.

In January and February, we hope tourists will make like the Ringling



Brothers by making Baraboo their "winter quarters." Visitors will enjoy a rich circus experience. Five world-renowned sites will open their doors: Circus World, the Al. Ringling Theatre, the Al. Ringling Mansion and Brewery, the Ringling House Bed & Breakfast, and the International Clown Hall of Fame and Research Center.

Those visiting during the Winter Quarters period will be treated to lodging and dining discounts. Plenty



of [special events and activities](#) are planned over the Winter Quarters period.

Circus World and the International Clown Hall of Fame will be open Saturdays during the campaign. Ringling House Bed & Breakfast will present a circus-themed [murder mystery dinner](#) on January 17 and 24. The Al. Ringling Theatre will offer tours, and historian Paul Wolter will deliver [presentations](#) about the Ringlings there every Saturday. The Al. Ringling Mansion & Brewery will offer tours, as well. After the tour, enjoy a pint of Ringling Original!

Anyone ready to get on board the circus train should visit [baraboo.com](#).



THREE NEW DIRECTORS JOIN CHAMBER BOARD

George Althoff
Executive Director

Three new faces will be joining the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors in January. The new directors are:

- Mike Weyh, a Realtor with Weichert Great Day Realtors. He was the winner of a three-person race for an At-Large seat on the board. Mike received 46 percent of the vote, while Mitchell Spierings of Community First Bank garnered 30 percent and Alexi Needham of Wegner CPAs got 24 percent.

- Jim Gingras, owner of Fireside Cabins. Jim was running unopposed for the position of Village of West Baraboo Hotelier.

- Jason Bristow, area sales manager for Frank Beverage Group. Jason also was running unopposed for the Retail position on the board.

Mike, Jim and Jason began three-year terms on the board effective Jan. 1.



Four directors will be leaving the board:

- Teddie Szydlowski of Community First Bank, who served on the board for four years, including 2025 as Past President.

- Tony Jaynes of Wegner CPAs, who served two three-year terms.

- Jason Grossenbacher, formerly of Festival Foods, who served a partial term but had to resign due to a change in his employment status.

- Tom Patel of Best Western Baraboo Inn, who served two three-year terms.

A big thank you to the four departing directors for their many years of service. And a hearty "welcome aboard" to the three new members for



their willingness to help guide the chamber.

Wagner takes over as board president

Stefanie Wagner, a partner with Cross, Jenks, Mercer & Maffei law firm, assumed the



role of President of the Board of Directors as of Jan. 1. She served the past year as Vice President and, per the Cham-

ber's bylaws, automatically ascends to the presidency. At its January meeting, the board will fill the positions of Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Annual dinner is chance to walk the red carpet

We'll be rolling out the red carpet – literally and figuratively – at our annual dinner and meeting on Thursday, Jan. 22.

The theme for the event will be "Showtime," and the program will showcase our Discover Wisconsin episode that aired statewide in October. In addition to the literal red carpet, the event will feature a virtual red carpet, compliments of Rick Markley, owner of Aspect Multimedia. Rick will set up his Photo Portal and give attendees the opportunity

to "walk the red carpet" surrounded by dozens of AI-generated paparazzi.

The event will be held at the Baraboo Arts Banquet and Convention Center. Sponsorship tables of eight are available for \$400. Individual tickets are \$40. You can register [here](#). More information about the event is available on the front page of this month's Chamber Review.

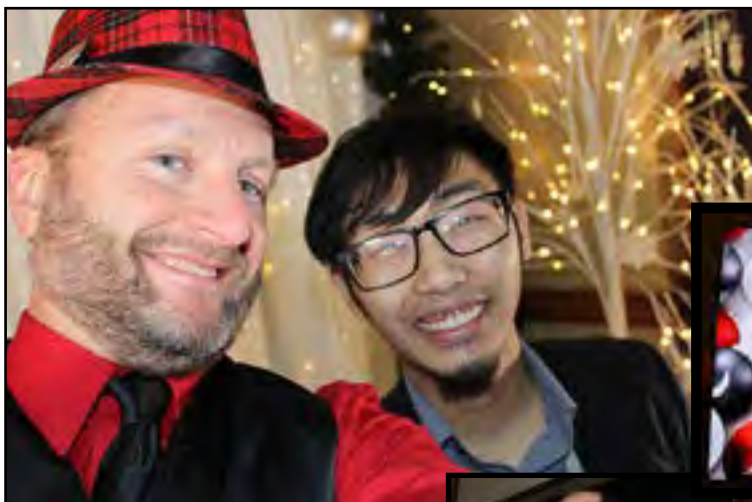


The Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors held its December meeting at Mike's Italian Restaurant.





HAPPY HOLIDAYS



We closed out this year's slate of Business After 5 events in fine holiday style December 11, with Ho-Chunk Gaming rolling out an incredible spread of food, as well as games, give-aways and a photo booth!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Ambassadors Club meeting

5:15 p.m. Monday, January 12
Draft City Taproom

Every Chamber member is welcome to become an Ambassador. Get to know this fun group over snacks and beverages at Draft City Taproom in West Baraboo. We'll plan for the upcoming Annual Dinner and discuss prospective members. We promise the meeting will be brief!



Annual Dinner: "Showtime"

5:30-9 p.m. Thursday, January 22
Baraboo Arts Center

We'll roll out the red carpet for the Chamber's Annual Dinner, which will celebrate all the ways we've promoted the Baraboo Area across the Midwest, including in our "Discover Wisconsin" episode. In addition to holding our annual business meeting, we'll present our 2025 Chamber awards recognizing outstanding achievements. [REGISTER](#)



Board of Directors meeting

Monday, January 26 from noon to 1 p.m.
Visitor Center

Board members, please mark your calendars if you haven't already, as President Stefanie will lead our monthly Board of Directors meeting in person (with a Zoom option) in the Visitor Center's conference room. Board meetings have been rescheduled to the fourth - but not the last - Monday of each month.



Business After 5 at Beyond Blessed Pantry

5-7 p.m. Monday, February 9
Beyond Blessed Pantry, 1101 Lake St.

We'll kick off the 2026 slate of Business After 5 events at the site of one of our award-winning nonprofit organizations, Beyond Blessed Pantry. [REGISTER](#)



2026 BUSINESS AFTER 5 SCHEDULE

- February 9 - [Beyond Blessed Pantry](#)
- March 31 - [Spa Serenity](#)
- April 13 - [Baraboo Country Club](#)
- May 15 - [Fireside Cabins](#)
- June 10 - [Hill's Wiring](#)
- July 23 - [Friends of the Zoo](#)
- August 17 - [Sauk County Historical Society](#)
- September 8 - [Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- October 13 - [Durward's Glen](#)
- November 10 - [Brightstar Care](#)
- December 10 - [Ho-Chunk Gaming](#)





HOLLY JOLLY FUN

Our Ambassadors Club always has a good time, especially during the holidays. Many thanks to Baraboo Burger Company for hosting the Ambassadors' Christmas party on December 16. The white elephant gift exchange never disappoints, except for whoever ends up with the framed photo of Ben that has become something of a traveling trophy. Or whatever the opposite of a trophy is.



RIBBON CUTTING: BARABOO FRESH MARKET



On December 12 it was our pleasure to help Baraboo Fresh Market celebrate its recent rebranding. Raj and his team hosted a well-attended open house that afternoon, featuring food and drink samples and a bourbon auction. Congrats to this east-side grocery and convenience store on its new look!

Prevail Bank supports women in business

Prevail Bank recently distributed 21 charitable contribution checks totaling \$50,000 to support community programs across central Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation was one; it received \$5,000 to assist low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs in Clark, Price, Taylor, Marathon, Portage, Sauk and Wood counties.

Brianna Welch, WWBIC Education and Volunteer Program Manager (far right) accepted the check from (left to right) Prevail Bank Relationship Banker Susan DeVoe and Branch Manager Kristi Anderson.

Prevail Bank's Charitable Contributions program is reserved for local nonprofits within Prevail Bank's service area. Initiatives that assist low-to-moderate income individuals, provide financial management education, stimulate local economies, and/or enhance the standard of living for many, are preferred. Nonprofits interested in applying for Prevail Bank Charitable Contribution funds should visit its Community Giving webpage to learn more!



MOVEMENT ROOTED IN LOVE DAY

A TIME FOR INFINITE HOPE

Monday, January 19, 2026
9 am - 7 pm

In observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, a
national holiday of community service

9:00 am to 4:00 pm community service
activities

12:00 pm free soup lunch

6:00 pm free concert w/ guest
speakers

For more information, call (608) 356-3991.

Donations of nonperishable food items for Veterans
and toilet paper for the Baraboo Food Pantry gratefully
accepted.

First United Methodist Church
615 Broadway, Baraboo

*"We must accept finite disappointment,
but never lose infinite hope."*
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



It's party time!

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Baraboo Reads Presents

THE SEED KEEPER

With Special Guest
Jessika Greendeer

at Carnegie-Schadde
Memorial Public Library
Saturday, January 17, 2026
10:00 AM

**Book Pickup at the Library
Beginning January 2, 2025**

Seed Ball Construction begins at
9:30 AM

This is not a school sponsored activity and the Baraboo School
District does not fund or endorse this program.

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Free Overdose Response Training

Overdoses can happen anywhere, including workplaces. Public Health Sauk County offers free Narcan training. This training protects employees and customers, reduces risk, builds confidence in emergency situations, and shows your commitment to community safety. Best of all, the training and Narcan kits are completely free. Each session includes expert-led instruction, either virtually or in person at your location. Staff will learn how to recognize and respond to an overdose, practice using Narcan, and receive free kits for your business and participating team members. The training takes 30 minutes, and the impact can last a lifetime.

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11:30am - 5:30pm | Lower Dells Ballroom by Atrium

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