

Christine Fenner  
President  
Waconia Chamber of Commerce

## What's the story behind the businesses you love?

Behind every start-up is a story with entrepreneurs following their passion, taking a risk, and are creating something innovative in the market. The Waconia area is filled with really cool stories; and many of the entrepreneurs behind them are our friends, neighbors, and community members.

Business owners invest thousands (hundreds of thousands) and/or take out loans to buy or renovate buildings and purchase inventory. Oftentimes, they are working in their business and have another full time job to support the start-up. As the business grows, more jobs are created, and local people hired. These same businesses also generously donate to our local schools, sports, and nonprofits (Chamber included).

A strong hospitality and retail community is important, but especially in these times. Take pride in the products and services that are either available or made right here. There are fascinating stories within each business venture. I encourage you to talk with the owners, and employees to find out their story, and share it with others. Many have left their corporate jobs to chase a dream. Some have turned their side hustle into their full-time gig. Uncover the story and ask the questions, 'How did you get here? What sparked the idea? What is it that makes this product or service unique?' When gift giving during this season, take pride in shopping local. Not only are you purchasing great products, but you're supporting our community and its people.

It was delightful to see shoppers out for Small Business Saturday this past weekend. The shop owners have been incredible in making changes and adjustments in how they do business to make it safe and a positive experience for their customers. This year has been filled with challenges, but the business owners and employees show up with a smile and do so much for our community. We love our Waconia businesses, and they need you. Let's continue to support them through the season by shopping, eating, and supporting local business.

Tell the story, and have a meaningful Holiday Season!

*-Christine*