

## Economic Development Plays a Big Role in the Chamber

During our August chamber luncheon last week, we reflected on stories of the past. The history of Coney Island, Nickle Dickle Day, and the Chamber of Commerce were all shared. From its origination (legally incorporated in 1962), the mission of the Waconia Chamber of Commerce has been to promote a positive business environment to enhance the quality of life in the community.

Fast forward to 2020, that statement is still the mission today; along with the addition of: Advocacy, Economic Development and Networking Opportunities. The Chamber of Commerce may be most known for the networking opportunities like events, ribbon cuttings, and social gatherings. However, in addition to advocacy; economic development in our community is a big part of the equation.

With the support of the 'Grow Minnesota!' program through the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, we are expanding our footprint in economic development in the Waconia area by strengthening the vitality of our community. For example, in recent months, members in the trades industry (manufacturing, automotive, and construction) have come together on a monthly basis to seek ways to build programs to increase their future workforce. One way to achieve this has been by connecting with teachers, students, and parents to give exposure to the companies here in the Waconia area. The goal is to continuously grow, and educate students and teachers about the current needs and employment opportunities in the trades.

As the building of our future workforce continues to expand, we will target goals and objectives to include education on relevant topics, speaking engagements, and a partnership apprenticeship program through the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Finally, in addition to supporting an educated and skilled workforce, the chamber will continue to support an environment that attracts employers, retains existing businesses, and promotes job growth. Through these ongoing initiatives, we'll stay true to our mission.

***-Christine***

***The Mission*** of the Waconia Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote a positive business environment, through Advocacy, Economic Development, and Networking Opportunities, to enhance the quality of life in the community.