



# CHAMBER Connection

Serving the communities of Columbus, Forest Lake, Lent, Linwood, Scandia, Stacy, and Wyoming

## Be an Informed Voter

Your Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring several Candidate Forums. Plan to attend and if you have questions you would like us to ask please submit them for review a few days before the forums.

### Thursday, October 7, 2004

Forest Lake City Council Chambers  
6:00-8:00 p.m. *Forest Lake City Council Candidates*  
8:15-9:30 p.m. *Forest Lake Mayoral Candidates*

### Tuesday, October 12, 2004

Wyoming Elementary School Cafeteria  
7:00-9:00 p.m. *Wyoming Mayoral and City Council Candidates*

### Wednesday, October 20, 2004

Forest Lake City Council Chambers  
6:30-8:00 p.m. *Legislative District 17B (Chisago County) and 52A (Washington/Anoka Counties)*  
8:30-9:30 p.m. *District 1 Washington County Commissioner*

These Forums will be taped by LATV channel 10 for broadcast several times before the elections.



Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce  
Volume 21, Issue 10 • October 2004

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## OUR MISSION

The Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce is an organization representing business and industry, working together to advance the economic well being of its members and the community.

## What's Happening with the Community Center?

### Membership Meeting October 13, 2004

### The Lodge at Forest Hills • 11:30-1:00

Now that the Kroc Grant is not in our future, what are the plans? Members of the Community Center Task Force will show us.





BRING YOUR  
BUSINESS  
CARDS!!

## a.m. Connection October 28

The next a.m. Connection will take place on Thursday, October 28 at 7:30 am at the **Chamber's office, 56 East Broadway Avenue, Forest Lake**, and is hosted by AmericInn-North Branch. Take an hour to mix and mingle with other Chamber members while enjoying a light breakfast. If you don't have an entire hour, don't worry—stay as long as you want. Please RSVP by Tuesday, October 26 by calling the Chamber office, 651-464-3200, by fax 651-464-3201 or online at [www.flacc.org](http://www.flacc.org).

## \* BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

### ALLSTATE – Bob Wheaton Agency



**Bob Wheaton**

Bob Wheaton is a long time resident of the Forest Lake area. While growing up, his family celebrated the 4th of July at Lakeside Park every year. His sister, Nancy Immel remains active in the community, and his brother, Grant helps out with youth services. So when Bob decided to open his Allstate insurance agency in October 2003, Forest Lake was the natural choice. "Forest Lake," he says, "is a growing community filled with friendly people who have provided a warm welcome."

In describing his agency, Bob says they are very service oriented. "We talk to our clients about their insurance needs and explain why we are recommending a particular coverage. That way the customers can make an informed decision on the right protection for their families and themselves."

Bob, who has more than 25 years in the insurance industry, says he chose Allstate Insurance Company for several reasons. Allstate is a large company with highly trained customer service and claims people throughout the U.S. and Canada who are easy to reach 24 hours a day. In addition, they have over 6000 body shops nationwide that can repair your car immediately without you having to wait for authorization to get work done. Bob says this will save you the time and hassle of waiting for an adjuster or trying to locate a drive-through claim center. Allstate guarantees any work done by the shops for as long as you own your car.

With Allstate, Bob says he can provide confidential claims advice so customers know before they submit a claim if any discounts will be lost or premiums raised. This eliminates zero dollar or small claims that can affect future premiums for up to five years.

The Bob Wheaton Agency, which also includes Bob's wife, Pat, Toni Thelemann and Jim Runneberg, joined your Chamber in October of 2003, as soon as they opened the agency. "We feel the Chamber of Commerce is a good organization that looks out for the best interests of the community. Allstate has that same philosophy and it just seemed natural to belong."

Bob, Pat or Toni can be reached at 651-464-7999, and invite you to stop by and meet with them. The Bob Wheaton Allstate Agency is located in the Town Square Building at 20 No Lake St in Suite 309.

## FROM THE CHAIR



The Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting was this past Thursday evening at Eko Backen. The attendance was fantastic, creating an atmosphere perfect for catching up with old friends, business associates and networking with new faces from within the Chamber. For those of you unable to attend this year's meeting, please take the time to attend the next year's meeting to really understand what a networking benefit you can receive from being a member. You will have the opportunity to meet some of the most wonderful business people the Forest Lake area has to offer as well as some very dedicated volunteers.

A tremendous benefit of being the Chair is the honor of acknowledging those members who make a difference, through their volunteer efforts, not only to the Chamber but to their community as well. This year's Community Volunteer of Year award went to Bea Zaruba of the First State Bank of Wyoming. Bea dedicates countless hours to worthy causes and organizations in the Wyoming community. This year's Chamber Volunteer of the Year award went to Joni McPherson of McPherson Graphics for all of her tireless efforts with the newsletter and the redesign of the Chamber logo. This year's Business of the Year award went to Forest Lake Travel, owned by Deb Oaks, who also devotes a lot of time away from her business helping the Chamber. Congratulations to Bea, Joni and Deb! Thank you all for your selfless devotion to improving the lives of everyone around you.

Rick Savage from Doc Savage Productions provided the evening's entertainment with a presentation of your Chamber's new recruitment video. It runs like a year in the life of the Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce. Somehow, Rick was able to keep Debby still enough at some point to capture her commentary on the activities of the Chamber. Great job!

John and all of his staff at Eko Backen deserve a round of applause for their hospitality in hosting this year's meeting. They ensured that everything went without a hitch, which makes the event more enjoyable for all of the attendees. Thank you John!

Thank you to Debby and Janet for the flawless planning and execution of a great evening. Your leadership and hard work made this an ideal networking opportunity, ensuring that those in attendance reaped one of the many benefits of being a Chamber member.

Last, but not least, thank you to all of the members who took the time out of your busy day to participate in this event — a member benefit is of little use without the member. See you next year!

Sincerely,  
*Rob Griffin*  
Gaughan Properties

## Patronize Your Fellow Chamber Members

There are many loving animals looking for a family to love. Please call our local animal shelters to find that perfect pet.

### **St. Francis of Assisi Animal Rescue**

612-387-4869

### **Northwoods Human Society**

651-982-0240

## October Refreshment Host

***Thank you!***

## **Wealth Management Midwest**

The Refreshment Host supplies the Chamber with coffee, pop, and snacks for meetings held at the office. The cost is \$30 in cash or supplies.

# Welcome New Members

**Web Electric**  
7180 177th Street  
Hugo, MN 55038  
651-464-1660

# Thank You Renewing Members

The following members have renewed their investment in their Chamber of Commerce. Please utilize their services whenever possible:

**Forest Lake Printing**

**Thurnbeck Steel  
Fabrication**

**Five Star Financial  
Resources**

**Wally McCarthy's  
Chevrolet/Olds/Cadillac**

**Wal-Mart**

**Waldoch Custom Center**

**Rolseth Drug**

**TCF**

**eschelon telecom, inc.**

**Lexington Inn & Suites**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



It looks like the elections process will be very exciting this year. Not only on the national level where presidential candidates are all over the airways and all over Minnesota, but also locally.

In Forest Lake we have 5 candidates vying for the mayoral seat and 9 (or did I hear that one candidate just dropped out of the race) for two open City Council seats. Our council could take on a whole new look. Judging by what I currently know of the candidates it could be a council that looks a lot like

the past or one that has a whole new set of people with who knows what new ideas. Or it could be a mixture of both. I must say that for the first time in a long time I did not just look at the slate of candidates and immediately know whom I was going to vote for. I am looking forward to our Candidate Forums because there are several candidates that even I have no idea who they are. I do know that they range in age from 26 to over 70.

Without a doubt, though we are in for changes. None of the incumbents are running for their seats, which means 3 out of the five members of the council could likely be new faces.

In Wyoming the incumbents are all running, but they have opposition. That should also be a fascinating forum and election as the residents vote on their approval or disapproval of the direction the current council has taken the City.

Why should you as business owners care? You need to know how much control, through zoning and other ordinances, these bodies can have on your business. Care enough to have a voice in the direction of your community.

*Debby*

debby@flacc.org • 651-464-3200

We accept Visa or  
MasterCard for all  
Chamber events.



# Resource Fair to Showcase Tools for Small Business Success

Whether you're already in business, launching a new startup, or pondering a future venture, you can explore dozens of programs and services to help ensure your success during a Small Business Resource Fair on October 21. The fair is co-sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Small Business Development Centers program.

More than 30 exhibitors will be on hand, including government agencies, nonprofits, educational institutions, and lenders. Free workshops will be presented throughout the day, covering such topics as starting a small business, finance sources and taxation, marketing, Job Opportunity

Building Zones (JOBZ) economic development program, and selling to the government.

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21**  
**9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Rochester Community and Technical College - Heintz Center, Rochester, MN**

**Admission and workshops are free of charge.**

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For more information contact Diane Henry at 651-297-5771 or e-mail at [diane.henry@state.mn.us](mailto:diane.henry@state.mn.us).

Register online at [www.sba.gov/mn](http://www.sba.gov/mn) or call SBA at 612-370-2324 to register. A detailed list of workshops and exhibitors may be viewed online at [www.sba.gov/mn](http://www.sba.gov/mn).

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## Small Business Grants

The American Institute of Small Business is offering 3 different grant programs: one for current small business owners, one for people wanting to start a small business and one for high school business education teachers. The grant amounts will range from \$500 to \$10,000 and will be given out on a yearly basis.

"Finding money is always a problem for small business owners. We have put together this grant program to help people follow their dreams and succeed in their own small business," states Kris Solie-Johnson, president of the American Institute of Small Business. The American Institute of Small business is the publisher of over ten different titles, including the best seller "How to Set Up Your Own Small Business."

Visit their website at [www.aisb.biz/grant.htm](http://www.aisb.biz/grant.htm) for an application to the program. Deadline is December 17, 2004. Right now there is no application fee.

## Calendar of Events

### October

- 1 Grow MN Committee Meeting
- 5 Heinz 57 Ambassadors
- 6 Program/Activities Committee Meeting
- 7 Membership Committee Meeting
- 7 City of Forest Lake Council and Moral Candidate Forums
- 12 City of Wyoming Council and Moral Candidate Forums
- 13 Membership Meeting
- 14 Board Meeting
- 20 Marketing Committee Meeting
- 20 House Seat 17B and 52A and Washington County Commissioner Candidate Forums

28 a.m. Connection

## Community



# Customer Contacts By Staff in August

Apartment Lists Requested . . . . .	1
Calls Answered for Chamber President (not counted elsewhere) . . . . .	123
Demographic Info Request . . . . .	1
Emails . . . . .	964
Event, Chamber or Member Queries . . . . .	77
General Business Referrals & Maps . . . . .	20
Government, Social Agency or Organization Referrals . . . . .	28
Moving Packs Requested . . . . .	10
New Member Inquiries . . . . .	4
Specific Member Referrals . . . . .	26
Total Contacts . . . . .	1254
Walk-in Visitors Included Above . . . . .	94
Unique Visitors to Website	
Total Number of Visits to Website	

## OUTGOING MAIL COUNT IN AUGUST

(excluding Newsletter & Bulk Rate Mailings)

Apartment List . . . . .	0
Bills . . . . .	18
Tourist Info . . . . .	0
Invoices . . . . .	113
Miscellaneous . . . . .	0
Member Communications . . . . .	38
New Member Info . . . . .	5
Demog/Moving/New Res Packs . . . . .	4

# Minnesota Chamber shapes 2005 agenda

**David Olson, president, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce**

Minnesota Moves, the Minnesota Chamber's transportation blueprint, will be at the forefront of Minnesota Chamber of Commerce initiatives during the 2005 legislative session. Also drawing attention will be the state budget, health care and workers' compensation. The Chamber annually focuses its efforts on nearly 50 policy positions. However, to be effective we target our statewide grassroots efforts on our members' 5 or 6 highest priorities. These priorities reflect member input, through focus groups held in conjunction with local chambers, as well as a member poll.

Minnesota Moves reflects a business vision for the future of transportation. The economic vitality of all Minnesotans depends on an integrated and well funded transportation network. Minnesota Moves proposes to accomplish this through long term funding targeted at specific projects across the state.

In regard to health care, the Chamber's focus is how employers can reduce health care costs and still provide quality options for employees. Solutions must be consumer-driven, which will occur only if purchasers and employees have access to standardized, credible, easy-to-understand information on health plans and providers. Another priority is to achieve federal conformity of Health Savings Accounts for tax purposes.

Minnesota's budget should be balanced without any increase in general fund taxes. The Chamber endorses Governor Pawlenty's recent Drive to Excellence initiative focusing on making government more accountable and efficient. Contrary to public perception, the state budget has not decreased with recent cutbacks. Rather, Pawlenty has led the charge to slow the growth of government spending. Projected spending for the 2006-07 biennium, will increase \$1.7 billion, or 6 percent over the current biennium due to automatic spending increases in programs.

Reform of workers' compensation is back on the business agenda following the sharp rise in costs in recent years. Many experts predict that data will show double digit increases in 2003 and 2004. Medical expenses are at the core of higher costs.

Environmental issues (permitting, impaired waters legislation and electronic waste disposal) along with energy (reliability and affordability) round out the list of Minnesota Chamber priorities.

I encourage you to become active on these issues, particularly those that have a significant impact on your company. If you would like to be a part of the statewide grass roots network, contact Jennifer Byers at [jbyers@mnchamber.com](mailto:jbyers@mnchamber.com) or 651-292-4673.

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