

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 3 | FALL 2022

DUBUQUE AREA
CHAMBER

ON THE COVER:
BMW MUSIC
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LOCAL BUSINESSES

SURVIVING AND THRIVING

Been Around the Block | *New Kid on the Block*
Graham's Style Store | BMW Music Entertainment

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On the cover



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WELCOME

FROM THE CHAMBER PRESIDENT /CEO



"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no one can sincerely try to help another without helping themselves"
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

* * *

We all know the pandemic has had a profound impact on our local area businesses and daily ways of life. Now the threat of a potential looming recession adds insult to economic injury in our post-COVID recovery.

Whether we are currently in a recession or not is widely debated. The typical definition of a recession is two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth. However, according to the U.S Chamber of Commerce the typical negative growth is not the only determining factor, but at very least it may signal a slowdown in economic momentum.

We have navigated through some of our most turbulent and uncertain times in American history. Across industries, Chamber members big and small have weathered the past two years with creativity and resourcefulness to adapt to customers' needs and solve problems. The ability of our businesses to survive and thrive in such times has been a study in Dubuque's unwavering resolve and resiliency. Inside this issue of the CQ we talk to businesses about their thoughts on a potential recession and their success stories despite the challenges of global pandemic.

The Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce is one of your best tools in your recession-busting arsenal. During times of recession, you can use networking to talk to fellow members about protecting themselves against uncertainties through network marketing. You can use your Chamber membership to facilitate connections between members that promote others, and that good business practice finds its way back to you. Shifting the focus from yourself to another benefits everyone involved. Together we achieve more!

Inside this issue of our Fall CQ issue read the success stories of our members not just surviving but thriving in today's brave new post-COVID world and their thoughts on a potential recession.

Molly Grover

President & CEO, CCE, IOM
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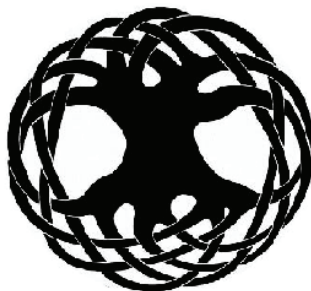
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The Multicultural Family Center located on Central Avenue in Dubuque.

DUBUQUE BUSINESSES HAVE MIXED RESPONSE TO RECESSION TALK, COVID-19 CHANGES

BY KARI WILLIAMS

Talk of a recession among economists in recent weeks has Dubuque businesses expressing a mix of cautious optimism and concern.

Tim Hodge, owner of Hodge — a material handling equipment business — said his business is “cautiously thriving.”

“There’s so much talk out there of a potential recession, but you can’t live in fear of that ... We can’t stop doing what we’re doing now,” he said. “We have to keep going full speed ahead to keep up.”

However, Umaru Balde, Dubuque’s Multicultural Family Center director, said he’s seeing hardships through his work.

“It all just comes back to how many families and teens we are seeing in the building,” he said. “It’s increasing very quickly... Many more kids come here for dinner.”





Tim Hodge

The most recent Chicago Fed Survey of Economic Conditions Activity Index, which includes Dubuque, noted a decrease in activity from May (-8) to June (-34), “suggesting that economic growth was well below trend,” a news release stated.

Those who were surveyed as part of the activity index reported a deterioration in economic outlook for the next year.



Umaru Balde

Plus, almost as soon as the center’s summer program ended, Balde said, they began receiving calls from parents inquiring about other programs.

“That I think is caused by the recession obviously, because some of these parents can’t afford to even feed their kids,” he said. “Some have two different ... jobs. And the need somewhere for their kids to be.”

COVID-19 EFFECT ON BUSINESS

Like many others, Hodge had to “invent protocols on the fly” and, sometimes, change them on a whim to align with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. But the biggest change in the past few years has been at the staffing level, Hodge said.

“It’s just so hard to find people,” he said. “We had to make big changes in the way we recruit new team members.”

While Hodge has been present at “more job fairs than we ever have,” they’ve focused more on increasing their recruiting staff. There are roughly 150 open positions across the company — which has 1,100 employees total — or roughly 10% unfilled jobs.

“We used to rely a lot on recruiting companies,” he said. “Now, we’re doing much of that on our own. We’ve probably doubled, or perhaps even tripled, staff internally for [recruiting].”

There was a time, according to Hodge, when the com-



Multicultural Family Center Director Umaru Balde chats with Peyce McCoy, 14, at the center.

Application Form

Personal Information

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Name (Initial)

Department Number, if any)

pany struggled to even get potential employees to submit applications. Now, they're receiving more, but he said it's unclear if that's related to their additional recruiting staff or the general public being more willing to submit applications.

Balde, who has been with the Multicultural Family Center since June, said that by mid-July one of its main programs (a teen night) had to be canceled due to a lack of staff.

"Part-time jobs are not sustainable anymore," Balde said. "Everyone is looking for a full-time job."

However, Balde said that there are more children and teens coming to the center's programs either because their parents "are now doing two jobs" or are currently unemployed. Both programs – dayside for children and evening for teens – include meals and "fun activities," he said.

"They depend on our programs and the food we provide to them," Balde said. "Because we have two programs running – one during the day and one in the evening."

The center only has two part-time staffers, and staff planned to interview for open positions in mid-August.

But the Iowa Workforce Development Corpora-





tion reported in June that the state's unemployment levels had returned to a pre-COVID-19 pandemic rate of 2.6%.

"Iowa establishments added 5,100 jobs in June as the Labor Force Participation Rate also increased to 67.8%, up from 67.6% last month," a news release stated.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, under which the state of Iowa falls, reported that Dubuque's highest 12-month percent change in employment-growth occurred in April 2021 with 9.1. The U.S. was at 10.1% at the same time.

The city's largest private, nonfarm industries include: Machinery manufacturing; wood product manufacturing; fabricated metal product manufacturing; textile product mills; amusement, gambling and recreation; insurance carriers and related activities; educational services; warehousing and storage; nursing and residential care facilities; publishing industries except internet.

SUPPLY CHAIN STRUGGLES

Amid the fallout of COVID-19 protocols and procedures lies the supply chain struggles that have resulted in backlogs and delays for companies nationwide.





The PwC Digital Trends in Supply Chain Survey 2022 found that “many challenges remain to fully optimize supply chains.” Among those are increasing efficiency, addressing risks and addressing “higher-than-normal turn-over.”

Several aspects of the supply chain, including operational issues, securing raw materials and insufficiently localized supply chain were reported as moderate to major risks, according to the PwC survey.

For Hodge, items that used to take four to six weeks to receive, sometimes has turned to 40.

“Our customers are frustrated just as we are fact that it takes us so long to get them [certain items],” Hodge said.

That has required Hodge to pivot and take care of its customers in ways it hasn’t traditionally done, including ordering equipment without

having any customer orders for it.

“Our stocking level has to be higher because our lead times are so long,” he said.

They also have been actively trying to purchase used equipment – something that has always been part of the Hodge Company business model but is now a larger component.

“We’ll buy fleets maybe a dozen at a time... We’ve

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added staff in order to get our used equipment fixed,” Hodge said. We’re ordering more rental equipment.”

However, Hodge said their methods aren’t “magic bullets.”

“We don’t have a corner on these strategies,” he said.

At the Multicultural Family Center, Balde said supply chain issues have affected the food it can provide for programming, as well as its food pantry items.

“We do buy the food that we

provide to the teens, and then, we also have a food pantry where we giveaway free box and canned food,” he said. “That has been going down simply because things are really more expensive now. The meals used to provide are also not the same... We do what we can afford.”

While Balde said the center largely is funded by the city, the nonprofit

side, which handles programming, is more affected.

“Fundraising has not been very good with the pandemic,” he said. “We’re not able to have that big fundraising event, then some of the funding sources that we were getting are either, the board has not gotten them yet or they stopped some of the funding.”

For more information about how the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce is assisting city businesses, visit www.dubuquechamber.com/advocacy.

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NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

BMW Music Entertainment



Attendees of this year's Dubuque County Fair could step into the beer tent and be greeted with a giant Twister mat, complete with more than 200 circles to step on (or avoid).

Oversized games like that are just the latest addition to BMW Music Entertainment – a Dubuque staple for nearly 30 years residing at 595 Huff St.

Think a 6' Plunko or Kerplunk. Larger-than-average games for the likes of family reunions and graduation parties.

"There's nothing really like it in Dubuque," said owner Robb Munter. "What we do already with entertainment and everything."

The family-owned business has four employees and is unique to the area, Munter said. BMW Music Entertainment offers DJs for weddings, parties and anniversaries, along with a party bus, photo booth, chair/table rental, PA systems, yard letters and more.

Munter also is an officiant and performs an average of 100 to 110 marriages annually.

He joined the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce in May.

"We know some people who are in it," Munter said. "We want to spread our name out more. DJ'ing we've been doing since 1995. BMW music is the main anchor and everything has kind of grown off that."

Joining the chamber has led to an increase in business.

"I booked some things because of that," Munter said. "I'm a small business. There are a lot of small businesses in the chamber. A lot of people just like me in the Chamber."

BMW Music Entertainment also has had a presence at benefits and fundraisers throughout the Dubuque community, including Run for the Troops and Dubuque Regional Humane Society.

For more information or to book BMW Music Entertainment, visit the company's Facebook page.

BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK

Graham's Style Store



Graham's Style Store has been dressing Dubuquers since the 1930s and has no plans to slow down.

Owned by siblings Ben Graham and Katie McFadden – fourth generation descendants of founder Ed Graham – the Main Street establishment offers custom dress shirts; wedding suits and tuxes; wardrobe and style consultations; shoe shining; tailoring; and free local delivery.

Residing at 890 Main St., the store offers dozens of name-brand clothing items for men and women, along with dresses, shoes, totes, hats, cologne, undergarments and more. However, when it opened in August 1936, it was exclusively a men's clothing store and in a different location on Main Street.

Today, Graham's Style Store features nearly 60 brands for men, including Tommy Bahama; Fulton & Roark Fragrance and Grooming; and On Running Shoes. Women can choose from 21 brands, among them Tart Collections and Sam Edelman Jeans.

Ben and Katie took over the store in the 2000s, following the retirement of their father, Joe.

The legacy business employs eight people – five full-time and three part-time – and is a long-time Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce member.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



The Leadership Dubuque class of 2022.





The Young Professionals of Dubuque 2022-2023 Board.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



The Young Professionals July luncheon.



Speaker Alex Dixon.



The Young Professionals July luncheon.



Speaker Gary Dolphin.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



The Young Professionals of Dubuque Board.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



The Young Professionals of Dubuque award recipients.




The Young Professionals of Dubuque Friend of the Year recipient, Mattitude, LLC.



The Young Professionals of Dubuque Board Member of the Year recipient Whitney Sanger.



The Young Professionals of Dubuque Business of the Year recipient, The Dubuque Museum of Art.



DUBUQUE DANCES WITH THE STARS



The Dubuque Dances with the Stars contestants.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS

Vibe Dance Company performs at Dubuque Dances with the Stars.



Temwa Phiri, of City of Dubuque, danced for Crescent Community Health Center.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



Brock Renbarger, of MidWestOne Bank, danced for Junior Achievement of the Heartland.



Danielle Schmitt, of Fidelity Bank & Trust, danced for Research for the Kids.

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Jacquelyn Pfohl, of Five Flags Center, danced for Riverview Center.



Tara Duggan, of McDermott Excavating, danced for Dubuque Community YMCA/YWCA.



Michael Pennington, of Cottingham & Butler, danced for Opening Doors.



Danielle Peterson, of United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States, danced for United Way.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



Tara Duggan was the charity winner at Dubuque Dances with the Stars.



Temwa Phiri was the judges' choice winner at Dubuque Dances with the Stars.

RIBBON CUTTINGS



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RIBBON CUTTINGS



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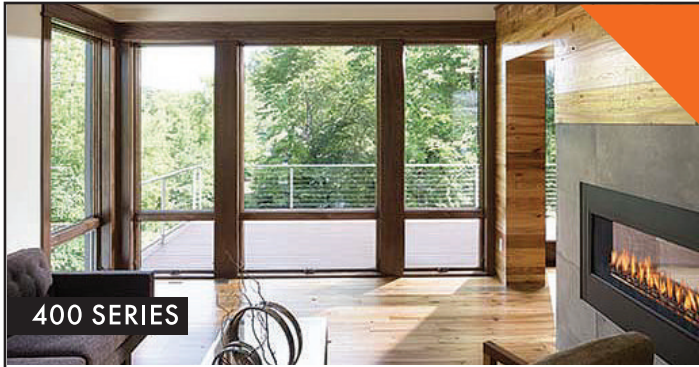
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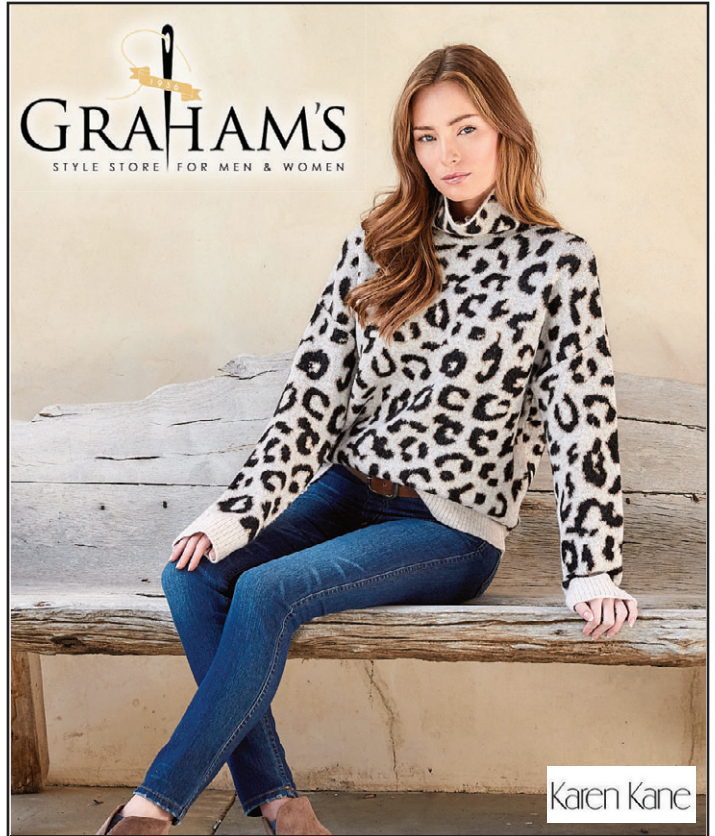
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