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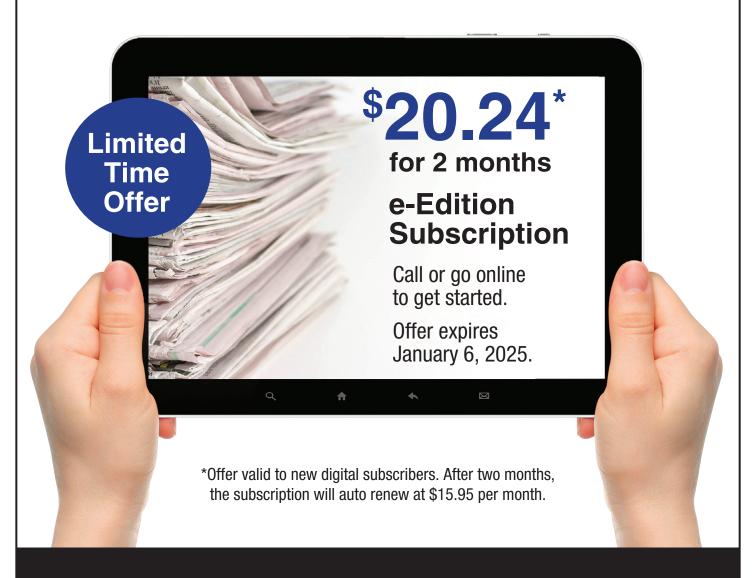


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On the cover



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# CHAMBER TEAM





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oliday Greetings! Welcome to the Holiday/Winter CQ edition.

No matter the temperature outside, the holiday season can bring a sense of warmth inside. No matter our age, we can still feel the magic of the holiday season. The local shops in our community continue to amaze us with the warm welcomes, personal attention, and offer exceptional service and products.

We encourage you to "Keep it Home for the Holidays" and shift your purchasing to your hometown where those dollars are reinvested in our community. Continue to take the time, be intentional, and make the commitment to spend your dollars at home to support your local businesses. The value of our businesses shopping local and utilizing products right from our hometown has a great impact on our community as well. Let's continue to support our community and invest in one another this holiday season.

The Dubuque Area Chamber continues to Advocate, Connect, and Educate our members that shopping small, has big impacts.

Sincerely,

Molly Grover
Molly Grover CCE, IOM
President & CEO

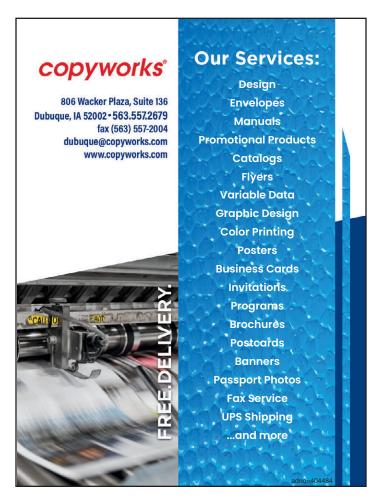
# Welcome New Members

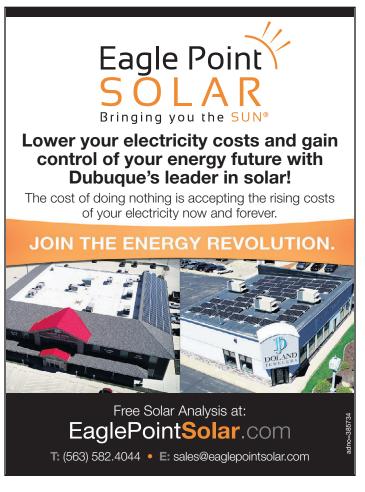




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7/11/2024 7/15/2024





# 11/elcome New Members





7/18/2024 7/23/2024



8/1/2024





8/1/2024 8/1/2024

11

# Welcome New Members



8/5/2024





8/13/2024





8/14/2024 8/19/2024

# Welcome New Members





8/20/2024

8/22/2024

**ELIM-A-NIT** 



8/26/2024

8/27/2024





9/4/2024

9/5/2024

13



#### **BY DAN RUSSO**

UBUQUE — In ways as small as a needle's eye or as large as a wooden frame around a treasured sports jersey, local small businesses are helping people keep the fire of life's joy burning, even during the cold winter months.

Michele Hefel, for example, has been preserving memories and beautiful art through A Frame of Mind, the shop she's owned for 19 years.

"Our main business is custom picture framing but we also have an art gallery and home decor offered in the store," she said. "We just finished a remodel to the store a couple of months ago and started to get in a lot more home decor and artwork to fill the new space. As far as our custom framings go, we carry a huge selection of frame mouldings to choose from, and everything we use is conservation to protect your framing and make it last for years to come. We pride ourselves with expert help when designing your framed piece."

Hefel changed the name of the enterprise from Ben Franklin Framing and Gallery when she bought the business. She has two employees who work with her out of the shop on Dodge Street in Dubuque. Combined, the trio has more than 80 years of framing experience between them. During the Christmas season, framing is especially important because people wish to preserve special items and give them as gifts. This can include children's artwork, family photos, paintings or military medals.

Although finding a way to frame unusual things can be difficult, Hefel and her staff are more than willing to take on the challenge.

"My favorite thing about owning my own business is my customers," she said. "Watching their families grow, catching up about what's new in their lives or the latest trip they've been on is something I love. When you shop local, you get that and you get someone you can trust and someone who cares about you, your family and the community we live in. I love my job."

Heather Clasen, owner of a A Threaded Needle, found her passion early in life and is now helping to revive the dying art of being a seamstress.

"I got into sewing because of a junior high home economics

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Listen



class," Clasen said. "At Jefferson Junior High School, sewing was required for all students."

As a child, the Dubuque native made a doll's dress as part of a Christmas charity project sponsored by a local bank By seventh grade, Clasen was making clothing. A dress she designed for her grandparents 40th wedding anniversary party caught the attention of an aunt.

"I made five bridesmaids dresses for my aunt's wedding," she said.

Clasen earned a degree in education and English, but soon realized as a young adult that teaching was not her calling. After working one summer as a seamstress in a bridal store, she decided to change direction. At the tender age of 23, she bought a bridal store, which she operated from 2001 to 2007.

"I sold my store to be a stay at home mom," Clasen said. By 2017, she had established a seamstress business entirely out of her home in Dyersville, Iowa. This eventually turned into A Threaded Needle. A large portion of her house is now occupied by a professional work space. Clasen has two employees and also relies on her daughter, Hannah Nelson, who uses her art experience to benefit the business. Clasen specializes in wedding gowns and dresses that use unusual materials. Many are designed from scratch, but others are not.

"Some may purchase a dress from a store," she said. "I fix the 'but' in the dress. 'I love my dress, but ..."

Clasen is busy keeping up with trends in the industry, such as one where wedding dresses from previous generations are repurposed into reception dresses or baptismal garments. She loves being able to enhance some of the most intimate moments of people's lives. Clasen said she would never be the successful business owner she is today if not for her junior high experience.

"There's a decline in the number of seamstresses because we're not exposing students to that," she said. "We're doing a great disservice to our youth. Bring trades (education) back to schools."

Another local business contributing to the fashion scene in the area is Phoebe's Dressing Room started in 2023. In

My favorite thing about owning my own business is my customers. Watching their families grow, catching up about what's new in their lives or the latest trip they've been on is something I love. When you shop local, you get that and you get someone you can trust and someone who cares about you, your family and the community we live in. I love my job.

Michele Hefel, owner of A Frame of Mind





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There's a decline in the number of seamstresses because we're not exposing students to that. We're doing a great disservice to our youth. Bring trades (education) back to schools.

#### Heather Clasen, owner of A Threaded Needle



2001, Dana and Jeff Huettman relocated to Dubuque after Jeff took a job. In 2023, Phoebe's Dressing Room opened on Main Street. The clothing retailer is a relative newcomer, but is going strong.

"For two years, I was managing a boutique (Vivie Boutique) in the Millwork (District) that closed," Huettman told the Telegraph Herald in a June 2023 article. "I loved learning the business side of it. When that closed, I thought I might as well give this a try."

Phoebe's Dressing Room — named after Huettman's youngest daughter — features women's clothing and accessories from various brands. Huettman said she aimed to have pieces that are affordable, fun and colorful.

Across town, there's another local business that's dug into building strong connections with the community.

The Dubuque Mining Co. is a place known more for its rich burger selection than its precious ore deposits. The chance to facilitate love and friendship through his restaurant provides enough gold for Guy Parkin.

A Dubuque native from a family with 10 children, Parkin started working in the restaurant business at age 14. He was hired at the Mining Co., located at Kennedy Mall, in the 1980s. The business space, which originally housed a disco dance club, was established as the Dubuque Mining Company in 1977.

After a stint as a part-owner, Parkin bought the business in 2018.

"I started out as a cook and a bartender," he recalled.

The establishment currently has 35 staff, according to Parkin. In honor of its disco past, sections of the place are still called "stage" and dance floor," but that's not the only nod to history.

On the walls are items which call to mind Dubuque's lead mining operations of the past.

"We have mining tools," Parkin said. "There are different signs and a thermometer."

The people who work at and patronize the business are what has sustained Parkin through so many years. His two sons now also work there with him — one full and one part-time.

"I have some employees that have been here as long as I have," said Parkin. "We have a lot of regulars. It's a family atmosphere."

For those looking for a way to meet outdoors in both the summer and winter, Chestnut Mountain Resort is a small business with a long track record catering to adventurous folks. The business near Galena of-fers bike trails, zip lines, a ski slope, a restaurant and numerous other activities.

"Its Midwestern roots and small town charm makes folks feel welcome and keeps them coming back for more," stated a description on VisitGalena.org, a website dedicated to area travel.

In the winter season, skiing takes center stage at Chestnut Mountain.

"We are family friendly. We cater to beginners (new to skiing)," said Chestnut Mountain Resort Marketing Director Stewart Stoffregen.



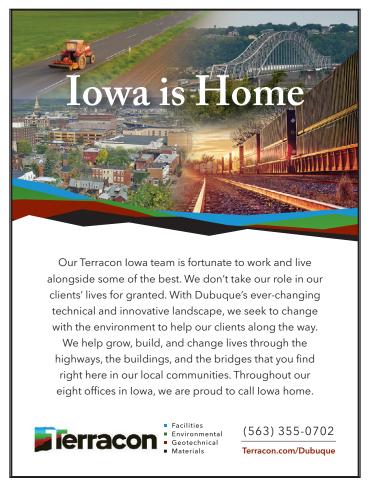
A skier rides the ski lift at Chestnut Mountain Resort.

He said last year was tough because there was a streak of extreme heat during the winter, so everyone is hoping for colder weather this time around.

It's just one business in the Dubuque

area that's keeping the home fires lit as the holidays approach and winter takes hold. When you shop small and shop local it has an outsize effect that ripples throughout the community.





# NEW KID ON THE BLOCK



WEE Brands Eustom Apparel



#### **BY DAN RUSSO**

IELER, Wis. — WCC Brands Custom Apparel, a growing screen printing and embroidery company, is taking the tri-state market by storm.

"If you work with us, the quality and the service will stand out," said Corey Kaiser, who coowns the firm with Jacob Skora and Tim Pickel. WCC Brands has 30 employees. The company's commitment to personalized service for clients is so strong that 10 of those employees are in sales, according to Kaiser. An earlier embroidery business owned by Kaiser's parents and originally established under a different name, made a mark in the local market for three decades, becoming known for uniforms early in its history. In 2022, Kaiser and his partners took over and made big changes.



"In our family and in our business, it's always community first," Kaiser said.

Kaiser, 29, graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 2018, with a business degree before taking on his current role. He said the company can put logos and other designs on different types of clothing.

"We handle the homecomings for Loras College and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville," he said. "We working with companies throughout Dubuque."

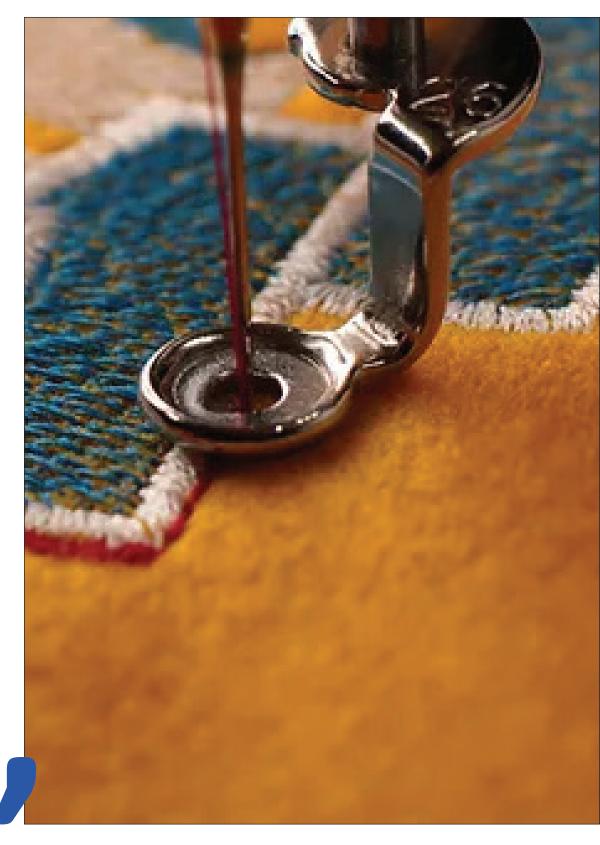
WCC Brands is expanding. They recently moved to a new 10,000 square foot facility, also in Kieler, to handle the additional business. The company owns multiple screen printers and embroidery machines, as well as other equipment. Graphic designers on staff help customers create their items and the sales team sticks with the customers through the concept phase to the end of the process, according to Kaiser.

"Our job here is to make everyone else's job easier," Kaiser said, alluding to the staff of companies using the custom clothing for promotion.

Designs are put onto name brands like Under Armour or Nike. Although all work is done at the Kieler, there also are customers who have orders shipped around the Midwest region. Aside from the traditional printing methods and embroidery, the company also does Heat transfer, also known as

In our family and in our business, it's always community first.

Corey Kaiser, co-owner of WCC Brands Custom Apparel





heat transfer printing. It is the process of applying heat-applied materials to various items known as substrates with a heat press.

"We have quality checks throughout our facility," Kaiser said.

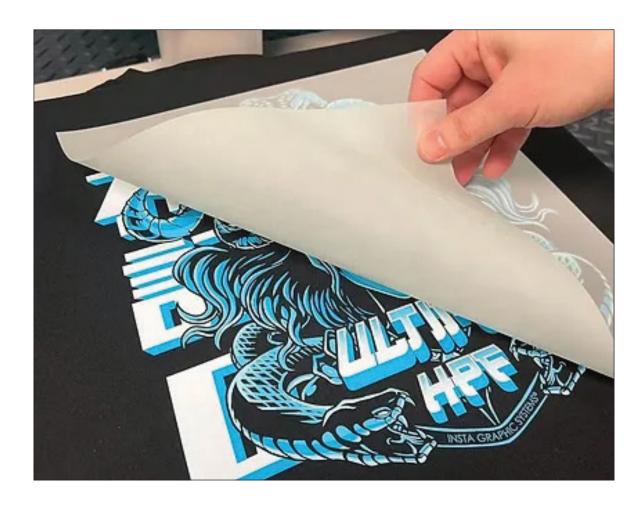
He attributes the company's success to the attitude of its personnel.

"Our minds and focus of our sales team is in the right spot. The customer always

comes first," Kaiser said.

WCC Brands is one of the newest members of Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, according to the organization. Hopes are high for continued expansion and development, according to the company's leaders.

"Up to this point, we haven't had any major challenges," Kaiser said.



# BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK Townsquare Media



ownsquare Media has become a leader in the local marketing industry since its founding 20 years ago. With radio serving as its foundation, the firm with about 20 employees has adapted to the rise of the digital age.

"Townsquare Media was founded in 1994, but acquired our cluster of radio stations from Cumulus in October 2013 as part of a large acquisition that included Cedar Rapids, Waterloo and Quad Cities markets," said Jeff Robb market president and chief revenue officer for the company. "As for when our radio stations were first established, our oldest station WD-BQ-AM first went on the air in 1925."





We've executed national marketing campaigns out of this Dubuque office that has played a part in being recognized by Borrell Associates as the #1 digital marketing vendor in the Dubuque market.

Jeff Robb, market president and chief revenue officer

Townsquare Media strives to connect local audiences on radio and across digital media.

"If you listen to our stations, we're constantly pointing people back to our digital platforms to engage, enter contests and get great local content," Robb said. "We own radio stations 349 local radio station in 74 cities — mostly all in small-to-medium sized markets, which was intentional."

In addition to radio stations, Town-square owns national media platforms such as Taste of Country, XXL, Screen-Crush, Diffuser, Ultimate Classic Rock and a website/SEO/reputation management division called Townsquare Interactive.

This stable of resources has allowed the company to bring success to many clients.

"We've executed national marketing campaigns out of this Dubuque office that has played a part in being recognized by Borrell Associates as the No. 1 digital





#### 



marketing vendor in the Dubuque market," Robb said.

There are some misconceptions in the digital marketing realm, according to Robb.

"Everyone wants attribution — did my marketing dollars generate a response or sale?" said Robb. "Traditional marketing mediums like radio, TV, print and outdoor have always faced the challenge of providing attribution to their clients. I think it would surprise some of your readers to know that Townsquare Media can provide a report to our clients of how their radio ads impacted their web traffic in the minutes after their ads aired. Feel free to reach out and I can explain more about Townsquare Analytics and how it works."

Robb said there's no "one size fits all budget for all verticals and objectives."

"The more highly desirable your audience

is to market to, the more it's going to cost to deliver an ad to that person — whether it's on Google, streaming TV or audio, a banner display ad or on a social media platform, he said "... I would really sit down with your digital provider and ask them to reverse engineer the budget to understand how/why they came up with that number ... "

Townsquare's leadership is grateful for its success and has tried to show it through community support.

"We have several local non-profits we help promote and support but one partnership we've had 20 years is with the Children's Miracle Network and the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital, Robb said. "I'm proud to say we're bringing our annual Radiothon back on Friday, Dec. 6."





# THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



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# RIBBON CUTTINGS Listen



Las Margarritas Restaurant Ribbon cutting date: 8/8/24 1091 Main St.



Ludovissy Insurance Ribbon cutting date: 8/15/24 302 Locust St.



# RIBBON CUTTINGS



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## RIBBON CUTTINGS



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**Venustas Immortalis** Ribbon cutting date: 9/12/24 805 Century Drive, Suite 5

### RIBBON CUTTINGS



Kwik Star Ribbon cutting date: 9/18/24 1080 Kerper Court





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