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On the cover



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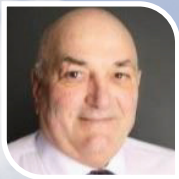
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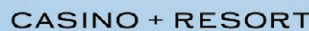
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WELCOME

FROM THE CHAMBER PRESIDENT /CEO



This summer, Dubuque is in motion. From large-scale events like RAGBRAI, making its way to our community, to the continued investment in spaces like the Back Waters AMP, our community is experiencing a season defined by energy, connection and opportunity.

At the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, we know these moments don't happen by accident. They are the result of strong partnerships, intentional investment and a business community that shows up, ready to welcome, serve and grow.

In this issue of CQ, we explore how summer serves as a powerful economic driver for our region. Behind every visitor experience is a network of local businesses — restaurants, retailers, service providers and employers — working together to make Dubuque a destination. For many, this season represents a critical window for growth, innovation and momentum that carries throughout the year.

We also recognize that with opportunity comes challenge. Workforce needs, operational demands, and the pace of the season require adaptability and resilience. Yet time and again, our members rise to meet the moment.

As you read these stories, we encourage you to think about your role in this season of opportunity — how your business can engage, collaborate and contribute to the continued vibrancy of our community.

Together, we are not only supporting a strong summer—we are building a stronger Dubuque.

Sincerely,

Molly Grover CCE, IOM
President & CEO





Welcome New Members

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1/8/2026



1/8/2026



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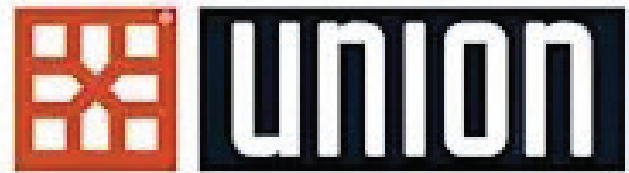
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Welcome New Members



2/11/2026



2/20/2026



2/26/2026

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Car Wash*

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DUBUQUE AREA BUSINESSES HAVE THEIR DOORS WIDE OPEN FOR SUMMER CROWDS

BY ANGELA JONES

Once Midwesterners shake free of winter, it's time to get out and about; and, naturally, they bring their friends and wallets with them. Many businesses see their profits grow during these warmer days, and they make preparations accordingly. Summer brings with it more than just welcoming businesses and interested customers; there's also a range of outdoor events and activities, like RAGBRAI and concerts (as at the newly constructed Back Waters Amphitheater).

Of course, planning for summer cannot just be business as usual, either, as much more goes into preparing for customers and their wishes. They have to plan strategically for staffing and for products around the events that are most likely going to draw more people to the city and surrounding area.



Fans enjoy Buckcherry as they perform during Velocity Festival at Field of Dreams in Dyersville, Iowa.

One of the first things that out-of-town visitors consider is where they will stay, and there are plenty of options. One hotel, Holiday Inn on Main Street, is central to many area happenings, and hotel manager Theresa Rodgers knows just what it means to prepare for these active months.

“Summer is big; it’s much busier. When we hit spring-time, we start ramping up our staff,” Rodgers said. “We’ll have five baseball teams in-house this weekend. There are more weddings, and the (Back Waters) stage will bring more business.”

And those are just a few of the activities that they know of to prepare for; then they also check the published events calendars to make sure they’re not missing anything for staffing the hotel, the restaurant and the shuttle.

Of course, besides staffing, the hotel changes its menu to fit summertime pal-



Holiday Inn Dubuque.



Summer is big; it’s much busier. When we hit spring-time, we start ramping up our staff.

Holiday Inn Hotel Manager Theresa Rodgers



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Yardarm Riverfront Bar & Grill in Dubuque.

ettes, though “pizzas are (always) huge (to order in).”

With this in mind, Holiday Inn will start making pizzas in-house to capture some of that food revenue.

“Summer is when we make our revenue,” Rodgers said. “We bank on groups and summer guests. Room revenue could double, and we often have sold out weekends.”

Visitors come to the Dubuque area not just for events but for mini-getaways, too.

“People come here because there’s good food and entertainment,” Rodgers said. “But the game is that we have to work ahead of schedule.”

The hospitality and service industry is not without its challenges, though, especially with staffing.

Bama Ohnesong, manager at the Yardarm Riverfront Bar & Grill, agrees that staffing can be a challenge, but sees that as part of being a seasonal establishment.

“Dubuque is good about giving heads up to be strategic,” Ohnesong said. “We have lots of college kids (working here). They’re often here for four summers and then they’re gone. I’m an empty nester all the time!”



The interior of Holiday Inn Dubuque.

While Ohnesong admits that some turnaround is part of the business, she also knows that Yardarm has a “great environment” for students to work in. While their own stage cannot compete with national acts that get booked at Back Water Amphitheater and other

stages, she said their spot is good for “pre-gaming” and for getting food before a show.

“We’re always adapting,” Ohnesong said. “We now have mocktails and healthier drinks so younger people can hang out and socialize. And this year we added day music for those who use the



Bartender Kelli Steffen pours a beer at Darkbird Taproom.

marina and for those who want less of a blast of party.”

She stressed that the more that is going on in Dubuque, the more they get to welcome people. Of course, it’s easy to embrace a good-time place during the dog days of summer.

A little further west, Darkbird Taproom, in Peosta, Iowa, another good-time spot, also feels the effects of summer crowds but often more from goings-on in Dyersville and area than from downtown Dubuque.

“Summer is a good opportunity to showcase what we do,” manager Grace Burds said. “And we plan ahead and adjust for schedules.”

The events in Dyersville that they track include the Velocity Festival, activities at the Field of Dreams and numerous others. And, as with most places in the service industry, staffing is a major part of business success.

“Staffing and training is a bigger challenge,” Burds said. “Finding a good fit and retaining strong team members

“ This will be one of the busiest summers in Dubuque. There’s a lot of opportunity for new money to come to the community. ”

President and CEO at Greater Dubuque Development Corporation Jason White

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to represent the business matters. Strong staff helps the customer experience.”

It makes sense that summer staffing is more difficult due to the inconsistent nature of events and activities, but this summer seems to be heating up with a steady stream of options.

Jason White, President and CEO at Greater Dubuque Development Corporation (GDDC), is looking forward to seeing how well this summer does for the Dubuque area economically.

“This will be one of the busiest summers in Dubuque,” White said. “There’s a lot of opportunity for new money to come to the community.”

From GDDC’s studied point of view, the area will see more patrons, there will be more shopping and there will be more revenue for motels and hotels, for example. The hope, of course, is that staffing issues will be largely solved by the college- and high school-aged students looking for part-time, temporary work, according to White.

Dubuque, with its numerous small universities in the area, might see more student availability this summer, especially with recent living cost increases, he stressed.

Once staffing, product levels and marketing (print, social media, billboards, etc.) are in place, area businesses can show what they are capable of, and visitors are more likely to go home and tell others to visit, too.

“It’s a good opportunity to present ourselves to the outside world,” White said.

Many from the outside world will be coming to Dubuque via bicycle in July. RAGBRAI Director Matt Phippen understands the effects that visitors from this specific event has on a local economy.

“Our riders love to experience what each town has to offer. The riders understand that it takes a lot for these



Riders make their way through Dubuque the last time that RAGBRAI ended in Dubuque in 2010.



towns to pull off RAGBRAI,” Phippen said. “They want to make sure they find ways to support locals first.”

RAGBRAI riders will experience downtown Dubuque before heading out to Onawa and then again on the return, according to Phippen. Further, he said, “the shorter last day ... should give riders extra time to explore and not feel the rush to leave town.”

The area already seems abuzz with the possibility of entertainment and adventure this year, so much so that it may be difficult to do everything we hear and read about. But that’s a good problem to have, and a good problem for area businesses to have.

The ultimate challenge might be to keep summer at a slow pace and really savor all of these offerings while supporting the businesses we know and love, both currently and in the coming months.



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Miracle Car Wash in Dubuque.



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And we take pride in spending time (on cars).
It's all about the people and the employees.*



Owner Doug Tonn

BY ANGELA JONES

Miracle Car Wash has recently rejoined the Chamber but can hardly be considered new to town. With almost 22 years under the current owners, and more than 40 years before them, this “newbie” has staying power. And a solid business model to back it.

While many newer car washes are popping up, they do not quite seem to match Miracle’s community involvement and care for their employees and customers as a locally owned company.

“Everything we do stays in Dubuque,” owner Doug Tonn said. “It’s important to shop local if you like where you live.”

That pride of place is seen in their washes for cars — even a self-serve dog wash — and in their support of their community. The company’s ‘Operation We Care’ that takes place every Memorial Day has raised more than \$250,000 thanks to its sponsors and customers.

“We take pride in knowing our customers,” Tonn said. “And we take pride in spending time (on cars). It’s all about the people and the employees.”

It’s been about the customers and

employees since Tonn joined his brother, Chuck, in 2004, and continues to be about customers with current co-owners, Jesse Howell and Luke Heim.

But, of course, focusing on customers means focusing on customers’ cars both exterior and interior.

“We don’t just spray the car and run it down the line,” Tonn said.

Instead, a number of Miracle’s 15-20 employees attend to the washes, the detailing and other individual services to pamper cars, which is good for the car and feels better to drive it.

Miracle Car Wash is succeeding in



the test of time. Howell and Heim were “kids” when they first started working for Miracle and are now part owners; a daughter, one of Tonn’s first employees, is now working there, too.

Tonn, who initially carried on the business with his brother, Chuck (and after Ron Pothoff), takes calm pride in what he has helped shape and lead. He knows that customers take pride in their cars, and he believes that Miracle Car Wash’s approach to cleaning cars is superior to the new spots in town.

Customers can tell the difference, too, and they keep going back — not just for the quality but also for the local care.

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The Bike Shack at 3250 Dodge Street in Dubuque.

BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK

The Bike Shack

BY ANGELA JONES

Cars help us get around and walking helps us get exercise, but bikes do both — they help us get around faster than walking while also getting exercise. Or taking a bike on a trail for pure exercise and fresh air. No matter what kind of bike we're looking for there, The Bike Shack is ready to outfit riders.

Although it's difficult to imagine that The Bike Shack had any other locations besides on U.S. 20, in fact it was originally located on Burlington and Primrose in an old milk house, then moved to Delhi before landing at its current spot in 1998.



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And the reason it came to exist is because owner Pamela Lewey's dad was "big into biking and racing, and had trouble finding what he wanted," Lewey said.

The Bike Shack started with the bike lines Puch and Austro-Daimler, then added Fuji, and before long brought in Ross and Schwinn lines. In 2001, the business started The Shoe Shack, too.

"We sell bikes and e-bikes, fitness equipment, weight equipment and shoes," Lewey said. "And we offer servicing on the bikes we sell, too."

Lewey said that bike sales are strong, as are e-bikes, which they're selling the most of right now. And she attributes the success of the business to a "good customer base and a good reputation."

Mountain bike and hybrid bike sales have dipped a little, but still sell fairly well thanks to the "four nice mountain trails" that Dubuque has.

Meanwhile, sales are not as strong for kids' bikes at this time, and it's even difficult to fill stock for them.

"Inventory is still not back to normal from (when) COVID (hit)," Lewey said.

But since we can all shop in stores now, the benefits are worthwhile.

"The benefit is service and knowledge, and that you know you're getting what you want," Lewey said.



Dan Schmitt works on bikes at The Bike Shack.

Lewey and her cousin, Dan Schmitt, purchased the business as of Oct. 1, 2025, and they're both "happy to be part of the next generation." She said that as an owner she worries more but likes to make decisions, like recently bringing in a new line of e-bike, Aventon.

Not surprisingly, their success is

attributed to "customer service" — in particular, "taking care of customers, getting what they want, asking the right questions" — and their business longevity is connected to this customer care.

Their success means they've hit the right path and are cycling along for the long ride.



An employee moves inventory at The Bike Shack.

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THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



Owner of Vanguard Countertops JB Priest (right) gives a tour of his company during the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce annual Manufacturing Appreciation Week.



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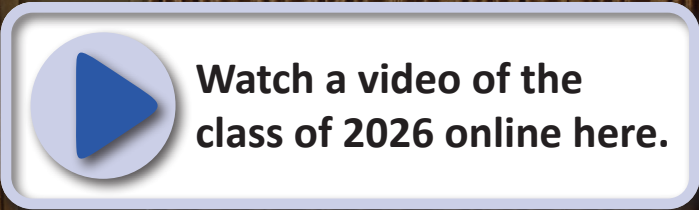


SCHEDULE A VIEWING TODAY!

Contact **AMY WAGNER** at
(563) 588-5685 or
awagner@wcinet.com

Visit: www.wcinet.com/801bluff/
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more details.





The Leadership Dubuque graduation, class of 2026.

THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS



Taste of the Tri-States was held at the Hotel Julien Dubuque.



Photos courtesy of Digital Dubuque



&
present



TRI-STATE DRONE EXTRAVAGANZA

ELECTRIC SKIES | LIVE BEATS | LOCAL EATS

Friday, July 17 | 5 PM
Dubuque County Fairgrounds
14569 Old Highway Rd. | Dubuque
Drone Light Show at Dusk

TICKETS \$10 EACH

(10 & under FREE, but they must have a ticket)

AT THE SHOW

JOHN DEERE DUBUQUE WORKS

Equipment manufactured at Dubuque Works will be on display.

MUSIC

Kind of a Big Deal (5:30-9:30 pm)

FUN ZONE *(fun stuff for kids little & big)*

inflatables: obstacle course, bounce house, hoops game, ax throwing game, and more!

COOLING & QUIET ZONE *(4H Building)*

FOOD AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FROM

Hibachi Time, Hangry Hobo, La Patrona, Magoo's, Freddy's Popcorn, Hy-Vee (BBQ) and Dubuque County Fairgrounds

BEVERAGES *(including adult beverages)*

served by Dubuque County Fairgrounds

DONATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR THE VETERANS FREEDOM CENTER.

*Feel free to bring lawn chairs and blankets.
PLEASE NOTE: Outside food and beverages, coolers, and animals are not permitted.*

Major Sponsors



Supporting Sponsors



Venue Sponsor



TICKETS AVAILABLE AT: TelegraphHerald.com/Drone

adho-464971

RIBBON CUTTINGS



DuBrick
Ribbon cutting date: 3/26/26

RIBBON CUTTINGS



The Scrub Rack
Ribbon cutting date: 4/9/26



Edwards Creative
Ribbon cutting date: 4/30/26



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