

100 YEARS OF BUSINESS 1918 - 2018



“Waukesha and Waukesha County
have much to offer.”

-J. Frederick Palmer, President
Waukesha Association of Commerce, 1936

WAUKESHA COUNTY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Advocate

Develop

Network

Promote

We're excited to celebrate 100 years of business in 2018. From our humble beginnings in 1918 as the Waukesha Chamber of Commerce, representing just the City of Waukesha, we have grown to be a business powerhouse that represents the whole of Waukesha County, truly making us a strong voice for business in our entire region.

But we couldn't have done it without all our member companies that so believed in our mission throughout the past 100 years. As you can see from our bylaws in 1922, we have been committed to serving the business community since the beginning.

You'll also notice that many of the issues we have worked on throughout the years are still being worked on today. We're still trying to attract companies to our area, still trying to build up a skilled pool of workers for our businesses, still trying to ensure Waukesha County has a business-friendly regulatory climate, still trying to maintain a safe and efficient infrastructure, just as we did in 1918. Why have none of these issues been solved?

It's important to remember that issues that face the business community are rarely solved. These issues are complex and ever-changing, and constantly require new ways of thinking to address them. We must be committed to constantly evolving and adapting to the needs of the business community, offering new and innovative solutions to the same problems as they morph over time. We can always attract more businesses and workers to our area, make Waukesha County's regulatory climate even more business-friendly, make our infrastructure even safer and more efficient, and more.

We at the Waukesha County Business Alliance are dedicated to implementing innovative solutions to help our member businesses succeed. We know that the business environment is constantly evolving and we are committed to evolving with it. We're humbled by everything the business community in Waukesha County has been able to achieve over the past 100 years and we're excited to be at the forefront of business growth and success for the next 100 years.



Suzanne Kelley

Suzanne Kelley
President & CEO
Waukesha County Business Alliance

A strong and aggressive chamber of commerce is an integral part of any progressive and developing community. We salute the member firms who have undertaken the support of our dedication to our free enterprise system and our concurrent concern for the welfare of our citizens.

Dar Williams, president of the Association, introduces "Know Your City" tours for residents to learn what is being produced and built in Waukesha

The Junior Association and affiliated women's organizations become part of the chamber, so "efforts of all may be directed toward a common end"

The Association moves its offices from the Columbia block to the Kolb building at 267 Broadway West in Waukesha

Articles of Incorporation are filed for the **Waukesha Chamber of Commerce**

1918 The organization's name is changed to the **Waukesha Association of Commerce**

1919 The first meeting of the Waukesha Chamber of Commerce held

1924 The Association supports the proposal to expand the hospital in Waukesha, now known as Waukesha Memorial Hospital

1932 The Association helps Alloy Corporation move from Milwaukee to Waukesha

The Association begins holding meetings for executives on topics such as budgeting, sales, advertising, unemployment insurance and more

1936 The organization's name is changed back to the **Waukesha Chamber of Commerce** and is incorporated

A safety school was launched in conjunction with the Waukesha Vocational School, now known as Waukesha County Technical College

1939 The Chamber joins the Better Business Bureau

The Chamber tries to bring the Waukesha Motor Company strike to a close by forming a Citizens Committee to educate Waukesha citizens on the cost of strikes and the effects on local merchants, the community and the future of industry in Waukesha

The Chamber endorses building a legion of homes to stimulate home-building in the area and employ construction labor

The Chamber contributes to the debate on whether parking meters should be installed in downtown Waukesha



1949 **MEN AT WORK**—The members of the Association of Commerce industrial committee are shown here across the conference table. They are, left to right, Phil Roden, Charles Nelson, John Pfeffer, Roger Mixter, chairman, Roy E. Cairns, A. O. Hinz.



The business interests, which include all taxpayers, citizens, business men of all classifications as well as manufacturers need an Association of Commerce.

—J. Frederick Palmer, president of the Association, 1936

The Chamber works with the City of Waukesha and the Waukesha National Bank to run war loan drives during World War II

1944 The Chamber's national affairs committee sends telegrams to state legislators to try and end the coal strike. "No one group should at any time be allowed to monopolize and control the industrial life of our community."

1946

1945 The Chamber stresses the shortage of labor in Waukesha County and urges issuance of building permits for the construction of housing on a temporary basis

1951 The Chamber sponsors a retail sales clinic for up to 700 business owners to learn best practices in sales and human relations

1954

The Chamber sponsors a program at the local high school to train students for sales jobs during the holiday season; 42 students were placed as a result

The Chamber advocates for a new post office to be built in Waukesha

1956

The organization's name is changed back to the **Waukesha Association of Commerce**

The Association hosts the first Industrial Exposition in which 32 industries familiarize the community with what their particular business is all about

1961

The Association's Education Committee helps develop the technical arts program of the Waukesha School system

The Association hosts a "Voice of Your Business" clinic on courteous telephone-answering technique

1964

Joseph O'Connell becomes executive director of the Association

The Association moves its offices to 722 N Grand Ave in Waukesha, across the street from the old location

The Association begins its campaign to revitalize downtown Waukesha by visiting four towns in Illinois to learn best practices

1971

1969

The Association meets with the mayor and council members to help select a new site for the Waukesha County Technical Institute, now Waukesha County Technical College

1963

The Municipal Affairs Committee of the Association initiated action to bring a University of Wisconsin Extension Center to the county, which ended up opening in 1966



Grand Opening Downtown

Downtown Waukesha has a new business. Allied Radio had its grand opening Thursday in the building formerly occupied by Clarke Drugs at the Five Points. From left to right are: Mayor Paul Vrakas, George Strack and Jeff Stutz of Allied Radio, Sig Ross, president of the Waukesha Chamber of Commerce, Ken P. Klitzke, vice-president of the Marine National Bank and Joseph O'Connell, executive secretary of the chamber of commerce.

1974

1975

The Association joins the newly-created Cross Town Traffic Educational Committee to push through a major street improvement project to help alleviate major traffic problems in downtown Waukesha



Industries Showing Products

More than a dozen Waukesha industries are exhibiting their products this weekend at the Waukesha Industry Exposition. It's being held at the County Arena on Northview Road. Here, Robert L. Thompson, 2021 Madera Drive, international market-

er for the Waukesha Motor Co., explains one of its engines to (left to right) Julio Alvarez, 11, of 2115 Oaklawn Ave.; Andy Schultz, 11, of 2005 Norton Ave. and Mark Peterson, 10, of 2210 Norton Ave. The Expo is on today and Sunday.

1974



The Chamber's annual banquet, November 20, 1947

1922

Membership in the Association is reclassified to include men of all occupations

The Association's headquarters are moved to the Avalon Hotel

1923

A manufacturers' division of the Association is formed

1928

Talk begins among groups, including the Association, to establish an airport in Waukesha

1930

The Association endorses establishing a Salvation Army in Waukesha

1935

The Association joins the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Wisconsin State Chamber of Commerce

1938

The Chamber sponsors a trade promotion dinner with the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) to discuss problems of mutual interest

1945

The Chamber stresses the shortage of labor in Waukesha County and urges issuance of building permits for the construction of housing on a temporary basis

1951

The Chamber sponsors a retail sales clinic for up to 700 business owners to learn best practices in sales and human relations

1960

The Association clears its financial debt under a new board of directors, sells the non-profitable credit bureau and begins a new decade with a new goal in mind: To make Waukesha a better place to live and work

1969

The Association meets with the mayor and council members to help select a new site for the Waukesha County Technical Institute, now Waukesha County Technical College

1973

The Association works with local police to make a registration system for door-to-door salesmen/sales groups

OVER

WAUKESHA COUNTY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Advocate / Develop / Network / Promote



The Alliance reaches 1,000 member companies.

2015



The Waukesha County Business Alliance celebrates 100 years of business

2018

The Alliance runs the first Schools2Skills™ tour to show high school students all the available career opportunities in manufacturing

2011

The organization merges with the Waukesha County Action Network to form the **Waukesha County Business Alliance, Inc.**

The Manufacturing Alliance is formed

2010



John A. Ehlers, FREEMAN STAFF
Graduates of the Waukesha Area Chamber of Commerce 1994 Leadership Waukesha Class pictured here are, left to right, Brian Link of Link Associates, Steve Gross of the Fleming Co., mack of Alloy Products Corp.

Ann Nischke becomes executive director of WACC

1998



Ann Nischke

1993

WACC works with Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) to present a first-of-its-kind legislative video conference as well as a "legislative update" that summarizes state legislation



"We Are 75 Years Young"

WACC moves its offices to 223 Wisconsin Ave in Waukesha

The Advocacy Task Force kicks off to help WACC determine which positions to take stances on

WACC supports the formation of the newly-created Partners in Education

WACC creates a Tourism Task Force to find a way to attract more businesses

A West Bypass Task Force is formed to support the creation of a west side bypass to help alleviate traffic problems that threaten to hurt commercial and residential development in that portion of Waukesha

1990

The Association, in partnership with the City of Waukesha, opens the Waukesha Area Business Center, a business incubator to help new businesses survive

The first Leadership Waukesha County class kicks off

1988

223 Wisconsin Ave, Waukesha



The Association hosts the first monthly legislative breakfast, where state legislators meet with chamber members to discuss the political topics of the day

1983

The organization's name is changed to the **Waukesha Chamber of Commerce, Inc.**

1985

1984

The Association forms a Leadership Development Task Force to kick off the first Leadership Waukesha County class

1980

The Association opens a resource center to aid small businesses and give free counseling and information

1987

The first The BIG One Golf Outing is held

The first annual Mardi Gras ball and banquet fundraiser is held

Gregory Fitzlaff becomes the executive director of the Association



Jean Graf



From the Chamber's Program of Work, 1976

To develop, encourage, promote and protect the commercial, professional, financial, general business and manufacturing interests of the community is our stated purpose. Supplementing this objective is the promotion of civic interests and the general welfare of all the citizens of the city of Waukesha.



2003

Patti Wallner becomes president of the WACC

The organization's name is changed to the **Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.** to represent the entire county



Patti Wallner

1991

WACC takes a leadership role in developing the General Castings property into affordable housing to increase the number of qualified workers

1989

Jean Graf becomes the executive director of the Association

The Association assumes an informed advocacy position

The organization's name is changed to the **Waukesha Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (WACC)**

2016

The Alliance supports the City of Waukesha in gaining approval for their proposal to use Lake Michigan water

The Alliance launches the Waukesha County Center for Growth, Inc., the economic development organization for Waukesha County, in partnership with Waukesha County, the City of Waukesha and the Wisconsin Small Business Development Network (SBDC)

The Alliance helps Waukesha County Technical College fundraise to open their new, state-of-the-art Integrated Manufacturing Center



UW-Extension, the Waukesha County Business Alliance, the City of Waukesha and Waukesha County sign the agreement to form an economic development organization for Waukesha County.



The BIG One Golf Outing, 1998

WORKING TOGETHER TODAY . . .

as an organization of business endeavors encompassing four major divisions:

- ★ Industrial ★ Retail ★ Service
- ★ Professional & Finance

YOUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE . . .

is dedicated to the promotion and protection of the business interests and the general welfare of the community.

LOOKING FORWARD . . .

to tomorrow through a Program of Work, established by its Board of Directors and accomplished through standing committees concerned with:

- ★ Economic Development ★ Education
- ★ Government Affairs ★ Retail
- ★ Municipal Affairs ★ Manufacturing

WAUKESHA

Chamber of Commerce

722 N. Grand Ave., Waukesha, Wis. 53186

542-4249

An advertisement run in the Waukesha Freeman, 1976

PRINTING PARTNER

CONTENT PARTNER

heritage
design > print > mail

