MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Thank you for being a member.

That is an oversimplification, of course. If I had to list all the ways to say thank you, this report would take days to finish reading. What I can say in this space is this: we are excited to have you as a part of the Chamber. We are excited to continually bring people together to provide them with unique opportunities and services that allow them to grow their business.

The Chamber is more than a means to network. We're about elevating your profile, providing cost-savings, advocating for business, developing our workforce, no-cost business education, and tackling community issues head on.

Our success is only made possible by your success. We are thrilled to see our community embrace the passion and vision we have for helping to create McLean County a great place to do business. I hope you enjoy reading and learning more about our work in this 2023 Annual Report.

We appreciate you.

Charlie Moore
President/CEO
Elevating Our Members

Top 10 Member Categories

1. Business & Professional Services: 157 members
2. Family, Community & Civic Organizations: 123 members
3. Finance & Insurance: 107 members
4. Construction & Renovation Services: 88 members
5. Shopping & Specialty Retail: 84 members
6. Restaurants, Food & Beverages: 84 members
7. Health Care: 79 members
8. Real Estate, Moving & Storage: 61 members
9. Advertising & Media: 49 members
10. Computers & Telecommunications: 41 members

Total Members: 932
ECHI Subscribers: 835
Members of Distinction: 171
New Members: 161
Advertisements Placed: 127
Events: 103
BNYP Members: 84
Room Rentals: 62
Ribbon Cuttings: 54
Business Education Sessions: 29
Ambassadors: 28
Energy Cooperative Participants: 18

Vision and Mission in 2023

In 2023 we focused heavily on what matters most—working to bring people together to create an informed, empowered, and strong network of vibrant and progressive businesses collaborating to make McLean County a great place to do business.

We accomplished this through Promoting commerce, Advocating for local businesses through identifying what impacts our community, Collaborating to lead change by building partnerships, and Engaging in action leading to results which positively impact the diverse needs of our members. This is our PACE mission.
The Chamber offered a variety of engaging events designed to bring businesses together to network and create intentional connections through exceptional experiences.

### Annual Business Excellence Awards

The Annual Business Excellence Gala, presented by Commerce Bank, was the biggest event of the year. A sold out crowd of 720 people from our community came to celebrate local business and to share in celebration of five recipients of the Business Excellence Award and our Legacy of Excellence winner, Julie Dobski.

### Agricultural Awareness Events

The Agriculture Awareness Breakfast and Agriculture Awards Dinner, presented by GROWMARK, honored local agriculture and the advancement of agricultural education and awareness. Combined, attendance was over 400.

### Stroker Golf Classic

The Stroker Golf Classic, presented by Lil Beaver Brewery, was a fun way to connect with others through an interactive activity that is both challenging and entertaining. It was a sold out event.

### Leaders of Distinction Awards Dinner

The Leaders of Distinction and ATHENA Awards Dinner, presented by Carle BroMenn Medical Center, honored those 20 under 40 in our community. We had 250 gathered to celebrate.
The Chamber offered a variety of engaging events designed to bring businesses together to network and create intentional connections through exceptional experiences.

Twin Cities Showcase
The Twin Cities Business Showcase, presented by CEFCU, gave businesses the opportunity to shine by showcasing their services. We had nearly 400 attendees.

Business Before and After Hours
Business Before & After Hours are McLean County’s premier monthly networking events! Hosted at a variety of locations throughout the year, attendees had the opportunity to meet with others to connect and build relationships. Total attendees were 1350.

Let’s Do Lunch
Members met at various locations throughout the year as an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion centered around growing their business and building a better community. Around 250 members engaged in this opportunity which spanned ten events.

Comm University Tailgate
Comm U returned with its first gathering since the pandemic. President Tarhule engaged with our members during a beautiful outing at Illinois State University to cheer on the Redbirds.
The Chamber offered an assortment of educational and leadership building resources utilized by our members to maximize their potential in personal and professional growth.

Business Education

Business Education, presented by PNC, offered sessions providing a unique insight to anyone in any business. Speakers brought their experience, knowledge, and tools to help businesses thrive in our community. We had more than 350 unique participants.

Leadership McLean County

Presented by GROWMARK, LMC helped develop informed leadership skills to participants wanting to better understand issues facing the community, and to gain an influence over the decisions that impact our community. We had the largest class size in six years with an enrollement of thirty people for 2023-2024.

Bloomington Normal Young Professionals

Presented by Catalyst Construction, BNYP engaged with leaders in the Bloomington-Normal community focused on building professional networks, giving back to the community, and taking on leadership roles to help move this community forward. We ended with 84 active members.

Resource Groups

Our Resource Groups engaged in a variety of experiences providing them with opportunities to grow in areas of education, best practices, developing mentor relationships, and remaining relevant on market trend information. Current groups include: Small Business Roundtable, Solopreneurs, and Women Elevate Women.
Ribbon Cuttings

The Chamber hosts ribbon cutting and ground-breaking ceremonies throughout the year as a way of celebrating milestones for our members. This serves as a way to elevate our member's profile.

Healthcare and Energy Cooperative

Through our partnership with ECHI and Good Energy, we combined all of our Chamber members into an aggregate pool, securing lower costs as compared to what they would have received directly from other providers. Separately, through OEO, we provided free, energy saving lightbulbs. Collectively, these programs saved members tens of thousands of dollars.

Advertising

The Chamber placed 127 ads in 2023 providing an exceptional avenue to businesses to share their message with our membership through a variety of actively engaged communication channels.

Room Rentals and ShareSpace

ShareSpace had active use with 84 monthly passes and 48 day passes issued for the year. We offer the most affordable co-working space in town, saving our small businesses and startups critical dollars in overhead. We also have two great spaces for members to utilize for meetings or training sessions.
Becoming BN Intern Social

Becoming BN, presented by OSF Healthcare, held events to encourage employers, interns, summer employees, and young professionals to create connections within our community allowing a growth in the local talent pipeline. Participants engaging saw value in expanding their career potential right here in McLean County.

Spring Job Fair

The Spring Job Fair brought people together to showcase opportunities in career placement and advancement by speaking one on one with businesses seeking talented people. There were 150 attendees.

Fall Job Fair

Our Job Fair returned once again in the fall at Heartland Community College to a crowd of 250 attendees.

New Resident Guide

The Chamber partnered with MIRA to distribute an attractive and useful New Resident Guide and Welcome Kit. 300 kits were given out to new residents joining our community! This initiative is focused on community onboarding and workforce retention.
Elevating Our Members through ADVOCACY

The Chamber of Commerce served as the leading voice of business on matters of public policy impacting the local economy. This year we re-launched our Government Affairs Committee and crafted a brand new Advocacy Agenda.

Reimagining Advocacy MultiPlied

Our RAMP event focused on workforce needs and improving quality of life and place by creating impactful platforms for fostering business, community growth, and prosperity. The success of RAMP would not have been possible without the enthusiastic participation of all attendees, sponsors, and partners.

Political Action Committee Fundraiser

Remarks on the importance of our pro-business mission were given by several local council members. With your support we more than doubled what we raised at our 2022 event! This will enable us to continue in our mission to get more pro-business candidates into office.

Business Roundtable with Sen. Durbin

Senator Durbin shared a federal legislative update and his insights on workforce challenges facing communities across Illinois. Issues raised by Chamber members included workforce, housing, immigration, infrastructure, healthcare, real estate, affordable childcare, and inflationary pressures.

Office Opening with Rep. LaHood

Members of our community and the Chamber gathered to congratulate and celebrate with Representative LaHood on the opening of his Uptown Normal office. We also helped welcome Senator Koehler and Representative Chung to Downtown Bloomington.