

# CHAMBER NOTES



Oconto Falls  
Area Chamber  
of Commerce

## 2010 IS HERE!

### PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It's that time of year again... time to renew your membership in the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. Why should you write that check?

An investment in the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce is an investment in the future of your business. (See page 10 for your renewal form.)

- Your business listed in the Oconto County Discovery Guide.
- Your business profiled in the Chamber Notes newsletter.
- Ribbon cutting ceremony and media attention for your new business.
- Lunch-n-Learn educational seminars.
- Involvement in community projects.
- Scholarships awarded to a chamber member's child each year.

- Networking opportunities.
- Your issues brought to elected officials.
- Your business listed on and linked to the Chamber website.
- Access to business experts and mentors.
- Window cling showing your support and encouraging local businesses to do business locally.
- Dedicated staff to help direct the public to your business.

2009 was an exciting year for the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and 2010 should bring even more growth and opportunities for our area businesses.

Every member is interested in seeing our area grow and prosper. If that is important to you, then please renew your membership to the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2010

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## MESSAGE FROM NEW CHAMBER PRESIDENT KEN O'DIERNO

Hello Chamber Members,  
I'm Ken O'Dierno and, at least for the next year, I will be the President for the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. Also, before I continue, I would like to give a shout out to April Konitzer for the ideas and timely, effective changes that occurred while she was President. "Thank you very much April."

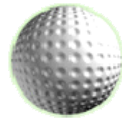
Before I start writing about the Chamber and what we hope to accomplish, it might be a good idea to let you know more about me. Many of you may know me through



my two sons: Ryan; soon to graduate from college or Ian; soon to graduate from Oconto Falls High School.

Probably more of you know me as the invisible person attached to Margaret O'Dierno.

Margaret's father, Vince Reinhard, (94 years old) started Sandalwood Country Club in 1975. She, along with her brother Joe Reinhard, manage and are part owners of Sandalwood Country Club in Abrams.



Margaret and I met while in college at U. W. Whitewater. We both graduated and then were married 26 years ago right in Abrams.

As for Joe Reinhard, in addition to greens keeping at Sandalwood, he is also the Town Council Chairman for Abrams and is quite involved in local and county improvement. Joe is married to Monette Reinhard, who is pretty



involved with the Machikanee Players and the Historical Society of Oconto County.

Margaret and I moved permanently to Abrams in 1995. Prior to that, I held positions as the Executive Director, President or Chairman of a number of non-profit and community entities including:

- County Tourism Director
- County Economic Development Supervisor
- Downtown Redevelopment
- President of the Delta County (Escanaba) Chamber of Commerce.

I also served on the Board of Directors for the Chamber of Commerce for the State of Michigan.

During those years, I was involved in bringing business to the community, creating events to draw tourists, marketing and advertising both county and business sites, and other avenues that tried to bring employment or business to the area.

Honestly, after a few years of doing non-profit and community work, Margaret and I were really burned out and wanted nothing more to do with overseeing another volunteer committee or running another event. Since then, I have tried to keep a low profile and have not been as involved as perhaps I should have been.

Earlier this year, I joined the Oconto Falls Chamber of Commerce for my Health Insurance business. I am an Independent Agent/Owner. I let Michele know that I had some Chamber and Non Profit

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*President's Message from page 2*

experience and that I would be glad to chair a committee or two. Michele contacted me about the opening, and here I am, President of the Chamber. Please don't take these past paragraphs wrong, I just wanted to let you know that I have some experience and that, after a few years of staying away from volunteer work, I think I owe something back to this area.

I hope that as you read a bit of my background, I have earned some credibility as I make a few observations. First, I'll bet most of you had no idea that I had any kind of Chamber or Community Development background. Most may just look at me as Margaret's husband or Ryan/Ian Dad, etc. Or what I do for a living – a health and life insurance agent. The old saying comes to mind “don't judge a book by its cover.”

Here are my observations and a questions for each of you. The Oconto Falls area could always be better – better for business, better for employment, better for (fill in the word). There are very few things in life that couldn't be improved upon.

How many of you have a background or experience in something that few know about? If given the opportunity could you really make a significant change, a big difference, or be a game winner for our community? Why not take that school of hard knocks skill and join a committee tooled for your background? Come up with an idea and let's get after it and make the Oconto Falls area better.

Personally, I will use my past background and experience in the Chamber and Economic Development arenas to hopefully make a difference. How about you?

**SOME IDEAS FOR FUTURE GROWTH OF THE CHAMBER:**

**Small business loan program** - possibly in conjunction with the City's Revolving Loans Program or other programs offered by OCEDC.

**Co-op advertising** – the Chamber runs a weekly insert or ad and has members buy space at cost to help in advertising their business, event, etc.

**Business to Business discounts** – Members buy from members at a lower cost. It keeps business in our area and helps promote keeping dollars at home. Sandalwood, as an example, would have a lower price for golf for Chamber Members.

**Events to draw business to our area** – I helped with events that brought thousands to our area and actually made money for the non-profits I was involved with (I'll say more at Chamber meetings). Maybe you have an idea that you have seen or been involved with in your past?

**One-on-One help for your business** – sign design, architecture ideas, façade improvement, business marketing, advertising, business accounting, cost saving ideas, etc. You could make your background or experience a boon to those

*Continued on page 4*

## Calendar of Events

### January

**5**                    **JOINT CITY & SCHOOL  
PARK & REC  
COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**6 pm**                City Municipal Building  
Oconto Falls.

**16**                    **JOINT OCONTO  
FALLS/OCONTO  
HOLIDAY CHAMBER  
DINNER**  
**5 pm**                Oconto Golf Club  
Las Vegas Night of Fun &  
Entertainment  
\*\*Grand Prize\*\*  
Trip for 2 to Las Vegas  
**RSVP'S BY JANUARY 5,  
2010 REQUIRED**

### February

**6**                    **WILD GAME BANQUET  
with Seminars by Keith  
Jennings**  
**5:30 pm**            Oconto Falls High School  
Contact Hillside Assembly  
Church (920) 855-2962.

**12**                    **CMH HAS GOT TALENT  
OCONTO FALLS PAC**  
Contact Diana Hucek at  
846-3444 ext. 1270.

**16**                    **SPRING PRIMARY  
ELECTION**  
Check with your municipal  
clerk for more information.

If your business or organization has something you would like included in our calendar, please email me at [ofchamber@centurytel.net](mailto:ofchamber@centurytel.net)

### *President's Message from page 3*

who want to do it but just don't know how.

**Expanded List and Monthly Article(s) by Chamber Members** – we have local people and businesses that have a great deal of experience in a broad range of areas. We can highlight that skill not only with their current business but also their past experience (like mine in the Chamber). Also, by featuring articles from local commerce, we can provide easy to get information from someone we can also easily contact for more advice or hire.

These are just a few of the ideas and benefits that I have been in contact with over the years. As you look at the short list above, how many areas could you impact by giving someone your hard won experience?

About that short list – let's make it longer. Let me know if you have any ideas. Let's change the area for 2010. We've all heard it; "God helps those that help themselves." Let's help ourselves and help our community.

You can e-mail Ken at [kenodierno@tristateinsure.com](mailto:kenodierno@tristateinsure.com) with your ideas or if you'd like to be on or chair a committee.



## IRS ANNOUNCES 2010 STANDARD MILEAGE DEDUCTION

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today issued the 2010 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2010, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 50 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 16.5 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

The new rates for business, medical and moving purposes are slightly lower than last year's. The mileage rates for 2010 reflect generally lower transportation costs compared to a year ago.

The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile. The rate for medical and moving purposes is based on the variable costs as deter-

mined by the same study. Independent contractor Runzheimer International conducted the study.

A taxpayer may not use the business standard mileage rate for a vehicle after using any depreciation method under the Modified Accelerated Cost Recovery System (MACRS) or after claiming a Section 179 deduction for that vehicle. In addition, the business standard mileage rate cannot be used for any vehicle used for hire or for more than four vehicles used simultaneously.

Taxpayers always have the option of calculating the actual costs of using their vehicle rather than using the standard mileage rates.

[Revenue Procedure 2009-54](#) contains additional details regarding the standard mileage rates.

Go to the IRS website by clicking below



### 2010 Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce Officers

**President:**

Ken O'Dierno  
866-826-7576

[CLICK TO EMAIL](#)

**Vice President:**

Dick Cromell  
920-897-2104

[CLICK TO EMAIL](#)

**Treasurer:**

Debbie Arndt  
920-846-3444  
ext. 1436

[CLICK TO EMAIL](#)

**Secretary:**

Lisa Christensen  
920-846-4508

[CLICK TO EMAIL](#)

## 5 Small Businesses Tax Tips for 2010 from DebtGuru.com

### 1. KEEP A CALENDAR

Deadlines can sneak up fast. As a small business owner, you have a lot of bills and payrolls to juggle. Don't fail to meet tax deadlines. Deadlines differ depending on when your tax year ends and your business entity. Meeting filing deadlines will minimize penalties and interest.

### 2. START NOW

Don't wait until the last minute and then pull out your shoebox of receipts to give your tax accountant. Even the best accountant can make mistakes when forced to pull it all together at the last minute. Start now. It'll make things a whole lot easier. Take baby steps so you'll have an easier time staying organized.



### 3. REMEMBER YOUR RETIREMENT PLAN

Who would you rather pay: yourself or the government? When you contribute to an IRA, you reduce the amount of income taxed by the government, and you set aside money for retirement. Remember, you can contribute to last year's IRA all the way up until April 15th.

### 4. KEEP ALL DOCUMENTS

When it comes to your taxes, it's a good idea to be a pack rat. You'll have peace of mind knowing you can produce any document at anytime, no matter what questions may come up. Always organize and carefully file away:

- Credit card bills and receipts
- Old checkbooks
- Bills and invoices
- Mileage logs and documentations
- Canceled checks or proofs of payment (VERY important)
- Any evidence that supports

deductions and credit claims on your tax returns

### 5. START PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

Think ahead and April will be easier next year. Throughout the year, keep your taxes on your mind. When making decisions for your business – such as purchasing office space, incorporating, or hiring extra help – consider the implications those changes may have on your taxes. Such careful considerations could help you make wiser, more successful choices for your business.

#### About this Newsletter

*Chamber Notes* is a monthly publication by the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. The intent is to keep Chamber members informed about issues of interest and promote Chamber meetings and activities. To the extent possible, the newsletter will be sent out in electronic format, but paper versions will also be sent out to those members who cannot access it electronically. If you currently receive a paper version and would like to get it in electronic format or know of someone who is a Chamber member and is not getting the newsletter please contact Michele Ripley at 920-604-1008 or [OFChamber@centurytel.net](mailto:OFChamber@centurytel.net).

For other information on the newsletter or to submit items of interest, contact the editor, Michele Ripley at 920-604-1008 or [OFChamber@centurytel.net](mailto:OFChamber@centurytel.net).

# THINK SAFETY

## GOOD WINTER DRIVING TECHNIQUES

For your safety, the safety of other travelers, and the safety of the DOT crews, remember to practice these good winter driving techniques.

- Don't drive through white out conditions caused by plowing of light snow or cross winds. Be patient. Conditions will change so you can travel and pass safely.
- Don't travel beside a snowplow. They can be moved sideways after hitting drifts or cutting through snow pack.
- Drive well below the posted speed limit and avoid the use of cruise control when snow, ice, freezing rain or sleet is on the pavement. The posted speed limits are intended for normal pavement conditions.
- Buckle up!
- Watch when passing a snow plow for the "wing" plow.
- Stay a safe distance behind the snowplows. During snow plowing operations visibility can be reduced by blowing snow. Operators may need to stop or move over to avoid stranded vehicles. Materials are also being spread for your driving safety.
- Make sure you have clear vision ahead before passing a snowplow. On two-lane roads where traffic is not able to pass the plows, plow operators will pull over periodically to let vehicles behind them pass. On divided highways, watch for snowplows operating in the left lane.



- Be aware that ramps, bridges and overpasses may occasionally freeze first.
- Allow plenty of room when passing a snowplow. Do not cut back into the lane ahead of the plow too quickly since the blade extends several feet ahead of the truck.
- Be aware of black ice. (roads that look wet but are actually glazed with ice.)

- Move as far away from the centerline of the pavement as you safely can when meeting a snowplow on a two-lane road since blowing snow may obscure the actual width of the snowplow's blade.

- Remain alert.

Snowplows generally move slower than other traffic (5-35 mph), and may be completely obscured at times by blowing snow and blizzard-like conditions. This is especially important when you see an area of blowing snow that could conceal a plow.

- Don't try to pass snowplows that are working together in tandem pulling snow from the middle of a divided highway. There isn't enough room for you to get through.
- Turn on your lights - to see and be seen. Brush the snow off your head lights and tail lights frequently.
- Know how your anti-lock brakes work in slippery conditions.

Wishing you a safe winter driving season!

# HOLIDAY GATHERING

## TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS



Each year the Oconto and Oconto Falls Chambers of Commerce come together to celebrate the holidays with all of their business members. This year it is being hosted by the

Oconto Area Chamber and will be an amazing extravaganza!

"An Evening in Vegas" will be held Saturday, January 16th at the Oconto Golf Club, 532 Jefferson St., Oconto. The Oconto Chamber is partnering with Oconto Travel to offer an awesome grand prize...A trip for 2 to Las Vegas!



**Cocktails** 5:00--6:30 pm  
**Las Vegas Style Buffet** 6:30 pm  
Prime Rib & Broasted Chicken  
**Cost:** \$18.00

There will also be an evening of live entertainment, provided by the band Renegade, which will follow dinner. The meal will be a "Vegas-style" all you can eat buffet of prime rib and broasted chicken, provided by Brothers Three.



The event will also benefit Oconto's own food pantry "Bread by the Bay". We will be taking cash donations and accepting canned

goods at the door, to help restock their shelves after the busy holiday season.

Each guest will receive a goodie bag with coupons, small gift certificates or give-a-



ways provided by interested members from BOTH chambers. These items can be dropped off at Flowers at 1042 Main Street in Downtown Oconto or either Chamber office.

With approximately 80-100 guests expected, this is a great way to get your name out to your business customers and fellow chamber members. During these economic times we will rely on networking and the support of our business organizations more than ever.

Send your check with the names of those attending to:

Oconto Area Chamber of Commerce  
Holiday Party  
PO Box 174  
Oconto, WI 54153

Questions?  
Please contact the Oconto Area Chamber at:  
Phone: 834-6969  
Email: [CLICK HERE](#)



# 2010 NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Would you like to be able to reach potential customers? It is a great opportunity to advertise AND help the Chamber at the same time. Please consider becoming a *Chamber Notes* sponsor in 2010.

All this is available for only \$50! Pick the month most beneficial to your business and you will receive the inside front cover of the *Chamber Notes*. Your logo will also be prominently placed on the front cover. Plus you will make production of the *Chamber Notes* possible for your chosen month. Don't have an ad? No problem! Let us design one for you. You can use the ad in the newsletter and use it as a flyer or poster to generate even MORE business.

The following months are still available:

- March
- April
- May
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

Please contact Michele ASAP at 604-1008 or email [ofchamber@centurytel.net](mailto:ofchamber@centurytel.net) to confirm your sponsorship month. Make the *Chamber Notes* work for you!

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN WISCONSIN

The State of Wisconsin has many programs and departments to help with your business. Check out this link <http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/BD/> for more information that can help you grow your business.

The mission of the Division of Business Development is to help Wisconsin businesses prosper in a marketplace that is subject to constant change.

To accomplish this task, the Division utilizes a combination of technical and financial assistance programs that have been designed to assist businesses at all points of the continuum including: business planning, site selection, initial capitalization, permitting, employee training, research and development, and business expansion.

There are a wide range of resources available to businesses in Wisconsin, whether initiating a new idea or expanding a business. The following links will guide you to all the important resources to help grow your business.

Links to specific topics.

- [Entrepreneurs/Startups](#)
- [Growth and Retention](#)
- [Minority/Woman-owned](#)
- [Regulatory Assistance and Advocacy](#)
- [Community Resources](#)
- [Tax Credits](#)
- [Technology Businesses](#)
- [AgriBusiness](#)
- [Diesel Idling](#)
- [News/Announcements](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Staff Contacts](#)

# Membership Renewal Form



To renew your business membership in the Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, please complete this form and return it with the appropriate fees. Please be sure to include your email address to receive the *Chamber Notes* newsletter, minutes of the meetings, and special notices via email. Your email address will not be sold to third-party vendors.

Business members have full voting rights, are eligible to hold office and will be featured with a website address in the Oconto County Discovery Guide. The Chamber website Business Directory will highlight your business including a link to your business’s website. You must name a representative with your Business Membership.

**Business Membership:**

Name of Organization, Business or Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of employees your business employs in Oconto County: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Fee based on schedule below: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Employees	Due Range
Home Based Business	\$75
1-5	\$75
6-15	\$100
16-30	\$125
31-45	\$150
46-60	\$175
61-75	\$200
75-100	\$250
101+	\$300

\_\_\_\_\_  
 PO Box      Street Address      City      State      ZIP

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Business website address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of representative: \_\_\_\_\_

***This person will be recognized as the voting member.***

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and email address of additional employees wishing to receive the Chamber Notes Newsletter:

Mail completed form and checks made payable to:

**Oconto Falls Area Chamber of Commerce**  
 ATTN: Treasurer  
 PO Box 24  
 Oconto Falls, WI 54154