

Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Report

2023-2024



AREA CHAMBER
of COMMERCE

YEAR END REVIEW



21 Networking & Chamber Events



Over 6,800
Social Media Followers



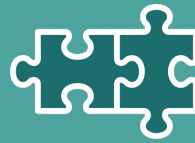
235 Members



15,000 Visitor Guides Printed



52 Chamber
Chat Emails



5 Business
Builder Workshops



Over 1K attendees at Chamber Events



2,150 Visitor
Conversations

7 Ribbon
Cuttings



11 Events
Supported



102 Member
Spotlights

103 Years

Serving the Saranac Lake Area Community

Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce

Mission: Act as a catalyst for business and community development in the Greater Saranac Lake Area.

Vision: Providing services and representation for its membership and generating economic development through promotional and marketing strategies.

As we mark the end of our year we are honored to share with you the highlights and accomplishments of our chamber over the past year. We are committed to fostering economic growth and development through partnerships, targeted initiatives, and communication; we work to empower local businesses to thrive and succeed. Our business builder workshops, networking events, and resources have provided opportunities to connect, learn and grow.

In addition to our business support, we have also remained steadfast in our commitment to community engagement. From supporting local nonprofits to organizing volunteer initiatives and community events, we have worked tirelessly to give back to the community.

As we celebrate our achievements and look ahead to the opportunities that await us, we renew our commitment to serving our community, supporting one another, and building a future that is prosperous and inclusive for all. The annual report allows us to look back over the past year and celebrate our success, review ways in which we can improve, and plan for the future.

Staff:

Rachel Karp, Executive Director

Tori Vazquez, Membership & Engagement Coordinator

Board of Directors

- President: Jacob Wright, Skyward Companies
- Vice-President: Chris Knight, North Country Community College
- Treasurer: Corey Hurwitch, Adirondack Regional Airport
- Secretary: Emmett Smith, Northern Power and Light
 - Chrissie Wais, Above the Treeline Fundraising
 - Joe Shoemaker, Fathom Recruitment
 - Valerie Trudeau, Adirondack Artists Retreat
 - Cynthia Martino, Bionique
 - Mike Navarra, Wilkins Agency
 - Katie Stephenson, Community Bank
 - Mindy Audlin, What if Up Club
 - Justin Oliver, Silver Birch Cycles
 - Tiffany Rea-Fisher, Adirondack Diversity Initiative
 - Amy Wenske, St. Joe's Rehab & Addiction

New Incoming Board Members

- Martha Spear, NYS Dept. of Civil Service
- Josh King, Hotel Saranac



Membership

Membership remains steady with 235 current members. Our membership is both business and non-profit organizations. We serve the greater Saranac Lake area which includes Bloomingdale, Vermontville, Paul Smiths, Gabriels, Lake Clear, Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Malone, Plattsburgh, Raybrook, and other areas. Our industry sectors include: professional services (30%), lodging/retail/restaurants (20%), home improvement/construction (10%), health/wellness (10%), outdoor recreation (10%), arts/entertainment (10%), and community organizations (10%). Over the past year we welcomed 35 new members to the chamber.

235 Members Strong



Welcome Center

At the Saranac Lake Welcome Center, located at 39 Main St, Suite 2 in the Harrietstown Town Hall, we welcome visitors, answer questions, and make recommendations based on their interests. We also provide assistance to area residents with questions about where things are in the village, who to go to for village services, town services, and area events. We provide a welcoming smile when visitors and residents first enter the Town Hall.

2,150 Visitor Conversations



Serving our Members

We hosted 5 workshops over the past year in addition to our breakout sessions at the Tri-Lakes Business Expo and Women in Business Conference. The workshops include a variety of topics reaching various industry sectors of our membership.

“Creating an Inclusive Workplace” was co-hosted by the chamber and the Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance. It was a free educational training open to anyone wanting to increase their knowledge and confidence of LGBTQIA+ inclusion at work and in the community.

OSHA 10-Hour Training

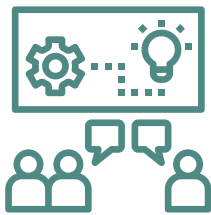


In March we hosted the free 2-day “OSHA 10-Hour General Construction Safety Training” in partnership with the North Country Chamber of Commerce. The training provides workers with awareness of common job-related safety and health hazard and 14 participants attended and received their OSHA certificate.

Serving our Members

In November and January we co-hosted the workshop “Communication: Connect Through Conversations” facilitated by Ami Parekh Fletcher, Director of Human Resources & Communications at Bionique Testing Laboratories and certified DDI facilitator. The free 4-hour workshop offered participants to learn flexible communication skills that help them in all types of conversations, centered around moving forward to accomplish business goals.

“Video Marketing for your Business” was a 4-hour workshop with 14 participants and offered engaging techniques to use video shorts for marketing. With hands on instruction, participants recorded and edited videos and by the end of the workshop they had content and tools to help boost their social media marketing.



5 Business Builder Workshops

65 Participants

Partnerships & Programs

Partnerships are an important part of doing business and supporting businesses. We are proud to work with various regional organizations to fulfill our mission and objectives.

The Center for Businesses in Transition (CBIT) – assisting businesses who are planning to retire or sell their business so that they may have a successful transition for their business. We partner with CBIT and work to promote the program and services offered and celebrate when a successful transition is accomplished. We attended the CBIT strategic planning meeting with the Adirondack North Country Association to meet with other CBIT liasons and partners and plan for the future.

As a liaison with CBIT, we worked with and continue to work with eight businesses in the region from various industries to help them plan for their transition. This includes one on one meetings with business owners, assisting with providing valuations for their business, creating sell sheets, and guiding owners through the process. This past year, through the CBIT partnership, we also helped plan familiarization tours with graduate students from area colleges to provide the opportunity for them to see businesses for sale, meet the owners and ask questions, and explore our local areas.

Ithaca College Students on a familiarization tour are pictured here meeting with Kayte Billerman at The Good Bite Kitchen, a CBIT client, who is selling her business.



Partnerships & Programs

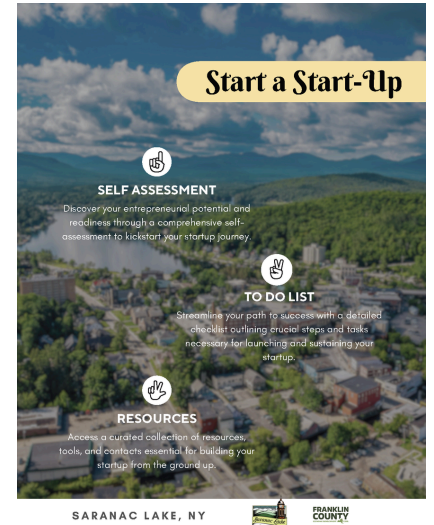
The Carry Co-Working Space – the Chamber assists the Franklin County Economic Development Corporation and Point Positive with general information and some day-to-day operations of the space.

Working closely with the Franklin County Economic Development Corporation we assisted in developing the new “Start a Start-Up” business guide to provide a road map to starting a small business and connect entrepreneurs to area resources.

We continue to partner with the North Country Chamber of Commerce to offer health insurance including dental and vision plans to our members. We coordinate times to offer informational sessions as well as individual appointments in the Saranac Lake area.

The Saranac Lake 6er Program - working closely with the Village of Saranac Lake and the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism to help manage the challenge, process registrations, and provide information.

We continue to partner with the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism to promote the area, assist with events, and operate the Saranac Lake Welcome Center.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) - Staff, Board Members, and Volunteers within the chamber work together to ensure we focus and complete the objectives in our DEIB Strategic Plan. In addition to offering training opportunities we work hard to provide resources to our community, engage in important conversations, and promote and support multi-cultural events. Our 3-Year Strategic Plan outlines the following objectives:

- To provide staff, board members, volunteers, members, stakeholders, and supporters with educational resources and training opportunities with a focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging to foster a welcoming community.
- Facilitate four DEIB related events that encourage participation from the BIPOC community and/or provide exposure of multicultural practices, traditions to the Saranac Lake community.
- Assist with executing the final product of the Welcoming and Belonging Micro Credential Program and encourage business participation to coincide with the goals of the program.
- Develop and review internal strategies to ensure an inclusive, equitable and sustainable culture and work environment and increase diversity within the chamber community.



Online Engagement



“Chamber Chat” – our weekly newsletter sent to 1600 contacts with an average open rate of 41%.



Website – 11,193 visits to the website (increase of 40% from previous year) and 7,129 unique visits (30% increase from previous year).



5.5K Facebook followers with a reach of 86.4K



1.3K followers on Instagram with a reach of 2.4K

Events

The Chamber brings people together. Our events encourage connections and community conversations, promote tourism and support local initiatives, and support the chamber so that we are able to provide workshops, networking events, advocacy and support for our business members as well as help out with other community events.

Our Annual Dinner and Celebration brings together the business community and offers a time for us to celebrate the businesses we serve, the successes of the chamber, and look to the future of our area.

Business After Hours – 8 networking events at area businesses with 220 attendees.

Coffee Hours – 7 coffee hours with a variety of guest speakers and relevant subject matters with 70 attendees.

Ribbon Cuttings - 7 ribbon cuttings throughout the year celebrating new business, transitioned businesses, and business anniversaries. We enjoyed celebrating with HK Boat Rentals, With Woman Wellness, Heartwood Studios, Early Dawn Confections, Bloom, Left Bank Market, and Saint Regis Canoe Outfitters.



Events

Tri-Lakes Business Expo - held in September at the Saranac Lake Civic Center this first-time event provided an opportunity for businesses and the community to discover new businesses and network with regional businesses. The Expo offered businesses the chance to showcase their products and services with 58 exhibitors and offered breakout sessions with the topics of leadership, marketing, and business belonging.

Open House at the Saranac Lake Civic Center - a grand re-opening for the civic center to showcase the renovations and venue, with just over 250 who attended tours were offered of the facility and free ice time for skating.

Sparkle Village – annual craft show and sale the first weekend in December with 45 vendors and over 850 shoppers with over \$25K in dollars spent supporting small businesses and local crafters.

Inspire & Ignite: Women in Business Conference - this first time, 1-day event held in March was a success with 100 attendees and a day filled with inspirational guest speakers, breakout sessions, guided activities, awards, and networking opportunities. Attendees came from throughout the region including Massena, Plattsburgh, Malone, Potsdam, and throughout the Tri-Lakes. Organized to coincide near International Women's Day, save the date for March 7, 2025.



Solar Eclipse Trivia Night - To kick off the Solar Eclipse weekend we hosted a trivia night at the Hotel Saranac with 60 participants. Participants engaged in some friendly competition answering questions about the solar eclipse, Saranac Lake's path of totality, as well as some movie & music trivia.

Community Resource Day and Job Fair – a free annual event in May co-hosted with the Saranac Lake Central School District to offer businesses, organizations, students, their families, and the general public a chance to connect and explore employment opportunities. This year we had 50 participating businesses and organizations and 200 student and community attendees.

Event Support

The Chamber supports a variety of community events in different ways as an effort to assist organizations with ensuring the event is successful and building partnerships with our members and community.

Saranac Lake ArtWalks – assist Saranac Lake ArtWorks with promotion and share information on this popular event that happens on the third Thursday of the month from June–September. We assist with communication between organizers, businesses along the streets, artists/vendors, and visitors/area residents.

Celebrate Paddling – coordinate organizational meetings with the area outfitters and promote this month long event to visitors, businesses, and area residents to get outside and enjoy the area waterways as well as participate in engaging workshops.

90-Miler Canoe Race – Assist Northern Forest Canoe Trail with finish line logistics & organizing food vendors by directing vendors to their correct location in Riverfront Park, answering questions, and finish line logistics.

Northern Current Music Festival – assist with merchandise sales and sales reports, planning, and volunteer at the event.

Paranormal Event - co-hosted with Pride Paranormal, ADK ArtRise, Hotel Saranac, and Historic Saranac Lake this one time event to explore paranormal activity in our historic downtown with 100 attendees.

Solar Eclipse, Saranac Lake Solar Fest - worked with a committee to assist with planning for area coordination for the solar eclipse as well as organizing the street fest “Solar Fest” for the day of the eclipse. Solar Fest had live music, food, craft vendors, local organizations with about 500 people in attendance throughout the day. Co-hosted two community conversations about the solar eclipse and what to expect in the months leading up to the event.



Event Support

Saranac Lake Winter Carnival – volunteered 28 hours at the History Hut, handled printing and distribution of sporting event applications and liability forms, sold buttons and posters, promoted and provided information about activities and events.

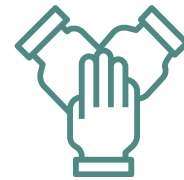
Saranac Lake 3P (Pole, Pedal, Paddle) - assisted with administrative set up of the online auction, served as a pick up and drop off location for auction items, and volunteer on day of the event.

Savor ADK – served on the committee for Sip & Savor Restaurant Week assisting with planning, communication with businesses, business participation, financial reporting, and helped to create a plan to expand and grow the event.

North Country New Year - served on a committee for planning of the New Year's Eve event (formerly First Night). We coordinated over 60 volunteers for the event with and worked closely with other committee members on promotion and assisted with button sales and event logistics.

The ADK UpLift - we support this monthly entrepreneurial think tank and networking program hosted by The What If Up Club with marketing, referrals, & some event logistics.

**Supporting community events
and serving thousands of people**



Energizing Entrepreneurs Scholarship

Each year the Chamber provides the “Energizing Entrepreneurs” High School Scholarship for \$1000. This is awarded to a student who is civically minded and interested in studying business or a related field OR has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and is interested in starting their own business, vocation, or trade. We partner with St. Joe’s Addiction and Treatment Recovery Center to be able to provide this scholarship and North Country Community College and Paul Smith’s College offer a match if the student attends their college.





Moving forward.

Embracing change.



Forming partnerships.

