

INTERNATIONAL FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHAMBER member magazine

JUNE 2023



IFALLSCHAMBER.COM



International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

301 Second Avenue
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
218.283.9400
IFallsChamber.com
ChamberAdmin@IntlFalls.org

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The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce offers a wide range of benefits to its members.

These benefits include networking opportunities, business resources, educational programs, and community involvement.

As a Chamber Member, your business will gain increased visibility and credibility in the community, as well as access to a variety of valuable resources.



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SARA SMITH, QWIKBRANDS

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INTERNATIONAL FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A NEW ERA

BACK FROM THE BRINK WITH AN ALL-NEW OUTLOOK & FOCUS ON OUR MEMBERS

It's been just over a year since the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce decided to keep the lights on and continue serving the needs of our Chamber Members, local business economy, and the community.

We are deeply grateful for your support of the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and want to share with you, in more detail, what we have planned through the end of 2023.

It is important to note that we are still in the testing phase as we develop and implement new initiatives. But we assure you, the commitment to our members has never been greater.

Over the next several months, we will ask for feedback from our members to help us gauge the effectiveness and success of these initiatives. Here are several things you can expect:

TRAINING & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Just when you think you know something, it changes. This must be some kind of "Murphy's Law" thing. With the help and expertise of your fellow Chamber Members and area resources, we will provide more opportunities to learn new skills and gain more insight into the business trends, policies, and people that affect your business.



MORE EXPOSURE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

We have crafted a robust marketing plan designed to help our members better engage with the citizens of this community and visitors to the area. Our goal with this new marketing plan is to bring awareness of your business to people living in and outside the fine 56649.

USEFUL & PRACTICAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

On April 18th, the Chamber joined forces with the Koochiching Economic Development Authority, the City of Int'l Falls, QwikBrands Marketing & Design, and the Entrepreneur Fund to host a local business resources event.

This event was unique in that it was not only informational but also allowed for productive and open dialogue for attendees to discuss their current business situations and learn more about local resources they were unaware of. In addition, it allowed folks to ask questions and share their experiences.

As much as we thoroughly enjoy Business After Hours, we found participating in this roundtable format and structure highly productive and delightful.

Speaking of **Business After Hours**, we are happy to announce that we are bringing these casual and fun networking events back into full swing. Business After Hours is an enjoyable way to get to know your fellow Chamber Members in a way that isn't quite so "business-y."

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

In the spirit of collaboration, we invite all our members to join us in bringing the community and businesses together. We have a variety of ways to get involved in making International Falls and the surrounding communities the best places to Live, Play, Shop, and Stay!

OPEN DIALOGUE

We want to be a Chamber that genuinely serves its members. Have an idea, suggestion, or complaint? Let us know. Our top priority is you.

Ready to get into more detail about what's in store? Read on!





GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

The benefits of Chamber Membership are many. Our members gain increased visibility and credibility in the community through the Chamber's website directory and other marketing initiatives.

As a valuable Chamber Member, you have access to various resources and services, such as marketing assistance, educational programs, and Member-Exclusive networking opportunities.

An investment in the Chamber of Commerce is an investment in your business. On the following page are eight ways to help you get the most out of your Chamber Membership.

1 REVIEW YOUR CHAMBER WEBSITE PROFILE

The Chamber's website receives approximately 300,000 unique annual visitors, and we want to ensure they can connect with you. Please review your profile on our website and confirm we have your most up-to-date contact information. As a member, you have direct access to: update your profile, post job openings, list your business or organization's calendar events, and advertise "hot deals" and discounts. We will provide a training video instructing our members on updating and maintaining their business profiles soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please reach out.

2 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHAMBER DOLLARS PROGRAM

If your organization participates in the Chamber Dollars Program, please be sure your staff knows how to accept Chamber Dollars (see page 13 for more detail). Last year, we circulated nearly \$50,000 in Chamber Dollars. This is an excellent opportunity to generate more business and revenue.

3 PARTICIPATE IN CHAMBER COMMITTEES AND EVENTS

We are always looking for new voices around the table, and we encourage you to get involved with a Chamber committee, volunteer at an event, or share ideas about how to make a difference in our community. The Chamber is an excellent way to meet and connect with like-minded people working hard, just like you, to make a difference.

4 ENCOURAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE

As a member, your employees are also welcome to participate in Chamber events, committees, and other activities. Please share Chamber updates and information with your staff and encourage them to attend workshops, trainings, luncheons, and other educational and networking events.

5 PROVIDE US WITH MARKETING MATERIALS

We are often the first point of contact a visitor or new resident makes when researching the area. As a Chamber Member, you have the opportunity to distribute marketing materials through our office. If you do not have any materials to share, we are pleased to have two local Chamber Members—QwikBrands Marketing & Design and Imagine Marketing—who can assist with your marketing and design needs.

6 DISPLAY YOUR CHAMBER MEMBER DECAL

As a paid member, you will receive a window cling to display on your window, entrance door, reception area, or cash register to showcase your affiliation with the Chamber. Let us know if you operate in multiple locations, and we can set you up.

7 STAY INFORMED WITH CHAMBER NEWS AND UPDATES

Follow us on Facebook and subscribe to our YouTube Channel, read our emails, blog posts, and participate in Chamber events to stay on top of the latest happenings in our area and beyond.

8 ASK QUESTIONS AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

We exist to support and promote the local business community. We are here to serve our members and hear your voices.

NEW AND RENEWED MARKETING INITIATIVES

We are thrilled to unveil fresh marketing initiatives at the Chamber of Commerce. Engaging Facebook themes, like Member Special Monday, Tip Tuesday, and Thankful Thursday, will boost member visibility and encourage community interaction.

Our new YouTube channel promises interesting and enjoyable content. "Small Business Saturday" will feature interviews with our members, sharing their stories and insights. We'll also showcase Local Area Info videos highlighting local points of interest and events, engaging viewers, and promoting our vibrant community.

Introducing **two magazine titles**: Our member-exclusive "Chamber Member Magazine" will feature business news, trends, marketing tips, events, and a marketing calendar our members can refer to in their marketing efforts. Our direct-to-public "Chamber Chat Magazine" will captivate readers with human interest stories about our members, local area highlights, business tips, and more. These magazines will serve as valuable resources, engaging our members and the wider community.

Join us as we embark on renewed marketing initiatives, highlighted by our most popular and upcoming events: **Crazy Daze** (July 26th), **Diva Days** (November 4th-5th), and **Icebox Days** (January 26th-27th, 2024). These community-wide celebrations provide our members with excellent opportunities to showcase their businesses and attract new customers. Furthermore, we are proud to promote our **Chamber Dollars** program, encouraging the community to support our members' businesses.

Lastly, we invite our members to contribute articles, providing a valuable platform to soft-market their businesses and share their expertise with a broader audience. Together, we can help foster a positive community of growth and success.



MARKETING INITIATIVES

[FACEBOOK]



MEMBER MONDAY SPECIALS

Every Monday, the Chamber will publically post a list of sales and discounts being offered by Chamber Members.

To ensure inclusion in the weekly post, kindly submit your deals, discounts, and specials by the preceding Thursday for Monday's feature.



TIP TUESDAY

Every Tuesday, the Chamber will share business and marketing tips and other valuable information. From time to time, we will be asking our members to share tips with the public.

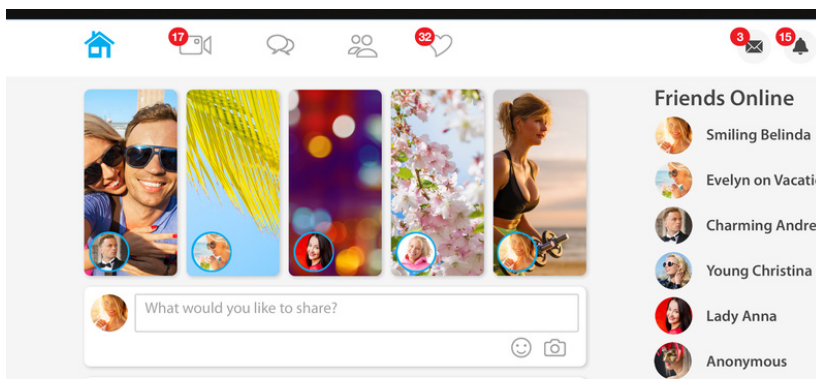
This is a great way for businesses to share their knowledge and experience with the community.



THANKFUL THURSDAY

Every Thursday, we will highlight a Chamber Member to show how thankful we are for that business and what they do for the community.

This is an excellent way to highlight your business or organization without being on video.



MEMBER SHARES

Our goal is to share our member's posts whenever we can. If you have a post that you would like us to help amplify, please let us know.

We are happy to help spread the word about your updates, news, information, and events.

MARKETING INITIATIVES [YOUTUBE]

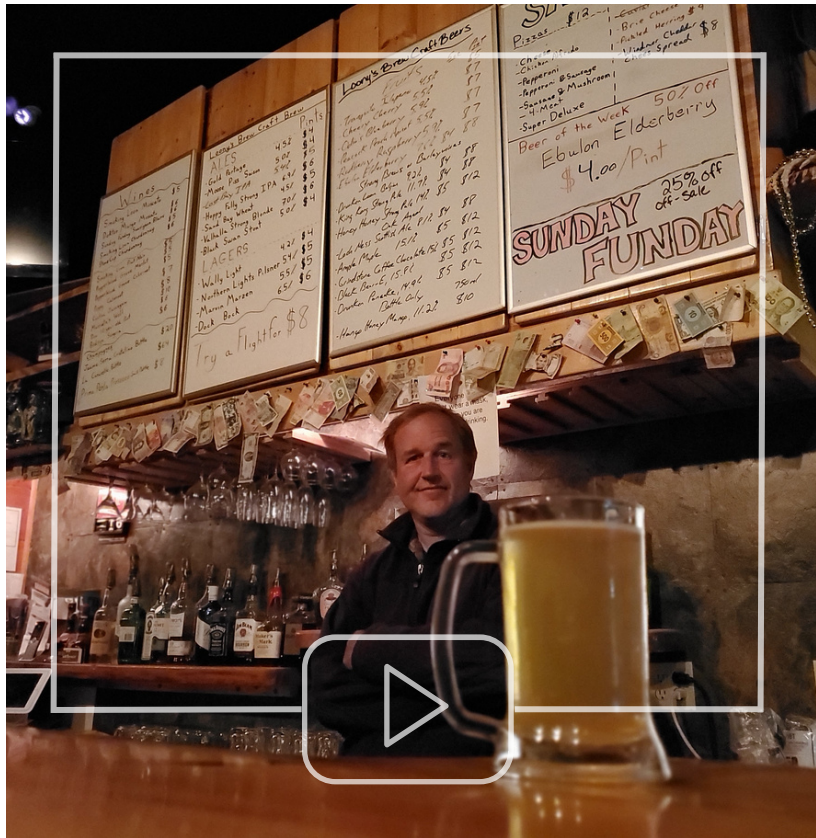
SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Easily one of our most exciting new initiatives, Small Business Saturday will feature interviews with our Chamber Members at their business location.

These videos will give viewers a behind-the-scenes look at the history of the business, updates, news, information, and more.

Our very first Small Business Saturday will debut on June 3rd. It will feature Milt and Max from **The Sports Shop** and our Small Business of the Year Award Winner, **Koochiching County Historical Society**.

We have a lot of reaching out to do and look forward to featuring our members in this delightful new series.



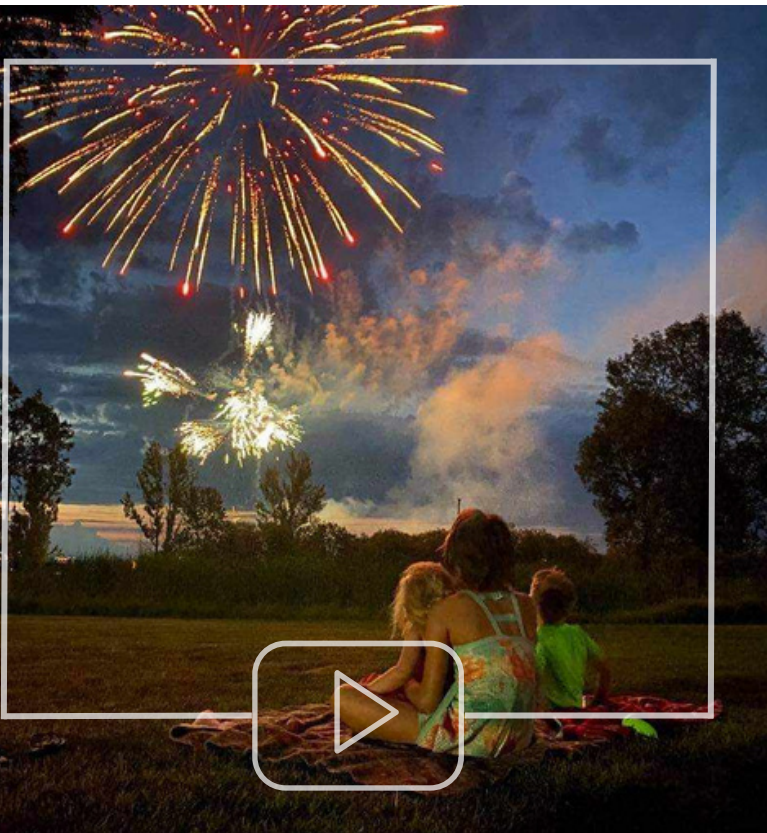
LOCAL AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Our new YouTube channel would not be complete if we didn't showcase the amazing people, places, and things that make up this place we are fortunate to call "Home."

In this series, we will explore area events and points of interest that we hope visitors and residents will find enjoyable.

Unlike Small Business Saturday, we don't have a set schedule for when these videos will debut. Be sure to "Like & Follow" us on Facebook and subscribe to our new YouTube channel to stay updated with our video series.

PS: If you have any suggestions for this series, please send them our way. Thanks!



[CHAMBER MEMBER] MAGAZINE



We are thrilled to announce the launch of our Chamber Member Magazine, a valuable resource designed exclusively for our Chamber Members.

Packed with insightful business articles, features, and industry trends, this monthly newsletter is your go-to guide for staying informed and inspired.

Each issue will provide in-depth analysis, expert advice, and practical tips to help you navigate the ever-changing entrepreneurship landscape and make informed decisions for your business.

One of the highlights of our Chamber Member Magazine is the inclusion of member-contributed articles.

We believe in the power of our collective expertise and want to give our members a platform to showcase their knowledge and insights. This is your chance to share your experiences, success stories, and industry-specific expertise with fellow Chamber members.

We invite you to contribute articles to educate, inspire, and engage our business community.

We are excited to bring you this exclusive resource and encourage you to make the most of it. Let's empower and inspire each other as we strive for excellence in the business community.

Remember, your Chamber is here to support you every step of the way!

Chamber Member Magazine is published on a regular basis and will arrive in your email approximately one week before the start of each new month, ensuring you have ample time to prepare for what lies ahead. The deadline for submissions and advertising for the upcoming issues will be as follows:

| ISSUE | DEADLINE | PUBLISH DATE |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| July | June 19th | June 23rd |
| August | July 14th | July 21st |
| September | August 18th | August 25th |
| October | September 15th | September 22nd |
| November | October 20th | October 27th |
| December | November 17th | November 24th |
| January 2023 | December 15th | December 22nd |

MARKETING INITIATIVES

[CHAMBER CHAT]

MAGAZINE

Get ready for an entertaining new publication celebrating our incredible Chamber Members and their businesses!

Introducing Chamber Chat Magazine: Live, Play, Shop, Stay

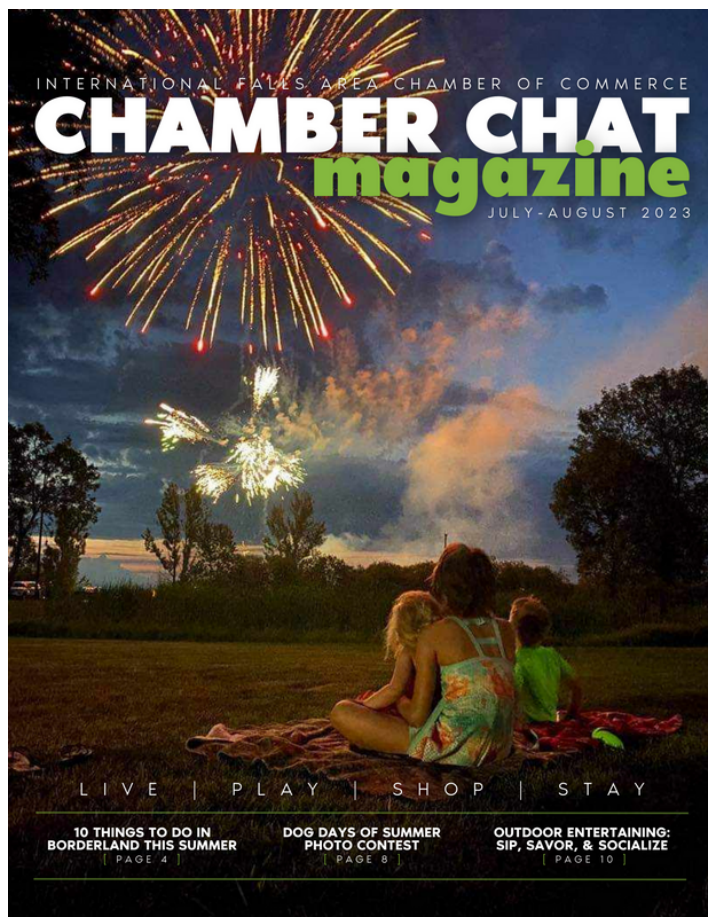
Chamber Chat Magazine will be the community's go-to source for fun articles, engaging features, and inspiring Chamber Member spotlights. We aim to connect our community and spotlight the diverse range of offerings, services, and products our members provide.

Inside the colorful pages of Chamber Chat Magazine, you'll discover a world of captivating stories and insights. We'll share heartwarming success stories, practical business tips, and shining examples of entrepreneurship. But that's not all!

Each issue will feature captivating spotlights on our Chamber members, revealing the hidden gems of our community. From long-standing family businesses to innovative startups, we proudly showcase the diverse tapestry of entrepreneurial endeavors of our members.

Together, let's strengthen the bonds within our community, support local businesses, and embrace the collective spirit of growth and collaboration.

Get ready for an insider's guide that will keep you informed, entertained, and connected with the vibrant world of local business.



Chamber Chat Magazine is a bi-monthly magazine published:

- January-February
- March-April
- May-June
- July-August
- September-October
- November-December

The deadline for submissions and advertising is on or before the 20th of the previous month: December (January-February), February (March-April), April (May-June), June (July-August), August (September-October), October (November-December).

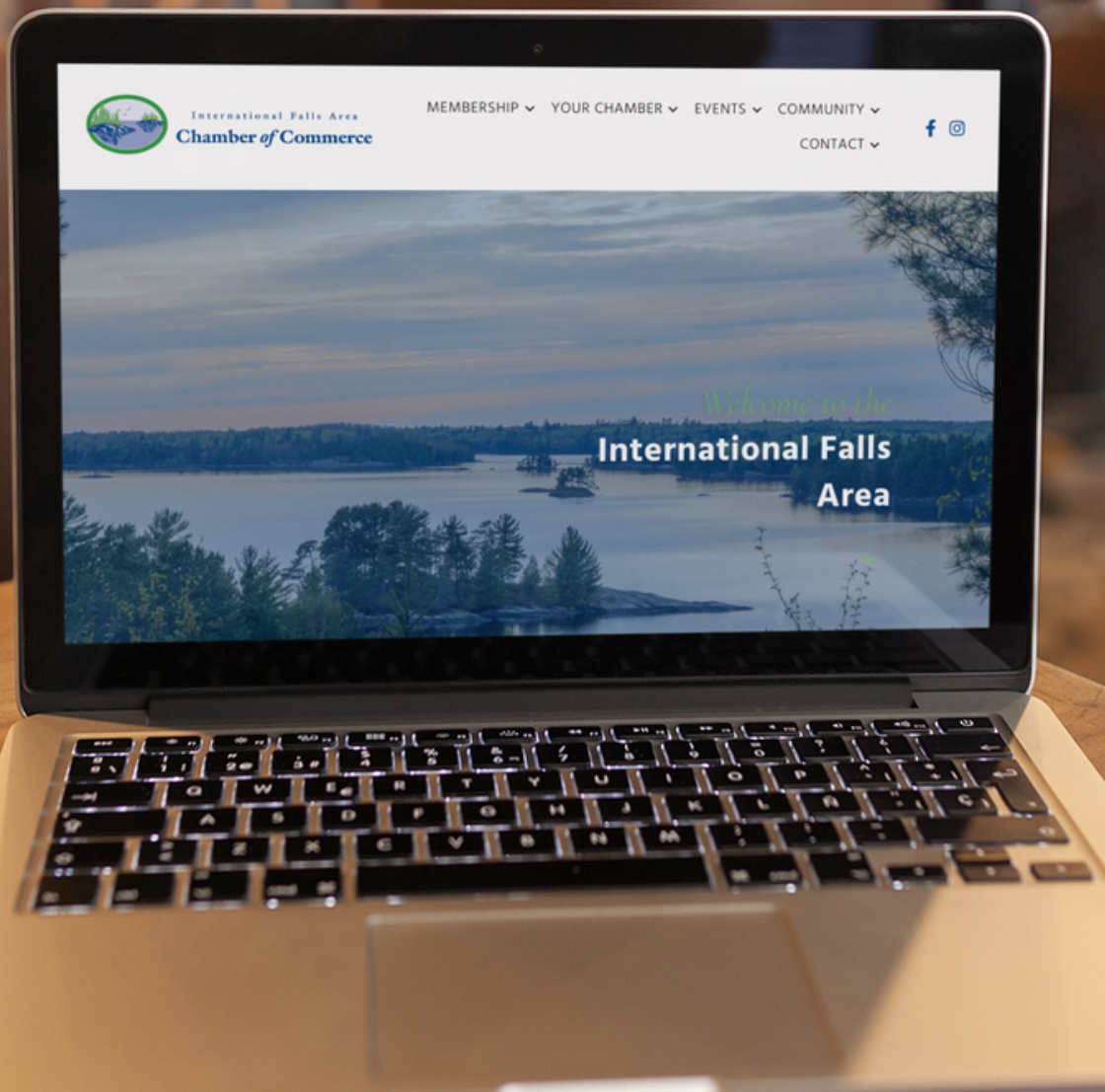
MARKETING INITIATIVES [CHAMBER WEBSITE]

Introducing our newly redesigned website with special features for Chamber Members!

Designed to boost your business's credibility and visibility, the new website features enhanced listing profiles for all members that can be customized—post jobs, advertise specials, promote an upcoming event, and more.

With over 300,000 unique website visitors annually, our website serves as the go-to resource for individuals looking to relocate or plan vacations in our area. Your Enhanced Listing will give you an edge by showcasing your offerings and attracting potential customers on a larger scale.

To ensure you make the most of this opportunity, we will provide training sessions tailored for Chamber Members. Stay tuned for more information on training dates.



[CHAMBER DOLLARS]

CHAMBER DOLLARS: THE CURRENCY OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Add more revenue or raise more funds with the Chamber Dollars Program from the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce!

Thousands of Chamber Dollars are circulated annually as gifts, incentives, and awards by Chamber Members and locals. This unique program is designed to get more people to support local businesses and organizations. **Whether you are a business, non-profit, or charitable organization, you have the privilege of receiving Chamber Dollars as a Chamber Member.**

Accepting Chamber Dollars

- Chamber Dollars are to be treated like cash.
- While Chamber Dollars are treated like cash, they are not redeemable for cash.
- If the total amount is not spent, change should be returned to the customer as you would if they were paying cash.
- It is up to the individual business to decide the minimum purchase amount when a customer uses Chamber Dollars.
- Chamber Dollars do not expire.

Chamber Dollars Reimbursement

- Bring redeemed Chamber Dollars to the Chamber office (301 Second Avenue in Int'l Falls) by the 30th of the month to be reimbursed.
- Reimbursement Checks should be in your mailbox by the 15th of each month.

More Chamber Dollars Information

- Anyone can purchase Chamber Dollars. Chamber Dollars are available at the Chamber office in increments starting at \$5. They make excellent gifts, awards, and incentives.
- Non-Profits and service businesses can accept Chamber Dollars exactly like retailers and restaurants do. **Chamber Dollars can be used as payment for goods, services, or donations.**
- Only Chamber Members can accept Chamber Dollars. Non-Chamber businesses will not be reimbursed if they accept Chamber Dollars.

The Chamber Dollars Program is entirely voluntary—you do not have to accept Chamber Dollars at your business or organization.

Please let us know if you are a Chamber Member, are not listed in the Chamber Dollars Brochure, and would like to be included in this program. And, if you are in the brochure and would like your business removed, let us know that, too!



OPPORTUNITY ABOUNDS

UPCOMING EVENTS + IDEAS TO HELP YOU STAND OUT

At the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, our mission is to support you in achieving your best. We extend a warm invitation to join our community and tap into the resources and opportunities that will empower your success in today's competitive landscape.

Retail Events & Opportunities: Take part in some of the area's most popular retail and entertainment events.

Crazy Daze | July 26th, 2023

Diva Days | November 4th-5th, 2023

Icebox Days Festival | January 26th & 27th, 2024

Freeze Yer Gizzard Blizzard Run | January 27th, 2024



Business After Hours & Chamber Roundtables: Any Chamber Member or employee can attend or host these casual business networking events.

Holiday Business After Hours & Annual Awards Ceremony & Banquet: Chamber Members and their employees are invited to mix and mingle at these annual galas hosted by the Chamber. Gain extra-special attention when you sponsor an event or donate a silent auction raffle prize.

Member Open House Events & Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies: Whether you're a new member or a Chamber veteran, we're here to help promote your business and provide the community and Chamber Members a glimpse into your new or existing business.

Trainings and Workshops | Lunch-n-Learns and On-Demand Courses: Attend or teach other Chamber Members over a catered lunch hour crammed with insight, education, and skill building. If you'd like to share your knowledge, let us know, and we can add you to the schedule—this is a fantastic soft-marketing moment! We will also be sharing a variety of on-demand courses and information covering topics of interest our members have requested.

Chamber Committees | Ambassador, Economic Development, Public Policy: Join us for ribbon cuttings, event planning, strategy sessions, business building, and community involvement events.

Contribute Content: One of the most proven marketing strategies to create awareness and build trust is by sharing your valuable knowledge and experience with those who need it most.



Dear Valued Members,

As we move forward together, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast support and participation in the [International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce](#). Your dedication and commitment have been instrumental in keeping our doors open, and we are immensely grateful for your trust in us.

Our commitment to your success remains unwavering, and we are here to help you navigate your membership benefits, ensuring you receive the utmost value for your investment.

We look forward to **highlighting our outstanding members** on our YouTube channel with the "[Small Business Saturday](#)" series, as well as Member spotlights and interviews on Facebook's "[Thankful Thursday](#)" and in the upcoming "[Chamber Chat Magazine](#)." Please let us know if your business is interested in being featured in the Small Business Saturday. If you prefer to be featured in our Thankful Thursday series on Facebook or Chamber Chat Magazine, we would happily accommodate.

Again, we are grateful for your support and are committed to helping you succeed. Should you have any questions or comments, please stop by the office, call us, or email us.

With much appreciation,

The International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors!

301 2ND AVE., INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MN 56649 | 218.283.9400 | CHAMBERADMIN@INTLFALLS.ORG

IFALLSCHAMBER.COM



"The best marketing strategy ever: Care."

[GARY VAYNERCHUK]