



take root
Rushford Peterson Valley[®]
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Newsletter

December 2015



A Farewell

Doug and Marie Botcher moved to Rushford in spring 2000 when they became the owners and operators of the Meadows Inn Bed & Breakfast. After careful consideration over this past year, Marie and Doug have decided to move forward into another stage of their lives and closed the bed and breakfast effective November 1.

For the past 16 years, the Botchers chose to not only be residents and entrepreneurs in Rushford; they decided to serve, and to be engaged in, their community. Doug was the chair of the Rushford Peterson Valley Brand Council for four years, guiding the work of the dedicated team towards the development of the Rushford Peterson Valley "take root" brand and logo. Doug also has served on the Rushford Peterson Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors since January 2012, including the last three years as president. Marie was a trustee for the Rushford Public Library and stepped in as the Chamber's interim coordinator for six months in 2014. The couple took turns coordinating the Taste of the Trail in Rushford in 2012 and 2013, and both have served in various other volunteer capacities over the years.



During his tenure as the Chamber's president, Doug has been a pro-active, operative leader – not only planning meetings and activities of the Board of Directors but meeting regularly with the coordinator to provide guidance and support and continuously contemplating and seeking progress for the Chamber and the business community.

Marie and Doug have two adult children, Peter and Nikki, residents of California and Roseville, MN respectively. Upon selling their home, the Botchers are planning a move to California to be closer to their new granddaughter, Cora May, and, of course, her parents. Farewell, Marie and Doug, and thank you for your positive imprint on the Rushford Peterson Valley.

Events Calendar

1st Wednesday of the
Month - Lions Club
Evening Meeting

1st Saturday of the

Thank you to all those who chose to Shop Small this holiday season. The Rushford Peterson Valley is fortunate to have so many options—from our several retail stores to our restaurants, lodging, health/fitness or other services! Also, the Chamber sold over \$6,100 in Valley Doe in December, which are dollars that will all be spent in the Rushford Peterson

Month - Masons Pancake
Breakfast

January 9
(begins at 4 p.m.)
Rushford Peterson
Cancer Crusade @
Nordic Lanes



Valley.



January 17
(7 a.m.-noon)
Rushford Peterson
Cancer Crusade
Breakfast @ the Rushford
Legion

January 26
(12 noon)
Chamber Annual Meeting
at Ferndale Country Club

February 25
(7:30 a.m.)
Chamber Meeting with
Presentation by Fillmore
County Assessor at The
Creamery

April 13
Food Manager
Certification or
Recertification Course at
Loken's Rushford Inn



Purchase "take root"
brand t-shirts at
Rushford Hardware.
Men's and Women's
sizes available in
several colors.

Share news or events!
If you have information to

Chamber Activities

Membership Drive 2016 is underway! Please respond with your membership renewal before December 29, and thanks for your continued support of the Chamber of Commerce! We had 111 members in 2015!

Chamber's Annual Meeting. Please plan to attend the organization's Annual Meeting on *Tuesday, January 26 at 12 noon at Ferndale Country Club*. A brief business meeting will be held prior to the keynote address by Tim Penny, president and CEO of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). Reservations for the luncheon will be requested beginning in early January, so stay tuned for additional details.

Board of Directors update. After three years as president and four years as a board member, Doug Botcher has resigned, as he and his wife have decided to close their bed and breakfast. At the December Board of Directors' meeting, Peggi Redalen was elected president, and Angela Colbenson agreed to be the organization's secretary. The immediate vacancy on the Board of Directors was filled by Steven Halvorson, who operates a Thrivent Financial branch that includes an office in Rushford.

Official notice of nominee. As stated in the organization Bylaws, Chamber members are to be notified of the Board's nominees for office by the first week in January. **The Board has nominated Steven Halvorson for a two-year term beginning with the annual meeting.** Any additional names for candidates must be nominated by petition bearing signatures of five Chamber members. Petitions must be filed at the Chamber office within 10 days of the date of this e-newsletter. If a valid petition is received, the names of candidates will be presented for a vote at the annual meeting. If no petition is filed within the 10-day period, the nominations are closed and the Board's nominee will be declared elected and presented to the general membership for ratification at the annual meeting.

Revitalizing Storefronts seminar. On November 19, 2015, Chamber Coordinator Jen Hengel attended a Revitalize Storefronts event in Cashton, WI along with Rushford City Administrator Steve Sarvi and Rushford EDA Director Sam Whitehead. The 7 Rivers Alliance hosted the event that featured speakers who explored local and national best practices for creating vibrant communities. Joel Bookman, president and CEO of Bookman Associates, shared short-term strategies that can quickly transform a community. He spoke of the importance of creating fun-filled corridors, and he reiterated that actions affect attitudes. Bookman stressed that it's not what you think, say, or plan, but what you *do* that transforms the community. David Milder, president of DANTH, Inc., presented strategies needed for strengthening the complex economy of rural downtowns. He spoke of maintaining a Central Social District (CSD), which is a downtown with activity venues that facilitate people having enjoyable experiences with other people. Milder also touched on the jobs concern in rural communities. He said the "meta strategy" for overcoming small town's sparse population is to tap denser and richer distant areas through (1) tourism; (2) using the Internet for more customers, better employment opportunities, and education and health services; and (3) attracting new

share with your fellow Chamber members or would like to be considered for the Business of the Month, please contact the Chamber office. Also, Chamber members may post employment opportunities on the RP Valley website at no cost. The Chamber coordinator updates the local Cable Access Channel, so community events will be put on that channel and the RP Valley website.

residents from urban and suburban areas. The event also highlighted downtown initiatives in Cashton, Sparta, Tomah, Marshfield, WI and Decorah, IA. The overall theme of these presentations was that communities must have strong partnerships between local government and businesses and that merchants must take ownership over their downtown. Activity must be generated in downtown areas for the entire community's success, and involvement and buy-in from businesses in this activity generation is absolutely necessary for success. [Read more from Hengel's notes.](#)

Merchant Processing. Merchants Bank's Credit Card Department Manager, Deb Kemp, provided a brief lunch seminar regarding credit/debit card processing on December 1 at Stumpy's. Several business representatives attended to learn more about their card processing fees and the new embedded chip debit and credit cards. Thanks to Merchants Bank for hosting this business luncheon! Contact the Chamber if you have ideas for other seminars pertaining to business operations or management.

February Chamber Member Meeting. Attend a Chamber breakfast meeting on Thursday, February 25 at 7:30 a.m. at The Creamery to hear from Fillmore County Assessor Cindy Blagsvedt, who will review 2015 land/property sales data, including a breakdown for the Rushford Peterson Valley and surrounding area. Cindy may also touch on how property is assessed, how commercial property taxes are calculated, the timeline for assessment appeals, and the Fillmore County 0.5% sales tax with more information on revenue and how those funds are being used. Contact the Chamber if you have a specific area or question you would like Cindy to address. Meeting RSVPs will be requested closer to the date.

Publications at the Chamber office. Please contact the Chamber if you would like any of these magazines or maps for your customers:

- Winter 2015-2016 Minnesota Snowmobiling Destinations magazine
- 2015-2016 Minnesota Fishing Guide magazine
- Minnesota State Bicycle Maps - (shows trails and traffic ratings for biking on Minnesota highways and county roadways)
- Explore Minnesota State Maps
- Area towns' guidebooks
- [Rushford Peterson Valley Guidebooks](#)
- [Rushford Peterson Valley one-page Events & Things to Do flyer](#) (below)



take root
RushfordPetersonValley®

2016 Events

- May 13-14—Citywide Garage Sale, Rushford
- May 14—Rover Run, Rushford
- May 20-22—SEMBA Bluegrass Festival, Cushon's Peak Campground
- May 21—ExpoCulinaria: Sample area cuisine & culinary art, Rushford
- June-Oct.—RP Valley Farmers Market, Wednesdays 4-7 p.m.
- June 17-19—Gammel Dag Fest, Peterson
- June 24-25—Root River Trail Towns 60-Mile Garage Sale, includes RP Valley
- July 10-July 31 (Sunday evenings)—Music in the Bandstand, Peterson
- July 11-17—Rushford Days
- July 13-17—RASA Theatre, Rushford
- Aug. 18-21—SEMBA Bluegrass Festival, Cushon's Peak Campground
- Sept. 10—Taste of the Trail: Peterson, Whalan & Lanesboro
- Sept. 24—Taste of the Trail: Rushford, Rushford Village & Houston
- Oct. 1—SpectaculAIR, Rushford Airport
- Oct. 8—Tri-City Challenge: Run, Bike, Golf Triathlon in Rushford
- Oct. 18—Rushford Arts & Crafts Fair
- Dec. 10—Christmas in Peterson and Parade of Lights in Rushford

Things to Do

- Bike or hike the Root River State Trail
- Canoe, kayak, tube the Root River
- Hike Magelssen Bluff Park & Trail
- Play at Creekside Park & Peterson Park
- Fish Rush Creek or Root River or hunt State Forests
- Visit Peterson Station Museum and Rushford Historic Depot Museum
- Tour the world-renowned Iefse bakery and Peterson State Fish Hatchery
- Swim at the Rushford Aquatic Center
- Golf 11 courses, all within 30 miles of the Rushford Peterson Valley
- Shop local stores from groceries and hardware to specialty arts and crafts
- Bowl for family fun and enjoy the night life at local taverns
- Cross-country ski and snowmobile extensive trails during the winter months
- Dine at various restaurants and cafés
- Stay at bed & breakfasts, motels, cabin/apartment rentals, and campgrounds
- Visit local churches for services, events, architecture, and genealogy research
- Drive scenic byways and serene, back-road corridors—Don't forget a camera!

Rushford Peterson Valley
 Chamber of Commerce • www.rushfordpetersonvalley.com • 507-564-3330
 City of Peterson • www.petersonmn.org
 City of Rushford • www.rushford.gov/office.com
 City of Rushford Village • www.rushfordvillage.gov/office.com



Local Business & Community News

Rushford Peterson Cancer Crusade. The 33rd annual Cancer Crusade will be held **Saturday, January 9 at Nordic Lanes**. Persons wishing to drop off donated items for the massive auction, which raises close to \$35,000 annually, can contact Ross Himlie or Wayne Meyer. The Cancer Crusade Breakfast will be held January 17 from 7 a.m. to noon at the Rushford American Legion.

Root River Trail Towns plans 2016 activities. At the November meeting of the Root River Trail Towns, the group planned the following 2016 activities:

- The first annual [Root River Bluff & Valley Bike Tour](#) will be held July 8-10. This 3-day bicycle tour begins in Whalan and winds through the region (50-68 miles per day) with overnight stops in Harmony and Houston. The bicyclists will stop for lunch in Rushford and root beer floats in Peterson on July 10.
- Root River Trail Towns will have a booth at the **International Owl**

Festival in Houston on March 4-6 with information about the Root River State Bike Trail and all our towns along the way.

- April 23 will be the first annual **Trail-wide Clean-up** (the Saturday immediately following Earth Day). The Root River Trail Towns' representatives are organizing the clean-up in their respective communities, so the entire 60-mile trail will be impacted during this event. Volunteers from the Rushford Peterson Valley who are interested in helping pick-up trash along the trail or at community parks on April 23, please contact either Jen Hengel or Gail Boyum.
- June 24-25, the Root River Trail Towns will host the second annual **60-mile Garage Sales** to encourage visitors to and through our area. Plan to have a garage sale on these dates for inclusion on the event's Google map and all publicity.
- Mark your calendars for the **2016 Taste of the Trail** - September 10 in Peterson, Whalan and Lanesboro; September 17 in Fountain, Harmony and Preston; September 24 in Rushford, Rushford Village and Houston.

Bluffland prairie restoration work. Jaime Edwards, Nongame Wildlife Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, said that the DNR continues its program to restore bluff prairies on the west and south facing bluffs surrounding Rushford. If you've heard chainsaws or have seen the smoke from small fires over the past month, it's due to the project's intent to keep invasive species at bay. Therefore, eastern red cedar trees and other brush species and short-lived trees are being reduced.

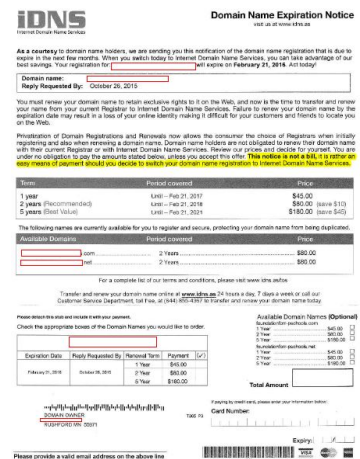
City of Rushford continues to seek citizens interested in serving on its advisory commissions. Contact Rushford City Hall at 864-2444 for details on how to apply to serve your city as an appointed commissioner on one of the following that have vacancies for terms beginning January 2016:

- Airport Commission
- Trees/Trails/Parks Commission
- Planning Commission
- Municipal Electric Commission

City of Rushford Economic Development Authority has available a Micro Loan Program for Rushford businesses. The loan can be up to \$5,000, and the EDA is the only lender, setting the interest and term of the loan. For more information, contact City Administrator Steve Sarvi at rushford@acegroup.cc or 864-2667 or EDA Director Sam Whitehead at sam.whitehead@cedausa.com or 507-327-2766.

Website domain name solicitation.

Recently, some local organizations have received in the mail a document that appears to be an invoice for domain name registration (see image to the right). Be aware that [this letter](#) is a solicitation asking you to switch your website's domain name registration to a new registrar, often for a higher price that what you may be paying. Although the letter appears to be a friendly reminder, please research before responding to this type of solicitation.



Office/Business Space

- Space for rent at the intersection of Hwy 43 & Hwy 30 in downtown Rushford. About 1,000 square feet of space for \$675/month plus utilities. The owner would also consider the sale of the entire building (currently renting 2 apartments, 1 hair salon, and 1 office space. 5,000+ s.f.). Call 864-4400 or email creighton@horihan.com.
- Pam's Corner building has office space available to rent. Contact Pam Brand at pamscorner@acegroup.cc for details.
- Loken's Rushford Inn would like fellow Chamber members to know the hotel is for sale. Go to www.darrauctions.com for details.

News from around the region & beyond

The final Southeast Minnesota Together meeting was held December 3 in Winona. For a re-cap of the meeting, read [this Rochester Post Bulletin article](#), and stay connected with the group's work at [their website](#).

Lanesboro Arts, 103 Parkway Ave. N., will present the Annual Juried High School Art Show, showcasing work by 9-12th grade students from Chatfield, Fillmore Central, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, and Rushford-Peterson High Schools. The show opens with a reception on January 9 from 6-8 p.m., which is a wonderful opportunity to meet and ask questions of student artists and teachers from these schools. The show runs through January 31. Always free and open to the public, the gallery's January hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The show features a variety of art projects, including those in ceramics, acrylics, pastels, ink, pencil, and mixed media sculpture.

Gopher State One Call is moving to a new system for on-line ticketing for Minnesota excavators and contractors beginning December 30 at 6:00 p.m. [Click here for more details and to learn about the training available.](#)

Commentary from Doug Loon, MN Chamber President, from the *St. Cloud Times*: The recent forecast of a \$1.87 billion budget surplus is a perfect backdrop to our season of holiday cheer. State coffers continue to grow on the strength of the hard work and success of Minnesota employers and employees. By all accounts, tax relief will be center stage when the 2016 Legislature convenes in March. The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce leads the statewide United for Jobs Coalition, which represents more than 75 local chambers of commerce and business associations. We recommend the governor and the 2016 Legislature focus on reducing the state business property tax, which will benefit Main Street businesses in every community. [Read the full article.](#)

Editorial - How 'one state' should function, from the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*: Greater Minnesota matters. That's been a mantra for state lawmakers in the year since the 2014 state House election saw a Republican resurgence outside the Twin Cities area. Yet despite talk about a new emphasis on the non-metro share of the state, the 2015 Legislature left many advocates for Greater Minnesota dissatisfied. ... What's needed in 2016 and beyond is not a Greater Minnesota agenda, but a One State Agenda that reflects the interdependence of this state's regions. [Read the full article.](#)

MN Department of Natural Resources says hunters this spring will get more time to enjoy being outdoors while trying to bag a wild turkey. Turkey hunting time periods will be longer, all will include weekends, and more time periods will be available to each hunter. Five one-week time periods will be followed by one longer time period ending May 31. The bag limit will remain one bearded turkey. "A significant change will be that hunters who don't bag

a turkey during their first time period will also be able to hunt the last time period using their original license," said Steve Merchant, DNR wildlife populations program manager. Firearms hunters who want to hunt either of the first two time periods will need to enter into a lottery to participate; apply for the lottery through Jan. 22. In another change, archers will be able to hunt the entire season and in any zone from when the first time period begins on April 13 through May 31. Hunters must choose between a firearms or archery turkey hunting license. [More information on turkey hunting.](#)

Contact

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Executive Coordinator
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chamber@rushfordpetersonvalley.com

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