

coulee region
women

2023 BUSINESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY



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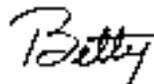
Connecting and Reconnecting

We at *Coulee Region Women* have made it our mission to create connections—between our readers and their communities, between readers and advertisers, between women offering products and services and women who are seeking them. This connection seems even more welcome and needed in 2023. After a spell of connections being halted and disrupted, we’re all about connecting and reconnecting in a fresh new year. Our 2023 *Coulee Region Women Business Resource Directory* is a celebration of that.

We start off by connecting you with this year’s 20 featured businesswomen, providing services to meet most any business need you may have—but also the needs of mind, body and spirit. Our business story on p. 9 takes the theme of connection a step further by showcasing women-focused business groups in the area that provide mentoring, business expertise, networking opportunities and more. These groups offer the opportunity to connect with business advisors but also reconnect with other professional women—something we may be missing in our busy lives.

We love that our region is filled with bridges—physical bridges that span our many rivers and have become icons for our communities, yet also bridges of connection that we all build between each other to network, meet needs and construct the strong communities we in the Coulee Region are so fortunate to have. The Our Towns section beginning on p. 17 celebrates these communities and the businesses that have helped make them strong, telling the story of our region in words and beautiful photography.

We hope you’ll find the 2023 *Coulee Region Women Business Resource Directory* a fun, useful and easy way to find services you need and to support women-owned businesses in the Coulee Region. You can also find the directory online at www.crwmagazine.com. As we look forward to a promising new year, we hope you’ll make *Coulee Region Women*, and the empowering stories we serve to tell, a part of yours.



Betty Christiansen, Publisher & Editor



From left: Rachel Persson, sales; Diane Raaum, photo editor; Betty Christiansen, publisher & editor; Jaclyn Berg, graphic design

Cover and advertorial photos by Jordana Snyder Photography

coulee region women

BUSINESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY

ISSUE 14, VOLUME 1 2023

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Coulee Region Women Business Resource Directory

is published annually by

Coulee Region Communications LLC

816 2nd Avenue S., Suite 300, Onalaska, WI 54650.

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Coulee Region Women magazine does not necessarily endorse the claims or contents of advertising or editorial materials.

Printed at Crescent Printing Company

Onalaska, WI.

Printed in the U.S.A.

For advertising information

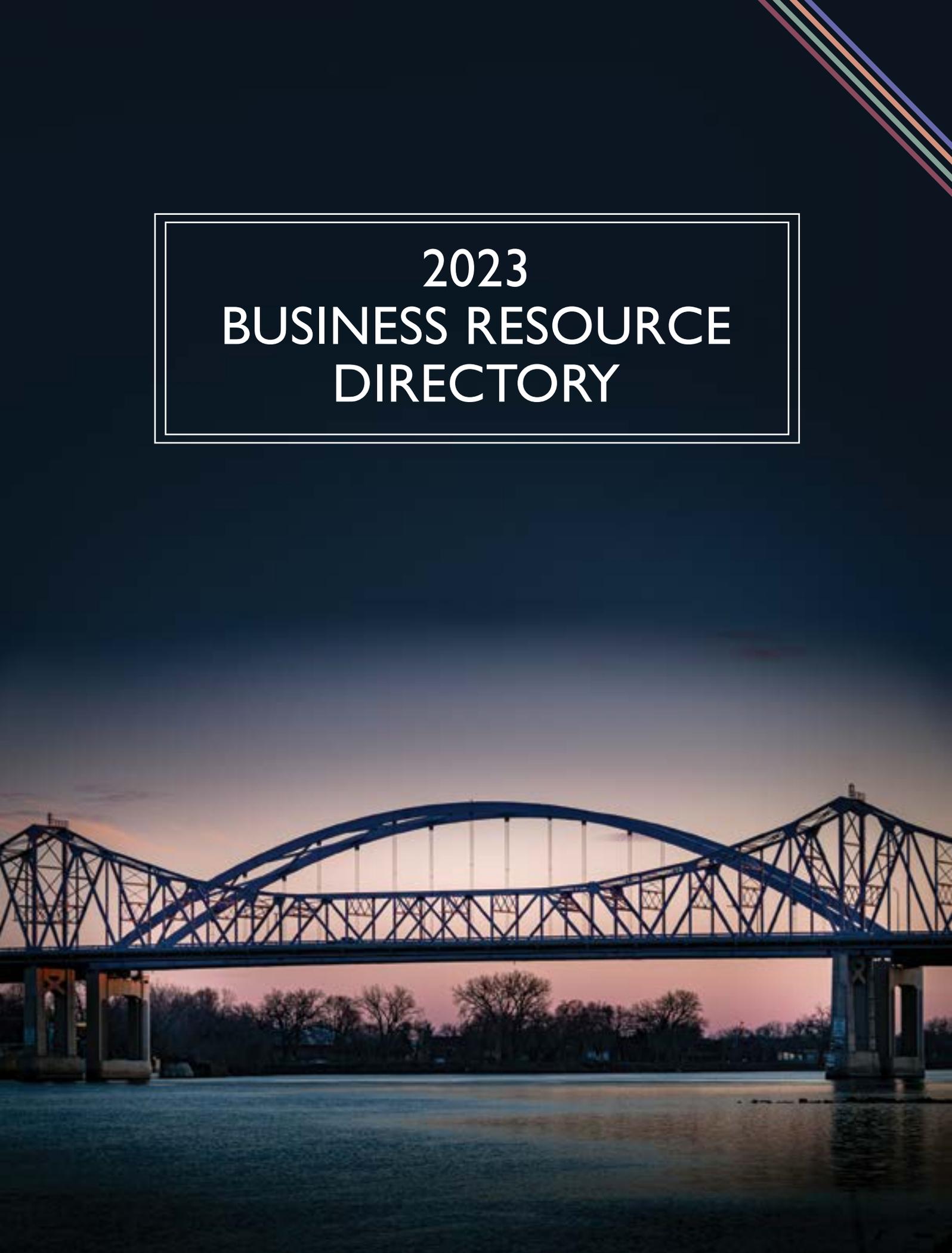
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MORIAH A. CODY, CLTC, RICP®

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
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FINANCIAL

Moriah Cody, Financial Advisor, has served clients at **Hanson & Associates**, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services LLC, since 2005.

Moriah is dedicated to knowing her clients' unique financial goals. She is passionate about women's financial and socially responsible investment strategies. Moriah can help you customize a financial plan that reflects what matters most to you.

Moriah is a supporter of the Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse, as well as the Women's Alliance of La Crosse. Moriah enjoys music festivals, traveling, hiking, and gardening.

Socially responsible investments focus on green solutions companies, which may present increased risk over a more diversified portfolio by limiting investment choices to a specific sector that may or may not perform as well as other industry sectors. Investment products are not insured by the FDIC, NCUA or any federal agency, are not deposits or obligations of, or guaranteed by any financial institution, and involve investment risks including possible loss of principal and fluctuation in value. Ameriprise Financial cannot guarantee future financial results. Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



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KAMI EVANS

INTERIOR DESIGNER
THE BOARD STORE
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HOME IMPROVEMENT

The Board Store Home Improvements Interior Designer **Kami Evans** specializes in bathroom remodels and kitchen backsplashes and countertops.

Kami has over 20 years of experience. She started working in Austin, Texas, with custom home builders, assisting their clients with their interior selections. Kami then specialized in window coverings, draperies and shutters and worked with a high-end design studio helping homeowners with custom furniture, draperies and room design.

Kami joined The Board Store team in 2019. She finds joy when she can help homeowners by using her eye for color and design to find the perfect vanity, tile or flooring that will complement their style. She loves the opportunity to help customers make their space more functional while making it look great at the same time. Come visit with Kami today in our showrooms or in your home.



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JODI EHRENBERGER

VICE PRESIDENT,
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Jodi Ehrenberger of **Coulee Bank** has been assisting business owners in the Coulee Region with their financing needs for over 10 years. Throughout her 22-year career in banking, she has worked in every area of the industry, including tellering, branch management and commercial lending. Her goal as a banker has always been to build long-lasting relationships and assist individuals through all stages of their business.

Jodi was one of 10 professionals accepted into the 2022 Future Leading Lenders program through the National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders. She is passionate about small businesses and continues to pursue education and development so that she can provide the best service to her customers.

Outside of her role at Coulee Bank, Jodi serves on the board of Rotary Club of La Crosse East. She is a former trustee for the La Crosse Public Library and a former president of La Crosse Oktoberfest.



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MARGARET A. SEVERSON,
AAMS
FINANCIAL ADVISOR
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Margaret Severson understands financial circumstances unique to women. Women tend to live longer than men, meaning more years in retirement. Between planning for the expected and preparing for the unexpected, Margaret and her team at **Edward Jones** in Viroqua have been helping investors build smart strategies for over 21 years. This is where goals and priorities come in. Working? Volunteering? Traveling? A winter home? Women view financial decisions holistically, working toward goals rather than set dollar figures. Margaret provides perspective on whether a spending strategy is realistic and what tradeoffs may need to be made. Families may be hit with many surprises: caring for elderly parents, losing a spouse to death, helping adult children financially, managing ongoing long-term care costs, even outliving savings.

Margaret has served as a financial advisor with Edward Jones in Viroqua since 1999, where she works to help investors manage many unique challenges. She believes it's much easier to focus on dreams once you understand your goals, how to prepare for them and how to put time on your side.



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AMY STODOLA, AAMS
FINANCIAL ADVISOR
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Amy Stodola began her career as an **Edward Jones** financial advisor in 2005; since then, she has helped clients in and around La Crosse work toward realizing their life dreams. Before being named regional leader in 2017, she volunteered in several regional roles, including level coach, mentor, field trainer and recruiting leader. As regional leader, she helped establish Region 309, where she guides and supports over 60 branch teams in southwestern Wisconsin. She was named an Edward Jones principal in 2020.

Amy has built a thriving business that ranks her among the firm's top 250 female financial advisors and has earned her six invitations to the Edward Jones Women's Conferences. Amy has shared the Edward Jones opportunity by recruiting more than a dozen financial advisors.

Amy holds an AAMS® professional designation and a bachelor's degree from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Amy enjoys traveling, entertaining and spending time boating with her husband, Vince, and their three children, Brody, Jack and Kennedy.



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ELLIE MCLOONE
REALTOR
GERRARD-HOESCHLER, REALTORS®
REAL ESTATE

Ellie McLoone is a La Crosse native with a multigenerational family history in the beautiful Mississippi River Valley area. Bringing unmatched local knowledge, experience and service to her career as a Realtor, McLoone is an asset to anyone seeking a home in the Coulee Region. A graduate of University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ellie worked in marketing and advertising for more than 20 years before joining **Gerrard-Hoeschler, REALTORS®**.

Leading the local real estate market for over 70 years and with a constant eye on the future, Gerrard Hoeschler, REALTORS® provides expertise, insight and commitment to service. Throughout the home buying or selling process, Ellie will be there every step of the way providing guidance and continued communication, always looking out for your best interest. Start your next chapter with Ellie to make your home ownership dreams a reality.



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MARTHA KOLOSKI

HOME IMPROVEMENT CONSULTANT
THE BOARD STORE HOME IMPROVEMENTS
HOME IMPROVEMENT

Martha Koloski may be best known for being a news anchor in the Coulee Region, but behind the scenes she was also building her resume in home construction. For more than 20 years, she built twin homes and single-family homes in Onalaska. In addition, her personal experience caring for both her own children and parents in an intergenerational home gives her a lot of insight into the needs of growing families, as well as those trying to age in place, facing an illness or being challenged with new circumstances.

Now a Home Improvement Consultant at **The Board Store Home Improvements**, Martha's experience as a journalist and consumer reporter help her ask all the right questions to pinpoint a homeowner's goals for their project as well as being an advocate when it comes to using the right products, designing a new space and working within a budget. Martha would love to help you plan your next project and make it a comfortable and inviting space for you and your family.

Martha has been a volunteer for the Great Rivers United Way, Family & Children's Center, Children's Miracle Network at Gundersen Lutheran, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, La Crosse Family YMCA and YWCA La Crosse.



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HEIDI EGLASH

ATTORNEY
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LEGAL

Eglash Law Office is committed to providing clients with essential, highly customized and collaborative life and legacy planning services. The unique, dynamic life each one of us leads has a value that exceeds far beyond material possessions. Attorney **Heidi Eglash** recognizes this by meeting her clients with authenticity, empathy and a wide range of expertise, advice, strategies and tools designed to educate, encourage and empower.

In having focused her practice on planning and the many facets involved—ensuring care for vulnerable beneficiaries, maximizing retirement savings, facing the costs of elder care with confidence and administering plans upon disability or death, to name a few—Eglash knows that an attorney's value is so much more than the completion of form documents that are stored away to gather dust. Clients of Eglash Law Office find, instead, a personable counselor-at-law who takes genuine interest in their planning goals, who educates and encourages them to be active and engaged in planning endeavors and who empowers them to complete quality, comprehensive plans that can grow and change as their lives do the same.

For more information on how to engage Heidi to assist with your planning, please visit www.eglashlawoffice.com.



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The Women's Alliance of La Crosse is composed of professional women making connections, like officers Megan Preston, Allison Steers, Lori Francis, Gina Miller and Marcy Lund.

WHERE WOMEN TURN FOR SUPPORT

Local organizations provide mentoring, education and networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

*By Shari Hegland
Contributed photos*

NO MATTER HOW STRONG, how talented or how determined a person is—even a woman—there are times when a little support is welcome to overcome a challenge, find a new approach or even just celebrate a big win.

That is why women seek out organizations that bring them together with likeminded colleagues, experienced veterans and networking opportunities as they envision and build their businesses. The Coulee Region has a wealth of resources for women looking for support, formal and informal, to reach their professional goals.

WISCONSIN WOMEN'S BUSINESS INITIATIVE CORPORATION: PUTTING DREAMS TO WORK

We may have come a long way from the setting in which the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation was formed in Milwaukee in 1987, when women often couldn't get a business loan without a husband or father cosigning the note, but there is still a need for support to help many women get their businesses off the ground.

Now serving clients across the state—the Southwest Wisconsin regional office opened in La Crosse in 2021—WWBIC offers free business and financial training, connection to other resources and micro-loans, often to entrepreneurs who would not qualify for traditional financing.



*Mara Keyes, WWBIC
Regional Project Director*

Regional Project Director Mara Keyes says the organization's clients represent a diverse group of businesses and individuals, many of whom are starting a business for the first time. "A little over half of whom we're working with are people who have been doing something on the side and are thinking of taking that leap," she says, for example, expanding a home "maker" side gig, such as making jams, into a full-time business. "Sometimes those individuals are very good at their craft, but they aren't sure about finances. We can help them with things like planning cash flow."

Others may have been in business for some time but are struggling or just maintaining—WWBIC's team can help them explore what they can do differently or rethink to move beyond survival mode.

The organization can also help direct businesses in transition to legal resources or assist in drawing up a business plan for a



Women gather for a Strong Women, Strong Coffee event hosted by Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation at J's Café in La Crosse, a 2022 startup business. The monthly events feature speakers and offer networking opportunities.

new owner taking over. "Being a connector is really how we leverage all of the resources we have in the community," Keyes says.

Business loans of up to \$350,000 are a key part of what WWBIC brings to the region. "What's really unique is that after receiving a loan through WWBIC, a small-business consultant is assigned through the life of the loan," Keyes said, which plays a big part in the high payback rate WWBIC's loan program has, despite targeting those who may not qualify for traditional financing.

Keyes is working to establish a locally based revolving loan fund for the La Crosse area, similar to one that has been used successfully in the Milwaukee region, so today's successful entrepreneurs can continue to feed into the next generation of women in business.

Learn more:

Check out the website at www.wwbic.com for more information, and click the calendar to attend a Strong Women, Strong Coffee speaker event (see the schedule under Trainings on the website). All women are welcome. You can also call the office at 608-668-4400 to talk with Keyes or another staff member.

SCORE: MENTORS WITH EXPERIENCE

Shari Laffredi remembers looking to SCORE for assistance 20 years ago as she was trying to structure the many projects she and her husband had in the works: her IT consulting, a book, a patent and rental properties. "I didn't even know where to begin to create a business," she says, from writing a business plan to choosing a type of legal entity. "I sought out SCORE and got advice for free that probably would have cost me hundreds of dollars elsewhere. ... It gave us a lot of good information to guide

us to make good decisions."

Today, the Wilton businesswoman is giving back as a volunteer mentor for SCORE and volunteer coordinator for the West Central Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Chapter. She encourages other women to become a part of SCORE, as well, as mentors or to find the support they need in building their business success.

Laffredi says the organization's website (www.score.org) is the best first step in accessing assistance from the more than 11,000 volunteers nationwide. While ideally a client will be matched with a local mentor for one-on-one guidance, that network means there are nearly 200,000 years of business experience in a huge range of fields ready to be tapped.

"When I get a client who needs help in an area that isn't in my background, I can go into the database of SCORE mentors and find someone who has the kind of expertise that my client needs," she says. "The main thing the volunteers can provide is expertise ... practical know-how. We can help small-business owners create or refine their business plans, help with legal or funding issues" or even provide guidance in specific fields or markets.



Shari Laffredi, SCORE volunteer coordinator for West Central Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Chapter

Continued on page 16



NIKKI BENZING

OWNER

HIDDEN VALLEY DESIGNS, INC.
INTERIOR DESIGN/
WINDOW TREATMENTS

Nikki Benzing, owner of **Hidden Valley Designs, Inc.**, knows her business inside and out.

Hidden Valley Designs, Inc., specializes in the sales and installation of custom window treatments, offering “shop at home” services as well as a display at Floorcrafters to browse at your convenience. Nikki and her associate Laura Kasinger work as a team. They come out to your home, help you pick the perfect treatment for your windows and even come back to install. Hidden Valley Designs’ top product lines include Hunter Douglas, Graber and Kasmir Fabrics. Recently the motorized window treatment business has taken off, and Hidden Valley Designs now installs motorized treatments in one out of every three homes it serves.

Nikki’s busy work schedule is complemented with her busy lifestyle. Nikki spends her “spare” time raising three sons.



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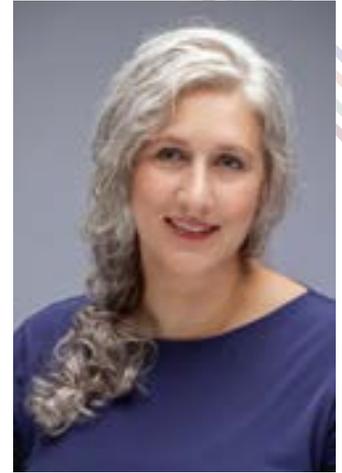
ATTORNEY/PARTNER

HALE, SKEMP, HANSON, SKEMP & SLEIK
LEGAL

Attorney **Sarah Fortune** of **Hale Skemp** has practiced law for 14 years. She focuses on helping people plan and preserve their assets in the event of death or long-term illness.

“I enjoy helping people prevent disputes and financial crisis,” Sarah says. “One aspect of this is articulating your wishes using wills, trusts, powers of attorney and other means. My experience advising businesses allows me to help clients with complicated assets such as family-owned businesses and real estate investments to create comprehensive plans that make it easy for their children or others to administer their estate.”

Sarah has been named a Rising Star in *Milwaukee Magazine* for the past 10 years—an honor given to only 2.5 percent of attorneys in Wisconsin each year. Sarah is rated 10/10 in the Avvo.com Lawyer Directory. Sarah loves to travel, and her adventures have included swimming with beluga whales in the arctic and camping in the Amazon rain forest in Brazil.



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MARGARET “PEGGY” HERLITZKA

ATTORNEY/PARTNER/COMMISSIONER

HALE, SKEMP, HANSON, SKEMP & SLEIK
LEGAL

Since joining **Hale Skemp** 33 years ago, **Margaret “Peggy” Herlitzka’s** primary focus has been in litigation with an emphasis on family law. As part of the firm’s family law team, Peggy has litigated hundreds of cases involving custody, placement, child and spousal support, and complex property division. Peggy also serves as a Court Commissioner for La Crosse County.

Peggy has been named a Super Lawyer by *Milwaukee Magazine* 14 times and selected by U.S. News and World Report—Best Lawyers® for inclusion in the last 11 editions of *The Best Lawyers in America* as a Best Lawyer®. Peggy has been named an Outstanding Woman by the YWCA La Crosse, received the Wisconsin Business and Professional Women’s “Woman of Inspiration” award and was named Mrs. Oktoberfest in 2015. Peggy has received the Paula J. Tower Memorial Award for her advocacy of breast cancer awareness and research, is past president of the Wisconsin Law Foundation and serves on the board of the Aptiv Foundation.



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JODI FLACH

OWNER/OPERATOR
MICROBLADING BY JODI FLACH
BEAUTY

Jodi Flach is a cosmetic tattoo artist who specializes in creating realistic eyebrow tattoos for individuals looking to enhance their current brows or in designing and restoring new brows for those who have lost theirs completely. After working in various roles in the beauty industry since 2009, Jodi's passion for helping others feel their best led her to explore the art of microblading. She quickly learned that many people were seeking these services, and she opened her studio, **Microblading by Jodi Flach**, where she has been serving clients for over five years.

Jodi enjoys having the opportunity to connect with her clients and loves to help improve their confidence and self-image. She is always striving to provide the best possible experience for each client and seeks to complement their own unique natural beauty with her artistry.



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SAMANTHA KECK

REALTOR®, DIRECTOR OF TEAM OPERATIONS
THE DAN STACEY TEAM—RE/MAX RESULTS
REAL ESTATE

As a REALTOR® with **The Dan Stacey Team—RE/MAX Results** and with over 25 years of real estate experience, **Samantha Keck** is dedicated to the real estate profession and the buyers and sellers of the Coulee Region. A resident for 30 years, she has been highly involved in the community as a volunteer for several nonprofits, a host family for collegiate athletes and a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). She is proud to have been recognized as a Citizen of the Year and Community All-Star by different organizations. Her energetic approach, dedicated work ethic and professional relationships with industry partners allow her to provide a high level of customer service to every client, whether they are relocating to the area, buying their first home, upsizing or downsizing. Samantha believes in delivering results and a pleasant, memorable experience for her buyers and sellers, and she loves being part of a team that delivers both continually.



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JENNIFER LOUGH

ATTORNEY/PARTNER
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Jennifer Lough has been practicing law for 16 years. Previously a prosecutor in the Waukesha County District Attorney's Office Sensitive Crimes Unit, Jennifer and law partner Todd Schroeder formed the law firm of **Schroeder & Lough**. Jennifer now practices exclusively in the areas of criminal defense and assisting with restraining orders. She has protected hundreds of people who have been accused of crimes, proving their innocence and ensuring they are treated with fairness. She assists individuals through a difficult time with compassion, skill and zealous advocacy.

Jennifer volunteers at the La Crosse County Free Legal Clinic. After being named a Rising Star by *Milwaukee Magazine*, Jennifer has been named a Super Lawyer for the last four years. The firm was selected in 2022 by U.S. News and World Report as one of the Best Law Firms in Wisconsin—First-Tier Rankings.



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HEATHER JORDAN,
CFP®, MBA
MANAGING DIRECTOR
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Heather Jordan, CFP®, MBA, is the Managing Director for Emerj360, a new division of Trust Point that specializes in retirement and financial planning. Heather helps investors from retirees to people nearing retirement to younger investors setting the course for retirement saving. She also advises on 401(k) rollovers, when to take Social Security and how to save for college expenses. Emerj360 is built on Trust Point's strong foundation and core values, including genuine personal service and a strong commitment to helping our clients achieve financial confidence.

Heather is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with an undergraduate degree in general management and an MBA. Heather is also a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER®—a coveted certification awarded only after mastering financial planning skills.

Heather is a member of the Holmen Rotary and the La Crosse Chamber's Young Professionals committee. She also serves on the board of directors for the Children's Museum of La Crosse.



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JENNIFER GANDER, CPA

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER,
WEALTH MANAGEMENT
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In her role as Relationship Manager, Jennifer Gander works directly with clients on various aspects of investment management and estate and trust administration. She is responsible for meeting client expectations through the proper administration of trusts, estates, IRAs and agency accounts. When it comes to working with clients, it is important to Jennifer that her clients know that Trust Point is there for them every step of the way.

Prior to coming to Trust Point, Jennifer taught kindergarten before going back to school for accounting. She has a bachelor of science degree in accountancy from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as well as a bachelor of arts in education from the University of North Florida. While working as a staff accountant at a local accounting firm, she went on to receive her CPA designation, which distinguishes her as a licensed accounting professional who has proven her dedication, knowledge and skills in the profession.



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ANGELA CZERWINSKI

MORTGAGE LOAN OFFICER, NMLS# 402403
WNB FINANCIAL
FINANCIAL

With over 16 years of comprehensive mortgage lending experience, Angela Czerwinski of WNB Financial provides the trusted advice and innovative solutions you need to buy, build or refinance your home. As your trusted financial advisor, Angela provides a consultative, client-first approach with personalized service and customized loan products to fit your family's needs.

Angela earned her degree in finance from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in 2001. She is a member of the Downtown Rotary Club of La Crosse, the La Crosse Area Business Association, the La Crosse Chamber of Commerce and the La Crosse Area Realtors Association. She also serves as a board member for the La Crosse Family YMCA and volunteers with the Finance Council at the Roncalli Newman Catholic Parish. Angela and her husband, Curt, reside in Onalaska with their two young children, Adam and Sarah. She enjoys golfing, playing cards, gardening, reading and spending time with her family and friends.



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TAMARA ZEE

OWNER/INSTRUCTOR/TRAINER
OM YOGA STUDIO & TAMMY ZEE'S YOGA TEACHER TRAINING
WELLNESS

Tammy Zee owns **Om Yoga Studio** and **Tammy Zee's Yoga Teacher Training** in Onalaska. A certified Yoga Therapist through the International Association of Yoga Therapists, Tammy has her master's degree in Exercise Sport Science/Human Performance from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She leads 200/300-hour Yoga Teacher Trainings at Om Yoga Studio, a private post-secondary school through the State of Wisconsin Education Approval Program and accredited through Yoga Alliance. Tammy specializes in making yoga accessible to everyone and is a Trauma Sensitive Yoga teacher for La Crosse County Health & Human Services.

For the past 34 years, Tammy has managed the UW-La Crosse Rec Sports Group Fitness program and is a continuing education provider for the American Aerobic Association/International Sports Medicine Association. She instructs yoga, Pilates, kickboxing, ZUMBA®, Barre Above, INSANITY®, Tabata, cycle, ZUMBA Strong and water exercise classes.

Tammy and her husband, Dennis, have been married for 35 years, and the love of their lives is their daughter, Olivia. Tammy's passion and joy is helping others on their health and yoga journey.



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MEGAN WURZEL, MS, LPC, LPCC

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR
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MENTAL HEALTH

Megan Wurzel graduated from Purdue University with a master's degree in clinical psychology in 2012 and has since served in the Coulee Region as a mental health counselor. Licensed in both Wisconsin and Minnesota, Megan opened a private practice, **Skyward Counseling LLC**, in La Crescent in 2022.

Megan provides individual and family counseling to children, teens and adults. She addresses topics such as depression, anxiety and parenting. She specializes in treating impacts of trauma and holds a national certification in Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Additionally, Megan is certified through the National Association of Forensic Counselors, providing assessments and treatment for individuals struggling with sexual behavior problems.

Counseling with Megan is 100 percent inclusive. She offers a relaxed space where individuals can feel safe being their authentic selves. Looking around Skyward Counseling, you'll see evidence of Megan's love of adventure with her aviation tributes, her passion for music with an old guitar in the lobby, and her appreciation of creativity with art supplies in almost every corner.

Megan is involved in the La Crescent Chamber of Commerce and the La Crescent PTO. An advocate for social justice and reducing the stigma of mental health, Megan continues to pursue novel ways to contribute to the Coulee Region.



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JENNIFER LUEDTKE

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
TOWN N' COUNTRY TITLE
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Jennifer Luedtke is a young professional with a fire inside to inspire and serve her team at **Town n' Country Title**. As the Human Resources Manager, Jennifer is no stranger to the ever-changing workforce and workplace environment in today's society. Because she is so passionate about her career and the title industry, Jennifer has taken the initiative to become involved at the state and national levels, promoting talent recruitment and retention and serving as Talent Committee Chair at the American Land Title Association.

Town n' Country Title is committed to providing a work environment that promotes teamwork, integrity, a thoughtful positive attitude, work-life balance and excellence in service. Not only does Town n' Country Title have a great team, but they also take care of title issues before they become closing issues. As a team, they make sure to provide the best service possible in the industry.

Jennifer enjoys giving back to the community by serving on the Oktoberfest board of directors, Holmen Area Community Center board of directors, several industry committees and the Rotary Club of La Crosse After Hours. She enjoys traveling, trying new craft beers and wines and spending time with her friends and family.



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Continued from p. 10

In addition to one-on-one consultation with a mentor, SCORE maintains an impressive library of written and recorded resources covering topics from writing a business plan to creating a website or hiring your first employees.

Laffredi says being a mentor is rewarding for her in providing an opportunity to remain connected to the business field and learning new things alongside her clients. While she retired in November 2021, she says many mentors are still actively working, and SCORE is an excellent way for passionate businesswomen to put what they have learned over the years to work helping new businesses succeed.

"It's amazing to me to see how many brilliant women we have in our community and our region who have so much to offer," she says.

Learn more:

Go to www.score.org to find tabs linking to becoming a volunteer, finding a mentor or accessing the library of live events, recorded webinars and courses on demand.

**WOMEN'S ALLIANCE OF LA CROSSE:
FROM NETWORKING TO SCHOLARSHIPS**

While some organizations offer business-specific training or advice, others simply bring women together to lift up each other and the community, while providing wonderful opportunities to network and create friendships. One such organization is the Women's Alliance of La Crosse.

Allison Rodriguez Steers, the organization's 2022-23 president, says that WAL's core purpose is education. "We give scholarships to women in our community who have had any kind of hardship that is preventing them from going to school or finishing school," she says, which includes not only traditional college programs, but also trade or certificate programs women need to move toward their educational and career goals.

The scholarships are funded by money raised through the organization's monthly meetings, dues and an annual holiday party with an auction. "This year we will give out \$5,000 in scholarships," Steers says, which could all be awarded to a single applicant or split among several, depending on the applications received. WAL has awarded more than \$30,000 in scholarships to local women since beginning the program.

While scholarships are the stated objective, the structure in which those funds are raised is perfect for helping women—whether actively involved in business or not—find a group with whom they can connect. "It's likeminded women who are very involved in the community who can not only become good friends, but also good partners for anything you are planning," Steers says.



Allison Rodriguez Steers, WAL 2022-23 president

The group's current membership represents a wide swath of the community, including financial planners, accountants, stylists, business owners, yoga instructors and retirees. In addition to monthly

meetings with a speaker (hosted the second Thursday of each month at noon at the Waterfront Restaurant in La Crosse), monthly pop-up happy hours are held on the fourth Thursdays at women-owned businesses in the community, providing a greater opportunity to chat in an informal setting and learn more about fellow members.

Steers invites anyone interested to attend a monthly meeting or pop-up. "You get to know so many of the members and be a part of something awesome," she says.

Learn more:

Visit www.womensallianceoflacrosse.com to contact the organization or register to attend a monthly meeting. Meeting speakers and pop-up happy hour locations are updated on the group's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/womensallianceoflacrosse/>.

WINONA WOMEN IN BUSINESS: LEARN AND GROW

Women in Winona also have an organization committed to connecting, educating and providing scholarships. Mandy Hansel, 2022 president of Winona Women in Business, says she has found friendship and support in the organization throughout her career, having joined shortly after graduating from college.

"It's a great way to meet other women who have the same mind-set as yourself—working hard and interested in helping their community and helping others," she says. "It's this melting pot where everyone comes together and helps each other."

Monthly noon luncheons, hosted on the third Thursday of each month in the meeting room at Nate and Ally's Frozen Treat Creations, 109 E. Third St., feature a variety of speakers. The 2022 lineup included presentations on employee retention; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); and the philosophy behind a local nonprofit's events that encourage people to achieve things they thought were impossible.

"We try to have well-rounded topics that will be interesting to a lot of people," Hansel says. The group also has fun, with a holiday luncheon featuring music from one of Winona's universities.

Scholarship funds are raised through an annual online basket auction and February's Cabin Fever Dash 5k/10k run.

Hansel hopes to see more young people join the organization, which provides opportunities for networking and developing and showcasing leadership skills. "I want to see other people shine and step up and show the group what they can do," she says. "It's fun to see people come in and grow."



Mandy Hansel, WWIB 2022 president

Learn more:

Apply for membership, which is free, and learn more about upcoming events and luncheons at www.wibwinona.org or follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WIBWinona>. 



OUR TOWNS

Celebrating life in the Coulee Region

No matter where you live in the Coulee Region, you're in or near a town—big or small—that's a wonderful place to live, enjoy our beautiful environment and do business. Here, we'll take you on a tour of the towns in the area we're proud to call home, highlighting what each has to offer. We're so grateful to all the businesses and organizations that make the Coulee Region a delightful place to live and that offer what community members need to thrive.

Stories by Shari Hegland
Photos by Diane Raaum Photo





Explore La Crosse

Whether you are seeking arts and entertainment, quality of life with outstanding health care, access to a silent sports mecca or a growing business community rooted in tradition, La Crosse has what you are looking for.

The largest city on Wisconsin's western border, La Crosse stretches for miles between the Mississippi River to the rolling bluffs of the Driftless Area, encompassing many unique and diverse neighborhoods with rich histories. The historic downtown includes both legacy businesses with more than 100 years of history and innovative start-ups ready to make their mark. You'll find unique boutiques, restaurants of all types, museums, art galleries and entertainment for all ages and interests.

The spirit of what was once officially North La Crosse lives on in the northside business district, where more boutiques, restaurants and services such as [The Board Store](#) center the neighborhood. And French Island, officially the Town of Campbell, is home to the community's regional airport and a thriving industrial park filled with businesses like [Decker Design](#).

The city is home to two nationally recognized health care systems, three colleges and universities and outdoor recreation that is ready for exploring, from water sports to hiking, mountain biking, skiing and more.

Named 50th of 203 cities on the Forbes list of "Best Small Places for Business and Careers 2019" and second on the "Business Insider" list of "The 10 Most Exciting Small Cities in America," La Crosse is the perfect place to get creative, set down roots or find the next challenge.

La Crosse's countless businesses provide the products and services that make up the backbone of life in western Wisconsin. The major medical systems are complemented by a diverse community of specialized providers such as the mental health experts at [The Therapy Place of La Crosse](#). Professionals at [Trust Point Inc.](#) and [The Monogram Company](#) provide essential services for businesses in the community. Other family service businesses include [D.M. Harris Law LLC](#), [Coulee Bank](#), [Midwest TV & Appliance](#) and [Schumacher-Kish Funeral Home & Cremation Services](#).

Many of La Crosse's businesses, big and small, are owned by creative, entrepreneurial women, including charming shops like [River City Gallery](#), [Nelson Flag & Display](#) and [River Road Quilts](#), where you can find a unique gift or fuel creativity, or capture memories with [Jordana Snyder Photography](#). The city also has programs to help women grow their business and be successful. The [Women's Alliance of La Crosse](#) and Women Empowering Women connect businesswomen for networking while professionals at the Southwest Wisconsin office of Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) and SCORE connect entrepreneurs and business owners with mentoring, education and even financing. Community organizations such as the Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse, the La Crosse Community Foundation and YWCA La Crosse are women-led and offer grants that support local causes, including those supportive of women and girls.

Whether you are in need of a product, service or advice, there's something here for you. Let the businesswomen of La Crosse help you with all of your needs.



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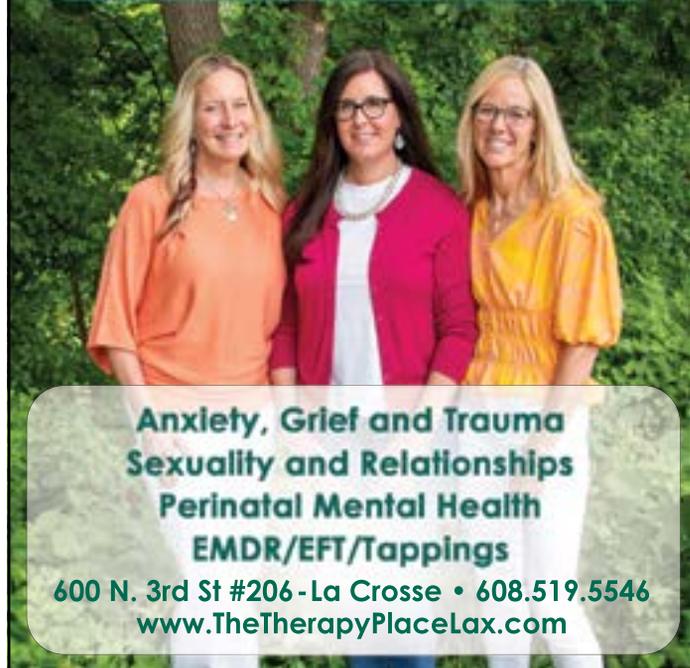
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The Minnesota Side of the River

La Crescent • Winona



The Minnesota side of the Mississippi offers more great communities that keep the Coulee Region vibrant.

The “Apple Capital of Minnesota,” La Crescent is just a quick drive across the big blue bridges from

La Crosse—with great pedestrian and bike access as well, thanks to a new bridge dedicated in 2022. Founded in 1851, with the first apple trees planted just six years later, it is no surprise that the highlight of the year in this growing community with a small-town vibe is Applefest in September. Celebrating the community since 1947, Applefest’s committee is made up almost entirely of women who love bringing people together.

This community boasts wonderful educational facilities, numerous parks and other outdoor opportunities and a recently completed hotel and convention center capable of hosting mid-sized events. Hop on any one of the three scenic drives in the area (Apple Blossom Scenic Drive, Historic Bluff Country National Scenic Byway and the Great River Road) to experience just how lovely La Crescent can be.

From the small-town essential businesses centered around downtown to businesses that reach throughout the region, like **Thorson Graphics**, La Crescent is ready for you.

Just up Highway 61, **Winona’s** riverfront and historic downtown are bustling with shops, cafés and charm. Stretched along the river and lakes that anchor Winona, you’ll find national and international industries, three institutions of higher education, and a medical center. Outdoor opportunities are in abundance here, both on land and on the water. Try rock climbing (or ice climbing), or just take in the view from Sugarloaf Bluff and Garvin Heights, or kayak and ice fish on

the lakes. Lovers of art and the arts will find plenty to enjoy, from the Minnesota Marine Art Museum’s collection of works by the masters and rotating exhibitions to festivals that make music, theater and film accessible to all. Enjoy the Great River Shakespeare Festival, the Frozen River Film Festival or the Minnesota Beethoven Festival.

Winona is no stranger to a women-filled workforce, with the Winona Women in Business not-for-profit organization aiming to inspire women of all occupations and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth through leadership, networking and education.

Winona’s vibrant downtown also has a high presence of women entrepreneurs, with approximately 90 percent of the retail establishments being run by women. Women lead manufacturing companies, health care systems and a wide range of service, retail, education and entertainment businesses throughout the city.





Onalaska— Beautiful by Nature

Just north of La Crosse on the Great River Road is the city of Onalaska, anchored at the corner of Highway 35 and Main Street by the Great River Landing and Dash-Park, which hosts events throughout the summer. The Great River State Trail connects you to 101 miles of trails for walking, running and biking. From a water paradise for boaters, anglers and photographers to more than 300 acres of parks for hiking and playing, plus the OmniCenter venue hosting everything from hockey to home shows, Onalaska has something for everyone.

Enhancing the natural beauty are women important to the art scene in Onalaska, as evidenced by the Onalaska Arts Council. This group is composed primarily of women business owners who led the fundraising campaign to create the “Nature’s Backyard” sculpture that now graces Grand River Landing. And we can even thank a woman—Vicki Gilbertson—for commissioning Sunny, the giant sunfish just down Highway 35, an Onalaska icon and favorite stop for tourist photos. The Onalaska Art Keepers organization debuted Pop Up Onalaska in 2022, featuring 44 paintings by student and professional artists that could be found throughout the city during the summer months.

In town and out, you’ll find a plethora of booming businesses, many of them women-owned. This flourishing community has over 2,000 businesses, and women play a huge part in keeping

this city humming and thriving. Their many local businesses, shops and restaurants contribute to the authentic cultural experience. From restaurants and wine bars to boutiques and numerous health and wellness practices, women-owned businesses abound, and a woman leads the city as mayor.

Women representatives at **CPC Printing & Promotions** are here to facilitate printing jobs and set your organization up with promotional products. Homeowners and builders can find all they need in Onalaska as well. **Solid Surface Specialist** can connect you with countertops that make your kitchen and bath glow, and the designers at **Elevations by Wisconsin Building Supply** are here to help you with your next kitchen remodel or home improvement project. Even window treatments are easy to find at **Budget Blinds**. Then, fill your home with artistic photography and family portraits by **Diane Raaum Photo**. Counselors, yoga instructors, beauty consultants, fitness trainers, video producers, shop owners and dog groomers—these women, and many others, are making a difference in Onalaska by getting involved, empowering other women and being active members of their community.

Onalaska is a great city to live in, or even just visit for the day. Explore the great outdoors or support local businesswomen while you spend some time here. If you’re lucky, you’ll have time to do both!

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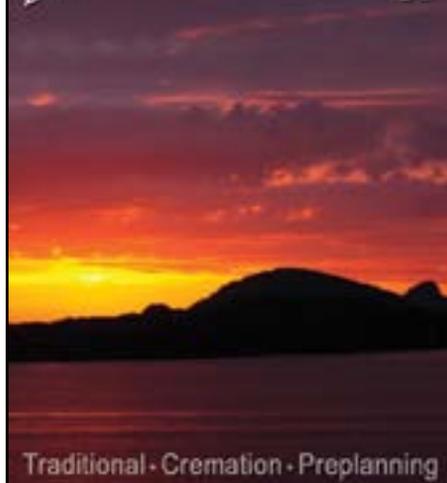
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Points North

Holmen • Galesville • Trempeleau

On the northern side of the greater La Crosse area, you'll find the family-friendly village of **Holmen**. One of the fastest growing communities in the state, Holmen is continually adding new housing, updated retail opportunities and a thriving industrial area through the Highway 53 corridor. Here you'll find a strong sense of community spirit that makes Holmen loved by residents, business owners and visitors alike. Rolling farmlands and beautiful bluffs color the local landscape.

Women are the drivers in many of the businesses on the growing edge of this community. From professional services to dining for all hours of the day, wellness-based businesses and unique retail offerings, Holmen's women are opening doors.

Just a few more miles north of Holmen on Highway 53, you'll find the city of **Galesville**. Boasting attractions like the Apple Affair, Lake Marinuka, A. A. Arnold House, Old Main Historical & Community Arts Center and the Swinging Suspension Bridge, this community is a delight to all who have the pleasure of experiencing it. Galesville was awarded the Scenic Beauty Award from Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin in 2008 and surely deserves the title.

Galesville is the perfect place to support women in business. Nearly all of the businesses ringing the charming downtown square, which boasts almost no empty spaces, are owned by women, whether bakeries, cafés, boutiques or florists—even a bowling alley. Collaboration is valued, as businesses like **Rebel Glass** refer customers to other businesses in town and

work together to host a number of events, including summer Downtown Walk-Abouts with vendors and evening hours at most shops.

Upriver from La Crosse and downriver from Winona is the small village of **Trempeleau**. Located off the scenic Great River Road, this village is surrounded by a marsh and seven lakes, which create natural scenic beauty and the perfect place for outdoor fun. Trempeleau is home to a vibrant community with a workforce that reflects what it means to truly have a Midwestern work ethic. Whether you are looking for unique hand-crafted items, farm-to-table food or a traditional Midwest breakfast followed by a day of fishing, Trempeleau has you covered. Don't miss the astounding views from Perrot State Park, then enjoy a wine picnic at the women-run, award-winning Elmaro Winery.





Vibrant Vernon County

COON VALLEY • WESTBY • VIROQUA

For a day of road-tripping, dining and shopping, there's no better direction to head than south of La Crosse to the many delightful destinations in Vernon County. You'll find an eclectic blend of tradition and Scandinavian heritage mixed with progressive approaches to art, dining and sustainability.

The village of **Coon Valley** is located in the heart of the Driftless Area, which was never touched by glaciers. The absence of glacier activity has created an area of lovely rolling hills and spring-fed trout streams. The landscape was a favorite for Norwegian settlers, whose history is preserved just outside of town at Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center. The main road through town is dotted with shopping stops for unique gifts and more.

The city of **Westby** also sits in the Driftless Area and is home to peaceful valleys, towering ridges, breathtaking vistas, tranquil back roads and roaming rivers. Once just a village, Westby has since expanded into a city where you'll find outdoor activities in abundance, plus boutiques highlighted by shops such as **Dregne's Scandinavian Gifts**, historical displays, antique shops and a rich local culture.

Farther down the road, **Viroqua** has put itself on the map as a foodie's paradise with innovative farm-to-table restaurants that have received national recognition, the well-stocked **Viroqua Food Co-op** and a locally

owned coffee roaster. Viroqua's delightful downtown has been named to the Wisconsin and National Register of Historic Places and is home to the newly renovated Historic Fortney building, filled with women-owned businesses including salon services, photography, counseling and health and wellness. Known for its bustling business environment, the community places great value on supporting creative efforts such as the **Driftless Writing Center**, which offers writing workshops and author events, and the **Viroqua Public Market**, an emporium filled with locally made goods often crafted by women. Find even more special touches for your home at **Vinhøst Vintage Market**.

Coon Valley, Westby and Viroqua are all wonderful places to support local businesses. Whether you drop by the downtown area to enjoy a cup of coffee or explore some of the many trails in the area, you're supporting the local culture and community.





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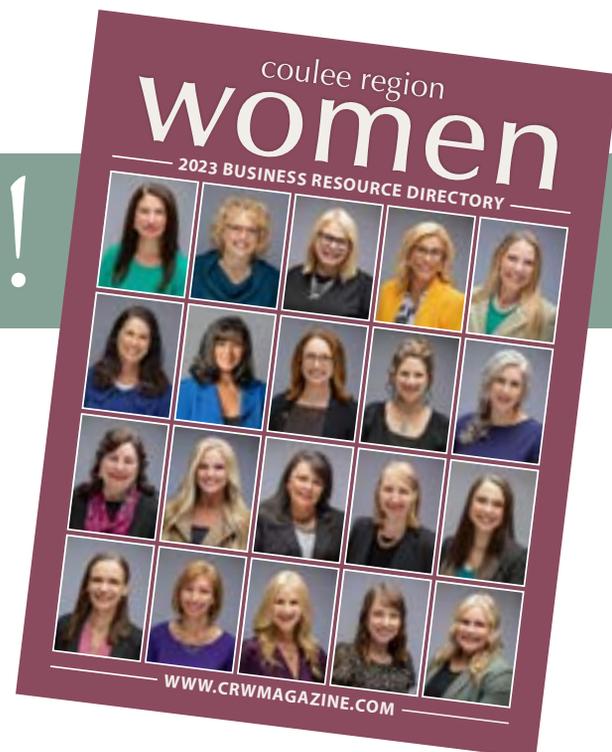
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Beyond the Bike Trails

West Salem • Bangor • Sparta

Find a home for all seasons in **West Salem**, east of La Crosse and Onalaska, with easy access to either the fast road (Interstate 90) or the slow road (the La Crosse River bike trail). The hometown of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hamlin Garland, West Salem is a delightful small town surrounded by outdoor recreation opportunities: boating and fishing at Lake Neshonoc, camping and picnicking at Veteran’s Memorial Park or canoeing down the La Crosse River. You could even hop on the La Crosse River State Trail for a bike ride or a run.

West Salem also has a thriving community of women-led businesses ranging from RV sales to a downtown featuring clothing, home décor, yoga, beauty, coffee, event venues and more. Elsewhere in the village, many local homeowners rely on **Beyer Cabinets** for their custom cabinetry needs.

East of West Salem is the village of **Bangor**, small in size but rich in what it has to offer residents and visitors alike. Here you can enjoy the feeling of a small town while having all of the amenities of a big city nearby. One-of-a-kind boutiques and restaurants offer options you won’t find from chains and big box stores.

Nestled in the rolling hills along the La Crosse River is the city of **Sparta**. It is known as the “Bicycling Capital of America” and is home to the first rail bed in Wisconsin to be converted to bike trails between Sparta and Elroy. You can’t miss the world’s largest fiberglass bike, marking the access to several nationally

recognized bike trails.

Beyond biking, Sparta is also home to many businesses run solely by women. The city itself has many women in leadership roles, including the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, the mayor, the superintendent and the Sparta Free Library director. Women are keeping the downtown vibrant with their many coffee shops, gift boutiques, clothing stores and more.

This progressive city is full of women entrepreneurs who support and encourage each other, bringing creativity, energy and a fresh new take on the business scene.



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