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women

2025 BUSINESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY



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Alicia M. Zillmer

Client Service Coordinator

Linda Fruechte

Office Manager

Margaret Hanson

Marketing Consultant

Hanson & Associates

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Coulee region women

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Supporting Success

We've all heard the saying "It takes a village," but we at *Coulee Region Women* wonder how often we apply that phrase to our own journeys as businesswomen. We often think about how hard we've worked, the crucial decisions we've made along the way and how we've prepared carefully to create success for our business and ourselves. But as the 2025 *Coulee Region Women Business Resource Directory* is here to proclaim, we are never alone on our path to building a successful business. Each of us can name women—family, mentors, friends—who have supported us along the way, whether with advice, funding, strong examples of success or simply love. Our 2025 *Business Resource Directory* is leading a celebration of those supportive women.

In this year's directory, you'll find the stories of 20 featured businesswomen, providing services to the Coulee Region and inspiration to our community. Our business story on p. 9 invites these women to tell their own stories of women who helped them along the way, mentors who provided coaching or positive examples and, most important, their hopes and dreams for a business community of women that exists to offer support and encouragement every step of the way.

Our community stories this issue pick up this thread on p. 19, illustrating the best of the towns in our region and highlighting how they, too, support a strong community of women in business. Enjoy this photo essay featuring the communities we love to live in, the businesses that have helped make them strong and the celebrations that bring us all together.

We hope you'll find the 2025 *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. We at *Coulee Region Women* are proud to be one of your supports in this community, and we look forward to telling more and more stories of highlighting our communities of women in business.

Betty Christiansen, Publisher & Editor

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Betty Christiansen

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Shari Hegland

DESIGNER

Jaclyn Berg

MARKETING ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE

Rachel Persson

Olivia Walker

PHOTO EDITOR

Diane Raaum

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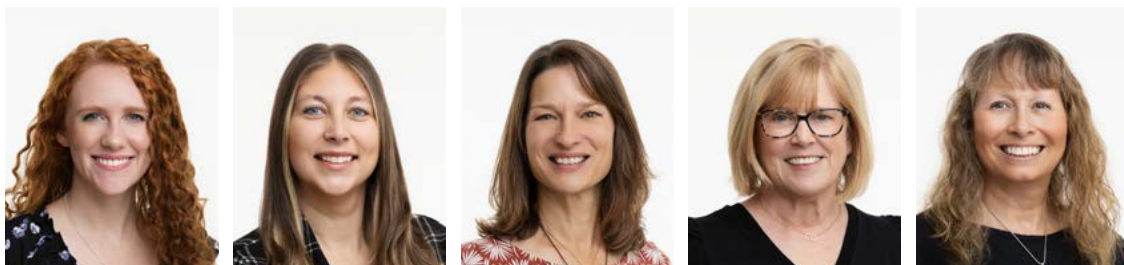
call 608-783-5395

www.crwmagazine.com

info@crwmagazine.com



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From left: Rachel Persson, sales; Olivia Walker, sales; Betty Christiansen, publisher & editor; Diane Raaum, photo editor; Shari Hegland, contributing editor. Not pictured: Jaclyn Berg, graphic design. Cover and advertorial photos by Frontier Photography. Photo on facing page by Diane Raaum Photo.



2025



BUSINESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY





ERICA BOLAND

CO-FOUNDER/MIDWIFE/
CHIROPRACTOR
COULEE HEALTH BIRTH COLLECTIVE

Dr. Erica Boland, co-founder of **Coulee Health Birth Collective**, La Crosse County's first and only birth center, is a passion-driven woman and movement and pelvic floor enthusiast helping heal your pelvic floor dysfunction without a single kegel. As a chiropractor and midwife, Erica thrives in connecting with women and children to help them move better and feel better on this journey. Much of her practice is focused on healing the core and pelvic floor in the prenatal and postpartum periods. She teaches other professionals across the globe how to set a higher standard of care for the parenthood transition, and it is her mission to educate and empower women and lead transformation of current postpartum protocols.

Outside of her dream job, Erica can be found at the rink, at the court or listening to live music. She and Kyle spend much of their free time with their four beautiful boys.



608-612-0777
N4622 County Road M
West Salem, WI 54669
info@couleehealthbirthcollective.com
www.couleehealthbirthcollective.com



MICHELLE OLDENBURG

SERVICE ADVISOR
DAHL AUTOMOTIVE

Michelle Oldenburg is a certified Service Advisor for **Dahl Automotive** in La Crosse, with a total of 15 years' experience as an automotive service advisor. She has experience with many vehicle makes and models, is certified in Hyundai and Ford and has held certification for Nissan. She holds a finance degree from Western Technical College. Michelle is the proud and dedicated mother of two children and enjoys working for Dahl Automotive, which is a family-oriented organization.

Dahl Automotive is committed to delivering a quality guest experience, and Michelle prioritizes the company's Core Value of "Create a blow your mind, gotta tell my friends about you" guest experience. She treats every guest with integrity and respect, and she will walk you through the sometimes-confusing service process in a way that will help you be empowered to understand.

Michelle is happy to assist with your vehicle service needs. For more information on Dahl's services, please visit www.dahlauto.com.



608-791-6486
711 Third Street S.
La Crosse, WI 54601
michelle.oldenburg@dahlauto.com
www.dahlauto.com



MARGARET A. SEVERSON, AAMS

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
EDWARD JONES

Whether you are an experienced investor or just getting started, choosing a financial advisor is an important decision.

At **Edward Jones**, **Margaret Severson** and her team value personal relationships based on a deep understanding of your unique financial needs. They use a solutions-based approach tailored to your individual goals and provide exceptional service.

Margaret has had the pleasure of serving as a financial advisor with Edward Jones in Viroqua since 1999, where she has worked to help investors manage their investment priorities. Margaret and her team focus on preparing their clients for retirement, living well in retirement and estate strategies for loved ones.

Margaret and her family enjoy the best the Driftless Region has to offer with hobbies such as hiking the beautiful hills, canoeing the local waterways and biking the scenic trails.



866-637-7233
520 N. Main Street, Suite A
Viroqua, WI 54665
margaret.severson@edwardjones.com
www.edwardjones.com



AMY STODOLA, AAMS

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
EDWARD JONES

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 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.



608-788-2668
1212 Horton Street, Suite 102
La Crosse, WI 54601
amy.stodola@edwardjones.com
www.edwardjones.com



NIKKI BENZING

OWNER
HIDDEN VALLEY DESIGNS, INC.

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 two homes it serves.

Nikki's busy work schedule is complemented with her busy lifestyle. Nikki spends her "spare" time raising three sons.



608-526-9870
Located inside Floorcrafters
N5570 Frontage Road
Onalaska, WI 54650
nikki@designlacrosse.com
www.hiddenvalleydesigns.com



LAURA HOFFMAN

OWNER
THE MONOGRAM COMPANY

Laura Hoffman's dedication to quality and customer service at The Monogram Company is evident from her extensive experience in the embroidery and printing industry. With over 14 years in the field, Laura has successfully navigated the evolution of her business, particularly in the growing e-commerce space. The move to a larger facility last year in Onalaska and the acquisition of a new six-head embroidery machine highlight the company's commitment to increased production capacity and improved service.

Laura stays busy balancing her professional and personal life, including raising three young children. Her active participation in the Chamber of Commerce and former involvement with Young Professionals highlights her dedication to community engagement and business networking. The Monogram Company's approach to welcoming all customers, regardless of order size, reflects a customer-centric philosophy that contributes to its continued success and growth.



608-784-9647
1010 Second Avenue S.
Onalaska, WI 54650
laurah@monogramco.com
www.monogramco.com



HEIDI M. EGLASH

ATTORNEY
EGLASH LAW OFFICE LLC

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—Heidi 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.



608-782-6110
PO Box 189
La Crosse, WI 54602
heidi@eglashlawoffice.com
www.eglashlawoffice.com

SAMANTHA KECK

REALTOR®, TEAM PARTNER
HAUGEN & KECK TEAM @ RE/MAX RESULTS

With 28 years of experience in the real estate industry, **Samantha Keck** has built a reputation for dedication, professionalism and an energetic approach to her work. Having lived in the community for over 32 years, she has a deep understanding of the local market and a genuine passion for serving her clients.

Samantha is known for her strong work ethic and commitment to fostering professional relationships. Her dedication extends beyond her real estate practice; she is highly involved in volunteer efforts and currently serves as the president of the local CASA organization, advocating for the well-being of children in her community.

Her commitment to community service has not gone unnoticed; she has received numerous awards recognizing her contributions and impact. Recently, Samantha took an exciting step in her career by launching her own real estate team, the **Haugen & Keck Team**, with Brandon Haugen, a trusted colleague with whom she has worked with for 21 years. Together, they have opened a new office in Holmen, aiming to provide unparalleled service and expertise to their clients.

With a wealth of experience and a strong community focus, Samantha continues to inspire and lead in the real estate industry while making a positive difference in the lives of those around her.



608-792-2784
106 S. Holmen Drive, Suite 4
Holmen, WI 54636
samantha@haugenkeckteam.com
www.haugenkeckteam.com



Amy Stodola, Margaret Severson and Denise Halverson, along with other women advisors in the area, support each other in building their businesses with Edward Jones.

Supporting Success

Our cover women share insights on how women in business can support each other.

By Shari Hegland
Contributed photos

Finding support and giving support are both key elements in building a successful business, according to the women featured in our 2025 *Coulee Region Women Business Resource Directory*. We asked them who provided them the most valuable support in their careers and business endeavors and what they wish the broader community would do to build up businesswomen and generate success for all. Their insights could help us all be better.

Who has been influential in your approach to business, your decision-making or your advancement? What did they teach you that has been valuable?

Nikki Benzing: My mom, Sheryl Rupprecht. She taught me how to sell. Coming into the window treatment business, I had a good knowledge of the business “books” side of things, but going into homes was very scary. I learned confidence and how to interact with the customer.

Laura Hoffman: A former boss inspired my approach to business owning. He was a perfect mentor who taught me the true meaning of work ethics and how to be successful. We didn’t always agree on things, and that was OK. We all have our opinions and ways to

approach different situations, and that was a big part of learning flexibility in a job. He opened my eyes to the world of business, a new world to me at the time. I have used many tactics he taught me to achieve advancement in my career.

Gretchen Poellinger: While multiple women have been incredibly influential, the most impactful individual on my business journey has been my sweet 6-year-old daughter. I strive each day to show my daughter that a woman can be successful by embracing her unique strengths, fostering strong relationships and never shying away from challenges. I want my daughter to understand the importance of resilience, continuous learning and supporting others, and I want to show her that through determination, integrity and passion, she can truly achieve her dreams and inspire those around her!

Nancy Flottmeyer: My mother, Patricia Lyga. She managed my father’s dental office, and everyone loved and respected her. She treated everyone kindly. Her example helped frame who I am today as well as my approach to running my company. I also loved watching Nell Hull in her catering meetings. She always put the client first in the meetings and was so enthusiastic for their big day.

Jennifer Lough: My mentor is Peggy Herlitzka. She has always been a great resource in the legal community. She has taught me tips for practicing law and tricks that have made me more efficient. Her advice is always valuable, and her kind heart is a reminder to always treat people with grace and respect.

Keara McKinney: My mom, Jane, has been my rock since I started working toward becoming a lawyer. Growing up, my parents owned a business and never shied away from hard work. I learned at a young age that it takes a lot of work and dedication to achieve goals. My mom has always been there for me to listen to problems and brainstorm solutions with me.

Amy Stodola: My husband, Vince. He always believed in me and challenged me to push myself and get uncomfortable. “If we are comfortable, that means we are not growing.”

How have you been supported in your business or career by other women? How do you support those around you? What do you wish we all would do to build a thriving community of women in business?

Nancy Flottmeyer: The women in my life have all been supportive. When I first moved to town, I joined Wisconsin Women Entrepreneurs and was the only non-business owner. They welcomed me with open arms and encouraged and supported me until I was ready to start my company.

Samantha Keck: To build a thriving community of women in business, I wish we could all commit to collaboration over competition. By amplifying each other’s voices and creating mentorship circles, we can cultivate an environment where women feel empowered to pursue their goals and uplift one another. This collective support can foster innovation and resilience, ultimately benefiting everyone in the community.

Amy Stodola: Bringing another female along with me to events/meetings/etc. goes a long way. Sometimes we just need that other person to say, “Hey, you are awesome! Tell me more about you.”

Margaret Severson: I was one of three women in my region when I began my career as a financial advisor with Edward Jones in 1999. Together we learned how to build our businesses while building friendships with each other. We embraced women supporting other women.

Keara McKinney: As a community, I wish we could find a way to make it easier to fully support one another, no matter what. Everything is so competitive these days in general, but it seems like sometimes society tries to pin women against each other. Sometimes it gets hard to support others who may seem like they are doing better than you, but I think it’s important to remember that other women doing well makes our community grow stronger.

Stephanie Ross: I wish that more female small-business owners would be vulnerable and open about their struggles in business,

because I truly feel we would realize how much more alike we are than different. So many of us only want to show the shiny, glamorous side of business, but it only brings out our comparison mindset. Our dreams are all unique and different, but our struggles are often very similar, which is why we can support each other and collaborate instead.

Jennifer Lough: I have been supported in my career by other women simply by creating social networks within the legal community where we can ask questions and lean on one another with work issues. I wish we would create a greater social network, including different areas of business, to achieve that same emotional support.

Gretchen Poellinger: Mentorship can be transformative—having someone who truly understands the unique challenges of a business owner can make all the difference. As I have had so many incredible women support and encourage me on my journey, I strive to do the same for others. I believe in actively listening, sharing knowledge when I can and offering encouragement.

Continued on p. 14



Gretchen Poellinger says her daughter is one of the key influences in how she makes decisions for her business and life.



SARAH E. FORTUNE

ATTORNEY/PARTNER
HALE, SKEMP, HANSON,
SKEMP & SLEIK

Attorney **Sarah Fortune** of **Hale Skemp** is dedicated to protecting your assets and ensuring your legacy is secure, no matter what the future holds. Specializing in estate planning, trust and estate administration and long-term care cost planning, Sarah offers expert legal guidance tailored to individuals and families. From drafting comprehensive wills and trusts to helping clients navigate probate, Sarah's compassionate approach and meticulous attention to detail set her apart. She works closely with her clients to create customized strategies that preserve their assets, respect their wishes and provide peace of mind for generations to come.

Outside of the office, Sarah's adventurous spirit shines through—she's swum with beluga whales in the Arctic, camped deep within Brazil's Amazon rainforest, and enjoys gardening at home alongside her dog and a flock of backyard chickens. To learn more, visit our website and explore Sarah's articles on estate planning and asset protection, or contact her to start planning for your future today.



608-784-3540
505 King Street, Suite 300
La Crosse, WI 54601
sef@haleskemp.com
www.haleskemp.com

EMILY M. IVERSON

ATTORNEY
HALE, SKEMP, HANSON, SKEMP & SLEIK

Attorney **Emily Iverson** of **Hale Skemp** specializes in litigation with a primary focus on family law, where her excellent interpersonal skills and legal knowledge serve as the foundation for her advocacy. Emily represents clients facing challenges related to custody, placement, child and spousal support and divorce. She takes a client-centered approach to her practice, building strong relationships, understanding her clients' goals and offering dedicated, compassionate legal services.

Emily is actively involved in her community, serving as a board member of the La Crosse County Bar Association. Her dedication to supporting families and children is evident through her committee work and volunteer efforts, demonstrating her commitment to making a lasting, positive impact.

Outside of law, Emily enjoys traveling and spending time with her family. She especially loves boating and fishing at her family's northern Wisconsin cabin with her husband and their two young children. Her dedication to supporting families and children is evident through her committee work and volunteer efforts.



608-784-3540
505 King Street, Suite 300
La Crosse, WI 54601
emi@haleskemp.com
www.haleskemp.com



KEARA K. MCKINNEY

ATTORNEY
HALE, SKEMP, HANSON, SKEMP & SLEIK

Attorney **Keara McKinney** of **Hale Skemp** is part of the firm's esteemed litigation practice group. She is committed to delivering exceptional legal services with a focus on family law and debt collections, as well as touching other areas of law through general litigation. In addition to her legal degree, she holds a certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution, equipping her with specialized skills to navigate complex cases and achieve effective resolutions.

A proud Holmen native, Keara is thrilled to return to her roots and serve the community that shaped her. When she's not advocating for clients, Keara enjoys the great outdoors and cherishing moments with friends and family. Her passion for both her profession and her community makes her a valued asset and a trusted ally to those she serves.



608-784-3540
505 King Street, Suite 300
La Crosse, WI 54601
kkm@haleskemp.com
www.haleskemp.com



**ANGELINE FINCH, MS, ACNS-BC, APNP, RYT-200,
CERTIFIED PRACTITIONER OF SOUND AND VIBRATIONAL THERAPY**

OWNER
LIVING SIMPLY WELL LLC

Angeline Finch is a wife and mother of five beautiful children, a yoga teacher, a sound and vibrational therapist, a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) board-certified in adult health, an advanced practice nurse prescriber (APNP) with more than 20 years' experience in health care and owner of **Living Simply Well LLC**.

The vision for Living Simply Well stems from personal experiences with chronic pain, a son with special needs and an awareness of the need for supportive modalities for individuals within our community. Health and wellness are the foundation of life. Much of this has been lost in our current culture with increasing stressors and time commitments. Isolation, poor nutrition, impaired sleep and chronic disease is causing suffering, which is reaching all-time highs.

The vision at Living Simply Well is to provide nonpharmacologic interventions that improve health and wellness through mindfulness, prayer and meditation, movement, nutrition, stress reduction, improved sleep and connection within a community. Connecting to nature, detoxifying our body with fresh air and nutritious food from the earth and igniting our senses in the beauty found outdoors and in community are just a few interventions that can improve health.

Angeline hopes to foster and inspire your deepest source of wellness!



608-871-2884
103 State Street, Suite 201
Holmen, WI 54636
welcome@livingsimplywell-lax.com
www.livingsimplywell-lax.com

TAMARA ZEE, MS, C-IAYT, ACE, E-RYT 500

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

Tammy Zee is the owner of **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 37 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, water exercise and goat yoga.

Tammy and her husband, Dennis, have been married for 37 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. She motivates and coaches yoga and group fitness instructors in finding their niche and finding success in the wellness industry. In her spare time, Tammy loves spending time with her family and her three golden retrievers.



608-386-1217
1288 Rudy Street, Suite 102
Onalaska, WI 54650
dztz@acegroup.cc
www.tammyzyoga.com | www.omyogaonalaska.com



NICOLE AZENE, DVM

OWNER/VETERINARIAN
ONALASKA ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Since opening in 2022, **Onalaska Animal Hospital** has quickly grown a reputation for delivering a deeper kind of care. Reflecting the compassion, skill and love for pets of its owner and lead veterinarian, **Dr. Nicole Azene**, the hospital is redefining pet health care in the region.

Dr. Nicole, as she's known to clients and patients, boasts an impressive academic background from the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Her diverse experience spans private practice, academia and the federal sector, where she managed an intensive care unit at the National Institutes of Health.

At Onalaska Animal Hospital, Dr. Nicole makes veterinary care more convenient with resources like an app, telehealth, online appointment scheduling and an online pharmacy offering home delivery. She also makes the care more effective by using state-of-the-art equipment, including laser therapy, laser surgery and in-house labs, X-ray and diagnostics capabilities.

A Fear Free® Certified Veterinary Professional, Dr. Nicole deeply respects the human-animal bond, which shows in every aspect of her practice. From the clinical excellence she provides and the Fear Free® design of Onalaska Animal Hospital, her compassionate approach to pet medicine ensures care beyond the ordinary.



**Onalaska
Animal Hospital**
HANDS THAT HEAL, HEARTS THAT CARE

608-668-6777
984 12th Avenue S.
Onalaska, WI 54650
info@onalaskaanimalhospital.com
www.onalaskaanimalhospital.com



GRETCHEN POELLINGER, MS, LPC

RESILIENT ROOTS COUNSELING
OWNER/CLINICAL THERAPIST

Gretchen Poellinger is a dedicated licensed professional counselor (LPC) and the owner of **Resilient Roots Counseling**, a private practice committed to fostering emotional well-being and personal growth. You can expect Resilient Roots Counseling to provide compassionate, personalized and evidence-based therapeutic services that foster growth, healing and self-discovery. As a clinician, Gretchen believes that counseling is a therapeutic journey where individuals learn to process through challenging experiences, allowing for a more thriving and meaningful future. In therapy, Gretchen takes great pride in creating a welcoming and warm environment that is built on trust and compassion to empower individuals on their healing journey. With over a decade in the mental health field, Gretchen has extensive experience providing care to individuals from childhood through adulthood.

Outside of being a therapist and business owner, Gretchen is a devoted wife and mother of two children. Gretchen finds great joy in creating lasting memories with her family, whether that is boating or hiking in the summer or skiing in the winter.

Contact Resilient Roots Counseling today to schedule your first appointment. Together, we'll plant the seed for a more resilient and fulfilling future!



608-765-8783
704 Sand Lake Road, Suite 200
Onalaska, WI 54650
gretchen@resilientroots-counseling.com
www.resilientroots-counseling.com

Continued from p. 10

Laura Hoffman: I am a very busy mom with little kids, so I don't have as much time as I used to for networking with other women's groups; however, I read anything and everything associated with their businesses. Being a part of *Coulee Region Women* has been a large part of my success. I am always looking forward to reading about the women in our community. Being a current member of the Chamber is also giving me opportunities to participate in women's leadership.

Nicole Azene: I've had wonderful support from other women in varied ways. Misty Lown sold me the land for my business. Annette Mikat has helped me build, maintain and strengthen relationships that impact our success. Carolyn Colleen has provided training for my team. Michelle Hemp helped me start Onalaska Animal Hospital—hiring the right people, setting operating procedures and managing the business side. Through it all, our hospital director, Brandi Aliesch, has been by my side. We understand how difficult it is for women to juggle all the demands for their time and attention—work, family, community. That's why I'm so committed to safeguarding work-life balance. I'd like to see a fun community event for women in business—not something rooted in professional development, but more a celebration that fosters sisterhood, true friendships and the support that comes from them.



Stephanie Ross says Misty Lown has been a strong business mentor and example for her in how to support other women in finding success.

Just for fun: What is your favorite place in the Coulee Region for food or drink? Tell us what makes it your go-to.

Stephanie Ross: My go-to for coffee is Moka—I absolutely love the brand, their mission and their Jamaican coffee! (I also love that it's women-owned. Joan is amazing!)

My go-to place for food is 4 Sisters for tapas. They always hit the spot, and I always love the view! (Plus, also women-owned, and Corynn is fabulous!)

Nicole Azene: My favorite go-to place in the Coulee Region is La Crosse Distilling Co. I like that they're locally owned, serve great food and have a nice vibe. But the number one reason they're my go-to is their vodka gimlets!

Nikki Benzing: Lindy's! When it's busy during the day, we can pop in there for lunch. It's quick, we can take it to go and the staff is always friendly.

Samantha Keck: I don't think I can name just one or two ... or even three. I love so many places throughout the Coulee Region. I think it would be fair to say that the combination of great food and cherished moments with my people are what make places my favorite ... and I am pretty partial to a patio setting!

Margaret Severson: My favorite place in the Coulee Region for food and drink is Hotel Fortney in Viroqua. They have a historic yet modern atmosphere that is relaxing and appealing to visit with friends and family. I enjoy wine and tapas or a fresh pizza prepared and delivered from Driftless Café.

Other mentions: Lovechild, JavaVino, La Cave, Manny's, Red Pines, Waterfront Tavern, Freighthouse, Digger's Sting, The Hatchery, UnWine'd—it's time for a girls' dinner out to connect!

CTW



Laura Hoffman (far right) says her family has been a tremendous source of support in her business ownership journey.

Thank You
From
coulee region
women
BUSINESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY

JENNIFER LOUGH

ATTORNEY/PARTNER
SCHROEDER & LOUGH, SC



Jennifer Lough has been practicing law for 18 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 area of criminal defense and drunk driving defense. She has protected hundreds of people who have been accused of crimes, proving their innocence and ensuring they are treated with fairness. Being a former prosecutor, Jennifer has a unique skill set that helps her tailor a legal strategy to each client. She assists community members 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 six 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.



608-784-8055
300 Second Street N., Suite 200
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jennifer@laxdefenders.com
www.lacrossecriminaldefense.com



STEPHANIE ROSS

CEO, REALTOR®
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Stephanie Ross is an enthusiastic business educator, REALTOR® and speaker. A La Crosse native with a decade-plus of business experience, Stephanie wholeheartedly believes in the power of collaboration over competition and is always actively seeking out ways to positively contribute to her community. A true teacher at heart, she educates, leads and connects female small business owners through her company, **Small Business Sister Circle™**. Stephanie understands firsthand the challenges that come with small business ownership, which is why she created a community for female entrepreneurs to learn, connect and grow a sustainable, scalable, profitable business that allows them to enjoy a lifestyle they love alongside their entrepreneurial journey.

To that point, as a REALTOR® on The Sherie Grass Team at RE/MAX Results, Stephanie guides her real estate clients to find the perfect home or location for their business to enjoy life's big and small moments. As a coach, she specializes in helping clients build a strategy to guide them all the way to closing. Named a 2024 7 Rivers Alliance Rising Star Under 40, whether Stephanie is coaching, connecting or speaking on a stage or in her podcast, *Soul Driven with Steph*, she will leave you feeling empowered, inspired and on fire to build a business and a lifestyle that you love!



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757 Sand Lake Road
Onalaska, WI 54650
stephanieleaross@gmail.com
stephanieleaross.com
sistercircle.co



KELLY ELLINGHUYSEN

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER
TRUST POINT

Kelly Ellinghuysen is passionate about guiding her clients toward their financial aspirations at **Trust Point**. As a Relationship Manager, she specializes in the comprehensive management and administration of agency, IRA, trust and estate accounts. Kelly is dedicated to building strong, lasting relationships with her clients, meeting with them regularly and maintaining open lines of communication to address their evolving needs. She takes pride in providing tailored solutions that align with each client’s unique goals. Kelly finds great fulfillment in helping clients lead enriched lives, knowing her expertise plays a crucial role in their financial success and long-term security.

With over 20 years of experience, Kelly has developed a deep understanding of client needs, handling sensitive and confidential matters with the utmost care and professionalism. This experience continues to guide her at Trust Point, helping clients achieve their financial goals. Kelly is committed to delivering exceptional service, ensuring her clients feel supported every step of the way.

Outside of her professional role, Kelly is an active volunteer in her community. She serves as vice president and secretary of the Goodview Community Foundation and helps organize the Goodview Gallop 5k, which raises funds for various cancer care initiatives.



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JENNIFER GANDER, CFP®, CPA

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER
TRUST POINT

Jennifer Gander is a dedicated Relationship Manager at **Trust Point** who partners closely with clients to navigate the complexities of investment management, estate and trust administration and nonprofit services. Jennifer is committed to ensuring that clients feel supported every step of the way, whether she’s answering daily questions or guiding them through significant financial decisions like planning for retirement or purchasing a home. Her primary goal is to empower clients with a clear understanding of their financial situation, helping them achieve their long-term objectives.

Jennifer holds a bachelor of arts in elementary education from University of North Florida and a bachelor of science in accountancy from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She furthered her expertise by becoming a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Financial Planner® professional, reflecting her deep knowledge of financial planning and unwavering commitment to ethical practices.

Jennifer is actively involved in the community and is the treasurer of the Pump House Regional Arts Center, a nonprofit organization focused on enriching lives in the La Crosse region and beyond through visual, performing and literary arts.



608-782-1148
230 Front Street N.
La Crosse, WI 54601
www.trustpointinc.com



NANCY FLOTTMEYER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR/OWNER
WBN EVENT GROUP

Nancy Flottmeyer, owner and creative director of **WBN Event Group**, has been designing and producing events for 22 years. After working in advertising for eight years, she followed her passion for weddings and events and founded Weddings by Nancy in 2002. In 2019 she sold that company and now continues with corporate and social events.

She plans events of all sizes—from small, intimate birthday soirées to large corporate events for over 1,000 guests. She sees events as experiences and strives to make each one unique for both the guests and the client. She understands the “why” behind the event and uses that as her design guide.

Nancy loves a good party and is behind many annual events in La Crosse. For the past 10-plus years, she has designed the Festmaster’s Ball and co-chairs and designs the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra’s Valentine Ball. Her client list includes Adult & Teen Challenge of Western Wisconsin, Ashley Furniture, Dahl Automotive, First Supply, Leadercast, Marine Credit Union, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, VARC, and others..

A La Crosse native, she has been married to her husband, Bob, for 28 years and has three children, Frances (Brett), Albert, and Paul. Of everything she has done, she is proudest of her children. WBN Event Group is a member of the La Crosse Chamber of Commerce.



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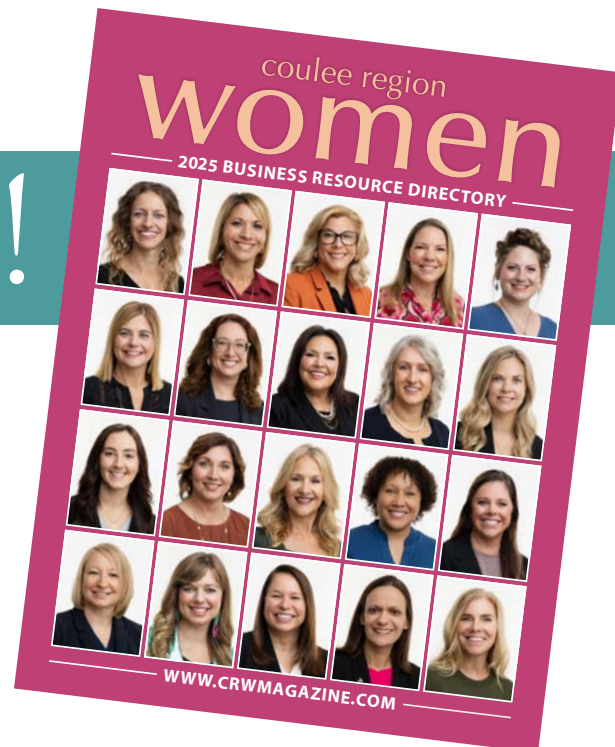
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CELEBRATING THE COULEE REGION

Businesses—and communities—thrive when they work together for the benefit of all. The Coulee Region's communities are home to many organizations dedicated to providing business owners and professionals with the support they need to succeed, from downtown organizations and business incubators to Chambers of Commerce with more than a century of support behind them. From Viroqua to Winona, West Salem to La Crescent, and all points in between, the community spirit and focus on support is strong.

Stories by Shari Hegland

Photos courtesy of Trempealeau County Fair, Viroqua Chamber of Commerce, Bangor Lions Club, Visit Winona and Explore La Crosse. Photo on this page by Diane Raalum Photo.



Photo by Dave Larsen

La Crosse

Businesses in La Crosse and throughout the Coulee Region understand the concept that a “rising tide lifts all ships” and band together in a range of organizations dedicated to driving community-wide growth and providing support for businesses of all sizes and at all stages.

While informal networks and mentorship are useful for individual businesspeople, formal organizations also coordinate everything from joint marketing and community events to business training and networking opportunities.

The La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce has been a voice of the business community since 1868, advocating for and promoting business growth and offering networking and educational opportunities. La Crosse’s business districts stretch from French Island to the south side and north on Highway 16, including **Decker Design Inc., La Crosse Fireplace, Midwest TV & Appliance, O’Brien Physical Therapy** and **Schumacher-Kish Funeral and Cremation Services**.

The city’s core retail district, home to **Trust Point, Larson’s General, D.M. Harris Law** and **Hanson & Associates**, is represented by Downtown Mainstreet Inc., dedicated to promoting the downtown, beautification projects and advocacy that supports downtown businesses. The North La Crosse Business Association is also focused on promoting its historic retail district, home to businesses such as **The Motherhood Collective**. Through mentoring, **Sister Circle** brings together

entrepreneurs to help both the business owners and community thrive.

Several organizations based in La Crosse offer business support efforts that extend beyond the city limits, including Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC), with a regional office located in La Crosse to provide business training, support for new business owners, networking opportunities and microloans. The Small Business Development Center at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse can provide access to SBA loans, assistance in creating business plans and more. Couleecap’s business support arm offers feasibility and business planning, marketing advice and a retail incubator to La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford and Monroe counties. SCORE’s experienced businesspeople are mentors for those seeking support to develop or grow their businesses.

La Crosse is also home to the Coulee Region Business Center business incubator, which offers light industrial and office spaces as well as a commercial kitchen.

Of course, we can’t always be working. La Crosse is full of festivals and activities year-round: Rotary Lights, Oktoberfest, Irishfest, La Crosse Logger baseball and La Crosse Steam softball teams, Juneteenth, Moon Tunes, Great River Folk Festival, the La Crosse Community Theatre, the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra and a host of other arts, organizations and events keep the social calendar full and the community hopping.



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Onalaska

With a diverse business mix spread across the original downtown, neighborhood centers, the Highway 16 and I-90 corridors and other locations throughout the community, the Onalaska Business Association strives to bring together a wide range of members to create community connections and foster networking among businesses.

The organization hosts monthly luncheons and “After 5” events designed to help business owners and leaders from throughout the community learn more about other businesses so they can support the community’s success.

Onalaska’s business community includes women supporting women (see our page 9 lead story for examples), with a complete complement of retail, financial services, professional services and more. You’ll find wellness-focused businesses such as **Om Yoga**, personal services like **Nail Dept. and More**, business services like **CPC Printing & Promotions** and **The Monogram Company** and building specialists including **Elevations by Wisconsin Building Supply** and **Solid Surface Specialists**, alongside restaurants, professional services, pet services, health care, retail boutiques and more.

Activities throughout the year connect community members and draw visitors in to enjoy the bike trails, waterfront amenities and more.

Great River Sound, hosted in Dash-Park, directly across from the Great River Landing in downtown Onalaska, is a free weekly summer music concert series featuring everything from

folk and calypso to rock and blues. Art lovers can join in the treasure hunt for unique paintings hidden around town each year as part of Pop Up Onalaska, hosted by the Onalaska Art Keepers.

Other summer events include Celebrate Onalaska in late June, complete with fireworks for the community, and Onalaska Community Days later in the summer, highlighted by music and a wide range of family activities hosted by area businesses and organizations.

The city’s heritage as logging river town takes center stage when Onalaska hosts Three Rivers Rolo, a log-rolling competition that draws in national champions in the sport.

And nearly every weekend will find the parking lot full at the Omnicenter, which hosts everything from hockey tournaments and craft shows to family reunions and even midweek bingo, bridge and mah jongg games.

For outdoors enthusiasts, Onalaska is the perfect jumping-off point to ride either the Great River Trail or La Crosse River Trail, providing access to miles and miles of rail-to-trail cycling (or snowmobiling in the winter), and its location on Lake Onalaska makes it an angler’s paradise year-round.





La Crescent | Winona

On the west side of the Mississippi River, La Crescent and Winona and their smaller neighboring communities are home to dedicated business owners and leaders.

Explore La Crescent is that community's lead organization, combining business support with tourism promotion, as well as hosting a unique coworking space available to entrepreneurs and others looking for a way to get a toehold in business.

Surrounded by orchards, La Crescent's flagship celebration, fittingly, is Applefest USA each September, featuring a flea market, car show, rides and the Sunday King Apple parade.

Summer staples include a farmers market and the Apple Jacks Base Ball Club, offering a glimpse into the past as they play by rules from 1860.

To the north, in Winona, the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce also offers opportunity for career development alongside its business advocacy through a Young Professionals organization and "Network Nites" designed to connect the business community's members in a relaxed setting.

Like La Crosse, Winona is home to multiple colleges and universities that provide opportunities for professional development, networking and business planning support to those looking to build new businesses, like **SturdyBird Mental Health**. The community also is home to an organization

dedicated specifically to helping women find the support they need: Winona Women in Business.

Winona businesswomen can find plenty of ways to share time with those they meet during networking meetings at the many events hosted in the city. Winona is a dream for the fine arts enthusiast, with a selection of annual events sure to delight, starting with the Frozen River Film Festival, highlighting the best of independent filmmaking and documentaries from around the world. Settle in for everything from a deep dive into the world of air guitar competitions to stories from attorneys on the front lines of the migrant crisis or enjoy a quick conversation with a whale.

If live theater is more your thing, a summer's worth of fantastic performances awaits during the Great River Shakespeare Festival, with both traditional and remastered takes on the work of the bard. Complete your appreciation for classic performances at the Minnesota Beethoven Festival. But don't worry, not everything is from the 16th or 18th century. Winona is also home to a Dixieland Jazz Festival, Mid West Music Fest and Boats and Bluegrass.

And the city's history as a river town takes center stage each summer during Steamboat Days.



Holmen | Galesville | Trempealeau

North of La Crosse and Onalaska, several communities maintain a small-town atmosphere full of locally owned businesses both new and well-established, even as their populations grow.

An expanding selection of retail businesses in Holmen are complemented by restaurants, professional services and more, all brought together for networking and community vitality by the Holmen Business Association, which hosts regular meetings and sponsors events to foster community pride. Businesses based in this region, such as **Holmen Pumping Service** and **WNB Financial**, are located to serve the growing residential communities in both in La Crosse and Trempealeau counties.

Holmen's August Kornfest offers a three-day late-summer festival centered around fresh corn-on-the-cob (of course!), a parade, live music and more. Other opportunities for free community entertainment occur all summer with Sunday night concerts in Halfway Creek Park, occasional movies under the stars and a National Night Out celebration, plus a fall festival, and in early December, Holidays in the Park includes a lighting ceremony, tree decorating contest and Jingle Fest parade.

Meanwhile, the orchards surrounding Galesville are an obvious connection to the fall Apple Affair, featuring an apple pie that feeds hundreds of hungry people each year. A vibrant downtown, weekly farmers markets and monthly Downtown

Walk About events are even more reasons to pop in and out of a variety of boutiques, bakeries, cafes and coffee shops.

Galesville's thriving downtown business district—with a central square ringed by businesses largely owned and managed by women—hosts its own events through the Downtown Galesville Business Alliance, as well as joining in the promotion and networking offered through the Galesville Chamber of Commerce.

In Trempealeau, home to **Small Town Beauty by Asia**, the community's businesses band together to promote cooperation and tourism focused on the area's attractions through the Trempealeau Chamber of Commerce & Tourism. As well as being home to a state park, state bicycle trail and growing residential areas, Trempealeau's business community has welcomed new members in recent years. The mid-July Catfish Days festival is fitting for a town tucked between the bluffs and the rivers. You can even bike from Holmen or Onalaska to Trempealeau (and beyond to Perrot State Park and the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge) by hopping on the Halfway Creek Trail in Holmen and linking to the Great River Trail.



West Salem | Bangor | Sparta

Following the transportation trails east of La Crosse—river, highways, interstate or bike trail, take your pick—you'll find several small communities building their business communities and thriving in a new era.

As you enter West Salem on U.S. Highway 16, just past Veterans Park with its campground and fishing pond, you'll encounter the La Crosse Interstate Fairgrounds and La Crosse Speedway, staples of summer fun for the entire region.

The West Salem Business Association hosts networking lunches, offers support to member businesses and engages the entire community in its National Night Out celebration each summer. A thriving industrial park with interstate access is complemented by a downtown with restaurants and retail and the Highway 16 corridor, where **Beyer Cabinets** can be found, along with everything from auto dealerships to bakeries and BBQ.

West Salem is home to an annual June Dairy Days celebration, and in the fall Veterans Park plays host to the Hmong New Year Celebration. And summer and winter both bring enthusiasts to Lake Neshonec for skiing—water or cross-country!

Next along that route, Bangor hosts an annual Fun Daze each August, with bingo, baseball, duck races and fun runs (of both the footrace and ATV kind), as well as a Sunday parade and car show. Business owners and entrepreneurs are busy remodeling and reviving the historic downtown with unique shops and dining worth the detour from the interstate.

Sparta celebrates all things bicycle—and space—honoring its unique location at the head of the Sparta-Elroy Bike Trail and its history as the home of one of America's first astronauts. Businesses in the community find support from the Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, which combines networking for leaders with support for the tourism industry as host of a range of community events.

Its location in the heart of Wisconsin's farming country lends itself to its annual early summer Butter Fest, which, true to its name, includes a butter giveaway and a cow-milking contest. With the La Crosse River winding through town, Sparta is also a natural to host Pedal Paddle Fish Days, a full weekend of trout fishing, cycling and kayaking, plus a cardboard boat race.

The holidays take on a European charm with weekends highlighted by Kriskindlmarkt, offering local vendors, authentic German foods and a warm atmosphere to welcome Christmas.



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Angela earned a finance degree from UW-La Crosse. She is a member of Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, LABA and LARA. She serves on the board for the YMCA and volunteers on the Finance Council for the Roncalli Newman Catholic Parish. Angela and her husband, Curt, reside in Onalaska with their two children, Adam and Sarah.

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Vernon County

Smaller towns throughout the Coulee Region recognize the importance of collaboration to promote the unique characteristics of each location, and Vernon County's communities are no exception. Coon Valley, Westby and Viroqua each are supported by local organizations focused on sharing their stories, bringing community members together and attracting visitors to experience the Driftless Region.

The Coon Valley Business Association hosts events large and small throughout the year, making good use of the renowned trout stream that runs through town by hosting both a Coon Creek Trout Fest and the Coon Creek Canoe Race as summer entertainment. The holidays bring an annual tree lighting ceremony, a craft show and Christmas in the Village, with horse-drawn carriage rides, ornament making, games and a coloring contest for the kids.

Just down the road, the Westby Area Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations showcase the hardiness and daring of the early Norwegian immigrants in the area—and the daring athletes who follow in their footsteps—with the Snowflake Ski Club's annual Ski Jump Tournament, launching skiers into the air for more than 100 years. If you'd rather

celebrate all things Scandinavian in warmer weather, stop by during the Syttende Mai (May 17) celebration for Norwegian heritage: trolls, rosemaling, rømmegrøt and more.

The Viroqua Chamber Main Street organization is a gathering point for information about all types of activities taking place throughout the region, with a packed newsletter and calendar of events that invite all to the county seat for fun, networking and a range of businesses. Depending on when you visit Viroqua, you might encounter everything from a holiday Twinklefest to the Driftless Music Festival and more free live music throughout the summer during the Live in Viroqua series. You'll think you've stepped into a John Wayne movie with Wild West Days, featuring a horse pull, rodeo, stagecoach rides and re-enactments, held each August, and you can follow it up a month later with the old-fashioned delights of a county fair that traces its history to 1856.

The region is also home to many Amish artisans and farms offering handmade goods in local stores or from their farms. And hiking and fishing can be found throughout the county's parks and state natural areas, as well as historic sites.

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