



Black River Area Chamber of Commerce
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February 20, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Four to receive Chamber honors

Three area businesses and a service organization will be honored with awards at the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on Monday, March 3, 2025 at Ho-Chunk Gaming in Black River Falls.

UScellular Agent/Cell.Plus will receive the 2024 Business of the Year Award (less than 20 employees), Walmart #1277 of Black River Falls will receive the 2024 Business of the Year Award (more than 20 employees), The Yoga Studio Black River Falls will receive the 2024 Emerging Business of the Year Award (open in our area 5 years or less) and Merrilan Lions Club will receive the 2024 Service Organization Award. The winners were chosen by the Chamber Ambassadors group and the Chamber Annual Dinner Committee after a review of the nominations.

UScellular Agent/Cell.Plus has served Black River Falls for 11 years, growing to over 5,000 local subscribers. The four-person team has earned "Store of the Year" four times, thanks to exceptional customer service and dedication. They consistently go above and beyond for customers and actively support the community through sponsorships, volunteering, and donations. Examples include supporting the All Abilities Walk, Trail of Terror, Walk to End Alzheimer's (raising nearly \$6,000 company-wide in 2024), donating phones and service to families in need, and partnering with local initiatives like the #WillPProject. Cell.Plus's outstanding service, customer feedback, and community involvement make them a valuable asset to the community.

Other nominees for the Business of the Year Award (less than 20 employees) were Bush Electric and Castle Hill Supper Club.

Walmart #1277 of Black River Falls is a true community partner. Since opening in 1989, they've grown from 90 to 230 employees, demonstrating a commitment to both their team and the local economy. Walmart provides a wide range of products and services, focusing on value, convenience, and exceptional customer service, including online shopping and pickup. They prioritize employees, offering opportunities like free college tuition. Beyond business, Walmart actively supports local organizations like The Foster Closet, Jackson County Animal Shelter, and Friends Sharing Food, contributing through donations, volunteer efforts,

and programs like Project Christmas, further solidifying their dedication to strengthening the community.

Other nominees for the Business of the Year Award (more than 20 employees) were Gross Motors of Black River Falls and Ho-Chunk Gaming Black River Falls.

Since opening in October 2023, The Yoga Studio Black River Falls has become a thriving wellness hub. Offering diverse yoga classes, from Hot Yoga to restorative practices, plus sound baths and meditation, they cater to all levels. The Yoga Studio has quickly grown, building a loyal community and even offering unique yoga retreats. Beyond classes, they foster connection through events and workshops, creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. The Yoga Studio also actively supports the community, volunteering at events like the Jackson County Wellness Extravaganza and providing services to organizations like Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers. The Yoga Studio provides a valuable space for nurturing both body and mind.

Other nominees for the Emerging Business of the Year Award were Blair Meat Market, Cobblestone Cottage, Love On You Home Real Estate & Boutique, Luxe Beauty Lounge, and Sunset Lumi Sunless Tanning.

The Merrilan Lions Club has served as a vital part of the community for 50 years. They organize numerous free community events, including drive-in movies, the Music in Gile Park series, car shows, and the Christmas Tree Festival. Beyond events, they support organizations like FCCLA, provide scholarships to students, and contribute to Leader Dogs for the Blind and the Lions Summer Camp for disabled children. The Merrilan Lions Club actively partners with other nonprofits and events throughout Jackson County, including local car shows and festivals. In 2024, they celebrated their 50th anniversary by reviving the Christmas Tree Festival and launching a program providing free decorated trees to families in need. Their generosity extends to park improvements, including Gile Park, and making their equipment available to other organizations. The Merrilan Lions Club has made a lasting impact in the community.

Other nominees for the Service Organization Award were Black River Falls Lions Club, Black River Falls United Methodist Church, Family Promise, and Jackson County ATV Association.

The Chamber's Annual Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, 6:30 p.m. dinner and 7:30 p.m. the program begins. A Silent Auction and 50/50 Raffle will also take place.