

At the heart of business

Heart of the Valley Chamber supports networking and education

Some came and went. Others stayed the entire day. The Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce lured businesses from as far north as Green Bay, as far south as Oshkosh, and every town in between, to its recent annual awards celebration at the Darboy Club in Appleton.

The Chamber offered complimentary breakfast, lunch, afternoon and evening sessions for members. "We wanted to thank our members and to reward them for their support in a tough economy," says Bobbie Beckman, executive director of the Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Several dozen members began their day with breakfast and a discussion on social media. At 11:30, just over 100 professionals filled their plates at the lunch-and-learn event. They made connections in the buffet line and at their table.

Just after noon Steve Van Remortel, owner of SM Advisors Inc. and author of *Stop Selling Vanilla Ice Cream*, called for the group's attention. The interactive session – along with the bowls of Culver's vanilla ice cream and toppings – made an impression on the attendees.

"It gave me ideas on how to think outside the box and ways to stand out from my competition," says Ann Koleske, owner of Hands to Heart in Appleton.



Left to right, Paul Meier and Brad Grant of Calumet County Bank and Ron Fosick of Elmstar Electric connect at the Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce annual awards event on Feb. 15.

After the luncheon, many filed into a room dedicated to the "Marketplace of Ideas." Here, members set up booths to showcase their products and services. "This was a good place for people to mingle and see what other members have to offer," adds Beckman. A breakout session, "7 Apps of Highly Effective Businesses," captured the interest of the room.

The Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce recognized outstanding

businesses and members after dinner at its 39th annual awards ceremony. Attendees took the opportunity to congratulate the winners and network with fellow professionals.

The chamber offers members other chances to participate in programs throughout the year. Beckman says, "We try to provide the tools for our businesses to use that will help them succeed."

Business over Breakfast events are