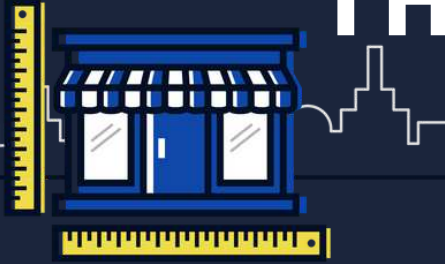


# THE BUSINESS LEAD



WINTER 2022

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

### ASSISTANCE FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Did you know that four out of every ten businesses are owned by women? (source: smallbizgenius.net) Women in business are a driving force in the nation's flourishing economy and are starting and running businesses at a stunning rate.

With a rising number of women attending business school, many are using their degrees to blaze a path with their own companies. By using strong resolve and keen decision-making, women have found tremendous business success.

If you are thinking of opening a new business or if you are seeking assistance in the way of funding to expand or improve your business, see page 2 to learn about several grant opportunities for women.

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To subscribe to the Business Lead Newsletter, contact City Hall at [cityhall@caledoniamn.gov](mailto:cityhall@caledoniamn.gov) or call 507-725-3450

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## BUSINESS GRANTS FOR WOMEN

Below is a list of foundations and programs specifically for women entrepreneurs.

### Amber Grant Foundation

The Amber Grant Foundation was founded by WomensNet in 1998. The first week of every month, they give \$10,000 to women pursuing their entrepreneurial passions. At the end of each year, they also grant one special woman \$25,000 of funding.

- Award amount: \$10,000 is available every month and one annual winner will receive \$25,000
- Where to apply: For more details, visit their website at [www.ambergrantsforwomen.com](http://www.ambergrantsforwomen.com)

### Eileen Fisher Women-Owned Business Grants Program

Eileen Fisher is a women-owned clothing brand on a mission to support other women business owners. Their Women-Owned Business Grant program awards women entrepreneurs \$200,000 annually.

- Award amount: \$10,000-\$40,000
- Where to apply: Although funding is temporarily suspended, check their website for updates to see if the program is renewed.

Learn more at [www.eileenfisher.com](http://www.eileenfisher.com)

### Live Your Dream Award

Each year, the Live Your Dream Foundation grants \$2.1 million in educational funds to women. They offer programs and funding that help women build confidence, advance their careers, and overcome unexpected situations.

- Award amount: \$1,000-\$16,000
- Where to apply: Applications open from August 1 to November 15

Access <https://www.soroptimist.org> for more information

### Cartier Women's Initiative Award

This grant program was created for eco-friendly and sustainable women-owned businesses around the world. They have two different funding types: regional awards and science and technology pioneer awards.

- Award amount: \$30,000-\$100,000
- Where to apply: [www.cartierwomensinitiative.com](http://www.cartierwomensinitiative.com)

source: [bmoharris.com](http://bmoharris.com)

### The Zimmerhagl Building 1940's

#### Old Buildings Renewed

The building located at 131 E. Main street and home to The Wired Rooster Coffee Shoppe was built in 1906. Anton Zimmerhagl was born in Smihoff, Bohemia, and moved to Caledonia in 1876. When he arrived in Caledonia, he acquired a lawn bench. He placed this bench under a tree, took out his shaving mug and his straight edge razor and started shaving some of the men in the community. As the business developed, he managed to build a small building on Kingston Street.

In the very early 1900s, the Zimmerhakls purchased the Tim O'Leary barber shop, located to the west of the Williams Hotel (currently the Historic Caledonia Inn) on Main Street. In 1906, Anton (Tony) built the brick Zimmerhagl building with his sons Lee and Eddie, replacing the wood frame structure originally at that location. The Zimmerhakls opened their three-chair barbershop in the west half of the building in October of that year (a café owned by J. C. Evans opened in the east half of the building).

Over the years, the building was home to many businesses, including the Caledonia Cafe, Strand Insurance Agency, Omodt's Jewelry store, an electronics store, Ole Haugstad's barbershop, the Brass Banana gift shop, and Torgerson's Paint and Flooring before Jeremiah and Amanda Ninneman purchased the building from the Torgerson's in 2014. On June 15, 2015, The Wired Rooster Coffee Shoppe opened to the public.

source: Houston County Historical Society



## HOW TO KEEP RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS COMING BACK

Restaurants rely on regular customers more than retailers do, so encouraging repeat visits is important. The more a customer visits your restaurant, the more likely they are to become a regular customer. Not only do they provide a steady stream of business, but they act as mini marketing agents each time they bring a guest to dine.

To keep customers loyal, treat them well by offering perks and making them feel special and valued. To encourage future business, offer some bouncebacks. Here are some popular bounceback ideas to get you started:

- Give a \$10 gift card for every \$100 spent.
- Offer a complimentary dessert on the next visit.
- Offer a complimentary appetizer on a future online order.
- Provide entertainment such as live music.
- Host a special event such as wine tasting.
- Offer a happy hour and discount drinks and appetizers.
- Change up your menu and offer seasonal dishes.

**Support Local Industries:** Supporting local industries such as microbreweries, small farmers, and independent musicians will help build the reputation of your business in the community. Developing this sense of community in your neighborhood will make customers feel at home in your restaurant and will keep them coming back again and again to support you in the same the way you support the area.

source: [www.harbertouchpossoftware.com](http://www.harbertouchpossoftware.com)



### Chamber Membership Free for New Businesses

New businesses can join the Caledonia Chamber of Commerce and get their first year membership for FREE!

Joining can:

- Help you make business contacts.
- Increase your credibility.
- Expand your network.
- Provide key business resources.
- Support your professional development.

To learn more visit:

<https://www.caledoniachamberofcommerce.com/about>



### BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Elsie' Restaurant is famous for their Caledonia burger, brick oven pizza, and home made soups and sandwiches.

Owned and operated by Elsie and Lee Babler, the business has been a part of the community since 2007.

Located at 226 E. Main, the restaurant hosts a full bar and pet-friendly patio seating. In addition, a separate space is available to accommodate large gatherings.

A catering service is also a feature of the business and can fit any customer's needs including a full buffet menu or a sampling of appetizers.

In addition to all the daily specials, entertainment, and an inviting atmosphere, Elsie's hosts a Thanksgiving community dinner open to the public every year.

### Grant Opportunity

Caledonia Area Chamber of Commerce members are eligible to apply for the Member Boost Grant. Grant guidelines include projects such as marketing signage, advertising, or promotional materials, or updates to properties including curb appeal projects. Visit the Chamber website for more information:

<http://caledoniachamberofcommerce.com/>

## 2023 SMALL BUSINESS TRENDS AND FORECAST

There has been a dramatic influx in small business owners and first-time startups over the last few years and the pandemic has been a major driver. Numerous market trends have also spurred this growth in entrepreneurship, which will likely continue into 2023. Let's take a look at the latest entrepreneurship trends to pay attention to over the next few years.

**Working from home and hybrid work**—Remote work was once seen as an option for a select few industries however, the pandemic revealed that many people could work successfully from home. These days, lots of entrepreneurs work exclusively or mostly from home, as do many entrepreneurial ventures with small workforces. This is a benefit for many startups. After all, it eliminates a major expense by not having to pay for office space. That being said however, many organizations are trying to shift their employees back to the office. Not every employee or business owner wants remote work as a long-term option. Nor is remote work a suitable option for every kind of organization either.

**Mobile optimization**—According to a study by Google, 50% of shopping apps installed on a smartphone are used at least weekly. It's also anticipated that global consumer mobile spending will reach \$728 billion by 2025. Companies that want to succeed online need to begin or increase investment in mobile optimization. The mobile version of their online stores must be easy to navigate. It should reflect the capabilities of the desktop version, and ideally, work consistently between the two. Just remember that being present and optimized for mobile is only one part of the overall equation. You need to be optimized and consider user experience anywhere.

**Increased diversity in the workforce**—Diversity is increasing in the workforce like never before. No longer is the professional and entrepreneurial sphere relegated to men, for example. Women make up a large proportion of working-class professionals and even entrepreneurial leaders. In large part thanks to major societal shifts. Furthermore, many entrepreneurial companies employ diverse workforces of people from many races, creeds, and religious faiths. This is a great thing, and it ties into profits at the same time. Millennials are more likely to shop at places they know are appropriately diverse and dedicated to social justice.

**Niche market service**—Many companies are specializing in offering increasingly niche market services. Why? Simply put, lots of people want to be unique. Therefore, companies are changing their brand identities, taglines, and even offering products to provide niche, specialized things for their target audiences. You can even see this at fast-food companies that claim that customers can order food "their way". Having options to create a personalized product or even add a name or color can be incredibly worthwhile. Consumers want something unique that most people will never get their hands on.

**The rise of the gig economy**—It's no surprise that the gig economy has risen in tandem with all these other trends. The gig economy relies on front-line or working-class employees. People constantly moving from gig to gig, always chasing another payday and working for clients on a per-job basis. Businesses like Uber and DoorDash have proven the profitability of this business model. One where they technically don't employ anyone but which connect independent contractors with customers. Whether this is a good thing is up for debate, of course. But there's no denying the influence the gig economy has had on the workforce.

**Eco-friendly business practices and products**—Millennials and younger shoppers are increasingly concerned with the health of the planet. They tend to shop with brands that make a show of being eco-friendly or practice green product manufacturing standards. Entrepreneurs are paying attention to these business trends and are dedicated to reinventing their companies to be more eco-friendly.

### Social commerce

Social commerce is where a business sells products directly on social media. It's designed to remove friction with your customers and be present where they are most engaged. However, there are often specific requirements to participate meaning you'll need to grow your social following. This may require you to focus more on social media as part of your digital marketing strategy.

## Upcoming Events

**Caledonia Winter Parade: December 2nd -Downtown Caledonia. 7:00pm parade followed by activities at Gazebo Park.**

**Christmas in Caledonia Gift Guide and Punch Cards: Shop Local! Incentive punch card at participating businesses. Check Caledonia Chamber of Commerce website for details: <https://www.caledoniachamberofcommerce.com/>**

**Houston County Rural Childcare Innovation Town Hall Meeting:**  
**Tuesday, February 7, 2023**

**Location: La Crescent Area Event Center, 505 Veterans Parkway La Crescent, MN**  
**Time: 6:00pm**

***The Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP) uses a community engagement process designed to identify right-sized solutions to increase the supply of high quality affordable child care in rural communities.***

***By mobilizing community members and empowering the creation of community-based solutions, rural communities are able to preserve existing child care businesses and add new child care slots. Come learn more and be part of the solution!***

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Bluff Country Collaborative (BCC) hosted a Career and Technical Education event at the Caledonia High school on Thursday, September 22nd and invited several area BBC partner schools to participate including Caledonia, Spring Grove, Houston, Rushford-Peterson and Fillmore Central. Approximately 500 students attended the event. Area businesses and colleges were invited to provide promotional and educational material allowing the students to explore what careers are available in various fields. 24 vendors were present at the event. If you wish to learn more about serving as a mentor or to provide other hands-on learning experiences to high school youth, contact MaryAnne Smith at [bccnavigators@gmail.com](mailto:bccnavigators@gmail.com) or Allison Wagner at [EDA@co.houston.mn.us](mailto:EDA@co.houston.mn.us) for more information or to make a monetary donation. <http://bluffcountrycollaborative.com/>

Studio M located at 219 S. Kingston opened for business in early October. The studio offers yoga classes taught by Joyful Expressions yoga instructor Daneka Romportl with a focus on including breath control, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures practiced for health and relaxation. In addition, Kristina Hauser manages a Reiki practice which is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing utilizing the studio's space. The business partners hope to offer opportunities to host various events including self-defense courses, and dance or karate classes. Welcome to the business community Studio M!

