



Q4 2025 Economic Development Report



FOX CITIES CHAMBER
CONNECT | GROW | LEAD



**NATIONAL
CHAMBER
OF THE YEAR**

Fox Cities Chamber By the Numbers: Q4 2025

Connect Free Memberships - **64** Fox Cities small businesses joined the Chamber at its Connect Free level in Q4. To date, **1,025** small businesses have taken advantage of this unique free membership opportunity. Overall, the Chamber has **1,870+** members.

YP Memberships - Pulse Young Professionals welcomed **16** new Pulse members in Q4, bringing us to a total of **861** active members. In this quarter, Pulse programs included Women in Leadership, Future 15 Awards, four Dale Carnegie leadership trainings, wreath making, Coffee & Conversation, Cocktails and Conversation, Adopt-A-Family, and conclusion of our yearlong mentorship program.



Pulse Champions - We continue to see strong support from our local employers who recognize the impact young professionals have on their workplace and within the Fox Cities community. As of Q4, **9** Fox Cities businesses are participating as Champions of Young Professionals. By doing so, they're demonstrating their commitment to recruitment, retention, and overall development of their young team members.

Employee Friendly Workplace (EFW) - **Jewelers Mutual** celebrated 2 years at the platinum EFW level. **ESOP Partners, The Boldt Company,** and **Fox Communities Credit Union,** all shared milestone anniversaries at the gold level. **Werner Electric** celebrated six years as an Employee Friendly Workplace.

Business Support - The Chamber held Business after Hours at three member businesses in the fourth quarter, providing the opportunity to showcase their businesses: **Mary Beth Nienhaus Activity Center, Appleton International Airport (pictured below),** and **Bergstrom Automotive.** Additionally, business milestone ribbon cuttings were held at **Dignity Counseling, iPROMOTEu, Slick Mimic's Board and Card Games Shoppe, Tardigrade's Bookshelf, JCPenney, Club Car Wash, Feeding America, Academy Bay/Appleton West Tech Academy Samsung Program Expansion, Hand To Shoulder Center of Wisconsin, Rice Companies, Encore Housing Development** partnered with **Cypress Homes, and Briohn Building**



Corporation for a joint groundbreaking for **Paul Davis Restoration and Rivian.**

BRE Efforts: Chamber staff met with **31** Fox Cities businesses in the fourth quarter of 2025 for a Business Retention & Expansion visit. Each business presents unique challenges and concerns, and our goal is to provide resources for the business to overcome those obstacles and thrive in our region. Some examples of projects we worked on are: temporary road signage due to construction, seasonal employment, staffing, business expansion planning, renovation, and relocation.

Media partnership supports local businesses: The Fox Cities Chamber featured the following members on **WFRV-TV Local 5 Live** in Q4: **UA Local 400, Galloway, and East Central WI Planning Commission.**

Q4 Program and Event Updates

Chamber Leadership Programs going strong; planning for 2026

LEADERSHIP FOX CITIES classes continues to meet the second Tuesday of each month for a community immersion experience. The program started in late September and to date has had Business Day, Government Day, and Human Services Day. Sponsored by **Bergstrom Automotive**, the program offers a “deep dive” into community topics.

IMMERSION FOX CITIES helps employees feel connected, supported, and invested in the community. March 27 and March 28 are the next dates for the program, with participant recruitment now taking place.

EXECUTIVE ELEVATE’s inaugural session was successfully completed in Q4. Designed for C-suite executives, the next session will be held early Summer 2026. This series is ideal for busy executives to participate in a small group, confidential space.

LEADER LAB had a fall cohort that brought together 7 professionals committed to developing their leadership skills and strengthening organizational culture. Participants engaged in BetterCulture’s seven-session curriculum, designed to cultivate self-awareness, team growth, and intentional culture-building. The program closed with an outstanding Net Promoter Score (NPS) of **86**, signaling high impact and strong satisfaction.

Q4 events delivered powerhouse programs

We closed out the year strong: the Octoberfest Volunteer Party drew **200** guests in celebration of community support. Women in Leadership brought together **154** attendees, and the Future 15 Awards honored rising leaders with **204** guests. The inaugural AI Business Summit welcomed nearly **300** professionals to explore tech-driven business strategies. Smart Girls Rock engaged **150** students and **15** employers in STEM mentorship. Average Net Promoter Score (NPS) for the quarter was **57**.

Business/school alliance focuses on strategy

The Chamber’s Emerging Talent Alliance, comprised of representatives from local school districts and businesses, focused on strategic planning this quarter, developing a new program series titled *Innovate for Tomorrow*, which launched in November to connect businesses with forward-thinking youth talent initiatives (see back page).

Q4 Fox Talks seminar focused on branding

Nearly 40 people attended the November 2025 Fox Talk, *Ignite Your Brand: From Social Media to the Winner’s Circle*. Presenters Emily Schwartz, owner and founder of **Wholehearted Health with Emily**, and Amanda Van Den Elzen, founder of **BetterWork**, shared two unique perspectives to help attendees strengthen their presence, both online and in person, and stand out with authenticity.



Participants in the 2025 Smart Girls Rock! program at Boldt

The latest news and events

Survey reveals Fox Cities AI readiness

Results of an AI readiness survey taken before and at the AI Business Summit reveals that our region's overall AI maturity score is 2.30 out of 5. This places the Fox Cities firmly in the "developing" stage of AI adoption; an expected and encouraging benchmark for a mid-sized region early on its AI journey. Here are key findings:

- AI interest is high and accelerating. Nearly all surveyed organizations report strong executive awareness and enthusiasm for AI's potential.
- Pilot activity is growing rapidly. More than half of organizations have already begun experimenting with co-pilots, workflow automation, or analytics pilots.
- Formal governance is emerging. One in four employers now have an AI policy or oversight framework: an essential foundation for safe and scalable adoption.
- Data readiness remains the biggest barrier. While cloud adoption has surpassed 80%, many organizations continue to struggle with siloed data and manual workflows.



Rebecca Ryan
was keynote
speaker at the
Chamber's AI
Business Summit.
Plans are under-
way for a 2026
program.

Connecting schools and employers

In Q4 the Chamber's Emerging Talent Alliance launched its Innovate for Tomorrow series, an energizing new initiative focused on the intersection of youth, innovation, and industry. The kickoff session welcomed **37** attendees from education and business, spotlighting actionable strategies to prepare students for future-ready careers.



**Questions or interested in
setting up a FREE Business
Retention & Expansion
consultation?**

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Find us online:
FoxCitiesChamber.com