

Meriden/Ozawkie Area Chamber of Commerce  
Chamber Meeting Minutes – November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Announcements/Updates

**Halloween Trunk or Treat** – Meeting chairperson and chamber vice-president Chuck Wilson announced that, in spite of inclement weather, 492 different students participated in this year's Trunk or Treat. Businesses donated a total of \$225 toward expenses. Door prizes totaled \$665.78, while hot dogs, mustard, and (2) bags of ice totaled \$124.81, for total expenses of \$790.59. Net costs after contributions totaled \$565.59. Twenty participating businesses helped make this annual community event a great success!

**Chamber Board Election** – Chuck noted that ballots for the ratification of nominated board members have been emailed to member businesses. As no additional members expressed interest in board service, the names of incumbents Pat Happer, Diane Shaw, and Chuck Wilson are being presented to the chamber for ratification.

**December "After Hours" Event** – Diane Shaw announced that the December "After Hours" is set for Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at Lake Ridge Bar & Grill (at the Lake Perry Country Club). A taco bar is being prepared, for which each attendee can submit a meal ticket and drink ticket provided the night of the event. Businesses are encouraged to consider donating something useful as a door prize. Items that promote your business are welcomed. Guests of chamber members are welcomed. The Christmas Lights Contest winners will be invited and presented their prizes, as well.

**Christmas Lights Contest** – The Meriden Pride Committee will participate with the Chamber again in this year's Christmas Lights contest. Four \$50 Chamber Gift Certificates will be awarded—one each to winners in four categories: Residential within (1) the Meriden city limits, (2) the Ozawkie city limits, (3) the rural areas surrounding each city, and (4) one Meriden or Ozawkie business. DeDee Skaggs and Jim McGrath will coordinate the judging. To be eligible for the contest, participants are encouraged to contact DeDee or Jim by Friday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> and to have their lights on display the week of Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Meriden Pride Committee** – Tim Benyshek reported that, though there were a number of lessons learned in the process, this September's Meriden Pride Festival was a successful first launch. The team is already planning for next year, with the event scheduled to be held September 17, 2016 (and on the third weekend in September in succeeding years, as well). Tim also announced that "Christmas on Main Street" would take place December 5<sup>th</sup>, with a lighting ceremony beginning at 6:00 PM.

Anyone interested in being a part of the Meriden Pride Committee is invited to attend join any monthly meeting at the Meriden City Hall on the first Thursday of the month.

**Facebook Update** – In this month's update, Heather Williams noted that...

- The Chamber Facebook page has 247 "likes"—up 10 from last month!
- Our Spotlight Ad was Denison State Bank (reached 269).
- The Ickiest, Yuckiest, Grossest Halloween Candy contest winner was Kim Gibbs Taylor! So far this year, we have given out \$75 in Facebook Contest gift certificates.
- The graphic for the Halloween Contest post reached 587 people.
- The Meeting reminder post reached 167 people.

- The Trunk or Treat flyer reached 855 people (shared by other organizations).
- Submissions for Facebook are welcome. Send these to [heatherlwilliams@live.com](mailto:heatherlwilliams@live.com).

**National Rural Health Day** –F. W. Huston Medical Center, sent word that today is “National Rural Health Day.” We were all encouraged to thank our health care providers today! F.W. Huston’s Winchester-based medical clinic is open M-F from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. During hours the clinic is not open, the hospital itself offers urgent care.

**Membership Invoices Arriving** – The Chamber was reminded that membership invoices for 2016 will be arriving in their mailboxes soon. Members were encouraged to “go ahead and write that check” so that renewals don’t get lost in the shuffle somewhere.

**Economic Development** – Brittany Chaplin announced that the “Think Local” committee was working on ways to gather and simplify access to county business information. Facilitating the committee’s work, the county will be hiring a web developer after the first of the year and Brittany plans to hire an assistant. The desire is to “bring the business directory into the 21<sup>st</sup> century” through Facebook and the development of a Jefferson County Business “app,” increasing both communication and visibility. The committee is also preparing “Think Local First” window clings. Local area chambers are being encouraged to contribute \$200 toward this effort. (Chamber secretary Kent Duncan noted that our chamber’s policies make that request a board decision, but one we would certainly consider at our first opportunity. Vice-President Chuck Wilson assured the chamber that, speaking “unofficially,” he was confident of board approval.)

Brittany also reminded the chamber that there is an Agritourism meeting scheduled for tonight, November 19<sup>th</sup>, in Oskaloosa. A crowd of sixty participants is already expected!

**County Commission News** – County Commissioner Wayne Ledbetter noted that there is an opening on the county Planning and Zoning board. Ideally, this opening would be filled by someone from District 2, and Wayne pointed out that it would be in the chamber’s best interests if that person had a positive business perspective and were assertive enough to provide strong input. Additionally, a woman representative would be ideal, as all other board positions are currently held by men.

Additionally, Wayne encouraged the chamber to pay attention to the upcoming session of the Kansas legislature, as there are matters under consideration that should be of specific interest because of their potential impact on local businesses.

## Special Guests

Jamie Love, Jefferson County Advocate for the Willow Domestic Violence Center and Peggy Lackey, Jefferson County Family Development Advocate for NEK-CAP, Inc. (the “Northeast Kansas Community Action Partnership”) gave an informative presentation on the challenges of domestic violence and its impact particularly on rural families, as well as a summary of the services offered through their organizations. Both Jamie and Peggy are available for presentations. More information can be found at [www.willowdvcenter.org](http://www.willowdvcenter.org) and at [www.nekcap.org](http://www.nekcap.org). Both of these organizations are doing significant work improving the lives of the residents of Jefferson and surrounding counties.

## Upcoming Meetings

Chamber – Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> – Lake Perry Bar & Grill – 5:30 – 7:30 PM