

Meriden/Ozawkie Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 18th, 2016

Announcements/Updates

Jeff County 4-H Fair Auction Results – Chamber President Scott Stanley was pleased to report that, on behalf of the chamber, DeDee Skaggs placed successful bids on the Grand Champion rabbit, raised by Alexa Gruber, and a steer raised by Neva Roenne. The two bids came to a total of \$406.66.

Meriden Fall Festival & Street Dance – The Chamber of Commerce will again conduct a watermelon feed as part of this year's festival scheduled for Saturday, September 17th. Festivities will begin at noon, and include the Air National Guard "jousting pit and obstacle course," carnival games, Mulligan's "pulled pork" fundraiser (in support of the Jeff West Educational Foundation), a bear garden hosted by the Game Day Bar & Grill, and a live band. The celebration is scheduled to continue until 10:00 PM.

Facebook Tidbits – Heather Williams sent word that the chamber FB page has received four additional "likes" this month, for a total of 309 "likes." Photos of the check presentations to both USD 340 (for the new LED sign) and to Dan Hypse and the Jeff West Baseball Team (our partner for this year's golf tournament) have been posted today. Submissions for posting can be made to Heather at heatherlwilliams@live.com.

K4 Sports – Owner/Entrepreneur Barry White was present to announce a ground breaking ceremony for K4 Sports scheduled for Wednesday, September 7th, at 6:30 PM on 74th street in Meriden. Barry shared a rendering of the planned facility, explaining that a 50' by 200' section of the facility will be host the offices, batting cages, pitching mounds, with additional rooms that will be available for activities like dance and yoga classes. An even larger section of the facility will feature a college-sized infield, complete with a turf floor surface and netting to allow for hard-hitting baseball and softball practice. Barry anticipates pouring footings for this facility later in September. On the same property, Barry is also building a shop for his current business, 5-Star Masonry.

Friends of Hospice of Jeff County Garage Sale will be held August 26-27 from 7:00 AM—5:00 PM at a new location — 11521 33rd St, Perry.

Senator Jerry Moran will make a "Listening Tour" stop at the Jeff Co. Courthouse on Monday, August 22nd, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM

Economic Development – County Economic Development director Brittany Chaplin reported that the cities have been very receptive to appeals for funding assistance. The "Think Local First" committee is focusing on partnership with groups already in place, including local chambers of commerce and city governments. Brittany noted the challenge of communication when so many people choose varied sources of information (i.e., the Vindicator, Facebook, etc.) with no one source reaching everyone.

The “Housing” committee is discussing the scope of work for the planned housing assessment, including developing an extensive list of questions to be utilized as part of the assessment, in order to secure some preliminary bids for completing the assessment. Brittany noted that costs may ride toward the high side given that the needs of each community to be included in the assessment can be so different.

The “Food Council” is functioning well and preparing for a September/October launch of their assessment of food resources within Jefferson County.

County Commissioner Wayne Ledbetter – In the course of discussing the work of the economic development committees, Wayne noted that the commission had just approved the next county budget for publication and commented on the impact of property valuation on county budget funding. Wayne observed that Jefferson County boasts \$95 million in residential housing valuation, which is actually rather high relative to other counties. Jefferson County is the 30th largest county by size, but ranks 24th in terms of residential valuation (which raises the question of what is the specific housing need as opposed to just “building houses”).

By contrast, Wayne examined the commercial valuation of 15 counties within a radius around Jefferson County. He noted that Potawatomi County (a county of similar size, with a similar number of communities, etc.) boasts a commercial valuation of approximately \$2,500 per person, while Jefferson County’s commercial per capita valuation is only approximately \$600. They have a 27 mill county levy, and we have a 73 mill county levy. Wayne noted, then, the importance of the work of entities like the Economic Development Commission and local Chambers of Commerce.

USD 340 – Superintendent Pat Happer noted that today is the first day for student attendance this school year. A student count is not yet available, as students were still enrolling as late as yesterday. This will be a significant year as a statewide school funding decision is before the state supreme court for consideration this spring.

Special Guest

Anissa Jepson – was present to discuss her work as Manager of Training & Volunteer Support for the Girl Scouts of NE Kansas. The council Anissa serves boasts some 23,000 girl scouts, 2,000 troops, and over 8,000 volunteers. Anissa described the Girl Scouts as a “volunteer driven, girl led” organization committed to “building girls of courage, confidence, and character.” She illustrated how even the familiar “Girl Scout cookie sales” are about more than fund-raising—teaching skills like business and financial literacy, budgeting, and development of sales goals, etc. Anissa was happy to announce the launch of new troop in Meriden and encouraged chamber members to consider getting involved as even as “episodic” volunteers—offering meeting space or a special presentation or business-related experience to the local girl scout troop.

Next Meeting – The chamber will meet again at noon on Thursday, September 15th. With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM