

Meriden/Ozawkie Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes - May 19, 2016

President Scott Stanley brought the meeting to order at 12:10pm.

Guest Speaker - Lori Henderson Crooked Post winery, Ozawkie, KS

Crooked Post Winery grows their own grapes, which they bottle into wine. They serve stop-in customers and special event groups. They also have a variety of local special interest items for sale, such as natural soaps, breads and brownies; and handmade cards. They have lots of stop-ins and in the summer the business is open Thursday evening too.

Retail sales are growing. This time of year, they're doing shoot positioning to make grapes easier to pick when the time comes. In the summertime, they advertise on social media and invite people to sign up for grape picking times. Participants in the grape picking are served lunch and provided with a t-shirt. Last year they got 16 tons of grapes out of the ground. This was a much better year than 3 years ago when there was a killing frost that killed their fruit. They had to purchase fruit to make wine that year.

Last year the business got new fermentation tanks, and recently they added a pizza oven for homemade pizzas. Local area resident Lisa Shenk kindly shared her expertise with her own outdoor pizza oven, and trained Lori on its use.

The business's niche is a small local business where everyone feels special and welcome. The business now is licensed to serve beer on premises and features 5 craft beers from Kansas. Beer is not for take-out; it must be consumed on the premises, but this is a nice alternative for those who prefer beer to wine.

A number of activities are booked and scheduled for this year, including an event over July 4th that will include musical entertainment.

Business Meeting & Announcements:

Chamber Golf Tournament: Scott announced that the Chamber's annual Golf Tournament is June 24. This year's beneficiary is the Jeff West Baseball program. Neal Spencer started the tournament years ago, and now Mollie McKinley is the go-to person. Fliers soliciting teams to sign up for the tournament were passed around for businesses to hang up. It's a four-man scramble with lunch, green fees, golf cart use, all included in the registration fee. We will have one more meeting before the tournament.

Scholarship Committee Chairperson Chuck Wilson reported that we awarded our 2016 Chamber Scholarship this year to Jacob Korb, who will be going to Kansas State University. Carol Wilson presented the scholarship to Jacob at the annual Jefferson West High School awards night. The scholarship is for \$500/year for 4 years, as long as the student maintains their GPA for the 4 years. Once again we had excellent applicants vying for the scholarship. The proceeds that support the scholarship come from donations collected at the Pancake Feeds conducted by our Chamber, twice a year.

F.W. Huston Hospital and their local pharmacies are teaming up with the Jeff County Health Dept. They'll have a ballot box for changes you'd like in the county and what you'd like to see in the county, health wise.

Ozawkie Methodist Church - from their Calendar of Events:

July 2 to Sept 24: 8 to 11am Saturdays: a Farmer's Market.

July 10- homemade ice cream, pie and cake

Booth at 4-H Fair

Sept 3 - Pancake Feed

Oct 1 – Chicken Noodle Dinner

Nov 5 Smothered steak dinner 4:30 to 7:30

Dec- Holiday market

Economic Development- Brittany Chaplin reported that there is a lot going on. Food Council will be partnering with the health department for a community wellness program. They may have a farmer's market in Oskaloosa in June.

Think Local First Committee- next meeting will be fun with a Scavenger Hunt throughout the county, to highlight businesses in the county.

Housing and Development Commission – next group will be the core group of who will be on board. Will do mission, bylaws etc., to be taken to the commissioners. Then will do a housing assessment.

Communication - Brittany said it's a challenge to find the best way to reach people – email, FB etc. She might use the Chamber Chronicles. She will do a blog on the EDD web site to expand on the information that is happening.

Chamber Chronicles - Chuck noted Heather is interested in having more info for the Chronicles, so it's fine to send her anything.

County Commissioner Wayne Ledbetter- getting a really early start on budget planning with the new tax law and tax lid. There are lots of unknowns and gray areas. Wayne recommends the County do more planning in advance. The commission is working with a capital improvement planning process. Wants to be efficient with resources we have available. The Tax Sale was a significant drain on county resources. It costs us in excess of \$100,000, and the cost of publications to advertise it was \$33,000. Twelve properties sold of the 394 offered. Most of the money goes to the property owner, not to the county. Wayne noted that everything in county government takes a long time.

A Corps of Engineers representative informed the chamber that the spillway outlet was increased to 6,000 cfs today, with hopes of going to 7,000 by the end of the day. The reservoir is eleven feet high right now, with more rain forecast next week. Some areas at the lake are closed. The Corps of Engineers presence was welcomed by the chamber as the Corps seeks to strengthen relationships with local community.

Teresa Day reminded members about the Youth Camp she's working with. June 1 is deadline for cheapest rate. A horse is not required. Sponsorships and food donations are welcome.

Scott adjourned the meeting at 1:04pm.