

Meriden/Ozawkie Area Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2017

Special Guest – Lance Anderson – The Guidance Center

President Scott Stanley introduced Lance Lewis, director of The Guidance Center (TGC) in Oskaloosa. TGC is a community based, non-profit agency that serves as the local Community Mental Health Center for Jefferson County. They provide a full range of quality outpatient and inpatient referral/release services for individuals, families and businesses in our community.

Lance has been with TGC for 20 years. He reports that TGC serves around 700 Jefferson County residents annually, with a roughly 50-50 split between adults and children being served. Adult services focus on therapy and support groups (e.g., for substance abuse) while children's services include a summer camp, alternative-school services, and after-school groups.

Lance noted that funding has become a significant issue over the last several years, especially with the impact of Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) on budget cuts, the elimination of previously available grant funding, and a recent 4% Medicaid cut. But mental health needs remain significant. One in four people will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Some 450 million people currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide. In spite of the challenges, Lance noted that TGC continues, for the present, to be able to offer health care services to anyone, regardless of his or her ability to pay.

More information about TGC is available at www.theguidance-ctr.org.

Bonus Presentation – Teresa Day – Day Insurance Group

With "open enrollment" under way for Medicare and looming near for Obamacare, Teresa Day with Day Insurance took a few moments to highlight available services through her agency, Day Insurance Group. Teresa is an "agent broker," and therefore not tied to any particular supplier, but able to market any worthwhile insurance product, and licensed to serve clients in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. Teresa noted the variety of products available through her agency, including Medicare and health insurance plans, health care cost sharing plans, "gap" plans, accident plans, vision, dental, disability, and life insurance plans—even guaranteed issue plans ("just bury me" plans) and foreign travel insurance plans.

Teresa noted that she is Medicare approved, Obamacare approved, and "Do you know anybody that just cares" approved! She demonstrated her knowledge of Insurance products by illustrating the reasons for pricing differences between duplicate Medicare products and assured the chamber that her services (paid by insurance providers) do, indeed, cost the end user nothing extra. The client *may* find the same product for the same price—but never at a better price—and would have to do so without the assistance of a well-educated broker for the decision-making process.

Medicare open enrollment runs from October 15th to December 7th, and Obamacare open enrollment runs from November 1st to December 15th. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Teresa. More information is available at www.dayinsurancesolutions.com. Group insurance options are available, as well.

Additional Business

Trunk or Treat – October 31st

Scott noted that the Annual Trunk or Treat event is scheduled for Tuesday, October 31st. The event itself is scheduled for 3:45-5:00 PM, but business participants should be in place and ready to go by 3:30 PM. A sign-up sheet was available for participants. Businesses can also register to participate by sending an email to Meriden_Ozawkie_Chamber@yahoo.com.

Fall Pancake Feed Report

Chamber vice-president Chuck Wilson noted another successful Chamber Pancake Feed was held on Saturday, October 7, 2017, from 7:00 to 11:00 AM at the Jeff West Elementary School. Chuck expressed his appreciation to volunteers who served 340 guests. Just over \$2,000 was received in donations, which (after expenses) will net over \$1,400 for the Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund. The Chamber expressed its appreciation to Chuck for his continuing leadership of this twice-a-year event.

“Taste of Elegance” Event

Chamber Treasurer DeDee Skaggs announced that everything was in place for this year’s “Taste of Elegance” event, scheduled for a 5:30 PM start on, Saturday, October 21st at Perry-Lecompton High School. Pre-paid ticket sales have been brisk, but tickets should still be available at the door. Twenty items are included in a live auction, with many more as part of a silent auction that will run throughout the evening. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Hospice of Jefferson County.

Board Elections Coming Next Month

Chuck Wilson noted that chamber members will ballot on six seats on the Chamber Board of Directors in November. Anyone interested in serving on the board should contact any member of the nominating committee—Pat Happer; Diane Shaw; or Committee Chairman Chuck Wilson.

New Jefferson County Economic Director

County Commissioner Wayne Ledbetter introduced the new Director of Economic Development for Jefferson County, Pam Anderson. Pam hails from Iowa, where she has significant experience in rural economic development. Pam addressed the chamber, noting that many of the challenges Jefferson County faces are nothing new, and discussed particularly the challenges of the availability of skilled labor and affordable housing. She emphasized the value she places on collaboration and a team approach to tackling challenges. Wayne indicated his interest in seeing greater county-wide involvement in economic development efforts.

Next Meeting:

The Chamber meets again at noon on Thursday, November 16th, in the “Community Room” of Gambino’s Pizza.