

Meriden/Ozawkie Area Chamber of Commerce
Chamber Meeting Minutes
August 20th, 2015

Announcements/Updates

2015 Jeff County 4-H Livestock Auction – Scott Stanley reported that the chamber offered winning bids toward livestock shown by Shanie Adams (goat) and McKayla Boyce (Beef Grand Champion). In addition, the chamber made a \$130 donation to “Friends of 4H.” The chamber expressed appreciation to DeDee Skaggs for bidding on our behalf.

Promotional Televisions – Scott presented to the chamber the ideal of using television monitors in local businesses to promote chamber business and community events. The images could load from a thumb drive, which could be updated with relative ease on a regular basis. Alexa Surritt, Charlene Sams, Scott Stanley, and Doug Norman expressed willingness to form an initial ad hoc committee to develop this idea.

Meriden Fall Festival – The festival is set for September 12th (see attached flyers for further information). In particular, Meriden Pride representative Tim Brayshek noted that (unlike previous years) the parade will assemble in the parking lot of Jeff West Junction beginning at 12:30 PM. Chuck Wilson welcomes volunteers to assist as the Chamber will provide and staff the watermelon feed at this community-wide event. Along with all the other activities, the Jeff West Educational Foundation will benefit from a “pulled pork” meal prepared by John Thelen—a sandwich, chips, and bottled water for \$6.00 on-site/\$5.00 in advance. Chamber member Top Post Winery will offer wine tasting.

Facebook Update – Chamber associate Heather Williams sent word that the Chamber Facebook page now has 220 “likes”! Recent “Spotlight” ads featured *Bowsers Meat Processing* and *Chuck’s Heating and Cooling*. The *City of Meriden* is next in line. The gift certificate giveaway was deemed a rousing success and job postings for Lake Perry Bar and Grill and Ernest Spencer reached 229 and 1,138 people, respectively.

Fall Pancake Feed – Mark your calendars—the Chamber’s fall Pancake Feed is set for Saturday, October 10th. See Chuck Wilson to volunteer. This is not only a great opportunity for community connections but also funds the Chamber’s scholarships.

Economic Development – Brittany Chaplin brought information (see attached) on efforts to establish a revolving loan fund in cooperation with “Network Kansas,” a statewide small-business resource. Brittany explained that, if approved, this program would be funded through donations that would also potentially serve to reduce the donor’s state tax liability through a 75% tax credit. While all of this is pending approval of the EDC’s application, it also requires \$35,000 in commitments by September 11th. For more information, Brittany can be reached at the office (785) 863-5262, by cell (785) 764-6609, or by email brittany@jfcoksed.com.

F.W. Huston Foundation Fall Fundraiser – Doug Norman announced that the public is invited to this evening of delicious food and delightful entertainment to be held on September 26th from 5:00 to 8:00 PM at the Jeff County North High School. Tickets are available for purchase in the hospital admissions office or at the door. Tickets cost \$25 for adults or \$8 for children (age 12 and under).

Doug also reminded the chamber that the hospital offers 24/7 “prompt care” services and expects to be able to offer advanced wound care beginning October 1st through the addition of a hyperbaric chamber and specially-trained wound care nurses. Additionally, the FW Huston Pharmacy is now open in Meriden and ready to handle all prescription needs. Their staff can transfer in any prescription with ease upon request!

Special Guest

Pat Happer – USD 340 Superintendent

Superintendent Pat Happer reported that the first day of the new school year was successfully underway with a number of changes in USD 340. Pat made note of several new staff members, including a high school language arts teacher, a middle school (7th grade) language arts teacher, a middle school special education instructor, and an elementary school art instruction aide. The budget status for the district remains largely unchanged, though there was a reduction in the amount of the budget supported through the local option budget (LOB). State support of the LOB decreased, resulting in a mill levy increase of 6/10th of a mill.

New social studies textbooks have been secured for all grades. In addition, several facilities improvements have been made: the high school gym floor has been completely refinished (the same is scheduled for the middle school next year), new fixtures installed in the boys’ middle school bathrooms, new stair handrails installed at the stadium, two new busses secured (an activity bus and a wheelchair lift equipped bus), along with fresh paint in hallways and classrooms. New “holds” have been installed on all doors at the high school that allow the doors to remain open but be automatically closed for safety and security in the event of a fire alarm or an intruder. Ten “through the wall” A/C units have been replaced in the elementary school—the plan is to replace 10 or 15 each year until all have been updated.

Enrollment stands at 841 students. For state funding purposes, the “full time equivalency” (FTE) calculates to 821 students. Ten percent of the enrolled students are from out-of-district and the largest class is comprised of 79 seventh graders.

Through various unsolicited comments, members of the chamber expressed their confidence in USD 340 as an asset to our students and our community.

Upcoming Meetings

Chamber – Thursday, September 17th – Countryside Square Community Room