

Meriden/Ozawkie Area Chamber of Commerce
Chamber Meeting Minutes – February 18th, 2016

Announcements and Updates

Spring Pancake Feed – Pancake Feed chairperson Chuck Wilson reminded the chamber about this spring's pancake feed, set for Saturday, March 5th, from 7 to 11 AM, at the Jeff West Elementary School. Proceeds from the pancake feed fund the Chamber's scholarship fund, which provides up to four \$500 scholarships each year to qualified Jeff West graduates. Chuck reminded members of what a great opportunity the pancake feed provides to interact with members of the community and other chamber members.

Membership Renewals – Chamber president Scott Stanley reminded the chamber that membership renewal invoices for 2016 have been mailed. Area businesses who are not active members have been sent an application via email. Any questions regarding membership applications or renewals can be directed to any Chamber board member.

Chamber Gift Certificates – Scott also reminded the Chamber that any gift certificates received can be redeemed by bringing them to a chamber meeting or mailing the certificate to the Meriden-Ozawkie Area Chamber of Commerce at PO Box 175, Meriden, KS, 66512.

Community Easter Egg Hunt – The VFW and Meriden Pride will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 19th, at 1:00 PM, at the Meriden City Park. As we've done in previous years, the Chamber will be providing several bicycles (at least one for each "age division" planned for at the egg hunt) as prizes. Any Chamber members who might be present at the egg hunt were encouraged to take a camera and snap some photos.

Economic Development – Brittany Chaplin announced that she has hired an assistant—Michelle Carter. Michelle is from the Meriden area, has a "ton" of experience in housing and economic development, and is energized to help further develop our business communities. Michelle's current focus is on the development of a county-wide business directory.

The "Think Local First" committee will be hosting two opportunities for conversation and brainstorming. The first is scheduled at Colonial Acres in Oskaloosa on Wednesday, March 16th, at 9:00 AM. The second is scheduled at The Crooked Post Winery in Ozawkie on Thursday, March 17th, at 5:30 PM. Both events will feature door prizes and provide great opportunities for networking.

The Housing/Redevelopment Commission will host a "by-invitation" housing summit on Tuesday, March 1st. Ultimately, Brittany sees this team as the "go to" group for developers and others with questions about housing development in Jeff County.

The Food Council is working on developing a list of current food producers in Jefferson County so that they can successfully be surveyed on their needs and interests and better connect them to consumers. Currently, no comprehensive list exists.

County Commissioner Wayne Ledbetter – Wayne Ledbetter reminded the chamber that he was still recruiting for a Planning and Zoning Board member from our part of the county. The current vacancy has been filled for the next year, but at that point a new member will be appointed. Wayne is convinced it would benefit the county to have representation from the Meriden-Ozawkie area. He also noted that all current board members are male—that a female perspective would be a welcome addition.

Wayne noted that on Thursday, February 25th, as part of the comprehensive plan review that occurs each year, there is a recommendation from the county Planning and Zoning Board to consider a “commercial recreation zoning district.” The district would involve a route running from 24 Highway and Ferguson Road north to Highway 92, west to West Lake Road, south to Highway 237 back to Highway 24. Wayne emphasized that this zoning district would not allow anyone to establish a business without going through the approval process, but rather, would only simplify the expansion of that business within the parameters of a pre-determined “by right” list of activities without having to go through another CUP (Conditional Use Permit) process—something that can be a months-long process. There will still be county oversight of any expansion.

Wayne also noted the complications surrounding the potential hard-surfacing of 62nd street between K-4 Highway and the Shawnee County line. Traffic count is higher than any other dirt road in Jeff County (over 300 vehicles a day) and the county is ready to move ahead with preliminary engineering, but the budget lid passed by the State, originally slated for implementation in 2018, has been accelerated for implementation in June of this year. Because this project will demand significant financial investment, the commission feels compelled to wait on more secure funding status before taking action.

Finally, Wayne gave the chamber a “heads up” with regard to KDOT plans for expansion of the turnpike. As plans stand, future development of the K-10 corridor would result eliminate access from K-10 to the “Farmer’s Turnpike,” cutting off convenient access to 1029, which accesses the only bridge across the Kansas River between Lawrence and Topeka. In essence, this isolates the entire southern border of Jefferson County. KDOT will host an informational meeting on Thursday, March 3rd, at Heritage Baptist Church, 1781 E 800 Rd, (on the Farmer’s Turnpike) from 5:30-7:30 PM. Interested parties are encouraged to attend.

Special Guest

Scott introduced Dr. Christina Cantrell of the Meriden Chiropractic Clinic. Dr. Cantrell offered a brief introduction to her practice (conducted in partnership with Dr. Ali Curry). Their offices are located at 7188 K4 Hwy in Meriden, just south of the Countryside Square Shopping Center. For more information or to set up an appointment, call (785) 484-3311.

Dr. Cantrell offered an informative presentation to the Chamber, encouraging the Chamber members to pay attention to posture (“hips in line with ankles, shoulders aligned over hips, ears in line with shoulders—without slouching forward!”) and offering simple stretching exercises that can significantly reduce the need for ongoing chiropractic care.

Upcoming Meetings

Chamber – Thursday, March 17th – Gambinos Community Room – Meriden