

Meriden/Ozawkie Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes

Thursday July 21st, 2016

Announcements/Updates

Chamber Golf Tournament – Chamber President Scott Stanley was pleased to report on successful chamber golf tournament for 2016—our 9th annual. Seventeen teams and twenty hole sponsors contributed to a great day, enabling the chamber to present a check for \$3,000 to Coach Dan Hypse and the Jefferson West Baseball Team, our benefitting partner for this year's tournament. Coach Hypse thanked the chamber for their support and announced that planned use for the funds involved field improvements and equipment purchases. Scott Stanley expressed appreciation to board member Mollee Wilkerson and all the tournament volunteers.

Jeff West Booster Club Sign – The Jeff West Booster Club has been raising funds to replace the current school district promotional sign with a new, 2-sided, 9 ft by 4 ft, full-color digital sign. Installation is scheduled to begin soon on the sign, with a total cost in the neighborhood of \$36,000. In addition to support from the booster club itself, Denison State Bank, and the Jeff West Educational Foundation, Scott Stanley was happy to present a check from the Chamber of Commerce for \$12,000 toward the purchase and installation of the sign. Chamber members will be among those identified as supporters of USD 340 as calendar events and school activities are noted on the digital display. USD 340 superintendent Pat Happer received the check on behalf of the booster club and expressed his appreciation for the chamber's continuing support of local schools.

Jefferson County 4-H Fair – Scott Stanley noted that, again this year, the chamber will expend \$500 in livestock auction purchases in support of local youth and their efforts at the Jefferson County 4-H Fair. Scott expressed his appreciation to DeDee Skaggs, who has once again agreed to bid on behalf of the chamber.

Jefferson Assembly's 2016 VBX – Jefferson Assembly of God pastor Kent Duncan announced this year's 2016 "Vacation Bible X-perience" for youth ages 3 years through 5th grade. Scheduled for July 25-29th, this annual event generally involves over 100 volunteers and 200 students.

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.

Ann Mah – Ann, a candidate for the State Board of Education, was present to greet the chamber and emphasize the importance of the Board of Education in support of quality local education. Ann distributed related materials and encouraged voter participation.

Economic Development – County Economic Development director Brittany Chaplin updated the chamber, describing the transition from working on the foundational structure for the economic development department to the current efforts to implement the ideas and plans developed so far. Brittany explained the challenges of funding implementation and current appeals being made to eight cities within the county for financial support matching that of the county (as a percentage of the overall budget). Jefferson County currently supplies \$37,000 annually (along with some reserve from previous years)—or .007% of the county general fund. Brittany is asking local communities to match that percentage within their own budgets and was happy to report that Meriden was the first community to respond affirmatively.

On behalf of County Commissioner Wayne Ledbetter, Brittany reported that the county will be searching for a replacement for the current Planning and Zoning Director beginning August 5th. A current county employee has been hired for web site development, opening a GIS map development position. Brittany also relayed the announcement of County Treasurer Lisa Buerman that driver's license renewals are once more being made available at the county courthouse.

Taste of Elegance – DeDee Skaggs announced that the Jefferson County Friends of Hospice will host their annual "Taste of Elegance" event on Saturday, October 15th, at the Perry-Lecompton High School. This annual event is the most significant fundraiser for the organization—all the more important as expenses to hospice organizations are only increasing with current changes in insurance coverage. This year's event will feature an "Arm's Length" raffle, with cash prizes of \$500, \$250, and \$100.

Special Guest

Great Life Golf & Fitness vice-president Gary Farrant was present to speak about the unique business plan and impressive growth of Great Life Golf & Fitness since its beginnings just over 30 years ago. Gary described company president and CEO Rick Farrant's philosophy of becoming "the Walmart of Golf"—making it affordable and getting people in the door—and also highlighted the significant role that fitness centers have come to play as part of the business model. Gary reported that, from one course in 1985 (Lake Perry Country Club), Great Life Golf and Fitness has expanded to include 58 courses and fitness centers in 2016, with thousands of members enjoying Great Life amenities.

Scott Stanley closed the meeting with the invitation to meet again on Thursday, August 17th when our scheduled guest speaker is Anissa Jepsen, with the Girl Scouts of NE Kansas.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM