

# *Chamber Visions*

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**GUEST EDITOR***By Pastor Bruce Lester*

It's Christmas time again. And the rush has begun to get the decorations up and out, the menu put together, the guest list finalized and on and on it all goes. So many people seem to push themselves into a frenzy trying to make Christmas special. Every year I am challenged to try to remember the reason for the season. It is so easy to forget that Christmas is supposed to be about Christ. The season is not called "Santamas". The following is a letter I found a few years ago that is challenging to say the least. It is a letter from Jesus regarding our misunderstanding of what Christmas is all about. I invite you to read it only if you are willing to be confronted with a new perspective regarding Christmas.

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**A LETTER FROM JESUS REGARDING HIS BIRTHDAY**

As you well know, we are getting closer to My birthday. Every year there is a celebration in My honor and I think that this year the celebration will be repeated. During this time, there are many people shopping for gifts, there are many radios announcements, TV commercials and in every part of the world everyone is talking that My birthday is getting closer and closer. It is really very nice to know, that at least once a year, some people think of Me. As you know, the celebration of My birthday began many years ago.

At first people seemed to understand and be thankful for all that I did for them, but in these times, no one seems to know the reason for the celebration. Family and friends get together and have lots of fun, but they don't know the meaning of the celebration. I remember that last year there was a great feast in My honor. The dinner table was full of delicious foods, pastries, fruits, assorted nuts and chocolates. The decorations were exquisite and there were many beautifully wrapped gifts. But, do you want to know something? I wasn't invited. I was the guest of honor and they didn't remember to send Me an invitation. The party was for Me, but when that great day came, I was left outside. They closed the door in My face and I wanted to be with them and share their table.

In truth, that didn't surprise Me because in the last few years several closed their doors to Me. Since I wasn't invited, I decided to enter the party without making any noise. I went in and stood in a corner. They were all drinking; there were some who were drunk and telling jokes and laughing at everything. They were having a grand time. To top it all, this big fat man all dressed in red wearing a long white beard entered the room yelling "Ho-Ho-Ho"! He sat on the sofa and all the children ran to him, saying: "Santa Claus, Santa Claus" as if the party were in his honor! At midnight all the people began to hug each other; I extended My arms waiting for someone to hug Me and do you know what? No one hugged Me. Suddenly, they all began to share gifts. They opened them one by one with great expectation. When all had been opened, I looked to see if, maybe, there was one for Me. What would you feel if on your birthday everybody shared gifts and you did not get one? I then understood that I was unwanted at that party and quietly left. Every year it gets worse. People only remember the gifts, the parties, to eat and drink, and nobody remembers Me.

I would like this Christmas that you allow Me to enter into your life. I would like that you recognize the fact that almost two thousand years ago I came to this world to give My life for you, on the cross, to save you. Today, I only want that you believe this with all your heart. I want to share something with you. As many didn't invite me to their party, I will have My own celebration, a grandiose party that no one has ever imagined, a spectacular party. I'm still making the final arrangements.

Today I am sending out many invitations and there is an invitation for you. I want to know if you wish to

attend and I will make a reservation for you and write your name with golden letters in My great guest book. Only those on the guest list will be invited to the party. Those who don't answer the invite will be left outside. Be prepared because, when all is ready, you will be part of my great party.

See you soon. I Love you!  
Jesus

P.S. Will you accept the invitation?



### **“LET IT SNOW” CHRISTMAS PROMOTION MAKES RETURN TO McCOOK!**

FREE CHRISTMAS? YES! The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce Marketing Committee has decided to re-visit the popular 2005 “Let It Snow” Christmas promotion again this year. Committee members are all abuzz as they reminisce about the success of that special promotion which gave their customers the opportunity to get a refund for their purchases made during the promotion window at participating businesses. Check out the qualifying details and then get out there and SHOP LOCAL! If it snows at least 6 inches on January 13, 2012, your Christmas could be free! Just shop twenty local participating businesses then save your receipts for purchases made between November 14 and December 10. Check the stores for details and then begin dreaming about all the refunds you could collect when the snowfall reaches the 6 inch mark on January 13. The official snow amount will be measured with doplar radar technology at Wieland Field by a designated weather observation company which has been insured by the insurance company.

“Let It Snow” participating businesses include: Barnett Do It Center, Brown’s Shoe Fit Company, Garrison’s/McCook Lettering, Knowlen & Yates, Longnecker Jewelry, Lord’s Hardware, McCook Daily Gazette, High Plains Radio, Hometown Family Radio, Peterson Jewelers, Samway Floor Covering, Sehnert’s Bakery & Bieroc Café, Sports Shoppe, TOP Office Products, VK Electronics, Wagner Ford, Wagner Chevrolet, D & S Hardware, New Life Christian Bookstore, Hershberger Music Store, Tri-State Spas. Sponsoring businesses helping to promote the event include McCook National Bank, ACME Touch Printing, and Eakes Office Plus.

### **YOU COULD WIN \$10,000.00 IN SNOWBUCKS!**

While you are out shopping, watch for the “Let It Snow” registration boxes located in participating businesses. Be sure to sign up so you have a chance to win the \$10,000.00 in Snowbucks. The name of the lucky winner-to-be will be drawn at Schmick’s Market on Saturday, December 17. Then watch for the snowfall on January 13. Snowbucks can be spent just like cash at the participating businesses.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Did you know that every year the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce brings Christmas to McCook? We begin making preparations in November by working with the WEC to put thousands of twinkling lights in the trees on the Norris Avenue Islands. (Yes, we must buy lots of new lights each year!) Then we work with the WEC to set up the long-time traditional and cherished Santa Claus Lane. Next we make arrangements to fly Santa into the airport from the “North Pole” to greet the little ones in that special “first time” moment. Then we coordinate the Christmas parade which travels down Norris Avenue immediately following the ceremonial lighting of the Norris Avenue Islands and Santa Claus Lane. The Chamber also hosts Santa Claus every Saturday afternoon before Christmas so that your little ones can experience the same “wonder” that you did as a child. In addition, the Chamber coordinates the retail Christmas promotion for participating merchants. We work hard to make Christmas in McCook a very festive occasion and we thank the merchants and volunteers who help us undertake the task! Merry Christmas to everyone!

## **WELCOME ABOARD!**

Scott Jeffers, Shelter Insurance, is the most recent new member of the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce. The office is located at 504 West E Street on the North side of the building that houses the dental offices of Dr. Chris Nix. Scott is happy to be coming on board with the Chamber and we, in turn, look forward to working with him. You can turn to Scott when you need to protect those things dear to you...he will listen first and then help you plan accordingly. Welcome aboard, Scott!

## **WELCOME ABOARD!**

The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to welcome Tropical Tanners, Starla Werkmeister, to the Chamber family. Starla just took over her new endeavor on November 1 and is excited to own her own business. We look forward to partnering with Tropical Tanners as she grows her business in the coming months and years. You'll find Tropical Tanners in the same location, just behind Tri State Spas on the hill at West 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Stop by and catch her enthusiasm!

## **WELCOME ABOARD!**

Farm Bureau Insurance, Jimmy Gleason, is a new member of the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce. Two licensed associates work from his McCook office which is located in the KDS Professional Building at 802 West B Street. Teri Turcotte and Sara Richards will join with Jimmy to provide area residents with insurance coverage they need as well as all of the other services offered by Farm Bureau. We look forward to working with them as they continue to service their current customers and to build their clientele base over the coming years

## YMCA ANNIVERSARY COINCIDES WITH EXPANSION COMPLETION

Mike Gonzales, McCook's Ed Thomas YMCA Executive Director, noted that in addition to the celebration of the expansion completion, they are also celebrating two special anniversaries. The YMCA is celebrating 85 years in McCook and 30 years in their current location. To share in the celebration, Chamber members and McCook Cordials gathered for a ribbon cutting and a member recognition ceremony on Wednesday, November 2. Several of those in attendance were treated to tours of the expansion. The YMCA is a facility that everyone in the area can be proud of and is now set for continued growth into the future. It is certainly a wonderful asset for our community.



## **RIBBON CUTTING AT WESKAMP FLORAL AND GIFTS**



On November 1, Pat Weskamp welcomed Chamber members and McCook Cordials who attended the ribbon cutting for his new business ‘on the bricks’ in downtown McCook. Pat shared that he is really happy to finally have a dream come true and that he loves coming to work every day. You’ll find Pat at the corner of Norris Avenue and D streets (324 Norris Avenue).

## **CHAMBER ANNUAL BANQUET ON FEBRUARY 4**

The Chamber Annual Banquet Committee met to select the theme, date and location for the 2012 Chamber Annual Banquet. The banquet will be held on Saturday, February 4, at the new Armed Forces Reserve Center on East Hwy 6 & 34. The evening will begin at 6:00 PM with Social Hour. Letters to Chamber members in the catering business were sent out to obtain bids for the dinner. The committee is excited to get started with the decorating and other details of the banquet. They chose the theme, “Building Our Community...Brick by Brick”. The committee plans to acknowledge the various building projects that have been ongoing in our community for the past couple of years. The annual awards will also be presented.

## **NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR ANNUAL AWARDS**

The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for awards to be presented at their 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet scheduled for February 4, 2012. The awards and respective criteria are as follows:

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD:** An organization contributing significantly over the past few years to the improvement of McCook.

**COMMUNITY BUILDER AWARD:** An individual with a history of service to McCook and the surrounding area, most notably in his or her work for non-profit organizations.

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**CHAMBER VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:** A member who has displayed an above-average level of participation in Chamber and other activities in the community.

**AG BUILDER AWARD:**

The candidate must have, or have had, a successful farming or agribusiness operation. The operation should represent agriculture in southwest Nebraska. Diversification is desired but, due to the changes in agriculture, specialization can also qualify.

Non-farm or non-agribusiness activities must be completed freely and willingly. The activities cannot be completed with the goal of attaining financial gains. The activities should be completed with a goal of improving southwest Nebraska, their community, agriculture and agribusiness in general.

The candidates should be or have been, involved in at least three (3) areas of off the-farm/agribusiness services or activities. At least one (1) must be or have been in general community service. The remaining activities may be related to agriculture / agribusiness.

The individual must exhibit pride in their farm / agribusiness occupation. They must project a good positive image of agriculture production or agribusiness. They should follow accepted conservation and farming practices along with being financially sound and respected by their peers.

The wording of these qualifications shall not exclude a woman, or husband and wife team, or family from consideration.

Nomination forms can be obtained from the Chamber office at the Keystone Business Center, 402 Norris Avenue. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Chamber at 342-3200.

**ORSHELN FARM AND HOME –  
ANSWERS AND LOW PRICES DOWN EVERY AISLE**

*By Kathie Pleinis, Assistant Manager*

The crew out here at Orscheln Farm and Home hopes everyone had a wonderful and filling Thanksgiving. Orscheln Farm and Home has had the philosophy of customer satisfaction for over 50 years. With over 150 stores in 8 states (Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri and Kentucky), we provide and meet customer needs in all areas; farm, home, automotive, clothing and so much more. Our mission is to continually improve our quality, service and convenience for our customers. Chad Arasmith, store manager, and his crew would like to invite you to come out for our monthly Kid's Clinic on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. There is a

craft activity, coloring sheet and a little break while you get your shopping done. ☺ Also on December 10<sup>th</sup> there will be photos with Santa. Stop by and ask an associate for details. We look forward to serving you with Answers and Low Prices Down Every Aisle.

## **MADISON'S OFFERING A RELAXED DINING EXPERIENCE**

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*By Lizann Miller & Theresa Mockry*

Welcome to Madison's Café. Located in the newly remodeled Keystone Business Center on the bricks in downtown McCook, Madison's offers you a relaxed dining experience. Our hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 2:00 pm and Thursday evening 5:00 to 8:00 pm.

Theresa Mockry is in charge of the kitchen and would be happy to prepare any item on our menu. Our breakfast menu offers the usual fare of eggs, pancakes, French toast, biscuits and gravy, but also some things a little different such as eggs benedict. For those hearty appetites the Madison's Breakfast will fill you up all morning long. Our lunch menu offers sandwiches, salads, and several pasta dishes. A daily special is available along with soups on those cold winter days. The Thursday evening menu includes all of our lunch menu, plus a special dish not available on our regular menu. For example, one Thursday night we offered a bacon-wrapped pork loin.

Lizann Miller is in charge of the dining room and strives to offer a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. If you are in a hurry call her at 345-1118 or send a fax to 345-2220 and she will have your order waiting for you to pick up.

Madison's offers a catering service for any occasion such as weddings, class reunions, office parties, or any reason you can think of that involves food. The event could be held at the Keystone or we will deliver to your location.

We are often asked where the name, Madison's, originated. We wanted a name in keeping with history of the Keystone Hotel. In reviewing old newspaper articles we ran across an article from December 1931 that the Keystone Hotel ran to thank all their patrons for their business the past year. The article listed all the employees by name and position. The chef at the Keystone Hotel in 1931? Charles Madison.

## **ACME TOUCH EXPANDS INTO WEBSITE DESIGN BUSINESS**

*By Rose Chancellor and Staff*

Have you noticed, businesses are popping up here and there in McCook and the surrounding towns? And it's not even Spring. It is a very exciting time. And we are very excited to tell you what has been going on in our business here at Acme Touch Printing; the buzz word is "McBreez." It is a work in progress. Project Manager, Sharen Saf is very excited and working on setting up McBeezWeb.com.

McBeezWeb.com is located at West 2<sup>nd</sup> and B Street in McCook. Their mission will be to help small business owners and nonprofit organizations promote and market themselves to their

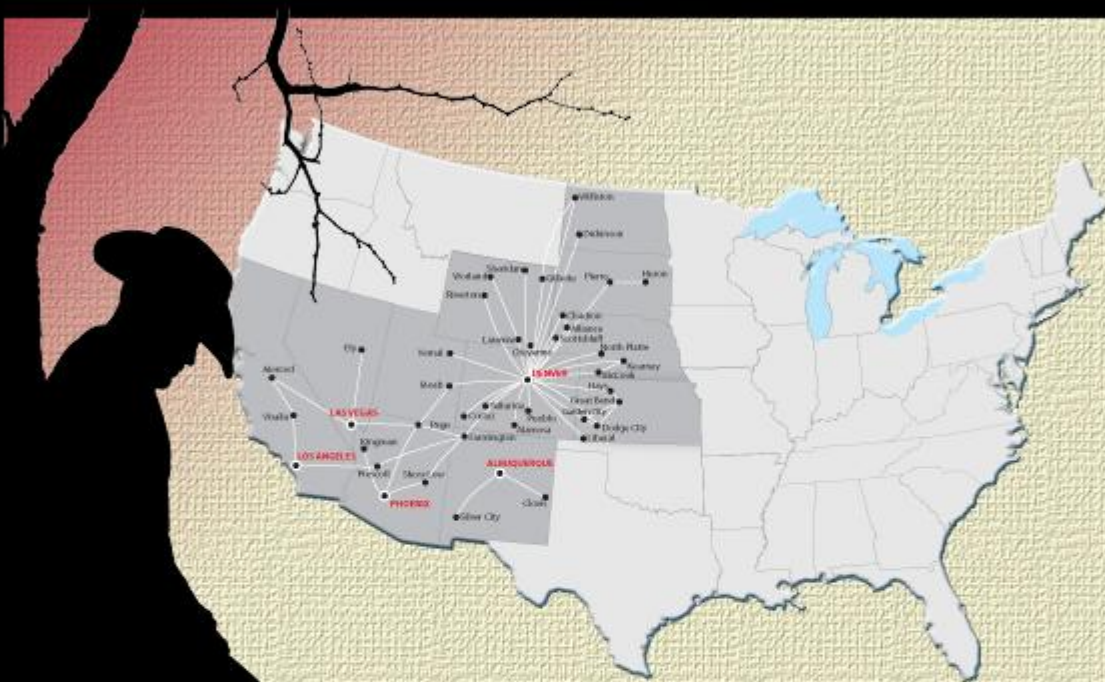
highest potential. They will offer quality, professional web sites and help promote clients through other media promotions.

McBeez will be a tour guide through the technology jungle so that the business owner can focus on taking care of their business. All of this will be done by the staff right here in McCook at McBeez. It will be nice to provide local support in order for businesses to push their local service and products locally and abroad.

Sharen is in the process of creating the friendly and professional team and says she has already seen a great demand for what she is striving to accommodate. McBeez is planning on opening in 2012. Sharen's direct phone line is 344-2339(BEEZ).

FLY WITH GREAT LAKES!

# Travel to the 106th National Western Stock Show in Denver



January 7 - January 22, 2012



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