



Chamber Visions – September 2011

Did You Know?

Did you know that if you spend \$100 locally, \$62 stays right in our community? Did you know of that same \$100 spent in a national chain, only \$42 stays in our community? Did you know of that same \$100 spent on-line, \$0 are returned to our community? ** As residents of our community, we must realize “THIS IS OUR HOME” and our way of life depends on the support of independent, locally owned businesses. Local stores employ our neighbors, pay taxes that support our schools and improve our roads, as well as, contribute to local non-profit groups. As consumers, we need to do our part. We can pledge to “Think, Shop and Buy Local” and commit to patronizing businesses near where we live and work. In order to keep our community strong we need to invest in our locally owned businesses and keep our money in our town. Did you know you can help?

***Courtesy of Barbara Wold, Author and Business Strategist*

Royalty Applications Due

The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce would like to announce that applications for Heritage Days Royalty have been sent to Red Willow County High Schools and can be picked up at the respective high school office. All Seniors in Red Willow County are eligible for this prestigious recognition. Successful candidates will be presented \$500 scholarships to McCook Community College. Applications should be submitted to the Chamber no later than September 8. The Royal Court will be announced at the McCook National Bank Mixer on September 21.

Heritage Days on Near Horizon

The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce would like to remind you that Heritage Days weekend is only a few weeks away on September 24-25. Please submit your parade entry to the Chamber at 402 Norris Avenue, Ste. 203, McCook, Nebraska 69001. Applications are available at our office, online at our website, <http://www.aboutmccook.com> or one can be e-mailed to you. The theme for Heritage Days is “Back In The Day”. There are plaques awarded in each of the 10 categories as well as an overall trophy. The deadline for entries to be guaranteed a narrative is September 16. Parade participants are reminded that candy or other items cannot be thrown from any kind of vehicle but rather must be distributed by walkers accompanying the entry. Any questions can be directed to the Chamber at 308-345-3200 or info@aboutmccook.com.

Grand Marshal Coming Home from Georgia

Normally, the Chamber Heritage Days Committee maintains silence regarding the dignitaries of our annual community celebration until the traditional announcement at the McCook National Bank mixer in September. However, there are exceptions to every rule and 2011 will be one of those. Pam Harsh, Chamber Executive Director, stated, “This time around we need to make the announcement early so that we can promote a reception which is going to be held to meet and greet the 2011 Grand Marshal, Mr. Mickey Stubblefield and his family.

Mr. Stubblefield lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his daughter, Mary, and her family. Mickey, 85, is excited to make the trip so that he can revisit his home of over 20 years where he and his wife raised their family between the years of 1950 and the early 70's. Mr. Stubblefield played baseball for the McCook Cats in the 1950s and went on to play semi-pro baseball on various teams around the country. He was recently honored at the Fifth Annual Negro Leagues Tribute Game in Atlanta for his contributions to breaking the racial barriers so prevalent at that time in our country's history.

The Heritage Days Committee had already selected the Heritage Days theme when an article in the Omaha World Herald on Stubblefield caught their attention. Harsh stated, "Back In The Day...", our newly selected theme and Mr. Stubblefield seemed a perfect fit." Stubblefield and several members of his family will be present during the celebration and look forward to the reception in his honor. The reception, scheduled to be held on Thursday, September 22, at the High Plains Museum, will begin at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend. Harsh recalled that the Stubblefield family was our first exposure to black people but the community welcomed them without reservations. Mr. Stubblefield was quoted in the Omaha World Herald to say, "In Nebraska, I didn't know I was black unless I looked in the mirror. They treated me so well." Mickey was employed by Hormel Chevrolet while in McCook.

2011-12 Leadership Institute Members Attend Lincoln Retreat

Eighteen members of the Southwest Nebraska Leadership Institute Class of 2011-2012 recently traveled to Lincoln for a two day retreat. While in the Capitol City, class members visited with a number of public officials including State Senator Mark Christensen; Attorney General, Jon Bruning; and State Treasurer, Don Stenborg. They also met with Nebraska Department of Agriculture Director, Greg Ibach; Nebraska Department of Economic Development Director, Richard Baier, as well as, Randy Cantrell and Major Alex Rathmun of the University of Nebraska. Bruce Reiker, Nebraska Hospital Association, also spoke to the class. While in Lincoln, the class toured the Capitol building, the University of Nebraska Memorial Stadium and the newly developing Innovation Campus.

While on the retreat, the class selected Kristi Daum as their Class Liaison to the Leadership Institute Board of Directors for the year. They also determined their meeting date as the second Wednesday of each month and Class Program assignments were made. In addition, they discussed potential project ideas as a completed project is a requirement to graduate from the nine month program.

The Leadership Institute program would not be possible without the support of the sponsors. Sponsors for the 2011-2012 graduating class are: Community Hospital, Don & Alice Harpst, Great Plains Communications, Inc., McCook Area Chamber of Commerce, McCook Community College, McCook National Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Mid-Plains Center for Enterprise, AmFirst Bank, N.A., First Central Bank, the McCook Optimist Club and the McCook Cordials.



Class members for the 2011-2012 year include: Randy Andrews, Bison Newsletter; Michelle Gill, MPCC; Nate Henning, WalMart Supercenter; Travis Rousselle, Plains Equipment Group; Kristi Daum, Carpenter Breland Funeral Home; Evan Fisher, Wells Fargo Bank; Jackie Johnson, Pinpoint Communications; Jon Reiners, Community Hospital; Jessica Bortner, Wellness Partners; Craig Merrihew, McCook National Bank; Linda Maiden, State Farm Insurance; Megan Rokusek, McCook High School Student; Tim Garcia, McCook Public Schools; Mattie Uerling, Southwest High School Student; Allie McConville, Southwest High School Student; Donnetta Schafer, Nebraska Breeding Service; Brad Osterhaus, Great Plains Communications; and Gavin Harsh, McCook High School Student.

The Chamber Salutes....

the volunteers from our Board of Directors who helped us with hauling supplies to the park and serving root beer floats for the two MNB Hot Summer Nights concerts on August 5 and August 12. They include Tom Wiemers, Terri Shipshock, Stacy Priebe, Rex Nelson and Dale Stewart. Thanks also to Andrew Nelson for his enthusiastic help.



Chamber staff members, Tacie Fawver and Linda Thieben, manned a Chamber booth at the recent MCC Community Involvement Fair for returning students at the beginning of the school year. Students were treated to a free lunch and handouts from participating businesses welcoming them to our community and to the McCook Community College family.

The Chamber Visions is the official publication of the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce, published monthly throughout the year at 402 Norris Ave., Suite 203, McCook, NE 69001. The Chamber accepts no responsibility for editorial content submitted to Chamber Visions.

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

Farmers Insurance – William Steinmetz Agency

My name is William Steinmetz, the owner and agent for William Steinmetz Agency, a representative of Farmers Insurance Group in McCook, NE. Originally, I am from Norton, KS where I learned the business of customer service from my parents who owned and operated two grocery stores in the area. Not wanting to go into the grocery business, I joined the Navy shortly after high school and moved out of Kansas. After a short military career, I ended up in Los Angeles, CA. and that's where I met and married my wife Monique Steinmetz. After finding out we were having our second child, we decided to move back to the Midwest in 2008. We chose McCook because of the schools and what the community had to offer.

I started my insurance career in 2008 as an agent who specialized in accidental and supplemental insurance. I soon became a manager for that company and learned the important roles of leadership and management. Soon the opportunity came up to start my own agency. After some research, I decided to become a small business owner and an agent for Farmers Insurance Group. I have been an agent for Farmers Insurance Group for one year now and I could not be happier with my choice.

There are a lot of great things I can say about Farmers Insurance, from their claims services and rapid response (as we have just found out), to their great customer service and, of course, their great rates. Farmers Insurance Group offers all kinds of products and service for Life, Specialty, Personal, Business, Farm and Ranch. We work with a lot of other great companies as well and we always make sure our customers come first. But please, don't take my word for it. Stop by and see how my agency can help service your insurance needs.

William Steinmetz

Waddell & Reed

Founded in 1937, Waddell & Reed is among the most enduring asset management and financial planning firms in the nation, providing proven investment and planning services to individuals and institutional investors. Among its accolades, Ivy Investment Management, its sister company, and Waddell and Reed have been ranked first and second in performance for three consecutive years in the five year category in an annual ranking performed by Barron's.

We are a full service financial firm committed to helping people pursue their financial goals. We offer a wide range of financial products and services to individuals and business owners. We believe you will be better able to identify your goals and make sound financial decisions by utilizing our financial planning process.

My name is Laura Walter, my husband Brad and I are both natives of the McCook area. We, along with our three children – Jarett, 8; Kennedy, 6; and Cole, 4 have been living back in the McCook community for the past nine years. We are starting to enjoy all of our children's sporting events from t-ball and t-softball, to volleyball, swimming, basketball, and football. We are huge Husker fans!

In my career, I obtained my Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Nebraska at Kearney while working full time in the medical field as an MRI technologist. Financial Advising is my new found passion, as I enjoy working one-on-one with people to help put them on a path to financial success. At Waddell & Reed, we specialize in comprehensive financial planning.

Whether you have one simple need or would like an overall evaluation, I can help. Please call today to discuss the investment, insurance, or financial planning service that would be appropriate for you. In the midst of these uncertain financial times, there is no time like the present!

Laura Walter MBA

Financial Advisor 308-340-3981

Weathercraft Roofing-Serving McCook for 37 Years

The McCook area recently received large hail capable of causing extensive damage to roof systems. Weathercraft is qualified to repair or replace any type of roofing system and has extensive knowledge of the insurance claim process. Weathercraft can also handle your siding, gutter and garage door needs.

- Watch out for Storm Chasers! Check your phone book. Beware roofers that show up when it hails and claim to be local. All you have to do is check the phone book. If they didn't advertise before the storm, they won't answer their phones in November when the hail work is done. They are known for their aggressive tactics like bugging you every day until you sign up.
- Weathercraft has been in business for 37 years. We pride ourselves in doing quality work and our professional attitude. We support the McCook Community and create at least 8 permanent jobs year around for the McCook economy.
- Beware of roofers who want half the money up front. Storm chasers have been known to leave town with the down payments. Weathercraft requires no money down, we invoice you when the job is 100% finished and we don't expect full payment until you receive your second "holdback" check from the insurance company.

- We will do the work for the amount of the roofing portion of your insurance adjustment. Simply contact us, pick a shingle color and we handle the rest. Nothing could be easier.

Don't be taken advantage of by a storm chaser...Make the smart move and call
Weathercraft Roofing Co
308-345-6670

Brett Schmidt

GUEST EDITOR

Heritage Days: Behind the Scenes

When I became a business owner 5 years ago, I decided to join the McCook Chamber of Commerce. Even though I have lived in McCook my entire life, I had no idea what the Chamber did. So I stopped in and Linda gave me a packet that explained some of the events that the Chamber was involved in. When I looked over a list of committees that I could be a part of, I saw "The Heritage Days Committee." I have always loved Heritage Days. I have so many memories of walking down to the parade then begging mom and dad for something from the park, but I had no idea what it took to put Heritage Days together. I volunteered for the committee.

I was surprised to learn that the planning actually starts in February with sending out press releases for the community to send in nominations for the Grand Marshal, Parade Marshal, and the Honor Family. We also talk about themes that will be fun for the year and what other events are already being planned. Once we receive the nominations from the community everything gets more difficult. There are so many worthy people in our community that it is never easy to choose who will lead our parade.

During the next few months, we begin the process of finding entertainment to perform in the park on both Saturday and Sunday, receiving entries for the parade, and organizing the booths for the park. We try to have events for all age groups so that everyone from one to one hundred and one will have a good time all week. The committee also works with other groups from around town such as: The George Norris Foundation, The High Plains Museum, The Fox Theater, Mid-Plains Community College and many more to ensure that all activities during Heritage Days work together to provide a pleasurable experience for everyone. By the middle of July all of the events around the community start to fall into place. The Heritage Days committee works to develop a continuous selection of family oriented fun, giving everyone an opportunity to find something that they will enjoy.

August is one of the busiest times for the committee. We are making lists and checking them twice to determine how many vendors are coming, who to put where, (wouldn't want to end up with a tree in the middle of someone's booth), determine if electricity is needed, and whether more people need to be recruited. Another major task for August is making secret plans to get our Grand and Parade Marshals along with the Honor Family to the Wednesday night mixer without telling them why they have been asked to attend. Finally, research is completed on our Grand Marshal, Parade Marshal, and Honor Family in order to properly recognize these wonderful people.

In the two weeks before Heritage Days, we are still busy lining up cars to carry the honorees and the royalty. We will also get a final list of the bands that will be marching in the parade. The Heritage Days committee arranges the order of the floats in the parade and coordinates with the McCook Daily Gazette to make sure everyone knows where they should be on parade day, so that it can be published along with the final schedule for Heritage Day's week.

Unknown to many, Heritage Days actually begins on Wednesday evening with the Chamber Mixer and continues the next night with an event that changes from year to year. More events follow on Friday, such as the Norris Foundation Prayer Breakfast and the McCook Bison football game later that night.

Saturday morning is always crazy. Volunteers show up around 8:00 AM for a quick meeting so that everyone is as organized as possible. No matter how many volunteers step forward to help, we could always use more. As the floats begin to arrive, they are numbered and put into the correct order. The parade begins with the Grand Marshal and the McCook High School Band leading the way. As the Grand Marshal, Parade Marshal and Honor Family reach the end of the parade they are rushed back to the Methodist church where they have chairs set up for them to sit and enjoy the rest of the parade. As the parade ends and the judges decide the category winners, everyone rushes back to the park to see all of the “goodies” that each of the booths hold. Lunch in the park is always a treat for everyone. As the afternoon goes on, a string of the most talented performers in the area can be enjoyed. The next day begins with a line of new faces arriving to stroll through the park and take everything in. The entertainment and booths continue on through the afternoon and come to a close around 4 o’clock.

Sunday evening finally arrives and everything is finished . . . no not quite there is still the final wrap up meeting to discuss the good, the bad, and the wonderful. Not to mention the question that ends the meeting, “What are we going to do next year?”

Maggie Repass

It’s YOUR Turn for Success!

The Hormel Family Foundation and Invest Nebraska Corporation have begun accepting submissions for the fifth annual business plan competition in McCook! The competition, which targets local entrepreneurs and business owners, will take place November 4 at the Hormel Business & Technology Center on the McCook Community College campus.

The winning entrepreneur or team will receive a \$25,000 cash award in exchange for a minority stake in the business. If you are considering submitting your business plan, but have hesitation about it, I encourage you to speak directly any of the past winners! They can give honest and real feedback about how the competition works and how the partnership in your business works.

Past winners include: Cody Dame and Tanner Lytle of Game On in the Westview Plaza, McCook, as well as the recently opened location at 5012 3rd Avenue in Kearney; Stephanie Hagan Dusatko, Jeffrey Dusatko, and Ashley Hagan of The Kloset in downtown McCook; and Tyler Loop of Loop Brewing Company, which will be opening this fall in McCook.

This year, the decision was made by sponsors to broaden the physical boundaries of the competition to include all of Red Willow County. Anyone with a business idea or plan to expand a current business, willing to locate in Red Willow County, is welcome to enter the competition.

Judges for the competition include: Rex Nelson, Cody Dame, Dr. Richard Tubbs, Jim Ulrich, Mark Graff, Linda Wallen, Ben Hormel Harris, and Dan Hoffman.

The Hormel Business Plan Competition is an initiative designed to promote and support the creation of lucrative businesses in the McCook area, and to attract new business to southwest Nebraska. Entrepreneurs with start-up ideas and owners with existing businesses are equally welcome to submit

business plans. The deadline for submitting competition applications is October 21, 2011. Applications may be found online at www.investnebraska.com.

Also on the calendar is a free Business Plan Bootcamp with meal, hosted by The Hormel Family Foundation & Invest Nebraska Corporation, on Thursday, September 22nd. This will be the perfect opportunity for potential competitors to get advice on how to prepare for the competition. Look for details coming out soon!

Spearheaded by the Hormel Family Foundation and Invest Nebraska Corporation, the Hormel Business Plan Competition enjoys generous support from Community Hospital and McCook Community Development Company, comprised of AmFirst Bank and McCook National Bank, as well as ongoing site support from Mid Plains Community College. The McCook Daily Gazette, Hometown Family Radio, and High Plains Radio Group all donate advertising to the winner.

All potential proceeds from the foundation's stake in the winning businesses are exclusively for the benefit of McCook Community College.

To learn more about the Hormel Business Plan Competition, contact Susan Harris-Broomfield at (308) 340-0856.

By Susan Harris-Broomfield

RETAIL DETAILS

jcpenny Serving McCook Since 1916

jcpenny has been a favorite place to shop in McCook for a long, long time. The McCook jcpenny store opened in 1916 (now that's "Back in the Day"!) It was actually the fifth jcpenny store to open in Nebraska; the first was in Grand Island in 1914. The original McCook store was located at 220 Norris, and was expanded a few times over the years — the last time in 1963. The current store is located at 201-209 West C Street.

jcpenny is one of America's leading retailers with more than 1,100 stores, as well as one of the largest apparel and home furnishing sites on the internet, jcp.com. We offer a wide array of national brands such as Nike and Levi's, our own outstanding private brands like Stafford and St. John's Bay, and exclusive designer brands like Liz Claiborne. Our merchandise reflects the company's commitment to providing you with style and quality at a very compelling price. Although our McCook jcpenny is small compared to some of the big mall stores, our customers have the same access to everything jcpenny offers, thanks to jcp.com. Our sales associates can always help you place an order right from the store.

Over the years, McCook jcpenny associates have donated many hours of their time and resources to volunteer projects such as the Cancer Walk, United Way and The Pantry. As a company, jcpenny is the leading advocate for quality afterschool programs and has provided over \$100 million to support afterschool programs in the last decade. Here in McCook, the jcpenny store is partnered with Red Willow County 4-H. Four times a year, we invite customers to "round up" their purchase to the nearest dollar and turn this spare change into "pennies from heaven" to support our afterschool partner and help them continue to provide safe and enriching programs for kids in our community. The McCook store has about 30 associates currently employed and half a dozen of them volunteered at the County Fair in the 4-H building this year. The associates blew up balloons for the kids and made sure the exhibits were not

disturbed. In addition to the efforts with the afterschool program, each October the McCook jcpenny's volunteers its parking lot as a gathering point for all the trick or treaters and lends racks and hangers to the Chamber for gatherings for the members during the holidays.

Tim Lyons, Senior Corporate, Communications Mgr.

MEMBER NEWS

Ribbon Cutting for New Facility



Chamber members, members of the community and a entourage of dignitaries attended the August 5th ribbon cutting and open house for the new 7.2 million dollar **Armed Forces Reserve Center** located just East of McCook on Highway 6 & 34. Taking part in the ribbon cutting ceremony, from left, are National Guard Col. Timothy Zegers, Gov. Dave Heineman, National Guard Maj. Gen. Judd Lyons, Mayor Dennis Berry and U.S. Army Reserve Col. Rob Wiley.

Dr. Nix Celebrates 30 Years of Dentistry in McCook



The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce was happy to help **Dr. Chris Nix, Southwest Dental Center**, celebrate 30 years of dentistry in McCook with a Member Recognition Event and Chamber mixer on Thursday evening, August 25. Dr. Nix has been a long time member of the Chamber and shared how he and his wife, Karen, came to be residents of McCook. It just seemed that the stars were aligned 30 years ago with influences including the newly formed Evangelical Free Church, the new YMCA and the new Heritage Hills Golf Course, as well as, a McCook dental practice for sale.

Welcome Aboard



The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome aboard new member, **Waddell & Reed, Laura Walter, Financial Advisor**. Laura and her family have lived in McCook for 9 years. Laura recently decided to follow her passion for helping people find their way to financial freedom. We are pleased to help Laura grow her business in McCook in the coming years and look forward to a long

partnership. At the present time, Laura operates her business from her home but hopes to be in a position soon to open an office in the McCook business community.

Welcome Aboard

Yli's Party Rentals is both a new business in McCook and a new member of the Chamber of Commerce. Carlos and Marcy Rodriguiz have purchased an inflatable jump house and water slide, as well as, a mechanical bull which they will rent for parties and/or other events. Plans include adding more inflatables as they grow their business. They are excited to debut their new business at the Heritage Days celebration the end of September. You'll find them on East 1st street adjacent to Norris Park during the celebration. The Chamber welcomes them to the Chamber family and wish them well as they bring this exciting new business to the McCook Area.

CHAMBER STATS

Office

2011	Calls	Walk-In	Tourism Packets Mailed or Distributed	Relocation Packets Mailed	Misc. Packets Mailed
Jan	346	221	25	18	3
Feb	464	216	16	9	2
Mar	487	173	21	11	3
Apr	596	190	15	4	3
May	490	231	15	5	3
June	467	198	17	5	2
July	526	247	17	12	2
YTD	3,376	1,476	109	64	18

Website

Rolling 12 Mo Hits		Specific Website Page Total Hits					
Month	Total Website Hits	Business Spotlight	Business Directory Search	Member Directory Search	Community Calendar	Chamber Calendar	Chamber Newsletter
July '10	4,416	205	346	96	93	107	341
Aug	3,826	180	311	173	73	105	297
Sept	4,396	215	277	96	101	142	374
Oct	3,454	170	289	89	59	95	292
Nov	3,935	214	371	190	45	95	358
Dec	3,165	245	323	72	56	79	314
Jan '11	4,577	126	324	300	28	58	328
Feb	3,785	224	222	149	40	78	284
Mar	4,723	341	313	191	35	81	408

April	4,489	213	424	158	41	73	315
May	4,488	131	440	143	55	57	273
June	5,038	205	745	132	55	97	371
July	4,048	201	379	73	56	107	306
Totals	49,924	2,465	4,418	1,766	644	1,067	3,920



