

2016 Executive Director's Report

Board of Directors is a group of dedicated individuals who have the best interest of the Chamber and our community and I appreciate every one of them. We have a steady attendance at our monthly meetings. I would like to thank outgoing Board Member Dave Stevenson, Vickie Sulenes, Bill Hunt and Sara Brown for their commitment to the Chamber of Commerce. I would like to welcome new Board Members Crissy Bauman, Ashley Kolve and Maria Crump.

Chamber After Hours has a pretty solid number of attendees each month and is one of the perks of Chamber membership. We have steady number of attendees from the general public which gives the hosting business more community exposure. This last year the following businesses hosted the event: 1st National Pawn, Marias Medical Center, Tiber Agency, Friends of the Library, NaturEner, Shelby RV Park & Resort, Leavitt Great West Insurance, Marias River Electric & Shelby Gas and we will finish the year out with Edward Jones Investments and the Comfort Inn & Suites. Please contact the Chamber office if your business would like to host in 2017.

Chamber Banquet was again held at the Civic Center on Wed. Jan. 27. The Coyote Club provided the bar and TLC Catering provided the prime rib dinner. The Blazing Saddles 4-H group did a great job with serving. Dwaine and Jan Irvin were recognized with the President's Award and Mac Bledsoe was our guest speaker. The auction and gun raffle were very successful and raised over \$6600 for the Chamber. I would like to thank Doug Fender and CCA for the large amount of handmade items that were made and donated by the inmates. Thank you also to all the businesses and individuals who donated items to the auction and all the local businesses that were table sponsors for the event.

Central MT Tourism Board: I attended 4 monthly meetings and one committee meeting in Great Falls, one meeting in Sanford and one in Big Sandy. I missed a meeting in June in Harlowton due to a conflict. Matt rode with me for every meeting he attended. This is a great networking opportunity and also a wonderful avenue to share information about our community. I also attended the Governor's Conference on Tourism in Kalispell on April 10-12.

Central MT Planner: This publication has 100,000 copies printed each year and has year round statewide distribution through Certified Folders and is also handed out at 4 trade shows per year: LA, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Denver. Each year the Chamber sponsors a page and we average about 17 to 18 business listings each year. The cost is divided between each business.

Christmas Stroll/ Chili feed: Was held on Sunday, Dec.6, 2015 at the Coyote Club from 1 to 3pm. We fed about 200 with a huge assortment of donated chili. We held a silent auction during the event that raised \$385 in funds that were split equally between the Chamber and the Sagebrush Food Pantry. Doug Fender was a wonderful Santa.

Coupon Books: The new book should be arriving any day and will be available to purchase from any Chamber Board Member, Chamber office, Prairie Peddler, Larson Clothing and Spa 30, and from Jr. and High School wrestlers and FFA members. The price is once again \$20 and is a fund raiser for the Chamber. Tthe Wrestlers and FFA members will also receive \$5 from every book they sell.

Membership Drive: The 2017 membership letters are being mailed this week. We currently have 123 members but have lost several from closures.

North Toole County Appreciation Picnic was held on Thursday, Aug. 17 at Spark Park from 5-7 pm. It was a beautiful day and we fed close to 200 area residents who were very appreciative. Doug Fender, Allan Underdal and Brent Madred barbequed on Doug's new grill. Cheri Hirst, Kris Ingenthron, Ashley Kolve, Locke Mellott,

Elaine Mitchell, Clark Bancroft, Amy Clark, Marsha and Nick McCubbins, Haylee and Justin Neiman provided manpower. CCA, Comfort Inn, Marias Medical Center, Marias Healthcare, Marias Care Center, Fieldstone Office Supply, Dr. Pat Moore, Marias River Electric and Shelby Glass provided picnic supplies. Mike O'Brien once again took pictures of the event and shared them with the Chamber office.

Parades: The Kiddie Parade continues to have very a good turnout and Dr. Hardy Clark once again provided ice cream treats to all the kids. Red, White & Blue, Americans Through & Through was the theme for the 2016 Fair Parade. First State Bank won the traveling trophy for the best business float. Our Grand Marshal was long time resident Ray Zell who celebrate his 100 birthday in 2015

5th Annual Shelby Street Fair, Car Show, Art Walk were held on Saturday, July 16. Main Street was closed from 8 am until 4 pm on Saturday for the festivities but things actually came to an abrupt end with a 2 pm cloudburst. We had seven vendors and several new games for the kids. We once again had a good turnout of car owners who participated in the car show with a beautiful array of new, classic and antique cars lined up on both sides of Main Street. Harry Benjamin brought his train and several other unique vehicles that provided rides for the kids. The dunking booth was once again manned by SHS athletes who had fun getting dunked. The Girl Scouts did the football and basketball tosses. I would like to thank the very dedicated group of Chamber and community members who met for months in advance to plan the events and also the generous sponsors CCA, Town Pump, First State Bank, Bear Paw Credit Union, Eagle Beverage and Dick Irvin Inc. who helped fund the event. New to the event this year was my misfortune of fracturing my wrist shortly after the cloudburst when I was trying to get some items inside my truck and failed to see the leg of the street closure sign and tripped over it. The battle with work comp ended on Oct. 21 when the MT office finally realized it was a work comp injury.

Shelby VIC: Our season began on from May 23 and ended Sept 30 (70 hours/week) thanks to support from the Shelby TBID. Our very dependable, knowledgeable staff includes Beth Aklestad, Phyllis Robertson, Charlotte Hanson, Dona Baird and Britney Bancroft. Phyllis and Britney were new this year but were very capable. We are told over and over during the summer that we are the best VIC that our tourists have visited. Best as far as helpful staff, the amount of printed material and the knowledge we have of our state. Our stock of 49 state maps is very popular. Visitation numbers were down and I believe is due to the Canadian exchange rate and increased use of smart phone apps.

Speakers: Oct. 26 – Sara Brown/ NaturEner; Feb. 8- Llew Jones/ Medical School in MT; March 14- Brandon Kavanagh/ new Shelby Magazine; April 18- Thad White/ Wrestling camp in Shelby; May 23- Luca Furnare/ Port Director; June 27 – Kelley Bartosh/ Youth Dynamics; July 11- Kim Winchell/ Relay for Life; Sept. 12- Kathy Bagley & Rosie Goldich/ Hi Line Arts Trail. I am always looking for possible guest speakers so if anyone has a suggestion, please let me know.