



Chamber Visions – June 2011

Did You Know?

“Staycation”....a new word that has become a household name for a “good time close to home”. With an eye on the economy and the “bad news at the pump” this spring and summer, it is time to think about making your fun right here at home. We have treasures in Southwest Nebraska that you and your family have yet to explore. So, how about trying a day at the museum and the Norris Home or go on the Heritage Walking Tour? Summer activities include events at the Kiplinger Arena, the Stock Car Races, the County Fair, the City Pool, the YMCA, baseball and softball games and even the City Library. Golfing at the renowned Heritage Hills Golf Course is a must do. Don’t golf?....Take lessons! Enjoy our many beautiful City Parks. Enjoy the playground, a picnic and fishing at Barnett Park or take a leisurely stroll on the walking trail ending with a picnic in Kelley Park. You’ll want to join your friends and family at the Hot Summer Nights concerts in Norris Park. Get your children involved in the many vacation bible school programs and the multitude of summer sport camps available. The list is endless and is only limited by your imagination. A “staycation” is just the ticket to make this a special summer that is heavy on fun and light on the pocketbook!

Young Professionals Group to be Represented on Chamber Board

The McCook Area Chamber Board of Directors voted unanimously at their May meeting to invite a representative of the Young Professionals Group to attend the Chamber Board meetings and to act as a liaison for the group. Board members commented that they would like to foster the growth of the YPG and felt it would be important to develop a relationship with the organization. At the regular monthly meeting of the YPG, Evan Fisher, Wells Fargo Bank, was selected to serve in that position for the next year. Evan will begin his duties effective July 1, which is the beginning of the Chamber’s fiscal year.

Leadership Class of 2011-2012 Attends Orientation

Eighteen members of the 2011-2012 Southwest Nebraska Leadership Institute class met on May 25, 2011, at the Keystone Business Center for an orientation session. Following introductions, Board member, Bill Burton of Wells Fargo Bank, shared a power point presentation with pertinent information for the upcoming year. The class will go on retreat to Lincoln, Nebraska, on August 3 & 4. Retreat plans include opportunities to hear from several of our state leaders at the State Capitol Building as well as tours of Memorial Stadium and the State Penitentiary.

Wolford Named “2011 Educator of the Year”



Mrs. Pam Wolford, McCook High School, was presented the coveted “McCook Area Educator of the Year” annual award at the recent high school graduation ceremony on May 14. Mary Dueland (shown on the left), a member of the Chamber Education Committee, presented the award. The award is accompanied by a wall plaque and financial stipend which is funded by Allen D. Strunk, former editor/publisher of the McCook Daily Gazette.

Certified teachers, administrators, counselors and coaches in Dundy, Chase, Hitchcock, Hayes, Red Willow, Frontier and Furnas counties in Nebraska and Decatur and Rawlins counties in Kansas in both public and religious schools offering K-2 or parts thereof are eligible. If you would like more information about the award and/or the selection process, please feel free to contact the Chamber office or any Chamber Education Committee member.

Educators Receive 'Sweet Reward'

Educators in the various McCook School systems were treated on May 3 to a special “\$100 Grand” candy bar signifying their priceless value to the education of our children and subsequently our future. In recognition of “National Teacher Appreciation Week”, The Chamber Education Committee delivered 288 candy bars. Those who assisted with the delivery included volunteers, Duane Tappe, retired; Maggie Repass, New York Life Insurance; Terri Shipshock, Community Hospital Health Foundation; Cindy Monahan, McCook Public Schools. The Chamber appreciates the help from the committee in making this recognition possible.

Chamber Hosts Fundraiser at Kiplinger Event

The Wayne Boyer Memorial Timed Event Showdown provided the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce an opportunity to host a fundraiser in conjunction with the event held on May 20-22 at the Kiplinger Arena in McCook. Garrett Nokes, promoter of the event, invited the Chamber to operate a beer stand at the Kiplinger for both the spectators and the contestants. The three day event is in its sixth year. It generally brings around 150 contestants plus their families to McCook which has a very positive economic impact on McCook businesses. The Chamber appreciates this opportunity to raise funds for the Heritage Days Celebration held each fall.



This little tyke provided the 'sideline' entertainment for those working the Chamber's Kiplinger Beer Stand. He's gonna be good when he gets all 'growed' up!



The cowboys held up the fence while they put down their beer at the Chamber's Kiplinger Beer Stand. It was a fun weekend!

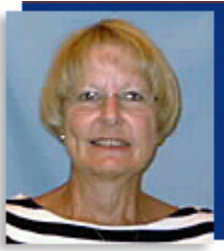
The Chamber Salutes.....

these volunteers who gave up part of their weekend to help the Chamber operate the beer stand at the Wayne Boyer Memorial Timed Event Showdown held at the Kiplinger Arena on May 20-22. We also appreciate Garrett Nokes for extending the invitation to utilize his event to raise funds for the Chamber. Those who volunteered to work at the stand include: Melanie Goodenberger, Rex Nelson, Terri and Bruce Shipshock, Lynn Driml-Pinkal, Greg Litz, Jason Hauxwell, Pat Weskamp, Alan Gunther, Bill and Sharla Bieck, Darcey Eckhardt, Don Hall and Kelly Egle.

We also appreciate the Red Willow County Sheriff's Deputies who helped us with security for the event.

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.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



This will be my final Letter as President of the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. However, that does not mean I will cease to be involved. As an outgoing President I am required to fill the position of Past-President...sort of like a lame duck. So, for at least another year I will stay on as a member of the executive committee and follow the example of other past presidents.

During my terms on the chamber board I witnessed Richard Stull, Jim Ulrich and Janet Weber providing transitional assistance and guidance to the new presidents. Likewise, I have been extremely grateful to Kristin Stagemeyer for not abandoning me when I took the office. With the exception of her workload in April, Kristin was always available to review financials, discuss goals and provide her input for decisions. I am also anxious to stay around and work another year with Tyler Schmick as he assumes the President's position. Tyler has strong feelings about community and the role the Chamber should play in assisting businesses. It should be a great year.

With this last message it is also a great opportunity to thank my fellow board members, the chamber staff, all the volunteers who assist with committee work and events as well as the Cordials who attend so many of our functions. Together we seem to get things done. And the work goes on.

I am especially reminded of the role of volunteers as this message goes to press on the eve of the 23rd John Mullen Pro-Am. Most people do not know that a 20 person volunteer committee begins meeting 6 months in advance to plan the event; or that we have that many volunteers on the course for the 3-day. And, that we work harmoniously with the team at Heritage Hills to make sure the tournament runs smoothly.

Of course none of this would be possible without tremendous support, from our special sponsors who underwrite portions of the tournament to the local food vendors who contribute their cuisine for the Friday night reception. Each contribution makes this tournament special. If you want to see how a true collaborative effort can work, you need look no further. The John Mullen Pro-Am is a first class event because so many want it to be successful. It gives McCook a chance to shine as a great place to visit. I am grateful for all who make this happen.

Terri Shipshock

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

Gerhold Concrete

Gerhold Concrete Company, Inc. supplies ready-mix concrete, block, landscape block, bagged Portland cement, masonry cements, tools, stucco and concrete repair products to customers in McCook and the surrounding communities. The Company currently employs seven people with Roger Henthorn recently returning as Plant Manager. Employees include Tim Lytle, batch operator and drivers, Donnie Nichols, Jim Howard, Dale Quinty, Sam Dybdahl and Justin Malleck.

Originally called McCook Hollowstone, the Company was purchased by Robert E. Phillips Construction in 1956. It was then sold to Bob Henthorn and James Gerhold in 1968 operating under the name of McCook Concrete until Bob's retirement in 1983. Bob then sold his share of the Company to Gerhold and thus the name changed to Gerhold Concrete Company, Inc. In 1985, Lyman-Richey Corporation

purchased the Gerhold operations and stands as the current owner. Corporate headquarters are located in Omaha, Nebraska.

In its heyday, the Company manufactured block, had its own gravel operation, a tin shop, readymix plant and 13 trucks. The plant and office was originally located at the southern entrance to McCook on Highway 83, where Trenton Electric's warehouse is today. All Portland was received in bags on railroad cars, loaded by hand and transferred to that location. The bags were broken open, added with aggregate to the 3 yard mixers, delivered by trucks as ready-mix or blended with cinders from the rail yard and poured into hand molds to make cinderblocks or concrete shingles. A tin shop located across the street manufactured furnace duct and was used to help keep employees busy in the off-season.

In the late fifties, a ready-mix plant was built in the railroad yard, southwest of Frenchman Valley Coop's fertilizer plant, where bulk rail cars could be unloaded by an auger and leg. The trucks, which increased in size to 7 cubic yard mixers, had two gas engines. A small engine mounted on the rear of the truck turned the drum. The new plant, which weighed out three cubic yard batches, could produce approximately 60 yards per hour. In the early 60's, the original mix plant at the Highway 83 location was converted into a block plant that became more automated over the years. With the invention of pneumatic trailers, Portland no longer had to be fed to the block mixer by busting bags. A conveyor system and racks were added so that pallets, steel plates (2' square x 1/4" thick) no longer had to be fed by hand into the molding machine. Once fully automated, the plant produced 4,500 blocks per day. In the early 80's, because of high production costs, outdated technology and decreased demand for block units, the block machine was sold and shipped to Jamaica where hand molds were still being used. The tin shop was also closed about this time for economic reasons. Our blocks are currently produced at the Norfolk and Columbus locations, where modern facilities color, split and produce units of 7,000 per day and ship these products to the 12 Gerhold locations throughout Nebraska and Iowa.

In 1979, the current ready-mix plant was build at the old sale barn site just west of the Highway 83 overpass. The new plant could produce approximately 125 cubic yards per hour. The capacity of the ready-mix trucks had also increased to 9 cubic yard mixers with diesel engines. In 1989, the original office property was sold. The office was relocated to its current site in the plant at the BNSF Right-of-Way location west of the overpass. Today, with computer batching and 11 cubic yard mixer capacities, production has increased to nearly 160 cubic yards per hour.

Since the peak of McCook's economy in the late 70's and early 80's, it has been challenging to maintain our goal of supplying our customers with a product, which is modern and of high quality, efficiently and in a professional manner at affordable costs. We are proud of the fact that nearly all of our products are manufactured in Nebraska. Portland and masonry cement are from Ash Grove Cement in Louisville, Nebraska. Aggregates are from Paulsen, Inc. that has gravel pits on the Republican and Platte rivers. Limestone is from Martin Marietta's quarries in Weeping Water, Nebraska. Block and landscaping block are from Gerhold Concrete locations in Norfolk and Columbus, Nebraska. Stucco mixes and concrete repair products are from United Products in Fremont, Nebraska. Even the plant was manufactured by Con-E-Co located in Blair, Nebraska.

We wish to thank all our customers for helping us to be successful in our business relationships in McCook and the surrounding areas. We are proud to be a part of this community's history and look forward to the challenge of achieving our goals as we continue to supply southwest Nebraska with our fine products.

I personally want to say that it's an honor to return to where my concrete education began with my dad and brother over 30 years ago. Dad would be proud!

Thank you... *Roger Henthorn Plant Manager 308-345-5610*

“MNB Insurance Celebrating 10 Years”

2011 marks the 10th anniversary as MNB Insurance; however “roots” trace back over 100 years of assuring our customers financial security. As an Independent Insurance Agency we are able to utilize numerous companies to tailor the best protection at the best price instead of a “one size fits all”. MNB Insurance is a full service agency providing coverage's for homes, autos, umbrella, farm, crop and commercial, as well, life and health.

With the completion of our remodel, the agency has created a better environment for customer-agent relationships and entrances located on either end of the building with off-street parking to the south. Newly created offices allow for product specialists along with increased customer privacy and attention. MNB Insurance offers 3 locations supported by 11 agents waiting to serve our customers needs.

Please check us out on the web at www.mnbinsurance.com , send us an email at insuranceinfo@mnb1.com or stop by one of the following locations:

McCook – 217 West 1st - Phone (308) 345-6055: Monday – Friday from 8am to 5pm

Benkelman – 413 Chief - Phone (308) 423-2663: M-W-F from 8am to 4pm

Stratton – 403 Bailey - Phone (308) 276-2166: Monday – Friday from 8am to 4pm

Agents: Chelsey Benes, Cindy Nelson, Denise Broomfield, Kimberly Mues, Mark Stagemeyer, Larry Eisenmenger, Phil Harr, Yvonne West, Carol Furniss, Diane Riggs and Kathy Reid

Mark Stagemeyer

GUEST EDITOR

Buffalo Commons-15 Years of Storytelling

The 15th Annual Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival, themed “Tales and Trails,” includes entertainment for the entire family. From cowboy tales recounted while touring some of southwest Nebraska's rugged ranch country to an old fashioned chuck wagon dinner and dance at the beautifully renovated Keystone Hotel Friday evening to an afternoon in front of the band shell at Norris Park and an evening concert at the Historic Fox Theater, you won't want to miss this exciting opportunity to enjoy the music and stories of professional entertainers and to learn the art of sharing and preserving your own personal and family memories.

A returning favorite to the festival this year is Awele Makeba. Awele has mesmerized audiences around the world including the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria; the Suriname rainforest; and Tsinchu Teacher's College in Taiwan. She is an award winning and

internationally known storyteller, recording artist and educator. She paints pictures with words, breathes life into characters, teaches, and inspires through the power of story--personal tales, history, folklore and children's literature.

On the music side, we are pleased to have one of the finest western musical groups from our neighboring state of Kansas. The Diamond W Wranglers will perform a combination of music that pays homage to the western greats like Sons of the Pioneers as well as their own western originals. From the oldest ballads like "Streets of Laredo" to the thundering "Ghost Riders in the Sky", the Diamond W Wranglers bring people to their feet with their inspiring harmonies, quirky humor, and galloping guitar. The Wranglers music is enjoyed by all ages.

In addition to our headliners, we have performers R.P. Smith and the Kraisingers. R.P. is a fourth generation cattle rancher from Pine Crest Ranch in Custer County, NE. R.P.'s material is inspired by his family and what's going on the ranch, giving his work an authenticity and down-to-earth quality that strikes a familiar chord with his audiences, regardless of their occupation. The Kraisingers, Wild West historians and authors of the book, *The Western*, relish in tales and true accounts about cowboys, saloons, and watering holes on the trail north as related by cowboys and homesteaders.

The festival kicks off Friday morning with a Wild West Bus Ride tracing the historic cattle trails that meander through the rugged southwest Nebraska hills. Margaret and Gary Kraisingers will share tales of conflicts between the drovers and homesteaders, Indian encounters and the lives of the tenacious cowboys who shepherded the thousands of cattle to market. Adding to the tales will be cattlemen and storytellers Jack Maddux, Wauneta, Nebraska and Jim Applegate, Sutherland, Nebraska. Cowboy poet R.P. Smith will make sure the lighter side of tales and trails is not overlooked by adding some sidesplitting humor from his perspective. This event is co-sponsored by the Mid-Plains Community College Center for Enterprise.

Friday afternoon, Awele Makeba will be at the McCook Public Library to paint pictures with words, breathe life into characters, teach and inspire through the power of story with her own personal tales, history, folklore and literature. This is an unprecedented opportunity to learn and enjoy the art of storytelling.

The Keystone Business Center will be the venue for the Chuck wagon Jamboree featuring good eatin' and all the headliners. Awele Makeba will treat the audience to her own tale of western trails. The Diamond W Wranglers will perform classic Western Music of the silver-screen cowboy era as well as classic cowboy trails songs and Wranglers' originals. R.P. Smith will be back in the saddle with good ranch humor set to rhythm and rhyme.

Saturday, participants will find events at the High Plains Museum, the Memorial United Methodist Church, the Bieroc Café, the George Norris Home, Norris Park, and the festival will culminate Saturday evening with a performance to remember at the Historical Fox Theater.

Join in the fun and inspiration at the Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival, June 10-11, 2011, in McCook, the Storytelling Capital of Nebraska. The treasure you find may be the one you've searched a lifetime to remember.

Mary Dueland

RETAIL DETAILS

Krazy Days, Krazy Nites

The Chamber Marketing Committee is busy planning the renowned Crazy Days retail promotion which is an annual event held in mid-July each year. The theme, "KRAZY DAYS, KRAZY NITES" has been selected and has led the committee to add some evening activities for the "Krazy Nites" segment of the promotion. The details of those activities are not ready for release but the committee would like their customers to be making plans to "shop 'til you drop" on July 14, 15, & 16. Many store owners will open their doors as early as 7:00 a.m. which is when you will find the best bargains of the promotion. There will, of course, be the usual outstanding savings at every participating business as well as the usual fun. Shoppers can expect to find store employees in various costumes as the merchants add to the fun by dressing to the theme of the promotion. The winner of the costume contest will receive a ¼ page ad in the McCook Daily Gazette.

Wagner Ford-Toyota and Wagner Chevrolet-Buick

Summer is here! We invite you to stop by Wagner Ford-Toyota and test drive some of our new products. One of our newest arrivals is the "All-New" 2012 Ford Focus. This car has been completely re-designed from the ground up, with technology, safety and up to 38 mpg/hwy. Also new from Ford Motor Company is the 3.5 liter V6 "ECO-BOOST". Our Full Size F150 pickup has an all new engine. They are boasting up to 21mpg/hwy and 365 horsepower. Our Toyota line up gets better and better all the time. We have a great selection of 2011 Toyota Corolla's in stock. They have freshened up the front and rear facias to make this car a real head turner. At Wagner Ford-Toyota we have over 70 New Ford and Toyota's on the ground. This time of year there are great incentives, so come on down and test drive some fun. We are a full service dealership offering Factory trained technicians, We have a fully stocked parts department, complete body shop, 24-hr wrecker service and rental cars.

Go cruising in style in the "All-New" 2011 Chevrolet Camaro Convertible just in at Wagner Chevrolet-Buick. Another new vehicle you need to check out this summer is the Chevrolet Cruze. This car is new from the ground up, styling, safety, and up to 42 mpg/hwy. Also be sure to test drive the New Buick Regal. Buick brought this name plate back on a whole new platform. Talk about stylish, this car is sharp looking and is fuel friendly as well. Equinox, Traverse, Malibu, Suburban, Silverado, Enclave, Lucerne, and Lacrosse are just a few of the 60 plus new Chevrolets and Buicks in stock. Rebates as high as \$4,000 and rates as low as zero percent makes this a good time to shop for your next set of wheels. We are a full service dealership offering Factory trained technicians and a fully stocked parts department.

Short on time shop us on line at www.drivewagner.com

Chris Wagner

MEMBER NEWS

McCook Art Guild Hosts Grand Opening Open House

On Saturday, June 4, 2011, the McCook Art Guild will host a Grand Opening Open House to celebrate the purchase of our gallery building and the 50th anniversary of the founding of the McCook Art Guild. Guild members have been working hard to upgrade the facilities and turn the building into a meeting

place for art activities in McCook. The gallery will be showing art from many of our founding members, as well as our Guild Members' work that will be entered in the state ANAC show.

- 1:00 PM Ribbon cutting ceremony by the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce
The Prairie Statesmen will be performing.
- 1:30 PM Performance by Robin Marks' dance students
- 3:00-7:00 PM Wine Tasting Event. A \$5.00 charge will allow you to sample five wines from the 17 Valley Winery of Lewellen, NE.
Full bottles of wine will be available for sale.
- 5:00-7:00 PM Chamber Mixer and special guests.
A short program will be provided by the brass quartet, Capella Nova, between 5 and 6.

Jan Korell

Farmer's Insurance Ribbon Cutting



Photo Courtesy of McCook Daily Gazette

Chamber members and McCook Cordials joined with Chamber board members to welcome Farmers' Insurance to our community with a ribbon cutting on May 18. The office is located at 505 West B Street. The agent, William Steinmetz, looks forward to this new venture in McCook. He is excited to be back in the mid-west and is happy to have his family settled in a safe community like McCook. The Chamber looks forward to partnering with the Farmers' Insurance Company long into the future.

State Farm Award to Chamber Volunteer of the Year



McCook Area Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the year, Duane Tappe, is still plugging away at various projects.

He recently received the State Farm Insurance Good “Neigh-bear” Award from the Linda Maiden agency.

He was nominated for the award by Chamber Director, Pam Harsh. The award is accompanied by a check for \$50.00 which is to be given to the non-profit organization chosen by the person making the nomination.

Ms. Harsh chose to designate that the check be sent to the George Norris Foundation in Duane’s name. Duane is a member of the Foundation Board and is working with other board members to plan a celebration for the upcoming 150th birthday of Senator George Norris. Duane has volunteered to paint the white fencing around the yard and to do some touch-up painting on the house.

Norris Home Planning 150th Birthday Celebration

The Norris Foundation is making plans for a 150th Birthday Celebration to honor George W. Norris on Saturday, July 9th. His actual birth date is July 11, 1946, but the board is planning an early celebration on the weekend. The highlight of the event will be the banquet at the Keystone Hotel on the ninth. Norris’ grandson, great grandson and other relatives from Maryland plan to be in attendance. Historian, Bill Pratt, will be a guest speaker on the R.E.A. as this year also marks the 75th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act which Senator Norris worked so hard on. The Norris Institute was instrumental in bringing Mr. Pratt to McCook for the banquet. They will also dedicate a REA display on the second floor of the Keystone Hotel before the banquet.

In preparation for the celebration, the Foundation is providing funding and manpower to help the Norris Home managers, Don Hall and Dawna Bates, spruce up the home at 706 Norris Avenue. In addition, they recently hired MCC student, Zac Curl, to repaint the sign in the front yard.

Tickets will soon be available for \$25.00 each from Board Members. They can also be purchased at the Norris Home.

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
YTD	1,893	800	77	42	11

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
May '10	4,658	180	473	128	63	83	275
June	5,218	224	635	181	64	93	277
July	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
Totals	50,642	2,537	4,308	1,823	698	1,089	8,863

