



## *Chamber Visions – March 2011*

### **Did You Know?**

Did you know that each year that the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce Ag Task Force hosts an Ag Appreciation Breakfast in March during National Ag Appreciation Week? Last year the committee served pancakes, eggs and sausage to approximately 180 individuals involved in the ag industry. Business sponsors help make this breakfast possible as a way to say “thank you” and to show appreciation for those who work in the ag world on a daily basis. Contact the Ag Task Force members or any sponsor for a ticket to attend the breakfast on Wednesday, March 16. You may contact the Chamber office for more information at [info@aboutmccook.com](mailto:info@aboutmccook.com) or call 345-3200.

### **Educator of the Year Nominations Due**

The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce Education Committee is now accepting nominations for the annual Educator of the Year Award. The purpose of this award is as follows: To encourage and recognize outstanding performance in the all important field of education with special emphasis on motivating students to reach their highest potential. All active, 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-12 or parts thereof, are eligible for the award. Any parent, student, former student, general citizen or fellow educator may submit nominations. Nomination forms are available at the Chamber office and must be returned to the office no later than March 15. For more information regarding the award, please contact the Chamber at 308-345-3200 or by e-mail at [info@aboutmccook.com](mailto:info@aboutmccook.com).

### **21st Annual Home Show in the Books**

The 2011 edition of the 21st Annual McCook Home & Leisure Show was deemed a success by Chamber Director, Pam Harsh and Show Coordinator, Linda Frank. Several vendors commented that those attending the show were quality prospects. They were also pleased with their sales throughout the show. Approximately 1,500 people attended the show which spanned over 2 ½ days from March 18 through March 20. The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that the winners of their drawing for \$250 certificates are Marian Acton of Trenton and Matt Matson of McCook. The certificates are to be spent with one or more of the vendors at the show.



**Best Decorated  
Totally You**  
Jennifer Kool & Missy Nelson



**Most Informative  
Lifetime Cookware**  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**PHOTO UNAVAILABLE**

**Best Overall  
Beveled Elegance**  
Littleton, Colorado

**Member Booths - 2011 Home Show**



**Catering Plus**



**City of McCook & Fire Department**



**CTE Roofing**



**Great Plains Communications**



**High Plains Radio**



**Hometown Family Radio**



McCook Daily Gazette



McCook National Bank



MEDC Housing



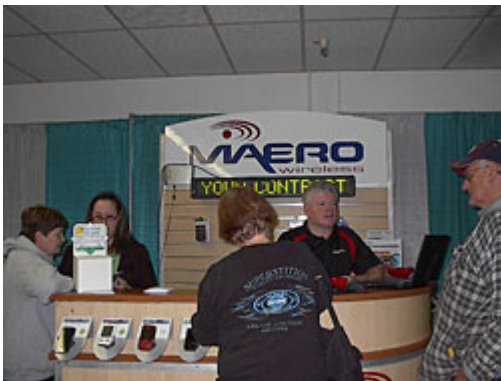
Painting Plus



Totally You



Tri State Spas



Viaero Wireless



VK Electronics



Willow Creek Meats

## The Chamber Salutes . . .

all of the volunteers who assisted with the 21st Annual Home & Leisure Show. Special thanks to Linda Frank, Home Show Coordinator for overseeing the show and her daughter, Kristine Frank, for helping throughout the weekend. The Home Show is a very important source of revenue for the Chamber and helps meet budgetary needs each and every year. Volunteers included:

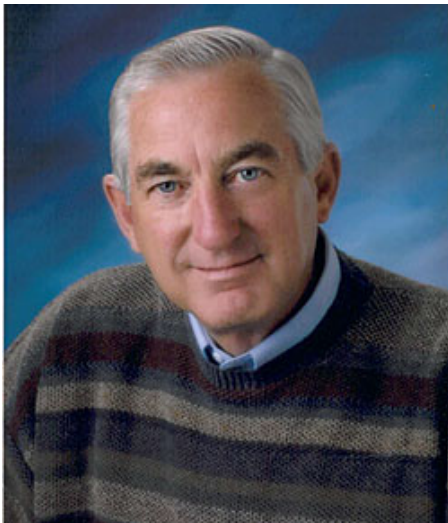
Bruce Lester, Diana Hoffmeister, Lynn Driml-Pinkal, Kellanie Pinkal, Darryl & Denise Volquardsen, Stacy Priebe, Dawna Bates, Tom Wiemers, Terri Shipshock, Kurt Fritsch, Rex Nelson, Kathy Eaton, Annette Wagner, Janet Weber, Alan Gunther, Leigh Ann Miller, Ken & Marlene Foster, Leon & Phyllis Kuhlen, Don & Jeanine Hall, Linda Dixon, Janet Rich, Darcy Eckhardt, Walt & Brenda McGuire, Diane James, Doug Gill, Duane & Diana Tappe, Gary & Barb Wiemers, Melanie Goodenberger and Rod Solko. Jerry Chambers, Manager of the Army Reserve Building and his assistants Zack and Daniel were great to work with through all phases of the show.

## Chamber Members Sweet on Banquet

The 86th Annual Banquet of the McCook Area Chamber of Commerce was held at the Republican River Valley Event Center on Saturday, February 5. “The Heart of Nebraska...McCook” was the theme which was carried through with heart décor and colors of red, black and white. To add to the ambience, Cheryl Christener, a talented local musician, played the harp during social hour and the meal. Sixteen corporate tables were reserved for the evening with a total attendance of 231 guests. The team of Cal Siegfried, (Willow Creek Meats) Master of Ceremonies, and Bob Haag, (Youngs’ Auction Service) Auctioneer, along with ringmen, Mark Hayes and Darren Dale (McCook Farm & Ranch Expo) and his crew, kept the auction lively and entertaining. Terri Shipshock, President, and Tyler Schmick, President-elect, gave their respective State of the Chamber addresses which were followed by presentation of awards.

Duane Tappe was selected as the recipient of the Chamber Volunteer of the Year award. Dr. John Batty was selected to receive the prestigious Community Builder award and the McCook Christian Church received the Community Service Award. The Ag Builder Award was presented to Don and Norma Klein in appreciation for their lifetime of contributions to the success of agriculture in Southwest Nebraska. The McCook Cordials, represented by their current president, Kathy Eaton, NPPD, presented their annual Cordial of the Year Award to Brenda McGuire.

At the close of the evening, the winner of the “Sweetheart Rose” drawing was announced. Guests at the NPPD table had pooled their money to buy their rose and as a result took home \$500 in winnings!



Duane Tappe  
Chamber Volunteer of the Year  
Award



Dr. John Batty  
Community Builder Award  
*photo courtesy of McCook Daily Gazette*



Don and Norma Klein  
Ag Builder Award  
*photo courtesy of McCook Daily Gazette*



McCook Christian Church  
"Faith in Action" Program  
Community Service Award  
*photo courtesy of McCook Daily Gazette*



Brenda McGuire  
Cordial of the Year Award

### **The Chamber Salutes . . .**

all of the volunteers who worked so hard to make the Chamber Annual Banquet special for those attending. Their creativity and willingness to devote time and energy to the event are so appreciated by the Chamber Staff and the Board of Directors. Committee members included:

Annette Wagner, Wagner Auto; Lynn Driml-Pinkal, Willow Ridge Senior Living; Kathy Eaton and Deb Shields, NPPD; Susan Hancock, CTE Roofing; Teri Turcotte, State Farm Insurance-Linda Maiden Agency; Terri Shipshock, Community Hospital Health Foundation; Gloria Mefford, First Central Bank and Sharon Kircher, McCook Community College.

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### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**



February is one of the busiest months for the Chamber. Every year the Banquet and Home & Builders show are scheduled within weeks of each other. I am not sure when this tradition started but I for one would advocate putting a bit more time between the two events.

My arguments are based on the fact that there are only so many people to rely on for planning and implementing two labor intensive happenings. Not surprising, it is often the same people as evidenced by those persons listed as Chamber Banquet committee members who also showed up to construct booths, man the registration table or serve refreshments to the vendors at the Home Show.

The second argument is the amount of behind the scenes work that is accomplished by the Chamber staff. When time winds down to either event, the check list is overwhelming. Do we have our auction items? Are the ticket sales up or down? Is the promotion sufficient? Are the programs printed? Are the decorations coming together? Do we have enough vendors? I think you get the picture. Of course the day-to-day work of the Chamber must go on at the same time.

My third argument is the month of February. Who ever came up with that? This year we were extremely fortunate with weather. But, who can predict weather in February. Did we not just have nearly 70 degrees one day and yet it is barely going to reach mid-30s as I write this letter.

In my “real life” position I am responsible for two fundraisers each year. I know how crazy it can get before, during and after events. I am fortunate that I inherited a schedule that puts 6 months between the events. And, that I have two outstanding committees. Even then there is always crunch time! Thus I am advocating for at least exploring a break between the Home show and the banquet...for everyone’s sanity!

On the flip side, one could argue for the benefit of getting both events behind us. With that in mind it is time to concentrate on the goals adopted by the Chamber Board of Directors at their goal setting session. You may recall at the banquet I shared 5 issues that were identified. Of the 5, three are ongoing issues that are under review and two were adopted as goals. Our number one goal is to examine and explore ways in which we can add value to our members so that they believe they are being well served. Number two is an overall revamping of existing policies and writing policies where there currently are none. Policy review may seem like an internal goal but in reality having solid guidelines for how we do business will be beneficial to members and staff. As we work on these goals it will be with the Chamber members in mind.

I am happy to report that meetings of the core committees have been calendared. Now we have to roll up our sleeves and be prepared to talk the talk and walk the walk. We welcome all ideas and suggestions.

Thank you for supporting your Chamber of Commerce  
*Terri Shipshock, President*

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## **SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS**

### **State Farm Insurance - Linda Maiden** **“Like a Good Neighbor, State Farm is there.”**

State Farm agent, Linda Maiden, and her team truly believe this and try their best to be there to provide the kind of service their customers can depend on.

When Linda Maiden started working for a State Farm agent as part of her high school work co-op program in 1973, she had no idea what it would eventually lead to. But today as she manages her own State Farm Insurance agency, she is very happy with the outcome.

After working as a secretary for 15 years, she was given the opportunity to become an agent in November of 1988. Since then she has seen many changes in her agency, the insurance industry and the community.

Adapting to that change is vital to any business and both Linda and her associates pride themselves on doing just that. With the help of State Farm, they stay up-to-date on the newest products, along with the technology to service those products. As the business grew she expanded her office to include a satellite location in Cambridge and the purchase of their current office building. In addition she has seen the agency grow from just insurance products to financial services with the addition of mutual funds and State Farm Bank which offers competitive deposit products and consumer loans.

Since the agency expanded into the financial services area, Linda understands that customers depend upon her as a trusted and competent source for risk management and/or financial advice. This is the reason that Linda has made the State Farm Insurance and Financial Review (IFR) a very important part of the service she offers

clients. The IFR's focus is upon the customer's needs and priorities and helps them in their efforts to reach their goals with appropriate information and alternatives and to make sure they are spending their insurance dollars in the best way possible.

Providing the products and service that customers deserve takes more than just the agent. The ability to do this rests with her very capable employees.

Cathy Carman, a licensed sales associate, has worked for Linda since 1997 and has recently accepted a position with the Red Cross and will be leaving the agency in March. The rest of the team will be stepping up to help fill this position temporarily. Teri Turcotte, is a fully licensed sales associate with 5 years experience who handles the auto and claims service. Pam Westadt, also fully licensed, was hired in 2009 to help with the Cambridge location but will now be spending some time at the McCook location. Her role in the office includes personal lines sales and service as well as the Bank products. Keith Stritt, is fully licensed, worked out of the McCook office for two years, and thanks to modern technology is still working for Linda (just in a much warmer climate) after he moved to Phoenix last year. He handles all the life, health, marketing and post review activity, and with call forwarding, he might even answer your phone call occasionally! Shelby Lytle is the newest employee and part of the McCook Community College work program. She helps with all the day to day office activities, freeing up Linda and the rest of the team to handle the insurance related issues.

Since being accessible to her clients is very important, Linda offers many ways to reach her office including a 24 hour Customer Response Service. In addition to reaching her office by phone anytime, they can be reached at two locations 802 West B Suite 101 in McCook (8:00 – 5:30 M-F and 10-2 on Saturday or 611 Paxton, Room D, in Cambridge on M-W-F. In addition, Linda can be reached by email ([lindamaiden@lindamaiden.com](mailto:lindamaiden@lindamaiden.com)) and through her web page ([www.statefarm.com](http://www.statefarm.com)).

In addition to their extensive involvement in the insurance business, Linda's office also believes in having fun and giving back to the community and customers that support them. During the summer you can find her buzzing around in the State Farm BUG, her 77 VW convertible or enjoy her posts on their new FACEBOOK page. And her newest, and favorite project is the "Good Neighbear" award which is co-sponsored by the McCook Daily Gazette. She presents a charitable donation of \$50 every two weeks in the name of a deserving "Good Neighbor" to a local charity. Of course they still continue to put on the annual bike rodeo at the McCook, Cambridge and Southwest schools along with sponsoring other activities through-out the community. And this June look for her involvement with the Disney Movie "CARS 2" – it should be fun!

*Linda Maiden, Agent*

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## **GUEST EDITOR**

### **Four Essentials to Build a Successful Small Business**

No matter the industry — from air charter service to plumbing supplies — all small business owners start their ventures with energy and optimism. Yet with all of this positive energy, comes the sober reality: After four years, only 44 percent of new businesses are still in existence, according to a study of the Bureau of Labor's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data.

So what can small business owners do to help make sure their companies have staying power?

Above all else, it's important for business owners to understand how to overcome the most common pitfalls to new business success. Business people with first-hand experience identify four common themes for success:

## **1. Having a Good Business Plan**

Studies show that success rates for new companies using business plans as guides are significantly higher than those without plans. By going through the process of crafting the plan, business owners force themselves to answer tough questions and examine their strengths and opportunities.

Successful companies have plans that show viable business models, marketing strategies and financial overviews. They also provide all of the facts a business needs to go to a financial services provider and apply for a loan. For those entrepreneurs with no experience, help is available — for instance, online business plan counseling is offered at [www.score.org](http://www.score.org).

## **2. Covering Capital Needs**

The most pressing challenge for many businesses is a lack of capital to operate and grow in the early years. Building a business from the ground floor up requires understanding and managing all of the expenses required to operate, pay the bills and employees. It's imperative to have clear picture of capital needs.

As soon as possible, new owners should start building a credit history for their businesses. It's not uncommon for new ventures to begin operation using the owners' personal accounts — personal credit and home equity — instead of building a credit history for their business. That's why it's important to build a relationship with business banker early – you begin to build your company's credit history and you get financial advice to help move the business forward.

## **3. Maintaining Strong Cash Flow**

An important indicator of a company's health is its cash flow – a measurement of the amount of cash coming in and going out of the business. Strong cash flow means a company's daily operations generate enough cash to meet obligations. Unfortunately, each year there are profitable companies that fail because they can't overcome cash flow challenges.

This hard fact makes the ability to plan and manage cash flow a business essential. It's also the area where sound business banking advice pays the most dividends. A business banker can help a company tackle its cash flow needs by identifying the right solutions.

When a business encounters slow-paying customers, a financial services provider can offer a line of credit to finance receivables and provide a reliable source of cash until payment arrives. On the flip side, if a company has a spike in revenue, an attentive financial services provider identifies tools – such as savings accounts, CDs or “reserve” checking accounts – that earn higher interest rates and make cash work harder.

As a business grows, it can benefit from cash management tools, treasury management services and ongoing account analysis so business owners can stay on top of balances, trends and activities for all of their accounts.

#### 4. Building a Support Team

Business truly is a team sport. The best business leaders rely on a team of people inside and outside their organizations whose collective skills keep their businesses focused and growing, and help navigate pitfalls.

In every business line-up there needs to be a great accountant, strong attorney and trusted insurance advisor. Of course, a reliable business banker also is a “must have” on the roster. Take time to gather referrals and interview for each of these roles to find the best fit.

When it comes to looking for your business banker, seek one who can deliver the full realm of financial services to satisfy all your financial needs today and in the future at one provider – saving you time and money. If your financial services needs are split among more than one today, it’s a good time to start considering the option of bringing all of your business to one place.

With a little planning and the backing of a great team, your venture is better prepared to beat the odds and become the next great business success story. Combined with your energy and optimism, the sky’s the limit.

*By Bill Burton, Wells Fargo Bank*

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#### MEMBER NEWS

##### Olson's Photography Celebrates 25th Anniversary with Mixer

Olson’s Photography and Sehnert’s Bakery & Bieroc Café are joining forces to host the March 8 mixer at the photo studio on Norris and J Street in McCook. The fun begins at 5:30 and will continue to 7:00 p.m. Sehnert’s will be serving up some special treats to help Tor and Holly celebrate their silver anniversary in style. Please join us and wish them many more years of success.

##### Welcome Aboard....

The McCook Area Chamber of Commerce welcomes **Great Western Bank** to the Chamber family. Karmon Coleman, currently the manager of the McCook site, was employed by TierOne Bank at the time of the transition to Great Western and is excited about the new branch. We look forward to a long partnership with our newest member. The ribbon cutting for this recent addition to the McCook business community is scheduled for March 2, 2011, at 10:00 a.m.

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#### CHAMBER STATS

##### Office

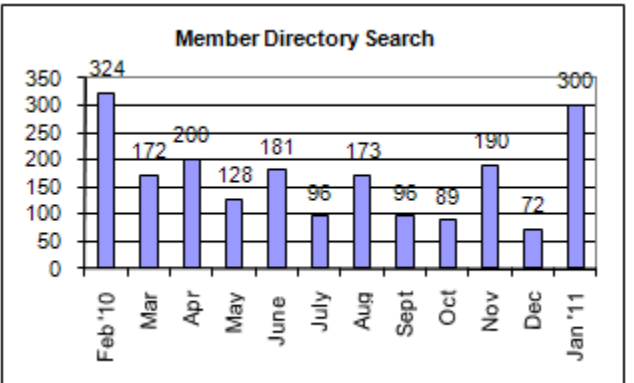
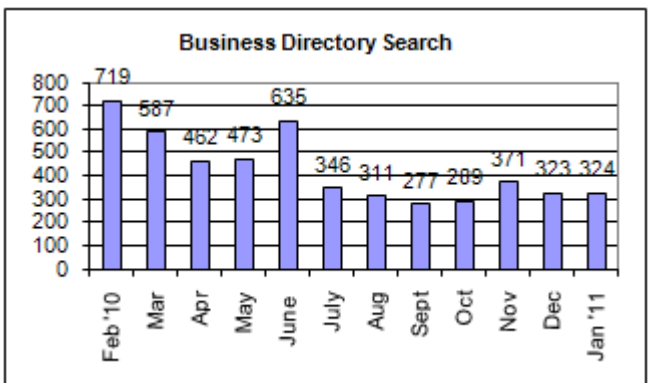
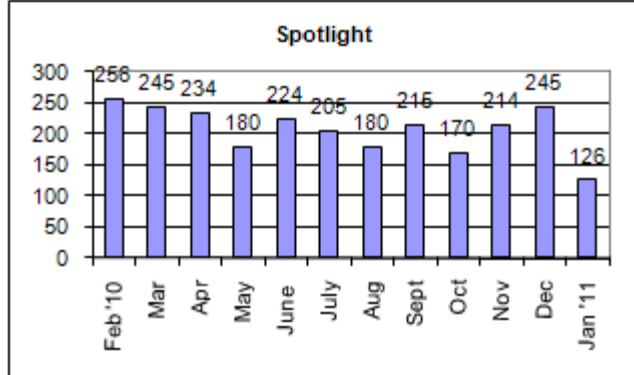
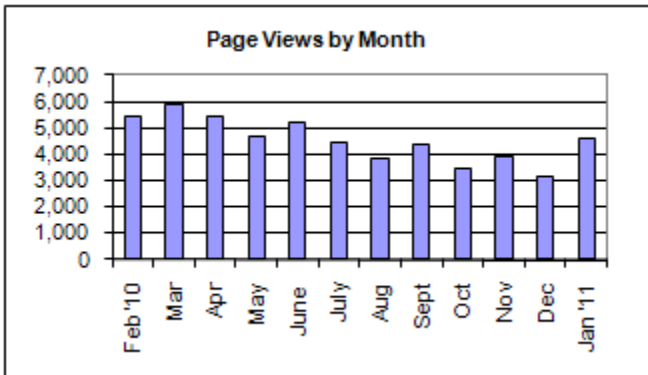
	Calls	Walk-In	Tourism Packets Mailed or Distributed	Relocation Packets Mailed	Misc. Packets Mailed
<b>2011</b>					
Jan	346	221	25	18	3

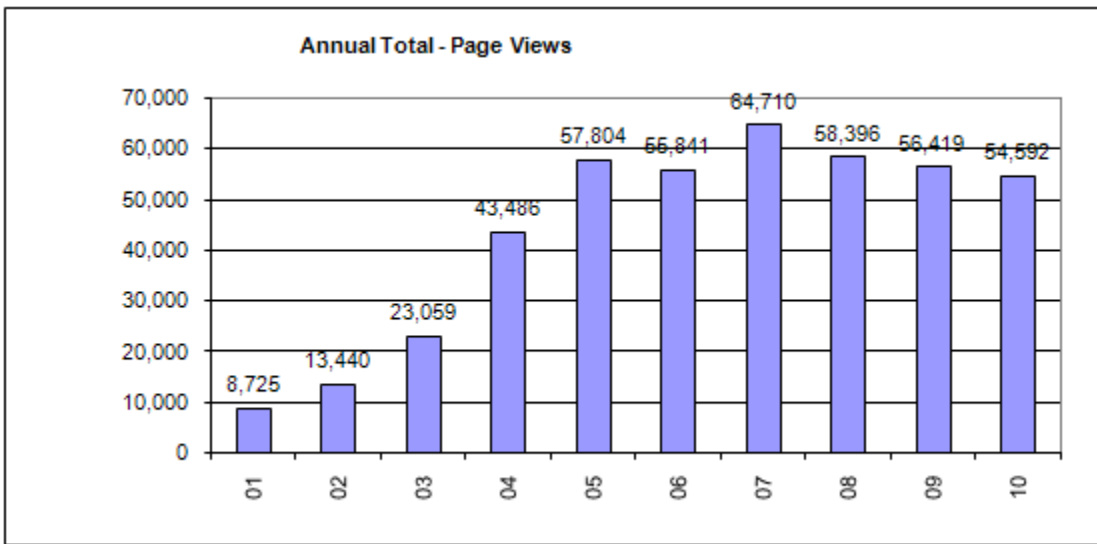
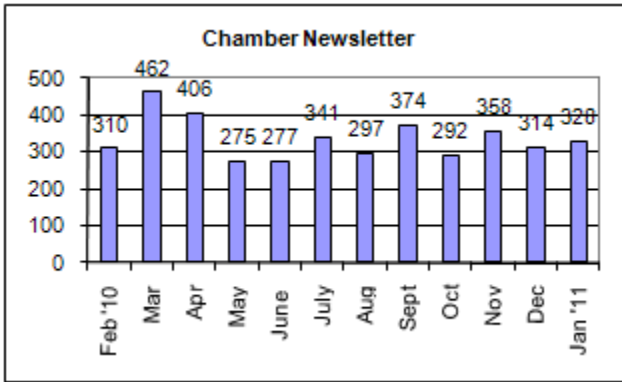
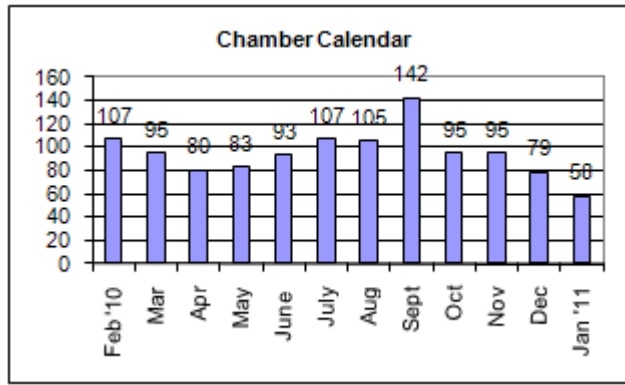
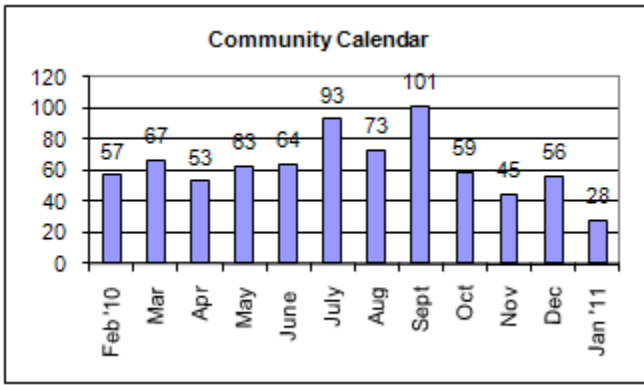
# Website

## 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
Feb '10	5,418	256	719	324	57	107	310
Mar	5,859	245	587	172	67	95	462
Apr	5,433	234	462	200	53	80	406
May	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
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54,355</b>	<b>2,494</b>	<b>5,117</b>	<b>2,021</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>1,139</b>	<b>4,034</b>







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## **Making Marketing Work For Your Business**

Join us on March 8 & 9 for a fast-paced, fun and interactive workshop to help you kick start your marketing efforts for 2011 and beyond.

Gain valuable feedback about your company brand and be inspired by small companies who have leveraged the power of branding to create loyalty and profits. Explore marketing tool options, including your company website and social media, and learn how to budget marketing dollars and track results. Put your marketing plan into practice with a simple and easy to use marketing calendar system. **Must pre-register by March 3rd.**

**Tuesday & Wednesday, March 8, 9**  
**6pm-9pm**  
**Cost: \$ 59.00**  
**Keystone Business Center**

Beth Cole, Instructor and  
VP Client Strategies,  
One Lily Inc.

## **Letter That Convey A Professional Message**

Have you ever spent hours composing the perfect message/body of a letter only to get no response from the recipient? It might not be the message, but how your letter appears on the page. Does it carry the same professional appearance as the message that follows? In this session learn how to properly format a business letter utilizing Word 2007 or Word 2010 default formats and in turn convey that you are an up-to-date organization that is always professional and that can be trusted.

**Friday, March 4, 2011**  
**12:00 pm 1:00 pm MST**  
**Please note Mountain Time**  
**Cost: \$10.00**  
**Please bring a sack lunch**  
**McCook Community College**  
**Walsh-Brady Rm 226**  
**Instructor Janet Weber**

Register online at [register.centerforenterprise.com](http://register.centerforenterprise.com) or call at **308.345.8124**.