



Proudly serving Morrison County since 1888



2009 Annual Report

The Mission
of the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
is to promote its members and the
greater community through innovative partnerships and
accountable leadership.



February 2010



Dear Chamber Members,

Thank you for the privilege of serving as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors during this reporting period. I am proud to present the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce's 2009 Annual Report.

The Chamber ended its membership year with 358 members, which is up 14 members over last year. This is impressive, especially in this economy. Thank you to all the businesses for valuing the work of the Chamber in and for the greater community.

The Chamber's Business Plan outlined the mission to promote our members and the greater community. To this end, new programming was instigated in 2009 utilizing our public access television station. Meet Me @ the Chamber, hosted by Debora K. Boelz, Chamber President/CEO, is filmed in an interview format with 2 members highlighted each month. The half hour program is aired twice a week and includes a segment on the Employee of the Month, which is filmed in the honoree's place of business.

A strong commitment to support our retail community in these uncertain economic times was front and center on the Chamber's plate. This commitment included a guest editorial in the Morrison County Record, numerous mentions in the Chamber's newsletters and a financial commitment of \$5,000 towards a retail market analysis spearheaded by the City of Little Falls.

Building on the success of the past Business Insights, Business Insights 2009 was held with the co-sponsorship of Pine Country Bank, the Morrison County Record, Little Falls Business Association and Little Falls Radio. The program reached out to business owners throughout the service area for this half-day educational session. Highlights of the program are included in this report.

Our commitment to the greater community was again demonstrated by significant financial contributions to the Initiative Foundation, Community Development of Morrison County, the Little Falls Dam Festival, and Little Falls Business Association. These contributions are derived from the proceeds of the 37th annual Little Falls Arts & Craft Fair.

In 2009 the Chamber lead the effort to replace the 'Welcome to Little Falls' signs along Highway 10 north and south of Little Falls. The collaborative effort utilized Restaurant & Lodging Tax funds from the City of Little Falls. The project came together with a generous donation for installation and engraving by Little Falls Granite Works. The new granite signs are an impressive introduction to visitors arriving in Little Falls.

The Chamber's strength comes not only from the number of members, but also from their active participation in the community. Thank you for your continued membership.

*Sandy Smith, Chair
GoldSmith Jewelers*

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The History of the Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce was organized on May 15, 1888 with the filing of the Articles of Incorporation, constitution and bylaws for the stated purpose of “advancing the commercial, mercantile and manufacturing interests of Little Falls and the surrounding country”. Listed on the initial membership roster were 42 businesses.

For the past 122 years, the Chamber has been instrumental in the development and expansion of business in Morrison County. The foresightedness of the founding fathers of the area laid the foundation for the Chamber as we know it today.

There is little recorded history for the Chamber from the years 1888 to 1954. The Chamber’s first paid staff came in the form of administrative support by Mrs. W. J. Bellefeuille from 1954-1960 and Lorrie Virnig from 1960 - 1961.

G. Harmon Klemme was the first paid administrator serving 1960 - 1962. Following Klemme was W. J. Vondrashek from 1963 to 1967. The Glen Kraywinkle tenure was from 1967 - 1984; Dave Hochhalter from 1984 - 1995; Elaine Westerdahl-Delaney from 1996 - 2003. Starting in 2004, Debora K. Boelz has been the President/CEO for the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

In 1972, the Chamber took over the planning and implementation of the Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair. This event has grown to include hundreds of vendors from 25 states. It annually attracts crowds of shoppers numbering over 140,000. Proceeds from the Arts & Crafts Fair enable the Chamber to keep its membership dues at very reasonable rates and is able to support community projects and improvements.

In 1984, the Chamber of Commerce changed its name to Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce to demonstrate the importance of developing an area wide approach to attract new commercial and industrial businesses.

In 1989, the annual golf outing was started.

In 1991, the Chamber moved into its current offices located in the historic Cass Gilbert Depot. The results of a community-wide effort saved the historic train depot from demolition and it is now used not only to house the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, but contains a community room that is enjoyed by many people on an annual basis.

In 2004, Friday Morning Coffees were started.

In 2006, the tag line “Proudly serving Morrison County since 1888” was added and the logo revised.

In 2006, Sporting Clays networking event was started. In 2007, an expanded, full-color membership directory was published. In 2008, the Chamber website was redesigned and the City of Lights retro fit with energy efficient LED bulbs.

Meet Me @ the Chamber was new programming started in 2009. This entails Chamber members being interviewed for programs aired on Central Minnesota Access Television. Two members were interviewed each month by Debora K. Boelz, Chamber President/CEO. The third component of the ½ hour program is an on-location interview with the Employee of the Month.

2009 Board of Directors

Chair

Sandy Smith
GoldSmith Jewelers

Carl Vaagenes
St. Gabriel's Hospital

Immediate Past Chair

Col. Rich Weaver
Camp Ripley

Tom West
Morrison County Record

Vice Chair

Doug Veillette
Dairy Queen

Julie Zupko
Bieganek Insurance

Treasurer

Jacki DeVine
DeVine Laser Skin Care

2009 Chamber Staff

President/CEO

Debora K. Boelz

Secretary

Lori Kush
Kush State Farm Insurance

Financial Coordinator

Rachel Czech

Directors

Bridget Britz
Horizon Health

Office Coordinator

Sylvia Ryden

Tom Chatfield

Fallsburg Woodworking

Projects & Volunteer

Coordinator

Gina Vetter

Shane Cole

Domino's Pizza

Paul Kapsner

Royalton Lumber

Membership Services Division

The goal of the Membership Services Division is to maintain a membership that finds value in their Chamber through effective communication of member benefits and development and maintenance of member only activities and services.

In 2009, the Chamber had 358 members in good standing, which is up 14 members from 2008.

Membership Development Committee

Chair: Tom Hoggarth, Evergreen Equipment

Board Liaison: Shane Cole, Domino's Pizza

Objectives:

- ~ to continue implementation of the plan to communicate membership benefits to the members and potential members;
- ~ to maintain a membership investment schedule that is equitable for all membership categories;
- ~ to identify methods for ensuring that all members' investments are made in a fair and timely fashion and to monitor/supervise member benefits.

Member Networking

Objective:

- ~ to provide a varied offering of networking events to provide all members an opportunity to develop business relationships with each other.

Networking Events

Board Liaison: Carl Vaagenes, St. Gabriel's Hospital

Business After Hours

Business After Hours provides not only a networking opportunity for the membership, but also the opportunity for a Chamber member to showcase their business by holding the event at their location. In 2009, 10 Business After Hours were held:

- January 22 sponsored by Lutheran Care Center at Bridgeway Estates
- February 17 sponsored by Camp Ripley with the Norwegian Home Guard
- March 12 sponsored by Great River Arts Association
- April 14 sponsored by Brandl Motors
- May 5 sponsored by The Gumdrop Tree
- September 24 sponsored by Hilmerson Collision Center
- October 22 sponsored by the West Side Bar and D & D Beer Company
- November 17 sponsored by RadioShack / Design Electronics
- December 10 sponsored by US Bank

Friday Morning Coffee

Friday Morning Coffees are held the 3rd Friday of the month at either the Cass Gilbert Depot or at the sponsoring business. In 2009, the following Friday Morning Coffees were held:

January 16 sponsored by Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union
February 20 sponsored by Friends of Crane Meadows
March 20 sponsored by Diamond Willow Assisted Living
April 17 sponsored by US Bank
May 15 sponsored by Faust Photography
June 19 sponsored by Rudolph Auto Solutions
July 17 sponsored by Lutheran Care Center
August 21 sponsored by Gold Cross Ambulance
September 18 sponsored by Stellar Health Center
October 9 sponsored by Habitat For Humanity
November 20 sponsored by Schlenner Wenner & Company
December 18 sponsored by Perkins Restaurant & Bakery

Chamber Golf Outing

Chair: Steve Schueller, Schlenner Wenner & Company

Board Liaison: Lori Kush, Kush State Farm Insurance

The Chamber of Commerce sponsored its 20th annual Golf Outing on August 3 at Little Falls Country Club. On this picture-perfect day, 124 golfers faced the challenges of this beautiful course.

Corporate Sponsors for the Golf Outing

Brandl Motors	Coborn's Superstore	Evergreen Equipment
GoldSmith Jewelers	Grand Casino Mille Lacs	Minnesota Power
Norwood State Farm Insurance		Precision Tool Technologies
RadioShack/Design Electronics		St. Gabriel's Hospital

Holes Sponsors for the Golf Outing

AmericInn	Larson Abstract Company, Inc.
Atomic Learning	Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union
Bell Mortgage	Mississippi Connections
Cans 'R' Us	Morrison County Record
CTC Consolidated Telecommunications	NAPA Auto Parts
D & D Beer Co.	Perkins Restaurant & Bakery
Family Medical Center	Pine Country Bank
Hilmerson Collision Center /	RA Randall Agency
Captain Ron's Hot Tub Rental	Ridgeline Manufacturing
Home Savings of America	Rudolph Auto Solutions
Horizon Health	St. Gabriel's Hospital
	Schlenner Wenner & Co.

Kush State Farm Insurance

Special thank you to **Century 21/New Horizon's Realty** for providing golfers with a cool treat of Blue Bunny ice cream; to **Froggy's Signs** for the hole sponsor signage; to **Subway** for the boxed lunches and to **Coborn's Superstore** for providing the steaks for the grill.

Chamber's 2009 Golf Outing winning team was from **Schlenner Wenner & Co.** Team members were Dick Knopik, Brian Mackinac, Steve Schueller and Eric Knopik.

The two random drawing team winners were **Hilmerson Collision Center / Captain Ron's Oasis Spas** with team members Carmen Meyer, Rich Richardson, Robin Richardson, and Jeff Waldvogel and **Advance Physical Therapy / Morrison County Record / Vernon Sales Promotion** team with members Mike Arneson, Carla Gerads, Patrick Watercott and Tom West.

The Men's Longest Drive was Steve Messerschmidt, **Morrison County**. The Women's Longest Drive was Teri Hoggarth, **Edward Jones Investments / Teri Hoggarth**. The drawing for Buy A Drive was won by the **LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation** team

Sporting Clays

Chair: Mark Gerbi, RA Randall Agency

Board Liaison: Tom Chatfield, Fallsburg Woodworking

The Chamber of Commerce sponsored its 4th Annual Sporting Clays Outing on September 15 at LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation. Fifty six participants faced the challenges of trap shooting, sporting clays and ended with a flurry.

Corporate sponsors for Sporting Clays included:

**Deml Insurance
GoldSmith Jewelers
Minnesota Power
Pine Country Bank**

**Schlenner Wenner & Co.
Spectrum Marketing Services
Thielen Meats
West Side Bar**

LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation

Station sponsors for Sporting Clays included:

**Kush State Farm Insurance
R. A. Randall Agency
St. Gabriel's Hospital**

**Schlenner Wenner & Co
Shelley Funeral Chapel**

There was a tie for first place between **Melgram Jewelers** and the **GoldSmith Jewelers** teams. Team members for Melgram Jewelers were Chris Grams, George Gold, Andre and Joe LeBlanc. The GoldSmith Jewelers team consisted of Tar Smith, Rick Tanner, John and Jonathon LeMieur.

Taking home 3rd place was the **Subway/RA Randall** team whose members were Jack and Luke Faufau, Mark Gerbi and Dwayne Marzolf.

There was a tie for the flurry shoot with both teams breaking 39 targets. **LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation** and the **GoldSmith Jewelers** team shared this honor. Team members for the LeBlanc's Rice Creek were Troy Bjorge, Chip LeBlanc, Gregg LeBlanc and Craig Smith.

The **Shelley Funeral Chapel** scored 27 of the possible 32 points on our "shoot the breeze game". Team members were Kyle LeMieur, Terry Nelson, Wayne Pikal and Steve Shelley. The trivia contest was won by **GoldSmith Jewelers** team. Prizes for all events were Chamber Bucks.

Member Recognition

Objectives:

- ~ to recognize members of the Chamber for their membership and support of the community;
- ~ to recognize member's major anniversaries in the community;
- ~ to recognize new businesses in the service area for their choice of location and grow a prosperous business;
- ~ to recognize the importance of outstanding employees from the membership.

Sub-committees:

Lindy Greeters

Chair: Randy Fossum, Home Savings of America

Board Liaison: Tom West, Morrison County Record

Lindy Greeters visited 30 new businesses in the service area in 2009. Regular member calls, which are made on a 3-year cycle, were made to 49 Chamber member businesses.

Thank you to the **Morrison County Record** for publishing, free of charge, the Lindy Greeter visit photos to new businesses in the service area. This truly demonstrates the paper's commitment to supporting area growth and development.

The Outstanding Service Committee

Chair: Deanna Boone, Franciscan Sisters

Board Liaison: Bridget Britz, Horizon Health

The Outstanding Service Committee works to identify and reward those Chamber members and their employees who go above and beyond the job description in their daily jobs and seeks nominations from the general public as well as other Chamber members for Employee of the Month designation, Large and Small Business of the Year and the Volunteer of the Year awards.

The Employee of the Month program recognizes a Chamber member employee who has been nominated by a customer or employer. In 2009, the 12 Employees of the Month were:

- January - Gilbert Zilka, **Pine Country Bank**
- February - Melissa Meyer, **Pete & Joy's Bakery**
- March - Kathy Lange, **St. Gabriel's Hospital, Hospice Unit**
- April - Ray Paulson, **Little Falls Community Schools, Middle School**
- May - Renae Schneider, **NAPA Auto Parts**
- June - David Cook, **Rural Minnesota CEP**
- July - Kim Steinmetz, **The Fitness Connection**
- August - Richard Peterson, **Gas Service Company**
- September - Lisa LeMay, **Little Falls Community Schools**
- October - Jeneva Bellefeuille, **St. Otto's Care Center**
- November - Russ Atkinson, **ACE Hardware**
- December - DiAnn Loven, **St. Gabriel's Hospital**

The Employee of the Month is treated to lunch by the Chamber with members of the Outstanding Service Committee. In addition, the recipient is presented with a cut flower arrangement provided on a rotating basis from **Coborn's Floral, The Flower Dell or Falls Floral**. **Broadway Stylists** provide a certificate for a hair cut and tanning session and **Silker Studio** provides the professional headshot that is displayed on the Employee of the Month board.

The **Morrison County Record** supports the Employee of the Month program by running monthly articles and photos of each recipient. The Employee of the Month is also presented with gift certificates to one of the following restaurants: **China Dragon, Dairy Queen, Perkins Restaurant & Bakery, Subway or Taco John's.**

An addition to the Employee of the Month designation in 2009 was the inclusion in the Chamber's weekly public access television programming, Meet Me @ the Chamber. Chamber President/CEO Debora K. Boelz filmed on location at the EMO's place of work. This program airs on Fridays at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. on channel 6 in Little Falls.

At the Annual Meeting, the Outstanding Service Committee presented the following awards:

The 2009 Small Business of the Year was awarded to Little Falls Granite Works, owned by Ron, Scott and Todd Nagel and Don Calhoun. The generous contributions of the Granite Works, who have been Chamber Members since 1964, made the new "Welcome to Little Falls" signs on Highway 10 north and south of town a reality in 2009. The new signs, which are granite, were engraved and installed free of charge. The granite signs are an impressive introduction to the community for residents and visitors alike.

The 2009 Large Business of the Year was Pine Country Bank. Pine Country Bank continues to provide outstanding community support through all levels of the organization. A driving force behind the Business Insights programming, Pine Country Bank, which opened its Little Falls branch in 2000, have been Chamber members since that time. Sharing of employee time and talents can be found on nearly every Chamber committee as well as with various organizations that promote the betterment of the entire service community.

The 2009 Volunteer of the Year was Mark Gerbi, co-owner of R.A. Randall Agency. Mark has been a Chamber member for as long as he has been in business. Serving on every committee of the Chamber at one time or another, including the Board of Directors where he served as Chair. Mark continues to share his time and talents with many other community organizations in addition to the Chamber of Commerce.

Awardees met established criteria for nomination, were nominated by their peers with the final determination made by the Chamber's Outstanding Service Committee. Winners received a plaque noting their award and are included on permanent wall plaques in the Chamber office.

Communications Division

The goals of the Communications Division were:

~ to further enhance the various communication channels of the Chamber including the Chamber newsletter, the Chamber's website, www.littlefallsmnchamber.com, direct mail, FAX, and a quarterly column written by the President/CEO in the Morrison County Record;

~ to cultivate relationships within the community generally, and specifically with Members, by increasing awareness of Chamber activities and the services and activities of its members.

In 2009, 7 issues of the Chamber newsletter were published. The first 4 were in hard copy only, then the format was changed to an electronic version in September, at which point the newsletter was published monthly.

ChamberMaster, a software company that specializes in providing services to chambers of commerce, integrated the Chamber's membership data base with the website software, streamlining many of the day-to-day activities of the staff. This new software enables the Chamber to accept payment via credit cards.

Press releases were done on networking opportunities and Chamber sponsored events such as legislative updates, educational sessions and the Arts & Crafts Fair. Press releases are sent to the Brainerd Dispatch, St. Cloud Times, Morrison County Record, Little Falls Radio, Central MN Access Television, Lakeland Public Access Television, and KSAX in Alexandria.

The Chamber website, www.littlefallsmnchamber.com, provides members and the greater community with information on upcoming events and membership listings with links to each individual business website, where available.

The Chamber's Membership Directory, a full color, spiral bound publication that included member-to-member advertising opportunities listing of all Chamber members was again provided. Dual listings were provided to better serve the needs of our members with an additional listing available for a nominal fee.

New programming started in 2009 was titled "Meet Me @ the Chamber" This entailed Chamber members being interviewed for programs aired on Central Minnesota Access Television. Two members were interviewed each month by Debora K. Boelz, Chamber President/CEO. The third component of the ½ hour program was an on location interview with the Employee of the Month.

Community Partnerships Division

The goals of the Community Partnership Division were:

- ~ to work in partnership with a variety of community entities (governmental, nonprofit, and private) to address community issues and opportunities;
- ~ to provide support to Chamber members through advocacy and liaison with government, taxing entities (including city, county, townships, and school districts) on a case by case basis as determined by the Board.

Legislative Updates

Pre-session briefing was held on January 19 with 45 attendees, Representative Al Doty and Senator Paul Koering addressed the concerns of the attendees that ranged from school funding to alternative energy resources. The post-session debriefing was held on May 29 with 36 attending.

Business Insights 2009

The Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, Pine Country Bank, Little Falls Radio, Morrison County Record and the Little Falls Business Association collaborated to provide a free business seminar on Wednesday, September 23 at the Initiative Foundation, with 129 in attendance.

Speakers included Carol Russell, CEO and founder of Russell Herder, a public relations firm from with offices in Minneapolis and Brainerd. Ms. Russell spoke on the issues surrounding social networking with her presentation titled "Social Media: Embracing the Opportunities, Averting the Risks". Joining Ms. Russell was Brandon Knowles of Faster Solutions, Inc. in Duluth.

Paul Douglas, entrepreneur and meteorologist, presented "Secrets of a Successful Entrepreneur" with practical tips that could readily be applied to local businesses. Mr. Douglas is a nationally respected meteorologist, with 29 years of broadcast television and 33 years of radio experience. A serial entrepreneur, Douglas continues to expand on new media and online opportunities, most currently WeatherNation, a web based weather service utilized by a growing number of weather sources across the country.

Opportunities in the Clean Energy Economy. Bill Glahn, Director of the Office of Energy Security and Deputy Commissioner in the Minnesota Department of Commerce, visited with Chamber and community members in Little Falls on March 24 about opportunities that exist for local communities in the clean energy economy. As Minnesota and the nation try to rebuild the economy, we have a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to invest in clean and green technologies that will promote energy independence and improve the environment was the message heard by attendees from Mr. Glahn.

Alternative Energy Sessions for Regional Businesses. Collaborative programming was co-sponsored by the Chamber with Region Five Development Commission and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) on May 5. This educational session was focused on providing information to the business community regarding existing conservation and alternative energy options plus the development of a regional conservation/alternative/clean energy strategy for Region Five. Presentations included conservation, solar, wind, methane digesters and biomass gasification technologies.

In the Chamber's on-going commitment to education of our members, the following Lunch & Learns were held:

Fueling Your Passion - Continuing to build Organizational Vitality in Trying Times with Jean Mershon, Central Lakes College

This Lunch & Learn session was held on January 21 at the Initiative Foundation. The informative session provided tips on creating and maintaining a work environment in which employees continue to build on the success of creating an atmosphere of vitality and trust. The session explored the methods and strategies of surviving and thriving in our changing world. The session goals were to promote a more positive attitude and boost productivity, loyalty, and morale; to explore strategies of coping with stress; to explore the role of emotional intelligence in the workplace; and increase awareness and skills of resources available for promoting wellness and to accept challenges with enthusiasm and improve one's ability to "lighten up"

Administrative Professional's Day Luncheon with Sue Christensen, New Day Training & Life Coaching. In recognition of Administrative Professional's Day, a special luncheon designed for the front line employees was held April 22 at Cabin Fever. Ms. Christensen shared tips on keeping your life balanced, yourself healthy and happy. The second part of the program involves honing communication skills that will assist in job performance.

Quality of Life Partnerships

Community Pride Division

The goals of the Community Pride Division were:

- ~ to generate income to support the activities of the Chamber which are unable to generate income;
- ~ to fund a large community beautification project;
- ~ to make a donation to local projects and programs;
- ~ to provide information, marketing, and promotion to area residents and potential visitors in order to increase the dollars spent in the community.

Activity: Heritage Preservation Commission, City of Lights, February's I Love to Read month, new teacher breakfast, Halloween Trick or Treating, hosting a Santa Parade reception, Santa at the Depot, Chamber Bucks, and Holiday Movie matinee.

The City of Lights was lit in conjunction with the Dam Festival, Arts & Crafts Fair weekend and lit for the season for the Santa Parade through the 1st of the new year. The Chamber proudly sponsors the City of Lights for the enjoyment of the community as well as the numerous visitors to Little Falls during the holiday season. For November - January, the City of Lights not only outlines the downtown buildings with lights, but includes the historic streetlights with pole wraps and wreaths that the Chamber also funds.

In collaboration with **Morrison County Healthy Communities Collaborative Education Committee**, the Chamber of Commerce and **Little Falls Community Schools** acknowledge the national "I Love to Read" month in February in the elementary schools. Chamber members visit classrooms and read to the students in support of this program and to instill the importance of reading in our everyday lives. Community volunteers read in 40 classrooms.

The long-standing tradition of welcoming new teachers to the school district at the beginning of the school year now has a two-fold approach. **Education Minnesota, Little Falls**, co-sponsors a new teacher/administrator breakfast with the Chamber for teachers in the Little Falls school district, public and parochial. The new educators are encouraged to utilize local businesses for goods and services as often as possible.

The wooden "Welcome to Little Falls" signs located on Highway 10 north and south of Little Falls were replaced with mahogany granite signage in 2009. Spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce, with funding partners the Dandee Lions and Leonard Gamradt; accessing of Restaurant & Lodging Tax funds combined with the donation of installation and engraving from Little Falls Granite Works, this project became a reality. Completion of the landscaping around the new signs will be completed in 2010 as the weather permits.

Another long-standing tradition of the Chamber is Halloween Trick or Treating with the business community. Annually around October 31, the Chamber coordinates with local businesses to provide the opportunity for safe trick or treating in daylight hours. The community welcomed about 800 children in 2009 for this event.

In 2009 the Santa Parade Reception was held on November 27. Working collaboratively with the **West Side Improvement Association**, who sponsored the Santa Parade, the Chamber and **Perkins Restaurant & Bakery** who provided cookies, hot chocolate and apple cider on the Chamber lawn prior to the parade for the enjoyment of the crowd, which number about 110 this year.

In collaboration with **Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union**, the annual matinee movie was provided on December 5 at the Falls Cinema. The showing of "Hotel for Dogs" was presented on 3 screens at noon and 2:00 p.m. The Chamber sponsors this event in support of the retail community as a means of bringing shoppers to the community.

Arts & Crafts Fair Council

Chair: Jodi Weaver, The Gumdrop Tree

Board Liaisons: Paul Kapsner, Royalton Lumber

The Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair continues to be a quality event which includes a cross section of handcrafted merchandise in a comfortable and safe setting for shoppers. It is how many people know Little Falls. The 37th annual Arts & Crafts Fair was held September 12 & 13 in the historic downtown area on both sides of the Mississippi River.

The Fair is a source of financial support to the community through significant contributions to the operations and projects of the Chamber. A portion of the proceeds from the Fair are reinvested in the community by the Chamber on items such as the historic streetlights, downtown redevelopment, maintenance and upkeep of the entry signs into Little Falls, in the sponsorship of the Leadership LindyLand program, and through financial contributions to the Dam Festival, Community Development of Morrison County, the Initiative Foundation and in 2009, the Retail Analysis Market study.

In 2009, the Arts & Crafts Fair welcomed 570 vendors plus an additional 42 food vendors. Of the 570 vendors, 110 were new to the event, adding something different and exciting each year. Attendance for this event was estimated at 140,000 people. Locally, 21 nonprofit agencies earned money for their programs through the Fair by working the event for the Chamber, by sponsoring a food booth or staffing a parking lot.

Sunshine Artist Magazine has again named the **Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair one of the best shows in the nation, ranking us number 47 in 2009**. This is an incredible honor as the voting is done by the vendors and is based on not only sale figures, but the physical environment including layout, parking and hospitality.

Development Services Division

The goal of the Development Services Division was:

~ to provide development services to assist in the areas of leadership and business.

Leadership LindyLand

Chair: Barb Lyons, Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union

Board Liaison: Julie Zupko, Biegane Insurance

In its 8th year, the Leadership LindyLand: Dynamic Development of Community Leaders continues to provide a training ground for the next generation of community leaders.

Participants in 2008 - 2009 included:

Sister Mary Pat Burger
Franciscan Sisters

Ruth Anne Cheney
St. Otto's Care Center

Doug Dahlberg
Spectrum Marketing Services

Patricia Dumonceaux
Morrison County Public Health

Kelly Ebeling
Minnesota Power

Jan Erdrich
Unity Family Healthcare

Janelle Fitch
Perkins Restaurant & Bakery

Jill Killeaney
Morrison County Motor Vehicle

Gregg LeBlanc
LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation

Lori Stang
Friends of Linden Hill

Bonita Strassburg
Morrison County Social Services

Vicki Villebro
Horizon Health

Jodi Weaver
The Gumdrop Tree

Leadership LindyLand provides the opportunity for businesses to speak to the participants by being a session sponsor or graduation sponsor. Sponsors were: **Domino's Pizza, Horizon Health, Larson Abstract, Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union, Pine Country Bank, Rural AIDS Action Network and St. Gabriel's Hospital**

Program content for Leadership LindyLand is broken down into 10 days over the course of the year.

September

Retreat - Personal Leadership Development
and K-12 Education

October

Personal Development and Community Heritage

November

Health and Human Services

December

Team Building

January

Media Education

February

Business, Economics and tours
of Manufacturing Facilities

March

Business Day at the Capitol
Sponsored by the MN Chamber of Commerce

April

Tourism and Camp Ripley

May

Personal Leadership Development

June

Graduation

A Community Service project is incorporated into this leadership development training. The project chosen by the participants was titled "Project Another Day". The project provided first response kits to victims of devastating events such as fires, accidents and tornadoes, bridging the gap until additional help could be provided. The project created 100 kits that were provided to Gregg Valentine through the Morrison County Chaplaincy program.

New in 2009 was the addition of the Business Day at the Capitol in March sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. The Leadership LindyLand participants spent a day in St. Paul hearing from the House and Senate leadership on pressing issues facing the State. An update on current lobbying efforts on behalf of businesses throughout Minnesota was heard from the Chamber staff. Individual meetings with Representative Al Doty and Senator Paul Koering completed the day, including a personal tour of the State Capitol.

Thank you to **Century 21/New Horizons Realty** and **Camp Ripley** for the use of their vans as the Leadership LindyLand participants toured the county and traveled to St. Paul.

The Chamber works to encourage continued business growth in the area through collaborative efforts with Community Development of Morrison County, Initiative Foundation, the City of Little Falls, Little Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau, Morrison County and others which is consistent with the purpose of the Chamber. Special emphasis is placed on technology access and use that assist local businesses to thrive in a global economy and developing employment opportunities for the under-employed residents of the area.

Minnesota Manufacturer's Week was celebrated with Lindy Greeter visits to our member manufacturers. Representatives from the Lindy Greeter Committee presented certificates signed by Governor Tim Pawlenty acknowledging this week that is celebrated statewide. Manufacturing members were invited to a luncheon at Central Lakes College in Staples, sponsored by the Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED), during this week.

Liaison activities: Community Development of Morrison County, City of Little Falls and the Little Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau

Governance

Chair: Sandy Smith, GoldSmith Jewelers

Vice Chair: Doug Veillette, Dairy Queen

Committee: Executive Committee

Annual Meeting

The 121st Annual Meeting of the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce was held on March 17 at the Falls Ballroom with 265 guests in attendance. Past board members Jim Andres, **RadioShack/Design Electronics**, Tom Cotton of **Spectrum Marketing Services** and Susy Prosapio of **Great River Arts Association** were honored for their years of service to the Chamber.

The featured speaker was Win Borden, a significant player in Minnesota public policy circles for much of the 1970's and 1980's. Win was elected to 3 terms in the Minnesota Senate and served as the president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce for over 10 years. His law practice spanned 30 years with an impressive client list including General Electric, The Hertz Corporation and other Fortune 500 companies. His message was one of moving forward to a positive message of hope in these trying economic times.

Corporate sponsors for the 2009 Annual Meeting included:

Brandl Motors
Central Minnesota Ethanol Co-op
Coborn's Superstore
Emblom Brenny Funeral Service
Family Medical Center
Franciscan Sisters
Grand Casino Mille Lacs

Horizon Health
Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union
Pine Country Bank
St. Gabriel's Hospital
Spectrum Marketing Services
The Tully Tube Network
West Side Discount Liquor

Table sponsors for the 2009 Annual Meeting included:

Bank of the West
Bieganek Insurance Agency
RadioShack / Design Electronics

St. Otto's Care Center
Schlenner Wenner & Co.

Major Accomplishments in 2009

~ Sponsored the 37th annual Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair with 570 merchandise vendors and 42 food vendors. Revenues for this event grossed \$188,395.

~ Collaboration with Pine Country Bank, Little Falls Radio, Morrison Country Record and the Little Falls Business Association to sponsor Business Insights 2009.

~ Replacement of "Welcome to Little Falls" signs

~ Completed the membership year with 358 members.

2009 Financial Recap

With comparisons to 2007 & 2008

		2009	2008	2007
Receipts				
	Membership Dues	\$ 65,205	\$ 71,017	\$ 72,978
	Arts & Crafts Fair	188,395	197,720	214,010
	Donations	21,330	42,491	17,309
	Ticket Sales	3,644	1,906	2,227
	Registrations	6,791	10,517	9,535
	Interest	6,455	8,737	14,209
	Other	12,443	9,318	988
	Total	\$304,263	\$341,706	\$331,256
Disbursements				
	Communications	\$ 14,257	\$ 19,826	\$ 11,922
	Community Partnerships	22,504	20,747	19,426
	Membership Services	38,496	39,976	35,040
	Development Services	8,508	9,644	15,755
	Community Pride	97,472	125,477	110,430
	General Operations	131,566	120,731	133,408
	Other	3,139	5,437	3,502
	Total	\$315,942	\$341,838	\$329,483
	Excess/Deficiency	<11,679>	\$132	\$2,043
Chamber Bucks	Sold	\$14,914	\$17,866	\$34,084
	Redeemed	\$15,324	\$17,878	\$30,295

For more information or membership materials, please contact us at:

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