

Chamber Annual Meeting



Pictured: *Doug Veillette, Dairy Queen 2010 Chair of the Board* officially passes the gavel to 2011 Chair of the Board, *Bridget Britz, Horizon Health.*

The Little Falls Area Chamber of Chamber's 123 Annual Meeting was held Thursday, February 24 at the Falls Ballroom with over 250 members in attendance. The Annual Meeting provides the opportunity for both the Chamber membership and the community at large to hear first hand the accomplishments from the past year.

The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the 2010 award winners by the Outstanding Service Committee, committee chair, Robbin Keehr, Schlenner Wenner & Co and committee member Tammy Jopp, Horizon Health. The 2010 Small Business of the Year was awarded to D & D Beer Co., the Large Business of the Year was awarded to St. Gabriel's Hospital and the Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Dough Dahlberg, Spectrum Marketing Services. Doug Veillette thanked outgoing board members Shane Cole, Dominos Pizza; Sandy Smith, GoldSmith Jewelers; Carl Vaagenes, St. Gabriel's Hospital.

A summary of the 2010 Annual Report was included in the program. A presentation of the Chamber's Annual Report and Financial Review will be held, Thursday, March 31 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Falls Ballroom. Cost to attend is \$15 and includes lunch. To learn more about the Chamber's Annual Report and Financial Review register via the Chamber's website at www.littlefallsmnchamber.com for call the Chamber Office at (320) 632-5155.

Pictured to the right is the **2010 Volunteer of the Year Doug Dahlberg, Spectrum Marketing Services** along with *Tammy Jopp, Horizon Health* and *Robbin Keehr, Schlenner Wenner & Co.*



Pictured below is **2010 Large Business of the Year St. Gabriel's Hospital.** Pictured left to right: *Robbin Keehr, Schlenner Wenner & Co.; Carl Vaagenes, St. Gabriel's Hospital; Paul Cameron, St. Gabriel's Hospital; Tammy Jopp, Horizon Health.*



Left is the **2010 Small Business of the Year D & D Beer Co.** Pictured left to right: *Tammy Jopp, Horizon Health; Gregg Dick, D & D Beer Co.; Mike Dick, D & D Beer Co; Robbin Keehr, Schlenner Wenner & Co.*



Thank you to our corporate sponsors: *Bank of the West, Bieganek Insurance Agency, Brandl Motors, Century 21 New Horizons Realty, Coborn's Superstore, Family Medical Center, Franciscan Sisters, Fresh Hair Professionals, Horizon Health, Little Falls Orthopedics, Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union, Pine Country, Bank, RadioShack/ Design Electronics, St. Gabriel's*

From the Desk of the CEO

- Debora K. Boelz



Greeting from the desk of the CEO! How many of you read my column last month and thought she needs a vacation? I was waxing a little philosophical last month; this month I am antsy! One is not to wish their life away, but this winter needs to go!

Thank you to our Annual Meeting sponsors and attendees! The 123rd Annual Meeting of the Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce was held on February 24th with great attendance. Congratulations to our award winners, whose pictures grace the front page. The companion piece to the Annual Meeting is the Annual Report. This document will be posted on the Chamber's website when it is available and can be obtained in hard copy by request.

The Annual Report outlines the Chamber's Business Plan and contains the 2010 financial review findings. A synopsis of the financial view was included in the Annual Meeting program, which prompted questions about the deficit that was experienced in 2010. This deficit was planned.

I have a tendency to hoard money. This is fine in my personal life (my husband doesn't share this philosophy!) However, in the nonprofit world, this isn't the case. During my tenure with the Chamber, we have been able to build up allowable cash reserves. Cash reserves are good for any organization to have.

The US Chamber of Commerce used the example of hurricane Katrina as a wake-up call to chambers of commerce across the country to be prepared to serve your community in times of wide-spread disaster. Closer to home, the tornado that Wadena experienced last summer could have very easily have hit Morrison County.

The other wild card for this chamber is the Arts & Crafts Fair. We rely very heavily on the revenue from this one event, which has, like every other Fair, experienced a decline over the years from its hay day in the 1990's. Will the Arts & Crafts Fair ever completely go away – no!

Most chambers rely solely on membership dues and entry fees to support the operation and programming of their chamber. At other chambers, things like Friday Morning Coffee would have a \$200 cost to the business for hosting and an entry fee of \$1 - \$10 at the door for members to attend. Meals for committee meetings and educational programming would include an extra couple of dollars to ensure a positive cash flow. Event sponsorships would be much more and include fewer bangs for your buck. Our chamber offers a free link to your website and free Hot Deal listings. Members who belong to more than one chamber can attest to the costs involved at other chambers!

Business Plan and Financial Review Luncheon - the Chamber is sponsoring a luncheon on Thursday, March 31st at the Falls Ballroom that will be a detailed explanation of the 2010 Business Plan and financial review. Cost of the luncheon is \$15. See the article in this newsletter for details.

The wheels of change often move slowly. The City of Little Falls has been hosting work sessions with the business community, the Planning and Zoning and the Heritage Preservation Commission members once a month over the past year. These meetings started with parking issues in the downtown or more accurately, the inconsistent parking time zones scattered throughout the downtown. The discussion turned to the mixed use of our downtown with retail, service and rental units.

This evolved into proposed changes in the zoning ordinance to create buffer zones between the business district and residential housing. Zoning issues are very personal. Business owners pay property taxes in exchange for the "public good" - police and fire protection, street maintenance and snow removal; for the support of our quality of life. When zoning is perceived as restricting trade, the conversation in the room changes dramatically! .

Little Falls has developed a historic downtown with quaint streetlights (that don't give off much light), the historic themed street signs mixed in with trees surrounded by flower beds. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is charged with regulating what happens to the exterior of the buildings in the downtown.

Challenges to the signage restrictions for back lit and electronic message boards have turned the conversation again. Technology has advanced options for signs, which are allowed in other business districts, just not the central business or historic districts. The discussion has now turned to what era our downtown should represent and how do we blend the old with the new to make it desirable for businesses to locate in the central business district as well as being fair to all commercial property owners. If you have an opinion, please step up and offer your time and talents as this project evolves.

In closing, the average high temperature on March 31 in Morrison County is 54 degrees. The down side is, we all know how 'average' gets to be average! Think Spring!

Business After Hours

Thursday, March 3

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

ReMax Central Minnesota

118 11 St NE Ste. 2, Little Falls

Join us for this informal networking event. ReMax Central Minnesota has lots to offer and here is an opportunity to see all the new happenings, while enjoying some hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and great networking.

Sponsored by:



Friday Morning Coffee

February Friday Morning Coffee

Friday, March 18

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Chamber of Commerce

200 1 St NW, Little Falls

Kick off your weekend by joining us for a cup or two of coffee and a donut while making business connections. All Chamber members and their employees are invited to attend. Friday Morning Coffees are the third Friday of each month from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. Introductions are made around the room starting at 8:15 a.m. A new component has been added to Friday Morning Coffee. After announcements, up to 4 people will have the opportunity to give a 30 second testimonial.

Sponsored by:



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Dr. DeAnn Adams

Doctor of Chiropractic

PO Box 562

Little Falls, MN 56345

651-249-8446

breathbalancing@gmail.com

dac.pa@hotmail.com

Individual Member

Keller Williams

Anthony Johnson, Agent

14091 Baxter Drive, Suite 116

Baxter, MN 56425

320-630-6289

877-454-0701

218-454-4301 fax

anthonyjohnson@hotmail.com

Real estate and property management

Woltjer & Associates

Ronald Woltjer, President

113 East Broadway

Little Falls, MN 56345

320-632-6016

320-632-6020

rwoltjer@gmail.com

Tax preparation, investments, business consulting, services and benefit planning primarily for self-employed. Social Security planning. Hours 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday, and weekends during tax season.

Start Planning for Leadership LindyLand 2011-12!

We are looking forward to our 10th Leadership LindyLand Class to begin October 2011. Detailed information will be coming out soon, with curriculum outline, meeting dates and some new exciting program components. Watch your mail for more information.

Congratulation's to our March Employee of the Month



Brenda Smith, *Little Falls Community Middle School*

Congratulations to our March Employee of the Month Brenda Smith, **Little Falls Community Middle School**. Brenda has been employed for 34 years, and teaches 6th Grade Reading and 7th Grade Language Arts. According to Principal Nate Swenson, "Brenda is a consummate professional and leads by doing, and is the type of educator that brings pride to him, the school and the community. Brenda challenges everyone to become better at what they do". Brenda states that "she, the Principal, and entire Middle School staff love what they do and work hard to make every student successful".

Brenda is married and has two children. She enjoys reading, hiking, photography, fishing, traveling, and gardening.

Presentation of the Chamber's **Annual Report** & **Financial Review**

Thursday, March 31
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Falls Ballroom
15879 Hwy. 27, Little Falls

Cost \$15 per person (includes lunch)

The Chamber's current Business Plan has an increased focus on communicating the mission and work of the Chamber to our members and Chamber's impact on the greater community. Please join us for a luncheon on Thursday, March 31st at the Falls Ballroom for a detailed look at the programming completed by the Chamber in 2010, including a breakdown of the financial review. Cost is \$15.00 per person.

*Please RSVP to the Chamber by
Thursday, March 24th.*

EntreLeadership Webcast **Coming to Little Falls**

"When you are looking for real-world advice in a small business setting, Dave Ramsey is second to none. He is a brilliant entrepreneur, and I am proud to call him my friend." Zig Ziglar.

Join the Chamber and Domino's Pizza for the next educational programming session on Friday, April 1st. This webcast will be staged in room 1 of the Morrison County Government Center at a cost \$35 per participant, payable to Dominos Pizza. The session will run from 8:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with lunch provided by Domino's Pizza.

The presenter, Dave Ramsey, took his business from a card table in his living room to a nationally recognized organization that assists in growing businesses by developing its leaders. His national radio program reached 4.5 million listeners with nearly 300 team members who work with businesses across the country.

EntreLeadership combines the innovation of spirit of the entrepreneur with the passion and drive of a leader. Dave Ramsey has made it a priority to train, mentor and refine his leadership team. The EntreLeadership principles are the foundation of his training process.

Seating is limited to the first 50. To register call the Chamber of Commerce at (320) 632-5155 or visit our website at www.littlefallsmnchamber.com. Make checks payable to Dominos Pizza.

Looking ahead . . .

Chamber Golf Outing

Monday, August 1, 2011
Little Falls Country Club
Noon Shotgun Start



Sporting Clays

Tuesday, September 20, 2011
Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation
4:30 p.m. Shotgun Start



March Guests on Meet Me @ The Chamber

Watch Meet Me @ The Chamber every Friday at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. on channel 6 in Little Falls. March guests are Sheila Arneson from The Office Shop and Patty Mackinac from the Flower Dell. The Employee of the Month is Brenda Smith from Little Falls Community Schools.

The Meet Me @ the Chamber programming is an added value to your Chamber membership. Each month 2 members are highlighted in a 10 minute segment free of charge! Completing the program is an interview with the Employee of the Month. If you are interested in this FREE opportunity to promote your business to the greater community, please contact Deb.



Chamber member businesses are encouraged to take advantage of

this great FREE advertising opportunity on the Chamber's website. Hot Deals are long or short term specials, sales or coupon opportunities. Hot Deals can be for the general public, tourists to our area or for Chamber members only. Coupons are printed off of the website and are easily coded for tracking purposes. Contact Deb to get your Hot Deal listed!

Recent board action for February

Recent Board Action:

~ Accepted the 2010 Financial Review as presented by Steve Schueller of Schlenner Wenner & Company.

~ Set 2011 Arts & Crafts Fair Food Vendor fees at the same level as in 2010.

~ Set the honorariums for nonprofits who assist with the Arts & Crafts Fair

Your 2011 Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

2009-2011

Bridget Britz
2011 Chair of the Board

Horizon Health

Paul Kapsner
Royalton Lumber

Julie Zupko
2011 Vice Chair of the Board
Bieganeck Insurance Agency

2010-2012

Jim Birchem
St. Otto's Care Center

Lori Kush
Kush State Farm Insurance

Barb Lyons
Mid Minnesota Federal
Credit Union

Roxanne Matsen
Larson Abstract Co, Inc.

2011-2013

Kyle Hogarth
Edward Jones Investments

Doug Veillette
2011 Past Chair of the Board

Dairy Queen

Jodi Weaver
The Gumdrop Tree

Tom West
Morrison County Record

Chamber Staff

Debora K. Boelz,
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Sylvia Ryden,
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Gina Vetter,
Projects & Volunteer Coordinator
ginav@littlefallsmnchamber.com

Lindy Greeter Member Visits

Thank you for your membership. Photos are from Member Visits made February 22, 2011. Greeters present the member with a Chamber mug filled with sweets, and thank them for their support of the Chamber and community.



BOOMERANG BAR

Lindy Greeters Laurie Whitlow, **PrimeLending**, left, and Kyle Hoggarth, **Edward Jones Investments**, with Rebecca, Kelsie, and Vanessa Popp, co-owners of the **Boomerang Bar**. Family owned and operated, the Boomerang Bar guarantees a good time and hospitality for your parties or gatherings. Sunday Fun Day - Spin the Wheel – Joker’s Wild – Chances to win \$75.00 in bar tabs. There is a huge outdoor patio with fire pit. Horseshoe and volleyball are available. Hours are 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Mon-Sat, and 12 to 12 Sun. Watch the MC Record for upcoming events.



BOB LEMIEUR ROLLOFFS, REFUSE & RECYCLING

Lindy Greeters Dr. Allison Zak, **Chiropractor**, left, and Kyle Hoggarth, **Edward Jones Investments**, right, with Office Assistant Beckie Tschida and Garbage Truck Driver Stan Mattern at **Bob LeMieur Rolloffs, Refuse & Recycling**. Bob LeMieur provides garbage and recycling services to Little Falls and surrounding areas, and also rolloffs for your clean-up or construction projects. They believe living and working with you in your community is a very important part of their business, and they actively participate in Habitat For Humanity, Pine Grove Zoo, Friends of Linden Hill, Heritage Preservation, and many other community projects.



HEAD FIRST SALON & DAY SPA

Lindy Greeters Laurie Whitlow, **PrimeLending**, left, and Dr. Allison Zak, **Chiropractor**, right, with Kari Forthun and Kelsey Caauwe, co-owners of **Head First Salon & Day Spa**. Head First is a full service salon and spa offering hair care, nails, massage, and facials. They feature six service providers and a massage therapist. Head First was founded by Janet Kieffer. Kari and Kelsey are her daughters.



Spotlight on government redesign

By David C. Olson

Minnesotans face mutual challenges as we climb out of a recession that has taken a toll on both the private and public sectors. Conducting business as usual just doesn't cut it. Business and government alike must explore all measures and take bold action to deliver quality products and services to our customers at lower cost.

In that pursuit, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and its local partners are engaging business leaders and citizens to redesign government services. We're grateful to the Bush Foundation that contributed money to this effort. The findings, to date, of these five studies were reported at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Executives (MCCE) There is reason for optimism.

Chambers of commerce at Brainerd Lakes, Staples Motley Area and Long Prairie Area are working with Crow Wing and Todd counties to study the case management for individuals who access a variety of county departments; the goal is to streamline the process and make these people less reliant on public services. The Owatonna Area Chamber is working with its city to use the LEAN process to evaluate operations; the first department being reviewed is parks and recreation.

Rochester Area Chamber is working with its city to develop a more customer-focused approach for review and approval of various development requirements. The Austin Area Chamber studied public safety dispatch with the city of Austin and Mower County. And a group of Twin Cities chambers is working with the Metropolitan Council to identify efficiencies in transit operations.

Some of these projects are still in progress, and others have issued final recommendations. Among the common themes that have emerged:

- Improving service to customers should be at the forefront of any effort to consolidate and/or streamline operations.
- Don't expect an immediate return on the bottom line; real savings are long term.
- Enacting change requires engaging ideas that focus on the outcomes. Do not pander to the vested interests of stakeholders; there can be no sacred cows.
- The private sector must demand change and be ready to jump in with its resources.

Hardly a week passes that headlines don't announce another initiative on government collaboration. Otter Tail County's director of solid waste also oversees programs in Wadena and Todd counties. Austin and Albert Lea are exploring sharing the services of a finance director. Rice County officials are charting a course to change the way the county does business. And Rep. Paul Marquart, DFL-Dilworth, said he would first consider redesign to ease the state's expected budget deficit. He suggested that some agencies, like law enforcement, don't need to be restricted by county boundaries.

Changing demographics are driving the delivery of government services. An aging population is demanding more public services, especially in health care. At the same time, a shrinking workforce is contributing fewer tax dollars to support these services. And the reality of a world economy means services must be delivered at the same or lower per-unit price.

We also recognize that many local governments – no matter how well intentioned – are hamstrung in efforts to change operations. Myriad state mandates hinder their flexibility and ability to carve new paths. That's why chambers of commerce are working with local governments and legislators to review and eliminate the costliest and most cumbersome of mandates.

The Minnesota Chamber believes the state budget can be balanced by using the revenues we know will be available for the next biennium. Budget reform and service redesign must be part of the final puzzle. We stand ready to assist policy-makers at all levels of government to identify the most pressing problems and then fund those programs that deliver the greatest value and best outcomes.

David C. Olson is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit the Web at www.mnchamber.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS & CHAMBER MEETINGS

Chamber events and meetings are in bold. For an expanded list of community events visit our website at www.littlefallsmnchamber.com

March

- March 1 ~ **Lindy Greeters Committee** - Noon - Black & White
March 2 ~ Little Falls Business Association - Noon - Chamber of Commerce
March 3 ~ **Business After Hours** - 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. - ReMax Central MN. *Sponsored by: **ReMax Central Minnesota***
March 3 ~ Taize Prayer - 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. - St. Francis Convent
March 4 ~ Dinner on the Hill - 6:30 p.m. - Linden Hill Historic Event Center
March 5-6 ~ Winter Wonderland Skating Show - Exchange Arena
March 10 ~ **Chamber Board of Directors** - 11:00 a.m. - Chamber of Commerce
March 12 ~ Habitat Day at Crane Meadows - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Crane Meadows
March 13 ~ Share Sunday - 1:30 p.m. - Mary of Lourdes Middle School
March 14 ~ Massed Band Concert - 7:00 p.m. - Little Falls Community High School
March 17 ~ **Membership Development Committee** - 7:45 a.m. - Chamber of Commerce
March 17 ~ Centering Prayer & Lectio Divina - 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. - St. Francis Convent
March 18 ~ **Friday Morning Coffee** - 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. - Chamber of Commerce. *Sponsored by: **Habitat for Humanity***
March 18 ~ Kiwanis Fish Fry - 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Little Falls VFW Club
March 18 ~ Pine Grove Zoo Gone Wild - 7:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Falls Ballroom
March 20 ~ Comedian Louie Anderson - 7:00 p.m. - Little Falls Community High School
March 26 ~ Lenten Day of Reflection - 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. - St. Francis Convent
March 25 - Lindbergh Lions Fish Fry - 4:00 - 7:30 p.m. - Little Falls VFW Club
March 26 ~ Morrison County Dairy Princess Contest - Falls Ballroom
March 29 ~ Kinship Soup Chili Cook Off - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Falls Ballroom
March 31 ~ **Presentation of the Chamber Annual Report & Financial Review** - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Falls Ballroom
March 31 ~ Bilingual Liturgy - 11:00 a.m. - Sacred Heart Chapel St. Francis Convent



Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
200 First Street NW
Little Falls, MN 56345
Proudly Serving Morrison County Since 1888