

Chamber-Main Street News and Knows

by Interim Director Jim Davies

It has been one month since I was hired as the interim director of the Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. I accepted this position as part-time, up to 20 hours per week, working around my other commitments.

To start with, I sorted through paperwork in the director's office, prioritizing what needed to be done. Fortunately, I was already well acquainted with others officed and working in Center 1, so I felt comfortable asking them questions regarding established procedures.

One of the first items on my agenda was to prepare budget requests for the Franklin County Board of Supervisors and the Hampton City Council. This year's requests were much the same as last year's requests. The Supervisors' request was tourism related. The City Council requests were for money to fund the Design Committee's Building Improvement Grant program and funding to cover administrative costs of the chamber overseeing the Hampton Main Street program.

A project I worked on was requesting design assistance from Main Street Iowa for four downtown buildings. These requests are all for upper story apartments. I took photos of the apartments and worked with the property owners to fill out and submit the request forms. I coordinated the scheduling and accompanied the Downtown Building Rehab Specialist and the Design Coordinator, both from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, who came to Hampton last Tuesday (1/14) along with a Small Business Specialist from the Pappajohn Center in Mason City. It is encouraging to see that additional housing will be added.

My column last week was about the quarterly economic impact report for the downtown main street district that was due to Iowa Main Street by January 15. I'm happy to say that I was able to pull together the statistics required for the months of October through December 2024.

There were five rehab projects:

- Windows replaced and apartment bathroom remodel at 122 First St. NW
- Roof and wall repair at 119 and 123 1st St. NW
- Remodeling of the space now occupied by H&R Block, 3 1st Ave. NW
- Tuckpointing, roof repair, interior wall repair and paint, transom windows fixed at the Windsor Theatre building
- 31 downtown vintage light globes were replaced

One building at 112 2nd Ave. NW was purchased by Rachelle Thompson, CPA PLLC. H&R Block moved into the downtown, and Jeff Jaacks, LPA retired and closed his business.

Reported activities and events included:

- Raffle Ticket Sales and Drawing
- Friday Uncorked (Wine Walk)
- Quarterly Coffee at the Franklin County Convention Center
- Halloween Howl
- Share the Warmth
- Light Up the Night
- Holly Dazzle Christmas promotion including the Ugly Sweater contest

Commentary and updates were also given on the overall program and the four Main Street committees: Design, Economic Vitality/Business, Promotion, and Organization.

The Promotion Committee met on 1/14 to begin planning the Chamber Annual Dinner to be held Saturday, March 22 at the Hampton Country Club. The plan is to serve heavy hors d'oeuvres during the social time that includes a silent auction starting at 5:00 pm with the program commencing at 6:30 pm with entertainment to follow.

The upcoming Tourism Board meeting will be a busy one with four grant requests to consider. It is good to see that there are events and activities planned.

The next chamber board of directors meeting is Thursday, January 23 at noon at Center 1.

Membership renewals will soon be either delivered or mailed before the end of January. Included with the renewal information and invoice is a handout asking for feedback. What do you like about the chamber? Any suggestions? Any changes in your member information?

Whether you are a member or not, please email any comments and suggestions for the Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and the Hampton Main Street program to director@hamptoniowa.org.

