

# The Chamber Business Journal

JUNE 2020

*Doing what most people think just happens!*

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## Congratulations and Welcome New Member

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As an Elite Agent for their company, **U.S. Cellular, Premier** is dedicated to providing the best wireless products and services, along with customer service in the industry. When a customer enters a U.S. Cellular wireless store, they are greeted by a friendly, knowledgeable associate who is there to assist them in selecting the wireless products and services that are right for them. The Mission of U.S. Cellular: They commit to love and serve their customers to transform their day. The Vision of U.S. Cellular: They will revolutionize their customers' experience by making U.S. Cellular stores hubs of innovative solutions and positivity. Store hours are Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday 12-5 p.m.

## Leadership McPherson 2020 An Impactful Experience

Leadership McPherson is a professional program of the McPherson Chamber of Commerce to develop effective leadership, open minds to perspectives that surround issues facing our community and enable participants to become more visionary leaders.

It has been an impactful program since 1982. Leadership McPherson Class participants will learn to recognize their talents, skills, and strengths, and discover new traits to celebrate and appreciate in others. The in-depth, educational program focuses on developing leadership competences and giving participants the skills to move organizations and businesses forward.

In 2000 the Leadership Class curriculum began incorporating a class project to benefit the youth of McPherson County. Through the years, these class projects have touched many lives and continue to make a difference in our community.

If you are interested in enrolling in the 2020 Leadership McPherson Class, here are a few things you need to know.

- Enrollment Deadline – July 10th, 2020 (class size limited to 12)
- Class Sessions are from 8:30-Noon on the following dates: August 5 and 19, September 16 and 30, October 14 and 28, November 18.
- Virtual “Your Leadership Edge” through the Kansas Leadership Center- is from 8:00-5:00 on September 2nd and 3rd. This is a high-quality virtual experience that maintains integrity and commitment of in-person KLC programs. Your Leadership Edge teaches participants to embrace leadership as an activity and step onto a path that develops problem solving skills. Participants will learn to use the KLC framework to intervene more effectively on the challenges they care most about, and ultimately, develop new ways to mobilize others to embrace challenges and seize opportunities.
- Class Celebration Lunch and presentation of class project will be held on November 18.

Participants will need to make a commitment to attend all class sessions, the two-day virtual training, class celebration, and participate in determining, creating and executing the class project.

*“Leadership McPherson is a great opportunity to connect with a diverse and energetic group of McPherson leaders who want to work collaboratively to improve our home community.”* Monica Rice, McPherson College, 2017 Leadership McPherson.

Leadership McPherson enrollment forms are available at [www.mcphersonchamber.org](http://www.mcphersonchamber.org) or by emailing [chamberdirector@mcphersonsoks.org](mailto:chamberdirector@mcphersonsoks.org) This is your opportunity for an impactful experience!

## DQ GRILL & CHILL WINNERS

**Congratulations to A5 Western, 102 N. Main, Winner of the DQ cake. Thank you, Roger and Karen Horn, owners of DQ Grill and Chill, 1435 N. Main, McPherson for providing the monthly DQ ice cream treat.**

## Be A Light

I am a big fan of inspirational quotes, and recently I keep thinking about “Be A Light,” the new song by country western singer Thomas Rhett and friends. *“In a place that needs change, make a difference. In a time full of noise, just listen. Cause life is but a breeze, better live it. In a place that needs a change, make a difference.”* “It’s hard to live in color. When you just see black and white. In a world full of hate, be a light.” The message has stuck with me and is the catalyst for this article.

I still remember the first assignment of my Leadership McPherson Class back in 2009, was to bring and describe three objects that represent who I am. My objects reflected that my faith has always been a constant compass, I am blessed to have family relationships that are filled with love beyond measure, and fortunate to have friendships with incredible, positive ladies who add light to my life. It was very thought provoking to summarize who I am with only three things, and to share it with a room full of people I had just met.

Fast forward to March of 2020, when I attended Your Leadership Edge at the Kansas Leadership Center. That experience included a break-out session with five other attendees who were tasked with an icebreaker of “What are three words that your friends would use to describe you?” We all kind of chuckled, then quickly took turns blurting out our three words. Certainly a different concept, to consider how the people that know the true you, see you. These are your friends describing you so it must be all good, right? I was trying to concentrate so much on what the others in my group were saying that I don’t honestly remember if these words were exact, but I believe I mentioned something along the lines of nice, funny and caring. I was raised to be nice to everyone because everyone is important. I chose the word funny because I have a sense of humor, but my friends know that I leave the “hilarious” verb to my friends who can tell stories that make me laugh-out-loud till my belly aches and my eyes leak tears of happiness. I assumed that my friends believe me to be caring, because I truly care about everyone’s concerns and joys.

I think we have all done a lot of soul searching, in light of recent world events. It has made me wonder, what are three words that people who aren’t my close friends would use to describe me? Is that how I want to be described? Could I do better? Yes. As much as I try and pray to be kind to everyone, honest in all that I do and a positive reflection of how God wants me to live, I know that I could always do better.

*“The broken world waits in the darkness for the light that is you.”* L.R. Knost. Be intentional and BE A LIGHT!



**Debbie Hawkinson,**  
*Executive Director,*  
**McPherson Chamber of Commerce**

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# 2019 - 2020 Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

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## Families and Faces Behind the Chamber Businesses

The more we get to know our Chamber members, the more they become friends and seem like family. When you know the people who own or manage the local businesses, the more you realize how connected we all are. Many have come from all corners of the world and have incredible stories to tell, while others have grown up in the area and stay or move back because they realize what a special community McPherson is.

Our hope is that as you enjoy “getting to know” your business neighbors through their stories, you will appreciate their commitment, passion, and enthusiasm, and understand the value of shopping local. Not only is your investment staying local, it is making a huge impact on the families who own or operate businesses and is instrumental in building our incredible community!

### Tara Kemp with Heartbeat Coffee, 1211 S. Main

“Hi, I’m Tara, the “face” behind Heartbeat. I am excited the Chamber is starting this series, as I think the best way to “market” a small business is to just be true to yourself and your story because our community cares! Our values, beliefs, quirks, all come out in the businesses we run.

While not a McPherson native, I have been here for seven years. I attended Central Christian for my Business Management degree, minoring in Accounting, and earning my Associate in General Insurance designation. While I have always had a heart for small business, I did not imagine running one right out of college. I was planning on getting my master's, finding a “good job” in maybe marketing research or consumer behavior analytics, and eventually training to be a small business consultant, we never know the Lord's timing! After graduating in Spring 2017 I immediately started planning for Heartbeat to open that Fall. It has been quite a ride...

Some of my many favorite things have been witnessing how every part of the business and each interaction works together, the feeling of getting to write checks to students after creating “something from nothing”, and the blessing of community and personal relationships formed from short interactions at a window. Some main struggles have been looking for the best way to manage student turnover, learning different personalities, and how I can be the best leader for each individual team member as well as the team as a whole, and finding out it is necessary to take some time to run a better me, in order to better run the business I love.

Other than Heartbeat, one of my favorite things is being outside. Whether I am coaching softball, finding a shady spot to read or write, catching a sunrise or sunset, or exploring one of the many great places Kansas has to offer, I feel the most “me” after spending time in nature. I also love seeing new coffee shops with friends and laughing at my own jokes... Other than that, you can find me recharging at home...speaking of, I just bought one in McPherson and will be moving in this month. I am very excited to call this community “home” for years to come! Thank you for all the love and support that you have given this face behind the business.”



### Jeff Reitz with JAR Performance Automotive, 121 E. Sutherland

“I grew up on a farm in southern rural Kansas working on farm equipment for my dad and neighbors for as long as I can remember. When I started driving, I changed transmissions and performed engine swaps on my own vehicles and those of friends. In high school, I bought a 1979 Mustang and drag-raced at the Mid-America Dragway in Ark City every free weekend. I rebuilt motors, transmissions and swapped gears and parts with friends as we built our cars up for the races.

I came to McPherson in the fall of 2003 to attend McPherson College. In 2007, I completed with my Bachelors’ degree in Automotive Restoration and Business Management with the anticipation that I would soon start up a shop of my own. I knew that I needed to get to work to start saving before I could start a business, so I started my career in a temporary labor position at Nation Pizza and Foods on a fast-paced, high-volume food production line. I learned many valuable lessons in corporate structure, people management and personnel training and quickly worked my way up through the ranks. 13 months after starting with the company I obtained the position of Production Supervisor and later became Production Manager. This position was responsible for all Production Operations and managed a team of approximately 350 employees.

In February of 2014 we made the decision to change my career path and so I left Nations, accepting the role of Shop Foreman for Welco Services, Inc. to return to a technical type of industry. My responsibility was to schedule and manage all aspects of daily operations and I gained valuable knowledge throughout the process from reviewing potential work with customers, formulating bids and quotations, creating/reviewing isometric piping drawings, structural steel blueprints, and AutoCAD design work. In this position I gained valuable knowledge in the management and structure of a small business in comparison to a larger corporation.

I first met my wife Ashton in McPherson during the fall of 2008, and we were married in May 2010. We now have three amazing children who keep us busy with local sports, and school events. Our daughters, 9-year-old Liliana and 7-year-old Averie, love their teachers at Washington Elementary School, and our son, 4-year-old Chandler, is excited to start Preschool at Washington this fall also!

My wife and I have been involved in building school floats for multiple All Schools Day Parades and try to stay involved in school fund-raisers and other community events as often as possible. Ashton grew up in McPherson and has always had a presence with the YMCA throughout her life and professional career.”



### Libby Monaghan with Twice Told Tales, 104 S. Main

“Hello! I’m Libby Monaghan- “the face” of Twice Told Tales, I suppose. I moved to McPherson in the summer of 2009—fully anticipating that this would be a quick pit-stop on the road to my “real life” somewhere else. Welp! Here we are eleven years later and not only have I stuck around, but in that time I’ve fallen in love over and over and over again—with the town, with my community and some of my greatest friends, with the local businesses, and especially with the person who has become my spouse! Ryan is a true partner in life and in business as well and I count myself lucky to even know him let alone share this adventurous life together. We share a small apartment with our sweet, elderly pets. Fiona is a 13-year-old rescue dog who sometimes comes to the store with me and Kiki is a twelve year old cat who is super camera-shy and has been social distancing since long before it was cool.

I think that talking about books is a sort of short-cut way to get to talking about the most important things. That’s why friendships bloom so beautifully in bookstores! Start talking about your favorite books and you’ll soon be sharing the heart of who you really are and what you value the very most. I think that stories are so powerful. When we listen to someone else’s story and when we share our own, we give space for freedom to grow. That’s what Twice Told Tales is all about. We want to be around for a long time—building relationships, making space for voices to be heard, and learning from and with one another.

When Twice Told Tales first opened in 2015, I approached the owner (Jessica Niemeyer who started it all and to whom I am forever indebted) and told her, “Hey, if you’re ever ready to take on some part time help—I’d love to be a part of this with you.” And eventually she called me up! I started working two days a week in 2016 and haven’t left yet (though my hours have certainly changed)! In 2018, it was time for Jessica and her husband Keith, to move to another state and we were all sort of wondering what the fate of Twice Told Tales would be. Eventually, Ryan and I decided that we couldn’t stomach the idea of the store closing and we were ready to step in and take over as the new owners.

You know, earlier this year when COVID-19 really hit and we all had to work together to flatten the curve... it felt like a scary time. Our storefront closed for over a month but the way our community worked hard to make sure that we were taken care of buoyed us in such an enormous way. Rather than staying home, wondering what we were going to do, we were at the shop bagging up books for people, shipping off big ole boxes to customers, popping gift certificates in the mail. We got innovative and you all responded in such a brilliant way. That’s why we’re here today and why we’ll be here for as long as you’ll have us.”



## From the United Way of McPherson County



**ROB MACKEY**  
Executive Director

### THE MYSTERY OF WORK: THIS IS YOUR LAST DAY

It was 3:30 on a Friday afternoon. I was working for a nonprofit in Washington, D.C. People from headquarters arrived. They sat me and a co-worker down and said, “This is your last day.” It’s not that you don’t think about it once in a while. But sometimes the timing just shocks you.

Such is the surprise for many in our county caught off guard by the stunning effects of the coronavirus. The governor’s order declaring “non-essential” businesses would close to avoid the spread of the dreaded disease. Through no fault of their own, many local residents found themselves without a job or in several cases, temporarily without the business they had created.

In recent weeks, United Way of McPherson County has been helping some of these people through our Community Response and Recovery Fund. With the guidance of Dr. Lara Vanderhoof, Associate Professor of Social Work at Tabor College who heads United Way’s Community Impact Committee, we’ve been taking applications from people who lost jobs, had their hours cut, or suffered in other ways economically due to COVID-19.

One woman told us when school was cancelled, she had to stay home and care for her children full-time, as daycare was tough to come by. We helped them with their rent. Another woman’s husband was still working, but he had not been paid for a month due to the economic effect of the coronavirus at his employer’s business. And we helped them. We paid the home utility bills of a

local business owner who was closed for more than two months during the emergency declaration.

Several people have found themselves in the situation where they had to take time off to be tested and had to self-quarantine for two weeks. That often meant falling behind on their bills, even though they may never had the illness.

Historically, McPherson County has had a low unemployment rate, buoyed by our strong industrial base. The rate was just 2.0% in March. Yet the Kansas Department of Labor said it more than doubled to 5.8% in April.

As I talk with some of these people, their pain is palpable. When I heard those words, “This is your last day,” it gave me some empathy for their situations.

Relief is coming from various directions. After a long wait, unemployment benefits are starting to kick in from an overwhelmed system. Federal government stimulus checks have also been hitting bank accounts, but not for all the people we’re talking to, as the IRS doesn’t have every taxpayer’s banking information on file.

Unfortunately, some people have gotten in so deep they will be unable to avoid eviction. Government programs have helped many, but these mitigations will eventually come to an end.

We’d like to thank the Kansas Health Foundation, CHS, Inc., Williams Energy, and several individual donors for helping McPherson County residents in need through United Way’s Community Response and Recovery Fund. If you lost pay due to COVID-19 or have been otherwise affected, you can complete an application online at [www.united-waymcperson.org](http://www.united-waymcperson.org).

Jobs come and go, and that is the mystery of work. The good news is businesses are reopening and jobs are coming back. United We Fight. United We Win.