

The Chamber Business Journal

March 2021

Community ~ Growth ~ Leadership ~ Vision

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Congratulations and Welcome New Chamber Member

Mahaney Group
2822 N. Mead, Wichita, KS
Main Contact: Damon Young
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The **Mahaney Group** is a commercial construction company that provides low-slope roofing, steel building design and installation, structural steel erection, architectural sheet metal and facility services. We self-perform work as skilled craftsmen with a focus on safety and excellence. By providing superior construction services, we fulfill our purpose of positively impacting our families, company, community, and country.

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Get to Know Your Chamber Board



Shannon Brake
Marketing & Communications Mgr./
Head of Adult Program, McPherson
Public Library
Chamber Board Term: 2018-2021

"I have lived in McPherson for 22 years and am delighted to have worked at the McPherson Public Library for 5 years. I am married to Chad Brake and have two daughters. As a family, we enjoy spending time outdoors, near water, and "kind-of" camping, as well as attending theater, and spending time with extended family. I enjoy participating in activities through the Civic Engagement Advisory Committee with the Kansas Leadership Center and being involved in various boards and committees in McPherson, including the Chamber

of Commerce Board of Directors, and the Leadership McPherson Advisory Committee. Through my work at the library, I have enjoyed connecting with community members, and providing programs and services that bring fulfillment, engagement, and enjoyment."

What is the value of investing in the McPherson Chamber? "The McPherson Chamber of Commerce provides a support system for your business that is detailed, personalized, compassionate, and innovative."

First job? "Little League Coach"

Favorite pet of all time? "Our dog now, Frankie"

Other than work, what would you rather be doing on a summer day? "I love hiking, kayaking, paddle boarding with my family, even if it isn't sunny."

What three words would you use to describe the McPherson Chamber?

"Supportive, innovative, and community driven."



Dr. Patrick Romm
Chiropractor, Integrated Health
& Wellness
Chamber Board Term: 2020-2023

"I grew up in the Salina area and my wife Taycee is from Great Bend. We moved here with our two kids in 2017 and have been in love with McPherson ever since!"

What is the value of investing in the McPherson Chamber? "The Chamber has allowed me to visit many businesses and make connections. It has been where I have met some great friends and built relationships. To me, the return on investment from the Chamber is vast and comes in many different ways."

First job? "My first job was cutting rye

out of wheat fields for a local farmer."

Favorite pet of all time? "Our dog Jackson"

Other than work, what would you rather be doing on a summer day?

"Playing golf or working out with friends."

What three words would you use to describe the McPherson Chamber?

"Purposeful, driven, connection."

Get to Know Your Chamber Board [cont.]



Lauren G. Hughes
Attorney, Wise & Reber, L.C.
Chamber Board Term: 2020-2023
and President-Elect

Lauren G. Hughes is a Texas-native, growing up in League City, Texas. She received her Bachelor of Arts in both English and American Studies from the University of Kansas in 2013, summa cum laude, and her law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law in 2016.

While at KU Law, Lauren served as a Staff Editor for the Kansas Journal of Law & Public Policy and served on the Editorial Board as a Staff Articles Editor. Lauren was elected as a Graduate Student Senator for KU's Student Senate, volunteered with the Volunteer Income Tax As-

sistance (VITA) Program, and served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the undergraduate Business Law course.

Lauren practices in the areas of estate planning, estate and trust administration, and business law. She is currently Secretary/Treasurer of the Kansas Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section and also serves on the University of Kansas School of Law's Board of Governors. Lauren is a Co-Chair for the Kansas Women Attorneys Association Annual Conference and is a member of the Kansas and Wichita Women Attorneys Associations. She is also a member of the McPherson, Wichita, and Kansas Bar Associations. In 2020, Lauren was named as the Kansas Bar Association's Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year.

Active locally, Lauren serves on the Board of Directors for the McPherson County YMCA, the McPherson Public Library, and is president-elect of the McPherson Chamber of Commerce.

What is the value of investing in the McPherson Chamber? "The Chamber provides so many benefits to McPherson and provides wonderful opportunities for business leaders to connect with the community, become engaged in programs to better serve their business, and provides opportunities for connection among the various industries in McPherson."

First job? "Main Event Entertainment, Webster, Texas. I was a party host, which was the beginning of my love for planning events and celebrations!"

Favorite pet of all time? "I have two shih tzu's - Bella and Dexter - if they knew I picked a favorite, they would never forgive me."

Other than work, what would you rather be doing on a summer day? "Something outside! Bike riding, playing golf, going on a walk with my dogs and husband, enjoying the Meadowlark Trail or the various bike and walking paths in McPherson."

What three words would you use to describe the McPherson Chamber?

"Fun! Passionate. Creative."

Matching Dollars

Make A Larger Impact

The McPherson Chamber of Commerce Ag Committee is dedicated to helping today's youth become tomorrow's leaders in agriculture. Since 2001, we have partnered with Agriculture Future of America to award scholarships. The Ag committee raises funds through various events and established a local AFA Scholarship endowment at the MCCC.

Great News....an anonymous donor has offered a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$5,000 for gifts received to the AFA Scholarship Fund by 4/30. With your help, we can continue to invest in the education of local students pursuing an agriculture field of study.

Contributions can be made at the McPherson County Community Foundation, 1233 N. Main, P.O. Box 822, McPherson KS 67460 or on their website (please indicate the AFA Scholarship).

Leadership McPherson Class Goal

The McPherson County Community Foundation is hosting Match Week in place of Match Day. From March 22 through March 26, you can give to 38 different community organizations. This year the foundation has \$100,000 in matching funds available to benefit the community.

The McPherson Chamber 2020 Leadership McPherson class is raising funds in partnership with the School Supply Train to provide school supplies for McPherson Middle School students. The School Supply Train currently provides supplies for the elementary school students. For Match Week, any donation made to the School Supply Train will be matched and will assist the 2020 Leadership McPherson class in achieving their goal of ensuring all middle school students have the supplies they need.

The 2020 Leadership McPherson Class asks you to give back and give big this Match Week. Donations can be made March 22 through March 26 online at www.mcphersonfoundation.org, in person at the foundation office, 1233 N. Main St., or by mail to P.O. Box 822, McPherson. Thank you for helping support all the wonderful organizations in our community.

DQ GRILL & CHILL WINNERS

Congratulations to Coates Cleaning Solutions,
218 N. Ash, McPherson, 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.

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2020 - 2021 Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

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- * Treasurer- Justin Kaufman, Swindoll, Janzen, Hawk & Loyd * Past President- Alex Graber, Graber's Ace Hardware
- * Board of Directors: Amy Beckman, McPherson College * Shannon Brake, McPherson Public Library
- * Craig Druecker, Midway Motors Supercenter * Ryan Hicks, Farmers Alliance * Matt Grieb, CHS
- * Jeff Reitz, JAR Performance Automotive * Dr. Patrick Romm, Integrated Health and Wellness * Eric Wicker, Viega

Ernie and Florene Goering Named Farm Family of 2020

(By Cindy Baldwin)

The McPherson Chamber Ag Committee has selected the Ernie and Florene Goering family as the 2020 Farm Family. The Goerings' farm is located between Galva, Moundridge and Elyria. They also have family ground near Garden City that was purchased by his great-grandfather, and which they still actively farm.



The Goerings produce wheat, corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum on their diversified farming operation in McPherson County. They have gradually transitioned from conventional tillage practices to a mix of predominantly no-till, minimum till, and strip till. Crop ground is managed conventionally for fertilization and chemical controls. The farm in western Kansas, however, has been certified organic for the last 15 years. The organic wheat grown on it is sold through a broker or directly to a mill for organic flour. Ernie said they really didn't have to change any of their farming practices on the western Kansas farm to become certified organic as that is how they had been farming it for years, utilizing fallow/planting cycles to help with weed and pest control and to efficiently utilize moisture on the dryland farm. If he had to pick a favorite crop, Ernie said it would be wheat. Florene is fond of it, too, as she saves part of their organic wheat each year and grinds it for their own use.

Ernie is the third generation of the family to farm the ground in Lone Tree Township and the couples' daughter Jenny and their son Matthew and his wife Chelsey are the fourth to be actively involved in the operation. The couple's other two daughters, Cynthia and husband Caleb Quick, and Sherlynn and husband Anthony Livengood, also help out during harvest and other times if needed. They have six grandchildren. The Goering home place was named a Century Farm by Kansas Farm Bureau in 2003. Century Farms have been in a family for at least 100 years and continue to be owned/farmed by the family during that time. Ernie's grandfather purchased the original farm in 1900. Ernie grew up helping with the farming, eventually joining his father – also named Ernest – when he left school. When asked how long he had been farming, Ernie said he's been farming his whole life, but they have been farming as a couple since their marriage in 1980.

They are pleased that Matthew and Jenny have joined the operation. "We always hoped the kids would follow us, but never pushed them into it. It was their choice," Florene said.

Florene grew up on a farm in the Whitewater community and trained as a nurse. She has been a full-time part of the farming operation since she and Ernie married. Many things have changed in that time and it hasn't always been easy, but the couple wouldn't change their choice to farm.

"There are lots of challenges (in farming), but the rewards are so much more," Florene said. Ernie added that it takes patience, but it has been worth it.

The Goerings are active in Garden Community Church and both Matthew and Jenny are involved in Farm Bureau at the county and state level. Jenny has also been part of the KARL (agriculture leadership) program and commodity groups. Congratulations to the Goering family.

Dave Christiansen Receives 2020 Friend of Agriculture

(By Cindy Baldwin)

Dave Christiansen has been selected by the McPherson Chamber Ag Committee as the 2020 Friend of Agriculture. Christiansen, who has worked in co-operatives since his first job unloading wheat trucks as a 17-year-old at the Great Bend elevator, retired from Mid Kansas Cooperative (MKC) based in Moundridge in April 2020 after 16 years as president and CEO of the coop. MKC was formed with the merger of three co-operatives in Moundridge, Buhler and Groveland and has grown from its core territory in McPherson, Reno and Harvey Counties to nearly 50 locations in an area stretching from Plains to Paola, Manhattan to the Oklahoma border, with most of that growth occurring during Christiansen's tenure.



Christiansen said that while the success of the coop was important, its stated mission was to "help farmers be more successful every day" and, by extension, add value to their communities. "We wanted to do what's best for the farmer." It is for that commitment to adding value to the farm economy and rural communities which MKC serves that Christiansen is being recognized.

As member-owned businesses, coops were formed to provide improved opportunities for their member farmers. "We knew our job was reinvesting in rural America for the betterment of our members," Christiansen said. Under his leadership, MKC has made infrastructure improvements, added new services, introduced technology, and provided educational opportunities for members, essentially transitioning it from a mid-20th century business model to a modern one that can efficiently handle grain and inputs, and provide technology support to area farmers.

"We produce more than we can consume locally," Christiansen said, adding that for MKC's members to be successful and receive the best price possible, the coop had to improve its abilities to handle and market grain to the wider market. Providing storage and marketing vehicles -- such as the terminal between Canton and Galva and TMA, LLC, -- along with other services were all critical to that financial success, he said.

That commitment to investment extended beyond farming operations to the community at large. Supporting youth leadership opportunities has been a focus through sponsorships and donations to 4-H and FFA groups in MKC-served communities, state-wide and local Ag in the Classroom activities, scholarships, and an intern partnership with Kansas State University, which provides job options in local communities. The MKC Way employee committee was established to look for local projects which allow employees to impact their communities and have included organizing food, coat and blood drives and safety and educational events. The coop sponsors a variety of appreciation and educational events for members, often partnering with other community groups.

"The MKC Way Committee gives our over 600 employees options to give back to the communities in which they live and raise their families," Christiansen said. He gave credit to the board members he has worked with over the years and MKC employees for supporting efforts to invest in the farming infrastructure, economy, and communities in the MKC trade area. For his leadership in these efforts, we recognize Dave Christiansen as a Friend of Agriculture.

OMEGA Nominations

The Outstanding McPherson area Eighth Grade Award (OMEGA) is a long-standing tradition that coincides with the origin of All Schools Day, to recognize 8th grade students. Each year the McPherson Chamber of Commerce honors 8th grade students from McPherson County for their courage, compassion, and service.

Help us celebrate inspirational 8th graders who are making a powerful and lasting impact on all those around them, by nominating them for the OMEGA award. Let's face it, the pandemic has added new challenges, but it has also been a time of resilience and opportunities for everyone to shine through adversity. We want to know about the 8th grade student who shows compassion to peers in challenging situations or has courageously overcome struggles to help others. The young leaders in your neighborhood who pitch in to help, and the volunteer who graciously shares time and talents to help an organization. Send us your nomination of the 8th grader who is taking the initiative to make positive changes, or the role model who is leading by example.

To nominate a McPherson County 8th grade student who is making a difference by their attitude and actions, please fill out and submit the OMEGA form by April 19th. Forms are available on the McPherson Chamber of Commerce website www.mcphersonchamber.org or can be picked up at the office, 306 N. Main in McPherson.

United Way Celebration Day

The McPherson City Commission and McPherson County Commission declared March 15th "United Way Celebration Day." And here's the reason for the celebration.

Each year, United Way of McPherson County embarks on an annual campaign to provide core support to 17 McPherson County nonprofit programs. When we began last September, we were uncertain how things would go this time around with our traditional workplace campaigns. After all, a lot of people were working from home. Some were missing work because they were in quarantine due to a COVID-19 exposure or were isolating as they had COVID. How might that affect giving?

Maybe it was the pandemic that created an even more charitable giving spirit resulting in United Way of McPherson County's campaign hitting a record-setting \$310,166.68.

United Way volunteer Chad Hitt, who served as Co-Chair for the campaign said: "I am completely humbled by the generosity of our community. This has not been an easy time for many due to the pandemic. For our community members and local businesses to rise up and not only contribute to the United Way Community Response and Recovery Fund to help those in need due to COVID, but to then put together the single highest campaign since the start of our McPherson County United Way, is absolutely amazing. We as a campaign committee and members of the United Way board are so thankful and appreciative of our strong community."

Some of our nonprofit partners need other sources of funding, so they hold special events around the year. Most events were wiped off the schedule, making the need even greater this year.

We'd like to thank all of you who "gave at the office," even if you haven't been at the office that much in the past year. We'd like to thank those who coordinated workplace business campaigns during a time of severe disruption at many businesses and industries. Running an employee



ROB MACKEY
Executive Director
United Way of McPherson County

campaign at a company is work and the pandemic made it even more challenging. We could not have done this without you. And to entrepreneurs and retirees, we thank you as well.

Thanks also to Marc Robertson, our campaign co-chair, and campaign committee members Tami Gossett and Ronda Sjogren, who gave many hours to the campaign this year.

Here are the partner agencies and programs receiving funding from the United Way of McPherson County campaign: CASA, A Voice for Children; Child Care Aware; CPRF (formerly known as the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation); GraceMed; Heart to Heart Child Advocacy Center; McPherson County Council on Aging; McPherson County Crime Stoppers; McPherson Housing Coalition & Brush Up Mac; McPherson Special Olympics; Meals on Wheels; Safehope; STEP MC (Steps to End Poverty of McPherson County); Trinity United Methodist Church Summer Lunch Program (Lindsborg and Marquette) and three McPherson Family YMCA Programs, the Middle School Learning Lab, Safety Around Water, and Y-Kids.

This has been such a challenging era for these partners. They had to get creative to continue to provide services that were normally face-to-face. But some went virtual, others social distanced with masks. These nonprofits went to the wall to stay connected and supportive.

The bottom line is, giving to United Way improves the lives of thousands of people in McPherson County through the work of these partners. The pandemic has magnified how vital their missions are to local people in need.

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...To Yours*

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