

The Chamber Business Journal

August 2021

Community ~ Growth ~ Leadership ~ Vision

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Congratulations and Welcome New Chamber Member

Ristorante Italiano Di Famiglia

204 N. Main St., McPherson

620-242-1013

Contact: Diana Griffis

Facebook: Ristorante Italiano Di Famiglia

"Hello! My name is Diana Griffis. I moved to Kansas a little over five years ago. I have been in the food industry for over 25 years! I never thought that I would ever own a restaurant, but here I am! I realized that McPherson needed an Italian Restaurant when I worked at Genova's in Newton. I went to work in Newton over five years ago and I brought both of my cooks with me from Missouri. After two and a half years working at Genova's, I decided to open my own restaurant in McPherson. With the permission of the owner of the recipes, all the way from Leavenworth, Kansas, we brought it to McPherson! We are excited to be part of this community and we pray to be here for years to come! Thank you all for the love and support that you have brought to us!" - Diana

Restaurant Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 11-2 and 4-8 pm; Friday & Saturday 11-2 and 4-9 pm.

Grateful For Those Who Show Up



I have had various conversations lately that end up circling back to being grateful for those that show up. Practically everywhere you look these days you will see a "we're hiring" or "job openings-all shifts." And yet these businesses are open and putting in extra effort to serve you.

The restaurant staff is explaining to customers that certain meal items are not currently offered because of product availability. This on top of reduced open hours because of a shortage in staffing. As patrons are disappointed with these realities, that are out of the restaurants control, did we stop to tell the staff or owner how much we appreciate them for showing up? They need to hear it.

Debbie Hawkinson
Executive Director, McPherson Chamber of Commerce

As the school year begins and the teachers head back to their classrooms, imagine their excitement! But is their enthusiasm dimmed a little with apprehension? These new or returning teachers are very likely preparing mentally, to navigate new procedures and possibly frustrated parents, while motivating their students to learn and thrive. As parents and a community, we need to be grateful that they show up. They show up and give a 110% effort because they care about our kids. Thank them.

The medical field is another biggie for me. I have friends and family who work at hospitals. They too are working with a shortage of staff. I'm sure everyone has occasionally put it overtime, and that is ok, but imagine doing it all the time. On top of that, they are working with patients who are struggling, families who are upset, and COVID patients who don't have much chance. This is the reality they endure all the time, yet they show up with hearts heavy, to help save lives and make a difference. Next time, don't focus on having to wear a mask in the hospital, take the time to tell them they are rock stars!

To all the managers and business owners, appreciate those that show up. I listened to a manager who was dealing with an employee that was "job hopping" to whatever business would pay the most. Before you play the game of raising the wage of someone who is always on the lookout for more (the squeaky wheel), remember the loyal employees who show up. They are your greatest asset.

Our community can be an incredible support system, especially in times of change and uncertainty. I would like to encourage you, every time you interact with others, take a moment to consider the circumstances, have patience for the little inconveniences, and remember to be kind. Be grateful for those with a positive light who show up and make a difference. You are appreciated!

100 Years Strong-Chamber History Stories

The McPherson Chamber of Commerce, chartered on May 3, 1921, is celebrating 100 years of serving the McPherson community. We are proud of the many milestones and the impact the Chamber has made throughout the years, and we plan to celebrate all year. Enjoy the snippets of our rich history, the visionary leaders and what they accomplished, and some fun photos we have discovered. As we celebrate the past, we also look to the future and what initiatives the Chamber will focus on for a better and stronger tomorrow. Thank you for being a part of our story!

Weekly Coffees Boost Connections

"Beginning June 4, Weekly Coffees Planned" This was the headline in the June 4, 2003, newspaper and referred to the weekly coffees first organized by the "Membership Services, Hospitality and Legislative Committee" of the Chamber. Back in 2003 the

coffees were held on Wednesday mornings and records indicate that Vanguard was the first business to host a Chamber Coffee, now known as Chamber Connections.

Something I got a chuckle out of was how they were referred to in a 2003 document "The 9:30 a.m. coffee and donut gathering would be held at the host business." Although we still share an occasional donut, the weekly gatherings are focused on making business connections. They are the perfect way to learn about local business products and services, or non-profit organizations and their outreach. Chamber Connections have their own vibe, a positive environment to build business relationships. Check out our Facebook page for a stroll through years of Chamber Connection photo albums.

Visionary Chamber Presidents and Board of Directors

The McPherson Chamber of Commerce strives to be an important energizing force in our community. The exact wording of our mission statement has varied through the years, but the overall intent is very much the same as it was 100 years ago when the McPherson Chamber of Commerce was first organized. Our mission is "Visionary Leadership Promoting a Vibrant Business Community and Enhanced Quality of Life."

The McPherson Chamber of Commerce board of directors consists of 12 members including the board president, treasurer, president-elect, and immediate past-president. All directors serve a 3 year-term and play a vital role in evaluating and establishing new initiatives and programs to serve our members and community.

In our 100-year history, the McPherson Chamber of Commerce has been shaped by the many visionary leaders. See a list of the Chamber Board Presidents at www.mcphersonchamber.org then click on Chamber History Blog under the News tab.



McPherson Advertising Council (Retail Arm of the Chamber of Commerce)

The McPherson Advertising Council (M.A.C.) was a promotion tool for McPherson, mentioned as far back as 1967/1968. MAC was originally comprised of a 15-member board with 6 committees.

"Whereas, retailers, wholesalers, service firms and individuals, are interested in creating a better market center for their trade territory the McPherson Advertising Council was organized as the retail development branch of the McPherson Chamber of Commerce."

M.A.C. was reorganized in following years and letterhead states that the "McPherson Advertising Council is a voluntary organization comprised of retailers, wholesalers, service firms, and individuals that are members of the McPherson Chamber of Commerce." "The two basic purposes of the McPherson Advertising Council, 1. Create a better business community for McPherson through general cooperation and coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and other organization of the community. 2. Organize advertising programs and promotions for the business community."

What did M.A.C. do you ask?

- In the June 11, 1974, board minutes, president of the MAC Council, Clayton Skinner, reported that the "Fun In The Sun Promotion had turned out to be a 'Pain In The Rain.'"
- A 1980 McPherson Advertising Council Calendar Committee meeting listed these promotions: Dollar Day, M.A.C. Spring Fair, Mother's Day, All Schools' Day, Father's Day, Rodeo Week, 4-H Fair, Rural Appreciation, Sidewalk Bazaar, Gold Rush Days, County Court House promotion, and Spook House.
- In a report on plans for the Rodeo Week Promotion to be held July 16, 1981, included a "western swing dance in front of the Community Building. A bucking machine will also be in that block, as well as the road apple throwing contest." Other suggestions noted were a wheelbarrow race with city officials, and a burro race between members of the news media, but apparently the tobacco spitting contest that had been discussed in an early meeting did not make it to the final planning stages!
- 10/26/1982 minutes say "The City Commission has given approval for a plan to decorate the parking meter poles as peppermint sticks (with red and white ribbon or tape). Each business is asked to do the poles in front of their business." It also mentioned "The Senior Center will be operating a 'for pay' gift wrapping service."
- Other good stuff we found: "Sold over a 1000 'I Love Mac' Buttons", held a White Elephant Days, Santa was brought in by helicopter to kick off the Christmas promotion, organized Moonlight Madness, Washington's Birthday Bonanza, Ladies Appreciation Day, Sidewalk Sales, and a Welcome Back Students event.

Towards the end of 1988, the McPherson Advertising Council's role of organizing advertising programs and promotions for the downtown merchants was transitioned to a newly formed McPherson City Center association. In 1996, the name was changed to McPherson Main Street.

Although the McPherson Advertising Council is no longer a "retail arm of the chamber" the McPherson Chamber of Commerce continues to promote McPherson in various ways and collaborate with other organizations to "create a better business community!"

**Thank you to Atelier Design and Print, who printed this fun copy of McPherson Advertising Council sticker for us.

(continued on pg. 2 Chamber History)

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Troy Glidden - Director

2020 - 2021 Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

President- Kendra Oakes, Peoples Bank & Trust * President-Elect- Lauren Hughes, Wise & Reber L.C.

* 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

(continued from pg. 1 Chamber History)

Who Wore the Snazzy Plaid Jackets?

The President's Club was established in 1958, but not much was mentioned about it in the early board minutes. An undated Policy and Procedures document says the McPherson Chamber of Commerce President's Club was a committee of the Chamber organized for the purpose of "maintaining progressive investor programs and continual public relations." The President's Club held annual membership drives and hosted ribbon cutting ceremonies for new businesses. They were also responsible for the Chamber plaques edged in "MacPherson" tartan plaid on a walnut base. Some local businesses may still have these plaques displayed!

Then a Contact Club was mentioned. In the April 1974 board minutes, Chairman Norvin Rolander "reported to the Board that Contact Club member Tom Harms is the first member to win a blazer under the new point system." Points (according to the President's Club Policy and Procedures) were obtained by attending meetings, ribbon cuttings, contacting members and recruiting new members, with various incentives including "a distinctive blue blazer" (not plaid) "to each new President's Club member who earns a total of 750 points." I am a little confused, but am going to assume that the Contact Club was another name for the President's Club?

The Ambassador's Club was formed in 1970 and took the place of the Public Relations Committee (not the President's Club). The President's Club and Ambassadors Club were both listed in the 1980's minutes so they must have co-existed for a while. The Ambassadors Club "would act strictly in matters of good-will for the town." They were the official hosts for the Chamber at all Chamber meetings. The Ambassadors also planned and carried out the annual meeting each fall. Back in 1970, the Ambassadors were appointed by the Board President, and board minutes stated that "each member would furnish his own blazer with the emblem patch furnished by the Chamber." Today the Chamber Ambassadors are a volunteer group that assist with ribbon cuttings and public relations.

Now you want to know who wore the plaid blazers? A report from 1982/83 includes a line item for Ambassador jackets; genuine "MacPherson" tartan plaid sport jackets tailored in Scotland! So, although I have yet to confirm this, I am going to assume the picture (found on the McPherson website mcpersonchamber.org under the News tab and Chamber History Blog) is of the Ambassadors Club. Anyone still have one of these plaid prestigious jackets?

Recruiting the Globe Refinery to McPherson



This interesting history nugget is from the book *That Great Heart: The Life of I.A. O'Shaughnessy Oilman & Philanthropist* by Doug Hennes. "In 1931, the McPherson Chamber of Commerce approached I.A. O'Shaughnessy about building a refinery in the central Kansas town. It proved to be a perfect match, and it came at a very unusual time in our nation's history.

During the height of the Great Depression, the building of the refinery would create 350 construction jobs. The chamber liked O'Shaughnessy and the prospect of working with an aggressive and successful independent refiner with the potential to become the town's largest employer. O'Shaughnessy appreciated both the chamber's entrepreneurial generosity-it furnished a location a mile south of town for the refinery-and the opportunity to develop a full-service operation that would meet Globe's refining needs for years to come.

He formed the Globe Oil & Refining Company of Kansas in 1932 to construct and operate the \$1 million refinery, which would have a capacity of 10,000 barrels a day. Ground was broken on July 12, and construction took only six months. The facility's one hundred new workers quickly adopted a tenacious bulldog as their mascot." ...

... The refinery opened in March of 1933 and the "Chamber of Commerce celebrated the opening with a five-hundred-person dinner the evening of March 14, 1933, in the town's convention hall." ...

.... "O'Shaughnessy told the dinner audience "I am grateful for what the community has done for us. It is indeed great happiness for me to be here. As soon as you get in the county the Depression disappears. There is happiness and contentment here."

The Globe Oil Refining Company was sold to the National Cooperative Refinery Association (NCRA) in 1943 and remained a McPherson landmark for many years. According to the CHS website, by 2011 the refinery was co-owned by CHS, and in 2015 it officially became the CHS Refinery at McPherson.

This incredible story started with the perfect connection. A recruitment effort with an unfathomable impact, and an amazing refinery that will continue to enrich our community well beyond our lifetime.

2020 Leadership McPherson Class Project Benefits Youth

The McPherson Middle School Supply Closet, a brainchild of the School Supply Train committee, is no longer an idea but a reality thanks to the coordinating efforts of the 2020 Leadership McPherson Class.

The 2020 Leadership McPherson Class approached the School Supply Train interested in helping bring school supplies to those in need. The class was then introduced to the idea of focusing their efforts to purchase school supplies for 6th-8th graders, an age group that the School Supply Train was unable to reach because of their current efforts being focused on kindergarten-5th grade students.

The class knew the initial purchase of the supplies for the closet would be large, but it was made possible by the incredibly generous donations from the McPherson community and the First United Methodist Church members. The 2020 Leadership McPherson Class raised over \$7,000 since announcing their goal in November to bring the Supply Closet to the McPherson Middle School. The First United Methodist Church Committee, who was involved in the first meetings with the McPherson Middle School to discuss the idea of a supply closet, raised \$6,000 in donations from their church members.

With the supplies purchased, all teachers and counselors at the McPherson Middle School will be equipped with supplies for any student who may need supplies at the beginning and during the 2021-2022 school year. The 2020 Leadership McPherson Class is excited to see this initiative carried on for years to come.

"Thank you, McPherson community, for your generous donations to help us see our goal become a reality. Thank you, First United Methodist Church Committee, for working alongside us in raising funds and purchasing supplies. Thank you, Scooter's Coffee, for hosting a fundraiser and donating a portion of your sales. We also want to thank Isaac Coutre, Store Manager of Walmart McPherson, and his team for helping to gather and organize the school supplies. As well as their \$200 donation (Walmart and Scooters may be large national chains, but we are blessed to have individuals in charge with a heart for our community). It really is amazing what OUR COMMUNITY can do when we come together to bring about change." -2020 Leadership McPherson Class:

Trisha Bengston - Adams Brown, Sharyn Boese - McPherson Public Library, Mark Brinck - McPherson Police Department, Marissa Edenstrom - Sunflower Mercantile, Kylie Goering - Ferguson Production, Hannah Hitt - McPherson Center for Health, Abby Trenkle - Sunflower Bank, Jessie Wagner - McPherson News-Ledger, and Michael McGowan - McPherson Chamber of Commerce.

Leadership McPherson is a professional development program of the McPherson Chamber.



Gwyn Muto – Inside & Outside, the Best of Both Worlds

Gwyn Muto grew up in Hill City, Kansas, a town of about 15-hundred people. Like many kids in smaller communities, she was involved in everything. Basketball, volleyball, band, drill team, golf. "I like to be active," she said. After high school, she attended Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina. She got a HPER degree, which stands for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. She worked while going to college, at both the YMCA and YWCA in Salina as an early morning lifeguard for their swimming pools. She also taught fitness classes and helped with youth sports and became Youth Director for the Salina Family YMCA in 1991.

ROB MACKEY
Executive Director
United Way of
McPherson County

In the mid-90s, Gwyn took over as the Executive Director of the Downtown YMCA in Wichita, and it was October 1, 1998, when she came to McPherson as the YMCA CEO and the Superintendent of the McPherson Recreation Commission (MRC). It's relatively rare for Ys and rec commissions to be together, but Muto says the arrangement in McPherson dates back to 1946. She's fielded many inquiries from other Y directors how McPherson does it. "It works better for the community. And you don't compete. You've got two different organizations," said Muto. "If you work together, you can only do more together." She emphasizes the finances of each organization are totally separate.

While many of the Y activities take place indoors, Rec Commission activities are mostly outdoors. "It's the best of both worlds," she said. "It's diverse for staff, as well as me, because you're not always stuck inside. Or you're not always outside. When the seasons change, you get a little change with what you do. It kind of gives you a break."

With a 30-plus year career, Muto gives a lot of credit to others. "Well, I had great bosses and I learned a lot. Now I have great staff and a great board of directors," she said.

So, what is United Way of McPherson County's connection? We partner with the YMCA on three important programs:

- McPherson Middle School Learning Lab is an afterschool program whose main goal is to provide homework support to students.
- Safety Around Water (SAW) provides basic swim instruction to 2nd grade students
- Y-Kids provides childcare, organized activities such as arts and crafts, group games, STEM activities and healthy eating.

COVID-19 challenged the delivery of all these programs, but the staff developed creative alternatives, especially during times of virtual learning. "(The Learning Lab) was probably a godsend to these children," said Muto. "These kids needed help with their homework. It made a huge difference with their grades."

"On all those programs, we lose money," said Muto. "United Way is a huge supporter for those programs. Without United Way funding, we wouldn't be able to run them."

Early in the pandemic, the governor's order to wellness centers like the Y was hard, said Muto. "People work out to keep themselves healthy, and to feel better. They don't feel well when they can't. So it hurt people's health. And so it was hard for us (to shut down). For the most part, people supported us. We had a lot of people that helped us with donations and donated their memberships."

We at United Way commend Muto, the staffs for both the Y and MRC as well as the Y board and MRC members for their innovations during this challenging time to **keep us all healthy.**

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