

## Mayors Conference, Thursday, June 15, 2017

Vicki Cain, President of the Marshall County Chamber of Commerce, Speaker

### **What does the Chamber do?**

\*We are a membership based organization consisting of large and small businesses. We even offer a seasonal membership to those that don't open every day. We have several individual memberships, as well as, non-profit and government categories.

Our mission is to promote business, industry and tourism, enhance economic development and serve as a catalyst for improving the overall quality of life in Marshall County.

\* We are governed by an eight member board of directors. Some are here today.

\*We have a full time director and two part-time employees, one of which is a college student intern.

\* The Marshall County Chamber of Commerce has been in existence since the 1920's.

\*There is not enough time to tell you all that we do. A review of our 2016 year is on the screen so you can see for yourself that we do much more than "answer phones". I will highlight a few of our successes:

1. **Membership Guide.** We published our fourth membership guide and have copies here today for you to pick up and keep. We are now out of contract with NovoPrint USA and will take bids for the next guide with our publishing members. We are focusing on a different look to the next book. There will be more community spotlights and focus on members and their stories.

2. **Agriculture Appreciation Breakfast.** We hosted our second breakfast last year. We partner with the JECDB and Columbia State Community College. This breakfast recognizes all local farmers and those in the agricultural industry in Marshall County.

3. **Marshall County Tourism Brochure.** Currently, we have no presence at any of the interstate welcome centers in Tennessee. That is about to change. We partnered with the City of Lewisburg, JECDB, EDC Tourism Committee to have a brochure printed highlighting all of our wonderful tourism spots in our county. That is scheduled to be printed by August 1st. A grant from the Department of Tourism and contribution from the EDC Tourism Committee funded the cost to print the brochures.

4. **Leadership Marshall.** This program has been going strong since 1996 under the direction of Lynda Potts. The classes are full each time and the projects that do are vital contributions to the community. We are grateful for this program.

4. **Newly Redesigned Website and Calendar.** We have tripled our number of clicks to our membership directory due to our new site. Our Member to Member section will be launched soon. It will offer members the chance to offer discounts, communicate directly with each other and pay online for items

like seminars, membership dues, breakfast tickets and more. Our interactive calendar makes it easy to add events, check on community events, and even share the events with friends or employees.

**5. Kid's Fun in the Sun Day at Victory Fun Park.** This was our first year to host the event. It is designed to promote activity and raise awareness on what the Chamber does. We will host a bowling event in the fall. Children are our future so why not reach out to our future leaders!

**6. Relocation Packages.** I cannot say enough about this. Our Chamber Staff requested relo's from other Chambers to compare what they offer and our Chamber topped them all! We receive thank you notes from some because ours is so extensive. This is a service overlooked by many. We offer packages for weddings, reunions, new employees, new comers, relocations, or just those looking for information about the County. Please call the Chamber for information. We recently put together 75 for a rally at Horton Park.

**7. Other services.** We also offer ribbon cutting scissors and stands for your special day. Staff will assist you getting the word out and provide you with information such as who to invite and provide you with labels.

Within the Chamber we provide Certificates of Origin to those businesses needing this service. This stamp certifies that the product being shipped out was truly made in Marshall County.

Need a place to meet? The Chamber allows our board room to members for meetings, coffees, and presentations at no cost.

### **How is the Chamber funded?**

1. **Membership** which is comprised of tiered levels: Presidential, Deluxe, and Standard. There is information on our website about membership and the benefits of each level. We hold steady at 200!

2. **Three fundraisers** per year that bring in around \$7000 to \$10,000 total.

\*Junior Miss Marshall County for young ladies 7-15

\*Rusted Magnolia Marketplace, which brings people from all over the state of Tennessee

\*July 4 Celebration, which has been taking place since the 1920's

3. **Two community partners:**

\* Gold Partner: Marshall County EDC Tourism Committee who increased our funding for 2018 to \$12,500. We are most grateful for this!

\*Silver Partner: The City of Lewisburg, who pays our utilities and contributes \$1,500.

4. **Chamber Directory:**

\* Profit sharing from this publication nets the Chamber an average of \$1700 every two years

We are extremely grateful for our funding, however, in comparison with other Chambers of our size we are ***still the least funded Chamber in the State of Tennessee.***

Although we fall short of yearly funding, we are abundant in donors. We have loyal members we can count on to donate postage, office supplies and services. We are proud of our high membership retention rate each year.

### **What are the future goals of the Chamber?**

The face of the Chamber is changing and we know that "Business as Usual" will lead to extinction.

We know we have to shed the aging habits of decades past and look to future trends in order to be thriving and dynamic. We must continue to evolve.

To do that we plan on implementing the following over the next three years:

1. **Establish web presence.** Continue to look for ways to promote the Chamber on Social Media and the Internet. With our Marketplace being launched soon, we will later add a pay pal feature so e-commerce will be possible at through our website. We also are going to offer live podcasts and videos.
2. **Inclusion of millennials into the Chamber.** They make up the largest segment of the population and by 2025 they will be the majority of the labor force. They have a unique relationship with technology and how it connects them to the world. Their unique skills and work styles will add value to the Chamber.
3. **Hire another permanent part-time person.** This employee will be director of tourism services and promotion and marketing.
4. **Grow our membership.** We plan to host a membership drive. Not only will this increase our funding, but it will get more people involved in the Chamber and community.
5. **Continue to partner with the JECDB and City of Lewisburg.** We are appreciative of the opportunities we get to partner with these organizations and look forward to future projects. We do represent the whole county and cannot focus on just one community rather all of Marshall County.
6. **Establish "Community Based Programs".** People want to be heard, so we are looking into ways that the Community can voice their concerns through the Chamber, after all we have long been considered the "Arm of the Community"
7. **Host a series of seminars on various topics of interest to the members and businesses.** With our membership in the Tennessee Chamber, we hope to get references on speakers and programs of interest to the community.

8. **Junior Board.** We will offer positions for 8 seats on a Jr. Board of Directors for ages 16-22. We are looking for someone to head this up. If you are interested let us know.

In closing, I would like to invite you to become a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Our membership forms are online and in the Chamber Guide. We are here to serve you so let us know how we can help. Thank you.