

Membership drive underway to spark community growth, newly selected president seated

by Janice Smith

Newly elected Chamber President Randy Gray called the Jan. 10 meeting to order with secretary Deb Burnett and vice president Darrin Burnett also seated. Patty Clark, John and Jeanette Earley, Dr. Todd Babcock, Miss Girard Maddie Robinette, Bob Ernst, Millie Burgess, Dr. Juanita Rule, Paulette Miller, Dottie Dambacher, Peggy and Bill Giles and Janice Smith were among the attendees at the breakfast meeting at Pleasant Hill Residence. First National Bank served as sponsor.

With the slate of officers accepted, Gray and membership praised the efforts of six year previous president Victor Angulo, with a plaque to be presented for his service.

Previous meeting minutes and treasurer's report were approved, with Todd Babcock serving as interim treasurer. Nominating Committee continues to search to fill the position.

Membership discussed accessing guest speakers, time limits and subject matter for speakers and scheduling, not to coincide with busier months for the

Chamber.

Todd Babcock spoke for the Community Center, stating the focus is now on completion of the kitchen and several rental requests have been received. Drywall is to be finished in the kitchen, as well as the purchase of appliances. A committee meeting will soon be scheduled, with Babcock targeting the summer as the Center becoming completely operational. Donations are still needed to finish the project and commemorative walkway bricks remain available. Within the conversation, John and Jeanette Earley announced proceeds from the recent Kiwanis-sponsored "Breakfast With Santa" were donated to the Community Center building project to further work on completion of the kitchen.

Bill Giles reported on the Girard business listing sign located at the four-way stop, stating two listings were recently put up and when weather breaks, two additional blanks are ready as well at backboard work can be done.

Discussion focused on expanding Chamber membership and attracting new business. A cam-

paign will begin to personally contact existing business owners with an invitation to join, with the invitation also extended to individual residents who are not business owners but are interested in the betterment and growth of the community.

For Beautification Committee, Randy Gray reported City Council officials have at last completed a legal effort for reclamation/demolition of a vacant property on Sherman Street.

Dr. Rule reported for Education Committee, stating an auction will be scheduled to coincide with an event to be held at the new Community Center, offering the new items donated by Dr. Robert Jenkins, with proceeds benefitting the Community Center, all to be announced.

Included in Correspondence, the group discussed the Route 66 Blue Carpet Corridor fee of \$300 (normally split with the city) and its validity for the city.

Discussion again turned to Chamber meeting attendance, with suggestions including invitations to attend be extended to a police department officer and representatives from the Virden

Chamber and North Mac Ministerial Association.

Emergency Management coordinator John Earley briefly spoke concerning the heating system problem at the South Campus; Darrin Burnett reported for Pleasant Hill Village (PHV) activities, stating employees are still taking down Christmas items, the Valentine's Day Flower Sale for residents is underway, and the annual PHV Easter Egg Hunt is set for Saturday, March 24.

A Chamber breakfast meeting sponsor and location list was formatted for the new year, with the Feb. 14, 7 a.m. meeting sponsored by and located at Pleasant Hill Residence. Additional locations suggested were County Market and the firehouse.

To close the meeting, Jeanette Earley announced Miss Girard 2016/Miss Macoupin County 2017 Colleen Nichols will participate at state level competition Jan. 20 and 21.



Initial gathering of new year for Chamber