

Interim superintendent addresses organization, newest business owner welcomed to Girard community

*Photos and story
by Janice Smith*

Three guest speakers addressed the crowd attending the March 8 Girard Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting held at Pleasant Hill Residence, with North Mac Ministerial Association as sponsor.

District #34 Interim Superintendent Bill Mattingly introduced himself providing a brief background, including the fact his administrative career began within the Girard School District in 1980, and praising Chamber members for their efforts within the community, describing them as a tremendous resource. Mattingly commended the current School Board and staff as youth education advocates, outlined what the District's criteria is for the hiring of a new superintendent, which included a community survey, and stated applications are closing March 9. An independent professional screening process will take place fol-

lowed by Board approval, with a selection to be announced in May or June.

Following approval of previous minutes and treasurer's report, President Victor Angulo introduced North Mac District #34 School South Campus media specialist Dani Allen. Allen gave a presentation on educational/motivational speaker Mark Morrow and his presentations to youth, requesting Chamber to help support/fund his visit to both the North and South Campus facilities (high school and middle school levels), at an approximate \$2,500 for each visit. Chamber later approved a \$500 donation. North Mac Foundation member Juanita Rule, also attending the meeting, discussed the possibility of support through Foundation grant monies. Police Chief Dave Campbell spoke, stating city crime rates involving youth have dramatically risen, endorsing the speaker's visit and encouraging Chamber support as

a community effort. If funding is raised, the visit will be scheduled in the fall of 2018.

North Mac Elementary/Intermediate School counselor, Becky Hampton, made Chamber aware of the Child Abuse Prevention Month, with the District making available and displaying blue pinwheels. Proceeds benefit the Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery. The school is also sponsoring "Panther Pack Program", designed to discreetly distribute backpacks containing additional food and sent home with children on the weekend who may be in need. Chamber unanimously later approved a \$100 donation to the program. Informational materials on both programs will be dropped off at city hall by Hampton.

Dr. Todd Babcock gave an update on the new community center construction, with possible limited rentals to take place as early as late April; Randy Gray reported on Blue Carpet Cor-

ridor, with discussion to take place at the next Chamber meeting, also stating the Carnival has been contracted for Festival Days; Deb Burnett announced volunteers are needed in sales for Festival booklets, a meeting to be scheduled; Juanita Rule spoke for Scholarship Committee, stating funding is becoming difficult questioning the longevity of the program; Maureen Nichols spoke for Miss Girard, Colleen Nichols, reporting on activities underway involving Colleen, including the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt, with plans in the works for a program to involve former queens with community-related projects, to include the new community center which is to open during her reign.

Angulo welcomed newest Chamber member Bill Brand, owner of Jackpot Gaming at Billy's Hideout, located downtown in the former Ted Lay Real Estate Office building. Brand introduced himself and his business, offering

to become involved and support Chamber projects.

Paulette Miller announced Pleasant Hill Village will host a March 20 program through the Macoupin County Health Department on chronic disease and management, with the public invited to attend. Pleasant Hill activity director Tabitha Bock announced the annual Easter Egg Hunt is set for April 28.

Randy Gray, speaking for City Council, reported the downtown square streets will receive a re-sealing update, not done for at least 20 years, funded through Motor Fuel Tax monies.

Also attending the meeting, Chamber officers Mike Mauk and Darren Burnett, Bill and Peggy Giles, Millie Burgess, Kevin Patrick, Nathan Jones, Bill Deck, Dottie Dambacher, K.C. Kirchner and Janice Smith.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 12, at Doc's Soda Fountain, with First Baptist Church as sponsor.