

March 12, 2013

The membership of the South Platte United Chambers of Commerce met March 12, 2013 at the Holdrege Country Club, Holdrege, NE.

President Tom Hastings welcomed the members. Membership approved the meeting agenda. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Balance sheet shows \$14,418 in checking/savings. Discussion followed on the list of businesses that haven't paid their membership dues in 2012 or 2011 concluding in volunteers offering to contact the business owners one more time for membership dues. President Hastings asked that the organization receive a more detailed report of the services provided by Jean Issler. Betty agreed to inquire. Treasurer, Sharon Hueftle said that invoices need to be sent out to all members for 2013. She asked a volunteer to handle this task. Jay Hall volunteered. He will work on the invoices the afternoon of March 28.

Old Business

Press Releases

Betty will contact Jean Issler and Gene Morris to learn more about the process in place. President Hastings said, "We need to get the word out about our speakers and the meetings."

April Meeting

Legislative Reception

The Legislative Reception will be held on April 9, 2013 at the Nebraska Club

Location: Nebraska Club,
233 S 13th St #1708
Lincoln, NE 68508

Topic: Reception for members of the Nebraska Unicameral

E-Mail registrations to: hastings@hastingschamber.com or
lmartin@hastingschamber.com

May Meeting

The South Platte organization will meet in Hastings in May. The topic is the Healthcare Reform Act and What it Means to Nebraska Businesses. E-Mail registrations to:

hastings@hastingschamber.com or
lmartin@hastingschamber.com

South Platte United Chambers of Commerce website

President Hastings asked if the current website met the expectations of the members. Betty Sayers inquired about adding a resource page and links to regional resources. Other suggestions included listing member Chambers. President Hastings asked for a proposal on adding links to the website.

Notes from the Region

Jay Hall reported that the post office is closing in Beaver City, and the community is studying what to do to lessen the burden on the citizens.

Jay Hall said that Red Cloud citizens are debating about removing the historical brick streets on Highway 281 and replacing them with asphalt. Town Hall meetings are planned for a dialogue on the pros and cons of this issue. The Red Cloud Chamber is presenting the Agriculture and Home Show and asked if the South Platte would like to showcase the organization at a booth? The date of the show is March 19 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Betty Sayers spoke about the new edition of the Nebraska Rural Living newsletter and the stories published for March on the eco-tourism entrepreneurs in the South Platte region, the Rural Foodies story on Grandpa's restaurant and an essay by Pat Underwood on the community collaborations to celebrate the Pelican Watch Festival in Alma and Harlan County Reservoir. See the newsletter at www.Nebraskaruralliving.com Bird watching tours and essays by T.J. Walker are published on the Chicken Dance Trail site www.chickendancetrail.com

Sharon Hueftle said that SCEDD is involved with Community Needs Assessments, income surveys and digitizing water, sewer, electric lines in the towns, helping communities with nuisance abatement and zoning codes and other projects. See the SCEDD website www.scedd.us for more information.

Doug Zoellner said that the Campbell nursing home is vacant and for sale and the school building and gymnasium is up for public auction in April.

Merrill Duntz announced a Fun Run in Clay Center on April 10 sponsored by the Community Club, Lions 4H and the Trailblazer RC&D

Monica Crowe said with great enthusiasm that Southern Valley won the state boys' basketball tournament!

Ed Shrock said that he is hosting a tour of the Gerald Gentleman Station at Sutherland next Tuesday, March 17 and invited members to join him.

The Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting the Whoopers and Hoopers basketball tournaments on the weekend of March 15. Whoopers and Hoopers is the largest five-on-five adult basketball event in the mid-west if not the entire U.S. The tournament has 135 teams from nine states plus Nebraska this year.

Carol Schlegel announced the Prairie Chicken Dance Tours starting in Red Willow County, April 5. Learn more on Facebook: [PrairieChickenDanceTours](https://www.facebook.com/PrairieChickenDanceTours). Carol also said that LB551, a bill concerning accident insurance of special interest to agri- and eco-tourism businesses is out of committee.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Sayers, Secretary

Workforce Panel Discussion

A panel discussion was conducted. Each member of the panel shared their thoughts about the workforce and what they are doing to assist in building a strong workforce in south central Nebraska.

Shawn Kaskie, Director of the UNK Center for Rural Research and Development talked about his department's work in surveys and labor studies, which can give employers and economic developers information on which to base decisions. He also said software is being developed by a company call Expansion that will be able to locate the current residence of graduates by field of study.

Diana Watson, Regional Coordinator at Central Community College, Holdrege talked about the Career Fair for sophomores in the ESU #11 area. It is being hosted in Holdrege March 20.

Ross DeLong of Valmont Industries in McCook (280 employees) spoke about the difficulty Valmont had in finding welders. The company worked with the community college to have a welder training program. He said the students from the program are good and a surprising number are women, who make very good welders. Mr. DeLong said the company's worst problems with employees are those who cannot pass entry or random drug tests and those who have a poor work ethic.

Angela Raby Area Director of the Center for Enterprise from Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte spoke about the work styles of the younger generations. She said they "want it now, they want to be in leadership roles, and they want to be involved."

Meeting Minutes

Bruce Dowse, Area Dean of Outreach and Training from Mid-Plains in North Platte, said the college used to work with 50 area schools but now there are only 30 schools due to consolidations. In the 18 counties of his area, there are more births than deaths, but the area is still losing population, proving that our young people are moving away. One program that has been successful in Broken Bow, Imperial, Valentine and Ogallala is a foundation that MPCC has helped the communities establish. Education funds are made available to local graduates if they will work locally after their training.

(Panel discussion notes by Jean and Randy Issler)