

JANUARY 2014

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Fax 641-782-9927
www.crestoniowachamber.com
chamber@crestoniowachamber.com

*Ellen Gerharz,
Executive Director*

*Peggy Van Pelt,
Office Manager*

For further information on
Chamber projects and
events, call the Chamber
office at 641-782-7021.

The Chamber's Mission Statement

To promote and show-
case the community, to
be a leadership organi-
zation which unifies the
community, and map a
course for Creston's
future development.

Business Property Tax Credit Form Available

In October the Iowa Department of Revenue announced the implementation of the new Business Property Tax Credit. Creston and Union County Businesses need to be aware of the process to apply for certain industrial, commercial and railroad properties. Residential and agriculture classified properties are not eligible for this tax credit. Applications for credit against 2013 property tax assessments must be received by the county assessor by January 15, 2014.

For more information on the Business Property Tax Credit, including the application form, visit the Department of Revenue's Website at <http://www.iowa.gov/tax/locgov/13PTReform.html>

If you have any questions please contact the Union County Assessor's Office at 641-782-1735.

2014 Legislative Coffees

During the 2014 Legislative Session, which opens on January 13th, the Chamber will once again provide you an opportunity to ask our Legislators questions during Legislative Coffee's. **The Coffee's have been scheduled at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 1, March 1 and April 5 in the Council Chamber at the Restored Depot in Creston.** They are to last for an hour. Currently Representative Jack Drake and Senator Hubert Houser are planning to attend. Information has been sent to Congressman Latham. Please mark your calendars now and plan on attending one or all of the sessions. There is no charge and all coffees are open to the public.

How to Reach Your Iowa Legislators

Mail may be sent to:
State Capitol Building
East 12th & Grand
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

The Iowa Senate's general number is:
(515) 281-3371

The Iowa House of Representatives
general number is:
(515) 281-3221

E-mail to legislators may be sent by
FirstName.LastName@legis.iowa.gov

Local legislators are:

Senator Hubert Houser -
Hubert.Houser@legis.iowa.gov

Representative Jack Drake -
Jack.Drake@legis.iowa.gov

Remember the current Legislative
Session is scheduled to run from January
13 through April 22.

Moonlight Madness Coming to Creston

The Retail Promotions and
Showcase Committee is making plans
for the annual Moonlight Madness sale
on February 20th from 5 to 7:00 p.m.
Mark your calendars now. Complete
details on the citywide event will be
going out to you early in January.

2014 Executive Board

- President**, Mike McCullough
Wellman Dynamics Corp
- First Vice President**, Barb Coenen
Maple Street Memories
- Second Vice President**, Ken Callahan
Callahan Real Estate
- Treasurer**, Adam Snodgrass
Iowa State Savings Bank
- Past President**, Roger Lanning
PCSB Bank
- Executive Director**, Ellen Gerharz

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- Chuck Irelan
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- Ron Bernard
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- Rhonda Miller
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- Melissa Driskell
Winterstien Construction
- Mary Saxton
First National Bank
- Teresa Cheers
Teresa's Fine Floral
- Matt Higgins
Alliant Energy
- Devon Leith
Tyler Insurance
- Tony Stuart
Hi-Crest Auto/United Super Wash
- Jessica Duncan
Geater Regional Medical Center
- Sandy Jennett
Green Valley Pest and Lawn Care
- Shawn Phelps
Walmart Super Center
- Jacki Steffen
Southern Prairie YMCA
- Marsha Wilson
Creston City Council Liaison
- Levi Eblen
Ex Officio, Creston High School
- Bree Daggett
Ex Officio, Creston High School

Thoughts and Thanks from the Director

The Creston Chamber Board of Directors and I would like to thank all of the many businesses and individuals that purchased Creston Bucks over the Holiday season. All of this money stays in Creston, and is spent only at Chamber member businesses. The Chamber and the businesses that receive these bucks certainly appreciate the support. Thank you so very much.

I would also like to thank everyone who decorated their businesses during this Holiday Season. It really added to the atmosphere of the city, and helped to show off our community. I would also like to thank all of the people who have cared for the flowerpots scattered around Creston during 2013. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

And finally, as we begin 2014 my hope to all of you is for a very happy and prosperous year and I look forward to working with all of you in the months ahead.



Great Lighted Christmas Parade

Special thanks to everyone who helped and were involved with the Lighted Christmas Parade. The biggest thanks of all goes out to the businesses, organizations, churches and individuals that were in the parade. All of your hard work gave enjoyment to many. All of the entries looked spectacular. It was certainly a fun evening for young and old alike.

Once again, thank you to **Ed Ritter, Darin Goins and all law enforcement officers** for directing the entries and getting everything in order.

Thank You To

- **KSIB Radio** for broadcasting the Lighted Christmas Parade
- To everyone that was involved in the Lighted Parade and those who participated in the **Shovel Brigade and Leslie Tyler**
- **The City of Creston Street Crew** for putting up all of the Christmas Decorations



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Recruiting all Ambassadors

The Chamber Ambassador Committee is the group that represents the Chamber at many different functions such as Chamber ribbon cuttings, open houses and coffees. If you would be interested in being added to our calling tree for reminders and updates of Chamber activities please give the Chamber Office a call. Even if your schedule does not permit attending all events, it is a great way to become involved in Chamber activities as well as meeting other business people in the area.

Chamber Inserts A Great, Low Cost Way to Advertise

Just a reminder that any Chamber member may advertise with a flyer in the Newsletter. All you need to do is call Ellen and reserve your spot, print 425 copies of your flyer and bring them to the Chamber Office by the 20th of the month. All flyers must be flat, unfolded, normal text weight, 8.5 x 11 paper. It can be printed on one or both sides. All for only \$40 a month.

Call the Chamber today to reserve your future spot.

Help Your Chamber Help You

Holiday 2013 GiveAway Update

The 2013 Chamber Holiday GiveAway from all reports was again very successful and something people enjoyed participating in.

We would like to thank everyone who was involved in the GiveAway. A ballpark figure would put the number of tickets involved at 450,000 compared to 425,000 in 2012 and 400,000 tickets in 2011 and in 2010 and 385,000 tickets given out in 2009 and 2008. Holiday GiveAway 2013 was again a huge success. What do these ticket numbers mean? They mean that over \$4.5 million dollars was spent in Creston during the two plus week promotion.

Again, thank you to all who participated in Holiday 2013 GiveAway.

Congratulations to the following businesses for their Holiday Decorations

The following businesses were selected by the Judging Committee for their Holiday Decorations. Thank you to everyone who made Creston a little brighter.

Hwy 34 - Grapevine Staffing – 100 East Taylor
Sumner - Stalker Chevrolet – 601 South Sumner
Townline Street - Rieman Music – Crest Plaza

Group Winners on Townline Street:

Crest Plaza including Vernie's Drapery, Discovery Kids Preschool, Stewart Realty, Spotlight School of Dance, Apria Health, Rieman Music, Creston True Value & Java J's

Uptown Creston

1. American Home Design Center – 101 North Walnut Street
2. Carroll Family Chiropractic – 224 North Pine Street
Shear Magic – 226 North Pine Street

Honorable Mention:

Creston Automotive - 410 West Adams Street
Family Shoe Store – 219 West Adams Street
Carter Agency – 208 North Maple Street
Congratulations to all of you.

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2014 Events & Activities Taking Place in Creston and the Area

Please mark your calendars now for events and activities already on the Calendar for 2014.

Creston News Advertiser Scrap Event – January 18 & 19

Creston Park & Rec Bowling Tournament – February 1

Moonlight Madness – February 20th, 5 to 7:00 p.m.

Creston Park & Rec Presents a “Night of Comedy” –
February 22

St. Malachy Dinner & Auction – March 1

Southern Prairie YMCA Home Show – March 29

Money Smart Week – April 5 to April 12

Easter – April 20

Meals from the Heartland – April 23

CHS Prom – April 26

CHS Graduation – May 18

KSIB Tractor Ride – June 7

Creston Citywide Garage Sale – June 14

Relay for Life – June 20 & 21

Festival/Party in the Park – June 21 – (Tentative)

10,000 Crestonians 4th of July Celebration – July 1st – 4th

Union County Fair – July 19 to July 24

McKinley Park Festival – July 26

Iowa Sales Tax Holiday – August 1 & 2

Hot Air Balloon Days – September 19, 20 & 21

Creston’s Healthiest State Walk – October 8

Lighted Christmas Parade – December 4

No Place Like Creston for the Holidays –
December 4 to December 7

2014 Investments

As a reminder, your 2014 Chamber Investment letter and application for continued membership in the Creston Chamber of Commerce were mailed to you in December. Please return your investment and membership form as soon as possible. Investments can be made monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and annually.

Also remember that your business can receive a \$50.00 credit on your membership investment by recruiting a new member to the Creston Chamber of Commerce in 2014.

If you have any questions about your investment, please call Ellen at the Chamber, 782-7021.

JANUARY INSERTS

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Creston:Arts

Enjoy art in Uptown Creston. Each month Creston:Arts will present a new gallery show in the former Water Office at the Restored Depot in Uptown Creston, 116 West Adams Street. The area will be open Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. for the public to stop by and enjoy the art. The January Show will feature the, "Traveling Show of the IOWA Watercolor Society". The Artist Reception will be held on January 3rd from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information please call 1-641-247-1663.

Free Advertising Opportunity

The Chamber offers newcomer packets to new residents to Creston. If you as a Chamber Member would be interested in promoting your business with items to include in the packets, FREE of charge, now is your opportunity. All we ask is that you deliver about 50 items at a time to the Chamber so that we may include them in the newcomer packets.

If you have any questions, please call our Office or email us at chamber@crestoniowachamber.com

January Gold Star Business Honor

Congratulations to
Van Gelder Clothing
110 North Maple Street -
Creston

Each month the Chamber will honor a business or businesses around town that maintain their appearance both inside and out and keep their area clean. The process to nominate a business for a Gold Star Honor is simple. All you need to do is to call the Chamber.

Creston Chamber Newsletter Online

The Creston Chamber of Commerce newsletter can be found on our website at www.crestoniowachamber.com.



Follow the Chamber on Twitter at Creston, IA Chamber

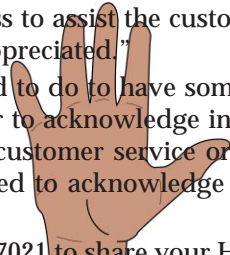
January Hi-Fives For Great Customer Service Goes Out To

Cody Hagel, Fareway – has received two nominations, for, "going above and beyond for the customer. Extraordinary Service – one of a kind. Remarkable young gentleman. Thank you."

Mary Chamberlain, Creston Walmart Super Center, for, "your helpfulness and willingness to assist the customer. You made it a very positive experience. It is appreciated."

Remember all you need to do to have someone honored with a Hi-Five is to call the Chamber to acknowledge individuals and businesses that have given excellent customer service or gone that extra mile for you the customer. We need to acknowledge this effort and show our appreciation.

Please call Ellen at 782-7021 to share your Hi-Five.



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2013 Chamber Accomplishments/Annual Report

As we begin 2014 I would like to reflect on some of the accomplishments that have taken place at the Creston Chamber during 2013. The following is a partial list that I hope you find informative.

AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE:

The mission of the Creston Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors shall be to promote the civic, commercial, and industrial development of the City of Creston by acting and participating as official representatives in all promotions and welcoming new people and businesses in Creston.

- The Chamber Ambassadors held over 30 coffees, ribbon cuttings and open houses
- Awarded several First Dollar of Profits
- Served over 150 people at the Chamber sponsored Employee Appreciation Omelet Breakfast in May during Small Business Appreciation Month as well as serving donuts to the employees of Wellman Dynamics Corporation in October during Salute to Industry Month
- Sponsored and coordinated WHO TV – RV TV's visit in September
- Co-sponsored the Veterans Appreciation Breakfast's for the sixth year
- Continued to Spotlight our members
- Provide Newsletter Insert opportunity to Chamber Members and local non-profits
- Chamber Annual Report appears annually in the *Creston News Advertiser* in April
- Provided Chamber-wide Email Updates and Alerts to membership
- Sponsored a networking and sharing meeting of the Civic, Service and Volunteer Groups and Clubs in the Spring

WOMEN IN BUSINESS:

This group meets the third Thursday of every month in an informal setting. It is open to any woman in business.

SUMMER GOLF OUTING COMMITTEE:

Sponsored the 16th Annual Chamber Golf Tournament at both Crestmoor and Pine Valley Golf Course in Creston. This is a successful fundraiser for the Chamber and networking opportunity for those who participate.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

General Goal:

To continue to create and maintain a positive image of Creston for current and future residents and businesses while maintaining and improving the business climate.

- Continued to collaborate, work with and promote partnerships with various organizations, governmental bodies and groups in Creston and the area to maintain and improve Creston's quality of life and economics – a partial list would include the following: Creston/Union County Tourism, City of Creston, Union County Development Association, Union County, the Union County Visitors Center, Creston Community Schools, Creston High School FFA, Union County Conservation, Green Valley State Park, Creston Park & Recreation Board, McKinley Lake/Hurley Creek Watershed Group, Creston Historical Preservation Commission, Western Iowa Tourism Region, Central Iowa Tourism Region, Southern Exposures Tourism and Iowa Tourism Department, Creston Volunteer Fire Fighters Easter Event, Around the Town Committee, Local Foods Council, Uptown Creston Food Crawl, Creston:Arts Council, No Place Like Creston for the Holidays, Santa at the Depot, Quiet Zone Committee, High Lakes Leadership Initiative, Crestland Betterment Foundation, Friends of the Library and CARE.
- Continued to work and assist in retail and commercial recruitment and expansion to strengthen and expand the economic base of Creston
- Continued to assist current businesses, while at the same time continued seeking new business opportunities
- Continued to assist industry members as requested
- Continued to promote the Creston Commercial Property Loan
- Continued to work with and support the South Central Iowa Small Business Development Center
- Continued to assist and recognize local businesses and organizations
- Continued entrepreneurial initiatives
- Continued the Gold Star Honor for businesses who maintain their property
- Continued the Hi-Five Honor for great customer service
- Continued monthly Chamber spots on radio and in the newspaper
- Continued to market Creston to the area, state and beyond as a business and regional hub
- Maintained Chamber Web, Chamber Facebook Page and Twitter Account to promote Creston
- Maintained various Creston Brochures to promote Creston
- Continued to provide business referrals, relocation packets, student requests and prospect packets
- Continued offering Newcomer Packets
- Included CHS students on the Chamber Board of Directors as ex-Officio members
- Continued speaking to service clubs and other groups about the Chamber and Creston
- Continued to attend City Council meetings and work with and assist local government
- Continued to hold Legislative Coffees and remain in contact with elected representatives.
- Continued to facilitate Around the Town Meetings
- Continued involvement with the 10,000 Crestonians, Balloon Days & Lighted Christmas Parade, No Place Like Creston Group, Chalk the Town Promotion and the Freedom Rock

IMAGE ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE:

General Goal:

To create and maintain a positive image of Creston through beautification, restoration and enhancement activities.

In the past this group has spurred many projects that are in place today – city-wide commercial loan program, junk car ordinance, mowing of property, gold star business honor, Hi-Five Honor, junk houses awareness, Iowana, garbage for renters, started the Welcome to Creston sign project with the Trees Forever Undertaking, flower pots in Creston etc., street cleaning and snow removal in Uptown Area – odd even parking to make this possible, Clean Sweep Days, Community banners, Yards & Areas of the Month, Paint Creston Project in 2007, 2011, 2012 and 2013, updating citywide Christmas decorations with City, removal of old Kum & Go building, assisted in selecting new light heads in Uptown Creston, initiated conversation on the Rental Housing Ordinance passed in 2011.

- Continued to collaborate and work with other groups and organizations in maintaining and improving the image of Creston– City of Creston, UCDA, FFA, etc.
- Continued to work with City and others on buildings, yards and homes in disrepair and other nuisances
- As part of Paint Creston, 8 houses were painted in 2013, bringing the total number of houses painted to 19
- Continued Yards of the Month, areas of the Month and flower pots of the month

RETAIL PROMOTION & SHOWCASE COMMITTEE:

General Goal:

To market, promote, retain and highlight businesses and industries in Creston through various activities and promotions.

- Continued to hold quarterly retail promotions – Moonlight Madness, Citywide Garage Sale, Crazy Summer Sales Days, Tax Free Weekend, Creston's Taste of the Town and Holiday GiveAway
- Continued to promote the use of Creston Bucks, which were spent only at Creston Chamber businesses
- Continued to promote the Shop/Buy Creston First Campaign Continued to Spotlight Members in the Chamber Newsletter
- Continued to market events and promotions outside of our area

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:

General Goal:

To continue to attract visitors to the area by marketing Creston as a tourism destination.

- Continued to promote the area locally, regionally, statewide and to surrounding states
- Continued to update and distribute brochures, SIT tabloids, ads and other materials locally, regionally and statewide
- Updated the Creston Map Brochure and Explore Creston and Union County Brochure
- Coordinated and worked with Green Valley State Park, the DNR and other local trail enthusiasts on obtaining funding to begin hard surfacing of the Park to Park Trail through Green Valley State Park
- Continued promoting area through various websites, DM Register, KCCI, WHO and ABC, etc., State of Iowa and their Welcome Centers across the State
- Continued promoting area and events through various ads – Iowa Travel Guide, statewide newspaper advertising, various regional newspapers and radio stations
- Continued Visitor Packets – mailed out over 522 packets on Creston and Union County
- Maintained tourism Web pages - www.unioncountyiowatourism.com.
- Continued working with local motels to promote the area
- Continued to work with local groups involved in tourism to promote and assist Creston and the area – Bob Brown at Mt. Pisgah, Union County Historical Society, the bed and breakfast establishments in the area, various organizations that hold activities and conferences in the area
- Continued to work with Western Iowa Tourism, Central Iowa Tourism, Southern Iowa Tourism, regional groups and State of Iowa Tourism Office, Travel Federation of Iowa to promote the area.
- Continued to organize and promote the various celebrations in Creston – 10,000 Crestonians 4th of July, 36th Annual Creston/ Southwest Iowa Hot Air Balloon Days, Lighted Christmas Parade and “No Place Like Creston for the Holidays”
- Continued to pursue new opportunities that will increase and strengthen tourism
- Continued recognition of tourism volunteers
- Continued maintaining the Visitors Center

As I said earlier, this is only a partial list of the Creston Chamber accomplishments and activities and I understand that there is always room for improvement, but I think we need to be proud of what the Creston Chamber of Commerce has accomplished in 2013 as we look to another positive year in 2014.

8. *Chamber Highlights* - Creston Chamber of Commerce

**Creston
Chamber of Commerce
Activities**

January 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Happy New Year	2	3 Creston:Arts Artist Reception 6-8 p.m. Restored Depot	4 Jump Start Jam 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. YMCA
5	6 Around the Town Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Quilts & other Notions Creative Center	7 Creston City Council Meeting, 6 p.m., City Council Chambers Monthly Chamber Radio Grapevine Visit 9 a.m.	8	9	10 Creston Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting, 7:30 a.m., Chamber Office	11
12	13 SWCC Spring Semester Begins	14 Three State Beef Conference, SWCC Ag Dept	15	16 Women in Business Meeting, 8 a.m., R Realty, 114 North Elm	17 Image Enhancement Committee Meeting, 7 a.m., Windrow Restaurant	18 Creston News Advertiser Scrap-A-Thon
19 Creston News Advertiser Scrap-A-Thon	20	21 Creston City Council Meeting, 6 p.m., City Council Chambers SWCC Online Classes Begin	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 St. Malachy School Coffee, 10 a.m., 403 W. Clark	30	31	

FEBRUARY

- 1 Legislative Coffee, 8 a.m., Council Chamber, Restored Depot
Creston Park & Rec Bowling Tournament
- 4 Monthly Chamber Radio Grapevine Visit, 9 a.m.
Creston City Council Meeting, 6 p.m., City Council Chambers
- 14 Creston Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting,
7:30 a.m., Chamber Office
Happy Valentine's Day
- 17 SWCC Mixed Blood Theater presents, "Black Eagle", Rm 220, Noon
- 18 Creston City Council Meeting, 6 p.m., City Council Chambers
- 19 SWCC Eighth Grade Careers Conference
- 20 Women in Business Meeting, 8 a.m., R Realty, 114 North Elm
Citywide Moonlight Madness Sale, 5 to 7 p.m.
- 21 Image Enhancement Committee Meeting, 7 a.m., Windrow Restaurant
- 22 Creston Park & Rec Comedy Night
YMCA Home & Garden Show is March 29th

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