

Springdale Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – September 19, 2017

The September meeting of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, September 19 in the Zachary Conference Room of the Springdale Chamber. Board members present at the meeting were: Brent Hanby, Mike Morgenthaler, Murry Cline, Mitchell Johnson, Perry Webb, Derek Gibson, Danny McGinley, Patty Hatfield, Tom Sledge, Clinton Bell, Julie Shook, Eddie Vega and Brian Moore. Philip Taldo, Arkansas Highway Commissioner was a special guest. Members of the 2017-18 Leadership Springdale class present included Pablo Fuentes (Cargill), Tracy Shepard (Rockline), Caroline Franco (The Jones Center), Tron Hodges (Black Hills Energy), Mandy James (Kawneer), Tiffany Mallard (Springdale Water), Jeff Taylor (City of Springdale), Eddy Combs (NWA Supply & Rental), and Kendra Clay (Springdale Schools). Staff members present included Rhonda Hughes, Sarah Gordley, Jim Ed Reed, Bill Rogers, Lance Eads and Scott Edmondson.

Chairman Hanby called the meeting to order and introduced the special guests.

The Board reviewed minutes of its May meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and the motion passed.

In the financial report, Webb explained the Chamber showed a net profit of \$65,000 in August and was up almost \$70,000 over budget for the year. He reminded the Board that the Chamber typically has four profitable months of the year with the remaining eight months showing a loss. With four major events remaining in the year, he said the Chamber is in good position financially. Chickin, Peelin' & Poltiickin, the NWA Workforce Summit, the AIM Magazine and CityFuture 5 are scheduled between now and Dec. 31. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial report and the motion passed.

Hanby acknowledged and congratulated Mitchell Johnson as recently being appointed as one of Springdale's two representatives on the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport Authority.

Hanby introduced Arkansas Highway Commissioner Philip Taldo as the Board's guest speaker for the month. Taldo provided the Board with an overview of the responsibilities of the Arkansas Highway Commission and the Arkansas Department of Transportation, reminding them that there are 16,400 miles the ARDOT maintains, the 12th largest system in the nation. He noted that Arkansas ranks 42nd in the nation in revenue per mile. He explained that Northwest Arkansas benefitted from 25 percent of the revenue generated by the ½ cent sales tax that ends in five years and has funded improvements to I-49 in Northwest Arkansas and the construction of the 412 Bypass. He noted it has and continues to be a challenge for the Arkansas Highway Commission to identify new sources of funding to maintain and build the highways under its responsibility. He said the Fayetteville Auto Park I-49 interchange is scheduled to be complete Dec. 18 and that the 412 Bypass still has a year and half remaining before completion. The widening and relocation of Arkansas 265 is moving forward with a completion date of 2020. He said it's important for voters to understand the Arkansas Highway Commission cannot generate any highway funds on its own but can only use that which is approved by the Arkansas Legislature or by voters.

In department reports, the Board heard there have been 141 new members join the Chamber this year including 23 in the month of August. Reed explained staff training and other efforts have led to a 50 percent closing rate on sales calls in August. Through August 31, \$706,000 in sponsorship sales has been made with an additional \$34,000 sold in September. Webb noted it has been a challenge to increase sponsorship sales without cannibalizing sales for existing events by existing sponsors. The number of members sponsoring an event has grown this year from 125 to 175.

In Events and Programs, the Board heard the Sam's Furniture Teacher Appreciation Event had a net profit of \$105,000, including a \$10,000 donation to the Springdale Education Foundation. The Sam's Furniture Chickin, Peelin' & Politickin' event set for Thursday, will draw between 500-600 people. It is the largest event of its kind in Arkansas. Senator John Boozman, Congressman Steve Womack and Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin are expected to attend. Leadership Springdale has completed the first two months of class while Junior Leadership will get underway in a week with 36 Springdale ninth graders. Early registration for CityFuture 5 is being opened to past attendees this week before being made available to all members in October. The Chamber is involved in securing volunteers for Bikes, Blues & BBQ's activities at Arvest Ballpark. This year, Harley-Davidson will headquarter demo rides at Arvest Ballpark for the first time, Wednesday through Saturday.

In Workforce, the Board heard that more than 700 high school students will participate in Day One of the NWA Workforce Summit, Nov. 14-15. The keynote speaker for both days of the Summit is Josh Davies who will speak on work ethic issues. The Walmart Foundation has announced a \$20,000 grant to the event. The Chamber has received the first draft of research conducted by Ted Abernathy regarding the need and demand for diesel engine technicians. It is hoped the research will lead to the State of Arkansas funding a diesel pilot program that could be replicated around the state.

Hanby updated the Board on the recent Washington D.C. Fly-In. Twenty three leaders attended for briefings by Congressman Womack and Congressional staffs. Discussions are underway to continue to tweak the trip to encourage a larger traveling party.

In Economic Development, the Board heard of eight recent inquiries from businesses ranging from retail, restaurant, manufacturing, downtown locations and expansions of existing firms. Through August, 3,241 new jobs have been created in Springdale. Edmondson noted Springdale's year-over-year sales tax revenue is up 17 percent in August. The Board reviewed a packet submitted to the White House for potential inclusion in infrastructure legislation currently being written. The proposal asks for federal matching funds for job-creating projects contained in Springdale's infrastructure program. Six U.S. cities – San Diego, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Springdale – are being referenced in the legislation as communities that are actively engaged in funding local infrastructure projects.

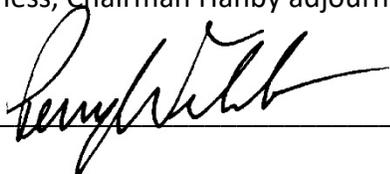
In Communications, the Board was reminded the redesigned tourism website – ExploreSpringdale.com – was unveiled September 5. Social media activity continues to grow monthly for both the Chamber and ExploreSpringdale platforms. The Chamber is actively engaged with Bikes, Blues & BBQ to promote the festival's activities at Arvest Ballpark.

Eads explained he and other Northwest Arkansas legislators are working with the Governor's office to allocate some available funding. He said there's the potential to provide some funding to the Rodeo of the Ozarks, ACO, downtown façade program, Don Tyson School of Innovation and downtown infrastructure to support a consolidated farmers market.

During the open comment segment, Sledge said the hospital's behavioral health unit was scheduled to be complete by late February.

With no further business, Chairman Hanby adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by: _____



Date: September 19, 2017