



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWS

Another benefit of your West Union Chamber Membership!



DECEMBER 2009

SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER OFF TO GREAT START!

The 2009 holiday punch card shopping promotion is off to a great start this year! The promotion began on November 4th and already about 6,000 cards have been distributed to local customers. The promotion is geared to encourage customers to shop locally and reward them for doing so. For every \$100 spent in a local business, \$68 will stay in the community. By encouraging customers to shop locally, we are helping improve the economic conditions right here in West Union!

Weekly winners are drawn each Monday from the cards submitted to the Chamber office for a wide assortment of local gift certificates. Winners to date include:

- Week 1: Barb Gaskill, West Union
Lee Barness, West Union
- Week 2: Lois Dummermuth, Elgin
Brad Nettleton, West Union

All cards remain in the drawing barrel

until the final prize drawing on December 23rd. This year's final prizes include an iPod Touch and a bright red Kitchen Aid stand mixer with baking supplies. All prizes are purchased locally and gift certificates are donated by participating merchants. If you are in need of additional cards, please call the Chamber office.

Thanks to all the businesses that participated in the Holiday Open Houses on November 12, 13, & 14. Paul Patrick from West Union was the lucky winner of 4 dozen assorted holiday cookies from participating merchants.

Please continue to remind all employees to ask customers for their punch card every time they shop with you. It is one more benefit customers have for shopping locally.



SANTA VISITS ON DECEMBER 3RD



Santa and his elves will arrive in West Union on Thursday, December 3rd at the Fayette County Court House to visit with area children from 5:00—7:00 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Chamber and this year the Main Street Promotions Committee will be reading holiday stories while children wait to visit with Santa. Bill Bouska and State Farm Insurance will be taking digital photos of children with Santa that can be picked up at the State Farm office after December 7th. All children will receive a coloring book and can enjoy cookies and hot cocoa or hot apple cider while they wait.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NEW VISTA WELCOME

Hello West Union!

I would like to start by thanking the residents of West Union for the warm welcome I have received. When I arrived on November 10th, I knew nobody to help me unload my U-Haul. By 1:00 four people had arrived to help me unload. Together, we turned a job that would have taken me the better part of a day into a task that took less than an hour! So, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about myself, why I'm here, and what I hope to accomplish during my year of service.

First off, a bit about myself. I just graduated from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs with a BA in English and a double minor in Sustainable Development and Geography and Environmental Systems. My interest is in restoring and revitalizing our built environment. When the opportunity to join AmeriCorps to help the Green Pilot Project come to fruition, I enthusiastically jumped on board.

I am very excited to become a part of the Green Pilot Project and the community. I was drawn to this community because of the forward thinking of the Pilot Project. What is going on here in West Union is leaps ahead of the sustainable practices of the communities I was a part of in Colorado, and the nation. The progressive design aspects of the Streetscape illustrates that rural Americans are not a backwards thinking population, but a group of self-sufficient individuals that make their living from a harmonious connection to the land. When this project is finished, West Union will be able to show this philosophy along Vine Street.

I can't wait to start new relationships and continue to grow the friendships that have already started. West Union has already helped me, now I'll pay it forward.

Thanks.
Ben Lewis
VISTA



VISTA
Volunteers In Service To America



Ben Lewis,
already hard at
work in the
office!

MARKET ANALYSIS UPDATE

Over 50 business owners and residents attended the Market Analysis lunch meeting hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street West Union on November 17th. Jim Thompson, Business Improvement Specialist with the Iowa Department of Economic Development presented the findings from the survey conducted this past August. Those in attendance learned about opportunities and challenges that exist for our market trade area. Demographic information including population trends, shopping habits, lifestyle categories, and income levels were shared and discussion centered around how these related to the economic climate in our market area. All of the combined data will be used to determine next steps for improving West Union's business mix, entertainment options, and retail offerings. For additional information about the survey results, please visit the Chamber office or check out the report on the website under the Main Street tab.



COMMUNITY AWARDS BANQUET IS JANUARY 16



The annual West Union Community Awards Banquet will be held at Echo Valley Banquet Center on Saturday, January 16th. The banquet honors local volunteers who give of their time and talents to make West Union a great place to live. Enclosed with this month's newsletter is a nomination form for volunteers in the areas of religion, community service, education, health care, and youth. The Chamber Board of Directors is encouraging all business owners and residents to nominate at least one individual that you think is deserving. We all know that there are many folks in our community who work behind the scenes to contribute to making West Union a better place. Take a look around your church congregation for that person who is always there at every activity that goes on. Think about that teacher who has made a difference in the lives of your children or grandchildren. Maybe it's someone who volunteers at the school or a bus driver, cook, or custodian. Who are the volunteers that you see at every community event helping to make sure things run smoothly? Those are the people we are asking you to tell us about so they can be recognized for all that they do.

Nomination forms are due to the Chamber office by December 31st. Tickets for the annual banquet will be on sale at the Chamber office beginning December 14th.

GREEN PILOT UPDATE



GRANT UPDATES: Notification has been received that 2 additional grant applications (each valued at \$500,000) are being funded for the streetscape project. This would bring the current amount of grant funding received to \$2,160,000. The city is also eligible to use the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for a low-interest loan up to \$3 million. More information was also provided for the CAT application and the DOT RISE application at the end of November. In addition, applications were submitted to the Main Street Challenge Grant for \$100,000 for the geothermal system and to Trees Forever for \$10,000 for new street trees. All grant applications are on file at both City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce office.

ENERGY REBATE PROGRAM: 21 West Union businesses took advantage of the Energy Efficient Rebate Program this summer and fall by making improvements to their individual businesses. A total investment of \$46,390 was made to install energy efficient equipment ranging from new water heaters to energy efficient lighting. The maximum rebate each business could receive was \$1500 and 5 businesses received the full rebate amount. A total of \$11,579 was issued in rebates to businesses. Not only did these business owners receive rebates through this program, but most also received rebates from their energy provider as well. They will also see savings on their electric and heating bills due to the improvements made. Additional rebate programs are being developed to continue to support energy efficient measures taken by local businesses to decrease the amount of energy consumed. Funding for the rebate program was provided by the Iowa Department of Economic Development as part of the Green Pilot Program.

PALMER MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER

Palmer Memorial Foundation has planned a Schwan's Fundraising Sale just in time to help with all of your holiday events! Mark your calendars for Thursday, December 10th at WU Hardware from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. or in the hospital's east parking lot from 2:30—7:00 p.m. Stock up now and help a great cause at the same time!



CHAMBER AFTER FIVE

All Chamber members are invited to attend a holiday Chamber After Five on Tuesday, December 15th in the main bank lobby at First National Bank. The event will begin at 4:30 p.m. and is open to all Chamber members and their employees.

SANTA'S STORE & COOKIE WALK

Zion Lutheran Church's Annual Cookie Walk will be held on Saturday, December 5th from 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. A large assortment of holiday cookies are available for \$5 per pound. The West Union CIVIC Club will also be having their annual Santa's Store in the basement of the church at the same time. The church is located at 130 South Washington Street.

WU-LIGHT SPECIAL at West Union Hardware

MSWU's Promotions Committee will be co-hosting its next WU-Light Special with West Union Hardware on Thursday, December 10th! Everyone is invited to join Marlys and her staff for great food and drinks served from 4:00 to 6:00. You will also find specials about the store. Enjoy a special Scavenger Hunt, too! All those completing the hunt will be entered into a door prize drawing!



The Hawkeye Foodservice Cash-n-Carry Store is now open in downtown West Union from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. They remind you that they can help you with all your holiday party needs!



The Chamber Office will be closed on December 24th & 25th. Happy Holidays from all of us in the Chamber/Main Street office!

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Check us out at www.westunion.com !

DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| 3 | Santa visits the Fayette County Court House | 16 | Fayette County Local Housing Trust Fund meeting in Fayette |
| 5 | Zion Lutheran Cookie Walk
CIVIC Club Santa's Store | 17 | MSWU Promotions Committee meeting at Top Hat |
| 6 | Prairie View Open House | 21 | West Union City Council meeting
NF School Board meeting |
| 7 | West Union City Council Meeting | 23 | Final Punch Card drawing date |
| 8 | Chamber Board Meeting
Iowa Great Places meeting at City Hall w/ Francis Boggus
MSWU Board meeting | 24 | Christmas Eve—Office Closed |
| 10 | WU-Light Special at WU Hardware
WU Just For Kix Winter Dance Recital at NFHS | 25 | Christmas Day—Office Closed |
| 12 | Fayette County Tourism Open House in Fayette | 28 | Lions Club meeting |
| 13 | West Union Community Messiah Performance at NF PAC | 31 | New Year's Eve |
| 14 | West Union Lions Club | | |
| 15 | Chamber After Five at First National Bank
MSWU Design Committee Meeting | | |



Merry  *Christmas* 