



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWS

Another benefit of your West Union Chamber Membership!



JANUARY 2010

COMMUNITY AWARDS BANQUET IS JANUARY 16

The annual West Union Community Awards Banquet will be held on Saturday, January 16, 2010 at the Echo Valley Banquet Center on Hwy 18. Tickets are now on sale for the annual event at the Chamber/Main Street office for just \$15. In addition to recognizing the Citizen of the Year and the local volunteer award winners, this year's banquet will also honor the many Eagle Scouts that have called West Union home over the past 50 years. This year's theme is "Hometown Pride" and will honor those who give of themselves to make West Union a great place to live, work, and play. The Chamber Board of Directors will be joined by the Main Street West Union Board in honoring many local volunteers in the areas of Education, Community Service, Religion, Health Care, and Youth. The evening begins with a social gathering at 5:30 p.m. followed by a meal at 6:00 p.m. and an awards ceremony beginning at 7:00 p.m. Dessert and conversation will follow the awards ceremony.

HOLIDAY PUNCH CARD SETS NEW RECORD!



The annual Holiday Punch Card promotion set a new record during 2009! Now in its third year, the annual promotion strives to encourage shoppers to shop locally during the holiday season, and rewards them with the chance to win gift certificates to participating businesses as well as some great grand prizes. This year 4,368 cards were turned in for the drawing which translates into \$655,200 spent locally. This is an increase of \$127,650 over last year's figures! We heard many positive comments from shoppers this year and from those lucky winners as they claimed their prizes each week in the Chamber office. Congratulations to the two grand prize winners—Julie Stanbrough who won the iPod Touch and Ann Dibble, winner of the Kitchen Aid stand mixer. We also thank all of the local businesses who participated in this promotion! Please return your cute Gingerbread man to the Chamber office or give us a call and we will pick them up.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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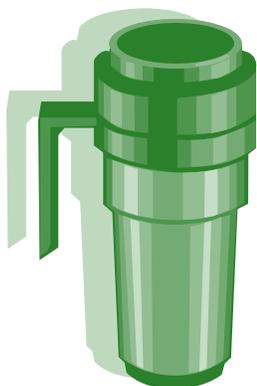


VISTA
Volunteers In Service To America

VISTA'S CORNER

8AM, Tuesday, late December. I am walking to work faster than normal today because I'm seven minutes late, I probably won't beat Karla to the office today, and I left my favorite travel mug on the table above the stairs. For a moment I think about returning to get it, but decide instead to drink the office coffee. In a few steps I'll turn north onto Vine Street and walk in front of the fire station. Even though it just snowed, the sidewalk is bare. There won't be a pile of snow in the middle of the crosswalks on Plum or Elm Streets, or frozen puddles along the curb. And I think to myself that the new planter boxes look like they've been there for years, with the waves of windswept snow on the limestone ledges mimicking in miniature the drifts in the courthouse square. All of the snow in the parking spaces that the plow trucks missed has percolated down through the pavers and into the aquifer.

It's an exciting time to be a "greenie" in West Union, because we can imagine a time, not too far into the future, where walking down the sidewalk in December is just as safe as September. This time of year seems to indulge that aspect within ourselves to look back, and reflect; so I'll play along.



The past decade has seen the death of the "Environmental Movement", and the rise of "Sustainability". The face of an "environmentalist" has changed from a scruffy college student who was chained to a tree, to a forward thinking business owner (such as yourself) who sees that conducting business in an environmentally sustainable way is an avenue for reducing overhead and operating expenses. Being "green" isn't about saving the whales (they still need our help, of course), or the rain forests of the Amazon (again, still needs saving), but about doing more with less, and thinking about how our actions affect our community. As a society we have learned that our energy sources have limits, and we have learned the consequences, both economically and socially, of those limits. Being "green" is also about harnessing what is around us, and using that energy in our lives, about building infrastructure that has a low environmental impact, but a high social value.

On this cold December morning near the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the City of West Union, and the businesses around Vine Street are positioning themselves to take advantage of an energy source that is as enduring as the bedrock beneath Knob Hill, an exciting time indeed.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE

Main Street West Union's Design Committee would like to remind local business owners that there are several opportunities available to them to assist with improvements they might wish to make to their buildings. The Façade Grant Program offers up to \$2500 in grant funds toward improvements to the exterior of their buildings. The three categories include Awnings and Signage (up to \$750), Exterior Painting (up to \$750) and Window/Door Repair or Replacement (up to \$1000). Over 10 businesses have utilized the program to help cover the cost of these improvements to their buildings. Applications are available at the Chamber/Main Street office and funds are granted on a first come, first served basis. **Free design assistance is available through the State Main Street Office which is a requirement in order to access funding.** For more information, please contact the Chamber/Main Street office at 422-3070.



WEST UNION TO HOST GREEN BUILDING WORKSHOPS

The Center on Sustainable Communities has chosen West Union as a host site for a series of free workshops concentrating on each construction phase of building an affordable, energy efficient and sustainable residential home. The workshops are part of COSC's *Rebuilding a Sustainable Iowa* statewide training program. West Union was chosen because they are a Green Pilot Community with the State of Iowa. Two sessions are being offered: one for professional contractors and one for homeowners. The professional series is a valuable opportunity for contractors, subcontractors, planners, architects, appraisers, city officials and other professionals to gain a comprehensive understanding of green building best practices. The series of 10 workshops will take place at the West Union Community Library and occur every other Friday beginning January 8, 2010 and ending May 7th. All sessions are free and lunch is provided. An accompanying 3-session homeowner series begins Saturday, February 6th, and will give community residents an overview of green building basics, alternative energy options and essential sustainable elements of new home construction. The workshops are free and lunch is provided. Registration is required as seating is limited. To register, contact COSC at (515)707-2787 or email leslie@icosc.com. For a detailed schedule of the workshop topics you can visit the COSC website at www.icosc.com/westunion.asp or contact the Chamber/Main Street office.

GREEN PILOT UPDATE



GRANT UPDATES: The City of West Union received a Department of Transportation RISE grant for \$2.3 million in December! This award brings the total grant funds received by the city for the streetscape project to \$4,508,029, add to that the \$2 million city commitment for a total of over \$6.5 million toward the project! 5 grant applications are still pending and 2 additional applications will be submitted in early 2010. The grant funds do not have to be repaid by the city, but must be used for specific items including the district-wide geothermal system and several street components related to storm water management such as porous pavers. The Iowa Great Places grant was for engineering and design services. The city's general obligation funds can be used for any part of the project. If you would like a copy of the current funding sources, please stop by the Chamber/Main Street office.

GREEN ISN'T GREEN WITHOUT ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Although a building can have a wide variety of environmentally friendly features, a building is not truly green unless it is energy efficient. Energy efficiency is the single largest way for a building to reduce its "carbon footprint." Today companies realize that energy efficiency is not just about smart business or the first step to being green. Instead, they realize that it can have a high return-on-investment and can reduce their bottom line. This fall, several businesses took advantage of West Union's grant program to save on their energy costs, and we will be tracking their energy savings over the coming year. The goal is to not only reduce the amount of energy they use but to also reduce what they pay for energy every month in their business. Stay tuned to learn how businesses right here in WU are saving money as part of our Green Pilot Project.

**What's Happenin'
in WU**



The Recipe for Business Success Seminar

January 26, 2010

Hotel Winneshiek, Downtown Decorah

Mark your calendars to attend this workshop sponsored by Iowa Farm Bureau and the Northeast Iowa Business Network (NIBN). There is no fee to attend this workshop, but you must register in advance with Winneshiek County Development at wcdi@alpinecom.net or by calling (563)382-6061.

Renew Rural Iowa workshops have been held around the state and provide an opportunity for small rural business owners to network and learn from local resource providers. The workshop runs from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Snow date is February 9, 2010.

What a Bargain! Fayette County Entrepreneur's Club **\$10.00 Entry Fee**

January 19th, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Edgar Fine Arts Building, UIU Campus, Fayette

Guest Speaker: Peter Awad

Topic: How to start an Ebay store

Peter Awad, local entrepreneur, will share his experience as an online retailer. He will cover how to sell online and helpful tips to growing your bottom line, while on-line!

Network with other entrepreneurs and enjoy great food & beverages!



Sponsored by:
Fayette County Economic Development
& the Northeast Iowa Business Network
To RSVP or for additional information, contact
Fayette County Economic Development @ 800-477-5073
or email: assocdir@fayettcountya.com



Dream Big. Grow Here.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped decorate West Union for the holiday season. Maybe you helped string lights on the trees on the Court House Square, or got up early to help hang the wreathes on light poles

or string garland at Lilac Plaza. Maybe you helped with the lighting project at the Rec Center. However you gave of your time, we appreciate those who helped make West Union a beautiful place this holiday season!



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«Contact Information»
«Street Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Check us out at www.westunion.com !

JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | HAPPY NEW YEAR! | 19 | MSWU Design Committee |
| 4 | City Council meeting | | Fayette County Entre Club at UIU |
| 5 | Chamber Board Meeting | 22 | Affordable Green Building Training at WU Library |
| 6 | MSWU Organization Committee | 25 | WU Lions Club |
| 7 | Barn Quilts of Fayette County Board meeting | 26 | Renew Rural Iowa Workshop at Hotel Winneshiek, Decorah |
| 8 | Affordable Green Building Training at West Union Library | | FCED Board meeting at UIU |
| 9 | Take down Christmas Lights | | |
| 11 | Fayette County Community Foundation Board meeting | | |
| | WU Lions Club | | |
| 12 | Northeast Iowa Business Network meets at Country Hills | | |
| | MSWU Board meeting | | |
| | Turkey River Corridor meeting at Gilbertson Nature Center | | |
| 15 | WUCD meeting at First National Bank Board room | | |
| 16 | Community Awards Banquet | | |
| 18 | City Council meeting | | |



Educational Opportunities

- Affordable Green Building Workshops - see story on page 2
- Fayette County Entrepreneur's Club - Learn how to sell products on the web to grow your business - see story on page 3
- Renew Rural Iowa Workshop - a great day long workshop for small rural business owners - see story on page 3