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A Publication for the
Members of the
Marshall Area
Chamber of Commerce

2007 highway project offers downtown renewal opportunities

Decisions will determine the future design of Marshall's central business district

Following months of discussion and investigation, downtown business owners need to work with the City of Marshall to create a conceptual plan of what downtown Marshall should look like following a planned 2007 highway renovation project.

And while the 30-day timeline may be short, the payoff to the downtown could be gigantic, setting the stage for future increased business activity in the central business district.

A recent public meeting underscored the need for the community to work together to create a plan that will result in a vibrant, profitable downtown area.

Business owners attending agreed that they do not have the required design expertise needed to complete a project of this magnitude.

As Joe Cool quipped' "I can sell you a suit; but I sure as heck can't develop a plan."

As a result, the City has agreed to retain the services of Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban to help in the creation of a final design. DSU has worked extensively in Marshall.

To prepare for the 2007 street improvements, Marshall Municipal Utilities, along with their consultants and the City continue to plan downtown utility improvements to coincide with the reconstruction of Main Street.

MMU will be replacing or upgrading water mains, electrical facilities and street lighting, while the City will replace sanitary sewer and storm water mains in the downtown area.

Surveys have been distributed to businesses

and building owners to help determine what the size, location and condition of existing infrastructure.

Because electrical distribution system will be put underground on the southside of Main Street in 2005 and on the north side in 2006, planning must be completed soon.



Progress continues in downtown Marshall on the building to be occupied by Movie Gallery, changing the face of the central business district. Movie Gallery expects to open in mid- December.

One planning scenario calls for a utility corridor of 15 to 18 feet behind Main Street businesses, to house storm sewer infrastructure, utility service, and garbage receptacles.

However, this plan would eliminate 55

parking spaces in the "P lot", requiring a strategic evaluation of future long-range parking needs.

As MMU general manager Brad Roos stated, "This project will have implications for both parking and traffic patterns for the next 30 years".

Once the scope of the project is identified and a design plan presented, the City of Marshall will be able to begin the process to refine the plan for what the project will ultimately include. Finally, cost estimates will be completed, and funding alternatives can be developed for consideration.

In what city engineer Glenn Olson characterized as "six weeks worth of great work", committee members have shared information on tips to New Ulm, Hutchinson, Alexandria and New Ulm, communities that have already struggled with the process.

Additional meetings will also continue to plan additional aspects of the project, including fundraising and promotional ideas for 2007.



Tracy Veglahn
MACC President / CEO

What have we done for you lately?

September 30 was the end of our Chamber's fiscal year. It is a great time to review our accomplishments and answer the all-important question: "What have we done for you lately?" Our annual report will be arriving in the near future but here is a preview of what we've done for our members during the 2003-2004 Chamber year.

- ◆ Applied for and received entrance into the Minnesota Chamber "Grow MN!" program – a retention and growth program geared toward local manufacturing and technology firms.
- ◆ Administrated the Second Annual Marshall Sounds of Summer Celebration.
- ◆ Graduated 20 people through our Marshall Leadership Academy.
- ◆ Provided monthly networking opportunities through Business After Hours Events, the Golf Tournament, AgFest and the Annual Banquet.
- ◆ Created a forum for discussion by meeting with representatives of WMMC, ACMC, and the City of Marshall to learn more about existing and proposed partnerships to allow for increased access to medical care
- ◆ Assist with physician recruitment efforts undertaken by WMMC and ACMC, providing community relocation information, tours and networking events, as needed.
- ◆ Worked to develop a regional coalition to advocate for improvements to Highway 23, and support continued Highway 212 improvements.
- ◆ Sponsored Legislative forums to discuss the issues that effect our members with local, state and national elected officials.
- ◆ Kept members informed with 12 issues of the Chamber Perspectives, 52 issues of the Friday FAX, printed quarterly "Downtown News" letters, Legislative Updates, and other communications tools.
- ◆ Updates email bi-weekly during the legislative session and published the annual issue of the Chamber's owner's manual.
- ◆ Provided an on-line business directory listing to our member for use by the general public to promote shopping locally.
- ◆ The Marshall Dollars program returned over \$100,000 to our members again this year.

We're working hard for every one of our members. Make this the year that you become more involved with all the valuable activities our Chamber provides to help make our members as successful as they can be!

Please feel free to contact the Chamber office anytime with suggestions, comments or concerns that should be addressed on behalf of the business community.

Question & Answer

Q. I received an email from my credit card company telling me that their security procedure had changed, and asking that I validate my information. Is this on the up-and-up?

A. Beware! More than likely, you were contacted by "phishers". In this scam, swindlers claim to be from a reputable company and send out thousands of fake emails in the hopes that businesses and consumers will respond with bank account information, credit card numbers, passwords, or other sensitive information.

The emails can look quite convincing, with company logos and banners copied from real web sites.

To avoid becoming a victim of a phishing scam, remember these tips:

- ◆ Never give out any financial information in response to unsolicited phone calls, emails or faxes, no matter how official the request may seem.
- ◆ Do not respond to emails that warn of dire consequences if you do not respond immediately.
- ◆ Check all credit cards and bank statements regularly for unauthorized transactions, even small ones. Some thieves hope that small transactions will go unnoticed. Report discrepancies immediately.
- ◆ When using the internet, watch for secure web sites, to signal that your information is secure during any transaction. Most often, this is signaled by a padlock or key icon at the bottom of your browser.

Business Poll consistent with MN Chamber priorities

Transportation, health care remain public policy priorities

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce kicked off its 2004-05 year, buoyed by a statewide poll that shows its agenda reflects that of the general business community.

Health care costs and keeping state spending in check ranked at the top of business concerns. The surveys also showed an opportunity for the Chamber to take leadership in shaping a solution to statewide transportation needs.

Results of the first Minnesota Business Barometer Survey were released at the Minnesota Chamber's Issue Conference and Annual Meeting September 28 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The survey was co-sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber and Himle Horner Inc.

The survey of 350 business managers and CEO's statewide was conducted in part to measure the views of the general business community against those of Minnesota Chamber members. The poll underscores the role of the Minnesota Chamber as the statewide voice of business. The results of the Business Barometer Survey align closely with what our members are telling us.

The Minnesota Chamber tests its policy recommendations with a separate random sample of its members. In addition, the Chamber hosts a series of regional policy

development meetings in conjunction with local chambers each spring and fall to receive member input on policy priorities.

Health care is the priority concern among all demographics of businesses, both surveys showed. Seventy percent of Business Barometer respondents reported rising costs and, of those, 16 percent said they were likely to stop providing coverage to employees if costs continue to rise.

Among Chamber poll respondents, 82 percent said consumers should bear more financial responsibility and 54 percent said they should have reports on the effectiveness of providers. Only 24 percent said they supported a health insurance mandate.

Balancing the budget and the quality and quantity of state services remain priorities with employers, too. Chamber focus groups sent a clear message that the Chamber should stay the course and support balancing the budget without a general fund tax increase. Tax increases were considered as an option of last resort, and then the clear preference was for "sin" taxes.

Among Business Barometer respondents, 73 percent agreed with the governor's "no new taxes" policy. Fifty-five percent believe some increases may be necessary to deal

with future deficits. Of those, 46 percent supported a combination of reduced spending and higher taxes, and only 9 percent supported a tax-increase



David Olson

solution only. Forty two percent advocated cutting spending as the solution.

Transportation was second to health care as far as priority issues identified in Chamber focus groups. However, both polls showed a wide variance of opinion on transportation needs and funding.

The results on transportation were not surprising given the many competing plans and mixed messages for improving roads and transit. The lack of consensus is an opportunity for the Minnesota Chamber to work with local chambers statewide and lead the way on forging a statewide plan. We will be visiting with local chambers about our statewide plan, Minnesota Moves, over the next several months.

*Article provided by
David Olson,
President of the*

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

For more information about MACC's public policy priorities, contact the Chamber staff, or a member of our Government Affairs Committee.

**SHOP
MARSHALL
FIRST**

Let's work together to encourage everyone to SHOP MARSHALL FIRST this Holiday Season!



*Deb Boulton
Board Chair*

Board Retreat provides forum for annual goal-setting

On October 5, members of the Chamber's Board of Directors and staff met with

facilitator David Olson, President of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to create a work plan for our upcoming fiscal year.

Our day began with discussions of trends found in chambers across the state and nation. Time was also spent discussing the role of the board of directors in leading our organization, and the need for increased participation at chamber programs and events.

Staff presented our "Year in Review" recapping many of the successful programs completed over the last twelve months.

The most significant portion of the day was spent on identifying our top priorities for the coming year. The issues that we have determined merit our most significant efforts during 2004 / 2005 include:

Transportation:

We will continue efforts to improve the regions transportation infrastructure, review and consider support of Minnesota Moves, a state-wide transportation funding plan developed by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber will also continue to focus efforts on improvements to

Highway 23, working with other communities along the highway corridor, as well as lending support to airport expansion. Along with other community groups, MACC will also continue to lobby for a spotlight in the area of the new high school

Economic Development

The Chamber will lead efforts to retain and expand existing local businesses through participation in Grow Minnesota! An advisory board to oversee the program, with a goal to complete a minimum of 25 calls during 2004/ 2005, and evaluate the results to identify strategies to aid in retention and expansion of local businesses.

MACC will also support efforts currently underway by the Marshall Industries Foundation (MACC's Industrial Development Committee) to create a full-time economic development position to work exclusively on development issues.

Downtown Redevelopment

The Chamber will work with downtown businesses, Marshall Municipal Utilities, the City of Marshall and MnDOT to develop a plan for 2007 highway construction through the central business district. At the same time, MACC will assist and facilitate the development of a vision for Marshall's downtown, enabling it to continue to be a vital --- and profitable--- business center.

Chamber Operations

MACC will work to more effectively

communicate MACC's value to our members and the community. To do so, we will publish an annual report, consider a weekly Chamber page in the Marshall Independent.

We will also work to increase office efficiencies, by considering the purchase of chamber membership software, replace outdated office furnishings and add an updated phone system with voice mail capacity. The Chamber's by-laws and policies and procedures will also be reviewed and updated.

Finally, we will work to plan activities to honor the Chamber's 75th Anniversary, and to thank our members for their continued support of Chamber programming and community progress.

Boulton assumed her role as 2004/2005 Chairman of the Board on October 1. A graduate of SMSU, Boulton serves as human services director at BH Electronics, a position that she has held for over ten years. She and her husband, Mark, also farm near Porter.

Did you know?

2005 marks the
75th Anniversary
of the
Marshall Area
Chamber of Commerce.

We are proud to have served the Marshall business community for seventy-five years, and we thank you for your continued support. Watch for special features and information as we celebrate this important milestone!

