

The April 14, 2011 meeting of the Greater Searcy County Chamber of Commerce was called to order at noon by President Clint Freeman. Present at the meeting were Vice President Lee Walsh, Secretary Merrily Hartwig, Linda Dinges representing the Master Gardeners, Dorothy Hare representing Operation Kindness, Treasurer Jack Treat, Home Bank of Arkansas, Richard Groves, Airport Commission, Ken Farris, Charles Baker, Poison Ivy Soap, Bobbi Rudd, Marshall Screen Printing, Doug Loggins, K & M Flowers, and Brad Runsek, County Agent.

Treasurer Jack Treat stated that there was \$7,270 in the Chamber's checking account and that there were no outstanding checks.

The County Agent talked briefly about the possibility of grape production in the county and about an Ag Day in either the Spring or Fall. In addition, he and Linda Dinges, both affiliated with Master Gardeners, spoke about the brick work and plantings around the "Welcome to Marshall"/"Rotary" sign south of town

Agent Runsek also talked about the Searcy County Health Fair to be held in May at the Civic Center. He said there was a need for food. Upon motion by Merrily Hartwig, seconded by Charles Baker, and unanimously carried, the Chamber will donate up to \$500 towards the cost of food for the event.

President Freeman said that there would be an estimate of costs for Christmas lights at the meeting in May.

Bobbi Rudd reported to the group her recommendations for a "Keep It Local" campaign for Searcy County businesses. Bobbi, Brad and Merrily will meet before the next meeting to come up with ways to implement a plan for shopping local.

Lee Walsh updated the members on the website. In addition, he asked that the May meeting of the Chamber be held at the Ozark Heritage Art Center in Leslie. There was discussion on the topic, but no action was taken. It was Lee's recommendation because the Chamber is a county-wide organization.

Lee also told the group that several of the Chamber members should plan to attend the May 10 meeting of the Marshall City Council to "gently" see what could be done to make the city look better, particularly since we are hoping for many out-of-towners for the Buffalo River Spring Fling. Any member who is interested in attending the Council meeting on May 10 is urged to do so.

Merrily gave an update on the Buffalo River Spring Fling and thanked Lee for all the work he was doing with the website and with Facebook to see that the event was publicized. Display advertising will be placed in the Marshall Mountain Wave twice and, probably, the Log Cabin Democrat in Conway since it was the consensus of the Spring Fling committee that advertising should be done in the south, rather than the north. Lee also stated that there should be some advertising funds forthcoming from the Ozark Mountain Region group.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Merrily Hartwig, Secretary