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Direction for Business

May 2011

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Thank you for your partnership!

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Groceries or Gasoline?

This month's newsletter includes a 'guest column' authored by Shari Kearney. Shari has been a Chamber Connector and is currently assisting the Chamber with several projects, including the site selection software database.

With today's prices for gasoline bumping \$4.00 and a gallon of milk up to \$3.79, there's been some concern voiced about making a choice between filling up the gas tank and buying groceries. I can certainly appreciate the quandary. It is a time-honored dilemma that has been hashed out for years. "I need to work to make money, and I need money to buy food, but I need gas to get to work so that I can afford to buy groceries." It reminds me of the chicken and the egg—which came first?

Do you find yourself watching the prices at the gas pump? Typically, I seem to notice the lower prices when I do not need gas. Yet, when it is time to fill up, the price of fuel seems to be at its highest. What causes the change in prices?

To answer that question, it's important to understand the simple concept of ordinary supply and demand. For example, a barrel of oil holds 42 gallons. Right now, the price of crude oil is \$75-80 per barrel; next, factor in the additional costs of raw material to produce actual gasoline from the crude oil. For simplicity sake, let's say that cost is \$2.00 per gallon. But that's not all. The \$2.00 does not include the cost of getting the gasoline to Grand Island. Before gas is available at the pump, the oil must be transported to a refinery, and then the gasoline is transported to wholesalers for distribution. From there the gasoline is transported to fuel stations. Now even after all of the transportation costs are added to that original \$2.00 per gallon price, the retailer or service station has to adjust pricing to cover their costs of doing business, including labor, utilities, theft, and much more. Hence, the price per gallon of gas in Grand Island is averaging \$3.89. Adding to the formula is the great unknown - environmental factors - that can and do create an imbalance in supply and demand.

How about food prices? The same laws of supply and demand affect our food prices. The same transportation expenses and local cost of doing business also affect food prices. And, as expected, so does the weather. Example, when Florida

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experiences adverse weather, the price of orange juice and lemonade increases.

The answer? I don't know. Each family has to make their own budgetary decisions based on what works for them. Maybe it is car pooling, consolidating errands, or ramping up your couponing efforts. The good news in Grand Island is that our unemployment rate is low (3.9% compared to the national average of 8.7%) which means more people are working; we've not had the horrible weather other states are experiencing; and there's a three-day weekend coming up!



Gary Thompson Agency invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on April 1, 2011 to celebrate their office relocation.



Hi-Tech Diesel celebrated their new Chamber partnership with a ribbon cutting on April 8, 2011.



Veterans Administration invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on April 14, 2011 to celebrate the opening of their transition house.



Just Desserts Bakery invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on April 15, 2011 to celebrate their new Chamber partnership and one year anniversary.



Island Towing celebrated their new Chamber partnership with a ribbon cutting on April 15, 2011.



Hy-Vee Business After Hours, April 28, 2011.



GRACE Foundation invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting on April 29, 2011 to celebrate their new Chamber partnership.



James Duff and Kris Jerke visit at the Hy-Vee Business After Hours.

Chamber Training Opportunity

The Chamber is offering YOU another FREE training! **Coaching Essentials will be offered Wednesday, June 15 and 22, 2011.** This hands-on, information packed class will explore the benefits of coaching, coaching approaches, how to develop an

action plan, and methods for ensuring the coaching process is successful. This information is key to help people meet and/or exceed expectations and to help ensure productivity and profitability for the organization. Coaching is a leadership tool that is effective in improving performance and contributing to the goals of the organization.

Seats are limited! Contact mberlie@gichamber.com to reserve your spot, limit 5 participants per company.

2011 Scholarship Winners

The Chamber is proud to announce our three 2011 scholarship winners! A BIG congratulations to GISH student Miguel Baeza, GINW student Kendall Hostler, and GICC student Michaela Ostdiek!

Each year, a \$500.00 scholarship is awarded to one Grand Island student at each high school. The student winners have been actively involved in the community, participated in school activities, demonstrated good citizenship, all while achieving excellent grades and holding down a job. Thank you to our business sponsors for making the Chamber's Academic Banquets and Scholarships possible!

Harvest of Harmony has a Place for You!

Be a part of history by joining the team that coordinates and executes the Harvest of Harmony events! 2011 marks the 70th year of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce's Harvest of Harmony Parade. The Parade is always the first Saturday in October and the Field Competition follows. The Pageant events take place the Friday prior to the Parade. Join us in hosting the nearly 90 talented bands that visit Grand Island, along with the 100+ floats that beautify the streets with their beautiful colors and displays.

Shadow a current committee member on the general committee

Many of our committee members have served for several years and are looking to share their knowledge and know-how with a shadow. By following these experts, you could be ready to take over their position without worry! Responsibilities vary from parade to pageant to stadium. This group meets regularly from April to November to plan and, of course, work a full day on Parade day.

Pageant Committee

The Pageant Committee members organize the Pageant events as well as prep the girls, help the judges, take care of food and decorations, and share in the excitement! There are many

chances to help. The committee meets once a month from May to November and works the day of the Pageant.

Stadium

There are various spots to assist at the stadium, from taking tickets to running notes to judges, to being a gopher. This area is event day volunteering.

Event Volunteer

With an eye on the big picture, our General Committee needs help on parade day! An event volunteer could help with parking, assisting the parade judges, or enforcing the rules for entries. The time commitment would be the day of the event only.

While there are multiple positions available to help, one thing is for certain, each volunteer is a valuable part of the Harvest of Harmony events. Without these hundreds of helping hands, we would not be able to host these historical events.

New Chamber Partners

May 2011

American Eagle Airlines
Brett Hooyerink
PO Box 619616 MD 5494
Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX 75261-9616
817.967.9715

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Topeka, KS 66615-3850
785.272.2252

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308.379.2947

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Grand Island, NE 68801
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