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Direction for Business

November 2011

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Happy Holidays!

A Message from your Chamber President

Happy Holidays! The Christmas season unofficially kicked off November 1, just as Halloween was wrapping up. At least it seems that way to me. It's a little disconcerting to make that transition -- Halloween decorations (and candy) one day and Christmas ornaments the next; jamming to *The Monster Mash* on October 31 and *Silver Bells* just twenty-four short hours later. But transition we will.

Black Friday, the day that has traditionally marked the inaugural start of the Christmas shopping season, is just a week away. Retailers, restaurants and others are busily preparing for what is historically the busiest shopping day of the year. As the retail center for a trade area with a population of 300,000 spanning 30 counties, Grand Island offers an extraordinary array of services and merchandise - from customer-service oriented businesses. Grand Island is poised to assist consumers who are eager to part with their Christmas savings.

Your Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for business. As you are making your Christmas lists this year, consider unconventional gifts that also support our local economy. The following is adapted from a national effort to support products made in the United State and that support local economies.

- Everyone -- yes everyone--gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from a local hair salon or barber?
- Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages, for those interested in recreation or health improvement.
- Consider a gift certificate for car detailing or an oil change at a local shop.
- Does someone on your list need their driveway sealed? Would they appreciate lawn care services for the summer or snow removal during the cold Nebraska winter?
- Thinking about a heartfelt gift for mom? Mom would LOVE a house cleaning service.
- For the technologically challenged among us, consider computer services.
- Handcrafted gifts - jewelry, scarves, or pottery - encourage entrepreneurialism and personalized selections

- Give the gift of 'experiences'. Consider season tickets to Grand Island Little Theater, Stuhr Museum, or Nebraska Danger Football games or gift certificates for dance or golf lessons, or to the Heartland Public Shooting Park

The options are endless. These suggestions are intended to be thought-provoking and meaningful and to encourage support of local businesses. The Chamber of Commerce is committed to its role as an advocate for business – each day fielding calls and other inquiries from consumers seeking referrals to businesses. Recommending Chamber partners is one way we support our membership and provide "Direction for Business".



The Boat Dock had a new partnership ribbon cutting.



El Quetzal Bakery announced their new Chamber partnership.



Dressed 2 Dance at 1004 North Diers is a new Chamber partner.



Custom Class 8 Trucks recently joined the Chamber.



High Quality Housing invited the Connectors to a ribbon cutting.



Family 1st Dental celebrated their new Chamber partnership.



Grand Island Physical Therapy opened a new Balance and Mobility facility.



Sonya Schultz Photography celebrated her new location.



Dreisbach's Carry Out announced the opening of their business (308) 675-1211.



Heartland CASA held a ribbon cutting to



Freddy's Frozen Custard celebrated their business with a ribbon cutting.



Uniquely You held a ribbon cutting to

announce their new Chamber partnership.

celebrate the opening of their business.



GISH students watch a 'Trumpf 5000 Punch' machine at Chief Fabrication.

Dream It! Do It!

Grand Island Senior High students enrolled in the Advance Metals program toured Hornady manufacturing, Penrose Machinery, Chief Fabrication, and the Platte Generation Station through the Grand Island Chamber's Dream It! Do

It! initiative. Twenty-five students observed daily operations, identified job skill sets, and discussed hiring requirements with company Human Resources professionals. During lunch, students heard from Randy Kissinger with the Department of Labor/Workforce Development. Randy shared helpful interview tips and explored job opportunities in Grand Island.

Black Friday

After filling up on turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce Thanksgiving Day, sights turn to Black Friday sales deals. Black Friday is the Friday following Thanksgiving, and traditionally is the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. This unrecognized holiday has Americans patiently waiting for the sales ads in order to locate the best deals in town.

Black Friday is so named because this day has historically been the day when a business goes from operating "in the red" financially to operating "in the black." This year is looking promising for retailers; overall retail sales are currently 7.2% higher compared to one year ago, and they have increased 7.6% in the past three months. (www.marketwatch.com)

Retailers are hoping this upward trend in spending will continue. Drawing foot traffic into stores is crucial for expanding sales; hoping shoppers will pick up other goods once there, and return for more holiday shopping. Early sales and openings have been a way to increase traffic and this year it appears stores are going to be opening even earlier.

Chain stores are climbing on the bandwagon of early openings and deal announcements as they face increased competition from online retailers. Stores are recognizing that they must compete with online retailers and Cyber Monday and are countering by releasing ads earlier on special promotions and allowing shoppers to plan. Walmart has already released a few

sales promotions to their Facebook followers to whet their appetite on what is to come.

This year, shoppers can utilize the latest technology to locate the best deals. A Black Friday app for the iPhone is available. The BFAds.net Black Friday app lets you plan your Black Friday shopping trip in advance and provides you with early access to sale advertisements and deals from major retailers. You can also browse the ads by store or category and create your own shopping list.

Whether you choose to participate in the rush and chaos of Black Friday, we encourage you to support local businesses. By keeping your money local, you are supporting stores, jobs and the Grand Island economy.

2012 Top 35 Under 35

The Grand Island Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations and applications for Grand Island's 2012 Top 35 Under 35. This fantastic opportunity identifies young individuals with community commitment and leadership. Past honorees Dr. Chad Hudnall and Valerie Hinrichs tell what it means to them to have been selected:

"I was much honored to be chosen as a Top 35 under 35 recipient. There are so many examples of excellence in leadership in business and community in Grand Island's under 35 population, and to be recognized with this outstanding group was humbling." – Dr. Chad Hudnall, Optometrist/Owner at Family EyeCare Center, PC

"Being honored as one of the Top 35 Under 35 means that the Grand Island community recognizes the importance of recruiting and maintaining a young professional base of leaders. I am proud to say that I have worked very hard within the Grand Island community and enjoy all that it has to offer. The Top 35 Under 35 has helped me develop a professional network and make some great connections with fellow young individuals in town." – Valerie Hinrichs, Executive Director of Big Brother's Big Sister's

Anyone currently between the ages of 21 and 35 who works in and/or contributes to Grand Island, has demonstrated professional excellence in his or her field, and has a commitment to the community is eligible for consideration. Because our workforce is diverse, we want to highlight a wide variety of occupations and people!

Please complete the application and submit by November 23, 2011. The application can be found at www.gichamber.com/interior-pages/2012-top-35-under-35.



Welcome Deanna!

Deanna Mesch has joined the Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce as the events coordinator. Deanna will be responsible for organizing various events directed by the Chamber, including the Harvest of Harmony Parade, the Chamber Golf Outing and Annual Meeting.

Mesch has worked as a buyer for over 15 years at Macy's, Harry and David, USAA and Oriental Trading Company.

Deanna received a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Merchandising from the American College, a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of Nebraska/Lincoln and her Masters of Business Administration from Creighton University.

If you are in the Chamber or see Deanna out and about, please welcome her.

New Chamber Partners

November 2011

Black Box Cosmetics
Laura Mader
3580 North Webb Road
Grand Island, NE 68803
308.380.4252

The Fence Post Magazine
Kevin Williamson
545 K Road
Chapman, NE 68827
308.222.0352

Heartland CASA
Amy Bennett
410 West Second Street
PO Box 525
Grand Island, NE 68802
308.385.5125

JobXSite
Shari Kearney
201 Second Street
St. Libory, NE 68872
308.750.6036

Majestic Treasures
Christie Kelley
216 West Second Street
Grand Island, NE 68801
308.379.3588

Uniquely You/Rachelle Leigh Photography
Rachelle Suchanek
123 West Third Street
Grand Island, NE 68801
308.381.5555

For a list of renewing partners please visit:
<http://www.gichamber.com/main-menu/chamber-news/business-news/chamber-partnership-renewals/>

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