There’s nothing like being a witness to our small town’s generosity and warm support, and that could be heartily felt at the 2017 Palmyra Chamber’s Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet held January 5. All who attended helped create the welcoming and congratulatory atmosphere. Outgoing President Brian Caldwell amiably welcomed all and served as Master of Ceremonies. Miss Marion County, Amanda Lewis, assisted with award presentations, adding a festive air to the evening.

Pablo Picasso said, “The meaning of life is to find your Gift; the purpose of life is to give it away.” The 2016 Citizen of the Year Award went to Mary Beth and Tony Lenzini, a couple who have been giving their gifts of caring and kindness to the Palmyra Community for so many years.

Tony’s service to Palmyra began in 1960 as a teacher in the Palmyra R-1 District where he ended his career in the field of education 38 years later. During that time he served in various positions such as science teacher, Assistant High School Principal, Athletic/Activities Director, Special Education Director, Federal Programs Director and Clarence Cannon Conference Secretary. To quote a testimonial by Mary Scholl, “he seemed to know every member of the community, who their children were, their nieces and nephews, what activities and contributions they had made to the school and town, and how many yards they had run on a certain play in any game of any untold year!”

Tony’s lovely wife, Mary Beth joined her spouse teaching in Palmyra in 1968, the year they married; she retired two years after her husband in 2000. Mary Beth influenced many Palmyra youth, first as an English teacher and later as the Elementary School Librarian. As one who nominated her wrote, “It is not possible to count how many successful people there are in this world because she taught them to use proper grammar and how to express themselves. … If you were in her classes, you left them knowing how to write, how to punctuate, and how to read for knowledge as well as pleasure. She was a task master, but students knew that if they did an assignment that garnered her approval,
then they had accomplished a great deal. Her love for her students and her colleagues was evident in every part of every day."

Their teaching careers have positively affected hundreds of students and their families. They have been invited to more graduations, weddings and class reunions than you can count! But their outreach and model citizenship have extended beyond the school environment. He has served on the Nutrition Center Board and the Palmyra Rural Rental Housing Board. She has served on the Park Board and written grants for community institutions. Both are active members of their church. From Meals on Wheels to taking the ill to appointments to cards, gifts, food, visits, prayers and support, they have cared for Palmyra as one would care for one’s own family.

Palmyra could have existed without them. But it is definitely a brighter place because they decided to make it their home.

Honored as 2016 Educator of the Year was Palmyra R-1 Superintendent, Eric Churchwell. In her presentation, Elementary Principal Lora Hillman likened his work in the district to life on the river. “As a school administrator, one works to protect the simplest of ideals in a classroom. As a teacher there is no greater reward than to have a group of kids learning a lesson from instruction. This seems easy enough, but protecting that learning environment is far from simple. The ebb and flow of a school system challenges even that of Mother Nature.”

Churchwell has dedicated his career to serving the students in Palmyra with honesty and dedication. A Palmyra graduate’s testimonial puts a face on what that looks like: “I was a pregnant 16 year old that wanted to give up on a lot of things, but God used him to not allow that to happen… I am so fortunate to have [had] an educator that cared so much for me, that pushed me to not give up on my education when that was the easy thing to do.”

As an administrator, Churchwell’s decision-making has been based on what is best for kids. In his thank you remarks, Eric said he accepts the award “on behalf of all the teachers, students, staff and the community” because he believes “a school system is only as good as the community it serves.” He recalled how he was transplanted here many years ago and expressed his gratitude to Christine Crawford, then Middle School Principal, for hiring him in 1991 and expanding his talents.

To quote presenter Sharon Harrison, Christine Crawford, Volunteer of the Year, “truly has a servant’s heart!” [She has] over the years, consistently revealed a dedication to her community in various areas, on a volunteer basis. She simply finds fulfillment in serving others and in doing so, expresses her appreciation to the Lord by using her ‘gifts’ of finances, abilities and time to the fullest. She does so, by being available whenever and wherever she is needed.”

Crawford has donated countless hours and unselfish service to the First Baptist Church here in Palmyra. For years, she organized Vacation Bible School, and also serves as the Sunday School Director, providing the children’s sermon as well. She is the driving force behind the “First at the First” Program now in its second year at the church, helping organize and facilitate the ministry that seeks to support working parents in our community. "First at the First" provides after school care and activities on the first Wednesday of every month when there is early dismissal at Palmyra R-1 and no after school program. This program has provided a safe place for our community children free of charge. With the help of twenty-four adults and youth, "First at the First" served 50 families with 74 children this January.

Crawford also serves as secretary for the Palmyra Area Food Pantry and treasurer for Heritage Seekers, a not-
for-profit organization which seeks to maintain Palmyra’s history. Heritage Seekers is responsible for both the Gardner House Museum and the 1858 Marion County Jail. She was actively involved in securing 501(c)3 non-profit status for the Food Pantry and has written grants for both which have been funded to support the mission of each. When serving on the Park Board, Crawford also wrote grants to support the work of Flower City Park. “I share this award with the many other volunteers with whom I work,” she added in accepting.

The Paintbrush Award was presented to Janes Surveying. This award recognizes business owners who have made commitments and investments through both time and money to improving their building and their services to Palmyra and the surrounding communities. This Main Street property was first owned and operated as Sprague Funeral Home, established in 1921. In 1994, new owners converted it into a beauty shop, which it remained when it changed hands for the third time. Janes Survey acquired the property in 2008.

The building at 222 South Main has seen a lot of changes since it was built and in 2016 underwent some major renovations. The building façade was totally redone along with the interior. Seeing the before and after makes this property very deserving of the 2016 Chamber Paint Brush Award. The recipient, Jason Janes, credited his father, Justin, who “did all the work,” and his downtown building neighbor Josh Steffen, Principal of SSD Build, who helped with the vision for the finished project.

HOMEBANK was recognized as the 2016 inductee to the Chamber’s Business Hall of Fame. Awardees are community businesses which have greatly impacted Palmyra for an extended period of time. HOMEBANK, known as Palmyra State Bank until 2014, rose from the ashes of the great depression in 1934 when a consortium of community leaders pooled their resources to open this institution to serve the city of Palmyra. With only one change of ownership in its 83 year history, this business has continuously provided its products and services to the Palmyra-Marion County area.

The current family owners, the Webb family, began buying the business in 1957, believing that the backbone of a successful financial institution was community involvement and giving and employing outstanding people committed to service. Byron Webb, current bank owner, admitted he’s “known this town my entire life,” having visited his grandfather here many times after his grandad acquired the bank. “We are very much a team,” added Joe Thomas, CEO and Chairman of the Board for HOMEBANK.

Brian Caldwell chose Teresa Smyser as the recipient of the President’s Award. Smyser began her service on the Chamber Board in January 2016 and has been a very active member. She was the force behind the Palmyra Chamber stickers displayed on the doors of member businesses; chaired the Gift Certificate Review Committee to be better prepared for the holiday season; provided major assistance for the Taste of Palmyra 10th Anniversary and successfully led Christmas in Palmyra, increasing the number of committee members, donated items for the auction and the amount raised by the event. Accepting the award emotionally, Smyser simply said, “I love helping. I always have and I always will.”

Caldwell expressed the Chamber’s gratitude to Randy & Michele Hopson for their excellent work on the Marion County Fair and presented them with a token of the Board’s appreciation. The Hopsons will be chairing the event for the seventh year in 2017. Also recognized for her service was retiring Board member Heather McChristian.

The 2017 Palmyra Chamber Board was introduced: Charlene Jones-Liendo – President, Mason Owen – Vice President, Brian Caldwell – Past President, Bryan Bartz, Tav Brown, Randy Hopson, Kelly Porter, Teresa Smyser and Josh Steffen – Members, and Susan Berti - Secretary/Treasurer. Incoming President Jones-Liendo presented a plaque to Brian Caldwell thanking him for his service as the 2016 President.

Caldwell concluded with thanks to all who helped make the evening successful and special for the award recipients including Aramark, Doug Dry and the Rebel Pig, Flowers For You, Golden Eagle, HATS, Key Club volunteers, the Old Stone House Inn, Susan Berti and Miss Marion County, Amanda Lewis.
JA in a Day is a special opportunity for community members to educate elementary students on smart ways to earn and save money, skills needed to be successful in the workforce, and about business all in the course of around 3 hours. Community volunteers lead hands-on activities that are provided to volunteers by Junior Achievement. The activities educate youth on the connection between education and success in the workplace. Volunteers are able to share their real world experience with students. Curriculum, training, and support is provided by Junior Achievement.

JA Our City (the 3rd grade program) introduces students to the basics of financial literacy, the characteristics of cities, and how people and businesses in cities manage their money. They explore how financial institutions, entrepreneurs, and news media contribute to the financial well-being of a city.

JA Our Region (the 4th grade program) introduces students to entrepreneurship and how entrepreneurs use resources to produce goods and services in a region. Students operate a hypothetical hot dog stand to understand the fundamental tasks performed by a business owner and to see how money comes into and goes out of a business.

At Palmyra Elementary JA in a Day will occur on March 6th. We are in need of community volunteers like yourself who have a vested interest in the success of students in our community! Last year, five Palmyra Chamber members participated in this program.

Won't you join us on March 6th? Contact the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce at palmyrchamber@gmail.com or 573-769-0777. You may also contact Denise Damron, Junior Achievement in Northeast Missouri and West-Central Illinois District Manager at 573-769-0161 or ddamron@jastl.org.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

7th Annual Prom Dress Resale

Have a dress to sell? Want to buy a dress? The Annual Prom Dress Resale, hosted by the First Christian Church, will take place at Zion Lutheran School, 120 South Spring Street in Palmyra. Bring dresses to the school to sell January 25-27 from 6-8 p.m. A fee is charged for registration and sale. The sale takes place Friday, January 27 from 6-8 p.m. and Saturday, January 28 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information call Nancy Goellner at 573.470.0861.
The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce held its monthly meeting Tuesday, December 13, at HATS. President Brian Caldwell welcomed all including FBLA guests Noah Brown and Brock Malone.

**CHRISTMAS IN PALMYRA**
Christmas in Palmyra chairperson, Teresa Smyser, thanked all who helped make Christmas in Palmyra so successful including the businesses and individuals who donated items or refreshments for the live auction, those who made monetary contributions, the St. Joseph Singers, the Methodist Church Choir, auctioneer George Keller, hostess Rachel Bringer Shepherd and the Marion County Fair Queens who assisted her. The auction raised $1730. This money stays in the community and is used for donations for organizations and events such as the Fireman’s Fundraiser Dance, the Heritage Seekers, PHS After Prom and After Graduation, FACT’s PAWS Pack Program, etc. Many auction attendees brought contributions for our Food Pantry which have been delivered for distribution.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES**
Annual Membership Dues are due in January. A membership form and information regarding the benefits of Chamber Membership can be found [HERE](#).

**CITY RECAP OF 2016**
Mayor Loren Graham was our guest speaker. He recapped 2016 city happenings and gave members a preview of what would be happening in 2017.

All electric and water meters have been converted to remote, eliminating the need for meter readers. A screw press is being purchased for the sewer plant to compact the solids from the plant so they may be hauled to a land fill, eliminating the need to land spread solids. Almost 1500 feet of new curbing and over 1500 feet of new sidewalks have been completed in 2016, about 12 blocks of streets and alleys were resurfaced, a new street sweeper was purchased, and Klinger & Associates were hired to develop a city wide storm water abatement plan. And who hasn’t noticed the new blue LED Christmas lights just completed to intensify our Christmas spirit… and save money as well!

Work has begun on upgrading three of the nine electric circuits in town and will be completed in the coming year. The improvements will reduce line loss on the upgraded circuits and should save the city approximately $45,000 annually when completed. In the coming year lights need to be added to the new ball field built in Flower City Park, and a concession stand between Foster and Pixie Fields will be completed. A memorial donation will enable a butterfly/hummingbird garden to be constructed this coming spring. The city and the park will share the cost to insure that Well Lake will not leak. When completed, the Conservation Department has indicated that they will stock it, build a fishing dock and build a handicap accessible sidewalk around the lake.
Palmyra Chamber of Commerce

Working Together for a Stronger Future for the Palmyra Area

2017 CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP:
Renew Your Chamber Membership for 2017 NOW or become a member for the first time! Membership runs January – December. Businesses with only 1-3 employees can join for only $75. Not-For-Profit 501(c)3 Organizations and Non-Business Individual Memberships are also $75, while Retired Individuals may join for $25. An application and more information are available on the Chamber website: HERE.

Visit www.showmepalmyra.com for everything Palmyra!

UPCOMING MEETING DATES & PROGRAMS
YOUR NEXT CHAMBER MEETING IS NOON

Tu., February 14th, 2017:
Nutrition Center. Clay Thornburg will be revealing his new product and share information about his business venture, United Vitality Health.

Tu, March 14th:
The Old Stone House Inn. Kathryn McDaniel, Community Manager with the American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life will be presenting awards to 2016 Marion County teams and contributors and sharing information about the upcoming June 2 event.

Tu., April 11th:
Rebel Pig. Michele Hopson with B&S Insurance will address the threat of identity theft and how ID Shield can provide comprehensive identity protection.

Tu, May 9th:
Location TBA. Tonya Stamper, Nurse Practitioner with Palmyra’s Blessing Clinic will share services their staff provides.

upcoming events

January 19
Route 168 Overpass Bridge/Acceleration Lane
Public Informational Meeting~4:30-6:30 pm, REC

January 25
Free Blood Pressure Reading~10-11:30 am, Marion County Library

January 27
7th Annual Prom Dress Resale~6-8 pm, Zion Lutheran School

January 28
7th Annual Prom Dress Resale~10 am-4 pm, Zion Lutheran School

January 31
Pink Out the Gym, Relay for Life Fundraiser, Palmyra High School

February 4
Ducks Unlimited Banquet~6 pm, American Legion Hall

February 22
Free Blood Pressure Reading~10-11:30 am, Marion County Library

February 25
St. Joseph’s Church Trivia Night~6 pm, Msgr. Farishon Hall

March 6
JA in a Day~Morning, Palmyra Elementary

Chamber Email Address: palmyrachamber@gmail.com

Palmyra MO Chamber of Commerce