

Chamber recognizes the best of the best

By Ronni Hannaman

Scott Dockery, outgoing chairman of the Board of the Carson City Chamber of Commerce, is pleased to announce the outstanding businesses and individuals within our community that have made a difference in how we view ourselves. Chosen by the Chamber's Executive Committee those chosen continue to be committed to a better Carson City, a strong Chamber, and a strong regional presence.

Economic Development Award



Joel Dunn, youth director, Carson City Parks & Recreation

Joel Dunn, youth sports director of the Carson City Parks & Recreation Department, is responsible for bringing millions of dollars to our community for most of the year, impacting varied businesses that have come to rely on the sports events to increase their bottom line. His program will bring more than \$15.5 million to Carson City this year. Joel began the program in 2005 accounting for more than \$61 million in overall revenues of which more than \$1.2 was returned to the city in sales tax revenues and almost \$1.3 million to the Carson City Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Community Spirit Awards

These awards go to those who have made a visible difference in our community:



The Firkin & Fox continues to wow residents and visitors for the showy flowers lovingly arranged by Lynn Phalan each year. The show stopping display makes for a colorful site as one comes upon Third and Carson streets and is a frequent subject of visitor photos taking away with them the colorful memory of our downtown. This remodel of the former dowdy and downcast historic hotel and the beautiful floral display is appreciated by all and has once again become a landmark of which we can all be proud. The Firkin flowers were the catalyst for all those flowers now on display everywhere.



Karen Abowd continues to be a champion for the flower baskets seen the past few years along Carson Street. The flowers add a whimsical colorful touch and brighten our main street, setting off the historic downtown from the rest of the city. This year's crop looks particularly great.



Cactus Jack's Casino painted a new suit of clothes on the waving Senator atop the casino, a longtime trademark of Carson City. In addition to the new suit of clothes, the entire outside of the casino has been repainted to reflect the new trend toward earth tones giving the casino a fresh, updated look. We're happy to see the Senator looking so spiffy.

Community Spirit Honorable Mention

Carson Horseshoe Club

The Chamber believes the flower baskets found along the side of The Firkin & Fox and Comma Coffee make a dramatic visual impact as visitors enter the historic downtown area.

We are pleased the

Carson Horseshoe Club has chosen to add a bit of color to their railing this year by putting in flower boxes as well.



Best Annual Event Award



Taste of Downtown

There is no doubt the best event of the year is the annual Taste of Downtown coordinated by Advocates to End Domestic Violence to raise funds for its programs. Now in its 18th year, the event showcases the various restaurants and the heart of downtown. Locals who may not otherwise go downtown have made this a must attend annual event that never disappoints and attracts those from within the region. This event is the place to see and be seen while enjoying new businesses. The Taste is a great way to sample food from local restaurants that may open all new dining possibilities.

Chamber Volunteer of the Year



Bob Williams

Another award not lightly given is that of Chamber Volunteer of the Year. Though we have many fine volunteers to help the small Chamber staff when conducting outside programs, no one serves us better than Bob Williams. With a cheerful smile and attitude, Bob can always be relied upon by the staff to assist where needed, whether it is to bring stacks of boxes up or down the steep stairs, to greet fellow members at mixers or to chair the annual golf tournament. The Chamber staff cannot do it without volunteer Bob Williams. ■

The Chamber's Executive Committee who served as judges include Dockery, former chair Jim Smolenski, Stan Jones, Lisa Stirgus and incoming chair Court Cardinal.



School Board President Joanna Wilson, right, listens intently to a citizen after her talk at the Chamber's State of the City June event.

'When it comes to education, we are not Clark County'

By Ronni Hannaman

Those were the very words Carson City School Board President Joanna Wilson reminded us with recently at the Chamber State of the City event. She further informed us soundly that Northern Nevada is very different from Clark County especially when it comes to graduation rates and school rankings stating, "I am very proud of the Carson City School District graduation rate at 91.9 percent and how solvent the district is even in these turbulent times."

Joanna doesn't mince words when it comes to how she feels about the good and the bad facing school districts. What does she think of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program and the testing required to rate the adequate yearly progress of each school under the NCLB guidelines?

"The district has turned itself around because of No Child Left Behind raising the bar for teachers and the kids."

Though many see NCLB as more work for teachers, Wilson sees really "good stuff" coming out of the process forcing teachers to become even more organized.

"The quality of teaching in our elementary and middle schools is bringing well-prepared students to the high school level creating successful scholars," she proudly stated as she told of the four merit scholars recently announced along with former students who graduated this year from the U.S. Naval Academy.

Citing CHS as the "microcosm of who we are," Joanna is proud of the career tech students as well, who don't receive enough recognition for the many awards they receive. National awards have been won in auto shop, graphic design and the ever popular culinary arts program. New to the CTE program this year is the Future Business Leaders of America Club preparing students to become tomorrow's entrepreneurs. She cites the ROTC program as one of the best producing young men and women who may go on to military academies. Though she considers the overall CTE program too small, the programs now in place "really shine."

New to the school district are the online programs available to honor students and to those who may need to catch up on credits needed to graduate.

Joanna is proud of the number of graduates produced by CHS and Pioneer High pointing out the Class of 2011 as the largest class ever to graduate from Pioneer. "Fifty kids may not have graduated had this high school not been available for students who may not feel comfortable in the

much larger CHS setting," she stated.

She credits Carson City's forward thinking residents for continuing to pass the revenue neutral school bonds to allow the district to continue to upgrade the schools to make the overall student learning environment friendlier and "green," creating pride in our schools. Gone will be the portables at Empire Elementary School keeping students under one roof as was done a few years ago at Carson Middle School. In particular, she credits the great staff in the janitorial area for keeping the schools in tip-top condition citing, "This great crew is always there when we need them."

What is the future of CCSD?

"The future will be tough economically. Although we have had a tightening of our purse strings, we may have to tighten a bit more."

She has complete confidence in the school administration that have to make the tough decisions and states emphatically, "It is amazing what this district can do." She cites ours is the "best little school district" in the state.

A resident of Carson City since New Year's Day 1986 and now in her 11th year and final term on the school board and serving her second stint as president, Joanna is the very engaged mother of five, daughters 28, 26, 23, 21 and a son 14, and believes in strong parental involvement to assure student success.

Does Joanna seem a bit braggadocio? According to her, CCSD is the only solvent school district in the state, has one of the highest graduation rates, is governed by a committed school board and has a great management team in place. Clark County may dominate the statistics when it comes to putting Nevada at the very bottom of the education list, but she continues to remind us, "We are not Clark County and we are at the top of the list!" That is something to brag about! ■

"I am very proud of the Carson City School District graduation rate at 91.9 percent and how solvent the district is even in these turbulent times."

- Joanna Wilson

Anything is possible with a little help from a lot of friends

By Ronni Hannaman

There's a special group of volunteers right here in our community supporting those who want to help themselves break out of their cycle of poverty and become self-sufficient. I would call them guardian angels, but they prefer to be called Allies.

During the past three years, a dedicated group of 19 of Carson City's most influential leaders have worked diligently to create the Capital City Circles Initiative providing support and education to those in poverty who are committed to making a better life for themselves and their families. That core group of 19 serve as board members, oversee the program and interview the potential participants who sign up for the 20-week "Getting Ahead" workshop.

Kathy Wolfe of Carson City Health and Human Services Department introduced the national Circles concept to Supervisor Shelly Aldean who embraced the program wholeheartedly writing, "What captivated me about this initiative was its emphasis on teaching people in poverty how to become economically self-sufficient and how to give back to their community." She then assembled her powerful board who, in turn, recruited an additional 21 volunteers to serve as Allies. Today, the success of the program is evident as formerly government dependent individuals move up the economic scale, some starting their own business.

Being chosen to participate in the Circles program is an honor. It is not a commitment to be taken lightly for



Haylie Hume, Circles graduate and owner of Haylie's Hair Hut, styles the hair of Circles Executive Director Brenda Silis.

it can take between 18-24 months for students known as Circle Leaders to attain "self-sufficiency," according to Aldean. And, the personal commitment doesn't stop once the students have graduated, for many become Allies themselves encouraging future Circle Leaders to join the program thus "completing the circle of reciprocity."

One such graduate who has overcome some pretty big challenges throughout her young life is Haylie Hume. In spite of recently living in poverty, she is now proud to say she is completely free of public assistance and is even more proud to have recently opened Haylie's Hair Hut on East Spear Street. Haylie has become one of the poster children for the success of Circles. This young single mother of two moved here

from Elko determined to take charge of her life. After interviewing Haylie and determining her passion to pull herself up by her own bootstraps, enroll in beauty school and open her own business, the Circles board found her to be an excellent candidate for the first class. Meeting energetic Haylie is a delight, and you immediately see how confident and enthusiastic she is about the Circles program and how proud she is to be fully self-sufficient, all a credit to the Circles program and the Allies.

Haylie's success, however, is not isolated. Aldean and her board are equally proud of graduates Ken Campbell, who started his own home improvement business, and Melissa Peden who became a hair stylist.

While not everyone is interested in starting their own business, Circles is

proud to also have graduated two homeless single moms, now stable and employed full-time, and eight others according to Aldean, "Now completely free of state welfare and food stamps," and on the road to breaking the cycle of poverty. A divorced mother of seven found herself living in motels barely able to make ends meet. Allies encouraged her desire to become a certified nurse's assistant and she is now working part-time and living in a 4-bedroom home, a far cry from the two rooms the family occupied in a local motel.

Lack of a proper education and personal appearance can keep one in poverty, according to Circles Executive Director Brenda Silis. She states proudly, "Three Circle Leaders are currently attending college and a former meth addict, as part of the second graduating class, is receiving a new set of teeth to help her gain confidence to allow her to lead a normal life." Such are the accomplishments of Circles.

Four major local churches have embraced the program providing space for the evening meals and meetings. Funding comes from donations and various grants prepared by a volunteer grant writer. For Aldean, growing Circles has been a labor of love and the third class will graduate from this unique program on September 27. Silis is seeking volunteers to become Allies and can be reached at 887-2190 X 30528. More information online at www.capitalcitycircles.org. ■

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August is Jazz Month in the City!

Thanks to the dedication of the Elinor and David Bugli and their fine volunteer committee of those who love jazz, August is the month where jazz can be heard almost any night anywhere in Carson City. For those who really want to participate in a very special evening of wine, food and jazz, there's a great garden party planned at the Bliss Mansion for the evening of Saturday, Aug. 13. Jazz vocalist CeCe Gable will delight the audience. Food, wine, art and great music plus tours of the Bliss for \$25 per person. Be sure to calendar the evening of Aug. 21 to enjoy Cami Thompson and the Reno Jazz Orchestra at the Capitol Amphitheater beginning at 6 p.m. That event is free. Garden party tickets available at Home Treasures in the Carson Mall and Purple Avocado. For more information visit: www.jazzcarsoncity.com or call 883-4154.

Chamber video viewed by thousands

Last September, the Chamber unveiled its new website including a video produced by former CHS graduate Tyler Bourns. A check of YouTube.com shows that almost 29,000 viewers have enjoyed the video. Check out the video for yourself on our website or at youtube.com and just type in "Carson City, NV" and be proud of our wonderful community.

CHS Future Business Leaders gain national attention

Betty Foerster, CHS Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) adviser, is pleased to announce CHS students Ashley Saaren and Daniel Gall placed ninth in the nation in the Desktop Publishing category at the FBLA national competition held the end of June in Orlando, Fla. The team placed first in this category in the April regional competition in Reno. The Chamber sponsors this after-school business club.

Thank you not expected, but much appreciated

Someone brought up Aubrie Ricketts to be a caring and responsible human being. These days, it is not often one gets a personal thank you card for making a donation to a worthy cause. In this case, Aubrie went above and beyond to save the abused pitbull Ruby to assure she would be given a chance to know humans for their good nature instead of their brutality. Aubrie works at Lone Mountain Veterinary Hospital and has been tak-

ing care of Ruby since she was brought in to correct the physical abuse requiring multiple operations. We think Aubrie is a good role model for the young.

We're going to China – again!

You are invited to join us for an informational meeting to learn what to expect when you travel to China with the Chamber in May 2012.

Meet the tour operator and hear for yourself why this destination is a must-see for anyone who is interested in the global economy. You'll be staying in some of China's best hotels. This all-inclusive tour is being marketed as only \$2,199 and that includes transportation from Carson City with a group of 25 or more. Call 882-1565 to RSVP for the meeting set for Aug. 30 at the Chamber office beginning at 5:30 p.m. Let us sign you up as part of our successful travel club!

Romantic Italy and Sicily is on our travel schedule for 2012

Maybe you have already seen China or would rather see wonderful Italy and Sicily and enjoy great wines and pasta. We've got a few trips planned for you that you shouldn't miss! And, we're planning a Greek Island Cruise as well that will depart from Venice. Come hear the Collette Vacation representative tell you about these

great trips at our next trip planning session to be held at the Chamber office on Tuesday, Aug. 23 at 5:30 p.m. Call us and we'll send you the information we now have for the Sicily/Southern Italy trip, or better yet, go online to www.carsoncitychamber.com and see the scrolling spotlights for more information.

Noticing graffiti?

If you see any graffiti anywhere, make certain you let the owner of the building know or if it is on public property, contact the Sheriff's Office immediately to have the graffiti removed. This is important! There will not be any repercussions for your report. Unfortunately, we still see graffiti now and then and whether it is tied to gang involvement remains to be seen. Do your part, call 887-2020. Sheriff Furlong will be glad you did. ■

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