



Paxton Area Chamber of Commerce

All articles written by Kristina Phelan

“Encouraging Residents To Live Local, Be Local, And Buy Local.”

December 2014

Save Money With Our Chamber Buck Sale!

Have any family or friends that are hard to buy for? Chamber Bucks make the perfect gift this holiday season!

When you purchase \$50.00 in Chamber Bucks you'll get \$10.00 FREE from the chamber! You can spend Chamber Bucks at over 45 area businesses and they never expire. They come in \$10.00 and \$25.00 amounts

and make great stocking stuffers as well as useful teacher, mailman, and bus driver gifts. Or, just use them for yourself during your normal shopping in town!

Purchase Chamber Bucks at Hudson's Drug, Paxton IGA, or the chamber office. "We are excited to offer this sale again this year," stated Kristina Phelan, "we only have a limited

amount of offers available so purchase Chamber Bucks before the free offer runs out!". Sale is limited to one offer per household.

Keep tabs on how many offers we've sold by checking out the graph posted at the chamber office. Don't wait to purchase yours or they may be gone! Contact the chamber office at 379-4655 with questions.

ERS Appreciation Dinner Report

Many of Paxton's volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel were treated to an excellent dinner at Ben Grice's new Market Street Events. Volunteers brought along one guest with them to enjoy the provided dinner from our generous sponsors. Mayor Bill Ingold spoke to the group giving his thanks for all of the work that they do each year to help protect and serve our community. Chamber President Nancy Ecker also spoke to the group and gave her thanks for their excellent work.

The meal was fantastic and there were many comments regarding the changes that Ben Grice had already made to the venue. One of the new features include metal paneling that gives the space a modern look.

Thank you to all of our sponsors of the ERS Benefit Dinner who gave generously in providing this most deserved meal to our community volunteers. And thank you to all of our volunteers for sacrificing your time in keeping our community safe!

Thanks To The Following Sponsors Of This Event:
ASTA Care, Baier Family Funeral, Cleary Equipment, Inc., Colmac Coil, Compass Insurance Partners, Country Thyme Tea Room, Farmers-Merchants Bank, First National Bank, 523 Design, Gibson Area Hospital & Health Services, Heartland Healthcare, Heiress Promotions, Hudson Drug & Hallmark Shop, Illinois Knights Templar Home, Kirchner Building Centers, Mediacom, Nicor Gas, NexStep Commercial Products, Paxton IGA, Paxton Hardware & Paxton Ready Mix



This Month Ahead:

December 8th

City Council Meeting 7pm

December 16th

Chamber Board Meeting

December 24th

Christmas Eve

December 25th

Christmas Day

December 31st

New Years Eve

Wanted: Chamber Board Members

Are you interested in joining the Board Of Directors that runs the chamber? We will have a few openings in 2015 and we are looking for current chamber members who may want to find out more about joining our board.

Chamber Board Members are required to attend a monthly Tuesday board meeting and be involved in at least two committees.

Joining the Board of Directors is a great way to volunteer for our community as well as network with other business professionals. It also allows you the opportunity to help run the chamber with all executive decisions for 2015. Let Kristina know if you're interested in finding out more!

Gain Customers With Every Door Direct Mail

Over 30 chamber members attended our last Lunch & Learn of 2014 on November 19th. Our speaker was Sherrie Johnson who is the small business consultant for the USPS. She spoke about their Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) program and how it can benefit small business owners in reaching more customers, "The Every Door Direct Mail program only costs 17.5 cents per piece to reach your customers. It is a cost efficient way to get your business information into your customer's hands." Johnson stated that 97% of people take their mail out of their mailbox every day and that 77% of them sift through it the same day. "This program is easy to use with our online tool at www.usps.com. You don't have

to give us any information if you want to check out how this program would work for your business." Johnson stated. The program does have some rules including sizing restrictions and proper labeling of the indicia. One of the main rules is that you have to have a piece of mail to deliver to every customer on whichever route you'd like to target. However, no permit is required and no mailing list is needed.

Using the online tool can also help small business owners reach a certain target customer based on age, income, and area. Johnson stated that, "85% of your customers will come from within a 5 mile radius of your small business." "It would cost \$451.15 to mail your advertisement to every customer in Paxton. If you only

want to target a certain street or neighborhood please talk to me and we will work with you on what route that would include," stated Paxton Postmaster Tammy Lemley, "This program allows your mail to stay in Paxton without having to go to the distribution center in Champaign which gives you a lot more accuracy on when it will be delivered."

Lisa Magers from Pro-Type Printing also mentioned that, "we can do all of the designing, bundling, and even delivery to the post office for you." Andy Hudson has had great success with both Pro-Type and the direct mail program, "It has been really easy and has worked well for my business," Hudson stated.

To find out more visit www.usps.com

Email Marketing: Constant Contact

Do you want to reach your customers using an easy and professional looking email campaign? Constant Contact is a great resource for any business that wants to simplify and streamline their email marketing plan.



Constant Contact is an online email marketing company that focuses on easy to use software to help you reach your business goals. Here at the chamber, we use constant contact and you may have noticed how updated and professional looking our emails have become over the past year.

Mike Wilson, manager of Communication and Community Relations at EIEC in Paxton, has been using Constant Contact to communicate with his members for the past year. "Constant Contact has helped us better engage our co-op members. Our 'open rate' is about 28%, which is quite high. Their templates are easy to use and make the process of sending emails quick and simple while still offering a professional, high-class look," Wilson

stated, "We also utilize their survey option and have been quite happy with that. For such a minimal investment, I think every business should consider using Constant Contact."

As a chamber member, you can receive a discount on your Constant Contact fee.

When you call in to set up your account simply tell them that you are a member of the Paxton Area Chamber Of Commerce and that you want the Partner Program discount.

"I love using Constant Contact," stated Kristina Phelan, "it is an easy way to get information to our members and I love the scheduling option which allows me to knock out reminder emails weeks ahead of time."

Not quite sure about it yet? Feel free to check out the free trial that allows you to use the software before purchasing a plan at www.constantcontact.com. We are also working on getting a Constant Contact representative to come do a workshop in Paxton early next year.

Save Money On Electricity With

ActOnEnergy®

Did you know that Ameren's ActOnEnergy program can save you hundreds of dollars a year? Their energy savings program is a few years old and they really want to focus on small businesses who have outdated lighting. Their incentives program for the updated T-12 light bulbs will be going down as of January 1st so now is the time to contact them! Many businesses across our state have saved money through this program. ActOnEnergy can help pay for most of the new equipment needed to get your business updated to more efficient light bulbs. Not only that, but the new light bulbs will save you money each month on your utility bill!

This is a free program provided by Ameren and the first step is to contact them so come out to your business and give you their recommendations for upgrades.

Check out the website at www.actonenergy.com/business to get started today on saving money for your business!



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**Chamber Of Commerce
Board Members**

President: Nancy Ecker

Karen Abbe Cody Kietzman

Lori Epps Jason Mills

Roxi Giese Candi Riecks

Andy Hudson Ross Sorensen

Craig Kief

Executive Director

Kristina Phelan

Phone: 217-379-4655

Address: 165 S. Market St.

Mailing: PO Box 75 Paxton

kristina@paxtonchamber.org

www.paxtonchamber.org

In Business News:



Congrats to Bre Cunningham as the new owner of **The Upper Cut Salon & Tanning** on Market Street. They are still at the same location and are taking clients!



We'd like to welcome **Harbor Light Hospice** as our first new member of our 2015 membership. Harbor Light is currently acquiring a new office in Rantoul but will be available to serve clients in the Paxton area. Check them out at www.harborlighthospice.com. Welcome to the chamber!



A big welcome to **Down To Earth Hardscapes** who joined our membership for 2015 and even became a Bronze

Member! They specialize in custom patios, retaining walls, landscaping, lawn maintenance, and snow removal. Call them at 217-386-3063 today!

Want To Draw Attention To Your Business?

Host A Chamber Connection!



***You Pick A Day To Host**

***You Pick The Time (Preferably After Business Hours)**

***You Provide Drinks & Appetizers**

***We'll Provide The Marketing and Promotion Of Your Chamber Connection!**

Contact the chamber office at 217-379-4655 or email Kristina@paxtonchamber.org to sign up!

Kristina Attends IACCE Fall Conference

The Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (IACCE) met for their fall

conference November 5th-7th.

Our Executive Director, Kristina Phelan, was able to attend this conference again this year. She joined over 100

other chamber executives to discuss current issues, ideas to better benefit members, and ways to improve the chamber. "I had a great time at the conference this year," Phelan stated, "the amount of information that I learned and



the networking opportunities with other Illinois chambers is absolutely invaluable."

The keynote speaker was Pat McGaughey who presented his "157 Rules for Executive Success". Pat's presentation was very beneficial to our chamber and brought up some key challenges that many chambers face.

Phelan also attended breakout sessions over the two day conference that focused on building better relationships with customers, how to identify and listen to the needs of

customers, implementing essential financial policies, and learning about the chamber's role in the event of a community emergency.

"My favorite session was *50 Ideas in 50 Minutes* where attendees shared new ideas that have worked well for their chambers. It was great to hear what other chambers are offering and I hope to implement my favorite ideas for our own chamber," Phelan noted.

"I also got to network with peers from all across the state: from Chicago, Marshall, Pekin, Washington, Jefferson County, and Waterloo," Phelan added, "It was a great conference!"



Use Your Membership: Add Us To Your Marketing Strategy

When you go to place an advertisement in the paper, on the radio, or on social media don't forget to email us! We want to help your business as much as we can and your membership includes us sharing your business events and news. So please add Kristina's email to your list when you have something to promote: Kristina@paxtonchamber.org.

Help us help you by telling us about your business events, new employees, and sales! We can't promote your business unless we know about it!

Chamber Buck Sale!
Get \$10.00 FREE With Every \$50.00 Purchase!

Limit one per household. Limited time offer. Purchase at Hudson's Drug, Paxton IGA, or the chamber office. Great for stocking stuffers, teacher gifts, or just to use for yourself! Spend Chamber Bucks at over 45 area businesses in the Paxton area!

Membership Renewals Due January 31st

All member packets were sent out to members in early November. Please note that your 2015 member fees are due by January 31st in order to not miss out on any of our marketing for the upcoming year.

If you need another invoice or have any questions call Kristina to get another copy sent out to you. Help us keep our costs down by sending in your fees as soon as possible!

The chamber office will now be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8am-Noon. Kristina is always available by phone, text, or email and will answer all inquiries throughout the week. Hours subject to change without notice.