



Paxton Area Chamber of Commerce

All articles written by Kristina Phelan

"Encouraging Residents To Live Local, Be Local, And Buy Local."

February 2015

Lunch & Learn February 5th

The 2015 Lunch & Learn series will begin Thursday, February 5th at noon in the American Legion Building. This year's Lunch & Learn schedule has been adjusted from previous years to accommodate the Annual Meeting in April.

We will be hearing from Mary Quinn, owner of Quinnspiration, who has worked in the Wellness Industry for over 32 years. Quinn will be speaking on



"Mindfulness & Appreciation: The Art Of Effective Communication."

Lunch & Learns are a great way to network with other business owners as well as hear an update on what the chamber has been doing recently.

"If you haven't had a chance to attend one of the Lunch & Learns I highly recommend it,"

stated Executive Director Kristina Phelan, "it is a great way to connect with other members and we are careful to dismiss at 1:00pm to accommodate everyone's busy schedule."

The fee to attend the Lunch & Learn is \$8.00 to cover the catered lunch from Country Thyme Tea Room.

Reservations are required and can be made by contacting the chamber office:

217-379-4655
PO Box 75 Paxton
Kristina@paxtonchamber.org

Come learn how to effectively communicate with your staff and customers in the workplace!

You can find out more about Mary Quinn at:
www.quinnspiration.com.

This Month Ahead:

February 2nd

Groundhog Day

February 5th

Lunch & Learn @ Noon

February 9th

City Council Meeting 7pm

February 14th

Valentines Day

February 16th

President's Day

February 17th

Chamber Exec. Board Mtg.

February 24th & 26th

Chamber Office Closed

New Owners At ASTA Location

Paxton Healthcare & Rehab took over the ASTA Care building in late 2014. They are a family owned company governed by Bradley Alter who is the CEO and Vice President. Tisha Harty is the administrator for the Paxton location and has been in the industry for the past 14 years with also 23 years of social work experience. The Paxton location offers assistance with nursing, rehabilitation, respite short term care, and hospice. Admissions and Marketing Director, Vicki Day, stated, "We want to be apart of our community and look forward to building positive relationships with chamber members." For a tour of the facility or for more information call 217-379-4896.

Annual Meeting Tickets On Sale Now!

Monday, April 6th, 2015

Lakeview Country Club

147 E. 200 North Road Loda

6:00 pm Cocktail Hour

7:00 pm Dinner Begins

Tickets: \$25.00 Each

(Includes Catered Dinner, Dessert, & Drinks)

Advance Reservations Required



**With Special Speaker:
Scott Garrelts**

*Former Pitcher For The San
Francisco Giants &
Buckley Resident*

Minimum Wage Increase Could Hurt Small Business

Illinois voters overwhelmingly approved an advisory election question on the fall ballot that would raise the minimum wage to the \$10.00 per hour mark. Raising the minimum wage from \$8.25 per hour to \$10.00 per hour is hitting a lot of chords with small business owners. Illinois State Director, Kim Clarke Maish, of the National Federation of Independent Business stated, "That's a huge jump for small business owners to absorb." Last fall the plan was to raise the minimum wage to \$10.00 per hour as of July 1, 2015 with an increase to \$10.50 on July 1, 2016 and \$11.00 on July 1, 2017.

Many states have a minimum wage that is higher than the \$7.25 federal rate although there is a bill in Congress right now that would raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10.

New Illinois governor Bruce Rauner supports a minimum wage increase if

coupled with business reform in the state of Illinois. Rauner is in favor of "pro-job creation" along with "pro-growth reforms". Rauner seems to see both sides of the coin involving minimum wage employees and the affect it could have on businesses. Rauner stated that changes are needed in the state tax structure, laws governing lawsuits, and worker's compensation in order to help business growth with the increase of minimum wage. At press time, Rauner had canceled Pat Quinn's mandatory requiring state vendors to pay the \$10.00 minimum wage.

Illinois is not one of the 21 states that raised their minimum wage in January of 2015. This map shows how Illinois measures up to our neighboring states.

Rauner has already made

some changes since taking office on January 12th and it is expected that he will officially weigh in on the minimum wage topic within the next few months.

Sources:

Long, Ray & Garcia, Monique. "New Plan on Illinois Wage Hike: \$11.00 by 2017." *Chicago Tribune*. 10 Nov. 2014. 13 Jan. 2015. www.chicagotribune.com.

Long, Ray & Garcia, Monique. "Rauner says Chicago city wage hike could make city less competitive." *Chicago Tribune*. 2 Dec. 2014. 13 Jan. 2015. www.chicagotribune.com

"Minimum Wage By State." *National Conference of State Legislature*. 18 Dec. 2014. 13 Jan. 2015. www.ncsl.org



Chamber Connections To Begin

We have had a great response to our new Chamber Connections program that will be starting next month and these events are going to be great way for individual members to showcase their business/

The Chamber Connections will be held the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 5:30pm-7:00pm. Currently the first three months available are already taken and Kristina Phelan expects the months to fill up fast, "If you have been thinking about hosting please let me know which date you would like to reserve."

Chamber Connections will be a great way to network with other business members in a relaxed environment. The host will provide free appetizers and drinks along with a raffle prize. The Chamber is also going to be donating a large raffle prize to encourage attendance.

"Every time you attend a Chamber Connection your name will be entered into a drawing," stated Phelan, "we will then pick a winner of the drawing at the Annual Meeting in 2016. The more times you attend an event the more your name will be in the drawing for a chance to win a big ticket prize!"

These events are a great way for individual members to show off their office and what they do at their business. Each host will get 10 minutes of "brag time" at the event along with any promotional materials that they would like to pass out.

"We want this to be an inviting fun atmosphere for our chamber members," Phelan said, "we look forward to seeing you there!" Chamber Connection dates are first come, first served. Please call the chamber office at 379-4655 with any questions about this event.

2015 Chamber Connections:

March 10th: Illinois Knights Templar Home

April 14th: Busey Bank

May 12th: Paxton Healthcare & Rehab

June 9th: OPEN

July 14th: OPEN

August 11th: OPEN

September 8th: OPEN

October 13th: OPEN

November 10th: OPEN

December 8th: OPEN

Call 379-4655 to reserve your month!



Like us on our Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/paxtonchamber

Chamber Of Commerce Board Members

President: Nancy Ecker

Karen Abbe	Craig Kief
Josh Didier	Cody Kietzman
Lori Epps	Jason Mills
Roxi Giese	Candi Riecks
Andy Hudson	Ross Sorensen

Executive Director

Kristina Phelan

Phone: 217-379-4655

Address: 165 S. Market St.

Mailing: PO Box 75 Paxton

kristina@paxtonchamber.org

www.paxtonchamber.org

A Banner Year For Chamber Bucks!

2014 Chamber Bucks Total:

\$9,085.00

Thank you to all over our chamber and community members who purchased Chamber Bucks this past year. Your purchases kept all of this money in our local economy!

2015 Chamber Buck Goal:

\$10,000.00!

Let's work together to stimulate our economy with an even better 2015!

Welcome To The Chamber!

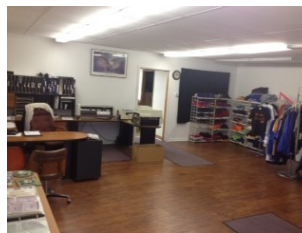
Carl E. Hudson Jr. and Dr. Richard & Marietta Foellner become individual members of the chamber. Thank you for your support in our local business community!

Fox Transport Co. is a trucking company based out of Paxton. Owner Jim Fox can be reached at 217-379-4866 or emailed at jim@foxtransportco.com. Welcome To The Chamber!



Paxton Healthcare & Rehab took over the ASTA Care building late last year. They are a skilled nursing facility and also became a Silver Sponsor! Contact them at 379-4896 or check them out at www.paxtonhealthcare rehab.com. Welcome To The Chamber!

In Business News:



Tommy Moore, owner of **Signs & Designs**, recently updated his shop with a brand new wood floor! "I get a lot of customers who come into the shop straight from working outside and wanted something that is easy to clean up," stated Moore. Nice job on the update!



Gibson Area Hospital's old OB unit along with a few staff members will be featured in an upcoming movie, *The Forgiven*, starring GCMS student Bella Rose. The movie opens February 16th and filmmaker Jay Turner is currently trying to find a distributor to get the movie into as many theaters as possible. Congrats on becoming a movie set GAH!



Robin's Country Crossroads, located at 224 S. Market Street, will be relocating into **Country Crossroads** at 221 S. Market Street. Robin McNish, owner of both locations, is

consolidating her business to one building. Everything that is specially marked in Robin's Country Crossroads will be 50% off until gone! We wish Robin the best of luck in continuing to offer amazing antiques and primitives to local and traveling customers!



Ben Grice's **Harvest Brewhouse** is slowly but surely taking shape. Located at 102 S.

Market Street, Ben hopes to open the doors to the upscale restaurant sometime this year. Keep up the good work!

Harbor Light To Open In Rantoul

Harbor Light Hospice is in the process of opening up a Rantoul office to better serve central Illinois. Kevin Jett is the admission and education coordinator for our area and states, "We are contracted with all area nursing homes, and work closely with all of the area



hospital ERs and discharge planners." Harbor Light also works regularly with the Danville VA to provide home hospice to veterans. "With the opening of this new office we are hoping to expand into Northern Iroquois,

Livingston, and Kankakee counties," noted Jett, "we also do not deny services based on inability to pay and also accept Medicare, Medicaid, Private Insurance, and Private Pay." "We are still choosing a location for the Rantoul office but we hope to be open soon," Jett said.

Three New Years Resolutions For Small Business Owners

1. Grow Your Business Through Discovering New Partners

Partner relationships can have a huge impact on your business! Swap blog posts, share what is working for your business, ask them questions and give/receive advice! Attending our Lunch & Learns or Chamber Connections would be a great place to start looking for a partner in town!

2. Spend More Time Out On The Floor

Local customers use your business because they know you! Show your face to old customers and new ones will come back because they enjoy putting a name to a face. Block out floor time into your schedule if needed, it's worth it!

3. Be Adventurous With Your Marketing Strategies

Need to build your business but not sure where to start? Take your budget and break it up into smaller pieces to see which strategy will work best for you. Facebook advertising is a great way to increase traffic to your website and is a minimal cost. The post office's Every Door Direct Mail marketing is another great option. Play around with where you market and soon enough you'll know what customers respond to.

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!

Need Help With Facebook Advertising? Call the chamber office at 379-4655 and Kristina will walk you through it!

