The Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Connection

May 2011

- With the passing of long-time Chamber President Elton Pody on March 27, 2011, came a very large hole to fill on the chamber staff. The Board of Directors has identified a selection committee and the process set in motion to find the next President of the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce. We have begun advertising for the position through several avenues including trade magazines, newspaper and the internet. We are accepting applications through May 31, 2011; visit www.cenlachamber.org to see our ad.

- The Chamber served as an advocate for the business community, Rapides Parish and all of Central Louisiana during the Special Legislative Session on Redistricting. The Chamber's Governmental Affairs Division facilitated an informational meeting for board members and community leaders and participated with local elected officials in preparing testimony in response to proposed redistricting plans. Rick Ranson, Chamber VP of Economic Development, and Jim Clinton, then CEO of CAP joined Mayors Jacques Roy and Clarence Fields to provide testimony before the House and Senate Governmental Affairs Committee as the redistricting plans were considered. After much debate, the Legislature approved a U.S. Congressional Redistricting Plan that will keep Rapides Parish in Congressman Rodney Alexander's 5th District. The Legislature approved a State House Redistricting Plan that will largely preserve districts currently served by Representatives Chris Roy, Herbert Dixon and Chris Hazel. The Legislature's State Senate Redistricting Plan will place Rapides Parish into four Senate Districts. The new District 29 will bear little resemblance to the present one, which encompasses most of Rapides Parish. If approved by the U.S. Justice Department, District 29 will become a majority, minority district drawn in a narrow, smoke like shape that runs from Alexandria to Grambling State University. A major portion of Rapides Parish will now be in District 31, which is currently represented by Senator Gerald Long. Smaller portions of Rapides Parish will be in Districts 32 and 35, represented by Senators Neil Riser and Bob Kostelka, respectively. Thank you to those Chamber members who corresponded with our legislators regarding redistricting. Though redistricting legislation has been signed into law by the governor, the U.S. Justice Department must approve Louisiana's Redistricting Plan. Redistricting maps and a more complete summary are available at the Chamber website at www.cenlachamber.org.

- The Legislative Committee of the Chamber will be hosting our Annual Central Louisiana Day at the Legislature on Wednesday, May 18. All chamber members are invited to attend a briefing on Legislative Issues presented by our legislators at 11:00am at the Capitol, and later that evening our Legislative Reception at 6:00pm-8:00pm, at the Camelot Club in Baton Rouge. The Camelot Club is located on the 21st Floor of the Chase Bank Building's South Tower, at 451 Florida Street. The entire Louisiana Legislature is invited to attend and will begin arriving shortly after adjournment. The Chamber works closely with our delegation and hosts this event to show appreciation to our legislators for their support and to provide you the opportunity to "meet and greet" your legislator. Again, all Chamber members are encouraged to attend. Without our sponsors, this event doesn't take place, so a special "Thanks" to the following: Alexandria Pineville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber Governmental Affairs Division, CHRISTUS St Frances Cabrini Hospital, Cleco, England AirPark, RoyOMartin, Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, City of Alexandria, City of Pineville, Port of Alexandria, Rapides Regional Medical Center, Red River Waterway Commission, and Greater Vernon Chamber

- On April 19, representatives from the Small Business Administration Regional Headquarters in New Orleans traveled to Alexandria for a joint press conference with the Chamber to announce the winner of the 2011 Louisiana Small Business Person of the Year Award. Out of over 300,000 small businesses, this year's award winner is Kenny Sayes of Sayes Office Supply. This is the first time in 25-years the state's winner has come from the Alexandria area and the Chamber is extremely proud to have nominated him. Kenny will receive the award at the Governor's Mansion on May 24 and the week prior will be at the White House in Washington D.C. for National Small Business Week along with honorees from the other 49 states for the announcement of the National award winner. CONGRATULATIONS!

- The Chamber is co-sponsoring a workshop with the Louisiana Small Business Development Center on May 24. The workshop, titled "*Emergency Preparedness for Businesses*", will take place 8:30-10:00am, at the Chamber located at 1118 Third Street in Alexandria. The workshop is designed to provide business owners with a planning tool to create an action plan for streamlining recovery in the event of a catastrophic disruption to business operations, regardless of the cause. There is no cost, but pre-registration is requested. For more information or to register call (318) 484-2123.

Continued on page 2

Chamber Connection

May 2011

- Last month a delegation from the Chamber traveled to Washington D.C., as part of Fort Polk Progress, with officials from Vernon and Beauregard Parishes, for a series of meetings concerning the continued expansion of Fort Polk and improvements in the surrounding region. The group went to the Pentagon for meetings with former Fort Polk Commander, Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Housing and Partnerships, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations and Environment. During the trip they visited Capitol Hill to meet with Senators David Vitter and Mary Landrieu and Congressmen John Fleming and Rodney Alexander. This Chamber is a proud member of Fort Polk Progress, which is a coalition of the six parishes surrounding Fort Polk seeking to be the force that will help keep the growth in Vernon Parish and the surrounding region coordinated, keep the lines of communication open among the various entities working toward growth and be a liaison between Fort Polk and the communities.

- Congratulations to Dr. Charnia Cheatwood, Retired Dean of Students at LSUA, for being recognized as the Chamber's Red Coat Ambassador of the Quarter, January-March 2011. He was presented the award on April 21st by Deborah Randolph, during the After Ours event, for dedicated support in representing the Chamber to further its mission of economic growth and development. Special "Thanks" to the new Anchor's Seafood & Steakhouse for being the sponsor of the award.

- This Month's Events

  May 5 @ 5:00pm, Business After Ours sponsored by ADs The Red Book and Tunk's Cypress Inn, at Tunk's, 9507 Hwy 28 West, 10-miles from MacArthur Drive
  May 10 @ 11:00am, Ribbon Cutting, Crossroads Pharmacy Gifts & Gourmet Shop, 3592 Hwy 28 East, Pineville
  May 11 @ 11:00am, Ribbon Cutting, Diamond Grill, 924 Thid St, Alexandria
  May 12 @ 9:00am, Ribbon Cutting, Central Louisiana Business Incubator, 1501 Wimbledon Dr, Alexandria
  May 12 @ 11:00am, Ribbon Cutting, Loving Care Nurse-Led Clinic, Louisiana College Campus, Pineville
  May 16 @ 11:30am, Strategic Luncheon sponsored by Brown & Brown of Louisiana, TOPIC: U.S. Department of Commerce "CommerceConnect", Alexander Fulton Convention Center, 701 Fourth St, Alexandria
  May 18 @ 6:00pm, Legislative Reception, Camelot Club, 451 Florida St 21st Floor, Baton Rouge
  May 20 @ 8:30am, "Getting to Know Your Chamber", Chamber Office, 1118 Third St, Alexandria
  May 24 @ 8:30am, Business Workshop, "Emergency Planning", Chamber Office, 1118 Third St, Alexandria
  May 25 @ 11:00am, Ribbon Cutting, Avis/Budget Rent A Car, 3220 Jackson St, Alexandria
  May 26 @ Noon, Ground Breaking, Habitat for Humanity "All Women Build", 429 Faith Way, Alexandria
  May 30, Chamber Holiday in observance of Memorial Day

- Welcome to Our New Members

  Central Louisiana Business Incubator – Joe Page, (318)561-2299
  Hampton Inn & Suites Marksville – Lorrie Miller, (318) 253-7576
  Jay Ellington, (318) 442-2688
  CyNita Nash, (318) 487-6776