



January 2021

Community Connections

"Powering up business throughout Martin County"



And, the Winners Are!

The Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the City of Fairmont want to thank everyone that participated to light it up in Fairmont this holiday season! This years judges were from the Chambers Board - RBE committee

The Residential Lighting

Contest Winners receiving **Chamber "Bucks"** are.

Grand Prize: \$150.00

Jeremy Scheff: 609 Washington Ave

Second Place: \$75.00

Mark Fenlon: 504 Canyon Drive



Third Place: \$50.00

Ashley Scheevel: 979 S. Prairie Ave

Fourth Place: \$25.00

Betty Jones: 1610 Knollwood Ave

We look forward to a 2021 contest with a few different categories,

nominating process and voting!

Don't forget ... the City of Fairmont offers a rebate on LED holiday lights ~ check out their website for all the details on these and other rebates.

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Agri-Business scholarships



Graduating Seniors of Martin County high schools who plan to pursue a bachelor's degree

in an agriculture related field may apply for up to \$8,400 in scholarships. In partnership with the Agriculture Future of America (AFA), the Agri-Business Committee of the Fairmont Chamber of Commerce is offering two \$4,200 scholarships, which include registration for the Fall 2021 AFA Leaders Conference.

Eligibility:

- Recommended 3.0 GPA or higher.
- High school senior or undergraduate student status.
- Must be 17-25* years old during AFA Leaders Conference attendance
- Plans to obtain a four-year degree.
- Possess a passion for food and agriculture.
- Plan to pursue a career in the food and agricultural

industry. To be considered for a scholarship, please visit www.agfuture.org/scholarships. Here, you can read more about the AFA Community Scholarships, as well as other scholarships AFA offers. Click on the "Apply Now" button to access the application. Please note: you must continue through the last page of the application and you will receive an e-mail confirmation.

Applying for an AFA Community Scholarship online also makes you eligible for an AFA National Leader and Academic Scholarship; however, you may only receive either a local or a national award.

The Martin County application deadline is March 10, 2021. If you have any questions about the scholarship, please contact Ned at president@fairmontchamber.org or call 507-235-5547.

Questions regarding the online application can be directed to AFA staff Betsy Smith betsysmith@agfuture.org.

PLATINUM MEMBER



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Chamber reflects 2020

By: Ned Koppen - Chamber President



Happy New Year Martin County from the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce! The year 2020 is now in our review mirror and what a historic, crazy year it was. COVID 19 and the resulting pandemic changed everything. I looked back to the first Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce newsletters from 2020 recently and it was obvious that like everyone else, we never saw what was coming. It has been the strangest, trying year for all of us. While we are still in the midst of restrictions and precautions due to the COVID 19 virus, we are able to put 2020 behind us and look to 2021 with optimism and hope that we will be able to fight our way back to a normal way of life. There are new vaccines now available being given to those most at risk and hopes that more and more of us can be vaccinated in the future. I believe that we are on our way to finding a path through this and we just need to be vigilant in doing everything necessary to get there.

We have seen aid for our families and our businesses from a number of programs coming from both the State and Federal level in 2020. Now, as we kick off the new year there will be another round of relief programs coming from the State and Federal levels that were passed as we finished up 2020. The State legislature acted first. There will be direct payments to our most challenged businesses, extended unemployment benefits for our workers that have been forced to stay home and there will be money made available to our local governments to directly aid the businesses that they know need the most help.

Here is a summary of the relief provisions:

- Business Relief Payments: \$88 million
- \$88 million will be distributed in grants to "qualified businesses" which were closed to the general public through Executive Order 20-99 (attached) – the most recent order closing certain businesses. These

businesses include restaurants, bars, breweries, distilleries, wineries, fitness and recreational sports centers, bowling centers, and specialty food stores. Businesses must show a 30% decline in sales for the year, have a physical presence in Minnesota and meet other qualifications listed in the bill. If qualified, the Minnesota Department of Revenue will distribute grants to businesses ranging from \$10,000 to a maximum of \$45,000.

Movie Theater & Convention Center Grants: \$14 million

- \$9 million to be distributed in grants to movie theaters with indoor seating and \$5 million to be distributed to with regional or statewide significance and a capacity of 1,500 or more. These grants must be used for the direct operations & upkeep of convention center facilities.
- County Relief Grants to Local Businesses: \$114.8 million
- Funds will be distributed to all 87 counties on a per capita basis and the county will provide relief grants to local businesses. The intention of this grant fund is to give flexibility to counties to make grants to individual businesses and non profits that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and business closures, but may not have

met the strict guidelines in the previous grant categories.

- Unemployment Insurance Benefits Extension
- Extends unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks to April 20, 2021. Over 112,000 Minnesotans will be impacted by this provision.

Regulatory Relief

- Several regulatory relief provisions are included in the bill including waiver of the caterer's permit fees, permit fees for sales after 1:00 a.m., refund of the wastewater permit fees for brewers, and waiver of late fees for license renewals by food retailers, food manufacturers, food wholesalers, and food brokers.

(Continued on page 3)



*"We welcome the
New Year - 2021
Refresh -Recharge
and Enjoy"*

Reflect

- Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Deadline Extension
- The bill grants an extension of the deadline for school districts to report the number of pupils enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program.

During the Christmas holiday the Federal government passed a bill with the President signing off on it shortly after Christmas with funding for our families and businesses. Here is a summary of that relief and how it will be administered:

The \$900 billion economic relief stimulus includes:

- \$600 direct payments for qualifying adults and children
- Economic assistance for struggling small businesses, including more than \$284 billion for forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans and \$15 billion for theaters, cultural institutions, and other venues
- \$300 per week for enhanced Unemployment Insurance benefits
- \$25 billion for rental assistance & an eviction moratorium extension
- \$82 billion for schools and colleges
- \$10 billion to help with childcare assistance
- \$13 billion in increased food assistance and child nutrition benefits
- \$7 billion to bolster broadband access across the country
- Support for coronavirus vaccine distribution, testing and contract tracing efforts
- A tax credit "to support employers offering paid sick leave"

These are the key details of the bill:

Stimulus check

- The legislation provides a \$600 stimulus check for each qualifying American, including children and adults.
- The size of payment reduces for persons who earned above \$75,000 in the 2019 tax year. Anybody who earned above \$99,000 in the 2019 tax year will not receive a stimulus check.

Jobless benefits

The legislation extends unemployment benefits of up to \$300 per week.

- The benefits could begin from December 27 and run until March 14.
- The bill also extends the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance tar-

(Continued from page 2)

geting part-time and gig workers who were left out of the state unemployment insurance benefits. However, applicants are now required to provide documentation that proves employment or self-employment within 21 days of applying for the benefits. Anybody extending their benefits before January 31 have 90 days to provide the documentation.

Relief for business

- The bill provides over 284 billion for the first and second forgivable paycheck protection program loans. It also expands the PPP eligibility for non-profit organizations and news outlets
- The bill provides \$15 billion for entertainment industry, including music clubs, cultural institutions, movie theatres, & entertainment venues
- The package includes \$20 billion targeted grants through the Economic Injury Disaster programs

- The legislation provides a tax break for corporate meal expense

School funding

- The bill extends aid to colleges and schools, which will receive \$82 billion. A \$22.7 billion will go to colleges and universities and \$54.3 billion for elementary and secondary education.

- The deal also provides a \$10 billion package for childcare assistance.

Transportation

- The bill provides \$45 billion for transportation, including \$16 billion for an extra round of airline employee and contractor payroll support.
- Others are \$14 billion for transit, \$10 billion for highways, \$2 billion for airports, and \$1 billion for Amtrak.

Both of these State and Federal relief bills are important and timely for our businesses and our families. It is a great way to start the New Year. Once again, Happy New Year from the Chamber. We will continue to support and advocate for our businesses and work hard to be a source of information when you need it. 2021 is going to be better than 2020! If you have questions or would like to contact me at the Chamber, call (507) 235-5547 or e-mail me at president@fairmontchamber.org.

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Chamber member business briefs

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Mayo Clinic Health Systems (507) 238-5181

Let's Connect: COVID-19 Vaccination Myths and Facts | Friday, January 8 from Noon to 1 p.m. Join Mayo Clinic Health System for a community forum that addresses the COVID-19 vaccination. James Hebl, M.D., regional vice president, Mayo Clinic Health System, and Eric Gomez, M.D., infectious diseases, Mayo Clinic Health System, will discuss myths and facts about the new vaccine followed by a Q&A session. During the presentation, participants can submit questions via slido.com using the slido code MCHSCONNECT. This event is free and open to the public. Registration is required. https://mchealth.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yDOPyekM-TJGRLqEJlrpCfA



Exit Realty

(507) 840-1831

EXIT Realty - Great Plains is pleased to announce that Tristy Rossow has joined its growing team of dedicated real estate sales professionals.

EXIT Realty - Great Plains, located at 100 North State St, Fairmont, Minnesota, is a proud member of EXIT Realty Upper Midwest's rapidly expanding network of independently owned and operated brokerages across the region.



Martin County License Center 507-235-3335

The completion of the Lake Ave construction is not the only progress at the Martin County License Center. November 16th DPS transitioned to the new MNDRIIVE computer system. Although this transition was much smoother than MN-LARS, progress takes time. There is a lot more information that is entered as well as documents being scanned in office. In addition, there is a learning curve with a new system. Be prepared for longer waits. For the convenience of our customers, we have added a dropbox on the outside of the building. We also can process some transaction via mail or over the phone with a credit card. Questions? Email pskrumgholz@hotmail.com or call 507-235-3335.



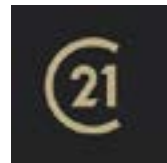
Sweet Financial Services (507) 235-5587

Wishing Denise Chrischilles a Happy Retirement! Denise has been with Sweet Financial for 24 years as Assistant to Operations. We will miss her attention to detail, kindness and loyalty. Denise and her husband of over 40 years, Gene, will enjoy retirement together at their home on Iowa Lake. They will now have plenty of time to enjoy spending time with their two daughters, Jamie and Tricia, along with grandchildren Caleb, Lillyan, Parker, Lainee and Leigha. Please join us as we wish Denise a happy, healthy and well-deserved retirement!



Century 21 - Northland Realty (507) 238-4796

Happy New Year! A hearty "thank you" from Century 21 Northland to our customers and clients - we appreciate you! Although the past year has been a challenge for most businesses, we have been able to integrate the new COVID precautions with no interruption to the quality of our services. As 2021 begins, there may be new challenges and difficulties, but be assured that we will be here to help you with all your real estate needs. So, if your hopes and dreams for this next year include buying or selling a home or business, please give us a call, we are here to help!



Chamber of Commerce (507) 235-5547

The Chamber owns the street light decorations the city crew graciously puts up every year for the holidays. Each year bulbs are replaced and other repairs are made. If you would like to make a donation to offset repairs and purchase of new decorations, mail to or stop by our office at 323 E Blue Earth Ave. Donations are accepted all year long!



"Business Briefs" are a complimentary service provided by the Chamber for chamber members. Limit your information to one paragraph of about 100 words. Example: expansion, new employees, relocation, awards, monumental anniversary, etc. A photo or logo can be included. NO Direct Advertising.

Thank You to those who donated to the Lighting Fund

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The Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce thanks the following businesses, organizations and individuals who made a financial contribution to our Community Decoration Fund. Donations help to maintain our current decorations and make sure they are ready to shine each year.

Ambiance on Albion- Taphouse & Grille
American Family Insurance
American Legion Post 36
AT&T Mobility
Auctioneer Alley
Baarts Trucking Inc.
Bank Midwest
Bank Midwest
Becker Storage
Blazer Bar & Grill Inc
Boekett Building Supply, Inc.
Borchardt Dance Company
Bulfer Tree Farm
City of Fairmont
Cress Refrigeration, Inc.
Dee's Floral & Designs
Domino's Pizza
Don Anderson
Doolittle's Carpet & Paints Inc.

Dutch Creek Farms
Erpelding, Voigt & Co. LLP
Exit Realty Great Plains
E-Z Wash Laundromat
Fairmont Body Shop
Fairmont Ford
Fairmont Lakes Foundation
Fairmont Police Officers Association
Fairmont Vet Clinic
Fareway
Garry's Body Shop
Good News Bookstore
Great Plains Transportation Services Inc.
Green Plains Fairmont LLC
Heritage Acres
Investor Commodity Services
Jakes Pizza
Jenkinson Abstract Company
JL Computers
Karen Mussmann
Kiwanis Club of Fairmont Early Risers
Lakeside Agency of Fairmont Inc.
Lakeview Funeral Home
Leo and Pauline Mau
Linda Thate Eisenmenger CPA
Lund Chiropractic
MaeVerine Gibbons

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Martin County Mechanical
Martin County Treasurer
MET Properties
Montana's Tree Service Plus
Northern Lines Insurance
Old Northrop Bar
Optimal Health & Chiropractic of Fairmont & Jackson
Options Pregnancy Center
Partners Funding Inc.
Patricia Willett-Kietzer
Paul Seibert, OD
Peterson-Anthony Insurance Agency Inc
Pierce Accounting
Poppes Car Wash
Professional Tax Advisors
Profinium Inc
Safety Solutions
Sara Barnett
Sovell Jewelry
Speedway
Sweet Financial Services
TG Equipment, Inc.
The Marina Lodge
The Meadows

Fareway Supports Small Business

Fareway Stores, Inc. recently announced a second round of donations to local chamber of commerce affiliates in each of the communities Fareway serves in Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Gift cards totaling \$1,000 were provided to each community chamber to help small businesses and their employees facing challenges due to the pandemic. "We are excited to continue our support of small businesses and their employees during this holiday season," said Fareway President and CEO Reynolds W. Cramer. "As small businesses continue to face challenges, we hope this relief reduces some of the stress our community business partners are facing."

The Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to have Fareway as a Chamber Member and to share in their Act of Kindness



Fairmont Area of Chamber of Commerce (507) 235-5547

Your Chamber offers a few unique advertising opportunities that reach local residents, businesses, newcomers and visitors to Martin County. Right now we are wrapping up the 2021 visitor and relocation guide, 8,000 copies are distributed free in Martin County and the tri-state area. We host a variety of events and meetings throughout the year. Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are available. Like to know more about utilizing your chamber membership call us!

Chamber Events

Due to the Executive Order issued by the Governor of Minnesota and continuing COVID 19 concerns, all Chamber meetings and gathers will need to be cancelled for the month of January pending changes to mandated restrictions on gatherings

We will continue with Ambassador Visits

Wednesday, January 20 - 3:00 p.m.
Ambassadors Meeting
Business Visits & Ribbon Cuttings

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NEW MEMBERS!**

Faribault County Register

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Martin County Leadership



What: A leadership program designed to enable candidates to learn about Martin County resources, values, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. A learning experience geared toward providing an in-depth look at eight key elements of our community; education, economic development, government, healthcare, public safety, quality of life, agriculture, and culture & diversity. This program will provide opportunities for candidates to exchange ideas, build networks and begin the process of identifying and solving important community issues.

Who: A pool of candidates who are current or prospective leaders in the Martin County community. Candidates are drawn from business, industry, education, public and private agencies, civic groups, non-profit and virtually all other facets of the professional community. Class size will be limited.

Program Development: A Martin County Chamber-designated "Leadership Advisory Committee" oversees the development of the LEADERSHIP Program. Riverland Community College and the Chamber will assist with individual seminar curriculum development in cooperation with designated day-leaders.

Where: This localized program was designed by the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with Riverland Community College and its Training and Development Division. All sessions are facilitated locally and focus on topics directly affecting our community. Seminars are held at a different location each session.

Why: To develop candidate knowledge and understanding of our community...its assets, complexities and potential. To provide an opportunity for participants to meet and exchange ideas with each other and current community leaders. To develop leadership skills through classroom instruction, interactive exercises and small group discussion.

How: A series of topical seminars held over a nine month period and conducted by local and regional professionals. Area leaders volunteer their time to raise awareness to the assets and opportunities of our community by providing an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at eight key elements of our community. Peggy Young, Business Consultant with Riverland Community College's Training and Development Department will nurture leadership development by leading discussions that integrate community information through dialogue, interactive exercise and small group discussion.

Cost: - Tuition is payable at the time a participant is accepted to candidacy. Scholarship opportunities are available.

When: Monthly sessions run September - May on the first Wednesday of each month.

LEADERSHIP requires a serious commitment of time and energy. Candidates meet the FIRST WEDNESDAY, a full day each month. Attendance at the work sessions and all day program meetings is imperative. Class participants are expected to attend all sessions with the exception of an extreme emergency or illness.

For more information on Leadership contact us! Participation is limited so inquire early!

Ambassadors Grand Opening Visit



SCOOTER'S COFFEE
Ambassadors celebrated with *New Chamber member* Scooter's Coffee during their Grand Opening which was held on December 11



FAIRMONT ROOFING
Chamber Ambassadors visited their new location on Downtown Plaza and checked out their remodel of another downtown building!



EXIT REALTY - GREAT PLAINS
Chamber Ambassadors hold a ribbon cutting with Chamber member Exit Realty - Great Plains at their new location and remodel in Five Lakes Centre



FAIRMONT
Area Chamber of Commerce

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Medicare can be complicated.

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January 2021 programs at CER

"Lifelong Learning and Leisure Opportunities for All Ages"

What's Happening at Fairmont Community Education and Recreation

The New Year of 2021 is arriving full of hope. Make a New Year's resolution to count your blessings in the year ahead and remember those special people in your lives with kindness and keep connections continuing. **Will we remember...**... how we learned patience, adaptability and resilience through the trials of 2020? ...doing more things for others and with our families in our homes when things were closed? ...that people are more important in this life?...how we learned to balance the priorities of faith, family and friends at home & work?

A new monthly "Keep In Touch" newsletter will be available in 2021 to help us know that we are all important in the connections of life, even if staying at home and isolated. Watch for this encouraging and engaging monthly connection.

Did you know that you are an LLL - Life Long Learner? Continue learning new things in 2021 as you probably had to do in 2020! Use the computer or updated technology to connect with others. Learn to make fresh Cinnamon Rolls or Vomacha (a Czech soup) in your home with a virtual class. Welding begins January 9. Think about your future with the Aging Mastery Book Club.

For more information, check out our digital catalog at www.fairmont.k12.mn.us under the CER tab or the CER Facebook page or call 507-235-3141. Youth Scholarships are available-thanks to Martin County Foundation, Hunt

Fund & private donation-contact your school's social worker or principal for referral or CER for information. Virtual Classes and other activities are subject to change as per District and State health guidelines.

A Sampling of Upcoming Activities

Adult Basic Education/English Classes	Call for updated dates/location
Welding Begins	January 9
Elementary Basketball Programs	To Be Announced
Cinnamon & Caramel Rolls (virtual-Reg by January 7)	January 15
Lights On For Kids Afterschool Enrichment	Begins January 18
Learn to Skate or Play Hockey	January 20
CER Winter Co-Ed Volleyball League	January 21
Rick Pauly Elite Pitching for Coaches & Parents	January 22
Rick Pauly Mechanics of Elite Pitchers Softball Clinics	January 23
Fastpitch Hitting Clinic	January 30
Vomacha & Zelnicky (Czech Soup & Crackers-virtual)	February 4
Aging Mastery Book Club (morning-virtual-free)	March 2

For an up-to date list of activities, see the CER Web Store located at

www.fairmontareaschools.com

Register online with MasterCard/Visa.

The CER office is located in the Fairmont Elementary School Door 15A, 714 Victoria Street, Fairmont Call 507-235-3141 or E-mail rdauer@fairmont.k12.mn.us

Donations being accepted

Keeping with tradition, the parks department of the City of Fairmont decorated the street lights with the holiday decorations.

Did you know the decorations are owned and maintained by the Chamber of Commerce? These decorations are showing their age and it is getting to the point that many are not repairable. We have ongoing fund-raising set up in anticipation of purchasing new lighted decorations starting for next year - 2021.

If you are interested in making a tax deductible donation to the outdoor holiday street light decorations: Stop by the Chamber of Commerce or mail your donation to the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce P.O. Box 826 323 E. Blue Earth Ave. Fairmont, MN 56031





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