

GOVERNOR'S COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD NOMINATION

Name of Community or Multi-Community: Bassett **Population:** 636

Name of Project: Chamber Leading Volunteers

Project Contact Person: Mitz Bussinger/Bill Sanger, Chamber Secretary & President

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Category: Leadership **Subcategory:** Volunteer and Leadership Development

Special Project Award Nomination: No

Date Project Started: 9/2009 **Date Completed:** 8/2010 Ongoing

Volunteer Hours: 764 **Number of Volunteers:** 78

1) Description of the projects.

The Chamber of Commerce is an all volunteer community organization with a current membership of 46. The membership represents not only businesses but includes many public service providers/agencies with youth encouraged to participate. This service organization meets every second Tuesday of each month at noon. These public meetings are held at a different location each month at the various food service providers in Bassett. Numerous projects are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Chamber involving many community volunteers:

- When the Rock County Fair Board decided they could no longer sponsor a County fair parade, the Chamber stepped up to the plate and volunteered to take it over. The fair parade committee of eight determined the theme, chose a grand marshall, distributed parade entry forms, selected judges, determined entry prizes and managed the line-up of entries at the beginning of parade. Rental of inflatable games for youth was paid for by the Chamber bringing people downtown after the parade.
- A State Fair booth was manned by Chamber members featuring promotional Bassett items.
- GROW Nebraska marketing workshop was co-sponsored for local citizens by Chamber providing the local advertising for the event.
- A downtown sign was purchased and will be installed on Hwy 20 to let travelers know Bassett does have a downtown area with lodging, food service, groceries and many other amenities.
- A Farmer's Market is sponsored by providing free advertising for the market from mid-July through late September with free set-up for vendors. Items sold include garden produce, homemade jellies, beef jerky, baked goods and crafts. Local organizations are invited to provide car washes to enable them an opportunity to raise funds for their projects.
- Welcome baskets are distributed to all new residents of Bassett. Donations from local businesses/agencies provide the items for these gift baskets. One Chamber volunteer packages

the baskets and makes a homemade goodie for each one to be delivered. Two other Chamber volunteers deliver them.

- A Halloween parade for all the local goblins and ghosts was sponsored by the Chamber. Pumpkin carving and prizes for the best costumes were provided along with a hot dog meal before trick or treating began.
- A food pantry sponsored by the Chamber and local churches for all needy individuals is housed in one of the local churches. When the stock of food items became scarce, the Chamber donated \$1,000 to restock the shelves this year.
- The Chamber has a fund titled the Magic of Christmas. Before Christmas Chamber volunteers work with local social service agencies to determine children in need and find out what they need for Christmas. Then tags are hung on trees at various Bassett businesses with the item wanted, clothes size and sex of child. Then residents can choose these gift tags from a tree and buy and wrap the gifts for this unknown child. Volunteers then deliver the gifts along with food items for Christmas dinner to these families. This fund is no longer just for Christmas. At Thanksgiving time in 2009, turkeys with all the trimmings were donated to needy families and delivered.
- The Chamber Christmas promotion in 2009 was titled "12 Days of Christmas." Residents who wanted to be eligible for the cash prizes had to do twelve service projects in order to register. Several of the required tasks were take a child or senior citizen out for ice cream or visit a senior citizen at the local nursing home. All the required tasks involved buying something at a local business or visiting a local agency. Santa's visit is also sponsored by the Chamber complete with a bag of treats.
- Bassett was selected to be one of the first communities to participate in the Leadership Challenge and the Chamber sponsored one of their monthly meals to support this effort. The Chamber also covered the expense of the food for their graduation meal with Governor Heineman that the Chamber NCIP committee prepared.
- A logo contest was sponsored by the Chamber for Bassett promotional items.
- An election candidate forum was sponsored in April 2010 providing candidates an opportunity to express their views on issues and citizens an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.
- A community clean-up day is sponsored by the Chamber with volunteers managing the project.
- Communities along Hwy. 20 from Neligh to Bassett and north through Niobrara sponsor a Bargain Buyway where individuals can sell collectibles or other treasures on April 17th and 18th. Chamber volunteers organized this sales event in Bassett.
- A promotional booth was sponsored by the Chamber at the first 2010 Sandhills Ranch Expo held in Bassett. Chamber volunteers manned the Expo gates on June 16th and 17th.
- A city-wide garage sale event during the two days of the Sandhills Ranch Expo was organized and advertised.
- Bassett Livestock Market offers one of the largest livestock sales in Nebraska along with a free barbecue in July. Chamber members were there in full force to help dole out the food on July 7th and 8th.
- The Chamber purchased history DVD's on Rock County and are selling them to generate funds to kick off the Rock County Q125 celebration scheduled for 2013. Chamber volunteers have attended local events to sell them.
- The Bassett Firemen sponsored a fireworks display on the night of July 4th. The Chamber supported this effort by donating \$300 to this cause.
- One new business was honored and recognized with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

2) Identify the planning and implementation of the projects.

Suggestions on projects and ideas are projected at the monthly meetings. Project committees then meet to brainstorm ideas and plan the steps necessary to carry out projects. A goal of the City is to encourage community involvement through projects increasing pride in Bassett.

3) Describe volunteer involvement in planning and implementing the projects.

Volunteers are requested and selected for the numerous projects at the monthly meetings. Quite often it is known which Chamber members or other residents have expertise to carry out a specific project and are personally asked by the Chamber officers or another member to serve on a committee. This helps to involve other volunteers in the community other than just those who have joined the Chamber and residents who are not necessarily business owners or service providers. The Chamber projects become community projects and create a greater sense of ownership and pride in their community.

4) Identify Project Outcomes.

All the Chamber projects are geared to bring people to Bassett and shop increasing the potential of business retention. Information on Bassett was distributed at the State Fair and Sandhill's Ranch Expo increasing the potential for Bassett's viability. Six residents received training on marketing skills. The Farmer's Market provides local producers and entrepreneurs an opportunity to sell their products. Eleven needy families received turkeys with all the trimmings in November, 2009. The total number of families who benefited from the Magic of Christmas deliveries in December was 39. A logo was selected helping people to readily recognize Bassett's promotional items. Twelve Bassett vendor locations benefited from the Bargain Buyway project and there were nine garage sales in the City-Wide Garage Sale event. The number of new families who were welcomed to Bassett and received information on the community was eleven. The large number of projects successfully fulfilled by the Chamber indicates wide community support.

5) Describe how resources were identified and used to successfully implement the projects.

Every January the Chamber sends out a membership letter/form encouraging all businesses/agencies to join for a membership fee. In June a Chamber Golf Tournament fund raiser was held to help fund projects. Local businesses donated the prizes. There were 28 teams and the Chamber netted \$1,591. This is a big money maker and great fun! The City and County are requested by Chamber to fund the clean-up day dumpster cost. A fireworks stand from June 25 to July 4th to earn money to cover the costs of prizes for the winning entrants and expenses of the Fair Parade is managed by the Chamber. A committee orders the fireworks, sets up the booth and members volunteer to cover the two-hour shifts from 3-9 every day. The generosity of the people of Bassett is greatly evidenced by the number of donations to the "Magic of Christmas" fund. Many comments on the generosity of the people for this project have been stated and provide evidence of community pride.

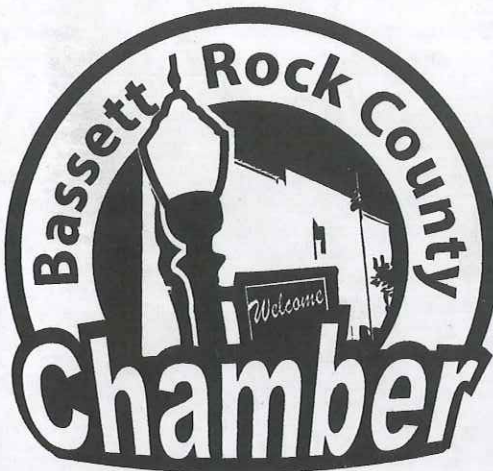
6) Future Plans

All the projects are on-going with yearly changes in planning and development with new projects developed as needed. The Economic Development Coordinator applied for a grant for a booth at the 2010 State Fair in Grand Island and the Chamber was granted a free booth. Chamber and other community members are strongly committed to the grant requirement of manning the booth from August 27--September 6. The Chamber has a committee of six members working with the Nebraska

Division of Travel and Tourism to conduct a Target Study. The Chamber will be a key player in the development and planning of the Rock County Q125 celebration in 2013.

7) What aspects (if any) of the project were especially unique or creative?

The Chamber meeting locations changing every month is creative allowing all six food service providers business opportunity and Chamber members a chance to try all the eateries.



Give to the Food Pantry

The Bassett/Rock County Chamber of Commerce is asking for donations to the Food Pantry as a Thanksgiving promotion. Items related to a Thanksgiving meal are needed. Items may be left at any of the local Rock county churches, G&V's Market, or R. F. Goeke Variety.



Chamber lists new members

Twenty-six businesses have become members of the Bassett/Rock County Chamber of Commerce for 2010.

- Ainsworth Vision Clinic, PC
- Jim Anderson
- Arnholt Agency
- Bassett Arts Council
- Bassett Development Corp.
- Bassett Livestock Auction
- City Of Bassett
- Coleman Associates Inc.
- Commercial Bank
- Farmers & Ranchers Co-op
- Ernie and Betty Hasch
- Hoch Funeral Homes
- Keller Abstract & Title
- Lisa's Accounting
- North Central RC&D
- Reliable Welding, Inc.
- R. F. Goeke Variety
- Rock County Agronomy
- Rock Co. Historical Society
- Rock County Leader
- Rock County Library
- Scott's Place
- Second Chance Thrift Shop
- Tri-County Bank
- Triple R Tire, Inc.
- United Methodist Church

Donations made to Magic of Christmas

The Bassett/Rock County Chamber of Commerce met Sept. 8, at Allen's Pizza Place with seven members present.

Donations to the Magic of Christmas were from the BASIC youth, \$140 from the games at the fair and \$40 was donated from Kenneth and Gladys Sybrant.

Mike Skulavik reported that the State Fair booth went well. He commented the brochures to promote the area need to be at the State Fair at the beginning, not towards the end of the fair.

Dawn Hans from the Range Cafe will be in charge of the Halloween parade. On Oct. 24 a pumpkin carving contest starting at 2 p.m. and on Oct. 31 the parade will begin at 4 p.m. starting at Turp's Automotive and ending at the Range Cafe. Dawn will be serving hot dogs for the kids before trick-or-treating. More on the Halloween parade will be discussed at the October meeting.

The next meeting will be held at the Rock County Senior Center on Oct. 13 at noon.



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

BASSETT

HWY 7 NORTH

Chamber buys sign on Hwy. 20

The Bassett/Rock County Chamber of Commerce met at the Range Cafe with 13 members present on June 12.

Members voted to purchase the Bassett Motors sign on the lot on Highway 20. The sign will help promote Bassett and businesses. The Chamber golf tournament had 25 teams and was again a successful meet.

Bassett's 125 years is approaching and it was suggested to form a committee to begin planning events for the celebration. The Chamber parade committee is again sponsoring the firework stand.

The Tourism booth at the State Fair is the last week in August. The Chamber is encouraging members to attend.

The Bassett City Council asked the Chamber to help with the repairs on the Bassett banners. Members voted to help with this cost.

Twyla Witt from the Division of Travel and Tourism came and spoke with members of the community. She spoke on how to help promote Bassett and creating a new logo. The current logo is "Bassett - Nebraska's Home Town."

The theme for this year's fair parade on Aug. 6 is "Christmas - Sandhills Style." The Rock County Hospital will be hosting the annual health fair on Aug. 8 from 10 to 2 at the Rock County High school.

The next meeting will be held at the Clark Street Mall on July 14 at 12 noon.

Successful tournament

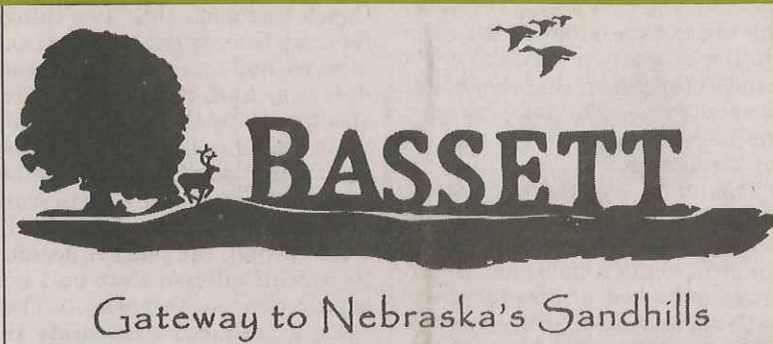
The Bassett/Rock County Chamber of Commerce held another successful golf tournament on June 4 at the Bassett Country club. Results are as follows:

Championship flight - Todd Kicken, Tony Allen, Terry Allen, Jennifer Gering were first with a score of 56; second went to G&V's Market with a 57, Steve Camp, Kristie Camp, George Friedrich, Vicki Friedrich; and third to the Arnholt Insurance/Arrowsmith team, Jim Arnholt, Brad Arrowsmith, Mike Young, Doug Weiss with a 60.

First flight - Lisa's Accounting was first with a 61. Team members were Nick Larsen, Spencer Murdock, Joelle Brummond and Nick Murdock; second with a 62 was BLA #1, Bim Nelson, Ben Fischer, Jake Maurer, Kelby Nelson and third was a three way tie 67, Heartland Auction, Mitch Dean, Glen May, Duane Jackson, Bryan Coleman; Rock County Telephone, George Friedrich, Dan Morrison, Bernie Hart and Rick Foxworthy and NPPD, Mike Marvin, Jake Childers, Larry Arens, Jerry Fales.

Second flight - First place team with a 71 was Tri County Bank, Gary Shankland, Payton Shankland, Jacob Maurer, Cameron Smith; second, Scott's Place with a 73, Pam Seberger, Frank Seberger, Lisa Connery and Scott Connery. Third place was a tie between Mid America, Tim Iverson, Jessica Iverson, Keith Ammon and Robert Seidel with a 74 and Affiliated Foods, Joe Mundorf, Arch Ferguson, Rex Schubert and Joel Mundorf.

Dee Hollenbeck was the women's shootout winner and Matt Morrison was the men's shootout winner.



LUKE ARMSTRONG WAS THE WINNER of the Bassett/Rock County Chamber and Economic Development logo contest. His artwork received the most number of votes from the public. His logo will be used on all promotion items from the Bassett/Rock County Chamber and Economic Development. Luke receives \$50 in Bassett Bucks from each of the two sponsoring committees.

