

## ANNUAL MEETING: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as well as executive director Rebecca Ferderer, executive director. General membership members present were Kent and Kathleen Brackel (KB Jewelers), Kim Schalesky (Dakota Buttes Visitors Council), Mike Marion (Mike Marion Construction & Rentals), Alan Slater (Good Hope Café), Rae Vaught (Rae's Boutique), Cheryl Dix (Rustic Orchid Floral), Ted Uecker (West River Health Services), Ronda Fink (GS Publishing) and an anonymous attendee by Zoom.

Newly elected president, Laurie Wickstrom, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting began with the acceptance of the 2026 agenda, financial report and the minutes of the 2025 annual meeting.

The meat of the meeting began – committee reports.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July started it off with Rebecca stating she thought the event went well. The planning committee tried to focus on the younger people to participate in the parade with the theme of “Party in the USA.” She felt it was one of the longer parades in the last few years, lasting over an hour. Then-president Jacki Christman had a family emergency as she was lining up parade entries and had to leave. Even though there was a moment of panic of what to do, the parade went off without a hitch. Cash prizes were provided for parade category winners as an incentive for participation.

The Jaycees sponsored 100% of the inflatables and tea cups on Main Street and, as always, the fireworks, allowing the Chamber to offer participation for free.

General membership member Kent Brackel stated, “Rebecca and Andy Roehl ended up putting up banners along the highway at 2 a.m. That



“IF YOU HAVE NEVER COME DOWN HETTINGER'S MAIN STREET IN A PARADE you just can't imagine how many people come to those events,” stated Kathleen Brackel, organizer of the annual Wake Up Santa parade.

[Submitted Photo]

was beyond what should be asked and we need to recognize them for that.” Everyone gave a resounding round of applause.

Kathleen Brackel thought the poker run was successful, “People were in the store that had never been in the store before.”

Nine teams participated in the volleyball tournament which was spearheaded by student chamber director Katie Buckmier. The group agreed she did an excellent job and encouraged her to do it again this year.

Board member Sonell reported on the vendors on Main Street. The vendors said they would prefer to be under the trees. This was the first year of vendors during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and she said she is still learning and trying new things.

Rebecca stated, “We are the Chamber of Commerce. Our goal needs to be to bring business back to the stores.” Archibald's Valle Grande Ranch and Feeders again sponsored 100% the free noon meal, including the 20% increase in the cost of the beef.

Before moving on to the next committee, Laurie announced since this July 4<sup>th</sup> is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States of America, this year's parade theme will be “Our American Story –

250 years in the making.”

The next event was the Rodeo. Rebecca expressed the event was amazing, the perfect storm of weather, contestants and crowd. The chamber made 2 ½ times as much as it usually does. Sonell headed up a vendor show again and felt it was well received. She felt having the rodeo and vendors connected through the back doors at the Armory was great and worked well.

The Star of ND group handled ticket sales at the entrances and provided the National Anthem. The Peacock Mercantile effortlessly handled the concession stand while the Pastime Bar kept everyone's thirst under control.

The Pitch Fork Fondue had a good turnout with Mike Marion and his crew cooking over 500 steaks. The chamber is grateful to the Jaycees for, again, donating to help cover the increase in the cost of the steaks. In visiting with the vendors from which the meat is purchased, the board is concerned there may be another 20% increase by the time the event comes around in 2026.

The condition of the Country Club road was the main concern. Rebecca called the construction company to give them a heads up on the traffic for the event and

she felt they did a good job of making the road travelable. The group agreed it is a concern for this year's event also.

The Pastime usually donates the salads and butter for this event. However, with the sale of the business, Katy's Catering stepped up and donated these items. The Stars of ND helped set up tables and tents for the event as a fundraiser and the Close Up group helped clean up afterwards as one of their fundraisers.

Mike Marion is the driving force behind the success of the Pitch Fork Fondue. Allen Wickstrom said, “I know Mike will eventually show up so this year I found Mike to buy my tickets. You can run but you can't hide from Mike.”

The Wake-Up Santa event celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with \$40 in Chamber bucks being the parade prizes and the Chamber Bucks drawings.

Mike Marion said Kent and Kathleen Brackel need to be commended for their great support over the years for this parade event.

The tree was donated by JC Farms, helping to decorate it was Sage Olson with MDU, When asked how things went at the fire hall, Rebecca replied very well with Rusty's Burgers and Ice Cream providing apple cider and Dakota Western Bank the goody bags. John Jahner and LeAnn Fitch kindly filled in for Santa and Mrs. Claus with Carrie Jahner and McCauley Vailes acting as elves.

Better Life sponsored horse-drawn wagon rides with John Hill as the teamster. Ted Uecker informed the group that the

Medora Musical group has already asked to come back for 2026's celebration.

With committee reports out of the way the meeting moved on to membership dues. Last year the general membership voted to increase dues by \$100 for each category but to give an early payment discount of \$50 if paid by March 31. Rebecca stated it doesn't seem to have affected the number of memberships as of yet but it is a little early to make a final decision.

The by-law changes voted on last year were to change the number of directors to a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 12 with at least one student member at all times. The number of student members does not need to be kept to one but however many student members there are, they will share only 1 vote. Therefore, they will need to agree on what that vote will be before voting.

There was discussion on the mini chamber which had been through the Hettinger Public School previously. The group was informed the advisor, Mrs. Brooke Schneider, had gotten just too busy to continue the group. It was suggested that maybe one of the student Chamber members could be in charge of the mini chamber group.

As the meeting began to close, Ted brought up that he was concerned about the financial stability of the theatre. He suggested the chamber reach out to the group as he believes the chamber could help. Rebecca reminded the group the chamber had rented the theatre last year for their awards night. The suggestions

began to pop up about all sorts of events people thought the theatre could be used for if there was a way to protect the screen. Someone stated theatres in other communities are used for events other than just movies.

Some of the suggestions for events were a comedy night, concert series, fashion show, Cowboy Band concerts and a community play. Kathleen stated, “It is amazing what this town accomplishes when it comes together. The theatre and the pool are good examples. We need to make this happen.” The group all agreed. Ted, Sonell and Mike all agreed to go to the next theatre meeting.

The Baby Grand piano which was originally at the theatre needed to be stored elsewhere as it needs moderate temperatures and use, otherwise, as stated by a piano technician, it will become useless. Therefore it was moved to the Lutheran church as it was the only church in town with the room for a piano of that size.

In closing Rebecca sent a big thank you to Andy and Jacki for their commitment to the chamber events. Andy and Rebecca prepped for the 4<sup>th</sup> and Jacki single-handedly prepped for the rodeo.

Although individuals and businesses too numerous to list donate beyond their chamber dues to make events happen it is as Mike Marion said, “There is one common denominator we have been hearing all night – Jaycees, Jaycees, Jaycees. These events and more would not happen without them. The community owes them a great deal.”

## Peace Gardens offers free entry for Seniors

Peace Garden Offers Free Entry for Seniors Every Wednesday from now through April, the International Peace Garden is offering free entry to seniors age 55

and up. Beginning Feb. 11, every other Wednesday afternoon will also include an educational presentation, a stroll through the Conservatory, a craft activity, and tea. The recently

remodeled Conservatory is home to a large collection of cacti and succulents from all around the world, showcased in a 15,000-square-foot space that was designed to encourage visitor interaction. The soaring space invites visitors to explore the walkways, pause in resting nooks, and learn about the collection through interpretive displays.

“We hope to encourage seniors and people of all ages to get out and enjoy our beautiful Conservatory,” Tim Chapman, Peace Garden CEO, said. “We have a great lineup of presenters offering sessions on local history and the horticulture of our amazing collection. Craft activities and tea provide opportunities for people to get together and socialize in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.”

## LIKE TO WRITE?

We are looking for people who like to tell their friends, neighbors and family about sporting events, government meetings, community gatherings and other area news.

It could be full-time or a part-time side job. If interested, call Jill at 701-584-2900 or email [jill@gspublishing.net](mailto:jill@gspublishing.net).

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**RECORD**

### NOTICE OF CANDIDATE FILING DEADLINE

Notice is hereby given that the deadline for filing to have a candidate's name printed on the ballot for the **Hettinger Public School District 13** is **Monday April 6th, 2026** by 4 pm. The following offices are up for election:

City School Board Member (3-year term)  
Rural School Board Member (3-year term)

A candidate for a school district office must prepare and sign a document stating the candidate's name and the position for which the individual is a candidate, and a SFN 10172 Statement of Interests form. Both of these documents must be filed with the school district business manager for Hettinger Public School District 13 by the above deadline date and time. All forms are available from either the school district business manager for Hettinger Public School or may be obtained online at <https://vip.sos.nd.gov/PortalListDetails.aspx?ptlhpKID=30&ptlpKID=3#content-start>

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