

## Pike County Chamber of Commerce Plan of Work : 2015-2016

### The Pike County Chamber of Commerce will work to strengthen membership in the organization.

Tactics: Membership recruitment drive; Member visitation program;  
Add a weekly Membership email blast to Chamber social media toolbox, launch Constant Contact Chamber program  
Identify additional member benefits, and member-to-member benefits;  
Create a membership brochure, Board member kit, and Ambassador kit;  
Continue to expand the Chamber website. Post an additional Members Directory sorted by business category for ease of use by the web site visitor. Increase referrals/ customers to member businesses.

### The Pike County Chamber of Commerce will increase Chamber identification and role in the county/region.

Tactics: Develop a relocation section on the website for prospective new residents and businesses.  
Work with the Ambassador group and YPIke! to facilitate coordination of activities and promote events throughout the year;  
Expand networking opportunities for members; Continue partnerships and networking with all Pike County communities;  
Continue to do the Twin Pikes Report daily (Kaye as co-host) , monthly coffee breaks and spotlight shows on WBBA; look for additional avenues to keep members and the community at large abreast of Chamber activities and goals.

### The Pike County Chamber of Commerce will implement strategies to increase tourism to the county.

Tactics: Continue to develop and upgrade our website to better attract visitors and aid in their travel plans. Use social media to increase our reach. Explore emerging technology and use as appropriate. Provide Hospitality Training;  
Develop and print a new Pike County Visitors Guide with increased focus on heritage tourism, year-round activities, hunting, and family entertainment. Guide will be placed in State Tourist Centers across the state;  
Continue to cooperate with the various organizations working on tourism projects (Lincoln related activities, New Philadelphia, Mormon history) and the Pike County Color Drive Committee to foster communication, maximize resources and avoid duplication. Continue our regular emails and events promotions to encourage visits. Continue and expand partnerships with other organizations to include a regional focus on tourism.

### The Pike County Chamber of Commerce will implement countywide strategies to raise awareness of the importance of local shopping & spending for the health of the county.

Tactics: Chamber will continue to be a "neighborhood champion" for Small Business Saturday but expand the communication with a year round promotional schedule;  
The "Live Pike, Love Pike, Spend Pike " campaign will outline how state taxes are used and how they benefit the county; and include press releases, PSAs and media tools to educate residents and raise the awareness of spending locally. The "Live Pike, Love Pike, Spend Pike " Facebook page will continue to highlight local businesses;  
Social media and email campaigns will encourage local spending. We will continue and expand partnerships with other organizations involved in promoting local businesses to encourage a countywide focus on doing business locally.

### The Pike County Chamber of Commerce will focus efforts on creating a positive climate for business and fostering entrepreneurship within its membership and the Pike County business community.

Tactics: Continue to offer value-added business workshops to the business community, with emphasis on marketing and sales promotion for our members;  
Reenergize YPIke! to help provide opportunities for young entrepreneurs;  
Engage youth to attract them and keep them in Pike County. Help facilitate a Junior Achievement chapter in the county.  
Continue to develop/reinforce partnerships with PCEDC, the Barry Business Association, community business organizations and key influencers; and Communicate and celebrate success!



The Pike County Chamber of Commerce advocates for our members, promotes tourism and a positive business climate, and works to enhance the overall quality of life in the County. Our mission is summed up in our slogan:

***Making Pike County a great place to live, work, and visit.***

We are the front door to Pike County for people and businesses, and a trusted source of information, resources, and advocacy.

2014 Annual Report March, 2015



#### A Message from our Executive Director, Kaye Ifner

This is certainly an exciting time for Pike County. Good things are happening all over the county. Tourism continues to increase and the business climate is improving. Many older businesses are expanding, and new businesses are popping up everywhere. Cities, towns and villages are showing pride in their hometowns and revitalization examples are everywhere. The Pike County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to be part of that energy and growth. We have a great Board of Directors who are focused on our mission—to make Pike County a great place to live, work, and visit. I wish to personally thank them for their support.

We have worked very hard this past year for you, our valued members. We sponsored several informational sessions throughout the year aimed at helping you manage and grow your businesses. We have also been involved in initiatives to promote greater entrepreneurship within the county, working with many partners—the Abe Lincoln Project of Pike County, Access Illinois Outdoors, the Barry Business Association, Pike County Economic Development Corporation, and Pittsfield Main Street to name just a few—to leverage resources to promote Pike County, create opportunities for our members, and to give our young people a desire to stay and the tools to create their futures in Pike County.

On a personal note, as I reflect back on the seven years I have been in this role, one of the amazing things I have realized is that Pike County has a strong sense of community- a commitment to volunteerism and to helping each other in whatever way is needed and to whatever extent possible. As many of you are aware, I had a tough year in 2014 personally. We lost 2 parents, David had some health issues, and there were a lot of personal demands on my time. But you were patient and understanding, and always there for me. I am forever grateful for your membership, support, and friendship. Kaye

One of the major accomplishments of 2014 was the launch of our re-designed website, [www.pikeil.org](http://www.pikeil.org). Organized around our mission slogan "Making Pike County a great place to live, work, and visit", the website supports every aspect of what we do and therefore warrants special coverage in this report. After many months of work, the site was launched in November.



The new site has the same ease of use as the former site, and all the great content. The advantages are that it looks the same across all browsers and is a responsive design. It is mobile phone friendly, and uses the latest code and SEO. We have an unlimited number of pages, and the Calendar is amazing!

# 2014 IN REVIEW

## A special thanks to our 2014 Board of Directors, Officers and Ambassadors

### 2014 Board of Directors

Kent Hawley, *at large*, Chamber Board President

Jill Moss, *Farmers State Bank*, Chamber Board Vice President

Peter Wright, *Wright Place Auto Body*, Chamber Board Treasurer

David Fuhler, *WBBA*, Immediate Past President,

Carolyn Casteel, *Casteel's*

Bob Evans, *Pike Co. Historical Society*

Jan Gates, *Golden Ruler, Barry Business Assn.*

Charlie Hull, *Illini Community Hospital*

Nancy Kurpaitis, *Florence Guest House*

Brenda Middendorf, *Two Rivers RC&D, Access Illinois Outdoors*

Beth White, *Farmers National Bank*

Mike Spann, *COUNTRY Financial*

Andy Sprague, *Sprague's Kinderhook Lodge*

Robert Wood, *PCEDC and alderman with the City of Pittsfield*

**Staff:** Kaye Iftner, Executive Director

### 2014 Ambassadors

Kim Ator, *Farmers State Bank*

Sheila Davidsmeyer, *Northwestern Mutual Financial Services*

Tammy Harshman, *Illini Health Services*

Megan Newman, *Pike County Health Dept.*

Holly Henderson Johnston, *KHQ*

Marci Freesen, *United Community Bank*

Julie Plattner, *United Community Bank*

Nathan Painter, *Edward Jones*

Jayne Pieper, *Blessing Heath Systems*

Jennifer Ross/Bob Dieker *J.D. Ross & Associates, Inc*

Noelle Flesner, *CNB Bank & Trust*

Lindsey Rennecker, *Western Collision*

Shelly Martin, *Quincy Medical Group*

The Pike County Chamber of Commerce's 2014 Program of Work focused on several major areas of focus:

Strengthening/growing membership and increasing member value;

Creating a positive business climate and fostering entrepreneurship, especially among young professionals;

Promoting tourism;

Raising the awareness of the importance of spending locally;

Advocating for our members and the county; and

Increasing the Chamber identification and our role in the county and the region.

### So how did we do?

#### Membership:

Ten new members joined the Chamber family in 2014 and membership revenue was up. We welcome these new members and thank them for their investment in our county.

We also hosted 3 our three major networking activities: our 27th annual meeting, the 20th Annual Chamber Golf Outing and the Fall Cookout. We organized 12 ribbon cuttings and four members hosted "Business after Hours" or "Meet & Greets".

#### Creating a positive business climate:

The Chamber hosted six business workshops, five by the Chamber alone, and one co-sponsored with Pike County Economic Development and Pittsfield Main Street. Topics included Advantage Illinois, the Affordable Care Act, Internet Marketing & Social Media, and a 4 part Leadership Series for Young Professionals. We also co-sponsored a Local Candidates Forum with the Pike County Farm Bureau to give the public an opportunity to meet and hear from candidates running for the Pike County Board and Pike County offices.

The business community officially welcomed twelve new or expanding businesses to Pike County through ribbon cuttings organized by the Chamber.

The fifth annual Girls Night Out on the Square, co-sponsored by Pittsfield Main Street and the Chamber was a huge success. Over 440 ladies participated and many visited all of the businesses that were official stops, some of which were new to them. Many of the stores reported brisk sales that evening and all food & drink establishments on the Square benefited as well.

We continue to work with the Barry Business Association by supporting their efforts to promote local businesses.

## Live Pike, Love Pike, Spend Pike! - Encouraging local spending



Spending locally is more than just a holiday promotion, and it encompasses more than just shopping at local retailers. It involves all of our businesses, and we promote "thinking Pike first" year round and whenever choosing goods or services.

### Advocacy

We are an active participant in the Workforce Readiness Program developed through Pike County Economic Development, the Workforce Investment Board and our four school systems. The Chamber



#### Statement of Commitment for Pike County's Workforce Readiness Program Certification

The Pike County Chamber of Commerce recognizes that its member companies need a well trained, motivated workforce. In addition, it recognizes that educators in Pike County wish to graduate students prepared with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace or in further educational opportunities.

### Promoting Tourism in Pike County

According to a report provided by the Illinois Office of Tourism, the US Travel Association reports that tourism expenditures in Pike County were \$23.45 million in 2013, up 1.2 % from the previous year. Tourism supports 100 local jobs with a payroll of \$2.84 million.

The trend continues for visitors to plan trips via the internet, and the Chamber website is rich in content regarding all of Pike County's amenities. We list all of the lodging establishments, restaurants, and attractions. In 2014 the "visit" section had 8,700 unique visits.



The Chamber is the sponsoring organization of the Pike County Fall Color Drive. 2014 was the 26th Anniversary of this annual event which brings thousands of visitors to the county during the third full weekend in October- a major boost to our economy!

In the fall of 2013, the Chamber conducted a survey of businesses. The survey identified that our great "Quality of Life" was one of the strengths of living and doing business in Pike County. However, many survey respondents expressed a concern about dollars leaving the area, and the need for continued education for our residents of the importance of keeping these dollars in the county. It is recognized that unless we keep our local businesses healthy and operational, our communities won't be healthy and the great quality of life we all enjoy will erode.

Long a supporter of shopping locally, the Chamber has been a champion of events such as Black Friday and Small Business Saturday. In 2014 we were again a "Neighborhood Champion" for the 5th Annual Small Business Saturday campaign from American Express. We put together a countywide campaign and distributed over 300 "Shop Small" shopping bags and other items. We requested the Pike County Board to proclaim Saturday, Nov. 29th as "Small Business Saturday" in Pike County, which they did.



was the first organization to officially endorse the program, at our 2013 Annual Meeting.

The 5th Annual "Let's Say Thanks" gave us an opportunity to thank thousands of veterans and their families.

### 2014 by the numbers...

49,200 page views on the Chamber website  
3,581 visits to the Chamber Member Directory  
1,854 followers on Facebook and Twitter (combined)  
\$ 5,245 worth of Chamber Bucks sold  
6 business workshops, one co-sponsored with Pittsfield Main Street and PCEDC  
3 Major Networking Events, Four Business after Hours or "Meet & Greet"s.  
Twelve Ribbon Cuttings  
Thousands of postcards mailed to veterans  
Over 440 ladies attended the 5th Annual Girls Night Out, co-sponsored with Pittsfield Main Street

### Financial Stats...

2013 Income: \$ 39,350.00  
2013 Expenses: \$ 34,206.94

