

Chamber sparks Harrah growth

By John Martin
Staff Writer

The Harrah Chamber of Commerce is a member driven organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and promote local business and educational opportunities within the community.

And Chamber Executive Secretary Brandy McKay is dedicated to making that happen and then enhancing the product.

"The Chamber provides its members with a multitude of ways to increase visibility in the community. Like most membership organizations, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it," McKay said.

The Chamber is supported by dues from its members and also the annual Chamber Auction held each December plus revenue from the Harrah Day celebration.

"This is a time when all our members really come together. Lots of people put in a lot of hours to prepare the Taste of Harrah, auction of donated items, silent auction and lots of food, fun and fellowship," McKay said.

The event is held in the Parish Hall at St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church and the Chamber is certainly grateful to the church for hosting the event, McKay said.

Supported by business, industrial, and professional people who are empowered with strength and a passion for a common cause, the Harrah Chamber brings together members who are dedicated to developing, promoting and maintaining a sound and

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healthy climate for Harrah, making it a great place to work and call home.

McKay reports that there are currently just over 100 members in the Harrah Chamber of Commerce with 15 being added during 2017. By far, the biggest and most popular event sponsored by the Chamber is the annual Harrah Day Celebration, held in Harrah Heritage Park with a parade, pageant, entertainment and vendors of every kind of food imaginable.

The 2017 Harrah Day, held annually the second Saturday in September, attracted more than 7,000 people this year.

SCHOLARSHIPS GIVEN

The Chamber annually awards \$3,000 in scholarships to worthy and needy students at Harrah High School. The Harrah Chamber is also the sponsor of the Harrah Future Leaders program.

"Every year, 25 of the top 11th grade class leaders from Harrah High School are selected to represent our communities as future leaders," McKay said.

"Purpose of the program is to identify young individuals who have potential leadership qualities and to help further develop that potential, to provide educational activities, which familiarize participants with community needs, opportunities and resources.

"It also provides opportunities for interaction with community leaders, and to equip participants with leadership skills that will be valuable to them as they continue their education and will continue into their adult world," she added.



Celebrating over 30 years

This year the Harrah Chamber of Commerce hosted a banquet to celebrate over 30 years serving the community of Harrah. Nine former Chamber Presidents were in attendance to be honored. Others were remembered and thanked for their dedicated service. Current President Jeremy Davidson along with Executive Director Brandy McKay hosted the event, and presented trophies to Greg Seikel, Mike Baker, Jim Kirby, Russell Dull, Scott Dull, Benita Peeler, Karen Heffley, Gordon Jenney, Mandy Gulley, Ryan Manry and Vernon Willis.
PHOTO BY RYAN HORTON

These students can build a network of relationships and friendships by attending these events, serving on a committee, and keeping connected through out media and messaging, McKay said.

An example of the outreach in the community provided by the Chamber was the legislative lunch held recently at Harrah Church. The forum allowed several elected officials from this area the opportunity to speak di-

rectly to eastern Oklahoma County constituents.

Special guests included Congressman Steve Russell, State Senator Ron Sharp, State Representative Tess Teague, State Rep. Lewis Moore and County Commissioner Brian Maughan. A field representative from U.S. Senator James Lankford's office was also in attendance.