



The Chamber News

November 2017

WOW!
What can the chamber do to WOW
you?
Let us know!

Thursday, November 2nd 2017

Dear Chamber Member,

Happy Holiday Season everyone! It's hard to believe it's already November and the snow is starting to fall but we are very excited for winter here in Morris! We have a lot of exciting holiday events coming up and are looking forward to helping your business thrive during this joyful season.

The Parade of Lights kicks off our holiday season on Thursday, November 16th at 6 p.m. If you would like a float in this year's parade, please fill out a registration form included in this newsletter. Also, be sure to let us know if you plan to have a holiday open house the night of the Parade of Lights or during the weekend right after.

If you have not done so already, please contact our office right away to be part of the holiday promotion! We have a lot of new and exciting things going on this season including a lighting contest and an ugly sweater day for participating chamber businesses and patrons who shop the stores that day. The 2nd Annual Holiday Stroll will also take place as well as the free movie at the Morris Theatre for kids and families, and so much more! Please be a part of this festive time of year! See full list of holiday events in the Important Dates section of the newsletter and registration form later in this newsletter.

We are still looking for businesses willing to sponsor and co-sponsor future chamber socials. Socials are a great opportunity to network with other chamber members and showcase your business. If you are interested in sponsoring a social, please contact our office.

As you can see, we have a lot going on here at the Chamber, but we couldn't do any of it without you, our Member. Thank you so much for your continued membership and support!

Andrea Koehntop
Marketing Director

IMPORTANT DATES:

Thursday, November 16th:
Candy Cane Dash 5:45 p.m.
Parade of Lights 6 p.m.

Nov. 16-18th: Business Holiday
Open Houses

Friday, November 24th: Free
Fire Truck Rides 12-2pm &
Movie "Rock Dog" 2pm at the
Morris Theatre

Saturday, December 2nd:
Holiday Stroll 9am-3pm, craft
show, activities at the Stevens
County Museum and more!

Saturday, December 9th: Free
Pictures with Santa 12-2pm and
Free Movie "Polar Express" 2pm
at the Morris Theatre

Friday, December 15th: Ugly
Sweater Day

Friday, December 22nd: Grand
Prize Drawing for \$500
Chamber Cash

Wednesday, January 17th:
Chamber Annual Meeting &
Dinner Auction

REMINDERS:

Please contact the Morris Area Chamber of Commerce if your business has any change of address, email address, phone number, etc. If you are interested in learning more about our different committees and/or becoming part of our committees, please contact us! We would appreciate the participation.
(320)-589-1242
morrismnchamber@gmail.com

The Morris Area Chamber of Commerce wishes you a safe and happy holiday season! Please note that our office will be closed on Thursday, November 23rd in observance of Thanksgiving as well as Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December 26th for Christmas.



Membership Spotlight

Conexiones



There is a new non-profit in town that's helping connect newcomers to the area and creating a greater sense of community and belonging for everyone. That non-profit is called Conexiones, a Spanish word meaning "Connections." Although the group works largely with the growing Hispanic population in Stevens County, their mission extends to any newcomer to the area. Conexiones seeks to empower immigrant families in the Stevens County community, not just Morris. They also strongly encourage volunteerism and show ways to volunteer, while helping newcomers maneuver in their new community.

Conexiones was started about a year ago by Amy Schmidgall, Vanessa Sandoval, Nico Guerrero, Stephanie Cid and Martha Reyes. The idea started when new employees from Riverview felt a need for a stronger connection to their new community and thought an organization could help new families who came to town. Conexiones also mentors families, as in they find out what the new family's needs are and assign them a family to work with to show them around and help them get acquainted in the things they are looking for. The new family can then go to that family to answer any questions they may have and for help in different areas of getting settled into the community.

Conexiones does not have any paid staff and no members, just a board of directors very passionate about the mission of helping newcomers in the community feel welcome and a part of the community. Amy Schmidgall, Executive Director of Conexiones says she loves seeing the look on newcomers faces when they come to the community and feel that they are not alone and are welcome here. "Realizing we are all one community and the culture here is to do that for each other," says Amy. "You are empowered by being helped and you are empowered by helping others. It's a cycle that needs to happen."

In the future, they hope to have more events that promote and encourage all members of the Stevens County Community to come together and have various events together. For example, they would like to have a cultural center open to anyone that would like to share pieces of their culture and heritage with others. There could be meals and lessons on how to make meals like lefse or tamales and everyone in the community would be invited to participate. Sharing of various cultural dances is also an idea. Another idea would be to have an English roundtable like they have a Spanish roundtable at the university in TMC. It could be a great opportunity to bring all community together and practice English in a non-confrontational setting.

Although they have a lot of hopes and dreams for the future, starting a new non-profit is a slow process and Amy admits it's hard to be patient with the excitement there is around helping others and getting things going. "You just want to help people and it feels like the legal processes take a long time," she says. Conexiones is still waiting on official government status as a non-profit organization, but they have been able to do a lot of services for people in the meantime. They were able to work with and help four families over the summer. They also created welcome baskets for new families with goodies from local businesses in them. In the future, they hope to make the baskets bigger and have more things in them including information on how to set up cable, electricity, emergency info and important numbers to call available in English and Spanish. They are also working on having new baby baskets since many families who move here do not have family in the area.

Conexiones is not a politically affiliated organization and is just about helping people and building community. It is not just for new Hispanics to the community but anyone in need. "Our objective is to build community and that takes everyone to do so," says Amy. "The best way to build community is to help people feel empowered. We are stronger all around for that."

2017 Holiday Promotion Registration



October 10, 2017

To: Morris Area Businesses
From: The Chamber of Commerce Retail & Events Committee
RE: **2017 Holiday Promotion**

Plans for the 2017 Holiday Promotion will soon be completed. Our 17th Annual Parade of Lights will be held on Thursday, November 16th at 6 p.m. to kick off the season. We have enclosed an entry form if you would like to have a unit this year. Holiday Open House weekend will be held on November 16th- 18th.

On November 24th we will be offering firetruck rides with Santa along with black Friday and small business Saturday sales.

Again this year we will be having a "Holiday Stroll" event on December 2nd that includes various activities and demonstrations at local businesses as well as some local craft sales.

A free holiday movie will be shown on December 9th along with pictures with Santa and fire truck rides. There will also be drawings and various shopping specials being held during the promotion.

Our goal is to create incentives for customers to shop in Morris during the holiday season. We are asking for a contribution of \$50.00 from your business to help with the cost of hiring Santa, a movie, candy, and other kids activities and expenses associated with the Parade of Lights.

As a supporting sponsor, we will be listing your name in our weekly advertising as a Holiday Promotion Supporting Business.

If you would like to participate, please mail your donation to the Chamber Office or contact the Chamber by Wednesday, October 25th indicating you would like to be a supporting business. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Chamber Office at 589-1242 or by email at morrismnchamber@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued support of the Morris Chamber of Commerce and the Morris Community!

Yes, I would like to help sponsor the 2017 Holiday Promotion Events!

_____ I have enclosed a check for \$50 _____ Please invoice me.

Business Name _____

Phone: _____

Please Return by October 25, 2017

Parade of Lights

Thursday, November 16th



2017 Parade of Lights

Join the festivities and fun as we start the Holiday Season in Morris on Thursday, November 16, 2017 with the 17th Annual Grand Parade of Lights

The Chamber of Commerce's Events & Retail Committee invites all businesses and community members to enter a float, vehicle, or characters in our Grand Parade of Lights. We have invited Santa to join us for the parade. Please do not include a Santa with your parade unit.

We encourage you to get together with co-workers, family, and friends to put together your parade entry. Because it is a "Parade of Lights," we ask that you decorate and dazzle the crowd with lots of lights on your entry and also include some holiday music. Prizes will be awarded for the best overall entry and the best show of lights. Please return this form to the Chamber Office. **Lineup will be in the order registration forms are received. You will receive an e-mail confirmation of your registration.**

Deadline to register is November 9th

Grand Parade of Lights Registration
Thursday, November 16, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Business/Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

E-Mail: _____

Address, City, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Entry Description: Please indicate the length of unit and if you will have music.

Length of unit _____ Music _____

It is understood that service groups, businesses and organizations have their own insurance. For those without insurance, we ask you to sign a release of liability:

I, the undersigned, agree that I will notify my participants that they alone are responsible, for any personal injury and/or property damage resulting from participation in the Parade of Lights. I specifically release and discharge in advance The Morris Area Chamber of Commerce from any and all liability.

Applicants Signature _____

Please return form to:
Morris Area Chamber of Commerce, 215 Atlantic Avenue, Morris MN 56267
Or Email to morrismnchamber@gmail.com