

Fredonia finally getting a Chamber

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Grass roots group of business owners decide time is right to take on a community presence

Fredonia is no longer the only community in Ozaukee County without a Chamber of Commerce.

A group of local business owners decided last week to create the Fredonia Area Chamber of Commerce.

A preliminary meeting was held to discuss forming a Chamber in March, but the more than a dozen business representatives attending the session put off formal action until the group met April 29.

Although the follow-up session drew fewer people, the group decided it was time to proceed in forming a local Chamber. The first order of business was naming an initial leadership team.

The group decided to leave the position of Chamber president open until nominations from the community are received.

However, Laurie Ziegler, who is building a home in Fredonia and owns Sass Accounting in Saukville, was named vice president.

Ziegler is a past president of the Grafton Chamber and a member of the Saukville Chamber.

"I realize it looks a little odd have a vice president but not a president, but I strongly believe the president of the Fredonia Area Chamber should have a Fredonia business," Ziegler said.

"I think this is something we can make work. There are enough businesses here, and I think it is about time Fredonia has its own Chamber. By calling ourselves the Fredonia Area Chamber, we can look beyond the village, too."

Peggy Wester of Realty Executives accepted the appointment of secretary/treasurer.

Initial terms will be for one year. The goal is to eventually stagger three-year terms so there won't be a turnover of the entire board in a single year.

Fredonia businesswoman Lisa Dohrwardt, who is also a village trustee, has served as facilitator for the group in its exploratory stages.

Because one of the Chamber's main functions is to interact with government on behalf of the business community, Dohrwardt said she did not think it would be appropriate for her to take a leadership role in the organization.

Still, she reported the interest in a local Chamber is gaining momentum.

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“We were all very enthusiastic about moving forward with the Chamber, with the caveat of needing more people to participate,” Dohrwardt said.

To that goal, a community outreach committee was formed in hopes of recruiting more members.

Laura Logan of Meadowlark Storage will contact business owners in Fredonia about joining the organization, and Gale Sigler of JCR Power Source in Waubeka will focus on recruiting business owners from Waubeka.

Dawn Geis of Dawn Geis Photography is also on the outreach committee.

Northern Ozaukee School District Supt. Blake Peuse offered to recruit “a tech savvy student” to help set up a website for the Chamber to earn community-service credits for graduation.

The website will post meeting information, member contacts and general information about local businesses.

A membership fee schedule was also set, with businesses asked to pay \$50 a year and non-profit groups, \$35.

Tentative meeting dates are June 3, July 15, Aug. 19 and Sept 23. All meetings will start at 6 p.m.

The Chamber will meet in Room 424 at Ozaukee High School.

Inquiries about membership can be mailed to Fredonia Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 24, Fredonia 53021.

For more information, contact Dohrwardt at 692-9650.