

Palmyra Chamber of Commerce

## Chamber News

FEATURED ARTICLE



# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet



January 11, 2024 was a special day. The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce gathered to celebrate an exceptional year of service to our members and our communities. We honored the accomplishments and contributions of some of Palmyra's own during our Annual Awards presentations.

For 29 years, Mark and Patty Cheffey have been the face of our community newspaper, the Palmyra Spectator, Missouri's oldest weekly newspaper, established in 1839. This couple was recognized as Citizens of the Year for their dedication to keeping all of us in the know about city happenings, business events, sports outcomes, personal triumphs and tragedies, sales, elections, and everything in between.

In the words of Denise Damron, United Way Executive Director and award presenter, "They [have been] consistent and dedicated, ensuring their job [was] done to the highest standard."

Damron reminisced about when the Cheffey's made her feel like a celebrity, seeing herself on the front page of the paper. She admitted to probably still having that clipping and countless others including "honor roll listings,



*Patty & Mark Cheffey, Citizens of the Year.*

“It's a wonderful honor to be chosen as Citizens of the Year in a community that has become our home for more than 29 years. We want to thank everyone in this community who welcomed us and have supported the Palmyra Spectator so well over the years.”

-Mark Cheffey

*Bringing Business & Community Together.*



# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet

*Continued*



letters to Santa, sporting and livestock photos, my graduation announcement, engagement announcement, and more all stored away in a box so someday my kids and grandkids can enjoy them.” She has started boxes for each of her children with similar pieces. How many of us have also clipped and collected similar mementos, documenting family member participation in various community events and major milestones that appeared in the Palmyra Spectator?

Mark and Patty Cheffey have “put their heart and soul into the oldest weekly newspaper in

the state to ensure the Palmyra community would have this paper as not only something that people could read but also a resource to record our community’s history,” said Damron.

The Cheffeys have officially hung up their hats at the Palmyra Spectator but are leaving big shoes to fill. We thank them for their commitment and effort and wish them all the best as they write a new chapter in their lives.

## EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

An educator teaches, informs, inspires; a teacher helps someone learn new things. Luke Mahsman, Math Instructor at Palmyra R-1 and deacon at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, is both of these and was honored as Educator of the Year.

Tim Wellman, 2022 Palmyra High School Graduate, summarized the accomplishments of his teacher, mentor, and friend, Mr. Luke Mahsman. In his position as Agriculture teacher and FFA Advisor for over fifteen years, Mahsman trained more contest teams to qualify for state than almost any other advisor. Luke’s first year as a math teacher was during the Covid-19 pandemic, so he was teaching Geometry proofs via Zoom, and Wellman credits his teacher, who “despite having to teach to an empty classroom over a computer screen, put in the effort every single day to try and help us learn.”

Presenter Wellman also credits Mahsman on “his ability to teach and educate outside of

school.” Since 2019, Luke Mahsman has served as a Deacon of St. Joseph Catholic Church. “I was blessed to have him as my confirmation instructor,” Wellman expressed. “As a child and up through most of my teens, religion was all but absent from my life... As time went on, he taught me a lot about religion, but I contend that he taught me even more about myself... To say that I’m indebted to this man for teaching me God’s lessons is an understatement, and I do my best to pay it back every single day in the way I approach the world.”



*Luke Mahsman, Educator of the Year.*

Mahsman is also applauded for his role as educator/parent. “This individual is in a unique



# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet

*Continued*



position to speak to such a challenge, as he has 9 [children] of his own. With the help of one of his daughters, I was able to showcase to you all just how great of a dad he really is," shared Wellman. One of his daughters said, "Dad's taught the importance of being dependable, as even when he has a lot going on, if he says he'll do something, he keeps his word."

"I think back to all the wonderful teachers I had while growing up in this school district,"

said Mahsman, "and I am incredibly grateful for the impact they have had on my life by instilling in me the desire to be a teacher." "I have been very blessed to have had the privilege for the past 21 years to teach such wonderful students from the families who make our community so great."

For educating as a teacher, deacon and parent, we honor Educator of the Year, Luke Mahsman.

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Volunteer of the Year, Gary Stowe, was acknowledged for over fifty years of service to our community. Gary Stowe, veteran and active American Legion member. Gary Stowe, exemplary First Christian Church member. Gary Stowe, renowned Kiwanian. Gary Stowe, one of 12 individuals across the state to receive the 2023 Lieutenant Governor's Senior Service Award.

To quote presenter Nancy Goellner, Assistant Vice-President and Branch Manager at Palmyra's Exchange Bank, "Tonight I have the honor of introducing a person in our community who is the perfect example of this reading. 'Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interest of others.'"

Stowe's volunteer work has spanned not only a half century but also a range of ages spanning more than that. As a member of Kiwanis, he's served pancakes at Daddy-Daughter Dances, delivered dictionaries to elementary students, and served as the High School Key Club liaison. Stowe offers his services at the local Food Pantry, delivers

Meals on Wheels and has assisted with many Honor Flight fundraisers. Gary serves as first vice commander of the American Legion, leading many parades and often playing Taps at military funerals.



*Gary Stowe, Volunteer of the Year.*

"Thank you to the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce for this award. 2023 has been a good year for me: Grand Marshall of two parades, the Lt. Governor's Senior Service Award and going on the Honor Flight! I have come to love my adopted hometown of Palmyra," declared Stowe.

This volunteer truly has been everywhere, doing everything!

# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet

Continued



What business doesn't like a facelift? The Palmyra Chamber's Paintbrush Award is given annually to applaud a business that has undergone a facelift and whose pride in the services or products they provide makes Palmyra residents take notice. This year's Paintbrush Awardee is the Urban Nest. Owners recently perked up the building's worn lackluster appearance, and what a transformation!

For about seventy years before the current space housed this venue, it served as a flower shop. Before that, it was the Pal Movie Theatre, and prior to that a live theater.

Now we have a fun attractive venue that can be rented for dinners and parties celebrating a wide range of occasions: graduations, holidays, wedding and baby showers, vendor pop-ups etc.

A surprised Lisa Hinkle exclaimed, "I can't thank the Chamber enough for helping finance all the improvements on Main Street.



*Leisa Hinkle & the Urban Nest, Paintbrush Award.*

This type of development grant is exactly what the small business owners need to spruce up our little town of Palmyra!"

Please join us in congratulating Leisa and Richard Hinkle, owners of the Urban Nest, the recipient of the 2023 Paintbrush Award.

Seventy-five years is a long time to provide service to this community! And that's exactly what this Palmyra icon has done. The Business Hall of Fame inductee is none other than Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative, usually referred to as Northeast Power.

NE Power is a member-owned not-for-profit electric transmission cooperative headquartered in Palmyra. It was founded by three rural electric distribution cooperatives in northeast Missouri on February 2, 1948.

Doug Aeilts has served as CEO and General Manager since 2004 and is only the fourth individual to fill this role.

NE Power's eight member-distribution cooperative serve more than 57,000 meters in 33 counties in northeast Missouri and southeast Iowa. This includes over 15,000 miles of distribution line.

NE Power is safety-minded, and in 2022 was one of 35 Missouri electric cooperatives





# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet

Continued



recognized for working safely. Employees of NE Power worked a total of 128,655 hours without a lost time accident as of December 31, 2022.

NE Power is technology-driven. A failover firewall system protects systems from failure whereby standby equipment automatically takes over if a main system fails.

NE Power is community-focused. In the company's economic development tool belt is a revolving loan fund, participation in the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program and giving back through a variety of community and economic development efforts.

NE Power is employee-inspired. The legacy of NE Power is rooted in its people. The many men and women who have given their



## BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

*Business Hall of Fame Inductee, NE Power represented by CEO Doug Aelits.*

time over the past 75 years will never be forgotten.

Northeast Power – part of Palmyra's history since 1948, part of Palmyra's history tomorrow.

Chamber President Allie Bennett, Manager of Economic Development & Member Services for NE Power, presented her President's Award to Susan Berti, Secretary/Treasurer and Jack-of-All-Trades with the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce.

Berti was an educator for 32 years, serving her last 22 years in the Palmyra R-1 School District. She served on the state level as President of the Gifted Association of Missouri from 2002 – 2004. Losing her husband to cancer in 2004 spurred her to become active in the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life, and her involvement with this worthy cause continues as a member of Palmyra's Flower Children Team.

“Her love for Palmyra is evident in every endeavor she undertakes.”

~Allie Bennett



*Susan Berti, President's Award.*

## PRESIDENTS AWARD

# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet

*Continued*



"In her retirement, our deserving recipient continues to serve our community by working for the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce, seamlessly transitioning from educator to a pivotal leader of the Chamber," explained Bennett. "She has become the go-to person for everyone within the organization, showcasing her versatility, dedication, and passion for the betterment of Palmyra. Her

love for Palmyra is evident in every endeavor she undertakes, and today, we proudly honor her with the annual President's Award."

"I am so fortunate to work with so many talented businesswomen and men, and to have gotten to share in the lives of so many Chamber members," thanked Susan.

President Bennett also thanked Caitlin Smyser for serving as Past-President and Heather McChristian and Wes Tuley for both serving 3-year terms as Board Members. She expressed the Chamber's gratitude to Nancy Goellner for serving as event lead for the Flag Day Parade for the past nine years. Bennett thanked Jason Janes and his committee for another successful Chamber Golf Tournament which once again raised funds for our Business Development Grants. Anna Gottman was recognized for a second year as the Taste of Palmyra's leader, introducing new fundraising ideas and bringing in additional sponsors. Jamie McCoy was acknowledged for her contribution to increasing the Marion County Fair's presence on social media and assisting in so many ways on the fairgrounds as well. And, though unable to attend the banquet, Michele and Randy Hopson were applauded for continuing to excel at the immense task of overseeing the Marion County Fair.



*Past President,  
Caitlin Smyser*



*Wes Tuley,  
Board Member*



*Heather McChristian,  
Board Member*



*Nancy Goellner, Flag Day  
Event Coordinator*



*Jason Janes, Chamber  
Golf Coordinator*



*Anna Gottman, Taste of  
Palmyra Event Lead*



*Jamie, McCoy, Marion  
County Fair Marketing  
Coordinator*



*Michele & Randy Hopson,  
Marion County Fair Event  
Organizers*

**Volunteers  
Bring Life  
to all of our  
Amazing  
Palmyra  
Events!**



# Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet

Continued



## 2023 Palmyra Chamber Highlights

- For the second year in a row, the Chamber Board awarded 3 Business Development Grants. Each recipient was awarded up to \$2500 matching funds for starting up or improving their business. The awardees included Bethany Armontrout, owner of [Three Sisters Boutique](#); Michelle Merkel, owner of [310 On Main](#); and Alex Treaster, owner of [Stattus Error](#).
- The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce revamped its website. We are working to add an online payment option to the site later this year.

## New in 2024 – the Palmyra Prosperity Fund

Nonprofits are a vital part of our community's present and future. They help spur economic development by providing arts, leadership, social services, education, community amenities, and more. The Palmyra Chamber is proud to announce a new community resource that will support, grow, and enhance Palmyra's nonprofit and civic organizations, programs, and projects: **The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Prosperity Fund**. You can read more about the Prosperity Fund on page 9.

## With Special Thanks...

*Thanks to all who attended to honor our award recipients. Our appreciation to Hall's Chuckwagon for a delicious dinner, Palmyra High School Key Club for their service and Miss Marion County, Elina Reed, for assisting with award presentations. We are grateful for the gracious donations made by Aramark and Golden Eagle and can't say enough about the businesses that provided us with such unique and festive décor: 310 On Main, B Creative Nutrition, Chariton Valley, Clean Restoration, DMO Promo & Marketing, HATS, HNB Bank, HOMEBANK, Janes Surveying, Lewis Brothers Funeral Home, MAST Automotive, Mercantile Bank, Miss Marion County – Elina Reed, NE Power, Palmyra R-1, ServePro and Simply Picked Country Store.*

## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Allie Bennett	President
Kelly Porter	Vice President
Randy Hopson	Member
Anna Gottman	Member
Zach Jones	Member
Nicole Konrad	Member
Steve Mast	Member
Joel Swisher	Member
Susan Berti	Secretary/Treasurer

*At left: Palmyra Chamber of Commerce 2024 Board of Directors: Nicole Konrad, Steve Mast, Susan Berti, Zach Jones, Kelly Porter, Allie Bennett and Joel Swisher. Not pictured: Anna Gottman and Randy Hopson.*

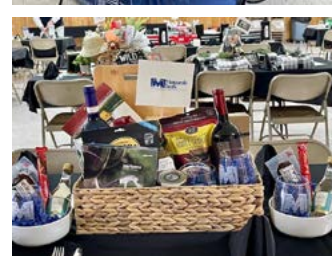
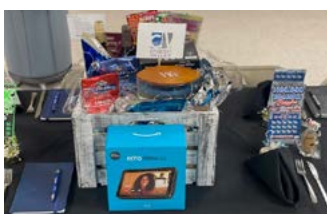


# ANNUAL AWARDS NOMINATIONS

**2024 AWARDS  
ANNUAL BANQUET  
JANUARY 9  
2025**

Perhaps reading about the deserving Annual Awards recipients makes you think of whom you'd like to see recognized. Why not submit your nominations for Citizen of the Year, Educator of the Year and Volunteer of the Year while this is fresh in your mind? 2024 recipients will be announced at the Palmyra Chamber's next Annual Banquet, January 9, 2025. Send your nominations to the Chamber office: [director@showmepalmyra.com](mailto:director@showmepalmyra.com).

## 2023 Palmyra Chamber Awards Banquet Table Sponsors



Thank you to all the businesses that supported our event!





# PALMYRA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROSPERITY FUND



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

For communities to thrive, they must thoughtfully invest in social services, youth development, arts and culture, education, and community amenities. Traditional sources of funding like local have come under increasing pressure and are not always there when communities need them the most. Community-based philanthropy is a way for neighbors to invest and realize a shared vision for the future.

**The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Prosperity Fund** is a philanthropic tool that allows us to extend and expand our programming for local nonprofits and charitable projects while offering community members the opportunity to make tax-deductible donations.

As a **Donor Advised Fund**, it allows the Chamber to be hands-on in the grantmaking process by recommending grants for local charitable and civic projects. **Endowed**, the fund will provide a permanent source of support for the community.

## WAYS TO GIVE

### Online

Click "Give Now" and search "Palmyra"

### Mail

Make check to Community Foundation and write "Palmyra Chamber" in memo line

### IRA

Make a qualified charitable distribution and save on taxes

### Assets

Donate securities, grain, or other appreciated assets

### Planned

Include the Fund in your will or as a beneficiary

## HOW IT WORKS



### GIVE

Anyone can give to support the community that matters to them.



### GROW

With trusted, local advisors, funds are invested for long-term growth.



### GRANT

Grants from the funds' interest are distributed to strengthen the quality of life in Palmyra.

*Connecting people who care  
with causes that matter since 1997*

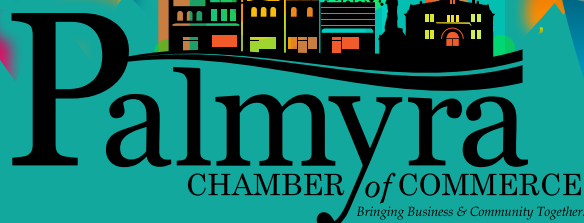
**WWW.MYCOMMUNITYFOUNDATION.ORG**

**217-222-1237**

621 VERMONT STREET  
QUINCY, ILLINOIS 62301



WELL DONE!



**KUDOS**  
CONGRATS

**WELCOME  
NEW CHAMBER  
MEMBERS**



The Community Foundation Serving West Central Illinois & Northeast Missouri is an endowment builder, community connector, and grantmaker working with donors to build charitable funds that support needs and opportunities in our region now and in the future. The Marion County Endowment Fund and the new Palmyra Chamber of Commerce Prosperity Fund are donor-advised funds to primarily support nonprofits under this organization's umbrella.



Wyatt Ragar with Preferred Rate is joining us as Ragar Home Loans. Wyatt's main focus is on you and your future. He and his team will take you step by step through all of your options and fit you with the loan that fits you and your ultimate goal. Ragar can be reached at [wyatt.ragar@preferredrate.com](mailto:wyatt.ragar@preferredrate.com) or by calling 314-413-0202.



Royce Gracie Jiu-Jitsu MO is the source for authentic self-defense instruction for kids, teens, women, law enforcement professionals, and all ages of adults – and it's right here in Palmyra at 811 N. Main St. Every class is taught by Royce Gracie's 173rd personal black belt in the world - a tri-states native & Palmyra resident, and the only Royce Gracie black belt in the State of Missouri, Mark Kerkoff. For more information & to schedule your first free introductory class complete the online form at [roycegraciemo.com](http://roycegraciemo.com).



Quick Stop 11, formerly Break Time, is a one-stop destination for all your fuel and convenience needs at 410 East Main Cross. Check them out!



Schwanke's Directional Drilling LLC is a local company offering Directional Drilling Utility Installation. It is co-owned by Steven Schwanke and Timmy Schwanke. You can contact the owners and learn more via their Facebook page, emailing them at [drillmanschwanke@gmail.com](mailto:drillmanschwanke@gmail.com) or calling 573-769-3023.



Tek Forward has an ambitious, yet simple goal. In the words of its founder, Luis Barnes, Tek Forward wants to teach software development to anyone wanting to learn and even provide the laptop Tek Forward is asking local business, "How can we help?" We want our newly trained developers to become involved and employed within the community while helping grow our local businesses. Intrigued? You can reach Tek Forward at [luis.barnes@tekforward.org](mailto:luis.barnes@tekforward.org) or 513-657-8771.



# THE VOTES ARE IN...

## KUDOS #14

Palmyra got an awesome shout out from the website Homesnacks, which included our community on its best small towns in Missouri for 2024 list.

How does one determine what's a great Missouri small town and what isn't? The website factors in housing values, median household income, population and unemployment among other things. Here are the numbers they shared for Palmyra:

**Population:**  
3,613

**Median Home Value:**  
\$201,577  
(87th Best)

**Unemployment Rate:**  
1.6%

**Median Income:**  
\$60,694  
(59th Best)



## CHAMBER BENEFIT PLAN

The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce is able to offer its members health insurance through the Missouri Chamber Benefit Plan and Trust GDC Insurance Services. Powered by the Missouri Chamber Federation and administered by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Chamber Benefit Plan is available to small group employers, who are members of a qualifying Chamber of Commerce and have 2 - 50 eligible employees.

By being part of a larger, self-funded pool, employers have financial protection backed by Anthem's stop loss coverage. In addition to financial protection, the Chamber Benefit Plan offers much more, see column to the right.

If you think the Chamber Benefit Plan is right for your small business, call the Palmyra Chamber at 573-769-0777 or call agents noted below.

**Trust|GDC**  
INSURANCE SERVICES

Paul Frankebach | Carla Meyers  
**573-769-4311**

### CHAMBER BENEFIT PLAN OFFERS:

- Competitive, medically underwritten rates
- Fixed, predictable monthly payments
- A variety of plan designs, including 10 PPO and three HSA options
- Anthem's Blue Access, Blue Access Choice and Blue Preferred networks
- Coverage for claims run-out/terminal liability coverage Open
- Simple, streamlined administration



# 2024 CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

## What is the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce?

The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce is an organization of businesses and professionals who are dedicated to helping further the interests of businesses in our area to make Palmyra and the surrounding area a better place to live and work.



## Why Join?

- Contribute to something bigger than yourself when you join the Chamber!
- Advise the Chamber of the needs of your industry.
- Use the Chamber's marketing resources like its newsletter, website and social media.
- Apply for a Business Development Grant to open or grow a local establishment.
- Keep abreast of legislative issues facing your business.
- Get access to the Chamber Benefit Plan health insurance.
- Network, make new connections, foster additional exposure for your business.
- Increase your visibility by engaging in sponsorship opportunities, ribbon cuttings and the opportunity to serve on committees and the Board of Directors.

NEXT MEETING:

**Noon at Rebel Pig | February 13**

An application is available on the [Chamber website](#).

## Join or renew as a valued member of the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce.

Membership runs January – December.

Retired  
Individual

**\$25**

Businesses with  
1-3 employees

**\$75**

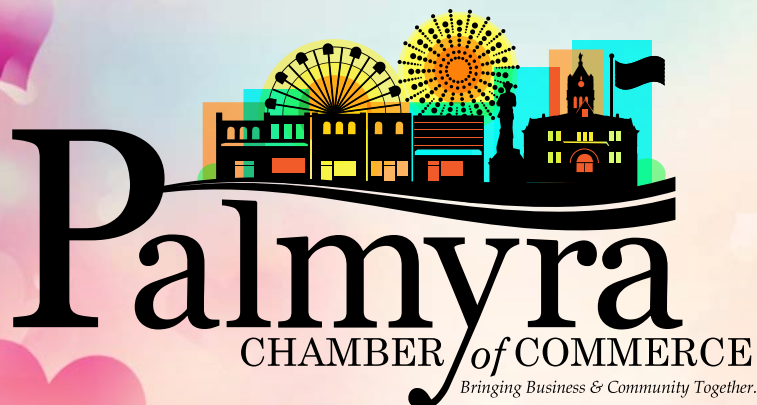
Churches/Community &  
Service Organizations

**\$75**

Non-Business  
Individual

**\$75**

*Join us and contribute to something bigger than yourself*



## 2024 CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

Invite a friend or business member to join!  
Palmyra Chamber membership  
for 2023 runs January – December.

Details on Page 12.

Applications available [here](#).

Visit

[www.showmepalmyra.com](http://www.showmepalmyra.com)  
for everything Palmyra!

## UPCOMING CHAMBER MEETING & PROGRAMS

**12 pm, Tu., February 13:**

Rebel Pig: Join us for lunch and Palmyra R-1  
Updates with Superintendent Jason Harper.

**8 am, Tu., March 12:**

Urban Nest: Join us for our first breakfast meeting!  
Catherine Meckes, CEO of the Community Foundation  
Serving West Central Illinois and Northeast Missouri, has  
vital information about the Marion County Community  
Endowment and the Palmyra Chamber's new Palmyra  
Prosperity Fund.

**12 pm, Tu., April 9:**

NE Power: Kim Voelker with the MO Chamber of Commerce  
will share with us What It Takes To Be A Leader  
In Your Community.

## CALENDAR upcoming events

**February 10**

*35th Annual Fireman's Dance*

**February 14**

*Valentine's Day*

**February 16**

*Parents Night Out ~ FCCLA*

**February 17**

*Daddy & Daughter Dance "Ties and Tiaras"*  
5:30 – 9:30 pm. ~ Sesqui Building.

**March 10**

*Daylight Savings Time Begins*

**March 19**

*First Day of Spring*

**March 26**

*Carden International Circus Spectacular ~ Rockin  
A Arena, Palmyra*

**March 27 – April 1**

*No School, Palmyra R-1*

**March 31**

*Easter*

**April 27**

*Spring Fling ~ American Legion Hall*

**June 7**

*Palmyra Chamber Golf Tournament*

**June 15**

*Flag Day Parade*

**July 27 – August 3**

*Marion County Fair*

**October 21**

*Taste of Palmyra*

**PAT Play Group**  
**Tuesdays, 9:10-10:10 am**  
Palmyra Elementary Cafeteria  
While school is in session.

**Chamber Email Address:**  
**[director@showmepalmyra.com](mailto:director@showmepalmyra.com)**

Visit us on Facebook at:



**Palmyra MO Chamber of Commerce**