



Palmyra Chamber of Commerce

Chamber News

FEATURED EVENT

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

On January 8, Palmyra turned out big to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of some of its own at the Palmyra Annual Awards Banquet. We welcomed our largest crowd to date to applaud those who give so much of themselves to our community.

Being a productive and model citizen takes kindness, compassion, and empathy. The **2025 Palmyra Chamber Citizen of the Year**,

Alice Humphrey, Activities Director at Maple Lawn Nursing Home, possesses all these qualities. For more than 30 years, she has been dedicated to creating joy, connection and meaningful experiences for those served, tailoring activities to meet abilities, needs and interests. She brings heart to everything, not simply performing a job, but fulfilling a calling.



2025 Citizen of the Year
Alice Humphrey

Alice stimulates residents' memory, conversation and physical movement through themed events, intergenerational activities, games and social opportunities. She brings in volunteers, community members and local groups to enrich their daily lives. She offers comfort and companionship during difficult times.

Families, coworkers and volunteers recognize that Alice consistently goes above and beyond. Deneen Agnew, a co-worker for 25 years, defined her as "a friend to all who helps everyone." "She ensures that birthdays are special, holidays are memorable, and even ordinary afternoons are filled with connection," shared Lynn Blickhan.

“With our aging population, a quality nursing home with employees that truly care about residents' well-being is essential for our community. This characteristic radiates from Alice Humphrey and consumes everyone in her path. **”**

Summary from
Peggy Meyers, Linda Janes and Jami Wood

Humphrey's impact on Maple Lawn Nursing Home – and the broader Palmyra Community – is immeasurable. Her contribution is important because she supports one of the most vulnerable groups in our community: elderly individuals who depend on the nursing home for social, emotional and physical support. Alice makes sure they feel valued, seen and loved.

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Continued

As Kent and Vaness Rupp imparted, "The world could definitely use more Alices."

"I want to be there every day and let residents know they are not alone...I feel like I've been to the Grammys!" enthused Alice.



2025 Educator of the Year
Alysha Barnett

Teacher. Coach. Sponsor. Mentor. Colleague. Encourager. Supporter. Dedicated. These words describe **2025 Educator of the Year**, Alysha Barnett. This teacher's commitment to students stands out in everything she does, making her a true asset to our school community.

Barnett is a graduate of Palmyra High School who began teaching there the 2000-2001 school year. Alysha has built a reputation for strong instructional skills and a genuine connection with students. She is constantly trying new strategies to reach them, ensuring that every learner has multiple ways to understand key concepts. Her classroom is a place where students know they will be supported, challenged, and encouraged to grow. She is always available to assist students

who need extra time or a different explanation, and she makes it a priority to meet learners where they are. Her students know she believes in them wholeheartedly and works tirelessly to make sure each one feels capable and valued.

For many years, Barnett accomplished these things while coaching numerous sports, sponsoring clubs, being a class sponsor and raising two children of her own. Whether in the classroom or on the court, she leads with patience, empathy, and a genuine love for helping young people succeed.

“ She exemplifies the qualities we value most in education, and our school is truly better because of her. ”

Tracy Fountain

Alysha supports her colleagues with the same generosity she shows her students, willingly sharing ideas and lending a hand. In acceptance, Barnett added, "I am blessed to teach in the community I grew up in."



2025 Volunteer of the Year
Penny Knochel

Penny Knochel was honored as the **2025 Volunteer of the Year**. When someone asks who consistently demonstrates qualities of compassion and service to either one organization or a variety of volunteer activities in the Palmyra community, Penny

Knochel stands out. She helps inspire and mobilize others to work together through both example and encouragement.

Knochel has served on the Board of Directors for the Palmyra Food Pantry the past 14 years, dedicated to the continuous effort to secure donations of food and financial assistance for neighbors in need. Showing up weekly to work, Penny is kind and gentle, noticing when a client

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET Continued

comes in carrying a child without a coat or shoes. Before that person leaves, he or she is no longer without.

Knochel always expresses her thanks and acknowledges what individual workers accomplish.

Most Missouri Food Pantries have only one truck a month from the Food Bank in Columbia. However, a blessing for the Palmyra Food Pantry is that Penny Knochel has enlisted her church to provide a driver to Peoria's Food Bank for additional goods. Ensuring even greater bounty, Doc Wommack also drives to the Columbia Food Bank every Tuesday.

Although currently retired foster parents, Penny and her husband Eric Knochel served in that capacity for 24 years while also raising three sons,

“Not only does Penny treat the clients well, but she is also intentional in her kindness and appreciation for the 30 to 40 other volunteers at the Palmyra Food Pantry.”

Janis Lomax, fellow Food Pantry Volunteer

Ben, Rick and Joe. Through the years, they had 31 placements. Department of Social Services employees sing praises for how well the Knochels

worked with biological parents, took children with medical issues, and always answered the phone in the middle of the night. The couple also served as mentors for other foster couples, adopted one of their special-needs foster children and continue a

loving and nurturing relationship with former foster child J.T. Thomas, the Palmyra football player who suffered a spinal cord injury in a September 2025 game.

These lifelong qualities of dedication to others make Penny Knochel an excellent choice for Palmyra's 2025 Volunteer of the Year. "I couldn't do this without everyone there [at the Food Pantry]," shared the grateful awardee. "Anyone wants to volunteer: Come on down."



**2025 Paintbrush Winner
Palmyra R-1 School District**

Palmyra R-1 School District, the **2025 Paintbrush Awardee**, improved all three school buildings. Voters helped make that happen by approving Proposition 2 in April 2024. The \$8 million bond issue allowed our school district to improve infrastructure, safety and classrooms without increasing Palmyra taxes.

At the elementary school, the original galvanized piping has been replaced with copper pipes, and roughly 22,000 square feet of asbestos tile has been removed and replaced. Restroom fixtures are also new.

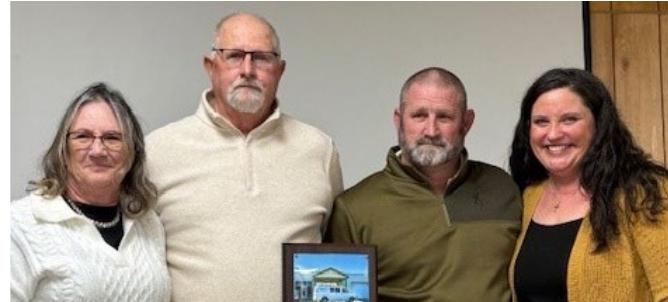
The biggest issue with the middle school was the safety entrance. The office areas have been moved to the front of that building, eliminating the possibility of someone being able to enter and go anywhere they want without checking in at the office.

The changes at the high school are the most noticeable because of

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET Continued

multiple projects: a new kitchen, a new art room with an enclosed kiln, a new family and consumer science area complete with a commercial kitchen, a larger PRIDE classroom with a private restroom, renovated ADA compliant public restrooms, updated locker rooms and commons area, and, new flooring and bleachers in the gym.

Thanks to Superintendent Jason Harper, the Palmyra R-1 School Board and voters, these major renovations allow Palmyra R-1 to provide a top-quality environment for our students and set up the infrastructure for better programs and expansion in the future.



2025 Business Hall of Fame
Gary's Glass

The **2025 Business Hall of Fame** inductee, Gary's Glass, opened for business in 1995. Working out of his garage, Gary Kroeger built the company one customer at a time, relying on trust, word of mouth, and the belief that quality work speaks for itself.

From the beginning, it was truly a family operation. Father taught son everything he knew, and his wife handled the bookkeeping. As the years went on, spouses, children and relatives often pitched in, carrying forward the values instilled from day one. That family involvement, especially the son's growing role, became the

heartbeat of the business. Customers didn't see this business as just another service provider; they knew they were supporting a local family who took pride in every job.

In 1996, Gary moved the business to its current Palmyra location on Main Street to allow the company to expand its services. When son Skeeter Kroeger and his wife Emily took over ownership in January 2016, they stepped in with fresh ideas, modern technology, and updated techniques—all while holding on to the traditions Gary established: respect for customers, integrity in workmanship, and a personal touch that large companies simply can't replicate.

Every project completed reflects decades of shared passion and dedication. As the company looks toward the future, the mission remains the same as it was in Gary Kroeger's earliest days: serve the community with quality, treat every customer like family, and pass down a legacy worth carrying on.

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET Continued



2025 President's Award
Brady Huber

The President's Award

recognizes an individual as a stellar performer, one who has provided exceptional service, with significant contributions and impact on our local community. This individual is chosen directly by the Chamber President. As

outgoing Palmyra Chamber President, Kelly Porter chose Brady Huber to receive the 2025 President's Award.

“ Brandy gives her all to everything. She co-chaired the Flag Day Parade, worked hard and sent a couple of her employees to work at our Golf Tournament, co-chaired Christmas in Palmyra and is a fantastic board member who works tirelessly and always has creative ideas. **”**

Kelly Porter



Steve Mast



Kelly Porter

Service awards were presented to Steve Mast, retiring Board Member, and Kelly Porter, Past President.



2026 Board of Directors

Nicole Konrad - President
Zach Jones - Vice-President
Kelly Porter - Past President
Randy Hopson - Member
Brandy Huber - Member

Chris Miller - Member
Kathy Nicholson - Member
Keely Ragar - Member
Susan Berti - Secretary/Treas.

TRIBUTE TO ALL NOMINEES

The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce would like to pay tribute to all the nominees. Though all were not 2025 awardees, they do so much to help make our community the wonderful place it is and deserve recognition for their noteworthy contributions: Devon Breitling, Kayla Carroz, Cara Churchwell, Carla Eagan, Yvonne Goellner, Brooke Hudson, Jim Lowe, Wes Tuley and Joyce Vannice.

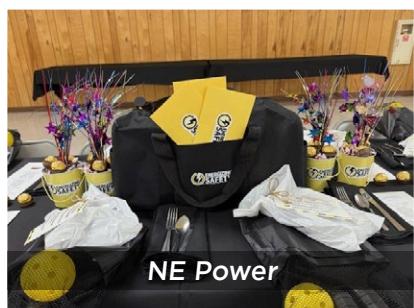
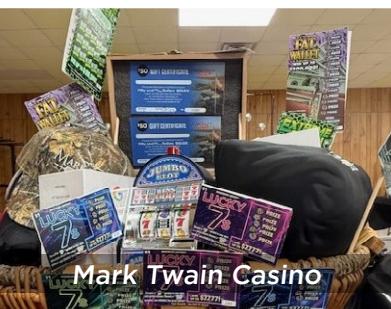
ANNUAL AWARDS NOMINATIONS

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? 2026 recipients will be announced at the Palmyra Chamber's next Annual Banquet, January 7, 2027. Send your nominations to the Chamber office: director@showmepalmyra.com.

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Continued

Tables were adorned with unique packages for those in attendance to take home. We appreciate our table sponsors for 2026.



Reserve your table for 2027!

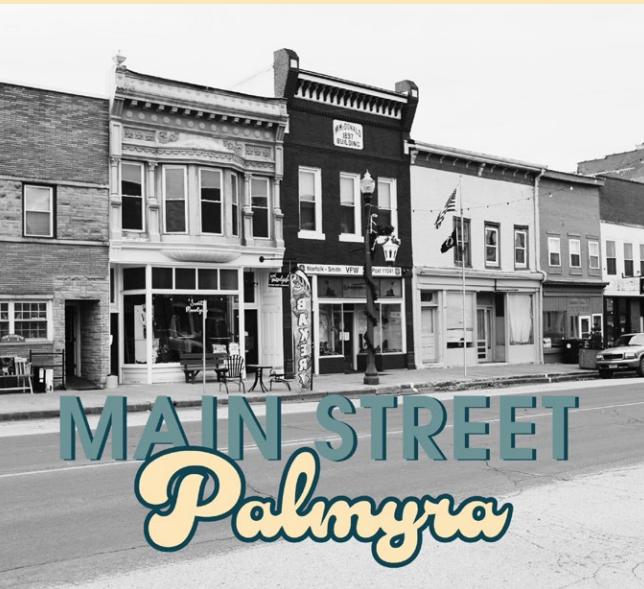
Bringing Business & Community Together.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS 2025

Since 2022, the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce has been awarding Business Development Grants of up to \$2,500 in matching funds to expand or open a for-profit business within city limits. The Palmyra Chamber Golf Tournament was established to finance these grants.

Four Palmyra businesses were selected to receive the 2025 grants and were recognized at the Annual Banquet. **Chevy's Bar & Grill** will use the funds to reface the front of the building to increase curb appeal. **El Nopal** will apply its grant money towards parking lot resurfacing. **The Rebel Pig** restaurant is in need of new subfloors and flooring, and the Palmyra Chamber Business Development Grant will help with the cost of this work. Lastly, **Willow & Poppy** (owner, Ann Hackler-Foutch) is focusing on marketing her new business to help it grow.



MAIN STREET PALMYRA

Welcome to Palmyra's newest non-profit, Main Street Palmyra, a member of Main Street Missouri. Its purpose: to ensure that downtown Palmyra isn't just preserved, it thrives as the vibrant heart of our community for generations to come.

Learn more and follow the progress on the Facebook page, [Main Street Palmyra](#)! The page will feature stories, updates, businesses, events and projects that highlight the pride and potential of Palmyra. Main Street Palmyra is volunteer driven, and you're invited to help create a strong unique downtown: local partners, property owners, entrepreneurs, government, preservationists, the Palmyra Chamber of Commerce. Get onboard!



[Main Street Palmyra](#)

2026 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.

An application is available on the [Show Me Palmyra - Join](#).



NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

Noon | Northeast Power | Feb. 10

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

Membership runs January – December.

Businesses with 1-3 employees

\$75

Churches/Community & Service Organizations

\$75

Retired Individual

\$25

Non-Business Individual

\$75

Join us and contribute to something bigger than yourself



Want lower, stable
health insurance rates?

It's possible with the
Chamber Benefit Plan.



CHAMBER BENEFIT PLAN

The Palmyra Chamber of Commerce is able to offer its members health insurance through the Missouri Chamber Benefit Plan and First State 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 the 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.

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
- Simple, streamlined administration

Trust|GDC
INSURANCE SERVICES

Paul Frankebach | Carla Meyers
573-769-4311



2026 CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

Invite a friend or business member to join!
Palmyra Chamber membership
for 2026 runs January - December.

Details on Page 8.
Applications available [here](#).



Visit
www.showmepalmyra.com
for everything Palmyra!

UPCOMING CHAMBER MEETINGS

- Membership meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month.

12 pm, Tu., February 10, NE Power:

Join us for lunch and an opportunity to learn about AI for Small Businesses from JR Bareis, founder and CEO of Tigerhawk Technologies.

12 pm, Tu., March 3, Rebel Pig:

Cole Sutter will be joining us for lunch and sharing information on drone usage for agriculture and small business use.

2026 CHAMBER SPONSORED EVENTS

June 12:
Annual Golf Tournament

June 13:
Flag Day Parade

August 1-8:
Marion County Fair

October 19:
Taste of Palmyra

Nov. 27 - Dec. 19
Christmas in Palmyra

Chamber Email Address:
director@showmepalmyra.com

Visit us on Facebook at:

 Palmyra MO Chamber of Commerce