

February 19, 2008



Volunteers and Community Support Makes The 4th of July A Huge Success

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If people are coming to work excited . . . if they're making mistakes freely and fearlessly . . . if they're having fun . . . if they're concentrating on doing things, rather than preparing reports and going to meetings - then somewhere you have leaders.

- Robert Townsend

I am often asked why Wamego is so successful and how we are able to host such great community festivals and celebrations each and every year. My answer to them is fairly simple, but very hard to grasp—have great community support by your businesses and citizens!

This year's 4th of July celebration is a shining example of the support and commitment the businesses and community have given Wamego. Over 800 hours of volunteer labor was logged to plan, prepare and present one of the greatest Inde-

pendence Day celebrations in the state.

The Kansas Mainstreet Association values volunteer labor at \$17.19 per hour. That is a total of \$13,752 donated in time spent away from work and families.

Wamego businesses and citizens also showed their support by contributing over \$16,000 to ensure a top-notch parade and fireworks show.

The simple math is that over \$30,000 went into making the 4th of July the best it could possibly be.



The list is too long to name each and every person, but I would like to take this opportunity to give a big thank you to everyone that lent a hand or spared a dollar to make Wamego the place to be on the 4th of July. Through your support we truly give a BIG experience in a small town!

Be A Leader In The Flint Hills

As our region continues to grow, our businesses will be required to work more regionally to be successful. We will also be forced to be better leaders within our businesses and community.

A great way to get a jump on the competition and learn more about our region along with meeting some great people is by being a member of

the Flint Hills Leadership Program.

This selective leadership program provides participants with 21st Century Leadership skills and also gives an in depth look at major opportunities and issues in Pottawatomie, Geary and Riley Counties.

If you, an employee or co-

worker is interested in applying for the Flint Hills Leadership Program you can pick up an application at the Chamber/Mainstreet office or download one at www.wamegochamber.com. **The deadline has been extended to July 29th**

If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact Chad at 785-456-7849.

WorkKeys®...working for you!

WorkKeys Assessments can:

- Provide common language between business and education for workforce development.
- Identify workplace skill levels of current or potential employees.
- Determine skill training needs of current and prospective employees.
- Target training to maximize the return on skill training investment.
- Measure the effectiveness of a workforce skill training program.

Did you know that in the 2003-2004 school year, approximately 1400 high school students in the tri-county region took the WorkKeys assessment? Did you know that there are currently three WorkKeys assessment sites in the area?

So, what is WorkKeys?

WorkKeys is a reliable and nationally validated system that analyzes employability skills. Over 10,000 jobs have been “profiled” to identify skill levels necessary to perform each job. WorkKeys measures basic transferable skills that are necessary for most jobs. The system helps you identify candidates who have the skills needed to be successful in your jobs.

The WorkKeys system provides accurate and depend-

able information for individuals, educators, employers, labor organizations, students, and policy-makers making employment decisions. The WorkKeys system establishes a common language between these entities that allows a direct comparison of the skills needed for a job with the skills a potential employee possesses.

Tell me more

Businesses in the tri-county region are fortunate to have the support of the local school districts that are already testing students. Because students are already being tested, you get immediate results. As your business grows, you can begin asking candidates for their WorkKeys scores or Employability Certificate. These scores let you know exactly what skill level candidates have in areas necessary to

perform their job well.

In the next few months, representatives from the Chamber’s Regional WorkKeys Task Force (including representatives from business and educational institutions in the tri-county region) will be out and about to spread the word about the benefits of the Employability Certificate to you and your company. Benefits include:

- Increased profits
- Decreased turnover
- Effective applicant screening
- Increased employee productivity
- Standardized skill sets for specific jobs

And more!

If you just can’t wait to find out more of the benefits to

Kansas Mainstreet Training A Must Attend For All Retailers



Take advantage of this great free professional training!

The Kansas Mainstreet Association will be hosting a business training seminar dedicated to the merchandising and visual displays of products on August 3rd from 8:30 am—4:00 pm.

One of the many perks that Wamego receives as being a Mainstreet Community is that these trainings are free to any Wamego business.

The presenter is Scott Day of Urban Development Services. His firm helps small independent businesses develop models, strategies and measurements to help move their products as efficient as possible, just like larger retailers such as Target, Wal-mart and Sears.

This day long training will also provide helpful tips on creating window displays that will help pull customers off of the side-

walks and into your store.

The Chamber/Mainstreet would like to get as many business to attend this training in Parsons, KS. The office would be willing to arrange transportation to and from the training if there is enough. For more information or to sign up to attend, please call the Chamber/Mainstreet office at 785-456-7849. **The Deadline is July 27th.**

I Just Got WOWed!!

I just had the BEST customer experience I have ever had and learned a valuable lesson that all of us can use. As hard as it might be to believe, the experience came from a traditional airline, American Airlines. We all know the problems that the airline industry has had with the combination of deregulation which opened the door to countless competitors, and then 9/11. Most legacy line airlines are losing money and the quality of air travel has reached an all time low. Maybe that is why my experience was so unexpected.

Let me share exactly what happened. I was getting off a flight with my wife from Atlanta to Chicago. As we walked onto the jet bridge, there was a well dressed professional woman holding up a sign with my name on it. I said that was me and wondered if anything was wrong. (You get scared that something is wrong with a family member or something.) Barbara Anderson, a customer relations representative, assured me that everything was fine but she was going to be escorting us to the next gate with her associate Arlene Bonds.

Sure enough, at the top of the jet bridge was Arlene Bonds in an electric cart waiting to whisk us to our next gate which would have been a long walk. I asked both Barbara and Arlene why were they doing this? I wondered if we were the one millionth customer or something silly like that. The response was that I was a very good customer, was traveling with my wife, and American Airlines just wanted to say thank you for all the business I had given them. (I am still trying to figure out what my wife had to do with everything because we rarely travel together.)

There were no hidden agendas or anything for me to sign or join - it was truly a random act of kindness that I will never forget.

When was the last time you did something unexpected and nice to some of your best customers? Things you don't have to do but you do, things you don't need to do but do, things that will make an ordinary moment into an extraordinary and memorable moment. I am constantly preaching a simple philoso-

phy that if you want word-of-mouth advertising, give them something to talk about. I have told the story, at least 20 times in the last few days. What story are your customers sharing with their friends about experiences in your business?

Do the unexpected. It's what people talk about. Barbara and Arlene didn't know that I was a writer and my experience would be shared with all of my readers worldwide, including my Staples.com column and all of the magazines I write for (47 at last count). That's about 3 million people! (I don't think they all read it but that is the subscriber count.)

It's not as easy an exercise as you might think. But maybe just a phone call saying thanks might be a good start. Let's all work to make it memorable, like American Airlines did for me. I will never forget the experience.

For more information on retail expert Rick Segel, please visit www.ricksegel.com.

KanEquip & First Baptist Church Win Top Honors

The Community Life Committee is proud to announce the winners of the Construction Barrel Contest held over the 4th of July weekend. Businesses were asked to decorate a construction barrel to resemble an aspect of their business or organization and to also have some fun during our

road construction period. KanEquip took the top prize, the Golden Coney Award and the Best Use of the Barrel for their design of an Argo tractor replica. The First Baptist Church's Angel won the Best Use of Material award. The Community Life Committee

would like to thank all of the businesses and organizations that took the time and energy to create a decorated barrel and help make this construction process a little bit more enjoyable.



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Check out the CVB's New Website

www.visitwamego.com



Mr. Bill Baxter Is The 2005 Citizen Of The Year

Mr. Bill Baxter was named the 2005 Wamego Citizen of the Year on June 20th at the Wamego Chamber of Commerce/Mainstreet's General Member Meeting for his serves he has provided his country and Wamego as a Veteran of World War II, a local postmaster and a life long citizen.

Mr. Baxter was honored during the Independence Day parade in Wamego as he was escorted through the parade route along with other local dignitaries. The honor of Citizen of the Year also extends to the Annual Meeting where his accomplishments will be celebrated once again.

Below is the nomination letter sent anonymously to the Chamber/

Mainstreet office.

Communities thrive when their citizenry demonstrates a cooperative spirit and a commitment to the common goal of sustained civic success. Bill Baxter, lifetime Wamego citizen, WWII veteran, and former postmaster, demonstrates that philosophy.

Bill has lived his entire life in Wamego. He loves the opportunity to learn and has generously given to the Library Fund during their move and expansion. He has been a quiet, behind-the-scenes force to ensure success for multiple projects, initiatives, and opportunities for youth.

As Carol P. Waldhauser stated in

"Bridging the Multi- Generational Workforce,"

our WWII veterans "... believe in the intrinsic value of work . . ., favor obedience over individualism and understand self-sacrifice and 'making do'. Most have small town roots. "

Bill Baxter, Wamegoan, WWII veteran, and Community Volunteer loves Wamego and continues to serve her well.

Congratulations from the Wamego Chamber of Commerce/Mainstreet Board of Directors and staff members

