

Over 140 people attended the Anson County Chamber of Commerce's 54th Annual Membership Meeting and Banquet on Tuesday, October 11 at South Piedmont Community College's Lockhart-Taylor Center.

The meeting was opened by Gary Henderson of Carolinas HealthCare System, the banquet sponsor this year. Henderson, who is also on the Chamber's Board of Directors, welcomed everyone to this year's meeting. Shelby Emrich, Executive Director of the Chamber, followed Henderson in welcoming everyone. She thanked Carolinas HealthCare System for being the banquet sponsor and all eleven corporate sponsors: Ambassador Health & Rehabilitation, Anson County Schools, Anson Health & Rehab, Brown Creek Animal Hospital, Columbus-McKinon, Duke Energy Progress, JobHook, Leavitt Funeral Home, Pee Dee Electric, South Piedmont Community College and Uwharrie Bank. She stated that Duke Energy and Pee Dee Electric were unable to attend due to the storm from the weekend. She asked everyone to continue to keep their thoughts and prayers with our neighbors to the east as they try to recover from the devastation.

Emrich asked everyone to "please be patient for a few minutes as I thank and recognize some special groups and people." She first thanked the caterers, Beth Rogers and Kathy Thompson, for the delicious meal they had prepared, Sharon from Oliver's Restaurant for bartending and the student volunteers for helping serve. She also recognized the wonderful volunteers who helped organize and decorate for the banquet: Jennifer Tarlton, Susan Thomas, Mary Thomas, Jilla Gathings, Caroline Goins, Stephanie Wilson and Brandis Chewning.



Brandis Chewning and Richard Allen

"The past eight months have been busy and a little crazy at times at the Chamber, but from my point of view that's how the Chamber should be. The Chamber should always be busy in supporting and promoting our members along with recruiting new members and promoting this great place we call Anson County," Emrich stated. She went on to tell everyone that she could not and did not do it alone. "There are some people who have listened to me, helped me and partnered with me to make these past months successful," Emrich said. The Chamber has a board of eighteen directors, of which twelve were able to attend this year: Richard Allen, Dr. Don Altieri, Jeremy Burr, Brandis Chewning, Joe Dutton, Lewis Evans, Michael Freeman, Eric Forbes, Gary Henderson, Chuck Horne, Jennifer Tarlton and Jeremy Taylor. Emrich thanked all of them for their support and encouragement. She thanked her #1 supporter, her family. "They are always there to help no matter what and I could not do it without them," she stated. She also recognized two individuals for always being willing to come in and volunteer at the Chamber when she had to be away. "Thank you to Lewis Evans and Derek James for giving your time freely when I need to be out of the office," Emrich commented. She said a special thanks to Chairman Richard Allen. "He has had to deal with a lot of changes as the Chairman this year and has always had my best and the Chamber's in making decisions," she stated. Others that were thanked and recognized were Cathy Page of Pee Dee Electric for her willingness to listen and talk ideas; Lisa Rolan, Director of SPCC's Small Business Center, for being willing to partner with Lunch & Learns, seminars and some upcoming projects; Scott Collier and Scott Rivers for leading the Leadership Anson 2016 class, partnering on projects for 2017 and their dedication to the Chamber; and to Dr. Don Altieri for his advice, willingness to listen and sharing his knowledge of the history of the Chamber.



Lewis Evans (right) was presented with the Dunning Award. Tom McInnis is on left.

On behalf of myself and the Chamber Board of Directors, thank you for your support to the Anson County Chamber of Commerce and dedication to Anson County," Emrich stated.

Chamber Vice Chair Joe Dutton presented the outgoing chair plaque to Richard Allen. Chamber Chair Richard Allen presented outgoing directors Brandis Chewning and Sam Cash (who was unable to attend) with their appreciation plaques. Vice Chair Dutton presented the nominations for the election of Directors. Josh Bricker, Uwharrie Bank; Ashley Haynes, Pee Dee Electric; and Aaron Bates, Bates Law Firm were unanimously elected as new directors of the Chamber.

A presentation was given by Chuck Horne of Hornwood, Inc. and Chair of the Anson Economic Development Partnership on economic development in Anson County. Horne talked about how the process works when inquiries come in, and he gave a background of the history on economic development in the county. Horne then introduced the new Economic Developer for Anson County, John Marek. Marek addressed the crowd on his plans for moving forward. He also asked for input from everyone and stated that he would like to visit with some of the civic groups in the county.

Chuck Horne presented the 2016 Henry W. Little III Community Leadership Award. Horne stated, "The criteria for this award is someone who is a community leader, strong supporter of education and has leadership for major projects." He commented that this is the first time that this award will go to someone not from Anson County. Horne presented this year's Henry W. Little III Award to Senator Tom McInnis. McInnis thanked everyone and said he was honored to receive the award.

Wadesboro Town Manager Alex Sewell, recipient of the 2015 W. Dunlap Covington Award, presented this year's award. Sewell commented that this person is very involved in community service, serves with many different organizations like the Chamber, Wadesboro Rotary Club and the Anson County Tourism Development Authority, and is determined to see good things happen in the county. Sewell presented this year's "Dunning" award to Lewis Evans. Evans stated that "Normally I'm not at a loss for words but this time I am." Evans thanked everyone in accepting his award.

Closing remarks were given by Richard Allen. He recognized Sen. McInnis and Rep. Mark Brody for attending and thanked the membership. He also encouraged members to let the Chamber know if they need help with anything or have ideas on changes or something they would like to see.

Bingo at Grace Senior Center

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