

Martin Business Association Monthly Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 16, 2010 City Courtroom, City Hall 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

- **Breakfast:** Members helped themselves to breakfast provided by J. J.'s Quick Shop and U-Haul-Jill Dinning.
- **7: 30 a.m. Greetings:** Nan Rountree – Thanked members who made it even with the snow.
- **Happenings:** Rountree reminded members that the main purpose of MBA is to promote our businesses and invited members to introduce themselves and provide information about happenings in town.

Jason Sellers says E.W. James & Sons is still taking donations for ongoing efforts to support earthquake victims in Haiti. Audrey Roberts updated members on a Martin Beautiful, March 2^{0th} free seminar at Weldon Library beginning at 9 a.m. Local nurseries will be participating. There will be displays plus coffee and donuts. Gift certificates valued at \$25 each will also be given away. Katrina Cobb with WLJT-TV asked for a few MBA members to volunteer for the March pledge drive on Monday, March 15.

- **Word from the Mayor,** Randy Brundige.

The Mayor updated members on news from the city. One announcement: Central Baptist Church is hosting a Wild Game supper this Saturday night, February 20. He also praised our city crews who have worked so hard during the snow and ice to keep our roads open.

Soybean Committee signed a Saturday night act, John Michael Montgomery. They have also signed The Return-The Best of the Beatles, a poplar group at Soybean from years' past. The committee is hard at work and making progress for Soybean 2010.

The city has applied for another \$500,000 in addition to the Harmon Field grant that we discussed last meeting.

Brundige said he wanted to share some good news with MBA, and we will hear it even before the board hears it. There has been progress in creating a Frisbee Golf Course in the Harrison Road Area. This course will either be a nine or 18 hole Frisbee golf course. Brian Moore from Parks and Recreation has worked hard to get businesses to sponsor each hole. Brundige said it is a venue that will benefit residents and bring visitors to the city, and plans are on the mayor's desk. Brian will present to city board next month for approval.

The mayor said that he may be away at a conference in Nashville next month during our meeting. A question was asked about news on the progress of the Huddle House. Brundige reported that everything appears to be working toward completion, and that a site plan needs to be approved.

The mayor asked for questions. Audrey Roberts commented that O'Reilly's has gone up very fast, especially with the challenges with the weather.

- **MBA Monthly Program:** Lisa Robinson, Lisa Robinson Public Policy Consulting (SEE BOTTOM FOR MORE DETAIL)

Rountree introduced Lisa Robinson. Ms. Robinson has owned her own public policy consultant business for the past ten years and has lived in Martin for the past four years. She is a writer, researcher, analyst and project manager. She primarily consults for national foundations and nonprofits. Her work includes addressing issues in the area of civic participation, education, community development, and health. Robinson's program today will provide information we all need on our ever changing national health initiative. Please see attached document for a synopsis of this presentation.

Rountree asked Steve Westenhofer, CEO of Volunteer Community Hospital, his thoughts on the reform measures. Westenhofer commented that a greater number of insured people is a much better scenario for all. Obviously, this would mean fewer people in the system who delay care due to having no insurance coverage and who may then require more expensive care later.

- **Special Announcements (2): Nan Rountree**

Coach Luthi-UTM Rodeo Team

Annual Spring Rodeo-April 15-17. 2010. Rodeo poster has gone to print. Luthi handed out tri-fold to everyone with details, costs, times. Luthi commented that the spring rodeo is a big activity with huge crowds and standing room only on Saturday night, a full house on Friday and a bit smaller crowd on Thursday since it is a school night. With close to 250 contestants from all over the region, the Ozark Region consists of states east of the Mississippi with teams primarily from Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Kentucky, Georgia and Mississippi. Some individuals also participate when a school doesn't have a team. There are about 32 different colleges represented. Our rodeo has won the Rodeo of the Year in the Ozark Region all four years that this award has been presented. The Annual Spring Rodeo is broadcast by WLJT-TV and WCMT Radio. Advertising is sold, and Luthi reviewed ad prices. Luthi also mentioned an economic impact study conducted with Dr. Parker Cashdollar, professor of economics at UTM, which highlights that the spring rodeo brings in an average of \$123,000 a day into the community.

Luthi reviewed the tri-fold brochure which includes information on these events:

- Fifth Annual Tennessee National Guard Jr. Miss and Miss UT Martin Rodeo Pageant which will be held at 2 p.m. in Student Life Center at UTM on Saturday, March 13.
- Crawfish supper at American Legion beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday night, March 14.
- Rodeo Thursday night with primary sponsor: Tyson Foods. This is bargain night. MTD donates a riding lawnmower for horseshoe toss. Luthi stated that they've been able to award a mower several years, and that the team is thankful to MTD for sponsoring this event. Luthi said that if they don't have a winner on Thursday than the competition will continue of Friday night.
- Rodeo Friday Night with primary sponsor: Tennessee Tractor. This is also "Tough Enough to Wear Pink Night" to raise money for breast cancer awareness.
- Saturday's festivities include: The UT Martin Rodeo Roundup- a free barbecue at 11:00 a.m. at the Ned Ray McWherter Agricultural Complex. There is a Scholarship Live Auction sponsored by Harald Melson, Edward D. Jones Investments at 12:30 p.m. at the complex. There are unique UT and UT Martin items donated, and all proceeds go to the UTM Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund. The Rodeo Booster Club works hard every year to make this a great event.

- A silent auction is also conducted all three evenings of the rodeo with items donated from all over the country. Luthi reported that his wife, Diane, conducts the silent auction, and she says it is a very competitive and fun event because of the great items available.
- Saturday Night Championship Finals is sponsored by Martin Paving Company out of Medina.

Luthi added that Tim Fuller, a favorite announcer, will be here again this year. Luthi reviewed ticket prices. He mentioned that advanced ticket outlets are only sold up to April 12. These are not available the day of the rodeo, so make sure to buy in advance. No advance tickets will be available day of rodeo.

Luthi concluded saying that spring rodeo is a big activity and many here at MBA are already sponsors. He noted the team's appreciation. Luthi recognized MBA member Christie Ricketts as the photographer of the rodeo and mentioned the great job she has done. Rountree thanked Luthi and also mentioned the high scholastic average of rodeo participants each year. Luthi said one boy on the team made it to the rodeo college finals. This student also received an \$1800 scholarship for the highest GPA of any male athlete on the college level. Luthi remarked that many of the rodeo students are talented both in the arena and in the classroom. Rountree concluded the presentation with a comment that the approximate \$123,000 a day the Rodeo brings to Martin also needs congratulations.

Ronnie Price-Weakley Co. Economic and Community Development

Price commented on this being the toughest economy he has ever seen, and we are not out of it yet. He says his office focuses on manufacturing and distribution. Most projects are on hold with everyone waiting to see an upturn in the economy. Price mentioned that alternative energy-solar is one area of opportunity in West Tennessee. He noted a solar farm in Haywood county and project Hemlock, a Dow Corning Corporation facility in Clarksville, Tennessee, which produces polycrystalline silicon (polysilicon), a key raw material used to manufacture solar cells and semiconductor devices. Price said development representatives in Weakley, Benton, Carroll and Henry counties have formed a coalition and set an early March meeting with the Dow Corning facility to explore the impact this facility may have on West Tennessee. Price said the meeting will look into the possibility of other companies locating to West Tennessee who require products from the Dow facility.

Price said that City of Martin and the Mayor have been good to work with and helpful during this slow economy. He said the incentives here are good, and that we do have products for sale with our spec buildings and the Gordon food services building, which he says is seeing increased activity right now. He says owners are finally getting realistic on pricing. Price mentioned that it is important that we have products available to sell when people get ready again to buy. Price says his office is funded by the county and the five municipalities in Weakley County. He says the City of Martin furnishes his office space at the Reed Center which helps his budget very much. Price mentioned that he made a visit with Mayor Brundige to MTD headquarters last August and that MTD is pleased with workforce in Martin and doesn't anticipate any downsizing in Martin. Price mentioned some counties in Tennessee are doing better than Weakley County right now, for example, counties around Nashville.

- **Committee Reports:**

Membership: Sharis Diggs Chandler recognized newer members for Roger Donaldson who is out due to skiing injury. Three's Company Consignment Shop, Fuller Partners associates, Len Haven Motel, Martin

and Bailey Hicks, Parnell's Grill, Remax, Christie's Photography, Westan Insurance and Veranda Restaurant.

Activities: Leslie Haywood-Moore updated members on the past Mix and Mingle for January 14, 2009 for Kim Craddock who was out of town at the time of the function. The UTM Department of Athletics graciously hosted a very successful Mix and Mingle in the Skyhawk Club Room of the Elam Center prior to game night against Tennessee Tech. MBA members and Skyhawk Club members met together and enjoyed a welcome by UTM Athletic Director, Phil Dane, and by UTM Men's Basketball Coach, Jason James. Everyone enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and free admission to the games. There are three more mix and mingle events planned for this year, so be sure to attend.

Civic and Church Activities: Dee Pritchett updated members on several activities and resources: The Optimist Club sponsors a trailer rent out. Trinity Presbyterian Church is having an Ash Wednesday Service at 7 pm. Bible Union Baptist Church is taking hundreds of youth for a Youth Evangelism Conference in March. Also the Martin Kiwanis Club is hosting their annual Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 27 at Martin Elementary School.

MBA Directory: Carol Guest announced that the MBA directory has 273 members online. We have added 15 new members since the directory was printed. She passed out business cards, so please alert her if you know of any changes that need to be made to the directory. Also we have MBA window decals to replace old ones that may be curling. Use these at each entrance of your business. Rountree added that there are also flyers and cards available to post in our businesses to promote MBA.

MBA Website: Katrina Cobb mentioned that two online advertiser slots are available on the MBA website. Call Katrina for details.

Special Call Need: Rountree asked for a volunteer who could provide updates to about ten businesses who are MBA members but don't have email about morning meetings and mix and mingle functions. This is a need above the In-Touch team responsibilities, so we would appreciate someone coming forward to assist.

Other Announcements: Rountree mentioned the Legislative Breakfast and WestStar Working Women's Conference held at UTM on Friday, Feb. 12, 2010. Both were well attended events. According to Charley Deal, UTM assistant vice chancellor for alumni relations and executive director of the WestStar program, the Working Women's Conference hosted 270 women and 50 companies. Deal also said 15 out of 21 counties in West Tennessee were represented at the conference.

The Art's Co-op is sponsoring a "Celebrate Martin" Gala with wine and cheese, Friday night, February 26 from 7 – 9 p.m. which will feature art that focuses on the theme of Martin. The Arts Co-Op is on Lindell across from Opera House .

Rountree asked that all event information be forwarded to Lynette Wagster at lcwagster@frontiernet.net to insure that events are included on our MBA calendar on our website.

Rountree also introduced Kris Moore who will be taking over publicity responsibilities. If your business has not been featured, please let her know and she can get the information in the paper once per week and also on our website. Nan says MBA is focusing on trying to provide as much publicity as possible to our members.

- **Closing** – Nan Rountree

Rountree closed the meeting with a thank you to Jill Dinning at J.J.'s Quick Shop and U-Haul for the breakfast. She asked members to please sign in our MBA attendance roll and to please sign up for the breakfast each month. She also asked everyone to sign a get well card for Roger Donaldson who has done so much for MBA and membership. Our next MBA meeting is set for March 9, 2010. Rountree adjourned the meeting at 8:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, February 19, 2010 by Leslie Haywood-Moore, Secretary

MBA Monthly Meeting Presentation: Lisa Robinson, Lisa Robinson Public Policy Consulting, Martin, TN
Health Care Reform

Health care reform is still in a lot of flux. Important to note that the state of healthcare affects all and that it is important that we look at it and understand it. The presentation today will include: 1) quick facts, 2) a status update on health care reform legislation and 3) an overview of the major ideas out there.

Quick Facts: 953,000 residents are without health insurance in TN. Providers lose 1.2 Billion dollars in health care each year. Just 30 percent of employers in TN with fewer than 50 employees offer insurance, but small business pay higher rates than in other states due to market consolidation. The situation is that the U.S. spends more than twice as much per person on health care than the average industrial countries do. We pay more yet our outcomes do not show this: U.S. Ranks 45th in mortality and 50th in life expectancy.

Status on Health Care Reform: Nov. 7 the House passed a unified bill. Senate passed different legislative package on Nov. 24. There is quite a bit of difference in the details. Normally, a conference committee would meet and negotiate a compromise bill and move forward. This is not happening in this case. The scenario will probably be an amended legislative proposal which will draw on what has been passed and which will add in big ideas that will surface in a few weeks.

Analysts are looking at the senate bill as most relevant and as becoming a point of departure from this point going forward. Provisions in the senate bill include:

- 1) Expanded coverage to 31 million uninsured Americans. We are already paying for these uninsured through our taxes and our health care insurance. These uninsured usually see no primary care doctors and resort to emergency room care which is most costly right now;
- 2) New regulations imposed on the insurance industry that will: prohibit denial based on preexisting conditions; provide a cap on out of pocket expenses; provide a prohibition on cancellation of insurance when one gets sick;
- 3) Establishment of an insurance exchange or marketplace where individuals and small businesses could go to compare options and make choices that would be better than the health insurance that is available in today's small business market and individual market. The senate bill would also mandate that Americans have health insurance and provide sliding scale subsidies for premiums. Rationale behind this measure requires that risk is spread due to large variety of people-both healthy and not.

Senate bill and small business: Right now small businesses pay higher premiums, have higher risk, and pay higher administrative costs. These costs can be up to 18% per worker more than large companies. The senate bill would: 1) give quick access to new regulated insurance marketplace where plans would compete on a level similar to what larger firms enjoy; 2) provide small business with 25 or fewer employees a tax credit of up to 35% of the employer's contribution toward each employee's health insurance premium.

Senate bill and large business: Play or Pay Program to encourage participation with a penalty of \$750 per employee if over 25 employees .

Fiscally, the Congressional Budget Office, a watchdog group, did an analysis of this bill. The CBO looked at package and deduced that the program would provide a 132 billion dollar reduction in over ten years. Premiums would be left unchanged or slightly lower. The bill would lead to higher premiums in some

markets, but the actual cost would actually be balanced by better coverage. Subsidies would be available to drive down costs. There is a limit on how much insurance agencies could charge – age, etc. Provisions would lower premiums by as much as 20% by 2016.

This is all very preliminary, and this is just one set of provisions. This presentation today highlights some of the major ideas of what is out there. We all need to understand what is going on, what is at stake and what we need to do to fix it. Reform could provide a healthier and more productive workforce.

Questions? Nan Rountree asked about the current standing on competition between insurance companies across state lines. These exchanges and state regional exchanges are being discussed as an attempt to address this disparity in costs between states. Clearly it is in the insurance companies best interests to keep within state lines.