



Girard Chamber of Commerce members meet July 12 at Doc's

Members prepare for Festival, Manar pitches Senate Bill #1 for education

*Story & photos
by Janice Smith*

Darren Burnett chaired the July 12 meeting of Girard Chamber of Commerce members in the absence of President Victor Angulo. The breakfast meeting was sponsored by Miss Girard Colleen Nichols at Doc's Soda Fountain.

Following prayer by Bob Ernst, Mike Mauk gave the treasurer's report, and guest speaker Senator Andy Manar was introduced.

Manar stated the meeting was his first address since the recent budget action taken by legislators, covering aspects of revenues and state spending, including:

- approaching a nearly three year impasse, said he struggled with many of the votes with indecision, citing merits on both sides.

- discussed the \$3 billion cut in spending.

- passed a major pension reform bill, now pending in the house, a re-alignment of the pension system.

- reviewed a 5% across the board cut to state government.

- prioritized Senate Bill #1, school funding, stating the bill reflects core principles of the Evidence Based Model and Governor Commission; accounts for needs of students with disabilities, English learners and low-income students; ensures a district's taxing effort matches the district's local wealth; with no district losing money, offering a stable, long-term solution. Funding from Sen-

ate Bill #1 would mean an estimated \$410,982 additional overall gain for North Mac District, with the study reporting 50% of its students considered low income.

After fielding questions, Manar added, "we are very close to getting this done", urging proponents to call the governor's office at 217-782-0244 voicing an opinion.

Jeanette Earley announced games available for the Festival Days celebration as fundraisers for various groups or organizations have not yet been spoken for. Those interested may contact Randy Gray. Earley also announced Queen Contestants will be stationed at the Girard Shell parking lot Saturday, July 22, to offer Carnival tickets for the Festival at a discounted price.

Deb Burnett stated Festival Books have been distributed; 50/50 tickets for the Chamber are ready; requested cake donations for the annual Cake Walk; and asked for volunteers in watering the city square concrete flower pots. Burnett said she will step down as Festival chairman following this year's event.

Dr. Juanita Rule discussed the new donated items by Robert Jenkins and how those items will be offered to the public, perhaps by auction or silent auction.

Police Chief Dave Campbell gave a report on the July 11 "Cops and Bobbers" event, teaching youngsters the art of fishing during a morning camp, with \$2,700

being raised through generous community/business/individual donations for the event; recognition was given Campbell and his department for the efforts of property reclamation and overall city cleanup; park improvements were reviewed, with Kim Eldridge stating the Park Committee had ordered three additional benches; and all agreed to the reinstatement of flying American flags at various locations, especially during patriotic holidays.

Miss Girard Colleen Nichols was lauded for her selection as Miss Macoupin County during the recent Pageant. Colleen will appear on Channel 20 MIDDAY to promote the city's Festival.

On a motion by Todd Babcock, seconded by Randy Gray, all voted aye for a \$100 donation to the Little Miss/Little Mister Pageant.

Prior to 8:35 adjournment, John Earley stated the annual Fire Protection District budget is being prepared; Pleasant Hill Village will host a Job Fair July 20; and Ministerial Alliance members will be invited to Chamber.

Also attending the meeting: Maureen Nichols, Bill Deck, Harold Pierson, Millie Burgess, Stacey Hughes, Dawn and Jim Cherry, Peggy and Bill Giles and Janice Smith.

The next Chamber meeting is set for Aug. 9, at 7 a.m., at Pleasant Hill Residence, with Dave O'Dell, Country Financial, as sponsor.



Guest speaker, Andy Manar