

**Naturally Meramec
Gasconade County Meeting
February 25, 2015
White Mule Winery**

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Kim Jones (Kim-Kill Foods, LLC), Charlie and Karen Schlottach (White Mule Winery), Phyllis Hannon and Keva Limberg (Nature's Organic Haven, LLC), Walter and DeAnn Els (Hermann Hills Apiaries), Kurt and Ron Vitoux (Homestead Farms Nursery), Linda and Larry Miskel (Stone Haus B & B), Tom Blatchford (Brinkman Farmstead B & B/Cool Cow Cheese), Barb Willsey (Rockin W Alpaca Ranch), Jerry Lairmore (Gasconade County Commission), and Teri Hoon (Hummingbird Kitchen).

Welcome: Connie Willman, MRPC, welcomed attendees, introduced Lyle Thomas and El Willman, and thanked hosts, Charlie and Karen Schlottach for hosting the event.

White Mule Winery: The Schlottachs welcomed attendees and gave some history and facts about the winery.

Introductions: Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and tell a little about their businesses.

Hermann Hills Apiaries: The business features local honey (including comb honey), beeswax crafts, pollen and bees.

Nature's Organic Haven, LLC: The business (Nature's Organic Haven, LLC/Physician's Natural Solutions, LLC) features a elderberry-based organic drink that is high in vitamins and minerals. They are also working on the Twenty-First Century Training Center that will offer training on various organic processes.

Rockin' W Alpaca Ranch: The ranch offers products made from alpaca wool, and lamb food products. The property has its own greenhouse in which hydroponic barley is grown for fodder.

Hummingbird Kitchen: This certified kitchen features artisan breads, jams and jellies. Currently, its products are sold only for specific events. Future plans include an additional building for walk-in sales.

Kill-Kim Food's, LLC: Kill-Kim offers a spicy sweet jalapeno mustard that can be used in a variety of dishes, including a dip, when mixed with cream cheese. Samples of the mustard were shared with the group.

Homestead Farms: This farm, located south of Owensville, sells perennials to area nurseries and walk-ins.

Hermann Stone Haus B & B: The Hermann Stone Haus B & B is located on property overlooking Hermann. The home is circa 1862, and features an early German vaulted limestone wine cellar.

Pig Hollow Farms: This farm, located north of Owensville, holds special events such as the "Youth and Special Needs Hunt" held in partnership with the Mid-Missouri Dream Hunters.

Naturally Meramec Background: Connie Willman reviewed the Naturally Meramec project. Staff have been working to finance the project for about four years, following a discussion of the MRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Advisory Committee presentation by Peter Hoeffher, CEO of the St. James Winery. The need for a consortium of agriculture/tourism businesses that crossed "silos" was identified. The project was funded this year by the USDA Rural Development Farmer's Market Promotion Program and the Delta Regional Authority. The purpose of the project is to provide a forum for agriculture and tourism businesses to meet together to discuss ways they can use and market each other's products/services.

Needs: Staff asked attendees to share the top three needs of their businesses, with which Naturally Meramec may be able to help. Responses follow:

1. Exposure to producers, the public and other outlets.
2. Events and venues
3. Remember promotion in Kansas City, well as St. Louis
4. Improve ability to connect with wholesale
5. Need for organic suppliers (Nature's Organic Haven, LLC - Phyllis Hannon)
6. Employees- lack of part time employees (Need to allow those who receive entitlements to work agriculture jobs without losing entitlements)
7. Exposure/recognition for those using local products/services (Possible food critics that feature those)
8. Promote cross-sales of products
9. Regional cross-sales
10. Transportation -Need rural transit or tourist shuttles
11. Marketing beyond state borders
12. Local maps outlining/featuring agritourism businesses
13. Access to capital/finance
14. Need ways to get people to visit websites

Agriculture/Tourism Database: Staff distributed a copy of the Gasconade County database of agriculture and tourism businesses. Attendees were asked to check their information for accuracy and to check the list for any other corrections or missing agriculture/tourism businesses.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.