

**Naturally Meramec  
Pulaski County Meeting  
March 24, 2015  
Cellar 66, Waynesville**

**Meeting Notes**

**Attendees:** Twyla Cordry (Cellar 66), James Morgan (City of Crocker), Beth Wiles (Pulaski County Tourism), Joan Strong (Lucas Farms and Visit Osage County), Sarah Hultine Massengale (MU Extension), Charlotte and Vern Metzger (Deep Woods Farm), Randy and Debbie Becht (Old Hillbilly Store/Autumn Eve Antiques), Judy Fortner (Fort Wood Hotels), Bruce Baker, Ron and Marie Selfors (Sustainable Ozarks Partnership), Molly Maxwell-Stribling (Howard Johnson/Pulaski Tourism Board), Stephanie Chatterjee (Gasconade Hills Resort), Greg Stratman (City of Richland), Susan Alexander (City of Richland), Lyle Thomas and Connie Willman (MRPC).

**Welcome:** Connie Willman, MRPC, welcomed attendees, introduced Lyle Thomas and thanked hostess Twyla Cordry for hosting the event.

**Cellar 66:** Twyla welcomed attendees and gave some history and facts about Cellar 66. The wine bar is not a typical "sports bar," by choice. They offer a relaxed atmosphere with a variety of wines, beers, sodas and other drinks, along with a menu of summer sausage, cheeses, sandwiches, etc. They also offer free wine tasting daily.

**Introductions:** Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and tell a little about their businesses or entities involved with agriculture/tourism:

**Howard Johnson St. Robert/Waynesville, Molly Maxwell-Stribling:** The hotel is located on St. Robert Blvd, and is located near Fort Leonard Wood and offers a complimentary breakfast, a 24-hour fitness center and multilingual staff.

**Pulaski County Tourism Bureau, Beth Wiles:** This organization works to promote Pulaski County and surrounds. It works with many agritourism businesses by posting general information about them on the web site, as well as posting special events.

**Lucas Farms, Joan Strong:** This farm, located in Meta, features all-natural beef that it sells to local consumers. The farm has been in the beef cattle business for almost 50 years. The first major buildings on the farm were built in the 1870s by a German brewery family in Westphalia. The farm became a dairy operation in the 50s. Beef cattle were introduced some time later, and the farm is now well-known for its outstanding Angus herd.

**University of Missouri Extension, Sarah Hultine-Massengale:** The MU Extension office in Pulaski County is located on School Street in Waynesville. Services include, but are not limited to, educational sessions (covering topics in agriculture, natural resources, lawn and garden, etc.), professional consultation (to answer specific questions for individual situations) and testing (canner gauges, soil).

**Deep Woods Farm and Pumpkin Patch, Charlotte and Vern Metzger:** This is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation family farm located in Hancock. The farm is open Saturday and Sunday during October, and by appointment on weekdays. Deep Woods offers an educational experience for kids, including farm animals, a country store, pond, hay stack, etc.

**Autumn Eve Antiques, Randy and Debbie Becht:** This business is located on Highway Z at Devil's Elbow. It specializes in hand painted furniture and repurposed items, rustic and shabby-chic, vintage and primitives.

**Fort Wood Hotels, Judy Fortner:** Fort Leonard Wood area hotels that are part of Ehrhardt Properties include Farfield Inn, Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, mainstay Suites, Candlewood Suites and Liberty Lodge.

***Baker Farm, Bruce Baker:*** Retiring from the military soon, Bruce has purchased a 100-acre farm and is interested in cattle, bees and farm-to-family produce.

***Sustainable Ozarks Partnership, Ron and Marie Selfors:*** SOP is a nonprofit organization founded in 2012. It focuses on the four counties around Fort Leonard Wood (Laclede, Phelps, Pulaski and Texas). SOP works to meet all aspects of the Initial Integrated Strategic Sustainability Plan (ISSP). SOP has been involved in such efforts as Vets to Farmers, FLW Food Recovery and a regional trail system. The Selfors are also involved square dancing and announced the Route 66 in the Ozarks Square Dance Weekend May 29-31 in Waynesville.

***Gasconade Hills Resort, Stephanie Chatterjee:*** Gasconade Hills Resort offers 16 rustic cabins, 18 RV sites and plenty of tent sites. The resort includes a convenience store, large pool, river access, camp shower facilities, fire pits and picnic tables. It is one of the oldest Route 66 locations still in operation.

***City of Richland, Greg Stratman and Susan Alexander***

***City of Crocker, James Morgan***

***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.