

MAPLE LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Bringing business & community together

By Brenda Erdahl

The goal of the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce is to improve the vitality of the community and make Maple Lake a great place to live and do business.

It does this by building relationships among the businesses then working together to promote the community with some really fun events.

Although not overly big with 76 members, the Chamber is responsible for the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Gear-Head Get Together, two events that brings thousands of people to town every year. The Chamber also hosts Christmas in Maple Lake, the Business Trick or Treat and other seasonal activities and occasions that draw old friends together and new people to town. Always forward thinking, the Chamber is often adding new events knowing that when the community succeeds, its businesses succeed.

Community first

"We put community first and our businesses are at the forefront. When our community thrives our businesses thrive and that's important to us," Chamber Vice President Nick Pawlenty said.

One of the Chamber's newest events is the Makers and Growers Market. One Sunday out of the month, April through October, vendors set up along Birch Avenue in the heart of downtown Maple Lake to sell their artistic or home-grown items. Food opportunities and live music accompany the event, which always draws a large crowd to the community.

Its first year in 2023 was a resounding success and the 2024 season was even better. This past season saw an average of 50 vendors per event and 88 that came to one or more market throughout the summer. There were also 20 new vendors over the previous year.

The Makers and Growers Mar-

Become a Chamber Member or Chamber Event Volunteer

Businesses organizations may join the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce anytime throughout the year. Contact Kathy Hennen at 320-963-3612 or khennen@maplelakechamber.com or visit www.maplelakechamber.com

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed to host chamber events. Organizers are always looking for people to help. Please reach out to Nick Pawlenty at nick@maplelake-messenger.com or call 320-963-3813 if you would like to help.

• A craft person to chair the two craft fairs is currently needed. Space for crafts is free. Contact Kathy at 320-963-3612 or email khennen@maplelakechamber.com for details.

ket stands out among the rest because it is a donation driven event, which means they don't charge vendors or food truck owners a fee to attend, nor is there an admittance fee for shoppers.

The event operates solely on money gained from fundraisers, sponsors and donations. That philosophy is one of the reasons organizers feel it is so successful.

Organizers start preparing for the next season early with their first fundraiser, the annual Pizza, Puzzles and Pitchers happening this year on March 23. They will also hold a wine tasting fundraiser in April at King's 46 Wine Bar in downtown Maple Lake.

Another new event the Chamber is introducing this winter to draw more people to the community and its businesses is the Snowmachine Rendezvous and Ride. Organizers are already calling this their "winter Gear-Head" and like the oh-so-popular August festival, this show is all about peo-



The Gear-Head Get Together and Swap Meet attracts thousands of people to Maple Lake on the third Saturday in August. The 14th Annual Gear-Head Get Together is set for Saturday, August 16th.

ple getting together to talk about and enjoy the machines they love. The only difference is this event will focus on machines that go in the snow. It takes place Saturday, February 15 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and includes a swap meet and vintage snowmobile ride to Silver Creek at 11 a.m.

All these events make Maple Lake a great place to live and work, which is the Chamber's ultimate goal.

"The Chamber is motivated to keep expanding on new ideas and new concepts and is excited to share those ideas with the community," Chamber Vice President Nick Pawlenty said.

Building relationships

Being a member of the Chamber of Commerce gives business owners and individuals the opportunity to come together monthly to inform one another of events, updates or happenings going on in their businesses. It's at these meetings that they can plan and talk about opportunities available through the community's numerous events. Being involved with this group of individuals affords a company the opportunity to meet with other business owners and involved community members to form long-lasting relationships. It is a terrific networking mechanism.

Being a member of the chamber also offers great ways for businesses to increase their exposure. The names of all member businesses are published in the Chamber's resident newcomer packet that is distributed to new residents of the area through the school district and The City. Member businesses are also listed in Chamber newspaper ads and can have their business website linked to the recently updated Chamber website.

"The new and improved website has made it even easier to disseminate information," Pawlenty said.

The Chamber's member Facebook site is another way for busi-

ness owners to keep up to date with happenings in town and to share promotions or events. Businesses also receive discounted pricing on the use of the Chamber's Highway 55 messaging signs positioned on both ends of town.

The Chamber's goal is to build its organization by reaching out to businesses and finding what their needs and wants are.

"I want to make sure our Chamber members are taken care of and address all the issues and positives we see every day. We want our members to achieve something attainable through the Chamber, and with that serve our community to the fullest" Pawlenty said.



The Chamber sponsors a craft fair in the fall and in the spring in conjunction with the St. Patrick's Day Festival.



The Chamber Business Trick or Treat takes place Oct. 31st.

MAPLE LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Growing

This year the Chamber will add two new directors to the board. Doug Lindenfelser, owner of The Butchery of Maple Lake and Scott Chantland, city council member and owner of Olde Town Creamery. Lori Hegle will also be staying on the board for another two-year term. In addition to Vice President Pawlenty, the Chamber board is led by President Mike Rowe, Secretary Caleb Haag and Treasurer Kathy Hennen.

"We are very excited to add new businesses this year and get more people involved," Pawlenty said.

Tried and true

Besides being vice president, Pawlenty is the lead organizer of the St. Patrick's Day Grand Day Parade. The parade is part of a 47-year-old St. Patrick's Day festival in Maple Lake that annually attracts thousands of people in March. It features the 5K Irish Scamper, coronation and craft fair in addition to the parade. Recently, Pawlenty incorporated the Parade Cloud app to make registering for the parade easier than ever. The app, which was invented by business owners in Annandale, is used nationwide because of its simplicity. Parade-goers also find the app handy to check specific parade units, or the lineup the day of the festivities. A registration link can be found on the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce website, www.maplelakechamber.com.

Not quite as old as the St. Patrick's Day festival, but just as popular is the 14-year-old Gear-Head Get Together. This "car show and much, much more" takes place the third Saturday of August and attracts some 1,000 vehicles, close to 200 motorcycles plus an assortment of mechanical odds and ends for a display that takes over much of the town. The event also features entertainment, live music, food stands and a swap meet.

The Chamber is also responsible for fall and spring craft fairs, an all-city garage sale in June, Business Trick-or-Treat in October, and Christmas in Maple Lake in December. In February, the Maple Lake Ice Fishing Derby takes place, which the Chamber doesn't organize itself, but supports.

Government partnerships

The Chamber of Commerce works in collaboration with The City of Maple Lake and has a productive partnership, Pawlenty said. Just this winter, they worked together to purchase a new artificial Christmas Tree that will decorate downtown from its location on the empty lot for years to come.

Support the Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber has one main fundraiser, a cash raffle that will be held late summer or early fall this year. Please visit local businesses that month to purchase tickets for a chance to win big cash prizes.

The other way the chamber makes money is by its membership fees which Pawlenty said is one of the lowest of any chamber in the county.

A variety of members

The Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce has become home to a

broad spectrum of members, from large industrial corporations to small, downtown shops.

The Chamber also has several members that are not businesses, including the City of Maple Lake, the Maple Lake Lions, the Maple Lake School District, St. Timothy's Church and Bethlehem United Church of Christ.

All work together to make Maple Lake a better place for its residents and its businesses.

"We want to make sure this year benefits our local businesses to the fullest, because when we achieve that it will reflect in our commerce sections and our community," Pawlenty said.

MAPLE LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2025 EVENT LINE-UP

48th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade
Saturday, March 15, 2025

Irish Scamper 5K Race - 11:00 a.m. start

Parade: 1:30 p.m. start
on Division St. W. Maple Lake

REGISTRATION:
[HTTPS://APP.PARADECLOUD.COM/REGISTRATION/1257/9391E52D5DEAB4F011BD945684DBEA50](https://app.paradecloud.com/registration/1257/9391E52D5DEAB4F011BD945684DBEA50)

Spring Craft Sale
Saturday, March 15, 2025

9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Elementary Gym

2025 Makers and Growers Market
May 18, June 22, July 20,
Aug. 24, Sept. 14, Oct. 5,

One Sunday a month from
10:30 am to 2:00 pm
Downtown Birch Avenue

VENDER INFORMATION:
MAPLELAKEMAKERSANDGROWERS@GMAIL.COM

All City Garage Sale
Saturday, June 7, 2025

Gear Head Get Together & Swap Meet
Saturday, August 16, 2025

Downtown Maple Lake
streets, park and lots

VENDER INFORMATION: 763-333-4422

Halloween Trick or Treating
Tuesday, October 31, 2025

At participating
Chamber Businesses
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Fall Craft Sale
Saturday,
November 8, 2025

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
at ML Elementary Gym

Christmas in Maple Lake
Saturday,
December 6, 2025

10:00 a.m. - Noon

Shop LOCAL
"You're Helping Yourself"

A Membership for Local
Business and Organizations

We'd love to hear from you!
Email us at treasurer@maplelakechamber.com
or call Kathy Hennen at 320-963-3612
www.MapleLakeChamber.com



Don't miss the first Snowmachine Rendezvous and Ride in downtown Maple Lake on February 15th from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A vintage snowmobile ride begins at 11 a.m.



MAPLE LAKE'S NEWEST EVENT

A new event is coming to Maple Lake this February 15th and it's already being dubbed by some as the "wintertime Gear-Head Get Together."

Its official name is the Snowmachine Rendezvous and Ride and it's being hosted by the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in downtown Maple Lake with a vintage snowmobile ride at 11 a.m.

The event will focus on any, and all machines related to snow. Like the now famous Gear-Head Get Together that takes place in Maple Lake the third Saturday in August, the Rendezvous and

Ride will feature a swap meet and lots of opportunity to get together and enjoy each other's machines.

The event sort of started last year when organizers added a vintage snowmobile show to Christmas in Maple Lake, but "for whatever reason the event combo just didn't feel right," organizer Scott Chantland said.

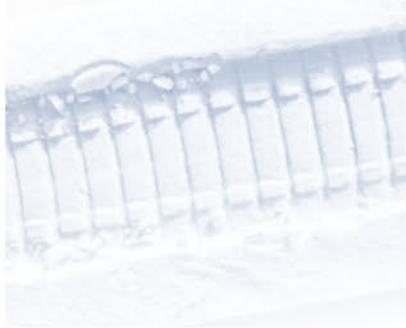
Then recently a few members of the Gear-Head crew started asking if the snowmobile show was happening again this year. That led to the idea of creating a whole new winter event.

"Going with the Gear-Head theme we

decided that we would like to have any, and all machines related to the snow, not just snowmobiles, hence the name "snowmachine". Then folks started talking about a vintage snowmobile ride, so we are including a ride from Maple Lake to Silver Creek and back," Chantland said. "The 'rendezvous and ride' part just sounded good and really does wrap up the concept of just getting together and enjoying each other's machines. And for those that want to go on the ride they can."

Organizers chose Feb. 15 for the event because it takes place between the Maple Lake Property Owners' Ice Fishing Derby and the Chamber's St. Patrick's Day celebration. It's also exactly six months before Gear-Head.

"This year we are just hoping to get the word out there and expect a pretty small crowd, much like how Gear-Head started," Chantland said.



Who knows what kind of snow machines will come out of the barns for Maple Lake's newest Chamber event.