

Rotary Club of Portage Bulletin

Porta-Rota-Call

September 18, 2019

by: Christy Klien

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by President-Elect Matt Semelbauer.

President-Elect Matt led us in the Four-Way Test. Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chaplain Mary Hall gave our invocation.

Greeter Randy Orwig welcomed everyone to the meeting today. Debbie Miller with Kalamazoo Rotary and past Rotarian Robert Heinke joined us today.

PROGRAM: Southwest Michigan First

Jill Bland and Petey Stephanak opened by sharing Southwest Michigan First's motto: the greatest force for change is a job. They provide many services to area businesses to benefit the entire greater community. Focusing on business retention; providing resources in the community that could assist companies such as developing a succession plan; educating businesses of legislation and its potential impact; developing stronger relationships between businesses and schools for internships; identifying expertise areas within the educational community; developing leaders; and working and consulting with municipalities on programs such as Brownfield developments to help create jobs.

Jill and Petey highlighted some recent expansion projects that Southwest Michigan First provided assistance. The projects included: The Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet expansion in Comstock Charter Township, Schupan and Sons expansion in the City of Kalamazoo, Stryker Instruments HQ & R&D expansion in the City of Portage, and Stryker Medical expansion in the City of Portage.

A new initiative is a design initiative; we are a city of creators. They are providing events and collaborations to build community. They are actively recruiting talent to our community by attending events across the nation and bringing representatives from area companies with them to promote living and working in Southwest Michigan.

They also focus on the infrastructure of the community to attract companies to the area. The runway enhancements at the airport were given as an example. Staff met with airlines to discuss how to get more

service enhancements. Through those discussions they learned that we need to extend the length of runway for commercial purposes to keep us competitive. They are working with surrounding businesses and landowners to make that happen. One of the challenges they face is moving a portion of the railway track. Construction will possibly take place in 2023/2024.

The K-12 and higher education collaboration is an important focus for recruiting and developing talent in our community. They have created a tool kit with WMU to help businesses with providing internships and they have hosted intern mixers with area business interns. Area career and technical education is important. They expressed the struggle with a having the career and technical education being dispersed throughout the county not centralized. They shared information about the upcoming KRESA Career and Technical Education millage proposal.

Visit www.southwestmichiganfirst.com to learn more about Southwest Michigan First.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Jim Martin asked that people provide correct change for lunches and raffles. It would be appreciated and helpful.
- Ben Barber shared that the Free Store of Kalamazoo needs men's and women's business clothing. Donations can be given to Ben.
- John Crandle shared with regret that the Tom Eddy Golf Outing has been canceled because of lack of participation.
- Shirley Johnson put flyers on the tables for "The Reason Why We Sing" presentation on October 26 from 2-4 PM at the Portage United Church of Christ.

LATECOMERS: Paul Carlson and Dan Jaqua were serenaded for being late.

HAPPY BUCKS were collected from J. Pearson, S. Johnson, D. Morgan, D. Jaqua, B. Barber, M. Hall, C. Buckley, and R. Orwig.

Sergeant Chris Buckley fined Betty Lee Ongley and Mayor Randall for having their pictures in MLive for Senior Center's Kick Off event.

50/50: Chris Buckley was the winner of \$15.00.

ACE OF SPADES: Chris Cole drew from a deck of 33 cards for the chance to win the pot \$244.50. Luck was not on his side today.

Next week's program features Jim Stephanak, Co-Chair of the new Portage Senior Center building effort.

Meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m. by President-Elect Matt.

[Facebook link](#)

The Portage Rotary Club provides financial support for youth education, families in need and other local charitable causes. We are part of Rotary International. A service organization of business and professional leaders that provide humanitarian services and help build goodwill and peace in the world