Five O’Dock at Twin Creeks

The Chamber of Commerce hosted another of their Five O’Dock mixers Thursday, June 20th, this time at Franklin County’s newest dock, Twin Creeks Marina. These events are meant to showcase some of what Franklin County has to offer, as well as provide an opportunity for Chamber members and others to mix and mingle, meeting new people and making connections which can help businesses help each other. Drafts and Watercrafts, Twin Creeks’ newly expanded restaurant run by Oasis Steakhouse owner Scotty Steele, provided complimentary drinks and pizza to a large crowd of business owners, community members, and supporters. There were door prizes and live music. The event was a great success for Twin Creeks, the Chamber, and for all the businesses who attended.

Jeff Kinney, one of the co-owners of Twin Creeks, explained that he had built lake developments before, but he was not interested in being involved in another one. However, friend and fellow co-owner Ken Howell convinced him to at least come and talk about it with “cold beer and a boat.” Two weeks after this meeting, the group bought the initial plot of land for the development, closing on December 31, 2015. They promptly sold the first 85 lots in 4 hours; and realized just how great the potential Franklin County had for a resort, so they expanded the original plan. Jeff explains that the group was selling houses on the dream of a lakefront marina and resort, so they built Twin Creeks Marina to “make that dream a reality.” Today, Jeff says the project is about one-third complete, having built 150 of a planned 500 homes. The marina is expanding, campgrounds for RVs are under construction, there will be waterfront cottages, hiking trails, a hotel, and more. Jeff says that the Franklin County Chamber is one of the best he’s ever worked with, noting that the Chamber is eager for Twin Creeks, and the county, to grow and develop. He feels that Franklin County has great potential and that Twin Creeks will be a big part of fulfilling that potential.

Cindy Stephens, Twin Creeks event coordinator, expanded on what all the marina has to offer. The Nest, a beautiful room upstairs with views of the lake, is now available to reserve for conferences, parties, and other events. Firefly point venue and wedding chapel are taking bookings now. Twin Creeks is hosting a Fourth of July fireworks display on June 29th. Drafts and Watercrafts will have Twin Creeks’ pontoon boats, normally available to rent, set up with tables to watch the show. All boats have already been reserved.

Aside from Twin Creeks, many businesses, organizations, and individuals were represented. Catherine Murray of McMurr’s copy service of Tullahoma was glad she was finally able to make it over to a Franklin County event. Describing her business as “Kinko’s on steroids,” and then joking that people may not know who Kinko’s was anymore, Cat explained that no job is too small or big, saying she can print “one copy or thousands.” She talked about a time she made tiny Christmas cards, complete with tiny envelopes, for a woman who had just moved into a tiny house. Aside from McMurr’s, Cat teaches graphic design and yearbook at Farrar Elementary School in Tullahoma and DJs weddings, parties, and events. She said, “I want to help the Chamber because they help me,” and started the night off by showing Chamber Director Michelle Earle the correct way to speak into a microphone so as to be heard.

Cliff Wilson, COO for the hospital, moved to Franklin County from Atlanta after hospital owner LifePoint sent him to Winchester. Describing Franklin County as “absolutely wonderful,” Cliff said that the hospital is proud to be a Premier Sponsor of the Chamber. He loved the Five O’Dock events, saying how they create a great environment for people to mix and mingle. Cliff urged people to join the Chamber, remarking that there’s “lots happening in Franklin County.”

It wasn’t just businesses who were present. Christie Shaw, abstinence advocator for Franklin, Coffee, Grundy, and Moore county middle and high schools, was there to spread awareness of the project, saying that many people do not fully understand what they do. The organization holds presentations for both parents and students, covering topics like self-worth, healthy self-esteem, boundaries, and information sexting, porn, and STD statistics. Started in Hendersonville in 2002, the program is now in 13 counties in Tennessee and aims to provide fact-based information to help teens make informed decisions without opinions or biases. Christie noted that feedback has been very positive and is proud that she has had a positive influence on teens throughout the region.

Jeff, Cat, Cliff, and Christie were just a few of the many community members who participated in the mixer. The Franklin County Chamber of Commerce is very pleased with how the event went and hopes that people who attended were able to make connections with new people. The Chamber will be hosting another Five O’Dock later this summer and hopes that everyone interested in business and events going on in the county will come out to support the community and the people who make it special.

Article by Stetson Snead