



## Economic Development Update

June 2022

### Summary:

In recent weeks months, our chamber has been working hard to clean up systems for a more accurate picture of member counts. We currently have 125 active (systems inaccurately showed 160+) Chamber Members (6 new since the start of 2022). Our target is to retain 10 previously paid members and 10 NEW members for the remainder of the year. We are looking to accomplish that through consistent communications, updated membership benefits and new programs coming soon (Summer Blitz) for recruitment.

In addition to systems updates, we are in the planning phases of several large community events to bring additional traffic to Lodi and our surrounding areas. Additional community events are in the works as well but not listed here.

- Spring Street Market – our new Saturday morning event is in full swing and gaining momentum each weekend. Opening weekend was the best turnout but we are excited and hopeful about the growth over the year. The goal of this event is to foster our love for small businesses and supporting them in our community as well as driving traffic to our downtown areas.
- Susie the Duck Day – we are expanding this beloved tradition to a two-day event. Friday we are sponsoring a FREE movie night in the park. Saturday will continue with the parade, Spring Street Market, food garden, duck races, activities, beer tent and live music. We are expecting a large turnout!
- Brew-B-Que – a loved and very well attended event for Lodi! This year will be similar with several NEW additions as well. Bushnell will be hosting a car show in their lot that same day, we are planning to expand the bags tournament, new life into the homebrew competition, live showing of the home Badger game and so much more!! In addition to previous years promotions, we are expanding our reach through press releases and media coverage for this event. Very exciting stuff!

We continue to work with new businesses on supporting their move to Lodi. We recently issued our 11<sup>th</sup> Main Street Bounceback grant letter. These grants allow up to \$10K in funding for businesses who move into empty spaces on our Main Street. This grant was recently extended through December 2022.

Chamber Members are slowly starting to use our new Chamber Meeting Space located inside the Chamber Office on Main Street. We have cleaned out, painted, had the ceiling tiles replaced as well as two new front doors. The large table and chairs allow for ample seating up to 10. Businesses are

reserving the space for meetings, job interviews and brainstorm sessions too. We are very excited about this space.

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a Business Brainstorm session at the Chamber Office to get feedback from some of our local businesses on what they would like to see as initiatives in driving our economic growth in 2022. This was a fantastic conversation and I will be planning more of these as we move forward. Here are some of the most important topics discussed in that meeting:

- Flood Zone & Insurance – this was a HOT topic. The downtown area needs clarification on the issue, would like to work with the city to find solutions and is concerned that this is a major contributing factor as to why many businesses are turned off owning property on Main Street. I would recommend the city and chamber work closely together on this ASAP.
- Top of Lodi – for businesses and community members alike, this is such a disappointment. Everyone in the room would like to apply pressure on the current owner, find solutions or at least start talking more about how we can make this less of an eyesore.
- Beautification – another topic that led to several pieces...benches, consistent signage, sidewalks, trash cans, expanding of parks for better use, utilizing the creek more...
- Branding – who are we? What do we want to be known for?
- Additional things discussed: public safety building, ATV/UTV, parking, river walk ideas, the need for hotel/motel, types of businesses we'd like to attract, eating, brewery, dog park, a labyrinth in the park, opening spring creek for kayaking or tubing, crosswalks, daycare...