We Have News for You!

A lot has changed in 100 years.

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, we also have lots of good, current news to share with you in this first edition of the Chamber and Visitor Bureau’s quarterly newsletter.

I’m honored to serve Chamber members as the new executive director, and I am fortunate to have the support of an excellent Board of Directors, active volunteers and the Chamber’s new administrative coordinator, Sara Neer.

We’re excited to be serving our 316 members – and counting – in new offices in the historic Bancroft House at 127 W. Court St., Urbana.

Some things, though, stay constant:

- **Our Vision** – to support members, create connections and strengthen our community
- **Our Mission** – to connect Champaign County by promoting our members, inspiring collaboration and offering resources and opportunities to enhance our community
- **Our Values** – Members Matter, Build Partnerships, Connect the Community, Act with Integrity and Embrace Change

As always, the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau is here to serve you and make Champaign County a better place to live, work and play. **Remember: The fun starts here, in Champaign County!**

*Susie Koennecke, Champaign County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau Executive Director*

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**Welcome, New Chamber Members…**

- 3C Contracting
- Apple Farm Service
- Buck Creek Stable, LLC
- Class Landscaping and Lawn Care, LLC
- Folck Winery
- Munz Contracting
- PAWS Animal Shelter
- Serina Ann Photography
- W Productions

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**The Chamber’s Turning 100. Let’s Celebrate with Enthusiasm!**

This year’s **Chamber Annual Dinner will be September 19** at the Champaign Aviation Museum – to coincide with the month that the Chamber was established 100 years ago.

The Chamber was founded as the Urbana Chamber of Commerce on September 29, 1919. This was just a few months after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, to end World War I, and Congress approved the 19th Amendment for ratification by the states, to allow women to vote.

The October 1, 1919, *Urbana Daily Citizen* proclaimed: **Urbana’s Chamber of Commerce Comes into Being with Enthusiasm**

The article concluded: “We welcome the Chamber of Commerce into the life of our city. It has long been needed to handle our many difficulties. Unity among industries and businessmen has been lacking. The Chamber of Commerce will change all this, and every merchant, manufacturer and businessman will pull together on the same rope to raise Urbana to the high level of a booster town.”

Ever since, the Chamber has been here to support and strengthen local businesses and to help make Champaign County a better place to live, work and enjoy community.

*Look for more information about the Annual Meeting – and other 100th anniversary events – in the summer Chamber newsletter. If you have information or artifacts about the Chamber’s history, please contact us. We’d love to share it at the Annual Meeting.*
Welcome to Our New Home!

We’re feeling right at home in our new offices – in the historic Bancroft House, at 127 W. Court St., Urbana – which we share with the United Way.

We hope you’ll feel at home here, too. We invite Chamber members to use our meeting room and other space when you need to get away from the office – for strategic planning, interviewing job candidates and other uses. We even have a patio area available for your special occasions.

To learn more or reserve space: please contact us at (937) 653-5764 or info@champaignohio.com.

About the Bancroft House: Built in about 1855, this Italianate-style house was home to three generations of the Bancroft family, from the 1880s through 2000.

The residence was converted in 2005 for use by a real estate firm, with new electrical and plumbing service and structural renovations. The original doors and woodwork remain.

By the way, if you happen to go to our former location, 107 N. Main St., Urbana, you’ll find the new home of Chamber member Universal Home Health Care & Hospice.

Join Us for Lunch & Learn

Chamber members and Chamber-members-to-be have been gaining a lot from our monthly Lunch & Learn Series. We’ve averaged 21 attendees so far this year.

Attendees come away with valuable information to apply to their businesses and personal development – all while enjoying networking and lunching on delicious food prepared by Paul’s Catering.

Recent topics have included the Stigma of Addiction, Social Media, Marketing, and Aggression Management. Upcoming topics include Customer Service, Workforce Development, Effective Communication, Internships, Suicide Prevention, Health Insurance Benefits, Community Outreach, and Social Media Part 2.

Lunch & Learns are held 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month at the Champaign County Library, 1060 Scioto St., Urbana. Cost is $10. Call us for information and to make a reservation, (937) 653-5764.

Susie & Sara Making Connections

They took on new roles with the Chamber earlier this year, but Susie Koennecke, Executive Director, and Sara Neer, Administrative Coordinator, are not new to the Chamber – or promoting Champaign County business.

Susie, who has been with the Chamber since 2017, is originally from Canada and has lived in Ohio since 2009 with her husband, Kirk Koennecke, superintendent of Graham Local Schools. With the Chamber she has worked to strengthen ties between businesses and the community. And she puts her customer service, leadership and community-building experience to work to help make Champaign County a better place to live, work and play.

Sara, who grew up in Urbana, has eight years’ experience in the banking industry and has volunteered for Chamber events and committees – most recently the iLead-Champaign County Young Professionals group. She lives in Urbana with her husband, Derek, and their children, Julien, Mira and Esme, and is dedicated to helping the community grow and prosper.

Chamber Member Benefit Spotlight

Tuition Discount and Scholarships

Thanks to our new partnership with Urbana University and Franklin University, Chamber members, their employees and employees’ dependents are eligible for these valuable education benefits:

20% Tuition Discount – for Chamber members who enroll in online associate, bachelor’s and master’s degree and certificate programs offered by Franklin University, including classes offered on-site at Urbana University, a branch campus of Franklin University. This benefit includes free books for the classes.

Scholarships – up to five $9,000 scholarships to be awarded to dependent children of Chamber members, to attend Urbana University. The scholarships are renewable for up to four years and can be used toward tuition and room and board for on-campus students pursuing an undergraduate degree. The scholarship will be split between fall and spring terms.
Mark Your Calendars. Prepare for Fun.

Here’s a sampling of not-to-miss events coming up in Champaign County:

**Historic Home and Garden Tour, June 29 and 30:** This year’s tour, a project of the Champaign County Preservation Alliance, will feature historic homes, a business and a church in Urbana. Tickets cost $12 in advance, on the CCPA website, and $15 at the welcome tent during the event, at East Market and Locust streets.

a juried art show, demonstrations, exhibits, children’s arts activities, performing artists on the Courthouse Plaza stage, and a feast of specialty and gourmet foods from vendors and downtown restaurants. Also enjoy guided riding and walking tours of the city’s abundance of 19th century architecture. Brought to you by the Monument Square District.

**Other summer events include:**

**Rotary Chicken BBQ and Fireworks** — July 4 at Grimes Field

**Our Towne Mechanicsburg Summer Celebration** — July 13

**Champaign County Fair** — August 2-9, Champaign County Fairgrounds

**Mid-Eastern Regional Fly-in (MERFI)** — Aug. 17 and 18, Grimes Field, including parade of planes, biplane rides, Wings & Wheels car, truck and bike show, antique airplanes, and local food vendors

**Pony Wagon Days** — Sept. 5-7, downtown St. Paris

**Connect on the Links June 26 at Chamber Golf Outing**

Sign up now for a friendly round of golf at the Chamber’s annual outing, June 26, on the Urbana Country Club’s original Dye-designed course. Shotgun start at 10 a.m.

Cost $400 per foursome. $40 off when you register by May 15. Includes dinner.

Call or email to register: (937) 653-5764, info@champaignohio.com.

To promote Champaign County tourist attractions and events, the Champaign County Visitors Bureau participated in the AAA Great Vacations Travel EXPO in February. More than 11,700 attended.

**The Taste of Champaign County: How Fresh It Is**

Savor Champaign County at its freshest at our local farmers’ markets this spring and summer.

**Champaign County Farmers’ Market:** Open every Saturday through October, 9 a.m. to noon, at E. Market and Locust streets in Urbana. Jeff Conley, president, (937) 508-8586. Space available for vendors.

**Mechanicsburg Farmers and Artisans Market:** Open Tuesdays (beginning June 4), 3:30 to 6 p.m. at Heritage Cooperative. Jeff Conley, manager, (937) 508-8586. Space available for vendors.

**St. Paris Farmers Market:** Open Fridays, 2:30 to 6 p.m., in front of the St. Paris Municipal Building, 135 W. Main St., St. Paris (inside municipal garage during inclement weather). (937) 207-8798.

**Don’t forget:** Champaign County’s **virtual farmers market** is available year-round, at champaignoh.locallygrown.net.

**Proceeds support your Chamber!** Thanks to our Gold Sponsor, CRSI, and other sponsors. Call us about sponsorship opportunities.
**Leadership Champaign County Members Establish Four ‘Little Free Libraries’**

Three members of the Chamber’s Leadership Champaign County program, Brittany Lewis, Tonya McGuire and Chrissy Yoder, held a ribbon-cutting at Gwynne Street Park for one of four Little Free Libraries they are establishing as their Leadership project.

Their project also includes a Little Free Library at Melvin Miller Park and two to be added at Lions Park in West Liberty and Concord Community Center Park. Leadership Champaign County helps participants enhance their community leadership skills.

Little Free Libraries are neighborhood book exchanges for readers of all ages, established in all 50 states and more than 90 countries — more than 80,000 total. You can borrow books from the libraries and drop off books for others to read.

This Leadership Champaign project is being sponsored by Lewis Farms, McGuire Farm and Excavating LLC, Security National Bank and Yoder Grain Farms. Book and monetary donations may be made to the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce.

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**Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors**

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**County Library Opens Maker Space**

Chamber ribbon-cutting celebrated the opening of the Champaign County Library’s Imagine Lab, which offers public access to a wide range of do-it-yourself technology, including 3D printers, a wide format printer for banner making, a heat press, sewing equipment, a sublimation printer for printing designs on T-shirts and coffee mugs, media conversion equipment and items that can be checked out, such as robotic kits and coding devices.

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**Please Take Advantage of These Resources...**

- Visit ChampaignOhio.com to keep up with the latest on the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau — and look in your inbox for our event calendar, emailed weekly to Chamber members.

- Pick up the new Champaign County Community and Membership Guide at the Chamber.

- Send us your event dates to be included in the 2020 Champaign County Calendar. Calendar sales support the Visitors Bureau, helping us promote Champaign County tourism.

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From left, at the Gwynne Street Park Little Free Library: Connie Craig, Jeff Williams, Jeremy Sigler, and Brittany Lewis and daughter, Natalie, all of Security National Bank; Chrissy Yoder, Yoder Grain Farms; Adam Moore, City of Urbana; Tonya and Oliver McGuire, McGuire Farm and Excavating; Ryan Lantz, ground/parks supervisor; and Sara Neer of the Chamber.