

# Owen County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Corporation Business Life

Owen County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Corporation Newsletter

P.O. Box 87  
Spencer, IN 47460  
812-829-3245

Winter 2003

## Community Awards Top Program At Chamber/EDC Annual Meeting

### Board Members...

Dave Henk  
*President*

Mike Derleth  
*Vice President*

Becky Brown  
*Treasurer*

Mary Wheeler  
*Secretary*

Barbara Pigati  
*Executive Secretary*

Linda Epeards  
Sarah Harrison

Bill Pursell  
Sherri Sloan

Gordon Wells

### Ex-Officio...

Dean Bruce  
*Spencer Town Council*

Byron Stockwell  
*Owen County Commissioners*

Chris Wesley  
*Gospport Town Council*



With former Indiana University basketball star Kent Benson as the guest speaker, the recently reorganized Owen County Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation held their "first" official banquet recently at Canyon Inn.

While Benson addressed the audience on the "ABCs of Success", the evening also included the announcement of some special awards to members of the community who made a difference for the organization during 2003.

With OCCC/EDC Treasurer Becky Brown serving as emcee, the first honors came in the form of three honorarium awards... first to Carter Bell of Patricksburg, owner of Bell Pyrotechnics, for the outstanding fireworks display during the July 4th holiday, sponsored this year by the chamber. It was explained Bell donated both his time and additional fireworks at cost - and some at no charge - to make sure the community show would be a success.

The second honorarium was presented to Ed Hines from the Owen County State Bank in recognition of the bank's continued support through the donated use of computer equipment

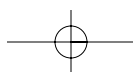
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Becky Brown, chamber treasurer, presented the Owen County Business Person Of The Year to Tom Derleth, left, while Mike Derleth, right, was named the Outstanding Community Volunteer Of The Year. (Spencer Evening World courtesy photo)



Becky Brown, right, presents Sarah Harrison with the T. Perry Wesley Community Leader Award at the recent OCCC/EDC Annual Banquet. (Spencer Evening World courtesy photo)



# OCCC/EDC 1st Annual Banquet

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and their meeting room for chamber meetings.

The final honorarium went to Wally DeFord and his mother, Marilyn DeFord, for providing office space for the chamber in their building on E. Morgan Street. The fully accessible location is described by Becky as "an office that reflects the professionalism we want to convey to visitors to Owen County and to prospective new businesses. Wally has provided the office to the OCCC/EDC for several years, reducing the rent substantially to fit the organization's budget."

Other special honors announced during the banquet included the Business Person of the Year to Tom Derleth, T. Perry Wesley Community Leader Award to Sarah Harrison, and the Outstanding Community Volunteer Of The Year honor to Mike Derleth, Tom's brother.

In making the presentation to Sarah, Becky said, "Through the years this organization has presented many awards, and the 2003 T. Perry Wesley Community Leader Award goes to a person who has made her mark in many ways.

"Although volunteering in the community has been important, the recipient has also excelled in dedication to her employer and the many people she comes in contact with daily... and she was a close friend and coworker of the late Mr. Wesley.

"As a member of the OCCC/EDC board, a previous member of the Spencer Zoning Board, a member of Delta Theta Tau Sorority and other community functions, she has made her presence well known... but it is for her community-oriented work for World Arts, Inc. and the *Spencer Evening World* that we honor Sarah Harrison."

Noting that Sarah has been a member of the *SEW/World Arts* team 33 years, Becky continued, "In a 1996 Cluttered Desk column by *Evening World* Editor Tom Douglas, he talked about a decision by Sarah and her husband, Bill, to move to Panama City, Florida. Their new home and jobs

in the Sunshine State were fine, but they didn't come close to what they loved in Owen County. As a result, their life away from Owen County lasted only a short time and they returned to Spencer. Sarah returned to her post at the *Evening World* while Bill also joined the *Evening World* team.

"From a community standpoint, Sarah may be best known for the tremendous success of her brain-testing Treasure Hunt each summer, a project that has become one of the major events connected with the start of the Owen County Fair.

"From her employer's position, Sarah's value comes in a much wider range of areas, with the prime emphasis placed on being a great people person - someone who makes it a point to go the extra mile for every customer involved with the commercial printing plant or newspaper office."

On behalf of the chamber, Becky noted, "Sarah has become a trusted and valued member of the OCCC/EDC Board of Directors. She brings with her the same values of caring and hard work that is part of her daily life. She created the logo for the newly merged organization and has been responsible for a tremendous marketing campaign to promote the growth of the OCCC/EDC. She has put her heart into making this organization a success."

Near the conclusion of the meeting Becky was presented a check for more than \$2,800, the chamber's profit from a project coordinated by Sarah, and supported by chamber members, to produce the 2003 OCCC/EDC Directory.

The other two awards for 2003 went to a pair of brothers who have become very active members of the chamber and the community. They operate Indiana Hardwood Specialists, Inc. at the junction of 231/67 six miles north of Spencer.

In regard to Tom Derleth's award as Business Person Of The Year, Becky said, "Owen County has seen many changes in the last three decades. We have grown steadily, building on the strong foundation of agribusiness that

has been the time-honored occupation of many families throughout our history. We have added another row of solid blocks to our economic base with the growth of manufacturing, printing and the timber industries. We have been fortunate to become home and partner to both large and small employers whose products are sold in our backyard, across the nation and around the world.

"We want to recognize someone who came to Owen County because he saw a community where an opportunity existed to build a business, where people wanted good jobs and where he wanted to put down roots.

"Tom Derleth grew up on the south side of Indianapolis. While a student at Southport High School he worked part time for Davidson Industries, where his father was a purchasing agent. Following graduation Tom joined the company full time.

"The early 1970s found Tom ready to move on and he began manufacturing and installing hardwood flooring in Bloomington. Opportunity came in 1978 when he purchased property in Owen County that had been the location of the John Deere dealership. At the same time he bought the remains of a sawmill that had burned down in Beaver, Ohio. He rebuilt the equipment and reassembled it at the new location known locally as 'The Junction' where he began to manufacture railroad ties as well as hardwood flooring. In time, the sawmill was dismantled to make room for a new warehouse for the flourishing flooring business.

"Today, Indiana Hardwood Specialists, Inc. employs 45 people and produces 3 million square feet of flooring per year. The company is currently building a new 10,000 square foot warehouse for incoming rough lumber and plan for additional expansions in the future.

"Tom and his wife, Ronda have been generous to our community and to our state. They donated all the hardwood flooring and shared in the cost of installation for the new Owen County Family YMCA. They provided all of the flooring in the new addition to the Governor's

# Chamber Looks Back On 2003: Looks Toward Promising Future

Dave Henk, president of the Owen County Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation, Inc. had the pleasure of reporting this week on the "first year" of the reorganized organization, emphasizing a strong dedication to continued growth.

Speaking during the organization's banquet and awards night at Canyon Inn, Henk explained, "We started out as two organizations. Thanks to a ton of work in the office by Barb (executive secretary Barbara Pigati) who is more than a secretary, by board members who gave a huge amount of time and energy, and from our members, we now have a strong, growing organization working for Owen County."

The chamber's general meetings have involved many varied activities including a tour of the new Owen County Family YMCA, a lesson on predatory

lending and the resulting impact on community residents, emergency preparedness, the Owen County Learning Network, property tax issues, small business development and details of the upcoming construction project at Owen Valley High School.

The OCCC/EDC also sponsored two legislative breakfasts, awarded a scholarship to Lindsey Ann Whaley (attending Butler University), and held a golf outing at Rolling Meadows Golf Course to help support the scholarship fund.

Henk also noted the importance of the chamber-supported "first rate" fireworks show for July 4th (thanks to the dedication of Mike Derleth), and a successful booth at the Owen County Fair that gave the organization good community exposure.

The year also included numerous daily requests to the chamber office by phone, mail and e-mail from individuals, schools, etc. for information on local

business demographics, county information packets and other details about Owen County.

Henk emphasized, "We are learning as we grow, and I hope I hear from all of our members about what we can do better... how we can help make the fast growth that is happening in Owen County be a good thing for everyone."

In addition to the report from Henk, board member Gordon Wells conducted an election of three board members whose terms will expire in 2006. The trio includes Chris Wesley, Gary Fiscus and Sherri Sloan.

Sloan will be continuing her current post on the board while Wesley and Fiscus will replace Wells and Bill Pursell, whose terms expire at the end of this year. Wesley has served as an ex-officio member, representing the Town of Gosport, but will now move to regular board status.

## Quarterly Financial Statement

October - December 2003

### Income:

Donations - Fireworks, Scholarships, Christmas Lights	\$1,175.00
Donations - Economic Dev.	1,380.00
Dues - 2004 Membership	4,050.00
Interest Income	1.40
Other Income - Advertising, Auction & Banquet	4,586.20
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$11,192.60</b>

### Expenses:

Payroll	1,354.00
Insurance - Business	300.00
Meetings - Annual	1,077.91
Office - Internet	59.85
Postage	188.96
Rent - Office	375.00
Supplies - Decorations (Christmas repairs & Banquet)	312.02
Supplies - Membership	150.00
Taxes-Withheld from Payroll	170.74
Taxes - Federal & State	316.09
Utilities - Electric	82.76
Utilities - Electric (Christmas Lights)	231.84
Utilities - Gas	38.13
Utilities - Telephone	366.28

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$4,662.10</b>
<b>Total Income-Expenses</b>	<b>6,510.50</b>

## OCCC/EDC Banquet

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Mansion in Indianapolis and several Indiana churches have new flooring thanks to the Derleths."

In conclusion, Becky said, "We are indeed fortunate that Tom Derleth decided to bring his talents and dreams for the future to Owen County."

For the second half of the Derleth brothers team, Becky explained the reasons for awarding Mike Derleth the award as the Outstanding Community Volunteer Of The Year. She said, "It is the person with vision who makes a difference. It is the person who sees a need and sets out to fill that need who will make a community better. To paraphrase a famous statement of Ted Kennedy, 'Some men see things as they are and say - Why? Other men see things that seem impossible and say - Why Not?' We have someone just like that in our 2003 Volunteer Person Of The Year. We have someone who sees a task that is overwhelming to most and says - why not? Then he just quietly and steadily goes out and accomplishes that which most feel is impossible.

"Marion County has given Owen County two of its good sons and we are grateful to have them.

"Mike Derleth also grew up on the south side of Indianapolis and graduated from Cathedral High School. After

graduation he pursued a degree in electrical engineering and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. He lived there from 1971 to 2001 when he decided to join his brother in the hills of Sweet Owen.

"It didn't take long for Mike to volunteer his talents to the community by becoming a member of the Owen County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He is currently the vice president of the newly merged OCCC/EDC Board.

"Last year many thought Mike was tilting at windmills when he said why not have a Fourth of July fireworks in Owen County. He didn't see a problem - just because there was no money, no plan and not much time to do either. It was because Mike believed - why not? He practically single handedly collected the money and made the contacts to pull together a memorable evening for families in the area.

"In addition to the fireworks project, Mike has been instrumental in placing the banners along Morgan Street and around the courthouse. He has also given time and effort to the Christmas lights project and we can expect to enjoy an increased display thanks to his work.

"Mike has become a great asset to Owen County, a dedicated volunteer who gives back to his community."

# Meet The Newly Elected 2004 OCCC/EDC Board Members

New members of the 2004 Board of Directors were elected at the Annual Meeting, November 11, 2003. They are Sherri Sloan, Gary Fiscus and Chris Wesley. The newly elected members will serve for three years with their terms expiring the end of December 2006.



**Sherri Sloan**

Meet one of the members of the Owen County Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation, Sherri Sloan. Sherri has served as an American Family agent since 1997 and presently has an office located at 171 N. Fletcher Ave. in Spencer. In 1999, 2001 and 2003, Sherri won the American Family Life Insurance Award and she has been Agent of the Month three times. American Family Insurance's motto is, "All your Protection Under One Roof." The local agency is staffed with one licensed customer service representative, Amy Newton, to assist you with all your insurance needs.

Being involved in The Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation keeps Sherri busy, but she still finds time for membership at Lifeway Baptist Church, Tri Kappa Euchrerama, and most importantly her family. She has two girls, Britney and Cassie Staley, who are actively involved in sports and color guard at Owen Valley High School. She is the daughter of Jim and Liz Vest. She has one brother, Tim, sister-in-law, Susan and two nephews, Cody and Dalton.

Sherri graduated from Owen



**Gary Fiscus**

Valley High School and attended Indiana State University.

Gary Fiscus graduated from Spencer High School in 1964. He attended Indiana State University in Terre Haute; Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida; and Amarillo Bible Chair in Amarillo, Texas. He began full-time preaching for the Westview Church of Christ, Hamilton, Ohio in 1968. He married Janeann Van Buskirk in 1967 and they have three daughters and six grandchildren.

Gary is the son of the late local businessman Foster Fiscus. Gary's mother is Doris Fiscus who still resides on County Line Road four miles south of Gosport.

Mr. Fiscus is well acquainted with the business world. He has served as president of the local Chamber of Commerce twice. Before moving back to Spencer he worked with the Chamber and the mayor's office in Connersville, Indiana. Gary ran for county clerk while residing in Fayette County. He served as an elder in the church at Connersville and oversaw not only the spiritual aspects of the church, but the financing as well.

While living in Bloomington for ten years, Mr. and Mrs. Fiscus owned and operated University Typing. Fiscus also worked in livestock through his father's farm and built up a herd of several cattle for the ten year period he was at Bloomington.

In a partnership arrangement, Mr. and Mrs. Fiscus with a friend from Indianapolis owned and operated the Hoosier House restaurant

near Waverly, Indiana.

Since his father's death Gary has assumed the business responsibilities in running the farm and real estate investments his father started many years ago.

He has a vested interest in planning and zoning, managing farmland and real estate lots in both Owen and Monroe counties.

He has preached for 36 years in the church of Christ, and has been back in Spencer for the past 12 years.

Gary has served in the Lions Club as a District Governor, and has a special interest in Leader Dogs for the Blind and the Indiana School for the Blind. He is a recipient of the coveted Sagamore of the Wabash, awarded him by the late Governor Frank O'Bannon and presented by former State Representative Vern Tincer.

Fiscus has served as president of the Owen-Monroe Cattlemens Association for the past several years. He is on the board of the Indiana State Beef Cattle Association and a member of the National Cattlemens Beef Association. He has lobbied on The Hill in Washington D.C. on three separate occasions for beef and ag-related issues.

Gary is also a member of the Purdue PCARET committee which is responsible for securing both state and federal monies via grants, etc. for research at the university.

Concerning work with the Chamber and Economic Development groups Fiscus stated, "I find it interesting that Bloomington is trying soybean fuel in their transit system vehicles. When I was president of the Chamber before, I kept bumping heads with "city folks" who wanted to blacktop and concrete everything. I always wanted to see how many cows I could pasture. Now that the "city folks" are interested in our soybeans for fuel, I wonder where they think we ought to grow it? If, by being an OCCC/EDC board member, I can help in some way I am always glad to be a working part of the community."

**Business Life**

# Business Life

## New Board Members

(Continued from page 4)



**Chris Wesley**

Chris Wesley is the third new Owen County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development board member.

He is a full time realtor and is the owner of Wesley Real Estate located on Harrison Street in Spencer. Chris is a member of the Bloomington Board of Realtors (BBOR) and the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors (MIBOR).

Chris and his wife, Nancy, have four children, Danielle, Kegan, Kolby and Daucyn and they reside in Gosport.

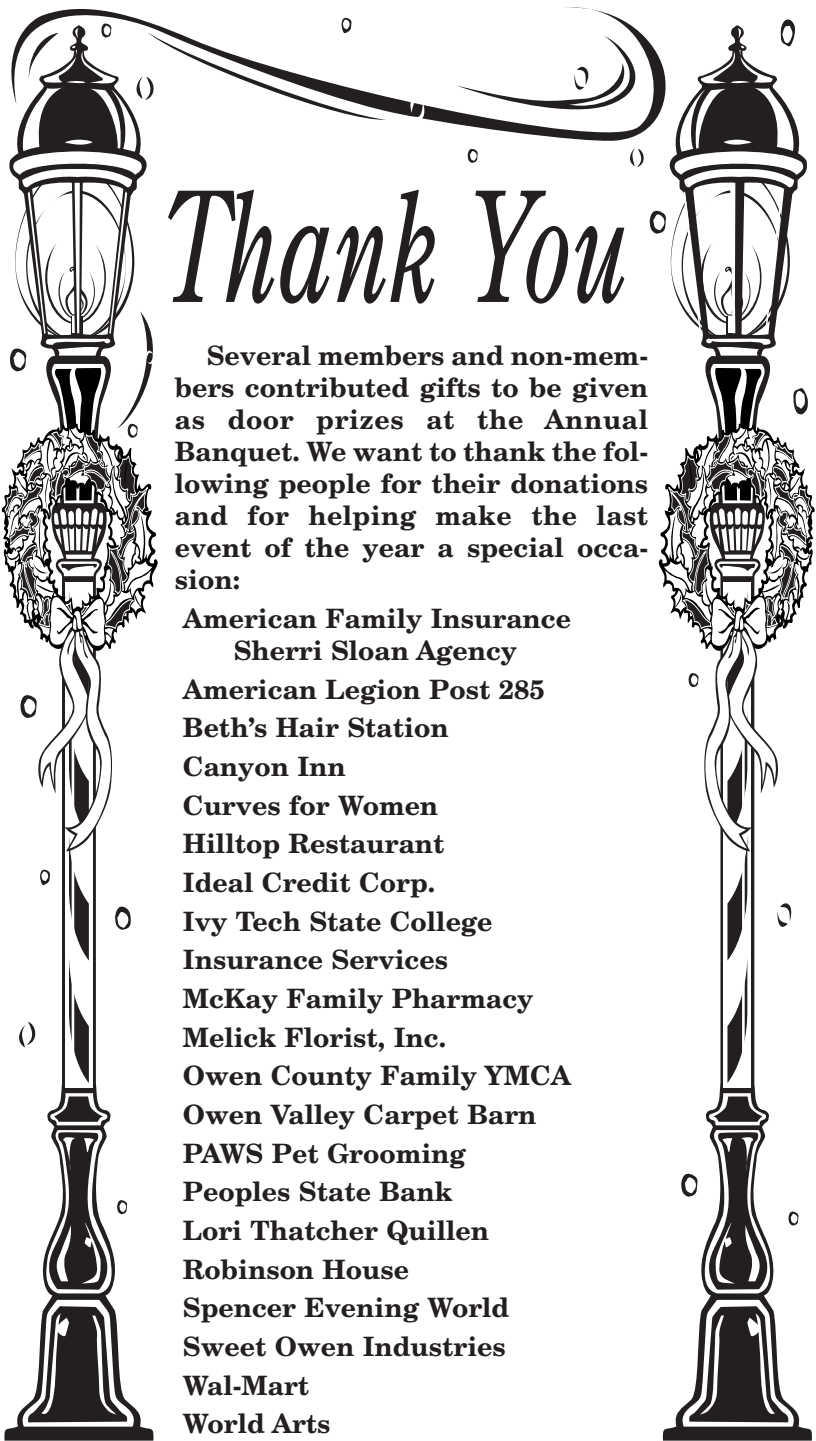
He attended elementary school in Gosport and graduated from Owen Valley High School. Chris is a Little League basketball and softball coach.

A Gosport town board member until 2004, Chris is presently an Ex Officio member of OCCC/EDC and looks forward to being a voting member in 2004.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Board Meetings – 1st Tuesday of month.

General Meetings – 4th Thursday of month.



## Thank You

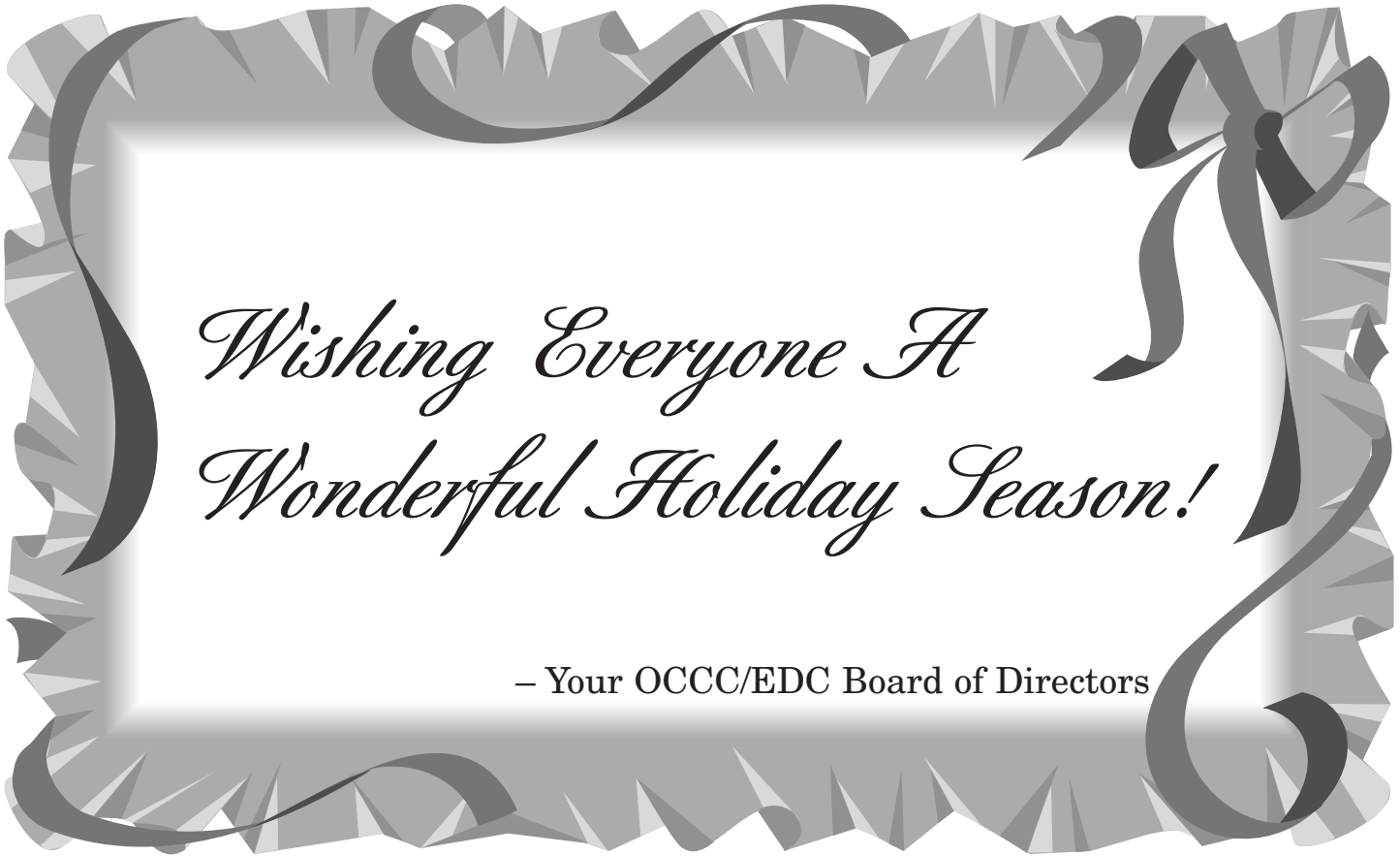
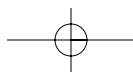
Several members and non-members contributed gifts to be given as door prizes at the Annual Banquet. We want to thank the following people for their donations and for helping make the last event of the year a special occasion:

- American Family Insurance
- Sherrri Sloan Agency
- American Legion Post 285
- Beth's Hair Station
- Canyon Inn
- Curves for Women
- Hilltop Restaurant
- Ideal Credit Corp.
- Ivy Tech State College
- Insurance Services
- McKay Family Pharmacy
- Melick Florist, Inc.
- Owen County Family YMCA
- Owen Valley Carpet Barn
- PAWS Pet Grooming
- Peoples State Bank
- Lori Thatcher Quillen
- Robinson House
- Spencer Evening World
- Sweet Owen Industries
- Wal-Mart
- World Arts

## 2004 Membership Dues

The 2004 membership packets have been sent out and several of you have already responded. Thank you! Those who have yet to renew, please take a moment to complete the survey and "About You" sheets and send in with your renewal for membership information.

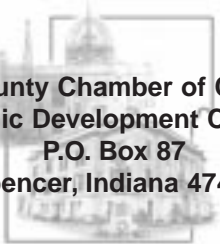
We look forward to having you help us make next year even greater than this year, as we continue to grow in service to you, the members, and the community.



*Wishing Everyone A  
Wonderful Holiday Season!*

– Your OCCC/EDC Board of Directors

Owen County Chamber of Commerce  
& Economic Development Corporation  
P.O. Box 87  
Spencer, Indiana 47460



*For all your printing and publishing needs...*



**Evening World, Inc.**

**World Arts, Inc.**

