

Much of the talk at this month's Washington County Chamber of Commerce meeting revolved around local events that will take place this fall in and around Salem. The chamber met on June 28 at John Jones GM administrative building.

Board President Hank Jacobi was excited to talk about the Chamber's newest event, Eikosi, which will be held at Salem Speedway on September 1. Eikosi is a beer and wine festival that, according to Jacobi, will "celebrate our local crafts, wineries, breweries and agriculture." In addition to beer and wine tasting, Eikosi will also feature many booths set up by local vendors in a similar format to Friday Night on the Square, which was also brought up during the meeting.

The fall edition of Friday Night on the Square will take place on the evening of September 16 from 6 to 10 pm. Marketing Director Anita Bush said they nearly sold all of their available booth spaces on the Square last fall and they hope to meet with similar success this year.

Jacobi also talked briefly about the board's partnership with the Old Settlers' Day committee and their plans for expanding the annual celebration this year. One of the changes the Chamber is helping to initiate is the addition of vendors setting up shop on the museum grounds during OSD. It was mentioned during an earlier meeting this year that the Chamber wishes to assist the OSD committee revitalize Old Settlers' Day over the next few years, bringing the celebration back to its former glory.

The Chamber of Commerce recently announced that their membership has reached 240 businesses, a significant milestone, and Bush said their numbers are poised to continue growing. She pointed out Washington County Artisans & Farmers, one of the Chamber's newest members, specifically as an organization that is preparing to increase their own footprint within the community.

Artisans & Farmers is a group of volunteers who meet every Saturday morning in Pekin Park to showcase and sell local arts, crafts and produce to the public. The organization has become so popular that they have decided to also take their wares to Salem on Saturday afternoons as well starting July 14.

"Artisans & Farmers and Eikosi celebrate what's being produced in Washington County," Jacobi explained. He added that it is important for Salem's business community to support local events like these to maintain and protect the area's local heritage.

The Chamber of Commerce meets at noon on the fourth Thursday of every month. If you would like to RSVP for July's meeting or would like to know how to acquire a vendor application for any of the festivals going on this fall, contact the Chamber office at 812-883-4303 or by email at info@washingtoncountychamber.org. More information is also available at www.washingtoncountychamber.org.