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Two business owners share insight at Chamber lunch



Williston Chamber President Marc Pompeo

Story and Photos

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WILLISTON -- Two Williston Chamber of Commerce members shared insight concerning their business lives with others during a luncheon Thursday afternoon (April 11).

Williston Chamber President Marc Pompeo said the top two volunteers of the Chamber are Dylan Robertson (left) and Karen Otero (Number One), seen here late Thursday morning.



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Michael Langston, owner of Turning Point Fitness



Steve Quinata, owner of Williston Well & Pump

Michael Langston, owner of Turning Point Fitness, and Steve Quinata, owner of Williston Well & Pump, spoke about the origins of their businesses.

The two business owners sponsored the lunch. Chamber President Marc Pompeo opened the meeting and luncheon by mentioning that the Chamber plans to have three

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luncheons in 2019. Pompeo sought other business interests to volunteer to sponsor the next luncheon.

The meal was catered by a local barbecue restaurant. It included pulled pork, macaroni and cheese, steamed green beans, garlic bread, cookies for dessert, and either tea or water. None of the diners had to pay for their meals, thanks to the gift from Langston and Quinata.

The meeting was held in the Williston Community Center, which is connected to the brand-new Williston City Hall.

Langston was the first to speak. Most recently, he was elected as the vice president of the Williston Chamber of Commerce.

Langston said before he bought the gym, he prayed to God. He and his wife had faith that the new business would succeed.

Now into his third year of the venture, part of his new definition of success is that he has the ability to determine how to use his own time, he said.

“Like today,” he said, “I got to substitute (teach) at WCCA (Williston Central Christian Academy).”

Langston said he is thankful to have the opportunity to help mold the minds of young people.

Langston then began speaking about how the Williston Chamber of Commerce has helped him in business. Steve McMillen (McMillen Surveying Inc.) suggested that Langston join the Chamber, Langston said.

At the time, he said, the city was in the midst of the procedure involved with revising the growth management plan. Langston became involved with that process. Part of the most recent revisions to the city’s growth management plan included a new element – economic growth.

Then, after becoming involved with SCORE Nature Coast – thanks to his association with the Williston Chamber of Commerce, Langston said, he created a profile on the [**Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center**](#).

The Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center (FLVEC) is an online directory of resource agencies that serve entrepreneurs. FLVEC is powered by The Corridor, a regional economic development initiative of the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida and the University of Florida.

Jim Green, a certified mentor with SCORE, has been very helpful to Langston, he said.

Williston is primed to grow in an extremely positive manner, Langston said, and the members of the business community can link arms to create a network for development in the city.

He hopes to look across a room like the one in which everyone was meeting that day, a decade from now, and then to be able to say this point in history was the point when entrepreneurs came together, and continued creating strong community ties leading to the general public enjoying the progress that will have become commonplace in 10 years.

“Let’s link arms and get this thing done,” Langston said as he spoke to inspire other business owners to enlist the whole of the Williston in this effort for positive economic growth, which he sees will lead to a bright future.

President Pompeo said he has reached out to the developer of property that used to be Williston High School, but he has not heard back yet. He is certain that the retail

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outlet developer will communicate with the Williston Chamber at some point in the future, when it is further along in its development of that property.

After people had started their buffet-style BBQ lunch, Quinata spoke.

In addition to President Pompeo and Vice President Langston, the other officers of the Chamber are Treasurer Julie Brannan and Secretary Lon Sullivan, and directors Crystal Cull, Mary Martha Hartley, Paul Jones, Quinata and Heidi Schwiebert.

Quinata told the other Chamber members that he moved to Williston in 1994.

One day, his well stopped working. He had never had a well before. His now late father showed him where the well was.

Quinata repaired the well with a part that he bought from a seller in Belleview, when he could have bought it cheaper at Ace Hardware. After that experience, Quinata told his father his plan was to make wells and pumps his business.

For 10 years, Quinata said he “told family and friends about fixing wells.” He never surrendered on the idea of having this business.

His business is in its ninth year now, he said. Quinata began in a storefront across the street from City Hall. Without the help of his parents or his former landlord, Quinata said, he would not have made it through the first part of this venture.

Now, after working seven-days-a-week, all year long, for the first three years -- never taking a day off -- he has built Williston Well & Pump into the success story it is today -- helping people with their well and pump needs.

He started in a four-door Buick with \$200 worth of parts, he said. Today, Quinata said, his equipment is worth about \$70,000.

Quinata said he is honored to have been nominated and elected to the Williston Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and he is happy to volunteer his time, talents and other resources for service to this group.

The luncheon meeting included discussion and action by the officers and the Board of Directors. While this was a luncheon meeting, another potential Chamber function is a mixer -- where business interests spend more time socializing with each other one-on-one or in small groups, to strengthen the network from being part of the Chamber.