

HardisonInk.com

Chamber set to discuss branding Dixie County



Dixie County Chamber of Commerce Co-President Andrew Rains welcomes everyone to the meeting on Thursday.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 11, 2019 at 8:09 a.m.

CROSS CITY – “Dixie County, A Great Place to Live, Work and Play,” is a slogan that the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce includes on its signs, its website, correspondence and elsewhere.

Among the discussion items at the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce meeting Thursday (Aug. 8) was the start of a potential to brand the county.

“The Town of Fried Mullet and Swamp Cabbage” was a thought for Cross City as something to remember the county seat by or to brand it, according to a story about one previous visitor to a Chamber meeting. That person likes fried mullet and cooked hearts of palms.

Swamp cabbage is cooked from the heart being taken from the sabal palm, Florida’s state tree. Once the heart is taken, the tree dies.

As for whether it is legal to harvest this tree, the 2017 version of Florida Statute 15.031, with historical origins in the 1953 statutes 1, 2, chapter 28126, proclaim the sabal palmetto palm as the state tree.

It is OK to harvest, according to law. The law says, “15.031 State tree.—

(1) The sabal palmetto palm, which is also known as the cabbage palm, and sometimes as the cabbage palmetto, a tree native to Florida, is hereby designated as the Florida state tree.

(2) Said state tree being now extensively used for commercial purposes, the provisions of this section shall not be construed to limit in any manner said use thereof in business, industry, commerce, for food, or for any other commercial purposes.”

HardisonInk.com

While the Chamber members did not discuss the harvest of the tree, the mention of the Cross City branding idea led to potential new business to be discussed at the monthly Chamber meeting on Thursday afternoon – the branding of all Dixie County.

As for what to tag Dixie County with as brand, Ruth Ann Lovelace suggested “Dixie County – The Most Patriotic County In The USA.”

Dixie County taking the title or brand as “The Most Patriotic County” was perhaps inspired by the significant American flag displays the Chamber puts up next to U.S. Highway 19 in memory of veterans. Those flags and crosses are thanks to the Chamber and people who memorialize veterans by purchasing the flags for a couple of years at a time as a fundraiser for the Chamber.

This may have given rise to the idea of being patriotic in Dixie County, and that might be a catchy and memorable brand for the county.

With the likelihood that some other county somewhere in the United States might want to lay claim to “The Most Patriotic” title, and partly as a result of this discussion starting in the very waning moments of the monthly meeting, Andrew Rains, one of the co-presidents of this Chamber this year, decided to put it on the agenda for more people to discuss at the next monthly meeting.

Cheryll Jones, the other co-president of the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce this year, was unable to attend the monthly meeting for August due to unanticipated work demands. All of this Chamber’s officers and directors are volunteers.

Some Chambers of Commerce in the Tri-County Area pay people as part-time employees to perform office work and the like.

Another significant business and community matter discussed at the Dixie County Chamber meeting was how the county as a whole intends to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Dixie County coming into existence.

The Centennial Celebration is not just a Dixie County Chamber of Commerce idea. There is no particular group, yet, either government or private, that is taking the reins for leading the celebration in April of 2021.

The Chamber is not even consolidating the various forms of celebration, and according to discussion at the meeting, the five Dixie County Board of County Commissioners are not yet wanting to commit to anything to herald the moment in 2021 when the county marks its 100th anniversary as a county in Florida.

Instead, the various civic, veterans, sports, municipal, county and other organizations or affiliations will each be on their own – each independently and separately having a celebration, or not having one to recognize the centennial for this county.

Dixie County Chamber Co-President Rains suggested, and the members present on Thursday afternoon in the Dixie County Public Library at Cross City agreed, that the Cross City Airport Fly-in and Dixie County Chamber Expo slated for April 21, 2021, will incorporate a celebration of the county centennial.

Rains said that this annual event hosted primarily by the Chamber will provide a definite point as an attraction for thousands of visitors -- as it has in the past few years.

There was mention of a thought of letting the Dixie County Historical Society have a major display in the Horseman’s Park Building on April 21, 2021. That is the Fly-In date that year and this building has been a centerpiece of the Chamber Expo each year.

As for the Centennial Celebration in April of 2021 for Dixie County, there may be a rodeo. There may be a concert. There may be a parade. There may be a beauty pageant. There may be a fishing tournament. There may be a kayak race. There may be a

HardisonInk.com

barbecue competition. New flags or banners may be made. Coins may be minted. Any number of these ideas may reach fruition.

Time will tell as to which organizations step up to the plate in their own ways to recognize the 100-year point in time for Dixie County.

Bob Leichner (foreground), former owner of the now closed Dixie Music Center, is seen at the most recent Chamber meeting. Always active in the Chamber, Leichner was asked about bands and setting up to provide for a concert at the April 21,

2021 Fly-In. He provided information and there is an expectation that he will help guide efforts if that is something added for that year's fly-in, as well as the 2020 event. The Fly-In for 2020 is scheduled for May 2, 2020. Leichner significantly helped the 2019 Fly-In in regard to music and acoustics, as he has done so in the



past. In fact, the public address system for the 2019 event was the best ever, in no small part thanks to Leichner. This year's Fly-In which was April 27, 2019 also included a separate musical element, which Leichner helped by providing the sound system as well as musical performing artists' participation.

The meeting on Thursday was enjoyable as usual, as the Chamber helps build the business community in the county. Co-President Rains said Chamber members are welcome to every monthly meeting.

The meeting in September is set for Sept. 12, starting at noon, in the big meeting room on the north side of the Dixie County Public Library in Cross City.

Members are welcome, and they may bring guests, Rains said.

Lunch on Thursday was spaghetti with meat sauce, a tossed salad and garlic bread, with sweet or unsweet tea. Debbie DeWeese and Kathryn McInnis provided the delicious lunch for members and guests.

As part of the most recent monthly meeting, Cindy Bellot provided the minutes from the previous month's meeting and those were accepted. Debbie Dembo provided a financial report, showing the Chamber is financially healthy.

Mike Hutto of American Legion Post 383 of Old Town had been scheduled to be the guest speaker; however, he was not present at the meeting Thursday.

Hence, the members and guests were able to speak about the 100-year anniversary of the county and what might happen to recognize that; and, near the last minute of the one-hour meeting, the people spoke about branding Dixie County to help attract more people as visitors.