

Odessa Chamber of Commerce

Minutes of Meeting of December 13, 2005

The meeting was held at the Community Center due to flooding from a broken pipe at the Old Town Hall. Following the flag salute, the minutes of the last meeting and the treasurer's report were read and approved.

A motion was made and carried for the Chamber to buy flowers for the funeral of long-time Chamber member Del Kirstein who passed away on December 10.

Saturday, March 11 was selected as the night for the Chamber banquet. Tom Schafer and the other members of the banquet planning committee submitted a list of suggestions for the banquet for members to consider and decide upon at the next meeting.

Roger Thieme of the Columbia Basin Development League gave an informational presentation on the status of the Odessa sub-aquifer that is slowly being depleted by withdrawals of irrigation water and lack of replenishment due to persistent drought-like conditions. He pointed out the importance of continued cooperation among agricultural producers, corporations involved in food processing, government entities at all levels and interested individuals in this crucial issue. At present there is good legislative support for completion of the irrigation project initially envisioned and begun with the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam in the 1930's. The Washington State Dept. of Ecology has identified the Odessa area sub-aquifer as its number-one priority. There is also major landowner support in the form of financial backing. A study must be completed before any additional water can be drawn from the Columbia River for the project. Governor Gregoire has allocated \$600,000 to fund the study, and many related issues still need to be addressed. But the League is working hard to educate all of the parties involved and to promote completion of the project for the good of the populations affected by the water levels in the sub-aquifer. The League is also trying to obtain additional funding for its efforts from members of the food processing industry who are likely to be affected by any changes in the viability of agricultural producers in the Odessa sub-aquifer area.

The next meeting will return to the Old Town Hall if repairs are completed in time.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrie Schmidt-Crosby
Secretary