

COLDSRING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2022 Recap & 2023 Goals

Hello, Everyone! We were so honored to have you all in attendance at our Annual Scholarship Banquet. All funds collected will go to deserving 2023 Coldspring-Oakhurst Independent High School graduates.

The Annual Scholarship “Best of Banquet” Banquet marks the *first* as we return to pre-COVID-19 era with approximately 160 people in attendance! Wait! Think for a minute---Can you all remember how things were done before COVID? Large crowds vs. social distancing; hugs and kisses vs. masks and waving; in person meetings vs. Zoom; welcoming friends and neighbors into your home vs. immediate family only. I could go on... With that being said, I felt abundantly blessed to be standing in front of the awesome group of people at the Banquet...without a mask Uh oh! Without a mask covering my nose and mouth, I mean! Thank you, God!

To recap 2022, for me, is like a new beginning! The Chamber was able to return to most of its pre-COVID activities. However, since the paradigm shifted in 2020 to shutdown of almost everything to 2021 skating on a thin bed of ice. You know, if we do this: will people come out? Or who do we ask to sponsor something, because everyone was financial strapped from COVID? Well, as the ice got thicker and stronger, so did we! We were able to accomplish the following:

- **Annual Scholarship Banquet** last year was a small intimate event at the Coldspring Community Center for Chamber Members only where we offered awards for
 - Large Business
 - Medium Business
 - Small Business
 - Non-Profit
 - Volunteer of the Year
 - Citizen of the Year
 - ETC....
- **Quarterly Luncheons** focused on the needs of the community with information on first responders, safety, community services and ended with an update of the City of Coldspring from Mayor John Benestante. We actually had to take the microphone from Sheriff Capers—I think he loves his job almost as much as I love mine (LOL!)

- In 2022, we awarded 7 **Scholarships** in the amount of \$5,700. This year, we are set to award the largest dollar amount in the history of the Coldspring Chamber of Commerce!
- **Wolf Creek Car, Truck & Bike Show** set all types of records for us. We had Hot Rod Magazine present, and record attendance throughout the entire weekend! Look out for great things this year as we start planning next month.
- **Christmas on the Square** was reminiscent of those from years back. There was a wide variety of vendors with holiday specials! We had our first Gingerbread House Contest, and were set for a large parade.... However, mother nature had something else in mind. Unfortunately, the parade was rained out, but we did get a chance to judge the floats before the downpour!
- As we said goodbye to some **Board Members**, we welcomed many more, along with new officers.
- The Chamber office was remodeled, and received a much-needed facelift. Gone are the green carpet days!! Stop by to see the new improved office!

The Coldspring Chamber of Commerce is now positioned to better served its members and the residents of San Jacinto County. We are truly grateful to all “the Members of the Chamber” because without you none of this would be possible. For non-Members, we have applications available in the office and on our website for Chamber membership for just a small financial investment.

Goals:

1. In February, we will go to a Retreat where we will fine tune our operational processes, select Chairs for Committees and finalize dates for all 2023 events.
2. As the world has changed, so has this Chamber! Get ready for some great, and innovative things to happen in 2023! For starters, we will promote our current office manager, Mindy Blankemeyer to EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!
3. Next, we will start a campaign whereby we will outreach to large businesses and corporations “outside” of our area for support with our two largest events, Wolf Creek Car, Truck and Bike Show and Christmas on the Square.
4. We will embark upon an Ambassador/Membership campaign or Business Blitz, where we will be dropping by new businesses in the area, but also seeking out dropped members to earn their trust and bring them back into the fold!

Finally, I will make my last “State of the Chamber” speech in September of this year at our Annual Membership Meeting. It has been both a pleasure and a blessing to serve as President of the Coldspring Chamber of Commerce for these past three years. I am pleased with the progress we have made, and know that more great things will happen before my term ends in December through the Grace of God! With that being said, please know that “It takes TWO, The CHAMBER and YOU!” to make this a success. As volunteers, we endeavor to spend our time working for and with you. While we are not perfect, and may occasionally make a mistake, please know that THIS Coldspring Chamber of Commerce is not the same as it used to be. We are focused on the future, and welcome your volunteer time, ideas, input and support. Remember, “It takes TWO, The CHAMBER and YOU!”

God Bless you All,
Barbara S. Justice
President 2022-2023

