

Let's celebrate history, people, future

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What an ironic contrast of eras and industries: Within a barn built in the 1860s, about 100 of Adams County's leaders gathered on Oct. 8 to celebrate the achievements of ACEDC and our economic development partners and investors. The location provided a wonderful connection to our county's heritage, while the people provided a wonderful connection to our county's economic future.

Agriculture's position, as one of the top three industries in Adams County, took center stage as we gathered for ACEDC's 26th Annual Membership Meeting, at Beech Springs Farm, Orrtanna, owned by Jayne and Bill Shord. The lush landscape, gorgeous gardens, and rolling Adams County hillsides surrounded us as the social hour kicked off on the barn's deck. Imagine business chatter, cellphones and technology in our hands, surrounded by strong wooden barn beams, and a green landscape!

It was a warm and friendly atmosphere, as the evening progressed, with ACEDC's business meeting and dinner inside the spacious barn-complete with sparkling chandeliers (another fun contrast!).

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the 25th J. Frank Sapp Volunteer of the Year Award to Deborah Keyser. A member of the board since 2002, Deb has served on the Strategic Planning and Marketing and Membership Committees. Through her position as Market Development Manager for CenturyLink, Deb has supported ACEDC by sponsoring membership mixers for the past four years. She was also instrumental in changing the structure of ACEDC's membership which has led to an increase in membership investment over the past several years.

Two additional people received special recognition and appreciation at the Annual Membership Meeting: Kathy Powley and Gerry Richardson. Both are finishing up their board terms for ACEDC, but have left indelible marks on the organization.

Kathy Powley, Vice President of Commercial Sales with F&M Trust, joined our board in 2012, jumping right in and serving as treasurer. She also served on the Loan Review Committee, providing her lending expertise.

Kathy was instrumental in guiding the organization through various borrowings and grant deals related to the Adams Commerce Center and the Gettysburg Station project in downtown Gettysburg. She is an invaluable asset to this organization and we'll miss her terribly.

Another incredible person we'll miss at ACEDC is Gerry Richardson. He has been involved with ACEDC and the IDA since the beginning! He started Hanover Building Systems, headquartered in Abbottstown, in 1982. A few years ago, Gerry passed along his legacy and sold the business, but

remained involved in ACEDC through October's Annual Meeting.

During his years with ACEDC, Gerry has served on the Executive Committee, Strategic Planning , Marketing and Membership Committees. Additionally, he has served as Vice Chairman of the IDA. We wish Gerry the absolute best in his retirement and can't express how thankful we are for the many years of guidance, support and service Gerry has given to ACEDC.

Thanks are also due to Duane Kanagy and Adams Electric Cooperative for their generous, platinum sponsorship of ACEDC during 2015, which entitled them to title sponsorship and a speaking opportunity at the annual membership meeting. Again, the juxtaposition of time periods and industries was striking, as Duane spoke about the rural electrification of Adam County during Adams Electric Cooperative's early years. What amazing progress we have all witnessed during our lifetimes, let alone the treasured historical stories we heard, as interwoven with ACEDC's Annual Membership Meeting.

We are proud of our organization's 26-year history and the many talented people who have contributed to the organization over the years, bringing us to this point. The Annual Membership Meeting was a great reminder of this, and we look forward to many more milestones to come!

Robin Fitzpatrick is President of the Adams County Economic Development Corporation.