

## Falls City Chamber & Main Street Hold Annual Banquet

(KTNC) - The Falls City Chamber of Commerce and Falls City Main Street organizations held their annual banquet Wednesday night at the Elk's Club.

Eric Barr, the Executive Director of the organizations, recapped activities over the past year and looked ahead to some things on the horizon for 2013.

The past year saw completion of the first phase of the Main Street revitalization project. As they wrap up the first phase of construction, Barr says they're looking ahead and working to secure funding for the next phase of construction. (play audio :25)

Barr recognized local winners of Nebraska Main Street awards. The City of Falls City was named an Outstanding Public Partner; Hoot 'N Annie's was named a Business of the Year; and the Falls City Main Street Organization itself won two awards – one for filing its reports on time and the other for gaining national accreditation.

Another project Barr is working on is a \$25,000 JOBS grant, with funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka. He says the funds will be used to help foster local entrepreneurs. (play audio :11)

Barr says work is also progressing on a National Historic District nomination for Falls City's downtown district. (play audio :22)

New members of both the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Boards were recognized during the program.

New Chamber of Commerce board members are Mary Whitehouse, Kenny Strathman, Lisa Schawang, Rachel Witt, and Kathy Hutfles.

New Main Street Board members are Linda Santo and Carol Bentley. John Martin, Jamie Ankrom, Lindsay Chichester, and Trudy Burenheide are returning board members who will serve additional three-year terms on the Main Street Board.

Main Street president Tony Brunette recognized Cassey Whalen and Diana Orton, who are leaving the Main Street Board. Brunette credited them for helping organize the Main Street Program in Falls City.

Brunette also recognized Karla Rhodd, who he said stepped in while Main Street was without a director last summer and basically ran the organization, and also wrote the JOBS grant application. Lieutenant Governor Rick Sheehy was to have been the speaker at the banquet, but he was unable to attend due to the snow. Barr said there would be a program to recognize Falls City Main Street gaining national accreditation within the next few weeks.