

Gloria Hariston, program and event chair for the Winston-Salem Black Business Chamber, speaks to members of the chamber during the meeting held on Thursday, Oct. 6.



Ernie Pitt, founder and publisher emeritus of The Chronicle, talks about how hosting events can create relationships with other businesses and the community during the Winston-Salem Black Business Chamber meeting held on Thursday, Oct. 6.

Black Chamber meeting focuses on event planning

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Each month members of the Winston-Salem Black Business Chamber (WSBBC) come together to brainstorm ideas that can help take their various business ventures to the next level.

During the meeting held last Thursday, Oct. 6, members discussed how hosting events can help grow business opportunities for small businesses, and build connections with the community. Longtime chamber member and president of Maximum Enterprises Inc., Reginald McCaskill, said hosting events can be a lot of work but they are needed to compete with the mainstream businesses in the area.

"When you are trying to host an event for the people in the community, you have to cross every T and dot every I," he continued. "It is important that everything is in place because that event you are hosting is the first thing people are going to think about when they think about your business."

The past three years Maximum Enterprises, which provides event planning, development courses, grant writing and a number of other services to schools, universities, churches and mentoring programs, has hosted the Triad Minority Business Expo right here in Winston-Salem. Each year the event designed to highlight minority owned businesses has grown in size and attendance.

McCaskill said, "Hosting events put you where you need to be and help you develop individual relationships within companies in the area that can improve your business," he continued. "Developing relationships with individuals will take your business to new heights."

Ernie Pitt, founder of

and publisher emeritus of The Chronicle, was also on hand to lend his expertise on the subject. Pitt said, when planning an event you should first find out what there is a need for. He said when The Chronicle first decided to host the community awards banquet, he felt that it needed to be done. This year, the 31st banquet drew hundreds.

"Our first awards banquet maybe only 15 people showed up," said Pitt. "But it wasn't about how many seats were filled. It was about filling a need in the community, and that's what we did."

Pitt mentioned the same process that went into the creation of the awards banquet went into the creation of other events sponsored by The Chronicle including, the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Prayer Breakfast, the David Lash Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament, and Gospel Fest, which has become a tradition at the Dixie Classic Fair, which just ended Sunday.

(See Gospel Fest coverage on page B5.)

He also discussed the importance of getting sponsors for your event.

After the gathering, a number of business owners said they can't wait to put the good advice they received into action. Michelle Houser said she learned how important hosting events is to building relationships in the community.

"I understood that in the beginning but the discussion we had today shines a brighter light on it," she said.

Houser, who owns and operates a nonprofit transitional home for women, said her mission is to help women change their lives and the WSBBC has helped her on that journey.

WSBBC Program and Events Chairwoman Gloria Hariston, said "Chamber members who couldn't

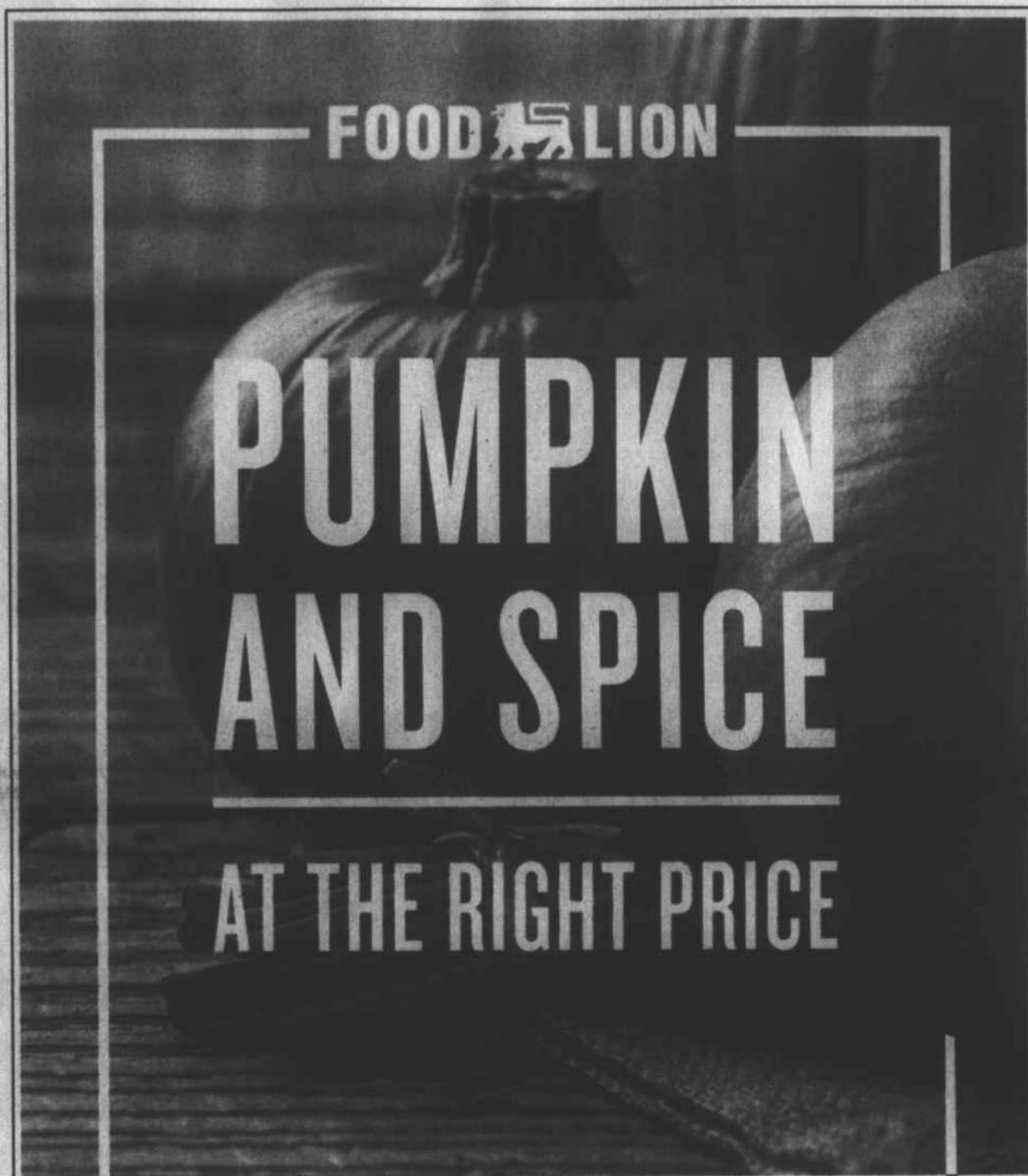
make it to the meeting missed a real treat."

Chamber President Randon Pender said she will pass the information

along to others in the community who can benefit from the information provided by McCaskill and Pitt.

The Winston-Salem Black Business Chamber meetings are held the first Thursday of every month. For more information on

the chamber or to become a member contact Gloria Hariston by phone at 336-391-4012.



TRY THEM BEFORE THE SEASON IS OVER!



HOW REFRESHING

#foodlionfresh | foodlion.com



Photo by Bobby Roebuck for the ACEY Group event

Passionate presentation

Debra Donahue, executive director of the Forsyth County Department of Social Services, encourages members of the ACEY Group at its ninth anniversary to continue to show compassion in their work. The group works with girls in foster care, among other projects. The group, part of The Women's Fund, celebrated in the Piedmont Club in Winston-Salem on Friday, Oct. 7. ACEY is an acronym that represents goals of the group: Achievement in the education of women and girls about the power of philanthropy; Commitment to connect with women and girls in the community; Encourage self-esteem and empowerment of women and girls; and Yield women and leaders and philanthropists.