The new year is a time for reflection and aspiration. Nearly 30 Barnesville Main Street members did just that at the annual meeting of the program, which was held over the noon hour on January 15 at the American Legion Club.

Pete Larson, a director on the Main Street Board of Directors, presided over the meeting. He was filling in for the absent board president Ryan Tonsfeldt.

Larson welcomed all in attendance, calling attention and expressing gratitude to all the volunteers who contribute to the success of various Main Street activities and events.

Following a meal of grilled hamburgers and an assortment of cold salads, Larson called the meeting to order.

The 2013 financial report and secretary’s report were approved with information included in a program given to each attendee.

The annual meeting’s theme, “Chemistry of a Business Community” was an appropriate preface to the guest speaker. Ryan Pesch, University of Minnesota Extension, presented preliminary findings from a recently completed Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) survey.

In conjunction with the Barnesville EDA, Main Street initiated the BR&E program in 2013. Pesch explained that the BR&E program is a three step process and will take approximately a year and a half to complete. The program is designed to become aware of concerns within the business community and then address them. The first step, research, has been done. The next two steps will involve prioritizing the survey results and implementing any changes.

Stating that the BR&E process allows business owners to express concerns, it also finds commonality. In addition, it shows support to local businesses because it engages the community in the process.

Earlier this fall, 45 volunteers visited with many local businesses asking specific questions about future business plans, employees and community factors. A total of 69 surveys were completed.

In the next couple of weeks, members of the BR&E team will receive an in-depth report regarding the survey results compiled by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Details of the survey will be shared with the Barnesville community at a retreat scheduled for March 27. Time will be set aside at the retreat to begin planning what steps are needed to improve the business community.

Mark and Deb Rustad were introduced as the new administrator and activities/social services director of the Clayco Care Center. The Rustads began their new responsibilities at the local nursing home in November 2013.

The 2013 membership profile reflected a total of 143 members within the seven different categories. On behalf of the Main Street Program, Larson encouraged continued support for the program in the new year.

The Barnesville Main Street Program is currently carrying out its annual membership drive. Membership may be gained at various levels. Businesses may join at a gold, silver or copper level. There are categories for home-based businesses, as well as organizations, couples and individuals.

Those interested in getting involved may contact Karen Hagen, Main Street program director, at
354-2479 or stop up at the program’s office on the second floor of Wells Fargo bank.

It is through membership that the Main Street Program is able to provide services for businesses, members and non-members alike. Some of these services include marketing assistance, workshops, advertising and promotions.

In addition, board members, committee members and volunteers plan and execute the details of several long-standing Main Street events. Some of these happenings include Showcase, Toast of the Town, Rummage Sale weekends, Golf Tournament, the Community Picnic, Miss Barnesville Pageant, Miracle on Front Street and a Holiday Tour of Homes Tour.

The annual meeting is an opportune time to acknowledge the dedication of individuals who make the Main Street activities possible. A few these people were recognized for the “extra” effort to make Barnesville stronger.

Karen Hagen took to the podium to name the winners for the Volunteer of the Year, Committee Member of the Year, Board Member of the Year and Business of the Year awards. She began by thanking the many people who made the Main Street activities possible.

Mike Detloff was awarded Volunteer of the Year.

Pete Larson was presented with the Board Member of the Year award.

Cindy Ullrich was named Committee Member of the Year.

The Business of the Year award was presented to the Record-Review. Staff members of the weekly newspaper are back row, left to right, Pam Aakre, Char Grosz, Kelli Froslie, Eric Johnson; front row, Lynae Schenck, Jean Carver and LaVonne Redding. Unavailable for the photo were Gene Prim, publisher, owner and Jacob Underlee.
that help the Main Street Program continue year after year.

Mike Detloff’s dedication to water flowers in the hanging baskets and planters along Front Street every day last summer earned him the Volunteer of the Year award. Hagen figures that Detloff volunteered 184 hours just to complete this task. Detloff, a member of the Design Committee, also helps out in other areas.

Promotions Committee member Cindy Ullrich was named Committee Member of the Year. Hagen remarked that Ullrich’s willingness to make sure that projects were completed timely, efficiently and with a smile, contributed to each event’s success, especially the Community Picnic and Area-wide Rummage Sales.

The Board Member of the Year award went to Pete Larson for going above and beyond his responsibility on the Main Street’s board of directors.

The Barnesville Record-Reveiw was named Business of the Year for their continued support by publicizing many of the Main Street sponsored activities and events.

Barnesville established the Main Street Program in 1991. Over the past 22 years, the program has worked with and assisted the entire community. It is through the collaboration of community leaders, business people and private individuals that strengthen the local economy and make Barnesville a better place to live and work.