

Isn't it great to wake up here in Warren County?

As I considered how to start my monthly update from The Chamber of Commerce of Warren County, I decided that the best way to introduce my thoughts about our local businesses and communities is to start with a short story I heard several years ago.

Years ago in the midst of the Great Depression, times were hard across the entire country; but people in big cities seemed to have it harder than most. Many of them had no family or friends to fall back on and as a result, they took to the streets. George, in New York City, was one of these people.

For as long as anyone could remember, George had stood at the corner of Wall Street near the subway, begging for a penny or nickel from the passing bankers. He never got much...but the few cents he gathered each day were enough for a cup of coffee, a sandwich and maybe a cot for the night at the Y. Rain, snow, cold and heat...each day found George standing next to the curb. One morning when George arrived at his curb he found that someone had left a large wooden box right where he usually stood. Since no one seemed to claim the box, he decided to sit on it for a little relief from the hard sidewalks and dirt kicked up by the passing cars. And there George continued to sit every day.

Jump forward almost a year...as George sat on his wooden box, a banker with his young son passed by. The young man started to walk over to George when his father yanked him back. "Son, there's no time to waste. We're expected in the office and have a full day's work ahead of us." And so the man and his son went past George into the bank.

At the end of the day, George was still there when the man and his son headed home. Before his dad could stop him, the boy ran up to George, "Hey mister...what's in the box?" "I have no idea," said George hopping down. "Why don't we look?" So with the help of a crowbar they pried open the lid and to their amazement the box was filled with treasure...gold, diamonds and jewels to the top.

Our businesses in Warren County are the treasure right under our noses that we all need to celebrate. Whether they're brand new like Firehouse Biscuits & Burgers; Main Street fixtures for more than 60 years like Warrenton Supply; or revitalized friends from the past as in Robinson Ferry – the business owners here in Warren County work, sacrifice and provide vital services to all of us...with a smile and friendship that you won't find in most cities around us.

So, that's my job with the Chamber. I'm here to open the wooden box and let new residents, people who have lived here their entire lives and people from outside of our county see the treasure we have in Warren businesses. If you'd like to talk about a Warren County business treasure, I'm at 252-257-2657 or via email at info@warren-chamber.org. Let's tell our story together!

---Craig Hahn