

**Introducing See Lancaster
By Nita Brown on behalf of See Lancaster**

Did you know that tourism is the world's largest business? Income generated by tourism even exceeds expenditures for the world's military armaments. Increasing tourism and thereby boosting the local economy is a primary goal of See Lancaster. Last Thursday evening, April 7, the organization was officially announced by the City of Lancaster at a reception held at the Lancaster County Council of the Arts.

An outgrowth of Main Street Lancaster, See Lancaster has broadened its vision to include all of Lancaster County. Although endorsed and supported by both city and county governments, it is a separate, non-profit organization, not a government agency. Some of its funding comes from hospitality tax granted by the city. The city has specifically requested See Lancaster to implement the Charette report. That report is the result of a study commissioned by the city and prepared by Community Builders of Columbia with input from people throughout the county.

The purpose of See Lancaster, to summarize, is to provide information to individuals and businesses considering a move here, to encourage and promote existing businesses and economic restructuring, to help preserve historic sites, plan new events and expand existing ones to attract more visitors to the area.

The 15-member board of directors represents many walks of life. Current board members are: Elaine Adkins, Brown Crenshaw, April Mathis, Kim Robinson, Susan Connelly, Marvin Starks, Robin Estrada, Mary Reimers, Debbie Jaillette, Debra Cephas, Leo MaGuire, Kelly Pittman, Kathy O'Brien and Deena Totherow. Nancy Howell is serving as interim director and Nita Brown is serving as interim publicity director.

The board has agreed it must be publicly accountable, and wants to keep you informed of its work. The Lancaster News has graciously agreed to publish a monthly article from See Lancaster to provide an up-to-date report on progress, funding received and expended, future plans and upcoming events.

Two priorities this year are hiring a full-time director and locating temporary offices. Several options are currently being considered for temporary space. It is hoped that office space will be developed into a visitor's information center and museum.

In spite of the lack of quarters, several See Lancaster projects are already underway, supported by city funding and donations of time and labor from others. With the help of Dr. Robert Brookshire's internet development class

at USC, a website is being built to provide up-to-date information on-line. The students involved in this project are from Lancaster, and are personally interested in helping promote their home town. Though currently under construction, website completion is anticipated by the end of April. The address is www.seelancaster.org. Plans are also underway to produce an audio walking tour of downtown historic sites. An on-line version will be added to the website when complete.

Summer entertainment is planned again with the Friday at Last celebrations downtown on the last Friday of May, June and July. Watch for details.

The Christmas parade and Christmas Happening will be coordinated this year by See Lancaster. Watch for announcements about next year's county-wide Red Rose Festival, planned for May 5 through 14, 2006.

Your help is invited and appreciated. For details, call See Lancaster at 286-1145.