

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New Downtown Florence Flower Baskets**

**Florence, WI...**The Florence County Chamber of Commerce worked with several local partners to create a more visual flower display for downtown Florence this year. A local craftsman, Ronnie Bradke, designed and fabricated 25 metal baskets that were powder coated black. Rick Knepper, Chamber President, and Bradke attached the baskets to the mid-block light posts on Central Ave right at eye-level. This project was possible thanks to Florence Utilities, General Manager Kevin Inman and his staff with special thanks to Roger Secrist. Utility staff installed the automatic watering lines into each light post. A crew of Chamber volunteers lined the baskets with garden fabric, added potting soil and then planted flowers that will grow and flow over the baskets all summer. Knepper installed fittings to distribute the water more evenly within each basket. Finally, on 6/17/21 utility workers checked each post to ensure the water was working and timers were set to water each basket daily.

The Chamber took over the flower box project in 2009 from the former Citizens & Business League, restained the boxes and added more. The 60 wooden boxes were refurbished and painted white in 2013. For years, Knepper and others watered them by hand several times a week all summer long. The flowers drew rave reviews from visitors and residents alike. In 2017/2018 when the Florence Utilities installed new light posts on Main Street, water was added to the taller corner poles. However, with the corner pole baskets 20 feet in the air, they were less noticeable and the water lines did not always stay in position over the plants. The new planters are much more visible and allow much easier water adjustments. The Chamber would like to thank the following groups for donations to help cover the costs of the new planters: mBank (\$500), Dickinson Area Community Foundation (\$250 mini-grant), Florence Utility Commission and WPPI Energy (\$500) and the Town of Florence (\$500) towards the flowers.

The Chamber is willing to collaborate with other towns in the county on beautification efforts. These types of partnerships are what make small towns and rural America special. Go to the 'Join Us' page at [www.FlorenceCountyChamber.org](http://www.FlorenceCountyChamber.org) to print the application for funding special projects or contact Rick Knepper at 715-528-5999.

