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Sutton Chamber President Shannon Mendez presents the Friend of the Community and Volunteer of the Year awards to Dave Reiser, left, and Tanya Nuss, respectively.

Sutton Chamber honors Reiser, Nuss with Friend of Community, Volunteer of Year awards

BY ASHLEY D. SWANSON

Sutton's Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual meeting Monday, Feb. 7, honoring two people with awards.

The first award, Friend of the Community, was given to Dave Reiser. Reiser, as many Suttonites know, is the artist of the Sutton mural painted for the 150th celebration last year.

"Entertaining, celebration, deep-roots, perfect, and anxious, these are all words that come to mind for Sutton's 150th celebration, but we wanted more. We wanted 'enduring.' We found just that when we commissioned Dave Reiser to be our artist for our commemorative mural," as stated in a nomination letter.

"Dave found a way to enhance the environment of an old brick building into a true piece of art. He was able to capture the history, values, and pride we find in our small community, and it will last for generations."

The next award, Volunteer of the Year, was given to a familiar face around Sutton.

"It's no surprise that they are willing to give so much back to this community with the family they are a part of. Working hard, volunteering their talents, and supporting others is just part of their DNA," Chamber President Shannon Mendez read.

"This year's winner has



Clay County Sheriff candidates Jeff Franklin, left, and Chris Slocum served as the guest speakers at the chamber's annual meeting, Feb. 7.

most definitely left her mark on Sutton's history; she is not afraid to take a challenge head on and lead a group of people, all while working a full-time job and raising a family."

Tanya Nuss was recognized for this award for her dedicated countless hours of time, being willing to jump in and help whenever needed, and taking responsibility of organizing and planning the celebration of Sutton's life.

This year's guest speakers for the meeting were the two candidates for County Sheriff, including current sheriff Jeff Franklin and candidate Chris Slocum.

During his turn, Franklin told how his career as an officer began at the Harvard Police Department before transferring to the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

He's served as an officer in the county for 33 years, 28 of



those years as the sheriff.

"I love the career. I've loved working here. I'm so glad that the community has backed me for this many years," he said, adding, "During my career, I've been president of the Sheriffs Association which was a great honor; and I've been on the board of directors for the sheriff's department. I've also been on the board of directors with CASA, and in 2013 I was awarded outstanding jail administrator of the year, which was a heck of an honor. I've really enjoyed the career."

Franklin also briefly spoke about his family, noting how he graduated from Harvard High School and his two kids graduated from Clay Center.

Slocum is a 16-year veteran in law enforcement, serving with the Nebraska State Patrol for the past 10 years.

"I went into law enforcement

to make a difference and I believe I can do that better on a county level than the state level," he said.

Slocum outlined some of the goals he has for the sheriff's office, including:

- Work with all city and county officials to assure that there's uninterrupted law enforcement services in Clay County.

- Bring the staffing up to the level the Clay County Board of Supervisors requested.

"This will allow us to better serve the county and reduce crime. I will also have those deputies more involved in the community. I would like to see them at community functions. I would also like to appoint a school resource officer that would visit the schools."

- Keeping up-to-date with technology to current standards, assuring the job is done more safely and efficiently.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chamber meetings have changed to quarterly meetings, with the next one scheduled for April 7.

Newly-installed officers are Mendez; Jessica Moore, vice-president; Jordan Anderson, secretary; Amy Baumert, treasurer; Jennifer Griess, marketing specialist; and Tony Huber, past president. New members include Sophie Carlson, Tara Pope, Julie Craig, Jeremy Korth, Nikki Frasier, and Brooke Marshall.