

and the income is primarily through dues and special events," he said.

Ramseur said he can understand why the Chamber may be viewed by some as just a "social club."

"I have tried to eliminate that label," Ramseur said.

"We do have social events, and we have fun, but you might meet somebody who you can talk to about refinancing or other business subjects.

"Networking is important and can't all be done online. They have to get out of their comfort zone."

He mentions the success of the legislative breakfasts, which are designed to help local businesses have quality time with their representatives in Raleigh and Washington.

"We have 200 coming in to those events, and the representatives are telling us the other counties do not have that kind of attendance," Ramseur said.

"Those things happen because the Chamber makes it happen. It's no accident and there's a lot of hard work that goes into promoting those events."

"I also tell people to give us a try for a year. Come to some meetings. Go to some of the seminars we're doing with Stanly Community College. Come to some business after hours. Come to some of our events and you'll meet somebody."

He said the organization has been responsible with its funds and owns its own building and has no debt.

"I'm also proud we have now built a reserve fund and we had a successful membership drive last year with 220 new members," Ramseur said.

One of the programs Ramseur said he is proud of helping to establish is the Career Academy for Educators.

The program brings teachers in to meet with existing businesses and educates them as to what skills are currently needed to supply the county's industries and businesses.

"The problem is many times getting teachers, counselors, parents and students to make realistic decisions. Everybody wants to go to Chapel Hill. Many people don't know how to cope after high school and a four-year degree is not always a ticket to a job," he said.

"That is not to discourage anyone from pursuing that goal. It just may be some would be better prepared by entering the workforce first and this program helps in that regard."

If there was one magic moment during his years directing the Chamber, it happened in March 2009. "We found out Harris Teeter announced it would close its Albemarle location," Ramseur said.

"The manager said he thought the decision was final. I asked what we could do."

What happened is what Ramseur said needs to happen throughout the county when it comes to the economic betterment of the area. Come together.

"Everybody was on the phone with each other and Harris Teeter got more than 700 calls and emails within hours," he said.

"They announced the store would remain open within a few days. That's what happens when everyone works together."

He said there weren't many disappointments, but mentions the prolonged discussions between Alcoa and the county as "not very helpful."

"The Chamber did not take sides on the issue. Alcoa is still an active member of the

Chamber. We have an excellent relationship with the county. But the fact it hung on that long probably did not cast a good image on Stanly County," Ramseur said.

"The only time we ever got covered or noticed was when it had to do with that issue."

He said he was "very pleased when there was a settlement. I commend the two parties for settling that. What it means is we can move on to other issues that can make a difference such as education and recruiting businesses."

As Ramseur leaves his post, he does so with a busy schedule ahead for the next few weeks.

The Chamber will initiate the new class of Leadership Stanly and host its annual Business Expo, which is already successful by the number of participants who have signed to be there.

He will do that while guiding his successor, Kathy Almond, into her new role which begins officially Oct. 1.

Ramseur has no worries about the job Almond will do, taking into account her already being active with the Chamber and a superb board of directors.

"I will never be able to express how much I have appreciated the board and their support in all we've done," he said.

"They are volunteers and yet they are always there and do what needs to be done. With their support and enthusiasm, they have been great to work with.

"We have the best staff with Stephanie Gresham and Winona Vullo who always work hard to make everything we do successful as well as being there to help our members in any way they need us," he said.

His advice to Almond or to anyone else in the post is to keep focused on the main reason the Chamber exists.

"Just help people to find what they need and go the extra mile and everything else will be fine," Ramseur said.

Ramseur has some parting shots as to what he's learned and what the county should learn about the local economy.

"I think you need to keep the personal touch. Call people back. But you can't do everything," he said.

"I said I'd get by and see every member the first year. I found I couldn't. But I still try to communicate as much as possible."

He said he would put a personal note on each yearly fee announcement and one when it was received.

"The Chamber can't be all things to all people. My successor needs to always ask if it is something that is part of what the mission is and what we do," Ramseur said.

He said there are many people in the business of economic development and commends the county for funding a separate economic commission.

"(Economic Development Director) Paul Stratos can do the hard fast economic development. He understands the land use and utilities and you have to have someone doing all of that," he said.

"We shouldn't lose sight of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, where we have more and more people coming through here. People come from all over.

"I have no problem with the cities doing more in economic development on their own part as long as they try to coordinate their efforts."

"I encourage people to work together, but if a group can financially commit to have more work for the good of the county, who is

going to complain? We're going to get more jobs and that's the goal."

Ramseur has received praise from his Chamber colleagues for his leadership of the organization.

"Even during a down economy, under his leadership the Chamber has grown and thrived," Past Chamber Chairman Matt Smith said.

"He has also been very instrumental in making our chamber a strong voice in the community that works hard to bring people together and build a better business environment in Stanly County."

Current Chamber President Bill Lawhon echoed Smith's remarks.

"He has been good for our chamber, working extremely hard to bring our community of businesses together," Lawhon said."

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## OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, 2009, the day I took office, the national debt was \$10,627,961,295,930.67.

Today, it is \$16,738,454,664,319.38. We've added \$6,110,493,368,388.71 to our debt in 4 years. This is \$6.1 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a Balanced Budget Amendment. We must stop this unconscionable accumulation of debt.

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## HONORING THE NON-DENOMINATION HOUSE OF PRAYER

### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Christian organization, The Non-Denomination House of Prayer.

The Non-Denomination House of Prayer was founded in 1948 by Pastor Charity Waffer in the historical city of Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Pastor Waffer was the first female pastor in the Mississippi Delta. As a pastoral pioneer she was instrumental in opening doors for women and youths through various church auxiliaries and functions. Her leadership guided many to various freedoms and liberties.

The current overseer is Dr. Earnestine Flowers which over sees other churches in Mississippi with the communities of Duncan, Batesville, Sardis, Oxford and in Chicago, Illinois. The Non-Denomination House of Prayer in the City of Mound Bayou current ministerial leaders are Pastor Willie Joe Flowers, Assistant Pastor Carl Henry, and Minister Martha Sanders. They have increased the church membership and have embarked on renovating and expanding their facilities in order to continue to be a blessing to its members,