

Gary Clark

COC Board member

Missoula Federal Credit Union, president and CEO

For Gary Clark, the Chamber of Commerce is a way to stay informed about what's going on in Missoula, and to meet new people and further relationships. But more than that, the chamber is a business advocate that can work with the city to together "build a better place to work and live," he says. The chamber as an advocate for the business community and working with local governments is crucial — "the community benefits, jobs are created, not destroyed, and progress can be achieved."

Having moved to the valley to become president and CEO of the Missoula Federal Credit Union in 1995, Gary has been involved with the chamber's government affairs committee since 2006 and has been on the board since 2008. Coming from a career in credit unions and financial cooperatives lets him contribute "a different perspective regarding business and government." He takes over as board chairman July 2010.

With the support of senior management, MFCU since 2001 has actively sponsored employees to further themselves through chamber programs including Leadership Missoula, chamber/government co-sponsored meetings on economic forecasts and political updates, Red Coats and Business After Hours networking events. "I believe the networking, the information provided and the topics reviewed at chamber events are invaluable," says Gary, who lives outside of Hamilton with his wife, Kayla, three horses and two registered Angus breeding cows.

A two-career family that's lived many places in the Northwest for one career move or another, Gary and Kayla moved to Missoula to join MFCU, although it took Kayla about a year to transfer her position as deputy commissioner in the Denver Regional Office of the Social Security Administration to the Missoula office. Now retired, she joins Gary at the Missoula Children's Theater or the art and entertainment events at The University of Montana. "We ride on occasion but my off-time passion is golf," Gary adds. "We enjoy traveling and playing golf at new and different courses throughout the country." Eastern central South Dakota is one destination, 1,200 miles down I-90 to visit daughter Tina, her family and its farm about six miles from Minnesota.

Now entrenched in Missoula and caring about "community" in its greatest sense, Gary also is involved locally with Habitat for Humanity, CASA and United Way. Nationally he's active in the credit union industry through the Filene Research Institutes Research Council and the Credit Union National Association.

Gary is a graduate of Arizona State University and a veteran Army officer.