

## NEWS RELEASE

### Sikeston Tourism to Recognize Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leaders at the March Chamber Luncheon

Sikeston, MO

March 4, 2026

On March 12, at the Sikeston Chamber Luncheon, the Tourism Advisory Board will present the Sikeston Tourism Award of Excellence to Apple Ridge Orchard for their outstanding contribution to the tourism industry and the Sikeston Hospitality Award of Excellence to JoAnn Blissett for her significant contribution to the hospitality industry. The tourism and hospitality awards are presented annually to a business, individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to the tourism and hospitality industry in the Sikeston area.

Apple Ridge Orchard's success story is deeply rooted in the vision and hard work of its founders, Trey and Ashley Wilson. Established in 2001, the orchard began as a humble endeavor with the planting of lavender, blueberries, and blackberries. Over the years, it has flourished into a diverse agricultural haven, boasting a rich array of crops including apples, strawberries, sweet corn, and pumpkins. The orchard offers seasonal festivals and educational tours, creating an immersive farm experience for families and visitors of all ages.

Apple Ridge Orchard through its affiliation with Harvest Hosts started welcoming RVs in August 2025. They host approximately 40 campers each month, drawing visitors from all over the US, showcasing Sikeston's hospitality to a wider audience.

In 2024, Apple Ridge Orchard took a significant step in preserving its heritage by relocating two 1930's and 1940's era barns from the Wilson Family Farm to the orchard. These historic structures now serve as venues for weddings and special occasions. Additionally, they transform into a Haunted House in the fall.

JoAnn Blissett has greeted thousands of customers at Lambert's Café since she joined their team in 1990. She has welcomed visitors from all over the world with the same friendly service for 36 years. In her time at Lambert's many changes have taken place, but one thing remains constant, great customer service. A lifelong resident of Scott County, JoAnn Blissett exemplifies what *Southern Hospitality* means and how vital it is to give the customer a great experience and keep them coming back to visit Sikeston.

The Chamber Luncheon will be held on March 12 at Lambert's Café (rear dining room) at 12pm. It is open to Chamber members and anyone who would like to help recognize Apple

Ridge Orchard and Ms. JoAnn Blissett. Lunch is \$15 for Chamber members and \$20 for non-members. Call 573-471-2498 for more information.