

## **ALBION-HOMER UNITED WAY Kicks off 2009 Campaign**

With optimism running high, a crowd of Albion-Homer United Way (AHUW) board members and community supporters kicked-off the 2009 United Way campaign in the parking lot of Family Fare Supermarket on Monday of last week. Nearby, a trailer donated by NAPA Auto Parts stood filled with food for Albion Interfaith Ministries (AIM) and Homer Caring and Sharing. The non-perishable items had been donated throughout the four-day community food drive sponsored by the United Way and Albion's Family Fare Supermarket.

"We begin this year's campaign with an event that supports our friends and neighbors in a time of great need." Said John Ropp, Albion-Homer United Way Director.

Mike Melli, Manager of Albion Family Fare Supermarket, addressed the gathering and expressed his and the corporation's determination to support the Albion community however it can. Mike turned over money raised from the sale of hotdogs and soft drinks provided by Family Fare to the United Way to be used as its Board saw fit. "This is an event that we are proud to be a part of," said Melli in his opening comments to the crowd.

Marty Blashfield, President of the AHUW Board, introduced the Campaign Co-chairs of this year's drive, Bob Frahm, Former Owner of Bob Frahm Chevrolet Buick Pontiac and Chris Miller, former CEO of Miller Industries and current President of Steel Products, Homer, and Village President of Homer. Bob and Chris spoke respectively of the needs of our communities and the generosity of our citizens. "We are ready for the challenge of this year's campaign," they agreed and urged community members to continue their strong support for the United Way. Blashfield added that choosing Chris Miller and Bob Frahm as co-chairs of this year's campaign reminds us of the essential role businesses and manufacturers play in supporting the caring agencies of our communities.

Last year, the Albion-Homer campaign reached its goal of \$100,000. "There were times when it seemed that that number was out of reach," commented Gail Reed, AHUW Board Member and event coordinator. "John kept pushing us then even in light of the troubled economy and he was right to do so. Raising funds now will be no easier, but this is a community that continues to prove its generosity. That's why so many of us love living here."

"We're looking forward to a successful campaign in order to provide significant support for the many agencies that support our citizens," Ropp said. "Donations are already coming in."

The United Way's campaign theme for this year is "LIVE UNITED—Advancing the Common Good" through three primary areas of focus: education, income, and health. Last year's funds help support more than twenty non-profit agencies in Albion and Homer who serve the "common good." For more information or to make a donation, contact the Albion Homer United Way at 629-2645 or email [AHUnitedWay@netscape.net](mailto:AHUnitedWay@netscape.net).