



## CHAMBER BUSINESS VS. BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS: WHAT IS BEST FOR YOUR MEMBERS?

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**Aerial View of Greater Palm Bay - Credited to Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce**

**PATRICK MCCABE**  
Editor

For decades, every Chamber of Commerce across the country has depended on publishers to help them reach out to new movers, prospective members, and their community in general. It was a technique that was valuable to publishers as new community maps, area brochures, and business directories were created and printed on an annual basis; but it was also valuable to Chambers themselves as they were invited

into a free program with the promise of royalties paid from advertising sales. However, as we said in our last issue, this is no longer exclusively the case. With costs going up and sales going down, publishers were finding themselves unable to afford the promise of royalties made when the contract was signed. Chamber publishing companies are failing, causing Chamber Executives to reluctantly wait for maps or brochures that may never arrive. But how do these relationships start? How does a Chamber avoid these headaches? “Definitely have a contract,” says

Vicki Northrup, President and CEO of the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce in Florida. “Have your attorney review the contract, and follow up.” This might sound basic, but in the non-profit sector so much business is done based on personal relationships. Having a clearly outlined and defined contract can sometimes go by the wayside. Northrup, an MBA with over thirty-five years of corporate experience, was chosen by the Greater Palm Bay Board of Directors to take over as President and CEO in 2010. Their former Executives were all very experienced in the non-profit industry, but they wanted to transition the chamber to be more business-oriented, as opposed to the ‘social club’ it had been for 23 years. “They gave the marching orders to ‘run it like a business’,” says

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## A HISTORICAL LOOK AT CHAMBER JOURNALISM

**ROBYN JOHNSON**  
Staff Writer

In researching news among chambers of commerce throughout the country, I stumbled upon a piece of history that may serve as an inspiration to maintaining the tradition of chamber activity. In previous articles I mentioned that chambers are organizations that have a sense of history and heritage about them; while they represent contemporary economic and social needs, they also remind us of a more community-driven time- a time when we conducted ourselves more personally.

In 1911, at a time of great economic change and development, The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Journal released its first issue. The twelve-page publication held a bold mission; the chamber’s journal hoped to introduce San Francisco as a “permanent installation” and integral part of world commerce. Years before in 1868, the chamber sought to promote and regulate commerce while fostering and encouraging the interests of the community and the country. The chamber’s journal became an effective extension of the economic organization and a tool that has guided commerce to this day.

The journal’s first volume addressed the purposes it intended to serve- the journal aimed to constantly be in touch with “all lands” and to benefit chamber members and the community alike. Each issue featured a business directory and a “Foreign Connections” list that developed and maintained business networks. The chamber grew from over 700 members in the first year of the journal’s release to over 3,000 members by the



**Liberty Hill Historic District - photo by Mike Hofmann**

time the second volume was published.

The reason I see this publication as so relevant, historically and in terms of serving a contemporary purpose, is because it was an impressive and revolutionary business tool appearing exceedingly ahead of its time. The newspaper was organized in a sense that it guided the community (and could inspire other communities) to succeed. The journal created a degree of transparency between businesses and the community by sharing information on expenditures, events and plans and tools for business. The journal also explained, in great detail, how and why the San Francisco community is and can continue to be suc-

cessful. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Journal’s attention to the commercial outlook struck me as especially informative and useful. As someone who appreciates structure and detail, I admire the journal’s ability to cohesively describe the ways in which the community can work together and focus upon in order to ensure economic growth and development. The journal demonstrated that San Francisco’s location, residents and commercial condition were ideal for establishing a sound local and global economy. The journal’s information was, simply, a boost to social and economic morale.

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## GETTING A RETURN ON YOUR ADVERTISING INVESTMENT

**ALAN ZHRINGER**  
Contributing Writer

The advertising landscape of Chambers of Commerce has been consistent for decades with their printed publications. Chambers relied heavily on community profile books, maps, membership directories, and newsletters to reach prospective new members and to help market and promote their current members’ businesses. They also needed these publications to help bring in non-dues revenue.

Where other industries began investing more into digital media, Chambers kept with printed advertising and revenue generating publishing solutions because it’s what they’ve always done. Unfortunately, a very important factor was missed along the way: advertising value for the businesses that bought into these publications. The Chamber made money, but did the advertising member? It used to be businesses joined the Chamber because it was the right thing to do. They advertised in Chamber publications because of civic pride with hopes of gaining new business. Businesses now become members anticipating a return on their investment. How many times have you picked up the phone in the Chamber office with a member on the line who received his membership dues invoice asking, “What has the Chamber done for me?” Will you be ready with a fair answer? This is due, in part, to the times we live in. As a society we’ve become more efficient and cost effective. People demand more for less and get it.

**Continued on page 4**

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# CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT

## 5 DIFFERENT CHAMBERS, 5 UNIQUE COMMUNITIES

Every Chamber of Commerce has a unique story to tell. In Chamber Spotlight, we take an in-depth look at 5 Chambers across the country and tell their story.

## GREATER ALBUQUERQUE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Albuquerque, New Mexico

**PATRICK McCABE**  
Editor

The sun rises over The Sandia Mountains, painting the desert red, stretching across the skyline to the Rio Grande and beyond. It's another day in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the community is rich in history, rich in culture, and always ready for more.

At the center of their business community is The Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce (GACC) who, according to their website, "works every day to make our community a place where businesses can grow and prosper, where people want to raise their families and where tourists want to visit."

GACC has several Chamber divisions to serve the political, economical, and social needs of their members.

Politically, the Ethics and Open Government division works to improve the transpar-

ency of their government for their citizens, and improve the reputation of their government on a regional and national level. In the past few years they've been able to pass bills that limit campaign contributions, open conference committees to the public, increase broadcasts of meetings at the capital building and create a place where citizens can review finances online. So much of New Mexico's government has been happening behind closed doors, the Ethics and Open Government strives to spread awareness and get the community involved.

Economically, GACC has many divisions to help their members achieve success. The Entrepreneurism and Small Business Support Division is vital to GACC members, especially considering that over 70% have less than 20 employees. Small businesses often can't afford a lot of advertising, so the visibility they receive from being a Chamber member is huge. From networking events to recognition in the community and connecting with other members, small business support is an invaluable service for GACC members.

In addition to Small Business Support, GACC also provides leadership training for

low to mid-level business people. Those who are interested in learning the skills to be a great leader can enroll in their program. There, they learn how to get themselves noticed, how to advance in their career, and how to really take positive steps towards a better position. The Leadership Division also works with individual members to keep them informed on Chamber programs directly related to their industry. A weekly memo also has that affect for every member in GACC.

Socially, GACC helps to keep the connection between their members and their community strong. Divisions like Convention & Tourism and Transportation are integral to bringing money into the Albuquerque community. Creating a more tourist friendly community helps everyone gain more business, that much is obvious. Combining this with Transportation, and making tourist travel convenient, makes Albuquerque an easier choice for those vacationers heading to the southwest. Creating a multi-modal system of transportation by integrating air, rail, transit, and roads increases commerce in a tangible way. It helps Albuquerque residents and tourists get to their favorite places much more easily.

Other Chamber divisions focus more closely on improving the environment for residents and business owners alike. The Crime & Safety Division is heavily involved in the property crime levels in Albuquerque. By helping to increase penalties for auto theft and supporting

increased penalties for gang activity, Crime & Safety is working towards a safer Albuquerque.

Other Chamber divisions focus more closely on improving the environment for residents and business owners alike. The Crime & Safety Division is heavily involved in the property crime levels in Albuquerque. By helping to increase penalties for auto theft and supporting

GACC is also looking towards the future. Energy, Renewables & Water Division's goal is to help make New Mexico the #1 state in the U.S. for renewable energy. According to GACC's website, New Mexico currently ranks 4th in natural gas production and 6th in oil production. In terms of renewable energy, they are a top 10 state in geothermal energy potential, 12th in wind

energy potential, and 2nd in solar energy potential. With a more concentrated effort, New Mexico could become a national leader in renewing energy. It's this kind of innovation that GACC looks to bring to Albuquerque. Education, in all forms, only serves to improve a community.

Of course, education needs to begin early on. That's why the most important chamber division of all may be Reads. A literacy partnership between Albuquerque Public School, Valencia County Public School, and GACC, Reads focuses on developing literacy in local kindergartners. This leg up before they enter 1st grade is huge for their development. Volunteer tutors provide kindergartners with reading lessons three times a week. With over five-hundred fifty trained volunteers, many

young students are getting an opportunity they may not have had otherwise. In 2008, 81% of the program's students entered first grade reading at or above the grade level.

With the resources available to them, business owners shouldn't become members of Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce just because they feel they have to. Business owners should become members because they will benefit from these programs. They will benefit right away, and they will benefit for years to come. When local businesses are showing progress, it's a tremendous boost to the local economy, local families, and Albuquerque's way of life. Go to [www.abqchamber.com](http://www.abqchamber.com) or better yet, visit Albuquerque to get a closer look. After all, 'It's a trip.'



Albuquerque, New Mexico Photo by Alejandro Marentes



The Grand Rapids Skyline - Credited to Derrick Wong Wikimedia

## GRAND RAPIDS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**ROBYN JOHNSON**  
Staff Writer

The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce has served the Grand Rapids, Michigan community for 124 years. With the purpose of connecting businesses and people, cultivating resources and building a strong community, the chamber has attracted over 2,700 member businesses, allowing the Grand Rapids area to boast successful leaders and a solid economy. The community is recognized as offering "urban sophistication and small-town warmth"; The Grand Rapids Chamber's members consist of 80% small businesses which truly reflects the small-town feel of the area. The Chamber's goals of job creation and the abundant activity within the community demonstrate the "urban sophistication" that defines Grand Rapids, 25 miles from Lake Michigan, Grand Rapids showcases a bustling downtown district, a historic and beautiful cityscape and an unmatched, thriving culture. To complement the diverse and rich economy, the chamber takes a strategic approach toward benefiting its members who improve the economy's health. The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce works tirelessly to create opportunities for the success of its members. Chamber President and CEO Rick Baker listed the three pri-

mary goals of generating success as: building a magnetic community that draws talent and businesses, advocacy for businesses, and developing specific programs that target the needs of business. Baker indicated that political advocacy is of utmost importance to the chamber, and because the chamber has been "relentless" the impact is clear; he stated that among the chamber's "major accomplishments in many areas", their advocacy work has been tremendous. Most recently, the chamber was involved in a successful public policy effort that removed the Michigan Business Tax. The chamber addresses all levels of politics which allows for a more comprehensive connection between business and community. The Grand Rapids Chamber of commerce has also demonstrated dynamic work in diversity and the execution of business programs.

When asked about the importance of diversity, Rick Baker was outright- "We do value many other chambers works continuously to build and develop programs that benefit workers and in turn, businesses. Grand Rapids has demonstrated the importance of recognizing the needs of the community and its businesses by developing services and resources that reflect growth and progress.

focus on these issues as well. Grand Rapids' attractiveness is not only rooted in the chamber's ability to inspire similar organizations, but in the opportunity the area presents. Baker stated simply, "We represent the interests of businesses." The chamber represents a variety of businesses, all of which, Baker stated, are important to the organization. Similarly, the diversity of the chamber member businesses are a unique feature of the chamber. Baker mentioned an impressive quality of his area's economy: even the largest companies are still family owned and operated. Popular names like Sara Lee, Amway and Steelcase are located in Grand Rapids and hold true to this sentiment of personalized business. Baker also pointed out the rich agricultural and food processing industries in his community.

## GATLINBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Gatlinburg, Tennessee

**CHASITY BEIKIRCH**  
Staff Writer

With an upgraded, user friendly-website, the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce is intertwined with the Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau. At the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Gatlinburg Chamber focuses on tourism. While this includes attracting visitors to the area; within the Chamber there also has to be guidance for area businesses whose livelihood revolves around these visitors.

By working closely with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Gatlinburg Chamber helps member businesses get in front of those visitors and vacation planners. Vicki Simms, Executive Director of the Chamber, says, "We provide our members with promotional and marketing opportunities available through our main industry, tourism. We also participate in regional efforts to improve the transportation grid to meet the needs of our small city and get

cluded in the official Gatlinburg Vacation Guide packet that is mailed out, members can be referred to visitors who call the bureau looking for information on area businesses using what their website describes as a "scientific random referral program." Members of the Gatlinburg Chamber promoted on the Convention and Visitors Bureau website and are also given access to the information about unique visitors to the site.

The Gatlinburg Chamber employs a variety of methods to engage their members and promote member businesses, while keeping the tourism industry at the forefront. "We provide educational seminars that are targeted toward our main industry, such as "Frontline Gatlinburg" and marketing seminars," says Simms. "It was instituted five years ago to educate our business community on sustainable business practices that in the long run can affect the bottom line positively, while also promoting conservation to protect the beautiful jewel in our backyard, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited national park in America." Initiatives, like the Gatlinburg Goes Green, improve business practices while keeping the focus of tourism at hand.

One of the ways the Gatlinburg Chamber balances the need to promote the area as a destination and communicate with member businesses is through social media. "Our social me-

dia includes heavy involvement in Facebook as well as Pinterest and Twitter because these are the communication tools which travelers use as they plan their trips and visit our area," says Simms. By engaging their audience on social media, Simms says the Chamber is able to "keep Gatlinburg top-of-mind during the normal daily routine, instilling in them the desire to visit again soon in most cases." Social media is also a tool for communication between members and with the Chamber itself. Particularly through Facebook, visitors can be "fans" of the page while members can keep tabs on upcoming events, other businesses' activities, and link to their own Facebook pages. "We are also constantly assessing our benchmarks from membership and marketing standpoints to make sure that we are using the most cutting edge communication tools in our industry," says Simms. The Gatlinburg Chamber is able to stay relevant in a constantly changing world through digital communication and social media.

As Gatlinburg remains a premier destination for tourists, the Chamber is staying on top of changing technologies and creating new avenues for both old and new businesses to prosper in the town. Simms recommends that Chambers in smaller areas across the country encourage growth in their own chambers by being "diligent and cognizant as you create consensus within your community. We take the approach of working to improve those businesses already established and to encourage new business growth."

## ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Canton, New York

**ROBYN JOHNSON & JOEL STOJKOVIC**  
Staff Writers

The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to strengthening the economic health of the area. A great deal of this strength comes from the county's interest in promoting tourism and area visitation that showcase the natural beauty and culture of St. Lawrence County. The Chamber claims that the area is "where the mountains meet the St. Lawrence and culture meets the great outdoors". The area's rich culture not only illustrates the community's landscape, but has a tremendous impact on the county's economy.

The Chamber, founded in 1965, is located in the town of Canton, New York. 650 members strong, The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce works to promote the community's culture and it's landscape with various events throughout the year that highlight the area's natural beauty and rich cultural history. Whether you attend the Junior Carp Fishing Tournament with a young one, or take a trip to view the Civil War Weekend, you will be immersed into the unique culture and scen-

ery of St. Lawrence County. While the Chamber holds regular networking events, as well as a group health insurance program for members, it also helps to bridge the gap between members, non-members, and groups who have been in St. Lawrence County the longest; mainly the Amish population and the Akwesasne - Mohawk tribe.

The Amish populations of the St. Lawrence County area provide unique cultural and economic contributions to what is referred to as the "North Country". Although many Amish hold beliefs and cultural practices that differ greatly from other cultural groups, the Amish of the St. Lawrence area offer residents and visitors a special market for a variety of goods and services. Pickens General Store (a St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce member) features a variety of products that are both novel and practical. The store's chamber membership bridges the cultural and economic gap that may have otherwise divided the two societies. The store was opened for business in 2007, but exists in an opera house that was built in 1856. The store's handmade and homegrown merchandise supports both the Amish community's economic stability and St. Lawrence County's commercial strength and variety- while serving as an entertaining and attractive location for people to visit.

Another aspect of the St. Lawrence County Area's cultural abundance stems from the rich contributions of the Akwesasne to the Chamber and com-



Horse Carriage - Credited to Flickr.com Audreyjm529

munity. In 1972, the Chamber established the Akwesasne Cultural Center "with a mission of teaching Mohawk culture to the surrounding... community". Akwesasne means "where the partridge drums" and also refers to the sound of the St. Lawrence River's rapids in their culture's tradition. The Akwesasne community's boundaries are politically" defined as the provinces of Ontario and Quebec in Canada, and as Franklin and St.

Lawrence counties in the United States. The vastly spanning community and deep culture is showcased locally in the cultural center in St. Lawrence County. The cultural center offers art classes, books for sale and loan, guided tours and printing and copying services. The Akwesasne specialty, however, is the sweetgrass woven basket- a believed 3,000-year old tradition and popular area craft. The Akwesasne-Mohawk c-

ommunity and the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce also collaborated in 1992 with the development of the area's casino, which has been a significant economic contributor and source of recreation for surrounding areas. After nearly 13 years of business, The Akwesasne Mohawk Casino still proves to be an important source of entertainment, dining, and socializing for the St. Lawrence County area.

Both the Amish and Akwesasne-Mohawk cultures survive and thrive because they preserve past values and serve contemporary economic demands. The St. Lawrence County Chamber offers both visitors and residents the opportunity to experience rich, historic cultures- and by supporting the community's businesses we can take a piece of these cultures home with us.

For more information of The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, visit: [www.northcountryguide.com](http://www.northcountryguide.com)

## WILLISTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Williston, North Dakota

**ROBYN JOHNSON**  
Staff Writer

Despite the nation's recent economic inconsistencies, some local economies have maintained an expression of stability and vibrancy. Williston, North Dakota has proven to be an exception to the rule that small business communities struggle when faced with national economic deficiencies.

The Williston Area Chamber of Commerce can be accredited with the success of the local economy and the area's natural resources. Marci Seamples, the chamber's new executive director, recounted Williston's fortunate success. "The Williston Basin has been blessed - as much of the nation and the world has struggled through the recession, we have experienced unprecedented economic and demographic growth mainly due to the most recent oil boom."

The chamber holds over 530 members- all of which are dedicated to improving the area's economy. Founded in 1907, its 106 years of activity have generated a local economic foundation resistant to broader commercial forces that often obstruct local economies- Williston is thriving. Seamples explained that "businesses and community organizations that come together under the umbrella of the chamber are better able to affect policy to help the community grow responsibly." The Williston Area Chamber of Commerce has successfully demonstrated the importance of solidifying the link between

business and the community.

A main component of the chamber's success is its direct involvement with businesses and the community. Member activity in all fields of economic interest drives the functioning of the chamber and community and businesses thrive because of this collaboration. However, Seamples pointed out that some businesses are especially important to the economic health of the area. "Some may argue that businesses relating to energy services are especially important to the community. It is true, we are in the middle of an oil boom and those companies have brought vast opportunities to the people of Williston and those who have relocated to the area. Similarly, construction can also be considered a dominant player. Permits for residential and commercial construction have more than doubled in the past year alone and all sources indicate it could easily be two to three years before supply catches up with demand." Seamples continued to explain that, additionally, small business owners "cannot and should not be overlooked" for their many local contributions.

The chamber's involvement and leadership have proven to help businesses and the community grow and succeed. Seamples was frank when asked how the organization addresses its members needs: "Simple. We talk to them." She elaborated to include that the chamber is "blessed with a very active board with a strong commitment to the community"



Marci Seamples

indicating the importance of giving members what they want and having the ability to do so.

The needs of the community are consistently a priority which contributes greatly to the economic benefits the Williston Area Chamber procures. When asked what the needs of the Williston business community are, Seamples response was simple: employees. She stated that "as new people move into the area, more services are needed. The oil industry employees bring their families - and they all will need services, from retail to banking, healthcare to entertainment, dining to personal and professional services. In a way, you may say the large players help us make a living, but our small businesses are helping us make a life."

Similarly, the chamber takes a contemporary approach toward conducting business and building the community, which certainly makes the chamber outstanding. The Williston Area Chamber of Commerce's most recent initiative was the creation of social media accounts

with a definitive purpose: "What we hope is to highlight our strong business community and all the good things Williston has and stands for - including an ever-improving quality of life." In addition, Seamples boasted the chamber's recent increase in membership. "As businesses enter the area, it means a great deal that we are one of the first connections they seek out. It speaks to our reputation and the work we perform on behalf and in support of our membership."

Most recently, the chamber held a ribbon-cutting ceremony that was a source of pride and celebration for the community. The Holiday Inn Express & Suites at 415 38th Street West was welcomed to the Williston area on Thursday, July 19th. The Williston Area Chamber "has received a great deal of national (and international) attention in recent years" claimed

### Membership Breakdown:

- Arts, Entertainment 10.74%
- Retail 6.8%
- Restaurants, Food, Beverage 11.56%
- Hotels, Camping 3.06%
- Housing, Real Estate, Realtors 8.5%
- Healthcare, Healthcare Services / Supplies, Human Services, Organizations 13.4%
- Building Services/Supplies, Architecture, Development 24.31%
- Oil (Services, Supplies, Production, Equipment) 21.59%

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Confluence of Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, near Williston - Credited to Cooperativeconservation.org

## GETTING A RETURN ON YOUR ADVERTISING INVESTMENT

(Continued from Page 1)

**ALAN ZAHNINGER**  
Contributing Writer

Chambers must also be effective in choosing the best products, and efficient by offering their members more than what they can get on their own. Any business in your community can and will spend their marketing dollars in whatever way they think is best. If that's a Chamber sponsorship, great! If not, they'll go elsewhere for the best marketing dollar investment, and perhaps devalue or not retain their membership. When you have good programs that your members appreciate and endorse, they'll stick around for more.

Every Chamber has only so much money to draw from their finite membership. Think of all of your campaigns, fund drives, and sponsorships as pieces of a pie. Recognition should be given to each to confirm it goes along with your mission statement- but more importantly, there is only so much pie. Is it cut up in so many slices it's not worth serving? Or is your contacting your membership so often that they are turning pie down? Digital marketing will forever evolve into better and faster advertising opportunities. Sponsorship programs must be evaluated frequently to offer your members all of the best programs all of the time. Dinner galas/banquets and golf outings are great networking events that usually generate revenue, but do they bring in new business for your members?

So how do your members get more business? Of course this depends on the type of community you live in, but the answer can be generalized by a newborn, gaining market share, or getting the first opportunity to do business with newcomers and people relocating into the community. Most businesses that have been in a community a while have established customers. However, gaining new market share will always be an ongoing slow return process. Your members would benefit most and get more business quicker if they were given first contact opportunity of the relocation market. To show relevance of membership you need to offer a program that reaches out to new audiences.

So if we bring this all together, offering the best marketing products for your members that connects them with prospective customers will justify their membership and satisfy their marketing needs.

After 22 years in Chamber publishing, I had to evaluate what I was doing to justify selling the best products available to my customers. What was once good is no longer. I changed jobs to offer my customers a superior digital marketing dynamic. How many times have you heard the phrase work smarter, not harder, it's easier? I've always looked to improve on the products I represent; better valued products sell easier, just like the various programs and functions associated with Chamber business. Are you seeing the big

picture and long terms benefits for your members or are you looking to make short term royalties? Tenured Executives I've come to know over the years have always taken the long term values knowing this is what will keep the membership strong down the road. My new career is still in Chamber marketing. The program and the product may be different, but the goal remains the same: to offer Chambers and their members the best marketing opportunity available.

CGI Communications, Inc. has produced over 15,000 on-line streaming videos for Cities, Counties and Chambers that are focused on relocation, education, healthcare, economic development and tourism. Our program is no-cost to the members that has revenue share with no risk or contingencies for advertising support. CGI also creates videos for the members that are viewed around the video player. Our business model has proven itself thousands of times assuring you that your members will support it, embrace it and thank you for bringing it to them. Producing videos is only half of what CGI does. We also incorporate Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing campaigns. What good is the video on your Chamber site if no one can find it? SEO comes from our massive library of videos hosted at [www.relocate.org](http://www.relocate.org) and throughout the Country that is linked with thousands of City and County Government websites along with Chamber and Real Estate Broker websites. SEM comes from us purchasing keywords to draw your video and Chamber website to the top of the search, giving users instant access to you. Before the internet, I'm sure you would agree that Chambers used to be the community. Most businesses that have been in a community a while have established customers. However, gaining new market share will always be an ongoing slow return process. Your members would benefit most and get more business quicker if they were given first contact opportunity of the relocation market. To show relevance of membership you need to offer a program that reaches out to new audiences.

Young Professionals Networks (YPN) are teams or committees of professional men and women, usually between the ages of 20 and mid-40. In addition to networking opportunities, the programs have many purposes. One Pittsburgh Young Professional describes the experience as rooted in "providing career-minded individuals with opportunities to develop socially, professionally and civically." The YPNs attempt to guide young people who are unfamiliar or inexperienced in business fields while connecting them to other people with similar lifestyles and goals. In terms of professional assistance, the programs focus on fostering individual development, generating empowerment, providing mentoring experience with seasoned professionals, and supplementing resources that individual businesses may lack. The programs also serve as a social outlet that builds friendships, offers recreational activities and encourages philanthropic and charitable service- some programs even have opportunities for dating.



Photo by Steven Depolo

## YOUNG PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS: A MODERN SPIN ON CHAMBER FUNCTIONING

**ROBYN JOHNSON**  
Staff Writer

The primary purpose of the YPN is, however, benefiting its members. Group membership benefits range from superficial to invaluable. Not only does participation in such a group look spectacular on a resume, but it is a simple and enjoyable way to promote, grow and set apart small businesses and business professionals. Young Professional Network participants are given a voice in their communities and are distinguished as more knowledgeable industry members.

Christina Donegan and Nikki Balcerak of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce commented further on the importance of

## CHAMBER BUSINESS VS. BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

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**PATRICK MCCABE**  
Editor

Northrup, "and within 12 months there was 6 months of reserve funds in the bank, all the debt was cleared up, our reputation turned around, and we were making inroads with county agencies and elected officials."

Northrup's predecessor, who resigned in late 2009 to move to Pennsylvania, did not inform her of an ongoing contract and directory program. Northrup had found a contract stating that a Florida publishing company, whom she requested remain nameless, was going to produce 3 directories for Greater Palm Bay and pay them 25% of ad revenues or \$8,000 per directory, whichever amount was greater. Northrup was able to find the 3 directories, and thinking the contract was completed, checked with the bank about the money only to find that nothing had ever been deposited.

After speaking with lawyers and getting approval from her Board of Directors, Northrup decided to act. She soon discovered the problems inherent with not having an explicit contract. "Going back 3 or 4 years I couldn't find where any money had been deposited in our bank... And this is the reason why we sent them a demand letter and said "You're going to need to prove to us that you fulfilled your contract financially, because I'm showing 3 directories, the contract was for 3, I'm finding 3, I find no money... Apparently it all came down to 'Well we were friends with your predecessor and we thought we had a great working relationship.' Through mediation and depositions this publishing company was able to prove that the directories received were from a contract dated three years earlier. The money that Northrup thought she was owed apparently wasn't even in the original contract. The contract had been verbally changed at a later date. Since there was no language mentioning the royalties due in the contract, her Chamber didn't have a case.

Northrup thinks that they, and many other Chambers, are targeted because non-profits are largely empathetic, and enthusiastic about building relationships with companies they work with, almost to a fault. "They're very nice people," she says, referencing the publishing company, "very friendly, very I'm gonna be your best friend and take you out to dinner." And people get sucked into that. Well, a contract's a contract. You're going to pay me \$8000 [each] for 3 directories, and I find 3 directories produced after you sign that contract, I think you owe me \$24,000."

Trades aren't uncommon in this industry, in fact bartering is a huge asset when chamber members work with one another- but when a trade is made that falls outside of what is agreed upon, and offers certain members advertising they don't qualify for, there's a problem. Not only did the Greater Palm Bay Chamber not receive their royalties, but some of the highest grossing advertising space was being given away for free.

All of this was able to happen under the guise of being friends. We all know that business relationships are crucial to success. And trust is a huge aspect of that. That's why it's important to get referrals from those you do trust, and don't move forward without an explicit contract. Because at the end of the day, your Chamber

of Commerce is a business. Northrup puts it best, "Every dime that is owed needs to be accounted for. That's your job as a Chamber President. Not being friends with somebody and feeling sorry for them, letting them slide with what they owe you. It's unfair to the staff, it's unfair to the chamber members." Often times Chambers are able to avoid these kinds of hassles by working with local companies. "...somebody in my home town would never do this. They would never in a million years risk that kind of bad exposure," says Northrup.

While this is good advice, it's not concrete. As we said in our last issue, there are national companies out there who are fighting against the bad reputation Chamber publishers and marketers have been getting in the past. CGI Communications, Inc. is one such company, who guarantees full transparency for Chamber royalties. By providing live, up to date information on what is being sold and how that turns into royalties for your Chamber, Chamber Executives can see the benefits of CGI's program in real time.

Chambers shouldn't have to fear a marketing program based on ghost stories they hear from fellow executives. Northrup's experience can be disconcerting for Chambers, but it's important that they are aware of, and prepared for, the risk some services pose. It's important to let your community know about the programs you sponsor, and the positive affects those programs have on the citizens in your area. Just make sure your investment comes with a solid contract.

For more information on The Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce, visit: [www.greaterpalmbaychamber.com](http://www.greaterpalmbaychamber.com)

business growth through their Young Professionals Program. "As the metro chamber for the region serving a workforce of nearly 700,000 people it is important to engage young leaders." Balcerak commented that the program allows young members to get started, build peer relationships and make contact with other professionals. Because the chamber is so large, there is not only a great variety in types of business members, but networking opportunities that draw many attendees. "Typical events welcome 60-80 people and our annual event can draw over 600", claimed Balcerak. The young professionals are able to be exposed to a significant amount of fellow leaders and better inform their business practices as a result of being a part of the group.

In addition to networking opportunities, YPNs benefit their members through the use of social media, newsletter advertising and email services. Modern services are especially important to Young Professionals groups because they allow the chamber to youth business leader connection to be more tangible.

Young Professionals Networks are serving an important and growing role in contemporary business and chamber function. Young leaders stand as the face of future business and evidence that community growth and prosperity will continue.

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## THE DEADLIEST, MOST UNPARDONABLE SIN IN MARKETING YOUR CHAMBER



Glenn Shepard

**GLENN SHEPARD**  
Contributing Writer

The deadliest, most unpardonable sin in marketing is being boring.

In the age of Twitter and texting, people are becoming increasingly accustomed to communicating in 160 characters or less.

And now thanks to Pinterest, people are communicating without any words.

Regardless of whether you do most of your marketing online or off, today you have to work harder than ever to capture people's attention.

Although I knew this, it wasn't really driven home until 2005. I self published my first three books between 1993 and 1999. In 2005, a major New York publisher picked up my fourth book, "How to Manage Problem Employees."

I wrote every one of the 68,000 words in the book, but did not write the most important line - the title. While I had plenty of input, it was the marketing team in New York City that came up with the title. No matter how good a book is, people DO judge a book by the cover.

You would have never heard of a book by my esteemed colleague Dr. John Gray if it were titled "The Difference between Men and Women". But because he titled it "Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus", it became a blockbuster.

Had Dr. Spencer Johnson titled his book "Change Management", few would have bought it. But because he titled it "Who Moved My Cheese?", it sold over 24,000,000 copies and is the #1 best selling book of all time on change.

While "How to Manage Problem Employees" was a good enough title to sell a \$15 book, it wasn't good enough to get people to fork over \$149 to attend a half day seminar on the subject.

So I took my clues from Dr. Johnson and Dr. Grey, and set out to make the subject of management and HR sexy, fun, and interesting.

After more than a few failures, we finally hit a home run when we came up with "Glenn's Rules of Work". We give away a full size poster of the rules for free to everyone who attends the seminar.

### THE RULES ARE:

1. Raises are earned, not given.
2. Leave your home life at home.
3. If you'd wear it to the state fair, don't wear it to work!

4. Do NOT read your text messages when a customer is talking to you.
5. You are the company to the customer.
6. Reasonable mistakes are acceptable, carelessness is not.
7. If you wouldn't say it to people's faces, don't say it behind their backs.
8. When you cause the problem, you fix it.
9. If you can't be on time, be early.
10. Be Low Maintenance!

Do they "offend" some people? You bet.

But as Mike Neal, President & CEO of the Tulsa Metro Chamber says, "If you do anything, you're going to offend someone."

While "Show up for work promptly" might be more politically correct, "If you'd wear it to the state fair, don't wear it to work!" is a heck of a lot more interesting.

As a result, our average seminar attendance is more than triple the average attendance of two of the biggest seminar companies in the country.

Now, let's apply this to Chamber World. The following was taken from a chamber website, under what they incorrectly list as "benefits of membership.":

1. Monthly business meeting
2. Committees
3. Task forces

When Joe the Plumber sees "benefits" of chamber membership like these, he's sure to have three thoughts:

1. Boring!
2. Boring!
3. Boring!

In my next column, I'll show you how to turn these into real benefits of membership that are so sexy and so enticing that Joe the Plumber would give up his firstborn just to join your chamber.

### Author Info

Glenn Shepard is the president of Glenn Shepard Seminars, which provides accredited seminars at no cost for Chambers of Commerce. To get a Free copy of his Rules of Work ©, go to: [www.glennshepard.com/chambers](http://www.glennshepard.com/chambers)

## ARE YOU WINNING THE FIGHT FOR RELEVANCE?

### CATHI HIGHT

Contributing Writer

More and more associations are having conversations around relevance. Members are questioning how relevant their associations are to their businesses today and consequently, boards of directors are bringing those concerns to their meetings (after all, they are members, too, and feel a responsibility to deliver relevance to the overall association and its members).



Cathi Hight

What does it mean to be relevant to your members and to businesses you want to recruit? Although they may not use the "R" word specifically, members and prospects alike consider these factors when evaluating your relevance:

Alignment with Your Vision and Mission

- What is your greater vision and how do you plan to achieve it?
- Who do you serve and what do you for them?
- Who do you collaborate with to achieve your goals?

GOVERNANCE MODEL

- Does your board of directors reflect your membership base and the business community?
- What is the succession planning model to ensure that strong leadership is recruited and retained?
- What is the decision making process and how well does the leadership implement decisions?
- How adaptive is your board of directors to navigate change in the association and the community?

VALUE EXPECTATIONS

- How well do you address the issues facing businesses with positive outcomes?
- Do you offer programs and services that businesses care about and use?
- How well does your value proposition resonate with business leaders and owners?

POSITIVE BRAND

- Is your leadership team seen as a driving force among members and policy decision makers?
- How well is your strategic direction and achievements communicated publicly?
- Do businesses see you as an effective leader, innovator, and conduit for success in the community?
- What are you known for in the community and how is your image perceived?

**LEVERAGE TRENDS AND ADAPT YOUR MODEL TO BE RELEVANT**

Several trends present challenges and opportunities for associations. Recognizing these trends and finding effective and new opportunities to serve the business community will ensure that we are the indispensable entity in the communities where we serve.

**TIME POVERTY** means that everyone has less time to volunteer and to participate in date specific member benefits.

Business owners and leaders are looking for ways to be more efficient with their time, resolve issues, and get more 'bang for their buck.' They are questioning how they spend their time and what value they receive for this precious investment. Associations must look for ways to educate, engage,

and provide value to members that don't require huge investments in time. Online delivery of education and access to resources 24/7/365 are no longer 'nice to have's' but essential.

**GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES**

Can no longer be ignored. By 2020, the Y generation will represent more than 50% of the workforce and yet many association's staff and board of directors do not reflect a representative body of this demographic group. Our associations will only be theirs if they have opportunities to 'be at the table' and make influential decisions. This generation of 'digital natives' value technology, innovation, globalization, and are willing to invest in causes that make real differences in their communities. We need to listen and be willing to evolve into a next-generation association that meets the needs of both the current and the emerging membership.

**LOCAL & GLOBAL COMPETENCE**

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**REAL-TIME BUSINESS SOLUTIONS**

Are a must to deliver on value expectations from members and to attract new members. The roles for advocacy, economic development, and workforce development are more important than ever before and businesses need effective leaders who can make it happen. Small business owners are looking for solutions to their challenges and don't feel that attending networking events are the answers to their dilemmas. Business owners need access to capital, expertise, skilled workers and specific connections to help them grow their businesses. Associations need to move from being 'event coordinators' to 'solution providers' to win the relevancy race.

**RESOURCES TO HELP YOU STAY RELEVANT**

We've made it our focus to help associations win the fight for relevance. Our spring and summer webinar series were created to help you redesign, refine, and...

**KILL THE SCARED ZOMBIE COWS**

This webinar offers an objective process and tools to evaluate your programs and services. The worksheets and proposed criteria can help you identify which benefits to keep and disinvest from on an annual basis. The recording is available on our site

**OH NO, NOT ANOTHER EVENT**

After analyzing the results from the Non-Dues Revenue Trends Survey conducted in April, we developed this webinar to highlight key themes and explore new and innovative ways to generate non-event dues revenue

enue that deliver value to members. Frank J. Kenny and Glenn Shepard were co-presenters on the webinar and the recording is available on our site.

**THE FIGHT FOR RELEVANCE**

This webinar explores insights from the Race for Relevance book and discusses specific strategies to employ to that will ensure you win this race.

**NEXT GENERATION DUES TRENDS**

This webinar explores the emerging dues models from the book 'The End of Membership As We Know It. You'll discover how associations are adapting their models to be more inclusive and taking advantage of technology, the global market and generational interests to offer memberships in a whole new way. Interestingly, you will recognize why the 'fair share' model based on employee count is on its way out!

I hope you realize that although this has been the 'worst of times,' it is also providing opportunities to become the 'best of times.' Where willingness is high to be relevant to current and future members, difficulty should not be to make the changes necessary.

**Cathi Hight**

Cathi Hight is president of Hight Performance Group and has over 20 years experience in performance improvement. She helps organizations build sustainable futures, improve processes, increase productivity, and develop staff & member loyalty. Hight Performance Group is the developer of the Member Retention Kit. A master facilitator, trainer and consultant, Cathi offers strategic planning, leadership and staff development, and a toolkit of publications, webinars and assessments. To learn how we can support your fight for relevance contact Cathi at (720) 304-0747 or e-mail: [cathi@hightperformance.com](mailto:cathi@hightperformance.com)

**SURVEYS ADD CONTEXT TO UNDERSTANDING MEMBER NEEDS**

**SCOTT JURANEK**  
Contributing Writer

It's easy sometimes to make assumptions about what customers or members want. Our perceptions based on past experience can make us (or at least me) a bit tone deaf to subtle changes in the market. While surveys aren't perfect oracles of human behavior, they are instructive and don't have to be created by market research experts to give you actionable results. I recently came across a very short survey conducted by a state association of chamber executives. It consisted of two short questions the association needed answered to better understand what software their chambers use for member management and for their websites. While the results were useful, what was particularly interesting was the large number of respondents.

The survey was very simple, short and clearly worded to ensure the results would be unbiased. I would be willing to bet that most chambers who conduct surveys get reasonable results with decent accuracy as your survey recipients know and trust you with their feedback. (<http://mashable.com/2011/07/11/how-to-online-survey/>)



Scott Juranek

**1) DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES:** What are you trying to learn? For example, are you trying to decide whether or not to launch a new member benefit? As chambers, you get lots of companies wanting you to resell their products to your members. How do you decide if it's truly something the members would be interested in?

**2) WORK BACKWARDS:** Think about the information you'd like to gain from the survey results, and then reverse-engineer questions. For example, if you are trying to determine whether or not your members are satisfied with the level of service at your chamber, make a list of the various elements of the member experience -- e.g. staff interactions, marketing opportunities, network events, etc. -- and then frame each individual element in question form. Make sure to avoid asking two questions masked as one; for instance, "how friendly and knowledgeable are the chamber staff when you have questions?" Perhaps they were friendly but not knowledgeable, or vice versa, which could affect how a member responds.

**3) CHECK FOR BIAS:** It's a common mistake to write your questions in a leading manner, i.e., "The chamber staff were friendly. Do you agree with this statement?" This can skew your results in a more positive direction, since people naturally tend towards tact and it may be hard for members to be too direct in comments regarding people who are there to help them.

**4) DO A TEST DRIVE:** Test! Test! Test! Send it to your staff first, check to see if you're seeing a strange pattern in their responses that suggest the question is leading or confusing.

**5) COLLECT RESULTS AND ANALYZE:** Keeping your survey short will help you with managing the data and likely lead to more completed surveys. Consider sharing survey information with other chambers to see what can be learned. We will be emailing our own set of surveys shortly to both customers and non-customers. We hope to gain a stronger understanding of how our customers view and rate our service. And we hope to get insights on how non-customers manage their day-to-day tasks and initiatives inside their chambers. So if you happen to see a survey from us, do us a favor and fill it out. If you have feedback on how we could do a better job of asking for your opinions, drop me a line, I'd love to hear from you. Scott Juranek is the CEO of MicroNet, Inc., providers of membership management software and website solutions for over 1300 Chambers of Commerce. His background is in software development and he is very passionate about using technology to make business easier. Scott and his family live in Nisswa, Minnesota. Scott can be reached at [Scott.Juranek@micronetonline.com](mailto:Scott.Juranek@micronetonline.com)

**A GROWING PARTNERSHIP**



Farmer John Huschle - Credited to Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance  
**GEOFF TOOMEY**  
Staff Writer

What do you get when you add a growing healthy eating consciousness with local farmers who provide farm fresh produce, baked goods, and quality products monthly, weekly, or even daily? The answer is not your local grocery store, but local direct farmers markets.

Today, consumers are connecting with local farmers more than ever before. The number of farmers markets across the country registered by the USDA is well over 7000. "When I started, which is close to 20 years ago, my guess is there were probably less than 1000," says Chris Curtis, director of Seattle, Washington's Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, "I would venture to say that a majority of markets have worked closely with their neighborhood and city chambers to get going."

Farmers markets, like Chambers of Commerce, are unique groups. They help regional small businesses connect with an audience. "The growth of farmers markets has been phenomenal and it's been a good thing for local businesses, small businesses, small farms, and communities – all the good things that farmers markets serve," Curtis tells me.

In 1993, Curtis aspired to link local farmers to a city looking for the freshest ingredients. She had seen the markets of California that prioritized farmers and wanted to bring this back to her own city in Seattle. "When they call an event a farmers market that means when you go there the priority is given to farmers and the majority of vendors that you see there are farmers, and that's what I wanted our markets to look like."

Since the inception of her first market in the University District of Seattle, WA, Curtis says that the success of their growth has been in part due to the combination of a core group of farmers market stakeholders, along with their local chambers. "Our greater University Chamber of Commerce was just this primary mover and shaker, who wanted to see this farmers market happen." This chamber was willing to share their resources, marketing, and even the building they worked in as an available resource for Curtis and her partners. "They provided office space so we could have our regular meetings, they provided fax machines and computers, and all of their office administration was there for us to create this very special first year of the farmers market." One of the members of the chamber actually took her time to teach Curtis how to write up a grant, "I sat down with the executive director and she literally walked me through what

it took to write a small and simple grant to the city. She was instrumental in helping me figure out how you form a non-profit [organization]."

The Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance now consists of 7 different markets in 7 communities within Seattle, and is a member of all 7 chambers. "When we started [The NFMA's first farmers market in Seattle's University District] in '93, it was a pretty small event. It was all grass roots, volunteers, community support- however we could get it going to get a farmers market in that neighborhood. Because it was the first one in the city we were really breaking new ground. It was a whole new paradigm of people thinking of how they were going to buy local food from local farmers."

Today, this paradigm is something of the norm. From local grocery stores to these direct farmers markets, shoppers are looking for fresh, natural, and healthy foods. As Curtis and the Neighborhood Farmers Markets grew, it wasn't because of a forced entry into a new neighborhood, but by request, "We were approached by other Seattle neighborhoods, who said 'I really like what's happening in the University District or one of the others, and I would love to do something like that here.' So, we'd sit down with a group and often it was a chamber who saw the value of the farmers market, not only as a community hub, but as a good development tool."

Seattle's markets have been recognized both in the state as well as nationally. Curtis and the Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance take this role seriously, helping as mentors to other start-up markets in other parts of the state, or even other parts of the country. The USGA has become a huge advocate for the farmers it supports who look to sell local. Through grants and funding, the support for local farmers markets from a national level is something to take notice of. According to usga.gov, from 2011 to 2012, 689 brand new farmers markets brought locally produced foods to new customers across the country. For some communities these markets can be seen as a revitalization tool, willing to share their resources, marketing, and even the building they worked in as an available resource for Curtis and her partners. "They provided office space so we could have our regular meetings, they provided fax machines and computers, and all of their office administration was there for us to create this very special first year of the farmers market." One of the members of the chamber actually took her time to teach Curtis how to write up a grant, "I sat down with the executive director and she literally walked me through what

Maintaining relevancy in a changing world has become an issue that chambers of commerce are beginning to face, particularly as younger generations become business owners and members of the business community. As chambers across the country fight to keep up with current trends in technology, many are tuning into various social media channels to keep in touch with their members. John McCarley is "The Social Media Guy" for the Dallas Chamber of Commerce in Dallas, Texas. For the last year and a half, McCarley has been experimenting with YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, blogging, and Pinterest, in an effort to engage current members as well as draw in new members. "Chalk the Vote" (<http://www.dallaschamber.org/index.aspx?id=ChalkTheVote>) was the first full-scale social media contest that McCarley launched June 1st, running for six weeks. Seven nonprofit organizations with ties to education vied for a free one-year chamber membership renewal. Hosted through the Chamber's Facebook page, people were encouraged to "vote" for the organization they felt most deserved the recognition. Prizes were also awarded to the individuals and organizations who "shared" this opportunity and had the most votes associated with their own Facebook page. McCarley says this contest resulted in a "78

percent increase in our Facebook fans in 45 days." By hosting the contest, McCarley was beginning to engage members, reach out to potential members, and encourage communication in the community- all through the Chamber's Facebook page.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**NORTHEAST**

1. The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, Manhattan, NYC: The 12th Annual 2012 Port Industry Day, a conference, exhibition and food festival, will be held Tuesday, October 16th from 10 A.M. until 5 P.M. The event will take place at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, New Jersey.

2. The Tremont Chamber of Commerce, Southwest Harbor, Maine: The Crown Oktoberfest Food and Craft Festival will be held at Mt. Desert Island on October 5th and 6th from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Admission ranges from 5 to 30 dollars depending on festival events and vendors. The festival offers music, dancing, artisan crafters, wine-makers and brewers, as well as a variety of food and drink vendors.

3. The Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce, Augusta, Maine: On November 9th the Lithgow Library will make a charitable deal with patrons owing overdue fines. "Food for Fines" gives those who owe the library for overdue books and materials a chance to absolve their debts but bringing in canned food items which will be donated to the Augusta Food Bank. The event is held in the Reading Room and will begin at 10 A.M.

**SOUTH**

1. The Huntsville Chamber of Commerce, Huntsville, Alabama: The 2012 Business Expo will be held Thursday, November 8th

and will feature a new Health and Wellness Showcase and will take place at VBC South Hall. The Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Asheville, North Carolina: The chamber offers

2. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Arlington, Texas: On November 9th, the chamber will hold the Second Annual Inspired-Women Luncheon. Over 300 female business leaders in the area will gather to acknowledge each others success. Both the time and location are to be determined.

3. The Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, Houston, Texas: The Governmental Affairs Committee will meet on November 6th from noon to 1:00 P.M. The chamber will meet to discuss legislative issues specific to women, provide an educational experience and better inform members of their roles in political and community action.

**MIDWEST**

1. The Mukwonago Area Chamber of Commerce, Mukwonago, Wisconsin: The Mukwonago Jack-o-Lantern Jaunt will be held October 19th and 20th from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. Attendees are encouraged to wear costumes to this pumpkin carving display and craft show. There will be an outdoor movie on Friday, October 19th at 8 P.M. and the one-dollar admission will be donated to charity. 2. The Sturgis Area Chamber



Upcoming Events outdoor tent festival CREDIT Oast House Archive Community Events

of Commerce, Sturgis, South Dakota: The chamber will host its annual haunted house on October 31st. The event will be held from 7 to 10 P.M.

3. The Greater Lawrence County Area Chamber of Commerce, South Point, Ohio: The chamber's Annual Awards Dinner will be held October 18th at Ohio University in Ironton. Senator Tom Niehaus will be the keynote speaker.

3. The Craig Chamber of Commerce, Craig, Colorado: The Moffat County Library Craig Branch will hold a Family Game Night on December 12th from 5 P.M. until 6:30 P.M. The library claims that all you have to do is "bring the family" and they'll "provide the games".

**WEST**

1. The Salmon River Chamber of Commerce, Riggins, Idaho: The area's regional fall art show will take place October 13th through 14th at the Best Western Salmon Rapids Lodge. The festival will feature a variety of exhibits, contests and a silent auction. The event is open to the public and offers free admission.

2. The Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce, Provo, Utah: On Saturdays throughout the quarter from 7:30 A.M. to 9 A.M.,

the chamber offers an "Eggs & Issues" breakfast at Intermountain Healthcare in the North West Plaza. The event is a forum discussion between legislators and business leaders. The breakfast group welcomes and encourages the discussion of legislative issues impacting the business community.

3. The Craig Chamber of Commerce, Craig, Colorado: The Moffat County Library Craig Branch will hold a Family Game Night on December 12th from 5 P.M. until 6:30 P.M. The library claims that all you have to do is "bring the family" and they'll "provide the games".

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**ON-GOING BATTLE BETWEEN U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND EPA**



EPA Smoke Stacks - Stock Photo

**ROBYN JOHNSON**  
Staff Writer

Generally, the EPA attempts to expand environmental conservation efforts, improve air and water quality, prevent pollution and enforce the laws that serve these objectives. The EPA's agenda addresses (and hopes to regulate) environmental concerns ranging from greenhouse gas emissions to ending coal power to soot particulate release in automobile exhausts and factories. The Environmental Protection Agency takes the stance that natural causes alone cannot explain the climate changes that have occurred in recent years- there is belief that human behavior has contributed; and this aspect of the EPA's position is problematic for the chamber because they want concrete evidence.

Bill Kovacs, the U.S. Chamber's Vice President of Environmental, Regulatory and Government Affairs, argued that the EPA lacks evidence to support an endangerment finding. An endangerment finding, simply put, indicates that greenhouse gasses in the earth's atmosphere pose a threat to human health currently and will continue to do so in the future, hence the need for emission reduction; however, emissions reductions are problematic for small and big businesses alike. Several years ago, the chamber asked that the EPA's scientific evidence be held on trial. The EPA claimed that sound science indicates climate change presents a threat to human health and welfare. In 2010, the U.S. Chamber sued the EPA in an attempt to review the EPA's endangerment decision. The U.S. Chamber later

reported that the science behind emissions and human welfare is not being questioned, but rather the suitability of using the Clean Air Act to regulate emissions.

The chamber claims that the EPA's past and present proposals attack man-made energy sources and shake the security and cost-effectiveness of resources that businesses and industries in America rely upon. Bruce Josten, the chamber's Executive Vice President for Government Affairs, indicated (in reference to the release of the Carbon Pollution Standard for New Power Plants in March) that the EPA's policies could lead to reliance on high-cost energy for businesses and families. Josten further commented at the press release that, over time, the EPA has taken actions that "weaken our energy security and raise energy prices".

The chamber views the EPA's emission standards and policy guidelines as too strict and wonders if greenhouse gasses are even capable of being regulated. The chamber has consistently resisted the EPA's efforts and fought the policies that the chamber suspects will make the EPA the "regulator of the U.S. economy". In 2011, the chamber petitioned the EPA again with the claim that the EPA "overestimated emissions"; inaccurate estimates can shape policies that are unfavorable to businesses. The U.S. Chamber saw the EPA's emissions standards as regulating a variety

of industries "out of business." Similarly, Southern Co., an electric utilities company, spent \$17.5 million lobbying against the EPA's rules in the previous year. While many businesses and business organizations fear the repercussions of the EPA's strict guideline proposals, some businesses and local chambers have been torn in terms of agreeing with one side or the other; some members have left the U.S. Chamber, while others have maintained support and involvement. Although the EPA's increasingly more limiting rules may negatively impact economic growth and be a financial burden to states, municipalities and businesses, human health and welfare organizations are quick to illustrate the regulations' benefits. The Environmental Protection Agency's most recent objective it to toughen soot emission rules, but the chamber claims that the expense of enforcing such regulations far outweigh the environmental benefits.

While this on-going battle between the EPA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is not likely to cease any time soon, both sides are attempting to ensure that their respective concerns are accounted for and corrected-pressing environmental changes for the EPA and a stifled economy for the chamber. It seems the chamber will continue to resist the EPA to better serve business interests and the EPA will keep its promise to try to protect the environment.

**HISTORICAL LOOK AT CHAMBER JOURNALISM**

(Continued from Page 1)

**ROBYN JOHNSON**  
Staff Writer

Similar to most modern journals and newsletters that chambers provide, the San Francisco Journal included current events, success stories and promotional tools. This journal strikes me as having created a foundation for future chambers to conduct public affairs. Because we now live in an era of finely-tuned communication, I am impressed that modern chambers mimic a 100 year-old method of communication.

The chamber journal offered trade maps, points of economic progress and articles that shared the chamber's interest in building a strong community. The journal demonstrated the chamber's goals and efforts and drew the community into the process of economic development. At the beginning of San Francisco's commercial cultivation, the journal served an important purpose- the transmission of information regarding community projects, political advice and trade analysis. Businesses and community members alike were able to relate to the material and in turn, benefit from the chamber's disclosure. The journal cared more about just promoting economic

interests; the journal, seemingly, attempted to establish a foundation that could withstand time and serve all people.

While many of the journal's efforts may seem simple or unimportant, there are several details I noticed that made this particular historical piece stand out. My typical perception of chamber newsletters and publications (having read quite a few of them) is that they are strict, direct and narrowly focused. The most impressive aspect of the San Francisco Journal was that it provided a forum for readers and addressed a variety of topics, issues and community concerns; and each issue encouraged comments, suggestions and input. The tone of the journal was especially surprising; the use of language was relaxed and informal. Today's networking events are often referred to as after-hours and the San Francisco chamber's were quaintly termed "Little Talks". Chamber updates and sources of pride were pleasantly coined "Strides of Progress". The journal seemed to serve a generally helpful purpose, not only for those involved in business endeavors, but for any person reading it. There were explanations of financial distribution proposals, tips for voting in favor of business, advertising advice and trade analysis. The journal was straightforward and represented, perhaps, a simpler time. This sense of nostalgia is most evident in some of the other resources the journal offered. For instance, the journal presented a small section that provided the prices of culinary staples such as meat, eggs and milk- all of which cost less than fifty cents per pound. The prices were also compared to surrounding areas to accentuate the benefit of living in San Francisco. Another charming aspect of the journal that reflects contemporary commercial milestones is the celebration of ribbon cutting ceremonies which are appropriately called "ground breaking" events. Lastly, there is a sense of inclusion that this journal held. Each publication listed every single chamber member and with each publication, the listing grew.

There is an inexplicable charm about the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Journal. It may be because I am a part of a generation that lacks a sense or appreciation of tradition, but either way I am impressed by how long the chamber's commercial efforts have existed- and proven to be effective through many other chambers' use of the same tactics. I was also impressed that despite the year of publication (1911), the chamber used methods of communication and promotion that most chambers use today. There are certainly some differences between chambers "then" and chambers "now". For example, the "types" of chamber members have changed quite a bit with the technological and sociological changes that have occurred over the past 100 years. Although the multiple columns of "lumber dealers" in the business directory may have been replaced by an abundance of technological services and modern luxuries, there is a lot to be said about an organization's methods of communication that inspire and remain practiced after 100 years of service.

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: THIRD QUARTER**



Ribbon Cutting - Credited to Williston Area Chamber of Commerce

**JULY**

- 1. Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce, Texas: Sherwin-Williams Paints. Managed by Clayton Williams, this Fortune 500 company has earned Texas City's 'Business of the Month' for its quality and personalized service.
- 2. Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Florida: Sneed Plumbing, Inc. Owner and Operator Glenn Sneed has specialized in bath and kitchen remodeling for over 20 years, earning his company the title of 'Business of the Month' in Fort Pierce.
- 3. North Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Florida: Bennett Chiropractic Northdale. As a qualified and reputable source of healthcare and assistance, Dr. James W. Bennett's practice has earned the area's monthly award.

- 4. Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, Oregon: Miller Realty. Owner Virginia Miller has generated client satisfaction since 2001. With a wide range of specialization in residential, commercial and farm real estate, Miller Realty won the title of July Business of the Month.
- 5. Hope Mills Area Chamber of Commerce, North Carolina: Antiques and Uniques on Main have earned the area's award for their contributions to the Hope Mills marketplace.
- 6. Spanish Fork-Salem Area Chamber of Commerce, Utah: Circle V Meat. The entire Circle V Meat staff has earned their success through their extensive involvement in both the chamber and the community.
- 7. Greater Mystic Chamber of

- Commerce, Connecticut: Steamboat Inn. Among other awards, Operator Kate Abel has earned the 'Business of the Month' title because of the charm, uniqueness and consistency of her business.
- 8. Penrose Chamber of Commerce, Colorado: Canon Marine, Inc. President Dave Gouveia's Marine has been the area's premium source for boat sales and service for 30 years. The team's expertise and quality have earned the 'Business of the Month' title.
- 9. Statesboro Chamber of Commerce, Georgia: The Country Store. James Revell and his staff specialize in residential and commercial flooring with optimal service and an environmental conscious that won the 'Business of the Month' award.

- 10. Milton-Freewater Chamber of Commerce, Oregon: Dairy Queen. Franchise owner Trevor Moon has been a business owner and chamber member since 2004. His involvement in the community and successful efforts to revamp and improve his franchise have gained him the monthly award.

- 11. Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce, Kansas: Al's Humble Flowers. Al's long history and quality service have led the community to call it their favorite florist and the chamber to claim it as its 'Business of the Month'.

**AUGUST**

- 1. Windsor Chamber of Commerce, California: The Redwood Credit Union has been awarded the chamber's 'Business of the Month' recognition for its community involvement and quality service.
- 2. Logansport/ Cass County Chamber of Commerce, Indiana: The Logansport August business of the month has been awarded to Maple Family Dentistry for their care to the community's families.
- 3. Huntington County Chamber of Commerce, Indiana: The Victory Noll Center holds the Huntington Chamber's August 'Business of the Month' award. The spiritual growth center has been helping the community for over 10 years. (Was mentioned in last issue)
- 4. Phelps Chamber of Commerce, New York: The chamber has awarded Dr. Emanuel Y. S. Li's cancer treatment practice 'Business of the Month'

for his caring and quality help within the community.

- 5. Morganfield Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky: Morganfield's Old National Bank has been awarded 'Business of the Month' for August. The bank's customer service and community involvement have earned them the recognition.

- 6. Navarre Chamber of Commerce, Florida: ResortQuest helps visitors and residents in the Navarre area locate and obtain vacation properties in Florida. ResortQuest's quality service has earned them the 'Business of the Month' award. (Was mentioned in last issue)

- 7. Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, New York: Riverside Rustics hand-crafted furniture has earned the August 'Business of the Month' award for their unique and stylish contributions to the area's retail market.

- 8. Sherwood Chamber of Commerce, Arkansas: BJ's Plants and Produce offers quality products and has earned the August 'Business of the Month' award in the Sherwood area.

- 9. Carlville Community Chamber of Commerce, Illinois: Reno's Italian Pizzeria and Ristorante offers delicious food and quality custom service that has earned the August business award.

- 10. Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Indiana: Kirby Realty has guided the Lafayette area through its real estate needs and in turn, has been named the area's August 'Business of the Month'

# U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STATE RANKINGS BY CATEGORY

CREDIT: UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## TOP 5 MANUFACTURING JOBS INFOGRAPHIC



Graph Illustration by Rob Frost & Robyn Johnson

## NORTH FORT MYERS' UNIQUE TAKE ON FAMILY FUN

ROBYN JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

On Monday, September 3, 2012, the North Fort Myers Area celebrated Labor Day a little differently than most. This year's first Lee County Labor Day Family Festival and Redneck Games was held; the "redneck celebration" was inspired by the success of the event in other communities. North Fort Myers' Executive Director Christopher O. Jackson reported that over 2,000 people attended and that the event was "well received by the community". The community has already started planning the event to be "bigger and better" after its immense success. Jackson said that attendees had such a great deal of fun that they look forward to assisting with the event in the future.



Redneck games Father Son, Credit to Amanda Inscore news-press.com

family event that everybody can enjoy," stated chamber president Dick Collins. The festival cost \$2 per person for all-day admission with free parking. Activities included a car show, arts and crafts tables, business exhibits, entertainment for children and a beer garden for adults. The real excitement, however, was rooted in the Redneck Games. Inspired by Jeff Foxworthy's famous redneck commentary, the "Redneck Games" offered a "six-tathlon" of events. There were competitions in tire-rolling, hanging laundry and Spam-eating. There was also a mullet contest, television remote toss and the aforementioned game of toilet-seat horseshoes. The signature activity was the mud pit tug-o-war that gave rival businesses an opportunity to humiliate the competition- it was quite a success.

area making this event an excellent sponsorship opportunity for area businesses and organizations in the future. As appropriately put by North Fort Myers Chamber's President Dick Collins, "what better way to pay due respect to rednecks everywhere, who are a special part of American history and culture."

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The Redneck Games originated in East Dublin, Georgia as a response to media broadcasters stereotyping the area as the location for the 1996 Olympics; broadcasters claimed that hosting the Olympics in Atlanta would leave it in the hands of "rednecks". Residents then intentionally reinforced the projected stereotypes and created the Redneck Games. The trophy for event winners is a plaque-mounted semi-crushed, empty beer can. The North Fort Myers Chamber was "pleased to be able to offer an affordable and unique

In addition to being fun and entertaining, the crowds far surpassed the anticipated numbers of people. The event gained a great deal of publicity for the

## TOP 5 STATES INFOGRAPHIC



Graph Illustration by Rob Frost & Robyn Johnson



Redneck games Father Son, Credit Amanda Inscore news-press.com



## OTHER RANKINGS

FASTEST GROWING STATES WITH REGARD TO STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH) JOBS 2009-2011

1. Vermont 8.4%
2. Michigan 6.6%
3. Washington 6.4%
4. Utah 5.6%
5. North Dakota 5.4%
6. Massachusetts 4.9%
7. Nebraska 4.7%
8. South Carolina 4.6%
9. Georgia 4.6%
10. Alaska 4.5%
11. Wyoming 4.4%
12. West Virginia 4.3%
13. Oregon 4.0%
14. Texas 4.0%
15. Ohio 3.8%
16. Virginia 3.7%

## TOP 10 FUTURE BOOM STATES

1. North Dakota
2. Utah
3. Texas
4. Virginia
5. Wyoming
6. Washington
7. Maryland
8. Colorado
9. South Dakota
10. Massachusetts

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# Fiber Optics

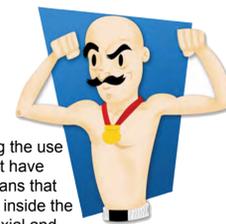
By: Nick Palermo

Fiber optics aren't new, but the technology is catching fire recently. Backing by a company of Google's magnitude could be what this future-tech needs to get off the ground. Since the beta test in Kansas City is well under way, here are 10 things worth knowing about Fiber Optics and how they could shape your future.

## 10 Facts About Fiber Optics

**Thinner**  
Fiber is thinner and smaller. The possibilities are nearly endless, but the fact of the matter is that copper and other forms of metal wiring can only be drawn so thin whereas fiber optics can be considerably smaller.

**How small is 'small' in the case of fiber optics?** Engineers at Intel are researching and developing the use of optics to replace transistors, but what does that have to do with the benefits of using fiber optics? It means that more consumers can be serviced by wires that fit inside the same shielded pipes that have been used for coaxial and POTS wiring solutions.



**Lightweight**  
Smaller also means lighter. From the standpoint of an installer, fiber optical cabling is easier to work with and transport. Easier work and transportation also results in lower expenses.

**How lightweight is fiber optical cabling?** NASA uses it in space shuttles, and companies that build airplanes also make use of fiber optical cabling in order to keep down overall weight, and increase payload capacity.

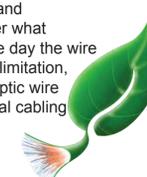


**More Secure**  
Fiber is more secure. Security is important, and the bonus is often on the company that owns and/or runs the cabling. It is far easier to tap into electrical wiring than it is to tap into fiber optic wiring in a surreptitious manner.

**Binary**  
Fiber is either on or it isn't. Since fiber optic systems do not interfere with one another, and there is no such thing as a residual lighting charge, fiber optic is the perfect medium for exchanging digital data. Digital data is innately binary, so it works far better than signaling based on electrical thresholds.

**More Efficient**  
Signals sent over fiber optics do not degrade nearly as quickly as those sent over copper wiring. Light and electricity may travel at the same speed, but electricity transiting through any medium degrades. The greater the distance, the poorer the resulting signal. Fiber optics do not degrade nearly as fast, and there is virtually no signal loss in many situations. This means fewer sub-stations to maintain signal quality, which in turn means a lower infrastructure investment and obligation. Lower bottom lines are great for businesses and consumers.

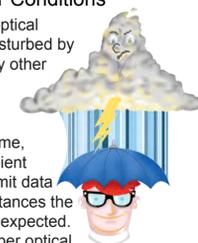
**Use Less Energy**  
Metal wiring of any kind has a finite tolerance for electricity, and that tolerance degrades over time. This means that no matter what compression algorithms are applied to data, at the end of the day the wire is going to be a limiting factor. Fiber optics do not share this limitation, as simply upgrading the equipment on both ends of a fiber optic wire will result in better performance. Furthermore, the fiber optical cabling does not degrade over time the same way that wiring does.



**Are "Green"**  
Fiber is good for the environment. Consider that the requirement to send an electrical signal over miles of wiring is typically dozens of times the amount of energy needed to send a brief flash of light over the same distance via fiber optical cabling. Lower energy requirements means a lower carbon footprint and lower price of operation, which can be enjoyed by network owners and their customers alike.

**Use Light**  
You won't get burned with fiber optics. Since there is no electrical current passing through a fiber optical cable, there is no heat. No heat means a few things, but prime amongst the benefits is that fiber optical cabling is not a fire hazard in the same way that metal wiring is. A fire that starts in an overheating cable might prove to be a very serious liability indeed.

**Are Not Influenced by Weather Conditions**  
Nothing seems to bother fiber optics. Because fiber optical cables carry light instead of electricity, they are not disturbed by changes in the temperature, rain, cold, or virtually any other environmental condition. Fiber optical cables are not immune to everything, but deploying and maintaining a network of wires is expensive and dangerous by comparison. Copper wiring can become brittle over time, especially if it is overused and/or exposed to hot ambient temperatures. Cold ambient temperatures help transmit data over copper wiring more efficiently, but over great distances the results may be more electricity arriving at a port than expected. The results can be a burnout or worse; but not with fiber optical cabling. It's not influenced by weather conditions.



**Faster**  
Well the light doesn't actually travel faster, but data is transmitted faster because of the increased capacity of fiber optic cables. How much capacity? Current commercial applications can transmit 10-80 Gigabits per second over a single channel. For a more tangible example of what this means, head over to fiber.google.com/about and play with the "Race Against Fiber" option in the middle of the page. To ground it further in reality use the "Experience 100x Faster" to see what actual travel would be like through Fiber Optics.



My personal favorite is from The Google Plex: 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, CA to The Moon, Space by Bicycle.

## The Bleeding Edge

What does search giant Google have on the way?

### The Best Thing You Haven't Heard About...Yet

Chances are if you're reading this you remember a world without the Internet. Hard to believe, but there has been nothing more significant to commerce and communication than the world wide web. If you can hear the sound of a dial-up modem booting in your head, you probably remember the first days of America Online connecting through your telephone. You no doubt lived through the Napster music sharing lawsuit before legitimate companies like Pandora and Spotify revolutionized the concept. You might even remember eBaumsWorld as the premier funny video site, before YouTube organized user-based content for the masses. Most importantly, your first search engine was probably AskJeeves or Fetch, before Google took the world by storm.

That first transformation of the way people search for and discover things on the Internet was a huge stride forward. Since those first days Google has grown into all facets of technology; competing with mobile phone giant Apple by developing Android for smartphones, and most recently taking on Internet Service Providers directly with Google Fiber. Some of you may only be familiar with the fiber optics used in artificial Christmas trees, but the little wires are capable of far more than holiday cheer- fiber optic cables can be used to transfer all kinds of information, including Internet and television. (See our "Facts About Fiber Optics" table)

### It's Not Like Flipping On The Kitchen Light

Assuming you've read the table accompanying this article, you're probably wondering "Why can't I have this *right now*". Unfortunately Fiber Optics can't operate through the existing systems we currently have for cable and Internet. That means Google needs to install new hardware. Lots of hardware.

In true Google fashion, the thing that makes their plan different isn't the pioneering factor. If you read the recap above, you noticed that Google isn't ever the first on the scene (see also: search engines; smart phones). While it isn't the first to implement fiber optics as a means to transmit data, it does have one of the most ambitious plans, and competitive prices to boot.

Currently the test areas are both Kansas City's (that's Kansas and Missouri for you non-geography folks). The "fiberhoods", as Google has dubbed the market areas, will be selected for hardware installation based on the interest of the residents in the area. Ambitious campaigns were held online at fiber.google.com where residents of the eligible "fiberhoods" expressed their interest for the new technology. The results posted on September 10<sup>th</sup> marking the end of the first phase of the planned installations.

### What It Means For Business

If you have not already jumped online to read more about the other features of Google Fiber (including HD Television and the DVR to end all DVR's) allow me to compound the equation; Google Fiber means *business*. Imagine for a moment not being restricted by connection speeds ever again. Imagine now that these lightning fast speeds are accompanied by an almost too good to be true price tag. The service is up to 100x faster than traditional Internet connections and costs less than other 'high-speed' providers. It even got to the point where Time Warner was going so far as to pay (see also: bribe) it's Kansas City employees to provide any intelligence they could regarding the fiber network (<http://www.gizmodo.com.au/2012/07/time-warner-is-paying-employees-to-spy-on-google-fiber-activity/>).

As a business in one of these "fiberhoods", costs go down, service to customers is improved, and you've future proofed your site. Google is going so far as to offer a baseline package that goes as fast as current Internet speeds. For free. Forever. Provided you pay a one-time \$300 installation fee. To which I say, so what? How many of you would gladly pay \$300 once and have the Internet you have now forever? Probably lots. Should you ever want to upgrade to a connection 100x faster then you can at any time. The rub on this deal is the fact that they're still in the initial testing phases. Once they sort it out from Kansas City, expect them to hit other eligible neighborhoods across the country.

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