

Annual Report

October 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009

Networking

- Our very popular monthly event, Business After Hours, attracted more than 2469 people throughout the year.
- A total of 853 people attended Business Before Business Receptions. 51 businesses participated with table top displays at the receptions.
- The President's Club hosted three socials for its members attracting 266 people to these events.
- Two Power Networking Luncheons were held with 156 members participating in the structured networking events.

Promotional Opportunities/Exposure

- The *Beautiful Bonita Springs* magazine was developed and delivered to the Chamber in April.
- *Invest for Success* partners totaled \$72,000 for the 2008-2009 program year with 12 members signing up for the annual sponsorship packages.
- Lobby Advertising generated \$42,125 in revenue for the Visitors Center lobby.
- 35,000 visitors stopped by the Visitors Center for assistance with their travel and business needs.
- The Web site generated 45,000 unique visitors per month to the site, four times the traffic of the previous Web site.
- Now posting 40 coupons to assist participating businesses attract more customers.
- The Professional Directory and Buyer's Guide was produced as the referral source for the Chamber and the community for business products and services.
- Produced weekly Chamber E-Briefs of the Chamber's events, programs and promotions, including sponsorship opportunities to keep the membership informed of options for their involvement.

Business/Education Partnerships

- Over 14 businesses met with hundreds of students at the Career Fair at Estero High School.

- \$5,000 in scholarships, provided by our President's Club, was awarded to five high school students.
- Four scholarships were provided to students at **FGCU** through the Chamber's Endowment Fund at the university.
- The Ralph A. Richardson Endowment Fund currently totals over \$89,000. We hope begin awarding scholarships from this account beginning in early 2010.

Community/Public Affairs

- Presented position papers and/or comments to local and state-wide elected officials on the following: Amendment 4, the New Boston Red Sox Stadium, US 41-Downtown Impact Fee Deferral, Old 41 Redevelopment Overlay, local Social Services Campus, Quality of Life Issues in the City, and transportation funding priorities including the Bonita Beach Road/I-75 Interchange and the expansion of C.R. 951.
- Participated in the Annual Lee County Days in Tallahassee to present information to our state-elected officials on issues such as unemployment insurance, broadband connectivity, and foreclosure relief.
- Monitored all city council and Lee County Commission meetings to keep aware of any pending issues for the business community.
- Hosted the Movies in the Park events in conjunction with the **Bonita Springs-Estero Association of Realtors** and the City of Bonita Springs.
- Collected over 3,000 pounds of food during the Annual Harvest Night event to help stock the shelves of the **Bonita Springs Assistance Office, Inc.**
- Collected hundreds of toys at our Annual Holiday Party, which were given to the **Bonita Springs Assistance Office, Inc.** for distribution to local families in need.
- Branding – The Chamber worked hand in hand with the City of Bonita Springs leadership to develop, communicate and execute their branding process. This collaboration leveraged the chamber's experience with rebranding a year ago.

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Tourism/Economic Development

- Continue to operate the Business Center as a core service to our members.
- Broadband – The Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce took the lead to form the Southwest Florida Innovation Network, representing six counties and anchor institutions such as local universities, healthcare providers, businesses, emergency responders, not-for-profits, chambers of commerce, economic development offices and community leaders to ensure regional connection to the Florida LambdaRail and promote full penetration of fiber optic network to all of our businesses and homes.

Training/Leadership Development

- Hosted Economist Ken Mayland as the featured speaker at the Small Business of the Year Awards luncheon. Over 114 people attended the luncheon.
- Provided a series of workshops during Small Business Week on topics such as Back to Basics...The Business of Social Media, Create Raving Fans, Business Banking Uncensored, and Small Business Success through Networking. More than 120 people took advantage of these popular workshops.
- Coordinated the Leadership Bonita program with 23 class members participating. Participants heard from more than 100 speakers and took 29 tours of local facilities as part of the program. Graduated the tenth class of Leadership Bonita bringing the alumni to more than 230 graduates.
- Continue to engage in a formal consulting program with the **Small Business Development Center** to hold on-site consulting services for area businesses.

Membership Development & Retention

- Completed the year with more than 1014 members.
- Recruited more than 267 new members to the Chamber this year.
- Conducted four New Member Welcome Receptions with nearly 200 new members attending.
- Hosted over 45 ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new or relocating businesses to the area.

Special Events

- Conducted a board-driven prospect reception in May to recruit new members to the Chamber resulting in 46 new members during the reception.
- Held the Annual Chairman's Gala in October, with 220 attendees, highlighting the vision for the incoming Chairman and a recap of the year for the outgoing Chairman.
- Coordinated the Annual Holiday Party in December with 283 people attending. Fifty-two businesses sponsored trees and wreaths that were auctioned to the attendees.
- Produced the President's Club Annual Auction with a crowd of 167 attendees. More than \$29,000 was raised for the Foundation during this event.
- Worked with the **Bonita Springs-Estero Association of Realtors** on a Market Pulse event for our area. The event sold out with 204 attendees.
- Held the Annual Golf Tournament with 96 players participating in the golf outing event.
- Combined TechXPO with the March Business After Hours showcasing technology-related businesses. More than 32 exhibitors participated, attracting 242 people to the event.

Awards/Recognition

- Recognized **Mr. Shower Door** as the Small Business of the Year in May during Small Business Week. Also recognized four other nominees and finalists.
- Encouraged nominations for the Blue Chip Enterprise Award program sponsored by **Oswald Trippe and Company, Inc.**
- Presented **Oswald, Trippe & Company** with the Large Business Member of the Year Award and **Len Eckert, iconDo, Inc.**, with Small Business Member of the Year at the Annual Gala.

Organizational

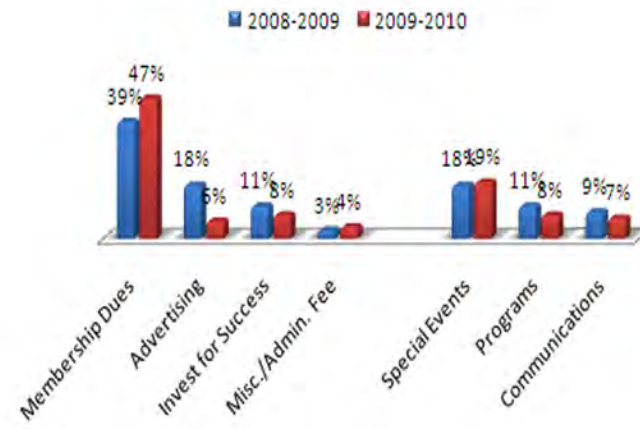
- The Finance Task Force continued to meet and monitor the chamber financial report and projections.

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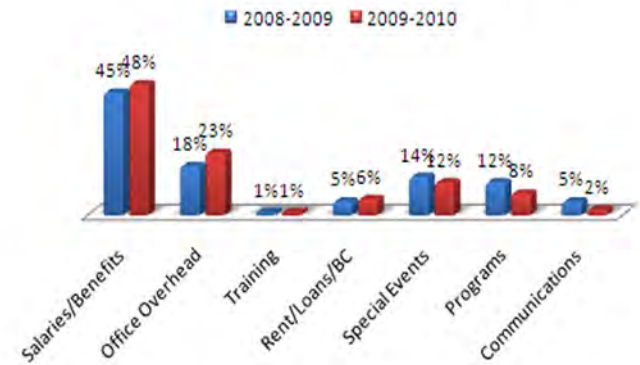
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- Coordinated the work of 25 committees and task forces to carry out the business plan of the organization.
- Conducted a membership-wide survey to assist with planning for the organization in 2009-2010.
- Held a Board Retreat in August to develop the business plan and annual budget for the organization for 2009-2010.
- Coordinated the use of the boardroom for 56 meetings conducted by various chamber members and community groups.
- Completed landscape redesign and paved the parking lot.

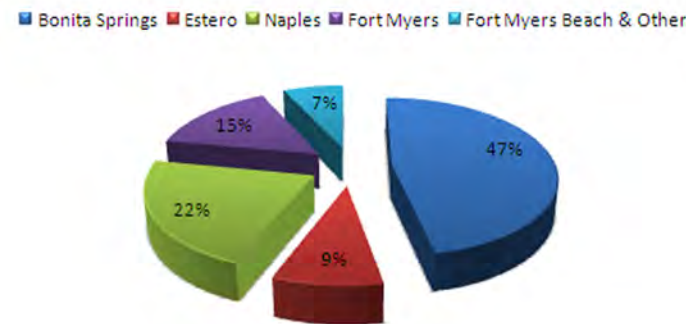
Budget Revenues By Area



Budget Expenses By Area



Graphic Location of Member



Length of Membership



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What a year!



Our Chamber of Commerce has had quite a year, as have most of our businesses. I am not only referring to the difficult economic times, but the hard business decisions and, in many cases, restructuring we have all gone through.

Although this past year has not resulted in financial success that prior years have exhibited, the board of directors and the staff have made changes in the chamber as a result of looking at our operations and processes through a microscope. We have attempted to make these changes without eliminating the programs or services which have given us our 5-star status.

The year began with the resignation of Nancy Keefer. The board and members stepped up and formed a nation-wide search committee, headed by Sabra Smith, which resulted in the fortunate hiring of our new CEO/President Christine Ross. The search committee made an excellent decision on a wonderful leader who is already displaying her capability to bring Bonita Springs to a new level.

Facing a dim economy and difficult financial situations, the board formed a programs task force to make assessments of all our programs, which allowed us to make decisions on which programs are most effective and those that needed to be pruned. A finance task force was also formed to assess and evaluate our financial position to be sure our chamber can get through this bad economy on top.

During the year our programs attendance remained strong, thanks to you. We have seen very little drop and in some instances, increased attendance at events. This is a telling sign of the quality of events, and is even more indicative of the people who come to these events. New members are made to feel welcome and the support we offer fellow member businesses is second to none.

I must commend and thank the Board of Directors for stepping up and putting time and efforts into our chamber that they may have not been expecting. I also must thank you for your participation in the Chamber's events throughout the year, making the networking events successful, as well as our other programs and events. Without your participation and attendance, our events and programs would not have the regional and national recognition we enjoy.

The leadership for the upcoming year is very strong across the board, starting with incoming Chairman, Brian Farrar. The staff changes have also positioned our chamber to offer improved services, marketing opportunities and business building events and products. Your Chamber is in remarkable hands and will come out of this difficult time in a position to deliver more benefit to all of our members.

I humbly thank all of you for the opportunity to be the Chairman, and I will look back on the year in light of our financial difficulty as a successful time when we did all that we could to improve the chamber for all of our businesses.

Now - I am going fishing!

Yours in service,

Owen Feeney
Chairman of the Board, 2008-2009