



Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce

Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce 2008 Plan of Work

The 2008 Plan of Work will continue to develop throughout the year. The well-attended planning sessions this past November proved to be very productive with many recommendations and suggestions for our Chamber's direction in 2008. Many of those suggestions have been incorporated into this Plan of Work.

The Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce and its Executive Committee is comprised of individuals, both volunteer and paid staff, who are responsible for particular areas of work. A follow-up planning session scheduled for January 31, 2008 will give the new Executive Committee members an opportunity to identify the goals for each individual committee. They will be able to determine what changes may be necessary to meet today's business challenges. A short board development workshop will follow for all members of the Board of Directors. The Chamber staff, Board of Directors, Chamber members along with the help of community and business leaders will work together to pave the road to a successful 2008.

In 2007 the Chamber welcomed 81 new members and added a database system that offers members a range of options to promote their business on the Chamber's website membership directory. Other new benefits include Hot Deals, an area to post promotional coupons and Hot Jobs an area to list job postings.

In 2008 the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce will build on the work accomplished this past year. This year's priority is to become indispensable to our members and our community. Communicating how the Chamber benefits Lenoir County and how vital membership is to each business and organization will be key to accomplishing this goal. 2008 will be the year to identify up-and-coming new potential community leaders inviting them to become more involved with the Chamber and our community. With that said, the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce 2008 Plan of Work is presented as follows:

Financial Affairs

Treasurer and Vice President of Financial Affairs: Kevin Zoltek, Walnut Street Securities

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Brandon Donaldson, Director of Operations

Committee members include the Board Chair and the Chair Elect.

- Monitoring the chamber's growth and financial accountability will result with the continuation of updating office procedures. This will include the development and adoption of an acceptable accounting procedures manual.
- The integration of QuickBooks and ChamberMaster during the fourth quarter of last year offers new opportunities in the billing system. New invoices, statements and reports will be utilized this year.
- Chamber Members with anniversary dates February through August will be invoiced for the actual number of months in 2008 thus beginning the three-year process of converting to an annual January billing cycle for all members.
- The budget will be monitored closely with midyear revisions if necessary.
- The goal to create a reserve is reflected in the 2008 budget.

Office Procedures

Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Brandon Donaldson, Director of Operations

-The Chamber will review existing policies and procedures and make recommendations to the Executive Committee as needed.

-The technology audit determining necessary upgrades to assure efficient day-to-day functionality will continue.

-The Chamber will utilize the US Chamber of Commerce Accreditation program as a tool to continue internal improvements.

Membership Services

Vice President of Membership Services: Deborah Hood, ERA Montague & Associates, Inc.

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Director of Membership Services TBD.

Membership Services is responsible to the Board of Directors for activities and projects that will increase the Chamber's membership and retain its present membership.

-Membership Services Committee:

The membership services committee is comprised of a Chairperson, Margaret Williams, the little bank, a Chairperson Elect, Jay Conner, West Pharmaceutical and Ambassadors. An immediate goal is to attract additional ambassadors that will embrace last year's reorganization of committee duties. This committee will begin the year with an ambassador retreat designed to review the recommendations from the planning sessions and build a strategic plan for the year. Suggested recommendations include: involvement in Leadership Lenoir; organize monthly "getting to know your needs" breakfasts for like groups; new member receptions; create a buddy system and tag teams; Junior Ambassadors; develop and implement a retention campaign and more. Ambassadors will continue to assist with Ribbon Cutting, Business Before and After Hours and other events.

-Membership Services Office Duties:

The success of membership services is effective communication with Chamber Members and the community. Businesses need to be aware of the value membership delivers to them and their employees. This awareness will be implemented in part through a continuation of certain methods such as weekly "Quick Updates" emails and the biweekly "Business Update" Newsletter printed in cooperation with the Free Press that will reach out to the entire community in addition to our members. Marketing and updating the Chamber website is critical this year as it now includes the ChamberMaster database upgrades that offer valuable opportunities to our members and online visitors. It is our goal to educate members about this new powerful marketing tool that is now part of their membership benefits package. Other possible membership services related ideas include: membership surveys; a new member orientation; a courtesy call retention plan utilizing the ChamberMaster database to log and document the program; organization of a new volunteer squad to assist with retention duties; a study of retention patterns and trends; and the development of Chamber Champions, a new member mentoring program to name a few.

Membership development is the number one priority for the Membership Services Director. The majority of the time will be spent inviting business to join the Chamber. Effective tools and programs will continue to be designed to accomplish this task. A new membership campaign drive is scheduled for March.

Membership retention is the responsibility of the Chamber staff; the membership services committee/ambassadors and the Board of Directors. New programs were recommended during the planning sessions and will be developed and implemented this year.

Special Projects

Vice President of Special Projects: Judy Bray, First Flight Federal Credit Union

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Jan Barwick, Director of Events and Programs

Special Projects is responsible to the Board of Directors for activities and special projects that give Chamber members an opportunity to network with other members and make valuable new business contacts. In addition, these activities generate non-dues income for the Chamber.

-Special Projects include events and programs. This year the Chamber is evaluating the value and worth of each event and program. A project will be measured against the Chamber's mission statement to stay on course. The result will be meaningful projects done well. 2008 will continue inviting businesses to join the Presidents Club which is a program of financial support for the year's mission related projects. Businesses that are interested in becoming a Chamber partner as it relates to an agenda of targeted business community building projects have a more systemized sponsorship option. President Club members will be recognized year long as strong supporters of the Chamber's well defined goals.

-2008 programs, projects and activities include:

Annual Banquet

Leadership Lenoir

Administrative Professionals Luncheon

Festival on the Neuse featuring the Hog Happenin' Pork Cookoff

Small Business Awards

Pinnacle of Achievement Award Banquet
Living the Good Life Expo
Wake Up Lenoir breakfast series featuring city, county and state government officials
President's Forum- Straight Talk, an evening forum that addresses economic development issues

Governmental Affairs

Vice President of Governmental Affairs: Alice Tingle, Kinston City Council

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President

Governmental Affairs is responsible to the Board of Directors for activities and projects that address public policy issues that affect the business climate and business community of Kinston and Lenoir County. In addition, these activities will inform the Chamber membership of identified public policy issues and solicit input from the Chamber membership in regards to their own concerns.

The Governmental Affairs committee will set up a yearlong action plan to identify and monitor issues relevant to chamber members. Ongoing conversations with city, county and state officials will increase awareness and build relationships. The goal is to work as partners for the betterment of our community. Federal issues will be identified through the US Chamber of Commerce and related information will be shared with Chamber members.

Special Projects include:

- Wake Up Lenoir breakfast series offering the opportunity to dialogue with our city, county and state government officials.
- Involvement in the Eastern Region Chamber Executives Legislative Agenda
- Identification, education and involvement with local issues such as a Round Up Campaign
- Increase support for public education
- Possibly co-host important debates
- Ongoing communication with our state representatives about legislative issues affecting our membership.
- A Day in Washington to meet with our representatives on Capital Hill.
- A "Get Out The Vote" campaign.

Diversity Affairs

Vice President of Diversity Affairs: Greg Hannibal, Small Business Center/Lenoir Community College

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Director of Membership Services TBD

The Diversity Affairs Committee is an extension of the Chamber of Commerce working to identify and pursue projects that will result in developing and expanding the economic prosperity of minority businesses within Kinston and Lenoir County.

Objectives for 2008 are as follows:

- Grow successful small businesses in Kinston-Lenoir County through increasing business opportunities, mentor-protégé relationships, teaming agreements, access to venture capital and federal, state and local procurement.
- Promote opportunities for success in small businesses in Kinston-Lenoir County through marketing, public relations, advocacy and technical assistance.
- Enrich the capabilities and life experiences of youth in Kinston-Lenoir County through entrepreneurship.

The Diversity Affairs committee is still in its infancy and has an aggressive plan to attract new committee members, develop an awareness campaign, involve the community and invite businesses to join the Chamber. A yearlong strategic plan will develop programs, goals, tactics and timelines.

Agri-Business

Vice President of Agri-Business: Tammy Kelly, Lenoir County Cooperative. Extension. Service

Staff: Laura Sylvester, President and Jan Barwick, Director of Events and Programs

Agri-Business is responsible to the Board of Directors for activates and projects that address Agri-Business and the Farming Business Community and associated industry. In addition, these activities should promote increased membership and participation in the chamber from this sector of the business community.

The Agri-Business committee will review and define its goals and mission. The Chamber will take an active role in increasing awareness for this segment of the membership population. The Agri-community is invited to participate in identifying their current needs as related to business and Chamber involvement.

Possible projects include:

- An enhanced Festival on the Neuse/Hog Happenin' Pork Cook Off
- Farm & City Week
- Farmers Market Grand Opening Celebration
- Relevant Links on Chamber Website

Community Development

Vice President of Community Development: Carolyn Hardy, Kelly Services

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President

Community Development is responsible to the Board of Directors for activities and projects, which lead towards improvement of the physical and environmental elements of the community so that it will become a better and more attractive place in which to live, work, shop and invest.

The Chamber is partnering with other local groups with similar goals to work collaboratively towards positive outcomes. This committee will be developing an action plan for 2008.

Projects considered for 2008 are:

- Second annual Images of Kinston Magazine
- Development of a "Why Kinston..." recruitment package
- Host a recruiting forum titled "Being Part of the Best"
- Community Forum concentrating on economic development strategies
- Participate in Leadership Lenoir 2008 efforts
- Active participation with the Kinston Appearance Commission
- Pertinent roundtable and focus group discussions
- Identifying community development issues through newspaper and online surveys
- Awareness and education about the Lenoir County Education Foundation

Business and Tourism Development

Vice President of Business and Tourism Development: Phyllis Smith, Kinston Drag Strip and Tourism Development Authority Board Member

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President/Executive Director Tourism Development Authority and Jan Barwick, Director of Events and Programs/Assistant Executive Director Tourism Development Authority

The Business and Tourism Development committee's responsibility is to work towards improving the total economy, specifically directed toward commercial, retail and industrial development while supporting agriculture and tourism.

The mission of this committee will be accomplished through fostering economic growth for our community through quality of life and business development as well as tourism development.

Projects for 2008 include:

- Co-sponsoring workshops and seminars designed to benefit the chamber memberships in conjunction with the Small Business Center at Lenoir Community College.
- Task groups to address workforce development issues.
- Roundtable discussions on key topics bringing a variety of partners to the table.
- Support for other chamber committees as they address activities with similar goals.
- Work closely with Lenoir County Economic Development as opportunities arise.
- Be prepared to offer a "Welcome Program" to new talent considering relocating to our area.
- Continue administration for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and the Kinston-Lenoir County Convention Bureau (CVB) and the delivery of services as mandated by legislation and the agreement between the TDA and the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce.
- Help develop an awareness and understanding of the separate roles and duties of the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the County run tourism program lead by the Lenoir County Tourism Director and how the two programs support and complement each other's efforts
- Work closely with the Director of Membership Services to identify new businesses to our area
- Small Business Awards

Manufacturing and Industry

Vice President of Manufacturing and Industry: Bill Hunneke, Domestic Fabrics

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President

This newly adopted committee will be building on last year efforts to organize and define its mission. Early plans are to build a committee of individuals interested in identifying direction and opportunities for the Chamber to support this segment of the membership. They will review the information gathered during a most productive focus group of industry leaders last year. This committee offers a new platform to encourage dialogue and action.

- The Manufacturers Road Show is a project that will continue in 2007. The Chamber President and Board Chair along with other interested individuals tour area manufacturers to learn more and to thank them for their commitment to our community.
- Breakfast for Small Business and Industry co-sponsored with the City of Kinston
- Welcome group for new top-level management
- This new committee will identify additional projects for 2008