



## 2017 Program of Work

The Chamber Lenoir 2020 committee comprised of a diverse group of community leaders continues to identify unmet needs. This comprehensive plan was adopted for the coming year based on those results along with board member and staff input. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce is expanding its efforts to promote the value of chamber membership along with a positive business, education and community image campaign through traditional methods plus and a variety of social media platforms.

### **2017 Chairperson Michael Dunn identified the following as a priority this year:**

*“Foster and support the economic growth of Kinston-Lenoir County and the value of our membership through community-building actions including social networking of information, events and activities, promotion of quality of life and housing opportunities, and guiding individual efforts by local businesses, civic groups and governmental agencies into coordinated community actions”.*

*With that said, the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce 2017 Program of Work is presented as follows:*

#### **Financial Affairs**

Treasurer and Vice President of Financial Affairs: Lara Lang-Tribula, State Employees Credit Union

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

Committee members include the Board Chair, Chair-elect, and Past Chair.

- Monitor the Chamber’s growth and financial accountability practices to ensure that procedures are revised and/or added as required.
- Track the budget closely to determine if mid-year revisions are needed.
- Continue to add to the Chamber’s money market reserve as in the previous years.
- Build on the success of last year’s Chamber Champions and Enhanced member listings, revenue producing programs.
- Invite additional members to join the President’s Club, a program of financial support for the year’s mission-related projects. President’s Club members will be recognized year-long as strong supporters of the Chamber’s well-defined goals.

#### **Membership Services**

Vice President of Membership Services: Jeanene McBride, Lenoir County Public Schools

Chairperson: Philippe Wouters, COECO Office Systems

Staff: Erin Passailaigue, Director of Membership Services and Programs

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

*-Membership Services Committee:*

The Membership Services Committee is comprised of Membership VP, Jeanene McBride; Chairperson, Philippe Wouters; and up to 15 Ambassadors. In 2016 Membership Services continued working on a membership retention program. This multi-tiered program will touch new members and existing members several times a year to provide easy to understand membership benefits in order for them to value their membership and eliminate any hesitation to renew. The program will be evaluated and modified if necessary in 2017 to ensure success.

*-Ambassadors:*

Fifteen ambassadors have been selected from submitted applications. Ambassadors are asked to select at least four to six Chamber businesses each month from a priority list and to visit and communicate Chamber benefits and address any needs the member may have. They will continue to assist with Ribbon Cuttings, Business Before and After Hours, and other events.

### *-Membership Development:*

Each year membership development is a top priority. The Director of Membership Services has monthly/annual goals to increase the number of new members, and meet our projected budget. *Membership Retention:*

The retention program will communicate membership benefits to our members throughout the year. If done effectively this should result in a higher rate of membership renewals. The goal this year is to assess the reason for previous membership losses in an effort to create a new strategy that will be implemented by the Director of Membership Services and Programs, the President, and the Ambassadors.

Membership benefit information will be included in renewal invoices

### *-Membership Services Office Duties:*

Maximize your Membership (MYM) one-on-one and group membership benefits sessions will be offered to all new members and existing members as needed. Additional touch points about membership benefits will be conveyed to all our members.

Enhanced directory listings will be offered to members as a way to maximize their online presence on the Chamber's website.

Continue to co-sponsor workshops and seminars designed to benefit the Chamber memberships in conjunction with the Small Business Center at Lenoir Community College.

## **Special Projects**

Vice President of Special Projects: Judy Jones, State Farm Insurance

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Jan Parson, Director of Events and Erin Passailaigue, Director of Membership Services 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.*

The Special Projects Committee oversees and works on the Chamber's larger events and programs. They also determine if a new event or program meets the criteria of the mission of the Chamber.

2017 Signature Events include: Annual Banquet, BBQ Festival on the Neuse, and ENC Food, Brew n' Que Fest.

## **Governmental Affairs**

Vice President of Governmental Affairs: Craig Hill, Lenoir County Commissioner

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 follows a procedure to identify and monitor issues relevant to Chamber members. Ongoing discussions 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.

Special Projects include:

- Wake-Up Lenoir series offering the opportunity to dialogue with our City, County and State government officials and community leaders on topics relevant to the business community.
- Involvement in the NC Eastern Alliance Chamber Executives Legislative Agenda
- Identification, education, and involvement with local issues
- Increase support for public education
- Ongoing communication with our State Representatives about legislative issues affecting our membership
- Participation in the Lenoir County Transportation Committee

## **Diversity Affairs**

Vice President of Diversity Affairs: Courtney Patterson., Kinston Community Health Center

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President

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

In 2013, the Chamber's Lenoir 2020 Committee identified the need for a community lead Human Relations Committee. In 2014, the Chamber, with the help of City and County government, formed the Human Relations Council which acts independently of the Chamber. The appointed group will be responsible for promoting equal

opportunity and fair treatment among our residents. As we move forward, the VP of Diversity Affairs will be the liaison between the Council and the Chamber reporting council activities to the Chamber's Board of Directors. The Chamber Board may also make suggestions or inquire to the Council through the VP of Diversity Affairs.

### **Agri-Business**

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

Staff: Laura Sylvester, President and Jan Parson, Director of Events

*Agri-Business is responsible to the Board of Directors for activities 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. This committee will consider new projects as they communicate with various agri-businesses, educational institutions, and organizations (i.e. Farm Bureau, Farm Credit Services, Cunningham Research Farm, etc.).

Other possible projects include:

- Chamber involvement and support of the annual Coastal Plains Livestock Show & Sale
- Enhance the Got to Be NC involvement at the BBQ Festival on the Neuse
- Farmers Market Season Opening Celebration, special events, Business After Hours, and year-long e-post updates and newsletter
- Encourage Tourism Development Authority to develop an assortment of Explore Lenoir Agri Tours
- Strengthen Agri-Tourism awareness through Tourism Development Authority and visitkinston.com
- Help public officials and business leaders to realize that promotion of local farm products is good public policy and local economic development.

### **Community Development**

Vice President of Community Development: Molly Taylor, Partnership for Children Lenoir Greene Counties

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President and Bryan Hanks, Marketing and Outreach Coordinator

*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.

Possible projects considered for 2017 are:

- Tenth annual *Livability* of Kinston-Lenoir County website update and advertising opportunities
- Update Chamber's website to be the community's visitor, relocation, and economic information resource destination

Lenoir 2020 mission: *To convince businesses and industries located here to expand their existing operations and recruit new businesses and industries to locate here. To make our city and county attractive to diverse group of residents, visitors and new comers of all generations so they and those who work and manage our businesses and industries choose to live, shop and prosper here.*

In 2012, community leaders examined topics critical to economic growth in Lenoir County. The group reconvened Lenoir 2020 in 2016 and continued its work to identify gaps that were prioritized such as: education, public safety housing and amenities, technology, infrastructure, energy and internet, transportation, jobs, tourism and religion. The committee will continue to prioritize issues and examine solutions in an effort to support local economic growth and sustainability.

### **Business and Tourism Development**

Vice President of Business and Tourism Development: Patrick Holmes, Lenoir County Public Schools

Staff: Jan Parson, Director of Events/Assistant Executive Director Tourism Development Authority and Bryan Hanks, Marketing and Outreach Coordinator.

*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 to achieve economic growth for our community through quality of life and business development as well as tourism development.

Projects for 2017 include:

- Revamp the TLC (Think Lenoir County) program encouraging local shopping and purchasing of services
- Continue the Red Carpet Gift Card program that welcomes individuals relocating to our community by presenting them with a welcome gift card package. Invite new businesses to participate and promote this program to HR Managers, Realtors and the public.

- Create awareness with Human Resource managers, realtors and the public about the importance of a live locally program. Work with Committee of 100 on updating the ExecuStay list of available temporary housing to be available to HR managers.
- Be the link for the Chamber's administration of the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and VisitKinston.com and the delivery of services as mandated by legislation and the agreement between the TDA and the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce
- Partner with TDA to offer ongoing Explore Lenoir Bus Tours for community/government leaders, hospitality industry employees and business owners.
- Work closely with Lenoir County Economic Development as opportunities arise.

### **Manufacturing and Industry**

Vice President of Manufacturing and Industry: Mike Afarian, Field Controls.

Staff: Laura Lee Sylvester, President

*The Manufacturing and Industry Committee is responsible to the Board of Directors for activities and projects that address the manufacturing sector of the 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.*

- Provide manufacturers a list of Chamber benefits that is quick and easy to read and inform them on how the Chamber can benefit their employees. Also provide an updated list of temporary housing for their new employees.
- Work closely with the Lenoir County Manufacturers Association (LCMA)
- Offer relocation packages and the Red Carpet program to all manufacturers
- Communicate to HR directors the wealth of local information on the Chamber's Livability website
- Continue to work with Lenoir County Economic Development, and Lenoir Committee of 100

### **Young Professionals of Lenoir County**

Vice President of Young Professionals of Lenoir County, Elizabeth Falk, Perry, Perry, & Perry Attorneys

Chairperson:

Staff: Erin Passailaigue, Director of Membership Services and Programs

*This Chamber-sponsored group mission is to connect with young professionals, enrich their lives through leadership development, and empower them to be the leaders of tomorrow.*

- Restructure membership in such a way to help increase participation in YP events and programs.
- Programs that address professional development, social networking, personal growth, community outreach, and mentoring will be offered throughout the year
- Provide a Junior Leadership Lenoir program in collaboration with all local schools
- Facilitate true understanding with youth leadership regarding the priority and impact of service in our communities and local economies. Also, supporting how the 'act of service' formulates depth of character for those performing it; professionally and personally.
- Market and promote this group with a continued updated web presence on [www.kinstonchamber.com](http://www.kinstonchamber.com) and Facebook.

### **Lenoir County Education Foundation**

Chairperson: Chamber Chair-elect, Tonya Adams, The Beauty Box/The Hometown Exchange

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

*The Education Committee and Foundation is a catalyst for educational excellence and an improved quality of life in Lenoir County by connecting the business community and all levels of education through related activities and awareness.*

- Support and assist the Lenoir County Public School's vision, mission, and goals
- Host the Adult Spelling Bee, and other fundraising events to fund the annual teacher mini grant program
- Assist the Lenoir County Public School system with Build-a-Backpack project which helps provide school supplies to help children in need
- Support school's awareness efforts connecting to community, work force development, and businesses