



Member Guide



MISSION STATEMENT

The Erie County Chamber of Commerce is an association of business and professional people, who volunteer their time to develop and provide information and services; promote the economic growth of Erie County; and advocate sound business principles and philosophies.

**Erie County Chamber of Commerce
2009 Board of Directors & Staff**

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Sandusky Steel & Supply
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CHAMBER STAFF

John P. Moldovan
President

Karen J. Camella
Office & Projects Manager

Ellen R. Supp
Managing Secretary – Sandusky Area Safety Council

WELCOME TO THE CHAMBER

All of us, in our personal lives, have a tool or two at home that we use only occasionally. We have it because of a need that arose at one time or another; and we invested in the tool to satisfy the need. Even if it is never used again, it adds to our peace of mind to know that it is there when we need it again.

Your Chamber of Commerce, to an extent, is like that tool. Some may use it regularly, while others need it on an irregular basis. Isn't it nice to know that it's there if and when you do need it? Your membership investment makes it possible for the Chamber to exist however often and whenever you need it.

This manual is intended to help you understand what your Chamber offers, and how to use your membership to the fullest advantage. We hope that you will be a "regular user" of the Chamber, and that your membership adds to the value of your business.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ERIE COUNTY CHAMBER...

The Erie County Chamber of Commerce traces its roots to the incorporation of the Sandusky Chamber of Commerce on June 29, 1899. It's stated purpose was for "effecting an organization to be composed of the merchants, business men and others interested in the welfare, progress and growth of the City of Sandusky", and "for securing the location of manufacturing plants and business enterprises within the city or on lands adjacent thereto."

In 1915, the corporation's name was changed to "The Sandusky Federated Commercial Club", and its purpose became "to promote the best interest and welfare of the City of Sandusky...and the territory contiguous thereto, and to hold and acquire all property real, personal and mixed, which may be necessary for the successful accomplishment of the corporate objects" (sic).

Four years later, the name was returned to the original "Sandusky Chamber of Commerce", which was maintained until May of 1962. At that time, the name was expanded to "Sandusky Area Chamber of Commerce". Then, on July 8, 1987, the name was again changed to its current "Erie County Chamber of Commerce".

While the specific purposes of the organization have changed over the years, the basic purpose of promoting the welfare, progress and growth of the community remains. Today's Erie County Chamber of Commerce places strong emphasis on the provision of services, promotion of its members, and advocacy on behalf of local business.

GOVERNANCE OF THE CHAMBER...

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, & STAFF:

The Erie County Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c) (6) non-profit business organization, governed by an 18-member Board of Directors. Each Director may serve a maximum of two, three-year terms. The Board is headed by the Chairman, who holds the office for a one-year term. A Vice-Chairman is also appointed to a one-year term, and generally assumes the Chairmanship the following year. The Treasurer may or may not be a member of the Board. The Board employs a chief operating officer with the title of President, who in turn, employs as many staff members as necessary, within the confines of the Chamber's operating budget. The President and staff of the Chamber are paid, and are hired to serve both members and the general public.

DIVISIONS, COMMITTEES, TASKS FORCES:

Members of the Chamber may, depending on their interests and time availability, choose to serve on one or more of the Chamber's committees or tasks forces. These committees and tasks forces conduct the programs and activities of the Chamber. Each committee and tasks force is headed by one of its members, who is appointed by the Chairman to serve as its chair. Chamber committees and tasks forces are typically placed into program divisions, according to their function. Also, a member of the Board of Directors will serve as a "Division Chair", which is a liaison position between the various committees and tasks forces and the Board.

The program divisions of the Chamber are: Economic Affairs, Advocacy, and Organizational Affairs.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE:

The Erie County Business PAC was created by the Chamber in late 2006. It is a county-registered political action committee, whose purpose is to support pro-business candidates and issues in Erie County, through direct financial support of campaigns, and by issuing endorsement. Contributions to the political action committee are voluntary, and not tax deductible.

CHAMBER SERVICES...

The Erie County Chamber of Commerce provides a myriad of valuable services to its members and to the general public. And, in many cases, Chamber members receive most services as part of their annual membership fees, with no additional fees. Listed below are the services currently available from the Chamber...

AREA & STATE MAPS: The staple of every local chamber, our maps include Sandusky, Huron, Castalia, Erie County and surrounding area. State highway maps are also available, which are provided by the Ohio Department of Transportation.

BUYERS GUIDE: A listing of Chamber members, by business type, which is provided as part of the New Resident Information Packet, or to individuals who want a free listing of Chamber members. Listing in the guide is automatic with membership. The purpose of the Buyers Guide is to present the names of Chamber members to potential new customers or clients before they see the names of competing businesses that are not Chamber members.

CERTIFICATE OF OPENING: An attractive, personalized certificate presented to a new business to commemorate its opening.

CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN: A necessity for manufacturers that export. The Chamber provides blank certificates, and also endorses completed certificates. Certificates of Origin testify to the fact that the goods being shipped are of U.S. manufacture and content. The Chamber does not charge member manufacturers for this service.

CHAMBER LIBRARY: The Chamber maintains a small, varied library of information that includes...

Telephone Directories: The Chamber is a distribution location for both Ameritech and Firelands telephone directories, and also maintains a small library of telephone directories from other Ohio communities;

Dickman Criss-Cross Directory, which provides the name, address, and telephone number of every resident and business in the County by alphabetical listing of streets.

There is other topical and miscellaneous information that the Chamber maintains, which is why it enjoys the reputation of *THE* place to call if you have a question about something.

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTORY: This listing of the various clubs and organizations in the County includes their addresses, telephone numbers, and key contact person. These directories are made available for a fee to non-members and free of charge to members. They are also good marketing tools for certain businesses.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: The Chamber maintains a vast amount of demographic information on all the political subdivisions within Erie County. This information is valuable in a variety of ways, such as the development of business plans, or as part of a personnel recruitment effort.

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION PACKAGE: The Chamber makes available a pair of

GIANT SCISSORS ✂ and ribbon to any member who is celebrating a Grand Opening or Grand Re-Opening. If requested, we will also provide a ‘Certificate of Opening’. In addition, the Chamber can provide “VIP” invitation lists. This service is available free of charge to members. Non-members may purchase the service, and the fee will be applied to membership if it is obtained within 30 days of the Grand Opening.

GROUP MEDICAL INSURANCE THROUGH MEDICAL MUTUAL OF OHIO: Erie County Chamber members may obtain competitive group medical insurance through Medical Mutual of Ohio. Access to this benefit requires payment of an associate membership to the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce. Chamber-member insurance agents can provide quotes for your consideration.

GROUP WORKERS’ COMPENSATION PROGRAM: Available through



This service can save thousands of dollars in workers’ compensation premiums to qualified chamber members.

INDUSTRY DIRECTORY: This directory lists all the industries located in Erie County, regardless of membership in the Chamber, and includes company name, address, telephone and fax numbers, key personnel, employment range, and product line. Industry Directories are sold to non-members, but are available free of charge to members.

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTORIES: The Chamber is the place to call if you need to know the name, address, and telephone number of any local, state or national elected official. Up-to-date information is maintained at all times.

MEDIA GUIDE: The Chamber’s Media Guide can be helpful in planning an advertising campaign, or just for having an appropriate contact name. The guide lists Erie County’s media by type, and includes addresses, telephone numbers, key contact person, program formats, hours of operation, and wattage or circulation.

MEMBER-2-MEMBER DISCOUNT PROGRAM: Chamber members may obtain membership cards and a listing of member locations that will honor it for specific, money-saving product and service discounts.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY: An alphabetical listing of all Chamber-member companies and organizations, the directory includes addresses and telephone numbers, and the key person at each member business. It is available to members free of charge, and is not available to non-members. It is often used as a marketing or communication tool.

NEW RESIDENT INFORMATION PACKET: This packet of information includes (1) a New Resident Guide, which helps new residents get “settled”; (2) our Buyers Guide; (3) a Community Booklet; (4) an area map; (5) a state highway map if the individual is moving from out-of-state; (6) a church directory; (7) the Guide to Local Elected Officials; and (8) the Sandusky/Erie County Visitor & Convention Bureau’s tourist guide, and a variety of other informational brochures. Information contained in these packets can be made available to members at no charge. Completed packets are available at \$5.00 each.

STUDENT INFORMATION PACKETS: The Chamber assists hundreds of elementary and middle school students around Ohio and the nation with their history and geography assignments, by providing an information packet about the area. They are made available to students at no charge.

WEB SITE LINKS: Chamber members who have a web site are automatically linked from the Chamber's web site (www.eriecountyohiocofc.com).

WEEKLY E-MAIL UPDATE NEWSLETTER: Every week, the Chamber staff e-mails a weekly update newsletter to keep members informed of the week's happenings, and other important information.

Your Chamber is always seeking ways to improve existing services, and to add to its offerings. If there is any way in which the Chamber can be of service to you, please let us know.

CHAMBER PROGRAMS...

Chamber programs provide opportunities to meet fellow members, and sometimes non-members; to learn about an issue that could affect your business; to share your experience and expertise with other businesses or some other segment of the community, such as with local students; to highlight successes; or to find out about what is going on in the community. Some programs are designed solely for the relaxation and enjoyment of our members.

The Chamber's traditional program offerings include

ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS BANQUET: The Chamber must, by law, conduct an annual meeting. Our Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet provides the opportunity to celebrate the "changing of the guard" among the organization's leadership, and to recognize the special accomplishments of the Business of the Year; Businesswoman of the Year; Educator of the Year; individuals and organizations that have provided extraordinary community service and service to the area's youth; and a member (or members) who have provided extraordinary service to the Chamber.

BUSINESS-AFTER-HOURS PROGRAMS: Generally held on a monthly basis at a member's location, these programs are exceptionally popular, informal gatherings, at which Chamber members can meet and get to know one another, enjoy the hospitality and view the operations of the host member, begin developing business relationships, and just enjoy a relaxing event.

CANDIDATE FORUMS: Held just before primary and general elections, Candidate Forums provide members and the general public the opportunity to hear how candidates for elected office feel about specific issues, and also to ask questions of these candidates. The purpose is to help educate voters about the candidates and important issues.

ECONOMIC FORECAST: Each spring, the Chamber and several co-sponsoring financial institutions, present a world-class economist, who presents his outlook on the nation's and Ohio's economy. This program is offered free of charge, and is capped with an informal wine and cheese reception.

ELECTED OFFICIALS RECEPTION: The Elected Officials Reception, held early each year, provides Chamber members with the opportunity to thank these officials for the time and efforts they devote on behalf of all citizens. It also provides an opportunity to personally discuss specific issues with elected officials in a casual atmosphere.



GALLERY OF ACHIEVERS: This "hall-of-fame-type" program honors the significant life accomplishments of people who have received most or all of their education in an Erie County school district. Induction ceremonies are held in late April each year.

GOLF LEAGUE: Every summer, Chamber members can participate in a golf league that is held at Woussickett Golf Course on Mondays, from early May to mid-August. Members may sign up for a full or half season, as individuals or twosomes, or even as "substitutes" to cover for members who cannot make a specific date. The Golf League provides fun and fellowship for any member interested.

ISSUE FORUMS: Issue forums are usually held at breakfast or lunch, and are designed to explore a specific subject, be it legislative, environmental, a social problem, or perhaps a business opportunity. They are scheduled on an irregular basis.

“OPEN FOR BUSINESS” GOLF SCRAMBLE: Held in late August, the Chamber’s golf scramble provides one of the best opportunities for members to have some fun, meet fellow members, and also advertise their businesses through prize donations or hole sponsorships. The golf outing is always among the more highly attended and popular Chamber programs.

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS: Twice a year, the Chamber presents seminars or workshops dealing with specific topics. These programs are designed to help members improve their day-to-day business practices.

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM: The Symposium is a joint effort with the Huron City Chamber of Commerce and BGSU/Firelands College. It is designed for college and high school students to join with area business people to explore a specific subject. Chamber members are invited to share their expertise on the subject.

Revised: 2/10

2010/2011 PROGRAM DIVISIONS & COMMITTEES

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIVISION

John Pheiffer, Board Liaison
Battery Park Marina

BUSINESS SERVICES COMMITTEE

Allen R. Nickles; Payne, Nickles & Co.; Chair

⇒ *Develops and conducts business workshops & seminars*
⇒ *Seeks to provide other business-related services and information*

ROUNDTABLES

⇒ Roundtables are informal gatherings of owners & CEOs in the same types of businesses, who come together on an informal and irregular basis to become acquainted with one another, and to share information.

ADVOCACY DIVISION

**Tim Kelly, Board Liaison
Sandusky Newspapers, Inc.**

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Tim Kelly, Sandusky Newspapers, Inc.; Chair

- ⇒ Monitors legislative issues and recommend policy positions to the Board of Trustees
- ⇒ Conducts regular meetings with government officials
- ⇒ Conducts Candidate Forums for members and the general public to meet and question candidates for public office
- ⇒ Conducts an annual reception for all elected officials in Erie County

ERIE COUNTY BUSINESS PAC

**Allen Nickles, C.P.A.; Payne, Nickles & Co.
President & Treasurer**

- ⇒ Supports local, pro-business candidates, with financial contributions to their campaigns, and, when deemed appropriate, public endorsements. The PAC operates separately from the Chamber.

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

**Connie Lamb, Board Liaison
Firelands Regional Medical Center**

MeLinda Ricci; Sandusky City Schools; Chair

- ⇒ Mentors new members & chaperones them at functions
- ⇒ Assists at Chamber programs

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mike Printy, Source One Placement; Chair

- ⇒ Develops new Chamber programs and services to enhance non-dues revenue sources.

GALLERY OF ACHIEVERS BOARD OF SELECTORS

- ⇒ Receives nominations and selects inductees for the Gallery of Achievers: a "hall of fame" type program that honors the significant lifetime achievements of graduates of Erie County school systems.

"MUFFLEHEAD" FESTIVAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

- ⇒ Plans and executes the new, annual Mufflehead Festival in Downtown Sandusky.

"OPEN FOR BUSINESS" GOLF OUTING

**Gary Schimmel; Honorary Life Member; Co-chair
Richard Jeffrey; Groff Funeral Homes; Co-chair**

- ⇒ Plans and conducts the Annual "Open For Business" Golf Scramble

SENIOR COUNCIL

Lee Alexakos; Cedar Fair L.P.; 2011 Chair

- ⇒ All living Past Board Chairs who:
 - ⇒ select recipients of Annual Awards, and;
 - ⇒ provide counsel to the Board of Trustees, upon request.

"TASTE OF THE CHAMBER" PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ed Hoty, Danny Boy's Italian Eatery; Chair

- ⇒ Plans and executes the "Taste of the Chamber" event at Kalahari Convention Center

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM

**Dr. Cindy Miglietti, C.P.A.; BGSU Firelands
Chair**

- ⇒ Joint committee of the Erie County and Huron City Chambers of Commerce, EHOVE Career Center and BGSU/Firelands College. Staff members from each organization plan and conduct the Annual University Business Symposium.