

ROCHESTER AREA

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Plan of Action 2008-2009 **Mission Statement**

To lead, inform, advocate and advance business interests for members;
and to promote a healthy community and a growing economy.

Chamber Priority – PUBLIC POLICY

Government Affairs

Actions:

- Publicly address county and city officials during the 2009 budget process
- Meet with local stakeholders to develop strategies for 2009 Legislative Session
- Develop Chamber's 2009 Legislative Priorities
- Urge the state legislature to pass Chamber's 2009 Legislative Priorities
- Continue to monitor and research city, county and school district initiatives
- Continue to work with our developer/builder partners in addressing development fees, land use and permitting process issues
- Through Grow Rochester, educate the community on the benefits of the building industry to the local economy
- Continue to advocate on behalf of individual members in dealings with government entities

Measure(s):

- Address city, county and school district at their respective Truth-in-Taxation hearings in December
- Chamber issues and initiatives are passed in the 2009 state legislative session
- Throughout the year, track and inform members of successes in resolving individual member issues

Government Forums

Actions:

- Connect with other organizations to sponsor and participate in our events (i.e. Rochester Area Builders, Rochester Downtown Alliance)
- Expand and grow Rochester on Tour event
- Continue to upgrade public policy events to better serve our membership
- Attend the US Chamber's Small Business Summit in May 2009

Measure(s):

- Sponsorship of Eggs & Issues, Local Leaders Events, Candidate Forums, Rochester on Tour and other Government Forums events by Rochester Area Builders, Rochester Downtown Alliance and other community partners
- At least 75% of legislators participate in Rochester Chamber's "Adopt-a-Legislator" Program in conjunction with Rochester on Tour event

- 80% of all public policy events are broadcast on Rochester’s local access channel. This will include Legislative Breakfasts, Eggs & Issues, Candidate Forums, Local Leaders Events and other events as they arise
- 550 attendees at Rochester on Tour Legislative Lunch
- Increase the number of attendees at the May 2009 US Chamber Small Business Summit by 50% over 2008

Transportation

Actions:

- Continue to monitor the ongoing threat of massive increases in train traffic thru our community. Strategize on how to foster a relationship with Canadian Pacific Railroad
- Support a Rochester route as the preferred corridor for high-speed passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Chicago
- Advocate for approval of the 65th street interchange on US Highway 52 in northwest Rochester

Measure(s):

- Corridor study funding approved for high-speed passenger rail through Rochester connecting the Twin Cities and Chicago

Hospitality 1st

Actions:

- Advocacy: continue to partner with Hospitality Minnesota
- Awareness: define what the hospitality industry is and its positive impact on the Rochester economy
- Educate the incumbent and future workforce on the hospitality industry
- Define and promote Destination Rochester

Measures:

- Completion of the Rochester Regional Stadium
- Awareness will: define what the hospitality dollar means to the community, ensure service providers understand the visitor and the magnitude of the visitor dollar, obtain video from Mayo on “Guess What I’m in the Tourism Industry”, send PSA’s to local TV and Charter, work with Charter to get a designated visitor channel and implement the third Hospitality Golf Classic
- Implement Hospitality Training – At Your Service Community Customer Service training program
- Implement High School/Post-Secondary Hospitality Training – Pro Start-to-Careers program

Chamber Priority – EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce 2020 (WF 2020)

Actions:

- Elevate the role of Workforce 2020 to advance Rochester’s education and workforce system
- Deploy the Workforce 2020 implementation plan
- Develop and communicate the Workforce 2020 plan

Measure(s):

- Conduct an assessment of our current coalition membership to evaluate optimum representation to maximize advancement potential of the Workforce 2020 initiative
- Define success by holding focus groups with key constituencies, outlining benchmarking areas and conducting a gap analysis in order to better communicate and deploy the Workforce 2020 plan
- Develop a community-wide education/workforce plan to be shared with the broader community

Business Learning Network (BLN)

Actions:

- Offer educational seminars that reach across industries
- Create a process for marketing seminars
- Continue to grow and develop private and public network
- Implement the *When Work Works* Workforce Flexibility Grant

Measure(s):

- Offer quarterly educational seminars that support WF 2020 efforts on a range of workforce development issues relevant to membership
- Attendance for seminars maintained at 25 or more participants per event
- Marketing enhanced through: BLN calendar of events, BLN educational spotlights, website, e-communications and Chamber *Advantage*
- Hold quarterly membership meetings to develop a stronger network and to bridge gaps between education and industry
- Increase awareness of and Rochester area workplace participation in the Workforce Flexibility project (see action plan and measures for Workplace Flexibility)

Diversity in Business:

Mission: Promote activities and relationships, in both the public and private sectors, to increase business ownership, market share, education and training opportunities for women and minority-owned businesses.

Actions:

- Advocate, communicate and negotiate to ensure full inclusion of the minority business sector in the economic life of the community
- Analyze barriers to economic growth and develop and implement approaches, plans and strategies to overcome these barriers
- Form community partnerships to ensure a strong entrepreneurial base
- Promote an entrepreneurial awareness program for minority youth

Measure(s):

- Build a strong Diversity in Business coalition comprised of new and existing women and minority entrepreneurs
- Enlist the support of three additional marketing and communications avenues to reach out to women and minority entrepreneurs
- Increase active participation in IBM Corporation's SME Toolkit
- Engage DIB conference participants in Chamber education and networking activities

Leadership Greater Rochester (LGR)

Actions:

- Educate participants on community needs and problems while identifying methods of and tools for affecting change

- Promote the development of communication networks among existing and emerging leaders through interactive site visits and panel presentations
- Provide training in leadership skills that will maximize contributions to employers, organizations and the community through providing one-hour of “hands-on” leadership training during each session
- Motivate participants to increase their individual involvement within the community as leaders through participation in LeadershipMatch, Board visits and reports and class representation on the Chamber Board
- Enhance marketing program
- Participants will design and deliver a community impact project
- Track community involvement of graduates
- Sustain involvement in the growth and development of the LGR program through the Alumni Executive Committee

Measure(s):

- 36 students will graduate from the course
- A viable, meaningful community impact project will be implemented and sustained
- Marketing enhanced through: direct mail brochures, blast email and faxes, powerpoint presentations, website, newspaper and radio
- The Alumni Committee will: recruit LGR program participants that reflect the diverse population of the Rochester area; organize, plan and direct the LGR program; actively participate in Chamber events; and build community awareness of the LGR program

Learn.Do.Earn.:

Objective(s): Ensure that all students graduate and are prepared for post-secondary education and/or the workforce; Increase enrollment in and successful completion of rigorous (Pre-A/P, AP) science, math and language arts courses.

Actions:

- Build Learn.Do.Earn. deployment team
- Establish phased implementation plan
- Train school staff and administration in the Learn.Do.Earn. program
- Deploy the Learn.Do.Earn. program

Measure(s):

- Year One: 2000 students at Willow Creek Middle School and Mayo High School will be exposed to the Learn.Do.Earn. program; Willow Creek and Mayo staff will be knowledgeable on the Learn.Do.Earn. program
- Year Two: Begin to see changes in attitudes/perceptions and increased enrollment in rigorous courses, attendance and active participation; full Rochester Public Schools deployment (every student exposed to the Learn.Do.Earn. program) based on student/teacher pre- and post-evaluations
- Year Three: Changes in attitudes/perceptions and increased enrollment in rigorous courses, attendance and active participation; full Rochester area deployment

Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast:

Actions:

- Secure a speaker for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast that promotes the business case for diversity
- Plan a program agenda at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast to meet timeframe (start and end on time)

Measure(s):

- Make business case for diversity
- Sell 300 tickets for the event

Preparing Workforce**Actions:**

- Offer a 3-day Educators in the Workplace Institute; coordinate participation of Chamber member businesses through panels, demonstrations and tours to show area educators the skill-sets required in today's workforce
- Coordinate student internships and educator externships throughout the year to promote a greater awareness between business and education
- Support the public school DECA program by securing judges or event coordinators
- Enhance marketing of programs
- Support Career Fair Expo for 6-8th Grade students, parents and teachers

Measure(s):

- 60 educators will attend the Educators in the Workplace Institute
- 30 different Chamber member businesses will be involved in the Institute through hosting a tour, sponsoring meals or participating in panel discussions
- Educators will be involved in an action plan that will require them to make business connections between the student and the business throughout the year
- Marketing enhanced through: blast email and faxes, website, school media, newspaper and radio

STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) Summit:**Actions:**

- Build a broad-based STEM Coalition
- Advocate for STEM education
- Create and host a STEM Summit for Rochester area middle and high school students

Measure(s):

- Cultivate partnerships with business/industry, higher education, public/private education
- Proclaim November as STEM month in Rochester
- Hold a STEM Summit for 1000 Rochester area students/teachers and engage a minimum of 50 business/industry and higher education partners to host interactive exhibits

Workplace Flexibility (When Work Works):**Actions:**

- Implement "When Work Works" Grant
- Create a coalition to drive the grant
- Recruit Rochester area workplaces to apply for the Sloan Award
- Recognize all Sloan Award winners
- Educate the Rochester area community on workplace flexibility

Measure(s):

- Add two new members to the coalition from business/industry that are current, local Sloan Award applicants
- Offer two educational sessions that increase awareness of workplace flexibility
- Recruit a minimum of 26 applicants for the 2009 Sloan Awards

- Hold a local Sloan Awards banquet for all Sloan applicants

Chamber Priority – MEMBERSHIP

Goal: Recruit 200 new members for a total of \$72,000 in new member revenue. Maintain a membership retention rate of 90% by providing more value for membership investment.

AM Espresso

Actions:

- Offer 10 events to serve member's networking needs
- Secure a corporate sponsor
- Expand sponsorship contribution

Measure(s):

- 10 events took place
- Maintain attendance of 50 members per event
- Cultivate a waiting list for the event
- Sponsorship contribution expanded

Business After Hours (BAH)

Actions:

- Offer 11 monthly events to serve member's networking needs
- Expand sponsorship contribution
- Combine small business hosts into one event
- Visit host site prior to event to ensure adequate size of venue

Measure(s):

- Maintain consistent attendance of 175 people per BAH Event
- 11 monthly events held
- Sponsorship contribution expanded
- Combined small member hosts into one event
- Visited hosts prior to event

Business After Hours EXTRA!

Actions:

- Offer one event (number of booths appropriate with venue size)
- Continue to create activities at the event that promote exhibitor interaction and networking among participants

Measure(s):

- Sell-out the event
- Attendance of 425 people

Chamber Annual Golf Outing

Actions:

- Continue to set and enforce sponsor guidelines
- Continue to utilize golf rangers at the event
- Transportation provided if necessary
- Increase the number of sponsors by offering tee sponsorships

Measure(s):

- Increased satisfaction as measured by participant surveys

2009 Chamber Annual Member Celebration

Actions:

- Start reception earlier for more networking time
- Start the program after dinner for more networking time
- Maintain celebration emphasis
- Shorter program

Measure(s):

- Increased participation, increased satisfaction as indicated by follow-up survey

Member Events

Actions:

- Ambassadors will complete 300 member surveys per year of companies who have been Chamber members two years and longer
- Communicate upcoming events to Board of Directors

Measure(s):

- 300 surveys completed
- Improve Board of Directors attendance at all Chamber events

Member Outreach Program

Actions:

- Make face-to-face contact with all new members 3 times per year to obtain feedback, ensure their needs are being met and address any concerns
- Increase member retention by communicating with all members

Measure(s):

- Membership retention of new members at or above 70% (in number of members)

New Member Reception

Actions:

- Provide an opportunity for new members to meet other new members
- Thank new members by providing lunch and networking activities at no cost
- Ensure new members are aware of Chamber events
- Obtain food, facility, 1 corporate sponsor and 2 contributing sponsors

Measure(s):

- Attendance by new members is 45 or more per event
- 90% sponsorship of food and facility expense

Power Networking Lunch

Actions:

- Offer six Power Networking lunch events
- Coordinate each event through securing sponsors and participants
- Participant and facilitator satisfaction
- Enhance marketing of program

Measure(s):

- Attendance maintained at 50 participants per event

- Satisfaction measured through event evaluations
- Marketing enhanced through: blast email and faxes, website, school media, newspaper, radio

Rochester Business Gives

Actions:

- Provide local businesses with tools for creating and strengthening business giving and a program to recognize their commitment and charitable contributions to the Rochester community

Measures:

- Promoting and implementing – as needed – a two-hour workshop, “Strategies for Smart Giving: When to Say ‘Yes’ and How to Say ‘No’” that will enable participants to better understand why and how to give and how they can be more strategic about how they give and to whom
- Providing the opportunity for local businesses to enroll in the 2% recognition plan

Young Professionals

(Actions and measures are in the development stage for launch in 2010.)

Chamber Priority – COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

Consistent marketing plan for all events to include Web site, *Advantage*, blast fax/email, press releases to all surrounding area media, SE area Chambers and utilize the MN Chamber link.

Business Blog

Actions:

- Maintain the Business Blog as part of the Web site that serves as an additional Member benefit
- Phase out the name “Business Blog” and replace with “Newsreel”, staying consistent with the *Advantage* newsletter’s Newsreel business news section
- Continually research and discuss blogging with other chambers currently using blogs
- Update blog 4-5 times per week with Member events, Chamber events and other pressing issues
- Include RSS feeds and other subscription methods on blog to increase usability and readership
- Increase the use of new media (video, audio, podcasts, photo galleries, etc.) on the blog

Measure(s):

- 10% increase in blog hits
- Increase rochestertermnchamber.com’s search engine rank

Buy Rochester Campaign

Actions:

- Re-focus efforts on campaign encouraging members to shift 5% of their purchases to Rochester area business
- Assemble a new Buy Rochester committee to strategically look into how to increase business participation in the campaign
- Continue to track participation and give members updates regarding the impact on the Rochester area

- Maintain and improve Web site as well as feature several Buy Rochester success stories on the site and in the *Advantage* newsletter

Measure(s):

- 10% of the Chamber membership pledges to the campaign
- Members and community are given quarterly updates on campaign status through internal and local media

Chamber Advantage Newsletter

Actions:

- Continue changing sections to meet Chamber needs
- Increase revenue through ad sales
- Look into electronic versions of the newsletter for those who would rather receive the publication electronically

Measure(s):

- Enhanced business-related content while maintaining profitability

Chamber Radio Show

Actions:

- Continue to broadcast a monthly radio show to inform the public of actions the Chamber is taking on behalf of the community
- Have a special guest speaker or pressing topic to present at each show
- Promote Chamber events and benefits at the end of each show
- Promote Chamber Radio Show on the Web site and in the *Advantage*
- Playback Radio Show on Blog
- Review extending the length of the Chamber Chat Show

Chamber Style Guide

Actions:

- Create a Chamber style guide that provides information and guidelines to assist staff members, board members, ambassadors and the general public, allowing consistent use of the Chamber brand
- Provide guidelines including use of fonts, colors, logo placement and correct use of wording

Measure(s):

- Consistent marketing of the Chamber throughout the Chamber and community

Grow Minnesota!

Actions:

- Thank members for their membership with the Rochester Area Chamber
- Conduct Grow Minnesota! survey provided by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
- Report findings to the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Measure(s):

- Conduct 36 one-on-one business retention visits

Media Relations**Actions:**

- Improve the Chamber's relationship with area media (KTTC, KAAL, Post Bulletin, etc.)
- Continue to work closely with reporters and media to meet their wants while at the same time meeting the Chamber's wants and needs

Measure(s):

- Conduct bi-annual lunch meetings with directors and/or relevant individuals from area media to discuss our relationship, including what is working and what can be improved

Membership Directory**Actions:**

- Create a complete listing of all Chamber members in alphabetical order and by business category
- Provide information about the Buy Rochester campaign, Workforce 2020 initiative, Rochester and the surrounding communities
- Provide a marketing piece for member advertising

Speakers' Bureau**Actions:**

- Advertise through e-communication and newsletter in order to find speakers and users of the Speakers' Bureau
- Include testimonials, biographies, topics and photos of speakers

Measure(s):

- Grow to more than 25 speakers

Web Site**Actions:**

- Complete Web site redesign and overhaul
- Make online directory more user friendly
- Improve look and feel of site through design
- Include testimonials

Measure(s):

- 10% increase in web site visits (includes blog hits)