

**NOTES FROM THE
MEDC FALL REGIONAL CHAMBER WORKSHOP**

November 1, 2011 - Natchez

Membership Retention

- New member reception
- Benefits—milestones
 - Mini-annual report w/ invoice
- One-on-one thank-you visits (no invoice)
- Membership plaques in window dated
- E-mail
- Ambassador calls
- Partner w/ universities for workshop
- Featured member each day on Facebook
- New member free lunch quarterly w/ benefits representatives
- Facebook everyday
- Project thank you
 - Boards & ambassadors deliver token gifts

Membership Recruitment

- Membership drive
 - Not Worth it – they don't stay members.
- Printed directory to all residents
- One-on-one contracts—by staff – with membership packet
- Contributions as members
 - Reasons to join e.g. civic pride
- Testimonials
- Venues that are cool
- Community forums
- Hire recruiter
- Report referrals made by the chamber —put with invoice

Membership

New Way – Putting business first, not Chamber of Commerce

Beth Stevens, Executive VP, Greenwood-Leflore Co. Chamber of Commerce

- When visiting potential member, ask:
 - How's business?
 - How are you doing?
 - Are you looking at any changes in next 12 months?
 - What are your challenges?

- ROI-Return on Investment
 - Events, sponsorships
- Share Success stories
 - Find from other members to talk about potential member's business
- What Chamber of Commerce can do for you
 - Based on information you just gathered
 - Match solutions for business e.g. bulk mail postage
- Stay in touch!! With current members
 - Work on them while you have them as members—not after they leave
- Business needs to see progress & changes in chamber
 - Be innovative
- Invest in your community
 - For non-joiner who is doing well
- Event open to everyone—something to invest in
- Write column in newspaper each week
 - What if there was no Chamber of Commerce (Beth Stevens wrote in local paper)
Others online: <http://www.burlingamechamber.org/about-the-chamber>
<http://www.summersvillechamber.com/html/about.htm>
What is a chamber of commerce:
<http://cushingchamber.org/page/What%20is%20a%20Chamber>
- Get members engaged

Volunteers

- Ambassador (Diplomats)
 - Employer encourages participation
- New board has to provide an ambassador for two (2) years on board
- Pay \$25.00 to belong – it is a privilege to be an ambassador
 - Name tags
 - Points spreadsheet
 - Diplomat of the month
- Committee Members – why participate?
 - Events
 - Recognition
 - Leave work
 - Fun
- Application process for ambassadors
 - Finite #
 - Boss signs off
 - Reference co-workers, peers
 - Sign agreement
 - Expectations

- Policies & Procedures manual
- Orientation
- Board—leadership level member by \$\$
- Put how to volunteer on website

Communications/Social Media

- Facebook—
 - Member of the day - must offer something i.e. event, discount – (Put ball in their court)
 - Recognize what you experience when visiting member businesses, i.e. store front decorated, soup was good, etc.
- Email Blast—Tuesday or Wednesday best days
- Paper Newsletter
 - Two (2) full page ads in paper
- Shop local—Mobile app. QR code
- LinkedIn
- Chamber App

Fundraising/Events/Non-Dues Revenue

- One day free festival
 - Vendors Pay
 - 5k Registration
 - T-Shirt Sales
 - Carnival Commission
 - Sponsorships
- Golf Tournament
- Membership Directory—ads
- Business expos —Booth fees
- Historic tours of town
- Maps—ads
- Annual Banquet
 - Ladies Night—Sponsors & Tickets
 - Men’s Night—March Madness – sponsors and tickets
 - Silent Auction—Skit from little theatre
- Honor past VIP residents
- A Taste of Your Town
 - Chamber of Commerce pays cost of food
- If I have to pay for event (race, etc.)
 - Have VIP hospitality