



Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Blueprint for Tomorrow Update ~ July 2007

Administration

A new Web site was launched in mid-June. The new site received 26,597 hits in a two-week period. The Web address remains the same at www.eschamber.com. Last fiscal year the chamber received over 1.5 million hits to the Web site.

Economic Development Council

The Economic Development Council, which is part of the Chamber Blueprint for Tomorrow (BFT) initiatives, has had a very busy, productive year. In addition to developing four new task forces, the Council held the first of two annual meetings to address the needs in the region to target businesses compatible with our existing industry. Governor Bob Riley was the keynote speaker at the meeting where elected officials, BFT partners, members of the Board of Advisors and members of the Board of Directors learned about businesses locating in our area, which will forge alliances among our existing business and industries and attract new high skilled workers. Reports were given from the four task forces.

Technology/Research Park Task Force

The Technology/Research Park Task Force, led by Scott Koser, developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a Technology and/or Research Park on the Eastern Shore. The task force has been meeting monthly since December of 2006, researching other facilities in the region to gather ideas to help create the RFP. The RFP was sent to potential consultants in June. Once proposals are received, interviews will be conducted by the task force members and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Directors.

Business Academy Task Force

Also launched this year was the Business Academy Task Force. Chaired by Eric Nager, the Business Academy will provide a wide variety of quality professional educational programs. A survey of the membership was conducted to determine their interests and needs. A "Call for Speakers" was sent to all Chamber members and outside sources. Sponsors are being sought for the classes. The Business Academy begins in the Fall of 2007 and will offer educational opportunities throughout the year.

Local Business Research Task Force

The Local Business Research Task Force, chaired by Jim Byrd, has been actively conducting Synchronist Surveys of local Businesses. They reached their goal to complete 30 surveys to gather data specific to economic development and workforce issues.

Transportation/Infrastructure Task Force

The Transportation/Infrastructure Task Force, led by Paige Thatcher, created a Request for Qualifications and a RFP to seek a consulting firm to conduct a transportation feasibility study of the Eastern Shore. The group researched and studied the submissions and recommended Gresham Smith and Partners to the Board of Directors, who approved contracting with the consultant firm.

Tourism Council Task Force

The Tourism Council Task Force, also a Blueprint for Tomorrow initiative, was chaired by Bill Tunnell this past year. The Council developed the policies and procedures that direct the process and govern the Tourism Council to help grow tourism in the area. The document was approved by the Board of Directors in the Spring of 2007. Jay Hasting, Tourism Director, was hired in June.

Environmental Committee

Walter Ernest, IV, of the Weeks Bay Estuary Foundation, is the chairman of the Environmental Committee. Volunteers serving on the committee sought nominations for the Chamber's Environmental Award in the Spring of 2006. The applications were reviewed and a recommendation was made to the Board of Directors, which was approved. The Chamber awarded the 8th Annual Environmental Award to the Daphne Utilities Board for their educational program promoting their cooking oil recycling efforts. Utility staff and volunteers conducted numerous demonstrations and activities and public events throughout the year to ensure cooking oil did not end up in the sewer system, thereby causing major clogs and environmental hazards. In addition to receiving a plaque to hang in their business a tree will be planted in their honor.

Business Education Committee

The Business Education Committee, led by Ramona Hill, met many times to research "economic life basics" curriculum and programs for seventh graders in public and private schools. Once funding is secured, a recommendation will be made to the Board of Directors. The program is expected to be initiated in the Spring of 2008.

**EASTERN
SHORE**
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

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