

2009 Annual Report



THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF
SOUTHWEST INDIANA

Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.

Mission Statement

The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana serves its members and leads our region by fostering an innovative business, educational, cultural and governmental environment that excels in a global marketplace.

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Annual Report Letter

We are pleased to present the 2009 Annual Report of The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana for your review.

In the face of challenging headwinds generated by the most trying economic conditions since the Great Depression, your Chamber continued to press forward with an aggressive and ambitious program of work over the past year; a business plan designed and executed for the sole purpose of creating economic growth and prosperity in our region, and beyond.

The construction of Interstate 69 remained your Chamber's top priority in 2009. As you know, construction of the first segment of the highway is well underway. This is clearly great news for Southwest Indiana, and the state of Indiana as a whole. Your Chamber worked to ensure that the funding created by the passage of the major moves legislation remained intact and invested into transportation infrastructure projects, as originally envisioned and designed. We focused our energies on protecting the \$700 million dollars designated for the construction of the first three segments of the highway. We continued to work with the Daniels administration and all other appropriate parties to explore ways to accelerate the highway's construction schedule, and identify how the balance of the road could be financed.

Importantly, we continued working closely with our friends in Kentucky as they sought to elevate the construction of Interstate 69 – including new bridges linking Northwest Kentucky to Southwest Indiana - to a higher level of priority in their state, and identify ways to finance these investments. They made tremendous progress this past year.

Another one of The Chamber's top priorities is local government modernization. During the 2009 legislative session, Indiana's legislators considered the 27 recommendations outlined by the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform – perhaps better known as Kernan/Shepard – but chose not to act. We believe this was a mistake. The Kernan/Shepard recommendations will likely be a major topic of discussion and debate during the 2010 session of the Indiana General Assembly. We will be very engaged in this dialogue, and will be a strong advocate for adoption of the recommendations.

The Chamber continues to believe that the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County should unify into one metro form of government. As you may know, The Chamber conducts an annual "Inter-City Leadership Visit" each year. These best practices investigations allow us to take a delegation of leaders from our region to visit other high-performing communities. By design, we have investigated a number of cities that have unified their local government structure into one metro form of government, including Nashville and Louisville. During our visit to Louisville, Mayor Jerry Abramson made it clear that, in his opinion, more wealth had been created in their region as a result of the unification of their city and county than would have been created under the status quo. At the time we visited Nashville – our first Inter-City Leadership Visit – that city had just been ranked number 1 on Expansion Management Magazine's "America's 50 Hottest Cities" list.

Nashville's leaders acknowledged that their metro form of government, coupled with their regional approach to economic development, was instrumental in achieving that lofty recognition.

The League of Women Voters of Southwestern Indiana recently announced that they would undertake a petition drive to secure the signatures necessary to bring the question of creating a consolidation study committee before the Vanderburgh County Commission and the Evansville City Council. This is an important step toward bringing the question of unification before the citizens, in the form of a referendum, in November, 2010. The Chamber commends the League for their leadership, and supports their efforts.

Speaking of referendums, your Chamber played a leadership role in the passage of the Evansville – Vanderburgh School Corporation's referendum, which allowed the school corporation to move forward with the full execution of its strategic plan. Further, The Chamber also played a leadership role in the passage of four township trustee referendums, which unified the township assessor function under the county assessor in Pigeon, Center, Knight and Ohio townships.

The Chamber was also heavily engaged in federal legislative matters throughout the past year. In June, we took a delegation of ten business leaders from Southwest Indiana to Washington, D.C., to meet with Congressman Ellsworth and Senators Bayh and Lugar regarding the Employee Free Choice Act, or "card check" legislation. We joined forces with the Southwest Indiana Builders Association and Evansville Area Association of Realtors to create a new alliance dedicated to addressing public policy matters of mutual interest and concern. The Alliance jointly issued a position statement against the federal "card check" legislation, and forwarded a letter to the editor of the Evansville Courier and Press expressing its opposition to the legislation. We also issued position statements regarding the proposed health care reform and "cap and trade" legislative proposals, and your Chamber and the U.S. Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy jointly issued a letter opposing the cap and trade legislation to newspapers across the state.

In the middle of all of this activity, The Chamber's Board of Directors decided to relocate the organization's corporate office to Innovation Pointe, and co-locate our office with the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana. Working in a collaborative manner with the Coalition, we proceeded to redesign and reconstruct the fourth floor of the facility. The end result is a functional, beautiful new home that will serve both organizations well into the future. Innovation Pointe is now home to a number of mission-similar organizations, including The Chamber, Coalition, Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville, Grow Southwest Indiana Workforce, Indiana Economic Development Corporation, and the University of Southern Indiana.

Throughout the past year, The Chamber continued to work in a collaborative manner with the Southwest Indiana Economic Development Coalition and other partners in business retention and expansion efforts.

Understanding that Indiana ranks as the state with the highest proportion of its workforce and the highest share of its income in manufacturing, The Chamber partnered with regional manufacturers and others to launch the Tri-State Manufacturers Alliance.

The Alliance's charge is to create a vibrant manufacturing environment that results in improved revenue, profitability, and employment. Core services include peer roundtables, site visits to manufacturers, and quarterly information sessions. The Alliance has been extremely well received by the manufacturing community.

The Chamber continued to administer the Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center. The Center delivers free, confidential business counseling services to business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as customized training programs. Our Small Business Development Center was one of the top-producing Centers in the State of Indiana for new business starts, capital investment, and new job creation.

In an effort to help our employers secure needed talent, and retain our best and brightest people in Southwest Indiana, The Chamber played a leadership role in the creation and launch of the Southwest Indiana Education and Experience Initiative, or E². The initiative is a partnership among the region's institutions of higher education, economic development organizations, civic organizations, and workforce development professionals charged with identifying and recruiting employers willing to provide meaningful internship experiences to college students from Southwest Indiana. Presently, nearly 110 companies have registered to participate in the program. We also continued to work in a collaborative manner with Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel's Education Roundtable, the Superintendent's Business Council, and the regional Early Childhood Development Coalition to improve the performance of our students and educational institutions, encourage students to pursue post-secondary education and training, and better prepare our students to enter the workforce.

The Chamber remained an events "machine" over the past year, planning and executing more than 100 highly-successful gatherings, including the continuation of our "Report to the Business Community" series, monthly business exchanges, our annual regional business trade show, and more. We also conducted our fifth annual Inter-City Leadership Visit, taking more than 60 leaders from southwest Indiana and northwest Kentucky to visit Chattanooga, Tennessee, to interact with that community's leaders and learn more about their successes and challenges.

We would like to express our warmest thanks to all of you for your continued support of The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana over the past year. Please take a few minutes to read the pages that follow. We trust you will be pleased with the progress and impact of your Chamber.

We look forward to serving you and working with you in the days ahead.



E. A. Beck
Evan Beck
Chairman of the Board



M. T. Meadors
Matthew T. Meadors
President & CEO

Economic & Entrepreneurial Development

Tri-State Manufacturers' Alliance



Indiana ranks as the state with the highest proportion of its workforce and the highest share of its income in manufacturing.



In response to these statistics, The Chamber, along with manufacturers and other partners started a new organization, the Tri-State Manufacturers' Alliance (TSMa), whose mission is to create a vibrant manufacturing environment that results in improved revenue, profitability and employment. TSMa engages local manufacturers in topical discussions, networking, knowledge and best practices sharing. Core services include: peer roundtables, site visits to manufacturers and quarterly information sessions.



The formal launch of the organization was held at the Southern Indiana Career and Technical Center June 16, 2009 with Bob Koch, President and CEO of Koch Industries as the keynote speaker. Approximately 200 people attended the event to hear Koch share his experiences in starting and growing his company.

Tri-State World Trade Network



The Tri-State World Trade Network (TSWTN), an organization whose purpose is to promote exporting and international trade in the Tri-State, sponsored several initiatives designed to increase participants' knowledge of global issues including a webcast on "Doing Business in Brazil", a seminar on "How to Optimize Financial Benefits of a Foreign Trade Zone," and a visit from the Indiana Commerce Departments' Beijing, China representative who spoke to a group of over 25 business representatives at Innovation Pointe.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)



The Chamber's Small Business Development Center was one of the top Centers in the state of Indiana in 2009 for new business starts, with 22 new business starts, investment of \$574,000 and the creation of over 40 new jobs.

SBDC clients to watch include:



Nichols Fire & Fleet, Inc., provides vehicle maintenance and repair for fire engines, ambulances and other service vehicles in IN, IL and KY. The company started in October, 2008 and currently has 15 employees.



Dave's Sports Den on North Weinbach in Evansville was one of two SBDC clients who won a 2009 EDGE award (Economic Development and Growth through Entrepreneurship). The business was honored at a ceremony at the Indiana State House to recognize and reward the important contributions made to Indiana's economy by small business.



Posh International, an upscale full-service hair salon with space for 17 stylists opened on the east side of Evansville in August 2008.

Economic & Entrepreneurial Development

In 2009, SBDC Business Advisors worked with 235 existing businesses in an eleven county region in Southwest Indiana. These clients invested over \$800,000 in expansions and added 80 new jobs; many received assistance from the SBDC in obtaining commercial and SBA loans.

Idea Club



The SBDC's collegiate management program had a team consisting of both high school and college students who worked together to prepare a project plan for the Evansville Otters. The high school students were participants in a Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) sponsored initiative called the Idea Club; a club for high school juniors and seniors to meet on a weekly basis to hear from successful entrepreneurs about their business start-up and to participate in a real world project. Working closely with University of Southern Indiana (USI) seniors, the Idea Club students and the USI students prepared plans and made presentations to the Otters management team regarding their recommendations to expand services for kids.



SBDC Workshops & Seminars



The SBDC sponsored 37 workshops and seminars, whose topics included social networking, understanding financial statements, access to capital, and company branding. Over 800 people attended these educational sessions that featured local experts, national consultants and global technology experts. The SBDC collaborated with the University of Southern Indiana, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, the Evansville-Area Human Resource Association and others on these important programs.

Advancing Hoosier Women in Business



This was the third year for the Advancing Hoosier Women in Business; an event that celebrated female entrepreneurs and small business owners in Indiana, held in conjunction with the Lt. Governor's office and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). More than 160 women, the largest gathering in the state, convened at Ivy Tech Community College to hear stories from local business owners, learning new techniques and ways to make their businesses grow and prosper.

Public Policy

Interstate 69 Update



Following the historic I-69 ground breaking in July 2008, construction work has been underway and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) expects the 1.77 mile segment of Section 1 to be completed and open to traffic in the fall of 2009. Final design and right-of-way acquisition continues in the remainder of Section 1, while a Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Highway Administration for Section 2 is expected in early 2010. Overall, the I-69 extension is on schedule with public hearings and environmental work being completed throughout the six Sections of the Evansville to Indianapolis extension.

While the Indiana portion of the I-69 is under construction, the new Ohio River bridges are beginning to see progress in Kentucky. During the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, new authority was approved to move the Ohio River Bridge project forward through innovative financing mechanisms at the local or regional level. This authority will allow Indiana and Kentucky to begin working in a collaborative manner to identify a funding mechanism for the new I-69 bridges over the Ohio River.

Legislative Update



During each session of the Indiana General Assembly, The Chamber works in a bi-partisan effort to ensure that Southwest Indiana has a voice in Indianapolis. In a regular session that was dominated by development of a new biennial state budget, The Chamber continued its work with a statewide coalition to enact recommendations of the Kernan-Shepard Commission on Local Government Reform and fought to protect the Major Moves funds, which contain the transportation and infrastructure dollars that currently fund projects like Interstate 69. The Chamber also worked with local legislators to approve legislation that would redistribute a portion of revenue from the existing local food and beverage tax in Evansville-Vanderburgh County to the Municipal Arena Fund. The funding was deemed critical to the construction of a new multi-purpose arena in Downtown Evansville. Construction of the new arena and a new three-star hotel by Browning Investments of Indianapolis is underway.

Federal Legislation

In 2009, The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana approved position statements on several pieces of legislation being considered by the U.S. Congress. Specifically, The Chamber opposed the Employee Free Choice Act (also known as card check), the Climate Change Act (also known as "cap & trade"), as well as the health care reform proposals that would place undue financial burdens on small businesses and taxpayers. The Chamber does support common sense reform in all of the previously mentioned areas, but without the negative economic implications for employers and their employees.

Public Policy

Washington D.C. Visit



A delegation of business leaders from Southwest Indiana traveled to Washington, DC to discuss a number of issues, including the proposed Employee Free Choice Act, also commonly referred to as the federal “card check” legislation, energy – particularly the much discussed cap and trade legislation, health care reform, transportation and other infrastructure, and more. All of these issues are of deep concern to the business community.

Alliance Against Card Check Legislation

The Chamber, the Southwestern Indiana Builders Association and the Evansville Area Association of Realtors formed an alliance to formally address legislative matters of mutual interest and issued a statement of opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act, or “card check” legislation.

Referendum Victories



In the fall of 2008, The Chamber was instrumental in assisting with advocacy efforts to pass local referendums that were on the ballot. Specifically, The Chamber teamed with the local labor community and numerous other organizations including the Citizens Supporting Schools Coalition for passage of the EVSC school referendum that sought approval of a construction bond within the strategic plan for the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC). The referendum was approved 70% to 30%. The overall plan seeks to address the corporation's facility and financial needs, and deliver world-class talent to the region in an efficient, fair, and inclusive manner, without increasing taxes.



Additionally, The Chamber worked with the Citizens for Effective Government PAC and the statewide MySmartGov.org coalition for approval of the referendum that would shift the duties of the township assessors to the county assessor to enact consistent property assessments county wide. All three referendums were approved in Vanderburgh County, as well as Ohio Township in Warrick County.



Roundtable with Senator Richard Lugar



During a trip to Evansville, members of The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana Board of Directors met with US Senator Richard Lugar in a “roundtable” discussion to cover federal issues at the forefront of national debate. Senator Lugar addressed health care reform, climate change legislation (also known as Cap & Trade) and the Employment Free Choice Act (also known as Card Check). This unique opportunity allowed Chamber leaders to discuss issues of importance to the business community of Southwest Indiana.



Public Policy

Reports to the Business Community



The Chamber hosted special "Report to the Business Community" events featuring Governor Mitch Daniels and Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel this past year. Over 400 business leaders attended each event to hear these leaders share their vision for the State of Indiana and the City of Evansville. Governor Daniels provided his perspective on the regular session of the Indiana General Assembly and outlined his budget proposal for the special session. On a local level, Mayor Weinzapfel outlined his plans for a new multi-purpose arena in Downtown Evansville. These events continue to provide The Chamber membership a unique opportunity to interact with our top leaders.



Jobs for Southwest Indiana (JPAC)

The Chamber continued to grow the financial strength and influence of its non-partisan political action committee, Jobs for Southwestern Indiana (JPAC). JPAC was created in 1996 to aid The Chamber's government affairs activities and to encourage more candidates with strong business experience to seek elected office. JPAC is an 11-person, bi-partisan board co-chaired by a republican and democrat member of The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana Board of Directors. Members use long-established criteria and guidelines to determine support for candidates. In the 2008 election cycle, JPAC supported numerous candidates for state and local office and local referendums regarding the EVSC strategic plan and the township assessment function.

Hoosier Voices for I-69



The Chamber continued to support the efforts of the Hoosier Voices for I-69 organization. Hoosier Voices for I-69 is a statewide advocacy organization charged with completion of the Interstate 69 extension from Evansville to Indianapolis. Hoosier Voices is led by Executive Director Steve Schaefer and a board of directors consisting of business leaders from across the state. The organization works with local, state officials to create a broad understanding of the importance of the highway to the state's future economic growth and vitality, ensuring adequate funding for the highway is made available, and that the highway is built in a timely manner. In addition, Hoosier Voices continues to maintain a presence at the federal level as a member of the Mid-Continent Highway Coalition.

John Biasini Environmental Awards



The John Biasini Environmental Excellence Awards program recognizes local companies and individuals for their commitment to a cleaner environment. Atlas Van Lines was the award recipient in the energy/renewable resources category; Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana was the award recipient in the pollution prevention/source reduction category; Alcoa, Inc. – Warrick Operations was the award recipient in the recycling/reuse category; and Richard Reising, Environmental Management Consultants (EMC), Inc. was the award recipient in the environmental leadership category.

Strategic Partnerships & Initiatives

Inter-City Leadership Visit



In May, sixty business, government, education and community leaders from Southwest Indiana and Northwest Kentucky, met with their counterparts in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for an inspiring exchange of ideas and best practices. The 2009 Inter-City Leadership Visit (ICLV), presented by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, examined a number of matters including regional economic development, downtown development, the retention of young leaders and workers, collaborative regional partnerships, community branding and overall quality of life.

Give Back Tristate



Established in late 2007 by a group of area young professionals following the ICLV to Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky, Give Back Tristate (GBTS) is an organization that strives to improve and beautify our respective communities by uniting area young professionals through monthly philanthropic activities. GBTS has served the community by building shelving and organizing the donations at the United Caring Shelter; helping students from the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation receive clothing, school supplies and haircuts at the Forest Hills Back to School Community Outreach; manning the VIP tent at the Evansville Freedom Festival; building a Habitat for Humanity home; and much more!

GBTS membership has grown to over 200 members since its inception.



Regional Compensation & Benefits Report (RCR)



The Chamber once again partnered with the Evansville-area Human Resource Association, Inc., and the University of Southern Indiana to conduct and complete the 2009 Regional Compensation & Benefits Report. This comprehensive, one-of-a-kind report contains valuable benchmarking information from over 120 organizations throughout the region.

Diversity & Family Friendly Conference and Awards



The Chamber continued to work with the Evansville-area Human Resource Association, Inc., to present the Diversity & Family Friendly Conference and Awards. The conference is a full-day event that featured an exhibit area and compelling speakers. The awards honor and recognize companies within the Tri-State that are leaders in developing a workplace that embraces diversity and family friendly practices. Over 400 people attended the conference and awards.

Strategic Partnerships & Initiatives

Evansville Education Roundtable



The Chamber continued to support and be engaged in the Evansville Education Roundtable established by Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel. The Evansville Education Roundtable has two strategic goals – increasing the high school graduation rates and increasing post-secondary educating attainment. Subcommittees have developed and executed strategic plans of action to move toward realizing these goals.

Early Childhood Development Coalition



In 2004, The Chamber partnered with the United Way of Southwest Indiana and other partners on the 4Community Grant project. This early work led to the establishment of the Early Childhood Development Coalition in 2006. Since its inception, the Coalition has grown to include many new members. The Early Childhood Development Coalition is charged with ensuring all children enter school “ready to learn”. The focus on early childhood development strongly compliments the efforts of the Evansville Education Roundtable. The Chamber views this initiative as an important component of the region's efforts to build a world-class workforce.

Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) Superintendent's Business Council



The Chamber supported and participated in the EVSC Superintendent's Business Council. The EVSC Superintendent's Business Council was created in order to bring together business and corporate leaders from throughout the community to help the EVSC realize a vision of excellence in the local schools. The schools' core focus of student success and of meeting initiatives in professional development, early childhood education, technology, in creating an innovative school model and in forging a family, school and community partnerships is at the heart of the discussions. The 33-member council meets quarterly throughout the year.

Southwest Indiana Education and Experience (E²) Initiative



The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana played a leadership role in the creation and launch of the Southwest Indiana Education and Experience (E²) Initiative. The E² initiative is a partnership among the region's institutions of higher learning, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, civic organizations and workforce development professionals charged with identifying and recruiting employers willing to provide meaningful internship experiences to college students from Southwest Indiana. The Southwest Indiana E² partners work cooperatively with Indiana INTERNnet, a statewide internship matching program, on the initiative.

Ribbon Cuttings & Ground Breakings

A celebration of business start-ups, expansions and the construction of new facilities. The Chamber's Ambassador Committee facilitated 32 ribbon cuttings and two ground breakings over the past year.



HR Solutions – November 13



Beef O'Brady's – January 14



Seek and Find Consignments – February 19



AT&T Experience Store – May 8



Banterra Bank – July 7



HUB International Midwest – July 14



House of Bluez – August 20



Cripe Architects & Engineers – November 19



Schultheis Insurance – January 20



Hawg 'n' Sauce – April 27



Scholar Center for Aesthetic Surgery & Age Rejuvenation – May 28



Amedisys Home Health – July 14



Ferguson Enterprises – July 23

Networking & Special Events

The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana conducted a wide range of networking and educational opportunities for its members throughout the past year. These programs include The Chamber Networking News (CNN) program; Good Morning Tri-State Breakfast program; the Toyota/Old National Bank/Chamber Golf Outing; business exchanges; the RC Cola/Chamber Tri-State Business EXPO; special Report to the Business Community programs; and business workshops and seminars.

CNN



The Chamber Networking News (CNN) program had record attendance in 2009. Approximately 80 people attended these fast-paced networking sessions each week. CNNs provided participants the opportunity to create awareness about their products and/or services and establish important new business relationships. This program is conducted each Friday at various Chamber-affiliated locations throughout the region.

Good Morning Tri-State

Good Morning Tri-State events are informative programs held in order to educate, celebrate and network. There were three Good Morning Tri-State events held over the past year. Acting from a regional perspective, two of these events, The Chamber's Annual Champagne Brunch and Chamber Day at the Races, were co-hosted by the Warrick County Chamber of Commerce and the Spencer County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Holiday Champagne Brunch



The Chamber's Annual Holiday Champagne Brunch was held at the beautiful Victoria National Golf Course in Newburgh. This holiday gathering is the largest Good Morning Tri-State event of the year, with over 400 Chamber members in attendance.

Freedom Festival Kickoff Breakfast



In June, The Chamber conducted the Annual Freedom Festival Kickoff Breakfast on the lawn in front of Old National Bank in Downtown Evansville. There were over 300 people in attendance at this community event.

Chamber Day at the Races



The third regional Chamber Day at the Races was held at Ellis Park in July and just over 200 area Chamber members gathered to enjoy lunch and cheer on the horses at Ellis Park.

Networking & Special Events

Report to the Business Community

These are intermittent gatherings held in order to educate participants on key issues and initiatives affecting the business climate. There were seven Report to the Business Community programs held in 2009.

Lunch with Governor Mitch Daniels



Over 400 business leaders attended this event to hear Governor Daniels share his vision for the State of Indiana.

Lunch with Evansville Mayor Jonathon Weinzapfel



This luncheon provided an opportunity for Chamber members to hear the Mayor's thoughts on economic development, revitalizing downtown and the future of business in Evansville. Over 150 attendees gathered for this event.

Pre-Legislative Session Luncheon



This luncheon featured a presentation on the upcoming session by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, as well as an overview of the Chamber's legislative priorities.

Breakfast of Community Champions



The Chamber partnered with the Vanderburgh Community Foundation and the Women's Fund of Vanderburgh County present grant awards to deserving organizations at the second annual Breakfast of Community Champions. Fourteen community agencies received grants at this important breakfast.

QuakeSmart



The Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mitigation Directorate (A National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) Agency) in cooperation with The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana hosted QuakeSmart, an earthquake preparedness forum for the business community of Southwest Indiana.

Lincoln's Journey of Remembrance Lunch



The Chamber hosted Lincoln's Journey of Remembrance Lunch on Dress Plaza. Over 100 attendees enjoyed a proclamation from Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel; a delicious lunch provided by Stratman's Pharmacy; and a presentation, including a viewing of a replica flatboat and the story of Lincoln's life in Spencer County from the crew of the flatboat.

Internal Fraud & Embezzlement Seminar: Stories from the Trenches



Just over 50 attendees learned the key red flags associated with embezzlement and fraud; common fraud schemes used to defraud; tips to protect companies from embezzlement & fraud; and what to do if fraud is suspected or discovered.

Networking & Special Events

The RC Cola/Chamber Tri-State Business EXPO



The Fourth Annual Tri-State Business EXPO was held in March. This year's EXPO featured The Chamber's First Small Business Awards Ceremony. At the program, awards were given in the following categories:



- Entrepreneur of the Year Award: Tracy Zeller Jewelry
- The Give Back Award: Firefly Southern Grill
- Non-Profit Business of the Year Award: WNIN - Channel 9 & FM88.3 Radio
- The Small Business of the Year Award: Woodward Commercial Realty



The exhibit hall featured 110 exhibitors showcasing their products, services and capabilities to an audience of over 1,000 regional business people. This was the perfect opportunity to learn about the latest products and services available in the Tri-State. As attendees toured the exhibit hall, they were offered a sampling of the Tri-State's most popular cuisine. An after-hours business exchange wrapped up the event in the exhibit hall.

Toyota/Old National Bank/Chamber Golf Outing



The 7th Annual Toyota/Old National/Chamber Golf Outing was held in May at Rolling Hills Country Club. Over 240 golfers enjoyed a fun and competitive day on the links. The Toyota/Old National Bank/Chamber Golf Outing always proves to be a great way to entertain clients and network with area business people, while enjoying a relaxing day on the course.



Posey County Golf Outing



The Posey County Golf Outing was held in October at Western Hills Country Club in Mt. Vernon, Ind. The event served as a great opportunity for Chamber member firms located in Posey County to network and enjoy a day on the golf course with their fellow Chamber members.

Chamber Trip to China



The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana, in partnership with the Henderson-Henderson County (KY) Chamber of Commerce, hosted a nine-day trip to China in April. The tour included the following:



- A unique opportunity to meet with business leaders in China and learn about their economy;
- Sightseeing in Beijing including the Great Wall of China, Tian An Men Square, Ming Tombs, Palace Museum, Summer Palace, Kunming Lake and Longevity Hill;
- A trip to Shanghai & Suzhou including sightseeing of the Lingering Gardens, Tiger Hill, Hanshan Temple & the National Embroidery Institute;
- A tour of the Hangzhou Economic Development Zone & Lingyin Temple;
- A cruise on the West Lake with stop-over at jewel-like pagodas and tea houses.

Networking & Special Events

Business Exchanges



In 2009, The Chamber once again hosted monthly business exchanges on the first Thursday of each month. Business exchanges are conducted at various businesses throughout the year. Business exchange locations included Western Hills Country Club in Mt. Vernon; Edgewater Grill in Newburgh; Black Buggy; and Biaggi's to name a few. Business Exchanges are after-hours networking and business showcasing events that offer Chamber members an excellent opportunity to meet one-on-one with area business professionals, including business owners and decision makers, while enjoying delicious food and drinks.



Other After-Hours Events

The Chamber offered three additional after-hours events for members to take advantage of.

Chamber Night with the University of Southern Indiana Screaming Eagles

Chamber Night with the University of Southern Indiana Screaming Eagles was hosted in January. This event offered Chamber members a special ticket price, a VIP reception prior to the game and a "pep talk" from the USI Men's Head Basketball Coach.



Chamber Night with the University of Evansville Purple Aces

Chamber Night with the University of Evansville Purple Aces was also held in January and featured a special ticket price, a VIP reception prior to the game and a "pep talk" from the UE Men's Head Basketball Coach.



Chamber Night at the Otters

Chamber Night at the Otters was hosted in July at Bosse Field. There were a record-shattering 1,800 Chamber members in attendance at this game! Chamber members were treated to special seating and dinner at this exciting event.



Annual Meeting & Dinner

The Chamber's Annual Meeting and Dinner was conducted at The Centre in Downtown Evansville. The Chamber hosts this annual gathering in order to communicate the issues and initiatives that the Chamber has undertaken or supported over the past year. It is a way to show the Chamber's progress, while previewing the organization's program of work for the next year. The Chamber's Annual Award recipients were announced at this event. They are as follows:

- Norman P. Wagner Business of the Year: Berry Plastics Corporation
- Richard A. Schlottman Business Person of the Year: Ira G. Boots, Chairman & CEO, Berry Plastics Corporation
- Volunteer of the Year: Edmund L. Hafer, President, Evansville Regional Business Committee

Coach John Calipari, UK Men's Head Basketball Coach, served as the Keynote Speaker.

ATHENA Award



The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana continued to partner with A Network of Evansville Women (ANEW) to present the annual ATHENA Award in October. The award, named after the Greek goddess of wisdom, recognizes area women for their personal ideals, professional excellence and assistance to other women in achieving their goals. The ATHENA Awards were held during the Evansville Women's Conference at The Centre in Downtown Evansville. More than 1,000 people attended the luncheon.

Communications

Web Site



The Chamber's web site, www.ccswin.com, is a highly-visible, state-of-the-art site. The site features, a calendar of events for The Chamber and community, pay online capabilities, streaming video, advertising opportunities and much more. The Chamber's web site average over 2,800 unique visitors per week – that's 145,000 unique visitors per year!

Images of Southwest Indiana



The Chamber and Journal Communications publish Images of Southwest Indiana. Images of Southwest Indiana serves as an engaging and persuasive publication that communicates the quality of life in our community. The publication is the main marketing tool used by The Chamber to secure family and business relocation to Southwest Indiana. It includes entertaining and informative articles and captivating photography. Images of Southwest Indiana is published in February and is distributed to over 15,000 readers.

Chamber Newsletter



The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana continues to partner with the Evansville Courier & Press to present The Chamber's Membership Newsletter, which is embedded in the Evansville Business Journal (EBJ), a beautiful, high-gloss business magazine. With a readership that reaches over 10,000 business owners, operators and their employees in the Tri-State, the EBJ has proven to be a great vehicle for communicating The Chamber's message to the regional business community. The EBJ provides information on local business trends, personalities and advice.

Chamber E-Newsletter



The Chamber continues to utilize Constant Contact, one of the leading web-based e-mail marketing services in the nation, to present a highly-effective, organized and informative monthly electronic newsletter. The electronic newsletter allows The Chamber to convey time-sensitive information that cannot be included in the Evansville Business Journal. Just over 3,000 Chamber members subscribe to this monthly communication tool.

Agent 511



Click here to receive the latest chamber news, events, and discounts.
powered by AGENT511

The Chamber partnered with Agent 511 to offer Chamber members the ability to receive texts with Chamber news; events and discounts; SBDC updates and tips; and legislative updates and alerts.

Chamber Calendar



The Chamber produced its first professionally printed, full-color, comprehensive annual calendar in 2009. This calendar was provided to all Chamber members and featured over 150 events for the year.

Facebook and Twitter



The Chamber began utilizing social media outlets in 2009. Facebook and Twitter were extremely beneficial when marketing The Chamber's events and legislative updates.



Committees

Affinity Programs Committee

The Chamber's Affinity Programs Committee is charged with introducing new "affinity", or special member benefit programs to the membership. The Affinity Programs Committee identifies targeted affinity programs, issues requests for proposals from appropriate Chamber-member firms, reviews proposals, makes recommendations to The Chamber's board of directors regarding program adoption, assesses program performance, and makes recommendations to The Chamber's board of directors regarding program continuance.

Ambassador Committee

The Ambassador Committee serves as the official liaison between The Chamber's staff and its members. Ambassadors welcome new members, facilitate ribbon cutting and ground breaking ceremonies, and serve as hosts at various Chamber functions.

Environmental & Energy Committee

The Environmental & Energy Committee is composed of technical and non-technical representatives from the business community who promote through advocacy and education the balancing of environmental protection and sustainable business growth. Topics range from air and water quality, to industrial safety measures and emission control.

Government Affairs Committee

The Government Affairs Committee consists of individuals who work together to promote pro-business advocacy at all levels of government. Each year they formulate policies on issues that affect business. During election years, the committee works to inform other Chamber members about candidates' positions on issues that affect business and industry. At the local government level, the committee monitors budgets and issues to ensure a positive business climate.

Marketing Committee

The Marketing Committee guides The Chamber's marketing efforts to ensure the organization is effectively communicating with members and potential members about the benefits of membership.

Membership Committee

The Membership committee is charged with growing The Chamber membership base through the attraction of new members to the organization and the retention of existing members. The committee also plans and executes the organization's annual membership campaign. It also works with The Chamber's Marketing Committee to help design a communication strategy that effectively conveys the value proposition of membership to the regional business community.

Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

The Transportation Committee works to promote transportation and infrastructure improvements that benefit the region and enhance economic growth. The committee's top priority is to ensure the construction of Interstate 69 linking Evansville to Indianapolis. The committee monitors local and state planning and works with leaders to bring about changes in transportation policies.

Financial Performance & Operations

Financial Performance

The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana enjoyed another successful fiscal year in 2009. Once again, revenues exceeded expenses. The Chamber's strong financial position allowed it to continue to invest in mission-related initiatives such as Hoosier Voices for I-69, support of the Downtown arena, support of the Early Childhood Development Coalition and advocating for passage of the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation referendum and township assessor referendums. The Chamber, in recognition that 2009 was a challenging year for much of its membership, elected not to increase the cost of membership dues for 2010.

Membership

Chamber membership continues to be a top priority. With our growing Ambassador Committee, Membership Committee and enthusiastic staff, our membership is holding steady. The Chamber's annual membership campaign brought in forty-six members in one month. With growing attendance at our networking events, an increased utilization of our affinity programs and continual public policy efforts, our members are seeing the advantages of their Chamber of Commerce.

Operations

The Chamber's new member value package offers free advertising in the Evansville Courier & Press, Evansville Business Journal, and Mount Vernon Democrat; along with a ribbon cutting ceremony and access to our membership contact list.

In 2009, The Chamber's board of directors decided to co-locate The Chamber's offices with the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana's offices on the fourth floor of Innovation Pointe, located at the corner of Fourth and Main streets in Downtown Evansville.

The co-location of The Chamber and Coalition in Innovation Pointe is the realization of a vision that has been discussed at varying levels of interest and intensity for a number of years. The vision is to bring mission similar organizations together into one location in order to encourage collaboration, create synergies and enhance economic efficiencies, while becoming more customer-centric and maximizing our region's economic development potential. Innovation Pointe is home to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and WorkOne, the regional workforce operator, as well as the Growth Alliance of Greater Evansville. The University of Southern Indiana also has a presence in the building. Two floors of the building are dedicated to incubating high-tech start-up businesses, and these businesses will now only have to travel to the fourth floor of the building to seek the free business counseling services offered through The Chamber's regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Corporate site locators looking at Southwest Indiana as a possible site for a new facility, as well as leaders of existing business and industry are now able to walk into one building and receive a myriad of services. And when they walk into the building, they are immediately greeted by the Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana's beautiful new gallery, featuring works of art created by artists from throughout the region.

Staff



Debbie Albin
SBDC Administrative Assistant/
Training Coordinator



Amy Back
Director of Membership &
Investor Relations



Carly Griffin
Events Manager



Kim Howard
Vice President of Economic
Development
SBDC Regional Director



Ellen Knapp
Director of Accounting &
Operations



Sarah McBride
Administrative Coordinator



Matt Meadors
President & CEO



Laurel Meny
Director of Marketing



Pete Sabella
SBDC Senior Business Counselor



Steve Schaefer
Vice President of Public Policy



Tiffani Weatherford
Posey County Administrative
Director

Key Areas of Strategic Focus

- Develop a pro-business environment for the region that encourages business investment and the creation of desirable, good paying jobs, resulting in an increased standard of living for all citizens.
- Ensure progress on I-69 from Memphis to Detroit with focus on the I-69 bridges over the Ohio River and Crane-Indianapolis funding.
- Support implementation of the major Kernan-Shepard (Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform) recommendations.
- Expand the engagement of the business community and work with partners to develop a world class education system.
- Leadership of regional collaboration towards “one voice.”
- Region that attracts young, dynamic, entrepreneurial, educated and skilled people.

**As developed at The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana's strategic planning retreat on September 5, 2008.*

Board of Directors

Evan Beck*, Chairman, Woodward Commercial Realty
Jeff Deig*, Chairman-Elect, Industrial Contractors, Inc.
Jeff Whiteside*, Secretary, Vectren Corporation
Kathy Effensohn*, Treasurer, Harding, Shymanski & Co.
Rick Baumgart, Mead Johnson Nutritionals
Dr. Linda Bennett, University of Southern Indiana
Steve Bennett, CSB State Bank
Tom Bernhardt, Kight Lumber Co., Inc.
Dr. Vince Bertram, Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation
Rick Borries, AT&T Indiana
Kathy Briscoe*, FC Tucker Emge Realtors
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John Daniel*, Fifth Third Bank
Tim Deisher*, BKD, LLP
Marco DeLucio*, Immediate Past Chairman, Ziemer, Stayman, Weitzel & Shoulders
Kyle Dodd, First Federal Savings Bank
Kerry Dougan, Mulzer Crushed Stone, Inc.
Derek Dunigan, Holiday Home Health Care
R. David Dunn, III, Dunn Hospitality Group
Timothy Flesch, St. Mary's Medical Center
Mark Gayhart, Vectren Corporation
Bill Gillenwater, BMG, Inc.
Duane Gilles, American Water
Andy Goebel, Evansville Regional Business Community
Ed Hafer, Jr.*, Evansville Regional Business Community
Terry Huber, Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana
M. Michelle Hudson, Shrode Agency, Inc.
Dr. Stephen Jennings, University of Evansville
Jennifer Keach, Western Kentucky Energy
Michael Keene, Babcock & Wilcox Nuclear Operations
Pat Koch, Koch Development Corporation dba Holiday World and Splashin' Safari
Richard Kuhn*, Efficient Energy Technologies
Don Lee, Century 21 Don Lee Realty
Steve Magruder, Warehouse Services, Inc.
David Matthews, David Matthew Associates
Beth McFadin Higgins, McFadin Higgins & Folz
Matt Meadors*, The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana
George Morgan*, Countrymark Cooperative, LLP
Jeff Mulzer*, Mulzer Crushed Stone, Inc.
William Newman, Old National Bank
Michael O'Daniel, D-Patrick Ford Downtown
Jack Pate*, Evansville Courier & Press
Bernard Peter, First Advantage Insurance
Dave Rector, Evansville Vanderburgh County Building Authority
R.J. Reynolds*, Toyota Mfg. Indiana, Inc.
Sally Rideout Lambert, Alcoa Warrick Operations
Constance Robinson, HMR Enterprises, Inc.
Jim Sandgren*, Old National Bank
Mike Schopmeyer*, Kahn, Dees, Donovan, & Kahn
Tom Shetler, Jr., Shetler Moving & Storage, Inc.
Lisa Slade, Alphagraphics
John Stratman, Stratman's Pharmacy
Reverend John Swain, Mt. Gilead Baptist Church
Terry Tuggle, Independence Bank
Mike Vea*, Integra Bank NA
Alfonso Vidal, Hospitality & Outreach for Latin Americans-HOLA
Mike Walsh, SABIC Innovative Plastics
Carolyn Walters, CC Boone & Co., Inc.
Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel, City of Evansville
Drew Wesley, Keller Crescent Co., Inc.
Linda White, Deaconess Health System
Larry Williams*, McKim's IGA
John Wood, MSD of North Posey
* Executive Committee

Special Member Benefit Programs

Chamber members continued to enjoy access to a broad range of special member benefit programs throughout the past year, as follows:

Health Care Insurance



Save 5% on health care plans with ChamberCare, provided by Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield.

Office Supplies



Save up to 85% off manufacturers suggested retail price on more than 200 common office supplies. As a member, you will have access to a full-line catalog with 14,500 items at up to 40% savings!

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Federation Program



Members of The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana are automatically enrolled as members of The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, at no additional charge! This gives you access to the following great programs:

Shipping



- Save up to 26% on select FedEx® shipping.



Employee Recruitment

- Save up to 66% on Job Postings.



Rental Cars

- Competitive corporate rates that are up to 25% off the lowest published rate and access to members-only discounts.



Sam's Club

- Receive a \$10 Gift Card with your new or renewed Sam's Club® Membership.

Business and Personal Lines of Insurance

OLD NATIONAL INSURANCE



Chamber members receive a discount on their business and personal lines of insurance through a special insurance program offered through Old National Insurance and Auto-Owners Insurance Company, a company recognized for exceptional financial strength and stability.

Auto and Homeowners Insurance



The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana members can receive a 10% discount on Sentry's Plain Talk® Car and Plain Talk Home® policies.

CHAMBER



Chairman's Club.....



Platinum Trustee.....

American General Finance	St. Mary's Medical Center
Deaconess Health System	Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana
Mead Johnson Nutritionals	

Gold Trustee.....

Alcoa • AT&T Indiana • Integra Bank • Koch Enterprises • SABIC • Whirlpool

Silver Trustee.....

Anchor Industries	Old National Insurance Group	Keller Crescent
Atlas World Group	Ferro Corp.	Red Spot Paint & Varnish
Berry Plastics	First Federal Savings Bank	Sentry Insurance
BKD, LLP	George Koch Sons	TJ Maxx
Casino Aztar	Guardian Automotive	United Bank
Crescent Plastics	ID&A, Inc.	University of Southern Indiana
Evansville Courier & Press	Industrial Contractors	Wal-Mart Stores



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