

2008 - 2009

Annual Report

Our Community is Our Business

Dear Fellow Chamber Members:

During this past year, we experienced many changes and uncertainties that no one could have ever anticipated. However, during this unique time, there remains one reliable indicator of our Chamber's true character and strength...its ability to go forth and prosper when faced with difficult challenges.

On behalf of our Eau Claire area Chamber of Commerce, I am pleased to say, that in this the second year of the Chamber's 3-Year Business Plan (2007-2010), our Chamber's strength and character has shone bright. Our Chamber's Five-Star Accreditation remains a true acknowledgement of our high standards of practice, full accountability to our members, and outstanding commitment to our community.

Your efforts as committed Chamber members, wonderful volunteers and outstanding staff enabled us to stay on course and accomplish our goals despite the unusual economic challenges we faced together throughout the year.

Thanks to all of the individuals just mentioned above, here are some highlights of our goals and the accomplishments towards them that we made this past year:

Growing Membership and Increasing Membership Value:

- The Chamber membership continued to grow to approximately 1,200 members.
- New and enhanced programs helped member businesses.
- 20% of the Chamber's membership representatives helped to develop and implement the Business Plan goals.
- Newly developed member partnership marketing/sponsorship opportunity packages provide more benefits.

Encouraging and Supporting Business Development:

- 42 Ambassador-attended ribbon cuttings and groundbreaking.
- Business EXPO hosted 1,500 attendees and 133 exhibitors.
- 194 people attended the Progressive Power Lunches
- Thriving networking opportunities including 11 Business After Hours, 12 Business Connections, LEADS Groups and more.

Educating, Training and Informing Members:

- 38 educational seminars with 600 attendees.
- 126 companies participated in the annual Chippewa Valley Wage Survey.
- 70 people participated in the Age of Opportunity Job Fair.
- An online Speakers Bureau was developed and lists those qualified to speak on a variety of important topics.

Developing Our Leaders:

- 41 members participated in the 2008 Leadership Eau Claire™ class.
- With a membership of more than 300, the Young Professionals of the Chippewa Valley celebrated its five year anniversary.

Preparing Our Youth:

- 24 area high school students participated in the Youth Leadership Eau Claire.
- 600 area students gained personal financial management skills through participation in the Real Life Academy.

Honoring Educational Excellence:

- The Excellence in Education Banquet recognized 60 students from 9 area high schools.
- 376 people attended this inspiring event.

Focusing On Health Care:

- Continue to support Chippewa Valley's Health Care Providers.
- Three Health Care Seminars with 120 attendees focused on access and solutions.

Serving as Voice and Advocate for Area Businesses:

- 11 Eggs & Issues Legislative Breakfasts and Lunches hosted more than 641 attendees.
- 70 people headed to Madison for the 15th Annual Chippewa Valley Rally organized by the Chippewa Valley Chamber Alliance.
- The Good Government Council provided candidate questionnaires for the Spring and Fall elections.

Connecting with the Community:

- We helped fund and host important projects and successful events to allow community members, businesses and local government to connect and build positive relationships.
- Participated in funding and organization of Eau Claire's Clear Vision project along with other community organizations.
- 690 people attended the Chamber Annual Meeting.
- 160 people attended the 2nd Annual Five O'clock on the River Walk gathering.
- 2,375 people's networking opportunities took flight at the Business After Hours including the Chippewa Valley Air Show Chalet and Airport Open House events.
- A record attendance of 3,470 people enjoyed the hospitality served up by 300 volunteers at the 12th Annual Breakfast in the Valley.
- 250 hit the greens in the 23rd Annual Business Salutes Eau Claire Golf Classic.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Board Chair and for joining me on our journey this past year. It has truly been an honor, privilege, and outstanding experience to serve with all of you in the advancement of our Eau Claire Area Chamber's mission.

Sincerely,

Sam Stagliano

Outgoing Chair, Eau Claire Area Chamber Board of Directors

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Economic Development

Further economic development and responsible growth.

Health Care

Promote solutions and access to health care for business.

Workforce Development

Facilitate in the recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce.

Business Prosperity & Quality of Life

Promote and protect an environment in which business prospers.

Government Relations

Serve as the voice and policy advocate for business.

Communications

Enhance communication methods to promote the Chamber and its members.

Membership Development

Recruit and retain members by providing business-relevant benefits.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce is the advocate of business striving to enhance and protect the business environment and the quality of life for the benefit of our members and the Chippewa Valley.

VISION STATEMENT

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce will be the leader in the progressive development of the Chippewa Valley through the efforts of the business community.

Committees and Task Forces

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Goal: To bring together a group of 30 small business representatives that will meet three to four times a year in order to provide input on Chamber programs and brainstorm ideas with the Chamber staff. Information will be shared with the Chamber Board of Directors.

Met two times and reviewed the proposed new Business Plan and gave input to the staff on the Chamber gift certificate program.

AGRI-BUSINESS

Goal: To recognize the vital role of agriculture in the local economy and promote positive relations between the business and farm communities.

Chair: Bob Sinz - Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc./ID Theft Shield

Conducted the 12th annual Breakfast in the Valley on June 13th and served 3,470 - a record breaking year! The breakfast was put on by more than 300 volunteers and over 60 sponsors. The breakfast included one milk-drinking contest and a new cow milking contest with legislators and local celebrities. The breakfast included agriculture and business displays, a petting zoo, door prize drawings, a visit from the 61st Alice in Dairyland and antique tractors.

Awarded the Friend of Agriculture Award to Dudley "Joe" and Marian Smith in recognition of their many years of support and promotion of Chippewa Valley agriculture.

Sponsored the Wisconsin Junior Livestock Banquet, Friends of the Fair, Kiwanis Club-Noon and the Eau Claire Alumni FFA-Farm City Day.

AMBASSADORS

Goal: To represent and promote the Chamber and retain Chamber members.

Chair: Mary Glassbrenner – Group Health Cooperative of Eau Claire

Conducted 11 Business After Hours with average attendance of 204 people.

Hosted the Chippewa Valley Chamber Alliance Annual Airport Open House.

Facilitated 42 ground breaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies for a variety of businesses.

Made monthly retention calls to members informing them about the Chamber and asking if they want to be more involved in the organization.

Continued "How's Business" visits to members, in an effort to obtain feedback.

ANNUAL MEETING

Goal: To plan and execute the Chamber's 94th Annual Meeting.

Chair: Gretchen Hutterli – University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, College of Business

The 94th Annual Meeting was held at the Ramada Convention Center with the leadership passing from Steve Weld, Weld, Riley, Prenz & Ricci, S.C. to Sam Stagliano, Bauman Associates in front of a sell-out crowd of 690 people. All committee and task force chairs were recognized.

Award Winners included:

Outstanding Volunteer

Ray Spies, Development Associates USA

Top Membership Sales Person

Jerry Moen, Supreme Graphics

Ambassadors of the Year

Kate Ludwigson, Area Financial Services

Community Development Award

Group Health Cooperative of Eau Claire

Outstanding Public Employee

Jim Schmitt, Eau Claire Area School District

Athena Award

Vicki Hoehn, RCU

Small Business of the Year

1-25 employees: L&M Mail Service

26-150 employees: Minnesota Wire

BUSINESS COUNCIL

Goal: To implement educational seminars and programs that will meet the needs of Chamber members.

Chair: Jim Pinter

Coordinated Business Solutions seminars with Chamber members Mario Racinelli on ID Theft, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Merrill Lynch and Wipfli.

Implemented a Lunch & Learn series featuring seminars on a variety of topics held during the lunch hour on the last Tuesday of each month. The series was sponsored by Eau Claire Realty and Weld, Riley, Prenz & Ricci, S.C.

Hosted half-day seminars on leadership and change by Bob Ash of Life Lessons™ with 142 people attending.

Partnered with the Business Expo Committee to offer a seminar series on a variety of topics during the public day of the Expo. Seminars were presented by Chamber members.

Hosted a Women's Golf Workshop with 34 women, which was presented by Heidi Olson of Automated Financial Solutions and Jim Buyze of Wild Ridge Golf Course.

Partnered with KRM Information Services to provide virtual seminars on a variety of topics from experts in their field.

BUSINESS EXPO

Goal: To plan and execute the 2008 Business Expo.

Chair: Jessica Cather, Downtown Eau Claire, Inc.

Hosted the 19th Annual Business EXPO in October with about 1,500 people attending. The event is sponsored by Leader-Telegram, Maverick Media, WEAU-13 News and the Ramada Convention Center. The VIP Reception was sponsored by Associated Bank, Ayres Associates and Wipfli.

Partnered with the Business Council to offer a seminar series on a variety of topics during the public day of the Expo.

BUSINESS SALUTES EAU CLAIRE

Goal: Conduct an enjoyable golf outing that promotes networking for members.

Chair: Pam Veith – Pam J. Veith, Attorney-at-Law

Conducted the 23rd Annual Golf Classic at the Eau Claire Golf & Country Club in May with a record crowd of 250 people attending. More than \$15,000 in prizes were given away. The major sponsor was Security Health Plan and the gift sponsor was Xcel Energy.

CHIPPEWA VALLEY CHAMBER ALLIANCE

Chair: Sam Stagliano, Bauman Associates, Ltd

The three Chamber Executive Committees in the Chippewa Valley continued to meet and discuss regional issues.

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CHIPPEWA VALLEY WAGE SURVEY

Goal: Conduct the annual Chippewa Valley wage survey in partnership with the Chippewa Falls and the Greater Menomonie Chambers of Commerce, Chippewa Valley Society for Human Resource Management and Wipfli. Conducted the annual Chippewa Valley Wage Survey with 126 participating companies.

Committees and Task Forces

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Goal: Be an economic partner in downtown revitalization along with the City of Eau Claire and Downtown Eau Claire, Inc.

Chair: Teresa O'Halloran – University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Continued to monitor the progress and development in downtown and work with Downtown Eau Claire, Inc.

Conducted the 2nd Annual Five O'clock on the River Walk on July 24th with 160 people in attendance and 10 sponsors.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Goal: To provide recognition for outstanding students and educators from nine area high schools.

Chair: Vicki Seltun – Weld, Riley, Prens & Ricci, S.C.

Coordinated the 24th Annual Excellence in Education Banquet, which honored 60 outstanding area high school students and their selected educators. In addition, the Committee honored three outstanding educators in the following categories: Innovation in Teaching, Contributor to Education and Unsung Hero.

GOOD GOVERNMENT COUNCIL (GGC)

Goal: To inform and educate members on business issues and candidates' stand on these issues. The GGC is independent of any political party, candidates or organization except the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce.

Chair: Bill Eklund – Sharp Photo and Portrait

Provided chamber members candidate questionnaires for area State Assembly races, Eau Claire City Council, Eau Claire School Board and Altoona mayoral spring elections.

HEALTHCARE

Goal: Recognizing that rising health care costs are a significant issue of concern for our members, the Chamber advocates the collaboration between health care providers, encourages public/private interaction and urges personal responsibility.

Chair: Jackie Pavelski

Monitored legislation related to healthcare reform and its effect on business.

Promoted wellness opportunities and initiatives to businesses.

Were informed of several community health related initiatives going on in the community.

Implemented a series of three seminars dealing with the rising cost of healthcare.

HIGHWAY "T" TASK FORCE

Goal: To have a safe four-lane highway on County Road T from Highway 312 to Highway 29.

The DOT completed the study and presented a copy to the Chamber.

MEMBERSHIP

Goal: To assist the Chamber in the recruitment of members.
Recruited a total of 34 new members from April 2008-March 2009.

Conducted two membership drives that recruited 18 new members.

Membership ended the year at a record high of 1,192 members.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Goal: Be a proactive voice for the business community, to facilitate communication between government and the business community and to encourage participation in public and government affairs.

Chair: Scott Rogers – Gloria Jeans Coffee

Presented Eggs & Issues programs monthly, which included legislative dialogues with elected officials that provided timely information to our membership. Total attendance for 11 events was 667.

Legislative agenda for 2008 was formulated and finalized with input from Public Affairs Committee and the Chamber Board

Wisconsin legislators whose actions reflected an appreciation for business were awarded the Spirit of Enterprise accommodation.

Successfully organized and completed the 15th Annual Chippewa Valley Rally.

Action was taken on Brain Drain legislation, Corporate Income Tax Increase legislation, Nanotech Tax Credit legislation, Wisconsin's Minimum Markup law, the City of Eau Claire's budget, cities efforts on a Wheel Tax, the state budget, Wisconsin's Shared Revenue program and replacement of funds withdrawn from the Highway Trust Fund in 1998.

Met with Senator Russ Feingold on business related issues.

Hosted a meeting for Wisconsin State Supreme Court candidate Mike Gableman and invited candidate Justice Butler.

Met with congressman Ron Kind once to talk about business and another time to talk about the economic situation and stimulus packages.

Hosted a candidate forum for Fall State Assembly 2008 elections.

Hosted a candidate forum for Spring School District and City Council 2008 elections.

WORKFORCE

DEVELOPMENT

Goal: To study workforce issues affecting businesses, implement programs to address the issues and partner businesses and education.

Chair: Jane Lokken – Ruder Ware LLSC

Conducted the annual wage/benefit survey with 139 companies participating.

Organized the Age of Opportunity Fair at Oakwood Mall and submitted a survey for participants to reflect upon the event to improve it in the future.

Internship sub-committee worked to further the role of interns in Chippewa Valley businesses, with an employer event hosted at the Chamber Building.

Chamber businesses were surveyed for their opinions and efforts regarding international trade. Partnering with UW - Eau Claire, will utilize the results to gauge the interest of member businesses in exploring international trade.

Supported CVTC's Next Generation Workforce Initiative.

Partnered with the City/County Health Department to host a question and answer meeting on the city's new smoke free workplace law.

Developed a Workforce Resource webpage.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OF THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

Goal: Engage and empower young professionals through community, professional, and social opportunities.

Chair: Jason Craig – Luther Midelfort-Mayo Health System

Co-Chair: Pamela Speckien, M & I Marshall & Ilsley Bank

Held two professional development seminars with a total of 78 attendees.

Held a power networking event with 26 attendees.

Held social events including five happy hours and a winter party with 60 attendees, a golf outing with 99 attendees, a deck event at Eau Claire Express Baseball with 30 attendees, beer sampling and grill out at the Leinie Lodge with 61 attendees, a bean bag tournament with 48 attendees and a membership extravaganza with 108 attendees.

Volunteered at The Community Table twice and Agnes' Table once and "sponsored" eight families for the holiday season. Volunteered at Country Jam and the Chippewa Valley Air Show. Participated in Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids' Sake and the YMCA's Halloween party.

Celebrated the five year anniversary of YPCV and recognized 42 Charter members.

Committees and Task Forces

Other Accomplishments in 2008-2009

Continued to promote the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce Direct Giver's Conduit to allow Chamber members and their employees to make contributions, through the conduit, to candidates running for office.

Participated in the Implementation Committee for the ClearVision project that is overseeing the six Key Performance Areas (KPA's).

194 people attended the Progressive Power Lunches.

Nearly 500 volunteers (20 percent of our membership representatives) helped to complete the goals of the Business Plan.

Developed a new online speakers Bureau publication which lists members who are will and qualified to speak on a variety of topics.

FINANCIAL REPORT

As reported on March 31, 2009

Figures were unaudited at the time of publication.

Projected Dues Revenue \$436,754

Projected Non Dues Revenue \$144,878

Projected Program/Project Revenue \$358,525

Projected Total Revenue \$940,157

Projected Program/Project Expense \$205,484

Projected Administration Expense \$603,623

Projected Operations Expense \$156,599

Projected Total Expense \$965,706

Projected Balance \$25,549

EAU CLAIRE AREA CHAMBER EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Goal: To provide a vehicle for members to contribute charitable support to Chamber educational programs and projects.

Board members include:

President: Mark Faanes - Wipfli

Vice President: Tom Mihajlov - University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

Secretary: Bob McCoy - Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Treasurer: Dean Schultz

Bonnie Feltz - Department of Interiors, Ltd.

Jeff Halloin - Landmark Company

Bill Kaiser - M & I Marshall & Ilsley Bank

Dr. Lee Mayer - Luther Midelfort - Mayo Health System

Dean Olson - Charter Bank Eau Claire

Jack Postlewaite - Weld, Riley, Prenz & Ricci, S.C.

Sam Stagliano - Bauman Associates, Ltd.

Completed the 4th full year of the Eau Claire Educational Foundation.

Provided the financial assistance for: Leadership Eau Claire™, Youth Leadership Eau Claire and the Real Life Academy.

Provided scholarships for both leadership programs.

Created an Endowment Fund for Youth Leadership Eau Claire with a targeted goal of \$300,000. Contributions reached \$48,000.

LEADERSHIP EAU CLAIRE™

Goal: To increase participants' community knowledge through skill building exercises and activities and educational days that stimulate them to take an active leadership role in shaping our community.

Chair: Sara Antonson – Boys & Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley

Graduated 38 participants from the Class of 2008 and enrolled 41 participants in the Class of 2009.

Held the annual opening and closing retreats in addition to seven program days, which included the following topics: agriculture/environment, arts/tourism, government/law, health/human services, education, media and business/industry.

Community issues were identified and group projects were developed working with the following organizations: Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, The Community Table, Girl Scouts of Northwestern Great Lakes, White Pine Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and Wisconsin Youth Sports Program.

LEADERSHIP EAU CLAIRE™ ALUMNI

Goal: To provide ongoing leadership programs and networking opportunities for Leadership Eau Claire™ alumni.

Chair: Mary Beth Krebsbach, RCU

Recruited applicants for the Leadership Eau Claire™ program.

Hosted an Alumni Luncheon at the Eau Claire Golf & Country Club featuring LEC alumni Dick Hansen, president and chief executive officer of Johnson Financial Group, Inc., with 153 alumni and friends attending.

Created a monthly e-newsletter, which is sent to all LEC alumni.

Hosted a cooking class by Laurel Robertson of Dinner's On, LLC - A Culinary Experience as a networking opportunity for alumni.

REAL LIFE ACADEMY

Goal: To plan and execute the Real Life Academy, an event for area high school students that is designed to demonstrate the importance of sound money management skills.

Chair: Kristan Motszko, Eau Claire Area School District

Coordinated the Real Life Academy in the fall and spring semesters for over 600 students from Altoona, Fall Creek, North, Memorial and Regis high schools.

Recruited 47 sponsored and over 150 volunteers for the academics.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP EAU CLAIRE

Goal: To provide an opportunity for area high school juniors to enhance their knowledge and develop leadership skills that will empower and motivate them to become involved and committed to their community.

Chair: Phil Fieber, City of Eau Claire Parks & Recreation Department

Vice Chair: Chris Ouellette, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Conducted the YLEC program for 24 students from Fall Creek and Eau Claire, Memorial, North and Regis high schools.

The class completed service projects for Eau Claire Parks & Recreation Department, St. Francis Food Pantry and United Cerebral Palsy.

Recruited candidates and sponsors for the YLEC Class of 2010.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Chair: Sam Stagliano - Bauman Associates, Ltd

Board Chair Elect: Peter Farrow - Group Health
Cooperative of Eau Claire

Secretary/Treasurer: John Dickey - Luther Midelfort-
Mayo Health System

Vice Chair: Bill Eklund - Sharp Photo & Portrait

Vice Chair: Mark Faanes - Wipfli

Vice Chair: Chuck Forster - Charter Bank Eau Claire

Vice Chair: Steve Sletner - TEC Design, Inc.

Past Chair: Steve Weld - Weld, Riley, Prenn & Ricci, S.C.

Dave Anderson - Ruder Ware, L.L.S.C.

Angie Bowe - Park Ridge Distributing, Inc.

Jason Craig - Luther Midelfort-Mayo Health System -
YPCV

Daniel Everhart - L&M Mail Service, Inc.

Mary Glassbrenner - Group Health Cooperative of Eau
Claire - Ambassadors

Cindy Gwinn - United Health Group/Ovations

Brian Levin-Stankevich - University of Wisconsin-Eau
Claire

Darin McFadden - U.S. Bank

Jim Norby - J C Norby & Associates

Marc Paulson - Benefit Plan Administrators

Tom Pulse - Ayres Associates

Jenny Reit - May's Floral

Mike Richards - Hutchinson Technology, Inc.

Gwen Saxe - Farrell Equipment & Supply Co., Inc.

Sue Tietz - McDonough Manufacturing Company

Pamela Veith - Pamela J. Veith, Attorney-at-Law

Ex-Officio Members

Linda Adler - Executive Director, Visit Eau Claire

Brian Doudna - Executive Director, Eau Claire Area
Economic Development Corp

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