



2008 ANNUAL REPORT

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THE YEAR IN PICTURES



Welcome to 2009



Joel Boyd
2009 Chair

I would like to highlight several elements of our Chamber's 2009 plan of action which are designed to provide additional VALUE to our members:

5 Star Accreditation – In 2005, the Chamber was 1 of 10 chambers nationally to receive a 4 star rating by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber will be submitting our application this year to receive the highest 5 star rating and become only the fifth such chamber in the State of Florida. The accreditation process involves a complete self-analysis of all aspects of the Chamber and will serve as an important evaluation tool for the effectiveness of our various programs and activities.

Building/Technology Upgrades – Our Chamber building (centrally located in downtown Melbourne one block west of the intersection of U.S. 1 and U.S. 192) is undergoing substantial exterior and interior renovations which will result in a modern facility to provide services to our members and the community for several decades. The new high tech information center in the lobby will include access to the internet and useful links to member, community, and government websites while the new auditorium will be available to our members for meetings, seminars, and other events.

Business Voice of East Central Florida – Business Voice was formed by the Chamber in 2008 as a Florida political action organization which can endorse candidates for local, county, and state elective offices as well as make political contributions to candidates for such offices. With Business Voice, the Chamber's future advocacy role on behalf of pro-business candidates and issues will be significantly increased and more effective.

Regional Economic Perspective – An important component of the Chamber's new 5 Year Strategic Plan is to focus our efforts on the East Central Florida region in which our members increasingly do business and compete. In addition to the other Brevard County chambers, our Chamber is developing an enhanced partnership with the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast. Significantly, the Chamber also will be networking with other organizations in our region including the Orlando Regional Chamber/Central Florida Partnership as well as the chambers in Osceola County (to the west) and Indian River County (to the south). In essence, our Chamber will continue to serve the needs of our members primarily in the South Brevard area while also recognizing that we must work together with our county and regional neighbors to maximize the value of our Chamber to its members.

Thanks to the Chamber members for the opportunity to serve as your 2009 Board Chairman. With an outstanding professional staff and our dedicated group of members, we are working hard to increase the Chamber's role as an effective and valuable organization serving the interests of our business community.

Farewell to 2008



Travis Proctor
2008 Chair

It has certainly been an interesting and challenging year for the Chamber as it has also been for many of our member business with the economic slowdown dominating many of the conversations throughout 2008. It also brought with it the realization that there is no time more important to have a strong Chamber providing members with an opportunity to network, do business, and to be represented with a unified voice in encouraging and fostering a pro-business environment.

Your Chamber staff and board worked very hard all year round despite shrinking budgets to maintain its commitment to the program of work aimed at helping our business community. We held many successful networking events, continued our support of education, and strengthened your voice through the formation of a new Committee of Continuing Existence. Our Small Business Committee, Multi-Cultural Council, Alive@5 and breakfast functions routinely pulled large crowds.

The realization that "we are not alone" continued to encourage an interest in thinking "regional" as we worked to forge new relationships and strengthen others. Your Chamber has much strength, but when leveraged with the strengths other like-minded people and organizations, great things can be accomplished.

The Chamber finished the year in solid financial condition within 1% of budget, maintained a strong reserve fund, and is positioned for a productive 2009. However on a more personal note, I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to the members, the board, and the staff for making my year as Chairperson so rewarding. It is nearly impossible to have a true appreciation for all that is happening at your Chamber until you are engaged in its daily operations. The personal dedication that this Chamber staff and volunteer leadership have to making our business community strong and vibrant is very inspiring, and it was my pleasure to lead such a team.

CHAMBER OVERVIEW

Vision:

The Chamber will be the recognized voice of our business community.

Mission:

To develop and promote the business interests of our members while acting as an advocate for overall growth and prosperity of our business community.

Staff:

Christine Michaels, President/CEO

Charles Galy, Executive Vice President

Melody Lane Buller, CFO/Communications

Janice Fox, Membership Sales

Ineavett Galan, Executive Assistant

Cassie Hansen, Director of Events

Terry Knowles, Membership Sales

Lisa Rouede, Director of Member Services

Ann Downing, Information Center Specialist

Nancy Manley, Administrative Assistant

Elizabeth Toole, Information Center Specialist

Diane Gabik, Education Academies

Stephanie Vlattas, Sponsorships & Membership Sales

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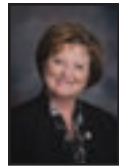


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Tom Poehailos
Crowne Plaza



Travis Proctor
Artemis Intl Technologies, Inc.



Jack Ryals
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PIP Printing

2009 Executive Committee

2009 Board of Directors



David Agee
Universal Engineering Scs



Robert Beckner
Lightle Commercial



Armando Casanova
DRS Tactical Systems



Katherine Cobb
Brevard Community College



Brian Curtin
BRPH



Nancy de la Moriniere
Paragon Printing & Graphics



Richard Ennis
Melbourne Intl Airport



Michael Fischer
PAVCO Construction



Tom Fulmer
Success Essentials



Laird Gann
Melbourne Main Street



Jack Harris
Head First Consulting



Dale Howlett
Space Coast Credit Union



Ed Kinberg
Kinberg & Associates



Brendan McCarthy
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company



Arty Pagan
State Farm Insurance



Jeff Piersall
Spacecoast Business Media Group



Joseph Reilly
Florida Drug Screening



Jim Ridenour
Residence Inn by Marriott



Pete Rochester
Seacoast Natl Bank



Gil Russell
BankFIRST



Al Sanders
Ichiban Cleaning



Doug Sharpe
Bob O'Connell's Rental Centre



Kirit Smart
The 1900 Building



Andy Ziegler
CCCS Computer Services

EDUCATION & ACADEMY PROGRAMS

Academy of Business and Finance

- Three-year academic program is a continuation of a 13 year partnership with the Brevard County Schools and is dedicated to developing specific skills in business and finance careers and is affiliated with the National Academy Foundation (NAF).
- We are now serving 170 children in Melbourne, Viera and Melbourne Central Catholic High Schools, providing these students with classroom presentations, success skills workshops, career shadowing, and internship placement.
- Melbourne Central Catholic entered their official year of planning August 2008.
- In addition to providing employment readiness workshops, guest speakers, job shadowing opportunities, internships this year 42 students from all three schools also got to participate in the 2008 Political Hob Nob as volunteers.

Academy of Construction and Design

- Three year industry specific curriculum along with intensive business community exposure including drafting and construction courses and site visits.
- Partnership with the Home Builders and Contractors Association allows the chamber to continue to provide student scholarships to Academy Seniors and begin a Future Builders of America Chapter and attend the International Builders' Show in Orlando.
- Provides "real world" workshops and seminars to students on topics including Career Opportunities, Communication, Interviewing and Leadership Skills.
- \$4,500.00 in scholarships awarded to students participating in the academy with the intention of entering into a construction related field.

Bayside Engineering and Technology Academy

- This intense academic program has two pathways, an academically rigorous Engineering pathway and a Technical pathway which the chamber augments with workshops on the soft skills necessary to success in the professional environment.
- The chamber provided various workforce readiness training workshops to the BETA Team.

P.I.R.A.T.E.S. Academy

(Program for Independent Research, Advanced Technology, Engineering, and Science)

- This academy is the final link in the Brevard County Public School's Science and Technology Choice Program feeder chain, which includes the West Melbourne School for Science and the Stone Middle School Science and Technology Program.
- The chamber helps recruit Advisory Board Team members and provides workshops on communication skills, teamwork, attitude, and workforce readiness skills.

Student Awards

Young Adult Award



The Young Adult Award recognizes outstanding high school students in Brevard County. Each month, the Chamber committee reviews applications from area high schools in order to select a Young Adult of the Month. This student is honored with a plaque at the Chamber's Monthly Business Breakfast of Champions. In

May, a Young Adult of the Year is selected from the monthly award recipients and presented with a plaque and a scholarship.

Student Athlete Award

The Student Athlete Award recognizes junior and senior high school students who participate actively and display positive attitudes in major athletics, but at the same time, achieve at a high academic level. These athlete scholars are chosen annually for each major sport played at most South Brevard secondary schools. They are presented with an award during the school's end-of-year ceremony.

Student Leadership Award

The Student Leadership Award recognizes students in elementary and middle schools who demonstrate outstanding leadership and citizenship skills. These students take a lead role in activities and are a key contributor to his/her school and community. One student is selected by the faculty and administration of each school. The student is presented with an award during the school's end-of-year ceremony.



Professional Development

Every year the Melbourne-Palm Bay Area Chamber of Commerce evaluates the needs of the member businesses and the business community to determine what programming is needed for businesses to be successful. In 2008 the Chamber provided the following programs, designed to fulfill those needs.

- *Workplace Flexibility Strategies* event in January was a successful joint venture for the Chamber and Brevard Workforce Development Board designed to educate Brevard County businesses about workplace flexibility strategies to recruit and retain top talent in their organizations and improving employee job satisfaction and increase productivity.
- *7 Secrets to Improve Your Marketing and Getting More Sales* was a half-day session on Marketing Strategies Presented by Tony Rubleski owner of the Mind Capture Group, Author and National Speaker.
- Throughout the year the chamber presented eight other “*Lunch and Learn*” events on high demand subjects at the chamber auditorium.
- The year ended with the *2nd Annual Best Business Summit: Striving for Success During Challenging Economic Times* and this time our featured speaker was Dr. Beverly Pennacchini, successful entrepreneur and East Central Florida President for Dale Carnegie Systems. We also featured three tracks: Sales and Marketing, HR and Management, and Finance for small businesses with a wonderful array of speakers and hard hitting, timely topics.

The Alfred P. Sloan Award for Excellence in Workplace Flexibility Strategies

For the second year in a row, the Melbourne-Palm Bay Area Chamber of Commerce has been one of only thirty communities, nationally to facilitate Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, which recognize organizations in these communities that are using flexible and effective practices to achieve employee and business goals.

CHAMBER EDUCATION FOUNDATION



National Academy Foundation (NAF) Conference

An entourage of Brevard County Schools representatives attended the 2008 NAF Conference held in Orlando, FL. Chamber supported Viera High School Academy of Business and Finance received recognition for completing their year of planning and graduated to be fully affiliated as a NAF Academy. Additionally, Melbourne Central Catholic School participated and came on board to initiate their year of planning for 2008-2009.

Platinum Partners



Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Small Business Partners



Chamber Ambassadors

The Chamber Ambassadors are a dedicated group of business volunteers that serve as the public relations arm for the chamber. Their involvement for 2008 includes 86 ribbon cuttings throughout the year, along with regular attendance at monthly breakfast and Alive@5 events – promoting the Chamber in every way. The 2008 Ambassador of the Year is Nancy de la Moriniere of Kwik Kopy Printing of Palm Bay. Nancy has been a continuous Ambassador and Chamber supporter for over twenty (20) years.



Area Business Councils

In 2008, two Area Business Councils fulfilled their mission of engaging members within their specific geographic locations for the purpose of identifying and addressing issues and concerns specific to them as well as providing venues for localized networking.

The Viera/Suntree Area Business Council and the Beaches Area Business Council both conducted successful, quarterly meetings. The reestablishment of the Palm Bay Area Business Council was also completed at the end of the year.

CHAMBER FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

- Annual budget \$1.1 million
- Revenues generated 58% by dues, 42% by non-dues—sponsorships, and events.
- Chamber received no governmental funded support.
- Chamber added 320 new members in 2008.
- Added \$ 8,390 to Chamber Education Foundation in 2008.
- Mega Marketplace, Monthly Breakfasts, Power Luncheons, Seminars and Taste of the Nations Tabletop Expo all exceeded budget for the year.

The Government Affairs program enjoyed another outstanding year in 2008. We published our Business/Legislative Agenda and delivered it to our Legislative Delegation in Tallahassee and hosted numerous other programs including:

Our *2nd Annual Capitol Days* trip to Tallahassee where we met with each of our State Senators and Representatives including meeting with Florida Senator Mike Haridopolos on the floor of the Senate and Representative Thad Altman on the floor of the House. We joined with business representatives from around the state for a Legislative Hob Nob and lunch with Governor Charlie Crist at the Governor's Club.



Hosted our *2nd Annual Post-Session Briefing at the Brevard Zoo* in cooperation with the Florida Chamber, where nearly 140 leaders of the Brevard Business Community gathered along with our Legislative Delegation to hear the results of the 2008 General Legislative Session and present awards to our pro-business Legislators.



Hosted the *Brevard County Council of Chambers and Bright House Networks HOB NOB 2008 At The Zoo* where voters enjoyed an evening of meeting one-on-one with candidates for Federal, State and County elected offices. Nearly 400 Brevard County voters participated in this event which included a BBQ, entertainment and a Straw Poll.

After the elections, the Melbourne-Palm Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and Bright House Networks Brevard County hosted the *Hail and Farewell Luncheon*. Nearly all of Brevard's Federal, State and County elected officials attended this luncheon in a spirit of cooperation to kickoff the 2009-2010 terms of office.



Maybe most significant of all was the creation, certification and incorporation of the Chamber's Political Committee, *BusinessVoice of East Central Florida, Inc. Committee of Continuous Existence*. BusinessVoice offers the businesses of our region to have a voice in the political process, where they can endorse and support candidates as well as recruit, train and support pro business candidates.

Better Business Council (BBC)

The Better Business Council has been an integral part of The Melbourne-Palm Bay Area Chamber of Commerce since 1961 and continues to emphasize to businesses in our community the importance of maintaining high business standards and doing business ethically. The BBC also seeks to inform and protect local consumers and assist businesses who adhere to the sound and fair business principles practiced and promoted by the Council.” Businesses must be chamber members in order to join the BBC and promote themselves as such. Better Business Council receive priority referrals, are able to use the BBC logo in all of their print & web advertising, are offered free mediation services, and are also listed in the Council’s Consumer Guide, an annual publication that lists members by category and includes a wide variety of consumer protection tips.



Accomplishments in 2008 include:

- Responded to over 2,600 call-in and walk-in requests and consumer complaints
- Conducted the 21th annual Better Business-Better Living Expo in the Melbourne Square Mall providing reputable, local businesses with the venue for presenting their products and information on their services to the consuming public. Major sponsors included Vita Spa, Residence Inn by Marriott, UCF Regional Campuses Cocoa and Palm Bay and Wachovia Bank
- Conducted annual membership drive resulting in 20 new members.
- Held our annual luncheon. Sponsored by Saturn Space Coast, the luncheon recognized its newest members and featured guest speaker Billy Mims, Head Men’s Basketball Coach for Florida Tech
- Printed and distributed hundreds of Consumer Guides containing consumer protection tips and listings of our Better Business members.
- Presented the Better Business of the Month award to twelve different recipients at Chamber breakfasts throughout the year. The 2008 Better Business of the Year award winner will be selected from this field of recipients.

Small Business Committee



The Chamber’s Small Business Committee had another extremely fruitful year under the leadership of committee chair, Jim Howes of Data Doctors. Monthly committee meetings featured topical speakers and plenty of networking opportunities and once again very strong attendance marked the meetings. A number of ongoing initiatives fall under the auspices of the Small Business Committee including Leads Clubs, award programs including the Best Business, Entrepreneur of the Year and Non Profit of the Year awards, and the “Sticking Your ‘Knows’ in My Business” program. To recap activities in these areas, seven Leads Clubs operated throughout the year providing participating members with close-knit networking and personal relationships. For a nominal \$30 annual fee, members can sign up to join one of our clubs that meet twice each month.

At the State of the Chamber Banquet in February, the Entrepreneur of the Year Award for 2007 was presented to Joseph Reilly of Florida Drug Screening and the Non-Profit of the Year award was presented to Crosswinds Youth Services. The Chamber’s 2008 Best Business Awards program was led by Jack Harris of Head First Consulting. This awards program also involved volunteer teams from the Small Business Committee who met with and evaluated nominees in order to determine award selections. The Best Business awards were sponsored by GrayRobinson, PA, and were presented at the Best Business Gala in November. Winners included: Less than 25 employees category: Annette’s Ultimate Dance and Creative Network Innovations. 25-99 employees category: Hoyman Dobson and One Senior Place. 100 - 500 employees category: GE Transportation and Symetrics Industries. Over 500 employees category: Holmes Regional Medical Center and Intersil Corp.



Michael Foley with Solutions for Growth once again led the charge in facilitating the popular “*Sticking Your ‘Knows’ in My Business*” sessions. The format involves one business owner who sits in the “hot seat” and shares detailed information on their business to a number of their peers who sit in the “Peanut Gallery.” In turn, those in the gallery provide the hot seat participant with immediate, constructive feedback and suggested action items that will hopefully lead to business improvements and success.

Multicultural Business Council



The Chamber’s Multicultural Business Council seeks to bring small business owners together in a united cross-cultural environment for the purpose of sharing resources, opportunities, and fostering economic growth. The Council held regular meetings during the year and served as the organizing force and the host for the Chamber’s very successful “Taste of the Nations” Business-to-Business Tabletop Expo held at the Clemente Center at the end of September. The premier sponsor for the event was Mercedes Benz-Porsche-Audi of Melbourne. Host location & sponsor Florida Tech and sponsor State Farm Insurance-Arty Pagan also made this event one of the year’s highlights.

Chamber’s Visitors Bureau (CVB)

2008 was a year of determining the future course for the CVB. This course was laid out by a steering committee that met on a monthly basis. Led by Tom Poehailos of the Crowne Plaza Melbourne Oceanfront, one of the first initiatives undertaken was an evaluation on how to best “brand” our area. Feedback was provided via a survey that questioned respondents on what they believed was the greatest driving force for attracting visitors to our area. Nature and recreation were the top two survey responses. Given this feedback, a nature & recreation spreadsheet was created and provided to hotels for their front staff to use in directing their visitors to these attractions. The CVB also designated TDC co-op funds for the printing of a Visitors Guide and the updating of the Visitors page on the Chamber’s Web site. Co-op funds were also designated to promote the inaugural Melbourne & Beaches Music Marathon taking place in February 2009. This event is expected to bring a significant influx of visitors to our area. At the end of the year, the steering committee transitioned into an Advisory Board which began its efforts by organizing a membership drive to increase participation in the CVB. Annual membership costs \$200; the exception being major hotels which pay \$300. The Advisory Board will be the vehicle for moving the organization forward in the years to come.

Women’s Business Council

- New initiative formed in 2008
- Mission: To empower the diverse working women of our community to achieve their highest potential through collaborative initiatives focusing on networking, professional development, and community outreach.
- Hosted such events as the Women of Excellence Awards Dinner and the Back to School Community Outreach Event.

