



662-369-6488 or 662-256-7194

## Monroe County Chamber of Commerce 2009 – 2010 PROGRAM OF WORK

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF WORK

#### A. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**Objective:** The Chamber will continue to have the support of local government and its leaders as it facilitates and coordinates countywide economic development activity and marketing efforts.

**Strategies:**

- The plans, activities, and industrial property site work should be ongoing with the cities and the county encouraged to carry these plans out.
- Sponsor workshops to focus on improving the level of contact and understanding between political leaders, business leaders, and the media.
- Executive director should give at least annual updates at various civic clubs.
- Publish a quarterly newsletter on local economic activity and indicators.
- Further develop and enhance ICC's image to the existing business community.
- Have an annual Legislative Update luncheon for govt. leaders, business leaders, Chamber membership, and education leaders.

**Actions:**

- Made the following written and formal recommendations to the City of Amory, City of Aberdeen, and Board of Supervisors in summer, 2008 concerning existing industrial sites. See actions below.
- + City of Aberdeen has acted with clearing timber, bushhogging, and cleaning debris from the 50 acre Aberdeen Port site.
- + The county sought and obtained a purchase option on a 100 acre site at the intersection of Hwy 41 and 45 at Wren.
- + The county cleared trash and bushogged the 30 acre Hwy 45 site, Aberdeen, ongoing.

- + City of Aberdeen has not yet completed engineer's report on their two sites.
- + City of Amory and Chamber had a land surveyor shoot elevations on a 25 acre site on the Amory Port South site, south of Hwy 278 as part of a large 1000+ acre site.
- + Chamber had Computer Graphics make 4 large highway signs for four of these sites. Partially funded by a TVA Grant.
- + Chamber has updated all industrial site and building maps and details on the Chamber's webpage and MDA website: LOIS.
- + Chamber has updated, measured and obtained most of the technical data on all of the prospective industrial buildings in the county that are available for lease or sale (8 buildings). Still awaiting some utility companies to give water, sewer, and gas line data.

**Other Actions:**

- Have reestablished the Council of Govts' quarterly meetings made up of all mayors, aldermen, board of supervisors, and Monroe Journal rep. Speakers have included: David Rumbarger, CDF, Joe Geddie, Greg Word, NMIDA, and Chris Berryman, TVA.
- Exec. Director speaks to all civic clubs in Aberdeen and Amory on an annual basis.
- The Chamber gives an in person monthly or bimonthly update to Amory Main St., Aberdeen Main St., and the Aberdeen Visitors Bureau.
- Exec. Director does a quarterly newsletter. The newsletters have been published in the Monroe Journal, sent via email to all Chamber members, govt officials, Chamber board members, and have been posted on the Chamber's webpage.
- In April, 2009, James Williams, ICC Workforce Training Coordinator, presented a seminar (Economic Stimulus dollars and Workforce Training Dollars) to approximately 20 company CEOs and HR persons.
- Have had James Williams or his staff visit in person with most major industries during the past year to discuss their workforce training needs.
- Exec. Director has attended the three meetings concerning workforce and education in 2008 – 2009 that were sponsored by Three Rivers PDD and ICC.
- A Legislative Update luncheon was done in July, 2009.

**B. EXISTING BUSINESS RELATIONS**

**Objective:** A very positive local environment for businesses to operate in, with local government and relevant agencies being responsive to business needs.

**Strategies:**

- Establish and maintain an active business visitation program.
- The Chamber should serve as an ombudsman with the City and County Govts' for businesses to voice their concerns.

- Work with Three Rivers, TVA, or MDA to offer assistance for businesses to expand their products and services to new markets via govt. procurement, int'l markets, and exporting.
- Develop industry appreciation efforts, highlighting special achievements of local business and industry.
- Establish a comprehensive information system or database of help resources that is easily accessible by small businesses.

**Actions:**

- Visit the CEO's, managers, or owners of the major businesses/industries
- Involve MDA and TVA representatives in the next round of visits.
- A monthly Mayor's breakfast is held in Aberdeen. All industry reps are invited to attend with Mayor Ballard, Sonny Clay, and Tony Green.
- A quarterly Mayor's breakfast has been initiated in Amory.
- Set up a meeting with the State Procurement Office in Columbus for business owners.
- Two businesses, a small business and a larger industry, are recognized each year at the Chamber Annual Banquet, for their past accomplishments or longevity.
- A page was developed and placed on the Chamber webpage that lists 69 web sources of information ranging from demographics, education, small business assistance, and transportation.

**C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS' RELATIONS**

**Objective:** To present Monroe County as an attractive location for business and industry and develop very positive working relationships with our regional economic development partners.

**Strategy:** Improve recognition within the State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Development Authority, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Three Rivers Planning and Development District, Appalachian Regional Commission, North Mississippi Industrial Development Authority, Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority, and Itawamba Community College

**Actions:**

- Cooperate with our economic development partners and project managers at the Mississippi Development Authority, Three Rivers Planning and Development District, North Mississippi Industrial Development Authority, Tennessee Valley Authority, Appalachian Regional Commission, Tennessee Tombigbee Development Authority, and Itawamba Community College.
- Attend conferences, training events, and networking events sponsored by the above mentioned economic development partners.
- Cooperate with the local government entities: Monroe County Board of Supervisors, City of Amory, City of Aberdeen, and City of Nettleton in working on individual industrial projects as they arise.
- Maintain and update the county's industrial product databases on the Chamber website, the Mississippi Development Authority's Location One website, and on the TVAsites webpage.

#### **D. LOCAL MEDIA RELATIONS**

**Objective:** To improve local support for economic development efforts.

**Strategy:** Improve local media coverage of the economic development activity within Monroe County.

**Actions:**

- On a quarterly basis produce a newsletter reporting on Economic Development and Chamber activities for the Monroe Journal, the South Monroe Create Newsletter, and the Chamber webpage.
- Have the Monroe Journal on location for all Chamber events, groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, receptions, and announcements.
- Post all event photos on Chamber webpage on the Monday Moments page.
- Have local TV stations, WCBI and WTVA, in town for at least quarterly updates on ED/Chamber happenings and activities.
- Publish the image publication, Monroe County Magazine, every three years.

#### **E. SITE CONSULTANT AND CORPORATE EXECUTIVE RELATIONS**

**Objective:** To improve the visibility and achieve an identity for Monroe County among these groups as a highly desirable business location.

**Strategy:** Develop very positive marketing tools to reach these groups.

**Actions:**

- Develop very persuasive Powerpoint and verbal presentations highlighting the positive business aspects of Monroe County and the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce.
- Use the image publication, Monroe County Magazine, as a selling tool.
- Solicit testimonial letters from local employers and CEOs.
- Highlight the positive quality of life aspects of Monroe County via the new Chamber webpage.

#### **F. TARGET MARKETING OF INDUSTRIES**

**Objective:** Attracting businesses and industries that are a good fit for Monroe County's primary assets and location, i.e., the TennTom Waterway.

**Strategy:** Develop a cost effective marketing approach to attract appropriate manufacturing industry targets.

**Actions:**

- Identify high growth industries and companies that might have use of the Waterway.
- Conduct mailings to corporate decision makers in each company identified.
- Network with all local economic development agencies (TVA, NMIDA, MDA, Three Rivers, ARC, Tenn Tom Dev. Authority, etc.) and site consultants.

- Attend some trade shows in the metal, automotive, high tech industries and any that apply to water/barge transportation.

## **G. MARKETING MATERIALS MAINTENANCE**

### **Objectives:**

- An improved information profile for County
- To provide positive promotional information that will include: quality of life, location advantages, and tourism information
- To promote the best industrial sites
- To yield higher visibility for our sites, buildings, and product

**Strategy:** Develop and maintain ancillary marketing materials to be used in direct mailings and for prospect development.

### **Actions:**

- The Monroe County Magazine image publication' purposes were twofold: promote our County to Industrial prospects as a great place to locate and as a great place to live (quality of life).
- The Visitor Guides for Aberdeen and Amory addresses tourism by being placed in three of the State's Welcome Centers and hotels in Tupelo and Columbus, and the Natchez Trace Visitor Centers at Kosciusko and Tupelo.
- Industrial site information, industrial site profiles, and executive summaries for all sites and available buildings have been updated and are posted on the Chamber's webpage and the Miss. Devel. Authority site page on LocationOne.
- In cooperation with TVA, the industrial sites identified as having the best potential for future development or new industry include: Stinson Airfield, Amory Port, Wren 100 acres, and the PeopLounger Building – Nettleton.

## **H. LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE**

**Objective:** The local infrastructure (roads, utilities, industrial parks, speculative buildings, etc.) will meet the needs of and attract new business and industry.

### **Strategies:**

- Conduct a thorough building inventory including detailed technical data on all available industrial and commercial buildings in Monroe County for marketing purposes.
- Determine the demand for industrial and office space.

### **Actions:**

- Detailed information on all marketable and available buildings and primary industrial sites has been gathered.
- The information with updated aerial photos has been put into executive summary format and has been placed on the Chamber's website and the

Mississippi Development Authority's LocationOne website and on TVA's website.

## **I. MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE NEEDS**

### **Objectives:**

- The County's education and workforce development capabilities will meet the needs of the local employees and employers.
- Availability of skilled workers is priority.
- The Chamber will become the liason between industry and education leaders.

### **Strategies:**

- Develop ongoing working relationships with the local schools and school supts.
- Work with James Williams, ICC Workforce Training coordinator, to make sure that all industries' training needs are met.
- Involve education and industry leaders in group meetings in order for the two groups to develop dialogue.

### **Actions:**

- ICC's workforce training coordinator, James Williams has met one on one and held a seminar for local industry CEO's and managers pertaining to stimulus dollars and training programs.
- Dr. Hank Bounds, State Supt. And local Supts. Scott Cantrell and Jim Sappington were guest speakers at the 2009 Monroe Leadership Institute Education segment in May, 2009.
- The new Supts. Mr. Loden, Amory, and Mr. Leigh, Aberdeen, have been invited, and will be attending our future monthly Chamber board meetings.
- Exec. Director was guest speaker at the 2009 Vocational Education Awards meeting at the Monroe County Vo-Tech Center.

# **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROGRAM OF WORK**

## **I. MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DIVISION**

### **A. AMBASSADORS**

#### **1. AMORY**

#### **2. ABERDEEN**

##### **actions:**

- conduct grand openings/ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings
- liaison and public relations persons for Chamber by attending Chamber events and functions
- year round membership recruitment

### **B. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

##### **actions:**

- schedule quarterly membership luncheons, acquire a guest speaker, and rotate these between Aberdeen and Amory
- schedule a tour of a large regional industry/business or industrial site such as the Golden Triangle Aerospace Park for chamber board members and govt leaders.
- provide a regular executive director's "state of the chamber" article for the local newspaper – Tony will be directly responsible for this
- recognize and name an "Ambassador of the Quarter" based upon attendance at Chamber events and functions
- responsible for choosing and announcing the annual awards for: "Business of the Year", "Industry of the Year", "Community Focus," Volunteer Award, and "Ambassador of the Year" at the Annual Chamber banquet
- update, review and revise the Chamber webpage, all Chamber publications, brochures, information packets, and the industrial site marketing packages to reflect a more positive and professional image
- Establish Chamber Board Orientation meetings that assists board members with understanding their roles.

### **C. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN**

##### **actions:**

- schedule an annual membership drive in Amory and Aberdeen with 6-8 persons in each town calling on persons that they know and physically going to present a Chamber membership packet and pick up the membership dues

## **D. CHAMBERPLUS INSURANCE**

### **actions:**

- when requested by a Chamber member, follow the required steps in offering reduced rate health insurance for all Chamber members

## **II. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

### **A. EDUCATION**

#### **actions:**

- sponsor the Mississippi Scholar's Program
- give special recognition via resolutions that recognize classes, student groups, and/or athletic teams for accomplishments
- provide information to Chamber membership concerning accomplishments within the school districts
- invite and provide recognition at the Annual Chamber banquet for various student groups
- provide support for the Workforce Training program
- continue a working partnership with ICC

### **B. BUSINESS SERVICES**

#### **actions:**

- participate and invite Chamber members to any small business seminars provided by the CDF, the Small Business Development Centers at the Univ. of Miss. and Miss. State University

## **III. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIVISION**

### **actions:**

- quarterly council of governments' meetings with all public officials sharing information with one another
- invite representatives of ARC, TVA, NMIDA, MDA, CDF, TRPDD, MMA, MEC, MEDC, CREATE, & LINK to speak at the quarterly meetings
- provide contact info on senators and representatives to the Chamber membership
- provide public forums for state and federal candidates prior to their elections
- review important issues of public policy, decisions, legislation, and regulations and inform the Chamber membership of their effects and ultimate impacts on the business community

- schedule a legislative update in May-June after the conclusion of the session for representatives and senators to summarize the accomplishments of that session

#### **IV. AREA COUNCILS - 6-8 members for each community council**

**ABERDEEN**

**AMORY**

**NETTLETON**

**actions:**

- formation of each area council; each to prioritize 2-3 community projects based upon their perceptions of their community's needs or desires and choose one to work on and oversee until its completion

#### **V. CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

- set a \$ goal and formulate a plan of action for a 5 year fund raising campaign for the Chamber & Economic Development efforts
- this committee made up of the executive committee
- this campaign should not be started until after some significant recovery from the current economic recession is recognized

#### **VI. MONROE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

**actions:**

- first class was winter-spring 2009
- 5 class meetings on Leadership, Healthcare/Community Services, Education, Local Government/Community Development, Economic Development
- Speakers included Dr. Hank Bounds, Gray Swoope, Dr. Vaughn Grisham, Phil Harwick, David Rumbarger
- Program coordinated with Mike Clayborne, CREATE Foundation

