

THE GREATER SARASOTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2013-14: A YEAR OF BUSINESS GROWTH

Read about how The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce has been fulfilling its role as an active voice for business, building a better community, creating member opportunities and developing our economy.

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PARTNERING TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS, AND OUR COMMUNITY

OUR TIMELINE

Over the decades, to help make our community a great place, the Chamber has partnered to achieve significant goals.

1930s

Building early roads and bridges and helping keep schools open during the Depression.

1940s

The first commercial air service to link greater Sarasota to the rest of the country.

1950s

Working with the WWII generation to start post-war businesses and careers.

1960s

Bring needed roads, water, schools and more here.

1970s

Promote the community as a visitor destination.

1980s

Launching modern economic development programs.

1990s

Creation and attraction of over 8,000 jobs.

2000s

Found the Sarasota Tomorrow initiative with a goal to secure a more prosperous future for our area.



Our Chamber has had a few different names over the decades since it began its work in 1920 and 1921. Originally called The Sarasota Board of Trade, The Chamber was key in creating Sarasota County as a legal entity, back when our community was part of a larger Manatee County. Over time, volunteer leaders inserted the word “Greater” in front of the “Sarasota Chamber of Commerce” organizational name. While much of the impetus to do this had to do with thinking and acting more regionally, there is another reason “Greater” is in our name. The Chamber is all about continuous quality improvement, so we think of the word “greater” in its qualitative sense of doing better. As The Chamber now moves into its 94th year of serving employers and

the community, there are three areas that we are focused on enhancing. These are, first, to improve the selection of value-added benefits and services available to our member employers. Second, there are strategies to expand the capacity of the Chamber to gather, analyze, and strategically distribute wider ranges of critical information. And third, actions are being taken to increase the Chamber’s positive impact on key business and community issues.

In 2015, the Chamber will:

- Update its array of programs and services available to local businesses, organizations and professionals. This will entail doing multiple types of research about the current and emerging needs of employers and how they can be best met. Best practices from other organizations elsewhere in the country will be reviewed and customized to work well in our marketplace, and new pilot programs will be launched in areas such as assisting small businesses and improving career exploration/pathways.
- Leverage the fact that “information is power,” which, in our fast-moving world, has never been more true. In 2015, we will experiment with different ways to gather local information that is important to business and decision-makers. Further, ways to gather and “aggregate” important information from a variety of sources, and make it more easily available to those here in greater Sarasota, will be explored.
- Increase our positive impact on key issues by devoting more time and energy to summarizing the important facts about topics facing local businesses and the community. More broadly sharing this information will help valuable projects to move forward, and will help fair and effective public policies to be adopted.

Our recent 94th Annual Meeting and “Salute to Business” highlighted dozens of Chamber members that invested millions of dollars, strengthened our tax base, diversified our economy and created hundreds and hundreds of jobs – just over the past year. We believe that working in the three areas above will help even more businesses start and thrive here, and will assist existing employers create more jobs for our residents. And, of course, as more businesses succeed, our community will become even greater.

Steve Queior, CCE
Chamber President & CEO

Photos courtesy of Spurlin Photography, Mavella and Concept Digital Media.

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BRANDING BENCHMARKS TO ENGAGE OUR MEMBERS

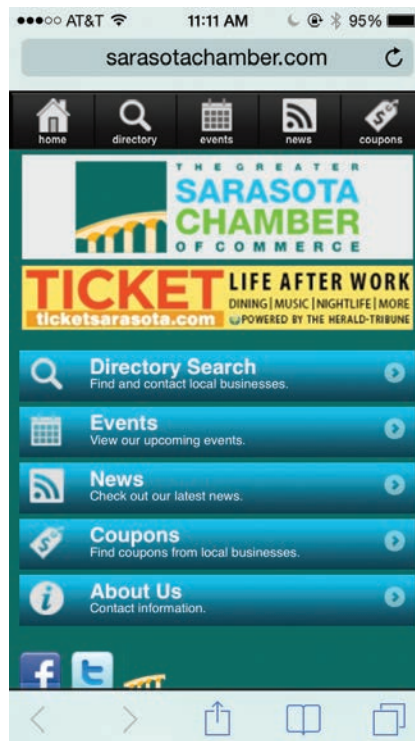
Branding: Taking it to the Next Level

In the fall of 2013, The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce tasked itself with revitalizing its brand. The first step was a complete overhaul of messaging and imagery, and mission statement realignment. An updated Chamber logo and accompanying graphic elements were completed, new sales material and membership collateral were created, and new purpose statements were introduced. All Chamber activities and initiatives were placed in a cohesive building structure: Build Your Network, Build Your Visibility, Build Your Bottom Line, Build Your Knowledge, Build Our Economy. With all of the opportunities through The Chamber it is important that the benefits are communicated in a consistent way and that our collateral is representative of where the organization is.

One of the largest projects completed last year, was a new membership database and qebsite. The purpose of this project was to construct and implement a responsive website that would allow members to easily utilize their member's benefits online. Convenience items such as bill pay, referral reports and access to their information made it more convenient for members to gauge their membership activity. A press release tool, community calendar and enhanced directory gave additional exposure opportunities to members. The Chamber's new branding and sales materials received an **Award of Excellence from the American Association of Chamber Executives (ACCE)** and a **2014 Addy Award from ADFED Suncoast**.

Buy Local. Buy Chamber

The next time you are looking for products or services for your home and business... think Chamber. The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce has over 1,550 businesses that provide top quality products and services to our community. Whether you're looking for a Friday night date spot or a new plumber check out what our Chamber Members have to offer. Be sure to check out our Chamber discounts to see what offers you can take advantage of.



Visit www.sarasotachamber.com on your smart phone and search the directory.

Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Receives Florida Association of Chamber Professionals Certification

The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce received its official recognition as a Certified Chamber of Commerce from the Florida Association of Chamber Professionals in early September at the Fall Conference in Panama City. Brittany Lamont, Director of Communications and Events accepted the recognition on behalf of the Chamber. The Certified Chamber of Commerce Program promotes public awareness of the intent of the chamber of commerce brand as a non-profit community development based business membership organization by providing a review process that assures Chambers meet a wide range of generally accepted chamber of commerce organizational benchmarks.

President Steve Queior stated, "Our organizations, strives to serve both its 1,550 member employers and the broader community. Successfully completing this review of our operations, programs, management, and finances is another step in our plan for continuous quality improvement."





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SO, YOU'RE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CHAMBER

A membership with The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce is a sound business decision that offers countless opportunities for success.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Over 100 Annual Opportunities to Connect

The Chamber hosts over 100 networking and educational events annually, offering you the chance to connect with key business leaders and potential customers in your community.

BUILD YOUR VISIBILITY

Get Your Name in Front of Potential Clients

80% of consumers surveyed felt more confident doing business with a Chamber member. Sometimes the biggest challenge a business has is just getting the word out about what they do.

BUILD YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Save Money on Products and Services

Receive discounts and value-added services that can save your company money. Plus, our referral line tracks the number of referrals your business is generating with your membership.

BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Workshops, Seminars and Resources to Grow Your Business

Access to some of the best programming and educational opportunities in town. Notable speakers and presenters cover topics that are both timely and relevant to managing your business.

BUILD OUR ECONOMY

Your Voice For Business and Prosperity

The Chamber works diligently to build relationships with the decision-makers who can help our community grow and to support projects to create jobs.

MEMBER STATS FROM THIS YEAR

\$434,623,584

Investment in the Community by Members

12,211 Participants at Chamber Events

1,560 Number of Chamber Member Organizations

1034 Number of Neighbors Hired by 68 Members

390 Number of Employers that Joined the Chamber Last Year.

353 Total Number of Active Volunteers

110 Total Number of Networking Opportunities

87 New Businesses and Facilities Welcomed

Recognizing our 2014 Chamber Partners

We would like to offer a special thank you to our Chamber Partners for their dedicated service to both Chamber members and staff this year. We rely on our Partners to not only welcome and orient new members, but to act as an extension of our Chamber staff out in the community. In 2014, our 42 Partners met with 390 new members, attended 110 events and logged hundreds of volunteer hours. It is this dedication that allows us to better serve our membership and we are grateful for each and every one of them.

For information on membership please contact Oma McCall or Matt Gower at 941-955-8187.



Key Chorale's 30th Anniversary Season
**CELEBRATING THE PAST -
 ENDOWING THE FUTURE**

Sarasota Choral Festival Concert & Documentary Screening "Shining Night: A Portrait of Composer Morten Lauridsen" Saturday, October 18, 2014, 7:00 pm at Church of the Palms, Sarasota This New Adult Choral Festival is open to all singers without audition and is part of Key Chorale's educational outreach program, "Tomorrow's Voices Today".

"The Courts of Heaven and Earth" - Key Chorale, Chamber Chorus, orchestra and soprano, Mary Wilson Saturday, January 24, 2015, 2:30 pm at First Church, Sarasota Music will be performed from the times of Courts and Kings including two Coronation anthems composed by George Frederick Handel.

"Tomorrow's Voices Today" - North Port, Pine View and Venice High School Choirs perform with Key Chorale Saturday, March 21, 2015, 2:30 pm at North Port Performing Arts Center Following last year's success, each school will perform independently and will join Key Chorale in a festival chorus that will be led by Joseph Caulkins. This concert showcases three exceptional South County high school choirs.

"Mozart: 1791" - The final works of Mozart with guest soloist, Bharat Chandra Saturday, April 18, 2015, 2:30 pm at First Church, Sarasota Key Chorale welcomes guest soloist, Bharat Chandra, to perform Mozart's beloved clarinet concerto, featuring the men of the Chorale in Mozart's final composition.

Tickets and Information: www.keychorale.org

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LEADERSHIP SARASOTA 2014

The Chamber's Leadership Sarasota Council oversees the adult leadership program, the youth leadership program, Engage Sarasota and the alumni program. Thirty six adults graduated with the class of 2014. As part of their leadership experience, the class selected the Boys and Girls Club as their class project. They had a canopy constructed within the outdoor area, planted a vegetable garden and, with the assistance of the boys and girls of the club, created a mural on the building. The goal of each class is to leave their legacy on the community.

Sixteen high school juniors graduated with the youth class of 2014. Additionally two students from the 2013 class were awarded scholarships to assist in their post high school education. Streamed through Leadership Sarasota, the scholarships were provided by the Buchanan Family Foundation at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

"Engage Sarasota" had thirty five registered participants who learned about the nuts and bolts of Sarasota County by attending a lunch once a month. Originally geared to new residents, this program has become increasingly popular for anyone wishing to stay in the loop of the community. One way Alumni stay involved with the leadership program is by celebrating their peers who have demonstrated outstanding leadership within the program and the community. The April 2014 celebration also recognized Sun Hydraulics as the corporate honoree. A popular annual event is the Sarasota-Manatee Exchange. Trading places for a day provides an overview of Manatee County to Sarasota alumni and an overview of Sarasota County to Manatee alumni. And, most importantly, alumni stay involved in the programs, and strive to improve the leadership experience for their followers.

What's in the future? YEA! (Young Entrepreneurs Academy) will enter the Leadership Circle. Geared for ages 11-18, students will have the opportunity to learn about creating their own businesses. It's all about creating a job, not finding a job. This program is coming to us from the Rochester, New York and has been highly successful in over 100 other regions of the United States. The Leadership Class of 2015 will be the 30th graduating class. An event is being planned for September 2015 to celebrate this milestone.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP 2014

The Sarasota Young Professionals Group, a program of The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, concluded its 2013-14 fiscal year with major achievements, record growth and optimistic plans for the future. The group increased membership, donated over 1,200 volunteer hours, attracted sold-out event attendance and put on never before seen activities for the members and community as a whole. The organization hosted a first-of-its-kind conference for local students, which featured CEOs and executives from notable companies in Sarasota County. The event included seven industry tracks for students to choose from and provided a wealth of knowledge for all attendees. The conference is scheduled to occur again in February, 2015.

Other new and unique events included a TEDx event on the Palm Avenue Garage, which was open to the public, revitalizing previously defunct Food & Wine events and hosting networking opportunities and Icebreaker events for new members. In addition, the organization established a new annual community event. In 2013, the event was a block party in celebration of YPG's 10th anniversary. This year it's called Rock-for-a-Cause and developed into a charitable music festival in the heart of downtown Sarasota. Community initiatives involved volunteering at local organizations to provide a total of 1,253 volunteer hours over the last year. YPG also hosted networking opportunities for local college students from Ringling College of Art and Design and New College, and maintained a relationship with Community Youth Development (CYD) students in order to provide networking and mentorship to the students. The organization held item drives (ie. food/clothing/school supplies) for local organizations.

Looking forward, the YPG has a vested interest in engaging with our local youth and putting education at the top of the priority list. With October's "Rock for a Cause" donating funds to a local art and music department, the 2nd Annual State of Jobs Conference awarding scholarships to local high school students, continued mentorship with the CYD Star students, and the development of an intercollegiate YPG University, the organization is primed to leave its stamp on the growth of our community.





RECOGNIZING THE 2013-14 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our 2013-14 board guided the Chamber through a tremendous growth year. We recognize three directors whose contributions this year went above and beyond for the good of the Chamber.



Lisa Krouse is Executive Vice President of the FCCI Insurance Group and a stellar Board member of your Chamber. She organized and led a Talent Management Task Force that completed a talent management audit and strategic development plan for the professional staff of the Chamber. Lisa has been a member of the Chamber Development Division, is the chair of the organization's Board Governance and Human Resource Committee, and has been Chair of the Professional Development Division of the Chamber (over the Young Professionals Group, Chamber Leadership programs, and the Talent Development Council). As a Divisional Chair, Lisa served on the Executive Committee of the Board; she recently assumed the position of Chair-Elect of the Board.



Richard "Dick" Webb is a shareholder in the Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen & Ginsburg law firm. His exemplary Chamber involvement includes being on the Board of Directors, and serving on the Board's Executive Committee by virtue of being the Chamber's legal counsel. Further, Dick has been on the Sarasota Tomorrow | NEXT Oversight Committee, the Chamber Development Division, and the Board Governance and Human Resource Committee. Finally, he chairs the Chamber Audit Committee, which functions separately and independently from the GSCC Finance Committee and reports directly to the Chamber Board.



Beth Ebersole is a CPA and is the tax partner in charge at the firm of Kerkerling Barberio & Co. and has done an outstanding job as Chair of our Finance Committee. Holding that important position places Beth on the Board and its Executive Committee. With help from committed and very knowledgeable volunteers on the Finance Committee, Beth has led improvements to the quality and transparency of the Chamber's finances as the organization's fiscal position has gotten better and better following the Great Recession.

Thanks to all the Chamber's over 300 volunteers for all they do!

And, there are a number of Chamber Directors who are always there. Scoring the highest marks for attendance at Board meetings are the following busy business and community leaders who had a perfect attendance record for the past year's Board meetings:

Joe Barbetta, Larry Face, Chris Gallagher, Nick Gladding and George McGonagill



SARASOTA TOMORROW | NEXT SUCCESSES

Keep
Sarasota County
Schools
At The Top!



School Referendum

On March 25th, 2014, the citizens of Sarasota County were asked to continue supporting an additional ad valorem millage of 1.00 mill per year with a ballot initiative continuing support for local schools. This funding, which has been in place since 2002, has successfully helped to ensure that Sarasota County Schools continue to be ranked among the top 5 public school districts in the state of Florida, of which there are 67. Referendum dollars have been critical in retaining top quality faculty members, adding an additional 30 minutes of education per day, supporting art, drama and music programs, and supporting technology and media in the schools.

The Chamber's Sarasota Tomorrow NEXT program provided extensive support for this ballot initiative in the form of thousands of dollars of cash and in-kind media support, numerous articles/columns, public speaking engagements, and active external fundraising. The school funding referendum for educational excellence was overwhelmingly approved by nearly 77% of ballots cast.

Talent4Tomorrow Takes Off

Because developing new quality workers for Chamber members and creating good jobs for our children and neighbors is so important the Chamber's Sarasota Tomorrow Next program has a key focus on improving educational and workforce development outcomes. In the past year, the Talent4Tomorrow (T4T) Partnership was created to bring employers, educational leaders and other key players together to focus on the following mission: "To build a competitive workforce prepared to lead our 21st century marketplace," and the goal "To create a career pathways system that will provide inspiration, encouragement and support for students to consider, prepare for, enter and develop STEM-related jobs locally." Based on the coalition's baseline research they found that our students would benefit from better career awareness and career exploration resources. T4T has started to expand these "career pathway" programs in the manufacturing sector and will support parallel efforts to expose young people to local careers in computer science, health care, construction, and to the career of being an entrepreneur.

Making the 2050 Plan Workable

In 1996, Sarasota County adopted a policy stating that "a plan shall be prepared for the area east of I-75...relative to projected demand to the year 2050." The outcome of this policy (i.e., the plan) would become known as Sarasota 2050. The plan, finalized in 2002 and adopted in 2004, has been met with relatively minimal success as barriers to participation have served as a severe hindrance.

Sarasota 2050 has undergone a multi-year, multi-phase, review process determined at optimizing the plan in way that would preserve the vital tenets while addressing policy and procedure issues that have served as a detriment. The revisions to the 2050 plan will reduce regional sprawl, strengthen our tax base, protect green space, and create thousands of jobs.

The Chamber's Sarasota Tomorrow Next initiative has been involved in all phases of the multi-year review process and has endorsed and been an strong advocate for the proposed changes to the comprehensive plan.



SARASOTA TOMORROW | NEXT FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN SARASOTA



Momentum Accelerates in Downtown

Economic development activity is thriving in Sarasota. The city continues to see a steady increase in the number of building permits issued each year since 2010. 29,405 building permits have been issued since then, including 6,873 in 2014 as of September 9th. This year's building permit activity is up up 8.7% or 554 permits over last year. The city has also seen a 176% increase in construction values over last year. \$127,602,000 was expended for projects in

2013 and as of Sept. 9 2014, \$352,374,000 was registered to be spent on construction for residential, hotel and commercial projects. Projects such as the Vue, One Palm Avenue, the Jewel condominiums, the State Street garage and other projects in the pipeline are generating enormous benefits for the city: short term construction jobs and long term permanent ones; taxes that help to provide city services to residents and funding for our schools; additional demand for retail; and a whole lot more.

\$352,374,000

Expended for projects through 9/9/2014

29,405

Total building permits issued since 2010.

8.7%

Percentage up this year from last year.

Downtown Economic Development

The City, in a unique partnership with the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce and the City's Downtown Improvement District, pooled resources to hire a Downtown Economic Development Coordinator (DEDC).

Norm Gollub, hired as the DEDC, has been intimately involved with the recruitment, retention, and expansion of area businesses. Norm is consistently tasked with sitting on committees for the review and negotiation of new proposals in the downtown area including, but not limited to, the State Street Garage and Rosemary Square projects. The City of Sarasota, and the greater Sarasota area, is uniquely poised to strengthen its positioning because of the efforts undertaken by the DEDC. Those efforts wouldn't have been made possible without a collaborative partnership between the City, the Chamber and the DID.

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