

# Making the Most of Your Chamber Membership

Below is a list of services we offer to bring about each of the impacts we strive to have on your business. Look for the "WYNTD:" ("What You Need To Do") section under each to find out "what you need to do" to take advantage of each.

## IMPACT 1: Increase Revenues of Local Businesses Through Promotion via...

- Chamber Website Serving as a hub for visitors, residents, members, and prospective new residents and businesses, it features an overall business directory as well as certain specialty subsets such as a restaurant guide, a hotel guide, and a shopping guide. This is an excellent way to promote any type of retail business to visitors and residents alike.
  - **WYNTD:** Check over your listing to make sure we have all of your information correct (including how you're categorized).
- Specials and Promotions Facebook Page and Email Blast Section We use our popular Facebook page and our weekly email blast (which as of April 2015 have nearly 720 followers and 781 subscribers, respectively) to feature specials and promotions from our members. We can even schedule a series of promotions over multiple days on our Facebook page (as we did for many members as part of our Shop Local for the Holidays campaign see Buy Local Campaign below).
  - **WYNTD:** Email us your special offer or promotion anytime and we'll get it on Facebook within a day and in our newsletter within a week.
- Buy Local Campaign As mentioned above, we launched a full "Shop Local for the Holidays" campaign via our Facebook page through which our members were able to promote daily, weekly, or seasonal specials (as well as special hours). In the future, we're considering an even more ambitious campaign that might include branded "Shop Local" decals for participating stores and a coordinated community-wide contest where customers who shop at any of the participating stores are able to enter drawings to win prizes.
  - **WYNTD:** Send us your promotions year-round and let us know you're interested in seeing the more advanced form mentioned above.
- Phillips County Visitor & Relocation Guide This comprehensive go-to fulfillment piece for any visitor or new resident serves as a selling tool to new residents, visitors, but also to existing residents, many of whom are unaware of what's available. We print and distribute 5,000 copies (including in all area hotels) and also make it available online at <a href="http://vrguide.phillipscountychamber.org">http://vrguide.phillipscountychamber.org</a>.
  - WYNTD: You'll automatically be in the business directory at the back, so as long as you keep your information up to date with us, you're good. However, if you're business has a special appeal to visitors or prospective residents, let us know and we'll try to work you into the content of the guide itself. Chamber Members also have the exclusive right to purchase advertising in the guide. If you're interested in advertising, simply respond to the invitation to do so.
- Teacher Perks Each year, we distribute Phillips County Teacher Perks cards to every single public school teacher in Phillips County. The cards entitle the teachers to discounts at local businesses. The program is a win for all involved: As a business, you get to promote yourself to one of the area's largest moderate-income demographics, while giving local school districts a benefit that can help them recruit and retain top quality educators.
  - **WYNTD:** Complete this simple online form anytime and your business and its special offer will be listed among those of other participating businesses: <a href="http://sgiz.mobi/s3/PC-Teacher-Perks">http://sgiz.mobi/s3/PC-Teacher-Perks</a>.
- Welcome Baskets / Bags The Chamber's outstanding volunteer Welcome Team distributes beautiful "Welcome Baskets" to all new residents. These include any promotional item that Chamber Members provide at no charge, so it's a perfect way to introduce your business to new residents who are trying to find a new bank, doctor, hair salon, favorite restaurant, and so on.
  - WYNTD: Just bring us your information, coupons, or giveaways at any time and they'll go in every subsequent basket we distribute.

- **Special Events** The Chamber will help you plan and promote your special event (e.g. Ribbon Cutting, Open House, Business After Hours) via newspaper and its email list with over 750 subscribers.
  - WYNTD: Just schedule a meeting with us to discuss your idea.
- **Preferred Referrals** The Chamber receives countless inbound inquiries each year from people both inside and outside of the county many of whom are seeking recommendations for local service providers. We always recommend Chamber Members first. The Chamber also strives to do business with Chamber Members exclusively, whenever possible.
  - WYNTD: Make sure we're crystal clear on what your business offers so we can refer people to you (or patronize you ourselves).

#### **IMPACT 2: Increase Access to Capital / Credit**

- Special Lending & Grants Program In 2011, we helped recruit the country's largest microlender to expand into our area. We also keep abreast of a number of special lending and grant programs to help businesses.
  - **WYNTD:** Contact us to schedule a meeting to share with us your situation and we'll provide you with recommendations to all of the appropriate institutions and programs.
- Local Venture Capital Group We have organized a private venture capital group that will entertain presentations from entrepreneurs (either for start-ups or to expand an existing business) that will consider investment in companies in return for equity, a portion of profits, or some other arrangement.
  - **WYNTD:** Let us know if you have an idea you want to put in front of the venture capital group.
- **Helena Job Incentives (HJI) Program** In partnership with Southern Bancorp Community Partners, we helped secure a \$1.9 million HUD Rural Innovation Fund grant, part of which was allocated for job creation incentives (\$2,500-\$7,500/job) ends August 2015.
  - **WYNTD:** Contact Brooke Gerber at 870-816-1115 or brooke.gerber@southernpartners.org for more information.

#### **IMPACT 3: Lower the Cost of Doing Business**

- Volume Discount / Pooling We are here to help you achieve economies of scale when it comes to the purchase of advertising, services, or supplies, once we know which (if any) of these you're interested in.
  - **WYNTD:** Let us know what types of expenditures you're interested in "pooling" with other members to get a volume discount on and we'll see if there's enough interest to pool our collective purchasing power.
- Thrive Design Services Discount We have an arrangement with Thrive through which Chamber Members receive a 10% discount on their first project and are able to lock in last year's prices throughout the current year.
  - **WYNTD:** Contact Thrive at (870) 338-3800 to learn more about their services or visit their website at <a href="www.thrivecenter.org">www.thrivecenter.org</a>.

# **IMPACT 4: Improve Quality of Customer Experience**

- Customer Service Training Workshops These workshops (offered regularly and at nocost to any and all of your employees) introduce frontline employees to the basics of providing great customer service and get your business into the Welcome to Arkansas program.
  - **WYNTD:** Read our monthly e-Newsletter to find out when the next one is and sign up as many of your employees as you can. Need one sooner? Just let us know. So long as we have enough participants, we arrange to do one at any time.
- Community-wide "Comment Box" The Chamber has created a community-wide "Comment Box" through which any consumer can share feedback positive or negative about a customer service experience they had. The feedback is shared privately with businesses, so that positives are recognized and reinforced and negatives are remedied.
  - **WYNTD:** Be prepared to receive the feedback (no action required).

## **IMPACT 5: Improve Quality of Available Workforce**

- Online Jobs Board We have an online jobs board on which Chamber Members are able to
  post job openings at no cost. We will also include your listings in our weekly newsletter that
  goes out to over 750 residents.
  - **WYNTD:** Email us your job openings and we'll promote them.
- Leadership Development course at PCCUA We helped create a low-cost, high-quality course at PCCUA designed to help emerging leaders develop the key skills and mindsets necessary to assume a leadership role for the first time. For businesses, this can be an ideal "training program" to help transition that promising front-line / entry-level person to their first leadership role, whether that be as a project manager or a manager of other employees.
  - **WYNTD:** Sign up yourself or the appropriate folks in your organization for class (offered each Fall Semester).
- Arkansas Scholars Program This program is designed to increase graduation rates and
  instill vital job readiness skills and attitudes in our future workforce, including work ethic,
  punctuality, and consistency. It also serves as a screening tool for employers interested in
  hiring applicants with a proven work ethic.
  - WYNTD: Contact us to join the list of businesses that give consideration to Arkansas Scholars in the hiring process or if you'd like to help us in the various recognition events we hold for students in the Arkansas Scholars programs. It's a great way to promote your business as an excellent corporate citizen.

# **IMPACT 6: Ensure Maximal Effectiveness of Local Businesses**

- Monthly Business e-Newsletter One of our most popular offerings, we spend countless hours to get you information that will save you time and money. We scan local, regional, and national news for important things you need to know (e.g. changes in law or regulation, trends sweeping one or more industries), money saving tips, or information that will give you a great idea about a new direction for your business. We also want to make sure you're kept in the loop about the most important upcoming events and opportunities and are thus able to take full advantage of what the Chamber has to offer.
  - WYNTD: Make sure you're receiving it and reading it each month. If you're not receiving these, please let us know right away. Also, check out our full archive at <a href="http://newsletters.phillipscountychamber.org">http://newsletters.phillipscountychamber.org</a>.
- Assistance to Struggling Businesses We are committed to doing whatever it takes to help any member be successful.
  - **WYNTD:** Tell us as early as possible when you're struggling (ideally long before it becomes an emergency). You'd be surprised by the many ways in which we can help.

#### Business Services

- <u>Copy and Print Services</u> As our community currently does not have a walk-in "copy shop," Chamber Members are able to utilize the Chamber photocopy machine during business hours to make black-and-white copies and color copies at a rate competitive with or well-below that of FedEx Office (formerly Kinko's).
  - WYNTD: Drop by anytime during business hours (though we recommend you call ahead to make sure we're not at a special event) and make your copies. You can pay by check or credit.
- <u>Board Room Rental</u> You can rent the Chamber Board Room for up to three hours for only \$20.00 (non-members pay \$50.00).
  - **WYNTD:** Call during business hours to arrange rental or learn more online at <a href="http://boardroom.phillipscountychamber.org">http://boardroom.phillipscountychamber.org</a>.
- Workshops & Seminars The Chamber typically offers 6-10 of these per year, all of which are free to Chamber Members and their employees. Spanning everything from "creating your own webpage" to "navigating the new healthcare landscape," they are very popular with members. Check out this list of all of our past workshops: <a href="http://workshops.phillipscountychamber.org">http://workshops.phillipscountychamber.org</a>.
  - WYNTD: Read our newsletters to find out about upcoming workshops and attend as many as you can. Also, make sure to tell us what topics you'd like to see covered in upcoming workshops.

- Special Assistance and Coaching This is typically one-on-one specialized assistance in whatever area you need assistance. Some past examples include helping find a business partner for a new business venture; helping design, promote, and run a jobs fair for a member; acquiring and learning to use financial software such as QuickBooks; helping fill a job vacancy (i.e. find prospects to hire), connecting someone to a mentor / counselor in their particular sector (e.g. restaurant expert if you run a restaurant).
  - WYNTD: Just let us know what you need help with and we'll do whatever we can to help. You'd be surprised what we can do!
- Connect Members to Resources The Chamber constantly receives information about all kinds of ideas, opportunities, and programs that might be applicable to a subset of our members in a given industry or sector (e.g. manufacturers, retailers, non-profits). Whenever we do find something we think might be interesting or helpful, we forward it on to all of our members in that particular industry or sector.
  - **WYNTD:** Nothing. However, the better we understand your business, the better we'll be at discerning what you might be interested in.

#### **IMPACT 7: Connect More Quickly to the True Priorities / Needs of Members**

- Site Visits / Executive Interviews We make about 40 site visits per year and have in-depth conversations with our members to learn more about their business and how we could assist them.
  - WYNTD: We can't get to everyone quickly, but if you're interested in having us visit with you to understand your business and how best we can help, just let us know and we'll schedule a visit very soon.

# **Other Services & Benefits**

- Opportunity to Network with Other Business Leaders
  - WYNTD: Read the monthly Business e-Newsletter to learn about these opportunities and just show up with business cards and be prepared to meet (or re-connect) with fellow business leaders.
- Access & Influence Over Chamber's Direction As a Chamber Member, you get to nominate and elect our Board Members, have access to our financial records, attend our meetings, serve on our committees, and get early access to special events such as our popular annual banquet.
  - **WYNTD:** Just read our monthly e-Newsletter and other communications to stay informed. Then contact us to take advantages of these opportunities as you see fit.