



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Occasionally we hear from a Chamber member who is considering dropping their membership because they don't see the value in being a member of the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce. I recently had such an email and I thought I would share with you my reply:

Dear Chamber member,

First of all, I would like to thank you for your reply to my email. Too often, we have a member drop and are never really sure why they dropped.

Secondly, I want to apologize. We obviously have done a poor job of conveying what the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce is all about. While it is true that we do promote tourism as Genesee County's designated Tourism Promotion Agency, it is just the tip of the iceberg of what we do at the Chamber.

I have often said that one of the toughest questions for me to answer is "what does the Chamber do?" It's not that I don't know the answer; it's just that the Chamber's activities are so varied and diverse that it is difficult to summarize all that we do in a short answer.

I have attached a list of all the services and benefits that the Chamber offers. As you can see, we have a lot going on. We offer small business loans to start-up businesses that might be too risky for a bank or credit union to take on. We also give small business counseling and help with creating a business plan for these start-up businesses (and established businesses as well!). We hold monthly workshops – free for Chamber members – on business topics ranging from Year-End Tax Tips for Small Businesses to Identifying Drugs in the Workplace to Social Media Marketing to Public Speaking Tips.

Networking is a big part of what we do at the Chamber. Events like our Business After Hours, our Golf Outing, our Annual Awards Night, our Celebrate Agriculture Dinner, our Annual Meeting luncheon and even our Business Workshops are designed to connect business people in our community with the hope of stimulating more business-to-business sales. We also connect businesses through our annual Business Directory (a real "Who's Who in Genesee County business"), the Daily News Chamber page, Main & Center interviews on WBTA, our Chamber Online newsletter, member E-blasts and Facebook posts. We even have a business card rack in our lobby where any member can post their business cards.

We also work on Public Policy advocacy on behalf of the business community not only on a local level but also in Albany through our membership in The Business Council of New York. The recent cuts in Workers Comp cost was championed by The Business Council. Last year we supported Frost Ridge Campgrounds in their efforts to keep their concert series at the campgrounds. These are just a couple of examples of how the Chamber supports business friendly legislation.

We also offer a number of member discounts that may not be available anywhere else for a lot of small businesses such as gas, electric and most recently Constant Contact Email Marketing. We also a member to member discount program that offers savings not only to all Chamber businesses but to all of their employees as well – a nice benefit to pass along to your employees at no cost to your business.

While the attached services and benefits list does a good job and summarizing what we do, there are other unexpected things that we do that come up within the course of a week. Just last month we facilitated a meeting between a local business and the Rochester Transit Service in an effort to come up with a solution for a bus route that would get employees to their place of business.

I think what the Chamber does is best summed up in our mission statement – “the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce’s mission is to lead in the pursuit of creating an environment for business success which will enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Genesee County”.

Thank you for listening to my long-winded reply to your email, Kristen. I hope you will reconsider dropping your Chamber membership. There is strength in numbers when it comes to many Chamber initiatives and we need your support.

*Sincerely,
Tom*

I think this reply does a pretty good job of summing up the value of a membership in the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce

Have a great month!

*Sincerely,
Tom Turnbull
President*