



Here's an interesting question: of the almost 400 Members in the Chamber, how many do you think you've done business with personally or professionally? For the Chamber, it added up to almost 80 Members in just the last year. It might be similar for you too.

There's an interesting paradox in running a business. There is no escaping the fact that every company or organization is responsible for their own growth and livelihood: it takes investment, effort and responsibility to achieve goals and generate success, for a person or a business. It's consistent with a long strain of thought in America about self-reliance: we are all "rugged individualists" who go it alone and choose our own self-determined paths.

Some of the language and metaphors we use emphasize these important ideas of independence and personal responsibility. Think of the Horatio Alger "rags to riches" stories; the concept of the "self-made man or woman"; pulling yourself up by your bootstraps (to the extent boots still have straps); or even the classic Western imagery of a lone cowboy riding off into the sunset of the American frontier. We are individuals solely responsible for our own destinies.

And yet, the old John Donne line of "No man is an island" comes to mind as well. We all play our specific part in a vast interconnected network. Whether we are aware of it or not, we rely on so many other people everyday: infrastructure providers, vendors, service providers, colleagues, customers, government officials, public safety officers, etc.



not to mention family, friends, neighbors, teachers – the list goes on and on.

In the world of technology, an array of computer servers in a linked network is infinitely stronger than just one isolated solution; if one part of the network fails, the rest of the network can continue to run, keeping the entire system working. Likewise, in our personal and professional lives it truly takes a village to keep everything running smoothly. When the furnace goes out in the Winter, or our car doesn't start for some reason, or we need assistance to keep our business moving forward, it's comforting to know that an expert who can help us is a phone call away.

In the Chamber, there are hundreds of members who are more than happy to help one another by providing excellent products and services to fellow members – please give them an opportunity to help your business whenever you can, which in turn helps them be more successful. While each business and organization in the Chamber is unique, we are all in this together in many ways too, and we will achieve far more by working together and supporting each other than we ever could working only on our own.