



Business Plan 2012-2017



ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE: Grow and sustain leadership, resources, membership & value in order to carry out The Chamber's mission.

Objective:

Mobilize the Board of Directors to become more engaged in the development & support of The Chamber's membership.

Strategies:

- Be strategic & intentional about division and committee assignments of board members based on their aptitude & interests.
- Hold Board members accountable for attendance at meetings.
- Strongly encourage attendance at events, especially those events identified as "key" to The Chamber's overall success.
- Require training prior to becoming a board member & provide ongoing training for existing board members.
- When selecting board members, give preference to those members with prior Chamber involvement and/or involvement in the community.
- Develop and implement adopted board and member mentoring initiatives.
- Implement an annual self-analysis of Board effectiveness.

Objective:

Develop & implement initiatives to expand and retain The Chamber's membership and its financial resources.

Strategies:

- Maintain aggressive marketing and advertising to expand membership base, increase retention, enhance visibility and expand public awareness of the Chamber.
- Sustain membership recruitment year-round by meeting an annual goal utilizing staff, volunteers and Ambassadors.
- Implement new tier membership fee structure.
- Sustain & grow annual Chamber Champions resource campaign to meet or exceed annual goal.
- Maintain an acceptable retention level of existing members.
- Expand website revenues.
- Identify various events to sponsor that can generate revenue for The Chamber (ie. Street Faire, etc.)

Objective:

Provide value to The Chamber's membership base, encouraging each member's participation in The Chamber.

Strategies:

- Sustain consistent member communications through utilization of technology and online capabilities in order to communicate the value of The Chamber's goals & results.
- Implement quarterly member-feedback system to monitor needs, results and interests of members.
- Sustain active Ambassadors program with emphasis on personal membership contacts, networking, mentoring and effective member relations.
- Hold scheduled networking and membership activities that provide a quality, enjoyable environment for

fellowship, membership relations and expanded participation, including regular membership orientations.

- Promote involvement of each member's employees in all Chamber-member firms and organizations.
- Sustain development, promotion and expansion of The Chamber's website as a value-added tool and essential benefit for Chamber members as well as the community.
- Show the value of membership through the tiered fee structure.

Objective:

Maintain & provide resources for The Chamber's staff in order to allow them to guide The Chamber in accomplishing its mission.

Strategies:

- Maintain level of staff necessary to adequately execute The Chamber's strategic plan.
- Provide opportunities for professional development of staff.
- Assure that The Chamber has appropriate facilities and other functional resources needed to operate in an efficient and productive manner and to carry out the organization's mission and adopted strategies.
- Provide a competitive level of compensation and benefits to assure that The Chamber maintains a high caliber staff.
- Provide training to Staff, Ambassadors and Directors.

TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS

PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE: To embrace emerging trends in communications and technology and to seek improvements in effectiveness and efficiency, always promoting The Chamber and its members.

Objective:

Constantly promote The Chamber, its benefits and initiatives to members and the business community.

Strategies:

- Implement and maintain a targeted advertising campaign to promote and market The Chamber.
- Continue frequent and consistent communications with members to maintain productive relationships, customer loyalty and support.
- Produce annual printed community resource guide or membership directory along with online digital versions of directory.
- Produce and maintain current community map that generates revenue through advertisements.
- Maintain timely annual report to the members, including online and printed magazine targeting 500 businesses.

Objective:

Further enhance and expand member communications through "cutting edge" technology.

Strategies:

- Assess and utilize social networking style of meeting notifications like Evite and/or web-based reminder methods like 'outlook meeting reminders.'

- Apply web-based social networking technologies, such as Facebook, Shareware, blog to allow open discussion of issues and events.
- Explore the capability and effectiveness of communicating to members via text messaging and Twitter.

Objective:

Establish and maintain relevant, timely, “cutting-edge” Chamber website.

Strategies:

- Add video streaming to enhance and promote site, events and activities.
- Develop and add online magazine format to the website.
- Consider online training, video-based programs and Webinars.
- Explore partnerships with California State University Stanislaus and/or Modesto Junior College to provide a virtual map and virtual tours on the website.
- Develop and execute plan for enhancing revenues for the website.

Objective:

Expand and enhance member participation in surveys to maintain member input.

Strategies:

- Provide email and online surveys, on-site surveying at events, issues polling and other technology-based methods for member input, coupled with incentives for participation.

Objective:

Identify use of smaller, special interest groups & networks.

Strategies:

- Facilitate smaller events consisting of groups with special interests for networking and exchange of ideas. This may include working with the Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Board and the Hatch Road Corridor Business Improvement District.
- Facilitate online communications for specific identified Chamber leadership groups, such as governmental and legislative affairs, economic indicators, trend and ongoing issues.

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE: To initiate, promote, market and sustain area economic development opportunities that will contribute to an expanded economy, job development, enhanced support for existing firms, and a positive environment for prosperous business investment.

Objective:

Develop and implement a sustainable marketing and image-building initiative to promote the community as a destination for economic investment, retail, residential growth, cultural experiences and livability.

Strategies:

- Establish and engage the public and private sectors to provide cohesive, cooperative and coordinated marketing initiatives for Ceres and the surrounding areas.
- Lead in the creation of a community-wide brand that informs prospects and the community as to “who we are” and “where we are going”.
- Develop and implement multi-year marketing plan that includes a community and/or regional identity, public relations component and advertising program that expands awareness as a quality business and career destination and that attracts investment and employment to the city.
- Secure sustainable, long-term funding for a community-wide, coordinated and cohesive economic development and marketing initiative.
- Advocate and lead development of a unified, cooperative and coordinated retail and commercial marketing and recruitment initiative among the public and private sectors.

Objective:

Expand economic development through ongoing analysis of current economic conditions, identifying trends, strengths and challenges, and seeking out opportunities that stakeholders can capitalize upon to facilitate economic growth in the city.

Strategies:

- Expand economic development through inter-dependent partnerships with all economic development organizations serving the Ceres area to insure and sustain a unified, cohesive, seamless delivery of information and support services.
- Expand and sustain The Chamber’s website and technology as a viable source of reliable economic, community and demographic information for business prospects, existing firms, commercial, retail and residential development.
- Identify and aggressively pursue policies and procedures within local, state, and federal government which advocate economic development and business growth, including comprehensive zoning, design and development standards, and tax incentives.
- Expand information exchange and coordination between and among California State University Stanislaus and Modesto Junior College to enhance recruitment, livability and business development in the community.

Objective: Foster a nurturing business environment that will lead to the retention and growth of business and entrepreneurial development in the city of Ceres and surrounding area.

Strategies:

- Encourage innovation, entrepreneurial development and growth through small business programs, networking and training opportunities.
- Work to enhance application of technology in area firms and the community and provide member support services through programs, technology and business training, and events.
- Manage and maintain the physical and online “one stop” business resource center as a viable source for small business services and information through technology as well as a center for counseling and support.
- Sustain and encourage utilization of the Alliance for small business counseling and support services.
- Encourage appropriate regional public and private sector organizations in the development of wireless and broadband technology and infrastructure to enhance economic development opportunities and livability.
- Coordinate and encourage programs which enhance the awareness and growth opportunities of business such as ‘entrepreneurs of the year’, women in business and others.

- Encourage school district to implement classes, programs or workshops that teach entrepreneurship skills to high school students.
- Encourage “member to member” buying and “shopping at home” to enhance the vitality and viability of the area economy.

Objective:

Provide a strategic and coordinated leadership team to review, monitor and address economic trends and identify needs in the community and to facilitate applicable strategies, policies and actions in the public and private sectors

Strategies:

- Provide relevant, current and accurate economic analysis and information for the public and private sectors for planning purposes as well as to keep businesses aware of trends, assets and opportunities in the local marketplace.
- Provide appropriate communications strategies that contribute to enhancing and sustaining consumer confidence.
- Facilitate and encourage effective, adaptable and applicable public policies that sustain stability and growth in the marketplace.
- Provide opportunities to inspire citizens and stimulate participation, investment and local buying in the Ceres marketplace.
- Advocate and encourage appropriate, timely and effective programming that contributes to training, planning and execution of strategies for area businesses as well as the public sector.
- Communicate and celebrate successes and leverage our assets to maintain and grow a vibrant economic environment for the future.
- Implement and maintain a high level of engaged leadership, collaboration and cooperation among all sectors of Ceres that strategically position the city for future prosperity and livability.
- Implement an economic summit for Ceres, engaging private and public sector leaders.
- Identify, assess and develop regional economic development models and management structures that would contribute to enhanced coordination and cooperation among public and private sector organizations and agencies, and more efficient, cost-effective utilization and application of resources, management and leadership.
- Identify and visit successful regional economic development models thus expanding awareness, creativity and cooperation among the leadership of the public and private sectors.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE: To link business and education leading to sustainable educational excellence and skilled workforce capacity.

Objective:

Sustain advocacy and support for implementation of a comprehensive workforce development system that contributes to meeting the needs of area employers.

Strategies:

- Provide coordination, leadership and accountability for implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated area workforce system model, which is employer-driven, demand-based, and business-led.

- Provide direct leadership and coordination for implementation of a workforce strategic plan, including establishment of full-time management, communication strategies, increased regional coordination and authority, integration of regional workforce programs, and marketing initiatives that support meeting workforce needs for new and existing businesses in Ceres.
- Aggressively support and encourage cooperation for maintaining an effective and coordinated labor clearinghouse among all public and private sector employment agencies and services.
- Provide ongoing assessment of employer needs, consistently providing information on employment and workforce needs, trends and required skills for area educators.
- Continue advocacy for sustainability of a comprehensive, business-led workforce system for Ceres that supports regional and local workforce initiatives and objectives.

Objective:

Provide aggressive leadership, advocacy and coordination that fosters effective business-education partnerships that contribute to excellence in education, career preparation and enrichment for all students.

Strategies:

- Maintain effective management and coordination of adopt-a-school program as a source for connecting business and education with a sustained emphasis on career preparation.
- Actively support, pursue and advocate development and establishment of a regional technical high school for Ceres.
- Develop and execute business-led initiatives that directly contribute to increased graduation rates.
- Develop and establish business-based education benchmarks to gauge educational quality, measure progress in area schools and hold educational systems accountable.
- Sustain support and partnership with Junior Achievement that contributes to enhanced economic literacy.
- Continue advocacy and leadership for improvement of literacy levels in Ceres.
- Engage business in actively pursuing, supporting and developing educational leadership that supports and leads to excellence in education performance and accountability.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE: Foster, enhance and expand the development of the rich human, cultural and natural resources of the community resulting in a more competitive economy and more livable community.

Objective:

Provide leadership development opportunities that stimulate and facilitate volunteer involvement in community issues and needs.

Strategies:

- Establish, coordinate and manage Leadership Ceres.
- Set leadership and volunteer expectations of applicants for Leadership Ceres prior to their approval and acceptance into a class.
- Establish a virtual Leadership Ceres alumni network that contributes to connecting graduates to community volunteer leadership roles.
- Maintain an accurate Leadership Ceres alumni data base.
- Establish and coordinate a Ceres Service Club of the Year, in conjunction with the Citizen of the Year, as recognition of the community's history and civic leadership through all generations.

- Complete recommendation for establishment of a permanent display for the Civic Hall of Fame and implement adopted plan.
- Develop a “new generations” or “young professionals” leadership initiative that provides a forum and network for development and involvement of the community’s young business and professional leaders of the future.

Objective:

Provide advocacy and leadership to leverage the area’s cultural assets into an economic and competitive advantage.

Strategies:

- Establish business-based council on the arts to facilitate coordination and cooperation for implementation of “culture builds” development strategies.
- Maintain annual scorecard to measure and report results and progress of “culture builds.”
- Implement approved “culture builds” strategies that are appropriate for the business community to facilitate and that directly contribute to attracting and retaining quality jobs.
- Provide opportunities to engage public and private sector leadership in visiting and learning from identified “peer communities” that are successfully modeling effective cultural and livability strategies.
- Encourage and actively advocate development of a community art district and/or program.

Objective:

Promote and facilitate development and marketing of the area’s livability to expand and sustain economic vitality and growth.

Strategies:

- Establish and advocate goal of achieving status as one of California’s most livable communities.
- Develop a specific action plan to market and communicate the area’s livability.
- Define ‘livability’ qualities and develop measurable goals and benchmarks to monitor and report annual progress for an established “livability scorecard”.
- Implement marketing and communications strategies, resources, and tools that support and contribute to raising awareness, promoting livability and enhancing image.

Objective:

Promote a physical image and environment that contributes to the community’s livability and economic vitality.

Strategies:

- Provide proactive leadership to encourage public and private sectors to pursue a fresher, cleaner and more attractive physical image, especially community ‘gateways.’
- Implement appropriate actions to hold local governmental entities accountable for a physically attractive metro area.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS

PURPOSE: Represent the interests of members and the overall business community in order to foster and sustain a positive business climate and livable community and to maintain advocacy at all levels of government.

Objective:

Implement and sustain consistent information management system that enhances The Chamber's role in representing and communicating the interests of members and business community that influences public policy.

Strategies:

- Sustain active public affairs council as the primary coordination point for The Chamber's issues management, communications and governmental relations initiatives.
- Apply cutting-edge technology to The Chamber's communications network to keep members consistently informed and to engage business involvement in identified public policy issues, legislation and public sector leadership.
- Maintain regular, consistent communications with elected officials at all levels of government to build productive relationships, to sustain advocacy role for business and The Chamber, and to contribute to accountability.
- Develop and implement initiatives that contribute to an enhanced and improved "business friendly" environment for conducting business with and through local governmental leaders, agencies, and departments.
- Expand and enhance visibility and presence of The Chamber in neighboring communities through regular visits and use of networking with Chamber members..
- Monitor, communicate and address specific tax, business license and fiscal policy issues; and permitting, planning and other appropriate governmental processes for economic development purposes and advocate continuity of policies and ordinances among all public entities.
- Monitor tax policies and incentives related to existing industries, and retail and commercial development and implement appropriate, approved actions that contribute to continuity of policies and ordinances.
- Define and implement process for political candidate development that strengthens the voice, leadership and influence in public and legislative affairs.

Objective:

Implement actions that contribute to assessment and advocacy of long range transportation and infrastructure needs to support expansion of the area's economic base and enhance livability.

Strategies:

- Utilize a business-led transportation and infrastructure task force to evaluate, monitor, and advocate short and long term transportation initiatives that support an expanding regional economic base.
- Actively advocate implementation among all public and private sector "stakeholders" for the development of a common vision and unified voice for Ceres.
- Hold accountable identified public agencies responsible for transportation planning coordination, development and implementation.
- Support long-term development of an improved coordinated and cost-effective water and sewer systems

for Ceres, including recommendations to the City of Ceres.

Objective:

Sustain initiatives that enhance and sustain the environmental quality of Ceres.

Strategies:

- Implement appropriate strategies to avoid designation as an EPA non-attainment area as well as provide overall improvements in environmental quality.
- Sustain proactive coordination of environmental issues through the environmental task force, including monitoring, assessment and other initiatives related to regulatory and public policy environmental issues.
- Implement proactive communication campaign to raise level of business and community awareness about environmental issues and that foster public-private partnerships that contribute to a sustainable quality physical environment for Ceres.
- Support and implement initiatives in partnership with public sectors that address recycling, a clean and litter-free community, and protection and enhancement of Ceres.