

Marshall County Chamber of Commerce

Business Plan

Mission: To promote business, industry, and tourism, enhance economic and community development, and serve as a catalyst for improving the overall quality of life in Marshall County.

Major Objectives

- Work closely with the County and City in an effort to promote Marshall County.
- Revitalize the Chamber's Image and Communication Initiatives.
- Develop focused initiatives on member retention and involvement.

Membership Services

New Member Recruitment and Retention

- Retain 90% of existing membership base.
 - Continue to promote members via web, newsletter, and other promotions.
 - Maintain consistent communications with members on upcoming events and news of interest.
 - Conduct surveys of non-renewing members and utilize feedback to refine recruitment & retention efforts.
- Recruit at least 25 new members to the Chamber of Commerce
 - Have the board members and ambassadors meet with current members and those who have chosen not to renew in an effort to enhance communication and make them aware of what the Chamber is doing.
 - Work with the membership committee to identify those business sectors that are under-represented within the membership.
- Host 2 Prospective Member events annually.

Events & Networking

- Utilize Chamber Ambassadors to gather feedback and promote Chamber activities through member outreach and participation at events.
- Work with JECDB Director to offer networking meetings for prospects and members.
- Conduct at least 1 Power Breakfast with average attendance of 100 members.

- Recruit highly recognizable speakers to address topics of general and/or professional interest to the membership.
 - Recruit at least one paid sponsor per event.
 - Encourage legislative leaders to attend.
- Organize, market, and host a series of seminars of concern to the business membership.
- Conduct the Chamber Annual December Business Meeting & Dinner.
 - Exceed 250 attendees for the extravaganza.
- Host an event to attract and bring to the area people from the surrounding counties and region.

Member Promotion

- Provide on-line promotion opportunities for members via the new Chamber website.
- Track and communicate electronic referrals to the membership.
- Introduce banner advertisements to promote businesses.
- Have the Marshall County Magazine appear as a digital book on the website.
- Add a “marketplace” feature to the website for businesses

Communication & Marketing

- Host an event to bring in people from surrounding areas
- Start a “Shop Local” Campaign and provide door decals to all members
- Continue to enhance the new Chamber website.
- Recruit and promote annual and event specific sponsors for all Chamber programs, and ensure that sponsors receive exposure/promotion prior to, during, and after events.
- Identify additional member advertising opportunities within the Chamber.
- All events will be promoted via the web, e-mail, direct marketing pieces, and in some cases with paid advertising.
- Continue to Produce the Marshall County Magazine and Directory which serves as a tool for recruitment and information for newcomers.
- Introduce video tours of Marshall County and the Chamber via the Chamber website.

Public & Community Affairs

Community Development

Continue volunteer support for the following:

- Leadership Marshall
- Chamber Ambassadors
- Junior Board of Directors

- Ribbon Cuttings
- Coffees or Open Houses
- Lunch and Learns
- Networking Breakfasts
- Setting up as a vendor at festivals

Education & Workforce Initiatives

- Continue to work with the Business Enterprise Resource Office to offer entrepreneurs the chance to learn how to write a business plan and have direct communication to MTSU in the Chamber Office.
- Continue to work with the Three Star Committee to promote tourism.
- Continue to work with the Board of Education to promote the schools and keep them informed of Chamber events.

Emerging Leaders

Create opportunities to identify and link emerging leaders into issues that are central to the Chamber and the business community.

Business Development

Entrepreneur & Small Business Development

- Survey the needs of the small business community to identify critical issues impacting their growth, and develop initiatives to address their needs.
- Maintain and promote the Chamber Training Network partnership with Tennessee Small Business Development Center.
- Host Small Business Lunch & Learns (using a similar format as the Women in Business Series) once per quarter.

Executive Women & Minority Enterprise

- Continue to host the BERO Individual Counseling Sessions.
- Offer seminars throughout the year.

Agribusiness

- Continue to promote the Farmers Market and link them to the Chamber Website.
- Work with the Marshall County Extension Service to identify other potential opportunities to work with and support area farmers.
- Host a agriculture appreciation breakfast or serve as a partner

Existing Industry

- Conduct at least 5 local site visits with area industry and major employers.
- Continue to support the Industrial Development Board.

Business Resource Center

- Refer all prospects of business relocation to JECDB Director Mike Wiles and EDC Director Greg Lowe.
- Distribute statistical data sheets that profile Marshall County.
- Have available “Starting Your Own Business” folders for distribution at the Chamber.
- Track and promote opportunities via the Chamber website.
- Continue to distribute relocation packages for those relocating their business or industry to Marshall County.

Finance & Administration

Finance Committee

Utilize the Chamber Finance Committee to:

- Adopt and adhere to an annual budget.
- Add new and renewed members as Presidential or Deluxe Level Investors
- Seek out partnerships with industry to increase the revenue by a possible \$5,000

Marshall County Chamber of Commerce History:

The Marshall County Chamber of Commerce was organized in the early 1920s as a project of the newly formed Rotary Club. Prior to the organization of the Chamber, the Board of Trade had promoted the retail merchants and industries. The earliest meetings of the Chamber were held on the second story of a building now known as Fountain Square.

One of the first projects of the Chamber was to remove the seven tollgates between Lewisburg and Nashville. The Chamber also promoted the local dairy industry, which boasted its production of Jersey cows as the largest the nation. A local credit bureau was another Chamber project.

In 1952 the Chamber decided to promote and build a recreational facility for the whole community. Preston Hopkins chaired a committee to raise the funds for the Marshall County Recreation Center. Mr. Hopkins made a list of 28 people and asked them to give \$1000.00 each toward the campaign. When this money was raised, others in the community wanted to help with the project. The total cash collection was \$130,000. The facility was built on eighty acres of land donated by the stockholders of a private country club that never materialized. The architect and contractor donated their labor, and materials were purchased at cost. For the next twenty years the Chamber of Commerce maintained the facility which included a large swimming pool, a nine-hole golf course, clubhouse, picnic area, and playground. The Marshall County Recreation Center is now operated and maintained by the City of Lewisburg.

The Lewisburg Industrial Park originated with the Industrial Development Committee of the Chamber. Representatives of this committee worked on the idea and urged the Lewisburg City Council to purchase a large tract of land for the purpose of recruiting industry. In 1963 the City purchased the original land for the industrial park.

For many years the Chamber rented space in various buildings on the Lewisburg Square. In 1975, the Chamber membership voted to purchase a building at the corner of Second Avenue North and Water Street. Proceeds from the annual July Fourth Celebration afforded the renovation and furnishings for the site. The Fourth of July Celebration includes breakfast for Chamber members and their guests in June. Included in the celebration are a Miss Marshall County Pageant, a Little Miss and Mister contest, Baby Pageant, July 4th Parade and Vendors. When the building was renovated, the Chamber rented the back office to the local UGF for many years. Currently, the Chamber rents the back office to WR Community Services.

One of the most successful Chamber events was the Marshall County Industrial Fair held September 19 and 20, 1976, at the Spot Lowe Vocational School. All Marshall County industries were invited to set up displays which showcased their product or service. A kickoff dinner was held prior to the opening of this mini expo. Invited guests included Chamber members, business and industry representatives, and Tennessee Commissioners of Revenue, Agriculture, Conservation, Employment Security, Labor, and Economic and Community Development. Long lines of people filed by the displays at this free, public event.

In 1983 Chamber members Betty Ann Ogilvie and J.B. Floyd, Jr. co-chaired the Vision Project for Tennessee Homecoming '86. With the help of Chamber members, industries, retail merchants, and a caring community, a twenty-four hour daycare center for working mothers was built on property donated by G.E. Childress on Fox Lane. The facility is known as Wee Care and is governed by a board composed of community leaders and parents.

In the 1980's the Chamber members began to host morning coffees for the membership and their invited guests. These coffees are often scheduled months in advance and remain a good way for members to network.

The Chamber has sponsored Leadership Marshall, a program to train community leaders, since 1996. Mandated by the Tennessee Three Star Program, the course is by application and requires an individual to spend one eight-hour day a month for eight months learning about the community. The eight sessions include a day for orientation, county history, education, health services, city government, county government, state government, and industry. Graduates are given priority when appointments are made to city and county boards and committees. Lynda Potts is the volunteer coordinator of the program.

A Junior Leadership Marshall program was begun in 2001 as a project of that year's adult leadership group. A committee of Leadership Marshall graduates plans and oversees the sessions for these junior and senior high students. All three county high schools have participated each year.

In 1999 the Chamber, under the direction of President Brenda Wolaver, published a community directory that not only listed the membership alphabetically and by business category but also included information on the county, the incorporated communities, and the many aspects of the area that make Lewisburg and Marshall County a desirable place to live and work. For the next six years this directory was one of the main recruitment tools used by the Chamber and by the City of Lewisburg's industrial development recruiter. A website designed by Matt Lewis later gave the Chamber a more global presence.

The Chamber has increased its activities from the single Fourth of July Celebration to numerous events throughout the year. A fish fry, junior golf tournament, a pigskin preview with participation by local high schools, a Junior

Miss Marshall County pageant, Mayfest, Dinner Shows, Nine and Dine golf outing, and a heritage home tour are among the fundraisers that it has taken part in. Coffees, Ribbon-cuttings, business seminars, Business EXPO, and two membership meals still focus on the needs of the membership. Three editions of the *Marshall County Magazine* and Marshall County Map are additions to the Chamber's accomplishments, as well as the introduction of the Junior Board in 2012 and the Chamber Ambassador Program in 2014. In 2016 the Chamber took part in the Rusted Magnolia Marketplace to bring in out of town guests to the area.