

2017 Program of Work

Business and Economic Development

Impact Area Purpose: To help businesses prosper by providing recognition to Muskogee, networking opportunities for members, supporting and stimulating growth of tourism, as well as collaborating with other economic development organizations working to make Muskogee stronger through business and industry.

Ag Appreciation Dinner – The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce celebrates the hard work and importance of the Agricultural community in Muskogee with an annual dinner held each October. More than 200 people from diverse professional and social backgrounds attend this fun event.

Chamber Coffee & Connections – The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce offers members the opportunity to host a morning Coffee & Connections meeting. Businesses who are selected to host this morning gathering are able to showcase their business and provide an excellent networking opportunity to Chamber members.

Chamber Night Out - The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce offers select businesses the opportunity to showcase their businesses by hosting a Chamber Night Out event. These evening get-togethers are relaxed and excellent for networking in a fun environment.

Local Business and Industry Appreciation Banquet – The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce proudly partners with the Port of Muskogee Industrial Development and Indian Capital Technology Center to provide an annual awards banquet to recognize local industry business' accomplishments.

Magic Holiday Giveaway – One of our most exciting and beneficial events! The Magic Holiday GiveAway is a community-wide retail promotion program that promotes local holiday shopping, supports small businesses and increases sales tax revenue for the City of Muskogee during the months of November and December.

Public Service Employee Appreciation Project – Muskogee is served by employees that are an integral part of improving the quality of life for our city by being responsive to the needs of citizens every hour of every day. The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce recognizes the constant dedication and talents of public servants with an appreciation event each spring.

Teacher Appreciation Project – Muskogee educators are preparing our future workforce and business leaders. The Chamber provides Survival Kits as a well-deserved “thank you” for their hard work and dedication to our youth.

Chamber Committees

Impact Area Purpose: Each Chamber Division may also have specific working committees perfect for the member's leadership team and employees to volunteer and support the work of the Chamber, and Muskogee, as your time allows.

Our current standing committees that are open to all Chamber members are:

- **Agri-Business Committee:**

Chair: Cheryl Leatherman; Staff Liaison: Angie O'Neal

Promotes and supports local businesses associated with all components of agriculture, including the Farmer's Market. The work of this committee supports the annual Muskogee Regional Junior Livestock Show and hosts an Ag Appreciation Dinner each fall. They meet the second Thursday of every month at 3:30 p.m. in the Georgia Pacific Board Room at the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce.

- **Ambassadors Committee:**

Chair: Kevin Igert; Staff Liaison: Sherry Pilant

This committee works to ensure our members have the full support of the Chamber and are provided opportunities such as ribbon cuttings, open house, and ground breaking events. The committee meets the first Wednesday of every month over lunch at a Chamber Member restaurant.

- **Magic Holiday Promotions Committee:**

Chair: Darrell Hamby; Staff Liaison: Angela Wilson

Plans and implements the annual Magic Holiday Giveaway event and community-wide retail promotion campaign. This program increases awareness of local retailers, encourages people to shop local, and increases sales tax revenue for the city of Muskogee. The committee typically meets every few weeks in August – December.

- **Muskogee Vision Committee:**

Chair: Jim Eaton; Staff Liaison: D.J. Thompson

The mission and purpose of this think tank is to dream, visualize, and discuss a vision for Muskogee and often serves as an incubator for ideas that improve and foster a positive image for Muskogee. This high energy committee meets the third Friday of every month for a 7:30 a.m. breakfast in the Georgia Pacific Board Room at the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce.

- **Military & Veterans Affairs Committee:**

Chair: Brent Trout; Staff Liaison: Angela Wilson

This committee helps the Chamber stay connected to our military and veteran personnel in the workforce, and their families who reside in Muskogee. The annual Veteran Appreciation and Awards event, and all the ancillary activities around the Dinner, are guided by this committee. Meetings are held monthly on the first Thursday of every month at 4:00 p.m. in the Georgia Pacific Board Room at the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce.

- **Paul Revere Legislative Affairs Committee:**

Chair: OPEN; Staff Liaison: D.J. Thompson

This committee oversees all of the government relations and legislative policy programs of the Chamber, including candidate forums, elected officials roundtables and other events. The committee meets the fourth Friday of the month at 7:30 a.m. in the Georgia Pacific Board Room at the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce.

- **Tourism Committee:**

Chair: Jim Blair; Staff Liaison: Marci Diaz-Apple

The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce is the designated provider of tourism services and activities for the City of Muskogee. Our Tourism Committee brings together a multitude of interested citizens and businesses and is made up of Chamber Board Members, City Council members and their appointees, as well as other stakeholders in the community. They oversee and guide all of our tourism activities and initiatives, including our community support grant process. The committee meets the third Wednesday of every month at 3:30 p.m. in the Georgia Pacific Board Room at the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce.

- **Women's Leadership Committee:**

Chair: OPEN; Staff Liaison: Angela Wilson

This group of extraordinary women meets from January – July of each year to plan one of the largest women's events in the region. The Chamber's annual Women's Leadership Conference and Awards Luncheon draws approximately 200 women every year. The committee plans the conference from start to finish, including securing speakers, planning a fashion show, constructing informative and education conference sessions, and awarding local women who have made a difference. The committee meets on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m.

Community and Professional Development

Impact Area Purpose: To assess leadership needs for Muskogee and provide training and programs to attract high level talent to business and community boards, as well as develop the capacity and commitment of the individual employee.

Chamber University – Workshops and sessions designed to provide affordable, professional development and education on topics needed for the workplace or that are important to business today.

Intern Muskogee – Intern Muskogee is a new component to our web site, visitmuskogee.org provided in partnership with Connors State College, Muskogee Area Human Resource Association and Port of Muskogee Industrial Development. Companies and organizations are able to post their internship opportunities where students and adults may then select which ones they are interested in and pursue the opportunity. As an added component to develop their skills for the workplace, Interns attend professional development and soft skills training one day per month at the Chamber. Subjects may include topics such as:

- Budgeting with Your New Paycheck
- Customer Service / Okie Pride Training
- How to Write Like a Professional
- Social Media Etiquette for the Workplace
- Interview Skills and Mock Interview
- Writing a Professional Resume
- Soft Skills Training (communication, adaptability, team work, problem solving, etc.)

Leadership Muskogee – This program is designed to develop participant awareness of the community with the purpose of broadening our volunteer base in Muskogee, enhancing the knowledge of employees, and creating well-rounded and educated citizens. The number of Leadership Muskogee Class participants is limited and applications are accepted from any individual or business. Being a Chamber member is not a requirement but is preferred and considered in the selection process. Participants attend a Team Building Retreat in October then come together for one session each month through the month of June.

Okie Pride Online Training We understand that not every individual or every workplace environment is the same. The ability to take time away from work or be outside the office can be limited. The Okie Pride Online Classroom provides you and your employees with an alternative to a traditional classroom for professional and community development. The objective of our Okie Pride Training program is to foster best practices in customer service resulting in loyal customers to you and a positive experience for visitors. Okie Pride Online provides you with the convenience of accessing learning materials at any time and from anywhere, and to learn at your own pace. This training provides

Small Business Development – NEW! The Chamber recognizes and appreciates the vital role that small businesses play in a community. They are the engines of job creation and economic growth for Muskogee. We want to ensure small businesses are getting the resources they need to grow and prosper. Providing the right climate for entrepreneurial and small business owners to succeed, including access to business advisors and resources, can be extremely valuable.

❖ **Create task force to develop initiative components / benefits**

- Host roundtables with community and business leaders to assess industry trends and pertinent small businesses issues.
- Develop Chamber benefits and features specifically for small and start-up businesses, including a tool kit and resources for being successful.
- Create a group of small business experts, with various backgrounds and experience, that may serve as a resource to others.
- Explore funding opportunities for small business start ups and provide general guidance and connections to resources to help them achieve their success.

Veterans Appreciation and Award Event – Muskogee has a large Veteran population from all branches and service periods. The Chamber works to build and strengthen relationships between the businesses of Muskogee and the military personnel and veterans, and their families. We host a “USO” Veteran Appreciation and Awards Dinner and Dance in conjunction with Veteran Appreciation week every year in November.

Women’s Leadership Conference – Approximately 200 women attend this one day conference every July to gain valuable leadership and business skills. The day includes informative sessions, panel discussions, the Chamber Women’s Leadership Awards and even a high energy fashion show.

Youth Leadership Muskogee – Patterned after our Adult Leadership program, the Youth Leadership program fosters the qualities and skills necessary for success in the workplace and life. Area youth are introduced to the world of business and aspects of their community in order to gain qualities to help them be informed and productive citizens. Each Youth Leadership Muskogee Class is limited to 30 students and applications are accepted from sophomores and juniors enrolled at Oklahoma School for the Blind, Muskogee, Hilldale, and Fort Gibson High Schools. Participants attend one session each month from February – May.

Government Relations

Impact Area Purpose: To utilize the Chamber as the voice for business with our elected officials and their staff; and to maintain consistent involvement and communication in strengthening the relationships with those individuals to affect legislative policy and statute changes as needed by our members. We will work proactively on the issues and focus on the City of Muskogee and the surrounding areas.

Political Forums provide candidates of federal, state or local office the opportunity to speak with the Chamber members regarding their ideas, stance on current policy, and plans if they are elected.

Elected Official Roundtables – The Muskogee Chamber of Commerce knows that stronger relationships with our elected officials leads to stronger influence on legislative issues that affect your business. We give our members the opportunity to meet with your local, state and federal legislators.

Nonpartisan Legislative Information Sessions, and Voter Education Publications and Forums-

From time to time topics arise where our members and citizens need more education or clarification to be able to make an informed decision regarding the issues. We provide education opportunities and focus group sessions for our members to help them fully understand current affairs, how it affects business, the individual citizen, public entities and Muskogee as a community.

Marketing & Communications

Impact Area Purpose: Through strategic communication methods, keep members well-informed on Chamber-related information and other pertinent matters, as well as help advertise and market your business in the community.

- Member Spotlights in emails distributed to over 1,000 addresses on a weekly basis.
- Advertisement of your local events and activities in a weekly email distributed to nearly 2,000 addresses.
- Priority placement in our Muskogee Welcome Packets.
- Priority placement in our Muskogee Relocation Guides.
- Premier advertising opportunities on the visitmuskogee.org web site.
- Premier advertising opportunities in the Muskogee Chamber offices and Tourism Information Center.
- Provide public Ribbon Cutting events that include press and photos.
- Press releases and coordination with appropriate partners to celebrate positive changes you may make in your business.
- Designing and maintaining a new, more responsive web site with easier navigation and increased search engine optimization to help advertise and market your business.
- Streamlining and upgrading our internal Information Technology solutions to ensure professional operations and appearance, as well as consistent and reliable communication.

Membership Development & Partner Relations

Impact Area Purpose: To create and maintain strong partnerships with the business community by developing events and programs that enhance the experience of our members, as well as providing them with varying opportunities to network and support the work of the Chamber.

Ambassadors - Our Ambassadors are in a leadership role as part of the Chamber's volunteer Membership and Public Relations team. Ambassadors improve awareness of Chamber benefits, act as hosts at our events, attend ribbon cuttings and appear in pictures of the event, and are a "go-to" resource for the business community. Ambassadors are showcasing Muskogee and their own businesses, as well as helping us build long-lasting partnerships.

Chamber Annual Banquet – Typically held in late March, the Muskogee Chamber's Annual Banquet has come to be known as one of the most worthwhile, fun and exciting events held in Muskogee each year. Approximately 350 attendees gather to celebrate the volunteers and businesses that have made the Chamber's work a success over the past year, and to enjoy delicious food, comradery and a great night out.

Chamber Classic Golf Tournament - Late April is a great time of year to get outside and take the opportunity to spend the day engaged in a friendly competition with other local businesses and colleagues. The Muskogee Golf Club provides a beautiful setting and a challenging course to accompany the good food, drinks and comradery.

Partnership Opportunities Program – Produce and implement a well-defined Partnership Opportunities Program that helps position members as a leader in the Muskogee community. The POP provides a variety of platforms for advertising, branding, and networking for the business community. Chamber staff will work with each Partner individually to customize the optimal program for the company and their employees.

State of the City Address – Approximately 350 people attend this Chamber event held each fall at the Muskogee Civic Center. Hear from the Mayor of Muskogee about the progress of our City and be the first to find out about exciting, upcoming projects and happenings.

Workplace Wellness Run / Walk, Bike or Crawl – NEW! In partnership with the Muskogee Bike Club, the Muskogee Running Club and the City of Muskogee's Wellness Initiative, the Chamber offers a fun and informative way to get active. The Run / Walk, Bike or Crawl will take participants on a "crawl" through downtown and the surrounding areas. Businesses will have opportunities to participate by being stops along the route. The event will culminate with some fun, relaxation and great music at the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame.

Tourism

Impact Area Purpose: To positively impact Muskogee's economy by promoting, fostering and advertising the City of Muskogee as a premier tourist and convention destination.

Branding

The Tourism Department continues to promote the REAL. OKIE. brand, emphasizing that Okie's from Muskogee have a genuine strength of character that often goes unrecognized. REAL. OKIE. is the true definition of someone who lives in Muskogee and has a deep understanding and appreciation of living right and being free. This campaign is designed to bring awareness of all that Muskogee has to offer and increase community pride.

Promotions

Develop and execute an annual Tourism marketing and advertising strategy that enhances tourism awareness both internally and externally, including but not limited to, purchasing and designing ads and distributing promotional items, and building and promoting community pride through the Real Okie Identity to foster local involvement in community and tourism activities.

Community Support

Providing hospitality and financial support for events, attractions and activities that meet the criteria for expenditure of hotel/motel tax revenue, including funding for organizations that hold successful tourism events and assistance towards facility or venue rental for qualifying conventions and rallies.

Product Development

Identify, develop and implement tangible products that enhance the visitor's experience while in Muskogee.

Networking and Professional Development

Networking with Tourism professionals in the tourism industry by attending Oklahoma Tourism Industry Association board meetings and Travel Industry Association's ESTO (Educational Seminars for Tourism Organizations), and the Oklahoma Governor's Conference on Tourism. Networking with local hotel and motel owners and attractions to foster mutually beneficial relationships.

Government and City Relations

Collaborate with city representatives to ensure a unified approach to being a top tourist destination and a visitor friendly community. Monitor activities that effect tourism at the state level and attend tourism meetings at the State Capitol or in other regions as needed.

Education

Educate the local public in various ways on the importance of tourism, their role in the success and impact of tourism, and how they can support Muskogee being a visitor friendly community. Education is provided through speaking to local civic organizations, serving on community boards and focus groups, and via social media and marketing.

Convention and Event Recruitment

Continually seek out opportunities and tailor marketing efforts to recruit new events and conventions to Muskogee.

Tradeshows

Promote Muskogee as a destination, to heighten public awareness of our local attractions and events by exhibiting at local and regional trade shows, and partnering with the Oklahoma Travel and Recreation Department to promote Muskogee at national and international tradeshows.

Visitor Center

Maintain and improve the Muskogee Tourist Information Center by staffing with knowledgeable and friendly volunteers to greet every visitor and promote Muskogee.

Information

Serve as a One-Stop-Shop for the collection of event information and a photo library of Muskogee attractions and events. Information is distributed via the Muskogee Activities Guide, the Online Community Calendar, the Tourism Website and Tourist Information Center.

Track Visitors

Create and maintain a tracking system for the attractions, hotels and restaurants to have an accurate estimate of visitors to the Muskogee area.

Okie Pride Online Training

Provide an online customer service and community pride training program offered free to all Muskogee businesses. OKIE Pride Online is available with the goal of helping businesses educate and train their employees via a convenient online training module. OKIE Pride Online helps train all employees in quality customer service and teach them about the activities, attractions, events, and available resources in Muskogee. This ensures every citizen can help give all visitors a positive "Muskogee experience".

As a part of Your Chamber Membership you also have access to:

- Certified Notary Public services by a member of the Chamber staff;
 - Certificate of Origin Services;
 - Consulting on marketing, public relations and graphic design for your business;
 - All of our connections and resources to help you be successful.
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Where We're Going in 2017

WE'RE GOING TO **PROMOTE** YOUR COMPANY AND OUR COMMUNITY TO ATTRACT VISITORS AND BUSINESS TO OUR AREA BY:

- Designing a new responsive web site with easier navigation and increased search engine optimization.
- Helping you know how to best utilize your membership profile to gain more exposure and referrals.
- Maintaining professional facilities and partnering with other organizations to provide locations for your company's information and promotional materials.
- Develop quality publications as promotional tools and resource guides for our members and for visitors to Muskogee.
- Actively recruit, and help host, conventions and large attractions.

WE'RE GOING TO **EDUCATE** YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES WITH INFORMATION AND RESOURCES BY:

- Providing a quality leadership training and community development program through Leadership Muskogee.
- Providing professional development and educational sessions through our Chamber University program.
- Providing monthly speakers on community and business topics through our Chamber Nights Out and Chamber ,
- Supporting initiatives that create a quality workforce.
- Sending you two emails per week regarding current affairs and events, fun things to do in Muskogee, special announcements and other Chamber related news.
- Contribute a monthly article regarding Chamber activities and our member businesses to the Muskogee Phoenix.

WE'RE GOING TO **ADVOCATE** FOR YOU SO YOUR TIME CAN BE SPENT RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS BY:

- Identifying the key issues of our members to gain valuable insight to their needs.
- Providing a forum through our committee structure to vet issues and develop positions that are in the best interest of the business community.
- Providing access to elected officials through roundtables, forums, an annual state of the City Address, and other venues.
- Utilize our partners nationwide to ensure we are aware of legislative or pending issues that affect City and County business.

WE'RE GOING TO **CONNECT** YOU TO POTENTIAL CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES
BY:

- Hosting monthly networking events before and after business hours to serve as an opportunity for members to connect with each other, and with potential clients and customers.
- Hosting a variety of special events, small and large, to provide a forum for you to connect.
- Engaging you and your employees in committees and task forces as your time allows.
- Providing leads and referrals for your business.
- Developing our Ambassadors to provide all members with a welcome and assistance to maximize the value of their membership.