



## ***A VISION FOR CHANGE***

# **PROPOSED THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2009 – 2011)**

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# **LEBANON VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

## **PROPOSED THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Background**

Following approval of its purpose and scope in fall, 2007 by the Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, a Strategic Planning process was launched for the Chamber in early 2008. The impetus for this effort came from both the Chamber volunteer and executive leadership's recognition of the need for developing a multi-year plan for the future of the Chamber.

The Chamber's Strategic Planning process focused upon developing a plan that would identify, clarify and firmly establish the vision, mission, priorities and future direction for the organization for the 2009 – 2011 period and beyond.

### **The Strategic Planning Process Utilized By the Chamber**

The Chamber's Strategic Planning process was a multi-step effort that began in early 2008 with the identification and recruitment of the Planning Committee Chair, Vice Chair and professional facilitator, as well as the development of a timeline for conducting and completing the planning process. The Chamber's planning effort was launched in spring, 2008 with a series of six focus groups and follow-up surveys that were used to obtain member and non-member business representatives' input and perceptions on the organization and its position in the community, as well as their views on future priorities and direction for the Chamber.

The information gathered from these focus groups and surveys were compiled and used to support discussions by the Chamber's Board of Directors at a full-day Board Planning Retreat in August, 2008. From this Retreat came revised and strengthened Vision and Mission statements for the Chamber, with the new Vision and Mission being subsequently approved by the Board at its August meeting.

Also identified by the Board of Directors at its Retreat were five areas or issues that the Board felt, based on input from our members and the community, should be considered priorities for the organization for the next several years. These priorities related to the areas of governmental and legislative advocacy, collaboration by the Chamber within the community, communications, membership value and return on investment and workforce development and education.

Specifically stated by the Chamber Board as priorities were the following:

- We will assertively advocate for the interests of business through government and community involvement.
- We will initiate collaboration with relevant business and community organizations to maximize the Lebanon Valley area's growth and prosperity.
- We will effectively communicate with our members and enhance the Chamber's and our members' visibility within our community and beyond.

- We will provide exceptional value (ROI) to our members and our community.
- We will actively lead, advocate for and partner in workforce development and education issues.

These issue priorities were assigned for further evaluation to separate task forces, which were given the responsibility to develop recommendations for enhancing the Chamber's involvement in each of these areas. The five task forces, which were each comprised of a cross-section of Chamber member volunteers, were formed in late October and, through the groups' focus and dedication, were completed by the first week of December, 2008.

The various steps in this Strategic Planning process have yielded a significant amount of valuable information on Chamber members' and the business community's needs and concerns, as well as their perspectives on the strengths and areas for possible growth and improvement in this organization. They also provided important input on the members' views of the Chamber's current and future leadership role in the community.

## **THE CHAMBER'S VISION**

The Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce will excel as the premier business leadership organization and catalyst for change, growth and prosperity in the Lebanon Valley.

## **MISSION**

The Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce is a visible, proactive advocate and resource for its member employers and the Lebanon Valley. It is committed to advancing our region's economic vitality and quality of life through the provision of strong leadership and through the formation of dynamic organizational and community partnerships.

## **GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

### **1. ADVOCACY TASK FORCE**

Priority: To assertively advocate for the interests of business before all levels of government.

Objectives:

- A. Develop a high level of involvement by the Chamber in local government and education issues.

Strategies:

- 1) Establish mechanisms, processes and procedures to monitor developing regulatory initiatives by local government and education systems by:
  - a) Being prepared to effectively mobilize Chamber resources on a timely basis to be proactive, rather than reactive, in addressing local government and educational issues. (2009)
  - b) Serving as a strong, visible and vocal representative of the business community on key local government and education issues affecting businesses in the Lebanon Valley by monitoring and addressing local governmental actions. (2009)
  - c) Collaborating with the County Planning Department and business development resources to educate local governments on the value of a viable business and industry presence in our community. (2009)
  
- B. Continue to enhance the Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce's involvement in State and Federal legislative and regulatory issues.

Strategies:

- 1) Expand the flow of timely and pertinent information to the Chamber's membership on key State and Federal issues. (2009)
  - 2) Encourage the Chamber's membership to participate in the process of influencing legislative issues as they develop. (2009)
- C. Develop a resource to assist businesses in navigating the governmental regulatory process, especially on the local government level, to assist in attracting and improving commerce within the Lebanon Valley.

Strategies:

- 1) Work with knowledgeable Chamber members and associates to assist new, expanding and existing businesses in understanding and addressing specific governmental regulations on a local, state or federal level. (2010, 2011)
  - 2) Direct business development requests to appropriate partner organizations and agencies within the Lebanon Valley and beyond and follow-up those referrals to ensure their fulfillment and completion. (2010, 2011)
- D. Serve as an effective and valuable information resource in public sector election races.

Strategies:

- 1) Solicit political candidates' views on issues of importance to the Lebanon Valley's business community and educate the Chamber's members, their employees and the general community on those issues. (2009, 2010, 2011)
- 2) Identify and, where appropriate, cultivate candidates for local elected positions who offer positive views in support of the business community and the enhanced livability of the Lebanon Valley. (2009, 2010, 2011)

**2. COLLABORATION TASK FORCE**

Priority: To initiate collaboration with relevant business and community organizations to maximize the Lebanon Valley area's growth and prosperity.

Objective:

- A. To identify relevant organizations/entities vital to the Lebanon Valley's growth and prosperity and to assign a level of relationship with the Chamber and a timeline for implementation.

Strategy: Significant opportunities exist for the Chamber to partner with or otherwise support other organizations and entities that are involved in efforts to enhance the economic prosperity, business climate and quality of life in the Lebanon Valley. Some of these organizations and/or issue areas are outlined below. In the case of most of these organizations, the recommended timeline for partnership and/or support efforts is immediate and ongoing. The exceptions to this may be the need for a more specific, flexible timeline as particular issues or projects arise. (2009, 2010, 2011)

The key organizations and issues on which the Chamber will seek to partner include:

- Agriculture / Farmland Preservation -- Play a supportive, ongoing role.
- Area Business Associations such as the Palmyra Area Business Association – Supportive, ongoing role.
- Business - Education Partnerships – Ongoing leadership role.
- Community of Lebanon Association – Ongoing supportive role.
- County Planning Department -- Serve in a co-leadership or supportive role, as the issue and situation dictates, on various business development, workforce development, transportation, County Comprehensive Plan and other issues.
- Emerging Hispanic Community – Play an ongoing co-leadership role in assisting the Hispanic community with leadership and business development.
- HACC & Lebanon Valley College – Play a flexible, co-leadership or supportive role, with the Chamber's role determined by each issue.
- Lebanon Valley Economic Development Corp. – Play an on-going co-leadership role in business and job retention, workforce development and other areas.
- Lebanon Valley Expo Center, Dutch Country Roads, the Hershey Partnership and Others – Market the Lebanon Valley and play a co-leadership role in expanding its tourism industry.
- Local Governments – Play a leadership role in encouraging effective local government practices and operational efficiencies.
- Military Affairs – Play a co-leadership or supportive role, depending upon the issue, in ensuring the ongoing health of our area's military installations and presence.
- School Districts/IU-13/CTC – Assume a leadership role in assisting schools with business-education partnership programs. Also play a leadership role in encouraging effective educational policies and operational efficiencies.

### **3. COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE**

Priority: To effectively communicate with our members and enhance the Chamber's and our members' visibility within our community and beyond.

Objective: Develop a strategy and process for evaluating current and future communication approaches and vehicles used to market the Chamber, its members and the Lebanon Valley.

Strategies: Establish a Communications Task Force (2009), which will:

- a) Work with the Chamber's President & CEO & Membership & Marketing Director to discuss and evaluate the Chamber's current communications approaches and methods and make recommendations for strengthening the Chamber's overall communications effort.
- b) Assist the Chamber in identifying approaches for enhancing the image of the Chamber among its members and within the community.
- c) Work in an ongoing advisory capacity to the Chamber President & CEO and Membership & Marketing Director to continually assess and evaluate approaches for enhancing the Chamber's overall communications program and methods.
- d) In an advisory capacity, assist the Chamber staff in exploring new methods of communication with the organization's members and non-members.
- e) Assist the Chamber's President & CEO and Membership & Marketing Director, where requested, with the development of external communications policies.

### **4. VALUES/RETURN ON INVESTMENT TASK FORCE**

Priority: To provide exceptional value and return on investment to our members and our community.

Objectives:

- A. Ensure that the Chamber provides the highest level of value possible to all of its members by offering a strong mix of benefits, services and programs capable of meeting the diverse and changing needs of the Chamber's members.

Strategies

- 1) Provide members with an array of effective and valuable benefits, services and programs in the areas of (2009, 2010, 2011):
  - a) Education and training for Chamber member employers and employees.
  - b) Group benefit programs and other direct product offerings such as the Member Marketplace program and membership mailing lists.

- c) Opportunities for business networking, referrals from the Chamber and its members, marketing and exposure for members' businesses, committee and volunteer involvement, involvement in community issues and participation at special events.
  - d) Businesses resources such as the Chamber's website and Membership Directory, day-to-day business assistance and support, meeting room availability and connections with other business organizations and resources.
  - e) Recognition and status as a member of the Chamber through extensive promotion of their affiliation with the Chamber
- 2) Create and maintain a positive, enthusiastic and welcoming environment at the Chamber for members, non-members, visitors and all segments of the community.
- B. Expand awareness among Chamber members and non-members alike of the broad array of services, benefits and programs offered by the Chamber as a means of retaining current members and attracting new members to the organization (2009, 2010)
  - C. Continuously evaluate all Chamber events and program offerings to ensure their quality and their benefit to the Chamber's members and to the Chamber itself.

#### Strategies

- 1) Continually evaluate changing business trends and the needs of our members and the Lebanon Valley's business community and pro-actively adjust the mix of services, benefits and programs offered the Chamber by (2009, 2010, 2011):
  - a) Continuously seeking to adapt and improve existing services, benefits and programs.
  - b) Identifying and adding new services, programs and benefits that will enhance the value of membership in the Chamber and the organization's ability to better serve the Lebanon Valley's business community.
  - c) Discontinuing those existing services, programs and benefits determined to be no longer essential or effective in serving the needs of the Chamber, its members or our area's business community.
- D. Systematically measure the level of member satisfaction with their investment in the Chamber and use the results for effecting continuous improvements in operations and service delivery.

## **5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Priority: To actively lead, advocate for and partner in workforce development and education issues.

Objectives:

- A. Position the Chamber to play a more active and prominent role in developing partnerships between the business community and the available public resources to ensure that all are better aligned and coordinated to meet our area's workforce development needs.

Strategies:

- 1) Evaluate all public resources, such as schools, PA Career Link, governmental agencies, work release programs and others, as viable options and resources for developing and increasing the pool of available workforce candidates (2010, 2011).
  - 2) Develop business-education partnership programs to further enhance and expand the working relationship between our area's business and education communities to ensure a well-educated and prepared workforce (2009, 2010, 2011).
  - 3) Develop programs capable of addressing training and workforce development needs that may be consistent among various employers to ensure the coordination and most effective use of available training and education resources (2010, 2011).
- B. Establish certification and training programs between the Lebanon Valley's business community and area educational institutions and school systems to better prepare students for current and future employment opportunities in our community.

Strategies:

- 1) Coordinate certification programs and share human resources best practices between the business and educational communities through such programs as School Counts to assist students in developing and understanding the importance of "soft skills" and a strong work ethic (2010, 2011).
- 2) Identify resources and develop approaches for promoting training programs for job-specific skills, such as safety and basic maintenance (2010, 2011).
- 3) Work with area school districts, guidance counselors, co-op teachers/coordinators, business teachers and other educators to coordinate apprenticeship programs with area employers (2010, 2011).

- C. Serve as the liaison and primary communication link between schools and the business community.

Strategies:

- 1) Develop and host events, such as an annual Education Summit, that bring together business and education community leaders for more direct communication on education and workforce development needs and concerns (2009).
- 2) Facilitate the availability and flow of information on employment needs and opportunities in the Lebanon Valley through an enhanced Chamber website that would include information on member employers' job openings, provide links to member employer websites and links to other appropriate sites such as that of PA Career Link (2010, 2011).
- 3) Assume a leadership role in promoting to area educators and business leaders alike the availability of appropriate training and education programs and resources (2010, 2011).

- D. Develop viable metrics to measure the effectiveness of these programs to ensure that resources are being effectively utilized to accomplish results.

Strategies:

- 1) Evaluate existing Chamber programs to determine their success (2002, 2010, 2011).
- 2) Discontinue or revise programs that are not measuring to the effectiveness tools established (2009, 2010, 2011).
- 3) Develop metrics for future programs to evaluate their ongoing effectiveness (2010, 2011).

- E. Establish the Chamber as a visible and active advocate on the state and federal levels in promoting education and business initiatives that support effective workforce development programs.

Strategies:

- 1) Actively monitor and evaluate education-related legislation and regulations and understand their impact on our area's schools and businesses (2009, 2010, 2011).
- 2) Develop policy positions on key education and workforce development issues and communicate these positions to the appropriate legislators (2009, 2010, 2011).
- 3) Keep the Chamber's member employers informed about key education- and workforce development- related legislative and regulatory developments and encourage their involvement on these issues, where appropriate (2010, 2011).

## LEBANON VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

### Strategic Planning Process

#### Chair

Robert Hoffman  
(*Beer & Hoffman, Ltd., Shonk & Schwear*)

#### Vice Chair

Larry D. Bowman  
(*G.F. Bowman, Inc.*)

#### Planning Process Facilitator

Roger S. North  
(*North Group Consultants*)

#### ADVOCACY TASK FORCE

Chair – Randy Ebersole (*Ebersole, Inc.*)  
 Archie Battistelli (*Stifel Nicolaus*)  
 Tom Buzby (*Weaber, Inc.*)  
 Eldon R. Dieffenbach (*Blatt & Myers*)  
 Robert Funk (*Arthur Funk & Sons, Inc.*)  
 Dennis Grumbine (*Lebanon Valley Expo Center*)  
 Holly Krall-Heft (*Century 21 – Krall Real Estate*)  
 Kathleen Kramer (*Harrisburg Area Community College*)  
 Stephen Lum (*Strauss-Kreamer & Lum Funeral Home*)  
 David Smith (*The Lebanon Daily News*)  
 Jeffrey D. Steckbeck (*Steckbeck Engineering & Surveying, Inc.*)  
 Chad Weaver (*H.R. Weaver Building Systems*)

#### COLLABORATION TASK FORCE

Chair – Robert Phillips (*State Farm Insurance*)  
 Josie Ames (*Ames Services, Ltd.*)  
 Willie Erb (*E & E Metal Fabrication, Inc.*)  
 Ray Maillet (*Commerce Bank*)  
 Ralph Rhode (*Met-Ed*)  
 Kathy Schmidt (*Northwest Savings Bank*)  
 Phil Tipton (*Lebanon Valley Family YMCA*)  
 Stephan Vegoe (*Brandywine Recyclers, Inc.*)  
 Margie Yohn (*BeYohnd Mail Processing*)

COMMUNICATION TASK FORCE

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 Doug Bedell (*Resource Relations*)  
 Duane Crouse (*PA Dutch Council Boy Scouts of America*)  
 Ann Decker (*Jonestown Bank & Trust Co.*)  
 Diana Hartman (*COMP Assist*)  
 Barbara Kauffman (*Kauffman Creative Strategies*)  
 David Kerr (*AT & T*)  
 Ken Phelps (*Lebanon Valley Mall*)  
 Bob Rios (*Visual Strategies*)  
 Rodney Royer (*Kingdom Computer Services, Inc.*)

VALUE/RETURN ON INVESTMENT TASK FORCE

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 Jay Deshpande (*E & E Discount Beer Warehouse*)  
 Mary Foltz (*Service Counts!*)  
 Karen Groh (*I.A. Design*)  
 Rebecca Grumbine (*G.F. Bowman, Inc.*)  
 Andrew Miller (*PA Precision Cast Parts, Inc.*)  
 Jane Miller (*Met-Ed*)  
 David Warner (*Buzgon Davis Law Offices*)  
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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION TASK FORCE

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 Nori Fisher (*PA Career Link*)  
 Matt Hetrick (*Supreme Mid-Atlantic Corporation*)  
 Ed Kercher (*Kercher Machine Works*)  
 Dr. Kathleen Kramer (*HAAC – Lebanon Campus*)  
 Dr. Richard D. Nilsen (*ELCO School District*)