

Growing with the Chamber



Karen Stiles
Rivers Advertising

One question often asked is how small business owners are making money with the Chamber of Commerce?

Well here's a fact: The Chamber of Commerce is helping people make money. Otherwise it would be a dead institution. It's thriving in most areas.

Here is why.

The Chamber controls a large, active, and prosperous center of influence. The Chamber of Commerce is made up of business owners, company President's, CEO's, V.P.s, association presidents, and other movers and shakers.

This membership group has consistently led to local businesses and community leaders taking active roles in the Chamber of Commerce over the years to get their monies worth.

Joining the Chamber of Commerce gives you access to these people that can grow your business.

The key is being active. It's about relationship building and that can take time.

Offer to speak at meetings on topics of interest to business leaders.

Giving a short educational speech in front of these business leaders is a great way to become known as a "Player" very quickly.

Still not convinced?

Just three years out of college, Karen Stiles had a product idea that needed a bit of a push to get off the ground. Being the daughter of a successful businesswoman, Stiles decided her first step would be to join the Chamber of Commerce. That would be one of the best business decisions she would ever make.

Shortly thereafter, she attended her first Coffee Club where she began meeting people from all different business sectors from new entrepreneurs like her to well established community leaders.

"I had an idea for promotional products that companies could put their logo on," said Stiles, owner of Rivers Advertising, Inc. (www.riversadvertising.com). "I wasn't familiar with the industry, but I knew I had to get out and meet people to try and get a foothold."

Things didn't boom overnight, but her constant use of the variety of networking activities led to her landing clients.

"It took some time for me to get credibility because people wanted to make sure I was going to be around. Once I had that with a few customers that took a chance with me, I saw my business grow as those first customers referred me to others," said Stiles.

"I never really pitched my product in the mixers and gatherings. I was more about meeting people and establishing a relationship, even if it was just a name and face.

And not only did those opportunities afford her the success she was looking for, the Chamber also covered topics that affected her business directly.

"I also learned about business issues and how to run a business. I took an active role, even serving on the Chamber Foundation Board."

As you can see, joining the Chamber of Commerce is a smart move for your business. Those that participate promote each other and work together. Your business can grow and prosper quickly.

More Jobs Enter Blount County

The Blount Partnership is proud to announce that Windham Professionals (www.WindhamPros.com), a full-service national collection agency, is adding to its operations by establishing a workforce in the Tyson Centre Building located in Alcoa, next to McGhee-Tyson Airport.



Windham, which provides specialized collection services in the educational, commercial, government and healthcare industries, plans to initially hire 125 employees in the fields of accounting, administrative, human resources and training professionals beginning approximately Feb. 1, 2012.

"We are excited about Windham Professionals new location to Blount County," said Bryan Daniels, President/CEO Blount Partnership. "This is another solid addition to the community made possible by the city of Alcoa and Blount County, along with Governor Bill Haslam who is to be commended for his continued support of the ongoing business developments in Alcoa."

With nearly 30 years in operation, Windham has experience working with numerous educational loan programs while being an International Association of Commercial Collectors, Inc. (IACC) Certified Collection Agency as well as a certified member of the Commercial Collection Agency Association (CCAA) and the Commercial Law League of America (CLLA). It is also a HIPAA ready collection agency and a Government Services Administration (GSA) Schedule 520-4 contractor.

"Windham Professionals wishes to thank the Blount Partnership along with the City of Alcoa for their support in making this move happen," said Chuck Harper, Executive Vice President of Operations for Windham Professionals. "The professionalism exhibited, along with the Tyson Centre, made this an easy decision. We are eager to get started in our new location and continue with our expanded operation."

With five locations nationwide, including a facility in Hendersonville, Tenn., the city of Alcoa gives an additional presence in the Southeast.

This expansion continues a trend over the past 12 months in Blount County's economic development programs with more than 1000 announced jobs.

"This project is a great example of the Economic Development Board placing non-taxable property back on the community tax rolls," said Dr. Matt Murray, Chair of the Economic Development Board of Blount County and the Cities of Alcoa and Maryville. "The Tyson Centre is a perfect location, lending itself easily to the electronic and digital requirements needed for their operation."

"Once again, we see that Blount County is a solid place to establish continued expansions," said Ed Mitchell, Blount County Mayor. "We are proud of Windham Professionals commitment to the community with sustained job growth and finding a place to call home."

Mark Your Calendar

Your Chamber has great opportunities each month for members to connect and network with potential customers. The events and meetings below will be held at the Chamber unless otherwise noted. Visit our website to receive notices of events and meetings you would like to attend - www.blountchamber.com, click on Chamber Calendar of Events. For more information, call 983-2241.

- Nov. 17 7:45-9:00 a.m. Coffee Club sponsored by Accent on Homes, 1778 W. Lamar Alexander Pkwy., Maryville
- Nov. 17 8:00 a.m. Legislative Coffee hosted by HR Focus Group
- Nov. 17 9:00 a.m. Small Business Start-up Seminar
- Nov. 24 & 25 Chamber Office Closed - Thanksgiving Holidays
- Dec. 1 9:00 a.m. Small Business Counseling
- Dec. 7 8:30-10:30 a.m. 12th Annual Holiday Open House
- Dec. 8 9:00 a.m. Small Business Counseling
- Dec. 15 9:00 a.m. Small Business Counseling
- Dec. 22,23 & 26 Chamber Office Closed - Christmas Holidays
- Jan. 2 Chamber Office Closed - New Year's Holidays

To schedule a free small business counseling session or to make an appointment with a representative from the Tennessee Small Business Development Center call Vicky at 983-2241.

New Members

Always Buy Chamber - New Members

By joining the Blount Chamber, the following companies have made an important decision in their business. Use the ABC theory -- Always Buy Chamber. It's good business to do business with Chamber Members. Use them for your professional and personal needs. Find out more information on all 1300 plus Chamber Members online at www.blountchamber.com, click on Business Directory.

Aerotek (www.aerotek.com)
Mr. Kyle Valentine — 408 N. Cedar Bluff Rd. — Knoxville
865.292.2414 — Staffing Agency

Byrons Printing, Inc.
Ms. Callie Whidby — 4430 Singleton Station Rd. — Louisville
865.982.7261 — Printing/Commercial

Chick-fil-A at Foothills Mall (www.chickfila.com)
Mr. Chris Liberatore — 144 Foothills Mall — Maryville
865.982.6061 — Restaurants/Catering

Gray Hodges Corporation (www.grayhodges.net)
Mr. Terry Yoakum/Mr. Travis Terry — 724 Brenda Dr. — Alcoa
865.522.3113 — Plumbing Fixtures & Supplies, Cabinetry

Judge Tammy Harrington — 946 E. Lamar Alexander Pkwy. — Maryville
Government-County

Snappy Tomato Pizza (www.snappytomato.com)
Ms. Cheri Cowan/Mr. Justin Cowan — 459 Marilyn Lane — Alcoa
865.233.5522 — Restaurants/Catering

TEAMHealth (www.teamhealth.com)
Mr. Richard McDaniel/Ms. Kim Norman — 265 Brookview Town
Centre, Suite 400 — Knoxville
800.342.2898 — Medical Billing

Tennessee Drug Card (www.tennesseedrugguard.com)
Mr. Harry Sayle — 901.292.9339
Prescription Benefits Card

Chamber Briefs

Tennessee Drug Card

As part of an ongoing effort to enhance the quality of membership in the Chamber of Commerce,  TENNESSEE DRUG CARD WWW.TENNESSEEDRUGCARD.COM all members are now eligible to receive a Tennessee Drug Card to aid healthcare cost reduction.

Tennessee Drug Card is a FREE statewide prescription assistance program that provides the residents of Tennessee with free health savings cards. Tennessee Drug Card was launched to help the uninsured and underinsured residents of Tennessee afford their prescription medications. However, the program can also be used by people who have health insurance coverage with no prescription benefits, which is common in many health savings accounts (HSA) and high deductible health plans. Additionally, people who have prescription coverage can use this program for non-covered drugs. This includes people enrolled in Medicare Part D.

Program Highlights

- FREE health savings cards to all Chamber employees, members and their families.
- Requires no enrollment/application, no age or income requirements, no waiting periods, no eligibility required, no exclusions, covers pre-existing conditions, no claim forms to file, no annual or lifetime maximums/limits, includes discounts on brand and generic medications, open formulary so all medications are eligible for discounts.
- Provides an average savings of around 30% off U&C pricing with savings as high as 75% on some medications.
- This program has "LOWEST PRICE" logic to guarantee that members get the best pricing on prescriptions (Members pay the lower of a discount off Average Wholesale Price-AWP, discount off MAC Pricing, or Pharmacy Promotional/Retail price).
- Administered by United Networks of America (UNA).

Holiday Open House

Mark your calendars for Dec. 7 as the Blount Partnership would like to invite you to our 12th Annual Holiday Open House from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

This thank you event will be held at the the Blount Chamber Board Room, 201 S. Washington St., Maryville, TN 37804

Basically Blount Deadline Nears

We want to ask for your support as our 2012 Basically Blount lifestyle magazine and membership directory enters its production phase.

Ad space is filling up and the Dec. 9 deadline for placing your ad is quickly approaching. Some prime ad locations are still available as well as spots around the 14 special sections devoted to the many activities in Blount County.

If you would like to learn more about the benefits of Basically Blount, the importance of supporting the Chamber, and how to get your business involved contact Rick Ford of Marcon Marketing (rford@marconmarketing.com), or David Paine (DavidPaine4@gmail.com).

Member 2 Member Benefits

Don't forget that being a Chamber member entitles you to benefits not available to non-member business owner. Here are some of those items that can be accessed at www.blountchamber.com/m2mdiscounts

Discounts are being offered by:

Alpha Graphics; Allyte Technology Solutions; Commercial Lighting Supply, Inc.; East Tennessee Rewards; Kyle Hall Plumbing; Honey Baked Ham; Garage Doors of Maryville; Lalka Tax Service; Courtyard by Marriott; MainStay Suites; Matlock Tire Service; Midland Dry Cleaners; Parker Towing & Recovery; Sam's Club; Successful Marketing and Sales; Toners Are Cheap.com; Trillium Cove Home & Garden; The Village Tinker; Y-12 Credit Union