



OREGON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Promoting Oregon Area's Businesses & Community

OREGON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

February Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2010 • 11:30 AM-1:15 PM

Hosted By: Oregon Fire/EMS Department

Lunched Catered by Firefly Coffeehouse

Board Members Present:

- Erin Kaether, Academy of Sound (Chamber Secretary)
- David Mastos, DLM Financial Solutions (Chamber Treasurer)
- Erika Weidler, Firefly Coffeehouse
- Judy Knutson, Oregon Community Bank & Trust
- Barb Mulcahy, State Bank of Cross Plains-Oregon (Chamber Vice-President)

Board Members Absent:

- Steve Peotter, Oak Bank (Chamber President)
- Jerod Bennett, Keller Williams Realty
- Jason Johns, Wisconsin Legislative Strategies

Staff Present: Marechiel Santos-Lang (Executive Director), Kristin McGuine (Member Services Manager)

Members Present:

- Jeff McCarthy (Alliant Energy)
- Amy Ketterer (American Cancer Society-Relay for Life)
- Sara Hynek (American Cancer Society-Relay for Life)
- Geoffrey Sandler (Celebrations Entertainment)
- Kaori "Kay" Kurihara-Nelson (D-Chai Thai Massage)
- Richard Lornson (Comfort Keepers)
- Rev. Karl Hermanson (Faith Lutheran Church)
- Rick Waldschmidt (Faith Lutheran Church)
- Dr. Bill Schneider (Luedtke-Storm-Mackey Chiropractic Clinic)
- Cheryl Baltzell (M&I Bank)
- Michael Steinhoffer (M&I Bank)
- Pete Curtis (Madison Brush Works)
- Eileen Curtis (Madison Brush Works)
- Capt. Tom Eithun (Oregon Area Fire/EMS Department)
- Gerald Neath (Oregon Area Historical Society)
- Deb Bossingham (Oregon Community Pool)
- Susan Santner (Oregon Public Library)
- Jay Baron (Phantasy Factory Web Design)
- Ryan Baron (Phantasy Factory Web Design)
- Staci Boudreau (State Bank of Cross Plains-Oregon)

➤ **Call to Order (12:00 PM)**

Board Vice President, Barb Mulcahy called the meeting to order. She introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked Erika (Firefly Coffeehouse) for preparing the lunch and Chief Bloom and Capt. Tom Eithun for hosting us at the Oregon Area Fire/EMS Department. Barb is the Vice President of Business Lending at the State Bank of Cross Plains-Oregon.

➤ **Annual Dinner Update**

Marechiel Santos-Lang thanked all members for their support of the Annual Dinner, which was held about three weeks ago. She asked for a show of hands of those who had attended, and many in the room had attended. Marechiel announced that the Chamber made \$2,000 in the silent auction and raffle (200% original goal)-so thank you to all who donated prizes. She commented that celebrating outstanding achievement in our community makes the Chamber and our community stronger. Lastly, please feel free to submit nominations for next year's business awards at any time.

Barb Mulcahy commended Marechiel and her staff for putting on a high-class, well-organized and successful event.

➤ **Around Table** Members introduced themselves and shared with fellow members' information about their business or organization including news, changes, promotions, sales & events.

- **Judy Knutson, Oregon Community Bank & Trust**

Judy is Vice President at the Oregon Community Bank & Trust, and also currently sit on the Chamber's Board of Directors. She reminded everyone that mortgage rates are still great and that the first-time homebuyers tax credit is good until April 30th.

- **Geoffrey Sandler, Celebrations Entertainment**

Celebrations Entertainment is a new Chamber member. They provide event direction and entertainment from small meetings that require certain AV equipment and team-building activities to events involving thousands of people. They have all kinds of fun party add-ons such as a photo booth, casino gaming tables and chocolate fountains. Geoffrey is excited that they just purchased a temporary tattoo air brush, which will have all sorts of fun applications.

- **Staci Boudreau, State Bank of Cross Plains-Oregon**

Staci is branch manager and mortgage lender at the Oregon branch of State Bank of Cross Plains.

- **Erika Weidler, Firefly Coffeehouse**

Erika is co-owner of the Firefly Coffeehouse. She is also on the Chamber Board of Directors. She announced that the expansion of the Firefly into the space next door to them will be complete next summer.

- **Erin Kaether, Academy of Sound**

Erin is Secretary of the Chamber Board of Directors and owns Academy of Sound, a music and drama school. Current opening exist for drum, piano, acting, violin, cello and bass guitar lessons. Their year-end recital is scheduled for May 22 at the OHS PAC.

- **Cheryl Baltzell, M&I Bank**

Cheryl is bank manager at the Oregon branch of M&I Bank. She has also taken on a new, additional role of business bank, which she is excited about and looking forward to.

- **Michael Steinhoffer, M&I Bank**

Michael works at the Oregon branch of M&I Bank. He reminded everyone that mortgage rates are really, really good right now.

- **Susan Santner, Oregon Public Library**

2010 is the Library's Centennial Year-And all their centennial events are listed in their new brochure. They include a Reader's Theater once a month on Sunday afternoons. Held at the Oregon Area Senior Center, each month's session will include a reading from Wisconsin author Jerry Apps' novel *Living a Country Year: Wit & Wisdom from the Good Old Days*. The book's chapters are arranged for each month January-December and features recipes, which will be prepared for all attendees to taste.

The library is also excited to announce that the Library is redesigning their circulation desk with the help of Paul Morrison from The Wood Cycle. It will be called the Community Centennial Desk, and donations of hard wood from community members will be collected and incorporated into the design.

On October 9, there will be a big birthday party, and the new desk should be ready by then. Susan hopes there will be a proclamation from the state legislature, as well, at that time.

- **Deb Bossingham, Oregon Public Pool**

Deb manages the Oregon Public Pool. She announced the coming of March Madness, when the pool will be open 3-6 for adults to use the facilities for aqua jogging and aqua exercises.

- **Kaori "Kay" Kurihara-Nelson, D-Chai Thai Massage**

Kay has two new staff members: one performs Swedish and deep-tissue massage and the other does Thai massage, and, in fact, used to teach it.

Kay is also leading a trip to Japan this summer. She already has three people signed up, and needs at least 6. The trip costs \$3,600. It will take place in May, or August, depending on interest levels.

- **Sara Hynek, American Cancer Society-Relay for Life**

Bark for Life is scheduled for May 1. This will be the second annual event, with last year's event drawing 96 dogs!

The Relay for Life is in June, and they are always looking for partnerships with businesses and sponsors. They love their sponsors, and so you can expect plenty of public recognition.

- **Eileen Curtis, Madison Brush Works**

Eileen is the Vice President of Madison Brush Works, a painting company that also does deck refinishing and wall-paper removal.

- **Amy Ketterer, American Cancer Society-Relay for Life**

Amy was excited that everyone in the room has heard of the Relay for Life, noting that not so long ago, this would not have been the case. She had posters, and invited everyone to post one at their location to help get the word out, as teams are forming now!

- **Karl Hermanson, Faith Lutheran Church**

This is Karl's first attendance to a chamber meeting. He is new to Oregon, having only lived here the past six months.

- **Dr. Bill Schneider, Luedtke-Storm-Mackey Chiropractic Clinic**

Luedtke-Storm-Mackey Chiropractic is located on the corner of Netherwood and Market Streets. They are open from 7 AM-7 PM Mondays-Fridays, and are also open on the weekends, so there should be appointments to fit everyone's schedule.

- **Dave Mastos, DLM Financial Solutions**
DLM Financial Solutions helps clients afford the lifestyle they deserve, both now and in retirement.
- **Pete Curtis, Madison Brush Works**
Pete called Madison Brush Works the best kept secret in Oregon. He also announced that his wife and business partner, Eileen Curtis, has just received her real estate license, and is currently an agent with Century 21 in Stoughton!
- **Rick Waldschmidt, Faith Lutheran Church**
Rick is here as a representative from Faith Lutheran Church. He formerly owned Ben Franklin Store, and used to be very involved in the chamber. Up until 7 years ago, he was a Chamber member since 1978, and served four terms on the board of directors, and was a chamber president for a couple of years.
- **Gerald Neath, Oregon Area Historical Society**
Pioneer Days are coming up for the elementary schools, when all the students borrow period costumes. They are also becoming more involved in the intermediate school's Wax Museum. The museum is now working to build that part of their clothing closet. They are looking for donations of bow ties or other old clothing items.

The museum also has an oral history project, interviewing older citizens.

- **Jeff McCarthy, Alliant Energy**
Alliant has plenty of programs to help organizations improve their energy efficiency. Let Jeff know if you would like a walk-through, or full-fledged audit.
- **Richard Lornson, Comfort Keepers**
Richard is Marketing Executive for Comfort Keepers. Comfort Keepers takes care of disabled and elderly people in their homes, offering full-time care. Through a growing network of partnerships, they are able to offer a full range of both medical and non-medical care options, including OT and PT.
- **Tom Eithun, Oregon Area Fire/EMS**
Coming up in May, they will be holding their drunk driving demo for OHS juniors and seniors. They are also working with the Police Department to host the annual Safety Day scheduled for May 1st.
- **Ryan and Jay Baron, Phantasy Factory Web Design**
Phantasy Factory opened their new office at 135 North Main Street in Stoughton just four weeks ago.
- **Kristin McGuine, Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce**
The Chamber is laying out the monthly newsletter next week, so be sure to let the Chamber know as soon as possible if there is any news, changes or announcements your organization has to share.

➤ **Approval of Minutes from the 11/24/09 Membership Meeting**

Tom Eithun made the motion to approve the meeting minutes. Richard Lorson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **Chamber Announcements**

Membership Renewals

Membership renewals are past due, and thank you to everyone who has renewed. When you receive your renewal confirmations, please note that with it, we attach the 2010 Chamber Member window decal and the

2010 plaque sticker plate. This is very tiny, so be watchful!

Summer Fest

Summer Fest will be June 24-27, 2010. Summer Fest provides numerous opportunities for great business exposure including entering a float in the parade, hosting a food vending booth and renting a business booth. Sponsorships are also a great way to gain broad exposure, given the extensive Summer Fest promotions the Chamber undertakes.

➤ **Member Development**

In today's age, businesses need to have a website to have a competitive presence. Phantasy Factory Web Design, formerly Mad Town Designs wants us all to know that you don't necessarily need to spend a lot on marketing if you are smart about it.

Advertising Offline

- **Promote your business on paper.** Business cards, even in full color/2-sided, are very inexpensive. Don't underestimate the power of business cards—people toss ads, but tend to file away business cards. Be sure to include your “elevator speech.” One idea is to stick your business cards in related books at book stores.
- **Competition vs. Population.** There's not so much competition if you just do your job well.
- **Referrals.** Solicit referrals from customers beginning before the deal even closes! While you are working closely with the client is the best time to ask for referrals; Once the deal is done, they tend to move on.
- **Promote your web site URL everywhere.** As long as it does a good job selling your business.
 - On your business door—people pass by and will be inclined to write down your URL, which they can visit on their own time, often rather than stopping in during open hours.
 - On car magnets-another cheap way to market your business
- **Use your phone.** This is another inexpensive strategy.
- Bottom line: Keep it simple. Keep your name in front of your audience.

Advertising Online

- **Share your knowledge.** Blogging--Search for blogs (“blog” “leave a comment” “web design”) and leave a comment.
- **Participate in Forums.** Search for forums (“forum” “web design”)
- **Classifieds.** Craig's List-FREE to post promotional ads
- **Write Articles.** Ezinearticles.com and articlebase.com are two top ones.
- Answer questions others have through Yahoo questions
- **Post your address to Google Maps.** You do not even need a website to participate.
- **Post your business at Yahoo locals.** This is free.

SEO

- What is Search Engine Optimization? SEO is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a web site from search engines such as Google. If potential customers do a search for organizations like yours, they often do not scroll past the first page of results. So if your company does not appear in the first page, you lose out.
- Try the Google keyword tool for key word ideas.
- Use your web address itself to increase your SEO.
 - Try to get “key words” in your domain name.
 - Try to get 3-4 different URLs.
- Content is king. Unique content is important-Google knows if you have copied content from elsewhere on the web. Use Copyscape.com to double check
- Use Key Words in your content, with 2-3% key word density (enough, but not too much).

- Title Tag (appears in the blue bar across the top of your browser window)
Title: Use key words--Such as Web Design Company/Madison Web Design.
Use different ones on different pages of your site
- Header Tags. Fireflox has lots of free tools to evaluate all of your tags.
- Blogging helps up your SEO.
- Google Analytics is a great web marketing tool—Web marketing is 100% trackable.
- Search for “Linkto:*competitor’s_URL*” to see who they are linked with. The more links you have to and from your website, the higher your SEO will be. Links with .edu or .gov extensions are worth more.
- Prchecker.info is another useful tool.

Questions:

- A question was asked about Merchant Circle—It is free to try, and Jay indicated it is great to have a presence wherever possible.
- When asked about social media recommendations, Jay indicated that Linked In, Twitter, FaceBook are all good for keeping in touch with current customers, but thinks this so much for drumming up new ones. However, Richard Lornson mentioned that Comfort Keepers has gotten 18 new customers through their fan page and blog on FaceBook. He added it’s not necessarily the Comfort Keepers clients who use it, but their children or grandchildren who are in charge of their family’s elderly care who found them through the social sites.

➤ **Schedule Announcements**

- Chamber of Commerce office hours are Mondays-Thursdays 10 AM-3 PM, and by appointment.
- The next Membership Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 18 at State Bank of Cross Plains. The topic will be: *The State of Oregon* with Village President Steve Staton and Village Administrator Mike Gracz. Note special time: 7:30-9:30 AM. Breakfast will be provided/sponsored by the State Bank of Cross Plains.

➤ **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:13 PM.

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting. We value your input and participation!

Meeting Minutes taken by Kristin McGuine.