



## Why Join a Chamber?

*'A chamber of commerce can only help you in three ways:*

*It helps **you**, it helps **your business** & it helps **your communities**...*

*If you don't care about any of those three things then membership is not for you.'*

### How chambers help you?

**Networking-** Over three dozen annual business networking events either free of charge or with reduced rates for SMMC members.

**Chamber After Hours-** Monthly open house-style events hosted by different members. A great way to connect and share your success and grow your network.

**12 @ 12 The "Free Lunch Networking Series"**- Once per year a member can ask to attend the monthly 12 @ 12 where lunch is provided and each of the 12 participants gets 5 minutes to talk about their business. It starts at noon so hence 12 @ 12.

**WILL Power-** WILL Power is our women's group focused on supporting, mentoring and championing women in our communities. This group began in 2018 and is set to hold five events in 2018: February, April, June, September & November. WILL stands for Women In Local Leadership, because as they say, 'Where there's a WILL...'

**Seminars & Workshops-** Chamber seminars & workshops with industry professionals who share their expert advice for national and international business.

**Chamber Member Breakfasts/Luncheons-** Members will host their own events throughout the year where they invite the membership to participate, or they will ask the chamber to partner with them. Though not on any regular schedule these events can be great ways to meet other businesses and discover new things about the region.

**RBT Con (Relevant Business Topic Conference)-** Scheduled for May 2018, RBT Con is a half-day workshop with 3-4 classrooms running concurrent hourly sessions on topics presented by the membership. We have a bounty of professionals in our area looking to help their fellow businesses with best practice ideas. Come in for a training or invite your staff to come.

**Volunteer Opportunities-** A great way to connect to area business people & the communities in the region. Have a say in the direction of the organization to help shape the future and get involved with the Government Liaisons team, the Chamber Ambassadors, our Marketing Team or other ad hoc groups that arise by member request.

## How chambers help your business?

**Marketing-** Exclusive chamber programs and publication help get your business recognized

**2018 Guest Guide-** Formerly called the Allure of the Coast, the 2018 Guest Guide is something new and all together different. With a focus on the tourist, it's called a 'companion guide' because it is designed for people to take with them when the travel. All members get listed in the member index but some businesses will also buy additional ads at reasonable rates. 50K copies are printed and distributed throughout New England.

**SMMC News & Notes-** Our robust e-newsletter goes out weekly and includes news from members as well as the latest event updates and local industry news.

**Member Videos/Midcoast Member Minutes-** In 2018 the SMMC launched the Midcoast Member Minutes as a chamber video series featuring 'how to' videos. The chamber has made a call for members to send in their own video profiles and they will be featured on the SMMC YouTube Channel and on the SMMC Website.

**www.midcoastmaine.com-** Speaking of websites, thousands of relocators and travelers find their way to the SMMC website annually and every member gets a login to manage their own free listing on the site.

**Sponsorship Opportunities-** Get noticed by supporting SMMC initiatives & projects that are viewed closely by fellow members and the business community as a whole. Many events have tiered sponsor marketing opportunities that promote you as a community supporter.

**Ribbon Cuttings & Open Houses-** Let us help celebrate your groundbreaking and expansions and promote them to our members, allowing you to get the recognition for your successes that you deserve.

**Referrals & Credibility-** Chambers were born from the desire to get preferred recommendations from a single source, and we still do that today. Calls to the chamber requesting business contacts are sent business information of members only. Being a member, for some, is a sign you are a business that believes in supporting the community and being part of the collective success of the region.

**Government Advocacy-** The SMMC keeps their members informed of the relevant issues affecting businesses in the region, and takes stands when necessary on vital business topics. Year-round there are local, state and federal issues that affect how we do business in the region. If you have a legislative issue affecting you, we will be there to support you and rally support from others at the state and federal level.

**Open to New Programming-** Some of our best ideas began with a suggestion from someone, and we built on it. We are constantly encouraging businesses to tell us what their business needs and trying to find an existing solution, and if one does not exist, creating a solution. We are only effective if we are meeting the needs of our members, so it is essential to know what those needs are.

## How chambers help your communities?

**Business Attraction, Expansion & Retention-** The SMCC works with developers, contractors, realtors and investors to grow existing businesses and attract new employers to the region. This work is done through promoting the region, identifying available assets, analyzing the existing business mix, and contacting companies who would fit that mix.

**Workforce Development-** The SMCC supports programs and initiatives for worksite training, wellness, identifying educational gaps and generating solutions so businesses can find the employees they need right here. Bridging the gap between what employers need and finding the right employees to fill those needs will be an essential task in the years to come. The SMCC began a program in 2017 that is two-fold: 'Pathways & Partnerships' works on bringing businesses and educators together while 'Barrier Solutions' works on the underlying social issues to why employers and employees struggle to find one another (ex: available housing, transportation, childcare, etc.)

**Community Collaborations-** Working together with other agencies, including state, county and municipal officials, and local organizations, we help spur economic growth collectively- a rising tide raises all ships. We don't believe there is any positive that comes out of putting ourselves ahead of any other organization in the region. We are all part of a great big collective that is all in it for the same thing- making sure the businesses in the region can be as successful as possible while making the area as attractive as we can for tourists and relocators. It's always 'we' never 'me'.

**Community Advocates-** We represent the community in a positive, effective way often being a media point of contact and a clearinghouse for those who have questions and don't know where to turn. We are a community resource for employers and citizens alike. Also using the philosophy of 'if it affects a member, it affects us' we find ourselves partnering on many different projects in the region from transportation and energy discussions to housing and healthcare issues.

**Event Generators & Supporters-** We don't put on every event in the region, but we do try to support them all by promoting them to as many people as possible through our channels and networks. Every new dollar spent in the region increases the prosperity of the whole. It means new employees, new infrastructure and a more secure business environment. Annually we produce dozens of networking, workshop and seminar events, but we also work on community events. The Hiring Fairs in the spring & fall, the Hacker's Ball Golf tournament, the Shot in the Dark Glowball Golf Tournament and the Bill Dodge Blood Drives are all events we started or partner on. In addition we support through volunteerism and marketing events like the Air Shows at the airport, fly-ins and events that our partners do such as the Brunswick Downtown Association's events on the Brunswick mall, and Main Street Bath's Heritage Days and Holiday events. More event ideas are always welcome.