

Greater FLORENCE Chamber of Commerce



GUIDE TO MEMBERSHIP

A Chamber of Commerce Welcome



Michael J. Miller
Chamber President

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce is a vital part of the ongoing growth and foundation building here in the Florence County area. Your membership in the Chamber provides unparalleled opportunities to connect with peers, current and prospective clients and partners up and down the supply chain to keep communications open.

Further, the programs and events we present provide extraordinary opportunities to grow needed networks and gain new insights for addressing the ever-changing challenges facing all of us in business today. By working together as Chamber members, we have a much stronger voice with our elected leaders as they contemplate policy revisions and new rules and regulations that create greater certainty and an improved environment for business in the Pee Dee.

Our body of work ranges from the widely known Leadership Florence Executive Program to the Washington Delegation Trip. We conduct many Small and Minority Business programs (PRISM), the Spring Business Outlook Luncheon and the Shop Local Program. We also organize Quarterly Business Seminars and CEO Breakfasts. In total, there are more than fifty different Chamber programs covering education, leadership development, business growth and networking.

To make all the programs possible, the Florence Chamber actively recruits local member support at a variety of levels. While many local companies provide supplemental funding at the Division Sponsor, Capital Club or President's Council levels, others provide sponsorship funding for specific platforms. Our largest supporters though, are our 600 business members whose help is critical to fulfilling our mission.

Our mission is clear. "Promote and enhance a favorable business climate and improve the quality of life to make Florence... the best community in which to live and operate a business."

Our Chamber Staff



Susan Farver
Chief Operating
Officer



Patricia Burkett
Director, Marketing
& Membership Relations



Les Echols
Director, Community
& Minority Enterprise



Ashley Christenbury
Director, Advertising
Sales & Services



Mandy Howle
Office Manager



Meg Feagin
Administrative
Assistant

Our Board of Directors for 2015-2016

Starlee Alexander
State Farm Insurance

John Bankson
Wells Fargo

Charlie Blake
Finklea Law Firm

Randy Bridges, Superintendent
Florence School District One

Keith Buckhouse
NBSC

Jamie Carsten
South State Bank

Dr. Fred Carter
Francis Marion University

Dr. Ben Dillard, III, President
Florence-Darlington Technical College

Tom Ewart
First Reliance Bank

Marion Ford
Performance Foodservice – IFH

Kevin Goodwin
SPC Credit Union

Dennis Hempstead
Cleanworld USA

Robby Hill
HillSouth

Ed Hoffman
Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School

Joe King, Executive Director
Florence County Economic Dev. Partnership

Pete Mazzaroni
Roche Carolina

Jeff McKay
NESA

Brian New
Florence Family YMCA

Tim Norwood
Victor's Bistro

Keith J. Novotny
Assurant Specialty Property

Shane Orr
Pee Dee Electric Cooperative

Roger Poston, Chairman
Florence County Council

Grey Raines
Raines Development Group

Ray Reich
City of Florence/Downtown Development

Paul Seward
First Bank

Mike Skarupa
PGBA

Jeff Stevens
Pepsi Cola of Florence

Stuart Swiggett
Ruiz Foods

Mindy Taylor
Duke Energy

Kendall Wall
Florence Civic Center

Richard Warrin
Carolinas Hospital

Chad Weisbeck
Jiffy Lube

Stephen Wukela, Mayor
City of Florence

Top 10 reasons you should be a member of the Chamber of Commerce

1. **Membership brings credibility to your business.** You can increase positive perception among consumers and business owners when your business is identified as a member of the Chamber of Commerce.
2. **Increase your visibility in the community.** As a new member of the Chamber of Commerce, you will be listed in the Chamber newsletter, e-newsletter, on Facebook and have the opportunity to be highlighted in other Chamber publications. You also can grow your business by advertising with the Chamber and sponsoring events. The Chamber may also promote your grand opening/ribbon-cutting ceremony and assist with any public relations efforts.
3. **Create networking opportunities.** Chambers have numerous committees, and serving on one of them provides numerous networking opportunities as well as professional leadership development. You can build your business while promoting developments of keen interest to local businesses and to the community at large.
4. **Gain a voice in government.** The local Chamber takes on the tough issues and opposes new regulations, taxes, fees, assessments and costs that can be detrimental to operating a business. It also helps protect the principles of free enterprise and aids businesses in being treated fairly.
5. **Make business contacts.** The Chamber's most fundamental mission is to generate more business activity for the community. The Chamber initiates more business-to-business commerce and more opportunities for networking and connecting local professionals than is available through most other local organizations.
6. **Receive ChamberLink newsletters.** Newsletters provide details about new members, interesting information about operating a local business, articles about the local community, a community calendar and details about up-and-coming Chamber events, among other things.
7. **Acquire customer referrals.** Every day, your local Chamber receives calls from individuals and businesses looking for potential vendors, and Chamber members typically recommend Chamber members.
8. **Chamber events and programs.** Chamber events and programs provide members with great opportunities to get to know new people and expand their prospect base. Chamber events are innovative and fun ways to help members meet potential customers, clients and vendors— and generate new business leads.
9. **Promotion and publicity.** With a Chamber membership, you can reach potential clients through member-exclusive advertising and opportunities for business-to-business advertising and publicity.
10. **Access to members-only discounts and services.** You have great opportunities to save with Office Depot and Blue Cross-Blue Shield programs.



Understanding the real value in Chamber Membership

When you are looking for ways to get more exposure for your small business, you should consider joining the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. We have been helping local businesses network and become more successful for many years. It is time that you join so you can take advantage of all that membership can offer.

Not only does belonging to the Chamber of Commerce help with networking, exchanging ideas with other business owners and managers and increasing your community exposure, but it also helps elevate consumers' perceptions of your business.

A recent study indicates that consumers are 40% more likely to eat at a restaurant franchise if they know the restaurant is a Chamber of Commerce member. Similarly, consumers are 43% more likely to consider buying insurance from a company who is a Chamber member, and they are 63% more likely to purchase goods and services from a small business when they know that business is a member.

There is no better way to boost your business just simply by joining a group, than when deciding to become a member of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. Results of the study also indicate that consumers believe a company uses good business practices when it is actively involved in the community as a Chamber member.

Joining the Chamber of Commerce means consumers are more inclined to believe that your business not only cares about its customers, but also the community. In addition to believing that members use good business practices, consumers are also more inclined to believe that your company is reputable.

Everything from automobile dealers, to insurance companies, to franchise restaurants, to small businesses of any kind have always benefited from a Chamber of Commerce membership. If you have not taken this smart business step, consider doing it now.

What *IS* the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce?

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce is a group of dedicated men and women who not only live in Florence, but they live and breathe Florence. It is a group of individuals who work together to promote the efforts of local businesses through leadership in economic, social and political development.

The Chamber is a strong voice for the business community, a tie that binds everyone from entrepreneurs and small business owners to major distributors and big box retailers. Our goal is simple - to encourage the growth of the local business community and economy in the place that we all call home.



Who Can Join?

Whether you are a small business owner, part of a large national or international company, an entrepreneur, a member of a non-profit group or any other type of business that calls the Florence area home, the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce has the kind of tools and resources that will give your business a competitive edge.

The Chamber is an organization that is open to individuals and businesses of every shape and size and we provide valuable resources that will help you establish or reestablish a firm foundation in your community and a strong business presence among your peers.

Chamber Membership Investment Levels

Individual or Personal Membership: \$100 Annually *

This level is for the Entrepreneur/Sole Proprietorships/Professional.

- Provides access to all Chamber programs and events.
- Includes ChamberLink newsletter and representation in Chamber directory and online membership catalog.

Small Business Membership: \$200 Annually *

This level is for the business that employs less than five full time equivalents (FTE's).

- Provides access to all Chamber programs and events.
- Includes ChamberLink newsletter and representation in Chamber directory and online membership catalog.
- Access to health insurance and office supply discounts.

Standard Business Membership: \$400 Annual base plus \$4 for each FTE above 5 *
Semi Annual or Quarterly Billing is Available

This is the base level membership for businesses with five or more full time equivalents (FTE's).

- Business featured in advertisement in the local newspaper.
- Provides access to all Chamber programs and events.
- Includes ChamberLink newsletter and representation in Chamber directory and online membership catalog.
- Access to health insurance and office supply discounts.

Example Investment Levels for Standard Membership

FTE *	Base	Size	Total
10	400	20	420
20	400	60	460
30	400	100	500
50	400	180	580
100	400	380	780
150	400	580	980
200	400	780	1,180
250	400	980	1,380
300	400	1,180	1,580
350	400	1,380	1,780

*Note: Credit Card payments for membership dues may incur additional bank transaction fees.

Chamber Sponsorship and Foundation Support Levels

Special support levels are in addition to membership dues.

Chamber Trustee / Division Sponsor: \$10,000 Annually (SemiAnnual or Quarterly billing is available)*

This level of sponsorship is billed above general membership rates. It shows major commitment to the Chamber by helping to support the many business programs and events that our community values. This level of commitment includes the following benefits:

- *Spring & Fall Luncheons - Reserved table for eight at each and recognition in event programs.*
- *Fall & Spring Golf Tournaments - A foursome in each event with preferred AM or PM tee time.*
- *Administrative Professionals' Day Luncheon - Reserved tickets for two at the spring event.*
- *Building Bridges Program - Two scholarships to attend the five-week learning event.*
- *A Chamber Appreciation Plaque- A large plaque engraved with your business name, celebrating your active involvement in our community efforts.*
- *Digital Leader Board Promotion- Company name and logo will be displayed in the lobby of the Chamber office in appreciation of the commitment.*
- *Advertisement in each ChamberLink newsletter publication at the half-page level.*
- *Recognition of the support level on the home page of the Chamber Website.*

Foundation Sponsor / Capital Club: \$6,975 Annually (SemiAnnual or Quarterly billing is available)*

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- *Spring & Fall Luncheons - Reserved table for eight at each and recognition in event programs.*
- *Fall & Spring Golf Tournaments - A foursome in each event with preferred AM or PM tee time.*
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- *A Chamber Appreciation Plaque- A large plaque engraved with your business name, celebrating your active involvement in our community efforts.*
- *Digital Leader Board Promotion- Company name and logo will be displayed in the lobby of the Chamber office in appreciation of the commitment.*
- *Recognition of the support level on the home page of the Chamber Website.*

President's Council: \$3,795 Annually (SemiAnnual or Quarterly billing is available)*

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- *Administrative Professionals' Day Luncheon - Reserved tickets for two at the spring event.*
- *Building Bridges Program - Two scholarships to attend the five-week learning event.*

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MEMBER SERVICES

This division's goal is to provide informative, quality member-guest programs and conduct activities, which maximize networking business opportunities and enhance membership value.

Annual Membership Luncheon (October 2015)

We host an annual meeting to report accomplishments of the organization, discuss future plans, recognize the Chamber's volunteer leadership and acknowledge the Outstanding Business Person of the Year.



State of the City and County Luncheon (March 2016)

Presents an overview of area business trends. The Small Business Person of the Year is recognized.

Business After Hours

We secure and conduct BAH programs to provide informative networking opportunities in an informal social setting. Usually 12 programs each year.



Chamber Fall Golf Classic (September 2015)

We will continue to improve our golf outing events into more attractive and enjoyable networking opportunities.



Chamber Spring Golf Classic (May 2016)

We will continue the tradition of an excellent golf outing event, rotating our use of local courses. Again, our events provide a wonderful and enjoyable networking opportunity.

Administrative Professionals' Day Luncheon (April 27, 2016)

This program is a terrific opportunity for member businesses to recognize and reward their administrative staff by attending a luncheon celebration that provides sponsor booths and free gifts and prizes.



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

A key part of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's mission is to promote and enhance a favorable business climate and to make Florence the best community in which to live and operate a business. To that end, we will use our Government Affairs Council to be a voice in the halls of local and state government. This would include policy issues, regulations and ordinances of government.

Legislative Breakfast – Education Initiatives (September 2015)

We invite our legislators to meet Chamber members and community leaders in a formal setting. It is an excellent way to build and grow relationships and to update the community on business and educational efforts. Lawmakers can explain the work they are doing on behalf of their constituents in these two important areas. We want to become a trusted resource that members can turn to when they need information.



Legislative Breakfast – Small & Minority Issues (February 2016)

Similar to our fall program, we invite our legislators to meet Chamber members along with community leaders in a less formal setting. The sessions can help educate our local businesses on issues and on efforts to eliminate the operational hurdles for the small and minority business operators.

Legislative Day (March 2016)

This is our annual business showcase conducted in Columbia, SC. This is a joint effort of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and the Florence County Economic Development Partnership. Together, we co-host a luncheon with Florence County leaders and the current year's Leadership Florence group. The day also includes an evening reception hosting our state and local elected officials.



City/Chamber Business of the Quarter (Awarded at City Council meetings during the first, second, third and fourth quarters)

A joint award made possible by the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Florence. The award is presented quarterly to a local business recognizing its efforts to help redevelop downtown Florence.



Washington Trip (April 2016)

A bi-annual visit to our region's legislative delegation in Washington, DC. The visit provides time to discuss present issues and topics of concern in the Pee Dee.



COMMUNITY& BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The activities of this division encompass community and local business outreach. It has at its core, programs that focus on community betterment and local business opportunities for companies, small business and minority business operators.

Promoting the Inclusion of Small and Minority Businesses (PRISM, Ongoing)

A committee focused on developing action plans, events and programs focused on the inclusion of small and minority businesses.

Chili, Brews & BBQ (October 23-24, 2015)

An opportunity for the Chamber to provide a community-wide, family-friendly event that promotes the Chamber, its members and Florence as a whole.



Quarterly Business Seminars (Ongoing)

A regular series focusing on current business issues and providing helpful information on how to tackle and address problems dealing with those topics.

Small & Minority Business Showcase (Summer 2015)

Provides local professionals the opportunity to display their business among other Chamber members and the local community. The venture allows small and minority businesses to highlight their goods and services.

CEO Roundtable (Mar. June, Sept. Dec.)

Hosted by Willcox, Buyck & Williams Law Firm. this breakfast is an informational exchange for senior business executives. It is held quarterly and typically has 25 local leaders in attendance.



Santa Run (December 2015)

This new, family-friendly 5K will offer participants the chance to put on a red race shirt, Santa hat and spread cheer throughout the streets of downtown Florence. It will be a chip-timed race, complete with an aid station and post-race food and drink. Participants will receive a long-sleeved, red race shirt and their very own Santa hat. Overall winners will receive medals; top age group finishers will also receive recognition.

Shop Local Program (Ongoing)

A program conducted in conjunction with a local media outlet, that promotes shopping with local businesses to the public. This program usually starts during the holiday shopping season, but we would like to expand it to a year-round program.



EDUCATION / LEADERSHIP

The Chamber believes strong educational opportunity is a key factor in the development of our local economy. Excellence in schools, colleges and universities is critical to building a modern and durable economy. The Florence Chamber will be focused on expanding learning programs which will enhance the education processes available in the Pee Dee Region.

Leadership Florence (September 2015)

This program helps develop effective leaders who will strengthen and transform our community. The class of approximately 30 participants reflects the diversity of our community-at-large. It is a hands-on program that includes team-building experiences and allows interaction with local business, media, government and education.



Leadership Florence Alumni Association (Ongoing)

A continuation program that fosters relationships among graduates of the Leadership Florence Program while also allowing them to stay abreast on current issues and stay engaged in community service. This includes quarterly meetings, networking socials and informative conferences.

Building Bridges (February – March 2016)

This program helps to engage our community by addressing racial and cultural diversity through a structured process. It helps to change attitudes and minds through educational and consciousness-raising sessions with emphasis focused on the workplace.



Junior Leadership Florence County (September-May 2015)

The JLFC Program is a new, prestigious opportunity for our county's high school sophomores and juniors who desire to become engaged citizens. The program was adopted from successful junior leadership programs in South Carolina, along with input from local education leaders. Each year, 20-24 students will be selected to participate in the program from all of the counties' high schools, which include rural, urban, public, private, home and virtual-schooled students. These students will spend 10 months going through a curriculum designed to broaden their leadership horizons.



Emerging Leaders Summer Institute (June 2016)

A five-week program designed to enhance leadership skills within the small and minority business community of professionals. This program will help share effective leadership opportunities at a very cost-effective level.



BUDGET & FINANCE

This division oversees the administrative and financial planning, procedures and policies of the Chamber. It will provide guidance in the administration of staff duties, manage facilities and equipment as well as manage the membership dues and retention efforts of our members.

Budgeting

We develop budgets to ensure sound financial management practices for the Chamber programs and the Pee Dee Visions 501-C3.

- Division members develop the annual budget and submit it to the Chamber Board for adoption during our May board meeting.
- We review the financial status of the Chamber on a monthly basis and review the CPA firm's year-end financial audit and will also review the management letter in September to ensure implementation of approved recommendations.

Ambassadors Committee

Fosters goodwill and understanding of the Chamber programs to existing and new members. This group can represent the Chamber at a variety of local events and also provide support for Chamber programs including:

- Acting as hosts at various Chamber events.
- Helping staff at Chamber functions.
- Hosting grand openings for Chamber members.
- Orientation of new members at various Chamber events.



Board of Directors Meetings

The Board of Directors meets the third Thursday of each month with the exception of July and December.

Chamber Affinity Programs

The companies listed as Chamber Affiliates are companies that have been chosen by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce as excellent business partners who guarantee our members special discounts on their products and services. Current programs involve Blue Cross-Blue Shield of SC and Office Depot.



**Office
DEPOT**



COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

We are focused on enhancing the image and brand of the Chamber by providing top quality information to area newcomers, current residents, local businesses and our membership. We want to improve our member relations and ensure better retention programs. We will expand our member communication channels through digital and printed products.

Membership Directory and Newcomer's Guide

The highly popular membership directory and newcomer's guides are now more vibrant to reflect an evolving downtown and surrounding area. In addition, these guides better reflect a growing and more diverse Chamber membership. Those just moving to the region rely on the publications to find their way into our great southern lifestyle.

Enhance and Grow our Digital Presence

The Chamber's online presence is taking on a more modern and streamlined feel with a complete website redesign and enhanced services for our members.



Regular Member Email Event Updates

The Chamber is committed to offering members the most networking opportunities available and will continue keeping the membership informed about events through email blasts and social media updates.

Social Media Member Updates

Over the course of the past year, the Chamber has put significant efforts into growing our online social media presence. That has included daily engagement on sites like Facebook and Twitter, organic Facebook "likes" growing by more than 1,500 in just six months and increased visual offerings for Chamber members as part of their ribbon cutting events, grand opening ceremonies and business celebrations. It has turned into a great communication tool for members and those in the community wanting to know more about area events and happenings.



Membership Newsletter

Our ChamberLink newsletter is published throughout the year with updated governmental issues, other regional and state Chamber news and our member businesses' notes and happenings.



Chamber Information:



Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce
100 West Evans Street
PO Box 948
Florence, SC 29501

Telephone: 843-665-0515
Fax: 843-662-2010
General Email: info@flochamber.com
Office Hours: M - F 8:30am – 5:00pm

www.flochamber.com
www.facebook.com/florencechamber



Our Staff:

Michael J. Miller
President

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Chief Operating Officer

Les Echols
Director of Community & Minority Enterprise

Patricia Burkett
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Memberships and Associations:



Our Mission

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