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Networking... Promotion  
Education...

Together

2009 PLAN OF ACTION

# 2009 Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

## Officers



**Char Larsen**  
Thrivent Financial  
for Lutherans  
President



**Carrie Verkuilen**  
Verkuilen Family  
Chiropractic  
President-Elect



**Kathy Hansen**  
Body Essentials  
Past-President



**Jon Moreau**  
Aarrowcast, Inc.  
Treasurer



**Ron Schumacher**  
Bamboo Shores, Inc.  
Shawano Country  
Tourism Council  
President

## Directors



**Paul Black**  
Law Offices of  
Paul F. Black



**Rob Gajewski**  
Shawano Title  
Services, Inc.



**Becky Henn**  
M&I Bank



**Debby Kaczorowski**  
Shawano Specialty  
Papers



**Paul Kersten**  
Kersten  
Accounting & Tax



**Kay Kristof**  
Cooperative  
Resources  
International



**Debbie Kuhn**  
NWTC



**Rhonda Lutzke**  
Frontier  
Communications



**Jennifer Schenk**  
U.S. Department  
of Agriculture  
Rural Development



**Jeff Simon**  
AgVentures, LLC



**Mary Zimaneck**  
Til the Cows  
Come Home

## Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce Staff



**Nancy Smith**  
Executive  
Director



**Patti Peterson**  
Tourism  
Manager



**Dawn Kneuppel**  
Finance  
Coordinator



**Phebe Richter**  
Office  
Assistant



**John Gallagher**  
Receptionist



**Sally Zander**  
Visitor Center  
Receptionist



**Wendy Crawford**  
Program Coordinator  
Leadership  
Shawano County

## A Message from Kathy Hansen, 2008 President

2008 was a year of change. With the help of many, the Shawano Country Chamber office was moved from its old dwelling to the new building quickly and efficiently. I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone involved in this event. It was a huge task, and to have everything moved in a day was phenomenal.

The Chamber as well as all Chamber members suffered a heartbreaking loss this year when Jeff Mace was lost to cancer. Jeff was instrumental in the planning stages and fundraising for the new building. His ideas and hard work were appreciated by all. He is irreplaceable. We will miss him very much.

I would like to extend a thank you to the Chamber staff for their hard work and dedication. They are “the Chamber” to the people who stop in for information about the area, or those who attend meetings and so on. They represent us well and made my job easy.

And thank you to all Chamber members. Your commitment to the Chamber, monetarily as well as through volunteering are what keeps the Chamber strong in our community.

It has been fun, challenging and a great learning experience for me in this past year. I have enjoyed every moment of it. I look forward to continuing on the Board of Directors, and the continued success of the Chamber in 2009.

## A Message from Char Larsen, 2009 President

2009 brings many economic challenges for the businesses of Shawano Country. It is the Chamber’s goal to keep our membership strong and provide opportunities for our members to participate in events that encourage the community to do business locally. Our success in promoting the area is directly dependent on the strength of the Chamber Membership. We need to maintain a working relationship with each other to grow our communities and we look to our area busi-

nesses to be a substantial part of that endeavor. While it is true that businesses are looking at cutting expenses in tough economic times, we realize that promotion of our area is of utmost importance to create growth and success. Chamber Membership dues are dollars well spent in this effort.



The Business Advantage Series and Business Connections are two important programs the Chamber of Commerce will continue to facilitate. With the Business Advantage Series, we will be providing educational programs six times throughout the year. These programs are designed to help member businesses, so please let us know if there is a specific topic you would like us to address. Business Connections are held on a monthly basis and are networking opportunities to build awareness of goods and services our community has to offer.

The Chamber facility is incredible. I had the privilege of hearing comments made by tourists visiting the building, who were impressed by the building, location, staff and materials available. They said the stop at the Chamber was the most worthwhile stop on their trip. Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce Staff for creating the welcoming atmosphere and helpful service. I look forward to working with them and the Board of Directors in 2009.

## Ambassador Club

*Mission: To serve as volunteer public relations representatives and good-will ambassadors for the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce, communicate the Chamber's mission and goals, and promote involvement in Chamber membership and activities.*

**2008 Chairperson:** Jill Birr,  
Jill's Pet Shoppe

**2009 Chairperson:** Tammy Brzeczowski  
Dynamic Designs Unlimited

### 2008 Accomplishments

- Recognized Jill Birr as 2007 Ambassador of the Year.
- Conducted "Operation Thank You" new plaque deliveries to members.
- Made Ambassador Calls to new members.
- Assisted with 11 Business Connections Networking Events.
- Attended 3 ribbon cutting/grand openings.
- Recruited new ambassadors from throughout Shawano Country.
- Increased awareness of the Chamber's new location and opportunities for all Chamber members.
- Hosted New Member Reception.
- Assisted with the Fall Parade.
- Organized the annual Shawano Community Fly-Out.
- Assisted with annual golf outing.
- Assisted with Annual Banquet raffles.



### 2008 Plan of Action

- Recognize 2008 Ambassador of the Year.
- Host New Member Reception.
- Make Ambassador calls to new members.
- Assist with 11 Business Connections.
- Organize the 2009 Shawano Community Fly-Out.
- Assist with Annual Golf Outing.
- Coordinate and promote the annual Fall Parade.
- Attend ground breakings/ribbon cuttings/grand openings.
- Assist with Annual Banquet raffles.



## Business Committee

*Mission: Develop and implement strategies to promote and enhance business in Shawano Country.*



**Chairperson:** Kathy Hansen,  
Body Essentials

### 2008 Accomplishments

- Continued Small Business Advantage Series. Topics included "Power Network Marketing," "Taking Advantage of Your Chamber's Marketing Opportunities," "Branding Your Business," "Evaluating Advertising Media," "Hiring Quality Employees," and "Retaining Quality Employees"
- Awarded 2007 Small Business of the Year to Keynote School of Music LLC.
- Awarded 2007 Retail Business of the Year to Qualheim's True Value.
- Awarded 2007 Distinguished Citizen to Barbara Schmidt.
- Implemented Shop Shawano Country for June Dairy Month. Over \$500,000 in sales recorded at 20 participating businesses during campaign.
- Implemented Shop Shawano Country Campaign for holiday season. Doubled the number of participating business to 40 and enhanced the promotion with a full page ad listing all members and the total combined dollar amount they donate back to community causes.
- Conducted "Customer Service Excellence" Workshops.

### 2009 Plan of Action

- Continue Business Advantage Series.
- Increase participation in the Shop Shawano Country for June Dairy Month and the Holidays Campaigns and continue to emphasize the importance of shopping local.
- Present 2008 Business of the Year Awards.
- Conduct Customer Service Excellence workshops.

## Special Event

### Grand Opening of New Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

- Celebrated with a flag dedication, ribbon cutting, open house, and VIP reception for larger donors.
- Worked with *Shawano Leader* to produce a special Grand Opening insert.
- Coordinated and hosted Donor VIP Reception attended by 120 donors.
- Coordinated special Grand Opening Business Connection attended by over 100 members.
- Grand Opening was featured on NBC 26 news in Green Bay and regional newspapers.

## Government Affairs

*Mission: To provide opportunities for communication and interaction between Chamber members and government officials.*

**Chairperson:** Paul Kersten,  
Kersten Accounting & Tax

### 2009 Plan of Action

- Host Government Affairs Informational Sessions with elected officials and other government leaders.

## Economic Development Partnerships

### 2008 Accomplishments

- Partnered with SCEPI and Shawano County Emergency Management to present the Shawano Area Disaster Response and Recovery Workshop.

## Education Committee

*Mission: To foster partnerships between business and education and create opportunities to better educate and prepare students for the workforce.*

**Chairperson:** Debbie Kuhn, NWTC

### 2008 Accomplishments

- Surveyed employers regarding employment skills of area youth. Results will be used in a grant application completed by the Shawano School District for an at-risk alternative education program.
- Partnered with Clintonville Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the Wolf River School to Work 8th grade Career Fair.

### 2009 Plan of Action

- Partner with Clintonville Chamber of Commerce and Wolf River School To Work to coordinate 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Fair.
- Educate members on WisCareers on-line job skills resource and available jobs site for students.
- Continue effort to partner with school districts

## Membership Services

*Mission: Identify and provide valuable benefits and services to our members.*

**Chairperson:** Carrie Verkuilen,  
Verkuilen Family Chiropractic



### 2008 Accomplishments

- Welcomed 65 new members which placed our total membership at 430
- Provided free US Chamber membership to small business members.
- Sold and distributed \$ 110,000 in Chamber Bucks in 2008.
- Provided over \$40,000 in savings to members through cell phone service savings program.
- Coordinated successful Patriotic themed Annual Golf Outing under the guidance of chairperson Mark Verkuilen, attended by 180 members.
- Partnered with WTCH on "Chamber Day" which included a live day-long broadcast from the Chamber of Commerce with interviews of Chamber leaders, committee chairs, and staff.
- Created Membership Partnership with Bonduel Area Business Association and Wittenberg Chamber.
- Annual Banquet Committee coordinated an International travel themed annual banquet attended by 320 members and guests.
- Activated Bad Check Hotline 9 times to alert members of bad check/counterfeit activity.
- Distributed hundreds of Relocation Packets to potential new residents.

### 2009 Plan of Action

- Recruit at least 60 new members from throughout Shawano Country.
- Expand membership partnerships with community chambers and business associations.
- Conduct short email surveys to determine how to best serve our members.
- Enhance member-to-member discount program.
- Continue cell phone and other discount programs for members.
- Coordinate annual golf outing and banquet.

## Shawano Chamber Foundation, Inc.

The Chamber Foundation is a 501(c)(3) corporation operated by the Shawano County Chamber of Commerce for educational purposes. The Building Task Force and Leadership Shawano County (LSC) operate under the Foundation.

**2008 President:** Kathy Hansen, Body Essentials

**2009 President:** Char Larsen, Thrivent Financial

## Building Task Force

*Mission: To secure property and construct a new facility that represents the heritage and culture of Shawano County (Shawano and Menominee Counties) and allows the Chamber of Commerce to better serve businesses, visitors, and residents.*

**Chairperson:** Jeff Mace,  
M&I Bank



## 2008 Accomplishments

- Finished furnishing the building with display units and public computer.
- Completed landscaping and exterior and interior signage.
- Installed 800 gallon aquarium. Worked with aquaculture class from Shawano High School to prepare tank. Received 3 sturgeon from Great Lakes Water Institute in Milwaukee. The sturgeon had been collected in Shawano the previous year during the spring sturgeon run in the Wolf River.
- Held official ribbon cutting and grand opening.
- Continued fundraising efforts to reach \$640,000 in pledged donation commitments.
- Dedicated the Jeff Mace Conference room in memory of Jeff and to honor his leadership as Chamber president in 2005 and Building Task Force Chairman, 2005-2008.



## Leadership Shawano County

*Mission: Provide hands-on learning opportunities that challenge and inform citizens to become civic-minded leaders.*

## 2008 Accomplishments

- Graduated 20 members from the 2007/2008 LSC class.
- Two community service projects were completed including: "Saturday Night Out" safe events for area high school students, and the Shawano Food and Culture Fest.
- Coordinated Community Volunteer Fair.
- Recruited 16 participants for the 2008/2009 class.
- Received funding from Shawano Area Community Foundation, Bleser Family Foundation, Crawford Family Foundation and TransCanada.
- Obtained sponsorships for several monthly sessions.



## 2009 Plan of Action

- Graduate 16 class members.
- Develop two community service projects.
- Increase funding from grant sources and sponsorships for individual sessions.
- Increase recruitment efforts throughout Shawano County
- Receive funding to support scholarships.
- Coordinate All Class Reunion in March.
- Encourage graduates to serve in leadership roles in community-based organizations and to run for public offices.
- Create ongoing public relations efforts to increase knowledge of the program.

# Shawano Country Tourism Council

A Division of the Shawano Country  
Chamber of Commerce

*Mission: Promote tourism in Shawano and Menominee Counties (Shawano Country) through marketing, promotion, and public relations.*

**President:** Ron Schumacher, Bamboo Shores

## 2008 Accomplishments

- Unveiled newly designed website. Chamber staff entered all content and updated the site regularly in-house. The site received an average of 250 unique visitors daily.
- Designed and purchased billboard on Hwy 29 directing traffic to the 24 hour Visitor Center.
- Partnered with Shawano County and City of Shawano to contract with Discover Wisconsin to produce a segment highlighting year 'round tourism attractions and events. The show will air in November 2009.
- Coordinated Free Gas For a Year promotion and advertised state-wide on radio stations, Internet, print media, and Department of Tourism's e-newsletter.
- Exhibited and promoted Shawano Country at Milwaukee Sports Show.
- Partnered with Shawano County to produce and distribute the Summer Recreation Map.
- Published and distributed monthly calendars of Shawano Country events and activities.
- Operated the Visitor Center including 24-hour vestibule to assist Shawano Country guests.
- Increased walk-in traffic by 69 % over 2007.
- Produced and distributed 60,000 copies of 2008 Shawano Country Visitor Guide.
- Presented room tax reports to City of Shawano, Village of Cecil and Belle Plaine, Washington, Wescott , and Wittenberg Townships.
- Purchased ads in the following publications: AAA Home & Away, 2008 WI Lodging Directory, Chicago Suburban Daily Herald, Wisconsin Outdoors, Wisconsin Fishing Guide, Up North Magazine, Fun in Wisconsin, Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, Appleton Post Crescent, Shawano Ski Sharks Program, Shawano Folk Music Festival program.
- Participated in the Marinette State of Wisconsin Welcome Center display and children's essay.
- Partnered with North Central Wisconsin International Trade, Business & Economic Development Council (ITBEC). Updated website and promoted region as tourism destination.
- Distributed 20,000 Visitor Guides through Assured Associates in the Milwaukee, Highway 43, and Highway 29 regions.
- Distributed folders to several groups/organizations who hosted a conference or event in our area. Also assisted with their itineraries.
- Exhibited at Shawano County Home & Cottage Show.



## 2009 Plan of Action

- Continue to promote the many businesses and activities available to tourists in Shawano Country according to our mission.
- Promote our new Visitor Center as a destination and vacation planning resource.
- Further develop brand image recognition of Shawano Country as "Wisconsin's Playground™"
- Regularly update www.shawanocountry.com website with upcoming events, attractions and special promotions.
- Continue partnership with ITBEC and promote Shawano Country at WBAY RV & Camping Show in Green Bay, Madison Fishing Expo, and Canoeconia in Madison.
- Continue to cultivate partnerships with other regional tourism associations.
- Host 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tourism Summit for Shawano Country businesses and community leaders.
- Exhibit at Milwaukee Sports Show.
- Create email campaign to promote seasonal campaigns and giveaways.
- Operate the new Visitor Center to assist Shawano Country guests.
- Produce and distribute 60,000 copies of 2009 Shawano Country Visitor Guide.
- Distribute room tax reports to City of Shawano, Village of Cecil, and Belle Plaine, Washington, Wescott and Wittenberg Townships.
- Distribute conference folders to local groups / organizations who host a conference in our area.
- Exhibit at Shawano County Home & Cottage Show.

## Visitor Center Statistics:

Total Visitor Inquiries: 5,586  
Visitor Center Walk-ins: 5,426  
Visitor Guides Printed and Distributed: 60,000  
Visitor Guides Downloaded  
from shawanocountry.com: 560



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