

Growing
Opportunities



2009

Annual Report



and

2010 Plan of Action

2010 Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Officers



Dr. Carrie Verkuilen
Verkuilen Family
Chiropractic
President



Char Larsen
Premier
Community Bank
Past-President



Jon Moreau
Arrowcast, Inc.
Treasurer



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

Directors



Paul Black
Law Offices of
Paul F. Black



Dorothy Erdmann
Shawano Medical
Center



Jim Feeny
Wisconsin
Film & Bag



Becky Henn
M&I Bank



Ron Hillmann
Mid-County
Cooperative



Debby Kaczorowski
Shawano
Specialty Papers



Paul Kersten
Kersten
Accounting & Tax



Kay Kristof
Cooperative Resources
International



Debbie Kuhn
NWTC



Rhonda Lutzke
Frontier
Communications



Mary Zimanek
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



Carol Pleshek
Visitor Center Receptionist



Sally Zander
Visitor Center Receptionist



Wendy Crawford
Program Coordinator
Leadership Shawano County

A Message from Char Larsen, 2009 President

2009 was a trial for Shawano and Menominee Counties as well as the rest of the nation. We were not immune from the recession and the hardships brought by the struggling economy. As a Chamber of Commerce, our mission is to provide networking, promotion and education to our member businesses. We continued to provide educational opportunities at little or no cost to our members. In fact, our Networking Business Advantage Series sessions were one of our most popular events throughout the year. Events such as this create connections and dialogues that give us access to the best ideas to survive and grow in these times.

This year brought some unexpected challenges with the bankruptcy of our Chamber Bucks provider. The Board of Directors and the Chamber Staff worked diligently to make sure our community was not adversely affected by this issue and released a new and better program that is serviced locally and issued and monitored by our Chamber office.

Thank you to all our members for realizing that continuing your membership during tough economic times is beneficial to our whole community. Your support directly enables us to provide all of the services we offer. Thank you also to the chamber staff. The staff makes it easy for the volunteers serving as the Board of Directors to guide the Chamber into a new year. We look forward to working with this excellent group of people to bring more ideas and programs to our members. Success to all in 2010!



A Message from Dr. Carrie Verkuilen, 2010 President

I am grateful for this opportunity to work with the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce. My husband, Mark, and I moved to Shawano over six years ago. Immediately, we knew we wanted to be a part of the Chamber of Commerce. I knew that as a chamber member, I would get back more than I ever asked. Over the years we have enjoyed meeting Chamber members and learning about their businesses. We have attended and enjoyed the monthly Business Connection networking events.

We have also enjoyed attending the Business Advantage Series educational programs. These networking and educational programs are valuable resources to all members.

I encourage you to be involved in the Chamber and its events. The networking events, Business Connections, Business Advantage Series and numerous other Chamber resources are for you. Being involved not only gives you the opportunity to showcase your business, but it also gives you a chance to meet other leaders in our community. You have the chance to learn and grow your businesses through the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce.

The past year has challenged our businesses and our community. The Shawano Country Chamber has been there to aid businesses during these difficult times, and it will continue to be there for its members in years to come. I know that this year we will continue to be challenged and I feel that your membership in the chamber will be even more valuable than before. The Chamber provides its members multiple opportunities for growth and development.

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.

2009 Chairperson: Tammy Brzeczowski
Dynamic Designs Unlimited

2010 Chairperson: Scott Parson,
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

2009 Accomplishments

- Recognized Tammy Brzeczowski as 2008 Ambassador of the Year.
- Attended Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings for North Star Mohican Casino, Kwik Trip-Shawano, The Cottages on Golden Pond, C-Us-4 Wireless, and O'Reilly Auto Parts.
- Attended ground breakings for Aurora Health Care Shawano Clinic, Olga Brener School, Hillcrest Primary School, and Menominee Casino.
- Welcomed 47 new members
- Conducted "Operation Thank You" visits to new and prospective members.
- Assisted with 11 Business Connections at Wolf River Habitat for Humanity; Comfort Inn & Suites & Sally's Catering; CRI/Genex Cooperative; Plaza 212 Businesses: Total Fitness, Advanced Physical Therapy, Staff of Life, Sprint, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Trusted Retirement Resources, William Meyer Agency and Riverside Finance; Crossroads Custom Cabinetry; City of Shawano Business Improvement District; CoVantage Credit Union; Longhorn Saloon; The Gathering; Edward Jones Investments, Stewart Title of Wisconsin, Orthopedic & Spine Therapy; and Menominee Casino & College of Menominee Nation.
- Organized the 2009 Shawano Community Fly-Out.
- Assisted with Annual Golf Outing.
- Coordinated and promoted the annual Fall Parade.
- Assisted with the Annual Banquet.



2010 Plan of Action

- Recognize 2009 Ambassador of the Year.
- Welcome 40 new members.
- Conduct "Operation Thank You" visits to new and prospective members.
- Assist with 11 Business Connections.
- Organize the 2010 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.



Business Committee

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

2009 Chairperson: Kathy Hansen, Body Essentials

2009 Accomplishments

- Continued Business Advantage Series. Topics included "Using the Media to Your Advantage," "Successful Cash Flow Management Strategies," "Power Network Marketing-Learning Marketing Successes From Your Peers", "Give a Tweet-Social Networking 101," and "How to Obtain Financing in a Challenging Economy."
- Awarded 2008 Small Business of the Year to Angie's Main Café & The Daily Grind.
- Awarded 2008 Manufacturer of the Year to CRI.
- Awarded the 2008 Retail Business of the Year to Sherwin-Williams.
- Awarded the 2008 Service Business of the Year to Pine Hills Golf & Supper Club.
- Awarded 2008 Distinguished Citizen to Chuck Dallas.
- Implemented Shop Shawano Country for June Dairy Month. Over \$325,000 in sales recorded at participating businesses during campaign.
- Implemented Shop Shawano Country Campaign for holiday season.



2010 Plan of Action

- Coordinate new Shawano Country Business Expo.
- Introduce new "Speed Networking" monthly programs.
- 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 2009 Business of the Year Awards.
- Conduct Customer Service Excellence workshops.



Economic Development Partnerships



- Joined "Go Shawano" Team and Shawano County Economic Progress which presented "Best Practices" forums in Shawano and Wittenberg.

Education Committee

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

2009 Chairperson: Debbie Kuhn, NWTC

2009 Accomplishments

- Partnered with Clintonville Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the Wolf River School to Work 8th grade Career Fair.



2010 Plan of Action

- Partner with Clintonville Chamber of Commerce and Wolf River School to Work to coordinate 8th 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

Government Affairs

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

2009 Chairperson: Paul Kersten, Kersten Accounting & Tax

2010 Plan of Action

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

Membership Services

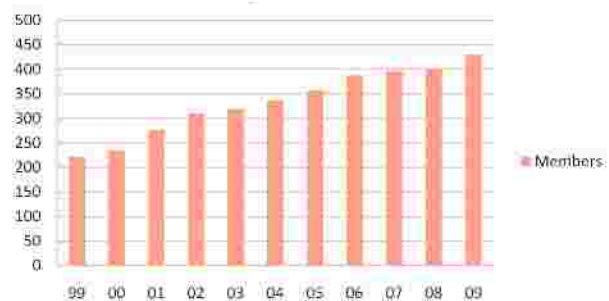
Mission: Identify and provide valuable benefits and services to our members.

2009 Chairperson: Dr. Carrie Verkuilen, Verkuilen Family Chiropractic

2009 Accomplishments

- Welcomed 47 new members which placed our total membership at 440
- Created new Chamber Bucks program with local bank. Paid out \$19,000 to replace outstanding Certifichecks certificates after that company declared bankruptcy.
- Surveyed members to find out how the economy was impacting them and determined the most important thing the Chamber could do to help them.
- Provided several new promotional programs in response to member survey including discounted Constant Contact email marketing program and MemberMessages email updates to members.
- Provided free US Chamber membership to small business members.
- Provided over \$40,000 in savings to members through cell phone service savings program.
- Coordinated successful "Life's a Beach" themed Annual Golf Outing under the guidance of chairperson Mark Verkuilen, attended by 180 members.
- Annual Banquet Committee coordinated old fashioned "Ski Lodge" themed annual banquet attended by 320 members and guests.
- 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.
- Activated Bad Check Hotline nine times to alert members of bad check/counterfeit activity.
- Distributed hundreds of Relocation Packets to potential new residents.

Membership Growth 1999-2009



2010 Plan of Action

- Recruit at least 40 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 Country Chamber of Commerce for educational purposes. The Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce Office Building and Visitor Center and Leadership Shawano County (LSC) operate under the Foundation.

2009 President: Char Larsen, Thrivent Financial

2010 President: Dr. Carrie Verkuilen, Verkuilen Family Chiropractic

Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce Office Building and Visitor Center

Mission: To operate a facility that represents the heritage and culture of Shawano County and allows the Chamber of Commerce to better serve businesses, visitors, and residents.

2009 Accomplishments

- Received grant from TransCanada Corporation which funded A/V equipment for the Jeff Mace Conference Room. The room is now fully equipped for webinars, video/Internet presentations, teleconferences, and, of course, good old fashioned face-to-face meetings.



- Welcomed Wolf River School to Work as new tenant.

- Received handcrafted "Visions of Shawano County" quilt by the Shawano Area Quilters.



Leadership Shawano County

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

2009 Accomplishments

- Graduated 15 members from the 2008/2009 LSC class.
- Completed two community service projects including: A Financial Resource Guide for clients at Safe Haven and "Networking for Those in Need" a project benefitting SAFPARC. A new computer, office chairs, filing cabinet and children's books were obtained and donated.
- Recruited 16 participants for the 2009/2010 class.
- Sponsored the second Leadership Shawano County All Class Reunion in April.
- Received funding from the Bleser Family Foundation, Crawford Family Foundation, and the Wal-Mart Foundation.
- Obtained sponsorships for several monthly sessions.

2010 Plan of Action

- Graduate 16 class members.
- Develop and complete two community service projects.
- Maintain funding from grant sources and sponsorships for individual sessions.
- Increase recruitment efforts throughout Shawano County.
- 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.*

2010 President: Ron Schumacher, Bamboo Shores



2009

Accomplishments

§ Partnered with Shawano County to contract with Discover Wisconsin to produce a

segment highlighting year 'round tourism attractions and events. The show aired in November, 2009.

- § Partnered with WFRV-TV 5 to highlight area businesses and attractions. Coordinated getaway packages for giveaways.
- § Produced new 2009/2010 Shawano County Map.
- § Continued to regularly update www.shawanocountry.com. The site received an average of 285 unique visitors daily.
- § Enhanced website with video player that shows Discover Wisconsin segments and videos of other area attractions.
- § Continued billboard on Hwy. 29 directing traffic to the 24-hour Visitor Center.
- § Purchased four electronic billboards for two weeks on Hwys. 43, 94 and 45 in the metro-Milwaukee area.
- § Exhibited and promoted Shawano Country at Milwaukee Sports Show.
- § Published and distributed monthly calendars of Shawano Country events and activities.
- § Operated the Visitor Center including 24-hour vestibule to assist Shawano Country guests.
- § Produced 60,000 copies of the 2009 Shawano Country Visitor Guide.
- § Purchased ads in the following publications: 2009 WI Lodging Directory, Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, Wisconsin Trails magazine, Midwest Outdoors magazine, Shawano County Snowmobile Map and Shawano Ski Sharks Program.
- § Hosted Tourism Summit featuring keynote speaker Denise Barnett, Wisconsin Innkeepers Association. Awarded "Tourism Progress Award" to Walls of Wittenberg and "Friend of Tourism Award" to Carol Pleshek, Super 8.
- § Partnered with North Central Wisconsin International Trade, Business & Economic Development Council (ITBEC). Updated website and promoted region as tourism destination and promoted Shawano Country at WBAY RV & Camping Show in Green Bay, Madison Fishing Expo, and Canoeopia in Madison.
- § 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.
- § Hired Carol Pleshek as part-time Visitor Center Receptionist.



2010 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 Canoeopia in Madison.
- § Continue to cultivate partnerships with other regional tourism associations.
- § 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 2010 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.

Visitor Center Statistics:

Visitor Center Walk-ins: 4,342
Visitor Guides Printed: 60,000
Visitor Guides Downloaded
from shawanocountry.com: 1,300
Total Unique Visits to Website: 103,000



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