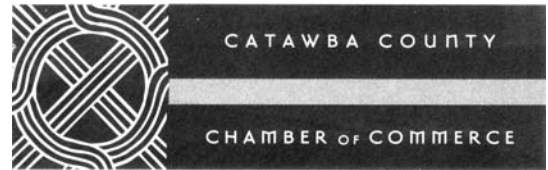


# Catawba County Chamber of Commerce – RETURN ON INVESTMENT

## Strategic Plan for 2008-2010



### **Regionalism:**

...Business needs to drive this effort and establish collaborative partnerships with the other Chambers, EDC's, government, higher education, public education and the citizenry at large.

...A region wide effort is underway to establish a Greater Hickory Metro Website Portal for our partner organizations that will be easily accessible for those looking for new business opportunities, potential new residents and visitors with direct access to their websites. This will also include a branding process with a new logo and campaign that all participating organizations can use.

...A special "SHOPMETRO...Shop Local...It Makes Good Business Cents for Everyone" campaign will be developed and branded throughout the Metro area.

...Continue to encourage and involve our regional partners in attending and helping to plan for our future Inter-City visits.

### **Champions of Education:**

...Education has been identified as our number one economic development priority

...Pre-K – 12, family involvement and teacher recruitment and retention will be the primary focus for the Education Cabinet.

...Quarterly Business/Education Partnership Breakfasts will be held to update the business community about key educational priority areas that the Cabinet/schools systems are addressing.

...Branding and marketing the Champions of Education efforts to the community at-large is very important and will result in an increased awareness that education is our pathway to economic prosperity.

...Encourage more businesses to fund "Home Grown Teacher Scholarships" provided that after graduation, they stay and teach in Catawba County.

...Provide support and sponsorship to the three school systems for their joint Teacher Recruitment Fair at the Convention Center.

...Provide leadership training classes for the Teaching Fellow students at Lenoir-Rhyne College. Help to plan for next years Teaching Fellow recruitment efforts at the college.

### **Voice of Business:**

...This is the number one priority area for the Chamber in 2008 and beyond. Make sure that the membership is aware of that designation and better communicate our efforts to them in a more timely and efficient manner. Create more effective ways for our members to communicate their legislative concerns to us so we can incorporate them into our overall lobbying efforts and into our Legislative Agenda for 2008 and beyond.

...Restructure, expand and re-energize the current Governmental Affairs Committee of the Chamber.

## **Catawba County Chamber of Commerce - Strategic Plan for 2008-2010**

### **Voice of Business (Cont'd):**

...Host local legislative receptions/briefings, candidate forums and attend NC State Chamber legislative meetings during the short session in 2008.

...Sponsor membership visits to Raleigh and Washington D.C.

...The Chamber's Land Use Development Board will continue to monitor local pro-business public policy issues/ordinances, etc. for the Chamber Board.

...The Chamber will encourage strong business candidates to run for elective office at every opportunity. They will also work with current elected officials to lobby as the "voice of business" for our members.

...Work with NCFree to monitor our legislators voting records and make sure that this is conveyed to our membership.

### **Existing Business/Industry Programs and Visitations: Partnership with the EDC**

...The Chamber should continue to be a major funding sponsor to the Economic Development Corporation to support and compliment each others efforts in new business development and retention for the county and Metro area.

...Update and publish the Permit Primer and the Entrepreneurs Resource Guide for new and existing businesses.

...Support the EDC in their efforts to open up new industrial parks, build speculative buildings and market this region as the new home for data center projects.

...Workforce issues (quality and quantity) will become an even greater problem as currently announced projects start production and/or break ground or even think about coming to this area.

...Business survival skills training programs are a priority for the Chamber to conduct in conjunction with the Small Business Center at CVCC, the SBTDC, the Higher Education Center and Lenoir-Rhyne College.

### **Environmental Committee:**

...This new Committee will be composed of industry and business representatives that will deal with issues such as water quantity and quality, recycling, air quality, investigate "best practices" from across the country, and network as a group for common vendors and affiliates that are providing good affordable quality service.

...Develop some type of Green Business Partnership Certification for local companies to implement and be recognized for.

...Become an effective lobbying group for pro-business friendly environmental public policy issues.

### **Leadership Training:**

...Sponsor the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Leadership Catawba program; the Check Point Leadership series and the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Non-Profit Leadership Training program

...The Chamber will kick-off it's new Young Professionals (21-40) group in 2008 to network these emerging leaders in our region to better prepare them for local Board positions, elected offices, recruiting other young professionals to the area, monthly networking events, establishing their individual bio's and resumes on their own website for possible new career opportunities and for other community activities that need a new emerging leadership base.

## **Catawba County Chamber of Commerce - Strategic Plan for 2008-2010**

### **Area Councils:**

...The Chamber will continue to manage both the Newton Area Council and the Southeast Catawba County Area Council.

...The Newton Area Council has a priority in 2008 to partner with the City of Newton and the Newton Downtown Business Association to do a community visioning and assessment survey dealing with shopping habits, new and existing business development/services, appearance, and future growth issues specifically for the downtown area.

...The Southeast Catawba County Area Council has as its priorities: lobby for sewer expansion along Hwy. 150 to Hwy. 16; locating a new Convenience Center site for Catawba County, reviewing new MUC-O standards being considered in the area surrounding the 150 and 16 intersection; a review of the Unified Development Ordinance after one year being implemented; quarterly networking events and increasing the membership to 75 members.

### **Land Use Development Board:**

...The Chamber, the Realtors Association and the Homebuilders Association will continue their strong and effective partnership in lobbying for more locally business friendly public policies that will have a positive impact on new growth and expansion of residential, commercial and industrial projects in the county.

### **Inter-City and Intra-City Visits:**

...The success of our Inter-city visits has been well worth the cost and time to go. The site selection process for the 2008 visit will be chaired by the Chamber's Chairman-Elect. The location will be better matched up this time with our regions most pressing economic priorities which were developed at the Chamber's Board Planning Retreat in late 2007.

...Priorities to consider for the 2008 visit will be: successful governmental affairs programs that are addressing key pro-business public policy issues, public and higher education, and effective regionalism strategies.

...Before the Inter-City visit, the Chamber will coordinate an Intra-City visit within the region to better understand our own key priority issues that we plan to learn and discuss with our host city. We need to become better prepared as a Visiting Team to make the most out of our trip.

### **ASU Expansion to the Hickory Metro area:**

...A four year UNC presence in the Hickory region is priority one under the Economic Development Committee's Foresight Report strategies. This would solve several of the region's serious shortcomings by increasing the number of higher paying jobs, building a strong and lasting economic base and increasing the region's languishing educational attainment level.

...ASU has confirmed its commitment to serve the needs of the Greater Hickory Metro area. Currently, ASU expects to receive almost 15,000 applications annually for less than 2,800 available slots. Land constraints and construction costs in Boone present challenges to campus expansion there. Greater presence in this region could serve our educational needs