



2018

**A COMPLETE GUIDE TO
RIBBON CUTTINGS & GRAND OPENINGS**

HopewellPrinceGeorge

Chamber of Commerce

GETTING STARTED

One of the most exciting events for a business, whether new or existing, is celebrating a grand opening, anniversary, recent achievement or business milestone. The Hopewell/ Prince George Chamber is pleased to assist members in the planning, promotion, and coordination of these important events.

SETTING A DATE

Allow yourself plenty of time to organize the details of the event. Begin a minimum of three to four weeks ahead of the actual event date if possible. This allows attendees enough time to respond and mark their calendars.

Tips for choosing a good date:

- Be aware of major holidays and avoid planning your event for those days. Also, if you are trying to attract bankers or government officials, take note of any special holidays when their offices may be closed.
- Try to avoid a conflict with major community and/or sports events. Log on to hopewellva.gov and princegeorgecountyva.gov to find out what events are taking place locally.
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- Consult the Chamber's online [Events Calendar](#) to assure you aren't selecting a date that conflicts with an established Chamber event.
- For better weekday attendance, choose a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. If at all possible avoid holding a weekend event.

TIME OF DAY

The time of day you choose to hold your event is also critical to its success. It's an important step in the planning process and helps determine the type of special event that you'll conduct. Morning functions, for example, will have an entirely different atmosphere and style than an evening cocktail reception. Luncheon gatherings will naturally require more food and beverages.

Consider the following when making your decision:

- Very few successful special events are held early in the morning. Unless it is a necessity, morning events should begin no earlier than 7:30 am.
- Luncheon events often turn out well, since most everyone eats a mid-day meal. However, luncheons require more advance notice in sending out invitations. If you decided on a luncheon event, the best time is 11:30 am - 1:00 pm.
- Late afternoon and early evening functions seem to be the most popular and successful. This allows people to drop by after work. The best time for an evening event is 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.
- Try to avoid mid-morning and mid-afternoon time periods.

- Half-day open house or tours of your company are not advisable unless it's necessary or traditional in your line of business (i.e. hotels or restaurants). If you decide on a half-day event, be certain to have a designated time for a ribbon-cutting or other special ceremonies to lend focus to your event.
- If media coverage is important to you, give serious consideration to their deadlines before selecting a time for your event.

INVITATIONS

When developing the list of invitees, consider the following groups of people:

- Potential/current customers
- Suppliers
- Employees
- Representatives from the Chamber
- Key government officials – city council members, mayors and public officials from the district where your business is located. If your goal is to have a public official present, you may want to schedule that person first and build your event around his/her availability.
- Media outlets
- Neighboring businesses
- Friends and family
- Business associates

FOOD & BEVERAGES

When planning for food, it is important to make time-appropriate selections.

- For morning events, coffee, juices, fruit, and pastries are common.
- At luncheon functions, serve some kind of sandwich or buffet meal. Keep in mind that guests attending a noon event are spending their lunch hour with you.
- During late afternoon or early evening events, light hors d'oeuvres or finger foods are appropriate.
- Many people choose to enlist the help of a caterer for larger events. Check with the Chamber or visit the [online Member Directory](#) for a list of our catering Chamber members.

MEDIA & PHOTOGRAPHY

To increase the chance of getting media coverage for your event:

- Send a press release to newspapers at least 10 days ahead of your event. Your press release should include the journalistic basics of who, what, when, where and why. See info on writing a press release and samples [here](#).
- We recommend contacting the following local business news editor at the following media:
 - 1-The Prince George Journal
 - 2-The Progress-Index
 - 3-The Hopewell Herald/Prince George Post
- Designate someone to take photos so that if the media is not able to attend your event, you can send a follow-up press release and photos to relevant media contacts after the fact.
- If you need professional photographers, consult our [online Member Directory](#) for assistance.

PLANNING THE CEREMONY

Have a brief printed program prepared. It is an opportunity to provide valuable recognition for you and allows you to provide information to the public about your business.

Consider these suggestions:

- Plan your event agenda to last approximately 30 minutes. Limit the number of speakers and the length of their speeches. Set a time limit for everyone asked to participate in the program.
- Be sure to give each of your speakers a reminder call the day before the event.
- Indoors or out, any group of 50 or less usually does not need a microphone system. More than 50 people usually requires voice amplification. A podium or lectern is often helpful to speakers.
- The Hopewell Prince George Chamber will conclude your program with the appropriate ceremonial or symbolic activity to commemorate the event: a ribbon cutting for a grand opening or shoveling the first load of dirt for a groundbreaking. These activities let guests know the formal program is over and they also create good photo opportunities.
- If your event includes an open house or tour of your facilities, be sure friendly and knowledgeable employees conduct group tours.
- Consider having some kind of door prize or drawing as part of your program.
- If holding an outdoor event, always have a backup plan in case of bad weather.

- Consider integrating a sign-in sheet or a business card drop box to collect attendee data and assist in your post-event follow-up.

CHAMBER RESOURCES

PUBLIC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Your event will be listed on the Chamber's website's [local event calendar](#).

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

If you would like to invite fellow Chamber member businesses, you can find their contact information on our [online Member Directory](#).

AT THE EVENT

CHAMBER MEMBERS & STAFF

The Chamber will provide staff representation at your event and will assist with the commencement of the ceremony.

PRESENTATION RIBBON

The Chamber will provide a ceremonial ribbon and a pair of oversized scissors for use during your ceremony and photo opportunity.

CONTACT US

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