



THE CENTRAL CHAMBER REPORT

Celebrating 10 years of the Chamber's Service!

What does the Chamber do in Central?

In these series of articles, we are in the process of exploring how each of the values of Care, Connect and Collaborate play into the overall plan of the Central Chamber. We strive to Care for our businesses and community, we serve to facilitate the Connecting of businesses to other businesses, governmental leaders and organizations and we help to Collaborate efforts between various civic, governmental, economic and nonprofit groups. Last week we discussed "Care". In a "Community that Cares", we strive to care for our businesses and our community! This week we look at the importance of the value "Connect".

CONNECT

Over the past ten years we have created opportunities for our members to connect with other businesses, governmental leaders and various civic organizations. Held the second Wednesday of each month, the Monthly Investors' Luncheons has constantly proven valuable in helping to accomplish this important mission. These meetings provide an opportunity for our investors to network with other business leaders and to also be exposed to a variety of speakers they might not normally have the opportunity to meet.

In the past year we provided our members with the opportunity to meet the candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State. Our members have had the chance to receive updates from our city's Mayor, Junior Shelton as well as updates from a variety of other elected officials. Officials have included U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, State Senators Bodi White and Dale Erdey, State Representatives Valarie Hodges and Barry Ivey, at the time Gov. Bobby Jindal, Treasurer John Kennedy, Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain, Secretary of State Tom Schedler and Constable Gordon Hutchinson. As an added benefit, at many of our meetings, a representative from one or more of our state representatives and senators office will be in attendance along with representatives from our U.S. Representative's and U.S. Senator's office, Central City Council and Central Community School Board. This type of exposure, allows our members to have dialogue with elected officials, voice their concerns and to ask questions.

Besides having the opportunity to interact with candidates and our elected officials, over the years our members have had the opportunity to hear from and interact with Moon Griffon, Leo Honeycutt, former Governor Edwards, Jay Grimes, Gordy Rush, Julio Melara, Superintendent Mike Faulk, Beth Torina, East Baton Rouge area hospital's CEOs, leaders from BRAC and BREC and a variety of other informative speakers.

Two years ago we launched, what has become a successful endeavor, LEADS for Lunch. LEADS for Lunch is held 10 times throughout the year at a variety of our Central Chamber eating establishments. LEADS attendees are given an opportunity to share about their business, highlight their business's services and possibly generate future business. LEADS is of great benefit to our local eating establishments. Due to their schedules, they often do not have the opportunity to attend other Central Chamber functions and this allows them to be engaged.

The Central Chamber, during election seasons, will also host forums with various candidates. These events allow our investors and members of the community to be informed, receive valuable insight and to connect with potential future governmental leaders.

To help connect our investors to the Central Chamber, we rely on the work of our Ambassadors. The Ambassadors Council is an elite group of motivated, enthusiastic and dependable Chamber Investors that volunteer to serve for a two-year term with the Central Chamber of Commerce. Ambassadors serve as the public relations arm of the Chamber by developing a two-way communication between themselves and the membership. This is done by calling on existing

members to update them on current activities, policies, and special events. Ambassadors also take time to ask members about their business and how the Central Chamber can be of better service.

Connect is described as: to bring together or into contact so that a real link is established; to join together so as to provide access and communication. The Central Chamber truly values the ability we provide to allow our investors to make the vast variety of connections I've mentioned. Through these opportunities contacts are made, dialogue is created, ideas are shared and we truly then become stronger together!

Ron Erickson
President – Central Chamber of Commerce