



## **Best Practices**

Chamber Café is much like a “Business Before Hours,” and has grown in popularity. Attendees benefit from a networking opportunity and learn more about Chamber members and community events

Chamber Cafés are from 7:30-9:00am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of odd-numbered months (every other month): January, March, May, July, September, and November. A business must be a current Chamber member to host a Chamber Café event, and dates are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Members may partner in hosting, such as one providing the space and another providing the food & beverage.

### **Here are ideas for a successful event:**

- Provide one large space for about 70-80 attendees
  - Room to sit, chairs & tables (cluster style, individual tables & chairs 4-8 people)
  - Adequate parking or shuttle service if parking on-site is limited
  - Winter: places for coats, sidewalks shoveled
- Serve a light breakfast & beverages (coffee for sure, juice – 1 kind is plenty)
  - Options range from rolls & muffins, coffee, juice and cider to a hot breakfast (egg bake).
  - Hire a Chamber-member caterer to make this part of the event easier.
    - Current breakfast caterers include: The Viking Café, Service Food, Zens Creative Catering, Café 116, Sweet & Savory Kitchen, Double A Catering, Stumbeano’s Coffee Co., Perks Coffee & Tea Co., The Coffee Hut
  - Plan for 70-80 chamber member guests (plus those you invite).
- Engage your staff
  - Make sure they know about the event in advance and ask them to personally invite people.
  - Have staff members wear a name tag or logo’d apparel to identify them as hosts.

### **Optional ideas to increase success:**

- Send invitations (postcards, flyer or formal) to your current business customers, chamber members and your staff – about 10-15 days before the event.
- Post a “Welcome to Chamber Café” sign on the door(s) the day of the event (we can provide)
- Hand out your company’s brochures or “Chamber special” coupons/discounts to encourage future business, 60+ day expiration date. Make sure you have information available.
- Offer tours following the speakers.

### **Here is what the Chamber will do to promote a successful event for you:**

- Newsletter – your Chamber Café event will be listed in our newsletter & on the calendar of events
- Provide mailing labels of Chamber members at no charge if you wish to send invitations
- Friday eNews – listed at least 2 weeks beforehand
- Promote the event on “Find it in Fergus Falls” TV show on PRTV with an opportunity to be the “Featured Chamber Member”
- Feature “Chamber Café” banner on our website’s home page
- Be a guest on Leighton Broadcasting “Chamber Café” the first Wednesday of the month on 1250AM
- Send an email blast reminder to Chamber members 2 days before event
- Post your Chamber Cafe on our Events Calendar on our website
- Provide greeters at the door to register guests



## Host Calendar

### 2018

- Thursday, January 11 -
- Thursday, March 8 - Country Inn & Suites/Bigwood Event Center/Z103 Bar & Grill
- Thursday, May 10 -
- Thursday, July 12 -
- Thursday, September 13 - M State (Legacy Hall) Fergus Area College Foundation
- Thursday, November 8 -

### 2017

- Thursday, January 12 - A Center for the Arts
- Thursday, March 9 - Daily Journal Media
- Thursday, May 11 - American National Bank of MN @ Community Education offices
- Thursday, July 13 - City Hall
- Thursday, September 14 - M State (Legacy Hall) Fergus Area College Foundation
- Thursday, November 9 - Olson Funeral Home

### 2016

Thursday, January 14 - Village Cooperative, co-hosted by American National Bank of MN  
Thursday, March 10 - Bigwood Event Center  
Thursday, May 12 - Nelson Auto Center  
Thursday, July 14 - Cooper's/Liberty  
Thursday, September 8 - M State (Legacy Hall) Fergus Area College Foundation  
Thursday, November 10 - Otter Tail Co. Historical Society, co-hosted by Thrivent Financial: Carol Juul

### 2015

January 8 - Olson Funeral Home & Cremation Service  
March 12 - Trinity Lutheran Church & Pre-School  
May 14 - Lakes Country Service Cooperative  
July 9 - Z103 Bar and Grill  
September 10 - M State, FACF  
November 12 - LB Homes

### 2014

Thursday, January 9 - Best Western  
Thursday, March 13 - VFW Post 612  
Thursday, May 8 - StoneL  
Thursday, July 10 - hosted by Mullen Insurance at the American Legion  
Thursday, Sept. 11 - M State, FACF  
Thursday, November 13 - hosted by Security State Bank at Salvation Army

### 2013

Thursday, January 10 - Fergus Falls Public Library  
Thursday, March 14 - Park Region Tel./OT Telcom  
Thursday, May 9 - Lake Region Healthcare  
Thursday, July 11 - A Center for the Arts  
Thursday, September 12 - M State - Fergus Falls  
Thursday, November 14 - LB Homes offices

### 2012

Thursday, January 12 - Lake Region Healthcare  
Thursday, March 8 - PioneerCare  
Thursday, May 10 - LB Homes  
Thursday, July 12 - Green Plains Otter Tail  
Thursday, September 13 - M State - Fergus Falls  
Thursday, November 8 - Don Pablo's

### 2011

Thursday, January 13 - Lakeland Hospice & Home Care  
Thursday, March 10 - Perkins Family Restaurant  
Thursday, May 12 - Otter Tail Co. Historical Society  
Thursday, July 14 - CrossRoads Church  
Thursday, September 8 - M State - Fergus Falls  
Thursday, November 10 - YMCA

### 2010

Thursday, January 15 - Bigwood Event Center  
Thursday, March 11 - Mabel Murphy's  
Thursday, May 13 - Seland's Floor Center  
Thursday, July 8 - The Spot  
Thursday, September 9 - M State, Legacy Hall  
Thursday, November 11 - Lakeland Mental Health

