Best Practices

Chamber Cafe 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 2nd 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