



# Pickens County Chamber of Commerce

## Ambassador Handbook

Welcome to the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Program. As an Ambassador of the Chamber, you represent the Chamber Membership, your business and the community to the Pickens County area. You are often the first community representative a new business owner meets. As such, your position is an important one.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with:

- An overview of the Chamber
- Information on your role as an Ambassador of the Chamber
- Expectations of the Board of Directors and the Membership.

After reviewing this manual you will be asked to sign a copy of the back page and return it to the Chamber to signify that you understand the purpose of this handbook, the expectations set forth, and your vital role as an Ambassador of the Chamber.

This manual has been developed to serve as a guide for use by all Ambassadors of the Chamber. The plans, policies and procedures are not limited to the conditions described herein. Changes in conditions and in the interests of the Chamber and its Ambassadors necessitate that the Board of Directors reserve the right to modify, suspend or terminate these plans, policies or procedures in whole or in part, at anytime, with or without notice. The Chamber supports equal opportunity as a matter of principle. The Chamber offers equal opportunity to all Ambassadors and applications without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin.

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## About the Chamber

### **Mission Statement:**

To actively promote Pickens County, assist with economic development, improve the quality of life of its citizens, preserve its natural beauty, and enhance the value of Pickens County Citizenship.

### **This will be achieved by:**

- supporting quality education and health care
- providing a link between the people of the county, business and industry and local government
- cooperating with other agencies and communities for regional growth and development
- preserving the heritage of our area
- protecting our natural resources
- insuring managed growth and development of our county

### **What is a Chamber of Commerce?**

A Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary organization of business and professional people dedicated to the economic well-being of their community. By working for a healthy economic climate, capital creation and honest, efficient government, a Chamber of Commerce helps to resolve the challenges of the fast growing community.

A Chamber's strength lies in the number and diversity of its membership. Both large and small businesses from virtually every profession are represented and influence the directions of the Chamber's programs. The Members are the Chamber. The more members the Chamber has, the better it can represent the business community. It can accomplish collectively what no one business can do alone.

### **The Pickens County Chamber of Commerce**

**IS.....**A nonprofit action-oriented membership organization for business and professional people and concerned individuals representing the best interest of Jasper-Pickens County.

**IS.....**The official voice of the business community on local, state and national issues.

**IS.....**Carrying out its programs through the financials support of members –many of whom participate in numerous committees assisted by a full-time professional staff.

**IS.....**Providing information and assistance to visitors and newcomers.

**IS.....**an Economic Development entity that helps foster a strong economic environment through our programs and initiatives, which helps attract new businesses, creates new jobs and generates new income.

### **Objectives of the Chamber:**

- To promote our Member's businesses and services.
- To coordinate the efforts of commerce and industry to maintain and strengthen a healthy business climate.
- To provide business leadership to coordinate interested parties in solving community problems and initiating community action.
- To create a broad understanding and appreciation of the great opportunities in the Pickens County area, and to promote the advantages and assets of our community within the area, the state and the nation.

### **How the Chamber is financed:**

A Chamber of Commerce is NOT a department of local government...a social, civic or charitable institution, a private advertising, publicity or public relations agency. Chambers are almost totally dependent on their member's investment for their income.

### **How the Chamber is structured:**

A Board of Directors governs the Chamber and is the policy making body of the Chamber. Its Members represent the business and professional leadership of the community. The Board consists of not less than fifteen (15) Chamber Members. The Chair of the Board chairs the monthly meetings, which usually occur in the last Friday of each month at 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber office.

The Executive Board consists of the Chair, Past Chair, Chair Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. The President also serves on this committee but has no voting rights.

The Chamber has several committees, which are responsible to report activities on a monthly basis to the Board of Directors. Each committee is chaired by a Board Member. There are other Programs of the Chamber which are lead by Chamber Staff, the Ambassadors are such a Program.

As the Ambassadors are part of the structure of the Chamber, the group will follow Chamber protocol and directions provided by the Board of Directors.

### **Confidentiality:**

All Ambassadors of the Chamber are responsible for protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of Chamber information. This includes conversations that occur in the Chamber office.

## **Ambassadors Code of Conduct**

The Chamber is proud of its Ambassadors and is confident that you will conduct yourself in a professional, business-like manner. No written list of rules or procedures can complete – or can substitute for good judgment. However, for the protection of the Chamber’s property, business interests and Ambassadors, there are guidelines that must be followed. These guidelines do not limit the Chamber’s right to correct for other conduct found to be detrimental to the interest of the Chamber, its Members or other Ambassadors. If your conduct should become unacceptable, you will be advised about the situation and corrective action will be followed when considered appropriate.

Actions that are considered serious in nature and may result in termination include:

1. Attending Chamber events under the influence of unlawful drugs; use or possession of unlawful drugs on Chamber premises or at Chamber events.
2. Failure to observe Chamber rules or generally accepted standards of conduct.
3. Falsifying Chamber records or assisting another in falsifying Chamber records.
4. Inappropriate behavior at Chamber events or activities, including discussion about internal Chamber or Ambassador issues.
5. Immoral or indecent conduct on or around Chamber premises, or when conducting Chamber business of premises.
6. Violation of safety or sanitation rules.
7. Unauthorized possession of Chamber property, embezzlement, fraud, misappropriation of Chamber property or funds, or any other act of dishonestly.

### **Guidelines of acceptable representation of Ambassador’s business**

The Chamber fully understands and expects each Ambassador to represent their business as well as represent the Chamber and promote it’s efforts. However, in doing so the following guidelines apply:

1. If you send a standardized letter or email to members (new, current or prospective) introducing yourself as a Chamber Ambassador and also soliciting for your business, you must have the letter or email wording pre-approved by the Chamber.
2. If you have a face to face contact or a contact via phone where you represent yourself as a Chamber Ambassador and then solicit them for your business, you must be very sensitive to your tone and assertiveness. The Chamber does not want members feeling a high degree of pressure to do business from an Ambassador. A soft sell, more introductory approach is appropriate for first contact. Then, once you have made an appointment and are predominately discussing your business, your normal natural style of selling applies.
3. You may only represent yourself as an Ambassador if you are in good standing with the Ambassador Program and have the express permission of the Chamber. If you, for any reason, lose the privilege of being an Ambassador, you may not represent yourself as an Ambassador.
4. It is acceptable for you to wear your company name tag when representing the Chamber and you are asked to also wear your Ambassador name tag to officially identify you as an Ambassador.

5. If you represent yourself as an Ambassador and make a promise to do something as a representative of your company, the Chamber expects you to honor all commitments. If you are not sure you can produce what you promise, then either don't promise it or don't represent yourself as a Chamber Ambassador.
6. When representing your company as a Chamber Ambassador, you must follow a high level of honesty, trustworthiness, and credibility. Remember, you are representing the Chamber of Commerce as well as your business.

### **Ambassador Structure**

There shall be one Chamber Staff person who will act as the liaison of the Chamber and assume regular Ambassador duties and responsibilities. It is the responsibility of this person to keep the Ambassadors informed of all future Chamber events at which their attendance is either requested or required.

Ambassadors are required to be a Chamber Member in good standing, and should your employment change, and your new employer is not a Chamber Member, there is a two month grace period by which you have the opportunity to recruit your employer as a Member.

The Ambassadors will have its own Leadership Team consisting of:

- President
- President Elect
- Secretary
- Membership/Programs Chair or Co-Chair
- Chamber Staff Person

The Ambassador President will be nominated in November, approved at December meeting and take office following January. President will serve through the following December. The Ambassador President will assist the Chamber Staff in effectively managing Ambassador activities. The Leadership Team will meet as required at the call of the Chamber Staff or the Ambassador President. Essential duties of the Leadership Team are as follows:

The President

- Presides over Ambassador meetings.
- Coordinates meeting agendas with the Chamber staff.
- Assists the Chamber staff in defining the role of Ambassadors in existing or proposed Chamber program.

#### The President Elect

- Presides over meeting or activities in the Presidents absence.
- Assists the President in coordinating Ambassador activities as required.
- Works to gain knowledge during President Elect term to become President.

#### The Secretary

- Takes and publishes notes for all Ambassador meetings.

#### The Membership/Programs Committee Chair-Co-Chair

- Serves as Liaison for the Chamber Board of Directors.

#### The Chamber Staff Representative

The Chamber Staff person takes their direction from the Chamber President.

Accordingly, the duties described here are suggestive only and will be modified by the Chamber President as required.

- Serves as the Liaison from the Chamber President to the Ambassadors.
- Assists the Ambassador President in developing the Agenda for Ambassador meetings.
- Ensures that the Ambassador Officers and individual Ambassadors have access to the information on Chamber plans, policies and activities necessary to conduct their required functions.
- Ensures that the concerns and issues of the Ambassadors are presented to the Chamber President, and with the consent of the Chamber President, to the Chamber Board as appropriate.
- Attends all Ambassador meetings.
- Attends Ambassador Officer meetings.
- Will be responsible for notifying Diplomats and Ambassadors that have been selected for non-retention.
- Will not normally vote on Ambassador Officer decisions; however, will vote to break ties if necessary.

#### **Role of Ambassadors**

- Expected to attend 8 of the 10 Ambassador meetings per year; a letter will be issued after 2 absences, and the Ambassador will be dismissed after 3 unexcused absences. The Ambassador Members may issue leaves of absence as necessary by vote.
- The Ambassador will be asked to choose their preference for participation in the event areas of Ribbon Cuttings, Mixers, and Business After-Hours. Within their preferred area they will be expected to attend 75% of the events or attend another event for makeup.
- Expected to attend ALL monthly breakfasts, unless excused. Ambassadors must volunteer to help the staff at least 3 times per year on day of or in preparing day

before breakfast. A letter will be issued after 2 absences, and the Ambassador will be dismissed after 3 absences.

- Volunteering to help the Marble Festival in some capacity is mandatory unless excused.
- Expected to volunteer for any 2 fund raising events, including Truck Raffle, Golf Tournament, Annual Dinner, Casino Night, and any others that may be created.
- A staff member will take attendance at the different events and maintain a current attendance spread sheet, but it will be the Ambassador's responsibility to "check in".
- All Ambassadors will have some responsibility to sell tickets for all fundraisers.
- It is the Ambassador's responsibility to know of all Chamber events and activities and the details surrounding them; IF YOU DON'T KNOW, ASK.
- Be active in qualifying and recruiting new Ambassadors as needed.
- A committee of three Ambassadors will be chosen to determine accountability and performance among Ambassadors.

The Ambassadors are the "Welcoming Arms" of the Chamber and as such is very important to the Chamber and the community. Since we value our Chamber Memberships we strive to make them feel comfortable in being involved at the Chamber. We understand all Chamber members are extremely busy, and the Ambassadors are no exception. We do not expect you to attend every event, though we would like to see Ambassadors at as many of the above listed events as possible.

### **Enrollment**

- The Chamber Ambassadors will have Open Enrollment year round. Upon receipt of application and acceptance from the Leadership Team, you are identified as a Diplomat.
- Each new Diplomat is expected to attend a New Diplomat Orientation. These Orientations will be held every other month immediately following the regularly scheduled Ambassador meetings. Diplomats cannot begin acting as a Diplomat until they have attended orientation.
- Upon completion, Diplomats are to attend Ambassador meetings and take on the role of an Ambassador.
- After three months as an Ambassador, if you have displayed a commitment to meeting the requirements as an Ambassador, you will be presented to the membership as an Ambassador. The reason for this period is for you to understand your role once you become an Ambassador as well as allow the Ambassador Leadership Team to see your commitment.

## **Terms and Termination**

### **Terms**

Diplomats

Diplomats will serve for 3 months.

Ambassadors:

The initial term of an Ambassador will be two years. At the end of the initial two year term an Ambassador must re-apply annually to remain in the program. The renewal period will be in January and February. Current Ambassadors will always be continued at their request unless they fail to meet the standards for continuation.

### **Terminations**

#### **Voluntary**

Participation in the Ambassador Program may be terminated for the following reasons:

- A. You do not or cannot fulfill the terms of this agreement.
- B. Your company does not maintain current membership in the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce.
- C. If a position on the board is taken, you must step down as Ambassador

Diplomats may leave the program at any time by simply informing the Ambassador Membership Chair.

Ambassadors that need to voluntarily leave the program during a term should submit their resignation in writing to the Ambassador Membership Chair. Individuals leaving the program voluntarily will be required to wait one year before re-applying.

#### **Involuntary**

While participation in the Ambassador program provides a service to the Chamber and the Community, it is both a privilege and an honor to serve as an Ambassador. All the members of the Chamber are actively involved in the community and in their own businesses and there will be occasions when the demands of business or family will dictate that a serving Ambassador simply no longer has the time available to effectively serve as an Ambassador. If an Ambassador will not be able to participate for several months or longer they should consider resigning and returning at a later date rather than place their peers and the Chamber in the awkward position of having to ask them to leave.

Participation in the Ambassador program, at all levels may be terminated for:

- Failure to maintain current membership

- Serious violations of the Ambassador Code of Conduct
- Failure to actively participate in the program once having been admitted.

The Ambassador Leadership Team will review circumstances around any complaint or incidence and make recommendations to the Chamber Membership Chair for action. The recommendations of the Leadership Team may be appealed to the President of the Chamber, whose decision will be final.

### **Leave of Absence**

In the event you are unable to actively participate in the program due to family illness, own illness, traveling, etc. Ambassadors may be given a leave of absence. Length of this leave will be determined on an individual basis by the Leadership Team on a case by case basis. The President should be notified immediately of this request.

The policies and procedures set forth in this handbook are subject to revision at any time. The policies outlined in this handbook do not constitute a contract between the chamber and Ambassador. The Chamber retains the right to update this handbook as needed and will provide Ambassadors with new material when reviewed or additions occur.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This acknowledges that I have received a copy of the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Handbook and I have read and comprehend the contents.

By signing this form, I am communicating my commitment to the Chamber and understand what is expected from me as an Ambassador.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ambassador Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Signature