

Pickens County Chamber – Membership Survey Results

Top 3 business issues

1. Increasing customer awareness of my website Increasing sales Traffic
2. Updates on who is doing what Special offers by local businesses Knowing what is going on with city & county stuff
3. Growing a quaint community. Helping to make us an attractive mountain community. Not only big business. Growing together as a community.
4. County budget, lack of responsive action by state level representatives, county land management department form top to bottom.
5. 1.Strength of the local economy 2.Local businesses being patronized instead of people shopping "out-of-town" 3.Building up the downtown area to attract more tourists and visitors. (like Blue Ridge, Acworth, and other towns
6. Maintaining small businesses and not allowing them to fail due to "Big Business"
7. Infrastructure, attracting businesses that create jobs, and crime (illegal drugs)
8. Sustained solid growth/keeping downtown and older developments occupied and vital For most of my clients and self-good employees Good solid sources of business information through the chamber and by referral to accountants,educational institutios, etc who have the information
9. child abuse, substance abuse, job opportunities
10. Eradication of Drugs Encouragement of our Youth Support of our local law enforcement personnel.
11. Over-population too much real estate development Poor zoning laws leading to above
12. Future growth & development, competent labor force, inflation
13. NOTHING
14. Taxes, transportation, governmental regulations
15. Uncontrolled growth City vs County conflict Inadequately prepared workforce
16. 1. THE LACK OF A COHESIVE VISION FOR ECON. DEV. FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTY. NOW THAT LARRY T. IS GONE, WE ALL NEED TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE!!! 2.THE SQABLE BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND THE CITY MAKES US ALL LOOK BAD TO OUTSIDE INVESTORS AND DEVELOPERS! IT IS VERY HARD FOR SOMEONE TO COME INTO THIS AREA AND INVEST IN THE PLANNING AND DESIGN THAT IT TAKES TO DO A NICE PROJECT AND THEY CANT GET STRAIGHT ANSWERS OUT OF ANYONE!!! 3.MOST OF OUR YOUTH ARE VERY UNDER-PREPARED FOR THE MODERN JOB MARKET. THEY GO INTO 'CONSTRUCTION' OF SOME SORT BECAUSE THEY HAVE VERY FEW MARKETABLE SKILLS THAT COMPANY'S NEED TO COMPETE IN TODAYS ECONOMY!
17. We need to recruit a major employer. we need something to entertain our youth (bowling/skating/movie theatre). We need school tax relief for our seniors.
18. 1. state of the mortgage industry, 2. it's effect on the housing industry
19. Economic Growth Infrastructure Leadership
20. Tourism Population Growth More Full Service Resturants
21. Keeping buyers local to Pickens County, Safety from crime for buyers, (ie. no

- vandalism to businesses, purse snatchers, personal item theft from cars, etc.), More jobs in Pickens County.
22. Referrals Sales
 23. Better Insurance for small business
 24. 1. New Growth for Pickens- Sales 2. Traffic Flow, DOT, red lights, etc. 3. Taxes
 25. Growth, Jobs, Traffic
 26. Networking, Membership Discounts, Development
 27. 1. Why is the chamber soliciting competitive businesses from other counties? If a service is not offered in Pickens County I could understand external invitations. However, inviting competing business is not appropriate. This action serves only the chamber and not the local membership. 2. Pickens should enact a ban on smoking within 20' of any public building. 3. Home based businesses should be required to be licensed with the county before being allowed membership into the chamber.
 28. I'm assuming your referencing concerns that the chamber could address? 1. Political pressure to create a better "business" environment, i.e., infrastructure, regulations, planning, etc. 2. Specific promotion of existing business opportunities and highlighting of current businesses outside our immediate area. 3. More focus on business and industry and less on social and philanthropic causes. Less social events seem to make the ones you do have more desirable to attend and all the "good cause" organizations will prosper even more if our local businesses are prospering because our county is and business community is very giving!
 29. expanding employment opportunities, preserving natural beauty and resources, planning for future growth
 30. Keeping our community 'growing gracefully' but not exploding--slow growth
 31. 1. Business growth without ruining the best of County. 2. Historical preservation with State, County & Community History taught in schools. 3. Development of County to encourage a broad range of incomes and housing without creating ghettos.
 32. Learning about each other. Working together as a Pickens County business. Being group together with other programs that are similar to yours.
 33. Taxes Taxes Taxes
 34. Property taxes increasing too fast. Low quality work force--for anything except construction.
 35. health insurance coverage, public health, social support resources
 36. Encourage Commuters and tourists passing through Jasper to visit the downtown area. Need sign at highway: Visit historical jasper- shops, fine dining, history.
 37. We need more Networking Opportunities for the businesses to meet and greet A men's "PWPC"
 38. Getting Involved in the community. Helping folks understand who and where we are. Making a difference or a positive impression of all we have the chance to get in front of.
 39. 1-Reliance on residential building for economic activity. 2-Lack of water source. 3-Need to expand industrial & manufacturing.
 40. Economy Environment Planned Growth
 41. Senior Citizen Issues Heating/prescription coverage

42. areas outside of Jasper get NO attention nothing for youth to do
43. 1)Infrastructure 2)controlled growth and planning 3)environmental impact of overdevelopment
44. Growth, traffic, quality of living and preservation of our views / mountains
45. Roads Schools Taxes
46. Education Quality employment
47. Lack of cooperation between city and county government. If we cant resolve it I think we should pull the charter from the city and make it all one thing. Dragging feet in replacing our economic development officer for the county. We have to take responsibility and not hope someone else does it. We must commit to adding cultural and recreational activities to our community in order to add quality of life for those that are already here and to attract the right kind of people moving in to our community.
48. High Taxes, Slow economy, Drugs
49. managed growth, standard of living, internal governmental issues.
50. Economic Development Collaboration with government entities Infrastructure
51. 1) Tourism 2) Roads 3) Animal Control
52. local business support - shop local, preservation of local community character - prevent overdevelopment, sustaining positive growth
53. Become more active in providing a traffice route on SR 53 (E & W)through town. Be involved in enforcing the Cross-walk saftey.
54. Economic Development Better Education in Public Schools More Services being offered to the community on a consistent basis.
55. vibrant downtown businesses tourist & business events retail & restaurants (quality, variety)
56. Volunteer opportunities
57. Governmental Control Folks who don't Vote Children who graduate High School but can't read
58. Skilled employees Ethical employees Confidentiality
59. none at the moment
60. customer base,community awareness, business growth
61. Fuel cost, vehicle insurance cost, enough business to keep going.
62. 1. Keeping sales in Pickens County 2. Recognizing the profile of new people moving in. 3) Keeping current on new businesses in area.
63. 1. Creating a workable vision for the economic future of Pickens County that incorporates its culture and dynamic potential 2. Creating a good working relationship between city and county government 3. Continued emphasis on high quality high school and post high school education (including technical fields)
64. 1. The quality of the Chamber of commerce website and the communication with members. make that number 2. and number 3. also
65. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICES, TRANSPORTATION
66. 1. Sustained/consistent business growth 2. Sustained/consistent population growth 3. Marketability of Pickens County as an economically viable and desirable metro Atlanta suburb 4. My concern is Pickens County will be over-looked when compared to Gilmer County in terms of economic opportunities for new growth and investment

- 67. Promotion of all business in the county. Legislative action. Soliciting new companies.
- 68. Controlled growth Infrastructure Community Awareness/Communication
- 69. Insurance & Tater Patch Players
- 70. Traffic on hwy53 through town to 515 is very bad many times during the day. Parks and recreation facilities are terribly inadequate for our population. Too much residential growth is destroying the trees and hills--which are the major drawing features of this area!
- 71. TRAFFIC AND GROWTH , GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP, RECREATION SOURCES
- 72. Identifying potential clients. Recruiting quality employees. Making a profit.
- 73. Lack of infrastructure in areas of the county Outmigration Poor recreational facilities

What do you want to see the Pickens county chamber improve on, add, delete?

- 1. Decrease the cost of sponsoring a breakfast Facility needs renovation
- 2. Add new things to the Marble Festival so it can compete more with Apple Fest. What about a new business to town having like a mentor or some kind of liaison to help them out.
- 3. A few seminars for business would be great on a variety of subjects. Maybe even being taught by people in the business.
- 4. Improve input to local officials and heightened pressure on items of concern to local business.
- 5. 1. Give members a choice of email or phone reminders--DON'T NEED BOTH 2. Promote more member to member business
- 6. It's outreach to attract businesses that residence currently drive to work at or do business with.
- 7. Glad to see UGA business consultant back Many of the activities are good but there are too many for me to attend and keep my business open. Some of the general trends in our chamber concern me such as having a more social and fundraising focus than what I experienced in other chambers.
- 8. no specific suggestion at this time.
- 9. Opportunities to speak to Civic Organizations within the community such as the Optimist Club or the Lyons Club, etc.
- 10. NOTHING
- 11. You folks do a good job with communication. Ideally I would prefer one e-mail per week containing all information, with links to specific topics. Failing that, always list the topic in the subject line. Thank you.
- 12. Not sure
- 13. CONSIDER HIRING A GREAT ECON. DEV. PERSON TO REALLY DRIVE INTEREST IN OUR COUNTY. PRODUCE A 10MIN DVD OF PICKENS TO SEND TO PROSPECTIVE BUSINESS'S. MARKET THIS COUNTY LIKE A BUSINESS!!!
- 14. Expand the Marble Festival to include some on-site night activities. Do a "Fin, Feather, and Fur" fundraiser. This is a raffle similar to the truck giveaway, in which you raffle off a fishing boat/motor/trailer (Fin), a high-end shotgun and/or a quail/pheasant hunting trip, (Feather), and a nice Big Game Rifle and/or Big Game Hunting Trip (Fur). Perhaps have a Professional Fishing Guide, and a representative from a nice Hunting preserve that offers both bird and deer hunting, provide the program. Draw a winning ticket at the conclusion of each of the respective presentations. Have it at Appalachian Tech, invite vendors to be there to promote their products. Serve light snacks and drinks. Sell 1000 tickets for \$50 each. Make it last all afternoon with the final drawing about 8:00.just an idea, but I bet it would be a hit!

15. Become more active and show what purpose it has to the community. I would like to see this shown through more vocal programs and better marketing of them.
16. A yearly Policeman / Firemans Ball (Benefit) to go towards purchasing equipment they need as well as to pay for one school per person each year.
17. We are relatively inactive members, but hope to change that soon! Our inactivity in no way reflects on the effectiveness of the Chamber or its attractiveness to us. We think it is an outstanding group. Our company just needs to become better involved.
18. I am too new to comment.
19. I think you all do a fine job.
20. More active in bringing new business to Community
21. Membership discounts and programs and getting the information easily.
22. Restrict membership to business with a physical presence in the county.
23. I would like to see the chamber have a greater influence in the local political arena. I would like to see our elected officials feeling that chamber support is important. I have seen chamber involvement in this area in the past actually bring our city and county together on common goals. The chamber can't be afraid to lead in this area. Social functions are nice but the chamber should be about progress and providing an environment for it. I would also like the chamber to review membership in terms of dues, membership requirements, etc.
24. A Chamber Chicks calendar.
25. Perhaps more lunchtime networking opportunities and workshops
26. Tourism & Marble Festival/Sculpture/Crafts top quality promotion
27. Communication is more important than growth. Knowledge of each other is more important than a room full of strangers.
28. Raising the awareness of the community to support the incoming businesses which are coming into Pickens county to help the local economy. If new businesses leave or shut down it only goes to prove why so much of the growth has skipped Jasper and heads to Elizabethton. The response of only 49 members from 600 reflects a lack of concern or interest in what is going on in your community. You need to figure out what will get people excited and care, opposed to periodic events and dinners that the same people continually attend.
29. keep up the good work!
30. luncheons and after hours for businesses to meet and greet A men's PWPC PMPC!! NOT to take Prayer and God out of Chamber functions
31. I wouldn't change a thing. The chamber has been Great to us and every body we come across.
32. Consider eliminating monthly meetings in favor of quarterly, and rotate between morning and evening to give more a chance to attend.
33. outreach to areas outside of Jasper
34. Y'all do a great job!
35. More intimate types of networking such as 12 @ 12 or CEO roundtables where you can network in a less intimidating atmosphere. I would also like to see more focus on support of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Possibly a resource area for information. I would also like to see a more professional polish or spin to events.
36. do not send communications as an attachment. I get over 150 e-mails daily. If its an attachment I set it aside...then rarely look back at them, thus they get deleted.
37. Fewer committees with more focus and impact
38. tourism
39. governmental affairs group, small business support meetings, luncheons for smaller groups (12-15 businesses non-competitive)

40. Reduce existing programs and concentrate on the remainder.
41. helping the business and services marry and see each relies on each other.
42. Delete all of the gambling based programs
43. can't think of anything now.
44. Great Job!
45. N/A
46. additional category for the arts, seperate from another category that does not pertain to the arts
47. We think the chamber does a great job in keeping its members informed and up-to-date with info. We are so busy in our busiess that we do not have the time to take advantage of all the services.
48. Serve as group to develop an inclusive vision for the future of Pickens County
49. Improve on the communication, personal care of the members. Take care of everyones needs, NOT just the rich businesses. Be a commerce chamber, not a party chamber for a few.
50. KEEP ON THE OUTSTANDING TRACK OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
51. 1. Availability through the chamber website of specific and up-to-date demographic information regarding population, income & buying power statistics. Commercial & Retail sales statistics. 2. Though the chamber's website is much improved, would like to encourage periodical maintenance of website with added features to encourage tourism, even though the Marble Festival site is attractive. 3. Encourage the Chamber's involvment in helping to establish a long-term and joint commitment from City and County officials to expand the availability of parks and recreation facilities possibly through Private-Public Partnership Initiatives 4. Expanded and improved Marble Festival to include more emphasis on entertainment, tourism opportunities & craftes with maybe a major competition such as Bar-B-Que or Chili Cook-off or Talent Contest. (A simple interest in "marble" as the primary attraction may not be sufficient to draw from a larger market. 5. Investigate a more suitable site for the festival and establish a program encouraging chamber members to contribute \$100 per member to a better marketing initiative earlier in the year. 6. Consider the Labor Day weekend for the Marble Festival so as not to closely conflict with neighboring festivals. At least consider the opitons and possible advantages of a mid-September event
52. The annual dinner has all priorities out of place. More time needs to be spent networking, less time on "entertainment".
53. Improve upon After Hours Mixer - needs more draw, entertainment
54. Continue to build the Youth Leadership Program and Mardi Gras in the Mountains???? Find some way to fund the Marble Sculpture competition so that it becomes more viable. We used to have fabulous marble sculpture but it has dwindled.
55. INCREASED FUNCTIONS ALLOWING MEMBERS TO INTERACT! ENCOURAGE
56. You do a good job promoting your events. The communication is very good.
57. Keep on keeping on.

2. Based on their importance to your business, please rank the following events below based on the following scale:

	Unaware of the Event	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Monthly Membership Breakfast	0.0% (0)	4.0% (4)	17.2% (17)	49.5% (49)	29.3% (29)	4.04	99
Annual Truck Raffle	2.0% (2)	28.0% (28)	34.0% (34)	26.0% (26)	10.0% (10)	3.14	100
After Hours Mixer	2.0% (2)	12.2% (12)	36.7% (36)	40.8% (40)	8.2% (8)	3.41	98
Business After Hours	0.0% (0)	13.0% (13)	29.0% (29)	46.0% (46)	12.0% (12)	3.57	100
Annual Marble Festival Business Expo	0.0% (0)	7.1% (7)	22.4% (22)	41.8% (41)	28.6% (28)	3.92	98
Annual Chamber Golf Tournament	2.0% (2)	22.2% (22)	38.4% (38)	29.3% (29)	8.1% (8)	3.19	99
Annual Casino Night	3.1% (3)	26.5% (26)	41.8% (41)	21.4% (21)	7.1% (7)	3.03	98
Annual Chamber Dinner	1.0% (1)	10.4% (10)	31.3% (30)	37.5% (36)	19.8% (19)	3.65	96

2. Based on their importance to your business, please rank the following events below based on the following scale:

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3. Based on their importance to your business, please rank the following programs/benefits below:

	Unaware of the Program/Benefit	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Ambassadors	11.5% (11)	7.3% (7)	28.1% (27)	36.5% (35)	16.7% (16)	3.40	96
Member to Member Discount Program	21.2% (21)	8.1% (8)	23.2% (23)	38.4% (38)	9.1% (9)	3.06	99
Discount member Insurance Plan	21.2% (21)	18.2% (18)	27.3% (27)	21.2% (21)	12.1% (12)	2.85	99
Leadership Pickens Program	5.1% (5)	6.1% (6)	21.4% (21)	43.9% (43)	23.5% (23)	3.74	98
Youth Leadership Program	5.1% (5)	8.2% (8)	15.3% (15)	41.8% (41)	29.6% (29)	3.83	98
Governmental Affairs Committee	10.2% (10)	4.1% (4)	28.6% (28)	36.7% (36)	20.4% (20)	3.53	98
Education Committee	11.3% (11)	4.1% (4)	23.7% (23)	41.2% (40)	19.6% (19)	3.54	97
Membership Business	2.0% (2)	1.0% (1)	8.2% (8)	51.0% (50)	37.8% (37)	4.21	98

3. Based on their importance to your business, please rank the following programs/benefits below:							
Directory							
Chamber Website	0.0% (0)	2.1% (2)	8.2% (8)	44.3% (43)	45.4% (44)	4.33	97
	<i>answered question</i>						99
	<i>skipped question</i>						1

4. Do you actively serve on a chamber committee?				
			Response Percent	Response Count
Yes			25.3%	25
No			74.7%	74
	<i>answered question</i>			99
	<i>skipped question</i>			1

5. Do you read Friday Chamber Grams?				
			Response Percent	Response Count
Yes			77.0%	77
No			2.0%	2

5. Do you read Friday Chamber Grams?			
Sometimes		21.0%	21
	<i>answered question</i>		100
	<i>skipped question</i>		0

6. Do you read the Chamber Monthly Newsletter?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		81.0%	81
No		2.0%	2
Sometimes		17.0%	17
	<i>answered question</i>		100
	<i>skipped question</i>		0

7. If the Chamber provided specific support and information for businesses, in which of the areas listed below would you be interested?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Marketing Management		33.8%	27
Financing for growth		11.3%	9

7. If the Chamber provided specific support and information for businesses, in which of the areas listed below would you be interested?

Accounting		5.0%	4
Business Plan		8.8%	7
Customer Service		25.0%	20
Business		16.3%	