



NOTICE: Chamber Annual Meeting & Casino Night
Friday, October 22nd at 5:30pm

The

Chamber Bulletin

Stoughton Chamber of Commerce
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October 2010 Newsletter

Meetings & Important Dates

2009-2010 Stoughton Chamber of Commerce Annual Report

President's Message

By: Tom Luttig, Luttig Imaging and Photography

OCTOBER 2010

- 4 **Economic Development** – Noon, Depot
- 11 **Board of Directors** – Noon, Depot
- 11 **Syttende Mai** – 5:30pm, Comfort Inn
- 11 **Victorian Holiday** – 6:30pm, Depot
- 12 **Ambassadors Club** – 8:00am, Depot
- 13 **Retail Group** – 6:00pm, Vincenzo's Wine Bar
- 14 **Lunch & Learn** – Noon, Sponsored by Cheeser's, Fire Station Training Room
- 22 **Chamber Annual Meeting & Casino Night** – 5:30pm, Impact Sports Enhancement Academy
- 25 **Lunch & Learn** – Noon, Sponsored by Blackhawk Community Credit Union, Fire Station Training Room

NOVEMBER 2010

- 1 **Economic Development** - Noon, Depot
- 2 **Arts Council** – 9:00am, Giles Dow Room City Hall
- 8 **Board of Directors** – Noon, Depot
- 8 **Syttende Mai Committee** – 5:30pm, Comfort Inn
- 8 **Victorian Holiday** – 6:30pm, Depot
- 9 **Ambassadors Club** – 8:00am, Depot
- 11 **Visitor Services Comm.** – 3:00pm, Depot
- 15 **Lunch & Learn** – Noon, Sponsored by Wise Enterprise Grp., Fire Station Training Rm
- 25 **Chamber Closed for Thanksgiving**
- 29 **Lunch & Learn** – Noon, Sponsored by Focus Strategic Solutions, Fire Stn. Trg. Rm

The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. - Winston Churchill

With the economy being what it is these days, we are faced with questions of how we will get moving forward again and discover an era of prosperity for everyone. On many days, it is a hard task to take a positive outlook on our financial future. We all know someone close that has lost their job and is struggling to make ends meet. Every day, businesses across the country must close their doors because they can no longer continue to afford to operate. We have many opportunities to see difficulties. But we do have a choice about how we view these difficulties. Let us take the optimist's path.

When I was selected as your president, I had set simple goals of continuing the course that the board of directors had set last year. Working on these goals of improving communication and being as open as possible with our members still holds true. But in addition, I am privileged to be in this position as we take your chamber to a higher level. Most of you are aware that the Stoughton city council has asked the chamber to take a leading role with regards to the city's future economic development. The board of directors feel confident that we can be successful in helping to implement the strategies of the economic development committee. These will make Stoughton a great place to live and raise a family, a great place to work and a great place to do business.

We all wish we could snap our fingers and make things better. We all hate to see another business close. From the many quaint shops and boutiques in our beautiful, historic downtown to the large industrial manufacturing companies that employ hundreds of our friends and neighbors, every one is important to the quality of life that we enjoy. If we are to be successful in the end, we must pull together and recognize that although times are tough and we face many difficulties, adversity often brings even better solutions that we could not see before.

I firmly believe that we have an excellent staff that works incredibly hard to do the best job they can with the resources available to them. Our Executive Director, Dave Phillips, continues to inspire us all and is a constant source for new ideas and a witty quip to put a smile on your face. Erica Dial is still working hard as your Visitor Services Director. We continue to see the progress of increasing tourism thanks to her efforts and dedication.

Of course, we can't forget about our fantastic receptionist, Mickey McCormick. Mickey plays a very important role as the initial contact of the chamber when the phone rings because they say you only get one chance to make a first impression. Our staff's willingness to help with just about anything sheds a truly positive light on the organization to those who inquire within.

Lastly, I would like to express the deep feeling of gratitude I have to the many great volunteers that make the chamber what it is. The countless hours that go into planning events like Syttende Mai, Coffee Break and the Victorian Holiday Festival are largely unnoticed and taken for granted by most of us. The Ambassadors continue to be the good-will arm of the chamber and have welcomed many new businesses to the community.

On behalf of the other board members and the membership as a whole, I would like to thank retiring members Randy McLaury and Linda Bradley for their service. As immediate past president, Randy will continue to serve on the Executive Committee and board for another year. We welcome new board members Kristi Hund and Sandra Burger. Mark Halverson was elected to a full term after completing his previous appointment. Mayor Donna Olson and School Superintendent Tim Onsager also participate in their appointed positions.

As always, we continue to ask for your input and feedback on how we're doing. The chamber exists by and for its members and you are vital to our success.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your President. I am humbled to accept your faith in my leadership and will strive to work to our mutual benefit.

2009-2010 Board of Directors

President – Randy McLaury, TRICOR/Schroeder & Associates
 Vice President – Tom Luttig, Luttig Imaging & Photography
 Secretary – Kari Hvam, Coldwell Banker, SUCCESS
 Treasurer – Connie Mathison, Associated Bank
 Jim Griffin, Mayor, City of Stoughton/Donna Olson, Mayor, City of Stoughton
 Linda Bradley, Jeff Bradley Construction
 Randy Olson, Universal Silencer
 Laurie Dybevik, Gunderson Funeral Home & Cremation Care
 Mark Halverson, Business Transportation Solutions
 Mary Gavigan, Superintendent of Stoughton Area Schools

Chamber of Commerce Staff

Dave Phillips, Executive Director
 Erica Dial, Visitor Services Coordinator
 Mickey McCormick, Receptionist

Committee Chairs

Ambassador Club, Co-chairs LouAnn McHugh, Clock Tower Gifts & Sandra Quam, Home Savings Bank
Ambassador Golf Outing, Chair, Randy McLaury, TRICOR/Schroeder & Associates and Ambassadors
Economic Development, Dave Phillips, Chamber
Leadership Stoughton 2009, Pat McNally, Olson Cress Funeral Home
Syttende Mai, Margit Gerber
Coffee Break Festival, Co-chairs Dave Gasner, The UPS Store & Erica Dial, Chamber
Victorian Holiday Weekend, Vicki Johnson

2009-2010 Office Numbers

Office Visits	4067
Phone Calls	3,043
Website Visits	47,651
Gift Certificates	\$44,864

Financial information will be provided at the Annual Meeting on Friday, October 22nd, 2010.

Executive Director's Message

By: Dave Phillips, Executive Director

Let me start by admitting that writing a “year-end” message is one of my least favorite things. They all seem to read the same...”It’s been a great year and we have done...” blah, blah, blah. You don’t even have to read the message because you know what it will say.

So, I am not going to mention what happened during the past year – you will find other messages in this newsletter that will cover those events better than I could – instead, with one notable exception, I am going to talk about the year to come.

The one exception – I want to express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to the many, many people who helped make the Chamber a successful and vital organization. From the volunteer Board of Directors to the volunteers at our festivals and events; from the red-jacketed Ambassadors to those who served on our committees; from the businesses and individuals who contributed their time, money and services to the folks who attended our various fund-raisers and events; and finally to the hundreds of “Stoughtonites” that purchased our Gift Certificates that were and will be used at our local merchants – all of you helped to make the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce work for Stoughton.

And, forgive me for another exception here, but everyone associated with the Chamber, regardless of what capacity that may be, everyone owes a standing ovation to Mickey McCormick and Erica Dial. What these two individuals accomplish in the limited hours they work is amazing. They are the Chamber (and Visitor Services) and they make the Chamber look very good.

Now, for the coming year, we will continue most of our traditional events making whatever changes we can to improve them while adding more activities to our plate. The new projects will center mostly on our economic development work. We anticipate the city will acquire land that will allow a significant expansion of our industrial park. We intend – as a partner with the City – to organize and conduct a full fledged campaign to market this space to attract new businesses and to also provide expansion space for existing businesses.

Our Incubator Committee will be hard at work bringing to fruition a business incubator in Stoughton. Work has already begun on this exciting project and we anticipate lots of progress over the next 12 – 18 months.

Very soon –perhaps as early as November – we will have up and running a new Chamber web site. Isadex, a Stoughton-based web development and hosting company, is working with Chamber staff on the site. We are just in the early stages but I must tell you what has happened thus far is great. Our new site will be a tremendous improvement over what we have now and will help us immensely in not just serving the needs of our members but in marketing our community to visitors and residents. The new site will also be a great help in marketing our community to businesses, developers and any others seeking a new location or other opportunities in Stoughton. As members, you will be very proud of the site.

We are looking forward to a great year. The Chamber is poised to embark on several projects that will enhance our value to our members and to the whole community as well. Every action and activity we undertake is done to create value for our members and to help make them more successful. We welcome your input as to what we can do to be an even greater resource for our members.

Ambassador Club Report

By LouAnn McHugh, Clock Tower Gifts

The mission of the Ambassador Club is to be the goodwill arm of the Chamber. We look to help boost positive public relations with activities that strengthen membership and enhance the image of the Chamber. Our membership is currently at 16 and is continuously changing with new people being added regularly. We are always looking for more of you to join us in spreading the good word about what a fantastic place Stoughton is to live and work.

The ambassadors have welcomed 14 businesses in our community with Red Ribbon Cutting ceremonies this year. We also organize the Chamber Holiday Open House held at the Depot in December.

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to everyone who helped out with the club's Annual Chamber Golf Outing. Despite a slow economy, this was one of our best years so far. Thank you to all the local businesses that came forward with donations. Because of your generosity, we were able to make a \$500 donation to the Stoughton START Program.

I'd like to extend a heart-felt thank you to all the past and current ambassadors in recognition of their donation of time and participation in this outstanding group.

Leadership Stoughton Report

By: Pat McNally, Director of Leadership Stoughton



Seated: Pat McNally; Standing (L-R) Tricia Suess, Tim Strandlie, Sid Boersma, Carol Gabor, Jim Sheoberl, Teresa Sylte, Dawn Marsh

Leadership Stoughton, a yearly class dedicated to preparing Stoughton's leaders for greater civic roles and involvement, concluded the 2009-2010 class this past June. Participating in the 2009-2010 class were Sid Boersma, Carol Gabor, Rob Horstrawser, Dawn Marsh, Jim Shoeberl, Mary Smith, Tim Strandlie, Tricia Suess, Teresa Sylte and Sue Vanderbilt. Participants developed and pursued community service projects; creating festive painted trash cans for Stoughton festivals, investigating and publishing information about connecting Stoughton Bike Trails, and developing a safe ride program from Stoughton Taverns. The class took many local tours including Stoughton Trailers, Stoughton Hospital, and Ortega. The class heard from a great variety of local experts on history, business,

volunteerism, healthcare, environment, education, faith, as well as arts and recreation in Stoughton. The class also learned from the leadership experiences of Helen Johnson, Coleen Kehl, David Sharpe, Bud Erickson, Terry Brenny, Peter Sveum, Lee Borkowski, and Kent Schroeder.

Syttende Mai Annual Report

By Margit Gerber, Syttende Mai Coordinator

The Syttende Mai Executive Committee for 2010 included: Rich Albright, Steve Christenson, Wendy Entwistle, Barbara Holzuter, Erica Dial (Chamber Rep), Jon Blackman, Barb Zander, Mary Kohlhepp, Jerri Kittleson, Sid Boersma, Todd Fossum, & Debra Carter. As new committee members, Sid, Todd & Debra brought new ideas and energy to the committee. Margit Gerber served as the Syttende Mai Coordinator for the eighth year, including her year working with the previous coordinator. Wow, where has that time gone??



The Syttende Mai Festival would not be possible without all of the hard work and dedication of the many event chairpersons and the executive committee members. There are literally hundreds of volunteers that work tirelessly to make the event a success each year. Very close to the festival weekend we were notified that the “Arbeiter” (Ways & Means) chairperson would not be available and thankfully Jim Brandt stepped in and organized a work crew for the weekend. NOT an easy task! That is just one example of how the community works together to make Syttende Mai a great festival. We had a wonderful folk dancing group, Dassel’s Leikarring, from Minnesota join us for the weekend. They were sponsored by Christ Lutheran Church and performed at various times and locations on Saturday and Sunday. The Stoughton Village Players production, “The Curse of King Olaf’s Cup”, was once again an amazing & funny play and well attended. Bob Bonebright is the new chairperson for the Lil’ Syttende Mai Run. The event was changed this year so that anyone in the community could enter this two mile event & the result was amazing – over 1,000 participants!! We also included a competition between the Stoughton grade schools to see which school could have the most entrants. Congratulations to Bob for working through all of the changes and enhancing this event. Another new event added for 2010 was the 1st Annual Syttende Mai 10 Mile Run. This race was started at the 10 mile mark of the 20 mile course, and we were happy to have over 250 runners participate. We had many positive comments and will be offering this race again in future years. The Sons of Norway Lodge added a mini Viking Encampment and “Uff Da” bingo to their weekend agenda and it was enjoyed by many. There were new activities and demonstrations at various downtown businesses and the weather cooperated for the most part, which always helps!!

All event chairpersons and volunteers should be commended for their dedication to the Syttende Mai festival. Many hours of personal time are contributed each year to make the many events possible to enjoy. We have countless volunteers who staff the various information/button booths that are scattered throughout town for the weekend. The Stoughton Lioness and the Stoughton “POSH” groups help by recruiting many of their members to work shifts for the booths. The Syttende Mai Committee has a great working relationship with the Stoughton Police, Street & Parks Departments, EMS, Post Office, Senior Center, City Hall, Opera House, Mandt Community Center, the Stoughton School District, and (of course) the Chamber employees. This is essential for putting together a premium, smooth running, and safe event. A special thank you also goes out to the many businesses and individuals who provide sponsorship, sell buttons & coins, loan us meeting & food stand spaces, and promote the festival each year. We cannot express how much this is **greatly** appreciated – again, thank you, thank you!!

Syttende Mai 2010 has been determined a successful event by the committee. We were blessed with decent weather again this year which always helps event registrations and button sales. We didn’t need to worry about any major storms, which is always a relief. A little rain here and there didn’t bother the weekend’s activities. Most of the events stayed within their budgets and generated their projected income. We are looking at ways to change and/or enhance a couple of the events to increase participation and revenue.

The committee was able to pay all of the expected expenses, maintain the Sunday Parade budget – which continues to be greater event each year, and make a \$20,000.00 cash contribution to the Chamber in June of 2010. Dave & Barb Kalland did a great job serving as the Syttende Mai King and Queen. They, along with their escorts, Randy & Elise McLaury, made many appearances throughout the week and were very visible within the community as well as with the Madison area media. Dave & Barb hosted a wonderful reception at Springer’s on Sunday afternoon after the parade. It was a fun evening filled with good food, fellowship, stories, and many, many thank yous.

The Committee and Event Chairpersons are already looking ahead to the 2011 festival – discussing ways that events and activities can be enhanced and/or added. Expenses continue to rise, which is always a major challenge. New volunteers are always welcome for the many areas where help is needed. It’s never too early to get involved.

As always, feel free to contact any of the Executive Committee members or Margit Gerber, Syttende Mai Coordinator (873-8082) if you have any comments and/or suggestions for the next year’s festival which will be **May 13, 14, & 15, 2011**.

Again, thanks to all for your continued dedication and support of the Syttende Mai Festival!!! We should all be proud of such a wonderful event for our community.

Coffee Break Festival Report

By Dave Gasner, Co-Chair

After a scare with torrential down pours of rain on Friday the 13th the sun shined nice and bright for the 13th Annual Coffee Break Festival on Saturday, August 14th. This year's festival included some new events. We had a beer tent and a band, the S.H.I.B.S. of Stoughton that closed out the festival day. Festival goers we were able to consume beer throughout the Mandt Park grounds. This was something that many folks really seemed to enjoy. Another first was the sale of Festival T-shirts. There are still a few available for sale at the chamber office (along with some festival mugs). The coffee brew off had 4 different coffee roasters vying for the Roaster of the Festival award. Those festival goers that purchased a Coffee Break mug for \$5 received a ballot to vote for their favorite roaster and also had the opportunity to sample different brewed coffees for free throughout the day. Over 300 mugs were sold and both attendees and roaster agreed that this is a great feature of the festival.

Special thanks to True Coffee House with their own coffee, Watershed Coffee House with Ancora coffee, The Firefly Coffee House with Kickapoo coffee, and Cheesers with Door County Coffee and Tea Co., who won the Roaster of the festival for the 2nd year. We truly want to thank them for their participation. The inflatable rides were back with a Gladiator Battle Zone, a bounce house and the Bungee Run. Other events were the custom & antique car show with 130 cars and motorcycles, the java jog with 200 entrants and the arts and crafts fair with 30 vendors. Food and beverages, a 50/50 raffle along with free rides to downtown provided by Ozee Cars rounded out the day's events.

Committee members are Erica Dial & Dave Gasner co-chairs, John Olson, Brian Larson, Beth & Brain Swain, Jean Johnson, Yolanda Staats, and Mark Asleson. The Committee extends its deepest thanks to all the volunteers who help with the setup, operation, and teardown of the event, and to the Fair Board for the use of their band stage. Next year Coffee Break will be on Saturday, August 13th.

Victorian Holiday Report

By Henry and Mary-Carel Verden, Victorian Holiday Weekend Co-Chairs

The weekend started out Friday night with a change from our traditional opening ceremony and tree lighting. The lighting and opening remarks happened beside the tree in front of the fire station but then we moved indoors for refreshments and a performance by the Stoughton High School Chamber Singers. Cooperative weather meant a good attendance. This was followed by the horse-drawn carriage rides and the newly renamed Beggar's Ball. This year's ball was well attended with participants who seemed to really enjoy the dancing, the torts and sweet treats donated by various community businesses, the various skips and dances, and the musical performances from the Stoughton Chamber Singers.

Saturday brought the trolley, sponsored this year by Blackhawk Community Credit Union. The trolley was very well received and we heard many positive comments from riders. We were very grateful to once again have the added feature of Mr. Joe DeRose from the State Historical Society with us on the trolley providing commentary on the history of Stoughton and some of its many homes and businesses the trolley passed. The local business tree decorating contest was a hit, as it is every year. Kiwanis assumed sponsorship of the Santa's Workshop event which was moved to the community center next to the school administration building. The event was attended by many bright-eyed children who came and decorated cookies, made ornaments, and visited with Santa. The Arts and Craft show went well with over 80 participants and was also well attended. Peter Engler set up shop at All Through the House as he does every year, and Patty Tofslund demonstrated rosemaling at Clock Tower Gifts. The annual quilt show at Saving Thyme was back and The Nutcracker Ballet returned for its 17th year. Both performances and the Sugar Plum Tea, held between performances, were as enchanting and magical as ever. This is a traditional event that everyone comes out for and is always a beautiful sight. The

Fire Truck Parade was once again a very spectacular sight on Saturday evening, and one that so many in the community come out to see regardless of our typical Wisconsin weather! Relay for Life had their home tour followed by a reception and silent auction.

Sunday the trolley continued with a sponsorship from Hann's Christmas Farm. The Dickens of a Run/Walk, sponsored by the Yahara River Grocery Co-op, kicked off with 76 entrants, an increase over last year. Many demonstration events continued along with the Arts and Crafts Show. The Landmarks Commission held a reception for Carl Sampson to recognize his contributions to the community. The holiday Bed Race had fewer beds this year but was still very well attended. The Holiday Weekend finished with a performance by the Stoughton Dancers at the community center and the Stoughton Chamber Singers at the Opera House.

Overall, attendance was up quite a bit from the previous year, and those who did come enjoyed themselves. We encourage everyone to put together a Bed Race Team for 2010 and challenge your competitors (or friends) to a fun grudge match. Contact Henry or Mary-Carel at 877-0766 if you have any questions or ideas for Victorian Holiday. We welcome any suggestions from you and the community on things we can do differently to make the event more enjoyable!

Visitor Services Report

By Erica Dial, Visitor Services Coordinator

The past year has been quite challenging. Although the rate of tax revenue has leveled off, we still have seen a decrease in tax dollars. Late tax payments also contributed to a shortage in cash earlier in the year. However, there are many positive things that have happened. The first being an increase in the number of bus tours coming to Stoughton.

After working with group tour operators over the past year we have found our niche. Most groups choose our Stoughton Norwegian heritage tour. This tour is a combination of the following: a driving tour around town with a Step-on-guide, a visit to the Opera House, a visit to the East Koshkonong churches, a visit to the Historical Museum, shopping downtown, enjoying a Norwegian lunch at the Sons of Norway Lodge with cultural demonstrations. Since October of 2009, we have had 8 tours come through Stoughton. The people on these tours are so interested in learning about our town and Norwegian roots. Time and time again, we have heard comments about what a wonderful town we have. They love the downtown area and many have expressed interest in returning to Stoughton in the future. This is how we are going to continue to become a destination – through word of mouth. Thank you to our partners: Dave Kalland, Darlene Arneson and all the folks the help out at the Sons of Norway Lodge and Christina and Bill at the Opera House. Their support is critical to the success of this initiative.

Our advertising this year focused mostly on the word “free”! We moved into the Social Marketing realm and created a Facebook Fan Page for the Chamber (please “Fan” us if you haven’t already done so), Linked In accounts and a Stoughton blog. Weekly postings keep people informed of the events happening in our community. We also continue to advertise (for free) all our events through the Travel Wisconsin website and other local events calendars. Other advertising initiatives included coop advertising opportunities for businesses in local publications.

Visitor Services Committee Members

Tony Hill	Carla McKnight
Candy Cain	Paul Lawrence
Dave Gasner	Tom Luttig
Dave Phillips	Erica Dial
Jeanne Dunbar	

Currently, we are working on travel packages for visitors. In a nutshell, a visitor would receive a discounted cost on a ticket to a performance at one of our many theaters along with a discounted room rate. Our new website – slated to be released in the next month – will surely help to tell the story of Stoughton to visitors and entice them to visit us. We will continue to partner with businesses to maintain our goal of bringing tourism to Stoughton.



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