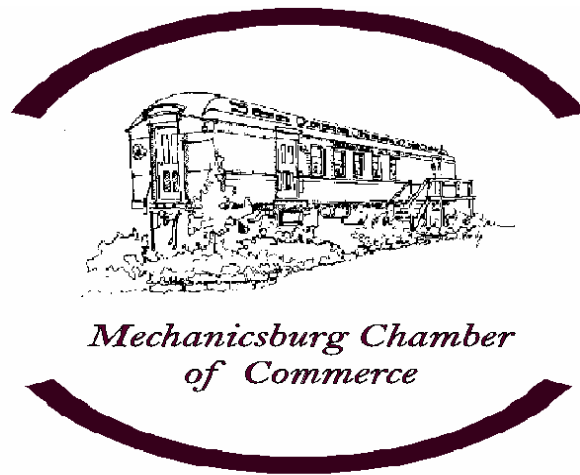


Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce

Strategic Plan for 2005-2007



Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce

6 West Strawberry Alley

Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Phone: 717-796-0811

Fax: 717-796-1977

Email: mcc@ezonline.com

Web: www.mechanicsburgchamber.org

*Adopted November 17, 2004
by the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors*

Planning for the Future

In 2004, my primary goal as President of the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce was to lead the Board of Directors and the membership through a strategic planning process. This document is the result of many hours of research, brainstorming, meeting with Chamber members, and compiling ideas and suggestions throughout the year. The end result is a strategic plan for a three-year period, 2005-2007, which will provide direction for the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce as it plans its activities for the next several years.

As with any strategic plan, flexibility is a key to success as many factors may influence the completion or non-completion of any number of these goals. Technology available three years from now may be something that has yet to be created and therefore is not listed as part of this plan. Responsiveness to members and community needs is also a key to success and while we have mapped out a very ambitious plan for the next three years, we may add new items and place others on the back burner as priorities shift.

The Evolution of the Plan

A survey was sent to Chamber members in late-December 2003. With the flexibility to complete the survey anonymously either on-line or on paper, 53 responses were received. A number of questions were asked, a variety of responses were collected and that data served as a starting point for the development of Core Areas and goals and objectives for each area. The Strategic Planning committee met numerous times during the first half of 2004. Three meetings were held in the fall with the committee and Chamber members to review a draft of the strategic plan. At these meetings, held at various times of the day and at various member businesses, 31 people participated in the review of the draft plan and provided many helpful comments and suggestions. Another draft of the plan was presented and reviewed at the October Board of Directors meeting and the plan was formally adopted at the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting on November 17, 2004.

In the end, eight core areas were identified as follows:

- I. Member Services**
- II. Marketing, Communications and Public Relations**
- III. Business Promotion, Advocate for Business & Economic Development**
- IV. Finance and Fundraising**
- V. Technology**
- VI. Personnel and Chamber Operations**
- VII. Property and Facility**
- VIII. Special Events**

The following pages outline each core area with the goals and objectives listed for each. Once the strategic plan was adopted by the Board of Directors, priorities were developed and they are noted throughout this document as "***Priority for 2005***". We welcome your input and participation on these committees. For more information regarding serving on a committee, please contact Office Manager Janice Witmer at 796-0811. The Board of Directors can not do this alone; it takes the entire membership working together to make great things happen in Mechanicsburg. In 2004, *Harrisburg Magazine* recognized Mechanicsburg as Simply the Best in the "Place to Live" category and Jubilee Day® was recognized as Reader's Choice in the "Block Party" category. Let's continue to work together to make Mechanicsburg visible, vibrant and vital!

It has been an honor and my pleasure to serve as President of the Mechanicsburg Chamber in 2004. Thank you for the opportunity to represent this organization.

Sue Erdman, Joseph T. Simpson Public Library, serdman@ccpa.net

I. Member Services

A. The Chamber will offer programs and services that are responsive to the needs of its membership.

- Contact Chamber members annually to ensure their needs are being met. Develop a system to communicate with new members more frequently during their first year of membership.
- Contact prospective Chamber members, explain benefits of membership, and solicit their membership. *Priority for 2005.*
- Provide support through attendance at various Chamber events.
- Distribute Prospective Member packets and New Member Packets.
- Hold ribbon cuttings for members of new and expanded businesses. *Priority for 2005.*
- Investigate establishment of an association discount program for members.
- Increase the number of members who provide small quantities of printed information for distribution at the Chamber office.

B. Establish an Ambassador Program to represent the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce at community, business and Chamber functions and to serve as the Chamber's official ambassadors. *Priority for 2005.*

- Typical duties include conducting and attending area ground-breaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies, open houses, delivering new membership plaques, and serving as goodwill ambassadors for the Chamber on a regular basis. Members of this committee would be a combination of business and residential members.
- Provide recognition to Ambassadors for new member recruitment.

C. Continue Business After Hours Mixers for networking of Chamber members. The purpose of the mixers is to provide the opportunity for a social gathering of the membership to stimulate and increase business development within a relaxed atmosphere.

- Sponsor a minimum of six business mixers annually. *Priority for 2005.*
- Request mixer sponsors provide seating for attendees during the event and if a specific dress code is suggested, to mention this in the mixer invitation.
- Investigate feasibility of sponsoring Noon Network opportunities for members to get together over the lunch hour for business development and networking.
- Explore opportunities for joint mixers of businesses located near one another such as "Waltz Down Walnut" or "Meander Down Main". *Priority for 2005.*

D. The Chamber will sponsor a series of seminars on timely topics about which its members and the community may have an interest.

- Investigate feasibility of sponsoring a quarterly "Eggs and Issues" breakfast meeting featuring programs and topics of interest to members and the community.
- *Through the member review sessions of the long range plan in September 2004 it was determined that seminars and continuing education opportunities are not a priority for our members as most feel that they receive adequate opportunities through their employers for educational seminars.*

E. Study current Chamber services and costs, and look at additional services that the Chamber may offer to its members.

- Determine what is an ideal membership size for the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce based on existing resources and future resources.
- Determine what staffing levels are required to adequately and efficiently provide services to the membership.
- Determine what the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce's primary focus is and periodically revisit this to see if it is still relevant or needs modified.
- *Through the member review sessions in September 2004, our primary focus was identified as helping members build their businesses and helping people learn about Mechanicsburg. It was also suggested that our focus should be on downtown Mechanicsburg and downtown revitalization efforts and to keep our focus on the overall improvement of the business community. And, it was mentioned that Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce used to be looked upon as a leadership organization with widespread support from downtown businesses. Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce needs to work at reestablishing that leadership presence.*

F. Increase membership.

- Conduct orientation sessions for new members at which time they may become familiar with the aims, objectives, programs and projects of the Chamber, meet the current Chamber leadership and become better acquainted with other new members.
- Conduct a membership satisfaction survey every other year to determine their use of Chamber benefits and services and solicit feedback on the Chamber.
- Develop a member appreciation program for members with ten or more years of membership.
- Strive to increase annual membership totals by 5% to 10% annually.
- On a quarterly basis, select one occupational group to target for a membership drive. ***Priority for 2005.***
- Annually conduct a membership drive targeting small and medium sized businesses, as well as not-for-profit organizations and home-based businesses.
- Every other year, conduct a membership drive targeted at increasing residential memberships.
- Conduct membership drives to increase members in the Mechanicsburg area. ***Priority for 2005.***
- Survey non-members as to why they are not members of our Chamber. Is it because they don't know what we do? Use that as an opportunity to inform people of the services and benefits the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce offers.
- Establish a Membership Committee in order to accomplish many of these membership goals. Chamber Ambassadors would work with the Membership Committee. Personal visits were identified as an important way to increase membership. ***Priority for 2005.***

II. Marketing, Communications and Public Relations

A. Build strategic community partnerships.

- Mechanicsburg Area School District, Cumberland Valley School District and Cumberland Perry Area Vocational Technical School
- Cooperative projects with other area Chambers (West Shore, Carlisle and Shippensburg)
- Mechanicsburg Museum Association
- Cumberland County Young Professionals
- Other entities
- Maintain a liaison relationship with local and state officials to express Chamber positions on important issues. Include local and state officials in Chamber mailings so they are aware of the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce's activities. *Priority for 2005.*
- Investigate feasibility of creating a Chamber liaison to the Borough of Mechanicsburg. Liaison would attend one of the two council meetings held monthly.
- Investigate feasibility of joining CREDC, Capital Region Economic Development Corporation and having a Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce liaison to CREDC.

B. Maintain an updated scrapbook and historical archive of Chamber photos, activities, news articles, and events, organized in chronological order.

C. Annually review progress on the strategic plan and communicate accomplishments to the membership and community.

- Provide each member with a copy of the strategic plan. *Priority for 2005.*

D. Improve communications with members, potential members, and the community.

- Provide relocation information to those that inquire about the community.
- Develop a testimonial marketing program, and feature testimonials in Chamber materials. *Priority for 2005.*
- Consider upgrading the newsletter with the following items to increase readership with relevant material and timely delivery: *Priority for 2005.*
 - change frequency from quarterly to semi-monthly or monthly
 - expand newsletter length
 - investigate feasibility of using two-color printing
 - include list of renewing members and Board member profiles
 - include committee reports and investigate bulk mailing options
 - review newsletters from other Chambers for new ideas
 - include a Business Spotlight in each issue
 - develop a Newsletter Article Submission form to encourage members to submit information for the newsletter
 - put the newsletter on the web site
- Revise and develop new publications to promote and provide information on Chamber members and Chamber activities. Possibilities include:
 - annual report to the membership
 - membership directory – through a printed membership directory, encourage Chamber members to support other members and to refer people to our members ; membership directory should also include a brief description of the business or organization ; consider including a photo of the owner or key contact person for that business *Priority for 2005.*
 - maps
 - newcomer's guide
 - restaurant guide
 - revise the membership brochure
 - develop list of membership benefits to use in Chamber publications. This could be on flyers or perhaps a membership card that member businesses could display at their businesses to aid with membership recruitment
 - develop a new logo
- Consider designing a "We referred your company today" postcards to send to Chamber members whenever the Chamber refers someone to a member business.
- Consider designing an "I did business with you" card to leave with a member business when visited by another Chamber member.

E. Improve visibility of the Mechanicsburg Chamber.

- Continue and develop new networks with media outlets. *Priority for 2005.*
- Include Chamber email and web site address on all publications. *Priority for 2005.*
- Encourage and promote doing business with other Chamber members.

Priority for 2005.

- Continue answering inquiries about Mechanicsburg from its residents, new businesses, visitors, and current and potential investors.
- Investigate feasibility of sponsoring an annual Beautification Award in Downtown Mechanicsburg for businesses who have done an outstanding job in new construction, remodeling and well maintained businesses.
- Investigate feasibility of installing hanging flower baskets in the downtown area.
- Focus marketing efforts on the entire community, rather than exclusively on retail promotions.
- Advertise in municipal newsletters in the areas we serve.
- Work with the local newspapers to produce business articles that will promote the community and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Contact local newspapers for editorial opportunities to write about business and Chamber issues.
- Support and develop membership goodwill through ribbon cuttings and groundbreaking. *Priority for 2005.*
- Purchase a bench or benches to place around downtown Mechanicsburg with the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce name and/or logo. Suggested first location would be the CAT bus stop at PNC Bank.
- Regularly submit digital photos to area newspapers highlighting Chamber events.
- Partner with housing developments, homeowner's associations and Welcome Wagon organizations to provide information on the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce's activities to enhance the quality of life in the Mechanicsburg area.
- Work with Mechanicsburg Borough on the feasibility of placing several directional signs on Main Street that would direct people to the Chamber office. (similar to the signs currently in place for the Mechanicsburg Museum Association).

III. Business Promotion, Advocate for Business & Economic Development

A. The Chamber will be a strong advocate for business and a catalyst to stimulate economic development for the Mechanicsburg area.

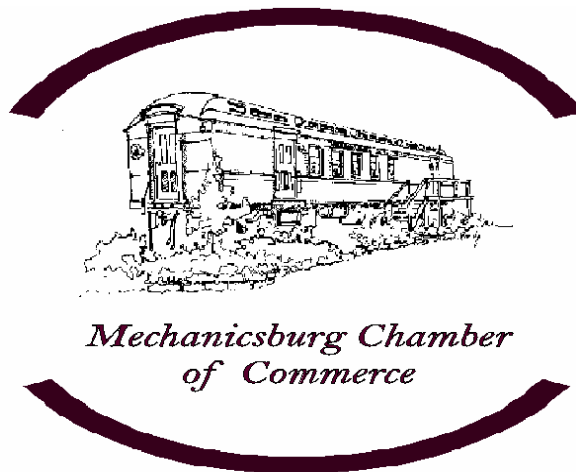
- Advocate and influence appropriate infrastructure improvements necessary for an improved business climate. *Priority for 2005.*
- Facilitate joint meetings of area public officials to ensure open dialogue and continuity of efforts.
- Assist others in targeting businesses for expansion and relocation where the business can benefit from the assets of the Mechanicsburg area.
- Monitor legislation affecting Chamber members, taking a proactive role in advocating issues of importance to members.
- Maintain an updated list of resources where new business owners can obtain financing for their business.
- *During the member review sessions in September 2004 this core area, Business Promotion, Advocate for Business & Economic Development, was identified as the most important role of the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce.*

B. The Chamber will promote the image and perception of the Mechanicsburg community as a great place to live, work and shop, and a great place for family entertainment.

- Work closely and cooperatively with all businesses, the media, citizens, and other organizations to promote a positive image of the Mechanicsburg area. *Priority for 2005.*
- Promote tourism in the Mechanicsburg area, and assist members in taking advantage of tourism opportunities in the area.
- Support and help public and private efforts to revitalize Downtown Mechanicsburg whether through the Main Street Mechanicsburg program utilizing state dollars, or other revitalization efforts. *Priority for 2005.*
- Provide guidance and support to potential businesses looking to locate or relocate in the Mechanicsburg area.
- Maintain a list of downtown storefronts available for rent, lease or purchase so this information can be given to potential business prospects. *Priority for 2005.*
- Develop and maintain a strong partnership and working relationship with the Borough of Mechanicsburg and surrounding municipalities and other governmental entities which affect Mechanicsburg's quality of life. *Priority for 2005.*
- Investigate feasibility of distributing a Chamber business directory to all hotel rooms for visitors to use and to guide them to member businesses.
- Investigate purchasing of advertising space in community publications for recreational events (such as football programs, theater performances, fundraisers and tour booklets) – publications in which it is likely that our member businesses are also advertising.

C. Promote member businesses with other members, prospective members, and the community.

- Utilize events such as Streets of Treats, Dickens of a Christmas, and Jubilee Day® as opportunities to promote member businesses.
- Encourage member businesses to provide the Chamber office with brochures, booklets, maps, literature, etc. on their business which can be given to visitors and mailed to people requesting information. *Priority for 2005.*



IV. Finance and Fundraising

A. Improve the financial position of the Chamber to ensure a balanced budget of revenues and expenses.

- Review dues structure every other year in odd numbered years (2005, 2007, 2009, etc.) and propose changes as needed to the Board of Directors.
- Develop new revenue sources. *Priority for 2005.*
- Increase membership. Consider a mailing to Mechanicsburg residents encouraging residential memberships in the Chamber. Investigate purchase of a bulk mailing permit and using a mailing service to produce such a mailing. (See Increase Membership item under Member Services for other goals.)
- Increase activities that in addition to providing visibility for the Chamber also serve as fundraising opportunities. *Priority for 2005.*

B. Create a master sponsorship program for all fundable Chamber projects.

- Offer sponsorship of specific programs and events so that members can identify with the Chamber. *Priority for 2005.*

C. Sell advertising space in Chamber publications.

- Explore ChamberPAK mailings.
- Consider selling advertising space in Chamber membership directory.
- Consider selling advertising space in the newsletter. *Priority for 2005.*
- Consider selling advertising space on the web page.

D. Conduct annual review of Chamber's finances.

V. Technology

A. The Chamber will keep abreast of changing technologies and shall strive for maximum efficiency in all areas of Chamber operations through the use of technology.

- Improve and redesign website / develop a web site to market Mechanicsburg. Primary goals include a site that is user-friendly, informative, and current. *Priority for 2005.*
- Include membership brochure, newsletter and other Chamber publications on the web site.
- Need to be able to maintain the website in-house in order to have better control over content and timeliness of information.
- Manage the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce web site as an information resource for visitors, residents, business prospects and prospective residents.
- Develop email and fax networks to improve communication to and between members. *Priority for 2005.*
- Determine future technology needs and computer needs, allocate the necessary financial resources and develop an implementation schedule to allow for effective use of Chamber resources.
- Annually monitor the functionality of the Jubilee Day database and investigate alternatives, if necessary, for the viability of this database in the future.
- Annually evaluate benefits of our subscription to www.chamber101.com to determine if this subscription should be renewed.
- Develop an on-line membership directory searchable by category with business address, phone and URL information. Design directory in such a way as to prevent mass email/spam mailings to our members. *Priority for 2005.*
- With creation of on-line membership directory, develop ways to promote member businesses who do not have their own website. Perhaps host web sites for a nominal fee for small businesses who could use this type of service.

VI. Personnel and Chamber Operations

A. Insure the Chamber has adequate staffing and provide staff with necessary training. *Priority for 2005.*

- Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce has one paid employee – a full-time Office Manager. The need for additional staff is a continued priority, especially if we hope to accomplish the majority of the goals outlined in this strategic plan. While we are pursuing internship opportunities, and volunteer opportunities, the need for an additional paid employee, probably part-time, is a priority when funds are available to do so.

B. Recruit volunteers to get more involved in Chamber projects, events, and committee work. *Priority for 2005.*

- Tap into retired business workers for their knowledge, expertise, and assistance.

C. Utilize high school and college interns as available and appropriate. *Priority for 2005.*

D. Utilize community service volunteers, as appropriate.

E. Establish a Board Development program that would complete tasks such as the following:

- Orientation for new board members.
- Preparation of existing board members to become Board Officers.
- Regularly examine board demographics and maintain a representative board of the members that we serve (male/female ; small business, large business, nonprofit ; downtown, outside of downtown).

VII. Property and Facility

A. Oversee all activities related to the property and facility where the Chamber office is located.

- Analyze the Chamber rail car with respect to immediate and future needs. *Priority for 2005.*
- Develop a plan for addressing future structural, aesthetic and safety needs of the rail car, which include but are not limited to its electrical, heating and air conditioning needs. *Priority for 2005.*
- Investigate alternative locations for the Chamber office based on projected future needs for space.
- Plan for regular maintenance of grounds, including landscaping and painting, to provide a clean and appealing appearance at all times. *Priority for 2005.*

B. Determine future property and equipment needs and implementation schedule to allow for effective use of Chamber resources.

VIII. Special Events

A. The Chamber will continue to sponsor several events each year to focus attention on Downtown Mechanicsburg. After each event, the planning committee for that event will meet to review what went well and what needs improvement and will determine whether or not the Chamber should continue to sponsor the event the following year.

- Jubilee Day® *Priority for 2005.*
 - to maintain Jubilee Day® at its highest level of event quality and profitability.
 - to encourage more local businesses and community organizations to become actively involved in Jubilee Day®.
 - to promote the benefits of participation in Jubilee Day®, how members can benefit from this event, and ways to get the maximum benefit from participation.

- Streets of Treats *Priority for 2005.*
 - to encourage more local businesses and community organizations to become actively involved in Streets of Treats.
 - to promote the benefits of participation in Streets of Treats, how members can benefit from this event, and ways to get the maximum benefit from participation.

- Dickens of a Christmas *Priority for 2005.*
 - to encourage more local businesses and community organizations to become actively involved in Dickens of a Christmas.
 - to promote the benefits of participation in Dickens of a Christmas, how members can benefit from this event, and ways to get the maximum benefit from participation.

- Consider new initiatives to promote the downtown such as:
 - New Year's Eve event *Priority for 2005.*
 - Christmas promotions
 - Best decorated business award
 - Door or display window decorating contests

- Consider new initiatives that do not require the closing of streets.

- Consider new initiatives in conjunction with the Foot Traffic Group.

*Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce
Membership Application Form*

Business Name _____

Address _____

Contact Person _____

Alternate Contact _____

Number of Employees _____

Nature of your Business _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Website _____

Type of Membership:

___ Mechanicsburg Business (\$80.00)

___ Associate (outside Mechanicsburg) (\$90.00)

___ Residential Associate (25.00)

Are you interested in serving on a committee?

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ___ Board of Directors | ___ New Year's Eve 'Wrench Drop' |
| ___ Business Promotion, Advocate for Business & Economic Development | ___ Personnel & Chamber Operations |
| ___ Downtown Promotion | ___ Property and Facility |
| ___ Finance and Fundraising | ___ Special Events |
| ___ Jubilee Day® | ___ Streets of Treats |
| ___ Marketing, Communications and Public Relations | ___ Technology |
| ___ Member Services | |

*2004 Board of Directors
Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce*

President Sue Erdman, *Joseph T. Simpson Public Library*

Vice President/President Elect Cliff Rogers, *Shadow Lake Research*

Secretary Darrell Westby, *Brookwood Investment Advisors, Inc.*

Treasurer Scott Christ, *Greenawalt & Company, P.C.*

Past President Dr. Larry Passmore, *Passmore Family Chiropractic*

John Anthony, *ACA Mortgage*

Dale Flor, *Waypoint Bank*

Craig Gentzler, *Cyber Boutique*

Marlin McCaleb, *Marlin McCaleb, Esq.*

John Petrie, *Mother Hubbard's Custom Cabinetry*

Maureen Shay, *Mechanicsburg Area School District*

Martine Sowers, *M's Beautique*

Jeffrey Van Boskirk, *2nd Floor Gallery*

Janice Witmer, *Office Manager*