

# OUR 2019 PLAN FOR BUILDING A BETTER BAY



(850) 785-5206



PANAMACITY.ORG

# about our organization

## Who We Are

Since 1913, the Bay County Chamber of Commerce has served businesses in Callaway, Lynn Haven, Mexico Beach, Panama City, Panama City Beach, Parker, Springfield and unincorporated Bay County. The Chamber works to promote the industrial and economic growth of the region, while partnering with, and supporting, local military installations. Through extensive relationships, the Chamber works to create a healthy environment in which businesses can grow and prosper. The mission for the Bay County Chamber is "to create superior value for all Chamber members, large and small; to cultivate economic and personal development; to promote and protect a competitive enterprise system of business; and to be a community leader while embracing Bay County's opportunities and challenges."

## Board of Directors

**Officers:** Chair, Will Cramer; Chair-Elect, Andrew Rowell; Vice-Chair, Sandy Sims; Treasurer, Chris Moore; MAC Chair, Doug Moore; Vice-Chair of Communications, Garrett Anderson **Board of Directors:** Michael Archibald, Debbie Ashbrook, Jean Capps, Terry Cole, Jason Crowe, Ryan Davis, Jan Gainer, Rhea Goff, Darren Haiman, Mynta Harbison, Reggie Johns, Ben Lee, Tommy Martin, Holly Melzer, Elizabeth Moore, Amy Myers, Harry Patel, Kyle Shoots, Mike Smith, Brad Thomas

For more information about the organization, visit [PanamaCity.org](http://PanamaCity.org)

## key objectives

On October 10, 2018, Bay County was changed for many years to come by Hurricane Michael and the devastating damage inflicted on our community. Now, more than ever, our community must come together to rebuild our seven municipalities and unincorporated Bay County without regard to the lines that separate those communities. The Bay County Chamber of Commerce is key to bringing community leaders together to work towards making Bay County an even better place to call "home." This is an opportunity to revitalize and refresh our area to attract those who want to invest and create jobs for our citizenry. It is imperative we rebuild to the highest standards to make our community more resilient to future storms and their impacts.

In order to achieve the items included in this document, it is critical the financial sustainability of the Chamber remain a priority for our leadership and business community. This organization maintains its role as a Community Development organization, but is fully funded by its dues paying members that were negatively affected by the storm. Staff and leadership are challenged to be proactive in preparing the organization for the impact of the loss of many of members, and to find financial resources to sustain its role to rebuild a better Bay County.

## Business Restoration and Retention

Our existing industries and businesses remain a top priority. The Chamber is key to ensuring those businesses have the right resources to sustain or rebuild by connecting owners and managers with agencies who can assist. In addition, the Chamber should serve as a liaison with local, state and federal officials to ensure a business friendly atmosphere and remove obstacles that may prevent revitalization of affected businesses.

## Commercial Development

The Chamber's partnership with NextSite, LLC is now more critical than its original intent. NextSite will continue to market our community and partnering government entities on a national level to recruit new commercial development and send the message that Bay County is, "Open for business." More opportunities are now available for redevelopment purposes, making the area more attractive to the big box stores that can provide restoration of our community, as well as products and services to the residents of the east side of the Hathaway Bridge.

## Branding, Marketing and Public Relations

The Chamber will work with all municipalities, economic development agencies and tourism officials to send a consistent message nationally that the county is recovering and is, "Open for Business." This messaging should not only be directed to visitors, but also to those seeking business opportunities in Bay County.

## Business Continuity and Disaster Planning

The clock starts now to prepare ourselves for the next storm. As we know, getting our business community up and running is a must for recovery. The Chamber, as it has in the past, will not only maintain its role in the ESF-18 function, but enhance it by working with our local businesses on their continuity of operations. In addition, Chamber staff will undergo adequate training at Bay County's Emergency Operations Center to familiarize themselves with software and procedures needed to provide timely information and support before, during and after a storm.

Staff will also work to improve the Chamber's continuity of operation plan, and use this as a learning experience to improve physical plant operations as well as technology that will enable the organization to better communicate with its members and serve the community.

## Legislative actions to reduce obstacles and support business development

Not only will the Chamber pursue all items included in the 2019 Legislative Agenda, but it will also stay informed and address new items that may affect restoration of the area (i.e., planning and zoning, sign ordinances, impact fees and more). Communication was a huge obstacle after Hurricane Michael. We must encourage state of the art communication technology for our community. The announcement of Verizon's commitment to make Bay County their fourth 5G community was a huge step, but we must encourage elected officials to exert the appropriate pressure to ensure that it becomes a reality.

## Supporting military, workforce, education, medical, housing, tourism, planning and infrastructure improvements

The economic impact of Tyndall Air Force Base on Bay County is surpassed by no other industry. It is critical to maintain community support for its restoration and support for the bed down of the F-35 and MQ-9 missions. The Bay County Chamber will continue its support of the Bay Defense Alliance.

Workforce was an issue before Hurricane Michael, and has now taken a huge hit with the loss of employees due to the housing issues caused by the storm. Addressing the community's housing needs is key to bringing employees back to Bay County. The Chamber will embrace builders, developers and local government to move swiftly in the rebuilding of multi- and single-family dwellings and to expedite the permitting process to not hinder the process. The storm was not selective in any socio-economic category and housing is needed at all levels.

In the meantime, those who have been victims of closures and do have housing should be pursued for retraining in different fields to fill vacancies. The Chamber will maintain its relationship with CareerSource Gulf Coast in promoting jobs fairs and training opportunities.

Bay County's Education system is no exception to the impact of the hurricane. Our K-12 and higher learning campuses were affected not only with their physical campuses, but with the loss of employees and students as well. The Chamber will fully engage with all educational institutions in pursuing funding for restoration and to draw students back to the classroom.

The medical community has suffered a devastating blow, leaving our citizens with minimal healthcare options. Support for both hospitals and our area physicians and clinics is critical. Our community not only serves Bay County residents, but a five county region that is in desperate need of healthcare services. By partnering with commercial realtors, the Chamber will assist doctors in locating appropriate office space to continue their practices.

Bay County was fortunate that Panama City Beach had minimal damage resulting from the hurricane. That community remained a valuable resource for all county residents to obtain products, services and housing. Tourism is Bay County's number one industry, and we must support our Tourism Development Council's efforts to bring our visitors back. In addition, the City of Panama City and Mexico Beach have suffered from the loss of the majority of its hotels. The resulting impact on the loss of income will affect marketing efforts.

With the influx of commercial vehicles in our community, our roadways and infrastructure have been damaged. It is of utmost importance that our local, state and federal officials address these damages and make repairs as soon as possible. FEMA funding should be pursued as those damages were an indirect effect of the storm.

We must view the impact of this storm as an opportunity to improve our entire community. Planning is critical to ensure our home is rebuilt correctly. This is our chance to make many changes to not only make ourselves more visually appealing, but also to rebuild a more resilient community. With a deliberate and inclusive effort, involving all stakeholders without regard to physical, social or professional boundaries, we can truly build a better Bay.



# public policy & community development

## GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**OFFICER: ANDREW ROWELL, CHAIR-ELECT**

**STAFF: BRANDI DERUITER, VP OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
CAROL ROBERTS, PRESIDENT/CEO**

- Address 2019 Legislative Agenda items
- Push for commercial development in Bay County with the help of NextSite, LLC
- Business Restoration and Retention
- Business continuity and disaster planning
- Take legislative action to reduce obstacles and support business development
- Maintain Chamber representation on Panama City and Bay County Infrastructure Surtax Oversight Committees

## LOCAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- Panama City Marina Revitalization
- Workforce Development: High School Trades
- Workforce Development: High School CTE and STEM
- Gulf Coast State College STEM Funding
- Florida College System Budget Request
- FSU Panama City programs to meet area needs
- Gulf of Mexico Restoration Funding
- Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc
- Economic Development: Airport Capital Projects
- Home Rule
- Transportation Priorities
- Infrastructure Funding: S.R. 390
- Bay Parkway
- State Fisheries Legislation
- Reducing Business Rent Tax
- Workers Compensation
- Enterprise FL/Visit FL
- Tourist Development Tax

For more information on these items, please see the Chamber's Legislative Agenda found at [PanamaCity.org/governmental-affairs/](http://PanamaCity.org/governmental-affairs/).

## FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- Offshore Drilling East of the Military Mission Line
- Federal Fisheries Legislation
- Panama City Crayfish
- Overtime Rule
- FEMA Flood Maps
- Port Panama City East Terminal

For more information on these items, please see the Chamber's Legislative Agenda found at [PanamaCity.org/governmental-affairs/](http://PanamaCity.org/governmental-affairs/).

### MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**OFFICER: DOUG MOORE, MAC CHAIR**

**STAFF: BRANDI DERUITER, VP OF GOVERNMENTAL/MILITARY AFFAIRS**

- Support rebuilding of Tyndall Air Force Base
- Partner with BDA on Community preparations for Tyndall's MQ-9 and F-35s Missions
- Conduct socials to honor visiting, new and departing base leadership



**OFFICER: SANDY SIMS, VICE-CHAIR**

**STAFF: ELIZABETH SMITH, VP OF EVENTS/FOUNDATION**

- 2018 - 2019 Leadership Bay
- 2018 - 2019 Junior Leadership Bay
- Bay Young Professionals (BYP)
- Education Committee
  - Alignment Bay County (ABC) - maintain involvement and assist where needed
  - Support Bay District Schools' preparation for increase in student population due to new missions at TAFB
- Continue Education Seminars to provide continuing developmental opportunities for members.
- Maintain representation on Bay District Schools's Citizens Oversight Committee



### ADMINISTRATION

**OFFICER: WILL CRAMER, CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

**STAFF: CAROL ROBERTS, PRESIDENT/CEO**

- Rebuild Chamber Facility
- Maintain Past Chairman's Council
- Hold CEO Welcome Reception each quarter
- Board of Directors/Executive Committee

### COMMUNICATIONS

**OFFICER: GARRETT ANDERSON, VICE-CHAIR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**STAFF: TAYLOR SMITH, VP OF COMMUNICATIONS**

- Produce New Member Video as a recruitment tool for new members
- Continuously update the Chamber's website to keep the public informed about upcoming events, as well as functions of the Chamber
- Increase likes/follows on each social media platform by 15%
- Develop plan to increase readership of Chamber publications
- Coordinate branding, marketing and public relation strategies with tourism and economic development organizations to send a consistent message that Bay County is, "Open for Business"
- Use marketing data collected by NextSite to assist member businesses in creating an advanced marketing strategy for their business

### EVENTS

**OFFICER: SANDY SIMS, VICE-CHAIR**

**STAFF: ELIZABETH SMITH, VP OF EVENTS/FOUNDATION**

- Annual Dinner & Awards Ceremony
- First Friday
- Celebrate Tourism Appreciation Month
- Hold Industry Appreciation Celebration
- Hold annual First Responders Appreciation event
- Business After Hours
- Research other non-dues revenue generating events

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**OFFICER: CHRIS MOORE, TREASURER**

**STAFF: TAMARA BARNES, VP OF MEMBERSHIP**

- Ambassadors
  - Apple of Our Eye Awards for Chamber Members
  - Deliver New Member Packets
  - Conduct grand openings and groundbreakings
- Continue Bay Business Connections (BBC)
- New Member Orientation