

2024 Business Plan



Building a Better Bay

about our organization

Who We Are

Since 1913, the Chamber 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 community development 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

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.

Officers

Chair, Joe Holt; Chair-Elect, Shane Boyett; Vice-Chair, Allen Armstrong; Treasurer, DeDe Rowan; MAC Chair, Kyle Shoots; Vice-Chair of Communications, Tricia Berry

Board of Directors

Kaydee Albritton, Kirk Bedford, Jeremy Bennett, Chris Brooks, Jean Capps, Shay Catrett, Chase Christianson, Paul Corbin, Arthur Cullen, Brendan D'Isernia, Lindsay Farris, Corbin McCall, Catherine McCloy, Ty Mitchell, Clint Mizell, David Netusil, John Pollman, Mohit Samtani, Chris Stamps

key objectives

The Bay County Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic and pivotal organization at the heart of Bay County dedicated to fostering economic prosperity and community well-being.

With a rich history and a commitment to excellence, this chamber plays a central role in advocating for local businesses, providing essential resources and support, and serving as a powerful catalyst for growth. It is a hub for networking, where business leaders, entrepreneurs, and community stakeholders converge to build valuable connections, fueling collaboration and development.

The Bay County Chamber is not only an advocate but also a driver of economic progress, supporting critical initiatives that shape the future of the community.

Below are the 2024 key objectives identified at the Board of Directors Annual Planning Session held in October 2023.

Affordable Access to Childcare

Florida is experiencing a childcare crisis and Bay County families struggle to access affordable, high-quality care for their children. Insufficient childcare options are driving parents out of the workforce resulting in reduced tax revenue for the state and increased strain on Florida families and businesses. The Chamber will be committed to advocating for increasing the income cap to grant more accessibility and affordability for families.

Infrastructure Surtax Renewal

The half-cent infrastructure surtax will be placed on the 2024 general election ballot for renewal. This surtax has played a pivotal role in transforming our local infrastructure. Not only does the surtax fund key projects, but it also gives local authorities the ability to leverage those funds to secure state and grant funding to increase the number of projects completed. The Bay County Chamber was instrumental in getting the surtax passed in 2016. In partnership with Bay County Government officials and other strategic partners, the Chamber will coordinate an education campaign on the benefits of the surtax renewal.

Workforce Development

The ongoing workforce shortage is a pressing concern impacting all sectors of our economy. The first two years of postsecondary education are a significant indicator of where a person will spend their career. It is crucial for the Chamber to continue its promotion of local postsecondary institutions in an effort to meet the workforce needs in Bay County.

Panama City Events Center Redevelopment

As community leaders, citizens and investors work to revitalize downtown Panama City, it is critical the arts, cultural, and entertainment hub remain as a draw to the downtown district. With the opening of Hotel Indigo downtown, it is important city leadership continue to take action to bring back a large-scale events venue. The combination of a hotel and performing arts/events center would be a huge economic boost, not only for downtown, but for Bay County.



public policy & community development

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

OFFICER: SHANE BOYETT, CHAIR ELECT

STAFF: AIMEE BRIGHT, VP OF GOVERNMENTAL/MILITARY AFFAIRS

CHAIR: SCOTT KIRKMAN

- Address 2024 Legislative Agenda items
- Maintain focus on education initiatives
- Develop strategy for Infrastructure Surtax renewal
- Continue monitoring all municipal government meetings and holding monthly City/County Manager's Meetings
- Continue efforts to bring awareness to municipal elections by promoting Florida Institute of Political Leadership Trainings, conducting candidate surveys and organizing candidate stump speeches

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Business and Economic Development

- Eliminating Business Rent Tax
- Home Rule
- Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
- Funding VISIT FLORIDA

Workforce Development and Education

- Continue Better Way for a Brighter Bay Initiative
- Expansion of programs at FSU-PC to meet local needs
- PIPELINE and LINE funds for Gulf Coast State College to support medical profession workforce growth
- Increase Affordable Access for Childcare

Quality of Life

- Affordable Housing
- Development of Panama City Event Center

Military & Defense

- NSA PC: Barefoot Palms Acquisition, Dive School Pier Repairs, Replace Condemned Barracks, Turning Basin
- Opposition to Offshore Drilling and Wind Energy Areas in Federal Waters in the Gulf of Mexico within or east of the Military Mission Line

Gulf, Bay & Fisheries

- East Pass
- Estuary Program
- Gulf of Mexico Restoration Funding
- State Waterways Debris Removal

Infrastructure and Transportation

- Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport Capital Projects: Terminal Improvements and Expansion, Creation of ECP Aviation Center of Excellence, Develop General Aviation Areas
- Transportation Priorities

More information on these items can be found at panamacity.org/governmental-affairs/

MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (MAC)

OFFICER: KYLE SHOOTS, MAC CHAIR

STAFF: AIMEE BRIGHT, VP OF GOVERNMENTAL/MILITARY AFFAIRS

- Support rebuilding of Tyndall Air Force Base and increase personnel assigned to Tyndall
- Continue to cultivate strong relations with both the USCG Station Panama City and the Offshore Patrol Cutter Commands
- Advocate for all local installations and continue work with BDA to support new and existing missions, leveraging the Gulf of Mexico Training Range
- Explore new outreach opportunities to support military and veteran families
- Host socials to honor visiting, new and departing base leadership
- Support opportunities for Gulf Coast Salute Air Show

OUR SUCCESSES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Over the years, the Bay County Chamber of Commerce has worked tirelessly to build a better Bay through countless projects with numerous partners that have made a positive impact on the community. Some of these projects include:



**PANAMA CITY
BED TAX**



**INFRASTRUCTURE
SURTAX**



PARTNERSHIP BAY



**BAY DEFENSE
ALLIANCE**



foundation

OFFICER: ALLEN ARMSTRONG, VICE-CHAIR

STAFF: ELIZABETH SMITH, VP OF EVENTS/FOUNDATION

LISA MOORE, MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR

- 2023-2024 Leadership Bay: Chair, Jeremy Pridgeon
- 2024-2025 Leadership Bay: Chair, Steve Bailey
- 2023-2024 Junior Leadership Bay: Chair, Christine Lance
- 2024-2025 Junior Leadership Bay: Chair, Jerry Sowell
- Bay Young Professionals (BYP): Chair, Taylor Williams - Develop signature event for Bay Young Professionals
- Explore new continuing educational seminars with businesses
- Continue to grow partnerships for Partnership Bay
- Maintain representation on Bay District Schools Citizens Oversight Committee



membership

ADMINISTRATION

OFFICER: JOE HOLT, CHAIR OF THE BOARD

STAFF: CAROL ROBERTS, PRESIDENT/CEO

DEBI BURDESHAW, VP OF FINANCE

VICTORIA ROUTH, INFORMATION SPECIALIST

- Maintain the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Nominating Committee
- NextSite
- Provide overall support for each department and management of the organization
- CEO Welcome Receptions and Past Chair Breakfasts/Luncheons

COMMUNICATIONS

OFFICER: TRICIA BERRY, VICE CHAIR OF COMMUNICATIONS

STAFF: SYDNEY CLIFTON, VP OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Establish and maintain deadlines on all publications
- Create promotional materials for all events. Use materials to keep news media and public informed about upcoming events and functions of the Chamber
- Design new Chamber website and maintain website content
- Increase Social Media presence on all Chamber platforms
- Prepare FACP Award Applications

EVENTS

OFFICER: ALLEN ARMSTRONG VICE CHAIR

STAFF: ELIZABETH SMITH, VP OF EVENTS/FOUNDATION

LISA MOORE, MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR

- Create new sponsorships for the Annual Dinner & Award Ceremony
- Increase participation in the Block Party and offer more booth space for members
- Tourism Appreciation Month: Chair, TBD - Create more awareness of the month
- Industry Appreciation Celebration: Chair, Brendan D'Isernia - Showcase the direct tie with Career & Technical Education and industry as well as work with media to produce news specials to highlight manufacturers in Bay County
- First Responders Appreciation: Chair, Shannon Williams - Improve First Responder of the Year Awards
- Develop other non-dues, revenue generating events

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

OFFICER: DEDE ROWAN, TREASURER

STAFF: TAMARA BARNES, VP OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PHILOMENA MARTRAIN, MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

- Member Recruitment
 - Recruit additional Member Account Executives
 - Develop plan to increase membership and member renewal
 - Increase member retention
- Ambassadors: Chairman, Shane Williams
 - Apple of Our Eye Awards for Chamber Members
 - Increase Ambassador activities/engagement with Project "Thank You"
 - Deliver New Member Welcome bags
 - Conduct grand openings, groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings and new member orientation.
- Business After Hours
- Continue Bay Business Connections (BBC)
 - BBC 1 Chair: Jamie Kitzmiller, Think Real Estate
 - BBC 2 Chair: Michael Lyng, Allstate Insurance
 - BBC 3 Chair: Bill Fuqua, City President, PeopleSouth Bank