



CAPE ANN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Serving Gloucester, Rockport, Essex & Manchester-by-the-Sea

November 29, 2006

REPORT TO THE BOARD: CHAMBER ACTIVITIES SINCE NOVEMBER 2005

This report contains a capsule summary of major Chamber activities in the past year. A bullet indicates a program that was initiated or expanded during 2005.

1. IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT

- Celebrated Joan Wolkin's tenth anniversary as Chamber Business Manager.
- Hired Susan Lucas as the Rockport Chamber office Business Manager

Developed a \$600,000 operating budget, complemented by Division accounts in excess of \$150,000.

Coordinated the sale of 500 tickets to the \$25,000 Game.

Coordinated the sale of 300 tickets to the Irish Sweepstakes.

Organized the nineteenth Goods and Services Auction, accumulating the incredible amount of \$165,000 in donations, utilizing new AuctionPay software.

Organized an Art Preview to showcase paintings, prints, and photographs donated to the auction.

Maintained and promoted the Chamber website, www.CapeAnnChamber.com, with hits continuing to increase in its fifth year.

Sponsored a retreat for the Board of Directors.

Coordinated the seventeenth Chamber Golf Tournament.

Held 12 regular Board meetings plus a special session in December to review the proposed budget for 2006.

Held the Chamber's Annual Dinner-Dance at The Tavern on the Harbor, featuring the induction of Robert Gillis as President.

Coordinated an orientation session for new members of the Board of Directors.

Maintained active memberships in the Massachusetts Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, the Massachusetts Association of Membership Development, the New England Chamber of Commerce Executives, the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, and the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Organized drink concession booths at the Waterfront Festival to boost non-dues income.

Used electronic means to distribute information to Chamber members, i.e., transmissions via facsimile and email instead of U.S. Post Office.

Utilized postcards for meeting notices instead of letters, saving \$.14 per notice being mailed.

Continued to display the work of area artists in the lobby.

- Obtained training for staff at Adelphia in order to film events for airing on local television station.

2. ROCKPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Held a well-attended general membership meeting in January to review 2005 and look forward to 2006 programs and initiatives.

Sold out the annual dinner meeting at Brackett's in April, celebrating the one-year anniversary of the union of the Cape Ann and Rockport Chambers of Commerce, and unanimously approving the slate of Directors for the RCOB Board. A full house of members and guests also enjoyed a special presentation by Alan Joslin, architect for the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, on the Festival's plans to convert the Haskins Building into a world class concert hall.

Produced a new Rockport map and guide, with 102 listings, distributing 125,000 copies.

Received \$3,000 in advertising grants from the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Sponsored a Board of Selectmen Candidates Debate, which was filmed at Adelphia studios and aired several times prior to the election.

Coordinated Motif #1 Days, with the involvement of numerous community groups and 100 merchants and other businesses.

- Held a special innkeepers meeting to review operations of the information booth and innkeeper on call program.

Produced several other publications, including the twelfth edition of the Rockport Walking Guide (increasing participation to 94 listings).

Continued to renovate the Rockport information booth prior to the spring re-opening, and completed installation of the new Rockport Accommodations Vacancy Map and Listing Board.

- Launched the re-design of www.RockportUSA.com, facilitated by The Van Ness Group, with a new menu system, a business directory with search features, a press room, beautiful photography, and the ability to utilize data from www.CapeAnnVacations.com, reducing staff website maintenance time significantly.

Continued discussions with the Board of the Old Firehouse Trust and Selectmen regarding possible use of space and collaboration on historical/visitors center issues.

- Met with other community groups to frame an initiative for a future naval ship visit to Rockport.

- Joined with the Town in purchasing 16 new barrels for the downtown area, eight of them being bought by the Chamber and several supportive businesses.

Met regularly with the Rockport Innkeepers group.

Hired seasonal personnel for the booth and maintained a schedule from Memorial Day through October 15 (Harvest Festival weekend).

Maintained Barletta Park information shed with assistance of volunteers.

Created an annual operating budget and developed monthly financial statements for the Board.

Organized the Rockport Auction, attended by nearly 200 patrons and generating net proceeds of \$33,000.

Produced the second Rockport Harvest Festival with the participation of over 100 businesses.

Met with Senator Tarr regarding possible funding for a new Chamber Visitors' Center, and generated initial design for the building.

Conducted regular, well attended meetings of the Retail Committee, dealing with infrastructure issues and promotions and hearing from DPW Director Tomasz, Police Chief McCarthy, and CATA Manager Ryan.

Coordinated the 21st Christmas in Rockport month-long program of activities with record support from the business community.

3. MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

- Recruited 80 new members during the course of the year.

Coordinated five Evening Business Exchanges at Cape Ann Lighthouse/Grand Banks Building Supplies, Coldwell Banker, Cape Ann Marine Sales & Services, Pond View Village, and Walker Creek Furniture.

Coordinated six Breakfast Clubs: Focus on Education, Economic Forecast, Ten Hours Until Dawn, Economic Forecast (#2), Options for Healthy Living, and Gloucester Crossing.

Produced the newsletter on a periodic basis, highlighting stories about the region and Chamber members. Advertising in the newsletter continues to be strong.

Sponsored five seminars for the general membership including: Activating Your Entrepreneurial Spirit, an Introduction to QuickBooks (twice), Labor & Employment Laws, and Shoplifting Prevention. Sponsored a seminar for tradespeople on Mold Remediation.

Produced four Cape Ann Chamber Businesswomen's programs, including the annual Winedown, Magic Closet, Spring Fling/Fashion Show, and the 20th Anniversary Fall Luncheon.

- The Businesswomen created the Carolyn O'Connor Scholarship, honoring the group's first Chairwoman and her many accomplishments.
- Sponsored the first Cape Ann Home & Garden Show in April, attended by 2,500 people.

- Organized the first Cape Ann Holiday Gift & Trade Show, including a special preview party for Chamber members.

Produced a weekly membership email update allowing members to submit a short paragraph on their business to be shared with over 1,150 recipients using email.

Offered a regular counseling program for small businesses.

Sponsored three receptions/orientations for new members.

Continued to develop the Contractors' Division, serving the needs of members in the trades, sponsoring two mixers and a seminar, and distributing a guide to hiring a contractor—a reference piece for homeowners and business people.

Offered six health insurance programs, a dental program and a disability insurance program for the membership.

Organized Christmas parties in Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, and Manchester.

Maintained and increased links to the Membership Directory on the Chamber's website, offering an online presence to each Chamber member for free.

Offered a Manchester Athletic Club discount program.

Offered an expanded advertising package to new members.

Maintained an Ambassadors Program to reach out to members. Ambassadors held monthly meetings and made over 50 contacts.

Recognized Ambassador of the Year Mark Grenier.

Began work on a new Chamber Membership Directory.

Continued regular meetings of the Cape Ann Health & Wellness Practitioners Group.

- Co-hosted an Open House honoring Polly Tomer, former Business Manager of the Chamber, upon her retirement from the Cape Ann Fishermen's Loan Fund.

4. RETAIL

- Advocated for the completion of Phase IV of the reconstruction of Gloucester's East End, resulting in the addition of period lighting, new sidewalks, trees, the reconfiguration of Flannagan Square, and the repaving of Main Street.

Coordinated Sidewalk Bazaars in Gloucester and Manchester.

Assisted the City of Gloucester in promoting a \$40 per month parking permit.

Organized Christmas programs in Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester, and Essex.

- Generated \$400,000 worth of local sales with the Gloucester Gift Certificate program since it's inception. Expanded the program to include member businesses in Rockport, Essex, and Manchester. DMK Graphics designed the new look for the Cape Ann Gift Certificate program. Increased the number of participants to 200.
- Maintained the downtown banner program with the City of Gloucester. Purchased new brackets for the 20 "Welcome to Gloucester" banners provided by the City.

Used lobster buoys as additional holiday decorations on Gloucester's Main Street.

Held regular meetings with Gloucester City officials to discuss downtown issues.

Updated the Welcome to Manchester package for new homeowners, including coupons from 20 businesses.

Planned the third annual "Gloucester Shop and Dine" promotion.

Organized the Christmas Club coupon program for all Cape Ann retailers.

Developed retail promotions in all four communities throughout the year.

Continued discussion with the Selectmen and the Police Chiefs in Manchester and Essex regarding parking concerns and enforcement in the downtown area.

Coordinated the City of Gloucester-Chamber Joint Parking Committee, meeting regularly to review the parking situation in the downtown area and discuss areas for parking management improvements. The group's recommendation to open the lot at the corner of Duncan and Rogers Streets to the public and move court and police vehicles to designated spaces in the Fitz Hugh Lane lot was added to the City's Capital Investment list as a necessary project.

- Actively advocated against the increase in meter fees from \$.25 per hour to \$.50 per hour.
- Held meetings and provided input to the Manchester Board of Selectmen on proposals on the downtown improvements project and, once construction commenced, distributed weekly updates to the business community.

Attended meetings of the Gloucester Downtown Development Commission.

- Purchased 43 hanging flower baskets for Main Street in Gloucester and hired Compass Property Management to maintain them through the season.
- Attended meetings and assisted in promoting the first season of the Cape Ann Farmer's Market at Harbor Loop in Gloucester.

5. TOURISM

Maintained space at the 128 North Visitor Center in Beverly, at which the Chamber distributed brochures for 46 tourist-related members in an A-frame brochure rack.

Maintained the Cape Ann Innkeeper on Call Program with 45 accommodations participating to assist visitors in finding a place to stay after the Chamber office and visitor centers are closed.

Distributed a listing of weekend events via email called *This Weekend on Cape Ann*.

Redesigned, published, and distributed 250,000 Cape Ann Visitor Guides.

Maintained an 800-information line and email address for visitor inquiries.

Coordinated a \$28,000 advertising campaign to promote Cape Ann.

Maintained and promoted www.CapeAnnVacations.com, resulting in a 50% increase in web traffic to the site and a higher page ranking with internet search engines.

- Upgraded www.CapeAnnVacations.com to allow members to advertise in more sections of the site.

Received \$6,000 in advertising grants from the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Coordinated regional cooperative advertising program in a spring preprint insert, which goes into 20 major newspapers in New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Coordinated regional cooperative advertising program in *Yankee Magazine's Travel Guide to New England*.

Coordinated regional cooperative advertising program in *Massachusetts Getaway Guide*.

Expanded office hours to seven days a week from May through October to accommodate visitors on a daily basis.

Coordinated the Gloucester Schooner Festival, the Gloucester Waterfront Festival, and the Essex ClamFest.

Sponsored the Essex Music Festival.

Attended meetings of the Gloucester Tourism Commission.

Hosted the 22nd Annual Travel Writers' Weekend, with the kick-off at a Tourist Mixer at the Essex Shipbuilding Museum.

- Jointly Coordinated a Hospitality Seminar with the Gloucester Tourism Commission.

Supported the programs of the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.

Displayed a Cape Ann tourist poster (with cooperative advertisers) at the Mansfield Information Booth, and funded posters at three other sites on the Mass Pike.

Utilized the services of Jordan Bragg and Kristian Hoysradt for tourism-based projects during the summer.

Maintained a list of tourist inquiries for a direct mail program.

Operated the Harbor Loop Information Booth for the sixth year, servicing close to 13,000 visitors.

Supported the Essex National Heritage Area commission, with Executive Director Michael Costello serving as a Trustee.

Sponsored two Gallery Strolls in Rockport, the first as part of the Christmas program and the second in conjunction with Motif #1 Day.

Promoted the sale of the Cape Ann street map, featuring the four communities on one side and the State on the other.

Sara Young joined the Executive Board of Directors for the North of Boston CVB as Secretary, and holds a seat on the Board of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts (SeArts)

Partnered with the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts in their application for a \$150,000 Boston Foundation Grant to support cultural economic development on Cape Ann.

- Partnered with the City of Gloucester in their application for \$140,000 Preserve America Grant to provide directional and interpretive signage throughout the City.
- Attended meetings and assisted with bringing cruise ships to the port of Gloucester. Coordinated an information/welcome table and volunteers to greet passengers from the cruise ships. Raised funds to provide a free shuttle service to downtown Gloucester and Essex for passengers.

6. INDUSTRIAL

Met with key Gloucester officials on issues of importance to industry.

Helped to organize a Gloucester presence at the Boston Seafood Show.

Coordinated the publication of the Gloucester Seafood Directory.

Organized the twenty-first annual New Fish Festival, promoting greater awareness of seafood and of the diversity of fish species.

Testified against Gloucester's proposed water and sewer rate increases, citing the negative impact on business.

- Coordinated meetings with Kondelin Road businesses on traffic and parking issues and developed a database for the Park.

7. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Met with Mayor Bell on a regular basis to review key City issues.

Organized meetings with the community on the Combined Sewer Outfall (CSO) project.

Served on the Mayor's CSO Advisory Committee.

Formed a Chamber CSO Steering Committee comprised of businesses from Washington Street and other areas of downtown that will be affected by the project.

- Organized meetings with businesses impacted by the Thatcher Road bridge reconstruction project.

Organized the campaign against tax classification for the 26th consecutive year.

Worked with government officials and police departments on parking issues in Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester, and Essex.

Coordinated the Cape Ann Caucus, bringing the area's public officials and business leaders together to discuss the housing crisis, the Gloucester Education Foundation, regional planning initiatives, water and sewer issues, proposed LNG projects off the Cape Ann coast, and the future of Addison Gilbert Hospital.

Sponsored numerous discussions with Essex officials regarding the sewer construction and Route 133 improvement projects.

- Worked with surrounding towns and Mass. Highway to improve signage on Route 128 relative to Essex exits.
- Worked with the Gloucester City Council and the Building Inspector on new fees for building permits.

Attended Harbor Plan Implementation Committee meetings, and sponsored meetings with Port professional Greg Ketchen and waterfront property owners to discuss the Plan and changes to the current situation.

Sponsored candidate debates in Rockport, Manchester, and Essex.

8. COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Recognized the achievements of four business people during Small Business Week.

Organized an Easter Egg Hunt for the children of Rockport.

Supported the Gloucester Pride Stride and St. Peter's Fiesta.

- Made a \$1,000 donation to the Essex Senior Center.

Maintained a community calendar of events to prevent scheduling conflicts and provided holiday information to the media detailing what's open and closed.

Organized a wide variety of ongoing community activities, such as the Essex ClamFest, the Schooner Festival, the Sidewalk Bazaars, the Holiday Gift & Trade Show, and Cape Ann Home & Garden Show, and the Waterfront Festival.

Supported the Gloucester Fireworks Fund.

Served on the Cape Ann Health Care Task Force.

Sponsored a visit to Manchester by the Walker Brothers Circus.

9. EDUCATION

Continued the work of the Business/Education Collaborative.

- Initiated program with GHS English Department and community volunteers to work with students and teachers called an Area Support Group.

Increased support for the Collaborative and participation from the three Cape Ann public school systems, the community college, and the vocational school.

Continued to work with the Business Department at GHS regarding their participation in the DECA Marketing Program.

Sponsored the annual Focus on Education Breakfast, featuring remarks from the Superintendents from Cape Ann's three school districts.

Awarded three Chamber scholarships of \$1,000 each to area graduating seniors.

Awarded the Sylvester "Red" Deering Scholarship of \$1,000 to a graduating Senior from Gloucester High School.

Awarded the annual \$1,000 scholarship in honor of Patricia Roy—the first woman President of the Chamber—to a graduating female pursuing a career in business.

- Created the Carolyn O'Connor Scholarship.
- Awarded two new \$1,250 scholarships on behalf of the Woodman Scholarship Fund.

Assisted with the "Taste of Essex" reception in support of the Woodman Scholarship Fund.

Worked with the North Shore Workforce Investment Board and the North Shore Career Center on "FirstJobs", a teen summer employment program.

Co-sponsored a Business Plan Competition with the Enterprise Center at Salem State and 10 other North Shore business organizations.

- Used email highlights to inform Chamber members of specific volunteer requests from local schools.