



# CAPE ANN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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

November 15, 2007

## **REPORT TO THE BOARD: CHAMBER ACTIVITIES SINCE NOVEMBER 2006**

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 2007.

### **1. IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT**

- Hired Economic Development and Membership Manager Carla Dellaporta and Receptionist Joy Balzarini. Promoted Receptionist Judy Caulkett to Program Manager position.

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 twentieth Goods and Services Auction, accumulating the incredible amount of \$185,000 in donations, utilizing AuctionPay software.

- Organized an on-line Auction as a key component of the overall Auction program.

Maintained and promoted the Chamber website, [www.CapeAnnChamber.com](http://www.CapeAnnChamber.com), with hits continuing to increase in its sixth year.

Sponsored a retreat for the Board of Directors.

Coordinated the Business/Education Collaborative Golf Tournament.

Held 12 regular Board meetings plus a special session in December to review the proposed budget for 2007.

Sold out the Chamber's Annual Dinner-Dance at The Tavern on the Harbor, featuring the induction of Ruth Pino as President.

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

Maintained active memberships in the North of Boston Convention and Visitors' Bureau, 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 a Lobster Bake, catered by Lobsta Land, and 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.

Continued to display the work of area artists in the “Artists’ Corner” of the lobby.

- Reviewed and updated the organizational By-Laws.
- Upgraded the phone system in the main office, replacing the operating system and two phone units.
- Purchased a higher quality digital camera, enabling more in-house graphics creation for publications and internet use.
- Replaced the server on the main office computer network.
- Entered into an agreement with Balsam Technologies to monitor and service the computers in both offices.

## **2. ROCKPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Held a well-attended general membership meeting in January at the Rockport Art Association to review a very successful 2006 and share ideas for celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Rockport Board of Trade in 1927.

Sold out the annual dinner meeting at the Emerson Inn by the Sea in April, celebrating the two-year anniversary of the union of the Cape Ann and Rockport Chambers of Commerce and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rockport Chamber 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 Nick Paleologos, executive director of the new Massachusetts Film Office.

Produced the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the Rockport map and guide, with 110 listings, distributing 150,000 copies.

Produced several other publications, including the thirteenth edition of the Rockport Walking Guide (increasing participation to 96 listings).

Received \$4,500 in advertising grants from the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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

Held a special innkeepers meeting in June at the Seaward Inn to review operations of the information booth and innkeeper on call program.

Continued to maintain and operate the Rockport information booth; re-furbished and organized the Barletta Park information shed with the assistance of members Cathy Cahill, Roger Norris, and Jay Smith.

Continued the promotion of [www.RockportUSA.com](http://www.RockportUSA.com), including enhanced listings for members. In conjunction with [www.CapeAnnVacations.com](http://www.CapeAnnVacations.com), these sites generated nearly 2 million hits per month during July and August, 2007.

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

Raised funds for community and civic improvements through bake sales and special activities in conjunction with Motif #1 Days and the Harvest Festival.

Met regularly with the Rockport Innkeepers group.

Hired seasonal personnel for the booth and maintained a schedule from Memorial Day through October 14 (Harvest Festival weekend).

Awarded two \$300 scholarships to graduating high school seniors.

Maintained Barletta Park information shed with assistance of volunteers.

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

Held monthly meetings of the Board of Directors.

Organized the Rockport Auction at the Rockport Art Association, attended by a capacity crowd and generating net proceeds of over \$30,000.

- Produced the third Rockport Harvest Festival with the participation of over 100 businesses, and helped coordinate the visit to Rockport by the USS Boone, the first such port visit in over 50 years, and also hosted the Navy Northeast Show Band for a special concert at Rockport High School.

Continued to communicate and meet with Senator Tarr regarding possible funding for a new Chamber Visitors' Center.

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 22nd Christmas in Rockport month-long program of activities with record support from the business community.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

- Recruited 84 new members prior to the Drive in September. Organized bi-annual Membership Drive, resulting in the recruitment of an additional 121 new members, which brings total Chamber membership on 11/07/07 to 1,240.

Coordinated six Evening Business Exchanges at Cape Ann Historic Association Museum, The Willow Rest, Sawyer Free Library, Pathways for Children, Sayward Street Condominiums, and Doyon's Modern Home. Hosted a special "Meet the Executives" networking mixer with the Executive staff of the Eagle-Tribune.

Coordinated six Breakfast Clubs: Focus on Education, Economic Forecast, Health Insurance in the Commonwealth, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Options for Healthy Living, Pre-Primary Mayoral Debate, and Mayoral Debate.

- Held an Annual Business Meeting for the full membership, providing organizational, program, and financial information for the 50 attendees.

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

Sponsored three seminars for the general membership including: Activating Your Entrepreneurial Spirit, Networking, and Advice for Exporters.

Produced three Cape Ann Chamber Businesswomen's programs, including the annual Winedown, the Spring Fling Fashion Show, and the Fall Luncheon.

The Businesswomen continued fundraising for the Carolyn O'Connor Scholarship, including the creation of the "Homes for the Holidays" home tour. The first scholarship award was made in January.

Sponsored the Cape Ann Home & Garden Show in April, attended by 2,500 people.

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

- Launched the Member-to-Member Savings Connection program

Produced a weekly membership email update allowing members to submit a short paragraph on their business to be shared with over 1,200 recipients using email.

Offered a regular counseling program for small businesses.

Sponsored three receptions/orientations for new members.

- Offered programs for the Contractors' Division, including two OSHA seminars, and developed a strong position against a proposed demolition delay ordinance for the City of Gloucester.

Offered a variety of group health insurance programs and a dental program for the membership, and sponsored a meeting on the State's new insurance legislation.

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.

Expanded the online Business Directory to include a small graphic and 150 word description to all members.

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 Donna Ardizzoni.

- Worked with Community Phonebooks to publish a new printed Chamber Membership Directory, enhancing the Directory with color advertising and photography.

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

- Held a “Chocolates & Cocktails” networking mixer for the Manchester Division.

#### **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.

- Reached the \$500,000 mark in sales of Cape Ann Gift Certificates (since 2001). Increased the number of participants to 232.

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.

Planned the fourth 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.

Attended meetings of the Gloucester Downtown Development Commission.

- Purchased additional hanging baskets and flowers for Main Street in Gloucester and hired Compass Property Management to maintain them through the season.

- Purchased 21 trash barrels and 6 new seasonal banners.
- Hired downtown worker to keep streets clean, and painted benches and bike racks.

Assisted in promoting the Cape Ann Farmer's Market at Harbor Loop in Gloucester.

## 5. TOURISM

- Sponsored the first Cape Ann Restaurant Week promotion, with 24 participants and support from the Cape Ann Beacon, North Shore 104.9, and Ryan & Wood Distilleries.

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 43 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.

Reprinted the popular "Lighthouses of Cape Ann" brochure.

- Published a new edition of the "Guide to Gloucester Harbor".

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

Coordinated an advertising campaign to promote Cape Ann.

Maintained and promoted [www.CapeAnnVacations.com](http://www.CapeAnnVacations.com), resulting in a significant increase in web traffic to the site and a higher page ranking with internet search engines.

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

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 annual Tourist Mixer at the Rockport Art Association.

- Hosted a fam tour for a group of six international food editors.

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 and brochure distribution at three other sites on the Mass Pike.

Utilized the services of Jessica Parisi and Samantha Alves 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 seventh year, servicing close to 12,000 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.

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 its application for a \$140,000 Preserve America Grant to provide directional and interpretive signage throughout the City, and made a \$10,000 cash contribution to the project.
- 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 Rockport 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-second 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.

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

## **7. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

- Coordinated a task force of waterfront property owners, who met over a three month period to review Gloucester's proposed Harbor Plan and made specific recommendations to amend the Plan.

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 affected by the project. Disseminated up to date and consistent information regarding the ongoing CSO project.

Organized the campaign against tax classification for the 27th 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 housing, 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.

Sponsored candidate debates in Gloucester 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, and participated in the opening ceremonies at the new 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 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.

## **9. EDUCATION**

Organized regular meetings of the Business/Education Collaborative.

Continued working with GHS English Department and community volunteers in the Area Support Group. Worked to expand program to include GHS History Department.

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 by 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.

Developed and presented an Interview Skills Workshop for Cape Ann high school junior classes.

Awarded two \$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.