

# Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce

*Annual Report to the Board*

*Chamber Activities Since November, 2007*

*November 1, 2008*

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 2008.

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## **IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT**

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

Reduced paper use and postage cost by distributing information to Chamber members via email and facsimile.

Displayed the work of area artists in the "Artists' Corner" of the lobby.

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

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

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.

Held 12 regular Board meetings plus a special session in December to review the proposed budget for 2008.

Held a special meeting with all Committee Chairs.

Sponsored a retreat for the Board of Directors.

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

- ◆ Hired Economic Development and Membership Manager Beth Morris.

Coordinated the sale of 300 tickets to the Irish Sweepstakes.

- ◆ Replaced two workstations and the primary printer on the main office computer network, continuing to utilize Balsam Technologies for computer service/maintenance. A laptop computer was donated by Horvitz & Frisch, P.C.

Organized the twenty-first Goods and Services Auction, accumulating an incredible \$215,000 in donations. Organized an on-line Auction as a key component of the overall Auction program.

- ◆ Initiated search for Executive Director.

## **IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT**

Organized a Lobster Bake, catered by Lobsta Land, and drink concession booths at the Waterfront Festival to boost non-dues income.

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

- ◆ Initiated a new fund-raising program-- the Cape Ann Dine-Around-- with Chamber evenings at Lobsta Land in October and Jalapenos in November.
- ◆ Hired Bob Hastings as the Executive Director, effective January 5, 2009.

## **ROCKPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Concluded three-year review of merger with Cape Ann Chamber.

Held six meetings of the Board of Directors (through October).

Held general membership meetings in January and November.

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

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

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, 2008 (with a record 993,000 hits on Rockportusa in August).

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

Received \$3,500 in advertising grants from the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Met regularly with the Rockport Innkeepers group.

Sold out the annual dinner at Brackett's in April.

Continued to staff and operate the Rockport information booth from mid-May through mid-September, and kept the Barletta Park information shed open year-round with the assistance of member Cathy Cahill and volunteer Linda Joseph.

Hired seasonal personnel for the booth and maintained a schedule from Memorial Day through mid-September.

Produced the 2008 edition of the Rockport Visitors' Map and Guide, with 112 listings and nine display ads, distributing 150,000 copies.

Coordinated Motif #1 Days, with the involvement of numerous community groups and 75 merchants and other businesses.

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

## **ROCKPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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

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

Produced the fourteenth edition of the Rockport Walking Guide with a total of 88 listings.

Coordinated the fourth Rockport Harvest Festival with the participation of nearly 100 businesses.

Organized the Rockport Auction at the Rockport Art Association, generating net proceeds of approximately \$25,000.

- ◆ Conducted a scooter raffle with the support of the Taliadoros family, selling 500 tickets.
- ◆ Worked with the Rockport Navy Committee for a second annual naval ship visit to Rockport in conjunction with the Harvest Festival.

Coordinated the 24th Christmas in Rockport month-long program of activities with continued strong support from the business community.

## **MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

- ◆ Recruited 73 new Chamber members, which brings total Chamber membership on 11/01/08 to 1,198.

Maintained the Membership Directory on the Chamber's website, offering an online presence to each Chamber member.

Maintained the Member-2-Member Savings Connection program.

Offered a Manchester Athletic Club discount program.

Offered a variety of group health insurance programs and a dental program for the membership.

Sponsored three receptions/orientations for new Chamber members.

Sponsored ten seminars including: Activating Your Entrepreneurial Spirit, Introduction to Quickbooks, Building Your Business, Managing Generational Differences, Tipping Points, Marketing Your Website, ServeSafe for Food Servers, Food Manager Certification, Tips for a Successful Trade Show, and Blogging Basics.

Offered a regular counseling program for small businesses.

Produced a weekly membership email update allowing members to submit a short paragraph on their business to be shared with over 1,250 recipients using email.

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

Produced six Cape Ann Chamber Businesswomen's programs, including the Winedown, the Spring Fling, Women of Cape Ann, Presentation Skills Seminar (first in a new seminar series for businesswomen), the Fall Luncheon, and the Homes for the Holidays House Tour.

## **MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

Recognized Ambassador of the Year Robert Gillis at the Annual Dinner Dance.

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

Coordinated five Evening Business Exchanges at C.B. Fisk, Ambiance Hair Design, Ryan & Wood Distilleries, Rockport National Bank, and Wellspring House.

Continued regular meetings of the Health & Wellness Practitioners Group. Sent out periodic e-newsletters written by wellness members to full membership.

Offered programs for the Contractors' Division, including a networking mixer at Scott Oil, an OSHA seminar, and the opportunity to participate in the Businesswomen's House Tour.

Offered an expanded advertising package to new members.

Coordinated seven Breakfast Clubs: Economic Forecast, Breakfast with Senator John Kerry, Labor and Employment Law, Options for Healthy Living, State Representatives Debate, Question One Debate, and Focus on Education.

Sponsored the Cape Ann Home & Garden Show in March.

- ◆ Initiated monthly meetings of the Human Resources Professionals Group.
- ◆ Initiated a membership renewal appreciation program.
- ◆ Hosted a special cruise aboard the Schooner Alabama for Chamber members and friends.
- ◆ Partnered with the City of Gloucester, SeArts, and CABI to host the creative connector, recognizing businesses from this important sector.
- ◆ Created event passes for Ambassadors to share with contacts.

Held a "Chocolates & Cocktails" networking mixer for the Manchester Division.

Held an Annual Business Meeting for the full membership, providing organizational, program, and financial information for the 80 attendees.

Organized the Cape Ann Holiday Gift Show in November.

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

## **RETAIL**

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.

Maintained the downtown banner program with the City of Gloucester.

Developed retail promotions in all four communities throughout the year.

## **RETAIL**

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

Attended meetings of the Gloucester Downtown Development Commission.

Served on the Downtown Improvement Committee, advancing such initiatives as the summer hanging baskets and painting of Boulevard railings.

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

- ◆ Worked with the Downtown Improvement Committee to support the Clean Team summer worker program.
- ◆ Produced flyers offering beach goers a variety of discounts at Gloucester businesses, which were distributed at the concession stands at Gloucester beaches and at the Gloucester Waterfront Festival.
- ◆ Coordinated the first Manchester Arts Festival, a revised program replacing the Manchester Sidewalk Bazaar

Coordinated the 50th Annual Gloucester Sidewalk Bazaar, expanding the number of local artists and artisans displaying their goods along Main Street

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

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

Planned the annual "Gloucester Shop and Dine" promotion.

- ◆ Reached the \$650,000 mark in sales of Cape Ann Gift Certificates (since 2001).

## **TOURISM**

Maintained a list of tourist inquiries for a direct mail program. Offered this program via email to all Tourist Division members as a membership benefit.

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

Coordinated an advertising campaign to promote Cape Ann.

Utilized the services of Jessica Parisi and Samantha Alves for tourism-based projects during the summer.

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

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

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

## TOURISM

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

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

Attended meetings of the Gloucester Tourism Commission.

Distributed a listing of weekend events via email called "This Weekend on 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.

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

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

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

Partnered with the City of Gloucester Tourism Commission to provide an information/welcome table and volunteers to greet passengers from the cruise ships.

Hosted the annual Tourist Mixer at the Cape Ann Museum.

Maintained the Cape Ann Innkeeper on Call Program.

Operated the Harbor Loop Information Booth for the seventh year, servicing close to 12,000 visitors.

- ◆ Initiated planning for a new event, the Lure of Cape Ann Saltwater Fishing Tournament, which will take place in August, 2009.
- ◆ Created the "Free and Under \$50 for Families" web promotion.
- ◆ Initiated planning for a new event, the Cape Ann Winter Birding Weekend, which will take place in January, 2009.

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

Sponsored the Essex Music Festival.

- ◆ Tourist Division and Board representatives met with DMO representatives and City's Tourist Commission to discuss activities and potential areas of cooperation.
- ◆ Reported to Mayor Kirk on Chamber efforts to support Gloucester Tourism.

Advertised in the North of Boston CVB Map & Guide.

Coordinated regional cooperative advertising program in Massachusetts Getaway Guide.

## **TOURISM**

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

- ◆ Initiated production of Cape Ann Promotional Video

Sponsored the second annual Cape Ann Restaurant Week promotion.

## **INDUSTRIAL / FISHING**

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

Coordinated the publication of the Gloucester Seafood Directory.

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

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

## **GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

- ◆ Coordinated a task force of waterfront property owners to review Gloucester's proposed Harbor Plan and made specific recommendations to amend the Plan.
- ◆ Held meetings on permitting issues at local and state levels, responding to the Governor's initiative to identify and remediate regulations that are unnecessary, overly burdensome, or inconsistent with statutory mandates or the rules of other agencies.

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

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

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

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 CPA.

Sponsored debates for Rockport Selectmen, State Representatives (primary election), and Ballot Question One.

- ◆ Initiated meetings with Commercial Street property owners to discuss zoning issues.
- ◆ Partnered with Chambers and other groups in opposing Ballot Question One-- the elimination of the state income tax-- as fiscally damaging to communities statewide.

Organized the campaign against tax classification for the 28th consecutive year.

## **COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Maintained a community calendar of events to prevent scheduling conflicts and provided holiday information to the media detailing various business' holiday closures.

## **COMMUNITY/PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Served on the Cape Ann Health Care Task Force.

Supported the Gloucester Fireworks Fund.

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

Supported the Cape Ann Farmers' Market, Gloucester Pride Stride, Downtown Block Parties, and St. Peter's Fiesta.

Organized an Easter Egg Hunt for the children of Rockport.

Entered Chamber teams in the Gloucester School Connection Spelling Bee and the Inns of Rockport Bowling Tournament in support of local schools.

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

- ◆ Supported the 1st Annual Essex River Day (a collaboration with Essex Merchants Group).
- ◆ Sponsored Walker Brothers' Circus in Manchester.
- ◆ With the support of the Contractors Division, installed ceilings in the Rose Baker Senior Center as a community service project.

## **EDUCATION**

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

- ◆ Supported the effort to build a new vocational school in Danvers.

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

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

Presented an Interview Skills Workshop for Cape Ann high school students.

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

Organized regular meetings of the Business/Education Collaborative.

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

Continued working with GHS English Department and community volunteers in the Area Support Group.

## EDUCATION

Assisted with the “Taste of Essex” reception in support of the L. Dexter Woodman Scholarship Fund.

Coordinated the Business/Education Collaborative Golf Tournament.

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.

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

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

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

Awarded two \$1,250 scholarships on behalf of the L. Dexter Woodman Scholarship Fund.

Awarded the Carolyn O'Connor Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. The Businesswomen continued fundraising for this scholarship, including the second annual “Homes for the Holidays” home tour.