

Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Annual Report
2004

2004 was a year of celebration and reflection as the Chamber of Commerce commemorated its 50th anniversary. On December 7, 1953 a number of the community's business leaders and interested citizens met at the town hall and unanimously decided a Chamber of Commerce was needed. Headed by S. W. Rawls, Jr., a Chamber steering committee proposed that a Chamber of Commerce be formed. Dues applications and pledges were accepted and a board of directors was elected. On April 1st 1954 the Franklin Chamber office opened for business. In December of 1968 the Chamber expanded to include Southampton County. In the annual report prepared by Chamber President Broun Dameron, he stated that "An area Chamber can make a real contribution to our community by presenting a coordinated, united effort in consideration of programs which may include education, industrial development, highways, water and air pollution, recreational facilities, zoning and even markets." He continued "The Franklin Southampton Chamber of Commerce is not a club, a political party or a branch of the government – it represents those people of the city and county who are determined that this community shall improve and progress and prosper."

The Chamber continues to be committed to sound, stable economic growth. We are a voice for the business and professional community and a clearinghouse for plans and proposals affecting our area's future. Our committees are hard at work conducting action-oriented programs for a better community. We strive to increase prosperity by encouraging growth of existing businesses and fostering new ones. Our Board of Directors and 250 members are comprised of business and professional firms and individual concerned citizens working together to make the Franklin-Southampton Area a better place to live and work.

2004 was also a year of change. Donna McCullough who had served as Chamber Executive Director since August, 1976 retired at the end of April. Leading the Chamber for more than half of its 50 years, Donna played an instrumental role in building the strength of this organization.

Teresa Beale who served the Chamber as Office Manager since March of 1987 was appointed Executive Director following McCullough's tenure. Melissa Rose joined the staff in January and now serves as Office Manager. Gretchen Hopkins who has worked with the Chamber since 1999 serves as Administrative Assistant.

Positive change for the community was also studied by MDC, Inc. working with the Franklin-Southampton Alliance. This group of dedicated individuals has been working since September 2003 to find ways to improve the quality of life in our community. The three areas of concentration are Jobs, Education and Environment/Heritage. Funded by the Camp Foundations and Franklin-Southampton Charities this effort continues to seek new opportunities to lay the foundation for sustainable well-being in our community.

2004 provided countless special moments for the Chamber. The Annual Membership Meeting held in March proudly paid tribute to the organization's 50 years of service to the community. Over 220 guests enjoyed the memorabilia displayed throughout the Cypress Cove Country Club and the special program. Fifteen past presidents were on hand to pose for a commemorative photograph.

A retirement celebration to honor Donna McCullough was held in June. With 200 family and friends in attendance, speakers gave testimony to Donna's successful Chamber career and dedication to her community. The Chamber announced that the annual scholarship award given to an area graduating senior would be named the Donna C. McCullough Chamber Scholarship. A sundial to be placed in the Chamber Walk was also given in her honor.

Accomplishments and activities from 2004 are numerous and varied. Below are highlights and programs of this past year that span goals of community development, public policy, education, business development and service to Chamber members.

January

- Presented a Pre-legislative Eggs & Issues Breakfast with Senators Louise Lucas, Fred Quayle and Delegates Bill Barlow and Paul Council. This event was co-hosted by the Kiwanis Club of Franklin and Franklin Rotary Club.
- Held Ribbon Cutting for Shear Creations
- Promoted registration for the 2nd Franklin-Southampton Leadership Institute. This Institute provides opportunities for current and emerging leaders within the business, education and government sectors of this area to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for a growing, vibrant community.
- Coordinated & participated in the Franklin-Southampton Alliance meetings and Jobs Committee meeting
- Promoted the ideals of the VA Association of Career and Technical Education by endorsing and encouraging business and industry to endorse their 2004 Legislative Priorities. These priorities are vitally important to improve the capabilities of Virginia's future employees.

February

- Held Grand Opening for Olde Town Coffee Shoppe
- Participated in the Southside of the James Winter Gathering
- Coordinated and promoted Own Your Own Business Seminar taught by Jim Carroll of the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center
- Coordinated client appointments with Jim Carroll, SBDC Counselor at Chamber office. The Chamber is a satellite office of the Hampton Roads SBDC where Jim meets with clients each month. A resource library is also housed at the Chamber.

March

- Commemorated the 50th Anniversary at the Chamber's Annual Meeting.
- Honored Parker Drug Co. as the 2003 Small Business of the Year award was presented to Ed & Glenna Canada.
- Attended VA Economic Development Partnership orientation
- Chamber staff attended a 2 day Institute presented by VA Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
- Co-sponsored Paul D. Camp Community college's Job Fair for area high school students to meet with employers. Encouraged businesses to participate in this event.
- Met with the Franklin-Southampton Alliance and MDC, Inc.

April

- DECA club from Franklin High School made a presentation about their activities at the Board of Directors meeting
- Held Grand Openings for Griffin Residential Home, William E. Wood and Associates and The Pace House Inn
- Coordinated meeting and continued work with Franklin-Southampton Alliance.
- Participated in SPSA event to kick off new recycling program in Franklin
- Compiled data on 50 years of Chamber history and progress for a special edition tabloid section of The Tidewater News
- Received recognition by Southampton County and the City of Franklin as each honored the Chamber with proclamations acknowledging the Chamber's 50 years of service to the community. Both proclaimed April to be Chamber of Commerce Month.

May

- Held Ribbon Cutting for White Picket Fence and Pattycakes Boutique
- Hosted 12th annual ChamberGolf Tournament with 104 golfers participating
- Met with Franklin-Southampton Alliance and their Jobs Committee
- Participated in Hubbard Peanut Co., Inc. Business After Hours during their 50th Anniversary celebration. The Chamber presented the company with a plaque recognizing their accomplishments.
- Assisted Money Mailer with their open house event
- Placed Chamber memorabilia in the showcase in the lobby of the Southampton County Courthouse at the request of the Southampton County Historical Society This exhibit highlighted the 50 years of the Chamber and was on display until February 2005.
- Received a scholarship from the US Chamber to be applied to Teresa Beale's week long course at U. S. Chamber Institute.

- Endorsed the Chamber Board’s resolution to name our annual scholarship “The Donna C. McCullough Chamber Scholarship”.

June

- Continued work with Franklin-Southampton Alliance
- Teresa Beale completed 3rd year of 4 year Chamber Institute program.
- Coordinated a retirement celebration for Donna McCullough to commemorate her 27 years of service to the Chamber as Executive Director
- Attended VA Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Meeting. Donna McCullough was presented with a certificate of appreciation from the association.
- Assisted the Small Business Administration with the “Entrepreneur Express” held at the Workforce Development Center. The goal of this workshop was to increase access to capital loans to the small businesses in the Franklin-Southampton Area.
- Awarded the Donna C. McCullough Chamber Scholarship in the amount of \$500 to Jenny Lankford, a senior at Franklin High School.

July

- Voted to draft a letter from the Chamber Board to Franklin City Council and the Southampton County Board of Supervisors encouraging them to strongly consider collaborating in a joint economic development effort.
- Held a ribbon cutting for Island Tan and Roses
- Participated in Business After Hours networking event hosted by William E. Wood and Associates and ABC Self Storage.
- Assisted at the Boys & Girls Club golf tournament.

August

- Promoted the Franklin-Southampton County Fair.
- Chamber began member visits in the Ivor area. Members were surveyed on ways the Chamber could better help their business.
- Gave welcome packets assembled by Chamber staff to 76 new educators hired by Franklin City Public Schools, Southampton County Public Schools, Southampton Academy and Paul D. Camp community College. These packets contained advertising items from member businesses and community information.
- Made a presentation on the Chamber’s 50 years to the Courtland Ruritan Club.
- Upgraded portions of the Chamber website with the expertise of Scott Carter, United Networks.
- Met with representatives concerning the Civil War Trails signage to be placed in the community.
- Presented a Congressional Luncheon with Randy Forbes co hosted with Franklin Rotary Club.

September

- Held a ribbon cutting for Carteret Mortgage
- Co-sponsored with Manry-Rawls Corp. a Business After Hours on Fred's Restaurant Patio
- Promoted and participated in Franklin Fall Festival.
- Coordinated and participated in a bus trip for Franklin-Southampton Alliance members and local elected officials to visit Wilson & Dunn, NC. The group met with the director of the Economic Development Council and the director of the Dunn Incubator to gain knowledge of their successful programs.

October

- Attended Business After Hours hosted by Southampton Memorial Hospital
- Attended Governors reception for Virginia Chamber leaders
- Met with Crime Solvers to revamp program and prepare marketing materials
- Evaluated One Economy – One Future, the draft report presented by MDC, Inc.
- Participated in the Regional Workforce Development Council quarterly meeting

November

- Assisted in formation of Franklin-Southampton Futures to continue the work of the Franklin-Southampton Alliance.
- Held Business Expo at the Workforce Development Center. Over 400 people attended to visit the 60 vendors. Free seminars were held on a variety of topics.
- Held ribbon cuttings for GRUP Travel, The Grey Fox Restaurant and the Franklin House Restaurant.

December

- Began accepting Master Card and Visa
- Initiated the Holiday Hotline for Chamber merchants to provide gift referrals to customers.
- Toured Mid Atlantic Gin on a member visit.
- Franklin-Southampton Alliance hired Market St. Services to design a strategy for community progress
- Hosted a holiday open house for Chamber members.

Benefits Exclusive to Chamber Members

The Chamber provides exclusive benefits to members. A wide array of benefits is offered to help members manage the cost of doing business and the Chamber is actively seeking new opportunities for savings. Forty six local Chamber member firms take advantage of ChamberSolutions' Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield health insurance marketed to our members by local firms, Councill Financial Solutions and Manry-Rawls, Corp. ChamberSolutions is a unique collaboration of many Chambers of Commerce that offers exclusive member benefit programs to Chamber businesses and their employees. Uniting as one, member firms become part of a power purchasing cooperative. The offerings include business, communication and insurance solutions. Many members utilize ChamberComm for economical long distance service. Continually searching for value-added benefits, ChamberSolutions launched a Long Term Care insurance plan and a discount shipping program with DHL Express in 2004. Enrollment in Health Savings Accounts, ChamberSolutions newest benefit offering, began January 1, 2005

An additional new benefit negotiated for Chamber members in 2004 is a complimentary annual subscription to Hampton Roads Monthly, the city and lifestyle magazine serving all of Hampton Roads. This magazine lists events and activities in our community. Chamber member, Pace House Inn, was featured in their latest issue. Other cost saving programs include: Employee Assistance Program conducted by Bon Secours; Enterprise Rent-A-Car discounts and Cable Advertising discounts offered by Prime Media Productions.

Members may insert their advertising flyers for a nominal fee in "Speaking of Business", the Chamber Newsletter. Over 400 businesses and individuals receive this mailing each month.

Sales of Chamber Certifichcks have increased by 64%. Chamber member firms collected \$24,000 in Chamber gift certificates in 2004. This money was kept in our local economy. Certifichcks are unique because they can be spent in over 100 locations. The recipient receives a listing of Chamber businesses that accept these certificates. Certifichcks come in denominations of \$25, \$10, and \$5 and the merchant deposits them in their bank just like a regular check. "Early on in the program most Certifichcks were given by businesses to their employees for awards, gifts and bonuses" Now that more people are aware of these gift certificates, many are stopping by the office to purchase them as gifts for family and friends." This program continues to grow by leaps and bounds and is a win/win for the recipient, gift giver, Chamber member and the community.

The Chamber is the front door to the Franklin-Southampton community. People visiting and those interested in relocating their residence or business to our area visit our office on a daily basis. The Chamber files are filled with information concerning all aspects of the community and its amenities. The community calendar where clubs, groups and businesses list their events is updated frequently as well as the area organization directory. Member business cards and promotional materials are displayed in our lobby. We also answer the community phone every day passing along information about members, community events, history, etc. The Chamber has worked for the entire community each day since 1954. As we begin our next half century we are poised and ready to serve the community in new and exciting ways. We maintain our commitment to making the Franklin-Southampton area a vibrant community now and into the future.

The Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber is people. People who realize that through the Chamber they can accomplish collectively what no one of them can do individually. The strength of the Chamber lies in attracting the greatest number of members, creating a pool of resources from which can be drawn ideas, energy, and finances.

2005 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**President Vernie W. Francis, Jr.
Immediate Past President.....Peter E. Clark
President-ElectR. Randolph Cook
Treasurer / Finance Chairman.....Lauren P. Harper
V.P. MembershipMary L. Lilley
V.P. Public & Governmental AffairsDr. M. Timothy Kelly
V.P. Community Development Alice W. Scott**

2005 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James P. Andrews	Dr. Patsy R. Joyner
Dr. Rodney L. Bland	Michael W. Miller
B. Scott Carter	Anne Beverly Moseley
Cindy L. Cave	Clyde E. Parker
Harriet Bain Duck	Desmond T. Stills
Bettie Earnhardt	Susan D. Stone
W. Bryan Fenters	Kevin S. Sutton
Jane R. Fries	Rowland L. Taylor
Michael W. Johnson	Anne C. Williams