



**LAKE
NORMAN**
chamber of commerce

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

(January - December 2023)



Chairman's Goals A sincere thank you to Douglas Marion for serving as our esteemed 2023 Chairman.

Onward

- Participation in Chamber programs and events was a priority for 2023 and we achieved that with our Signature Events – Annual Meeting, Business Expo, Women's Conference, Golf Tournament all selling out. Networking events, ribbon cuttings, and professional development seminars all saw a significant increase in the number of events and participation.
- An organization is also only as strong as its bottom line. We achieved both growth in membership as well as our Balance sheet in 2023.

Upward

- In 2022, the Lake Norman Chamber Board voted to consolidate with the Huntersville Connection / Huntersville Regional Chamber of Commerce to create a stronger organization and brand for the Chamber. The Board Leadership of the "Huntersville Connection" joined our Lake Norman Chamber Board and we continued to utilize and strengthen programs together as one organization.
- The Chamber was able to tap into rising interest rates and increase its fiscal health leaving the organization in a much stronger financial position.



Business Growth & Regional Advancement

- The Lake Norman Chamber and Huntersville Connection/Huntersville Regional Chamber of Commerce merged operations and programming. Four of the "Connection" Board Members were brought on to the LKN Chamber Board. The Huntersville Connection website and social media were consolidated. The "Connection's" signature program, Networking Works, a weekly Networking event held at 7:30am each Tuesday was continued and promoted as the Lake Norman Chamber Huntersville Connection Networking Meeting with a significant increase in participation. Many of the Connection Members have joined the Lake Norman Chamber and are participating.
- Hosted 33 Professional Development Seminars at the Chamber on Management, Marketing, Human Resources, Sales, and other topics to assist businesses as they compete in the LKN Market.

- The Chamber continued to grow a “Leaders and Legends” program for entrepreneurs to network and participate in peer-to-peer business consultation. The group held six meetings/events during the year.
- Promoted a Small Business Week highlighted by the 10th Annual Small Business Event of the Year, a three-hour program in partnership with WSIC FM. Recognized a Small Business of the Year from all four lake towns. Town Mayors issued Proclamations for Small Business Week.
- Hosted the 2023 Annual Business Expo with over 120 area businesses participating in the highly attended event.
- President met in-depth with potential start-up businesses regarding new business development in the Lake Norman region.
- Participated in 52 ribbon cutting ceremonies for new or relocated businesses in the Lake Norman area.



Community Affairs

- Hosted the 20th Annual Public Safety Luncheon recognizing local law enforcement, firemen, and EMS staff from the three North Mecklenburg towns, and Crime Stopper of the Year.
- Hosted quarterly meetings of Lake Norman nonprofits at Angels & Sparrows, Hosted by The Dove House at The McIntosh Law Firm, Homewood Suites, and Welcome Home Veterans at Richard’s Coffee Shop.
- Hosted a Regional Healthcare Summit featuring the CEO’s of Atrium Health University City, Iredell Health System, and Novant Health Huntersville Medical Center.
- Sponsored and promoted events such as Big Day at the Lake, a Big Brother/Big Sister Fundraiser.
- Promoted and supported programming with: Kiwanis Club, Aktion Club, Rotary (North Mecklenburg, Huntersville, Davidson and Lake Norman Clubs), Lake Norman Healthcare Forum, Hospice, Angels of ‘97



Diversity Development Division



- Coordinated a Diversity Council comprised of minority business owners to examine issues in common with women and minority owned business owners and managers.
- Hosted a SOLD OUT 10th Annual Women's Conference with a panel of Female Speakers: Connecting the Dots at the Peninsula Club attended by 150 women.
- Hosted the Diversity PowerLuncheon keynoted by Beth Bledsoe from MSC who spoke on Veterans reemerging in the workforce. Also recognized the Diversity Champions.
- Held quarterly Lunch n’ Learns on topic promoting Diversity and Inclusion with an African American History program; Hispanic American and Asian & Pacific Island Business Owners session; and A Multi-Cultural Christmas program.
- Held monthly meetings to plan events and hear from speakers on topics related to diversity and cultural awareness.

Lake Norman Education Collaborative



- Promoted the Education Collaborative to increase resources in North Mecklenburg.
- Conducted Junior Leadership Lake Norman with 18 High School Juniors from seven area high schools. Current class has 15 students from 6 high schools.
- Hosted an Education PowerLuncheon Featuring the Dean of UNC Charlotte recognizing an outstanding educator from Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Lake Norman Charter Schools, regional Private Schools as well as a local corporation with the “Inspire our Future” award in recognition of their outstanding involvement in vocational training.

- Working with CMS/CPCC and area Advanced Manufacturers to provide summer internship opportunities in the areas of Advanced Manufacturing.
- The Chamber endorsed and promoted the successful \$2.5 billion dollar school bond hosting CMS officials in a special legislative / community briefing as well as the WSIC Town Talk program.
- Partnered with the LNEEDC to host two Journey 360 tours. One in the Spring of 2023 and one in the Fall of 2023. At each event , 75 students plus educators toured three advance manufacturing facilities in Lake Norman and then toured Central Piedmont Community College Merancas Campus.

Finance & Operations

- Issued Statements of Financial Position and Statements of Financial Activity to the Board of Directors and continue to maintain a positive cash flow, building reserves.
- Held finance committee meetings composed of Finance Chair, President, Board Members, and Bookkeeper, along with other Chamber staff, to review accounts receivable to include in-depth discussion on open balances.
- Outsourced Bookkeeping Service. Bookkeeper compiles all financial reports, posts revenues to member programming accounts, and coordinates payables.
- The Chamber's president is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hugh Torrance House & Store, ex-officio Board of Directors of the Ada Jenkins Center, Board of Directors of Visit Lake Norman, Board of Directors Lake Norman Economic Development Corp., Board of Directors of Our Towns Habitat (Chair of the Leadership Committee), Member of the North Mecklenburg Rotary Club, Member of the Lake Norman Kiwanis Club, Aktion Club Advisor, Board of Trustees United States Junior Chamber of Commerce Foundation.



Membership Programs and Services



- Membership of 792 members. Began the year with 787 members.
- 179 members joined the Chamber from 1/1/23 through 12/31/23.
- Held 98 networking events (essentially 2 a week) which included Huntersville Connection virtual Meetings, Coffee Connections, Business AfterHours and Mixers.
- Held four Power Luncheons with an average attendance of 80 ppl.
- Annual Golf Tournament held at NorthStone Country Club with 132 golfers
- Graduated 26 individuals from the 26th Leadership Lake Norman program. Class XXVII has 25 people enrolled.
- Continued to promote the Lake Norman Chamber Young Professionals who meet monthly for networking and business seminars and self-improvement programs. Close to 90 young professionals participate in the group.
- WINS: A Female Networking group held 11 meetings and programs focused on female business issues at Brick Row. Typically attended by 40-60 women.



Public Policy

- Held a workshop and adopted 2023 Legislative Agenda focused on: Criminal/Justice/Court; Employer-Employee Relations; Environmental; Health Care; Job Creation; Municipal & County; State & Federal; Taxes; and Transportation.
- Conducted the 2023 Academy of Political Leadership with seven people participating. Six filed as candidates; one was elected to town board; and one is currently filed for state office.
- The Chamber endorsed and promoted both the Charlotte Mecklenburg School and Huntersville Town Bonds (Transportation and Park & Recreation). Both Bonds were approved.

- Held Annual Candidate Forums in Huntersville and Cornelius in partnership with WSIC FM. Video was streamed live and stored on WSIC Facebook and Website. A Meet and Greet for candidates was held at the Davidson Village Inn which was attended by all candidates.
- Eleven Focus Friday briefings were hosted via ZOOM with a variety of state and federal elected officials and representatives including both U.S. Senators and U.S. Congressman; NC Senate Pro Temp, House Speaker, political consultants, and more.



Transportation

- The Chamber has participated with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance and other regional chambers of commerce discussing transportation, economic development, public policy, and entrepreneurship. The Chamber has appointed a past Chamber chairman as a member to the NC Hwy 73 Council of Planning.

Communication & Technology

- Consolidated “Huntersville Connection” website and social media with Lake Norman Chamber communication platforms.
- In July, the Chamber launched a weekly “Town Talk” radio show on WSIC 4-5pm hosted by the Chamber President that features Chamber business, nonprofits, and area community and business leaders. A logo was created for the show and is hosted on WSIC’s YouTube site and promoted through Chamber social media.
- Coordinated e-Blasts delivered to almost 3,200 email addresses at least weekly (sometimes several times a week) with the purpose of keeping our membership informed on all of our upcoming events. Also distributed the President’s e-Brief on an as needed basis to keep the membership informed on current topics affecting businesses in the area.
- Distributed and mailed printed calendar of chamber events six times a year called the Splash.
- “Spotlighted” Chamber businesses and nonprofit members via “Around the Lake” on the website and distributing via social media. The Chamber spotlighted approximately 30 businesses in 2023.
- Facebook page continues to be an active and accessible platform for Chamber visibility. The Chamber averages 4.9 out of 5 for reviews of the Chamber, placing us in excellent status among our visitors and members. As of 1/2024 we have 7,504 page followers, 6.3k likes.



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