



2010 Annual Report Program of Work 2011

Dahlonge-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau
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thechamber.dahlonge.org



Photo by Jack Anthony

Our Vision

Making our community a great place to
live, work, visit and do business.

Our Mission

The Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce works with business, industry, governments, schools and the community to promote growth, retention and development, enhance our quality of life and provide services for visitors and the local tourist industry.

Dear Chamber Members,

The Dahlonega – Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Center is excited to “hit the ground running” in 2011 with a solid Program of Work that our Chamber Board of Directors and Staff created at our Annual Planning Session in October 2010. We recognize that through community partnerships our Chamber and community as a whole will achieve greater accomplishments and we are dedicated to bringing people together for a common cause.

Over the past two years our member businesses have weathered an environment of great challenges during these turbulent economic times. Now, more than ever, we recognize how crucial it is for our local business community and citizens to support one another. As each one of us has a need for goods or services, we must look to our local businesses throughout the year. As simple as purchasing our gas in Lumpkin County, buying that gift at a local retailer, using the services of local carpenters on our homes can truly make a difference in helping us to rise above these challenges. We encourage each of you to visit www.dahlonega.org and utilize our trusted Chamber Members from our Member Business Directory. As a Chamber member, please utilize your Member Discount Program, saving you money and keeping those sales tax dollars working for all of us in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County.

2010 was a year to focus on our members. We worked to provide educational opportunities for our members through Nuts & Bolts Workshops, Chamber 101 Orientations, opportunities through the UGA Small Business Development Center and other organizations. We added networking opportunities through our Morning Mingle mixers and provided informational sessions through a Town Hall Meeting and Candidate Forum. We sent out 104 weekly broadcast emails to our members to keep them informed on legislative issues, resources for business, member business announcements and events and entertainment in our community.

Our Tourism Committee worked diligently to achieve success in attracting visitors to our community through their strategic plan in 2010. Our Convention and Visitors Bureau embraced a regional approach and promoted Dahlonega and Lumpkin County as the “hub” for tourist visits to the “Heart of the North Georgia Mountains”, recognizing Atlanta as the primary target market, Florida and Tennessee as secondary markets. The Chamber and CVB worked diligently to strengthen Dahlonega’s and Lumpkin County’s tourism assets, including the Chestatee River Diving Bell and the Captain McDonald House and will continue to protect and promote our rich historical treasures in 2011.

We appreciate the support of our members and community partners and their confidence in our organization. We look forward to serving you in 2011 and remain dedicated to making our community a great place to live, work, visit and do business. Our organizational values of excellence, fairness, collaboration and innovation, in keeping with our Chamber Mission and Vision, will continue to drive us in our daily work as your professional business organization.

Best Regards,



Amy Booker
President



Delivering Value to Our Members...

- **Increase the membership retention rate by improving the member experience, in part through a member satisfaction survey to help us create benchmarks and develop a stronger understanding of what our members want and need.**
 - Explore, assess and maximize membership benefits for regular and mint club members
 - Provide website banner ad opportunities for members
 - Explore a Groupon campaign that drives business with both a tourism and local component
 - Provide an opportunity for feedback through one-on-one contacts and a member outreach program
- **Attract new members through improved communications and community outreach.**
 - Enhance the monthly Chamber News piece in The Dahlonega Nugget
 - Host an Open House/Community Block Party in conjunction with the Chamber sponsored Business After Hours
 - Host a North Georgia College Student Welcome Event
 - Attract agri-business members through local promotions, talking to legislators, and working with organizations and farmers
- **Provide educational opportunities for our members through quarterly Chamber 101 orientations, monthly Nuts & Bolts workshops, and business association meetings.**
 - Enhance Nuts & Bolts Workshops by offering classes based on member feedback
- **Develop leaders in our community through leadership programs, committee involvement, and volunteer opportunities.**
 - Continue to promote and sponsor Leadership Lumpkin County, Women in Lumpkin Leadership, and the Chamber Ambassador program
 - Establish a Young Professionals Group
 - Develop a Youth Leadership Program



Attracting Visitors to Our Community...

- **Embrace a regional approach and promote Dahlonega and Lumpkin County as the “hub” for tourist visits to the “Heart of the North Georgia Mountains”.**
 - Develop and market packages and itineraries to promote different market segments and ease visitor planning
- **Market to metro Atlanta as the primary target market; Florida and Tennessee as secondary markets.**
 - Participate in Hospitality Highway program to drive traffic up the 400 corridor
 - Promote Dahlonega and Lumpkin County in metro Atlanta-based and -targeted publications
 - Conduct a radio campaign in metro Atlanta
 - Recruit niche group travel
- **Manage the balance between paper-based media and emerging technologies to maximize Dahlonega and Lumpkin County’s exposure.**
 - Create Arts and History guides
 - Create comprehensive marketing program using expert public relations firm
 - Continue to enhance and optimize website
 - Promote and perfect .mobi website
 - Hire freelance writers to promote Dahlonega on theme websites and publications
- **Strengthen Dahlonega and Lumpkin County’s attractions, events, and tourism assets.**
 - Continue to participate with partnering agencies on plan to restore Captain McDonald House and Chestatee River Diving Bell
 - Provide opportunity to create Wine Tour Package
 - Create an MP3 audio tour of the historic downtown Square
 - Work with governmental and partnering agencies to potentially create Gateway entry signage
 - Promote events, such as the Arts Tour
 - Pursue promotions of historical relevance
 - Produce an awareness event for Appalachian Trail Community Designation
 - Purchase bike racks for the Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center



Growing the Economy...

- **Continue to build strong partnerships with state, regional, and local partners to improve the local economic climate.**
 - Continue work on the Georgia WorkReady program
 - Facilitate getting retail consultants to communicate to retailers on how to succeed in difficult times
 - Work with partnering agencies to educate members on the impact of the North Georgia Network on their businesses for technology-focused planning
- **Develop campaigns to encourage residents to buy locally and support Dahlonega and Lumpkin County businesses.**
 - Work with the Dahlonega Downtown Development Authority and the Dahlonega Merchants Association on producing an ongoing “Discover Your Dahlonega” Buy Local campaign
 - Partner with community agents on a Buy Local campaign with prize incentives
 - Explore creation of a community discount card / “Passport to Dahlonega”
 - Explore interest in producing a Business Expo
- **Serve as the cultural, economic, and community change organization by having the capability and capacity to improve upon the lives of those in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County.**
 - Research future visioning process

Serving as a Voice for Business...

- **Consistently monitor and advocate at all levels of government on issues that affect the cost and ease of doing business and the quality of life in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County.**
 - Enhance communication on environmental and recycling community issues
 - Maintain memberships with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Chamber of Commerce
 - Communicate and advocate with our regional state representatives through visits to the capital, letters, and emails
 - Revitalize the Chamber Legislative Committee
- **Host sessions for members and citizens to communicate with county, city, state, and other elected officials.**
 - Produce a Town Hall Meeting / Candidate Forum
 - Host an Eggs & Issues Breakfast
- **Solicit members on a regular basis to get feedback on their views relating to critical local and state issues.**
 - Continue to email members for feedback

Running the Chamber Effectively...

- **Ensure strong fiscal and operational management of the Chamber.**
 - Apply to become a US accredited chamber in order to begin application in 2011
 - Continue to enhance the Six Gap Century Bike Ride
 - Produce a golf tournament fundraiser
 - Enhance the retail store in the Visitors Center and expand the branded line of merchandise to sell
 - Create an online store on www.dahlonega.org to sell branded line of merchandise
 - Ensure adequate staffing of the Chamber and CVB
- **Improve facilities for staff, members, and visitors through building repairs, renovation, and technology upgrades to protect the City of Dahlonega and Lumpkin County's investment.**
 - Renovate the Visitors Center, public restrooms, and Chamber offices
 - Review technology and workspace requirements and complete upgrades as necessary
- **Ensure professional, well-trained, and responsive staff.**
 - Encourage professional development of staff through training and industry conferences



Delivering Value to Our Members...

- We implemented a monthly “Morning Mingle” networking opportunity for members.
- We added a monthly Chamber news piece to the Dahlonega Nugget.
- We co-hosted the North Georgia College & State University Student Welcome Back Party in August.
- We developed a New Member Welcome Kit, detailing benefits of membership to be used as a sales tool.
- We created quarterly Chamber 101 orientation sessions to educate new members and existing members on chamber benefits, ChamberMaster, and the website.
- We established the planning committee for the Young Professionals Group.

Attracting Visitors to Our Community...

- We worked with Pineapple PR to secure exposure in 43 major media outlets resulting in an ad value of \$118k in a circulation of 10 million.
- We conducted a radio campaign in metro-Atlanta on Georgia Public Radio during February and March.
- We participated in the Hospitality Highway Program.
- We produced a Wedding Guide and Visitors Guide.
- We attained the Appalachian Trail Community Designation with partnering agencies.
- We assisted with the fundraising events for the Chestatee River Diving Bell permanent display and the Captain McDonald House restoration.

Growing the Economy...

- We submitted the Letter of Intent to Participate in the Georgia Work Ready Program.
- We partnered with the Downtown Development Authority and the Dahlonega Merchants Association to develop and promote an extended shopping hours campaign and buy local campaign.
- We expanded the Chamber Economic Development Committee business community representation.
- We researched the community visioning process for potential future implementation.
- We visited Cisco Information Systems to better understand the potential impact of the North Georgia Network on our community and region.

Serving as a Voice for Business...

- We communicated and advocated with our state representatives through visits to the Capitol, letters, and emails.
- We visited and communicated with numerous businesses on their needs and concerns
- We produced a Town Hall Meeting and Candidate Forum in partnership with the Dahlonega Woman’s Club.
- We hosted a Downtown Merchants Coffee Break in partnership with the Downtown Development Authority.

Running the Chamber Effectively...

- We enhanced the Six Gap Century Bike Ride fundraiser, breaking the record with 2,605 registered riders and attracting thousands of visitors to our community with a \$2.4 million economic impact on our community.
- We added a part time Member Sales Coordinator position and increased a part-time Visitors Center position to better serve our member’s and visitor’s needs.
- We completed roof repairs and installed new HVAC units to the Chamber building.
- We renovated the Visitors Center Offices and made repairs and painted the Public Restrooms.
- We utilized the Internship Program available through North Georgia College & State University.
- We encouraged professional development of staff through industry training and conferences.

2011 Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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The Louver Shop

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Georgia Power

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Ken Kurtz
Kenneth Kurtz, CPA

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*Shenanigan's Irish Pub and
The Bourbon Street Grille*

Joshua Saint
Hiker Hostel

Dr. Mark Spraker
North Georgia College & State University

Jeff Weltzien
Paul Thomas Chocolates

Roger Yonts
Koyo Bearings USA

The Staff

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THANK YOU MINT CLUB MEMBERS

PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER



at&t



BRONZE

