

2020

DULUTH AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACTION PLAN



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF MOVING BUSINESS FORWARD

OUR MISSION

Serve our members by providing business advocacy, collaborative leadership, and member-driven initiatives.

OUR VISION

Serve as our area's premier advocate for business. We do this by engaging leaders from business, education, and labor in a shared effort to move our business community forward. Actively create innovative opportunities to advance our members.

2019

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDED -

FORTIFYING OUR COMMUNITY

Duluth is a great place to live. Our Chamber is working to ensure it is also a great place to do business. We are partnering with organizations and individuals, in a shared effort, to move our beloved community forward. Good things are happening. We are a city on the rise. Success begets success.

We successfully recruited strong leaders to serve on our Chamber's Board of Directors. Concurrently, we assembled a membership of 1,011 engaged and dedicated business leaders. Additionally, we attracted talented individuals to join our staff. It's a winning team at the Chamber.

Be a part of it. Join us.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS - JOIN US WITH CONFIDENCE

- Stay current on what's happening in our business community through informative gatherings and timely publications.
- Increase your business' community profile through inclusion in the Chamber's multiple, sophisticated marketing opportunities and often referred-to Business & Community Guide.
- Inform, educate and energize your staff through timely and accessible professional development, leadership training and networking opportunities.
- Generate business contacts and receive referrals through a compelling array of marketing and sponsorship opportunities.

RESOLUTE ADVOCACY -

- Advocating for Essentia's Vision Northland initiative, St. Luke's Strategic Plan and the combined City of Duluth Medical District Redevelopment. We did so locally and at the Minnesota State Legislature.
- Collaborating with local elected officials to successfully convince the Minnesota State Legislature to approve the City of Duluth's Street Improvement Program. In doing so, a reliable source of sustained funding will pave the way for a more robust street improvement initiative.
- Increasing community awareness of our region's child care shortage. We are partnering with the Northland Foundation, St. Louis County, and the City of Duluth to encourage solutions to this challenge.
- Successfully persuading the Duluth City Council to delay implementing the City's Earned Sick and Safe Time Ordinance until January 1, 2020. Originally, they considered an implementation date of July 2018 or January 2019. The additional eighteen months of preparation time is of great value to our members.
- Serving as the voice of business on City Councilor Noah Hobbs' Red Tape Reduction Task Force. The Task Force streamlined the city's project review and approval process while bringing additional predictability, a sense of urgency, and transparency to the approval process.
- Championing each potential housing development presented for approval to the City of Duluth's various commissions, departments and decision-makers. We often serve as the prospective housing developer's primary business contact and advocate.
- Hosting our community's most anticipated, highest profile, local Candidate Forums. We did so in partnership with the Duluth News Tribune, at the Playhouse Theatre at the Depot, September 24th.
- Serving as the business community's primary contact for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), as MNDOT engaged our community, and prepared the way for, the Twin Ports Interchange Project.
- Representing our members during the planning and implementation of, the Superior Street Reconstruction. The 2nd of 3 phases was completed in 2019.
- Hosting the largest, annual community gathering at the Minnesota Legislature, the Duluth & St. Louis County at the Capitol event. We hosted our 22nd annual gathering in 2019. Local elected officials view the event as one of the most ambitious, well-organized and supported advocacy efforts at the Capitol.
- Highlighting ten of our community leaders by affording them the opportunity to serve as keynote speakers at our luncheon series: Let's Do Lunch, Duluth and Let's Connect at Clyde.
- Serving as the Minnesota Air National Guard 148th Fighter Wing's premier advocate for generating local and national support for the Wing. Representatives of our Military Affairs Committee traveled to Washington D.C. in May 2019 to show support for the guard at the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. Department of Defense.
- Hosting timely discussions within our Chamber Forums to provide our members with insight into emerging community issues.
- Focused positive attention on the value our members bring to our community by assisting in the planning, hosting, and marketing of member celebrations, contributions, and accomplishments.

SERVICE AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE -

- Operating at a level of effectiveness and efficiency that allows us to keep our membership dues affordable by not increasing dues for the eighth consecutive year.
- Graduating our 31st annual Leadership Duluth Class. This remarkably successful program uplifts our community by educating, inspiring, and returning to our area 1,167 enlightened graduates.
- Hosting the largest chamber-industry gathering in Greater Minnesota, our 149th Annual Dinner Celebration, which attracted over 1,200 attendees.
- Celebrating the 14th anniversary of Fuse, our young professional group. This is the largest, longest-serving, young professional initiative in Minnesota's chamber industry.
- Attracting talented and engaged volunteers to serve on our: Fuse Leadership Council, Leadership Duluth Steering Committee, Military Affairs Committee, Ambassadors Program, and Board of Directors.
- Hosting well established networking opportunities, such as our 50th Annual Golf Classic, the largest annual golf tournament in Duluth.

2020

OUR **KEY INITIATIVES** WILL INCLUDE

LET'S MARSHAL THE POWER OF OUR 1,011 MEMBERS, OUR 22 BOARD MEMBERS, AND OUR 6 STAFF MEMBERS, TO PRESS FORWARD WITH THESE KEY INITIATIVES:

- Strive to ensure that Duluth's traditional economic base is supported by our community and our elected officials. This base includes: port operations, transportation services, manufacturing, bulk commodity handling, and related services. Advocate for municipal funding for: docks, shipping channels, railroad rights-of-way, Interstate highways, and our international airport.
- Collaborate with the Northland Foundation, St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, and others interested in generating solutions to address our region's child care shortage.
- Join forces with local elected officials, city officials, and developers to generate housing solutions. Research, monitor, and engage in proposed housing developments as they are advanced through the various approval processes.
- Encourage local elected officials to make decisions which create a supportive environment for doing business in our area.
- Articulate and promote a positive image of our business community.
- Champion economic development which will enhance our community by expanding the tax base and creating new jobs.
- Advocate at the Minnesota Legislature to garner financial and policy support for Duluth area businesses and organizations.
- Embrace emerging and growing economic sectors which add economic, cultural, and social diversity. These include: higher education, medical, outdoor recreation, historic resources interpretation, arts and music, information technology, and visitor services.
- Leverage, in a responsible way, the competitive advantage our community enjoys by being located on the shores of Lake Superior and the St. Louis River.
- Respectfully challenge local elected officials, along with city, county, and school board executives, to create efficiencies in the delivery of public services. Encourage the integration of public services to maximize efficiencies and minimize the increase in local taxes.
- Fully engage in a collaborative effort to address the need to grow our region's workforce. This includes specifically working on ensuring sufficient housing options and ample child care options, which are needed to attract workers.
- Enhance our Zenith City's image by emphasizing community attributes, such as: access to regional transportation, clean water, and a well-educated workforce.
- Continue to push for clearly defined and effectively communicated City of Duluth development and redevelopment processes. Press to have development standards and approval processes which balance the need for research and due diligence with providing enhanced customer service to land owners and developers.

A CALL TO ACTION -

This Action Plan envisions an engaged, inclusive business community moving forward - together. It builds on the hard work, resiliency and optimism channeled into the Chamber for the past 149 years.

Ideally, this Action Plan will unite, focus and amplify our efforts. The Chamber's recent accomplishments, and our plans for the immediate future, will assist in advancing a healthy, sustainable, and vibrant community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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