

Mark Your Calendar

01/13 - General Membership Luncheon

Time: 11:30 am – 1:15 pm
Location: Orlando Gardens,
8352 Watson Road

01/16 - Legislative Brown Bag Lunch

Time: Noon – 1 pm
Location: Chamber Office,
108 W. Adams

01/21 - Wellness Wednesday

Time: Noon - 1 pm
Location: Commerce Bank of
Kirkwood, 300 N. Kirkwood Rd.

01/23 - 63rd Annual Installation & Awards Celebration

Time: 6 pm – 12 am
Location: Hilton St. Louis
Frontenac

01/26 - Marketing Monday

Time: Noon - 1 pm
Location: Franciscan Sisters,
335 S. Kirkwood Road

01/29 - Business After Hours

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Location: Crown Vision,
343 S. Kirkwood Rd.

01/30 - Marketing Your Small Business In A Bad Economy Seminar

Time: 8 – 9:30 am
Location: National City Bank,
333 S. Kirkwood Rd., Ste. 100

* For information or to RSVP for any of these events call the Chamber office at 821.4161, or go online to the Chamber's award-winning website at www.KirkwoodDesPeres.com

Tripping Up In The New Year...

by Jim Wright

Did you ever trip? Let's say you're just walking along and for no apparent reason, you trip. Why (especially if we trip in public) do we look back? We expect to look down and see what made us trip and then we dwell on it as we walk along thinking about how the item made us feel, how it embarrassed us or whatever. Why look back?

That's how it is with the new year. 2008 was admittedly a difficult year. There were many things which caused us to trip. However, if we continue to look back at the negatives and don't look where we are going, our businesses will continue to trip again and again. Here are some ideas on how to plan for a better year in 2009.

First, if you do look back, look at the cause of your business woes and learn from them. Correct those things you might have done wrong and look for new ways to address the problems if they occur again. If a wrinkled door mat caused you to trip physically, smooth out the doormat instead of leaving it wrinkled and waiting for another stumble. It's the same with your business. If you know what caused a glitch and if you had any control over it, fix it immediately. If you had no control over it, find a way to work around it or remove it. Don't allow the underlying cause to remain or you will trip again.

Second, revisit your business plan. Times have changed since you first wrote your plan. Some of your competitors have changed market strategies and you may need to readjust the way you market too. If your idea is for an improvement or variation of an existing product or service, describe why consumers will use it instead of what is already available. Know how to describe your market niche in 50 words or less. List and describe the two most significant barriers to expect in the next year and how you plan to react if they occur. With a revisit and necessary readjustments to your business plan, you will have the formula for a successful year ahead.

Third, get to know your banker or finance provider. Many business persons know where they bank, but over time may have lost the relationship with the person capable of helping through a tough financial situation. By building a relationship, sharing your business plan in advance of need, you will have set up an understanding between you and your financier of where you want to go and you'll pave the way with the necessary steps to be successful. Banks want to, and need to, loan money but they must be more cautious than ever to avoid some of the pitfalls occurring in previous years. Meeting with and re-establishing a relationship with your banker is the perfect way to plan for 2009.

Finally, always be open to new thoughts and ideas. This is the information age and there are plenty of opportunities to stay on top of new trends in business which might help you gain a competitive advantage. Utilize information published by trade organizations, government entities and university affiliated organizations. Take a course from your local community college. Learn from other successful entrepreneurs by reading magazines, newspapers

and local references. Visit the local library and utilize the incredible resources they have to offer.

The Kirkwood - Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to assisting members in growing their business in a down market. It is just one way the board of directors has decided to address the current economic condition, and being here for you adds value to your membership. Contact the Chamber staff for any type of assistance. They'll point you in the right direction and help make the necessary introductions to help you. The Chamber has a fantastic relationship with SCORE (counselors to America's small business). SCORE has even opened a local office to assist entrepreneurs with their business questions. Most services are offered for free.

Avoid the same tripping hazards that were out there last year. Look ahead and prepare for a better 2009 by taking an active roll in making your business a success.



Chairman

Gene Maggard - AT&T

Chair - Elect

Tim Walsh - Eagle Bank & Trust Co.

Vice Chair - Finance

Brad Sowers - Jim Butler Chevrolet

Past - Chair

Michele Meyer - Des Peres Hospital

President/CEO - Jim WrightJeannine Clontz
Accurate Business ServicesDavid Collin
Busy Bees EmbroideryDustin Davis
Guardian Environmental Systems, IncJames Diel
Gravity PaymentsMary Kutheis
Open Spaces, LLCDr. Sean Lynch, DC
Balancing: A Chiropractic Wellness CtrDiane McKillip
SSM St. Clare Health CenterCindy Roeser
Roeser Home RemodelingLloyd W. Schnieders
Grabel, Schnieders, Hollman & CoScott Stream
Stream Benefits GroupLloyd Todd
Event Exhibits, Inc.Josh Wright
Edward JonesEx-Officio/Legal Counsel
Rich Magee, AttorneyIris Colyer, VP Member Recruitment
info@thechamber.usLori Foerstel, VP Creative Services
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Lori Foerstel, Jim WrightPrinting
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Area Chamber of Commerce, 108 W.
Adams, St. Louis, MO 63122**E-mail** your letter & comments to:
jim@thechamber.usFor information on membership call:
314.821.4161For more information on The Chamber
and its events go to
www.kirkwooddesperes.comFor past issues of *The Advantage* go
to **www.kirkwooddesperes.com**

My Term Is At An End...

It's been a great run!

It has been a privilege to serve the Kirkwood - Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce as Chairman of the Board in 2008. The members of this Chamber have shown their commitment to the economic viability of the communities served by participating in the various programs and by taking advantage of Chamber services. Most importantly, our members have shown their dedication to progressing as a strong business force by renewing their membership. I thank you for your perseverance in difficult times and for having confidence in the Kirkwood - Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce.

Your board of directors spent many hours meeting to make sure member expectations and needs were met. Educational opportunities were abundant with exceptional speakers covering many topics teaching each of us how to make our businesses stronger. Communications with members improved again this year with a few changes in the look of the directory, the web-site and the *Chamber Advantage* newsletter. Through members excellent response to surveys we learned what you wanted and expected and the board reacted to your suggestions.

Thank you to every committee chair, committee member and each volunteer who gave time and effort to ensure success in each of the Chamber's undertakings. And, let's not forget the Ambassadors who worked

especially hard to make members feel welcome and to help answer any questions they might have about their membership. It takes a lot of time to attend meetings and ribbon cuttings and to make the necessary "welcome to the Chamber" calls. I appreciate all you have done.

To the staff, well all I can say is there is none comparable to you. Every task is taken on with a positive, polite and professional attitude. Everyone on the Chamber staff is dedicated to doing their very best. This is obvious by the number of wonderful comments about them I have received from members. To you staff, I say thank you on behalf of the entire membership.

I could go on and on about how much this Chamber is doing, but my time is up. We have a new year to look forward to under new leadership with many new members just waiting to enjoy the benefits of belonging. One thing remains constant, the dedication of the current membership –no matter how

involved each member is- will continue to make the Kirkwood - Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce among the best Chambers in the State, if not in the nation.

Best wishes to Tim Walsh with Eagle Bank and Trust as he prepares to lead. And remember, as I write this one last time, "Shop Chamber First".



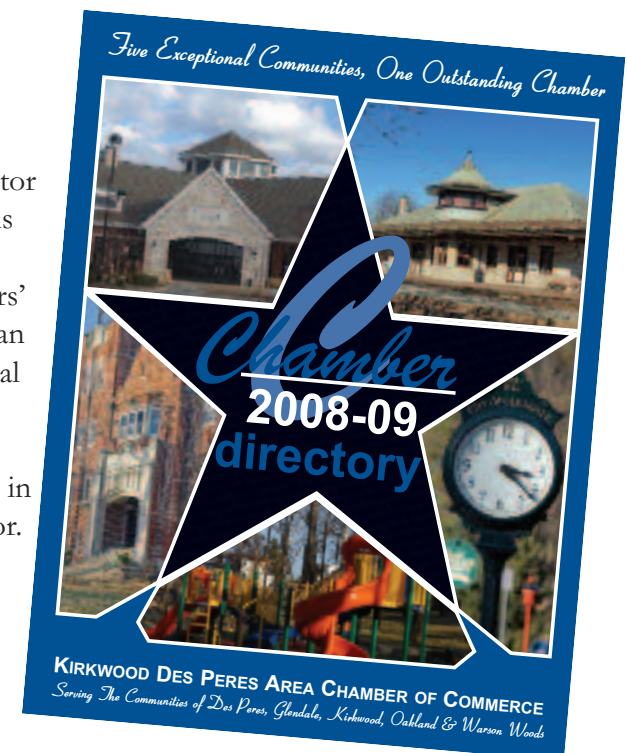
**Chairman
Gene Maggard
AT&T Missouri**

2009-2010 Directory Deadline is Here!

Do you have your Directory contract in to The Chamber? Your competitor probably does! Friday, January 16th is the last day to purchase an ad in this popular community phone book which reaches 20,000 homes and businesses in the Kirkwood – Des Peres area. To stay at the top of buyers' minds in this tough economy you need to market your business more than ever. The Directory is an affordable way for members to advertise to local shoppers 365 days a year – and for as low as \$165.

In a recent survey, 53% of chamber members said they plan to advertise in the directory this year – and at least one of those may be your competitor. Don't miss out on one of the best advertising bargains in town!

To download a contract visit www.KirkwoodDesPeres.com or call Gina at 821.4161.



January Membership Luncheon

Sponsored By:



Tuesday, Jan 13

11:30 am - 1:15 pm

Orlando Gardens

8352 Watson Road

Cost is \$20 for members and non-members. Chamber members will receive a \$3 discount if you pre-pay by Friday, Jan 9.

Please remember if you have a speedpass you **still need to RSVP.**

January Membership Luncheon

How to be sure your money is fully protected

Join your fellow Chamber members for the January Business Advantage luncheon. Scheduled for Tuesday, Jan 13, at Orlando Gardens, networking starts at 11:30 am and the program begins at Noon. The luncheon is sponsored by **Frontenac Bank.**

Speaker - Rodney Eckstein

Title of Presentation - FDIC Deposit Insurance:
How You Can Be Fully Protected

Speaker Bio - Rodney has worked as a bank examiner for the FDIC for 18 years, the first three years in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and the last 15 years in St. Louis. He has examined financial institutions ranging from small rural banks to large metropolitan commercial banks. In addition to safety and soundness examinations, He has also performed consumer compliance, Community

Reinvestment Act, and Bank Secrecy Act examinations.

The cost is \$20 for members and non-members. Chamber members will receive a \$3 discount if you pre-pay by Friday, Jan 9. Please RSVP by calling 821.4161, emailing iris@thechamber.us or online at www.KirkwoodDesPeres.com by 5 pm, Jan 12.

A reminder: if you make a reservation and do not cancel you will be charged for the cost of the luncheon. The Chamber is billed for each reservation.

Jim Butler AUTO PLAZA in CRESTWOOD

WWW.JBAUTOPLAZA.COM

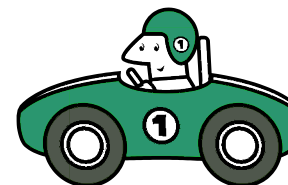
If you are on a budget, we have a car, truck or SUV for you! Vehicles under \$15,000 extended warranty options and backed by the BUTLER PROTECTION PLAN (see Kyle for details). You want it, we have it. IF we don't have it for some reason, we will get it for you, GUARANTEED! Our budget lot is at one location only, 9900 Watson ROAD, CRESTWOOD!

Call Kyle or Bob @

314-965-6060

kyle@jbautoplaza.com

JIM
BUTLER
AUTO PLAZA



Jim Butler Auto Plaza
9900 Watson Road
Crestwood, MO 63126
(314) 965-6060

4 The Chamber Rewards Card is Here!

Let the swiping begin!

Bring your new Chamber Rewards card to the January 13th membership luncheon at Orlando Gardens so you can start earning points toward valuable prizes. This exciting new member benefit was created to reward you for making the most of your membership and to add more value for your membership dollars. All members recently received a Rewards Card and key tag in the mail.

Why use your card. . .

- Cash in on **Member to Member discounts** all year long
- Show fellow members that you are **helping bring 5%** of your spending back to the community
- **Earn Rewards Points** toward monthly, quarterly and grand prize opportunities.

Here's how to use your card. . .

- **Show the card** to any Member to Member Discount participant to receive special prices offered to Chamber members only
- **Display your card** when you purchase from a fellow member to show that you're helping to strengthen the local economy
- **Get your card scanned** at every Chamber event to rack up points toward monthly and quarterly prizes plus a special grand prize offered by R. F. Schraut Heating and Cooling valued at \$2,300

For complete details on how to use your Rewards Card visit the Chamber website at www.KirkwoodDesPeres.com. You'll also find the list of events and activities that qualify for Reward Points and be sure to check out the long list of prizes that will be available throughout the year.

Please thank our January Welcoming Sponsor, **David Burlis of Express Employment Professionals**, who will be our inaugural card scanner! Also, a big thank you to our 1st quarter prize sponsors: **Dr. Dan Ybarra of A Better Life Wellness Center, Debbie Hartke of Juice Plus+, and Lisa Telthorst of Life In Balance Massage Therapy**. The Chamber Rewards card could not have been possible without the generous sponsorship of **Dave and Bev Collin of Busy Bees Embroidery, Marilyn Elkin of Midwest Marking / Scan Me In, and Brian Schraut of R. F. Schraut Heating & Cooling**.

Great Prizes Coming This Year

The new Chamber Rewards card is loaded with great benefits for members. One of the most exciting benefits is the chance to earn exciting prizes

for Chamber participation. Members can earn Rewards Points toward monthly, quarterly and grand prize opportunities.

Here are the Grand Prize and Quarterly Prizes for 2009. Also, there will be a minimum of three prizes awarded each month to those who qualify for the drawing. Monthly prizes range from bottles of wine and theatre tickets to iPods and coffee! Go to the Chamber's website at www.KirkwoodDesPeres.com for the complete list of prizes.

If you would like to



award a \$25 prize for any of the

upcoming months give Gina a call at 821-4161. Also, we have some months open for Welcome Sponsors and the cost is only \$100. This is a very affordable way to personally meet and provide your business information to each member who attends a luncheon — because they all want you to scan their Rewards card!

Grand Prize: New Home Furnace and Installation, Value: \$2,300

Sponsor: R.F. Schraut Heating & Cooling, Brian Schraut

This very lucky recipient receives a new Carrier 80% ZStage home furnace installed into an existing system. Includes gas, flue, electrical wiring, sheet metal plenum. If there is any additional cost it is for a flue liner, if needed. If the winner does not need a furnace s/he may use the same retail value for AC or toward upgrading to a better furnace. Awarded at the Installation and Awards Celebration, Jan 2010.

1st Quarter Prize: Massage/Wellness Basket, Value: \$435

Sponsors: A Better Life Wellness Center, Dr. Dan Ybarra, Juice Plus, Debbie Hartke, Life In Balance Massage Therapy, Lisa Telthorst

The winner receives a personalized health analysis with AcuGraph & computerized muscle tension testing, Tri-Core cervical pillow and 2 tubes of Biofreeze Therapeutic Gel from Dr. Dan Ybarra.

Also, the basket includes a one-hour Swedish massage with a hot stone bonus and a lavender Soothing Eye Pillow, all courtesy of Lisa Telthorst. In addition to all that, Debbie Hartke will provide the winner with a one-month supply of adult JuicePlus+ fruit and vegetable supplements, an Informational CD and a nutritional lecture of your choice. **Awarded at the Membership Luncheon on March 10.**

2nd Quarter Prize: Spa Package, Value: \$250

Sponsor: Ginger Bay Salon and Spa

The winner receives a 4-hour Island Retreat Spa package which includes the Caribbean therapy body treatment with hydrotherapy, the Caribbean foot treatment and the Caribbean hand treatment. A complimentary Aveda product is included in the package. Located at 437 S. Kirkwood Road in the Woodbine Center, Ginger Bay Salon and Spa is dedicated to creating and enhancing the essence of wellness and image through art, science, nature and relaxation. **Awarded at the Membership Luncheon on June 9.**

3rd Quarter Prize: Thai Cooking Party for Six, Value: \$250

Sponsor: The Naam Pruitt Company

The winner receives his/her very own private Thai cooking class for 6 people with local cookbook author Naam Pruitt. She will bring to your home a taste of Thailand along with a beautiful dining experience that you won't soon forget! She sets up and there is no clean up on your part, **JUST FOOD AND FUN!!** **Awarded at the Membership Luncheon on Sept 8.**

4th Quarter Prize: Arbonne Skin Care Products and Virtual Office Services, Value: \$250

Sponsor: Arbonne Intl. & Accurate Business Services, Jeannine Clontz

\$100 gift certificate for professional virtual assistant services. Jeannine has the knowledge to help keep your workload flowing smoothly and to help you achieve your business goals. Whether you need setup and implementation of drip marketing campaigns, website maintenance, or a quick turnaround on pleadings, ABS has the skills and expertise to keep your business on track and productive. The winner also receives \$200+ of Arbonne natural botanical/herbal products. The selection includes men's and women's skincare or anti-aging products, a baby product, a spa product and shampoo or hand/foot cream. **Awarded at the Membership Luncheon on Dec 8.**

63rd Annual Installation & Awards Celebration

The Chamber & You, A Combination You Can Bank On

All Chamber members are cordially invited to attend the 63rd Annual Installation and Awards Celebration on Friday, Jan 23, 2009 at 6 pm at the **Hilton St. Louis Frontenac**. This premier event is presented by **SSM St. Clare Health Center**.

The Chamber will formally install the Chairman of the Board: Tim Walsh of **Eagle Bank and Trust Co.** In addition, the Chamber will welcome incoming Board of Directors: Dustin Davis of **Guardian Environmental Systems, Inc.**, Terri Honeyball of **Telserv Technologies**, Ellen O'Brien of **Coldwell Banker Gundaker** and Dr. Paul Pai of **St. Louis Community College at Meramec**.

In addition to the installing, the Chamber's annual awards will be presented to:



2008 Businesspersons of the Year - Joe & Cindy Roeser of **Roeser Home Remodeling**



2008 Citizen of the Year - John Hessel, Kirkwood City Attorney



2008 Lifetime Achievement Award - Carol Ann Miller of **Fashions of the Past** (*Dressed as Mrs. Clause*)



2008 Jack Geders' Volunteer of the Year - Ellen O'Brien of **Coldwell Banker Gundaker**

This highly anticipated evening of celebrating, dinner and entertainment is \$60 per person which includes drinks, hors d'oeuvres, plated dinner and dessert. Entertainment is courtesy of **Des Peres Hospital**.

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres are from 6 - 7 pm, plated dinner and dessert from 7 - 8 pm and the Installation program will be from 8 - 9 pm. This event is black tie optional with assigned seating. Watch your mail for the formal invitations printed courtesy of **Dale Printing Co.**, Chamber Media Sponsor.

Presenting Sponsor:
SSM St. Clare Health Center

Entertainment Sponsor:
Des Peres Hospital

Media Sponsor:
Dale Printing Co.

Friends of the Board:
Martha's Hand Home Health
Telserv Technologies
Mistretta Chiropractic
Busy Bee's Embroidery

Friends of the Chamber:
BJB Creative Group

Available Sponsorships:

Major Prize Sponsor - \$1,000

- Four tickets at a premier table
- Your business recognized from podium
- Prominent signage at the event
- Your business recognized in the event booklet
- Complimentary bottle of champagne

Refreshment Sponsors - \$1,000

- Four tickets at a premier table
- Your business recognized from podium
- Exclusive signage at all refreshment stations
- Prominent signage at the event
- Your business recognized in the event booklet
- Complimentary bottle of champagne

Hors d'oeuvres Sponsor - \$1,000

- Four tickets at a premier table
- Exclusive signage at hors d'oeuvres tables
- Recognition on name tag worn by servers
- Your business recognized from the podium
- Prominent signage at the event
- Your business recognized in the event booklet

Friends of the Board - \$500

- Two tickets at a premier table
- Your business recognized from podium
- Prominent signage at the event
- Your business recognized in the event booklet

Friends of the Chamber - \$250

- Your business recognized from the podium
- Prominent signage at the event
- Your business recognized in the event booklet

Sponsorships are selling out quickly for this high profile event. Call Lori for more information or to purchase your tickets to attend this event at 821.4161, or email lori@thechamber.us

6 Welcome to Our New Members

You'll Like Doing Business With Us!

The Alternative Board
449 Eagle Pointe Landing
Eureka MO 63025-2083
ph 636.938.7039
John Keener

Cards By Jenn
4423 Cayuga Dr.
St. Louis MO 63123
ph 435.3247
Jennifer Thorson

Evans, Robert & Jane
St. Louis MO 63122

Pregatta Group, LLC (Pre-Paid MasterCards)
12166 Old Big Bend
Kirkwood MO 63122
ph 835.9886
Sherry Timmons

Prudential Select Properties / Pamela M. Berra
13175 Manchester Rd.
St. Louis MO 63131
ph 775.2050
Pamela Berra

Quizno's - Kirkwood
343 S. Kirkwood Rd., Ste 8
St. Louis MO 63122
ph 822.8070
Larry Stukenholtz

Rally Appraisal, LLC
8917 Gravois Rd.
St. Louis MO 63123
ph 771.8181
Beth Miller

SCORE (Service Corps Of Retired Executives)
333 S. Kirkwood Rd.
St. Louis MO 63122
ph 800.1527
Larry Ross

ACCURATE
Business Services

P.O. Box 206
Arnold, MO 63010-0206

Jeannine Clontz
Business Support Services
Virtual Assistant (VA)

Phone: 636-282-9550
Fax: 636-282-9973

Jeannine@Accbizsvcs.com
www.Accbizsvcs.com

Thank You To These November Renewing Members

Algonquin Nurses Inc.

B & B Aquatics

Balancing-A Chiropractic Wellness Center

Bill Duffy

Bogetto & Associates

Bopp Chapel

Bopp Plumbing Inc.

Chris Auffenberg Chevrolet

City Of Kirkwood

City Of Oakland

Corporate Response

Creative Homes Unlimited

Crown Vision Center

Dale Sign Service, Inc.

David Siscel

Franklin McCallie

Gibbons Law Firm Pc

Greentree Community Church

Heartland Mortgage / Jack Bailey

Kirkwood - Webster Groves Family YMCA

Kirkwood Plumbing, Inc.

Kirkwood Podiatry

Kirkwood Public Library

Lawrence Thompson Electric Inc.

L.H Wisniewski & Assoc., Inc.

The Magic House

Manor Grove

McDonnell's Market

Mistretta Chiropractic

National City Bank

Orthopedic Associates, LLC

Principal Financial Group / Wally Schmieder

Re/Max Results - Bill German

Rea Insurance Agency

Realty Exchange Commercial Group

Regions Financial

Relax, Inc.

Shop N Save

Stifel, Nicolaus & Co., Inc.

Take Care Health Systems - Walgreens

Thomas Veraldi, DMD

Wagner Engraving Co., Inc.

Wendell S. Kane, DMD

Westwood Automotive Inc.

New Members Introduced at the December Luncheon



(pictured l-r) Sherry Timmons of Pregatta Group LLC, Marcia Moore of Marcia Moore Design, Beth Miller and Shane Sipes of Rally Appraisal, LLC, Debbie Hartke of Juice Plus+ and Bill Striler of Arcade Amusements Plus

Don Stream - Stream's Tax Service

Providing time-saving, convenient, personalized services for business and individuals

"Remember that time is money," said Benjamin Franklin and that is evident in Don Stream's commitment to providing time-saving, convenient, personalized tax services for small businesses and individuals. "My client's time is very valuable and I am committed to saving them every minute possible," he says.

Don is recognized as an experienced, trusted tax professional with a reputation for providing outstanding, time-saving customer service. As an example, he not only offers personal pick up and delivery service but also meeting at a time convenient to them. "Clients really seem to appreciate the flexibility of my hours – if 9 pm works best for them, then I'll do everything possible to accommodate their wishes," he says. It's no surprise to learn most of his clients have come to him by word of mouth.

"I've been handling accounting, bookkeeping, auditing, payroll and taxes for more than 35 years," he reports. His background also includes working as an accountant for the State of Missouri for a number of years. An avid reader, Don keeps current with information contained in publications such as those from the IRS.

"Modern day business owners and individuals are dealing with a great deal of stress on an ongoing basis, so rather than waiting until the last minute for the preparation of their return, I encourage them to start their planning early. Everyone benefits because many of the potential problems and mistakes that can occur when one is rushed to



Don Stream is recognized as an experienced, trusted tax professional with a reputation for providing outstanding, time-saving customer service. As an example, he not only offers personal pick up and delivery service but also meeting at a time convenient to them. "Clients really seem to appreciate the flexibility of my hours – if 9 pm works best for them, then I'll do everything possible to accommodate their wishes," he says. It's no surprise to learn most of his clients have come to him by word of mouth.

beat the filing deadline can be avoided," he states.

Following is Don's list of tips which he recommends all of us follow to relieve some of the pressure of the tax return season, which, by the way, is just around the corner:

Save All Your Receipts including:

Income Receipts

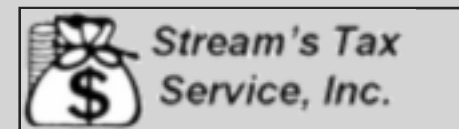
- All W-2s
- Estimated Tax Payments
- Investment Income Statements
- Stock/Property Sales Reports
- Pension and Annuity Statements
- Alimony
- Unemployment Income
- Gambling and Lottery Winnings
- Other Compensation

Expense and Deduction

Receipts:

- Medical Expenses
- Mortgage Interest
- Donation Receipts
- Professional Dues
- Child Care Expenses
- Tax Return Preparation
- Income Tax Withheld
- Real Estate Taxes
- Personal Property Tax
- Business Mileage

For more information or help on your tax return preparation, contact **Don at Stream's Tax Service, 636.391.1499.**



Stream's Tax Service, Inc.
Donald Stream
P.O. Box 31143
St. Louis, Missouri 63131
636.391.1499

8 Chamber Ambassador Feature:

“Where Have All The Flowers Gone?”



There was a song in the 60's titled ... *“Where Have All the Flowers Gone?”* One of the follow-up lines was ... *“When will they ever learn, oh when will they ever learn.”* (Think it was Peter, Paul & Mary.) Okay, this is not a trip down memory lane, especially since many of you never heard the song. But it reminds me of a version I often want to sing... *“Where have all the members gone?”* I've been a Kirkwood Chamber member since 1993 and have seen a lot of faces join the Chamber, only to disappear a few months later. Never to be seen again. Where have they gone? Out of business? Witness protection program? Moved to Tahiti for a better climate?

Over the years I think I've figured out where they really are. No, they really haven't moved out of the country. And they're not in the Witness Protection program. No, they simply have lost interest in the Chamber. Here are some of the comments I have heard. *“Well, I went to two of those lunches, and I didn't make any good contacts.”* And, *“you know I can only go to those after hours events about once every 3 months, if I'm lucky.”*

I'm so honored I have been able to serve the Chamber as an Ambassador for the past few years. Mostly because I'm able, more than ever, to talk to new members, and emphasize the importance of going to events. There's an old expression that says... *“half of success is simply showing up.”* When I meet with new members I always tell them

to be an “active” member of the Chamber. People will buy your product or service, if they need it, but they must first know, like and trust you. They'll get to know you if you're always at the luncheons, if you're always at the Business After Hours. If you choose to be a *part-time* member of the Chamber, expect *part-time* results.

Here's the deal. In your biz, just figure out how many hours of marketing you want to do every month. Let's say you can handle 30 hours a month. Okay, start by deducting two hours for the monthly Chamber luncheon. Then deduct another two hours for the Business After Hours. Now you still have 26 hours to do all your other marketing. In my opinion what we need to do is to “reframe” our thoughts on Chamber activities, whatever they are, and plug them into your “marketing” time.

Let's take it one step further. If you've decided to be an active marketer (and in the current economic climate I think it would be a good idea), then you must show up at the events. Even more important, you must make it a point to meet someone new at each activity. How about five or ten new people? That's what real networking is all about. Making new contacts. See if there are some networking possibilities. If you only talk with people you have known a long time, then take those two hours at a luncheon and put them on to your “socializing” calendar. I think you get the idea. But, you say,

you're a little uncomfortable meeting new people. No problem. Grab one of the Ambassadors by the arm, and ask them to introduce you to a few people. We would all be happy to.

You know, in my business (Pre-Paid Legal), one of the first things I was told was ... *“Be sure to show up at **all** the meetings and go to **all** the local and national events.”* Now I know why. That's where things “happen.” You have to stay close to the fire. What if, let's say, you missed a luncheon, and at that event was the one person who had been looking for a service just like yours. You missed out. It could have been a very profitable two hours, but you weren't there. So, think of your Chamber membership as part of your marketing plan. The socialization will logically follow. Hey, we all like to have fun. But we also all like to run (or be a part of) successful businesses. With the Chamber ... you can have both.

In the next few months, don't be one of those people we might sing a song about. (See paragraph 1) Be an active member of YOUR Chamber. Make it work for you. Keep showing up.



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drhilgendorf@sbcglobal.net
www.prepaidlegal.com/hub/davidhilgendorf

(We market plans that provide affordable Identity Theft solutions and Legal Access plans for individuals and small businesses.)

Ribbon Cutting

AMG Corporate Offices Expands Space



Steve Powell, owner of AMG Corporate Offices just keeps growing – that's his floor space, not his waist size. In the business of renting office space, providing virtual office assistance, and much more, to small business owners, he has expanded from 9,700 square feet of offices to 17,800 square feet.

Located at the northwest corner of Interstate 270 and Manchester Road, Powell's offices have easy access to major roads. Clients at AMG receive amenities which include conference / meeting / training rooms, call patching and part time call screening, and delivered lunches. All offices are

wired for digital telecommunications and voicemail, high speed internet service, digital color copiers and color laser printers. Multimedia videoconferencing is available 24/7 in an executive boardroom.

For more information call 686.4500.

It's Not Just What You Know, It's WHO You Know... *The Power Of Networking*

By Chris Powers

Powers by Design, LLC

One of the primary ways for a company to survive through any recession is by advertising and public relations. Ironically, one of the most overlooked avenues in public relations, which happens to cost the least too, is networking. Places like the area Chamber of Commerce meetings, luncheons or even after-hour business events are a great way to meet new people.

What's wonderful about networking is even if the people you meet might not need your services someone they know very well could. The more your name is out there, the greater your chance of building a client base. It's also important to remember to network with the people who have already bought your goods or used your services for the same reason – greater exposure equals greater sales.

That's why in 2009 Powers By Design intends to be at any function we can manage. Not only is it fun to see faces in our neighborhood, it's also good for business.

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10 Grand Marketplace Expo

Rolls Back Booth Prices to 2004!

Businesses of all sizes are feeling the current economic pinch and too often their marketing takes the hit. The Chamber is here to help! To make it more affordable for members to market their businesses at the **21st Annual Grand Marketplace Expo on April 7th, the Chamber is rolling back the cost of a booth space to the 2004 price of only \$175!** There's no better opportunity than this annual Expo for businesses to showcase their products or services to the public and fellow Chamber members.

Special surprises await exhibitors and attendees at this Expo. In addition to the Member's Only Preview and Networking event, held before the doors open to the public, there will be more fun attractions than ever before to make the Expo appealing to everyone. Members who don't exhibit will have several other inexpensive, fun and innovative ways to participate! Keep watching the *Chamber Advantage* and fax/email blasts for opportunities to be a part of this annual Chamber tradition. Save the date of Tuesday, April 7 for this Grand event!

Give Gina a call at 821.4161 or go to the Chamber's website at www.KirkwoodDesPeres.com to download the exhibitor form and reserve a space at the Grand Marketplace Expo.

Creating a Simple Marketing Plan

A How To Guide...

By **Jeannine Clontz**
Accurate Business Services

Many of you broke into a sweat after reading the title, didn't you? Many people don't have a marketing plan because they think it's too hard, too time consuming, or they just don't know where to start.

Creating a good marketing plan doesn't have to be overwhelming, or costly, but it will save you time and help you achieve your 2009 goals.

Get started by identifying:

- Who is your ideal client?
- What do I have to spend?
- Where can I reach my ideal client?

Establish your ideal client, by looking at your current client base, and who can afford to buy your product or service? Then identify the best ways to reach them.

Your marketing budget should be 1-5% of your yearly sales, or whatever you can afford. Start simple, and make changes monthly or quarterly as you begin to see results. Be realistic and flexible. Having a budget will allow you to visualize and expand upon your program throughout the year.

The plan itself will have a number of options to consider. Here is a list of **some** marketing aspects to consider in your plan.

- Print advertising (including Yellow Pages)
- Direct Mail
- Email (include eZines and Blogs)
- Networking (Chamber participation/membership)
- Sponsorship
- Trade Shows
- Article Writing
- Speaking
- Referrals

While some of these items will have little to no cost, including them in your marketing plan will help you stay on track and implement each segment of the plan.

When putting together the actual marketing piece the most important thing to remember is to have a 'call to action'. It could be a coupon in a direct mail piece, or a 'free' offer at the end of a speaking engagement. Just make sure you have different calls to action in each piece so that tracking success will be a breeze.

Check in quarterly to see how each segment is performing and make adjustments as needed throughout the year to make sure you are getting the biggest bang for your marketing buck!

Jeannine Clontz, president of Accurate Business Services, is a speaker and author, who helps clients stay 'top of mind' with their clients and prospects through marketing plan implementation.



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Ribbon Cutting

Racanelli's Pizza Enhances Dining Experience



Racanelli's Pizza, known around Kirkwood as a great carry-out choice, is now an even more comfortable place to dine-in. After remodeling with new booths, paint colors and even changing the entrance into the restaurant, the popular downtown Kirkwood establishment has an inviting, sit-down-and-stay appeal.

The Racanelli family celebrated this accomplishment with a ribbon cutting which included Chamber of Commerce dignitaries and friends. "We are remodeling all of our restaurants to have the same comfortable feel. We're very excited about the changes and are getting great responses from our

patrons," said John Racanelli, owner.

Racanelli's New York Pizzeria is located at 111 N. Kirkwood Road. For more information please call 909.0008.

Ribbon Cutting

Space Invaders Arrive In Kirkwood



Pac Man, Donkey Kong and Space Invaders are all video games from the past but they can now be found everyday in downtown Kirkwood. Arcade Amusements Plus, owned by Bill Striler, recently opened at 118 W. Jefferson.

Striler, who has been selling video games on the internet for 10 years and owned a store in Maryland Heights for 2 years, relocated his shop to Kirkwood

where he has lived for several years. "I can walk to my store if I want to. I just love working in Kirkwood," Striler says.

He also sells pinball machines, some vintage juke boxes, die cast cars as well as coin-operated video games. "When I buy an older video game for resell, I repair, clean, service and paint it to be in top notch condition," explains Striler. For those who want a

brand new machine, he also sells a 48-in-1 multi classic video game which has all the favorites from the 1980's.

For more information on any of the products available at Arcade Amusements Plus please call 401.9346.

Don't Delay Dealing With Delinquent Accounts

Once your deadline passes, you need to take action

As a small business owner, you do your best to meet your obligations to your customers. So it's only natural to expect them to pay their bills on time, right?

Unfortunately, the answer is not always. Most customers are conscientious about making timely payments, but others may require some extra effort. Though frustrating and time-consuming, collecting from delinquent accounts is not something you should put off or simply hope will work itself out. Every dollar of revenue counts toward keeping your small business afloat.

Obviously, prevention is the best way to avoid having to deal with collections in the first place. Establish a standard payment policy and make your customers aware of it before starting work. Your invoices should also clearly state when the total amount is due and the fee for late payments.

And once those deadlines pass, you need to take action.

Get the facts. Don't assume the customer is entirely wrong. Contact them by phone or mail and ask politely for an explanation. It may well be that the invoice has been lost or is awaiting approval. A customer with cash flow problems may also request extra time. How you proceed depends on the situation and your experience with that account. You may feel confident enough to allow extra time or arrange installment payments. Make sure the customer clearly understands any compromise. Be flexible, but firm; and don't hesitate to follow up.

Take stronger action. If your initial collection attempts fail, it may be time to turn to an attorney or collections firm. Terms for these services vary from a flat fee and/or percentage of the invoice amount to a retainer. The Commercial Collection Agency Association at www.ccaacollect.com and Collection Agency Research at www.collectionagencyresearch.com offer guidance on fees and guidance for choosing a collections agent for your needs.

Or let it go. You may decide the amount of the

overdue account does not justify the cost and effort to collect. If so, write it off as a bad debt and move on.

Don't make the same mistake twice. Should customers with poor payment histories approach you about working for them or restoring credit, don't immediately refuse unless you are absolutely certain they remain bad risks. Ask them to explain how their situation has changed and decide whether it makes sense to restore the relationship. As a precaution, insist on stricter terms such as advance payment or cash-only.

For more assistance with collections and credit policies, contact SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business", 516.4220. SCORE is a nonprofit organization of volunteer business counselors who donate their time and talents to assist entrepreneurs in starting, growing and operating small businesses. The service is free and confidential. Call for an appointment or contact the St. Louis office of SCORE at (314) 539-6600 ext. 242 or by email at www.stlscore.org or www.score.org.

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MEMBER FOCUS...

AWARDS

For the third straight year, **St. Anthony's Medical Center's** Breast Center and Mammography Suite both have received perfect scores on their annual state inspections, conducted in accordance with the federal Mammography Quality Standards Act.

Mosby Building Arts' president Scott Mosby is featured in the December 2008 issue of *Professional Remodeler* magazine. The article centers on the business and marketing philosophies that keep his remodeling company growing.

DONATIONS

Thank you to all the Chamber members and guests who attended the Chamber's December Luncheon and donated money to benefit the **Foundation For Children With Cancer**. Renee Verhoff, Executive Director for the Foundation, was on hand to receive the check for \$441 from Chamber President Jim Wright.



EVENTS

The **Walker Scottish Rite Clinic's** 5th Annual Trivia Night is Saturday, Feb 28, at the Scottish Rite Cathedral at 3633 Lindell Blvd. The cost of the event is \$25 per person and food and non-alcoholic beverages will be available to attendees, please feel free to bring



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your own coolers of food and drinks. In addition to Trivia there will be raffles, games, prizes, and a silent auction. The deadline for registration is Feb 14. For more information, please email Sheri Mistretta at sheri@srclinic.org or call 533.7415. Proceeds for the event help to support the services for the children of the Walker Scottish Rite Clinic.

GOOD DEEDS

Westwood Automotive recently participated in the 2008 Acoat Selected National Benevolence Program by giving away a "new" car during the holiday season. This is Westwood Automotive's fifth year participating in the program.



JoAnna Foree of Westwood Automotive said "even though we present this vehicle, these cars are being given away to deserving individuals by the community. Everything has been donated on the cars from the insurance, tires, body labor and parts to mechanical services. It is truly the community who puts these vehicles together and without the help and assistance from our vendors these cars would not have been reconditioned."

For more information on this program or any of their automotive services please contact JoAnna Foree at Westwood Automotive 636.225.8500.

NEW FACES

Welcome Laurie Ashe, **Kirkwood's** new Deputy City Clerk. Laurie is the assistant to City Clerk Betty Montano. Laurie was



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formerly Assistant to the Director of Planning and Zoning in Salina, KS.

Des Peres Hospital recently announced it has expanded its surgical weight loss program for morbidly obese adult patients who have repeatedly failed more conservative weight reduction alternatives such as supervised diet, drugs, exercise and behavior-modification programs. Des Peres Hospital's program now offers Laparoscopic Gastric Bypass Surgery and Laroscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy in addition to Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding.

Des Peres Hospital welcomes two additional board certified surgeons to the program staff – Norbert L. Richardson, MD, and Richard O. Follwell, DO. Between them, Drs Richardson, Follwell and the program medical director, Darin Minkin, DO, have For more information call 966.9640.

THANK YOU

Thank you to Dave Haring at **Sundown Landscaping** for the beautiful winter display in front of the Chamber office. We appreciate all you do.



Thanks to Mark and the staff at **Einstein Bros. Bagels of Kirkwood** for the wonderful pumpkin bagels and muffins dropped off during the holiday season.

Thanks to **Orlando Gardens** for providing delicious boxed lunches at the January Board Meeting.



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CONNECTIONS

“Checking Out The Latest”

by Barb Byerly
BJB Creative Services

Is Charlie Fischer one of the luckiest people we know, or what! Consider the fact he was on a mission trip in Hungary to work on housing improvements for older people, most with disabilities, when he heard about the job opening of his dreams in Shrewsbury, MO. And the timing couldn't have been better as Charlie was looking to change professions, switching from for-profit management to a non-profit position dedicated to serving others. His opportunity unfolded at dinner one evening as he and a fellow volunteer began chatting. Turned out the other volunteer serves on the board of **Canterbury Enterprises, Inc.**, an affiliate of United Cerebral Palsy of Greater St Louis, operating a sheltered workshop employing local people with disabilities. After his return to St Louis, Charlie was quickly hired as manager. That was two and a half years ago and his pride in, and enthusiasm for, the high quality work done by the 60 workers he and his staff supervise, continues to grow. His good luck continued when he met and married his wife, Synthea, and their forming a blended family of three wonderful children. He's looking forward to meeting as many Chamber members as possible at future events and even has a lucky **Chamber** connection because our own Gina March, marketing VP, serves on Canterbury's Board. Charlie reminds Chamber members about Canterbury Enterprises' many value-priced, responsive services including mail, packaging, assembly, promotion, salvage, retail, inspection, collating, shrink wrapping plus more. You can check them out at www.canterburyent.org - could be that working with them might even be a lucky pick for your biz needs!

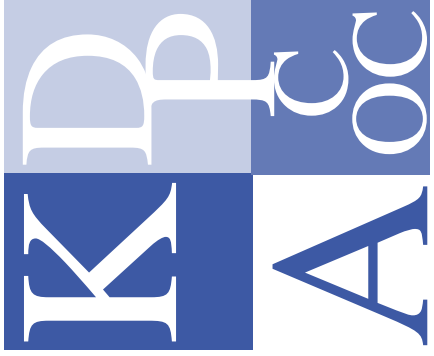
When Wendy Sammons Combs talks about running errands, she means she's really, really running. Plus it turns out this lovely, bright, fast running, physically fit wife of **Combs Tire & Auto Center's** Scott, mother of four and daughter-in-law of Sunny and Bill, is not only a marathon runner, she's also a field hockey champ. In fact, she's slated to be inducted into the St Louis U's Billiken Hall of Fame, Great Contemporary Category, Field Hockey 1986-1990, participating in one of the greatest eras of this sport in the school's history. Wendy appears in the Billiken Record Book ranking first all-time with 42 wins and 30 shutouts. Her 364 saves rank fourth in school history and her 16 wins in 1989 are a single season record. In her four years, she led the team to a 42-23 record and helped the 1988-1989 squads earn top 20 national ranking. She's sure to be receiving a standing ovation at the mid-January banquet where she will be honored, with the longest and proudest applause coming from her family. Congratulations, Wendy on receiving this well deserved honor!

It will likely be “All Aboard for Kirkwood!” when **Bill Burckhalter** addresses an audience of community and state officials attending **Amtrak's** Great American Stations Civic Conversation Forum in Savannah, GA on March 3 – 4, 2009. Since the forum will focus on preserving, restoring and upgrading existing Amtrak train stations to ensure they remain important transportation links, the group is going to be especially interested in hearing Bill's presentation. The beauty and historical significance of the Kirkwood station, its location in the heart of the downtown area, coupled with the love residents have for it, have made it the city's

most recognizable building and helped to save this wonderful structure. It is owned by the city and operated by a team of 60 dedicated volunteers, with Bill as coordinator. The building is available for event rental, with proceeds earmarked for maintenance needs. In 2008 more than 75,480 visitors and passengers passed through its doors. Volunteers worked over 6,241 hours at the station assisting travelers and doing light housekeeping. Bill's presentation will highlight Kirkwood's success in purchasing the station and the volunteer program that keeps it open and running. It will also be an opportunity to share how Kirkwood's station plays an important role in the residents and business activities. A big thank you is extended to all the station's volunteers for their work and dedication to keep the station open and operating!

Curious about that bigger than usual smile on **Kirkwood's Fire Chief** Tom Openlander's face lately? Well here's the sizzle: he's reveling in the department's 2008 official stats. Kirkwood's Fire Department responded to 1,212 fire calls and fires in structures with an insured value of over \$7 million. Keeping the fire losses to \$491,000 translated into a 93 percent saved rate! Wow, no wonder he's smiling and so are we for the super savings in insurance rates we enjoy thanks to his fab department's maintaining its Class 4 ISO rating. Hats off to the Chief and his amazing team of EMS/Firefighters for their great work!





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January 2009 Edition

Chamber ADVANTAGE

Promote Your Business on a Shoestring ~ a business workshop ~

Instructor: Linda C. Senn, author ~ instructor ~ consultant

Date: Wed., Jan. 14th~9:00-12:00

(optional) Create Your Promotional Plan 1:00-2:30

Location: Kirkwood Chamber of Commerce, 108 W. Adams, Kirkwood

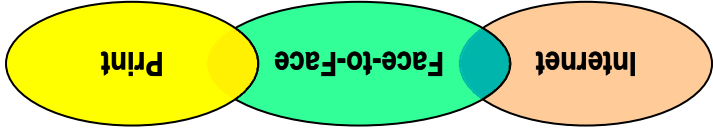
Cost: \$99 for morning session /Kirkwood Chamber members \$89 (includes a copy of *The Shoestring Promotions Handbook*)

\$20 for afternoon "Write it now!" session

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