

In the midst of tough economic times, the Sugar Grove Chamber of Commerce and Industry is even more vital to the community than when the economy was growing.

The Sugar Grove Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a not-for-profit organization that provides a forum to support businesses by fostering relationships between businesses, between businesses and the community, and by creating opportunities through which its members can add value to the community.

"Our focus has always been to enhance the Sugar Grove community by helping build a strong business community," Chamber Executive Director Shari Baum said. "We offer our members opportunities to grow with our community, as well as the opportunity to help our community grow."

The chamber focuses on building the relationships among the various types of community members—residents, businesses and government officials.

"Our success of working together improves the quality of life in our community," Shari said. "The chamber was instrumental in continuing the Corn Boil as a successful community event; we have issued thousands of dollars in scholarships to deserving local students; we have sponsored the Sugar Grove Farmers Market since its inception; we have sponsored "Meet the Candidates" night each local election year; and each year, we select and recognize the Sugar Grove Citizen of the Year. We also serve the community by overseeing publication and distribution of the Sugar Grove Community Guide and the Sugar Grove Map."

The chamber also presents awards to those businesses that represent the Sugar Grove community well. Each month, chamber membership luncheons feature informative speakers and networking opportunities. It offers Business After-Hours events, educational seminars, leads groups and fundraising events that provide members with sponsorship and advertising opportunities.

In addition to those the activities the chamber has taken on for years, the organization has begun to add additional incentives for members. The chamber recently revamped its website, www.sugargrovehamber.org, providing members with a strong web presence, as well as a resource for business information, education and advertising opportunities.

Building relationships for a **strong** business **community**



330 Division Drive, Suite A • P.O. Box 765
Sugar Grove
(630) 466-7895 • (630) 466-7825 fax
info@sugargrovehamber.org

www.sugargrovehamber.org

Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Weekly e-mail blasts offer another advertising opportunity while keeping members informed about important events, community and business issues. The most recent addition is a regularly published newsletter, which is distributed to each member, as well as providing publicly viewable copies to the Sugar Grove Public Library, the village of Sugar Grove offices, and other community businesses. Shari said the chamber has plans to continue to evolve, offering more services and opportunities for its members.

"We look forward to continuing to serve our members and our community in new and meaningful ways in the coming year," she said.

That is even more important now, in the face of a

difficult economic situation for everyone.

"Using chamber members' products and services is important, especially in these difficult economic times," Shari said. "Spending locally generates tax dollars that stay in the community to the benefit of the residents."

Shari went on to say that despite the difficult economic backdrop, they are still seeing new businesses opening in the area, and when new businesses open, the chamber immediately begins working to help them raise awareness in the community.

"We welcome them with a ribbon cutting ceremony to bring attention to their presence," Shari said. "The chamber gives them the ability to quickly establish new relationships in the existing business community through various networking events, sponsorship and committee opportunities, and our online business directory and referral system."

The Sugar Grove Chamber of Commerce and Industry was founded in 1992. It has grown to include more than 150 member businesses from Sugar Grove and the surrounding areas.

"We have a wide variety of members, from single-employee small businesses to large corporations and non-profits," Shari said.

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> Sugar Grove Chamber of Commerce and Industry

2009 INSIGHT — published by the elburnHERALD