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Local hotels and other facilities are eager to host your smaller business meetings and events, like this session at the Madison Club.

GOING OFF-SITE

No Matter How Small Your Meeting, Area Venues Can Accommodate It

BY JUDY DAHL

When you think of business events hosted at hotels or other venues, you likely envision a large banquet or conference, but area facilities can also host small events or meetings with as few as two participants.

Getting out of the office and away from day-to-day distractions can improve productivity and allow creative thinking, and it may be more affordable than you think.

Everything's Taken Care Of

The Madison Club hosts an average of 100 – 120 small events a month, with meetings from 2 – 10 participants.

"As a private club we know our members and personalize our service, so it's almost like they have their own offices here," says Mary Gaffney Ward, general manager.

"A lot of people are consultants working out of their homes, so they like the

privacy and professional atmosphere of our conference rooms."

The facility offers 15 meeting rooms of varying sizes and styles, from a conference room with a round table seating 2 – 6, to rooms accommodating banquets of several hundred people.

"We take care of all the amenities, including audio-visual equipment, and we can make our rooms very elegant for formal dinners or more casual," Gaffney-Ward says. "We have a full-time executive chef and staff on site, including a pastry chef, so we make all the food we serve here."

Often companies bring people in from other regions for meetings, and they stay overnight at the Madison Club. "We have a business center where they can get their work done as well," notes Gaffney Ward.

"And we have reciprocity with private clubs across the country. If you're trying to

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GMCC CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

GMCC Business Card Exchange

Wednesday, February 16, 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Tour Kelly-Moss Motorsports' comprehensive Porsche® race shop while enjoying complimentary appetizers and beverages provided by Gaylord Catering and mingling with fellow Chamber members.

Host: Kelly-Moss Motorsports
Address: 5105 W. Clayton Road, Madison, WI 53711
Sponsor: Upper Iowa University
Registration: Free for members; \$10 for nonmembers
Register: www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Valued GMCC Member:

Spring municipal elections normally don't generate the kind of buzz that fall elections can create with major state and federal races on the ballot. Many incumbents for school boards and city councils run unopposed, and voter turnout reaches disappointingly low figures.

With a crowded field of high-profile candidates for Madison Mayor, Madison Common Council and a special election for Dane County Executive in play, I think it's safe to predict that this spring will be different.

When the GMCC first made candidate endorsements in 2007, it was done at the urging of our membership. A member survey showed overwhelming angst from numerous legislative policies being enacted with harmful business implications.

While we've had many lobbying accomplishments in the last few years, perhaps our greatest business advocacy accomplishment is our electoral achievements. Thanks to your support through the GMCC Direct Givers Conduit program and by spreading the word to your friends and colleagues, we've experienced a 90% average in victory for our endorsed candidates.

The result has exceeded our expectations. The political discussion has shifted to focus on ways to support existing and relocating businesses – including creation of an economic development plan, a cabinet-level economic development position, a complete overhaul of our onerous zoning code (in progress), and an examination of what we can be doing to make the development approval process simpler and more consistent.

The leader of these initiatives was Mayor Dave Cieslewicz, the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors endorsement for Madison Mayor.

While the GMCC's endorsement may come as a bit of a surprise to some in the community, when one looks at the Mayor's priorities in the last four years and his list of admirable accomplishments, the decision was clear and unanimous.

The Mayor has proven that he is capable of solving complex problems in a pragmatic and thoughtful way. When a bold, \$100 million redevelopment proposal turned neighbors against each other, Mayor Cieslewicz remained firm with his convictions. One can certainly say that supporting the Edgewater Hotel redevelopment was politically risky for his re-election, as many powerful neighborhood leaders opposed the project. The Mayor, however, understood the tremendous impact the project would have for workers, residents, visitors, and the region and worked hard for its approval.

It's no secret that the Mayor and the GMCC have not always seen eye to eye. It would be unrealistic to assume that we will always agree in the future. But what we do know is that a foundation of trust and mutual respect has been established, which has already produced sizeable business victories and a clear vision for economic development in Madison.

Perhaps most refreshing is the change in our working relationship with the Mayor. The GMCC and Mayor's office communicates regularly and have collaborated on several initiatives to help small businesses, including improving communication and outreach for road construction projects and a current initiative to improve business safety.

Madison needs to do everything in its power to be a world-class city. We need to be a destination for business and entrepreneurs as well as advanced research and development. But we also need to maintain our high quality of life to ensure we're a great region to live and raise a family.

We believe Mayor Cieslewicz is in the best position to pursue this vision and are proud to give him our endorsement.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Alexander, GMCC President

OFF-SITE

continued from page 1

close a deal in Chicago, you can go to a private club there.”

Because the club is dues-supported, members can host meetings quite affordably. “If you have minimal food and beverages, many of our small rooms rent for \$25; you can use them for an hour or a day,” Gaffney Ward says.

“Three people can have lunch here for \$25 – 50, depending on their membership categories. We’re very conscious of keeping prices in line with or lower than other places in the area.”

It’s really about people feeling like they’re being taken care of and have professional services available. “Then they don’t have to think about anything but conducting their meeting,” says Gaffney Ward.

Flexible Space

Crowne Plaza Madison hosts a lot of “rollout” meetings. “We have a group coming in that’s implementing a new computer system and they’re using our space for hands-on training,” says Amy Wedig, Crowne meetings director.

Businesses also use the hotel to conduct interviews. “Some companies use our board rooms for a short time to do a couple of interviews, and others block out the whole day for multiple interviews,” Wedig says.

Business groups account for 50 – 60% of the Crowne Plaza’s business, and Wedig specializes in working with groups of 50 and fewer. “We have rooms ranging from 347 square feet to a ballroom that’s 4,200 square feet,” she says. “They’re all pretty flexible and can be split into different-sized spaces. We have another room for groups of up to 60, a smaller one for around 30 people, and two board rooms that can accommodate up to 15.”

The hotel offers on-site banquet service. “Small groups do mostly breaks — beverages all day, continental breakfast in the morning, and cookies in the afternoon,” says Wedig. “We have a pre-order menu for groups of 15 and under, where each person can pick what they’d like.”

She’s in the process of creating an all-inclusive meeting package for a per-person fee that includes room rental, food for breaks, and audio-visual equipment. “But we’ll still work with people to stay within their budgets,” she notes. “We can do custom menus if people need to reduce costs.”

Recently, more businesses are booking meetings closer to the days they’ll be held. “They might book today for next week, and we try to cater to that business by having everything they need at the hotel, so they don’t have to bring anything in,” says Wedig. “And we’re creating a menu that includes things we always have on hand, so if someone books for tomorrow they don’t order things we can’t get in that time span.”

Entertainment Along With Meetings

Although it’s primarily a nonprofit gymnastics school, Madison Turners also hosts diverse business meetings and parties in its unique setting. The venue has a conference room that accommodates about 75 people in a classroom style, along with a banquet hall that holds about 450 people. “It has a full bar and a dance floor; everything is in one room,” says Alice Soule, events manager.

“We have two volleyball courts with wood floors, and some businesses rent them for outings,” she adds. “We’ve had a company rent our gymnastics area and have open gym for employees’ kids. One company rented the whole place and the adults were playing along with the kids.”

A couple of clients have held casino nights for their employees. “We can convert our volleyball courts into rooms for events — they can have meetings or dinner there, and casino night in our hall,” Soule says. “It’s becoming more popular to have entertainment and social gatherings along with meetings.”

Madison Turners has a list of preferred caterers it contracts with, or a business can contract directly with one. “Many businesses do cater lunch or dinner if they want to keep their attendees in the building,” says Soule.

Her venue is far more affordable than many others, she indicates. “Businesses pay for rental of our space and for our

services, but they can bring in own caterer or deejay. They can shop around and do price comparisons — that can really save money.”

Adaptable To Any Size Business

At Comfort Inn & Suites Madison Airport, about 20 – 25% of its business comes from organizations holding meetings. “They’re mainly training sessions or update meetings,” says Dave Hornickel, general manager.

“We have three types of rooms, one holding up to 40 people, one up to 75 that’s tiered on several levels, like a college classroom, and a ballroom,” he continues. “Sometimes groups need to set up different stations for training programs and they use the ballroom.”


The hotel serves a deluxe continental breakfast for guests, but caters its meal service through a local restaurant.

“An organization’s meeting planner will sit down with my sales and catering director and review meals, and we can make menus according to their budget and what they’re interested in serving,” says Hornickel. “Or if a business has a preferred caterer we’re open to it.”

He and his staff work with the budgets businesses or nonprofits present, and accommodate them if possible. “We do try to break even, but we’re willing to negotiate a bit,” Hornickel says.

“We can make recommendations for lower-cost menus, or if they have overnight guest rooms it can make a difference.”

Comfort Inn & Suites does “trade outs” with some organizations, such as a nearby restaurant that holds periodic meetings there. “They give us food coupons instead of paying for space, like \$100 if they rent a room for a day,” explains Hornickel. “We use the coupons as employee rewards.

“We’re adaptable and willing to work with any size business,” he adds. “Tell us what your dreams are and we’ll try to make them come true.” 

Judy Dahl is a Madison-based freelance writer and editor specializing in the areas of business, finance and technology. Reach her at judydahl@charter.net.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Transforming the Fortunes of Business To Create A Better Quality of Life for Greater Madison

Chamber Designs New Programs For 2011 To Grow Your Business

BY BOB ANSHELES

GMCC Director of Membership & Marketing
bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com

A 2010 survey of Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce members illuminated a need for educational programs that would grow revenue and build connections for small businesses.

Respondents suggested programs that feature small groups and include attendee participation to provide maximum benefit.

Acting upon this information the Chamber is offering two new programs for its members in 2011 — Small Business Roundtables and SCORE Workshops — and reminding you about the popular new program we launched in 2010 — Connect @ Lunch.

Small Business Roundtables

Free and Open to GMCC Members only, 15 attendees maximum

The Chamber brings members the expertise they need by providing a specialist to answer questions about topics that are

continued on page 7



Connect @ Lunch offers new business connections and a great lunch at local restaurants.

GREATER MADISON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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GMCC Member Rate: \$965 / Non-member: \$1,445
Includes four Luncheon tickets

Double Booth - 20' X 10' Corner & Standard

GMCC Member Rate: \$865 / Non-Member: \$1,295
Includes four Luncheon tickets

Double Booth - 20' X 10' Two Standard

GMCC Member Rate: \$765 / Non-Member: \$1,145
Includes four Luncheon tickets

Quad Booths – 20' X 20' Booth

GMCC Member Rate: \$1,275 / Non-Member: \$1,910
Includes eight Luncheon tickets

**Additional discounts are available to GMCC Gold and Silver Level members.
15% added to exhibition booth rates after March 31, 2011**

Reserve Your Booth Now! For More Information and to Register Contact:

JENNIFER BRUHN

608-443-1945

jbruhn@greatermadisonchamber.com

MARILYN KOCIS

608-443-1951

mkocis@greatermadisonchamber.com

www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events/annual_business_expo

NEW PROGRAMS

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particularly relevant to small business owners. This new program offers small business owners the opportunity to have an open exchange about timely, critical issues in a facilitated forum.

Moderated by a trained facilitator, attendees will learn from other small business owners while also having access to an expert on that session's topic.

The program is ideal for business owners with ten or fewer employees. There are six Small Business Roundtables scheduled in 2011.

Score Workshops

Free and Open to GMCC members only, 20 attendees maximum

In today's fast-paced business environment, it's been observed that too many business people do not take the proper amount of time to effectively review and analyze their business plan.

These workshops allow attendees to take the necessary steps to move their business forward based on real information.

It will also challenge participants to think about their leadership style and how it affects employees and customers.

The Madison Chapter of SCORE®, Counselors to America's Small Business, in cooperation with the Chamber, will help participants review their businesses image, marketing and sales, operations, human resources, expenses and revenue, customer satisfaction, tactical planning, and leadership. The workshop is a

combination of large and small group discussions on each topic moderated by a SCORE business counselor.

There are four SCORE Workshops planned for 2011.

Connect @ Lunch

Open to GMCC members only, 36 attendees maximum

Started in 2010, this popular GMCC program offers attendees a more personal way to connect and share details about their company with fellow Chamber members.

Held in a local restaurant, Connect @ Lunch lets businesspeople share lunch while building solid relationships in a more intimate round-table environment.

Attendees rotate three times (salad, entrée and dessert courses) to tables of four people and make great new connections across the community over lunch! Four Connect @ Lunch programs are scheduled for 2011.

Take moment now to click over to the Program section of the Chamber website — www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events — and register for an upcoming GMCC program. It's an easy first step to grow your business. 

For more information please contact:

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jbruhn@greatermadisonchamber.com

Marilyn Kocis - 608-443-1951
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AMBASSADOR ACTION

BRIAN UNITAN

Account Executive at Adams Outdoor Advertising - www.adamsoutdoor.com

How long have you been an Ambassador:

Six years.

What do you enjoy most about being an Ambassador? I enjoy cultivating meaningful business relationships with GMCC members. I also take great interest in promoting the GMCC and its benefits to the community.

How does the GMCC provide value to its members? I have found that the GMCC gives all of its members an opportunity to develop existing business relationships and explore new business relationships in a positive environment. Moreover, the GMCC events are a great networking tool that manages to be both informative and fun.

More About Adams Outdoor Advertising: Adams Outdoor Advertising is a full-service outdoor advertising billboard company. We help you find and design the best outdoor billboards, transit advertising, mall advertising and zoo advertising for your business in Madison, Wisconsin. Learn more at www.adamsoutdoor.com.



GMCC UPDATE

Chamber Welcomes Jamie Welnick To Staff

The Chamber welcomes Jamie Welnick to our team as the new Program and Events Manager. She began work at the GMCC on January 10.



Previously, Jamie served as the Director of Client Services and also Promotion/Events Manager at Entercom Communications. She was instrumental in creating and launching Triple M's Green Team, an iPhone app and MyMadisonPerks.com. Jamie also worked with FreakFest, Rhythm & Booms, and the Food & Wine show. Welcome Jamie!

GMCC STAFF SPOTLIGHT

JENNIFER BRUHN

Membership Development Executive

Education & Prior Work Experience:

I have a Bachelors Degree in Sociology from UW-Madison and an MBA from Edgewood College. My first job out of college was for Rubbermaid in which I held many positions from Customer Service to International Business Development.

My previous job before the GMCC was in Business Development for a small family-owned company that manufactured granite countertops.

What are your duties at the GMCC? One of my main responsibilities is to help members utilize their many membership benefits. Growing up with parents who own a small business I know how important it is for small businesses to have the support the GMCC provides. With 80% of our members being small businesses you can imagine how busy my job can be. Sometimes I feel just like one of their employees because I help in areas such as marketing, business development and event planning. But that's what I love about my job — I am helping businesses succeed.

What do you enjoy most about working for the GMCC? What I like most about working for the GMCC is meeting all the wonderful hard-working people I meet every day and helping them make their businesses successful. Many times I get to share in their joy when something good happens whether it be making an important connection, having a successful event, or even landing a big account.

What is one GMCC member benefit you like to tell members about? This is what I do every day so I would like to tell members about ALL the benefits that are available to them. But since I have to choose one I would choose the opportunities we have to save their business money through our referral program and our discount programs for office supplies and health insurance. Also there are benefits such as programs and events, advertising, making connections, ribbon cutting ceremonies, etc, etc, etc. (I could really go on forever!)

What do you enjoy doing in your free time? The most important thing I like to try to do in my free time is to spend as much time as possible with family and friends because there never seems to be enough time in my days. I also like sports – watching them, not participating. And my husband and I have recently got into cooking (before that, it was take-out all the time).

What is something most people don't know about you? Coming from rural Racine County, I had a quiet and peaceful childhood, until one of my uncles was featured on NBC's *Unsolved Mysteries* ... I know it sounds creepy or scandalous, but that was just Robert Stack's voice.



GMCC UPDATE

Rev Up Connections at the February Business Card Exchange at Kelly-Moss Motorsports

Don't miss the Chamber's next Business Card Exchange, Wednesday, February 16, hosted by Kelly-Moss Motorsports.

Held from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m., attendees will enjoy complimentary appetizers and beverages provided by Gaylord Catering with tours of Kelly-Moss Motorsports' impressive Porsche® race shop.

Kelly-Moss Motorsports, 5105 W. Clayton Road, offers services such as race and street car repairs, engine and transmission building, and complete body shop services.

Learn more about their popular Arrive & Drive race trip program (private track days and pro-driver instruction).

Tour the showroom while mingling with fellow chamber members at this ever-popular networking event sponsored by Upper Iowa University.

This event is free for Chamber members and \$10 for nonmembers.

Register online at www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events.

If you would like more information or have questions, please contact GMCC Program and Events Manager Jamie Welnick at jwelnick@greatermadisonchamber.com or 608-443-1954.

Looking for additional Chamber events? Visit our Events page at www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events.

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www.greatermadisonchamber.com

CIVITAS & LGM UPDATE

Civitas and Leadership Greater Madison Give An Inside Look At Local Government

*SUBMITTED BY JULIE BUSS
Wood Communications Group*

2011 promises to be an exciting and noteworthy year not only for Madison but the entire state of Wisconsin.

This spring voters will select a new Dane County executive and will elect Madison's mayor and common council members.

Wisconsin's new governor and legislators will certainly introduce new policies and ideas that will have significant impact on Madison. Issues such as jobs, economic development and regional transportation all promise to be hot button topics.

Now, more than ever, it's important to understand both the issues affecting our community and how local government works.

Knowledge empowers citizens to become informed voters and future community leaders.

Civitas and Leadership Greater Madison (LGM) offer an insider's look at local

government and some of the most important issues facing our community.

These leadership training programs, offered jointly by the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce and Wood Communications Group, provide a behind-the-scenes look at local government and public school operations and funding; examine local services; explore the role of property taxes in funding government; scrutinize economic and workforce development efforts; and analyze the roles of the media, boards, commissions and committees in the operation of community affairs.

Civitas and LGM programs begin in February and applications are still being accepted.

Learn more about Civitas and LGM or apply online at www.civitaswi.org or www.leadershipgreatermadison.org.

Great communities need great leadership. Great civic leadership starts with Civitas and LGM.

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The Metro Commute Card is a great way for our company to offer a benefit to employees that they appreciate and it also promotes good transportation choices. It's cost-effective and easy to administer. — Mark Clear, IMS



Getting away to a facility like the Osthoff Resort can add inspiration to your business meetings.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

For Your Organization's Next Retreat Or Meeting, Consider One of the Area's Novel Venues Available Right Here in Madison or a Short Drive Away

BY JUDY DAHL

What if you could relax by a lake, drive a mini-racecar, or stroll through the woods with colleagues between meetings? It would probably spark stimulating discussions and help you bond with coworkers. Some greater Madison venues make all that — and more — available to businesses.

Like You're In Someone's Home

Take environmentally friendly Arbor House on Monroe Street. Without even leaving the city, small groups can hold meetings and events in a relaxed setting.

"We're a boutique hotel serving groups of 21 or less," says Cathie Imes, co-owner with her husband John. "Today so many things are techie and impersonal, but we're very high touch; you feel like you're in someone's home with our décor and all the wood and natural light."

Arbor House has fireplaces in its sitting room and great room, and its sunroom can serve as breakout space for four people. There are eight guestrooms with complimentary breakfast available for guests, and groups can use the full-service kitchen to

serve up potluck meals. All guests receive passes for canoeing on nearby Lake Wingra. The hotel is across the street from the UW Arboretum, and great restaurants and shops abound on Monroe Street.

Organizations often schedule strategic planning meetings or retreats at Arbor House. "It's usually a group that's looking to be creative, problem-solving or working on a project, or bringing someone in to help steer the business in a new direction," says Imes.

Business groups often take advantage

of the area's amenities. "We have six mountain bikes they can use, or some all go for a walk in the Arboretum," Imes says. "It's a great way to break up an eight-hour meeting, and they're still connecting and building camaraderie."

One environmental group took a moonlight walk (with flashlights) through the Arboretum to an ice cream shop.

"If they have time and creativity, they can integrate nature and exercise with their business," says Imes.

Natural Beauty

Just a little further down the road, an hour's drive from downtown, the House on the Rock Resort hosts meetings, golf outings, retreats and parties.

"We're set in this valley, where the hillsides have fabulous colors in fall," says Catharine Langrehr, senior sales manager.

"You're in the middle of nature but you have all the amenities of a regular hotel."

There are over 10,000 square feet of meeting space, full-service catering, suites with patios overlooking the golf course, two outdoor pools, volleyball courts and hiking trails.

"Our 27-hole golf course is not only beautiful, it's one of the best rated in Wisconsin," Langrehr notes. "And several businesses use us for catered meals — and sometimes guestrooms — when they take trips to nearby American Players Theatre."

Groups take tours of the House on the Rock, go boating and rafting on the Wisconsin River, or go antiquing and shop for arts and crafts in Spring Green.

"And if you want to go a little further, Cave of the Mounds is about 45 minutes away and there's wine tasting at Woltersheim or Botham vineyards," says Langrehr. "There are so many activities readily accessible from our resort as a central starting point."

She says businesses comment most often on the staff's friendliness and one-on-one service. "They also say the natural beauty makes coming here feel like a getaway, and they love our golf course and our delicious food."

A Different Experience

It takes about an hour and 15 minutes to reach Woodside Ranch in Mauston from downtown Madison. About 35% of its business comes from organizations' events, which include meetings, conventions and receptions.

"We often host team building or motivational meetings and trade shows," says Virginia Barton, general manager. "Most groups come from Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago, and we're always looking for more of this kind of business."

The ranch's convention center holds 90 people in a classroom setup, and the theater/media room holds 130. Guests stay in the ranch house or in cabins with fireplaces, including an executive retreat cabin that accommodates up to 12 people. Woodside also has tennis courts, a regulation-size basketball gym, an outdoor swimming pool, a lake with fish, horses, hiking trails, and a fitness center.

"We have the latest in audio-visual equipment and wireless internet," Barton says. "Our food is home cooked and delicious and we customize menus for groups."

It's a different experience for business groups. "It appeals to everyone," says Barton. "You get up in the morning, go to the barn, get your horse, ride out to our open-air kitchen and have breakfast cooked to order. You smell the coffee brewing before you get there."

"Woodside is the greatest place I know for making new friends, being lazy or doing everything there is to do," she continues. "The Trading Post is a great place to finish the evening with music, visiting or a cocktail. You can sit at the saddle bar and just enjoy yourself."

Peace Of Mind

The Osthoff Resort is just shy of two hours from Madison, in Elkhart Lake. Organizations' events make up 55% of its business. "Our meeting space is beautifully appointed, with all the services groups need for meetings," says Vicky Zacharias, senior sales manager. "We have an on-site audio-visual company, full-service catering, and several restaurants and lounges."

The accommodations for business clients are mostly one-, two-, or three-bedroom suites. "They have full kitchens, living rooms with fireplaces, and a private master bedroom and bath—also a patio or balcony. It's like having your own condo," Zacharias says. "You can invite your colleagues over and continue your business conversations or enjoy yourself. It's not like having someone come to your bedroom."


Business guests have told her that getting away to the resort helps employees think more strategically. "That's a lot of what our business groups do—strategic planning — and sales meetings are also popular. It's a combination of the inspiration they find in a beautiful place and the critical business information they need to deliver."

The resort offers a variety of team-building options. "It can be as complex as spending a whole day looking at a strategic plan or as simple as a fun activity they could do to work toward a common goal," Zacharias says. "They can have fun and build rapport."

Elkhart Lake is Osthoff's front yard. "We've had groups do canoe races, or use primitive materials — cardboard, duct tape, wood — to build their own boats and see which is most seaworthy," says Zacharias.

Some business groups relax at the on-site ASPIRA Spa, where they can enjoy a sampling of services. Others use the resort's L'école de la Maison cooking school for team building. "They divide participants into teams, with each responsible for preparing a particular course for their meal. Each team member has specific a responsibility and they work together and learn new techniques," Zacharias explains.

Golf courses are plentiful in the area, and Elkhart Lake's Road America destination, featuring one of the nation's oldest racetracks, offers 15 different adventure programs groups can use. These include paintball, geocaching and go-karting.

In the end, when hosting a meeting at Osthoff the organizer can have peace of mind, Zacharias says. "Our staff has great tenure, and you can be confident that what you've planned will happen and be done well." 



INITIATIVES & INSIGHTS

Transforming the Fortunes of Business To Create A Better Quality of Life for Greater Madison.

PUBLIC POLICY

Chamber Message to Governor: Focus on Jobs and Economy

BY KEVIN LITTLE
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Last month – just two weeks after taking office and in the middle of an aggressive, special legislative session – Scott Walker participated in a joint meeting of the GMCC Board of Directors and Thrive Board of Directors to talk about his agenda for Wisconsin.

The meeting presented the opportunity for GMCC Board members to discuss issues of importance to chamber members and the Madison regional economy.

The theme was simple: stay focused on jobs and the economy, and resist distractions into unrelated and controversial policy discussions.

On the issue of jobs, the Board praised the new Governor for his immediate action to call a special legislative session on the economy.

Demonstrating his commitment to fulfill a campaign promise to create 250,000 jobs in his first term, Walker unveiled an extensive list of proposals aimed at supporting existing and relocating businesses.

His proposals include tax relief for businesses that create jobs, changes to the regulatory and litigation climate, and at the foundation of his agenda is a complete overhaul of the State's Commerce Department.

The new public-private corporation would focus solely on job creation, with many of the regulatory responsibilities shifting to other state agencies.

As part of the department restructuring, the Board encouraged the Governor to formally partner with regional economic development organizations across the state to leverage private sector support and ensure that focused and relevant actions are implemented from the start.


As a major economic engine for the region and state economy, the Board also encouraged the Governor to support UW-Madison and give the campus more autonomy to manage its affairs, correct inefficiencies and adopt market-based solutions.

State government must also do everything in its power to support the advanced research taking place on campus.

In many cases, the innovative research leads to the creation of new companies and jobs across the state. It benefits everyone to keep these jobs in Wisconsin.



Photo by Skot Weidemann

It's encouraging that Governor Walker is committed to building a relationship with the GMCC and growing the economy. That's a message that can be embraced by everyone. 

We've Got Your Back!

Learn more about the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce's Public Policy efforts at www.greatermadisonchamber.com/policy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Thrive Implements Business Retention Program For Region

BY BETSY LUNDGREN
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Though it is often the announcement of a business re-locating to the region that makes headlines, the behind-the-scenes work of business retention is critical to any economic development strategy.

Thrive, the economic development partnership for the eight-county Madison Region, plans to focus much of its energy on business retention in the coming years.

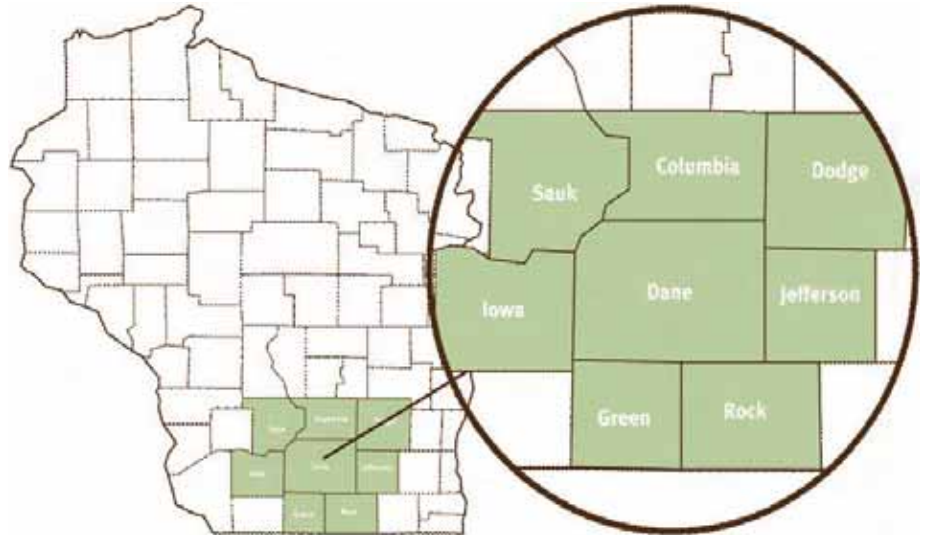
"We need to go to the businesses that are already here and who account for up to 75% of new job creation and ask them what we can do to solidify their success and growth," notes Sean Robbins, executive vice president of Thrive.

"If we do this as a foundational strategy, Wisconsin businesses will succeed."

Thrive is spearheading a collaborative effort among 50 economic development professionals to formalize a business retention and expansion program in the Madison Region.

The program, termed Business Link, involves business interviews conducted by economic development professionals to identify companies with expansion plans, at risk of downsizing or moving, or facing specific challenges and opportunities.

This information is put into an online database called Synchronist that allows




participants to access and analyze real-time business data.

Through these interviews, economic development professionals develop strong relationships with the businesses in their communities built on two-way communication that creates a greater understanding of the needs of each business.

With this information, economic development professionals can best employ their resources to assist, retain, and expand the business community.

Ultimately, the outcome of this program is not simply the gathering of data, but the strategic leveraging of that data to create an environment where businesses are

equipped to grow and succeed. For more information, contact Brad Elmer, Project Director, at (608) 443-1967 or belmer@thrivehere.org. 

Follow the latest regional news with Thrive online!

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Missed The Latest Chamber Programs and Ceremonies?



The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce is now posting video of Chamber educational programs and business ceremonies online!

Now if you miss a Chamber event, you can catch up at any time through the latest postings to the GMCC's video site on Vimeo.com.

Check it out today at

www.vimeo.com/greatermadisonchamber

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GMCC EVENTS & MEMBER CEREMONIES



December's CEO Forum welcomed new CEOs in our area to share what they have learned from other cities and now in Madison. Hosted by M3 Insurance Solutions for Business, the CEO Forum was sponsored by Johnson Bank and SVA. The event was moderated by Tim Cooley (left), City of Madison Economic Development Director, with Bill Johnston (Wisconsin State Journal), Donna Katen-Bahensky (UW Health) and Kevin Conroy (Exact Sciences).

GMCC EVENTS & MEMBER CEREMONIES



Superintendent Dan Nerad of the Madison Metropolitan School District led a discussion about the future of Madison's public schools — and the irrefutable link between a strong public education system and a thriving business community — at the December 2, 2010, GMCC Chamber Cafe. Hosted by Comfort Inn & Suites Airport, the Chamber Cafe was presented by the GMCC in partnership with the Business Education Partnership. Nerad provided an update on Madison's schools and then attendees worked in small groups to discuss ideas for how businesses can help our area schools.



The December Chamber Cafe provided an opportunity for attendees to learn more about Madison's schools and discuss supporting our area schools.



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Business Beat provides a forum where members and partner organizations can share their views on a variety of topics. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect the views held by GMCC management, staff, or board members.

OUR MISSION

The role of the GMCC is to support enlightened economic growth, positioning the greater Madison area as a globally competitive place to live, work, play and do business.

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