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ASK SAM

New GMCC Business Resource Desk Launches At 2011 Expo

BY JUDY DAHL

If you're one of the nearly 2,000 people who attended the GMCC Expo on May 2—or if your business is one of 200 that exhibited—you doubtless saw chamber staffers in "Ask Sam" T-shirts.

They were helping spread the word about the GMCC's new business resource desk. Ask Sam connects you to people, information and opportunities to help you move your business forward.

Whether you're a budding entrepreneur looking for potential business partners and information on starting a business, or an experienced business owner with a perplexing problem, just call the Ask Sam hotline at 608-443-1957 or email asksam@greatermadisonchamber.com.

The desk is staffed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and Ask Sam, your go-to chamber contact, will connect you with the resources you need and then follow up afterward to make sure you're satisfied.

The GMCC developed Ask Sam in

response to an extensive member survey and a study to determine how it can provide the best value to members.

The survey included an evaluation of all chamber programs and services.

"Members told us some programs are less relevant today and that some new ones are needed," says Jennifer Alexander, GMCC president.

"We'll discontinue those that don't fit in today's economy and climate and add new resources that do."

The survey also revealed members' diverse needs. "We learned that GMCC members and potential members fall into two groups," Alexander explains.

"One wants the chamber to help create a climate in greater Madison that's conducive to business and make this the type of community and region where people want to live and work.

"The other wants the chamber to help people grow their businesses," she continues. "They want us to have their back."

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ASK SAM

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Someone They Know And Trust

The GMCC's public policy advocacy and economic development focus is especially important to the first group and Ask Sam is designed primarily for the second. Between the Internet, trade publications, consultants, industry associations, seminars and other sources, there are myriad resources for businesses.

But harried business owners struggle to sift through the vast amount of information available while focusing on running their businesses and on their families.

"We heard from members that when something is keeping them up at night, their first inclination is to turn to someone they know and trust," Alexander says. "Ask Sam offers that interaction by phone and email. And with Ask Sam, the member gets the benefit of the chamber's resources and connections."

Rebecca Ryan, founder of Next Generation Consulting, could have used Ask Sam when starting her business several years ago. "I had a lot of intellectual property questions early on," she says. "I didn't understand copyrighting or trademarks or 'fair use.' Also, when we started hiring employees, I wanted to offer benefits but had no idea where to start."

Ryan served on the Value Proposition Taskforce that conducted the GMCC's study. "During our research, Marsha Lindsay [CEO of Lindsay, Stone & Briggs and then-GMCC board chair] found examples of innovative programs other chambers of commerce were using," says Ryan.

"One example that caught my eye was Johannesburg, South Africa's 'business desk.' Any member could call it and get answers."

The next week she heard a Madison business owner say he'd gone to a business center for information on finding funding. "They handed him a thick binder of resources, and instead of feeling better, he felt overwhelmed," Ryan says. "I thought, 'This is exactly what Madison is missing. We need someone who can really help, not just download a bunch of resources.'"

Ask Sam At A Glance

Call or email the GMCC's business resource desk for the information and connections you need to move your business forward.

When? Ask Sam is staffed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday.

How? Call 608-443-1957 or email asksam@greatermadisonchamber.com

Why? If you have questions about permits, office space, funding and more — you can Ask Sam. If you need to find an attorney or an insurance agent to meet your needs — you can Ask Sam. It's your go-to chamber connection.

This is an area where members have a need where, until now, there hasn't been a service, agrees Alexander. "Ask Sam links information, services, education, and connections to solve problems members might have."

Open The Door

Jane Boutelle, who also served on the chamber's Value Proposition Taskforce and is now the GMCC's business resources manager, was charged with developing and launching Ask Sam.

"I thought it would be a very valuable service for members and implementing it was a good fit with my product management background," she says. Small businesses are central to Boutelle's life. "I grew up with a family business, and jobs working at or focused on small businesses have been my most meaningful," she says.

That includes being the first product manager for QuickBooks. "And while I've lived in Madison for about 10 years, I was working at a company outside the area and I really wanted to get more involved in Madison's business community," says Boutelle.

Her immediate goal for Ask Sam is to open the door and give members an avenue to ask questions and find resources. "We want to deepen our relationships and conversations with members so we're their



The Chamber launched Ask Sam at this year's Annual Business Expo.

go-to contact," she says. "We're always here for them, but members haven't necessarily thought to call the GMCC when they've had questions or faced challenges. Ask Sam is a really good starting point when they're not sure who to talk to."

Long term she plans to increase the service's online presence. "We'll have the resources and social communities they want to keep conversations going not only with us, but amongst themselves."

The chamber's research shows members have a very strong desire to connect with and support each other, and a national study by Atlanta research firm Schapiro Group shows chamber members prefer to do business with other members.

- Business decision-makers are 51% more likely to be highly aware of a business they believe is a chamber member and 37% more likely to think favorably of the business.
- Business decision-makers are 59% more likely to buy goods and services from a company they believe is a chamber member.

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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.

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GMCC CALENDAR

JUNE

Eggs & Issues: WI Economic Development Corp.

Tuesday, June 7, 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation – What It Is and What It Will Do To Create Jobs

Earlier this year, Governor Walker signed a bill into law that turns the State's Commerce Department into a new public-private corporation focused specifically on job creation. Appointed to lead the new Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation is Secretary Paul Jadin, former President and CEO of the Green Bay Chamber of Commerce. Join us on June 7 for an interactive discussion with Secretary Jadin on what the new entity will look like and what it intends to do to support businesses and create jobs in Wisconsin.

Speaker: Paul Jadin, Wisconsin Secretary of Commerce

Location: To Be Announced

Cost: Free for members, \$15 for nonmembers

Register: www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events

Business Card Exchange at Camp Randall Stadium

Wednesday, June 15, 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

On Wisconsin! Our largest networking event moves to Camp Randall. Get the behind the scenes tour, make new connections with potential clients and colleagues, and enjoy complimentary refreshments.

Address: 1440 Monroe St., Madison

Cost: Free for members, \$10 for nonmembers

Register: www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events

Visit the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Online!
www.GreaterMadisonChamber.com

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Valued GMCC Member:

Over the last 12 months, the Chamber asked you – our members, the heroes of our community — how we could do better. Businesses like yours ignite ideas, develop products, and create jobs.

You taught us a great deal and we learned a lot from your survey feedback, in-person interviews, our extensive best practice research and picking the brains of some of Madison's most creative business leaders.

This month, in our final issue of *Business Beat*, I want to share with you a new benefit that we are offering our members - **Ask Sam**.

Sam stands for **Sharing Answers with Members**. This new benefit grew directly out of our feedback from you sharing that our business community needed a resource hotline seeking answers, information and opportunities for helping move your business forward.

When you have a business question, or need to find the right person or organization to help you solve a problem, who do you call?

Now you can call our staff through Ask Sam. Our Ask Sam service provides our members with a go-to person to ask those questions about doing business in the Madison area.

Ask Sam is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (excluding holidays). Call us at 608-443-1957. We'll get you answers, connect you with other members or organizations, and do our best to help you be successful.

Stay tuned to our weekly @TheChamber e-mail for updates about Ask Sam and how we're helping member businesses. And if you have a question about your business, don't forget to Ask Sam!

Thank you,

Jennifer Alexander, GMCC President



Connecting you with information & opportunities

Thank You For A Great Expo!



The staff of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce together after hosting another record-setting Expo at the Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall.

Expo Diamond Sponsor

**WISCONSIN
STATE JOURNAL**

<http://host.madison.com/wsj/>

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Total Awards & Promotions

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

Volunteers Boost Success of GMCC Annual Business Expo

BY BOB ANSHELES

GMCC Director of Membership & Marketing
bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com

While thousands of local business-people made connections, discovered new products and services and attended educational seminars at last month's Business Expo and Madison Small Business Conference, scores of volunteers pitched in their help.

Their commitment and professionalism provided support in all areas of the successful event.

One businessperson's comment summed up the feeling of many attendees and exhibitors, "This is the easiest place in town to do business!"

As businesspeople we all recognize that teamwork is a key ingredient in success.

Please join the Chamber as we acknowledge the valuable contributions of these volunteers:

Chamber Members Sally Balson, Balson Bookkeeping Co.

- Clara Hurd Nydam, Career Momentum
- Sandy Harper, Crowne Plaza Madison
- Colleen Gransee, Dean Health Plan
- Brenda Nickel, Dean Health Plan
- Don Higgins, Higgins Insurance Group
- Liese Pfeifer, Integrated Art Group
- Hannah Graumann, Madison College
- Melissa Amado, Madison College
- Jeff Olson, Monona State Bank
- Jon Koch, Mortenson Construction
- Kristen Roberts, Pawn America

Chamber Ambassadors

- Brian Unitan, Adams Outdoor Advertising

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SAVE THE DATE!

**2012 Annual Business Expo
and
Madison Small Business Conference**

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall

A Positive Sign  **Year After Year
First Weber is**

Wisconsin's #1
Most Productive, Independent
Real Estate Company

#18 IN THE NATION!

Source: RISMedia Real Estate Magazine, 2011 POWER BROKER REPORT, Ranked by Closed Transaction Sides for 2010

 **FIRSTWEBER**
Group
REALTORS®

FirstWeber.com

VOLUNTEERS

continued from page 5

Ryan Klemko, Aerotek Commercial
Victor Lemachko, Apex Insurance Group
Todd Geltemeyer, Capitol Bank
Jackie Ruggles, Community Health Charities of WI
Tammy Rozek, East Towne Mall
Greg Gottschalk, EZ Office Products
Stephanie East, Ferrell's Extreme Bodyshaping
Kathy Schmitz, Harms Insurance Group
Karen Lange, Herzing University
Bob Schenk, IMS International Monetary Systems
Chad Hopper, Isthmus
Liz Cardinale, M&I Bank
Jerry Brown, M3 Insurance
Amy Kennedy, Mary Kay Cosmetics
Tony Mennenga, Mennenga Tax and Financial Service
Ritchie Baumann, Mid-West Family Broadcasting
Jeremy Potter, New York Life Insurance
Pat Barry, Specialty Services of WI
Kelly Dewey, Stark Company Realtors
Tracy Buglass, The Employers Group
Holly Breidel, The North Central Group
Matt Friend, Two Men and a Truck
Lenore O'Brien, Unity Health Insurance

Madison Small Business Conference Speakers

Wendy Albrecht, Bodilly CPAs & Consultants
Todd Geltemeyer, Capitol Bank
Matthew Uselman, Wind River Financial
Jeremy Potter, New York Life Insurance
Laurel Cavalluzzo, Madison Marketing Communications
Laura Gallagher, The Creative Company
George Kamperschroer, Neider & Boucher, S. C.
Greg Sanders, Sortis LLC

Theresa Islo, Wellness Council of WI
Wayne Harris Glowac+Harris+Madison
Gloria Vranak, Madison National Life
Jon Morgan, Wisconsin Division of Public Health
Martha Yoakum, Hughes Company

Seminar Hosts

Rachel Rasmussen, Rescue Desk Virtual Assistant Services
Gary Molz, EZ Office Products
Susan Thompson, ActionCOACH Business Coaching
Cindy Rose Hughes, Rose CFO Solutions
Jim Mankowski., JBM Patrol & Protection
Judy Dahl, JKD Communications
David Rasmussen, Extract Systems


Special Thanks

Deanne Massey, Perfect Event Management

Jim Mankowski, JBM Patrol & Protection

If you have feedback on your experience as an exhibitor or attendee at the 2011 GMCC Annual Business Expo and Madison Small Business Conference, we would like to hear from you.

Please contact Director of Membership and Marketing Bob Ansheles at 608-443-1944 or bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com.

We appreciate your comments and ideas on improvements to the event. 

**CONNECT
ONLINE
WITH THE
GMCC!**



**Become a fan of the
Greater Madison
Chamber of Commerce
on Facebook!**



**Before families can put kids on stage,
they have to put food on the table.**

Hunger is a real issue for many area families. We are helping by supporting organizations such as Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin which serves nearly 85,000 people here each year. We are giving so our neighbors have a better chance of succeeding at play, at work and in life.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

Communications Engineering Company (CEC)

With locations in Madison and Green Bay, CEC is a technology integrator that offers solutions in A/V, fire and security, healthcare communications, IT, and two-way communications. We serve customers across the world in public safety, business and manufacturing facilities, schools, government buildings, healthcare facilities, hotels, and houses of worship.

Learn more at www.ceciowa.com.

ASK SAM

continued from page 2


Ask Sam can help facilitate member-to-member connections. "I see the service as both helping members find answers and helping members support each other," says Ryan. "Gary Molz [vice president of EZ Office Products and a GMCC board member] always says, 'think chamber first' when selecting vendors, and Ask Sam can help members do that."

A Dialogue

The GMCC will look to members for feedback on Ask Sam and all new programs. "We'd like to know what's helpful and what's not and how we can shape and refine offerings to better meet their needs," Alexander says. "The more we learn from members about what questions they have, what resources are valuable, what connections they're looking to make, we can develop better online and other resources."

"We need a two-way flow of information to help us meet the changing needs of members and stay current," she adds.

"To best serve members, we want to focus on what's on their minds, any obstacles or challenges. That's why we developed the Construction Survival Guide; members told us it was important to them and we made it a priority."

Have a question? Call or email Ask Sam today. We can only learn and improve if we hear from you. 



The poster features a blue and yellow macaw in the top left corner and a blue peacock in the bottom right corner. The background is a soft-focus green landscape. In the center, a green vertical banner contains the text "HENRY VILAS ZOO" at the top, a tiger's face in the middle, and "CELEBRATING 100 YEARS 1911-2011" at the bottom. Below the banner, the website "VILASZOO.ORG" is written in white. Two small inset photos are on the left: one showing a group of sheep and another showing a zebra in a field.

100 YEARS OF Keeping the Wild Alive

In Summer, 2011, Henry Vilas Zoo will embark on a fun-filled 100 day long 100th anniversary celebration featuring festivities, special events and lots of family fun for all to enjoy.

Henry Vilas Zoo strives to be an ambassador in animal conservation and education, and to share the wonders of the animal world with visitors all year long — free of charge. Last year alone, Henry Vilas Zoo welcomed **more than 700,000 visitors**. To continue our mission, we need your support.

If your business is interested in sponsorship or partnership opportunities in celebration of the 100th Anniversary, please contact Anna Reynolds by email at anna@vilaszoo.org or by calling 608.258.9490.

We hope that you will join us!

VILASZOO.ORG

2011 BUSINESS EXPO & SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE



Wisconsin State Journal



The Chamber launched Ask Sam at this year's Annual Business Expo.



A penguin from the Henry Vilas Zoo



Charter Business



Mid-West Family Broadcasting

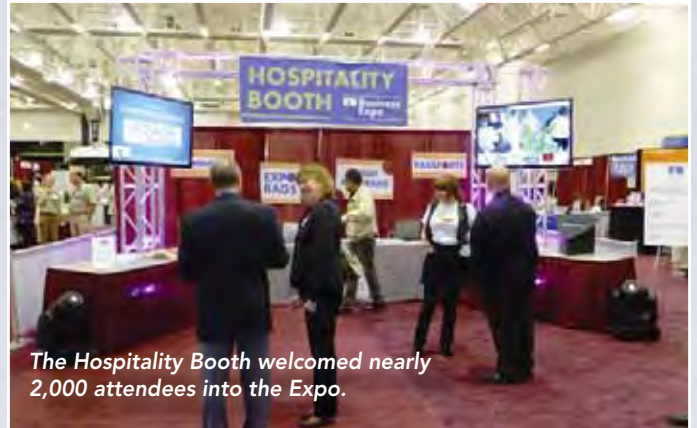


The Osthoff Resort

2011 BUSINESS EXPO & SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE



GMCC Small Business
Advisory Council



The Hospitality Booth welcomed nearly
2,000 attendees into the Expo.



Google helped local businesses build their
online presence through Google Places



Fish Brothers Concrete Raising



GMCC President
Jennifer Alexander
greeted an Expo attendee



The Martin Group

Business Plan

SCORE ONE FOR CHAMBER MEMBERS

The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the GMCC have teamed up to offer targeted business workshops.

BY JUDY DAHL

Jane Huang is president of Dragon Technology Solutions, an information systems consulting firm comprised of professionals experienced in all phases of the IT project life cycle, and a certified minority business. When she wanted to ensure her company was moving in the right direction, she attended a business workshop at the GMCC, facilitated by members of SCORE Madison.

The GMCC and SCORE first partnered to offer workshops in 2010, and are holding them quarterly this year. They're free to GMCC members, and several SCORE members—experts in the sessions' topics—lead the programs.

"The first one I attended was a general business workshop, covering different elements of a business," says Huang. "We

talked about business plans, branding, marketing, human resources ... it was a very good high-level overview."

When she wanted more in-depth education, Huang attended "Emphasis on Sales and Marketing." She used the information gained to prepare for the GMCC Expo. "We increased our focus on branding and created a new brochure," she notes. "Hopefully it will help us get more business."

Sharing Experiences

During the program, participants broke into small groups to discuss what they'd learned and how they'd apply the concepts. "That was the best part," Huang remembers. "We found that we shared a lot of similarities and faced the same issues."

Margaret LeMay, owner of Integrated Art Group, which specializes in building creative art collections for corporate and health care clients, took advantage of SCORE's free one-on-one counseling services before opening the business. Later Liese Pfeifer, an art consultant at the company, attended "No Goals No Glory—An Annual Business Checkup."

With her concentration on sales, she found the session very helpful. "We covered the focus of our business, to potentially refocus it," she says. "It reaffirmed that we were going in the right direction and was an excellent opportunity to learn something new and expand my business knowledge base."

And during the small group discussions she made a connection with another person who works in sales. "It helped me

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build my own sales strength and I've continued to pursue the connection."

The GMCC SCORE workshops are designed for small groups of about 13 people. "That fosters the learning environment and encourages discussion and sharing of professional experiences," says Jamie Welnick, GMCC program & events manager. "The expertise from the Madison SCORE chapter enables small business owners to work with mentors that help them grow their businesses."

Dedicated To Helping Businesses Succeed

SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small businesses start, grow, and succeed nationwide. Its members are "Counselors to America's Small Businesses."

"Almost half of our SCORE people are working and half are retired," explains Bill Arthur, chair of SCORE Madison. "We have people with a wide variety of experience, all of whom are—or were—involved in running successful companies. We all want to help people out."

Arthur was formerly part-owner of Sycam, Inc., which manufactures and sells forms and supplies to dentists and physicians across the U.S. "We sold the company but it kept the Sycam name," he says. "I stayed on for eight years and retired at 55."

Then he needed something to do. "I'd done different volunteer activities and I turned to SCORE because I wanted to help other people," he says. "I had succeeded at running a business and wondered if I could help others start their own. It was a natural for me."

Roger Henson is Chair of the Workshop Group of SCORE Madison. He worked at Xerox for 36 yrs, retired as vice president of customer service operations in Dallas, and came to Madison to be near his granddaughters.

"I was with SCORE six years ago in Texas when I first retired," he says.

"I did a lot of workshops and worked with chambers of commerce there. So I continued when I moved to Madison four years ago."

Henson had always volunteered, even while holding a very demanding job. Like Arthur, he was looked for something to do when he retired. "SCORE seemed like way to give back some of the things I'd learned over the years."

Long-term Mentors

Most people who request assistance from SCORE want to start a small business, or are running one but need some help. "It might be a successful business that needs accounting advice," Arthur says. "We have people who were or are accountants and can help them out."

It's often monetary issues, Henson adds. "Right now a lot of small businesses are losing revenues. Maybe they've overextended and don't know how to cut back," he suggests. "Or it may be the opposite—they may have developed a website and are on the brink of taking it to the next level and starting online sales. It's an important and expensive step from call-and-order to online shopping."

SCORE frequently provides long-term, ongoing counseling. "We're mentors; we want to stick with people as they grow," says Arthur.

The GMCC SCORE partnership began with a casual conversation at the GMCC Expo. "Bob Ansheles [GMCC director of membership & marketing] and I decided we could work together," Arthur says. "The GMCC is interested in seeing greater Madison businesses be successful. Our goals are the same."

It makes sense for the GMCC to work with organizations like SCORE. "They have a big membership and we have 40 or 50 people with varying business backgrounds," says Henson. "If I don't have an answer, someone else does. We've learned a few things over the years."

The chamber promotes and hosts the workshops and SCORE facilitates and provides advice. "The GMCC is a good partner," Henson affirms.

Focused Sessions

The 2010 workshop had a broad scope. "It was a rifle-shot approach," notes Henson.

You Can Still SCORE

Attend An Upcoming GMCC SCORE Workshop

Operations and Tactical Planning

Wednesday, July 27
8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Leadership and Strategic Planning

Wednesday, October 26
8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

"We modified the next sessions to be more focused. We wanted to appeal to a wider [swath] of chamber members rather than just small business owners."

He and several other SCORE members—often including Arthur—conduct the workshops.

"It's more of a discussion than a lecture," Henson says. "The synergy of the group helps people come up with ideas they may not have thought of otherwise."

Huang appreciates learning from other people's hands-on experience.

"Hearing about their mistakes helps us avoid the same ones in our own companies," she says.

"As small businesses we're on our own a lot," she continues.

"This type of workshop really validates that a lot of companies have the same issues and that we're not alone. And SCORE provides a very rich experience instead of just classroom training."

It's a great way to get new information, Pfeifer indicates. "You can brush up on your skills and meet new people too."

The retirees are real role models for newer entrepreneurs.

"It makes me think—and I never had before—that when I retire I can do the same thing and pass on my knowledge and experience to younger entrepreneurs," says Huang. "I like the idea of one generation passing on its experience to the next one." ■



INITIATIVES & INSIGHTS

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

PUBLIC POLICY

SBAC Update: New Road Construction Survival Guide Available

Editor's Note: This SBAC update is in place of the normal Policy update.

BY KEVIN LITTLE

GMCC Director of Public Policy
klittle@greatermadisonchamber.com

In 2009, the Chamber's Small Business Advisory Council created a taskforce with the mission to improve Madison's road construction process.

The reason for the taskforce was simple – road construction projects can be disruptive, and in some cases financially devastating to businesses.

The impact of this issue was demonstrated in a member survey from that same year.

Nearly 70% of respondents indicated that their business revenues declined during a road construction project.

Further troubling, more than half indicated their business did not return to prior levels after completion of construction, and for some continued to decrease.

The survey told us that businesses needed assistance not only during construction projects, but also prior to and after road construction occurs.

In partnership with the City of Madison, the SBAC initiated several new reforms, including new requirements inserted into city project bids, like regular meetings with contractors, city staff and businesses before and during road construction projects.

In addition, the City of Madison launched a new website designed specifically to provide updated information on all city road construction projects.

In addition to their work with city government, the SBAC created a road construction survival guide, which offered

tips and best practices for businesses to consider when dealing with road construction projects.

The guide was an instant success and has since been replicated by transportation departments and business groups across the country.

Based on the success of the first guide – and the number of new changes to city protocol and available resources – the SBAC went to work on a second version of the guide earlier this year.

The new guide contains many of the same recommendations from the first guide, but is told with a more local perspective.

Stories are shared from recent projects on Monona Drive, where businesses collaborated to produce coupons and events to attract customers during heavy construction, and on State Street where the Downtown BID created a "Get-Around Guide" to help customers access businesses during construction.

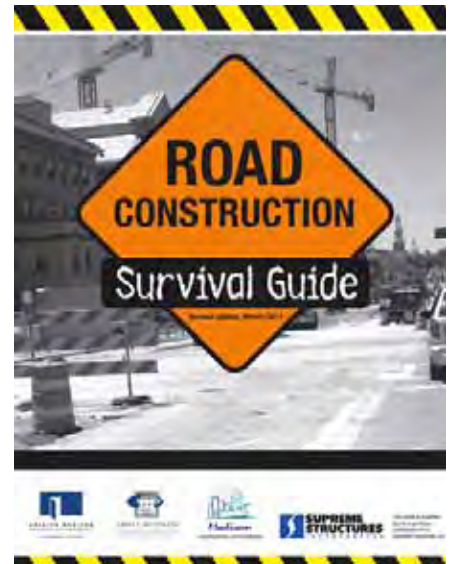
Also included the updated guide are new strategies to regain customers once construction projects end.

Last year, businesses along the University Avenue corridor partnered with the GMCC to organize an official ribbon-cutting to draw attention to the work's completion, new access and benefits to customers and businesses along the corridor.


An electronic version of the new guide is available on both the chamber and city website.

Printed copies are also available at the Chamber office, which we are happy to mail to your business upon request.

Once again, a big thanks to the Small



Business Advisory Council – in particular Judy Dahl with JKD Communications, and Dan Bertler with Supreme Structures for their generous contributions to this project.

This summer, several major construction projects are underway. We'd like to remind and encourage all members to take the time to support these businesses during this challenging time. 

We've Got Your Back!

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

CONNECT
ONLINE
WITH THE
GMCC!



Thrive's Best Practices Series Provides Learning For Local Professionals



BY BETSY LUNDGREN
MARKETING COORDINATOR, THRIVE
blundgren@thrivehere.org

Thrive is committed to improving economic development practice across the eight-county Madison Region by providing interactive educational opportunities for learning about best practices in economic development.

Through its Best Practices Series, Thrive delivers objective information and case studies on a variety of relevant topics within an engaging learning and discussion environment.

Thrive's next Best Practices Series, titled Building Successful Economic Development Corporations, draws on state and national research to explore the characteristics of effective Economic Development Corporations.

With more than 30 Economic Development Corporations in the Madison Region, plus hundreds more across the country, it's an important topic to address in today's struggling economy.

Whether your community is launching a new organization or advancing an established program, Thrive invites you to join the conversation.

The event is geared for local municipal leaders, commercial developers, planners, and economic development professionals.

Thrive's Best Practices Series

Building Successful Economic Development Corporations

- Thursday, June 9, 2011, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. (optional winery tours and networking to follow)
- Located at Wollersheim Winery in Prairie du Sac, Wis.
- Presented by Thrive and UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development
- Register online at www.thrivehere.org/bestpractices. Online registration is open until June 8.
- \$25 per person, includes seminar materials
- \$20 for Thrive investors, multiple attendees from the same organization


Questions? Please contact Jenn Post Tyler at jptyler@thrivehere.org or 608-443-1964. Stay tuned for upcoming Best Practices Series events on topics including Finance for Economic Development and Best Practices for Business Incubators.

About Thrive

Thrive is the economic development partnership for the eight-county Madison Region with a vision to create a dynamic environment where people and businesses prosper.

Thrive is committed to:

- Providing businesses and communities with efficient access to capital.
- Growing the industries and sectors that comprise our region's greatest assets.
- Informing smart decision-making by delivering valuable research and data.
- Collaborating across communities to share best practices and promote our region.

Thrive creates value with initiatives that focus on long-term, sustained results aimed at building the region's competitive advantage while preserving and enhancing quality of life. The Madison Region is comprised of Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock, and Sauk Counties. 

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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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