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Fair Indigo supports a school in Peru near one of its factories that produce merchandise ideal for holiday gifts. Ellen Farrell, customer service manager (center left), and Katie Stevens, retail manager (center right), stopped in for a visit.

'TIS THE SEASON

Promotion, Service And Planning Are The Keys To A Happy Holiday For Retailers

BY JUDY DAHL

Since the holiday season constitutes about 40% of Fair Indigo's business, co-founder and president Robert Behnke has been assessing this year's prospects. He's cautiously optimistic.

"The last couple of years have been extremely tough, but we saw some pickup in business early this fall, and that's always a good sign," he says. "Typically if we have a really good September it translates into a good holiday season."

Alison Turner, an independent consultant for Bagolitas By Janice, which does

direct sales, foresees a season similar to last year's — down from the previous year. "People are still gifting, but they're being smarter with their dollars. Instead of spending \$40, they're spending \$20."

That's why Goodman Jewelers is stocking up on lower priced items. "We've added quite a bit of sterling silver, with prices starting around \$20," says John Hayes, president and owner. "We have some lighter weight gold neck chains and things like colored gemstone rings without accent diamonds."

continued on page 4

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GMCC CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

GMCC CONNECT @ LUNCH

Tuesday, November 9, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Host: Eldorado Grill, 744 Williamson St., Madison
Enjoy a three-course meal, building new business connections while swapping tables for each course and meeting new people at each table. This is a GMCC members-only exclusive event. Registration is \$25.
Register: www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events

GMCC BUSINESS CARD EXCHANGE

Wednesday, November 17, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Host: Yahara Bay Distillery, 3118 Kingsley Way, Madison
Join us for an evening networking event where members from businesses of all types and sizes swap business cards and engage in lively conversation over drinks and appetizers - a perfect way to generate new contacts.
Registration: Members free. \$10 nonmembers / guests
Register: www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events

WHY GMCC?

“GMCC provides a creditable and reasonable voice during public policy discussions impacting job growth and quality of life in the greater Madison region.”



- Mark Bugher, Director
University Research Park, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Valued GMCC Member:

Businesses like yours ignite ideas, develop products, and create jobs. You are the heroes of the community. You deserve a chamber of commerce that changes to meet your needs as you evolve to meet the challenges of an ever-changing business climate. In other words ... *not your parents' chamber.*

To that end, this year, we asked how we could do better.

THANK YOU to the more than 700 of you who responded to our online survey, the 50 members who met with me for in-person interviews, the staff and volunteers who did extensive best practice research, and the 25 members of some of Madison's most creative companies who allowed us to "pick their brains."

You taught us a great deal. And we learned a lot ... We learned that we are doing some things well and other things not well at all. We are a large chamber with more than 1,400 members. Our members provide jobs for close to half of Dane County's workforce.

We learned that we are doing a great job of serving as the voice for business. We do it thoughtfully and in a non-partisan way. Our size gives us clout. We intend to remain vigilant in serving as your voice - "having your back" while you are moving your business forward.

But we also learned being large has its drawbacks. We have to find ways to make the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce more approachable, personal and - yes - more fun.

We learned that many of our offerings are worn out and a bit stodgy. And that businesses needs are very different than they were even a year ago. We plan to stop doing some things and start to do others.

We have some ideas that we intend to launch in 2011 to help you attract customers, sell your products and services to make your business thrive. We will have a business desk with online, phone and in-person components to make it easier for you to connect with the resources you need to grow your business.

We will launch peer-to-peer circles for business leaders, where they can meet to talk about their stickiest business issues in a facilitated, confidential group. And we will offer member-inspired, customized events.

It's an exciting time for your chamber. You will hear more about our 2011 offerings so stay tuned. I'd also like to thank Rebecca Ryan with Next Generation Consulting and our GMCC Board Chair Marsha Lindsay with Lindsay, Stone and Briggs who both contributed generously to this reinvention of the Greater Madison Chamber.

If any of these ideas catches your imagination and you'd be willing to help create and launch them, please call or e-mail me. We will begin design plans in the next few weeks.

Thank you,

Jennifer Alexander, GMCC President

SEASON

continued from page 1

Diane Doughman, co-owner of Mimosa Books & Gifts, is also finding high-ticket items sell less frequently since the recession. "But we have a wide range of price points," she says. "People can spend \$2 and go home with a lot of fun things in their hands, or they can spend \$20, or \$100."

Advertising

With her State Street location, summer's tourist dollars are as important to Doughman as the holiday season is, but the holidays still account for about 20% of her sales. "We try to get people in to shop earlier," she says. "Because as time runs out, people think, I just want to go to the mall and get it all done."

She holds several promotions to attract holiday shoppers and uses a weekly e-newsletter to inform regular customers. Starting December 1 it's "12 Days of Christmas," with a different item on sale each day.

"We also have freebie sales starting right after Thanksgiving, where if a customer buys two books they get one free, for example," she says. "It seems to work even better than giving a percentage off — people love free stuff. We have a lot of fun with it. When someone gets to the counter we'll say, 'You have three candles; if you buy one more, you get a free one.'"

It's important to get the word out early to potential customers about why they should buy from you, Behnke notes. "They have so many options. For us, the message is that people can buy gifts they can feel good about. We talk about how they were made and who made them."

Goodman Jewelers is increasing its holiday promotions via electronic channels. "We're using more of our advertising budget on our website, as well as social media like Facebook and Twitter," says Hayes. "We're also letting people know that we have financing available with no interest or service charges, as well as lay-away options. We've always had it, but we haven't called attention to it."

Turner promotes holiday shopping year round, as she sells her products at parties

held for that purpose. "It might be June, and a customer says, 'My sister would love this.' I promote her to buy it for the holidays; it helps the party's hostess and the buyer can check one thing off her list."

Service

This is the time of year to really exceed your customers' expectations, she asserts. "When the economy turns around they'll think about you. Try to do something great for them. It doesn't have to be monetary, just make them feel important. Even returning their calls right away helps."

Being wonderful to people is part of the formula for success during the holidays and all year, especially for a small, independent store, Doughman believes. "That's why people come to a smaller store. We do extra things like taking off price tags, cleaning items up and wrapping them, and finding a box. If small stores don't do this, they're missing the boat."

Hayes and his staff greet every customer. "No matter how busy we are, we say, 'we'll be with you soon; please take your time and look around,'" he explains. "We don't pressure them; if someone's just looking for ideas it's fine."

At Fair Indigo, "we pride ourselves on answering the phones quickly with real people," says Behnke. "And we have no talk-time limits like some call centers. We encourage people to take the time they need with each customer."

His organization does the majority of its business online, but in the store, lines are the big holiday challenge. "For 10 months of the year people get good one-on-one customer service, but it's not possible to the same degree during the holidays. But then again, when people are buying gifts, like scarves, they don't require as much personal service as when they're picking out clothes for themselves."

Staff

Helping employees stay healthy and keeping them from getting burned out affects service significantly. "We don't have people work more than 40 hours a week, and we try to keep things lighthearted and festive," says Behnke. "We're fortunate to have a small group of people who only

want to work at the holidays to make some extra spending money, and sometimes the office staff helps out at the store."

That's the case at Mimosa Books & Gifts as well. "My partner and I typically work more on management stuff, but we become part of the sales force during the holidays," says Doughman. "But the additional challenge with a small store is that you can't have too many people working — there's isn't enough room behind the counter."

Turner is a director for a group of Bagolitas By Janice consultants. She often reminds them of how important holiday sales are. "I tell them, you'll work really hard for a couple of months but things will slow down in January and February." We have fun — I send them notes and e-mails and check in more often by phone during the holidays, and I congratulate them when they make great sales. People love to be recognized."

Inventory

Inventory planning for the holidays is always a challenge. "It's probably the most thankless job in the world," Behnke opines. "You never buy exactly the right amount; it's tough to forecast."

He goes to trade shows during summer to see what's predicted to be big for the holiday season. "Then, as a company, we estimate what we'll spend on marketing and how much we'll sell," he says. "We break it down into categories — women's clothing, men's, children's — looking at what we sold in past years and what we think the future holds. Then we break it down further, into women's sweaters, for instance, then colors and sizes."

It's important to have a strong contingency plan. "Some things will sell more or less than you want and you can't afford to chase everything you're doing well on," says Behnke.

"You have to pick your spots. We might say ornaments are important and work with that vendor on a plan to get additional inventory quickly if we need it." ■

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.

www.greatermadisonchamber.com



2010 CHAMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Letter From The Chamber's Board Chair And President

BY MARSHA LINDSAY AND JENNIFER ALEXANDER

Marsha Lindsay is CEO of Lindsay, Stone & Briggs and the 2010 Chair of the Board of Directors of the Greater Madison Chamber. Jennifer Alexander is President of the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce.

Preserving Madison's great quality of life, and the ability to make it even better, takes a lot of money.

But let's face it; whether in the form of consumer spending, philanthropy or taxes, the dollars funding Madison's aspirations are fueled by jobs.

We'll all lose a great deal if Madison is not competitive at retaining, attracting and enabling job creators.

And if we think we're immune to the global competition between cities to optimize conditions for job creators – we're kidding ourselves. The recession has made the stakes very clear: We're in a race to fund our way of life.

But creating a culture primed for job creation is hard work. Among the things it takes are a vision of the future that the whole community embraces, and a clear strategy on how to get us there. This requires a deep understanding of what's critical to job creators; a means to provide it that's significantly better than what's offered by competing cities; and an inordinate amount of community collaboration to deliver it.

While this suggests we all have an important part to play, as the largest organization of job creators in the area (1,400 members strong) the Chamber's responsibilities are unique. Our role is to jumpstart the agenda, set a table for all to contribute, then apply our business-honed skills in strategy and performance to get the job done.

But because Chamber members are first and foremost citizens enjoying our famously high quality of life, the Chamber's charter is very specific: **We seek to transform the fortunes of Madison job creators in a way that creates a better**

quality of life for the whole community. Our daily to-do-lists reflect this devotion: We're not just working to help local employers overcome obstacles and grow their top line, our members are devoting time, talent and money to important causes like United Way, the schools, and more.

Despite considerable past success, the volatile economy has dramatically increased the competition between cities for job creators and the taxes, employment and philanthropy they provide. Earlier this year, this led your Chamber to take a hard look at itself in the mirror.



Marsha Lindsay



Jennifer Alexander

To find out what more we should be doing, we reached out to Madison area employers large and small, entrepreneurial and established, retail and hi-tech; those successful and especially those struggling. An online survey provided us with insights and admonitions from over 700 members and non-members. Face-to-face and one-on-one, 54 business leaders candidly

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advised us. In an all-day retreat, 24 job creators provided a wealth of fresh ideas for member programming and services. The findings of this unprecedented outreach were very clear, consistent, conclusive:

1) The Chamber's professional, non-partisan, collaborative and cost/benefit oriented approach when advocating various issues is highly respected and valued.

• However, there is much more we need to advocate for in order to make the community more appreciative and attuned to the needs of job creators.

2) If ever a community needed an organization to drive its global competitiveness in the retention and creation of jobs, it's Madison.

• But if the Chamber is serious about leading the charge, we have to first transform ourselves with more relevant programming and services to small and mid-size businesses, as well as how we deliver them in today's ever more economically-challenged, time-starved and digital world.

You'll see we've taken this feedback very seriously. We're already applying it across the board:

• The 2010 Annual Dinner: Unlike others you may have experienced, its program was designed to inspire the community with a common vision of what Madison can be, and how to get us there.

• In this issue you'll read about just a handful of the many initiatives of the Chamber, such as our ambitious effort to re-tool city approval processes so they're less onerous, more time and cost efficient for the city and businesses alike.

• In the next few months we'll be rolling out exciting new tools to make it easier for local businesses to grow their top line, faster.


The *net net* of the considerable effort of the Chamber this year—to change ourselves in service to revitalizing the community for job creation — is this:

We're no longer your parents' chamber of commerce.

It's not just that it wouldn't be right for the needs of businesses in today's fast-paced, global and challenging economy. It's that it wouldn't be right for the needs of Madison — this dynamic, creative hub of discovery and intellectual energy, who's quality of life is treasured by us all.

What's also come into focus this last year is that the whole of Wisconsin needs Madison to succeed at being world-class in job creation and retention. That's because in addition to Madison being an engine for economic growth in our eight-county region, many beyond our region are hoping (and praying) we can be the engine that transforms the state's fortune for the better as well.

Precisely because the stakes are so high, we invite you to join our effort to create optimum conditions for the jobs needed to fuel our treasured way of life.

Madison's history proves that, when we have joined together, we have in fact been able to achieve big things, and even pull off what some might call a miracle or two. 

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce welcomed more than 1,000 members and guests to the 58th Annual Dinner with the generous support of sponsors. The Chamber would like to thank the following sponsors of the GMCC 58th Annual Dinner:

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Wisconsin Interest Magazine



2010 MEMBERSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

Who's Got Your Back? The Chamber Is Always Here For You.

BY BOB ANSHELES

GMCC Director of Membership & Marketing
bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com

Now more than ever, businesses in the Greater Madison area need an organization that has their back and helps them move forward.

One which helps employers transform their business plans into reality.

One which offers educational resources on topics from marketing on a shoestring budget to comprehensive employee benefit packages.

One which provides valuable connections for all companies regardless of whether they are one-person start-ups, multi-million dollar corporations or any size in-between.

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce is that guiding force (and the smart choice) for over 1,400 businesses in our region.

Here are a few key reasons why:

PERSONAL BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

GMCC Programs - Whether it's Tim Metcalfe, President of Metcalfe, Inc., inspiring attendees on how a customer's welcoming shopping experience translates into business success, or a three-course lunch designed to build your business relationships in a relaxed and personal atmosphere, or a panel of experts highlighting health care changes that will take effect between now and 2014, members take away stimulating ideas and interactions to improve both individual and corporate success.

Annual Business Expo - Chamber members have the opportunity to showcase their company's products and services at the area's largest Business-to-Business Expo.

Moved to the Alliant Energy Center for the first time this year, the event drew

1,500 attendees and 160 exhibitors, a record number in both categories.

Annual Dinner - You won't find a larger crowd of business professionals anywhere else in the Madison area. This is the place to meet and build relationships with the area's top CEOs, elected officials, and mid-level executives before sitting down to a delicious meal and an inspiring message from a well-known business executive.

Minority Business Advisory Council - Formed in 2008, the goal of this advisory council is to provide business tools to minority owned businesses and assist them in making business connections.

Small Business Advisory Council - Serving as a voice for the small business

community, the GMCC Small Business Advisory Council brought attention to several issues in 2010.

In partner with the City of Madison, the SBAC identified and developed educational tools to assist small businesses on a variety of issues including road construction, business safety and privacy and information security best practices.

GMCC Ambassadors - GMCC Ambassadors contribute essential support to members at Chamber events, programs and member ceremonies throughout the year.

Their active Chamber involvement also benefits the companies which employ them as they make and strengthen business relationships.

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COMMUNICATIONS

GMCC Member Directory - The annual Member Directory and Buyer's Guide is a must-have resource for businesses operating in the greater Madison area.

All 1,400 Chamber members are listed both alphabetically and by business category for easy cross-reference.

The Buyer's Guide section includes a short description about each business. In addition to the handy print edition, all members receive free listings in the online directory which includes links to member websites and location maps.

Digital Business Beat Magazine - Every month the GMCC magazine *Business Beat* highlights members, membership benefits, upcoming events, public policy and economic development news.

The magazine is now in digital format allowing for wider distribution directly to the desks of area business professionals, providing exclusive information and insight on the business community.

Weekly e-Bulletin - Chamber members count on the weekly e-Bulletin to inform them of upcoming Chamber events, breaking public policy updates, member news and more.

Value Proposition Survey - Recognizing that today's economy has permanently altered the methods businesses use to succeed, the Chamber surveyed 5,000 members, non-members and past members earlier this year.

The survey will be instrumental in helping us determine what businesses expect from their Chamber membership and in incorporating programs and benefits our members need and expect.

If you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com or call 608-443-1944 to discuss how the Greater Madison Chamber has your back.

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AMBASSADOR ACTION

TRACY BUGLASS

Director of Donor Relations at Gilda's Club Madison

www.gildasclubmadison.org

How long have you been a

GMCC Ambassador: Five years.

I became a GMCC Ambassador in 2005.

What do you enjoy most about being an

Ambassador? Meeting business people in Madison and helping them meet each other. Also, learning about new businesses in town.

How does the GMCC provide value to its members? By getting involved in critical issues that affect businesses in Madison and helping to steer policy and decision making when possible. Helping connect businesses to one another to foster growth. Holding seminars and workshops on important and timely topics.

More About Gilda's Club: Gilda's Club Madison offers a welcoming community of FREE support for everyone touched by cancer—men, women, teens and children — along with their families and friends.

Our innovative program is an essential complement to medical care, providing networking and support groups, workshops, education, and social activities. Learn more about how Gilda's Club can offer support through your cancer journey at www.gildasclubmadison.org.



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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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Shoppers at Goodwill love the excitement of a good find.

OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Resale Businesses Are Booming In A Tough Economy

BY JUDY DAHL

Barbara Leslie, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of South Central Wisconsin, has noticed a change in consumers' attitudes when it comes to buying secondhand. "It's much more mainstream now for people to shop at thrift stores," she says. "They're realizing it's smart, it saves the planet, and it does good."

She sees all demographics shopping at Goodwill stores. "We see very low-income people who are struggling to make ends meet to very high-income shoppers. Thrift is kind of in."

She notes that through August, 2010, national retail sales were up 3.6% over 2009 sales, but Goodwill's were up by nearly 10%. The biggest increase is in garment sales. "When people are buying, it's mostly necessities like clothing," she says.

She'd been concerned that donations would drop because of the economy, as

people held onto items longer, but that hasn't been the case. "Donations are holding steady and strong, thankfully," Leslie says.

Easter Seals of Wisconsin is seeing fewer donated goods, notes Nance Roepke, director of development and donation center. Her organization collects items and Savers sells them. "Some of the decrease is due to the recession; some is due to increased competition," she says.

"Clothing makes up the largest volume of our donations and we also get a lot of smaller hard goods such as toys and dishes, and a fair amount of furniture," she continues. "Savers' sales are up, and they want everything we can bring them and more."

She foresees donations increasing as the economy improves. "Demand is very high right now in terms of people wanting low-cost clothing, furniture and other

things," she says. "I've been in the business since 1997, and in the last two years, I've seen a bigger gap between [available items and demand] than ever before."

Sales Are Up

At Grampa's Gun Shop, 95% of the business is resale, with about 350 secondhand guns sold annually. Owner Larry Gleasman doesn't stock new guns, but he will order them. He thinks the economy may be putting pressure on people to sell their guns.

"If you need money to pay the rent, you could sell your gun or your TV, and if you sell the TV your wife or kids might get mad," he says. "If you won't need the gun until deer-hunting season next fall, you can buy it back then."

His sales are up. "It costs 25% less to buy a used gun — they're all guaranteed to shoot — and right now people want to save money," he says. "I can't guarantee

you'll hit a duck — then I'd make a lot more money."

Pawn America is thriving as well. Brad Rixmann, founder and CEO, feels like his industry remained in the shadows for many years. "But the recession and the advent of the 'Pawn Store' TV show have brought a lot of recognition to the industry," he says.

People can sell items directly to one of his 24 stores or get a loan based on the items' current value and redeem them when they pay back the loan with interest. The stores receive a huge variety of things, from boats to artwork.

"A lot of people are selling gold because the price is so high right now," says Rixmann. "And jewelry is the No. 1 thing that generates sales."

Retail sales at the stores have grown tremendously. "That's what drives our business, and we've expanded our offerings in a variety of ways," he adds. "Our media environment — CDs, DVDs, video games — that's what makes the doors swing more than anything else."

He plans to start buying used exercise equipment and clothing for the Madison store. "This will be our test market for clothing," says Rixmann. "It's a natural. We have so many women that come in, and people want to do one-stop shopping."

Sales have grown continuously in the nine years the Pink Poodle Upscale Resale Boutique has been in business, but they've grown at an accelerated rate in recent years. Owner Beth Testa attributes the increase more to an expansion than to the economy.

"We moved across [Odana Road] two years ago and tripled our space, and we're more visible since we face the beltline," Testa says. "We stopped advertising five years ago but we still get new people every day."

People can sell things on consignment at her store and she purchases other merchandise to sell. The consignment items are most often clothing, furniture and housewares, but the store also sells jewelry, accessories, and a whole host of other things.

"Most people bring in consignment



Pawn America's spacious, gleaming stores aren't the stereotypical pawn shop.

items from the Wisconsin area, but some people who have moved away send me boxes of stuff, and we mail them the checks when they sell," says Testa.

She believes the selection of merchandise makes the Pink Poodle stand out in the resale market. "It's upscale, but not high, high end. It's meat-and-potatoes brands people want, like Chicos and J. Crew," she says. "We have Armani, but that's not Madison."

Attractive Stores

The unique way her store is decorated draws people in, too, with ornaments hanging from the ceiling, gilded mirrors on the walls, and pink poodles—stuffed, ceramic, you name it — everywhere. "It makes it fun to come here," Testa says.

Appearance is critical, Rixmann agrees. "My dad taught me curb appeal and location."

Pawn America is spacious, attractive, and well lit. "If our stores didn't say pawn on the door, you'd never know you were in a pawn shop," says Rixmann. "Our Madison store is our largest, roughly 25,000 square feet, which is about 10 times what the average pawn store has."

Goodwill also focuses on its stores' atmosphere and shoppers' experiences. "Our thrift stores look like any other type of store; they're modern, with good lighting and good customer service," says Leslie.

Increased Competition

She says increased competition in the resale market keeps her team on their

toes. "We deal with it by staying 'steady Eddy'—this is the business we've been in all along and it supports our mission—and by keeping up with best practices.

"We try to stay ahead of the curve," she continues. "Sales at our online store are growing as fast as our in-store sales."

People like Goodwill's one-price strategy, she finds. "When you walk in, you know all pants are \$3.99, whether they're new Talbots off the rack or K-Mart. It's fun, and people get excited about the finds."


When it comes to attracting donations, people give to organizations they feel closest to, Roepke opines, so Easter Seals works hard to get its message out. "And typically, if people don't have a preference they go to the most convenient place, so we try to be the most convenient."

Her organization gives donors choices. "We do a lot of residential pickups, and we have drop-off centers where they can get help handling their donations," says Roepke. "People appreciate having options."

Being Green

And particularly in the Madison area, she notes, people are very aware of recycling. They like the opportunity to give items a second life.

Resalers have been recycling since before it was popular. "If you trade something to us, we'll sell it to someone else and keep it out of the landfill," says Rixmann.

"It's cool and hip now, but our industry has been doing it for centuries." 

2010 PUBLIC POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

2010 Public Policy Work Improves Conditions For Job Creators

BY KEVIN LITTLE

GMCC Director of Public Policy
klittle@greatermadisonchamber.com

"If any City in the United States needs a Chamber, it's Madison ... "

How does the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce transform government policies?

We supercharge our advocacy on behalf of business to improve conditions for Madison's job creators.

We serve as the voice of business for companies who worry about how government regulations and stagnant property values will impact their ability to grow and prosper.

"If any City in the United States needs a Chamber, it's Madison ... "

Better economic and regulatory conditions that promote job growth mean additional tax revenue to support our schools, improve public infrastructure and

assist philanthropic efforts which fund our quality of life.

In 2010, the GMCC supported:

Attracting Bold Ideas

The success of our region depends on a thriving urban hub.

When a near \$100 million reinvestment proposal that would create jobs, reduce blight and create a downtown destination for residents and visitors to enjoy for generations to come was introduced, it was met with a burdensome process that continues to jeopardize the financial stability of the project.

We need to embrace bold, transformative investments.

That is why the GMCC:

- Submitted recommendations to simplify the development approval process.
- Continues to provide input and recommendations on the City's ongoing zoning code rewrite to insure we create a climate conducive to business growth and retention.

Upgrading Infrastructure

To accommodate business and community growth, it's critical that we upgrade our infrastructure.

This year, the GMCC supported several initiatives that utilize new technologies to make the Madison region more competitive, including:

- **Supported Google Fiber Optic** – GMCC partnered with elected officials and community leaders to raise awareness for Madison's application for the national fiber optic contest.

- **Supported High-Speed Rail Coming to Madison** – The GMCC supported the state's successful application for high-speed rail stimulus dollars to increase our regional economic competitiveness.



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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

• **Supported Creation of a Regional Transit Authority** – The GMCC led the call for creation of a Regional Transit Authority to develop a new, comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system.

Once created, the GMCC partnered with Thrive to produce a set of criteria for the transit plan.

Business-Friendly Candidates

Our conduit continues to grow both in accounts and disbursements to candidates.

Your support allows our organization to be more influential in the political process to help businesses grow and prosper. This year, we took another step forward by endorsing candidates for the Dane County Board of Supervisors.

Sixteen of our 19 endorsed candidates were elected into office.

These are big accomplishments that could not have been possible without the support of so many GMCC members, and we've got more in store for 2011.

Now is the time to get involved to help Madison continue to be a globally competitive place to live, work, play and do business.

If you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at klittle@greatermadisonchamber.com or call 608-443-1949 to discuss how the Greater Madison Chamber's public policy work improves conditions for job creators.

Want to Shine the GMCC Spotlight on Your Company?

Call your GMCC Member Development Executives today to find out how!

Jennifer Bruhn
608-443-1945

jbruhn@greatermadisonchamber.com

Marilyn Kocis
608-443-1951

mkocis@greatermadisonchamber.com



Madison's local chapter of Team Women - a women's only networking organization - held an open house September 29 at Daisy Cafe and Cupcakery on Atwood Ave. The morning event welcomed more than 30 Team Women members and guests to connect with other women in business while enjoying breakfast and coffee. Learn more about Team Women at www.teamwomeninc.com.

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GMCC 58th ANNUAL DINNER - OCTOBER 7, 2010

Photos by Amy Lynn Schereck Photography



GMCC Ambassadors Holly Breidel (left) of the North Central Group and Tammy Rozek (center) of East Towne Mall join GMCC Program and Events Manager Josie Floyd in welcoming attendees to the 58th Annual Dinner.



City of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz (l) and Dr. Colin Harrison, Creator of the "Smart Cities" Initiative at the IBM Research Lab in Zurich, Switzerland, and keynote speaker for this year's Annual Dinner.



More than 1,000 Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce members and guests attended this year's Dinner at the Monona Terrace.



L-R: Lisa Barry of Specialty Services of Wisconsin and Jaimes Johnson of UW Credit Union enjoy the evening with Souphaphone Maddox and Kelly Deegan of Harris Bank.



L-R: Dane County Board Supervisor Sharon Corrigan, Dick Wagner of Dane County Regional Transit and Dane County Board Supervisor Diane Hesselbein.



L-R: Town Bank of Madison's Rich Lepping, David Schade and Matt Fink.

GMCC 58th ANNUAL DINNER - OCTOBER 7, 2010

Photos by Amy Lynn Schereck Photography



L-R: Lindsay, Stone & Briggs' Karen Lovelien, Meghan Rollins, Tom Kuplic, Lee Schmidt, Amy Rohn, and Chris Reinders enjoy the 58th Annual Dinner at the Monona Terrace.



Linsey Tennyson (l) and Della Copp of Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin.



Deb Josephs and Rich Davision of Chamber member business DJ Graphic Designs.



L-R: Kate Wicker and Mike Wicker of Team Technologies with Cynthia Jansen Everhart and Rob Everhart of Energy Tech Solutions.



L-R: GMCC Board Treasurer Randy Eppli (center), President of Universal, is joined by his Universal colleagues (l-r) Holly Field, Cary Bremigan, Dawn Auby, Randy Olson and Mayor Donna Olson of the City of Stoughton.

GMCC 58th ANNUAL DINNER - OCTOBER 7, 2010

Photos by Amy Lynn Schereck Photography



GMCC Board Member Rebecca Ryan, Founder of Next Generation Consulting, enthralled the crowd as the Annual Dinner's emcee.



City of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz (left) and GMCC Board Chair Marsha Lindsay (center), CEO of Lindsay, Stone & Briggs, join Dr. Colin Harrison (right) for a quick photo following Dr. Harrison's keynote address.



Smarties candies and the GMCC's 2010 Accomplishments Report at a table.



GMCC Board Vice Chair Jim Imhoff, Chairman and CEO of the First Weber Group, receives his 58th Annual Dinner name tag from GMCC Ambassadors at the Dinner's registration table.



The Dave Stoler Trio entertained the crowd with jazz favorites.



L-R: Catherine Forde-Quint of Basketree Gifts and Nick Quint of Yahara Bay Distillers with Jim Alexander, Wisconsin Judicial Commission, and Jennifer Alexander, President, Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce.



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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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