Happy 50th birthday, City of Seminole! We just celebrated our 50th anniversary at Seminole First Baptist Church! Started as a mission church in 1956, our church was constituted and officially began in October, 1969. We observed our celebration with a fun weekend of remembering, friends getting together, a family picnic at Lake Seminole Park, a celebration service, and a catered meal afterwards to all who attended.

Seminole Mission began under the leadership and direction of Pasadena Baptist Church. In 1958, property was purchased on Park Blvd. and the name was changed to Seminole First Baptist Church. Fifth Avenue Baptist Church of St. Petersburg took over direction of our fledgling church in 1960 and the first buildings were built in 1961—and are still in use today. After the constitution of the church in 1969, additional buildings were built in 1972 and 1983. In 1998, the church purchased the old City of Seminole Library and in 2017, we purchased the “Boy Scout Building” on Johnson Blvd.

Under the direction of our current pastor, Mike Mott, the church has undergone extensive renovation in the last eight years. Many areas of improvement have been done, including the addition of a porte-cochere and a complete remodeling of our Children’s area to make it contemporary and a safe environment for children that attend.

Just as the city has greatly changed in 50 years, so also has Seminole First Baptist Church. So, congratulations on 50 years of growth and expansion to the city and we invite all to come and help us celebrate our 50 years at SFBC.
A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

DR. JAMES OLLIVER

It has been an honor and a pleasure serving as your Chamber President and Chairman of the Board for 2019. I have been a member of the Board for many, many, MANY years, most of them as Treasurer, and this year has been, by far, the most active and transformative in my long tenure with the organization.

Let’s check off the changes/accomplishments:

• A totally new staff.
• An expanded suite of offices and killer classroom and small business center conference room in the brand new Lurie Civic Building on the SPC Seminole Campus. There are already a steady stream of businesses and civic organizations making use of the space.
• An intentional “professionalization” of the Chamber -- hiring a new executive director with significant Chamber experience, reworking the job descriptions to create a “Communications Coordinator” and hiring an individual with great PR and social media skills.
• Creation of much more organized and standardized calendar -- with events scheduled at set times on set days to make it easier for members to remember and get activities on their calendars, e.g., First Thursday after-work mixers, fourth Wednesday breakfasts, etc.). Events this year have generally been the most well run and best attended in years.
• A totally revamped commercial-grade website. We contracted for a professional site with Chamber Nation and the changes have been dramatic. And we’re just getting started in harnessing the power of social media to assist our businesses.
• A new periodic workshop on Chamber basics and how to get the most out of Chamber membership and use of the new website. We’ve labeled it as “Chamber 101.” Originally designed for new members, long-time businesses are finding it helpful in educating new staff and reorienting themselves with all the Chamber has to offer.
• Resurrected the “Ambassadors Committee” and identified energized member volunteers to help welcome and mentor new businesses to the Chamber.
• Revised by-laws, both for the Chamber and the 501(c)3 Chamber Charitable Foundation. The latter will afford us the opportunity to secure grants for greater education and training opportunities in the future.
A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN CONTINUED...

- A revived luncheon series, now quarterly, featuring new approaches (like how to effectively use podcasts) and old favorites (like the November Thanksgiving “Gathering of Friends”).
- A new way to invest in the Chamber for our leading businesses -- eleven opportunities to sponsor our premier events (e.g., holiday parade) or series of events (e.g., monthly business breakfasts) packaged in a way that provides resources for the Chamber and great visibility and recognition for these major businesses. (If you’re interested ask Tara to give you a copy of the 2020 Sponsorship Packages materials.)

There’s much more, of course, but with the new building and the new team you can just feel the energy and promise for the future. Finances are strong, with income from investments covering our lease agreement for the use of the offices in the new building. (Thanks to the Investment Subcommittee for some very fine work on that!)

We are still very much in transition, however. Last minute “fixes” are still being made on the new building and the attractive awning with the new Chamber logo has yet to be installed. We’re still tinkering with events and schedules to improve in the new year. But the future is bright, and I am looking forward to handing the reins over to our 2020 President/Chair elect, Dr. Mark Strickland, for what is shaping up to be a fantastic year.

Now all we need is YOU -- your feedback, your ideas, your support, and above all else your active participation in the life of the Chamber. Never is it more true than with our Chamber: you get out of it what you put into it. Just ask those members who have gotten involved! Thanks for making this a GREAT Chamber for a GREAT community.
Networking:
Never Easy...But Worth a Committed Effort
By Jo Ann M. Colton, JM Colton Communications & Business Solutions
Seminole Chamber of Commerce Member

Did you ever dream about what an entire workforce of people could do to network and promote your business, if you had the monies to employ them? Assuming that your business cannot support your dream, generating new leads; building your customer base; and increasing your company’s revenue can still become a reality…

In all the years I have been in business there has always been some confusion in business circles relating to the meaning of “networking” and “leads.” Some people think networking groups and leads groups are synonymous—but they are not.

Business Networking is the overall process of interacting with others to exchange information, develop professional contacts, grow your business, and build your revenue stream. Networking groups per se are usually comprised of multiple members in every business industry and category imaginable. Leads groups, however, often meet at the same place each week within a non-competitive meeting environment that allows only one member per business category/industry and encourages leads and referrals be generated by and through each member to one another.

As business owners/business representatives, we are always looking for ways to expand our business reach. So if someone were to tell you of a business networking direction that could, for a nominal monetary investment, provide you with: a website and Social Media presence, a method for brochure distribution, referral services, and opportunities for advertising sponsorships and business-to-business collaboration, all of which can elevate your business earning potential—I am sure they would have your ear. If you are curious to find out more, I will tell you. But, first let me say that sometimes the answers to our questions are right before us and yet we fail to see them…

The answer, my friends, is the Greater Seminole Area Chamber of Commerce, a stellar example of a highly successful “networking” organization—and more. If you are already a member, perhaps you are now asking yourself how your networking efforts can become more fruitful. If so, let me say that the answer depends on you. The input/output factor of membership suggests that what you reap from your membership in any organization depends on how much effort you put forth.

Networking can be challenging and exhausting and there is no doubt that your efforts might not always be productive. In that case, maybe it is time for you to ask yourself “why.” Review your game plan and, if necessary, try a different approach.

According to American author Lewis Howes, “Effective networking isn’t the result of luck — it requires hard work and persistence.”

Take an active role in your Greater Seminole Area Chamber of Commerce and avail yourself of all the resources it has to offer. Don’t just pay your annual dues; maximize your membership by getting involved and attending mixers and other Chamber events. People like to do business with people they know, like, and trust. Allow your face to be seen and your voice to be heard. Let the Greater Seminole Area Chamber of Commerce be your “Cheers,” … a place where you are recognized and everyone knows your name!

Jo Ann M. Colton, the owner of the Seminole-based JM Colton Communications & Business Solutions, is a business services and marketing consultant for small businesses who also conducts business-related seminars and workshops. Likewise, Colton, a journalist/published author, provides literary services to aspiring writers and conducts seminars and workshops relating to the art of writing. Visit her website (www.jmcoltoncommunications.com) or call her at: 303-993-9211.
SAVE THE DATE

Interested in sponsoring a Chamber event?
Give us a call:
(727) 392-3245

December 5TH
1st Thursday Networking Mixer & Toy Drive
5-7 PM | BB&T

December 8TH
“Bright Before Your Eyes” Holiday Night Parade
6:30 PM | The Chamber

January 14th
Quarterly Luncheon: Installation
11:30 AM | SPC-Seminole Conference Center

February 22ND
34th Annual Awards Banquet & Mr/Ms Seminole Award
“Mad Hatters Ball”

Want to be the next Member Highlight of the week?
Visit MySeminoleChamber.com

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EVENTS RECAP

Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting The Greater Seminole Chamber of Commerce moved into the Lurie Civic building in late September, following a remarkable Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held September 10. The turn out was great, with guests including the generous donors who funded the project. These donors included Dr. and Mrs. Edward Lurie and son Michael Lurie, the City of Seminole, Mayor Leslie Waters and members of the city council, County Commissioner Janet Long, and President of St Petersburg College Dr. Tonjua Williams. The Lurie Civic Building will house the Chamber of Commerce and the Visit St. Pete Clearwater Visitor Center, while also being available for use by the civic clubs of Seminole and chamber members.

1st Thursday Networking Mixers Our mixers have been well attended throughout the year. Over the past few months, members such as Flooring America, Barnhorn Financial, Seminole Lanes, and BB&T have taken advantage of hosting this event. They are a great way to connect to other businesses in the community, network with fellow chamber members and members of the community, and generate new business. We are currently scheduling 2020 1st Thursday Networking Mixers, so if you would like to get fellow and potential chamber members and customers in your business for a relaxed networking event, Mixers are the way to do just that!

Business Breakfasts Business Breakfast’s act as training and informational seminars, while you get to enjoy a good breakfast. They have been a great success this year with even greater topics that appeal to business owners and managers. Topics over the past few months have included Grow with Google, Understanding Today’s Advertising & Marketing Strategies, and Tax Planning for Businesses. These classes are a great way to learn about various business-related topics from experts in the addressed field. They are also another great way to network with fellow business owners and managers.

Check out more of our past events and pictures at MySeminoleChamber.com
2020 Annual Promotional Package

Available now!

We have pre-planned and custom package opportunities!

The 2020 promotional year is in full swing, plan now!
Hello Chamber Members!

Your Fall Newsletter Is Here!

Photo courtesy of St. Petersburg College Writing for Mass Media class, originally published in The Sandbox News, Feb 2014

Remember to update our address in your databases