

editorial opinion

Farmington Chamber aids making community better

Farmington area businessmen are going to be hearing a lot from the Chamber of Commerce this month.

In case you hadn't heard, May is the month for the Chamber's annual membership drive. With good reason, the Chamber's membership drive committee is enthused about prospects of bringing in 100 new members.

As a matter of fact, Bill Flattery, membership committee chairman, is so enthused he's predicting 200 new members.

"Why not, it's the bicentennial year. We might as well go for the magic number," he quipped at last week's kick-off luncheon.

Presently, the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce is composed of 300 members. Because of extensive drives over the last few years, membership has skyrocketed from 80 members.

But there still is a long way to go. The Farmington-Farmington Hills area has more than 1,700 businesses. As Chamber Vice President Ed Balden says, power is in numbers and as the chamber's membership increases, so has the businessmen's voice in the Farmington area.

The big question in most businessmen's minds is what the Chamber can do for them. Well, the Farmington Chamber has a proven track record of doing good things for both the businessmen and the community.

Sometimes the proof isn't apparent. But in the long haul, businesses in the Farmington area, even if they aren't members, have fared well because of the Chamber's efforts.

A SPIRITED BUNCH, they haven't any qualms about raising Cain to get a road paved or ordinance altered to make it easier for a businessman to make a buck.

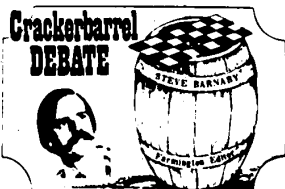
Presently, the Chamber is waging a vigorous campaign to get the mile-long stretch of Eight Mile, between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads, widened and paved. The two-lane road has been a bureaucratic travesty, with officials from Wayne and Oakland counties passing the buck.

Meanwhile, businessmen and drivers along the stretch have suffered. Some have paid with their lives.

The Chamber is in contact with officials who can do something about it. Believe me, before long the road will be improved.

The Chamber has waged similar campaigns along other routes and been successful, much to the benefit of local business.

The Chamber also keeps businessmen informed on current legislation affecting them. Legislative



breakfasts are scheduled and local businessmen are invited to rake their legislators over the coals.

Executive director Ed Lane is reason enough for businessmen to join up. In short, Ed gets the job done. When a local businessman calls for help, Ed knows the persons to contact to solve the problem.

The aspect of the Farmington Area Chamber that I like the most is that, unlike other chambers, it is a positive force in the community.

Having kicked around the Wayne-Oakland county areas for a number of years now, I've seen some pretty poor chambers.

A lot of chambers concentrate on being a reactionary force. But the Farmington Chamber shows initiative in advocating programs, instead of reacting to what somebody else does.

It works closely with both local governments.

As an example, a few years back the City of Farmington was about to pass a stiff sign ordinance. Because of the good working relationship between the city and the Chamber, Chamber officials were brought in to get their opinions. The result was a sign ordinance that is fair yet keeps the city's environment in good shape.

The Chamber also works hard during the Founders Day Festival to bring thousands of shoppers into the Farmington area. Just go to downtown Farmington once and see the number of folks from out of town who make it a point to come to Farmington and spend their money.

The Chamber works hard in getting the businessmen's viewpoint across to youth. They work with the school district so that Farmington's youth know what the business world is all about.

So businessmen, when in the next month a Chamber representative knocks on your door, take a few minutes and listen to what he has to say.

It will be worth your time.



Each of us can be a miracle worker. First thing to do is open the eyes and close the mouth. Later, after eradicating a few preconceived notions, one is allowed to open his mouth.

A story was told to me recently (I am lucky that way in my profession) that illustrates the miracle in reverse.

The person was somewhat embarrassed to relate the experience so I will refrain from attaching a name to it, but the setting is local.

To satisfy a long-time deep desire to be creative, the person took an evening class in silver making. It was the first time he had ever tried to do anything creative with his hands. He chose to make a butterfly, the most beautiful thing he could think of. Each week he polished and buffed his delicate silver creature with loving care and set in tiny silvers of ablaze.

When it was near completion another student walked by his work area, took a look and commented "Oh, you're making a moth."

YEARS LATER the butterfly-turned-moth has yet to see light. It remains hidden away to be looked at only as a reminder of the delicacy of the psyche of adults as well as children.

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