



## What is the Value of a Chamber Membership?

As a member of the Ripon Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors it is one of my duties to help recruit businesses to join the Chamber. When considering a membership businesses usually express a legitimate interest in what they will get out their membership. I would like to share with you my experience with the Chamber and the priceless benefits I have witnessed as a result of membership.

From my perspective the most important benefit of membership in the Chamber is the relationships that can be established as a result of becoming an active member. A price cannot be placed on the benefit of these relationships. In a close knit community like Ripon we are eager to let people know how great we believe our community to be and what it has to offer. I cannot think of enough words to express how just getting to know the other business members of our community is beneficial. When you get to know fellow business people on a one to one basis their names are easy to recall. When you meet someone who has need of a particular product or service the names of Chamber member businesses will come to mind. Getting your name out there and making yourself a visible member of the community will benefit your business. This takes time and repetition. The more you are seen and heard from the more likely you are to benefit from referrals not just from the Chamber Office but from other Chamber members. This is a benefit that is difficult to measure since a member may be acquiring business through referrals without even realizing it. The Chamber offers a number of networking opportunities such as business grand openings and ribbon cuttings, mixers and get-togethers such as the Almond Blossom Kick-Off Dinner and the Annual Installation Dinner. The community at large is welcome to attend any and all of these events. Participating in these activities increase our network of business opportunity. I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities.

Your Ripon Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for business. The Chamber is paying attention to what is going on in our community and in City Government. When an issue arises concerning business the Chamber is involved. We have an excellent working relationship with City Officials and Staff. In regard to the current downtown improvement activities members of the Chamber have been working with the City's Downtown Committee to help ensure that the interest of business is taken into consideration. Chamber Directors have attended meetings on behalf of the membership and have had ideas and suggestions to benefit business considered and implemented. Members have also had input into discussions regarding the City's activities relating to retaining existing businesses in Ripon and attracting new businesses to town. We are very aware of the contribution of existing businesses to our community and keep them in mind during our discussions.

The Chamber has helped a number of businesses overcome issues regarding City ordinances and has even worked with the City to get them changed to accommodate business needs. The Chamber can be called on at any time by a member for assistance with issues they need help resolving that will benefit their business. Dorothy Booth, the Chamber Executive Director, is only a phone call away. Dorothy does not hesitate to act. She is ready and able to provide assistance to members regarding many issues. These kinds of services benefit all businesses in the community not just our members. However, it is our members who are helping to make this happen for our community. The value of this benefit cannot be measured in dollars. Even those who say, "I don't need to be a member of the Chamber; they don't do anything for me" are benefiting.

I could go on and on about what you can get out of a membership in the Ripon Chamber of Commerce. I don't believe that a specific monetary value can be placed on the benefits of being an active member. I am proud to serve on the Board along side twelve other caring members of our community including our Executive Director Dorothy Booth. I can personally attest to each Board Member's commitment to fostering a family and business friendly environment and quality of life that are the hallmark of our community. I know first hand that they care about you and are looking out for you and your business.

If you haven't attended a Chamber function I would encourage you to do so. Please take a moment and dig into this issue of Communicator and check out the calendar of events and make a commitment to benefit your business by attending.

Sincerely,

*Danielle Pierce*

Danielle Pierce  
Board of Directors  
Ripon Chamber of Commerce