

# 2010 Annual Report

## President's Message

Our 2010 Board of Directors and committee leaders fulfilled their commitments despite the demands of their 'real jobs' during the national recession and impact of the April 20 Gulf oil spill disaster.

Smart business owners demand a return on their investments, including their Chamber investment. The work of our staff and volunteers, through our programs, communications and events, offered a value proposition. This value proposition resulted in strong membership retention.

Attendance at our business support events throughout the year was steady. Highlights among those were the annual Cultural Economy Luncheon, thanks to the vibrant, creative members of that committee. We acted as the "Voice of Business" at local, state and federal levels through our Governmental Affairs Committee and in collaboration with the recently renamed Northshore Legislative

Alliance, formerly called the Joint Public Policy Committee (JPP). Our three major annual fundraising events enabled us to end our year in the black.

Business support activities were primarily carried out through the members of our Small Business Advisory Council. Their monthly seminar series are continuing in 2011, enhanced by roundtable discussions. We addressed workforce development issues through our collaboration with the Northshore Healthcare Alliance. Our newly formed young professionals group took on a permanent name, Northshore Rising Professionals. They organized subcommittees, promoted Chamber membership and involvement, as well as gave back to their community through volunteer work with the Lake Pontchartrain Maritime Museum and the Covington Food Bank. Involvement and leadership among the

NRPs is growing in 2011.

While 2010 presented some obstacles, they were tackled head on. Our Chamber is in the process of re-emerging stronger to serve our business membership and represent our parish as one of the fastest growing in the state.

The fact is we are part of a strongly recovering region where existing and new business development is thriving! Our 2011 Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and Committee Chairs are each eager and enthusiastic about their servant leadership roles. They see the future opportunities as our parish population continues to grow. They know a strong Chamber is needed to enhance and maintain a strong atmosphere for successful commerce to occur.



— Lacey Toledano

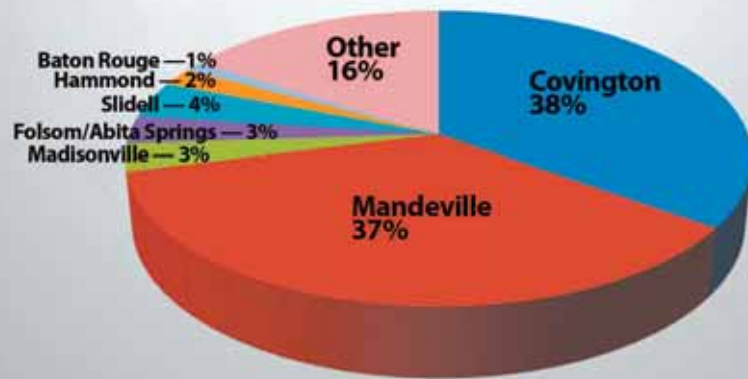
## Our Membership

- Chamber membership reached a highpoint at 1,040 members, with a total of 180 new members. Within all member businesses in good standing, over 29,451 employees are represented.
- The Chamber's information desk serviced over 2,557 phone calls, 2,940 emails and 1,045 walk-in visitors requesting information on community and Chamber events, membership, business referrals and newcomer information.
- Twenty-nine ribbon cuttings were held.



## Membership Analysis

75% Mandeville/Covington  
25% Other areas



- Implemented a new referral system to help drive prospective new customers to our member businesses, and to keep track of who was referred to each business and when.
- Launched a campaign to incentivize more members to offer member-to-member discounts and encouraged all patrons to take advantage of these offerings.
- The Chamber's Federation Partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce provided our members with U.S. Chamber membership completely free of charge.



## Coalition Building and Voice of Business

- A partnership among the St. Tammany West and East Chambers and the Northshore Business Council continued. Formerly called the Joint Public Policy Committee, our partnership was renamed the Northshore Legislative Alliance (NLA) in November. Legislative advocate Dino Paternostro of Legislink was hired. This enabled strengthening our united voice of business among Louisiana legislators and statewide elected officials through regular communications with our legislative delegation and a constant presence at the state Capitol.
- NLA priority issues included: state budget flexibility, higher education reforms, and government streamlining proposals.
- Provided our membership with a weekly public policy update during the 2010 legislative session.



## Governmental Affairs

- For the seventh consecutive year, we led a four parish-wide event called “North Shore Focus,” where representatives from Livingston, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington Parishes, along with the Southeastern Louisiana University Alumni Association, gathered at the state Capitol to bring the Northshore’s message to legislators.
- Held a legislative wrap-up luncheon with State Sen. Jack Donahue and State Rep. Scott Simon at the end of the regular session.
- Our Governmental Affairs Committee formed a team to address the high property taxes facing St. Tammany businesses and taxpaying citizens, and met with various elected and appointed agency officials in order to address how funds are being spent in the parish.
- Sent our CEO to the U.S. Chamber’s Regional Government Affairs Conference in Dallas. The three-day event focused on what is happening in Congress and the White House, relative to increased government regulations affecting businesses of all sizes.
- Featured Louisiana State Senator Jack Donahue as guest speaker at our Governmental Affairs Committee during a special December

meeting, to explain the state deficit and why higher education and the healthcare industry have been so heavily targeted.

- Positions adopted by our Board included:
  1. Opposition to the proposed ½ cent sales tax renewal for the City of Mandeville.
  2. Stood in solidarity with the Old Mandeville Business Association in supporting the use of noise ordinances as the overriding enforcement tool for noise and sound in Mandeville’s B-3 zoning district.
  3. The enforcement of noise ordinances should be the responsibility of the city police department and should not be included in the regulatory language of the B-3 Zoning District.
  4. The use of surplus City of Mandeville funds to create parking in Old Mandeville within the city rights-of-ways creating more on-street parking with proper lighting, sidewalks and landscaping.
  5. Applauded the selection of the East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce as the 2010 Chamber of the Year by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives.

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## Communications

- Increased our social media presence, with a total of 735 Facebook Fans and 265 Twitter Followers.
- Kept our website, [www.sttammanycommerce.org](http://www.sttammanycommerce.org), updated with relevant information about our services, programs and member happenings.
- Weekly Chamber Updates were sent via email to 2,200 individual representatives of member businesses.
- Wrote weekly columns for the Times-Picayune and monthly columns for Sophisticated Woman and Conifer. Various press releases were sent to local media outlets. Overall, our Chamber appeared in local printed media approximately 285 times this year.
- Over 300 members replied to our annual survey relative to our programs and services.
- Offered members a chance to give direct input during any one of five focus groups for 2011; 95 members participated.

## Resources and Events

- Like many chambers throughout the country, it was a challenging year; however, dues income remained our main source of revenue, followed by event sponsorships, for a total budget of \$575,708.
- Over 300 attended the 2010 Annual Installation & Awards Banquet and Auction.
- Our business EXPO had over 100 exhibitors and nearly 1,000 visitors.
- The “Ticket to Paradise” \$10,000 Raffle Party reached a new high with over 800 attendees present to enjoy live music and great food from 20 member restaurants.
- Business After Hours continued to be the most popular monthly networking event with 100 average attendees.
- Monthly luncheons averaged an attendance of over 100 each month



as well, including our fourth annual Cultural Economy Luncheon with guest speaker Chef John Besh.

- Also well attended were quarterly President’s Roundtables, our issues-focused breakfasts and “Speed Dating for Business.”
- Member Orientation provided information to new and existing members on the Chamber’s programs, initiatives, committees and events. Every other month this event alternated with B2B (Business to Business), a networking opportunity that allows business representatives to promote and market their business in a small group setting.

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## Business Support

- The Small Business Advisory Council held monthly educational seminars and forums aimed at providing the small business owner with information on a variety of timely topics.
- Continued working hand-in-hand with the First Planning District Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to connect employers to employees and education and training providers.
- Provided an outlet to and scheduled appointments for the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) of Southeastern Louisiana University, which is part of a



statewide network of centers that provide consulting and training for businesses; and SCORE Northshore, which is part of SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business," a national nonprofit association dedicated to entrepreneur education and the success of small businesses. We schedule appointments for both organizations. In 2010, over 162 new and existing businesses were counseled with the help of our Chamber's business support programs.

- Held our annual Business Appreciation Awards luncheon where awards were presented to deserving businesses in eight different categories.



## Leadership for our region during the Gulf oil spill crisis:

- Encouraged all members to sign Louisiana's official state petition opposing the federal government's moratorium on drilling in the Gulf of Mexico; supported efforts of GEST, Gulf Economic Survival Team.
- Through established relationships with contacts at the American and U.S. Chambers of Commerce, including the U.S. Chamber's Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC), rallied support for disaster recovery.
- Initiated efforts with the BCLC to bring in a team of corporate philanthropists to tour the affected areas and examine businesses and organizations most heavily impacted by the spill, resulting in volunteer and financial resources to help recovery.
- Joined the Move Forward Now Coalition aimed at mitigating the negative impact of the oil spill on businesses and community groups.
- Collaborated with economic and workforce development agencies in our region to focus on training and re-training opportunities for displaced workers.
- On our website provided recovery information and updates, links to various organizations and answers to frequently asked questions regarding the oil spill.