

## **Chamber EXPO includes networking, promotions**

*By Debbie Glover  
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The 122 exhibitors at the St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce EXPO 2008 on Wednesday reported record networking opportunities and an increase in professional business traffic at the event over last year.

Last year, about 800 people visited the EXPO, not including exhibitors, according to Kellye Donnelly. This year, visitors numbered about 1,000, said Alison Greffenius, special events and membership coordinator.

Greffenius said the EXPO provided members a “much more engaging experience for networking,” including the Business After Hours event that took place from 5:30 until 7 p.m., the close of the EXPO.

Greffenius said exhibitors reported a steady flow of visitors, and exhibitors were able to network with each other as well as EXPO visitors.

Some of the booths at this year’s event included health screenings by Ochsner Clinic and a product introduction of “virtualization systems” by DQSI.

In addition to the myriad of advertising items such as pens and key chains, massages were readily available as well as a sampling of bananas foster.

Booth exhibitors were also dispensing useful information about the St. Tammany West business climate.

WGSO-AM was broadcasting from the Castine Center, and many visitors stopped by to add their comments on-air.

Smaller business members of the Chamber actually pooled their resources and shared a booth with the Joint Cultural Economic Committee.

The Covington Food Bank stayed busy as many company representatives were asking about donation requirements and volunteer opportunities. Ann Lowe, a volunteer at the food bank, said they are in need of food at this time. Many people forget about the need for the food bank during this time of year, but Lowe said food is always needed, and donations are welcome.

The EXPO provided the opportunity for all types of businesses and corporations to showcase and network their unique offerings to the community as well as each other.