

RIBBON CUTTING & GRAND OPENING PACKAGE



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW BUSINESS OR LOCATION!

St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce has put together this simple guide to help you, as our member, in the planning of your ribbon cutting, groundbreaking, or grand opening ceremony to assist in executing your event.

Your event can be as simple or as elaborate as you want it! Before starting the planning process, we suggest reading this document and making a few decisions.

1. Set your date and time >> 1-2 months in advance

We recommend selecting a date one to two months in advance, on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, as these days often result in the most attendance of elected officials, dignitaries and Chamber Ambassadors. The time of day is also critical to its success, and will help to shape the style of the event. Morning functions, for example, will have a different atmosphere and style than a late afternoon event. Lunchtime gatherings require more food, while for a late afternoon event you may choose to serve wine and beer.

Please coordinate your preferred date and time with our Director of Membership and Sales at 985-273-3002.

Keep in mind:

- Allow plenty of time for preparation.
- Avoid hosting during holiday weeks.
- Check for schedule conflicts with other events (Chamber and community events, etc).
- Avoid a weekend. We cannot guarantee Chamber representation for any weekend or late evening functions.
- If your location is still under construction, consult with your construction team.
- If the event is to be held outside, consider temperature and weather patterns.
- Late afternoon functions are popular as people are better able to drop by at the end of the day.
- If you choose for your event to go on for one or more hours, have a designated time for the actual ribbon cutting/groundbreaking ceremony.
- For Chamber members attendance, we recommend Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, 11:30 am or 4:30 pm.

2. Invite your guests >> 2-3 weeks in advance

Your guests will vary depending on the event, but your guest list may include friends and family, your employees and their spouses, current and potential customers, neighboring businesses, suppliers or vendors and anyone who helped you get started (banker, architect, accountant, attorney, etc).

Keep in mind:

- Decide on either printed or emailed invitation.
- Include a phone number or email address for RSVPs. This will give you an idea of how much food and beverage to provide.
- Include clear directions on how to get to your location.
- Invite the media and a current media list is included in this packet. We cannot guarantee media coverage
- The Chamber will invite elected officials and Chamber Ambassadors.

3. Decide on food and beverage >> 2-3 weeks in advance

Serving food and beverages adds a nice touch- keep it as simple as you'd like. For morning events, coffee, juice and pastries, afternoon or evening, light appetizers and finger foods. If you choose, include alcoholic beverages for late afternoon/evening events. If you choose to hire a caterer, we can provide a list of Chamber-member restaurants. Bottled water is always appreciated. Don't forget the plates, cups, napkins, etc.

4. Plan an agenda >> 1-2 weeks in advance

It adds a nice touch to have a brief program of some kind. It provides not only valuable recognition for you and your key people, but it makes the event more purposeful and allows you to explain your products or services to attendees.

Keep in mind:

- Prepare your remarks, the shorter the better! Ideally, all announcements, recognitions, etc. should be 5-7 minutes tops.
 - Plan the announcements/ceremony to begin approximately 15-20 minutes after the start of the event, to allow late arrivals.
 - Decide if you would like anyone other than yourself to speak. If attending, your local mayor or councilman may like to say a few words.
 - You may want to verbally thank anyone who has played an active role in your new business, such as your banker, accountant, architect, etc. but keep it short.
 - Decide who will be in the official photo and who will actually cut the ribbon (or have a shovel).
 - Conclude your program with the appropriate ceremonial activity to commemorate the event: a ribbon cutting for a grand opening or shoveling the first load of dirt for a ground-breaking.
 - Consider having a knowledgeable employee conduct group tours of your facility.
 - If your event is outdoors, always have a rain plan. Move indoors or rent a tent if bad weather is predicted.
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5. Notify the media >> 1-2 weeks in advance

Keep in mind:

- When inviting the media, a news release that contains the basics of who, what, when, where and why is always helpful.
- A reminder email the day before is always a good idea.
- While a Chamber staff member will take a picture for the Chamber website and Facebook page, you may want to designate an employee or friend to take candid shots.

6. Day of

- A Chamber representative will arrive approximately 15 minutes prior to the event to review plans, etc.
- Greet guests as they arrive.
- When it's time for the program, Chamber staff and/or Ambassadors will gather everyone and coordinate the ribbon cutting or groundbreaking.

THE BUSINESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Choosing date and coordinating with Chamber
 - Paying the \$200 Ribbon Cutting / Groundbreaking Fee
 - Inviting guests
 - Inviting media
 - Making arrangements for food and beverage, if you choose to include them
 - Planning the agenda
 - Deciding on who shall speak and be included in the official photo
 - Deciding on who will cut the ribbon
 - Following up with guests / prospective customers after the event
 - A thank you note to any elected officials would be a nice gesture
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THE CHAMBER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Providing scissors and ribbon for ribbon cuttings and grand openings
 - Providing shovels for ground breaking events
 - Inviting the local mayor and elected officials
 - Inviting Chamber Ambassadors
 - Announcing event in Chamber e-blast newsletter twice, listed on Chamber events calendar located on the Chamber website and on the Chamber Facebook page
 - Taking an official photo and sending you a printed copy
 - Sharing photos on our Chamber Facebook within five days of your event
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MEDIA

The Times-Picayune
The New Orleans Advocate
St. Tammany Farmer
Inside Northside Magazine
Sophisticated Woman Magazine
Edge of the Lake Magazine

Sarah Bonnette
Sara Pagonos
Andrew Canulette
Jan Murphy
Gwen Anderson
Sarah Cottrell

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Find your councilman online at
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