

E-nterprise

Advocate...Communicate...Educate

Vol. 1 No. 1
March, 2010

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NEW MEMBERS

Graceful Designs, LLC
2 Carrington Ct.
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(757) 813-0671
Tanya Frazier
Florist/Event Planner/Event Decor

**John Wall, Morgan Stanley
Smith Barney**
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110
Newport News, VA 23606
(757) 873-3300
John Wall
Financial Advisor

Oyster Point Construction
744 Middle Ground Blvd.
Newport News, VA 23606
(757) 873-0000
Hugh Riley
Construction - General
Sponsor: Mark Hanna/Virginia
Company Bank

Revelation Enterprises, LLC
726 Milton Drive
Hampton, VA 23666
(757) 848-5132
Michael Ship
Information Technology
Consulting
Sponsor: Sheila Guillette-
Moore/Small Business
Development Center

Chamber introduces new electronic format for monthly newsletter

by Cathy Wagner

Welcome to the new electronic format of *E-nterprise*! As technology advances and becomes more and more a part of our everyday lives, the Chamber recognizes that our readers need solid, useful business information delivered in a timely and concise manner. Therefore, we have decided to streamline the monthly newsletter to include only the information most pertinent to your business lives.

The new *E-nterprise* will still be produced on a monthly basis; however, it will now only include a few articles targeted to the needs of our business community. Over the next few months, we will be working to home in on those subjects most important to our readers and will deliver that information each month. We will also begin phasing out former features found in the newsletter such as the list of monthly referrals, Members on the Move, and the bi-monthly calendar. Some of this information will be available directly on the Chamber's website: www.vpcc.org.

This new format will also offer some affordable advertising opportunities for our subscribers. For information on sponsoring the *E-nterprise*, please contact Cathy Wagner (757) 262-2000 / cwagner@vpcc.org.

Biz Talk ...talk isn't cheap when it comes to word-of-mouth marketing

by Mike Kuhns

Even in an age of high-tech communication, the most powerful and effective means of generating new business is also the oldest: word-of-mouth. People naturally turn to trusted friends or colleagues for recommendations regarding product or service providers. You've probably used it yourself when searching for a mechanic, making major purchases, or weighing an outlet to promote your small business.

And because word-of-mouth referrals are free, you can't beat the return on investment that a positive referral can generate.

While a successful word-of-mouth marketing chain can sometimes start on its own, don't assume that the phone will start ringing off the hook. Any successful marketing tool—word-

see Biz Talk on page 2

Biz Talk

continued from page 1

of-mouth included—requires a proactive, patient approach to ensure that the right message gets to the right people.

A good way to get started is to create a simple marketing message that is easy for people to pass along. If it's not simple, it won't pass the test. But make it specific to a real benefit or need, not something vague or general. If you can, include success stories or testimonials from real customers. These can have a tremendous pass-along impact.

To stimulate word of mouth, you might also consider asking customers for referrals and recommendations and put your networking efforts into high gear. If you network and get to know people in your community or industry, they will think of you when they need your product or service. Join networking groups and local business organizations, and attend conferences. Donating your products or services to local charities can generate goodwill and get your name around.

Consider introductory discounts or free samples. People are more willing to try a new product or service if they can do so economically. Many small companies have jump-started sales through carefully controlled giveaways.

Above all, perhaps recognize that people will happily spread the word about your business if you treat them well. Tales of negative experiences or poor performance can be difficult to correct once they are passed on. That's another reason it's important to continually provide superior service, address problems quickly, and anticipate your customers' needs. Those are the things they'll remember—and talk about.

For more information visit:
www.peninsulascore.com.

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Leadership Institute Class of 2010 experiences government from the Capitol

By *Karla L. Gonzalez*

“Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government,” Thomas Jefferson

Economy, jobs, senate bills and house bills were all major topics of discussion during the Government Program Day Feb. 4, for the Leadership Institute Class of 2010.

The class jumped right into the day’s activities by observing Senate and House committee meetings at the General Assembly building. The committees’ agendas included voting on bills related to everything from education to health care to traffic law enforcement. LI class members were able to see the state’s senators discussing issues that could have a direct impact on themselves and their family members down at the local level. Status of all the bills voted on during the session can be viewed at <http://leg1.state.va.us/>.

After viewing the committee meetings, one member of the class commented it was good to see some “common sense” being used during the meetings, which is not always the perception of the citizens outside those directly involved in the meetings.

Personal appearances were made by James Cheng, Secretary of Commerce and Trade; Senator Glen Oder; Senator Jill Abbott; and Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling. During their visits the class was able to interact with and question the politicians about issues affecting the Hampton

Roads area.

As the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Cheng is responsible for promoting economic growth and job creation. “This is a very humbling position to be in,” Cheng said, “because when it comes to jobs, it all falls on my shoulders and those of my department.”

Cheng said there were 20 pieces of legislation on how to create jobs within the state being worked at the General Assembly. Some of those included helping veterans start businesses within the state, offering more tax credits for the film industry to attract them to the state, doubling the Governor’s opportunity fund and looking to attract foreign businesses to the state.

Lt. Gov. Bolling encouraged the class to be participants in our governmental process by letting our elected officials know what is important to us. He also discussed the state’s unemployment rate and how it is the highest rate of sustained unemployment in 20 years. However, Bolling emphasized much of what Cheng discussed as ways to bring about more jobs. “Our team believes in creating jobs and getting our economy growing,” he said. Some of the current budget shortfalls, according to Bolling, are “our own doing. And we’ve got to figure out how to fix this mess.”

With a hike up nearly 100 steps, the class was introduced in both the House and Senate general session, followed by viewing the session from the balcony.

The class was later introduced to JoAnn Moore, a 77-year-old tour guide at the Capitol Building. Moore gracefully and without missing a beat, explained the history of Virginia and the construction of the Capitol Building to include the most recent renovations.

By the day’s end, the Class of 2010 gained valuable insight into our government, a first-hand look into what the assembly was voting on, what our local elected officials were concerned about and how they were working to make Virginia and the Hampton Roads area a better place to live, work and play.



Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling met with the LI Class of 2010 while visiting the General Assembly during State Government Program Day.

VPCC THANKS THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

for showing continued support by renewing their membership

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The Music of the Night

The Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce cordially invites you to its

2010 Gala Benefit Celebration

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010

We will recognize

The Honorable Joe S. Frank

as the

2009 Distinguished Citizen

Newport News Marriott
at City Center

Dinner Entertainment by the
Strolling Silver Strings

&

Dancing Entertainment by Slapwater

A portion of the Gala's proceeds will support
The VPCC Youth Leadership Alliance
"Helping today's youth become tomorrow's leaders"

Cocktails: 6:00 p.m.
Reservations Required

Dinner: 7:00 p.m.
Evening Attire

RIBBON CUTTINGS



Corporate partners & staff, along with Hampton Mayor Molly Joseph-Ward (center) and VPCC President & CEO Dottie Jordan (right of center), cut the ribbon during a celebration at bd's Mongolian Grill (3530 Von Schilling Drive, Hampton). Photo by VPCC Staff member Carrice White.

2010 Gala Benefit Celebration

Please reserve _____ places at \$85.00 per person
Table of 8 available at \$650 per table

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(Please make checks payable to VPCC)

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Billing Address _____

Signature _____

Name(s) _____

(List names of additional guests on back of this card)

Please Note

You will receive one ticket per reservation as a chance to win one of several premium prizes to be given away that evening. These tickets will be dispersed at the event's registration table. Deadline for reservations and payment March 8, 2010. Advanced payment required / non-refundable. VPCC Phone: 757.262.2000.

Visit our web calendar to get the latest information on seminars, workshops, and special events
www.vpcc.org



Chamber President & CEO Dottie Jordan (r) presents a "first dollar of profit" to owner Evelyn Azeem, during the ribbon cutting for Pearlies Restaurant (2108 Jefferson Ave., Newport News). Photo by VPCC Staff member Carrice White.