

## 2006 Board of Directors

### CHAIRMAN

Greg Steffens  
Southern Missouri Bank

### CHAIRMAN ELECT

John Scott  
Scott, Kidwell, & Scott

### VICE CHAIRMAN

Austin Tinsley  
Ozark Physical Therapy

### TREASURER

Karen Lance  
Jackson Hewitt

### DIRECTORS:

Skip Boatner  
Professional Wash Systems

Dr. John Cooper  
TRCC

Kevin Henderson  
Primevest Financial

Roger Hogg  
Today's Computers

David Libla  
Mid Continent Nail

Charlie Love  
Kraft, Miles, & Tatum

Mark Melloy  
Briggs & Stratton

Steve Rhodes  
Morris, Harwell & Jiles

Bob Sutton Jr.  
Sutton Real Estate & Loans

Ben Traxel  
Dille & Traxel

Paul Tucker  
First Missouri State Bank

### EX-OFFICIO

Lloyd Matthews  
Mayor of Poplar Bluff

Robbie Myers  
Butler County Commissioner

## 2005 Chairman's Message

Serving as Chairman of the Board of the Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce for 2005 was truly an honor and an experience that I will cherish forever. My appreciation goes to the Board of Directors, our Committee Chairpersons and Committee members, and our over 640 members for their hard work and support of the Chamber's goals during this past year. I would also like to thank our professional staff for their support and guidance throughout the year.

The 2005 Annual Report is an outline of historical accomplishments as well as a look forward to the Chamber's business plan for 2006 and beyond. The Chamber, historically, has set its goals and objectives consistent with our mission of providing leadership and service to promote economic growth and industrial development for the greater Poplar Bluff area. To accomplish this we rely on the financial investment of our membership as well as the investment of time given by our many committee members and volunteers from the business community. This commitment allowed us to accomplish many things in 2005, as highlighted below:

Increased our membership to over 640 in 2005, with a 91% retention rate

Increased communication with the membership through the Monday Morning Memo and upgrades to the monthly newsletter

Implemented the Chamber Checks program to encourage spending more dollars in Poplar Bluff, selling over \$130,000 worth in 2005

Partnered with PBRMC, City Leaders, and MoDOT to pursue and have awarded a grant to erect a stop light in front of the medical center

The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce has been successful in the past and will continue to move forward because of the dedication and commitment of its members. We are fortunate to be a part of such a fine community of hard working people willing to share and work for the betterment of Poplar Bluff. We cannot rest on our laurels however, we must continue to look to the future for ways to improve and grow. Doing what we've always done will get us the results we've always got, but we are striving to be even better.

I want to extend a warm welcome to Greg Steffens as our Chairman for 2006 and wish him and the Chamber continued success in 2006.

Sincerely,

Steve Halter  
2005 Chairman of the Board

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## **About the Chamber of Commerce**

The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce is a vibrant community based organization which leads the way in informing the public and energizing the membership to actively participate in programs and services designed to improve the quality of life of all businesses and residents in our area. The Chamber of Commerce serves as the driving force in promoting economic well being and growth of the regional community. The Chamber of Commerce takes a proactive leadership role in supporting, analyzing, and addressing business, industry, and labor needs. This is accomplished through cooperation with our local and regional government, plus private and public entities. The Chamber of Commerce has over 640 members and we will continue to assist existing businesses in their growth needs and recruit new businesses to the city of Poplar Bluff.

The Chamber of Commerce is a diverse organization made up of businesses in every field and size. From major employers to small businesses, from national chains, to local family owned companies, from Industry to Education, and retail to retirees, the Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce represents the complete business community in our area.

The Chamber of Commerce is governed by a Board of Directors representing member firms. Committees sponsor programs and projects, headed by a Chairperson. The Chamber of Commerce also houses a Visitor Center to continue our economic development mission and help Poplar Bluff grow. The staff at the Chamber of Commerce is committed to the membership and works daily to execute the policies set forth by the Board of Directors.

### **2006 Priorities**

Continue our strong relationship with the city of Poplar Bluff and Butler County through information sharing and partnership opportunities

Increase participation in the acceptance of Chamber Checks to help keep local dollars local

Continue the partnership with MoDOT for the construction project to make Highway 67 a four lane highway to Fredericktown, place a stop light in front of PBRMC, and evaluate the by-pass options into the Industrial Park

Recruit a major retailer and at least one major employer to help bolster the local economy

Provide opportunities for every member to become involved in the activities and programs of the Chamber through the extension of programs such as Business Breakfasts, Business after Hours, luncheons, and a reworking of the Industrial Outing

## History of Chambers of Commerce

Throughout the centuries, perhaps as long as commerce has existed, traders have banded together. In the beginning it might have been for the purpose of seeking common protection against enemies and bands of robbers. Later, codes were established to govern the conduct of trade. Later still, efforts were begun to exert influence on legislative matters.

In the early 1900's, most local Chambers were primarily interested in attracting new industry to their community. Civic and commercial development took second place. While industrial development was still often a major emphasis, gradually Chambers came to recognize that industrial growth was dependent on civic and commercial development as well. In fact, during the first quarter of this century so much emphasis was being placed on civic problems that many Chambers began to assume the character of civic associations. It soon became evident that Chambers, in order to be true to their purpose, must remain primarily business organizations, and express the point of view of business. The importance of balance in the Chamber program began to be recognized.

And just as many Chambers through the centuries have changed and adapted to meet the needs of the time, so will the Chamber of today be constantly alert to the changes taking place in our society and adapting to meet those needs.

### Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce Facts

**Mission Statement:** The mission statement of the Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership and service to promote economic growth and industrial development for the greater Poplar Bluff area. Some of our objectives include:

- Advance commercial, industrial, retail, agriculture, educational, civic, and other interests in the city of Poplar Bluff and surrounding area.
- Provide a forum for members to meet and discuss common concerns.
- Promote expanded education for membership; keep members current on new and ever changing technology and consumer needs
- Assist existing commercial, industrial, retail, and agricultural community to meet current and expanding needs
- Promote the Poplar Bluff area as the place to live, work, and play.

The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce has grown considerably over the years, as has the community of Poplar Bluff. We strive to keep our membership up to date through our web site, weekly memos, and monthly newsletter. We will continue to provide a quality service for all concerned. The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce is the organization to belong to if you want the best return on your investment. We don't just do things, we make things happen.

Over the years, the Greater Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce has earned an enviable position in the community. It occupies a recognized position of leadership and influence. This has been accomplished by constant and constructive efforts for the development and welfare of the community.

The operating support of this organization is obtained from firms and individuals throughout the community. The manpower of the organization is obtained from these members. The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce operates through committees, task forces and volunteer workers, and staff also renders direct services of types normally expected from a chamber of commerce. The plan of action of the organization is incorporated in the Program of Work. This carefully prepared annual schedule of projects, when adopted by the Board of Directors, becomes a guide to the committees for their activities, and it also serves as a checklist of performance.

To summarize, the Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce is an organization through which volunteer manpower of the community works as an effective team to make the Poplar Bluff area a better place in which to live and in which to make a living. Your pride and satisfaction in your job will grow with your knowledge of the work and objectives of the organization and in proportion to the interest and effort you put into your job.

The Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce also has an industrial development arm; Poplar Bluff Industries.

The need for an organization such as Poplar Bluff Industries, Inc. became evident as far back as May 7, 1941, when the Board of Directors of the Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce endorsed the raising of a fund to build a building for the Black River Shoe Co.

The Black River Shoe Company was at that time operation a small building on a site, which formerly housed the Dalton Adding Machine Company. The building so occupied was at that time owned by the City of Poplar Bluff through its Board of Public Works, and an agreement had just been reached with the International Shoe Company to occupy the entire premises. It was to be known as the Cedar Plant.

In 1945, it was evident that the International Shoe Company was considering erecting a second plant in Poplar Bluff, and had asked the Chamber of Commerce for community participation.

On February 28, 1945, a group of ten business men in the community agreed to put up \$700.00 each for a total of \$7,000.00, to purchase a 43 acre site in south Poplar Bluff (now a part of Poplar Bluff's Industrial Park) from Martin Kersting, on which this new building was to be located.

After several successful industrial endeavors had been accomplished, the need for a separate industrial development organization was evident, and Poplar Bluff Industries was organized, in 1947.

## **Small Business Committee**

### **Accomplishments:**

- Formed the committee and began to focus on needs
- Recommended and had approved the creation of a membership directory and community guide through a contract with Village Profile
- Promoted and encouraged retailers to accept Chamber Checks
- Addressed small business issues and communicated to the business community
- Conducted a very successful “Shop Poplar Bluff First” campaign for the holidays

**Purpose:** Act as a support system for small businesses; be an information source for small business for any opportunities that may arise for minority owned businesses. Assess small business needs and develop plans to address those needs.

## **Transportation Committee**

### **Accomplishments**

- Continued the strong partnership with MoDOT to make Hwy. 67 a 4 lane hwy.
- Applied for and received a grant to place a stop light at the hospital intersection
- Analyzed the need for a by-pass into the Industrial Park
- Conducted a member survey to assess local needs
- Worked with MoDOT on the Hwy. 60 corridor project
- Hosted information sessions with MoDOT director Pete Rahn
- Worked with local leaders on a Hwy W connector plan

**Purpose:** Promote improvement in local transportation measures; work cooperatively with the city of Poplar Bluff and the Missouri Department of Transportation for ways that will ensure our continued growth.

## **Industry Leader Forums**

### **Accomplishments**

- Met with Industry leaders to assess existing conditions
- Made recommendations to the necessary entities to address industry concerns
- Promoted and encouraged Industry leaders to participate in Chamber/PBI activities
- Briefed Industry leaders on HR Solutions and how it could assist them
- Conducted two Industrial Outings to show our appreciation of our industries
- Analyzed labor needs for our industries and worked with the WIB on skills gaps
- Secured employee training grants from the WIB

**Purpose:** Analyze the needs of the Industries in our area and address those needs. Provide an open forum for honest assessment of needs and make every effort to improve our strong industrial climate.

## **Tourism Operations**

### **Accomplishments**

- Mailed out almost 200 visitor information packets in 2005
- Handled over 500 walk in requests for tourism information
- Stocked area tourism information for easy dissemination
- Maintained a web site for tourism information achieving an average of 1100 hits per month
- Mailed our tourism information to state wide tourism centers
- Attended a tourism conference to better assist us with our efforts

**Purpose:** Promote and develop plans and procedures to attract visitors to our area. Work with the local tourism type entities to keep our calendar of events updated for upcoming events and opportunities.

# Chamber Ambassadors

## Accomplishments

- Conducted a total of 60 groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings in 2005
- Encouraged members to participate in the Business After Hours and Breakfasts
- Greeted members at our monthly luncheons
- Conducted two retention/recruitment drives culminating in a total addition of 136 new members
- Instituted a points system to recognize outstanding ambassadors
- Began plans for a mentoring program for new members

**Purpose:** Recruit prospective members to the Chamber, assist with monthly networking activities, new member orientation, ribbon cuttings, support member retention efforts, and conduct semi-annual membership recruitment and retention events.

## Special Projects

### Accomplishments

- Conducted a very successful golf tournament
- Planned and conducted the annual banquet
- Planned and conducted two Industrial appreciation outings
- Helped plan and conduct the Shop Poplar Bluff First campaign
- Began working on a downtown festival for early spring
- Partnered with the SBDC to conduct entrepreneurship training
- Partnered with Ozark Foothills for a strategic planning session for the community
- Nominated and selected a Citizen of the Year

**Purpose:** To add more return on investment to the membership as well as increase our non-membership investment income to assist the chamber in performing its mission.

# **Programs and Services**

## **Accomplishments**

- Maintain a community calendar for information purposes
- Promote local shopping through our Chamber Checks program with \$130,000 sold in 2005
- Created a new referral notification system to inform the members when we have referred them
- Made many updates and improvements to the monthly newsletter
- Instituted a Monday Morning Memo email to keep the members up to date
- Reduced the rates charged for the community room for the membership
- Provide mailing labels for a small cost to our members
- Improved our Red Alert capabilities and our notification methods
- Instituted HR Solution to provide HR information for our membership

**Purpose:** To provide a return on investment for the membership. Also to provide opportunities for involvement of the membership and provide information that can only be obtained through their membership.

## **Education Committee**

### **Accomplishments**

- Formed the committee and began to focus on needs
- Worked with the FBLA Club to assist them in their endeavors
- Helped the FBLA with their business plan competition
- Focused on the adopt a school program and every school now has been adopted
- Worked with the WIB and the school district to address employee skills gaps
- Began working to have a larger role in the Teacher of the Year Program
- Briefed the TRCC faculty on economic activities in the area

**Purpose:** Focus on efforts to assist the educational community and provide partnership opportunities with the business and educational community, work with local FBLA club to further enhance the business and education link, assist with educator of the year programs.

## **Legislative/Governmental Affairs Committee**

### **Accomplishments**

- Formed the committee and began to focus on needs
- Participated in monthly conference calls with the MO Chamber concerning legislative issues
- Hosted meetings with our local officials on issues concerning our members
- Tracked legislation and took positions on issues pertinent to the membership
- Attended two MO Chamber Federation conferences on legislative issues
- Made recommendations on legislative priorities to the MO Chamber
- Worked closely with our local officials on governmental issues relating to the Poplar Bluff area

**Purpose:** Observe legislation trends and make recommendations to the board as it relates to business. Track legislation that affects the business community and report to the board for their dissemination. Work closely with city and county government to foster positive relations

## **Leadership Committee**

### **Accomplishments**

- Welcomed the 15 member leadership group
- Conducted informational seminars on the history of the Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce
- Conducted informational seminars on the history of Poplar Bluff Industries
- Stressed the importance of taking leadership roles
- Hosted our leadership group at the fall Industrial Outing
- Led the leadership group through a tour of Rowe Furniture
- Encouraged the group to become involved in the chamber and the community

**Purpose:** Assist emerging leaders in their understanding of programs and services within the area, promote responsibility among the young potential leaders, and provide an atmosphere conducive to the development of future leaders.

# **Non Profit Alliance**

## **Accomplishments**

- Formed the committee and began to focus on needs
- Conducted four seminars throughout the year on issues concerning our local non-profit community
- Provided networking opportunities for our non-profits
- Addressed major areas of concern reference donations
- University Extension conducted a seminar on what every non-profit should know
- Created a data base of contact information for our local non-profits
- Included non-profit organization information in our community calendar
- Began a needs assessment of our local organizations

**Purpose:** Provide a forum for civic, service, and community betterment type non-profit organizations to meet and discuss concerns and projects. Offers seminars on subjects that will help them focus efforts on their areas of concern and reach their target audience. The alliance will also provide networking opportunities throughout the non-profit community on joint projects they may conduct as well as prevent overlapping of events.

# **Downtown Revitalization**

## **Accomplishments**

- Formed the committee and began to focus on needs
- Tracked the historic preservation recommendations to the city of Poplar Bluff on zoning issues
- Began marketing downtown as a good place to visit
- Decorated windows for the Christmas season
- Applied for and received a \$5,000 grant from Wal-Mart to purchase outdoor Christmas decorations
- Reenergized community pride in the downtown area
- Began planning for the arts festival scheduled for April

**Purpose:** Focus on the clean up and revitalization of the Poplar Bluff downtown area along with the development of a downtown square. Promote and restore the economic health, community pride, and quality of life for our residents and visitors.

## Upcoming Events in 2006

### January 2006

Annual Banquet  
Business Breakfast

### February 2006

Chamber Luncheon

### March 2006

Business After Hours  
Chamber Luncheon

### April 2006

Business After Hours  
Business Breakfast

### May 2006

Chamber Luncheon  
Industrial Outing

### June 2006

Business After Hours  
Golf Tournament

### July 2006

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

### August 2006

Business After Hours  
Chamber Luncheon

### September 2006

Industrial Outing

### October 2006

Business After Hours  
Business Breakfast

### November 2006

Chamber Luncheon

### December 2006

Business After Hours

## Current Programs & Services

Business After Hours

Business Breakfast

Industrial Outings

Luncheons

Community Calendar

Ribbon Cuttings/Ground Breakings

Chamber Checks

Visitor Center Operation

Golf Outing

Annual Banquet

Citizen of the Year

Business referrals

Newsletter

Website

Red Alert Notification

Membership Labels

Relocation Packets

Monday Morning Memo

H.R. Solutions