

Chamber Profile

Carol Stream Chamber of Commerce

By Randall G. Mielke

For members of the Carol Stream Chamber of Commerce, the emphasis is on networking and getting to know other business people.

"It is all about building relationships," said Luanne Triolo, executive director of the Carol Stream Chamber of Commerce. "People do business with people they know, people they like and people they trust."



Carol Stream

Chamber of Commerce

The chamber provides opportunities for members to get to know other members with such programs as the Pitch Your Business luncheon, which was held in August.

"This year we added some new things to our networking programs," Triolo said. "Pitch Your Business had a heavy baseball theme. Members had 45 seconds in front of the group to tell about their business."

Chamber members went from "home plate," where they registered; to "first base," where they dropped off their business card in designated containers; to "second base," where they obtained their lunch; to "third base," where the presentations took place; and back to "home plate," where they picked

up a Carol Stream Chamber Business Card holder, with a business card from everyone who attended the event.

Triolo had encouraged members to make their presentations creative and/or comical and some attendees dressed for the occasion by wearing baseball uniforms or bringing plastic bats.

"I told them, if you are memorable, all the better," Triolo said. "Cindy Cain of The IRA Store, because she was representing a golden nest egg, came dressed as a golden egg."

Another networking event that was new this year for the Chamber was Accelerated Networking, which was held in June.

"It is like speed dating," Triolo said. "In a square of tables, members have 30 seconds to talk about their business, then they switch to other person across the table and they have 30 seconds to talk. After one minute we blow the whistle and one person moves over one table. There were 60 people at the event, so you met 30 people one-on-one. It was successful so we will do it again in January or February. Some called me afterwards and said 'I got business out of that.'"

Triolo believes that this type of event is what the Chamber should be providing to its members.

"We try to do a combination of events that appeal to people and give them value," she said. "Whether it is educational speakers or networking speakers, we want to bring things to them that are valuable to their business and things that enable business people to build their contact list. We try to react to what businesses need and ask for."

One such event is the upcoming "Seven Secrets to Improve Your Marketing" seminar on Thursday, Sept. 21. Nationally-acclaimed marketing expert Tony Rubleski of the Mind Capture Group will present a seminar on how to improve marketing.

"This is the sort of thing we should be doing to assist our businesses," Triolo said.

Other events that the Chamber offers include an annual fund-raising golf tournament each July, the St. Patty's Day Reverse Raffle, monthly luncheons and

monthly Business After Hours networking opportunities.

The Carol Stream Chamber also gets involved with other organizations.

"We like to do things with other chambers," Triolo said. "We like to have our business circles touch other circles of people. We are one of six chambers doing the Five Star Business Expo on Feb. 17, 2007. The event will have about 120 exhibitors."

The Carol Stream Chamber membership has increased slightly over the years and Triolo attributes the growth to the members themselves.

"We have a dynamic group of people," she said. "It is evident at our events. They are fun to be around and are excellent at networking and referring people. Whether they can use the service or product or not, they are quick to refer to others."

After all, it's all about networking.

Quick Facts

Carol Stream
Chamber of Commerce
150 S. Gary Ave., Carol Stream 60188
(located in the Holiday Inn)
630-665-3325
www.carolstreamchamber.com

Executive Director: Luanne Triolo

President: Jim Hodgdon
of The HBC Group

Year incorporated: 1992

Number of members: 380

Partial Mission Statement:

The Carol Stream Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the economic, professional and civic welfare of the greater Carol Stream area.