

GROWING BUSINESS. BUILDING COMMUNITY.

2012 ANNUAL REPORT
FEBRUARY 2013 | VOLUME 8 ISSUE 2





A Letter from the Chairman

2012 was a prosperous year for growing business and building community in the Rogers-Lowell Area. New business expansion and job creation significantly impacted the local economy by helping to create meaningful opportunities for Chamber members to sell their goods and services to new businesses and residents.

The World's Foremost Outfitter, Cabela's Incorporated, opened in Rogers becoming the company's first and only store in Arkansas. NextLife Asset Recovery Services opened a new headquarters and processing facility and announced plans to invest more than \$10 million while creating up to 350 new jobs. Many other local companies announced expansion plans for either new product lines or facilities (or both) as well as growth in employment. Last year downtown Rogers welcomed 27 new businesses and saw 11 expand their operations. Major sporting events, like the FLW Tournament on Beaver Lake and the LPGA Tournament at Pinnacle Country Club, were secured again for 2013 and will provide wonderful exposure and revenue for our area businesses. Recent "best" rankings continued to recognize our region's accomplishments in transitioning to a true world class community and workforce.

It was an important year for local voters. The Chamber took a leadership position in promoting passage of Issue #1 in the 2012 General Election which will fund \$400 million of new highways in Northwest Arkansas. Our members can now expect to see major highway improvements along the I-540 corridor over the next decade and improvement in connectivity throughout the region.



**The Rogers-Lowell
Area Chamber of
Commerce is
one out of just
77 chambers of 7,000
nationwide accredited
with Five Stars!**

Last November, the Chamber's Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat and charted a strategic course for moving the Chamber forward with its membership growth and programming value. It was a productive and collaborative retreat exploring together what makes businesses want to invest in the Chamber, what are the most important things we do as a Chamber, who the Chamber's customers are and what needs they have. We also explored ideas on how to communicate and tell our story better to our members – small to medium sized businesses, large corporations and industry and the Northwest Arkansas community.

The Chamber is ready to build on these successes in 2013 so we can continue to "grow business and build community," making Northwest Arkansas a great place to work and live for years to come. Working within a regional context, the Chamber will further advance strong economic development, minority business development, government affairs, community development and business-building events and programs. You can learn more about specific programs and goals in our "2013 Business Plan," set to be published in March.

On behalf of the entire Chamber, we thank you for your membership and involvement. Memberships fuel the ideas, drive, goals, manpower and financial ability for all of us to work together in creating the ideal environment for businesses of all sizes to prosper.

In this annual report, we've outlined our accomplishments and provided highlights of our leadership. We hope you will be inspired by what we've done this past year and join us this year as we continue to make the Rogers-Lowell Area a great place to do business.

Cathy Foraker
2012 Chairman of the Board
AT&T



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WHAT WE BELIEVE

MISSION

To be the voice of business, to promote and initiate responsible economic growth, and to address community challenges in the Rogers-Lowell Area and the region.

VISION

Quality
Growth
Opportunity

VALUES

We act ethically in all we do.
We honor and serve all business and our community.
We work together.
We believe in the Rogers-Lowell Area and NWA.
We advocate a positive business environment.
We continuously improve the business climate.
We believe in and promote free enterprise.
We know that it is up to us to make a difference.
We promote quality, growth and opportunity.
We identify, develop and involve leaders.
We believe in preserving, promoting and enhancing the quality of life in the Rogers-Lowell Area.
We listen and respond to our membership.
We have fun.
We strive to cultivate a cohesive community.



January:
Northwest Arkansas Council
spearheaded the Business
Retention and Expansion Surveys
in cooperation with Chambers
throughout the Region.



January:
Benton County After Hours,
sponsored by Bentonville/
Bella Vista, Siloam Springs and
Rogers-Lowell Area Chambers
of Commerce, was held at Great
Southern bank in Rogers.



Chairman of the Board:
Cathy Foraker
AT&T



Chairman-Elect:
Matt Crafton
Crafton Tull



Treasurer:
Ric Clifford
Del Monte Foods



Past Chairman:
Greg Spragg
Spragg Properties



President/CEO:
Raymond Burns, CCE

2012 Executive Committee

Chairman of the Board: Cathy Foraker – AT&T
Chairman-Elect: Matt Crafton – Crafton Tull
Treasurer: Ric Clifford – Del Monte Foods
Past Chairman: Greg Spragg – Spragg Properties
President/CEO: Raymond Burns, CCE
RIDC President: Jerry Vest – Regions Bank

2012 Division Chairs

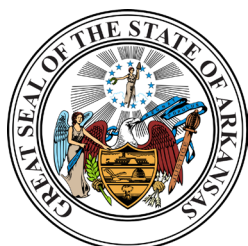
David Lang, Chair of Convention and Visitors Bureau
Vicki Vasser, Chair of Membership Services Division
David Thrasher, Chair of Community Development Division
Mike Watts, Chair of Economic Development Division
Jerry Carmichael, Chair of Government Affairs Division

2012 Board of Directors

Don Coenen – Don's Cold Storage & Transportation
Adrian Dominguez
Darin Gray – Gray Matters, LLC
Nick Hobbs – JB Hunt Transport, Inc.
Jerry Hudlow – City of Lowell
Greg Lindley – Simmons First Bank
Lori Brown – Kimberly Clark
Stacy Miller – Tyson Foods, Inc.
Chris Moore – Fast Lane Entertainment
Keith Noble – The Noble Insurance Agency
Norman Prestage – Ernst & Young LLP
Julio Rodriguez – LR Tax & Accounting
Mark Ryan – Arvest Bank
Scott Street – Mercy Health System of NWA
David Thrasher – Thrasher & Chambers, Inc.
Crystal Thurman – NWA Media
Vicki Vasser – Matthews, Campbell, Rhoads, McClure & Thompson, P.A.
Mike Watts – FM Corporation

2012 Ex-Officio Directors

Jerry Carmichael
Bob Clinard – Benton County Judge
Dr. Janie Darr – Rogers Public Schools
Rich Davis – SourceGas Arkansas Inc.
Mike Dodge – Carroll Electric Coop. Corp.
Ben Dolan – Sam's Club
Sandy Edwards – Crystal Bridges Museum
David Faulkner – Pinnacle Hills Promenade
Dan Hendrix – World Trade Center Arkansas
Greg Hines – Mayor, City of Rogers
David Lang – Embassy Suites NWA
Eldon Long – Mayor, City of Lowell
Jeff Milford – AEP/SWEPCO
Dr. Becky Paneitz – NWACC
Rich Reaves – Reaves Enterprises
Dick Trammel – Arkansas Highway Commission



February 13:
Arkansas General Assembly met
for a fiscal session to review state
government appropriation bills
for the 2013 fiscal year. This marks
the second such fiscal session in
Arkansas history.



February:
Green Power Hour kicks off
its educational seminars to
promote sustainability in the
workplace and at home.

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT 2012!

Forbes

names Rogers

**Best Places for Business
& Careers**#**19** in 2012**MILKEN INSTITUTE**

ranked NWA

#**41** **Best Performing Cities**
in the nation
for 2012**600**
NEW JOBS
created in 2012**CABELA'S, FRESH MARKET & HOULIHAN'S**
opened in Rogers in 2012
setting record sales for opening week**OZARK MOUNTAIN POULTRY,
CENTRAL RESEARCH INC.,
TYSON FOODS & NESTLE**
announced expansion plans for
NEW PRODUCT LINES, NEW FACILITIES
AND/OR INCREASED EMPLOYMENT FOR 2012**GONE
IN 60 SECONDS**twice partnered with **Innovate Arkansas**
39 local businesses and start-ups pitched their ideas to crowds over 100300 new jobs
invest over **\$10 million**
in the **next 18 months**

@RLACC

**1514 followers**in 2012 resulting in a
44% increase
from 2011**900 followers**in 2012 resulting in a
75% increase
from 2011

facebook.com/rlacc

**90** **NINETIETH
ANNUAL
BANQUET**March 2:
Chamber celebrates 2011's
accomplishments at 90th
Annual Banquet. Keynote
speaker Mike Duke on stage
with Past Chair Greg Spragg.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Division proactively provides innovative programs, assistance and technology to aid, support and increase business opportunities for new and existing business and industry, and expands the retail and service business available in our community to increase the local tax base. New job creation and business expansion impacts businesses by creating meaningful opportunities for Chamber members to sell their goods and services to those new businesses and residents. The Economic Development Division will work with industries both large and small in our community to increase job growth and business expansion as well as with individuals to increase our growing small business community.

Economic Development Division

- Over 600 new jobs were created in Rogers-Lowell in 2012. Creating new jobs not only decreases unemployment, but allows Rogers-Lowell to be seen as an area of the country for talent to relocate in order to find jobs.
- It was announced that Nextlife will create over 300 new jobs and invest over \$10 million in Rogers over the next 18 months.
- More than 100,000 SF of new commercial office space is either under construction or has been announced for Rogers in 2012.
- Staff responded to 21 Request for Information forms. Three of the 12 resulted in site visits by companies in cooperation with the NWA Council which would result in over 2,000 white collar jobs created.
- Research continues into the creation of a foreign trade zone within Northwest Arkansas. We are awaiting a cost benefit analysis to be provided from FTZ Corp before final consideration will be made.
- Staff attended a national site selector event in November in order to promote Rogers-Lowell as an ideal place for businesses to operate.
- The NWA Council launched its new regional marketing promotions including a new regional logo, tagline and website.

Recruit and Retain a High-Quality Workforce

- In 2012, 128 jobs have been posted on the Chamber's online job bank. This is over a 100 percent increase compared to the same time last year.
- Four articles featuring the online job bank and an article featuring the revamped NationJob program appeared in the *Chamber Voice* throughout the year.
- In 2012, 92 resumes were posted on the Chamber's website.
- The 2012 NWA Job Fair was held on September 14. A total of 69 local businesses purchased booths for the event seeking to fill open job positions. Over 1,200 people came to the event and participated in job hunting, resume reviews, mock interviews and seminars throughout the day.
- Through 2012, Chamber staff members had mailed or distributed over 150 relocation packets containing information about the quality of life and amenities available in the community.

Northwest
Arkansas

Job Fair

**+600
NEW JOBS
IN 2012**



Engage in Small Business Outreach

- Staff attended the ARK Challenge Demo Day in November. The event showcased local start-up businesses that completed the ARK program at the Iceberg facility in Fayetteville.
- Over 500 individuals seeking information on starting a business have received assistance from staff and been referred to the Small Business Resource Center at the Chamber and partner organizations for further advice.

"Knowing first-hand the benefits of chamber membership, my business partner and I didn't hesitate to join. Our membership has more than paid for itself in referrals, orders, networking and research assistance. As a fledgling new business, we truly feel like the staff at the Chamber is in our corner and wants to help us succeed. I believe the initial act of joining was truly the kick-start of Sweet D'z Express! We look forward to our continued partnership."

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

*Denise Hahn, co-owner,
Sweet D'z Express Bakery*



Worksite Challenge

April 2:
Drug Free Rogers-Lowell kicked off its five week fitness and healthy eating program. Participants engaged in 30 minutes of physical activity per day for five days of the week and ate five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.



April:

The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce Education Committee honored 588 sophomores, juniors and seniors of Rogers High and Heritage High Schools with its Annual Academic Awards.



2012 Legislative Golf Classic

Rogers-Lowell Area
Chamber of Commerce



April 23:
A total of 54 teams and 216 golfers participated in the 2012 Legislative Spring Golf Classic held at Pinnacle Country Club.



April 26-29:
Walmart FLW Tour returned to Beaver Lake with an estimated economic impact of half a million dollars.

- Staff twice partnered with Innovate Arkansas to host a Gone in 60 Seconds Elevator Pitch Contest in 2012. Thirty-nine local business and start-ups pitched their business ideas to crowds of over 100.
- For 2012, 12 local businesses were named as a recipient of the Small Business of the month award. Sabores Mexican Cuisine was the winner of the 2012 Small Business of the Year.
- The Chamber conducted 123 ribbon cuttings during 2012.
- In 2012, members taught members at 18 FYI Brown Bag educational seminars.
- The Small Business Council is undergoing a strategic planning session and has created a rough draft of a strategic development plan. The draft will be reviewed by Chamber staff and should be completed in early 2013.
- The 2012 NWA Business Conference & Expo took place September 6 at the John Q. Hammons Center. There were 185 area businesses that had exhibit booths at the event and over 1,500 people attended the various events throughout the day.
- Booth sales have begun for the 2013 NWA Business Conference & Expo. A Call for Speakers has gone out and seminar proposals are being reviewed. Meetings have begun to lock in the 2013 keynote speaker and an announcement should be made in the first quarter of 2013.
- The Small Business Toolbox web pages are in the final stages of development. This will include filmed seminars and programs



BUSINESS CONFERENCE & EXPO

to be uploaded to the Small Business Toolbox.

- The *Doing Business in Rogers and Lowell* guide was updated in February, May, and November with current information and 175 guides were published.

Encourage Business Recruitment and Expansion

- Ozark Mountain Poultry, Tyson Foods, Central Research, and Nestle all announced expansion plans for either new product lines, new facilities, or increased employment in 2012.
- In 2012, Chamber staff members assisted over 500 inquiries regarding new business start-ups, franchisees and existing businesses, offering information, advice and resources on setting up a small business, networking opportunities, marketing options, planning and zoning.
- Cabela's, Fresh Market, and Houlihan's all opened in Rogers in 2012 and set opening week records for sales.
- In 2012, eight restaurants opened in Rogers with three additional restaurants set to open in the first part of 2013.
- Marshall's, Home Goods, Shoe Carnival, and Bliss Cupcakes are all under construction and are set to open in early 2013.
- Staff conducted 138 Business Retention and Expansion surveys with area businesses in 2012. Of these, 31 were conducted with minority owned businesses.
- Staff continues to use and maintain current databases and software to track BRE survey results in an effort to proactively help meet the needs of large industries in the area.
- Road construction was completed in the Pinnacle Hills area connecting to Pauline Whitaker Parkway allowing for future office and retail growth in the area.
- Downtown Rogers saw 27 new businesses open in 2012. An additional 11 businesses expanded in Downtown Rogers.



IN DOWNTOWN ROGERS



IN DOWNTOWN ROGERS



May 9:
Drug Free Rogers-Lowell presents The Boys and Girls Club of Benton County with the "Partners in Community Wellness" award.



May 12:
Over 600 anglers participated in the 21st Annual Buddy Bass Tournament held on Beaver Lake in Rogers.



May:
Lowell company Central States Manufacturing, Inc. announced plans for its growth strategy for the next seven years. Plans include opening seven new manufacturing plants across the nation.

MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Minority Business Development Highlights

- A total of 96 minority businesses joined the Chamber, increasing our minority business membership by 85 percent when compared to 2011.
- The 2012 NWA International Festival was a success. We had 70 booths representing over 50 countries. The International Fashion Show had great participation this year and continues to be a favorite with the public. Hours of entertainment were provided including the first annual International Food Fest. A recap article was featured in the November issue of the *Chamber Voice*.
- We have had 570 minorities participate in the Chamber's networking events for diverse members of the business community to help them become more comfortable in growing their business through networking.
- We have 12 participants in the Minority Business Mentorship Program, these entrepreneurs have the opportunity to receive professional advice from their experienced mentors.
- We have assisted six minority businesses interested in starting and completing the Minority Business Enterprise Certification (MBE) program.
- The Minority Business Task Force has been formed and is working on education and inclusion initiatives.
- Fifty-five people have been provided assistance through available Chamber resources or referring them to strategic partners for advice on how to start or grow their business.
- A total of 182 minority business owners and entrepreneurs seeking assistance have been helped with resources and information on starting and running a successful business in Northwest Arkansas.

"The proactive support of the Chamber and its membership has made a big difference for minority members, such as LR Tax & Accounting. I want to give special thanks to the Chamber and the Small Business Council for the initiatives taken as a part of the Minority Business Development program. Working together, we will continue to grow the NWA business economy and also create a more culturally rich and racially diverse business community."

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

*Julio Rodriguez CPA, MBA
LR Tax & Accounting*



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

International FESTIVAL



INTERNATIONAL
FASHION
SHOW



COMMUNITY DIVERSITY CELEBRATION

Minority Community Outreach

- Rogers Police Department (RPD) - We held our first meeting in January between the RPD and the Minority Leadership Council with 32 people in attendance. In February we had the second meeting with 44 people in attendance. We had the third meeting on April 25 with 29 people in attendance. The last meeting of the year was on November 20 with 28 people in attendance. The meetings have been very effective in building relationships between the minority leadership and the Rogers Police Department. Both parties have been able to bring their concerns to the table and have worked on a plan of action to bridge the gap of communication and cooperation with the community. Information about the progress made in these meetings is being shared to the minority population through the strategic alliances that have been formed with the media and other organizations.
- Rogers Public Schools - The Minority Leadership Council has been meeting with representatives of the Rogers Public Schools and other education organizations in our community to develop a plan for minority student engagement and degree attainment as well as diversity and inclusion initiatives for the school district. We have had three meetings so far in 2012 with about 25 volunteers committed and ready to take the lead on this initiative.



June 15-16:
Annual Poultry Festival
returned to Rogers. The
Poultry Federation hosted
its 53rd annual festival for
poultry and egg industry
members and friends.



June 25 - July 1:
Walmart NW Arkansas Championship
presented by P&G returned to
Pinnacle Country Club in Rogers for
the 6th straight year.



June 29:
The annual Chamber Picnic was a huge
success thanks to our sponsors and to
everyone who came out in the heat to join
us at Ward Nail park in Lowell.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Division creates and supports innovative programs that help members enhance their businesses while maintaining a quality of life that ensures continual pride of Rogers and Lowell. Programs in the this division impact and enhance the quality of life in Rogers, Lowell and the region by improving the lifestyles and amenities enjoyed by residents as well as attracting newcomers and visitors, while developing leaders for the future.

Develop Dynamic Future Leaders

- Seventy-nine class members were provided with leadership skills training and an introduction to the community through the Leadership Benton County program in 2012.

Promote Healthy Communities

- Obtained \$178,375 in continuation funding for Drug Free Rogers-Lowell programs.
- Increased website visits to the www.ioit2me.com website 41 percent from 2011.
- Recorded a total of 1,337 Facebook fans on the ioit2me Facebook page.
- Over 5,000 community members reached at various community events.
- "Partners in Community Wellness" award was presented quarterly to a business or individual that promotes a healthy home, workplace, or community through the prevention of harmful substances and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
- Over 350 community members participated in the 2012 Fit with 5 Worksite Challenge.
- Over 100 Benton County retailers representing 30 stores participated in the Tobacco Retailer Trainings in 2012.
- Worked with several area businesses to increase or establish tobacco policies that exceed the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act.
- Conducted an Act 811 advertising campaign through gas pump signs promoting the law at seven area gas stations.
- Conducted tobacco prevention programs through the schools and the Boys and Girls Club, reaching over 565 youth.
- Ten Benton County Day Care providers increased no tobacco policies to include their indoor and outdoor spaces and posted signage provided by DFRL.
- Promoted the proper disposal of unused/expired medications and collected a total of 435 pounds of prescription drugs during the Prescription Drug Drop-Off event.
- Educated more than 8,000 youth about the dangers of methamphetamine during the Methamphetamine Awareness Month through videos and presentations at all Benton County schools and at community events.
- Conducted comprehensive media campaigns targeting methamphetamine, prescription drug abuse, marijuana, tobacco,

and underage drinking. Mediums used to reach residents included radio, gas pump advertisement, posters, flyers, television, Facebook, coalition website, and Chamber publications.

- Increased minority outreach by distributing materials in English and Spanish along with developing and running radio public service announcements in Spanish.

Support Education

- A total of 588 high school students at Heritage and Rogers high schools received a 2012 Academic Award for maintaining a 3.5 GPA. This was a 16 percent increase over 2011.
- Seventy-two students were recognized as Graduates with Promise in 2012, increased from 8 students in 2011.
- "Educator of the Year" awards were presented to Paul Wilson of Heritage High School, Susan Tillery of Oakdale Middle School and Diane Wooters of Northside Elementary School for their skills and dedication to improving education in the community. A special honor of "Principal of the Year" was awarded to retiring Principal, Nancy Swearingen of Westside Elementary School.
- Twenty-two Lowell Elementary School students were awarded the 2012 SMILE Awards (Student Most Improved in Lowell Elementary) presented by Arvest Bank-Lowell at the end-of-year awards assemblies in June.
- A total of 107 Chamber businesses helped to welcome 1,000 local educators back to school at the Annual Teacher Appreciation Breakfast and Education Fair at Rogers High School in August.
- Hosted the seventh annual Chamber Night Reception for the Rogers Board of Education in October with 75 guests in attendance.



ioit2me.com
I Owe It To Me.



July 1:
Daisy held its 47th Annual Daisy National BB Gun Championship Match in Rogers.



Cathy Foraker presents Honorary Lifetime Membership to past-chair Carl Baggett.

July 11:
Chamber honors Lifetime Members by recognizing six past Chairmen and Presidents with Honorary Lifetime Membership for their many years of leadership, service and contributions.

AREA DEVELOPMENT
SITE AND FACILITY PLANNING



July:
NWA is the highest ranking metropolitan area in Arkansas and is recognized as being the 8th best performing in the South Region and 20th best mid-sized metro areas for workforce growth.

MEMBER SERVICES

The Membership Services Division attracts new members while providing existing members with the programs, information and services needed to enhance their competitive edge in the marketplace. Membership Services staff will provide over-the-top customer service for the membership of the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce by providing valuable services and programming which yields a return on their investment. We will impact our members by offering business building events and educational opportunities to support local businesses.

Attract New Members and Event Sponsors

- The entire Chamber staff supported the profitability of Chamber events and programs by selling \$228,375 in sponsorships for 89 events and programs.
- Chamber staff sold 371 new memberships, valued at \$69,742 by aggressively marketing Chamber membership to the business community. Our membership goal of "2,012 members in 2012" was met with the Chamber having 2,025 members at year end.

Promote the Value of Chamber Membership

- Hosted 21 professional development programs, including FYI Brown Bag Lunch seminars and legislative forums offering educational information on business topics of interest to members.
- Coordinated business events for members and the community.
- Provided high-caliber, affordable and accessible training at the 4th Annual NWA Business Conference and Expo, which featured 12 breakout sessions and a keynote presentation. The expo featured 162 exhibitors and attracted more than 1,500 attendees.
- Welcomed more than 1,200 local educators back to school at the Annual Teacher Education Fair and Appreciation Breakfast at Rogers High School in August.
- Entertained more than 350 players at the Spring and Fall Golf Tournaments, which provide golfers with a relaxed environment for business networking.
- Provided 34 business-building networking events and opportunities which allowed members to grow their professional network and generate business leads. Events included 12 Business After Hours, four Business-to-Business Luncheons, six Community Diversity Celebrations and 12 Coffee Connections.
- The Small Business Council provided an overview of the benefits and services offered to 158 members of the Chamber at six New Member Orientations.
- Members of the Ambassador Committee promoted membership growth and retention, and event participation by functioning as a proactive, goodwill extension of the Chamber. Hosted 109 ribbon cuttings for new members in 2012. An average of eight Ambassador Committee members attended each ribbon cutting ceremony.

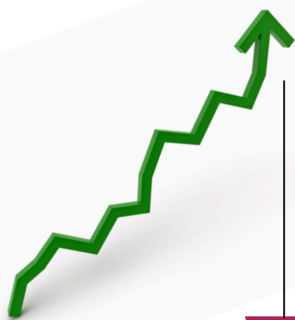
"Even though I had to talk myself into joining the Chamber, I did. After joining, I made myself go to the events. The bottom line is that several months later the Chamber positively influenced the function of my business – and profitability!

I put the contacts made at Chamber events to good use at the Florida Department of Emergency Management. Now, our background checks and payroll are being done by members. I also found an employee through an event I saw advertised on the Chamber's website. All in all, a ridiculously good decision."

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

Laurel Matula
EIO Co/erassist

- Honored outgoing members of the Board of Directors, recognized seven award winners and hosted more than 1,200 guests at the 90th Annual Banquet on March 2nd .
- More than 600 fishermen on 308 boats took part in the 21st Annual Bradford Marine Buddy Bass Fishing Tournament in May at Beaver Lake. The Youth Fishing Tournament doubled in size and had 127 kids participate.
- Thanked volunteers and community members at the Chamber Picnic in June at Ward Nail Park in Lowell. More than 200 attended this annual event.
- Bowling for Business was a successful event for the Chamber in 2012. This event had an attendance of 90 bowlers that came out to support their business and network with other businesses. The event was held at Fast Lanes Entertainment in November.



August 8:
Kathy Deck, Director of Center for Business and Economic Research, proclaimed, "Northwest Arkansas is at its highest level of employment ever." The exact number of jobs was 211,100, which is over 100 more jobs than the previous record set in 2007.

Timeline: August 2012



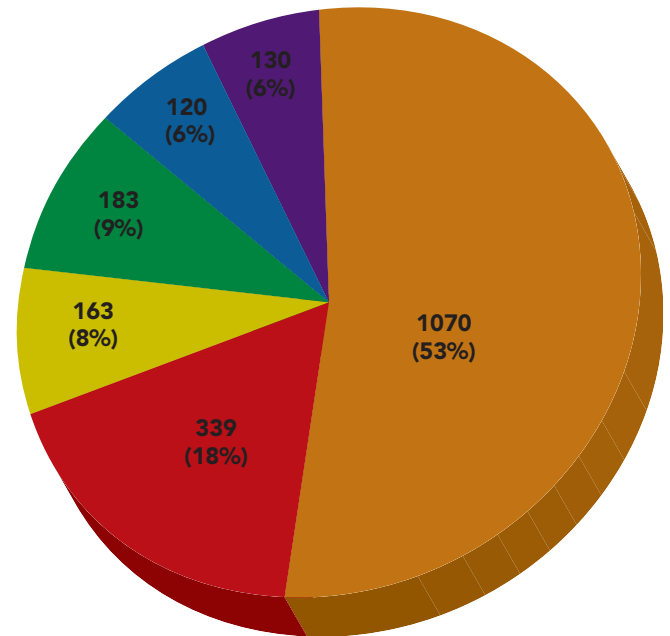
August:
Arkansas State H.O.G. Rally (Harley Owners Group) returned to Rogers for a three day event.

KNOW YOUR CHAMBER

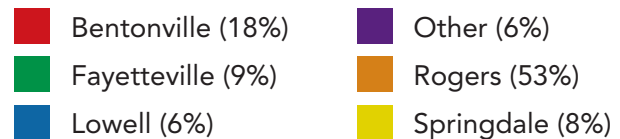
- Established in 1922
- 2,025 Member Businesses
- 3,545 Representatives
- 24 Voting Board Members
(18 Board Members/6 Executive Committee Members)
- 19 Ex-Officio Board members

Meet and exceed member needs and expectations with the result of increasing member retention rates, which will help the Chamber to meet overall mission to "grow business, build community" in the Rogers-Lowell area and region.

- Customer Service Representative provided exceptional customer service by contacting more than 1,800 members to verify and update profile information, answer questions about membership and events and provide training on the Members Only website tools.
- Customer Service Representative sent 1,374 reminders encouraging members to use the Members Only section to verify their contact information and view their referral report. The average member login in 2012 was 365 compared to 280 in 2011.
- The Customer Service Representative identified 132 members not attending or sponsoring events or serving on committees and invited members to attend events or serve on a committee that best suited them and their business.
- Customer Service Representative provided member support by visiting 58 members to discuss concerns and encourage involvement.
- Customer Service Representative surveyed 298 members for their reasons for joining the Chamber. A total of 257 out of 298 members answered the survey. The members were contacted and provided ideas on how to best utilize the benefits that were important to them.



2025 members



NWA BUSINESS CONFERENCE & EXPO

September 6:
The 2012 NWA Business Conference & Expo presented by Sam's Club attracted business people from all over the Northwest Arkansas region and from businesses of all sizes. The expo sold out for a second straight year with 185 exhibitors and over 1,000 in attendance throughout the day. Keynote Speaker Hank Henderson, CEO of Car-Mart, presented the Small Business of the Year award to Sabores Mexican Cuisine during the luncheon.



Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce

September 21:
Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce Fall Golf Tournament brought out 180 golfers on a beautiful Friday at Lost Springs Golf & Athletic Club in Rogers.



September 21:
Community Diversity Celebration celebrated Hispanic Heritage month in Rogers. Other events throughout the year included Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo celebration and USA's Independence Day.

Northwest Arkansas Job Fair

September 14:
Over 1,200 employment seekers and hundreds of veterans flocked to Rogers with hopes of landing that perfect job.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The Government Affairs Division serves as the link between business and government. In this role, the Division focuses on two goals: to educate our members on issues and public policy and advocate for regional business and quality of life priorities to the proper government body. Additionally, Government Affairs staff will engage in activities that produce long-term positive impacts such as candidate training, strengthening relationships and engaging membership in the political process.

Focus on Issues That Can Have an Influence on Business

- Conducted monthly Government Affairs Committee meetings with an average attendance of 25 members. These Committee meetings featured the director of the Arkansas Highway Department, Arkansas Attorney General and chiefs of staff for Congressman Steve Womack and Senator Mark Pryor, to name a few speakers.
- Nearly every week during 2012, Government Affairs staff produced an email update to interested members that provided information on local, state and federal policy and legislation that might have an impact on business and Northwest Arkansas.
- Worked with a state legislator to host a forum on the establishment of healthcare exchanges in Arkansas.
- Organized three Focus on the Economy forums that featured Senator Mark Pryor, Senator John Boozman and Congressman Steve Womack discussing the importance of healthcare, transportation and local business to the region's economy. More than 225 people attended the forums.

Work with Federal, State and Local Government

- Hosted the House and Senate Transportation, Game & Fish Oversight and City, County, Local committees in Northwest Arkansas. More than 25 legislators attended committee meetings in Northwest Arkansas.
- Traveled to Washington D.C. with 12 other Chamber members to meet with the state's Congressional delegation and staff to advocate for issues of importance to Rogers, Lowell and Northwest Arkansas.
- Provided staff support for the state 3rd District Legislative Caucus. This included organizing weekly breakfasts during the legislative session and assisting Caucus members schedule meetings and events throughout the year.
- Worked with other NWA Chamber staff to organize and host a reception and organizational breakfast for the 3rd District Caucus in Northwest Arkansas following the 2012 General Election.

Develop and Advocate a State and Federal Legislative Agenda

- Worked onsite at the state capitol from January through February representing the Rogers-Lowell Chamber during the 88th General Assembly's fiscal session.
- During the legislative session, the Government Affairs Division advocated for regional economic development funding that

2012 included
30+ educational
 events, some of those
 offered were:
6 candidate forums
 Focus on the Economy **3**
 seminars
10 government affairs
 meetings

resulted in \$250,000 being set aside for this purpose.

- Throughout the year the Chamber assisted numerous members in advocating for specific pieces of federal legislation. The Government Affairs Division utilized direct contact, advocacy trips and letters of support to aid members as they addressed important federal issues. The Division initiated three significant calls to action for the membership on issues including ending the ethanol-blending mandate, National Labor Relations Board rules and federal infrastructure funding.
- Assisted in educating voters and promoting passage of a temporary highway sales tax issue that will result in the investment of \$400 million in infrastructure projects in Benton and Washington counties.
- Collaborated with fellow NWA Chambers of Commerce and the NWA Council to develop a regional legislative agenda that concentrates on higher education, economic development, transportation and general business issues. The agenda may be reviewed at www.RogersLowellVotes.com.



October 6:
 12th Annual Northwest
 Arkansas International Festival
 in downtown Rogers attracted
 over 2,000 people. Over 50
 countries were represented in the
 International Fashion Show.



October:
 Bentonville Police Department
 adds Drug Free Rogers-
 Lowell's website and Meth Task
 Force logo to one of its drug
 seized vehicles during their
 Methamphetamine Awareness
 Month proclamation at City Hall.

Engage Members and Community in the Political Process

- Co-hosted with the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce a state legislative forum during the 88th General Assembly's fiscal session. State legislators from Benton County provided updates on their activities during the legislative session and answered questions from voters. The forum had an attendance of more than 50 people.
- Hosted public forums for candidates seeking the state legislature, Benton County judge, Benton County sheriff, Rogers city council, Lowell city council and circuit judge positions.
- Utilized Twitter (@RLACC_gov) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/RLACC.Gov) to provide updates and information to members and the community. In 2012, the Government Affairs Division had 331 followers on Twitter and 145 "likes" on Facebook.
- Spoke to multiple civic and leadership groups in 2012 on issues and legislation under consideration at the local, state and federal levels. Groups included Rogers-Lowell Chamber Government Affairs Committee, Board of Directors, Chamber Ambassadors and Rogers Morning Kiwanis.
- Assisted members in locating polling places and provided sample ballots upon request for both the 2012 Primary Election and 2012 General Election.
- Worked with Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders to host a political panel discussion on the issues and candidates running in the 2012 General Election. More than 50 people attended the program.
- Worked with Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders to host a voter registration drive on NWA Community College campus.
- Prepared multiple articles for the Chamber's eNews and *Chamber Voice* on legislative and election-related issues.



331 followers

in 2012 resulting in a

100% increase

from 2011

@RLACC_GOV



145 followers

in 2012 resulting in a

26% increase

from 2011

facebook.com/rlacc.gov

WEB STATS

The total number of **pageviews** of the Chamber's website for 2012 was

372,189

with **unique visitors** totaling

110,062

mobile website traffic reached

22,219 visitors

during 2012.

Top 12 Business Categories Searched

1. Organizations
2. Hotels/Motels
3. Restaurants – ALL
4. Entertainment
5. Banquet/Meeting Rooms
6. Manufacturing-Manufacturers
7. Clinics & Medical Groups
8. Banks and Banking Associations
9. Real Estate – Commercial and Residential
10. Walmart Suppliers
11. Restaurants – Fast Food
12. Caterers

Most Viewed Events

1. NWA Job Fair/Hiring our Heros
2. FYI Brown Bag Lunch - The Power of LinkedIn
3. NWA Business Conference & Expo
4. NWA International Festival & Fashion Show
5. Bradford Marine Buddy Bass Tournament

November 6:
On Election Day the Chamber supported Issue 1 - a temporary sales tax that invests over a billion dollars in highways in Arkansas and it passed. Northwest Arkansas will receive over \$400 million in new highways.



November 9:
Bowling for Business networking event at Fast Lane Entertainment included over 90 businessmen and women showing up to have a ball and pizza.



ioit2me.com
I Owe It To Me.

November 15:
37th Annual Great American Smoke-Out where millions joined together to take the first steps towards a better and healthier future.



November 24:
"Small Business Saturday" a day dedicated to supporting small businesses nationwide and celebrating the Shop Small movement in Rogers.

NWA EMERGING LEADERS

The mission is to retain emerging leaders and build a lasting legacy in Northwest Arkansas by providing the resources to infuse new talent with existing leadership.

The Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders (NWAEL) is an initiative of the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. It consists of informative programs and teams formed to collectively address issues and projects of relevance to Northwest Arkansas. During 2012, NWAEL membership increased by 10 percent as the total number of members topped 360. Also in 2012, NWAEL was a finalist for the Walmart Community Partner Award which recognizes an organization that has made a substantial contribution to diversity and inclusion in Northwest Arkansas.

Sustainability Workgroup – This workgroup focuses on increasing sustainability in Northwest Arkansas and diverting recyclable material out of the landfill.

- Led 10 recycling initiatives at non-profit and corporate events in 2012. Their efforts resulted in near zero-waste events as highlighted by the Boys and Girls Club 2012 Golf Tournament. More than 2,000 people attended the two-day golf tournament and thanks to the group's guidance and effort only a third of a bag of trash was sent to the landfill
- Partnered with Springdale Schools and Waste Management to encourage district-wide recycling at elementary schools in 2012. Once fully implemented it could save the district thousands of dollars in disposal fees while diverting tons of material.
- Supported formation of a recycling alliance between the cities, counties and solid waste districts. By improving collaboration, recyclables will be more efficiently collected and resources will be shared between agencies.

Legacy Workgroup – This workgroup develops a leadership pool and links ready, willing and able emerging talent to organizations, public and private boards and commissions and areas of leadership needed to benefit the community.

- Hosted the third annual board service certification program, which had more than 20 NWAEL members participate in this all-day educational event. The program prepares attendees for board service by providing instruction on legal and ethical considerations, fundraising, time management and finding the right service opportunities for your interests. More than 100 people have gone through the certification program since 2010.
- Initiated a partnership with the Northwest Arkansas Leadership Council to offer quarterly board service certification programs in 2013.
- Developed "mastermind" groups among its membership. A "mastermind" group is a circle of like-minded individuals who meet regularly to discuss issues, develop personal goals and instill accountability in accomplishing those goals.



Greenways and Trails Workgroup – This workgroup links parks, trails and people; to provide, protect, develop and maintain parks, greenways and trails throughout the community; and to promote public awareness of the benefits of green space.

- Continued to support the Community Bike Program. The workgroup established a community bike program in 2011 within the city of Rogers whereby donated bicycles are refurbished and placed on the trails for anyone to ride and return. The group held their second annual family bicycle poker ride and the first ever Race for the Spike bike race in conjunction with Frisco Fest in 2012 and raised more than \$1,000 to support the Community Bike Program.
- Advocated for a bike-to-school initiative at a local elementary school, which led to the school offering a bike safety course and allowing students to ride their bikes to school for the first time.

Community Enrichment – Provides avenues for dialogue and education about community issues as well as opportunities for emerging leaders to become engaged in projects that will enrich the region. Also in 2012, Community Enrichment merged with the Downtown and Education workgroups.

- Created a new member-wide program, Lunch with a Leader, which is a small group lunch that members can attend with a business or community leader. In 2012, University of Arkansas Chancellor David Gearhart, Tyson Foods' Archie Schaffer and Walmart's Cindy Davis participated and provided insight on leadership, growing your career and the importance of community involvement.
- Established a new driver's information program in partnership with the Arkansas State Police that placed driver's manuals and testing checklists in nearly 10 schools around Northwest Arkansas.

Political and Government Affairs Team – Non-partisan program intended to assess current political issues and opportunities; educates on political and government processes; and engages and encourages participation in local, state and federal government.

- Organized a member-wide quarterly program featuring Clinton School of Public Service Dean Skip Rutherford. Mr. Rutherford discussed the importance of engaging in the political process with more than 50 members.
- Offered an opportunity to learn more about the 2012 General Election by hosting a panel discussion on candidates and issues members would see on their ballot in November. The panel included University of Arkansas economist Kathy Deck, Arkansas Economic Development Commission director Grant Tennille, *The City Wire* publisher Michael Tilley and political strategist Clint Reed.
- Conducted a voter registration drive on the campus of NorthWest Arkansas Community College.

December:
Northwest Arkansas Council spearheaded the Business Retention and Expansion Survey in cooperation with Chambers throughout the Region. A total of 470 surveys were completed with a goal of 450.

December 31:
The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce closed out 2012 with 2,025 member businesses.

ROGERS CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Convention & Visitors Bureau's mission is to positively impact the Rogers economy through the promotion of the area as a retail, business and convention destination. The Rogers CVB staff works diligently to bring conventions, sporting events, and groups to Rogers who will stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, shop in stores and enjoy all the wonderful amenities Rogers has to offer.

The Rogers Advertising & Promotion Commission collects a two percent hotel tax in the city limits of Rogers, this tax funds the Rogers Convention & Visitors Bureau, which promotes Rogers as a destination for visitors, meetings and conventions, sports events and special events. Below are the accomplishments of the Rogers Convention & Visitors Bureau in 2012:

Generate overnight visitors that will produce room nights for Rogers hotels and business for our attractions, restaurants, and retailers and focus sales efforts on new and repeat multi-hotel business that utilizes convention center space.

- The RCVB generated 70 leads (versus a goal of 70) in which 42 leads booked in Rogers resulted in 14,371 (versus a goal of 12,500) room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$3,084,049.
- Year to date the two percent hotel tax collections are up 12.2 percent.

Market Rogers and northwest Arkansas as a premiere destination for meetings, conventions and sporting events.

- In 2012, \$125,000 was spent placing online and print ads in various magazines, websites and directories promoting Rogers as a meetings, sports and leisure destination.
- Utilized social media outlets, which resulted in 651 followers on Twitter and 2,565 fans on Facebook.
- Staff attended six trade shows to promote Rogers as a convention or sports destination.

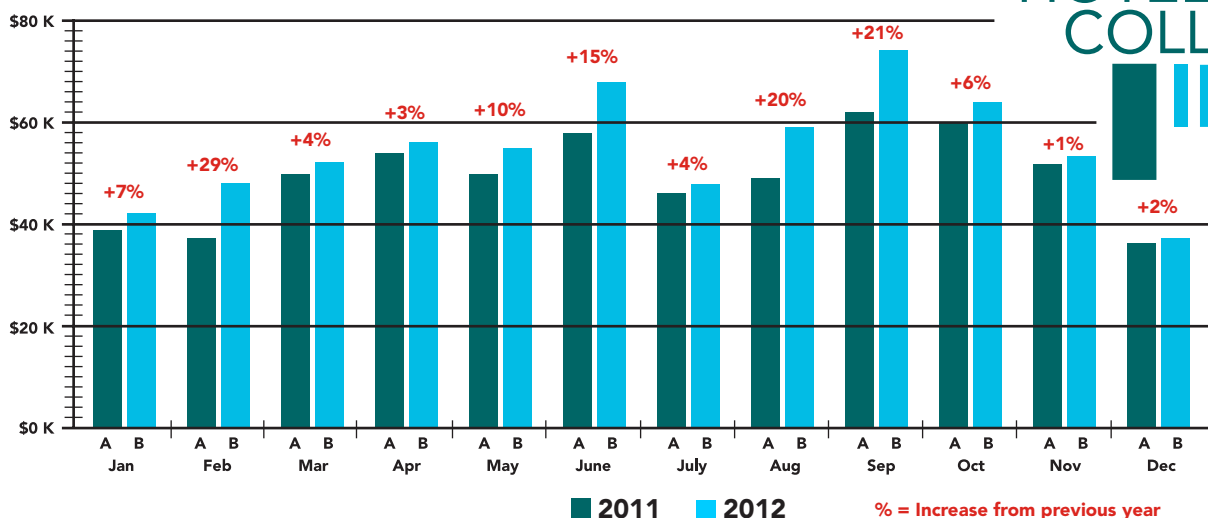


Meet and exceed visitor needs and expectations with the result of enhancing visitor experience and encourage repeat visits to Rogers and northwest Arkansas by offering exclusive services such as on-line housing and registration, welcome banners and posters and incentive funding.

- The RCVB has provided services for 61 groups (versus a goal of 60), making an impression on 26,798 individuals attending conferences, meetings and tournaments in Rogers.
- The Rogers A&P Commission awarded \$155,680.00 in incentive funding to groups in 2012, resulting in approximately 10,801 room nights for Rogers hotels.

**12%
INCREASE IN
HOTEL TAX
COLLECTIONS
IN 2012**

Hotel Sales Tax Collected: 2011 vs 2012





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www.RogersLowell.com

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