

GROWING BUSINESS.

BUILDING COMMUNITY.

2013 Annual Report
Chamber Voice

FEBRUARY 2014 | Vol 9 Issue 2



A Letter from the Chairman



2013 was an outstanding year for growing business and building community in the Rogers-Lowell area. New businesses, business expansion and job creation significantly impacted our local economy by helping to create meaningful opportunities for Chamber members to sell their goods and services. Businesses in our community created over 2,300 jobs last year!

Serco opened a customer care center in Rogers representing 1,600 of those new jobs created last year. Redman and Associates announced plans to on-shore production and create at least 74 manufacturing jobs in Rogers. 2013 also saw over \$24.5 million in capital investments get underway in Rogers. Recent national "best" rankings continued to recognize our region's growth and accomplishments in transitioning to a true world class community and workforce.

Last year, Downtown Rogers welcomed 25 new businesses and saw two expand their operations. Conferences and events like the Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism, the Poultry Festival, the FLW Tournament on Beaver Lake and the LPGA Tournament at Pinnacle Country Club were secured for 2014 and will provide great exposure and revenue for area businesses.

It was also an important year in Government Affairs. The Chamber's division worked hard with both Northwest Arkansas

Chambers and the Northwest Arkansas Council to assist in the preparation of a regional legislative agenda focused on economic development, higher education and infrastructure related issues. More than 50 percent of our key agenda items were enacted. Bills were passed that modified the Northwest Arkansas Regional Mobility Authority, broadened the scope of regional economic development partnerships, reduced taxes for manufacturers, empowered city councils to enact beverage control rules and supported knowledge-based growth.

The Chamber is ready to build on these successes in 2014 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 "2014 Business Plan," set to be published in the March issue of the *Chamber Voice*.

On behalf of the entire Chamber, thank you for your membership and involvement. Our members 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 the Chamber's leadership in our region. We hope you will be inspired by what was achieved this past year and join with us over this next year as we continue to make the Rogers-Lowell Area a great place to live and do business.

Matt Crafton
2013 Chairman of the Board
Crafton Tull



The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce is one out of just 79 chambers of 7,000+ nationwide accredited with Five Stars.

Raymond Burns, CCE

President/CEO
rburns@rogerslowell.com

Shelle Summers

Senior Vice President of Sales
ssummers@rogerslowell.com

Geovanny Sarmiento

Vice President of Minority Business Development
geovanny@rogerslowell.com

Judy Diffie

Finance Manager
judy@rogerslowell.com

Jacque McQueen

Account Executive
jacque@rogerslowell.com

Rachael Eichenberger

Director of Convention Sales | Visit Rogers
rachael@rogerslowell.com

Janine Springer, IOM

Chief Financial Officer
jspringer@rogerslowell.com

Brad Phillips

Vice President of Marketing Communications
brad@rogerslowell.com

Whitney Yoder, IOM

Vice President of Development
whitney@rogerslowell.com

Nick Smith

Creative Services Manager
nick@rogerslowell.com

Marni Rogers

Customer Service Representative
marni@rogerslowell.com

Jennifer Tidwell

Assistant to the President
jtidwell@rogerslowell.com

Amanda Mills

Information Specialist
amanda@rogerslowell.com

Allyson Twiggs Dyer

Senior Vice President | Visit Rogers
allyson@rogerslowell.com

Steve Cox

Vice President of Economic Development
steve@rogerslowell.com

Sarah Collins

Vice President of Government Affairs
sarah@rogerslowell.com

Erin Shoemaker

Director of Special Events
erin@rogerslowell.com

Frank Adase

Sports Marketing Manager | Visit Rogers
frank@rogerslowell.com

Katie Wright

Information Specialist
katie@rogerslowell.com

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:

The Rogers Regional Sports Park opened on Dixieland Road. Development was funded by the 2011 bond issue. The park features six softball/baseball fields used for league and tournament play. It also links to the City's trail system.



January 16:

The 89th Arkansas General Assembly convened. Republicans were the majority in the state House and Senate for the first time since the Reconstruction era.



January 22:

Chamber members started off the New Year "speed networking" at the first ever Business2Business After Hours held at the Metroplex Event Center.



January 24:

Benton County Business After Hours, sponsored by Bentonville/Bella Vista, Siloam Springs and Rogers-Lowell Area Chambers of Commerce, was held at Toyota Northwest Arkansas.

TIMELINE: January 2013



Chairman of the Board
Matt Crafton
Crafton Tull



Chairman-Elect
Ric Clifford
Clifford Consulting Group



Treasurer
Scott Street
Mercy Health



Past Chairman
Cathy Foraker
AT&T



RIDC President
Jerry Vest
Regions Bank



President/CEO
Raymond Burns, CCE

2013 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman of the Board: Matt Crafton – *Crafton Tull*
Chairman-Elect: Ric Clifford – *Clifford Consulting Group*
Treasurer: Scott Street – *Mercy Health*
Past Chairman: Cathy Foraker – *AT&T*
President/CEO: Raymond Burns
RIDC President: Jerry Vest – *Regions Bank*

2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Hale – *Digital Printing Solutions*
Norm Prestage – *Ernst & Young LLP*
Julio Rodriguez – *LR & Co. CPA Management Consultants*
David Thrasher – *Thrasher & Chambers, Inc.*
Mike Watts – *FM Corporation*
Vicki Vasser – *Matthews, Campbell, Rhoads, McClure & Thompson, P.A.*
Adrian Dominguez – *LULAC*
Nick Hobbs – *JB Hunt Transport, Inc.*
Greg Lindley – *Simmons First Bank*
Albert Madewell – *Tyson Foods, Inc.*
Mark Ryan – *Arvest Bank*
Crystal Thurman – *NWA Media*
Lori Brown – *Kimberly Clark*
Dewayne Burns – *eSCO Processing & Recycling*
Guy Cable – *Grand Savings Bank*
Clay Conly – *First Western Bank*
Jeff Geurian – *CEI Engineering*
Erin Kiefer – *Assembled Products*

DIVISION CHAIRS

David Thrasher, *Chair of Community Development*
Vicki Vasser, *Chair of Membership Services*
Mike Watts, *Chair of Economic Development*
Jerry Carmichael, *Chair of Government Affairs*
David Lang, *Chair of Visit Rogers*
Norm Prestage, *Chair of Audit Committee*

EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

Jerry Carmichael – *TY International Inc.*
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/SWECO*
Thom Stathakis – *Everett Buick GMC*
Dr. Evelyn Jorgenson – *NWACC*
Ben Casmer – *Northwest Health System*
Dick Trammel – *Arkansas Highway Commission*



February:

The Chamber released its 2012 Annual Report. One of the highlights included The World's Foremost Outfitter, Cabela's Incorporated, opening in Rogers and becoming the company's first and only store in Arkansas. Downtown Rogers welcomed 27 new businesses in 2012.



February 28:

Community Diversity Celebration was hosted by the NorthWest Arkansas Community College and celebrated Black History month.

Celebrating a Successful 2013



7077 Chambers | 222 Accredited
Only 79 5-Star

Facebook Likes
f **1500+** Fans
66% Women | 32% Men **70%**

Twitter Followers
t **2375+** **60%**

LinkedIn Members
in **920+** **25%**

WebStats - 2013
130,000 Unique Visitors | 350,000 Page Views



Northwest Arkansas
Metropolitan Area

NATION'S **6th** MOST AFFORDABLE



THE COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY
AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

Northwest Arkansas

2013 #3 for Job
Best Cities **GROWTH**
(mid-sized markets)
newgeography.com



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

#4
Private
JOBS
GROWTH



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

SEPTEMBER 2013 REPORT |

northwest arkansas economy

OUTGROWS
Peer Regions

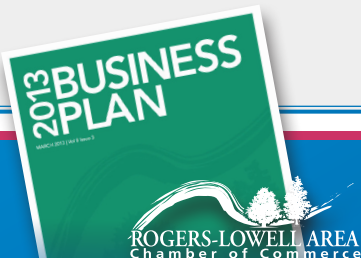
Forbes 2013

Northwest Arkansas
#28 BEST PLACES
for
Business & Careers

#3 on RealtyTrac
2013 Best Housing Markets
for Health & Wealth Report
Northwest Arkansas

**Arkansas
Business**
august 2013

Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce
**LARGEST
CHAMBER**
in the State of Arkansas



March 1:

The Chamber published its 2013 Business Plan providing its members specific programs and goals for the year. In 2013, celebrated 91 years as the premier advocacy organization for business in the Rogers-Lowell area.



March 5:

The 91st Annual Banquet celebrated 2012 accomplishments and welcomed keynote speaker Randall Stephenson, Chairman and CEO of AT&T, Inc., who shared his vision of where technology is headed.



March 28:

Chamber University offered its Small Business Start-up Summit helping members learn about approaching a lender, and opening and growing a business. It was presented in partnership with the University of Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC).

TIMELINE: March 2013

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.



snapshot

+2300

New Jobs Created in Rogers-Lowell in 2013

Economic Development Division

- Over 2,300 new jobs were created in Rogers-Lowell in 2013. Creating new jobs not only decreases unemployment, but allows Rogers-Lowell to be seen as an area of the country for talent to relocate and find jobs.
- A press conference was held October 7 announcing the onshoring of 74 manufacturing jobs coming to Rogers. Redman and Associates will phase out Chinese production, and manufacture and ship from a Rogers facility.
- Serco opened a call center in Rogers creating 1,600 new jobs.
- In 2013, staff members worked with site consultants and industries on 32 projects. Fifteen had criteria that we could not accommodate. Sites were submitted for the other 17 of which eight projects considered Rogers as a possibility. Three of those projects chose Rogers as locations for their businesses and the final project is still ongoing with a final site to be determined in early 2014.
- Staff attended a national site selector event in December in order to promote Rogers-

Recruit and Retain a High Quality Workforce

- In 2013, 118 jobs were posted on the Chamber's online job bank.
- Four articles featuring the online job bank and one article featuring the revamped NationJob program appeared in the *Chamber Voice* throughout the year.
- In 2013, 66 resumes were posted on the Chamber's website.
- The 2013 NWA Job Fair was held in October. A total of 65 local businesses purchased booths for the event seeking to fill open job positions. Over 1,400 people came to the event and participated in job hunting, resume reviews, mock interviews and seminars throughout the day.
- Through 2013, Chamber staff members mailed or distributed over 150 relocation packets containing information about the quality of life and amenities available in the community.

Lowell as an ideal place for businesses to operate.

- The Northwest Arkansas Council continued its new regional marketing promotions including a new regional logo, tagline and website.

Engage in Small Business Outreach

- Over 600 individuals seeking information on starting a business received assistance from staff and were referred to the Small Business Resource Center at the Chamber and partner organizations for further advice.
- Staff partnered with Innovate Arkansas to host a Gone in 60 Seconds Elevator Pitch Contest in 2013. Nineteen local businesses and startups pitched their business ideas to a crowd of over 70.
- For 2013, twelve local businesses were named as a recipient of the Small Business of the month award. Bailey and Oliver Law Firm was the winner of the 2012-2013 Small Business of the Year.
- The Chamber conducted 126 ribbon cuttings during 2013.



2013 **small BUSINESS**
OF THE YEAR

presented by ROGERS-LOWELL AREA
Chamber of Commerce



- In 2012, members taught members at 12 FYI Brown Bag educational seminars.
- The Small Business Council completed its strategic planning process. The strategic plan has been put into action.
- The 2013 NWA Business Conference & Expo took



April:

Visit Rogers' hard work pays off and reports that April hotel taxes were up 9.8 percent while February, March, and April represented the largest hotel tax collections in the history of the tax.



April 11-14:

The Walmart FLW Tour returned to Beaver Lake with an estimated economic impact to the local economy of half a million dollars.



April 22:

Jason Bedford, Steven Dixon, Chris Collins and Brett Granata won the 2013 Spring Golf Tournament held at the Pinnacle Country Club.



April 27:

Drug Free Rogers-Lowell partnered with the Benton County Sheriff's Office, the Rogers Police Department and the Bentonville Police Department for a prescription drop-off event collecting 737 pounds of medications.

TIMELINE: April 2013

place September 13 at the John Q. Hammons Center. There were 165 area businesses that had exhibit booths at the event and over 1,000 people attended the various events throughout the day.

- Booth sales have begun for the 2014 NWA Business Expo.
- The Small Business Toolkit is now online on the Chamber's website. Phase one is currently complete and updates and improvements will be coming throughout 2014.
- The Doing Business in Rogers and Lowell guide was updated in 2013 with current information and 175 guides were published.

Encourage Business Recruitment and Expansion

- Six local businesses are looking into expanding operations that would create up to 200 new jobs and have over \$50 million in new capital investment.
- In 2013, Chamber staff members assisted over 600 inquiries regarding new business startups, franchisees and existing businesses, offering information, advice and resources on setting



Northwest
Arkansas

Job Fair

1,400+ Attendance
65 Exhibitors

NWA

BUSINESS
CONFERENCE & EXPO

1,000+ Attendance
165 Exhibitors



25 New Businesses
including
2 Business Expansions
in Downtown Rogers



community update

Marshall's

HomeGoods

complete nutrition
Look better. Feel better. Perform better.

Mojitos

AKIN'S
NATURAL FOODS MARKET

GRUB'S
ROGERS

SHOE CARNIVAL

DICKEY'S
SINCE 1941
BARBECUE PIT

Bliss
CUPCAKE CAFE

The EGG&I
Breakfast & Lunch
Serving Our Friends Daily

THE PARTY PLACE
Party Supply Specialists

New Retail & Restaurants in 2013

May 11:

Hundreds of anglers participated in the 2013 Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce's 22nd Annual Bradford Marine & ATV Buddy Bass Tournament on Beaver Lake. The winning team, Garry Bundy and Johnny Hagood, had a total catch weight of 22.32 pounds.

May 25:

The new Rogers Aquatics Center held its Open House to the public on May 11, then Grand Opening on May 25. The \$12.9 million project was funded by the 2011 bond issue. It's the first time in more than 50 years that the City has a new public pool surrounded by a state-of-the-art water park.

May 31:

The annual Chamber Picnic was a huge success as Chamber members, volunteers, committee members, board members and special friends gathered in Lowell for the Chamber to show its gratitude to them.

TIMELINE: May 2013

MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Minority Business Development Division supports small minority owned businesses and entrepreneurs with programs, assistance and resources to start, grow or expand their businesses through education, networking, community involvement and outreach. We strive to make the City of Rogers and Lowell a place with great opportunities for all in a diverse economic climate.

snapshot in 2013

94 Minority Businesses Joined the Chamber

23% of New Chamber Businesses Minority Owned

Minority Business Development Successes

- A total of 94 minority businesses joined the Chamber, representing 23 percent of total new businesses joined in 2013.
- The 2013 NWA International Festival was a success despite the weather; we continue to have great attendance and support from the community. Year after year the International Fashion Show (pictured right) is the part of the festival that draws the most attendance.
- A total of 662 minorities participated in the Chamber's networking events helping them to become more comfortable in growing their business through networking.
- At the end of 2013, we had 20 participants in the Minority Business Mentorship Program; these entrepreneurs have the oppor-

tunity to receive professional advice from experienced mentors.

- Assisted 12 minority businesses interested in starting and completing the Minority Business Enterprise Certification (MBE) program.
- The Task Force worked in partnership with the Rogers Public Schools to provide mentors and role models for students. We served as a strategic partner for the NWA Regional Spanish Language Poetry Slam, a program attracting close to 200 talented minority students performing and expressing their art through poetry. We provided speakers for the LIFE program (Learn, Improvement, Fun and Empowerment) with the NorthWest Arkansas Community College and were able to reach out to more than 150 students.
- Provided education and networking opportunities for 135 minority entrepreneurs at our Spanish seminar series.
- A total of 121 people were 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 134 minority business owners and entrepreneurs seeking assistance were helped with resources and information on starting and running a successful business in Northwest Arkansas.

snapshot

662 Minorities Participated in the Chamber's **2013 Networking EVENTS**

Minority Community Outreach

Rogers Police Department (RPD) – In 2013, we continued supporting the meetings between the RPD and the Minority Leadership Council with over 85 people in attendance. These meetings were very effective in building relationships between the minority leadership and members of the community with the RPD. Both parties have been able to bring to the table their concerns and work up a plan of action. Information about the progress made in these meetings is being shared to the minority population through the strategic alliances that have been formed with media and other organizations.



newgeography

June:

The Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ranked #3 on the 2013 Best Cities for Job Growth list released by New Geography. It was a jump of 18 spots over the previous year's ranking.

AREA DEVELOPMENT

June:

Area Development Magazine ranked Northwest Arkansas #43 on its Top 100 Leading Locations for 2013. It marked an improvement over a #75 ranking the previous year.

54th Annual POULTRY FESTIVAL

June 14-16:

The Poultry Festival, a tri-state non-profit trade organization, held its conference in Rogers attracting over 5,000 attendees from all over the nation to Northwest Arkansas.



June 21-23:

The Walmart NW Arkansas Championship presented by P&G returned to Pinnacle Country Club bringing the world's best LPGA golfers to Rogers.

Daisy National BB Gun

June 27-30:

The 48th Annual Daisy National BB Gun Championship Match was held in Rogers at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center. More than 450 boys and girls competed in the 5-meter BB gun match.

TIMELINE: June 2013

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 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.



snapshot

80 GRADUATES

May 2013 | 38 May 2014 | 42

LEADERSHIP

BENTON COUNTY

Develop Dynamic Future Leaders

A total of 80 class members were provided with leadership skills training and an introduction to the community through the Leadership Benton County program in 2013 - 2014.

Promote Healthy Communities

- Obtained \$189,874 in continuation funding for Drug Free Rogers-Lowell programs.
- Redesigned and updated the coalition's website in 2013 | www.loit2me.com
- Achieved 1,380 Facebook "Likes" on the loit2me Facebook page
- A total of 5,000 community members were reached at various community events.
- "Partners in Community Wellness" award was presented to two businesses or individuals in 2013 for promoting a healthy home, workplace, or community.



small business TOOLKIT

July 1: Start, Run & Grow Your Business

The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce launched its new online Small Business Toolkit on Rogerslowell.com with the goal of helping small businesses start, run and grow their business with educational content, downloads and helpful links.



snapshot

2013 Tobacco Retailer Training

included

100


Benton County Retailers

representing

30

Stores

- 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 2013.
- Worked with several area businesses to increase or establish tobacco policies that exceed the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act.
- Conducted tobacco prevention programs through the schools and the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA, reaching over 885 youth.
- Conducted a training for 75 medical personnel on the available cessation resources in our community.



snapshot

737 pounds

of Prescription Drugs Collected

2013 Drop-off Event

- Promoted the proper disposal of unused/expired medications and collected a total of 737 pounds of prescription drugs during the Prescription Drug Drop-Off event.



July 1: The staff at OnlineMBApage.com determined the most social media friendly chambers of commerce in the U.S. and ranked the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce #87 in its Top 100.

- Conducted a "Why I Choose to be Drug Free" poster contest with four schools participating.
- 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, and tobacco. Media used to reach residents included radio, 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

- Over 550 high school students at Heritage and Rogers high schools received a 2013 Academic Award for maintaining a 3.5 GPA.
- "Educator of the Year" awards were presented to Martin Svoboda of The Annex, Kaye Chiles of Kirksey Middle School, and Amy Glenn of Westside Elementary School for their skills and dedication to improving education in the community.
- A total of 21 Lowell Elementary School students were awarded the 2013 SMILE (Students Most Improved in Lowell Elementary) Awards.
- A total of 82 Chamber businesses helped welcome over 1,200 local educators back to school at the Annual Teacher Appreciation Breakfast and Education Fair in August.
- Hosted the eighth annual Chamber Night Reception for the Rogers Board of Education in October with over 75 guests in attendance.



July 1: US Airways Magazine, the award winning in-flight magazine of US Airways published 64-page section on Northwest Arkansas reaching six million airline passengers worldwide during the month.

TIMELINE: July 2013

MEMBERSHIP 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.



snapshot

\$505,000

2013
Sponsorships Sold
for **120** Events & Programs



snapshot

413

New Memberships in
2013

Attract New Members and Event Sponsors

- During 2013, the entire Chamber staff supported the profitability of Chamber events and programs by selling \$505,000 in sponsorships for 120 events and programs.
- Chamber staff sold 413 new memberships, valued at \$68,422, by aggressively marketing the value of Chamber membership to the business community. The Chamber's membership goal of 2,100 members was met with 2,134 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 education and information on hot business topics to members.

- Coordinated business events for members and the community.
 - The NWA Business Conference and Expo was held on Friday, September 13, 2013. This was a great event for the Chamber and the community. We had 200 at the Keynote Luncheon and Small Business of the Year presentation. Bailey and Oliver Law Firm was awarded the 2013 Small Business of the Year. We had close to 1,000 in attendance for the Expo with 165 vendor booths.
 - Welcomed more than 1,200 local educators back to school at the Annual Teacher Appreciation Breakfast and Education Fair at Rogers Heritage High School in August.
- Entertained more than 300 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 mem-

bers to grow their professional network and generate business leads. Events included 12 Business After Hours, four Business-to-Business Networking Luncheons, six Community Diversity Celebrations and 12 Coffee Connections.

- The Small Business Council provided an overview of the benefits and services offered to 179 members of the chamber at six 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. They helped to host 126 ribbon cuttings for new members in 2013.
- Honored outgoing members of the Board of Directors, recognized seven award winners and hosted more than 1,200 guests at the 91st Annual Banquet held March 5.
- The 22nd Annual Bradford Marine & ATV Buddy Bass Tournament Kick Off Dinner was held on Friday, May 11 at Bradford Marine & ATV in Springdale with over 200 people in attendance.



snapshot

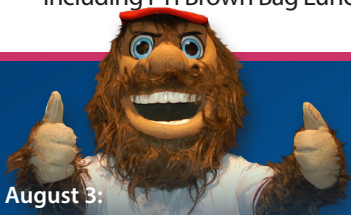
Hosted

34

Business Building & NETWORKING
Events

21

Professional Development Programs
in 2013



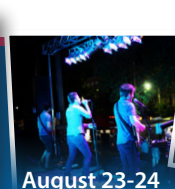
August 3:

Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders partnered with Walmart/Sam's Club NPAC organization to host members at Arvest Ballpark for an exclusive sampling of craft beers and a night of professional Nationals baseball.



August 16:

The Education Committee of the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Teacher Education Fair and Appreciation Breakfast at Rogers Heritage High School. Eighty-two Chamber member businesses helped to welcome over 1,200 local educators back to school.



August 23-24

Crowds gathered in Downtown Rogers for the 29th Annual Frisco Festival. The event has become Northwest Arkansas' biggest street party featuring live music, carnival rides, delicious food, beer and wine garden, arts and crafts vendors and lots of fun!



August 24:

Members of the Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders strapped on a helmet and participated in the third annual Race for the Spike/Frisco 5-Card Bike Poker Ride.

TIMELINE: August 2013



snapshot

In 2013, the Top 3 Reasons to Join the Chamber

NETWORKING / New Business Contacts

Marketing/Advertising/ Publicity Opportunities

Community Involvement / Increasing Visibility

- Jimmy Houston, professional angler, made an appearance at this dinner. The 22nd Annual Bradford Marine Buddy Bass Tournament was held on Beaver Lake on Saturday, May 12.
- The Youth Fishing Tournament has almost tripled in size since 2011 in with 140 kids participating. The Buddy Bass tournament had over 600 fishermen.

- Thanked volunteers and community members at the Chamber Picnic in June at Ward Nail Park in Lowell. More than 200 attended this annual event.
- Held the Bowling for Business event on November 8 at the Rogers Bowling Center. We had 13 teams that participated this year. This event is growing in popularity with our members.

Meet and Exceed Member Needs and Expectations

This results in increasing member retention rates, which will help the Chamber to meet its overall mission to "grow business, build community" in the Rogers-Lowell area and region.

- Provided exceptional customer service by contacting more than 1,600 members to verify and update profile information, answer questions about membership and events, and provide training on the Members Only section.
- Contacted 296 new members to ensure that they received their login credentials for the

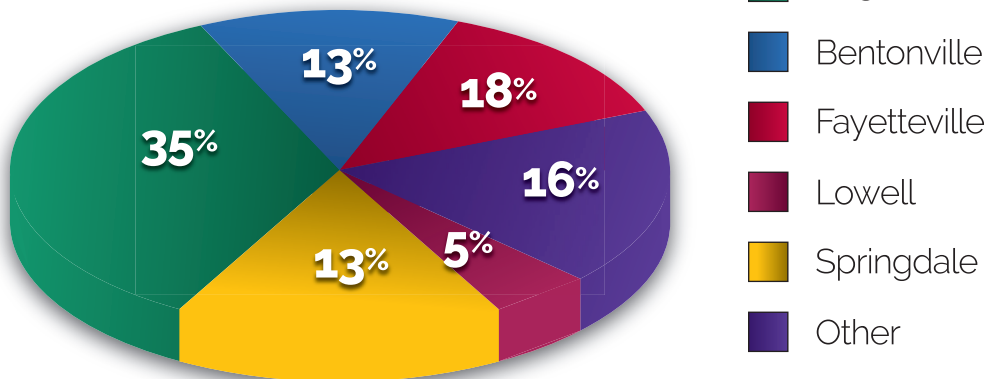
Members Only section and to answer any questions about their membership. If they were not signed up for a Member Orientation, the member was encouraged to attend.

- Sent 684 reminders encouraging members to use the Members Only section to verify their contact information and view their referral report.
- Surveyed 334 new members asking them the main reason their organization joined the Chamber. A total of 78 percent answered the survey. Tracked new members' involvement and contacted any not utilizing their member benefits.
- Customer Service Representative Visited 74 members to show appreciation for their membership and encourage involvement.
- Added 2,750 keywords to appropriate Chamber member profile listings for better search results and to increase referral opportunities.



community update

New Chamber Members by City



snapshot

Finished 2013 with
2,134
Members
and over
3,600
Representatives

NWA BUSINESS CONFERENCE & EXPO

September 13:

The 2013 NWA Business Conference & Expo hosted by the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce attracted over a thousand business people from all over Northwest Arkansas. The Expo, the largest of its kind in the region, had just under 165 exhibitors.

Small Business Of The Year Award

September 13:

The Small Business Council awarded Bailey & Oliver Law Firm the 2013 Small Business of the Year.



September 20:

Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce Fall Golf Tournament brought out 180 golfers to Lost Springs Golf & Athletic Club in Rogers.

TIMELINE: September 2013

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.

Division Chair – Jerry Carmichael

Staff – Michael Lindsey; Sarah Collins, J.D.

Mission: The Government Affairs Division serves as the link between Chamber members and local, state and federal government. In this role, the Chamber advocates for pro-business and quality-of-life issues of importance to Northwest Arkansas. The Division also provides outreach by keeping its members informed on legislation and public policy that might have an impact on business.

Focus on Issues That Can Have an Influence on Business

- Conducted monthly Government Affairs Committee meetings with an average attendance of 22 members. In January, the Committee heard from Benton County Judge Bob Clinard and Sheriff Kelley Craddock. In March, Michael Lindsey provided an update on the legislative session. In April, Michael reviewed the Chamber's legislative agenda and which initiatives were enacted. In May, Alcohol Beverage Commission Director Michael Langley discussed the impact to local business from changes in liquor laws. In June, the group met jointly with Large Industry Council and learned about National Labor Relations Board issues. In July, the group hosted a panel discussion featuring state legislators representing Benton County. In August, the city of Rogers provided an update on programs and projects funded by the 2011 bond issue. In September, the group met jointly with members of the Large Industry Council to learn about updates to the Affordable Care Act and its impact on employment policies.
- Nearly every week during 2013, 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. This email reached 141 recipients and averaged an open rate of 35 percent.

Work with Federal, State and Local Government

- Traveled to Washington D.C. in April with 10 Chamber members to meet with the



snapshot

Government Affairs utilized **DIRECT CONTACT, ADVOCACY TRIPS and LETTERS OF SUPPORT** to aid members on important **STATE and FEDERAL** issues.

state's Congressional delegation and staff to advocate for issues of importance to Rogers, Lowell and Northwest Arkansas.

- Prepared agenda for D.C. trip for Mayors and Chamber executives in October and worked with Congressional staff to organize meetings and events.
- Provided staff support for the state Third District Legislative Caucus. This included organizing 11 weekly breakfasts during the legislative session and assisting Caucus members schedule meetings and events throughout the year. Breakfast speakers included Senator John Boozman, David Gearhart, Randy Zook, Shane Broadway, Grant Tennille and others.

Develop and Advocate a State and Federal Legislative Agenda

- The staff was onsite more than 75 percent of the legislative session and more than



snapshot

Over **50%** of the **Chamber's Legislative Agenda** was Introduced in **2013**



October 2-4: Mayors and Chamber CEOs from Rogers, Springdale, Fayetteville, Bentonville and Siloam Springs and the Northwest Arkansas Council staff traveled to Washington, D.C. to visit with our Congressional Delegation on a wide range of topics.



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

International FESTIVAL

October 5:

The 13th Annual Northwest Arkansas International Festival was held in Downtown Rogers and featured the International Fashion Show, International Food Fest and Fun Festivities for the whole Family.



October 29:

The 2013 NWA Job Fair, presented by WorkSource NTS, was hosted at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center in Rogers. It's the largest and longest running job fair in Arkansas.

TIMELINE: October 2013

- 50 percent of the Chamber's legislative agenda was introduced. Bills were passed that modified regional mobility authorities, broadened the scope of regional economic development partnerships, reduced taxes for manufacturers, empowered city councils to enact alcohol beverage control rules and supported knowledge-based job growth.
- Throughout the year the Chamber assisted numerous members in advocating for specific pieces of legislation. The Government Affairs Division utilized direct contact, advocacy trips and letters of support to aid members as they addressed important state and federal issues. The Division initiated two significant calls to action for the membership on issues including tax reductions for manufacturers and civil justice reform legislation under consideration as a proposed constitutional amendment.
 - Sent letters of support for Big River Steel to members of the 3rd District Caucus.
 - Staff monitored the special session of the State Legislature called by Governor Beebe in October to fix the teacher insurance problem.
 - Collaborated with fellow NWA Chambers of Commerce and the NWA Council to develop a regional legislative agenda that concentrated on higher education, economic development, transportation and general business issues. The agenda may be reviewed at www.RogersLowellvotes.com.

Engage Members and Community in the Political Process

- Hosted five state legislative forums during the session in 2013 with an average attendance of 65. In February, attendance peaked at more than 90. These allowed the public to meet and ask questions of state legislators
- Created and maintained a new advocacy

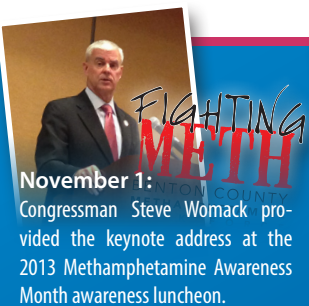
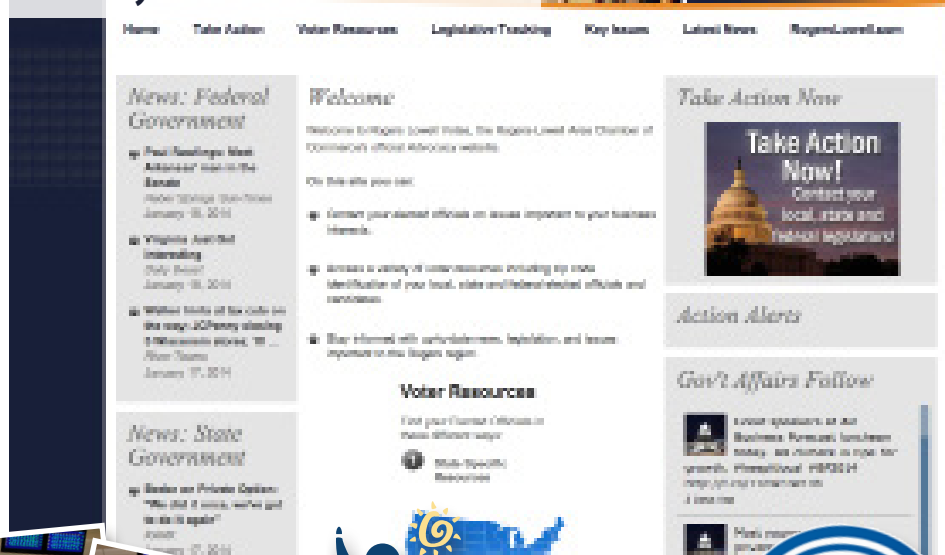
website (www.RogersLowellVotes.com) that details bills of interest to members and provides information on how to contact state and federal elected officials.

- Utilized Twitter (@RLACC_Gov) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/RLACC.Gov) to provide updates and information to members and the community. In 2013, the Government Affairs Division had 433 followers on Twitter and 173 "likes" on Facebook.
- Assisted members in contacting legislators concerning specific legislation. Averaged responding to two members' requests for information each week during session.
- During the session assisted members visiting Little Rock in meeting with legislators and navigating the political process.
- Testified on behalf of SWEPCO to the Arkansas Public Service Commission on the importance

of the Flint Creek Power Plant.

- Wrote letters requesting EPA delay implementation of TMDL rules in the Illinois River Watershed.
- Wrote letter expressing support for broad-based sources of energy including coal.
- Wrote letter of support for immigration reform to Senators Pryor and Boozman.
- Worked with Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders Political & Government Affairs to host a monthly candidate training breakfast series. More than 30 potential candidates attended the first breakfast in June featuring former Congressman Asa Hutchinson. The second breakfast focused on the basics of running for office and was attended by 18 people. The third breakfast in October discussed tips for raising campaign contributions.

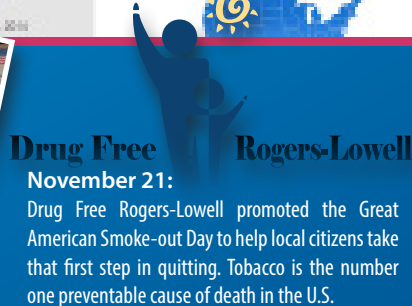
Launched new Government Affairs advocacy website in 2013



November 1: Congressman Steve Womack provided the keynote address at the 2013 Methamphetamine Awareness Month awareness luncheon.



November 8: The Bowling for Business networking event keeps growing every year. Over 70 businessmen and women showed up at the Rogers Bowling Center to enjoy an afternoon of fun. The highest scoring team was AMP Sign and Banner.



November 21: Drug Free Rogers-Lowell promoted the Great American Smoke-out Day to help local citizens take that first step in quitting. Tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death in the U.S.



November 30: The Chamber helped to promote Small Business Saturday, a day to "Shop Small" -- a movement that is helping to inspire people to shop with and support small businesses and give back to the places that have given their communities so much.

VISIT ROGERS

Visit Rogers' mission is to positively impact the Rogers economy through the promotion of the area as a retail, business and convention destination.

 snapshot


17,922

Room Nights Booked in 2013

The Rogers Advertising & Promotion Commission collects a two percent hotel tax in the city limits of Rogers. This tax funds Visit Rogers which promotes Rogers as a destination for visitors, meetings and conventions, sports events and special events. Below are the accomplishments of Visit Rogers in 2013:

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.

- Visit Rogers generated 72 leads (versus a goal of 70) in which 46 leads booked in Rogers resulting in 17,922 room nights (versus a goal of 15,500) with an estimated economic impact of over three million dollars.
- The Rogers two percent hotel tax was up four percent in 2013.

 snapshot

4% Increase in **HOTEL TAX** Collections in 2013

December 2:

The Rogers Christmas Parade featured floats, marching bands, decorated cars, scouts, dogs, choirs, kids and lots of colorful lights. The 2013 theme was "Holidays Around the World" showcasing the beautiful traditions of the many cultures that call Rogers home.

 snapshot

Rogers
Advertising & Promotions Commission
Awarded
\$179,000+
INCENTIVE FUNDING
to Groups in 2013

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

- In 2013, \$105,000 was spent placing online and print ads in various magazines, websites and directories promoting Rogers as a meetings, sports and leisure destination.
- Visit Rogers utilized social media outlets during 2013 which resulted in 1,125 "Followers" on Twitter, 2,793 "Likes" on Facebook, 122 "Followers" on Pinterest and 148 "Followers" on Instagram.
- Visit Rogers Staff attended seven trade shows to promote Rogers as a convention and 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.

- Visit Rogers provided services for 63 groups (versus a goal of 60), making an impression on 30,486 individuals attending conferences, meetings and tournaments in Rogers.
- The Rogers Advertising & Promotion Commission awarded \$179,201 of incentive funding to groups in 2013, resulting in approximately 13,415 room nights for Rogers hotels.



NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

GREAT FOR BUSINESS. GREAT FOR LIFE.

BENTONVILLE • FAYETTEVILLE • ROGERS • SILOAM SPRINGS • SPRINGDALE

December 3:

The Chamber announces to members that the Northwest Arkansas Council launched its new social media initiative called the Northwest Arkansas Digital Ambassadors program to help amplify good news about the region. Join this elite digital squad at nwacouncil.org.

2,100+ Businesses
3,600+ Individuals

December 31:

The Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce closed out 2013 with a total of 2,134 member businesses.

TIMELINE: December 2013

NWA EMERGING LEADERS

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 2013, NWAEL membership increased by twenty-five percent as the total number of members topped 449. NWAEL continues to connect individuals with networking, service projects and professional development opportunities that strengthen employee retention in Northwest Arkansas.

Mission: To retain emerging leaders and build a lasting legacy in Northwest Arkansas by providing the resources to infuse new talent with existing leadership.

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

- Led ten recycling initiatives at nonprofit and corporate events in 2013. Their efforts resulted in near zero-waste events as highlighted by the Boys and Girls Club 2013 Golf Tournament and the Polo in the Ozarks event.
- Continued to develop 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.
- Worked on developing materials to be shared with the public regarding the how-to's of recycling.

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 three board service certification events, which had more than seventy-five participants 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 175 people have gone through the certification program since 2010.
- Took steps to launch “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. The launch of this program is set for the second quarter of 2014.

Greenways and Trails Workgroup – The 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 Race for the Spike bike race in conjunction with Frisco Festival in 2013 and raised more than \$5,000 to support the Community Bike Program.
- Worked to create strategic partnerships to further enhance the NWA trail system.

Community Enrichment – Provides avenues for dialogue and education about community issues as well as opportunities to become engaged in projects that will enrich the region. The workgroup absorbed the Education and Downtown workgroups over the past year and offers an avenue for members with project ideas that do not fit within existing work-groups an opportunity to use Community Enrichment as a platform for any project or program that could benefit the community.

- Continued to build on the member-wide program, Lunch with a Leader. This small group lunch connects NWAEL members with business and community leaders and facilitates discussions on leadership and professional development. The four Lunch with a Leader events this year featured The Soderquist Center's Chuck Hyde, Innovate Arkansas's Jeff Amerine, Harp's Roger Collins and Walmart's Carol Johnston.
- Hosted Volunteer Days at Horses for Healing and Cobblestone Farms. 13 members volunteered a

half a day to provide meaningful service to help further the mission of these great groups and give back to the local community.

- Driver's Education Program—With a goal to improve teen driver safety, members produced a video equipping parents with the tools and tips they need to equip their young drivers to be safe and alert on the road.

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

- Organized the Ready to Run program consisting of a series of five breakfast presentations by expert panelists designed to educate and advise community members on various aspects of running for office. Roughly 20 to 30 people attended each presentation. Speakers included Asa Hutchinson, Stephanie Orman, Chase Dugger, Dustin Seaton, Tim Summers, Alex Martinez, Laura Kellams, and Derrick Smith.
- To assist Members in obtaining positions on local and state government boards and commissions, the group compiled links to applications and other information on the Resources page of NWA Emerging Leaders website.
- Worked with the Secretary of State's office to bring an interactive and educational program to Rogers High School seniors. Among other things, the program covered the importance of voting and offered students the opportunity to register to vote.

The screenshot shows the NWA Emerging Leaders website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, About, Partners, Blog/Reports, Resources, Sign Up, Contact. Below the navigation bar is a large banner with the text "About NWA Emerging Leaders" and "Northwest Arkansas Emerging Leaders is an initiative of the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce". Below the banner is a group photo of NWAEL members. At the bottom of the page, there are three columns with icons and titles: "About" (with a brief description of the organization), "Workgroups" (with a brief description of the workgroups), and "Impact" (with a brief description of the impact).



ROGERS-LOWELL AREA
Chamber of Commerce

317 West Walnut Street
Rogers, Arkansas 72756

www.RogersLowell.com

Paid for through Periodical "Chamber Voice" (USPS 492950) is published monthly in January, February, March, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December; semi-monthly in April by the Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc., 317 West Walnut, Rogers, AR 72756. Periodical postage paid at Rogers, Arkansas.

POSTMASTER send address changes to:
ROGERS-LOWELL AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWSLETTER,
317 West Walnut, Rogers, AR 72756.

Rogers Chamber Office

317 West Walnut Street
Rogers, Arkansas 72756
479-636-1240

Lowell Chamber Office

506 Enterprise Drive, Ste. 102
Lowell, Arkansas 72745
479-770-4400



ROGERS-LOWELL AREA
Chamber of Commerce