

Laredo Chamber of Commerce

GUIDE FOR CHAMBER VOLUNTEERS



LaredoChamber
of Commerce

FY 2017-2018

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce is

- to provide vision and leadership to develop, encourage, promote and protect the business, tourism, industry and educational interests of the Laredo metropolitan area;
- to encourage the orderly development of resources, people, and infrastructure of the area; and
- to be a politically proactive force to ensure the success of the Laredo metropolitan area.

CHAMBER ORGANIZATION

Your Laredo Chamber is the community's networking vehicle, resource center and a catalyst for getting things done. It manufactures the quality of life – a better place to live, work and enjoy.

Your Laredo Chamber is people – people who share the desire to improve the community and who believe the community worth living in is a community worth improving. Your Chamber enables these people to accomplish collectively what no one of them could do individually. The strength of the organization lies in attracting the greatest number of business and professional firms into membership, thereby creating a pool of resources from which can be drawn ideas, energy and finances. Your Chamber is a team.

Your Laredo Chamber can only be as effective as its membership. An active, strong membership means an active, strong Chamber. Your Laredo Chamber of Commerce is structured to serve the needs of the membership. Your Chamber, in fact, exists, specifically to build a business-friendly environment and to improve the quality of life in the community.

Your Laredo Chamber of Commerce –

- is a voluntary association of business people working TOGETHER to improve the economic and civic vitality of our community
- is the voice of the Laredo business community
- is not a governmental entity (it is a private not-for-profit organization)
- does not receive funding from any governmental agency for its operation
- is an independent organization (it is not directed by any State or national affiliation, although it is an active member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, the Texas Association of Business and the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce).
- is fully accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (only a small minority of all chambers in the United States carries this seal of approval -- 16 out of 142 chambers in Texas, affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are accredited.)

Your Laredo Chamber of Commerce is headed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership. The Board is made up of 40 directors -- 30 elected serving staggered three-year terms, and 10 appointed annually. The Board of Directors appoints officers who serve in the Executive Committee of the Chamber. Your Chamber is organized into six Councils that address the Work Plan as set up by the membership. Each of the Councils is headed by an officer of the Executive Committee. Each of the Councils is further subdivided into committees that carry out the various strategies of the Work Plan. The Chamber's Councils are listed below (an organizational chart, with listing of committees and respective staff assignments appears in page 3).

- Membership/Marketing Council
- Business & Enterprise Council
- Education Council
- Quality of Life Council
- Infrastructure Council
- Governmental Affairs Council

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is the policy making body of the chamber of commerce. It is in many ways a representative-at-large of the entire business community. Its duties extend well beyond fiduciary responsibility and internal matters of the organization. The Board of Directors is often considered by governmental entities as the spokesperson and leader in decision-making matters of public concern. Serving on the Board of Directors ought to be considered an honor and privilege. Commitment, unselfishness and genuine concern for the well-being of the organization may well be considered key qualifications for a Board member.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The officers, otherwise known as the Executive Committee, are a designated arm of the Board of Directors which can act as representative of the Board between meetings. Actions of the Executive Committee are subject to review and approval/endorsement by the Board at a subsequent session. The officers meet prior to a regular meeting of the Board and prepare the agenda for the regular Board meeting. Officers of the Board consist of the Chairman of the Board, the Chairman Elect, the Immediate Past Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Treasurer/ Secretary, and Council Chairs.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND AMBASSADORS

Committees are the working arm of the Chamber. Committees are responsible for carrying out tasks approved by the Board. Tasks may be defined by the Chamber Work Plan, or, in some instances, be the result of an arising situation/problem. Within the committee the authority lies with the Chairperson. Committee Chairs are appointed by the Chairman of the Board, who may seek the advice of Board members and/or active committee members, in making the selection.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Each committee chair is appointed by the Chairman of the Board and approved by the Board of Directors. The Committee Chairman is responsible for carrying out activities assigned to his/her committee. As Chair, he/she has the responsibility to guide, motivate and assist the committee members. The committee chair may establish those sub-committees necessary for the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

Each committee chair is directly accountable to his Council Chair for reporting, coordinating, and maintaining projects within the budget constraints. New programs, projects, proposed expenditures and/or solicitation efforts must be reviewed by the Council Chair who will in turn, request approval from the Board of Directors. Approved expenditures must be processed within the purchasing procedures of the organization (i.e., use of purchase order from an authorized Chamber executive). The Committee Chair coordinates with the assigned Chamber staff representative regarding meeting dates, times, correspondence, etc., necessary to do the work of the committee. Chairs are encouraged to plan ahead so that internal staff operations can be efficient and effective. Committee Chairs should avoid meeting dates that conflict with major Chamber projects or other committee meetings.

Prior to the Chamber's annual planning session, committee chairs should guide their committees in determining what has been accomplished, what tasks remain active for the coming year, recommended programs and a budget request. This, in turn, is reviewed with the Council Chair and is included in overall Council budget request.

Duties of the Committee Chair

- Plan with the Council Chair and/or Chamber staff to ensure that goals and objectives of the committee are clearly defined.
- Recruit members for the committee with skills necessary to support work of the committee.
- Guide and stimulate the members of the committee in their work to reach defined goals of the committee. Assign tasks as needed.
- Schedule meetings of the committee at times convenient to attain productivity. Start and end committee meetings on time and encourage all members to report and participate. Plan and organize with assigned Chamber staff to ensure that agendas are prepared prior to the meeting and minutes of the meeting are prepared afterward.
- Evaluate the progress of the Committee and its members. Review ideas and contributions objectively.
- Be accountable to the Council Chair and the Chairman of the Board for the performance of the committee. Notify the Board of members who exhibit leadership and teamwork skills for future inclusion in committee work or in leadership assignments.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Each member is responsible for this phase of work as outlined by the committee chairman. Committee members are accountable to the chairman, the committee as a body is accountable to the Council Chairman and the Council Chairman reports to the Board of Directors. At the close of the Chamber year, all chairmen and committee members are relieved. This is to give incoming officers full authority to build the kind of organization which best serve the community and the Chamber.

MEMBERSHIP AT LARGE

Members at large are investment-paying members that, because of time constraints, do not have the opportunity to work on committee. As mentioned earlier, the stronger the membership, the stronger the Chamber of Commerce in the community. Members of the Chamber, by joining the organization, have made a commitment to work through the Chamber to improve the quality of life in the community. The financial support provided by members allows those who do have the time to work on a committee to accomplish goals and objectives.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The Staff functions as a resource to the volunteer structure. The staff's job is to make the volunteer's job easier, to take care of the mountain of administrative details that occur in the development of volunteer program. The staff is expected to take such actions as may best facilitate the committees' work and position them for success.

Each committee has a staff member assigned to it. The assigned staff member has several responsibilities and works closely with the chairman on the following:

1. Attendance at all committee meetings
2. Serving as committee secretary, keeping minutes, drafting correspondence, etc.
3. Serving as a source of information for advice and counsel.
4. Authorization of expenditure of Chamber funds.
5. Facilitate in budgeting
6. Liaison with remaining staff.
7. Coordinate the publicizing and communicating of committee activities.
8. Assisting chairman in the development of a year-end report.

The following is a list of the committees that help the Laredo Chamber of Commerce operate successfully. Chamber members who want to take a more active role and get more out of their membership often join one or more of the following committees.

To learn more about committee opportunities, call the Chamber office at (956) 722-9895.

BIENVENIDOS COMMITTEE / MEMBERSHIP AMBASSADORS Chair: Abelina Veliz Perez- Inter National Bank

This committee consists of a group of over 25 selected business representatives that conduct groundbreaking or ribbon cutting ceremonies for any business opening, expanding or moving to a new location. You can view the Upcoming Ribbon Cutting Schedule by visiting the Chamber Online Calendar (www.laredochamber.com).

Mission: To welcome new members to the Laredo Chamber of Commerce by fostering a business friendly environment at Chamber events and grand opening ceremonies. Activities and responsibilities of the Committee include the following:

- 1) Monthly committee meetings to go over the schedule of events
- 2) Attend Ribbon Cutting / Groundbreaking Ceremonies
- 3) Active participation at the Annual Business Expo for new members
- 4) Participation as master of ceremonies

For more information about the Chamber Ambassadors or to schedule a ribbon cutting or ground breaking ceremony, email us at chamber@laredochamber.com.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: Cassandra Wheeler

The Legislative Committee was formed in 2015-2016 in line with Chairman Mario Pena's initiative for the Chamber to become more involved in the local political process as stated in the Chamber's mission statement. Participation in the committee is open to any member of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce in good standing.

Mission: To be a politically proactive force to ensure the success of the Laredo metropolitan area, particularly regarding issues that affect the local business community.

During its first year of operation the Legislative Committee joined efforts of the *Moving Laredo Forward* group to increase citizens' participation in local government. It collaborated in the drafting and promoting passage of amendments to the City Charter in support of –

- 1) adopting a hybrid form of government for the election of City Council – i.e., 4 City Council members representative of and elected by voters of geographical districts and 4 City Council members elected at large; and
- 2) providing the Mayor with some additional responsibilities.

The Legislative Committee was instrumental in the collection of over 10,000 signatures to allow for placement of the proposed amendments on the ballot.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Ana Rivera-Soto - KGNS

The Business Development Committee is responsible for the promotion of professional development practices among Chamber Members.

Mission: To develop an annual Business Development Seminar Program that consists of a series of 12 professional development oriented workshops offered at no cost to all Chamber members. To constantly deliver tips and techniques of exceptional service to Chamber Members; fostering positive image among all Laredo residents.

The committee may contact members via email to promote the advancement of principles and techniques necessary to maintain favorable relations with their customers. Activities and responsibilities of the committee include the following:

- 1) Facilitate workshops on a monthly basis
- 2) Organize the Annual 5 Star Service Awards
- 3) Attend monthly meetings to discuss new ideas regarding Customer Service Seminars & Programs
- 4) Volunteer for on-site customer service trainings as per members request

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chair: Humberto Gonzalez – Civil Engineering Consultants

The Education Committee promotes continuing education and connects industry needs with educational programs to ensure a skilled workforce for our community.

Mission: To identify, develop and implement the *Laredo Scholars* student programs that are beneficial for our business community through volunteerism by business leaders.

Activities and responsibilities include:

- 1) Volunteer for on-site *Laredo Scholars* presentations to students of both school districts.
- 2) Attend monthly meetings to identify new areas of improvement.
- 3) Promote Laredo Scholars by contacting school officials to schedule presentations.
- 4) Organize and participate at the annual School Bell Awards honoring local teachers with the golden bell award.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP LAREDO

Chair: Perla Ruiz – International Bank of Commerce

Leadership Laredo was established in 1986 under the auspices of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce through the collaborative efforts of Leadership Texas Alumni. Leadership Laredo continues to be a non-profit program aimed at challenging Laredo's best to take an active role in shaping the future of our community.

Mission: To identify proven leaders and nurture local individuals with leadership potential. To expose leaders to the working of our urban system and enable them to broaden their knowledge beyond their particular fields of expertise and improve lines of communication among present and future leaders.

COLA BLANCA COMMITTEE

Chair: Oscar Caballero – Falcon International Bank

Over the last 29 years, the Cola Blanca Big Buck Contest has risen to become one of the best recognized hunting contests in the state. With support of Webb County and the City of Laredo, members of the Laredo Chamber's Cola Blanca Committee travel across the state to participate in hunting trade shows and promotional events. Cola Blanca ads appear regularly in Texas and regional magazines and television broadcasts.

The success of Cola Blanca can only be rated by the growing number of registrations recorded annually by the Laredo Chamber of Commerce. Contest participants hail from different parts of the state and from areas of the country as distant as the states of New York and Minnesota. Ranch leases, retail stores, hunting stores, outfitters, hotels, restaurants, even welding shops, all benefit from the economic impact generated by local and out of town hunting enthusiasts.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Chair: Guillermo Ugalde – Inter National Bank

Mission: To support local business owners with workforce and business development through education, community involvement, and exposure.

Vision: The Small Business Committee accomplishes its mission by coordinating educational events and networking expositions, and rewarding success.

The Small Business Committee organizes the Distinguished Business Awards Ceremony, hosted annually by the Laredo Chamber of Commerce with the support of the Laredo Morning Times. The selection of the honoree is based on an adaptation of the criteria used by the U.S. Small Business Administration for their annual awards. The committee also assists in the coordination of other Chamber activities and programs such as the Small Business Saturday Campaign and the B2B Small Business Expo.

BOLA BLANCA COMMITTEE

Chair: Oscar Urdiales – Family Chevrolet

In its 20th year, the Bola Blanca Chamber Classic allows members of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce to network in a fun, relaxed environment while raising funds to benefit Chamber programs to fulfill our mission to promote local economic growth, foster business-friendly public policies, and serve our 658 members through benefits and services. Sponsorship of this tournament is an excellent, cost-effective way to gain exposure for businesses.