

2008 Annual Report

On February 11, 2008, the Board and Staff of the Yellow Springs Chamber of Commerce met for a goal-setting retreat, for the 2nd year facilitated by Fred Bartenstein. The retreat began with a lively discussion of our vision of the Chamber on December 31, 2010. We then fleshed out the priorities we should be focusing on to move us toward our vision.

Three over-arching goals for 2008 were articulated including:

1. Build awareness, support and image of the Yellow Springs Chamber of Commerce
2. Provide leadership in Economic Development
3. Market the Village as a Destination

What follows is the specific description of activities that went toward achieving those goals.

Goal #1: Build Awareness, Support and Image of the Yellow Springs Chamber

For the Chamber to achieve its goals and truly serve Yellow Springs, it is critical that we have the support and involvement of the community as members, volunteers and enthusiastic supporters. The Chamber worked hard to be the key local organization for business support, event coordination and community promotion through partnerships and coordinated efforts with several local organizations.

To that end, the Chamber reached out in a stronger way to the community with invitations to Chamber functions including meetings and Business After Hours and e-mail blasts about events and items of community interest. The Chamber also worked with our web host Servlet to develop a Community Events Calendar that is more comprehensive and readable and can be updated by Chamber staff to keep it more current and relevant to the community.

The Chamber was more visible locally with increased advertising in the Yellow Springs News as well as involvement in local organizations and committees. Several meetings were held throughout the year to keep the Chamber abreast of local business developments and to determine how we could support local endeavors including with Antioch University Administration and Board members, Community Resources and the Antioch College Continuation Corporation.

Business After Hours continued as a popular event for our members giving them the ability to network and showcase their business. Hosts in 2008 included Yellow Springs Country Bed & Breakfast; Antioch McGregor and the Chamber Marketing Committee; Curves; Yellow Springs Library; Creative Explorations; Millworks; Tecumseh Land Trust; Yellow Springs Arts Council; WesBanco; Hunter Consulting & Southern Ohio Chamber Alliance; and Home Inc. and YS Methodist Church.

On the arts front, the Chamber, Arts Council and YS Kids Playhouse began a wonderful collaboration with Summer in the Springs, a summer long series of arts and cultural events that provided wonderful entertainment and brought many visitors to the community. Additionally, representatives from the Arts Council and the Chamber Boards have been attending the other's board meetings and the Chamber has been very involved in the Center for the Arts. Finally, the Chamber partnered with Chamber Music Yellow Springs to sponsor the Adams Piano Series.

Partnership is at the heart of the 3rd Friday Flings, begun in December, 2007 but continued throughout 2008. The main partnership is with the downtown businesses who agree to stay open late with the understanding that the Chamber will promote the event to attract visitors. Secondary partnerships developed with many local organizations as the Flings moved beyond simply shopping and eating to entertainment and education. Examples include the April Earth Day collaboration with the Village's Environmental Commission and the October Arts Excursion collaboration with the Artist Studio Tour.

The work of the Chamber would not be possible without our members and 2008 brought 54 new members, 24 local and 30 non-local. Total membership grew by only 16 members however because the membership list was purged of non-current members and businesses who are no longer in operation, giving a total membership of 259 at the end of 2008. It is important to note that businesses, organizations and even private citizens can be members of the Chamber.

Benefits programs available with Chamber membership offer broad-based discounts and give businesses access to low cost and no-cost employee benefits. In 2008, the Chamber highlighted the value of these benefits to our members and also expanded the programs available, adding discounts from several local members and a new program with Auto-Owners Insurance. Those are added to the existing discounts from Office Depot and those administered by the Southern Ohio Chamber Alliance (SOCA), including a Worker's Compensation group rating program; health and dental benefits; and vision, prescription drug and hearing aid discounts for all full and part time employees and organization members.

Also in 2008, the Chamber developed a cohesive identity and marketing package for the organization including the development of a new logo and inclusion of it on all materials. ChamberNews, the monthly newsletter was redesigned and we began to publish it electronically enabling us to send it to a much broader group of recipients. The Chamber staff was also expanded with the addition of Kate Langton as Chamber Coordinator working approximately 20 hours per week, concentrating on membership and event coordination.

Goal #2: Provide Leadership in Economic Development

During the retreat, goals on economic development centered around an anticipated working agreement with Community Resources that would have brought the two organizations under the same umbrella. That plan was not realized but the economic development efforts of the Chamber were not hindered.

Coordination with Community Resources was strong in 2008 with a joint board meeting as well as several meetings with Antioch University and Antioch College Continuation Corporation. There was also involvement on the Center for Business and Education roadway project. Finally, the Chamber organized a large group of local representatives for a meeting with a potential new business to Yellow Springs in conjunction with Community Resources and the Village.

Developing tighter connections with regional economic development organizations and efforts was a highlight of 2008. The Executive Director attended monthly Greene County Marketing Committee meetings for the purpose of developing a brand identity for Greene County as well as quarterly Greene County Economic Development Council meetings.

The outreach went to State opportunities as well with attendance at two workshops hosted by the Ohio Department of Development regarding Advanced Energy, a Chamber meeting presentation from the State of Ohio Treasurer's Office about the GrowNow loan program and a Springfield Chamber lunch event with Amir Eylon, State of Ohio Tourism Director.

The Yellow Springs Chamber also co-hosted a Business After Hours event with the Springfield Chamber at Antioch University McGregor.

The strongest regional outreach occurred with the participation in the Dayton Development Coalition's San Antonio Fly-In with Mark Crockett representing Community Resources. The purpose of the trip was to provide military and civilian employees at Brooks Air Force Base with information about our region as they make decisions on their future with the closing of that base and relocation of their jobs to Wright Patterson Air Force Base by 2011. Nearly 500 Brooks personnel attended the presentation learning about Yellow Springs and an added benefit of the trip was the networking and contacts made with other communities. As part of our efforts to communicate the uniqueness of Yellow Springs as a place to live, the Chamber developed a beautiful new brochure based upon the Community Information Project efforts.

Attracting new business is often the focus of economic development but existing businesses are our strongest source of economic development and need to be nurtured. The Chamber coordinated with the Village of Yellow Springs and Greene County Department of Development in the regional Business First Retention and Expansion Program, scheduling meetings with local businesses to learn about the current status and needs of local business and to pledge our support toward their success.

Other local efforts included a gathering with leading downtown businesses for an assessment of the current state of business and ways to ensure continued success in the future especially in the current economic climate. To that end, the Chamber is strongly supporting the Michael Shuman Localization workshop “Going Local” being sponsored by the Village of Yellow Springs in mid-January. The Chamber also offers a formal mentoring program for local businesses.

This year also saw great strides in the Chamber website, a critical economic development tool. It is now more visually appealing, easier to navigate and more current. We also re-named and organized the business categories on the drop down menu to be more user-friendly and understandable and added web links to member websites.

Goal 3: Market the Village as a Destination

The marketing story in 2008 was Yellow Springs Together, the Cooperative Marketing Plan introduced in January. The purpose of the Plan was to combine resources into a single fund and develop a coordinated advertising plan to expand the reach of our advertising. The Fund reached more than 50% of the goal set with 25 participants and a total budget of \$27,400; \$10,000 from the Chamber and an additional amount of \$2,900 from our media partners, WYSO and the Yellow Springs News. Participants in the plan came from all areas of business including retailers, businesses, arts and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, hospitality, and professional service providers. This was an impressive first effort for the Plan.

The Yellow Springs Together effort more than doubled the money that was spent on marketing and advertising in 2007. With these additional funds we were able to reach into the Cincinnati and Columbus markets and place advertising in regional specialty magazines as well as maintain a near continual presence on WYSO. Additional marketing strategies included billboard advertising on Rt. 70, brochures, pocket stuffers, flyers and web banners. The advertising was primarily events-focused although image ads were utilized in some publications. Events advertised included twelve 3rd Friday Flings, the Community Yard Sale, two Street Fairs, Summer in the Springs, AACW Blues Fest, Artist Studio Tour and Holiday in the Village.

The collaboration and coordination of a wide variety of Yellow Springs’ events is another success of the initiative. Over 300 events were pooled into the promotional plan creating a menu of events advertised around community-wide initiatives. The plan was able to leverage cross-promotions with participants and other organizations. In addition, we offered several marketing education sessions for Chamber members. While no formal evaluation of the plan was done, retailers report that customers said they visited because of the advertising and visitors to the Chamber office were increasingly from the Columbus and Cincinnati area.

Another focus in 2008 was signage and brochure development. The signage development centered on Street Fair where signs placed in key locations around town provided pre-

advertising and directed visitors to the remote parking locations. Banners and event signage were also added for the Information Tent and the Music Festival. A new logo for Street Fair, consistently used provided a strong identity focus for the signage, banners and advertising.

Two new brochures were developed including the image piece developed for the San Antonio trip and a new 5-panel Visitor's Guide developed with maps and business listings specifically to inform people visiting Yellow Springs of the shopping, eating, event and recreational opportunities. New color-coded Village and downtown maps were developed that were much more comprehensive than previous maps and are computer-generated so they can easily be updated. In a pilot project with Antioch McGregor, the map with business listings was expanded to a 24" x 36" poster format to hang in their lobby that identified their location to make it easier for their students to know what's available in Yellow Springs and where.

For the past few years, the Chamber has focused on marketing the Village as a destination. While downtown, the Glen, Young's and other key locations are strong attractors, our goal was to attract visitors of varied interests and offer activities that will keep them in Yellow Springs for an extended period of time. To achieve that goal, new events were added to the calendar and existing events were dramatically enhanced.

The greatest success story in terms of new events was the 3rd Friday Flings which have become a staple with visitors, locals and our downtown merchants. We also expanded the scope of the Flings by coordinating themes with several community organizations. Advertising was a key to the success of the Flings with consistency of design and publication communicating that Yellow Springs was the place to be every 3rd Friday.

Further event success came with Summer in the Springs, a collaborative series of events co-sponsored by YS Kids Playhouse, the Yellow Springs Arts Council and the Chamber that brought visitors to Yellow Springs throughout the summer. That was followed with Fall for the Springs, a coordinated marketing campaign to highlight fall farm events, the beauty of the season at the Glen and surrounding parks and the arts. It was highlighted by a strong collaboration with the Artist Studio Tour and the promotion of the "Arts Excursion Weekend" encouraging weekend stay. Holiday in the Village continued the seasonal event theme to the end of 2008 and featured the Glen Helen Nature Arts and Crafts Show, the Holiday Fest with Santa and two Friday Flings. And for the first time this year, the Chamber sponsored a Community Yard Sale in conjunction with the Glen Helen Garage Sale that shows promise of becoming a large draw to the community and a favorite event for locals.

In the midst of those new events were the two most successful Street Fairs ever, each one bringing in \$3500 over the previous. Street Fair has grown and changed in many ways including the addition of booths and a layout change that made navigation much more comfortable and created interesting new vendor areas. In 2008, beer sales were added to Street Fair, resulting in the relocation of the music to the Bryan Center where we now have the Street Fair Beer Garden & Music Festival both coordinated by one of our sponsors, Peach's Grill.

Additional sponsorship support of Street Fair included WesBanco our Lead Sponsor, co-host of the Street Fair Information Tent. WYSO was our media sponsor, broadcasting from their new location adjacent to the Information Tent for increased visibility. Jackson Lytle Williams joined as another Street Fair sponsor by hosting the Food Tent, providing performance space and opening their facility for the comfort of guests. The final new sponsorship opportunity and major enhancement to Street Fair was the shuttle service provided for remote parking with sponsorships paying for 85% of shuttle costs.

The website remained one of the best tools for communicating information about events and activities in Yellow Springs. The new Community Events Calendar was an important piece of the website offering the ability to provide more information in a timely, readable fashion to visitors. Tracking recent web statistics gives some insight into how heavily used the website has become. In the last 100 days we have had over 80,000 page views on the web site - with over 4000 in the last week.

Goals for 2009

The Chamber Board Retreat will be held on January 23 this year with goals from 2007 carrying over to be further developed with specific Action Plans for 2009. Here are some priorities we can identify for 2009.

Increasing membership, especially local, will continue to be a priority as we look to offer more to our members in terms of benefits and tools for business success. We will be looking to expand our benefits package as further enhancement to membership.

The Marketing Committee will be introducing an expanded and improved Marketing Plan for 2009 with goals to double the Fund and focus the advertising to maximize its reach and success.

Street Fair will continue to be the Chamber's largest funding source and the premier event for the community. Developing sponsorship opportunities will be the focus this year so that we might offer increased amenities while not affecting income.

Friday Flings will be focused to offer greater partnership opportunities with local businesses and organizations as we work to highlight the full range of opportunities in the community as we also focus on our great downtown shopping, dining and entertainment.

Finally, much effort will be put into development of new revenue sources and enhancing existing ones in an effort to balance the budget.

Prepared by:

Karen Wintrow, Executive Director

Ellen Hoover, President

2008 Financial Report

Highlights of 2008

Our largest source of income as well as expense is Street Fair. This year we saw changes to the Street Fair which included the Beer Garden, shuttle service and changing the booth layout. These items affected the budget by increasing both cost and income. The end result to Street Fair is an increase in Street Fair net revenue of roughly \$7,000.

Membership receipts were down roughly 13% as of November 30.

As a participant in the Marketing Plan, the Chamber contributed the agreed upon \$10,000 as well as some additional advertising for the community. Revisions to the tracking method for the marketing fund will be made in 2009 for clarity.

Our Part-time Staff was only for part of the year thus reducing the 2008 annual expense.

In 2008 we incurred an expense to send the Executive Director to San Antonio as part of the Dayton Development Coalition outreach to attract employees to Wright Patterson AFB.

As of November 30 we were net (\$827.00) actual to budget.

2009 Budget

In 2009 we anticipate that our greatest income and expense will again be Street Fair. We have budgeted for a slight increase in revenue due to new sponsorships and increase in the Beer Garden income. Expenses are planned to remain flat as we incurred some one time expenses this year, which should offset routine cost increases.

The Membership Committee and the Executive Director have committed to a proactive approach this year and as such, have proposed an increase to membership income. Although a portion of the increase will be realized from our membership fee increase, the majority must be from increased membership.

The Chamber once again will participate in the Marketing Plan to the tune of \$10,000, this is in addition to the Chamber advertising budget of \$3,000.

The salary of the Executive Director has been increased based upon performance review and review of like positions within our market area, although the salary is still below benchmark. Additional forms of compensation are being considered to correct this shortfall.

The 2009 budget indicates a deficit of \$12,070.

It is our commitment to portray the Yellow Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Yellow Springs community in a professional and positive manner while enhancing the services we provide to our membership. After much discussion and consideration, the Board recommendation is to accept the budget as proposed. The Board recognizes that a deficit operating budget is not a long term option for the Chamber or any other business organization. The proposed 2009 deficit shall be funded by a time deposit redeemed in 2007 in the amount of \$6,843, which is currently held in the checking account and excess funds held currently in the operating fund of the Chamber. In effort to produce a balanced budget in 2010 the Board and Staff are tasked with identifying alternative sources of income as well as cost reduction efforts in our operations.

Prepared by:
Elise Click, Treasurer

**YS Chamber of Commerce
Profit & Loss Budget Overview
January through December 2008**

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12/31/08
Cash Basis

	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	TOTAL Jan - Dec 08
Income													
GCCVB				2,500									
Meeting Receipts	1,250							2,500		1,250			5,000
Membership Fees	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650	20,000
Misc other	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Street Fairs			5,000	5,000	22,500	7,500		5,000	22,500	7,500			70,000
Total Income	3,000	1,750	1,750	9,250	24,250	9,250	1,750	9,250	24,250	10,500	1,750	1,750	88,700
Expense													
Accounting & Tax Preparation	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	3,000
Advertising	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	3,000
Bank Fees	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	120
Cleaning	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Computers / Web	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	3,000
Dues & Subscriptions	68	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	750
Equip-Form	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Holiday Open	2,500												2,500
Insurance				600	1,200	600	600	600	1,200	600	600	600	7,200
Marketing	837	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	10,000
Meals & Entertainment	63	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	800
Meeting exp	1,500	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	3,000
Misc	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	3,600
Office supplies	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	3,600
Ohio Sales Tax	50												500
Postage	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Printing/Publ	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	3,000
Rent expense	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	3,600
Staff Benefits	315	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	4,000
Staff Development	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	240
Staff Salary	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	30,000
Staff Taxes	370	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	4,000
Street fair exp								7,500					7,500
Telephone	87	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	1,000
Unemploy Tax								40					400
Weekend Staff	837	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	833	10,000
Workers comp	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	180
Total Expense	11,462	7,178	7,178	7,273	6,873	14,676	7,623	7,178	10,170	14,678	7,178	7,178	110,770
Net Income	(8,282)	(5,428)	(5,428)	1,977	15,377	(5,428)	(5,873)	2,072	14,072	(4,178)	(5,428)	(5,428)	(15,070)