



Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce

NEWS BRIEFS

Here Comes Santa

Once again, the Chamber is hosting Santa's arrival in downtown Mantua at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, December 8. Light refreshments will be provided for guests visiting with Santa at the Mini Park on the corner of Prospect and Main. Please park on side streets or in parking lots of businesses closed for the day and keep store-front parking open for customers.

December Meeting at the Tree Farm

Diversified Enterprises is hosting our December 13 7:30 a.m. meeting. To get to the tree farm, head east on State Route 303 into Freedom Township. Nichols Road crosses Rt. 303 where State Route 88 heads north to Garrettsville. Head south on Nichols Road. Diversified Tree Farm is 3/4 or a mile south on the left. There will be one driveway open. Park in the large parking lot to the left. Watch for signs. In addition to our monthly business meeting, we will learn more about Diversified Enterprises and have the opportunity to purchase holiday wreaths and trees. Our thanks to the Lance family for hosting this event.

Upcoming Chamber Meetings...

Wednesday, November 15 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.

Mantua-Shalersville Fire Department (Rt. 44 south of Village)

Topic: Technology Solutions for Business,

Chip Hautala, Solisbury Hill Solutions

Use technology to reduce your overall cost of doing business; eliminate down time, reduce collections and A/R, go paperless, use the web as a tool, and more.

Wednesday, December 13 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.

Diversified Enterprises (Nichols Road in Freedom Township)

Topic: 2007 and Beyond

What is in store for the Mantua-Shalersville Area? How will the Chamber help your business succeed? Hear about Chamber benefits, 2007 goals, downtown revitalization efforts and more at this year-end meeting and networking event.

A Message from the President

Greetings friends and Chamber members! We have been very busy planning for our future and hope to see YOU actively involved in the community.

Recently, we have been exploring options to help revitalize the Mantua Village downtown area to make it more attractive to work and shop. Mantua has a lot to offer. We have several restaurants, purveyors of groceries and fresh meats, personal care salons, health care providers, banks, public services, and shops. There is housing and recreation within walking distance of all of these. Although we are losing a major employer, another is moving in, and a third is expanding. As at least one person said at a recent community meeting, "we have it all right here!" We just need to stop and spend time and money in our own community.

With winter coming, many of us will be heading inside to keep warm, but we will still have plenty to do. The annual 4C's Giving Tree campaign will provide not only food but gifts to the area's needy. Santa Claus will arrive early in December to pass out holiday cheer and to get the children to start visualizing sugarplums dancing in their heads. Although the canoe livery will be closed for the season, the Headwaters Trail remains open for winter hiking and cross country skiing.

We are returning to our home base at the Mantua-Shalersville Fire Station for our meeting in November. If you haven't taken the chance to do so, ask Chief Benner or one of the fire-medics to give you a tour of the station. They will be glad to show you around.

Also, consider taking advantage of some of the benefits that being a chamber member has to offer. Group rates for worker's comp and health insurance are just two benefits that being a part of a larger group provides. Networking with other business people in the area is also a big plus. There are many "cottage industries" in the area that most people would not even know about, except through membership in the chamber. So-even though it is getting cold, don't hibernate!! See you at the next meeting.

Marie Stehli, President

Officer Elections November 15

Attend the November 15 Chamber meeting to cast your vote. Officers for the 2007-2008 term will be chosen to lead the Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce in its role of supporting area businesses and promoting the community.

Nominations have been received for president, Marie Stehli; treasurer, Paulette Nichols; and secretary, Joan Sweet. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the November 15 meeting.

Marie Stehli was elected vice president for the 2005-2006 term and has served as interim-president since the departure of Ed Kent. Marie holds a BA in accounting from Miami University and an MBA from Case Western Reserve University. She is a self-employed CPA as well as clerk of Mantua Township since 1992. A Certified Municipal Finance Administrator, Marie belongs to the Ohio Township Association, Association of Public Treasurers of US and Canada, and Mantua Center Christian Church.

Paulette Nichols served as vice president when the Chamber was reactivated in 2002 and throughout the 2003-2004 term. She had been Branch Manager of Bank One/Chase in Mantua Village for many years. Upon her recent retirement, she began working part time with Portage Community Bank in Ravenna. Paulette still lives in Shalersville Township and is very interested in helping the community.

Joan Sweet has filled the role of secretary since Pam Raines left the area. Joan is a Mantua native, currently living in Ravenna. She has many years of banking experience in the area and has been Branch Supervisor of Middlefield Bank in Mantua since 2002. Joan is a graduate of the 2004 class of Leadership Portage County and is treasurer of the Rotary Club of Mantua. She has been involved with the League of Women Voters, the Mantua Potato Festival and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Oktoberfest 2006

The 4th annual Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce Oktoberfest was held Monday, October 23 at Betsy's Side Street Café & Grille in Mantua Village.

The weather caused a change from our usual outdoor venue to the warmth of the restaurant, but business owners and friends still enjoyed Betsy's German feast, pleasant conversation and great guitar entertainment offered by local resident Steve Vanderink. The Record Courier photographer even joined in with his harmonica!

Check out our website for information on becoming a member:

www.MantuaShalersvilleChamber.com



Every Business Has a Billboard

Businesses often spend hundreds of dollars on advertising that doesn't give them the return on investment that they anticipated. Advertising may be a great way to get your name out to prospective customers, unfortunately, many businesses forget about one of the most important and cost effective tools at their disposal to attract new patrons and welcome current customers back into their establishments.

Every business has a billboard, and it's not located on the highway on wooden or metal stilts. In fact, it's something they're already paying rent on or they may own it free and clear. It can be seen by customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. What is this billboard? It's the storefront; the front entrance and window display.

Shop owners might be surprised to learn how high a value customers place on their initial perception of a business. Research shows that 53 percent of shoppers base their initial perception of a store and their decision to shop there on the store's exterior! It only makes sense to capitalize on something that could draw in more than half of a store's potential customers.

How does a storeowner capitalize on that 24/7 billboard? First, consider consumer habits. The average pedestrian will pass a storefront in eight seconds. For a passing motorist, a shop's "window of opportunity" is reduced to one second! That doesn't give you much time to convey a message to a potential customer. Remember that much of retailing is centered on the sense of sight.

A storefront must present a strong, clear, positive visual image. Small things like signs, lighting, and window displays are all key factors to a potential customer's perception and willingness to walk through the front door and add money to a store's bottom line. Today's consumers are not just shopping, they are looking for experience. The first part of a consumer's experience with any store takes place before they enter.

Here are some tips to help business owners take advantage of their billboards:

Cleanliness. This may seem obvious, but it's not uncommon to see dirty windows, tattered signs, dust, dead flies, etc., in a store's front window. This gives a potential customer the immediate impression that the merchandise is outdated and in the same condition as the front of the store.

Visibility. Step outside and look at your storefront. Do you see an inviting entrance or window display? Now imagine what the customer sees in eight seconds or less. Replace burned-out light bulbs so your store looks maintained and well lit. Use spotlighting to attract the customer's eye to a focal point. Keep the lights on after store hours to take full advantage of this advertising medium. (And post your hours so shoppers know when they can stop in and make a purchase.)

Less is more. Be careful not to over-do window displays in order to avoid "visual clutter." Scrape off old decals and remove out-dated posters and signs. Display a few key items in your windows, selecting colors that are easily visible through glass; some colors just disappear. Light, bright colors work best.

Pick a theme. Holidays, school activities, festivals, seasonal events, etc., all provide great ideas for adding visual interest to your storefront. Continue the theme throughout the store to create a fun and festive environment for shoppers and employees.

Change is good. At a minimum, change window displays monthly and keep the entire storefront well-maintained with regular improvements. Anything that always looks the same is easy to overlook. Plus, customers will think the store is carrying the same old merchandise.

Ask for help. If you don't feel like you have enough creativity or time to keep your business looking its best, hire someone. Ask a current employee or customer to "take ownership" of your shop's appearance or work with neighboring businesses to get it done. Even trade services with other businesses.

Remember, eight seconds or less is all the time you have to capture the attention of a potential shopper.

Adapted from Main Street News.



2007

Get Involved!

Business entities, organizations and clubs, and individuals are eligible for Chamber membership. You do not need to attend meetings to receive membership benefits. Participate at your pace, on your schedule. We share a commitment to the community and we all hold a stake in the future of the area.

For more information, contact:
Membership Chair: Becky Newell
216-990-5086 or 330-274-3238
bbjnewell@adelphia.net

Yearly Chamber Dues

0-5 Employees	\$50
6-20 Employees	\$100
21+ Employees	\$150

Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce Membership Application

Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Business Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Web Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Please limit use.

Phone Number: _____

Alt. Phone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____ Please limit use.

Business Description: _____

In addition to using U.S. mail, the Chamber communicates with members via e-mail and fax. If you prefer not to receive correspondence via e-mail or fax, please check the appropriate box above.

Be sure to list complete your web profile at
www.MantuaShalersvilleChamber.com to be listed in the Member Yellow Pages!

Return to:
Membership
PO Box 111
Mantua, OH 44255

4Cs Emergency Food Cupboard

Make your tax-deductible donation to the 4Cs in time for food baskets to be distributed on December 19. Monetary donations may be mailed to Crestwood 4Cs, PO Box 227, Mantua 44255. Donations of food may be delivered to 4572 Prospect St. in Mantua (at Hilltop Christian Church, rear entrance) between 1:00 and 3:00 pm Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Giving Trees to benefit families served by the 4Cs will again be in local business establishments including Mantua Township Hall, Carlton's Harley Davidson, Teresa's Pizza, Hair Hut, Side Street Café & Grille, Middlefield Bank, and at the Mantua-Shalersville Fire Station. Select an ornament from one of the trees and visit any store to purchase a gift for a needy child. Wrapped gifts should be taken to any of the three Mantua banks. Alternatively, cash or checks in any amount will be accepted and used to purchase gift cards for teenagers in need of a nice holiday gift or to supplement the gifts donated for the younger group.

In 2005, this effort allowed the 4Cs to provide gifts or gift cards to over 140 children along with their holiday food baskets. As a food cupboard, the 4Cs is not allowed to use funds to purchase gifts or taxable items. It is only through your generosity that the holiday gift program succeeds.

You can also help the 4Cs by shopping at their Holiday Craft Show. Stock up on gifts for yourself and others on Saturday, November 18 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The craft show will be held at Shalersville Town Hall on the corner of Routes 44 & 303

Welcome New Members:

Sierra, Inc.
330-274-2959
sierrainc811@aol.com
Carl Zeleznik

Intrapromote, LLC
Brent Sharp
330-650-5370

Crestwood Action Coalition Team
330-274-8956
huntersthree@earthlink.net
C/O Harry Hunter

How to Choose a Health Care Plan

Compliments of Anthem
Blue Cross and Blue Shield



Businesses and individuals today are looking for advice and information on how to choose a health care plan that's right for their specific situation.

Here are 10 guidelines to keep in mind when decision time for health insurance comes around.

1. Consider your employee needs and demographics to guide your plans.
2. Look for an insurance carrier with a broad network of physicians and hospitals, particularly where your employees work, live and travel whether in the US or abroad.
3. Review your specific plan design and assess potential new plan designs and their impact on value and pricing.
4. Get to know more about new consumer choice health plans and health savings accounts to see if this works for your organization.
5. Evaluate your options on pharmacy and ancillary coverage such as vision and dental features to see if modifications here are worth considering to hold down overall premiums or to enhance your plan as a competitive recruiting advantage.
6. Find out about special features that may be embedded in a health insurance plan like discounts on health related items, wellness programs, health information resources and special offers that add value to the overall package.
7. Service is an important feature of any health care plan. Look for the service and quality track record of any health insurance carrier you may consider.
8. Consider the stability and reliability of the health insurance carrier of your choice.
9. Ask your broker for assistance on planning and new products and services.
10. Look for chamber and association discounts like those offered through NOACC chambers for smaller groups and ERC for large group insurance needs.

These 10 tips will get you started to a smart choice. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, committed to improving health, hopes these tips have been helpful and wishes you good health and good decision-making in this important process. For further information check out Anthem.com.

What's Happening in Portage County

PortageCountyEvents.com is a centralized website designed for the community's nonprofit and government organizations. The website will be "the place to go" for the residents of Portage County to learn about upcoming community events. Residents will have the opportunity to view events via the online calendar and sign up for a free weekly email newsletter.

To reach Portage County residents with news of your events go www.PortageCountyEvents.com and follow the instructions to request an account. Log in information will be sent to you via email. After you receive your log in information, the system will allow you to post events through the website at your convenience. There is not cost to nonprofit organizations!

Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce

For Chamber
information, contact
Becky at 330-274-3238
or bbjnewell@adelphia.net

For newsletter inquiries, email
mlbarnauskas@sbcglobal.net

Or visit our
website!

www.mantuashalersvillechamber.com

Chamber Goals

- ▷ To advance the commercial, industrial, educational, agricultural, and civic interests of the area ◁
 - ▷ To work together to support and promote local businesses and their products ◁
 - ▷ To work with elected officials to promote proper planning and growth ◁
- ▷ To support and work toward local harmony for the betterment of citizens and businesses in the area ◁

**"An optimist thinks this is the best of all worlds.
A pessimist fears the same may be true."**

**Mantua-Shalersville Area
Chamber of Commerce**

PO Box 111

Mantua, OH 44255