



oconee
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

OCONEE CHAMBER

NEW PARTNER PACKET

OCONEECHAMBER.ORG



W

Welcome to the Oconee Chamber of Commerce! Our organization is comprised of over 600 business partners spanning throughout the region, all of which work hard to ensure Oconee County remains a wonderful place to live, work, visit, do business, and raise families.

E

Partnering with the Oconee Chamber affords you many opportunities to get involved with the local business community. Whether you are an individual, small business, large business, or nonprofit, the Oconee Chamber keeps you active through participating in numerous networking events and Chamber committees throughout the year.

L

There are many reasons why someone may join a chamber of commerce and we understand that these reasons vary across the board. We encourage you to take full advantage of your partnership benefits (all of which are listed on the next page) and as you become active let us know which benefits you find the most rewarding so that we can continue to strengthen what we offer.

C

O

We hope that this guide will help you understand your Chamber partnership and answer a lot of questions you may have about benefits, opportunities, and events. If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at (706) 769-7947.

M

E

Thank you for putting your trust in us and we look forward to working with you!

B E N E F I T S

Ribbon Cuttings/Open Houses/Groundbreakings: If you are opening a new business, renovating a business, or expanding a business, we can help you host your ribbon cutting and open house.

Partner Promotion: Your business information will be listed in our online directory located at oconeechamber.org and you also have the opportunity to display your collateral in the Chamber brochure racks.

Business Seminars: We provide quarterly business seminars aimed at helping you strengthen your business.

Weekly Newsletter: Each week we send out a newsletter to the entire partnership. As a new business, you will be recognized in the newsletter.

Social Media: The Chamber has active social media accounts through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. When you have an event, let us know and we will post it for you to help spread the word.

Partner Plaques: As a partner of the Chamber, you have the opportunity to get an acrylic partner plaque as well as a window decal to display at your business.

Monthly Coffee/A.M. Exchange: The monthly morning coffee is hosted at a business each month. Coffee is served and guests can network with one another. The A.M. Exchange is also a morning event, however it can best be described as business "speed networking."

Business After Hours: Held monthly, the business after hours event is held at a business where partners can network with one another as well as with the host business.

Business Expo: Held annually, the Business Expo provides you with an opportunity to showcase your products and services. You have the ability to network with other business and community leaders as well as with the general public.

Oconee County Maps: County maps are available for you to pick up at the Chamber.

Ambassador Program: As an ambassador, you have the ability to network with new partners on a 1-on-1 basis. Ambassadors meet monthly and work on a variety of special projects for the Chamber.

E

Annual Meeting: The annual meeting is a recognition event which honors those who have gone the extra mile in support of the Chamber's mission. Some of the awards include: Sharon Johnson Volunteer of the Year, Chamber Volunteer of the Year, Larry Risse Agribusiness Person of the Year, James McClain Leadership Award, and Business of the Year.

STAR Student Breakfast: This event recognizes the STAR Students and STAR Teachers from the five high schools in Oconee County.

Golf Tournament: An opportunity for members to enjoy a round of golf and network with other Chamber partners.

V

Leadership Oconee: Adult leadership project for those interested in learning more about Oconee County and sharpening their leadership skills. The program incorporates tours as well as classes designed to promote personal development.

E

Youth Leadership Oconee: Tenth and eleventh grade students who live in Oconee County or attend school in Oconee County have an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills through involved learning experiences.

Farm/City Tour: An opportunity to view agriculture and business working together for a better economy.

N

Mini Grants: Teachers and support staff from SACS accredited schools in Oconee County may apply for grant funding to complete special projects throughout the school year.

T

Teacher of the Year: Further recognition of teachers from each of the ten public school locations in Oconee County.

3rd Grade Ag Day: An opportunity for students to learn more about agriculture and its role in our regional economy.

S

Fall Festival: The largest single event in Oconee County featuring original arts and crafts, food, entertainment, and children's events.

Women in Business: An opportunity for women within the Chamber to have lunch with one another while networking in order to foster professional development, business relationships, social awareness, and community participation.

COMMITTEES

Business Expo Committee: The business expo committee meets to discuss and plan the annual business expo held in March.

Golf Committee: The golf committee meets to discuss and plan the annual golf tournament held in April.

Ambassadors: Chamber ambassadors meet to discuss Chamber partnership, outreach efforts, partner retention, and upcoming Chamber events.

Education Committee: The education committee meets to discuss school and college education initiatives as well as ways to increase the Chamber's reach in education throughout the county. This committee is also responsible for the STAR Student breakfast, mock interviews, Youth Leadership Oconee, and the mini grant program.

Agribusiness Committee: The agribusiness committee's role is to facilitate the farm/city tour, fall festival, business expo exhibit, third grade ag day, and the middle school essay contest.

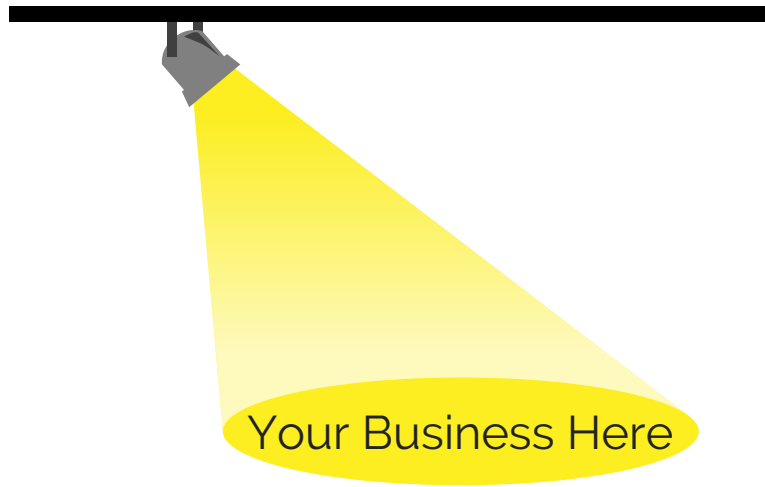
Fall Festival Committee: The fall festival committee meets to discuss and plan the annual fall festival held in October.

Economic Education: The role of the economic education committee is to promote legislative awareness, business development, the partnership with the Athens area, Barrow, and Gwinnett Chambers of Commerce in the Georgia's Innovation Corridor Joint Development Authority, and the service trade marketing program entitled **Go Local** which promotes shopping local.

Women in Business: The role of the women in business committee is to plan and oversee the group's quarterly luncheons as well as award the Chamber's Diamond Award scholarship.

Committee meetings are open to all partners and are held at various times Monday-Thursday. If you would like to participate in a particular committee, please call the Chamber at (706) 769-7947 for more information.

SPOTLIGHT



The Chamber "Spotlight" initiative was developed as a way for chamber partners to introduce their business to other partners. As a new partner, you have the ability to submit a short bio on your business/organization to be inserted in the Chamber newsletter, which is e-mailed each week to the entire partnership as well as city and county officials and school administrators. The newsletter is also placed on the Chamber's website (www.oconeechamber.org) for the general public to view.

If you are interested in submitting a "Spotlight" for your business/organization, you may include things such as:

- *Basic information (i.e. name, physical location, phone, website)
- *A logo or picture
- *The type of business or industry you are in
- *How long you have been in business
- *The types of products and/or services you offer
- *Special promotions
- *Your involvement with community organizations
- *Any additional information pertinent to your business/organization

Due to limited space, we ask that your "Spotlight" be no longer than 175 words. All "Spotlights" are to be e-mailed to Marshall Hooks at mhooks@oconeechamber.org. Depending on the number of submissions, your entry may not appear in the newsletter for a few weeks after submission.

We hope that you will take advantage of this value-added free advertisement that the Oconee Chamber of Commerce makes available to all of its partners.

DRUGS DON'T WORK

Join forces with other progressive area businesses in the Drugs Don't Work Program of the Oconee Chamber of Commerce. Drug use in your business costs money, customers, and lost productivity! To obtain drug free work place certification and to qualify for the 7.5% discount on your worker's compensation premiums, you must complete the following steps:

Institute a substance abuse policy: The Oconee Chamber has a sample policy you may use.

Conduct drug testing: Not all employees are required to be tested, however, pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, and post-accident testing are required. While random drug testing is not required, it is suggested. The Chamber can provide a certified testing provider list.

Conduct on-going employee education: The program provides a monthly newsletter for employees to equal the required two hours of training annually. Half of the training must be completed before applying for certification.

Supervisor Training is required: The Chamber can provide a newsletter to distribute to supervisors to meet the requirement.

Provide an **Employee Assistance Program** or post a referral list of treatment services

The General Assembly passed a 7.5% premium discount in workers' compensation insurance based on a certified drug-free workplace. We provide the Drugs Don't Work program to our partners free of charge while providing the necessary tools to empower business owners to maintain a drug-free workplace. Enrollment and certification through this program can also help lower workers' compensation premiums.

For more information or to sign up your business, please call the Oconee Chamber at (706) 769-7947.

