

## Weekly NewsBrief



February 9-15, 2009  
A weekly e-newsletter to chamber members

### Chamber building leased to entrepreneurs for talent agency *New movie industry in Michigan spurs opportunity for locals*

Local entrepreneurs, Jeff Pedue, Jeremy Stemen, and Richard DeShon, Jr. have leased the former Chamber office at 920 Pine Grove Avenue and will operate The Thespis Group Talent Agency.

The men have experience in theater, film and modeling and will offer classes in singing, acting and will showcase clients its clients work in local productions. The agency will also serve as an incubator for stage and screen performers as well as models.

The agency is looking to support the state's emerging film industry by working to connect clients with filmmakers and attracting film directors and producers to the area.

The Chamber will continue its efforts to sell the building, which is listed with Kramer Realty for \$99,900. Chamber President, Vickie Ledsworth was happy to see The Thespis Group move in, "The Chamber is happy to have the building occupied by such a unique business."



The Thespis Group is making minor improvements to the interior of the building and is planning a grand opening later this month.

### Website search results for January announced

*January referrals rise 25% over last year at the same time*

Discovering "Business in the Blue" is working as staff reviewed the results of our web referral and online business directory for January.

- ◆ Total referrals in January: 27,767
- ◆ Each member averaged 43.25 referrals from the website in January
- ◆ Top 10 categories searched most often by rank were:
  1. Retail Shopping = 121
  2. Community = 112
  3. Entertainment/Arts = 96
  4. Business Services = 95
  5. Repair, Improvement and Construction = 84
  6. Health & Medical = 78
  7. Manufacturing/Industrial Supplies = 60
  8. Attorneys = 59
  9. Restaurant = 57
  10. Financial & Insurance = 51
- ◆ Top keyword searches: entertainment, employment, Port Huron
- ◆ Most popular event searches:
  - Chillyfest 2009 = 104
  - 3rd Annual State of the County = 43
  - Stanley Cup in Port Huron = 36
  - Fogcutter Guest Chef Night = 27
  - Port Huron to Mackinac Sailboat Race = 25
  - Studio 1219 Lashbrook Exhibit = 24

Are you taking advantage of our online directory?

- Online coupons
- Specific category listings
- Banner ads
- Referrals
- Member-only discounts
- Links to your website

No website of your own? Let the Chamber's online directory be your web presence at no extra cost.

## Chamber seeks volunteers for committees

*Committee work is fun and a great way to connect with other businesses*

The Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce will hosts its annual "Drive for Success" golf outing in late August this year and new Board member, **Norm Krol**, co-owner of **The Office Lounge** will chair the committee.

Norm has some fun new ideas for the event and is forming a planning committee with **Mike Scully, BSB Communications** and **Herman Yentz** already volunteering to participate. The Chamber is looking for 3 more members to join the golf committee that will plan this year's event.

The purpose of the Golf Committee is to provide a social networking event for the membership that raises funds for the Chamber.

The Chamber has been hosting a golf outing since the 1930's and it is still one of the least expensive and fun outings in the community.

Members who are well organized, creative and goal oriented are encouraged to respond by emailing [info@bluewaterchamber.com](mailto:info@bluewaterchamber.com)

Don't forget your entire staff is a member and can get involved!



The Blue Water Ambassadors committee is looking for up to 10 new members who enjoy networking, special event planning and membership development.

The Blue Water Ambassador committee was formed 3 years ago by President Vickie Ledsworth and its purpose is to enthusiastically assist Chamber staff with public relations, member retention and recruitment and represent the membership at special events.

Ambassadors help new businesses and members host ribbon cuttings, open houses and recognition events. They also work with Chamber staff and help plan and host new member breakfasts, membership outreach campaigns, and participate in the annual state Ambassador conference.

Ambassadors are very outgoing, social interactive people that can work a room. They have a high energy level and enjoy working with people. They like to offer support and educate businesses on the benefits of being involved in the Chamber network.

Interested members should contact Amanda Will, Sales & Marketing Coordinator by emailing [awill@bluewaterchamber.com](mailto:awill@bluewaterchamber.com)

Don't forget your entire staff is a member and can get involved!



### **Chamber: Restructure, Avoid Tax Hikes**

On the eve of Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM**'s seventh State of the State address, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce issued its own blueprint for the new legislative year.

Chamber President Rich **STUDLEY** struck an early note of cooperation, which the Governor called for Tuesday night. His group is "strongly committed to playing a constructive role in shaping Michigan's future."

Having pledged that, however, he noted that when the Chamber has a philosophical difference with the Governor, it will say so.

The 22-page "Agenda for Economic Competitiveness" includes a call to downsize state government and no new taxes or fees.

"The chamber strongly believes the best way to control the cost of government is to improve government efficiency . . . and reduce spending, instead of new taxes, tax increases, or fees," the agenda reads.

The Chamber's 2009-2010 legislative priorities address eight issue areas:

- budget and tax policy
- energy and telecommunications
- environmental quality
- health care reform
- lawsuit abuse
- protecting employer rights in the workplace transportation investment
- workforce development
- student achievement

These priorities are available on the Chamber's web site at:  
[www.michamber.com](http://www.michamber.com).

The group identified \$1.5 billion in cost savings, including a reduction in the Department of Corrections budget with the savings earmarked for education.

The Chamber is also not interested in a flood of ballot proposals to reform taxes or the government. In fact, Bob **LaBRANT**, senior vice president of political affairs for the Chamber, sounded negative regarding a potential constitutional convention (con con) state voters will be asked to vote on in 2010.

"We can deal with changes . . . one amendment at a time," LaBrant asserted. Plus, he said reforms should be done through executive orders, and the appropriations process not a con con.

The document covered the environment, energy, health care reform, lawsuit abuse, education and protecting employer rights.

### **Gov Blows Life Into Offshore Wind Council**

Whether energy-churning wind turbines should be placed into the Great Lakes is the charge of a new 13-person "Wind Council" that Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** breathed life into Friday. Executive Order 2009-1 formed the Great Lakes Wind Council, a body within the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG) designed to collect public opinion on the idea of offshore windmills and where they could be put.

Among those tapped to serve is Michigan Environmental Council's James **CLIFT**, Bay County Executive Thomas **HICKNER**, Detroit-Wayne County Port Authority Executive Director Curtis **HERTEL** and Detroit Edison President and COO Steven **KURMAS**, among other appointees representing tourism, the Indian tribes and boaters.

Governor Granholm said, "The availability, consistency, and velocity of wind in the Great Lakes make their waters uniquely attractive to wind energy developers seeking to build offshore wind energy systems -- but we want to make sure we are prudent in this process of approval."

In the fall, the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of its membership to determine their level of support for the idea. Over 76% responded that our Chamber should advocate in support. Some questions that were forwarded to legislators concerned its effect on aesthetics, quality of life, shipping and tourism.

March newsletter deadline is Monday, February 23rd.

## Stretch your advertising budget

### Ad solutions that work for your business



The Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce offers targeted reach, flexible pricing, and tracking capabilities for advertisers looking to stretch their advertising dollars. With costs ranging from as little as \$4.99 per month, these entry-level advertising options include sales management assistance from a specialized support team.

**Business Classifieds** If you have business related items to sell, the Chamber can help with our business classifieds section in the monthly *Connections* newsletter. Submit 4 lines of text at no cost, or for an enhanced classified, we can add a link to a full page of text, photos or your web page for only \$10.

**Enhanced Search & Display Online Directory Listing** Why just list your business name when you can highlight your business by adding a descriptive paragraph, eye catching border, photo or logo and a link to your website in our online business directory.

**Click and Track Web Banner Advertising** Put the power of the web behind your advertising. With over 1/2 million visitors to the Chamber's website, a flashing banner ad will put your business front and center. The Chamber can track and report back to you the number of times your banner ad was viewed and web surfers were sent to your website.

**E-Connections Newsletter** The Chamber's *Connections* monthly newsletter, with enhanced ad links and a direct readership of over 550 area professionals and access to over 15,000 employees in the Blue Water Area, offers small businesses access to affordable advertising.

Check your selections

Free Classifieds  
*Enhanced Ad \$10*

\$42/year  
*only \$3.50 per month*

\$240/year  
*only \$20 per month*

Business card & 1/8th page  
\$20 per month

Full page \$49 per month

#### EXCLUSIVE OFFERS:

**"Hi"light Promotion** The Chamber office welcomes thousands of visitors annually from developers, sales representatives and recruiters, to tourists and relocators. Let us shine a little light on your business with our "Hi"light promotion - only seven (7) oversized 11.5"x12.5" backlit full color ads are available in the Chamber lobby promotional display unit. Be out front and on top and our visitors will see you first!

\$300 per year  
*Only 7 premiere spots available*

**President's "Business Beat" Spotlight** The Chamber President will spotlight your business as the sponsoring member for "Business Beat" - our weekly commentary highlighting chamber events, members, or public affairs that airs every Tuesday 8 am on 102.3FM WGRT. Limited to one 30-second spotlight sponsor per month (you'll be heard 4-5x a month) on a first come basis.

\$100 per month  
*1 available per month*

Purchase the advertising package that *works* for your business

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Invoice Me or Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax completed form to: (810) 985-7311 or email to: info@bluewaterchamber.com**

For more information, call the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce at (810) 985-7101