

SERVING ALL OF PICKAWAY COUNTY

# Circleville Herald

## Opinion

### Chamber and P3 'all about business'

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The Pickaway County Chamber of Commerce is an organization that exists to support the business community. Our mission is "to support, promote and advocate for business creating value for our members," which may sound like a lot of empty words but something our organization takes very seriously.

Founded in 1916 as the Circleville Area Chamber of Commerce, a lot has changed in over 90 years but one thing remains true, any business doing business in our community is invited and encouraged to become an investor and get involved in our efforts.

We work to start a business, grow a business, retain a business and attract new business to our community. Seeing a trend?

We're ALL about business!

Our investors are entitled to programs that help them save money.

We offer group rating programs for health insurance and workers compensation.

We offer our investors networking opportunities (Business After Business, Women's Network, Networking & Education Roundtable), legislative opportunities (State of the County Address, Legislative Roundtables, Meet the Candidates forum), low-cost advertising options and FREE small business consulting.

Our organization has two stand-alone subcommittees, the Pickaway County Safety Council and the Downtown Business Association. Both committees meet monthly and the Safety Council is offering a participation discount through the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation.

The Pickaway County Chamber of Commerce is a stand alone organization that survives solely on membership dollars. We are not a branch of the county or the city and our budget consists of memberships sold into the Chamber. We currently have nearly 300 members ranging from a small one person operation to the largest employer in our county, Berger Health System. While we can't be everything to everyone we strive to provide our members with top notch, quality services that will keep them engaged year after year.

The companion organization to the Pickaway County Chamber of Commerce is the Pickaway Progress Partnership, better known as P3.

P3 is an organization that is also all about business but with a slightly different perspective; P3 is the economic development agency for Pickaway County and its municipalities, and therefore is a branch of local government.

To put it in the simplest terms P3 is the link between government and business.

This requires a lot of coordination and facilitation on our part but we help government attract new business, help existing businesses grow, and improve infrastructure and workforce to support and encourage economic and community development.

Likewise we help local business navigate the halls of state and local government to make it easier to invest in new machines, buildings and products in order to create and keep jobs.

The end result of what P3 does is revenue to local government.

If we do our job correctly, in the long run income taxes, property taxes and sales taxes increase.

The key to that last sentence is "long run." Economic development is a marathon, not a sprint. It takes a long time and a lot of investment for an economy to turn around.

Even with our best intentions and planning we can't predict a recession like the one that occurred over the last 18 months.

It is during these times that P3 has to work even harder to prepare our economy for an eventual turn around.

The Pickaway Progress Partnership was founded in 1967 as the Circleville-Pickaway Community Improvement Corporation.

The organization was fairly inactive until the early part of the last decade.

It was at that time, and the closing of the RCA-Thomson plant that the organization's leadership decided it needed to take a pro-active approach to growing our economy.

In 2005 the name was changed to Pickaway Progress Partnership and a full-time economic development director was hired to reflect this pro-active stance.

P3 is a public-private, non-profit that operates with a board of directors from the public and private sectors.

P3 receives its funding from a variety of generous investors from around the County.

We only receive half of our funding from government; the other half comes from businesses and individuals. Like the Chamber, P3 would not be able to perform its job without the support of our investors.

P3 and the Chamber work together on a daily basis to help our businesses grow and to attract new business. We do this through a variety of venues, meetings and programs.

The Chamber exists to provide the services needed to help businesses succeed in our community.

P3 exists to be the link between those businesses and government.

At the end of the day we are both successful only if our local businesses are successful.

— Amy Elsea is president of the Pickaway County Chamber of Commerce and Nate Green is Economic Development Director of Pickaway Progress Partnership.

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