



Greater Florence  
**CHAMBER**  
*of*  
**COMMERCE**

**GUIDE TO  
MEMBERSHIP**

Rates Effective  
November 1, 2024



FULL LIFE. FULL FORWARD  
**FLORENCE**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

# A Chamber of Commerce Welcome



**Michael J. Miller**  
**Chamber President**

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce is a vital part of the ongoing growth and foundation building here in the Florence County area. Your membership in the Chamber provides unparalleled opportunities to connect with peers, prospective clients and partners up and down the supply chain to keep communications open.

The programs and events we present provide extraordinary opportunities to grow needed networks and gain new insights for addressing the ever-changing challenges facing all of us in business today. By working together as Chamber members, we have a much stronger voice with our elected leaders as they contemplate policy revisions, new rules and regulations that will create greater certainty and an improved environment for business in the Pee Dee.

The Chamber's body of work ranges from the widely known Leadership Florence Program to the Washington Delegation Trip. We conduct many Small and Minority Business programs including PRISM (Promoting the Inclusion of Small and Minority Businesses,) the Spring Business Outlook Luncheon and the Shop Local Program. We also organize Quarterly Business Seminars and CEO Breakfasts. In total, there are more than sixty different Chamber programs covering education, leadership development, business growth and networking.

To make all the programs possible, the Florence Chamber actively recruits local member support at a variety of levels. While many local companies provide supplemental funding at the Capital Foundation and President's Foundation levels, others provide sponsorship funding for specific platforms. However, our largest supporters are our 600 business members, which are critical to fulfilling our purpose.

Our mission is clear: "Promote and enhance a favorable business climate and improve the quality of life to make Florence... the best community in which to live and operate a business."

## Our Chamber Staff



**Susan Farver**  
**Chief Operating Officer**



**Les Echols**  
**Director of Community  
& Minority Enterprise**



**Jay Lavrinc**  
**Director of Membership  
Relations**



**Mandy Howle**  
**Office Manager**



**Jessica Watts**  
**Director of Marketing  
and Sales**

# Our Board of Directors

Kirby Anderson  
Raldex Hospitality

Paige Ard  
Assurant, Inc.

Lethonia Barnes  
City of Florence

Hugh Blanton  
Synovus

Keith Buckhouse  
Synergi Partners

Ken Burgess  
HopeHealth

Jamie Carsten  
Anderson Brothers Bank

Dr. Fred Carter  
Francis Marion University

Drew Chaplin  
Palmetto Commercial Real Estate

Ashley Christenbury  
First Bank

Diana Murphy Eaddy  
Diversity Works

Linward Edwards, II  
Law Office of Linward C. Edwards, II

Teresa Myers Ervin, Mayor  
City of Florence

Brian Fast  
First Citizens Bank

Dr. Jermaine Ford  
Florence Darlington Technical College

Amber Fort  
Raines Co.

David Fountain  
The UPS Stores

Derek Hemmingsen  
Clarke & Company

Robby Hill  
HillSouth

Jay Hinesley  
MUSC Health Florence

Ed Hoffman  
Trinity Collegiate School

David Kahn  
Signature Wealth Strategies

Rachel Lane  
Francis Marion University/Kelley Center

Jean Leatherman  
ERA Leatherman Realty

Doris Lockhart  
Spherion Staffing Services

Julie Maxham  
House of Hope of the Pee Dee

Jeff McKay  
NESA

Will McLeod  
McLeod Health

Mike Miller  
Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce

David Mullins  
First Reliance Bank

Robbie Norris  
The Floor Store of Florence

Dr. Richard O'Malley  
Florence 1 Schools

Gregg Robinson  
Florence County Economic Dev. Partnership

Rich Rowlett  
Field Fastener

Dr. Brian Sang  
Palmetto Smiles

William Schofield, Chairman  
Florence County Council

Mindy Taylor  
Duke Energy

Ray Taylor  
Finance of America - The Pee Dee Mortgage Group

Amber Tomlinson

## **Top 10 reasons you should be a member of the Chamber of Commerce:**

1. **Membership brings credibility to your business.** You can increase positive perception among consumers and business owners when your business is identified as a member of the Chamber of Commerce.
2. **Increase your visibility in the community.** As a new member of the Chamber of Commerce, you will be listed in the Chamber newsletter, Website listings, on Facebook and can be highlighted in other Chamber publications. You also can grow your business by advertising with the Chamber and sponsoring events. The Chamber may also promote your grand opening/ ribbon-cutting ceremony and assist with any public relations efforts.
3. **Create networking opportunities.** Chambers have numerous committees and serving on one of them provides numerous networking opportunities as well as professional leadership development. You can build your business while promoting developments of keen interest to local businesses and the community at large.
4. **Gain a voice in government.** The local Chamber takes on the tough issues and opposes new regulations, taxes, fees, assessments, and costs that can be detrimental to operating a business. It also helps protect the principles of free enterprise and aids businesses in being treated fairly.
5. **Make business contacts.** The Chamber's most fundamental mission is to generate more business activity for the community. The Chamber initiates more business-to-business commerce and more opportunities for networking and connecting local professionals than is available through most other local organizations.
6. **Receive ChamberLink newsletters.** Newsletters provide new member information, interesting information about operating a local business, articles about the local community and details about up-and-coming chamber events, among other things.
7. **Acquire customer referrals.** Every day, your local chamber receives calls from individuals and businesses looking for potential vendors, and chamber members typically recommend chamber members.
8. **Chamber events and programs.** Chamber events and programs provide members with great opportunities to get to know new people and expand their prospect base. Chamber events are innovative and fun ways to help members meet potential customers, clients, and vendors— and generate new business leads.
9. **Promotion and publicity.** With a Chamber membership, you can reach potential clients through member exclusive advertising and opportunities for business-to-business advertising and publicity.
10. **Access to members-only discounts and services.** You have great opportunities to save with Office Depot and Blue Cross-Blue Shield programs.

## Understanding the real value in Chamber Membership



When you're looking for ways to get more exposure for your small business, you should consider joining the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. We have been helping local businesses network and become more successful for many years. It is time that you joined so you can take advantage of all that membership can offer.

Not only does belonging to the Chamber of Commerce help with networking, exchanging ideas with other business owners and managers, and increasing your community exposure, but it also helps elevate consumers' perceptions of your business.

*A recent study indicates that consumers are 40% more likely to eat at a restaurant franchise if they know the restaurant is a Chamber of Commerce member. Similarly, consumers are 43% more likely to consider buying insurance from a company who is a Chamber member, and they are 63% more likely to purchase goods and services from a small business when they know that business is a member.*

There is no other way to boost your business just simply by joining a group, than when deciding to become a member of the Florence Chamber of Commerce. Results of the study also indicate that consumers believe a company uses good business practices when it is actively involved in the community as a Chamber member.

*Joining the Chamber of Commerce means consumers are more inclined to believe that your business not only cares about its customers, but also the community. In addition to believing that members use good business practices, consumers are also more inclined to believe that your company is reputable.*

Everything from automobile dealers to insurance companies, to franchise restaurants, to small businesses of any kind, have always benefited from a Chamber of Commerce membership. If you have not taken this smart business step, consider doing it now.

# What *IS* the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce?

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce is a group of dedicated men and women who not only live in Florence, but they live and breathe Florence. It is a group of individuals who work together to promote the efforts of local businesses through leadership in economic, social, and political development.

The Chamber is a strong voice for the business community, a tie that binds everyone from entrepreneurs and small business owners to major distributors and big box retailers. Our goal is simple - to encourage the growth of the local business community and economy in the place that we all call home.



## Who Can Join?

Whether you are a small business owner, part of a large national or international company, an entrepreneur, a member of a non-profit group or any other type of business that calls the Florence area home, the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce has the kind of tools and resources that will give your business a competitive edge.

The Chamber is an organization that is open to individuals and businesses of every shape and size, and we provide valuable resources that will help you establish or reestablish a firm foundation in your community and a strong business presence among your peers.

# Chamber Membership Investment Levels

**Individual or Personal Membership:** \$150 Annually \*

This level is for the Personal Memberships/Retirees.

- Provides access to all Chamber programs and events.
- Includes ChamberLink newsletter and representation in Chamber directory and online membership catalog.

**Small Business Membership:** \$300 Annually \*

This level is for the business that employs less than 5 full-time equivalents (FTE's).

- Provides access to all Chamber programs and events.
- Includes ChamberLink newsletter and representation in Chamber directory and online membership catalog.
- Access to Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance and office supply discounts.

**Standard Business Membership:** \$430 Annual base **plus \$5 for each FTE above 5**  
Semi Annual or Quarterly Billing is Available\*

This is the base level membership for businesses with 5 or more full-time equivalents (FTE's).

- Business featured in advertisement in the local newspaper.
- Provides access to all Chamber programs and events.
- Includes ChamberLink newsletter and representation in Chamber directory and online membership catalog.
- Access to health insurance, meeting and event space, and office supply discounts.

## Example Investment Levels for Standard Membership

	FTE**	Base	Additonal	Total Membership
	10	\$ 430	\$ 25.00	\$ 455.00
	20	\$ 430	\$ 75.00	\$ 505.00
	30	\$ 430	\$ 125.00	\$ 555.00
	40	\$ 430	\$ 175.00	\$ 605.00
	50	\$ 430	\$ 225.00	\$ 655.00
	100	\$ 430	\$ 475.00	\$ 905.00
	150	\$ 430	\$ 725.00	\$ 1,155.00
	200	\$ 430	\$ 975.00	\$ 1,405.00
	250	\$ 430	\$ 1,225.00	\$ 1,655.00
	300	\$ 430	\$ 1,475.00	\$ 1,905.00
	350	\$ 430	\$ 1,725.00	\$ 2,155.00
Cap	400	\$ 430	\$ 1,975.00	\$ 2,405.00

\*Note: Credit Card payments for membership dues may incur additional bank transaction fees.

\*\*Full Time Equivalents

# Chamber Sponsorship and Foundation Support Levels

Special support levels are in addition to membership dues.

**Chamber Trustee / Division Sponsor:** \$10,000 Annually (Quarterly or semi-annual payment available) \*

**This level of sponsorship is billed above general membership rates.** It shows major commitment to the Chamber by helping to support the many business programs and events that our community values. This level of commitment includes the following benefits:

- *Spring & Fall Luncheons - Reserved table for eight at each and recognition in event programs.*
- *Fall & Spring Golf Tournaments - A foursome in each event.*
- *Building Bridges Program - Two scholarships to attend the event.*
- *A Chamber Appreciation Plaque- A large plaque engraved with your business name, celebrating your active involvement in our community efforts.*
- *Four (4) seats at the Winter and Fall Community/Legislative Breakfasts.*
- *Digital Leader Board Promotion- Company name and logo will be displayed in the lobby of the Chamber office in appreciation of the commitment.*
- *Recognition of the support level on the home page of the Chamber Website.*

**Capital Foundation Sponsor:** \$6,975 Annually (Quarterly or semi-annual payment available) \*

**This level of sponsorship is billed above general membership rates.** It shows major commitment to the Chamber by helping to support the many business programs and events that our community values. This level of commitment includes the following benefits:

- *Spring & Fall Luncheons - Reserved table for eight at each and recognition in event programs.*
- *Fall & Spring Golf Tournaments - A foursome in each event.*
- *Building Bridges Program - Two scholarships to attend the event.*
- *A Chamber Appreciation Plaque- A large plaque engraved with your business name, celebrating your active involvement in our community efforts.*
- *Digital Leader Board Promotion- Company name and logo will be displayed in the lobby of the Chamber office in appreciation of the commitment.*
- *Recognition of the support level on the home page of the Chamber Website.*

**President's Foundation:** \$3,975 Annually (Quarterly or semi-annual payment schedule available) \*

**This level of sponsorship is billed above general membership rates.** It shows major commitment to the Chamber by helping to support the many business programs and events that our community values. This level of commitment includes the following benefits:

- *Spring & Fall Luncheons - Reserved table for eight at each and recognition in event programs.*
- *Administrative Professionals' Day Luncheon - Reserved tickets for two at the spring event.*
- *Building Bridges Program - Two scholarships to attend.*

\*Note: Credit Card payments for membership dues may incur additional bank transaction fees.



# MEMBER SERVICES

Our goal is to provide informative, quality member-guest programs. Conduct activities that maximize networking opportunities and enhance member value.

## **Outlook Luncheon (March 19, 2025)**

The following awards will be presented - The Small Business Person of the Year sponsored by Dedicated Community Bank and the annual Public Servant of the Year sponsored by Francis Marion University.



## **Membership Luncheon (September 25, 2024)**

We will host this annual gathering to share current projects as well as future plans, recognize the Chamber's volunteer leadership and acknowledge the Wells Fargo Outstanding Business Person of the Year.



## Business-After-Hours

We will plan and conduct BAH programs this year to provide informative networking opportunities for our membership. BAH attendance is 70 to 110.

## **Chamber Fall Golf Classic (October 3, 2024)**

We will continue to hold our Golf Classic events and keep them fun and enjoyable using hospitality sponsorship availability throughout the course. This provides a wonderful opportunity to network with other business leaders.



## **Chamber Spring Golf Classic (May 1, 2025)**

The twice-a-year tradition will continue with our excellent golf outing, rotating use of local courses when possible. Again, our events provide a wonderful and enjoyable networking opportunity for our vendors and players.

## **Women of Commerce Luncheon (August 29, 2024)**

We are launching a new program to replace our April Administrative Professionals Day Luncheon. The new program will be focused on having multiple local and statewide speakers at a 2-hour networking luncheon that offers the opportunity to make friends, business contacts and build relationships to grow your businesses and careers.



## **Women In Commerce Social (February 2025)**

This morning event offers connection time for all area women in the workforce. The women of Florence County can enjoy networking, fresh coffee and treats before work. Coffee is offered by Lincoln's Brews mobile coffee truck.

# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

A key part of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's mission is to promote and enhance a favorable business climate and to make Florence the best community in which to live and operate a business. To that end, we will use our Government Affairs Council to be a voice in the halls of local and state government. This would include policy issues, regulations, and ordinances at all levels of government.

## **Legislative Update Breakfast (November 1, 2024)**

The Chamber's Fall Legislative Update Breakfast will include government representatives from the federal, state, or local level. These sessions will help educate our local businesses on relevant issues that may offer help for Greater Florence business operators.



## **Legislative / Community Breakfast (February 28, 2025)**

The Chamber's Winter Legislative Breakfast will have a regional representative speaker. These sessions will help educate our local businesses on federal, state, and local issues.



## **Columbia Legislative Day (March 4, 2025)**

The Florence County business showcase held in Columbia, SC., as a joint effort of The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and Florence County Economic Development Partnership. The event starts as a luncheon with state leaders. Attendees include Florence County government, area business leaders and Leadership Florence class. The evening reception hosts our state and local elected officials.



## **City/Chamber Business of the Quarter (Awarded at the City Council meetings)**

A joint award made possible by the Chamber of Commerce and City of Florence. The award is presented quarterly to a local business recognizing their efforts in keeping downtown Florence prosperous.



**Private Key Legislator Drop-Ins (Twice a Year)** These events will be by invitation only to members and associates to meet in a small setting at the Chamber.



# COMMUNITY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The activities of this division encompass community and local business outreach. It has at its core programs that focus on community betterment and local business opportunities for companies, small business and minority business operators.

## **Promoting the Inclusion of Small and Minority Businesses (PRISM)**

A committee focused on developing action plans, events and programs focused on the inclusion of small and minority businesses.

Programs Include:

- Business over Breakfast
- Emerging Leaders Program
- Business Expo/Showcase
- BMW Supplier Diversity Conference in Greenville
- SC Sessions With the SBA:
  - Doing Business with Local Government
  - How to Start & Grow a Business
- Business of the Quarter
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summits

Greater Florence  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# PRISM

PROMOTING THE INCLUSION OF SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS

## **Small Business Appreciation Lunch (May 2025)**

This event will *celebrate* the contributions of *small business* to our community with a luncheon and small business expo at the Florence Center. We will have a keynote speaker from the SC SBA.

## **Kickin' Chicken Wing & Chili Fest (October 18, 2024)**

This event is an opportunity for the Chamber to provide a community wide, family friendly, event that promotes the Chamber, its members and downtown Florence. The festival has attracted more than 2,250 people to downtown Florence for the wings and chili cook-off.



## **CEO Breakfast Roundtable (March, June, Sept. Dec.)**

The leadership gathering is hosted by Willcox, Buyck & Williams Law Firm. The breakfast is an informational exchange with key business executives and is held quarterly at Florence Country Club supported by HopeHealth. Attendees include 32 to 35 local CEO's or business leaders from businesses around the region.



## **Business Mentorship Program - SCORE**

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce works in partnership with Grand Strand SCORE organization to support the Pee Dee Branch for the SCORE mentorship program. The partnership offers resources for small businesses in our Pee Dee communities.



## **Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration (January 2025)**

A joint program collaboration with Francis Marion University and the Florence Chamber highlights Dr. King's impact during the civil rights era.



# EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP

The Chamber believes strong educational opportunity is a key factor in the development of our local economy. Excellence in schools, colleges and universities is critical to building a modern and durable economy.

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## Leadership Florence (September 2024 - May 2025)

One of the Chamber's signature programs that develops effective leaders while strengthening and transforming our community. The class of up to 35 participants reflects the diversity of our community. It is a hands-on program that includes team building experiences and allows interaction with local business, industry, medical services, media, government, and education. This has been a successful business growth program for 35 years.



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## Building Bridges - Diversity & Leadership Summit (March 2025)

This program helps engage our community by addressing racial and cultural diversity. It helps to change attitudes and minds with emphasis on the workplace environment.



## Junior Leadership Florence County (September 2024 - April 2025)

The JLFC Program is a partnership program for all Florence County high school sophomores and juniors. The program is conducted cooperatively with FMU and Florence County 4-H club. Each year 28 students are selected for this program. This program is designed to broaden their leadership.



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## Fellows in Education (September 2024 - May 2025)

The Fellows program is designed to give local leaders a unique, behind-the-scenes look into Florence 1 Schools. Over the course of eight months, leaders will hear about seismic shifts in student needs and the additional state and federal requirements now placed on schools, teachers and administrators.



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## The Young Professionals of Florence

The Young Professionals group has experienced higher membership over the years. The YP of Florence operates with support from the Florence Chamber. The group offers social and business networking around the Greater Florence area with more than 60 members and great monthly socials. The organization helps support our regional business community.

# BUDGET & FINANCE

This division oversees the administrative and financial planning, procedures, and policies of the Chamber. It will provide guidance in the administration of staff duties, manage facilities and equipment as well as manage the membership dues and retention efforts of our members.

## Budgeting & Business Planning

Develop and manage the year's budget and ensure sound financial management practices for the Chamber (501-C6) and Pee Dee Visions Foundation (501-C3).

- Develop the annual budget and submit it to the Chamber Board for adoption during our May meeting.
- Review the financial status of the Chamber on a monthly basis and review the CPA firm's year-end financial audit and will also review the management letter in September to ensure implementation of approved recommendations.

## Ambassadors Committee

To foster goodwill and better communication, the Chamber uses its' Chamber Ambassadors to welcome new members and celebrate business milestones. The Ambassador's group is made up of many area business leaders that represent the Chamber at a variety of area events and provide support to the Chamber with new members and ribbon cuttings. The Ambassador of the Year will be announced in January 2024 and will be recognized again at the Chamber's Annual Outlook Luncheon in March 2024.



## Board of Directors Meetings

The Board of Directors meetings are held quarterly. The full year dates are announced in July 2023. There is one additional meeting held in June as an appreciation luncheon for outgoing board members and new incoming members.

## Chamber Affinity Programs

The companies that are listed as Chamber Affiliates are companies that have been chosen by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce as excellent business partners who will guarantee our members special discounts on their products and services. Current programs involve Blue Cross Blue Shield of SC and Office Depot.



# COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

The Chamber continues its focus on enhancing the image and brand of the Chamber by providing top quality information to area newcomers, current residents, local businesses, and our membership. We are committed to improving our member relations and ensure better retention programs. We also remain focused on our member communication through our digital and printed products.

## Membership Directory and Newcomers Guide

The Chamber published our ninth annual Membership Directory and Newcomer's Guide in June 2023. These products reflect the flourishing community we work in, while making a great first impression and providing an excellent information resource for those relocating to the area. Our businesses, medical centers, manufacturers, and real estate agents use the Newcomer's Relocation Guide for local information, while local businesses use the Membership Guide as a useful reference tool.



## Enhanced Digital Presence

The high traffic of the Chamber's website has enabled greater advertiser recruitment along with its improved navigation and detailed content for those researching the Greater Florence region. Typical annual Pageviews are around 68,000. Much of the traffic is from individuals and businesses looking to relocate to the community through company transfers, business opportunities or retirement life.

## Weekly Member Business & Event Updates

The Chamber offers members the most networking opportunities available and will continue keeping the membership informed about local events and news that may affect their business using weekly Chamber Updates.

## Weekly Member ChamberLink Radio Show

Each week the Chamber hosts a half-hour radio show on Sunday's from 12:00 - 12:30pm on LIVE 95.3FM featuring one of our Chamber members and share our upcoming programming events. To date, we have held more than 60 different Chamber member interviews.



## Social Media Program & Community Updates

The Chamber continues to use social media with updated daily community and state news. with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media interaction has helped the promotion of area programs and events. The Chamber's Facebook page is very healthy and has a following envied by most Chambers of Commerce throughout the state of South Carolina.

Facebook	10k+ Followers
Twitter	1,900 Followers
Instagram	1,800 Followers
LinkedIn	450+ Followers



## Monthly Digital Membership Newsletter

The ChamberLink newsletter is now published digitally each month. You will find features and stories about Chamber events as well as key information about local business concerns. Currently, there are 2,200 subscribers.

## Chamber Information:



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Office Hours: M – Th. 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

[www.flochamber.com](http://www.flochamber.com)  
[www.facebook.com/florencechamber](https://www.facebook.com/florencechamber)



## Our Mission

Our mission is clear: "Promote and enhance a favorable business climate and improve the quality of life to make Florence... the best community in which to live and operate a business. "

## Our Staff

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## Memberships and Associations :





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