NORTH EAST AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Membership Guide

North East Area Chamber of Commerce
44 West Main Street
North East, PA 16428
(814) 725.4262
www.nechamber.org
Welcome

The mission of the North East Area Chamber of Commerce is to serve the community by providing economic, educational and legislative information and assistance in order to maintain and enhance the community’s uniqueness and quality of life. Our focus is threefold –

· **Service to members** – As a membership based business organization, the Chamber provides a wide array of services to positively impact the business community. We make connections for our members, offer value-added programs and provide them with opportunities to market their business.

· **Community building** – We often collaborate with other community organizations and local government for economic development and to engage businesses in undertaking economic, educational, and environmental projects that promise to benefit North East and the surrounding community.

· **Tourism promotion** – The Chamber is the primary tourism promotion organization in North East. We work to position North East a destination for wine and agricultural goods, recreational pursuits, shopping, dining and historical landmarks to attract visitors to the community.

Our Team

We are committed to providing our members and our community with extraordinary service through our events, programs and community-based activities. Learn more by joining the Chamber and find out what we can do for you and your business.

**Holly Ferruggia, Executive Director**
holly@nechamber.org

**Katie Houpt, Membership & Communications Manager**
katie@nechamber.org

**Amanda Spellman, Office Manager**
amanda@nechamber.org
Membership Overview

Access to:
- Business development and networking events
- One on one assistance in marketing, business planning, etc.
- Grant monies from Façade Program
- Member 2 Member discounts
- Discounted advertising opportunities
- Discounted tuition for Mercyhurst NE
- Branding & Sponsorship Opportunities

Invitations to:
- Monthly Business After Hours
- Annual Meeting
- Business seminars & workshops

Administrative Support:
- Copies - 250 free 1-sided black and white copies monthly
- Discounted Color Copying
- Fax and scanning service

Your Business Represented:
- In the Chamber office - business cards, brochures & flyers displayed at no charge
- By Chamber staff members, who field over 5,000 calls annually from visitors and residents requesting information
- In North East promotional brochures
- In the print and online versions of the Member Directory
- On the Chamber website along with live links to your website and social media
- In regional advertising
- In Relocation Packets distributed to new residents
- In the Chamber’s bi-annual Calendar of Community events
- On social media

PLUS
- Ribbon Cutting for expanding or new businesses
- Subscription to weekly e-newsletter & calendar of events

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE BENEFITS IN EACH SECTION OF THIS MEMBERSHIP GUIDE!
Making Connections

We’re all about helping you make connections. The more we know about you and your business, the better we’re prepared to know who you need to know and who needs to know you. Everyone is so busy these days that the idea of networking seems overwhelming. Let us help you get to know your business peers and community better.

If you enjoy meeting people face-to-face, consider attending any of the Chamber’s events. If you prefer more of a low key approach, reach out to any of our staff and we’ll begin helping you make meaningful connections right away.

Business After Hours (BAH)
A BAH is a business networking of Chamber members and their guests at your business. As a BAH sponsor, the event provides you with the opportunity to showcase the products and services of your business. As an attendee, the BAH offers a chance to get to gather informally, see old friends, make new business contacts, and explore other businesses.
The BAH takes place at the end of the business day, from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. They are typically held the third Wednesday of the month.

Ribbon Cutting Events
The Chamber provides ribbon cutting services for members who have a business opening, reopening or expansion. Ribbon cuttings are a great way to promote your business and gain publicity. They increase the visibility of your business and create a buzz in the community. We encourage our members to attend these events and secure local press coverage as well.
Marketing Opportunities

Newsletters, guidebooks, and other chamber of commerce publications can highlight your business and increase the visibility of your product or service. Chambers are also a great source of information for visitors and local residents, and consistently refer potential customers to their members.

Business Directory
Our Membership Directory is published annually and distributed to all homes that receive the North East News Journal. A copy is also sent to each of our members and local lodging - the Chamber office also keeps copies to give new residents and visitors. The directory is typically published in the spring.

Annual Business Locator Map
The Chamber publishes an annual map of both North East Borough and Township which lists the locations of local businesses.

Visitor Center
Our office fields information and recommendation requests daily, as well as walk-ins. As a member, you have the exclusive ability to bring your business cards, rack cards, and brochures to display in our office and share with the public.

Co-Op Advertising
When members team together with the Chamber to advertise, we can book larger ads at a lower cost and showcase North East as the wonderful destination it is! We offer limited discounted advertising year-round in the North East News Journal as well as annual ads in tourist publications such as The Great Lakes Seaway Trail Guide and Visit Erie Adventure Guide.
Chamber Hosted Events

Wine Country Harvest Festival

The Wine Country Harvest Festival, or WineFest, takes place the last full weekend in September. The event encompasses three days, two parks, and includes ten wineries, twenty bands, and more than 150 vendors. It attracts 15,000 to 20,000 people annually from the tri-state area, Pittsburgh, Ohio, New York and even Ontario. Attendees can sample the finest wines in Lake Erie Wine Country, shop, and be entertained.

Sponsorship Opportunities Available.
Please contact Holly Ferruggia at holly@nechamber.org or 725-4262 for more information.

UnCorked Wine Walk

A themed wine walk adventure in downtown North East! This event features a taste of North East food, wine, and shopping. UnCorked happens every May and draws visitors from Pittsburgh, Ohio, and beyond. Participants visit downtown businesses (which are paired with wineries and food vendors) in an effort to solve a murder mystery, enjoy samples, and enter to win a fabulous prize. Each year has a different theme with staff and volunteers dressed as characters to add to the fun! Roughly 300 people participate each year.

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Chamber Hosted Events

Community Events

Community Yard Sale
Members have the opportunity to place a small ad on the Community Yard Sale Map each May for $20. Hundreds of copies are distributed to the community.

Picnic in the Park
The chamber joins with the North East Arts Council to bring entertainment and food vendors to Gibson Park each Thursday during the summer for this family centered event.

Olde Fashioned Fourth of July
As a fundraiser for the community, by the community, this event takes place annually on the Saturday prior to July 4. Celebrate our Nation’s birthday with a Chicken BBQ, Cow Pie Bingo, live music, a pie eating contest, children’s games and more! The afternoons celebrations are capped off with a backyard fireworks display courtesy of Phantom Fireworks. We also invite area non-profits to get involved to raise funds and awareness for their causes. Net proceeds raised by the Chamber are ear-marked for community enhancement and reinvestment.

Light Up North East
This holiday event has been a staple in our community for many years. Santa rides in on a fire truck while carolers and a special guest light the decoration in Gibson Park. The crowds then gather to drink cocoa, eat cookies and entrust their Christmas wishes to Jolly Ol’ Saint Nick. This event is held directly after Small Business Saturday on the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

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Chamber Hosted Events

Retail Events

Small Business Saturday
The North East Area Chamber of Commerce is a Neighborhood Champion for American Express’ annual November shop local event, Small Business Saturday®. In addition to passing out promotional materials and decorations for the big day, we also book full page ads in the North East News Journal to list the hours of all member businesses who are open that day. The Chamber and retailers offer sales and special giveaways to bring in crowds and keep them shopping!

Sugar Plum Weekend
This annual event encourages community holiday spirit and helps the anticipation of Christmas flowing. Santa’s reindeer fly into town for a visit, local vendors and non-profits set up in the Sugar Plum Marketplace, retailers hold sales and specials, there are free horse and carriage rides around town, and even Santa and his Elf stop in for a visit.

Men’s Shopping Night
This event is geared toward men, but anyone can participate. Throughout the holiday season fill out a holiday wishlist (available at the chamber and participating members) then give it to your special someone so they can shop great deals offered by our retailers.

Holiday Coupon Book
Each year we create a coupon booklet where our members can place a coupon, free of charge. Many members take advantage of this program to offer special deals for the holiday shopping season. The booklets are passed out to the public during Small Business Saturday® and Sugar Plum Weekend. Our staff can even design your coupon for you. Just email us your information and logo and we will take care of the rest!

Sponsorship Opportunities Available.
Please contact Holly Ferruggia at holly@nechamber.org or 725-4262 for more information.
Benefits of Sponsoring an Event

“I choose to sponsor because I love the community I live in and the events that bring us all together”

Josh Kitchen @ Paul Kitchen RE/MAX

1. **Put your business front and center**
   Your brand will be seen throughout various elements of the event and attendees eager to learn more about your business will come to find you.

2. **Brand awareness and media exposure**
   Event sponsorship also gives your brand the opportunity to generate awareness, boost the perceived image of your business and gain media exposure.

3. **Increase your reach and exposure to new clients, customers and businesses**
   Events don’t just have the audience in the room. Think about all the ways the organisers have promoted the event - social media, magazine and newspaper advertising, radio, emails and possibly even television commercials. As a sponsor your name and logo will potentially be used during these outreach campaigns.

4. **Deliver great ROI**
   Sponsoring an event can often be cheaper and have a higher return on investment (ROI) than a TV commercial or other above the line advertising methods. If an event caters to your target market, then it will probably provide strong ROI.
Additional Benefits

Business Seminars & Workshops
These opportunities help you learn or improve upon skills that are essential to running your business. You can use the professional development events to better your company without breaking your budget for business.

Copy, Fax & Scanning Service
All members receive up to 250 free single-sided black/white copies per month. (ex. 125 double sided copies) Any black/white copies over 250 or any color copies can be made for a small fee. Members must provide their own paper.
Member copy charges (per side, any size): Black/White $0.02, Color $0.10

Member 2 Member Discount
The Member 2 Member Discount Program is offered exclusively to members of the North East Area Chamber of Commerce. Members may present their key card at participating member businesses for specific discounts on sales and services.

Gift Certificate Program
The Chamber offers a gift certificate program for members - we currently have over 70 members participating! Customers purchase gift certificates at the North East Area Chamber of Commerce during regular business hours throughout the year; these certificates are redeemable at participating merchants. As a merchant, the Chamber will reimburse you for the full value of the gift certificate in the form of a check.

Facade Grants
The North East Area Chamber of Commerce makes grant funds available to chamber members for the improvement of building facades and storefronts. Funds are limited and available on a first come, first serve basis.
"But I don't have time for meetings."

No Problem. The Chamber can still help promote your business.

**How?**

- Business Listing in the annual directory
- Business Listing in website directory
- Bring your business cards and flyers to our office
- We’ll share your news and special offers through social media
- We’ll include your events in the Grapevine E-Newsletter
- Sponsor an event to gain publicity and brand recognition
- We will come to you

**Did you know?**

- Because we serve as a tourist information hub, we get hundreds of walk-ins at our office
- We have over 2,000 people following our Facebook page
- We get requests for recommendations and information daily
- Our members averaged nearly 500 page hits each through our website last year

**Chamber membership is good business!**

According to a national survey*, chamber membership benefits businesses.

- 49% increase in consumer favorability rating
- 73% increase in consumer awareness
- 68% increase in local reputation
- 80% increase in the likelihood that consumers would patronize that business in the future

*Study conducted by the Schapiro Group, A Strategic Consulting Firm
2019 Calendar of Events

A complete list of member events is available on our website www.nechamber.org

April
17 BAH Phantom Fireworks

May
4 NE Uncorked: Wine Wars
15 BAH Arrowhead Winery & Mobilia Fruit Farm
17-18 NE Community Yard Sale

June
13 Picnic in the Park
19 BAH Straw Hat
20 Picnic in the Park
22 Pets on the Square Dog Parade
27 Picnic in the Park
29 Olde Fashioned 4th of July

July
11 Picnic in the Park
17 BAH Heritage Wine Cellars
18 Picnic in the Park
25 Picnic in the Park

August
1 Picnic in the Park
8 Picnic in the Park
15 Picnic in the Park
21 BAH Grape Discovery Center w/ Lake Erie Wine Country

September
4 WineFest Sponsor Party
27-29 38th Annual WineFest

October
16 BAH Bemiss Insurance Agency

November
13 BAH
30 Small Business Saturday
30 Light Up North East

December
6-7 Sugar Plum Weekend
11 BAH
17 Men’s Shopping Night