

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Making the Most of a Job Fair



Job fairs are a great way for you to explore potential employment opportunities and learn more

about companies who are actively hiring in your area. Many people see it as something as serious as a first interview, while others view it as an opportunity to gather information about potential employers. Regardless of what reason you have for attending, there are a few important things to keep in mind before, during, and after a job fair to make it successful for you. Here are a few tips from Employmentguide.com.

Before the Job Fair:

- **Find out what businesses will be there.** The more information you can gather beforehand, the more successful the job fair is going to be for you. Find out what businesses are going to be at the job fair, and spend some time doing some research about them. What types of jobs do they have open? What kind of people are they looking for? What kinds of skills do these people need to have?
- **Develop some questions you'd like to ask employers.** Narrow down your list of businesses to include those who have positions you are interested in, or are businesses you think you might like to work for. Then list some questions you would like to ask the company representative at the job fair.
- **Proofread your resume - at least twice.** If you don't already have one, it is a good idea to put a resume together for a job fair. It gives employers a blueprint of your skills and something tangible to remember you by. Be sure to proofread your resume before the job fair to find any spelling or grammatical mistakes. Even if you think there are no errors, have someone else look it over too. Don't let errors overshadow your qualifications for a job!
- **Be sure your resume contains your updated contact**

information. You'll want employers to be able to reach you if necessary. Double check that your address, phone number, and e-mail address is current.

At the Job Fair:

- **Dress the part.** As with a job interview, first impressions at a job fair are important. How you represent yourself sends an immediate message to employers about how serious you are in your job search. It isn't always necessary to wear a suit to a job fair - unless you are looking for a job that would require you to dress professionally at work. However, you should leave the jeans and t-shirts at home. Business Casual is usually the most appropriate at a job fair - nice slacks and a collared shirt for men and nice slacks or a skirt and a blouse for women are appropriate. Make sure your clothes are clean and pressed. Avoid wearing excessive jewelry or clothing that is too short or revealing.
- **Take time to talk to employers.** Don't just drop off a resume and move to the next booth. Take time to get additional information and make an impression. The point is not to see how many resumes you can give to employers in the least amount of time - it is to establish some solid job prospects. Also, try to avoid approaching employers when they are crowded by a large group of jobseekers. Approaching a crowded booth makes it difficult for employers to answer your individual questions, and they are less likely to remember you when they return to their offices.
- **Use your research to appear confident and knowledgeable.** If you have done research before the job fair, you won't have to ask the question, What does your company do? If you have to ask, you are wasting valuable time. Instead, you could be asking questions about the position or department you are interested in. It works to

your advantage if you can tell employers how your skills match what they are looking for. Employers want to hire people who are genuinely interested in their company. Do your homework!

- **Have a firm handshake and maintain eye contact.** Let employers know how serious you are. Greet the employer with a firm handshake, and maintain eye contact throughout your conversation. Showing interest and good manners is important, regardless of the type of job you are looking for. Every employer appreciates someone who is dedicated, conscientious, and attentive.

After the Job Fair:

- **Follow up with a thank you note.** Experts agree that follow-up is an important part of attending a job fair. If you picked up a business card, or the name of the company's job fair representative, send a thank you note a day or two after the job fair. This is not only polite, but will let the representative know you paid attention, are serious about the job, and that you are the right person for it.

The Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the News & Advance, Central Virginia Community College, Virginia Employment Commission, Region 2000 Career Center and others, will be hosting its **Third Annual Job Fair** on May 13, 2015 at the Bedford Campus of Central Virginia Community College, 1633 Venture Blvd., Bedford. This event will offer workshops throughout the day for job seekers and feature businesses in our area that are actively hiring.

We are currently recruiting businesses that are actively hiring to participate by hosting a booth. Please contact the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce at 540-586-9401 ext. 101 for information. Please visit our website at www.bedfordareachamber.com for more details as they become available.

CHAMBER DAY AT THE CAPITOL – RICHMOND, VA

On January 28th, fifteen representatives of the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce traveled to Richmond to participate in Chamber Day at the Capitol hosted by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. The group met with our local representatives, Delegate Terry Austin, Delegate Kathy Byron, Delegate Scott Garrett and Senator Steve Newman to discuss the Chamber's 2015 Legislative issues. Our representatives showed great interest, spending valuable time from their busy schedule, listening and discussing our business members concerns.

Key topics discussed included Education, Transportation, Workforce Development, and Broadband.

Education Funding is of major concern to many residents of Bedford and we spent time highlighting the importance of providing quality education in our K-12 programs. The Bedford Area Chamber believes a strong educational system is vital for supplying the future workforce for area businesses, and the link between quality education and a healthy and prosperous community cannot be overstated.

The Bedford Area Chamber supports the recommendations of the SOL Innovation Committee including revising school accreditation processes, providing SOL testing flexibility, recognizing schools that promote authentic workplace experiences (internships/apprenticeships) in the state accountability system and local control and SOQ flexibility to support innovative practices that personalized learning experiences for students.

Transportation is also high on the Chamber's agenda and the attendees strongly urged our Virginia Legislators to protect the transportation funding for its designated use and continue to support a highway funding formula that recognizes the needs of rural localities.

The day concluded with a lunch with more than 150 representatives from Chambers' of Commerce from across the state and a tour of the Capitol. For more information or to participate in the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee please contact the office at 540-586-9401.



A delegation of 15, including representatives from area business and staff of the Chamber of Commerce, attended Chamber Day at the Capitol on January 28.

FEBRUARY NETWORKING BEFORE NINE

Bedford Area Chamber Members came out in full force to attend the first Networking Before Nine of 2015 on Tuesday, February 10! Luckily, the Networking Host, Kitchen & Bath Ideas had ample space to accommodate the over 50 guests in attendance. Attendees present included BACC Staff; Board Chairman Scott Murphy (Union); Board Member Steven Jefferson (Wooldridge Heating Air and Electrical); Pinnacle Investors Centra, Union, WSET, Bedford Bulletin, and the Bank of Fincastle;

BACC Ambassadors Bill Moss (Foster Fuels), Angela Noel (Comcast Spotlight), Brett Howell (Synergy Develops) Jennifer Harder (Plexus Fit U), Elizabeth Snider (All'asta), Tommy Doukas (New York Life), Terry Heiligenstadt (The Pampered Chef), Carol Craighead (Laker Media), and Rebecca Sturm-Clausser (Coach Rebecca).

Kitchen & Bath Ideas has proudly served Lynchburg and Bedford for over 25 years. They specialize in building dream kitchens for Home Owners, Multi Unit Builders, Custom Home Builders and Remodelers. Please feel free to call or visit our showroom anytime at One Millrace Drive or contact them at info@kbideas.com.



KEGS & CORKS RETURNS TO FOREST



Back by popular demand, the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to once again bring Kegs & Corks, Microbrew & Wine Festival, to the Bedford Community! Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 25 from Noon to 6pm and join us at the Forest Professional Park brews, tunes, and food! Advanced tickets are now on sale at www.bedfordareachamber.com and include a special VIP ticket with a special tent, tastings, and "ask the expert" sessions. For more information on how your business can participate as a sponsor, vendor, or entertainer, please contact Susan Brown at (540) 586-9401 ext 201 or sbrown@bedfordareachamber.com.

2015 NEW MEMBER SHOWCASE

Each year, the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce hosts the New Member Showcase in January to introduce new business members from the previous year to our community. This year's New Member Showcase was held on Thursday, January 22 at the Forest Recreation Center and brags participation from nearly 45 businesses that joined the BACC in 2014! Tasty treats were provided by Zaxby's, Everafter, Jersey Mike's, and Sam's Club. The event would not have been possible without the support of our Title Sponsor, Nadine Blakely - Realtor with RE/MAX 1st Olympic. Special thanks to Wendell Witt of Music, Music & More Music for providing entertainment. A list of New Chamber Members scrolls on our homepage and is posted monthly in the Chamber Focus Page. Please get to know these companies at www.bedfordareachamber.com!



back to business

BASOCS

The Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce is thrilled that the Annual Dinner has once again sold out in what seems to be record time and we thank you for registering for our event so far in advance. We are truly humbled to know that so many businesses and individuals in the community are excited to be a part of our yearly tradition.

The Annual Business Dinner will be held at Boonsboro Country Club, on Thursday, March 26, 2015. The Annual Dinner will once again feature the presentation of the Excellence in Business Award. The nominees for Small Business of the Year are Everafter Cakes & Flowers, Forest Direct Primary Car, Forest Family Dentistry, Lynchburg Roofing, Town Kitchen Provisions, and The White Hart Café. The Nominees for Large Business of the Year are Forestry Equipment of Virginia, Fostek, Sam Moore, Simplimatic Automation, and Wooldridge Heating Air & Electrical. The nominees for Non-Profit Organization of the Year are American Red Cross Historic VA Chapter, Bedford Christian Ministries, Bedford Community Health Center, Bedford Domestic Violence Services, CASA of Central VA, Centra, National D-Day Memorial, and the Wharton Society/Bower Center for the Arts. The nominees for Agribusiness of the Year are Alpaca by Jaca, Bedford Area Family YMCA Farmer's Market, and the Bedford Wine Trail. The nominees for Citizen of the Year are Macon Putney, Evelyn Johnson, Eddie Sitzler, and Kevin Willis. Thank you to everyone who submitted a nomination and good luck to all of the deserving nominees!

Even though the event is sold out, we are taking names for a waiting list and strive to accommodate as many as possible. Tickets are \$55 for chamber members and \$75 for general admission. Please call (540) 586-9401 ext. 102 if you are interested in being added to the list.

NEW MEMBERS JANUARY 2015

As a Chamber member, you become a part of a vibrant group of businesses with the advantage of a local referral network. Congratulations to these New Chamber Members who've made the wise decision and significant investment in their businesses. If you're not already a Chamber member and are interested in membership, please contact Heather Alto at 540-586-9401 ext. 103.

- Mutual of Omaha - John Naples
- Keller Williams - Jason Smawley
- Humbly I Serve
- Polished to Perfection Cleaning
- Zija International

