



Ambassador Handbook 2018

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Welcome New Ambassador!

On behalf of the River Falls Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau Board of Directors, welcome and thank you for your interest in being part of the Ambassadors Committee.

The Ambassadors are a well-respected extension of the Chamber. Though the time commitment is somewhat minimal, the benefits of being an Ambassador are immeasurable. As an Ambassador, you are an important extension to Chamber structure.

You, as an Ambassador, will have the opportunity to represent yourself and your business at the numerous networking functions listed in this handbook. There will also be opportunities to work on sub-committees for the individual events hosted by the Ambassadors. These sub-committees provide even more opportunities for your business to be recognized within the community.

I hope you find the Ambassador Committee as valuable as an asset to your business as we, the River Falls Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau, finds you as a member. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chris Blasius
Chamber CEO



Chamber Overview

The Chamber is a group of people working together to further enhance the River Falls area. We represent businesses, professional and interested individuals who care about the economy and the community and are willing to shape the future of River Falls.

Staff

Chris Blasius, CEO

- chris@rfchamber.com

Marissa Ostern, Event and Membership Coordinator

- marissa@rfchamber.com

Meghann Witthoft, Marketing and Communications Specialist

- meghann@rfchamber.com

Mission Statement

The River Falls Chamber of Commerce works together to connect, promote and support its members to further enhance the local economy and cultivate a sense of community.

Investment

New members will have the opportunity to choose a membership package that best fits their individualized needs from our Tiered Dues Investment Structure. You are encouraged to contact existing or new businesses and explain the benefits of Chamber membership. Potential new member packets are available at the Chamber office.



Participation

Upon joining the Chamber, it is our hope that all members will at some point become actively involved in any Chamber committee, event or function by encouraging new members to identify areas of interest and become involved where able. The Chamber is a volunteer-driven organization, so input and volunteer participation from our members is extremely important.

When joining the Chamber, you join a group of people that share common interests and work together to make the River Falls area a better place to live, work and grow. You also hire the organization to do this work FOR YOU if you do not have the time. The Chamber's strength lies in sharing membership information with the greatest members of businesses and individuals creating a pool of resources from which to draw ideas, energies and finances.



Ambassador Functions

Ribbon Cuttings/Business Visits

The following events are eligible for a ribbon cutting ceremony:

- Must be a River Falls Chamber Member
- Member has relocated to a new location
- Member has had a change of ownership with a new name
- Member has made substantial physical expansion to their existing business
- Member is new to the River Falls area

The following are not eligible for a ribbon-cutting ceremony:

- A new owner/co-owner is added to the existing business
- A new product or service is added to the existing business.

These events are announced/promoted through the Business Brief in the monthly newsletter free of charge.

As part of the monthly Ambassador meeting, the Ambassadors will visit a minimum of one current Chamber member.

Mentoring/Recruiting Members

The Ambassadors also play a significant role in the annual delivery of Membership Directories, as well as playing a key role in mentoring of members year-round. Mentoring also provides a great networking opportunity to Ambassadors. Ambassadors also encourage and welcome potential new members. Each Ambassador should make a point to, whenever possible, stop in at a new business or other businesses that have been visited to encourage Chamber Membership. Leaving a business card is encouraged. Some examples of mentoring opportunities include:



- Send Chamber supplied notes when members add new employees, receive special recognition in the newspaper, etc.
- Extend a special invitation to attend Chamber events and offer to meet them at the door and introduce them to others.
- Ask the member if they have any questions or concerns regarding their membership. (Please be sure to provide relevant feedback to Chamber staff.)

Chamber Support

The Chamber is a volunteer-driven organization, so Ambassadors are often called upon to support various Chamber committees, events or functions as able.

Ambassador Sub-Committee

Ambassador Annual Golf Outing

This annual event started in 1999 and has improved each year. The Golf Outing is coordinated by an Ambassador sub-committee, and supported by the entire committee. This event offers the local businesses networking and sponsorship opportunities.



Ambassador Guidelines

Mission Statement

Ambassadors promote goodwill and communicate the mission of the River Falls Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau (Chamber) to new and existing members; encourage all members to get involved with the Chamber; and support Chamber membership and staff.

Statement of Purpose

The Ambassadors Committee is the public relations group of the Chamber. The Ambassadors have three main objectives:

1. Welcome new businesses to the community
2. Visit and mentor existing members
3. Act as the official host group for the Chamber

Standing Rules

Article I Ambassador Membership

- Section A Membership is restricted to individuals who are members, or whose employer is a member, of the Chamber in good standing.
- Section B The Ambassador membership requests a minimum two-year commitment.
- Section C Anyone qualifying as a member will receive an official name badge once they attend two consecutive monthly meetings.
- Section D Once Ambassador Membership expectations are reviewed, please sign the 'Membership Expectations' form found at the end of this handbook, make a copy and return to the Ambassador Chair upon joining.
- Section E RSVP to Chair or Vice Chair on Ambassador related events.



Section F Attend monthly meetings, typically held the second Thursday of each month. Ambassadors must be able to commit to a minimum of two+ hours per month for business functions and other meetings.

Section G The recommended size of the Ambassador Committee is equivalent to 10% of the membership base, with no more than two representatives from one business.

Article II Officers

Section A The Ambassadors shall annually elect a Vice Chair who will assume the position of Chair for the following year.

Section B The duties of the Chair shall be as follows:

1. Submit an agenda and facilitate all monthly meetings and coordinate meeting locations.
2. Have the general supervision, direction and management of the affairs and business of the group under the direction of the Chamber Board of Directors.
3. Oversee the "Functions" of the Ambassadors.
4. Work with the Chamber Board Liaison to communicate activities and concerns of the Ambassadors to the Board of Directors and attend monthly board meetings.
5. Coordinate new ambassador orientation as necessary.

Section C The duties of the Vice Chair shall be as follows:

1. Assist the Chair and discharge duties of the Chair in the event of an absence.
2. Take minutes at meetings and send them out to the membership.

Section D The duties of the Chamber Staff shall be as follows:

1. Come to each monthly meeting with the Ambassadors and attend business visits.



2. Work with the Chair to communicate to the Chamber Board ongoing activities and concerns of the Ambassadors.

Section E The duties of the Business After Hours Chair shall be as follows:

1. Serve as host at all Business After Hours.
2. Encourage members to attend Business After Hours.

Section F The duties of the Visit Coordinator shall be as follows:

1. Organize monthly Ambassador visits
2. Responsible for coordinating ribbon cutting at members' requests

Section G The duties of the Golf Outing Committee Chair shall be as follows:

1. Arrange venue, assist in event promotion, coordinate volunteer committee, obtain event sponsors, etc.

Article III Functions

Section A The Ambassadors shall meet for business once per month. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

Section B The Ambassadors shall secure commitments for and plan for networking opportunities.

Section C The Ambassadors shall coordinate the Annual Ambassador Golf Outing.

Section D The Ambassadors shall attend ground breakings, ribbon cuttings, grand openings and greet new member businesses with a small gift, as appropriate.

Section E The Ambassadors shall serve as greeters and volunteers at Chamber functions.

Section F The Ambassadors shall help with membership mentoring and directory delivery.

Section G The Ambassadors shall participate in additional Ambassador sub-committees and other Chamber related events and activities.



Article IV Recognition

Section A Each Ambassador attending a Chamber member business visit, grand opening or ribbon-cutting ceremony will appear in a photograph which will be submitted with news release to the local media. Each Ambassador, and the business they represent, will receive recognition in the news release and in the Chamber newsletter.

Section B The 'Ambassador of the Year' Award will recognize an Ambassador for outstanding contributions to the group and to the business community. The Ambassadors Committee shall nominate members to be voted on by blind ballot.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Chamber?

An active, growing non-profit membership organization, whose mission is to support and promote business in the River Falls area. Helps connect businesses to the community and promote businesses to increase visibility.

How will a Chamber membership benefit me?

- The Chamber is often the first point of contact for businesses, residents and visitors looking for information about the community. We're here to help them find you, our member.
- The Chamber website gets over 5,000 hits a month. As a member, the Chamber will directly link visitors to their information. As a Chamber member, you will be kept current on events that are happening in the community.
- By joining the Chamber, you let others know you care about the community in which you work.
- By joining the Chamber, you are also investing in the local economy.
- People love to do business with people that they know - countless networking opportunities.
- The Chamber only gives referrals to Chamber members.
- There are multiple committees that you can serve on that provide an opportunity to network your business and make lasting connections with other community business owners.
- By joining the Chamber, you are making a stand that you are an advocate of local business.



How much does it cost? It's too expensive.

- Any additional visibility and promotion is beneficial.
- One-year of membership costs less than one ¼ page ad in a weekly print publication. It is hard to put a price on countless impressions that have the opportunity to make a big difference for your business.
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I was a member once, but I didn't get anything out of it.

Ask the member to share their involvement or frustrations from when they were a member. (Any pertinent information should be shared with the Chamber staff.)

We are already a member of an industry trade group.

Great, explain that shows they are dedicated to promoting their business as knowledgeable, experienced, and professional. The Chamber's mission aligns with those values and helps advertise your business locally.

Should I join if I am not a retailer?

- Less than 25% of our membership is comprised of retailers.
- While we do a lot of promotions for our downtown business community, our 300+ members are mostly small business owners and entrepreneurs located in and around River Falls.
- It is important that we have a cross section of businesses as members so we can effectively speak to the issues facing the community.

I'm too busy.

Explain that we understand that as a business owner they are very busy, but note the Chamber is dedicated to working with business owners to create networking opportunities that will work for them.



Ways to Connect

- **Network** – Expand your professional contacts by attending events including Business Breakfasts, Chamber Coffee, Business After Hours and Ribbon Cuttings
- **Referrals** – People like to do business with others they know, so leverage your opportunity to gain new customers, identify new suppliers and more
- **Credibility** – Your membership builds customer confidence and aids in attracting and retaining customers

Ways to Promote

- **Communication** – Post updates/events and share business spotlights to maximize your business exposure
- **Marketing Resources** – Leverage effective promotions including monthly newsletters, membership directory, mailing lists and more
- **Website** – Market your business 24/7 on the Chamber's website-the first place visitors look for information-which receives over 5,000 hits/month

Ways to Support

- **Personal and Professional Growth** – Participate in no or low-cost professional development programs with access to great speakers and educational sessions
- **Marketing Expertise** – Chamber staff and fellow members are here to guide you to success every step of the way
- **Mentoring** – Engage in opportunities to expand individual's knowledge of River Falls and assist in maximizing their potential while contributing to their personal growth in programs such as Leadership River Falls



Membership Expectations

As an Ambassador, I have read and agree to the items outlined within this Handbook.

Ambassador Signature

Date

Chairpersons' Signature

Date

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____