

# 2016 Ambassador Handbook



**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND TOURISM BUREAU**

715.425.2533 [rfchamber.com](http://rfchamber.com)  
215 W. Maple St. River Falls, WI 54022



Welcome New Ambassador!

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

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 Club as valuable as a asset to your business as we, the River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau, finds you as a member. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Blasius".

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](mailto:chris@rfchamber.com)

Maranda Mahr, Event and Program Coordinator [maranda@rfchamber.com](mailto:maranda@rfchamber.com)

Judy Berg, Tourism Sales and Marketing Manager [judy@rfchamber.com](mailto:judy@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 be assigned a membership investment amount based on their category of business. The schedule for each category is listed in our membership application. The Commerce Board of Directors must approve any requested deviations from the Membership Investment Schedule. Please feel free to contact existing or new businesses and explain the benefits of Chamber membership. Potential new member packets are available at the Chamber Office. (See attached Investment Structure.)

## 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 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 visit two current Chamber members each month.

## **Mentoring/Recruiting Members**

The Ambassadors also play an important 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 member should make a point to, whenever possible, stop in at 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 CEO.)

## **Chamber Support**

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



# Sub-Committees

## **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.

## **New Member Committee**

As new businesses are established, Ambassadors are encouraged to welcome them as potential new members. The committee also strategizes how to gain new members and increase involvement.

## **Business After Hours**

A great way to meet other business members from the community! Ambassadors take care of volunteering at Business After Hours. An Ambassador subcommittee plans these events and take place four or five times a year.



# Ambassador Guidelines

## Mission Statement

Ambassadors promote goodwill and communicate the mission of the River Falls Area 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 Club is the public relations group of the Chamber. The Ambassador Club has 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 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 The expectations for Ambassador Membership are described in detail in a separate document entitled 'Membership Expectations.' Please sign, make a copy and return to the Ambassador Chair upon joining.
- Section E RSVP to Chair or Co-Chair on Ambassador related events.
- Section F Attend monthly meetings, typically held the second Thursday of each month, over the lunch hour. 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 Club 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 Chair and Vice Chair to 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 Ambassador Club.
4. Work with the Chamber Board Liaison to communicate activities and concerns of the Ambassadors Club to the Board of Directors and attend monthly board meetings.
5. Coordinate new ambassador orientation as necessary.
6. Attend New Member Committee Meetings.

Section C The Co-Chair's duties 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 Chamber Staff duties 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 Club.

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

1. Serve as host at all Business After Hours.
2. Introduce speaker, thank everyone for coming to the event, and thank the grand prize sponsor, promote and sell 50/50 raffle tickets.
3. Organize Business After Hours events for the upcoming year.

Section F Visit Coordinator duties shall be as follows:

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

Section G Ambassador Golf Outing Committee Chair duties shall be as follows:

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

Section H New Member Committee Chair duties shall be as follows:

1. Lead the New Member Committee Meeting
2. Send the Ambassadors meeting minutes and report to the Ambassadors at monthly Ambassador meetings
3. Responsible for recruiting new members, coordinate membership directories.



**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 Club 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 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' Awards will recognize an Ambassador for outstanding contributions to the group and to the business community. The Ambassadors Club members shall nominate members to be voted on by blind ballot by the Ambassadors.





# 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 a 1,000 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 are able to serve on that provides 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 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 for your business.



## **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 Chamber CEO.)

## **We are already a member of an industry trade group.**

Great, explained 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.

## **Just from joining the Chamber you will receive:**

- One free business breakfast.
- One free newsletter insert.
- New member listing on the website.
- An ambassador visit .

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_



### MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT STRUCTURE

Complete the equation to determine your dues investment.

- **General Business = \$195 + \$6.60/Full Time Employee** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Retail, Restaurants, Automotive, Media, Manufacturers, Contractors,  
Beauty and Barbershops, Plumbing, Heating, Wholesale, Transportation,  
Landscaping and Nursery, Government, Utilities, Telephone, Educational,  
Hospital, Nursing Homes
  
- **Professional Offices = \$195 + \$65 Professional** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Accountants, Attorneys, Insurance, Investment & Realtors, Doctors, Dentists, Architects
  
- **Financial Institutions = \$195+ \$26/Per Million in Deposits** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Banks, Credit Unions, Savings & Loan
  
- **Hotels, Motels, Apartment Buildings & Mobile Home Courts**  
**(\$195 + \$5.50 per room or apartment)** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
- **Home-Based Businesses = \$140.00** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
- **Not-for-Profit Charitable Organizations or Individual Members = \$99**  
**With five or less employees** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Initial Start Up Fee = \$30 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 30.00

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#### **Additional Marketing Opportunities**

Website Marketing Fee (Optional: \$35, or \$60) **First Year Free** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 0  
*\$35 - link from our site to your Web site, Facebook and Linked In;*  
*\$60 - upgrade to bullet points, maps, pictures, etc.*

**Total Amount Due** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please remit with payment to:*

River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau  
215 W. Maple Street, River Falls, WI 54022 ph. 715-425-2533 info@rfchamber.com

- Check: Check # \_\_\_\_\_
- Credit Card Payment: Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note: Investments are deductible from Federal and State income tax returns as ordinary and necessary business expenses, not as charitable contributions.*

# Ways to Connect

- Business After Hours
- Chamber Coffees
- Business Breakfasts
- Annual Awards Dinner
- Community Business Expo
- Event and Action Committees
- Ambassador Committees
- Annual Golf Outing

# Ways to Promote

- Printed Member Directory
- Website Listing
- Chamber Newsletter
- New Move List
- Newsletter Inserts
- Event Sponsorships
- Member “Hot Deals”

# Ways to Support

- Chamber Checks
- Business Advocacy
- Leadership River Falls
- Community Goodwill
- Tourism Efforts
- Community Development



# 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: \_\_\_\_\_