



15+ Reasons to Join the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce

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# THIS ISSUE

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**Debi Tavey** President/CEO Debi@ fairfieldsuisun chamber.com

## a message from our President/CEO

# Goodbye and Thank You



s Mayor Lori Wilson has so eloquently said, I will be sunsetting with the chamber and sun rising with downtown Fairfield. As many of you know, I have been talking about retirement; however, those who have worked with me know my definition is slightly different. I have had the pleasure to serve the communities of Fairfield and Suisun City during my 11 years with the chamber. The new President/CEO will soon be an active leader in the community. I have the utmost confidence that Fairfield and Suisun City business communities will continue to grow more robust than it is. The many programs will remain, and new programs will develop. The Chairman of the Board, Terrance Strong, and his team of Directors and Ambassadors are eager to start implementing programs and events that will benefit our members.

As I look back 11 years, which brings me to 2010, I realize how much has changed. Thank you, Sue Vaccaro and Anand Patel, for believing in me. I will be forever grateful. Fairfield-Suisun Chamber has always been a solid and active chamber; however, I am proud of our direction today. Although the Board of Directors changes each year, they stay focused on our business and communities' needs. Who would have ever thought the many years of business expos would become an expo for eighth-graders? Inspire Dreams Start Now is a program developed from a partnership with the Fairfield Suisun Unified School District, the chamber of commerce, the Kroc Center, and a few business leaders who had a vision. We needed our youth to know who our business community was and exactly what each business in our community did. A great thing can happen when you get the right people in the room, and I just happened to be in the room with the best. Sheila McCabe, I am so honored and lucky to have met and worked with you

on this award-winning project.

What started with one school district and one chamber has now expanded county-wide and still growing. Thank you to all of the community partners that have and will continue to take this to the next level.

I have been in the right place at the right time throughout my career, surrounded by true leaders. A person can decide what to do with that. The path I chose was not to be intimidated but to soak it all in. Learn everything and surround yourself with people who have strengths where you are weak. A great team is everything, and admitting you need a great team member to walk beside you shows strength. Melissa Manary, you were and continue to be my strength. Steve Huddleston, you showed me what focus and career stability were many years ago; thank you. How funny life is, two of the most influential people in my career now work together. What a team that is.

Many times throughout my career, I threatened to run for office. As you age, you realize standing on the sidelines can sometimes be more effective than holding the title. The work we can do behind the scenes is critical. I will continue to fight for our business community, but more importantly, I have nine grandchildren and one great-granddaughter that I need to protect through advocacy work.

So many people I would love to thank. You know who you are. None of this could have ever been possible without the support of my colleagues, friends and family. As I sunset, I say goodbye and thank you for an incredible, fulfilling 11 years. As I sunrise, the Heart of Fairfield vision we have all dreamed of will become my focus. Dreams do come true.

#### **Debi Tavey**

President/CEO, Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce















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# **15+ Reasons** YOU SHOULD JOIN THE FAIRFIELD-SUISUN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

#### By Christina R. Green

re you thinking it's time to join the local chamber of commerce? Are you wondering if it's worth the investment? Or maybe you haven't considered it at all because you think it's the kind of thing that only insurance agents do. Maybe you think your business is too small or chamber membership isn't necessary in today's world.

Don't fool yourself. Read on for 15+ reasons you should join the local chamber of commerce, from obvious to subtle benefits.

# What Does a Chamber of Commerce Do?

Contrary to what some people believe,

the chamber of commerce is not a government entity; nor are they some super, secret business fraternity, nor a country club for business people. They also are not the Better Business Bureau (although we'll get into that more in a bit).

A chamber of commerce is a membership organization that advocates on behalf of local businesses. It is backed by a board that is comprised of business people from the local community. The chamber is a resource, advocate, and connector for business.

#### A Word About Chamber Membership and Advocacy

Before we get into why you should have a chamber membership for your business, it's important to know that the chambers of commerce on a local, state and national level are advocating for your business (and other businesses in their area) even if you never join the local chamber. Join the local chamber of commerce to get representation at the local and state government level. Most people don't realize that.

Chambers have a legislative agenda that reflects the needs of businesses in their area. This advocacy is happening on your behalf at no cost to you.

But...

If you want your specific concerns and voice to be heard, being a member is a good way to do this.

If you aren't a member, the chamber is still a tireless advocate for business.

Besides being an advocate for business, why should you join the chamber, and does it make sense for your business? You can decide after understanding some of the benefits of joining the chamber.

#### Is Chamber Membership Right for My Business?

Have you wondered if you should join the local chamber? Is membership is right for your business? Below are twenty reasons to consider it. However, before you begin reading over all of the many benefits of joining the chamber, consider the main struggle you encounter in your business.

What is it that troubles you most? Join the local chamber of commerce if you have worries about your business.

Where are you in the life-cycle of your business (i.e., just starting out, looking to take that next growth leap, or considering a sale of your business)? Chambers have programs and solutions for all stages of business.

But knowing what you're struggling with and feeling confident enough to share it, will help a chamber membership staff person suggest solutions that fit you and your business best. Plus, it's important to note that most of the reasons and benefits to chamber membership listed below are available to your employees as well. This perk alone can make chamber membership worth it.

#### Reasons to Join the Local Chamber

When you join your local chamber, your membership gets you:

1 Are a part of a like-minded group dedicated to helping businesses.

- 2 Can become a mentor to a new business.
- **3** Seek assistance or mentorship from established business people.
- **4** Be part of a CEO or
- business leadership group.5 Advise the chamber of the
- needs of your particular industry.
- 6 Can shape the future of
- education in your area by working with leaders in business, government, and education.
- 7 Are part of a group that helps its members in ways you might not think of, like providing office space should something happen to your

physical location.

Can host a meeting at the chamber office. Did you know the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce has two conference rooms for rent? This is a good benefit for new businesses and entrepreneurs who work remotely but need a meeting space.

 9 May be eligible for member-to-member discounts.

10 Will be made aware of

legislative issues facing your business. There's a lot that goes on at the local, state, and federal levels. Our chamber will help keep you informed about issues that could affect you like taxation, legalization, and permitting issues.

Be a part of free "How To's" and other learning session topics to help your business like workplace safety or taxation.

**12** Might be able to lead a

session in your area of expertise to better position yourself as an industry expert and put you in contact with the types of people who need your business or service. Ask us about a "Lunch and Learn."

13 Might be a part of a ribbon-cutting ceremony.Chambers may also help with other special business

milestones like anniversaries and expansions.

- Can be part of their shop local campaigns.
- **15** Might be on the receiving end of some of the Cham-

ber's web traffic as an online banner sponsor or being listed on their site in some capacity.

16 Can be a part of the chamber directory. Our Chamber has online, printed,

or both forms of online directories that may help your business get more traffic and customers.

Will benefit from the chamber as a resource for the community. We are giving our business referrals daily. You'd be surprised how many people contact the chamber for opinions on local businesses. You have local citizens and travelers who see the chamber as a reliable source for information. Be part of this list

Speaking of which...

Chamber benefits vary by Chamber, but one thing that is true of nearly every chamber is its positive influence on business reputation.

Many people are unclear as to what exactly it is the chamber does. Some even confuse them with the Better



Business Bureau. And in a lot of ways, they are similar. They are both outstanding organizations concerned with business.

Many chambers have been in their communities for a while. During that time, they've likely developed an impressive reputation for being the voice of business. This reputation has had an impressive effect on member businesses.

Consider this...

Your business can benefit from the chamber's stellar reputation. In a study done by the Shapiro Group and Market Street Services, they found that when someone knows a small business is a member of its local chamber of commerce, they were "44 percent more likely to think favorably of it and 63 percent more likely to purchase goods or services from the company in the future."

But that's not all they found.

59% of consumers polled believed being active in your chamber is an effective business strategy. For companies that can show they are active in the chamber, 12% of consumers are more likely to think the business' products or services stack up better than their non-member competition.

On membership alone! Pretty impressive.

Some industries will also be happy to know that chamber membership plays an even bigger role in whether someone will buy from them. For instance, in the insurance industry perspective buyers were 43% more likely to buy from a chamber member. Another example of how chamber membership affects purchasing is seen in restaurant franchises. Potential customers reported they were 40% more likely to dine at a franchise if they knew it belonged to the chamber of commerce.

#### The Only Reason That Matters in Chamber of Commerce Membership

Even though the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce offers countless benefits to members, there's no reason to read a list of benefits in order to make a decision. The answer to whether you should join your local chamber comes down to a few questions.

Join the local chamber of commerce and you'll contribute to something greater than your business.

Do you want to be a part of something larger than yourself in your community?

Would you like more customers?

Do you need help in some areas of your business?

If you answered "yes" to those questions, the chamber may be able to help.

If you have a business need, it's likely the chamber can help you in some way. They'll either be able to provide direct solutions or connect you with others who can help you solve your business challenges. •





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## MCE SOLANO COUNTY

#### Who is MCE?

**MCE** is a community choice energy agency controlled by local communities. MCE offers its members a more renewable choice for their electricity supply. Communities who join MCE participate on our Board through local elected officials. Our Board sets rates, oversees and approves MCE's energy procurement, budget, and programs and services. MCE provides almost twice the amount of renewable energy than traditional electricity service.

MCE has been serving customers in Solano County since 2015, when the City of Benicia enrolled. Since then we have launched service in unincorporated Solano County in 2020, and the City of Vallejo in 2021. Unincorporated Solano County has maintained a 90% participation rate, above MCE's 86% service area average.

Our locally controlled, not-for-profit model means that communities benefit through renewable energy at competitive rates, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and investments in local energy projects and community programs.

MCE is California's first Community Choice Aggregation program, serving customers since 2010. MCE has set the standard for the 23 programs operating in California, serving more than 200 communities. MCE currently serves 540,000 accounts in 36 Bay Area communities.

#### What is the timeline for joining MCE?

When a new community requests to join MCE, a feasibility study will be conducted and presented to MCE's Board for approval in the fall. A new implementation plan will be filed with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) which requires updated implementation plans to be submitted in December. Once the CPUC approves the implementation plan, the new community may nominate their MCE Board Director. Customer enrollment typically beings in April the following year. Erin Hannigan, Solano County Board of Supervisors John Vasquez, Chair, Solano County Board of Supervisors

#### Steps to join MCE for enrollment in 2023

#### 2021

#### July

PG&E load data request and authorization forms submitted to MCE.

#### August\*

City Council passes a Resolution, Ordinance, and Memorandum of Understanding to join MCE.

#### August/September\*

Second reading of the Ordinance at council - or may be added to consent calendar instead.

#### August/September\*

Mayor signs MCE's JPA signature page.

#### October

MCE conducts a technical feasibility study for all eligible electric accounts in the community.

#### November

MCE's Board of Directors votes on inclusion of the new community.

#### December

An new implementation plan is filed by MCE at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) .

#### 2022

#### March

The CPUC approves the implementation plan.

#### April\*

New community is eligible to select a representative from their council for MCE's Board of Directors.

#### July\*

MCE develops a community outreach plan in partnership with the new community.

## There is no cost for prospective member communities to join MCE.

\*These timelines are based on council preference. We request the first reading of the Ordinance,

Resolution, and MOU occur no later than the end of August, and the second reading and JPA signature page be completed no later than mid-September.

#### How is MCE structured?

MCE is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). MCE is governed by a <u>board of local elected officials</u> that represent the member communities we serve. Our structure as a local government agency ensures transparency in decision making. MCE's Board makes decisions in public meetings where customers are encouraged to voice their opinions. MCE is also completely funded by the revenue received from our customers and does not receive tax dollars.

#### Why choose MCE?

Along with helping meet California's ambitious climate goals, which all cities are required to participate in, MCE provides customers with a choice in their electric service provider. MCE also offers <u>energy efficiency</u> <u>programs</u>, rebates for income–qualified customers on <u>solar installations</u> and <u>electric vehicles</u>, <u>electric vehicle</u> <u>charging infrastructure rebates</u>, and a variety of <u>local</u> <u>renewable project</u> and <u>workforce education and</u> <u>development programs</u>. By choosing MCE, customers are increasing access to renewable energy and reinvesting their dollars into programs that benefit their communities.

#### **Local Benefits**

MCE's customer programs increase access to clean energy technologies and resources while improving the lives of our customers. Our energy efficiency programs focus on increasing the health and safety of homes and businesses while reducing customer bills. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MCE implemented several programs and policies to better serve customers including <u>suspension of collections activities</u>, new web pages dedicated to providing COVID relief resources, and a <u>bill credit program</u> supporting our most vulnerable <u>residential</u> and <u>small business</u> customers.



MCE staff unload batteries for distribution to medically vulnerable customers in July, 2020

Questions? Contact our team at engagement@mceCleanEnergy.org.

#### **Economic and Workforce Development** MCE's <u>Sustainable Workforce and Diversity Policy</u>

focuses on creating opportunities to build a clean energy workforce and foster local economic growth. MCE partners closely with local workforce development agencies and union labor including the Rising Sun Center for Opportunity, RichmondBUILD, and Future Build. MCE has utilized union labor for many of its renewable energy projects and recently signed a Project Labor Agreement with IBEW Local 302 in Contra Costa County. Our **local renewable energy projects** also require at least 50% of the workforce be from local residents and all employees must receive prevailing wage.



RichmondBUILD team at MCE Solar One in Richmond, CA

#### **MCE's Financial Stability**

MCE has a strong track record of financial success over our 11 years in operation. We have received investmentgrade credit ratings from <u>Moody's</u>, <u>Fitch</u>, and <u>S&P</u>, and maintained a financial reserve that meets or exceeds industry standards for fiscal responsibility.

Our highly detailed approach to financial stability resulted in MCE receiving a higher credit rating from Fitch (to BBB+) during the height of COVID in 2020 and an "A" rating from S&P in February of 2021. The credit reports cited our strong liquidity, successful management of COVID-19 challenges and lack of debt as primary reasons for increasing the credit rating.

John and Sue Pierson, Solano County

community

# Starting a Small Business

#### **Business Licenses**

All businesses that operate within the City of Fairfield are required to obtain a business license. Businesses new to the city must visit the Community **Development Department** window on the second floor of Fairfield City Hall, fill out a business license application and pay the appropriate business license fee. For a list of license fees and business classifications, see page 2 of the business license application. If you have questions about business licenses, contact the Economic Development

division staff at 707-428-7462.

#### Home-Based Businesses

If you operate a business from your home, you must comply with City Ordinances and standards. Home-based businesses must be clearly incidental and accessory to the use of the residence as a home. Operators of home-based businesses must fill out a Home Occupation Application along with their business license form. The City charges a Home Occupation permit fee in addition to the business license

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fee and must be submitted with the application. All fees, applications, and Home Occupation Requirements can be found on the City of Fairfield Website, www.fairfield. ca.gov.

#### Locating Your Business

Before you sign a lease, purchase a commercial building, or begin operating a business from your home, check in with the Fairfield **Community Development** Department to make sure that your business is a permitted use for that property. To talk to a planner about the zoning regulations of your planned business site, call 707-428-7461. They'll explain where you can locate your type of business and what special requirements, including Conditional Use Permits, that might apply.

#### Seller's Permit

You must obtain a seller's permit if you:

• Are engaged in business in California

• Intend to sell or lease tangible personal property that would ordinarily be subject to sales tax if sold at retail

• Will make sales for a temporary period, normally lasting no longer than 30 days at one or more locations (e.g. fireworks booth, Christmas tree lots, garage sale).

Both wholesalers and

retailers must apply for a seller's permit. For more information, call the State Department of Tax and Fee Administration at their local office in Fairfield at 707-427-4800. This office is located at 2480 Hilborn Road, Suite 200, Fairfield, CA 94534.

#### Federal and State Identification Numbers

If you employ workers in your business, you must have a State Identification Number and a Federal Employer Identification Number to report employee taxes. For more information, contact the California Employment Development Department at 1-888-745-3886. There is a local office at 316 Marin Street in Vallejo. For the federal number, contact the Internal Revenue Service at 800-829-1040.

#### **Fictitious Names**

If you plan to use a fictitious business name (a name different from your own), you need to check with the Solano County Clerk to make sure that no one else is using that name. You can contact the County Clerk at 707-784-7485, 675 Texas Street, Suite 1900, Fairfield, CA 94533.

For more information contact the Fairfield Suisun Chamber of Commerce 707-425-4625 •





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## New Members

#### Welcome to the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce!

- Embarc
- Primal Pet Foods
- Milan Institute of Cosmetology
- Beyond Tea
- Loan Depot
- Solano Advocates for Victims of Violence
- Community Action North Bay
- Quick Quack Car Wash
- Napa Spotlight Media
- Stemtech
- Karma Beauty Bar
- Spaulding Decon Fairfield

## Member Anniversaries

Thank you for your support throughout the years!

#### 5 -Year Anniversary

- Staples
- McDonald's Hamburgers #8138
- FEG Financial & Insurance Services
- Golden Brands
- Cordelia Winery
- Solano Yacht Club
- Complete Janitorial
- Motel 6 Fairfield- North
- Rockville Terrace Senior Living
- Soroptimist International of Central Solano County
- Operation: Care and Comfort
- Special Care Services
- Lystek
- Napa-Solano Building & Construction Trades Council
- Sonoma Harvest Olive Oil & Winery
- Lynn & Darla Supported Living

#### 10-Year Anniversary

- Enoplastic USA Inc.
- Concrush Inc.
- Blake Austin College
- Fairfield Community Services Foundation
- Macro Plastics, Inc.

#### **15-Year Anniversary**

- Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District
- Valero Benicia Refinery

#### 20-Year Anniversary

- Solano Community College
- Salvation Army Suisun City Kroc Center
- Jim Stever Realty
- B & L Properties
- Child Haven, Inc.
- Solano County Library Foundation

#### 25-Year Anniversary

• State Farm Insurance - Gary Falati

#### **30-Year Anniversary**

- Green Valley Country Club
- Mary's Pizza Shack
- Delta Graphics

#### **40-Year Anniversary**

- Northern Solano County Association of Realtors
- Sutton Construction

#### **50-Year Anniversary**

- Courtyard by Marriott
- Wooden Valley Winery

#### **60-Year Anniversary**

• Daily Republic



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and EMD certified dispatchers. We have a young and modern ambulance fleet that can accommodate all of our patients' needs. We even have specialty ambulances for large scale events and bariatric patients. We also make it a priority to recruit the most highly skilled caregivers available to provide excellent care to our patients. Our caregivers are well respected and recognized because at Medic it is a core belief that all of our patients should be treated as family.





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