



Lancaster by the Bay Chamber FAQ

How was the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber formed?

The Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, was founded in 1996. Its original purposes were twofold: to support the county's economic development and to provide traditional chamber benefits and services to county businesses. In 2006 the Chamber adopted and updated mission, "...to support and promote economic activities which will enhance and strengthen the local businesses we serve." It also added to its bylaws five principal purposes:

- Provide value added services to members businesses
- Serve as a business advocate on public policy issues that impact the business environment.
- Promote and support economic programs and events designed to strengthen and expand businesses within Lancaster County.
- Develop and support initiatives to enhance and maintain a viable local workforce.
- Provide a forum for discussion, collaboration and resource sharing for the benefit of all the local chambers and business associations in Lancaster County.

The Kilmarnock Chamber of Commerce was organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of the Town of Kilmarnock so that its citizens and all areas of its business community would prosper. All necessary means of promotion were provided and particular attention and emphasis was given to the economic, industrial, recreational, and educational interests of the town.

In 2008 the Lancaster County Chamber hired an executive director to strengthen and enhance the relationship of the membership, partnerships with other associations and create new opportunities for the growth of the Chamber and business community.

In 2009 after a year-long discussion, the Lancaster County Chamber and the Kilmarnock Chamber came together to evaluate whether the two Chambers should combine to offer one set of services, community events and membership features to the business community. With the difficult financial times, they knew it would take creative thought and leadership to continue to foster the local businesses. It was believed that it was in the best interests of the collective Chamber member be served through the strength of the combined resources. Kilmarnock's Chamber was primarily a merchant based chamber with both an entrepreneurial focus and great talents in event planning, organizing and management. Lancaster County Chamber had a broad business base, educational programs, website and administrative processes. Together, as a new organization, they both could be stronger and provide each member with greater value. Therefore, the new **Lancaster by the Bay Chamber** was formed.

What is a Chamber of Commerce?

A Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit membership-based organization dedicated to improving the business climate and quality of living within a specific region. Though they often work with large public agencies, chambers are not departments of any government organization. The goal of the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber is to work cooperatively with community, civic and governmental organizations to enhance the image of Lancaster County and to foster a climate in which businesses can operate profitably.

What are the benefits of joining the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber?

Aside from the numerous member benefit programs geared to helping members improve their bottom line, the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber also offers members various networking opportunities with peers, government officials, and business leaders. Members also receive relevant information so that they may be kept informed, professional development workshops and seminars so that they may gain valuable knowledge and skills to help them succeed.

- Credibility
- A Collective Voice
- Advertising Opportunities
- Representation Locally and at a State Level
- Business visibility Locally and Beyond
- Membership Meetings, Networking
- Discounts on Insurance, Office Supplies & Prescriptions Through the Member Benefits Program
- Exclusive Opportunities

What will my investment be to belong to the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber?

Our membership dues vary depending on the size of your organization and at what level you want to be involved.

How many members does the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber have?

As of January 2010 we have approximately 300 active members.

What kinds of business and organizations join the Chamber?

Businesses of every size, as well as trade and professional organizations join the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber. Nearly 75 percent of our member businesses have fewer than 6 employees.

How can I get involved?

Participation is key! and being involved helps make the difference. Being a member of the Chamber creates important connections that enable individuals and businesses to do and achieve more. The Lancaster by the Bay Chamber offers:

- Quarterly & Annual Membership Meetings
- Business After-Hours
- Professional Development Workshops
- Advertising in Chamber Publications
- Chamber Sponsored Projects