Welcome New Members
For the most current member directory, visit HamptonRoadsChamber.com

January
A. Rabideau & Associates
OIC Inc.
Cash Flow Network LLC
Central Systems of Virginia Inc.
E.I. Design/Abstract Art
Ensign Services
Encompass/Paramedical Services, Inc.
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
First Command - Robert A. Nelson
Flich Bond Classic, Inc.
Fohl’s Flowers
M.C. Dean, Inc.
Mayo Kay - Kristin Gabriell
National Tag & Ink
Prestige Business Services
Phill's Accounting Services
Piedoce Automotive, Inc.
PureClean Property Damage
Rock’s Appliance Repair
Rosebud Realty of the Outer Banks Inc.
Security Assistance
Sensenig of Suffolk/Smithfield/ Franklin
Shamans A. Vincent/Starke Farm
Insurance
Showcase Publishing
Sigman, Inc.
Susan Roehmhouse
ZINN Security

February
Avo Design Build
Automation Equipment Services Group, Inc. aka AEGS
BBQ CFO
Body Rejuvenations by Jessica
Bright Star Healthcare
Encourager
Freeman Uncle A’s Hobbies & Gifts
GDI Entertainment Group
Hampton Roads Landscaping & Lawn Care
Iva Bartlett Early Learning Ctr
JACK saturation, Inc.
MJ Security & Staffing
Norfolk Business Distributors Inc.
Old Dominion Utilities Services
One Hour Heating & Cooling
PC & Networks Services, Inc
Pleasant Leaure
Rounding Support Group of Virginia
Tidewater Productions Inc.
World Financial Group

Shelia Guillote-Moore
924-664-2534
Sheila, a business analyst with the Chamber’s SBDC, received the Financial Services Champions Award from the Small Business Administration (SBA). She will receive the award at the SBA’s Small Business Awards on May 8th in Richmond. The Financial Services Champion Award recognizes those individuals who guide small businesses through efforts in extending accounting or financial services.

Tommie Pochard
757-664-2520
tommie@hrccva.com
Congratulations, Tommie, for being named Account Executive of the Quarter. Tommie is a Senior Account Executive and has been with the Chamber for over three years.

Diane Rhudie
757-664-2521
drhudie@hrccva.com
Diane has joined the Chamber as an Account Executive. She and her family, Hampton Roads residents since 2001, enjoy being active in community organizations, initiatives, and events.

Sandy Sekset
757-664-2520
sonset@hrccva.com
Sandy joins the Chamber as the Development & Marketing Assistant and will be helping with the 2009 Sustainable Resources Campaign.

We also want to thank our 2009 SRC leadership volunteers for their guidance. The 2009 leadership team included:
* Campaign Chair Dave Durham (SunTrust Bank)
* David Williams (Fulton Bank)
* Ira Stacks (Williams Mullen)
* Jason Kuller (Signs By Tomorrow)
* John Padgett (McGuire Woods)
* and Ruthie Goodloe (McGuire Woods).

The Chamber also provides more than 100 educational programs each year. The Business Education Series covers important topics to help your business grow like marketing, accounting, customer service, technology, and more.

The Chamber’s SBDC also continues to help the region’s economy, counseling more than 500 small business owners last year, helping to generate $15.9 million in economic impact, 40 new businesses, and 150 jobs.

By taking advantage of member benefits, your membership can pay for itself! As a Chamber member, you can save significantly by using benefits like value-added health insurance, OfficeMax discounts, shipping discounts, and more.

With the diversity and resiliency of Hampton Roads businesses, we can weather this storm together. The Chamber is here to help you and your business through thick and thin. After all, we’ve been doing it for over 200 years. For more information on how the Chamber can help you network, market, learn, or save, contact the Membership Department at 757.664.2504.

The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce is a partnership with the Virginia Peninsula Chamber, promotes pro-business policies at all levels of government, advocates for a quality business environment, and promotes the Chamber’s overall goals by connecting businesses to resources, opportunities, and benefits. For more information, contact the membership department at 757.664.2504.

The convenience of doing everything under one roof, combined with our 33+ years of expertise makes Progressive Graphics the go-to choice for all your creative and marketing needs.

Call us today - 368-3321 - and let us show you how to streamline your costs!
The Chamber is pleased to announce that 500 East Main Street in downtown Norfolk has been selected as the Chamber's new location.

Chair Bob Boyd said, “The Chamber leadership had many options to look at, and we are confident that the selected location will be a great fit for the Chamber and our membership.”

The Chamber received 31 responses from property owners and developers within all five Southside Hampton Roads cities, and the 500 East Main Street location was chosen for its competitive business terms, impressive facilities, and flexible amenities.

““This new location represents a significant reduction in our annual operating expenses, which will allow the Chamber to better deploy our resources and staff to meet the needs of our members,” explained the Chamber’s President and CEO Jack Hornbeck. “The centralization plan will also allow for the Chamber to enhance meeting the needs of our members within their respective community.”

The move is expected to happen this fall. With the impending sale of the current regional headquarters to the Burton Planners, the Chamber will say goodbye to its historic Norfolk building after 35 years of occupancy. The Chamber expects to close on the building on or about June 16, 2009, and will then move into the new property at 400 Volvo Parkway near Greenbrier is also on the market. For more information about the sale of the Chesapeake property, contact GVA Advisors’ Deborah Stearns at dstearns@gvadvisors.com or John Westling at jwestling@gvadvisors.com.

The Chamber will know more details in the coming weeks and months, and will keep you informed as things begin to develop. For more information on the Chamber’s facilities, contact Jack Hornbeck at jhornbeck@hrccva.com.

Small Town & Merchant Program Comes to Hampton Roads

The Hampton Roads Chamber, together with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Suffolk Department of Economic Development, is pleased to bring the Small Town & Merchant Program (STAMP) to Hampton Roads.

The STAMP seminar will be led by Casey Willson, founder and president of The Willson Company. This program includes workshops, tools, and initiatives tailored to each individual business. Willson will discuss fiscal fitness, customer retention, economic restructuring and recruiting, and more.

You could win one of three one-on-one consultations with Willson to help assist with specific issues. Submit a one-page narrative of your business, including recent and ongoing marketing and sales efforts. Please also provide information on what you would like to get out of a business consultation. Submit entries to Suffolk Economic Development, 127 E. Washington St., Ste. 200, Suffolk, VA 23434 by Monday, April 27, 2009.

The STAMP seminar will be held on Thursday, April 30 at 7 a.m. at Suffolk at the Harbor Garden Inn. There will also be a STAMP program in Portsmouth on May 1. For more information, visit www.vbsbdc.org or call Jessica Knolla at 757.885.3128.

Dealer Discount Retained, Homestead Exemption Prevented

At the start of the Virginia General Assembly session, Governor Kaine recommended budgetary amendments to eliminate all of the state’s “dealer discounts” which would reimburse to certain businesses for costs associated with the collection and remittance of various state and local sales taxes. The dealer discounts would mean a cost to Virginia businesses of $80.4 million annually.

After extensive debate, budget conferences reached a compromise but retained all dealer discounts, an important ideological victory for Virginia business interests. This compromise did allow the new sales tax to increase from $12 million to $37 million more sales tax for the first two weeks of June. In July, they will “true up” their June sales tax, as well as pay an estimated payment for the first two weeks of July. This is expected to generate $97.1 million in revenue for the Commonwealth.

The Chamber was instrumental in securing other victories during the 2009 General Assembly. The Chamber helped to kill bills which would have revised last year’s proposed “homestead exemption” in Virginia, as well as eminent domain bills which also failed to advance. The Chamber also fought the “Trailing Spouse Bill” on the grounds that it would have increased the cost to the unemployment insurance program in Virginia and created an unfair benefit for some employees.

Thank you for your efforts in helping us maintain Virginia’s pro-business climate and a strong economy. A united business community can make a difference. Those successes were made possible because business interest spoke with one voice on those issues.

For more information on the Chamber’s legislative priorities and results from the General Assembly, contact Candace Reid, Governmental Affairs Manager, at creid@hrccva.com or 757.684.2572.

The Chamber will be hosting all of the region’s U.S. Congressmen at 12 p.m. on May 27 at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. They will discuss the economy, fiscal fitness, spending, the federal stimulus package, card check, and more. Visit the Events tab at HamptonRoadsChamber.com for more information.

Former Chamber Chair Elected Chair of the Virginia Chamber

Dorcas Helfant-Browning, former Chair of the Hampton Roads Chamber, has been elected the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. Helfant-Browning was the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Hampton Roads Chamber and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. She has been with the company since 1986 and currently serves as Vice Chair for the Virginia Chamber in 2008.

“This is a great recognition of her commitment to provide leadership within and to the business community,” said Jack Hornbeck, President & CEO of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. There is no doubt that she will do a great job.”

Helfant-Browning has also served as the first-ever woman President of the Virginia Association of Realtors.

Calling Hampton Roads’ BEST Small Businesses

D o you know of a small business that is second to none? Help give them the recognition they deserve! Nominations for the award will be accepted from April 30, 2009, to 5 p.m. There is no limit to how many businesses you can nominate. A business must meet three requirements to be considered for the Hampton Roads Small Business of the Year award: fewer than 250 employees, gross revenues of less than $10 million in 2008, and in business for more than three years. Eligible applicants will be judged on financial performance, business history, staff training and motivation, community involvement, customer service, and business strategies and goals.

We are also accepting nominations for the Top 10 to Watch and Award for Small Business Leadership. Visit HamptonRoadsChamber.com or call 757.622.2312 for nomination forms.

Also, mark your calendars now for the 2009 Hampton Roads Small Business of the Year awards luncheon on September 24, 2009, presented by Cex Business and Inside Business.

Launched in 1999, Pilot Direct was created to serve the needs of small businesses (less than five employees) and national advertisers. Pilot Direct serves customers with high-quality online and management services, direct marketing campaign management, creative design, creative consultation, e-mail marketing, targeted prospecting campaigns, variable digital printing, direct mail services, online marketing, and personalized URL campaign development. Pilot Direct has become a premier full-service database marketing company in Hampton Roads while extending its reach nationally. With a team of proven designers and skilled programmers, Pilot Direct is focused on executing relevant marketing solutions to its customers.