2017 is going to be a big year for The Hampton Roads Chamber. The second half of 2016 was spent planning and streamlining a bold new rebrand, complete with a new name, new logo and updated mission and vision. For years we’ve been setting the conditions for businesses to succeed in Hampton Roads, and now The Chamber “Means Business”. We will continue to support the Hampton Roads business community by being a powerful economic partner, impactful advocate for pro-business legislation, and an inspiring ignitor of emerging economic opportunities. Those three overarching goals—Impactful Advocate, Powerful Economic Partner and Inspiring Ignitor, are the backbone of our newly rebranded organization. They stand behind everything we do and everything we will continue to do for our region. They appear in our mission. They appear in all our communication products and they appear in our daily work. If we’re doing anything that doesn’t squarely fit into one of those “strategic buckets,” we’re doing something wrong.

Let’s examine them a little closer. What do we mean by Impactful Advocate? It means we will consistently, boldly and effectively lead the efforts to shape public policy and influence legislation that sets the conditions for businesses to succeed. As a Powerful Economic Partner we will proactively build partnerships with other likeminded organizations to develop, diversify, and improve the economy and the quality of life in Hampton Roads. Finally, we believe that the Hampton Roads region needs to let go of the divisiveness of the past and work towards becoming one true Hampton Roads region. We are devoted to promoting the importance of regionalism and the power of collective impact in Hampton Roads. To that end we will be an Inspiring Ignitor in developing civic leaders and young professionals and building coalitions on issues impacting the business community.

Our outlook for 2017 is bright. The Hampton Roads region has seen an uptick in economic development. Local and national companies have made major investments in the region, citing our talent pool of transitioning military and millennials as the largest draw. Our talented local workforce is an economic development enabler and the Hampton Roads Chamber will play a large role in strengthening our talent pool in 2017. Most notably, the development of the Military Transition Center, a facility that will help transitioning military, veterans, and their families find good, high paying jobs in Hampton Roads. The Hampton Roads Chamber’s young professional organization, tHRive, will continue to cultivate our millennial workforce and give them avenues to give back to their community, because it is the community, the region, that is the organizing structure of the economy.

The Hampton Roads Chamber will continue to work as the region’s pro-business partner, supporting and encouraging our members in all of our Hampton Roads cities to work collaboratively with other regional organizations and set the conditions for business success. We’ll do so by being impactful, inspiring partners to our business community. Welcome to the new Hampton Roads Chamber! The chamber that means business!
HAMPTON

The Hampton Roads Chamber is pleased to announce that after a comprehensive evaluation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce we have been awarded with 5-Star Accreditation. This is the highest honor bestowed upon local chambers by the U.S Chamber and puts us among the top 1% of all chambers nationwide.

If local chambers choose to subject themselves to the rigors of the accreditation process they may be rated 3, 4 or 5-Stars based on their evaluation. United States Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Thomas Donahue, congratulated the Hampton Roads Chamber stating “Accreditation is one the highest honors bestowed on chambers that support pro-growth and economic policies at the federal, state, and local level. Achieving 5-Star Accreditation demonstrates you went above and beyond the standards while demonstrating sound policies, effective organizational procedures, and having a positive impact on the community.”

In order to be awarded a 5-star accreditation the staff, board, and volunteers of the Hampton Roads Chamber spent countless hours preparing for the Accreditation process. The task was enormous; demonstrate outstanding effectiveness and proficiency in nine core areas ranging from finance to advocacy. Hampton Roads Chamber President and CEO, Bryan K. Stephens, stated this achievement exemplifies the Chamber’s commitment to excellence in ensuring its members and the regional business community has the absolute best programs and services a chamber can provide. “A chamber’s role in the region is to set the conditions for businesses to succeed. This award signifies we are among the best chambers in the nation in doing that. I am very proud of our staff who worked hard to make it a reality and have committed to maintain the high level of efficiency it took to achieve it.”

The full list of honorees can be found at www.hamptonroadschamber.com

MABUS

“Our focus on shipbuilding has produced tangible results for the navy and the economy in Hampton Roads,” said Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus. Secretary Mabus addressed a sold-out audience at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside as he gave the keynote speech during a Hampton Roads Chamber Leadership Series Event on October 14th.

Mabus focused his remarks on three areas: shipbuilding, energy, and people, and provided a retrospective look at the changes in the Navy since he took his position in 2009. Secretary Mabus concluded his keynote address by recounting the personnel policy changes made in order to “attract and keep the very best [sailors and marines] America has to offer.”

The Monster Mega Mixer was a smash success.

The Monster Mega Mixer is one of the largest business-to-business trade shows in Hampton Roads and is held every October. The 2017 Monster Mega Mixer is scheduled for October 10th.
"Jobs are where an awful lot of our challenges lie," said Dr. James V. Koch, President Emeritus, Old Dominion University as he addressed the audiences during the 17th Annual State of the Region Address. LEAD Hampton Roads, a program of the Hampton Roads Chamber, presented its 17th annual State of the Region Address to the Southside audience at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott on October 4th and to the Peninsula audience at the Hampton Roads Convention Center on Friday, October 7th. Dr. Koch, along with Dr. Robert McNab and Dr. Timothy Komarek, of the Old Dominion University Economics Department presented the address. Dr. Koch opened the economic overview of the past year with a look at our region's "big three" economic pillars—defense spending, the Port of Virginia, and hotels and tourism.

The event culminated in a final thought by Dr. Koch. "We have to think long run; focus on education, transportation, and investments in industry to diversify our economy. We need to get legislators to think regionally."

"We are fortunate in Hampton Roads that we can always count on elected officials who put business interest as a top priority in their legislative agenda," said Bryan K. Stephens CEO and President of the Hampton Roads Chamber as he kicked off the 13th Annual Legislative Reception at the Town Center City Club on October 25th. The annual advocacy-centered event serves to provide business leaders with one-on-one access to their legislators in an elegant, yet relaxed setting. Twenty five elected officials were present at the event. The Hampton Roads Chamber works as a business advocate in local and state government; working with elected officials to create economic prosperity and enhance the quality of life. Events such as the Legislative Reception allow Chamber members to gain access to decision makers, get involved in business issues that impact the community, and develop the plans necessary to achieve regional prosperity.

The Military Citizen of the Year Award Luncheon, held on October 7th, honored 33 service men and women for their contributions to the community. "I am humbled to be here to recognize the sailors, airmen, coastguard, and army men that have contributed back to our local Hampton Roads region" said Senator Frank Wagner, keynote speaker. With well over 500 hours of volunteer time, Petty Officer Second Class Breanna Coleman, United States Navy, was selected by members of the Chamber's Armed Forces Committee to receive the distinguished Military Citizen of the Year Award.

Nominations for 2017 Small Business of the Year are now open! Contact Lauren Smith at 757-664-5563 or lsmith@hrccva.com for more information. Deadlines for nominations is January 27th 2017

2016 was truly a year of growth for tHRive. As the program of the Hampton Roads Chamber designed to cultivate regional awareness and community development by providing a platform to empower young professionals, we have found ways to share our voice and invest in the future of our region. 1400 strong, we represent the future of this community. By polling members we are able to capture the as-it-happens momentum on critical issues. This year we spoke out in favor of Light Rail, promoted civic engagement by tracking and promoting volunteerism, and are helping to guide decision makers by joining non-profit and corporate leadership boards. We participated in Leadership Summits, organized Impact Talks, tapped into top level CEO’s expertise with Tables for Ten, and of course, we came together to further our careers with network building Happy Hours. We are excited about 2017 and all that the future holds for tHRive, our members, and our community. If you would like to join tHRive or your company would like to participate/sponsor, please contact Anne Baumler abaumler@hrchamber.com
Helen Dragas, President and CEO of the Dragas Companies delivered the keynote address at The Glass: Evolving the Business Woman on September 27, the second session of a two-part women’s leadership series. Dozens of women and a few men took part in the day-long event aimed to encourage the enrichment and development of local women leaders. Local women leaders took to the stage to participate in a panel discussion and question and answer session, followed by breakout sessions on personal branding, style, and career development.

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The Hampton Roads Sports Commission (HRSC) is excited to host the 2nd annual Corporate Challenge from April 12-22, 2017. This year’s team building events include: kickball, bowling, golf, ropes course, basketball, volleyball, cornhole, tug-of-war, and a 5k run/walk! Be sure to sign up for the 2017 Corporate Challenge before all the sports are filled! For more information about this event visit: www.HamptonRoadsSports.org/CorporateChallenge or contact: Lauren Bland: (757) 664-2576 or at LBland@hrccva.com or Sara DeGruttola: (757) 664-2573 or at SDeGruttola@hrccva.com

The Hampton Roads Chamber’s 2017 State of the City Series have been announced. The State of the City Series has become the preferred forum for elected officials and mayors to communicate with their constituents.

Virginia Beach: March 15th
Chesapeake: March 29th
Portsmouth: April 19th
Norfolk: May 5th
Suffolk: May 23rd

Sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Priscilla Monti, 664-2503; pmonti@hrccva.com or Anne Baumler, 664-2518; abaumler@hrccva.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

January
17th-Chamber Education Series
25th-Chamber Day at the Capital

February
2nd-Chamber Leadership Series (T)
3rd- LEAD Wise Women
8th- Hampton Roads Sports Commission Awards Dinner
14th-Chamber Education Series
15th-THRive Impact Talk
16th-Professional Women’s Leadership Luncheon

March
9th- Chamber Education Series (T)
14th-Chamber Education Series
15th-Virginia Beach State of the City
29th-Chesapeake State of the City

STATEGIC PARTNERS

Means Business