



San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



CHAMBER'S IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024



TOTAL MEMBERS

601

Active: 532 Courtesy: 69



RIBBON CUTTINGS

60



COMBINED SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

10,145



CHAMBER EVENTS

37*



WEBSITE VIEWS

135,000



RETENTION RATE

85%

*More event details on page 8.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on 2024, I am honored to share the incredible progress our Chamber has made this year. It has been a year of both challenges and achievements, and I could not be more proud of what we have accomplished.

Our focus throughout the year has been on membership growth, delivering value to local businesses, and engaging in long-term planning. Thanks to the dedication of our Board of Directors, hardworking committees, and exceptional Chamber staff, we made great strides in each of these areas.

This annual report offers a glimpse into what we've accomplished together. Inside, you'll find highlights of our events, milestones in membership growth, and stories that reflect the Chamber's impact across our region. I encourage you to explore the accomplishments and partnerships that have made 2024 a remarkable year.

This year flew by, but the progress we have made will leave a lasting impact. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of serving as your Chairman and for the opportunity to witness the incredible work of so many committed individuals who are driving our community forward.



Justin Payne, 2024 Chairman of the Board

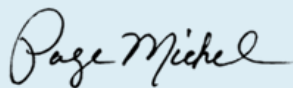


PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we turn the pages and reflect on a remarkable year, our team is proud to present this recap of our collective achievements and the positive spirit that defines us as a Chamber!

The success of Fiscal Year 2023-24 is thanks to an engaged, energized Board of Directors that planned and worked side-by-side with Chamber staff on virtually every program and event. It is also thanks to our dedicated committees and 530+ members who value the promotions and opportunities that the Chamber makes possible.

Flip through these pages and take note of all the goals and objectives that were addressed. Want to know how you can get involved and help us reach even higher next year? Drop me a line and let's put our heads together!



Page Michel, President & CEO



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 - Impact by the Numbers
- 3 - Chairman's Message
- 3 - President's Message
- 5 - Mission & Vision
- 6 - Board of Directors
- 7 - Events & Programs
- 9 - Partners in Education
- 10 - Chamber Membership
- 11 - Committees & Groups
- 12 - Goal Teams
- 13 - Advocacy





MISSION

To improve the economic prosperity and quality of life of our members through leadership, education and business advocacy.

VISION

The San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce is a leading membership organization that collaborates with stakeholders to develop an environment where businesses thrive, leadership is encouraged, students excel, housing is ample and attainable, all members are active and quality of life is a priority.

At the Chamber, we ACT.

The Chamber provides Advocacy and Connections for business to Thrive!

2023-2024 Top Goals

See full details on page 12.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Chair

Justin Payne, Frost Bank

Chair-Elect

Cassidy Berenato, Texas Aviation Partners

Treasurer

Brooke Damron, The Damron Group Realtors

Secretary

Alfonso Sifuentes, Texas Disposal Systems

Immediate Past Chair

Thomas Curtis, Chuck Nash Auto Group

Lee Colon, PGM of Texas

Mike Kamerlander, Greater San Marcos Partnership

Crystal Dixon, Edward Jones

Jo Anna Gilland, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

Eddie Glidewell, Comfy Air

John Hardy, Divided Sky Roofing and Solar

Keely Hennig, Corridor Title Company

Josh Paselk, Corridor Home & Commercial/Sagebrush Landscaping

Hondo Powell, Lower Colorado River Authority

Kristin Williams, Wonder World Cave & Adventure Park and The Groove

Kevin Wolf, Cobb Fendley

Elva Zdeb, Gary Job Corps

Ex Officio

CJ Odam, Director of CTE and Federal Programs

Dr. Brian Gunther, San Marcos Academy President

Jane Hughson, City of San Marcos Mayor

Harold Strong, Texas State STAR Park Executive Director

Rebecca Ybarra, City of San Marcos Director of Destination Services



Thomas Curtis & Justin Payne

2023-24 EVENTS & PROGRAMS



NETWORKING

Coffee & Commerce

A monthly morning networking event where Chamber members connect in a casual atmosphere, share elevator pitches, and exchange business cards. RSVP required; free to attend.

Chamber Mixers

Evening networking events hosted at local businesses, featuring door prizes, refreshments, and light appetizers in a lively, social setting.

Young Professionals Network

Monthly gatherings for professionals under 45 to network, grow leadership skills, and engage in volunteer activities, fostering relationships and development.

Corridor Women's Network - Launched in 2024

Empowering and inspiring women through networking, education, and connection, the Corridor Women's Network hosts events that foster professional growth and camaraderie. These gatherings provide opportunities to build relationships, share experiences, and support one another's success.

SPECIAL EVENTS

120th Annual Dinner & Awards Gala "Champions of Commerce"

On November 16, 2023, over 400 attendees celebrated business achievements and the transition of leadership within the Chamber, between Thomas Curtis, Chuck Nash Auto Group & Justin Payne, Frost Bank.

Transportation Summit

Held on February 20, 2024, this event brought together over 275 guests, business and public-sector leaders, to discuss aviation industry advancements and I-35 Corridor developments, with keynote speaker Marc D. Williams, Texas Department of Transportation Executive Director.

Chamber Cornhole Tournament

On March 22, over 30 teams participated in a fun and competitive tournament bringing together Chamber members and the community for a day of networking, camaraderie, and friendly rivalry. Teams compete in a double-elimination format, while enjoying refreshments, music, and a relaxed atmosphere.



S.T.E.A.M. Fair

On April 6, 2024, students and families enjoyed over 20 business exhibits, exciting displays and performances by student groups at this free event held at San Marcos High School.

InterCity Leadership Conference

From April 9-12, 2024, over 40 leaders from the region traveled to Lexington/Louisville, Kentucky to explore innovative strategies and challenges, aiming to inspire growth in San Marcos.

State of the City & District

On April 30, 2024, over 200 guests heard from Mayor Jane Hughson and Superintendent Dr. Michael Cardona as shared their visions for San Marcos at this informative event at the San Marcos Conference Center.

Member Appreciation Cookout

On May 17, 2024, over 150 Chamber members gathered for a relaxed outdoor event in the Chamber’s backyard to enjoy great food, networking, and door prizes.

Business Showcase: Tailgate Edition!

On August 23, 2024, over 700 guests explored exhibitor booths and enjoyed a spirited “Halftime Show” featuring TXST and SMCISD performers at the San Marcos Conference Center.

State of Workforce & Education Summit

On September 26, 2024, over 200 guests heard insights from Texas State University President Dr. Kelly Damphousse and panelists on workforce and education developments.

Golf Tournament

Held at the Kissing Tree Golf Course, over 130 golfers enjoyed an unforgettable day of golf and networking with other players.

4,000+ Event Attendees

9 Signature Events

21 Networking Events



PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

The Chamber is committed to fostering a strong future workforce by supporting educational initiatives and partnerships that connect local businesses with schools and the community. Key efforts include hosting summits, supporting workforce development, and promoting lifelong learning opportunities.



S.T.E.A.M. Fair:

Held at San Marcos High School, the S.T.E.A.M. Fair showcases local businesses and opportunities in STEAM careers, inspiring students to pursue paths in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Youth Leadership Program:

The program offers SMCISD and SMA high school students the opportunity to develop leadership skills while gaining insights into the San Marcos community & the future workplace.



Summer Externship Program:

The Chamber facilitates summer externships for SMCISD teachers, allowing them to gain firsthand experience in local businesses and integrate real-life business practices into their curriculum.





CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

The Chamber is stronger because of its members. Our diverse and dynamic membership includes businesses, organizations, and individuals dedicated to building connections, fostering growth, and creating opportunities within the San Marcos community. Membership offers access to networking events, resources, advocacy, and opportunities to engage with community initiatives.

<p>NEW MEMBERS</p> <p>118</p>	<p>CHAMBER AMBASSADORS</p> <p>20</p>	<p>TOTAL MEMBERS</p> <p>601</p> <p>Active: 532 Courtesy: 69</p>	<p>RIBBON CUTTINGS</p> <p>60</p>
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AMBASSADORS GROUP

Chamber Ambassadors help strengthen the overall relationship with members by assisting with events and boosting awareness of the Chamber in the community. They serve as official greeters at Chamber events, help new businesses get activated with membership, and foster goodwill among all community sectors.

“The San Marcos Chamber has been instrumental in helping our small business build meaningful connections within the community. Whatever your passion or dream, the San Marcos Chamber will set you up for success and help turn it into a reality, just like they did for us.”

Sheila Beck, Ambassador
AirOne Heating & Air Conditioning Owner



COMMITTEES & GROUPS

Government Relations Council

This volunteer committee is charged with building the annual agenda to advocate for pro-business legislation for the benefit of San Marcos and the region. It compiles the list of top priorities biannually to present to state legislators. It gathers feedback from businesses about the impact of ordinances and regulations.

Education Programs Committee

This group addresses issues of educational progress in San Marcos by strengthening the partnership between the business community and all educators including San Marcos CISD, San Marcos Academy, Gary Job Corps and Texas State University. It fosters cooperative programs between business and education to prepare students for the workforce after graduation. It works with Chamber staff to facilitate the Youth Leadership program, annual S.T.E.A.M. Fair, Summer Teacher Externships and more.

Business Development Committee

Comprised of members from a variety of business backgrounds, this committee helps to refine and enhance programs and special events held for Chamber members and the community. It works closely with business and community leaders to help the Chamber implement meaningful and high-impact events.

Ambassadors Club

These dedicated volunteers strengthen the overall relationship with members by assisting with Chamber events and boosting awareness of the Chamber in the community. They serve as greeters at Chamber events and foster goodwill among the membership.



GOAL TEAMS

From the Chamber Board's annual planning retreat, the goal areas below were developed for 2024. Goal Team Champions were appointed for each one and all board members served on at least one team. Goal Team meetings were held to develop strategies and tactics to achieve goals that were identified in each area.

Goal Team 1 - Education & Talent Pipeline Development

Team Members: Keely Hennig, Crystal Dixon, Kristin Williams, Brooke Damron, Elva Zdeb

- Part-time director for these initiatives was hired, thanks to grant from Hays County Commissioners.
- Strengthen partnerships between local businesses and schools to provide students with more training/experiences.
- Collect data on local workforce trends and needs, using the information to shape future talent pipeline development initiatives.

Goal Team 2 - Town & Gown Relations

Team Members: Josh Paselk, Alfonso Sifuentes, Jo Anna Gilland, John Hardy, Hondo Powell

- Promote regionally.
- How can the Chamber help get positive information out about area schools?
- Identify entrance points for partnerships at all schools and with government/civic agencies.
- Include as many contacts as possible on InterCity trip to build relations.
- Pre-trip survey to identify expectations and follow up to foster continued collaborations.

Goal Team 3 - Government Relations & Advocacy

Team Members: Cassidy Berenato, Keely Hennig, Brooke Damron, Cassie Frow, Josh Paselk, Kevin Wolf, Lee Colon

- Find and support business-friendly people to run for elected positions.
- Survey members and add advocacy input form to Chamber website.
- More frequent meetings with elected officials, mini forums with members.
- Gather and promote details about all upcoming elections.

Goal Team 4 - Enhanced Member Communications

Team Members: Tommy Curtis, Dominic Encinias, Cassie Frow, Alfonso Sifuentes, Eddie Glidewell, Jo Anna Gilland

- At the annual Planning Retreat, the challenge of communicating with members about events and benefits was discussed.
- This goal team will work on evaluating current tools and programs and ways to enhance and expand outbound communications.

Goal Team 5 - Future Building Needs

Team Members: Justin Payne, Cassidy Berenato, Tommy Curtis, Brooke Damron, Alfonso Sifuentes

- With the Chamber's current lease expiring in 2027, the need to determine future office space continues to be studied by the Executive Committee.

ADVOCACY

2023–2024 Guiding Principles

The Chamber exists to be the “voice of business” at the local, state and federal level. Members are encouraged to stay active by submitting input to the Government Relations Council and Board and promote to all their employees to be informed voters in elections. These are the policy statements approved by the Chamber Board and promoted to our elected officials at the state and local levels.

Job Growth & Business Recruitment

Recognizing that a healthy economy will serve to encourage a positive economic impact and quality of life, the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce supports legislation that encourages diverse businesses and industries to locate in Texas, such as (1) controlling excessive and burdensome taxes; (2) providing incentives for business recruitment, retention and expansion; and 3) workforce education funding and initiatives. We encourage local units of government to be aggressive in using incentives that have been provided through state and federal legislation.

Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Recognizing that to maintain a positive quality of life, low crime rates and public safety must be a top priority for citizens and businesses; the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce supports the efforts of the police and sheriff departments in our community. The Chamber supports efforts for enhanced flood prevention and mitigation standards.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Recognizing that the economic well-being of the business community is dependent upon the ability to efficiently transport people and products, the Chamber promotes initiatives that improve transportation opportunities and facilities. We encourage efforts to improve and facilitate more efficient movement of goods and people by road, rail, and air. The Chamber acknowledges the regional airport in its critical role in enhancing connectivity and fostering economic growth in the region.

Health Care

Recognizing that cost-effective health care for businesses and families is an essential element for business success and a healthy community, the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce supports policies that protect employers from legislation that increases health care costs. We support initiatives to encourage wellness and healthy lifestyles.

Education

Recognizing that the ability of tomorrow's workforce to succeed depends on the educational foundation we lay today, the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce supports programs, processes, activities and facilities that promote a strong local education system that, together with business and community leadership, prepares students for productive careers. We support the protection of funding for public schools, and we support legislation and programs that provide career awareness, exploration and experiences for all students through activities that involve businesses, schools and community in partnerships.

Housing

Recognizing access to affordable housing is a cornerstone of thriving communities, economic stability, and individual well-being, the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce supports local policies that prioritize the development and preservation of housing options for residents of all income levels. Meaningful progress requires the active participation of community members, policy makers, and stakeholders at all levels. We advocate for inclusive decision-making processes and community-driven solutions.

Water

Recognizing that water is crucial to the continued vitality and growth of our city and region, the Chamber supports strategies that include but are not limited to the conservation of existing water supplies, the identification and development of new, cost-effective supplies, and the further exploration of re-use strategies.

Inclusivity and Equality

Recognizing the responsibility of all business and civic leaders to participate in efforts to remove barriers to inclusivity; we support programs and initiatives that strengthen inclusion and equal access for all citizens.

Media Production & Creative Industries

Recognizing the economic impact and importance of creative industries in our region, the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce advocates for the growth of media production and creativity in Texas. We support increased and improved grant legislation and economic incentives to grow the media production industry in Texas.

TOP TIER INVESTORS - as of September 2024

Diamond



Platinum



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