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This newsletter goes to 337 addresses
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Bluffton University business showcase registration underway - event held Sept. 22

Your best opportunity to introduce your business to Bluffton University students is Thursday, Sept. 22. This year's chamber business-university showcase takes place in Marbeck Center from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. that day.

Based on previous showcases up to 25 businesses are expected to participate. Registered businesses will have a table provided. Businesses may provide hand-outs to students and may have separate drawings for prizes during the event. No food giveaways are permitted, but you may give away candy.

Like past years, we will give each student a "passport." It will list all the names of participating businesses. We ask that you X off your business when the student visits your booth. When the student makes the round of businesses the student may enter the passport in our drawing box. To enter our drawing for prizes, students must visit at least 15 of the chamber booths. There are no assigned tables. You may choose whichever table you want when you arrive.

A registration form for the show is part of this issue. The deadline to register is Friday, Sept. 16.

Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce Board:

Aphaphanh Nussbaum, president; Robert Neff, Jamie Mehaffie, Matt Luke, Brendon Matthews, Luke Young, Sally Siferd, James Grose, Tammy Whitlow. Fred Steiner, CEO Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 142, Bluffton, OH 45817; blufftonchamber@gmail.com; Phone: 419-369-2985
www.explorebluffton.com

Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce 2011 business showcase registration form

This year's showcase is Thursday, Sept. 22, in the Bluffton University Marbeck Center Commons. Set up 10 a.m.; showcase hours 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: - Monday, Friday, Sept. 16.

Yes! We plan to attend. Please reserve a display table for our business

Business name:

Address:

E-mail:

Tables will be provided for your display

Do you need more than two chairs: No Yes:
How many? _____

Please enclose payment of \$25 (for chamber members) and \$40 for non-members

Please note:

Bluffton University will provide two free lunches to each participating business and free coffee during the showcase. The registration fee helps the chamber purchase significant door prizes from showcase participants to students.

Make checks payable and mail to:

Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 142
Bluffton, OH 45817

2011 Blaze committee seeks ideas from chamber members

This year's new Blaze of Lights committee is hard at work. With two planning meetings behind it, here's what is set so far. The Blaze of Lights is Saturday, Nov. 26.

- "Winter Wonderland" is this year's theme. Floats, residences and businesses are encouraged to decorate with that theme in mind.
- Parade formation at The Centre, starting at 4 p.m.
- Parade from The Centre to College Avenue at 5 p.m. Last year's parade included nearly 80 units. A first-, second- and third-place trophy will be provided for floats entering the parade. Judging takes place during the parade line up. Winners will be announced during the parade.
- Weiss Carriage Rides will provide horse and wagon rides following the parade. Tickets will be sold during the parade in front of the town hall. Wagon rides will start and end on Elm Street between the town hall and Groves Collectibles and Antiques. The route will be decided soon.
- Santa and Mrs. Claus will bring up the end of the parade. They will meet youngsters following the parade in the Bluffton Senior Citizens Center.
- Entertainment is being planned and will be announced soon.
- The cultural affairs committee will handle the lighting of the Ream holiday folk art display. Details including set up dates will be announced soon.
- Sponsorship opportunities will be available soon. The sponsorships help with media advertising, printing of posters and free maps given away in November and December. Sponsorships also support the work of the chamber.
- The chamber will officially turn over the silent auction portion of the Blaze to the Bluffton Public Library. The traditional auction fund-raiser will move the library and funds generated from it will support the library. More details on that project are coming.

Brainstorming-dreaming-ect.

Several projects for this year's Blaze are in the discussion stages. Committee members welcome chamber member input on these. The following ideas are under discussion by the committee. No decisions are finalized.

1 -Residential lighting contest. Consider making prizes money more challenging. For example \$300 for first place; \$125 for second place; \$75 for third place. Entries accepted within the corporation limits extending 1-mile outside the corporation. Judging

could be based on the “Winter Wonderland Theme.”

2 - Consideration for block judging. Specific neighborhoods could enter a separate block judging entry category.

4 - Perhaps complete the residential decoration judging prior to the Blaze and award the prizes to winners from the Blaze stage the night of the event. This would provide more visibility to the winners and to the contest. This year’s winner could present next year’s prize that year’s winner on Blaze night.

5 - Judging business displays for downtown could involved a traveling trophy. The committee seeks ideas for what a traveling trophy - either something serious or something fun - might involve.

6 - Other ideas under consideration include an event on the third floor of the town hall in the afternoon and evening of the Blaze. Ideas range from Christmas tree festivals, Purse Bingo, to a repeat of this summer’s sesquicentennial ball.

Several other promotional ideas are being studied by the committee. Those will be announced soon.

The new Blaze committee includes:

Junior Weihrauch, Phil Zimmerly, Brandon Huber, Tracy Steele, Lauren Beasley, Ryan Lowry and Fred Steiner. The next meeting is at 7 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 15, on the patio at Luke’s. Blaze members appreciate your ideas and comments about this year’s event.

Become a downtown snowflake sponsor!

The Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce is soliciting sponsors for downtown snowflakes. The four-foot-tall lighted snowflakes will brighten Main Street during the Blaze of Lights season. One snowflake may be sponsored for \$399.

“The chamber invites, individuals, church groups, businesses, service organizations and industries to help light up downtown Bluffton this coming Christmas season and for seasons to come,” said Fred Steiner, chamber CEO. “Depending upon the response we’d like to have a very heavy ‘snowfall’ this summer. Yes, that’s an intended pun.”

Snowflakes may be sponsored in honor or memory of a family member, friend or special Bluffton resident. “Groups may sponsor a snowflake outright, or may contribute to the snowflake fund, which will go toward their purchase.

“The chamber purchased the lone snowflake hanging in front of Common Grounds and The Food Store. We wanted to hang it in the summer to get people’s attention, added Steiner.

It is the hope of this committee that once the snowflake project succeeds that a season banner project will follow. The banners will be placed on light poles similar to the snowflakes. The banners could promote any number of events or seasons.

Donors will be recognized in several ways including announcements:

- in chamber newsletters,
- at the December chamber breakfast meeting,
- from the stage during the Blaze of Lights,
- on the chamber website,

- on Bluffton holiday lighting maps distributed free in November and December,
- on posters displayed downtown during the holiday season.
- and, each donor will receive a certificate of recognition from the chamber for participation in the snowflake project.

The deadline for a sponsorship is Friday, Sept. 9.

Allen County Common Pleas Judge Richard Warren Sept. 9 chamber breakfast speaker

Bluffton native and Allen County Common Pleas Judge Richard Warren is the kickoff speaker for the 2011-12 chamber breakfast meetings. The first meeting is Friday, Sept. 9, in the third floor of the town hall. Richland Manor will provide free breakfasts. Serving starts at 7 a.m. The meeting begins at 7:30 a.m.

Citizens National Bank is September's breakfast sponsor. Several introductions will take place at the meeting. One of those introductions will be of Fortman Insurance, who opened a Bluffton office this summer. The complete agenda will be announced soon.

Some breakfast sponsorship still available

Contact the chamber to schedule a breakfast sponsorship. The sponsorships cost \$250. The chamber has the following monthly breakfasts available for sponsorships.

September - Citizens National Bank

October - open

November - open

December - open

January - open

February - DTR Industries

March - open

April - open

May - Bluffton University

Dates for your calendar

Aug. 26 - Cory-Rawson at Bluffton, football, 7 p.m. (note new starting time)

Aug. 26 - New students move in at Bluffton University

Aug. 29 - First day of Bluffton schools

Aug. 29 - First day of Bluffton University classes

Sept. 2 - Chamber board, town hall, noon

Sept. 3 - Kalamazoo at Bluffton University, football, 2 p.m.

Sept. 9 - Chamber breakfast

Sept. 13 - Bluffton University presidential forum, Founders, 11 a.m.

Sept. 15 - Blaze committee, 7 p.m., Luke's

Sept. 22 - Bluffton University business showcase, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (registration deadline Sept. 16)

Sept. 24 - Bluffton fall festival

Sept. 29 - Bluffton University artist series, The Four Freshmen, Yoder Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 30 - Bluffton High School homecoming parade

Oct. 8 - Bluffton University homecoming

Oct. 14 - Chamber breakfast

Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce

Snowflake Sponsorship Form

Please complete and return this form as soon as possible.
The chamber will invoice you for your sponsorship.

✓ Yes! We wish to become a Bluffton snowflake sponsor.
Billing address here:

_____ Number of snowflakes to sponsor at \$399 each.

✓ We are unable to sponsor a snowflake, but wish to contribute to the snowflake fund. \$_____ amount we wish to contribute.

Name of the snowflake sponsor:

Is the sponsorship in honor or memory of anyone?

(This option is only available for sponsorships of \$399 or more)

All sponsors will be recognized in several ways including announcements:

- in chamber newsletters,
- at the December chamber breakfast meeting,
- from the stage during the Blaze of Lights,
- on the chamber website,
- on Bluffton holiday lighting maps distributed free in November and December,
- on posters displayed downtown during the holiday season.
- and, each donor will receive a certificate of recognition from the chamber for participation in the snowflake project.

**RETURN THIS FORM BY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2011 TO:**

Snowflake Sponsorship
Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 142
Bluffton, OH 45817
blufftonchamber@gmail.com
419-369-2985
www.explorebluffton.com