



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Chamber of Commerce?

A Chamber of Commerce is an association of business owners, community leaders, students, government representatives, and retirees who are committed to improving the community in which they work, live, shop, play, and pray.

The Seaside – Sand City Chamber of Commerce is here to help your neighbors, colleagues, businesses, and organizations grow and prosper. If you call Seaside and Sand City home, or even if you don't, we're here for you!

Why would I want to become a member of the Seaside ~ Sand City Chamber?

People join the Chamber because they want to make a difference. By joining the Chamber not only to help themselves, but also help their neighbors as well. We need one another, pure and simple. We believe that if we don't help each other, no one will.

When you join the Chamber, your voice will be heard. Your story will add to the stories of countless others who, like you, have chosen to make a real difference in our community.

Who is in the Chamber?

Your friends, neighbors, colleagues, and mentors are members of the Chamber. They are people just like you! Even our Board of Directors, the leaders who run the organization, were chosen because they come from all walks of life, with different perspectives, and many different interests. They are young and *young-at-heart*; they are accomplished and *just-getting-started*. What they agree on is that you matter.

Like a Democracy, we all succeed when we all participate. The Chamber is the "glue" that brings us together to accomplish a greater good.

For this reason we've set a goal of doubling our membership this year, and every year thereafter, until all business owners, students, and friends of Seaside and Sand City are members of the Chamber. With your help, we will reach that goal sooner rather than later!

How is joining the Chamber of Commerce going to be good for my business?

Professionals and business owners who join the Chamber of Commerce join a collective of like-minded citizens. Chamber members are loyal to one another. Joining the Chamber means that some of the most influential people in our community not only visit your business themselves, but also spread the word to others.

Because Chamber membership is itself a community endorsement, consumers often associate Chamber membership with a business that offers quality, value, and customer service. We work around the clock to promote that message. A description of how we do this can be found below.

Money is tight. My business is struggling. Can the Chamber really help me turn things around?

The adage that “the only thing that overcomes hard *luck*... is hard *work*” doesn’t necessarily hold true in today’s rough economy. Sometimes we need creative solutions, not just hard work, to adapt. Many of the Chamber’s programs are designed to bring more customers through your door. Others are designed to help you help yourself. By connecting members with different perspectives, we can help you find strategies and resources to help you weather these difficult economic times. If working *harder* isn’t helping, maybe you need to be working *smarter*.

It is our goal that joining our Chamber becomes your ‘best bang for your buck’. Our membership fees are far less than other local Chambers, yet our benefits will be more significant. Try us for a year. If we’re doing what we should, we know you’ll stay. If not,... well,... you know where to find us, don’t you?!

I work alone. My business is me. How is joining the Chamber going to help?

As a one-person-operation, joining the Chamber could be the best business decision you’ve ever made. After all, we all need help! This year, we’ve reduced the membership fee for businesses with no employees (you) from nearly \$150 to only \$100. Why? Because we want to encourage small businesses to set up and grow in Seaside and Sand City.

We’re here to help you reach your goals. The more aggressive they are, the more we can help. We’ll celebrate with you next year when the growth of your business requires you to increase your membership!

I am new to the area and don't really know anyone. Is the Chamber really for me?

Yes! That's the whole point. One of the greatest benefits of joining a Chamber is networking. Our programs connect members so that they can get to know each other in a comfortable, friendly environment. Even if you've been here your entire life, you can't possibly know *everyone*. One of this community's greatest assets is its diversity - we're here to help you enjoy it and become a part of it.

My business isn't located in Seaside or Sand City. Why would I want to become a member?

Since the days of the Civil Rights Movement, the cities of Seaside and Sand City have been a proud place of opportunity, with a truly unique identity. But we are all citizens of the Monterey Bay. The Chamber is a great place to reach out and get to know your neighbors. Many of our newest members are finding a different attitude here. We smile a bit more often; we laugh a bit louder; we're a little sunnier, and maybe, we have just a little more fun. Join us and add your chapter to our shared story.

I don't have a business, but hope to start one someday. Can the Chamber help?

The Chamber is the perfect place to begin as you plan for a new business, or, grow the business you already have. The Chamber has access to countless resources for our members. If we can't answer your question, we can help you find someone who will. We can even connect you with mentors and other members who have been in your shoes.

Does the Chamber of Commerce only work with for-profit businesses?

Nope! The Chamber of Commerce exists to help *all* proud citizens of our community work together for the greater good. We include religious groups, youth groups, fraternal groups and other non-profit organizations. Like your non-profit organization, we thrive on helping those in need. Through your participation, we can better connect our members with the best possible solutions to their problems. Make us your partner so that we may empower one another, and in doing so, empower our community.

Do I need to be a 'business-person' to join the Chamber?

Not at all! Our membership includes musicians and artists who record and celebrate our unique culture. We have student members who join because they want to gain experience and build their resumes. We have military members who want access to special discounts in two cities they can call their own. We have retirees and residents who become 'friends' of the Chamber because they believe in our cause. All *you* need to join is to agree that your community is a priority.

Does joining the Chamber mean that I have to agree with local government?

It's inevitable that we won't always agree, but we have excellent relationships with the leaders and staff in Seaside and Sand City. By working closely with these decision makers, we can be effective advocates for our members. This doesn't stop with your City either; we can help with regional questions about water, permits, health codes, and plans for the future.

In years past, as much as 60% of our annual income came from City subsidies. This is no longer the case. For the past 2 years we've accepted only small membership fees from each City so that there was no potential for a conflict of interest. The Chamber is here for you. Let us be a resource as you learn more of what is happening in the community, and inform our leaders about your opinions.

I am already a member of a different Chamber, why would I want to join the Seaside-Sand City Chamber?

There are some great Chambers of Commerce on the Monterey Peninsula. Each Chamber is different, however, and offers unique service to its members. With The Seaside – Sand City Chamber, your community comes *first*.

We provide benefits that no other local Chamber is offering. It is our goal that joining our Chamber becomes profitable for you, *personally*. You may not know this, but our membership fees are far less than other local Chambers, yet our benefits could be far more significant for you.

But we think what you've done is great! By participating in a local Chamber, you've already demonstrated that you want to make a difference. As our 'thanks' for helping out, we'll cut your first year's membership fee in *half* when you demonstrate that you're already a member of another Monterey Peninsula Chamber. That's 50% discount! After

that, you'll find that our normal membership fees are far less than other local Chambers as well.

I used to be a member, but didn't really benefit from it. How would it be different this time?

The Seaside-Sand City Chamber of Commerce is experiencing an exciting new chapter in our history. While we have been around since 1945, we've recently revamped our mission, reconfirmed our purpose, and charted a course to exceed your expectations.

We've completely rebuilt the organization from top to bottom to respond to *your* needs. Just like this hard-working community, we have been putting in long hours so that you can stay more informed, become better trained, and are well advertised. We have created new benefits and strengthened the ones that have always worked in the past. We are focused on benefits that help everyone, not just a select few.

Whether it's www.sea-sand.com, the **Sea-Sand World Market**, or our weekly radio program, "**Out & About**," we're all about Seaside and Sand City! And, we've only just begun! Look out for new mixers, newsletters, and soon, a new building! Let us know how we can help. You talk - we listen... *really*.

That's all well and good, but who's going to do all this work?

"Good ideas are common -- what's uncommon are people who'll work hard enough to bring them about." We want you to meet your new Board of Directors. They include some of the most successful and enthusiastic leaders in our community. They reflect the diversity of our residents, business owners, and organizational interests. They believe that 'actions speak louder than words.'

But they aren't alone. To guide them through this dramatic transformation, the Board has recruited an experienced professional; our new Executive Director, and "Community Concierge," Tony Price. Tony is a fighter and is determined to make a difference. He's a gift to our community and will be an asset to your business.

The Seaside - Sand City Chamber of Commerce is poised for great success. Join now, and help us, help you!