

December 2015: Carbon County Chamber

Letter from Marlyn Kissner, The Chamber Executive VP, Affiliate Chamber & Councils

The red ribbon and oversized scissors appear at local businesses two to three occasions per month. So, what is a “ribbon cutting ceremony”? How does this type of event help businesses and why do we spend our time planning such events? We’ve had the pleasure of working with a number of business owners throughout the county as we help celebrate grand openings, anniversaries and special occasions.

The Carbon Chamber and Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) assist businesses in the planning by:

- Preparing a media release highlighting the event and special occasion
- Getting the word out via social media, email blasts and personal invitations
- Contacting local officials and dignitaries with a personal invitation to the event
- Working with the business owner on details that includes refreshments, door prizes, and ceremony agenda
- Taking pictures during the event, posting and promoting on social media and highlighting in future newsletters

The excitement of the occasion attracts community leaders, business professionals and the public to a fun, relaxing event. Not only does the business owner benefit by hosting the event, guests have the opportunity to mix, mingle and network. Dorothy Lane, Business Consultant for the Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) explains, “Grand openings generate media coverage and marketing opportunities. It gets people excited and brings potential customers out in droves.” She goes on to say “By collecting customer information at a grand opening via a raffle entry you can quickly build an effective mailing list or by offering discount coupons at your grand opening for future purchases you can ensure returning customers.”

The ribbon cutting ceremony will follow when the plan comes together for the entrepreneur. CCEDC has a partnership with the Wilkes University SBDC offering up free consultations and resources. Individuals who are contemplating starting a new business will receive assistance in researching ideas, writing a business plan, preparing financial projections, inter-facing with government loan programs, licensing, registration and much more. Existing businesses can turn to the SBDC for guidance in marketing and sales strategies as well.

We’ve enjoyed the journey by helping a number of passionate individuals like Alicia Kline from Turn to Us, Inc. “Our ribbon cutting ceremony with the CCEDC launched Turn To Us, Inc. into the spotlight. Ceremony announcements generated buzz that lead to word of mouth client referral. Press releases and advertisements turned into an article in the Times News that caught the eye of a TV news reporter.” Kline passionately expressed “The touching news clip went viral on our Facebook page with over 2,400 views and brought seven more clients to us. The compelling case for support combined with personal connections I developed with chamber members created a comfortable environment to cultivate corporate sponsorships.”

Once the ribbon is cut, it is time for the business owner to go to work! We encourage

individuals to stay connected with the guests who attended the ceremony, stay active and involved with the CCEDC by attending programs and taking advantage of all marketing and member benefits.

So, the next time you see a set of big scissors cutting through a red ribbon, remember, it is a sign of business growth and retention in Carbon County on the road to a strong local economy.