


REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: OCTOBER 28, 2009

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: PRESENTATION BY THOUSAND OAKS/WESTLAKE VILLAGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Please find attached a letter dated August 14, 2009 directed to staff from the Thousand Oaks/Westlake Village Regional Chamber of Commerce. This letter sets forth the services they provide to businesses within our area. This chamber has 1,300 members and has served the communities of Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park for many years. It has an extremely strong and positive reputation in the community; due in part to their very high level of service to their membership. They provide thousands of referrals each year to their member businesses and their website receives over 45,000 "visits" per month.

This Chamber is accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; one of just a few chambers recognized in this way. In addition, they are one of only nine chambers in the State of California with an impressive four-star rating. Their Board encompasses representatives from many different business sectors; however, their letter states that they would welcome Board members from Agoura Hills and would also consider a name and logo change to include Agoura Hills. Since they are a member driven Chamber their members usually stay with them for as long as they are in business.

In addition to the basic services set forth in their proposal, the TO/WLV Chamber is able to provide the following special services to the City:

1. Staffing to assist with the Business Task Force, Buy Local Program, and business newsletter
2. Statistical "Drilled Down" Analysis of the types of businesses in Agoura Hills and employment base data
3. Annual Retail Census
4. Business Outreach and Identification
5. Web Development

The Thousand Oaks/Westlake Village Regional Chamber of Commerce has requested the opportunity to make a presentation to you, the City Council, to explain in greater detail the opportunities and benefits which may be realized from utilizing their services. They are here tonight to make this presentation to you. They have previously met at length with the City's Economic Development Committee (Mayor Pro Tem Koehler and Councilmember Edelston) in order to first explain to them the benefits of joining this organization.

RECOMMENDATION

The Economic Development Committee and staff respectfully recommend the City Council listen to the presentation this evening, give careful consideration to this opportunity, and provide direction to staff on how the City Council wishes to proceed regarding the establishment of a working relationship with the TO/WLV Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Attachments: Letter dated August 14, 2009
Chamber Proposal of Basic Services Dated August 31, 2009

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City of Thousand Oaks



August 14, 2009

Greg Ramirez, City Manager
City of Agoura Hills
30001 Ladyface Court
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Dear Mr. Ramirez:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and one thousand three hundred members of the Thousand Oaks-Westlake Village Regional Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express our interest in proposing a closer working relationship between the Chamber and the City of Agoura Hills.

Here at the Chamber, we have always felt that we represent the whole Conejo Valley of which Agoura Hills is such an important part. Over 15% of our members are already from Agoura Hills and we think that a contract for services between your City and the Chamber would benefit all of us. As you know, we have a decades long relationship with both the City of Westlake Village and the City of Thousand Oaks and to partner with the City of Agoura Hills would be a natural transition for us. Each contract we have is somewhat different depending on the needs and desires of each city and we would be happy to tailor a contract to your satisfaction.

Briefly, who is the Thousand Oaks-Westlake Village Regional Chamber of Commerce today and what advantage does partnering with our Chamber hold for your city and your businesses? Although almost every town in the country has a Chamber of Commerce, each Chamber is different. The relevant Chambers of Commerce are defined by their willingness to be ever-changing in advance of the needs of the business community. There are over 7000 Chamber's of Commerce yet fewer than 5% are accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Thousand Oaks-Westlake Village Regional Chamber has not only been accredited for many years but is one of only nine Chambers in the State of California with an elite four-star rating.

We are about networking and participation like most Chambers but our Chamber is about much more than that. The Chamber provides tremendous value to our businesses on an on-going basis whether its members come to every networking event, just the panel discussions, serve on a committee, go to China or Sacramento with us or do none of those things. In fact, an effective Chamber of Commerce is the only independent business organization that exists to keep customers employed and sales tax dollars coming in.



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City of Thousand Oaks



The Chamber provides thousands of referrals each year for our member businesses. The information age is past; it's the referral age now and we are all about access and aligning the right businesses with the right customers. Our website receives over 45,000 unique visits per month to our on-line directory, to access our free seminars, webcasts and speaker series and to just drill around and see what's new. One of our new offerings is free consultations for our members with our Director of Marketing and PR to help organize a budgeted marketing strategy targeted for their businesses specific needs. Another is the opportunity to teach a seminar at our Lunch & Learn or Business Enhancement Lunch Series.

In our recent survey of our members, they agreed that our Chamber's size (we are one of the two largest Chambers between Santa Barbara and San Diego) and reputation give their businesses visibility and credibility with potential customers. Our Chamber is many voices joined together to be heard.

Our Chamber is a Chamber for all businesses: our Board encompasses representatives from the bio-tech, media and banking sectors. It has representation from the health care, legal and university fields and the age range of our Board encompasses five generations. We would welcome Board members from Agoura Hills and would also welcome a name and logo change to include Agoura Hills. We have an excellent marketing and public relations committee to collaborate with on these and other issues.

We are a member driven Chamber and our members stay with us for the life of their careers because we enhance their careers. We make tremendous efforts to introduce bankers to businesses looking for funding, landlords to tenants and we shine the spotlight on the City's we represent so proudly.

As one of the few regional Chambers of Commerce, we embrace the similarities and differences in the amazing cities we work with. We recognize that Thousand Oaks is different from Westlake Village and Oak Park is different from Agoura Hills.

We hope you will consider exploring a partnership with us. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Jill Lederer, President/CEO



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Leader, President/CEO
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CHAMBER'S PROPOSAL

Date: August 31, 2009

BASIC SERVICES:

Chamber shall provide the following Basic Services:

General Information: Provide general information to residents and potential residents, businesses and potential businesses, property owners and potential owners and employees and potential employees in the City. These information services include, but are not limited, to the following

- Distribution of relocation packets to individuals and companies;
- Distribution of visitor information to include City businesses and area attractions;
- Serve as a source of general information for prospective residents and current residents regarding City and civic issues;
- Provide City agendas/packets for public review;
- Attend the first regular Council meeting each month to provide a brief oral status report on Chamber activities and/or items affecting the City;
- Act as a liaison between businesses and the City to resolve business issues;
- Maintain the Chamber web site and e-mail in response to inquiries;
- Include City in Expo Trade Shows, TGIF Breakfast programs, monthly mixers in order to promote and market businesses, guest speakers and educational programs;
- City link added to Chamber website to include history, demographics, listing and photos of current Council Members;
- Directory of Chamber Members to include the above information;
- Shredding services provided at Chamber's rate;
- Use of Chamber Conference Room at a reduced cost;
- City logo to be included on appropriate printed material along with the Cities of Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village;



- Provide a semi-annual market listing of commercial, office and industrial space available within the City limits to the City Manager/City Council;
- Implementation and expansion of the Chamber's Buy Local program to include business in the City;
- Participation in our Annual Spirit of Community Awards Celebration;
- Invitation to current Mayor to speak and present a mini-State of the City address to Governmental Relations Committee one time per year;
- Invitation to address Chamber Board of Directors two times per year;
- Coverage in Chamber's monthly newspaper: Conejo Business Times;
- Coverage/participation at Annual Council Reorganization.