

Strategic Plan Emerging

For the past 5 months thirty plus members of the Chamber's board, as well as some non-board members, have been meeting to help us set our strategic course for the next several years. A new plan is emerging from the Chamber's Future Committee, carefully formulated to meet the needs of our investor members, the community and region.

While the plan, as yet, is not final the Future Committee has been fully engaged in the process. At nearly every meeting, there were 90 plus percent in attendance and the committee asked that more meetings be held rather than fewer. This evidences both strong volunteer leadership as well as an abiding interest in the Dallas Regional Chamber making further great achievements.

Our former chairman, Peter Beck, led a great effort on behalf of our volunteers, and professional assistance at the highest level was given by the Boston Consulting Group, a well-known international business consulting firm. The Chamber staff was also fully engaged in the process.

Once the Chamber's Executive Committee approves the plan, followed by board endorsement this fall, the implementation steps will put the plan in place in a deliberate and organized way.

Well, what is the new plan? Since its not yet been approved I will hold off on specifics. There are many parts to the plan; but, a couple of clues. What our surveys showed and what the Future Committee took into account is the fact that most of our members are interested in the Chamber looking at our challenges and opportunities on a *regional basis*.

A regional approach was reflected when we changed our name two years ago. Now we will have better definition of what that means *and we will organize to proceed accordingly*. Clearly some issues are regional, transportation, air quality, water supply and the like. Our principal mission, that of economic development has attributes of being regional and Dallas oriented. *Our economic development activities will be strengthened*. But, other issues are closer to home.

As an example, while active on the education front, we have had a somewhat diffused focus on programs related to public education. The Future Committee, knowing that the business workforce of the future must find well educated students to populate company ranks, has asked that the Chamber focus its activities, *making education a higher priority than before*.

One hundred and fifty seven thousand students attend DISD each year. We want them to succeed. We will engage to improve the public education system. Our Education Committee has already begun to examine how that might best be accomplished and has some outstanding ideas that will be a part of our new strategic plan.

The study and resultant plan has also turned up a *number of inefficiencies* at the Chamber

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which simply grew up over time. We will deal with these on a more immediate basis. As an example in some of our departments we have carried forth with multiple meetings which have outlived their useful life. And in other areas, programs which may be more appropriately carried out in other organizations, will find a good home.

Just as our volunteer leadership has demonstrated great support for the activities of the Chamber, your Chamber team is excited to be involved in the recasting of our efforts to support our member investors by strengthening our activities to bring more prosperity to the city and region and to put in place policies to improve our quality of life.

When businesses pool their resources to affect great changes, great results emerge. At the Dallas Regional Chamber, with a new strategic plan almost in hand, we look forward to working with our members so that we can all achieve greatly!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James C. Oberwetter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Amb. James C. Oberwetter
President
Dallas Regional Chamber