



Spartanburg Area



CHAMBER FOCUS

Upcoming Events

Business After Hours Thursday, February 17th at Young Office, 105 Southport Road, 5:30-7:00pm. Join us for this monthly networking event always held the *third Thursday* of the month. This free event is open to all Chamber members and their guests and no reservation or RSVP is required. There will be lots of food, drinks and great giveaways. *For more information, contact Cindy Teaster at (864)594-5022 or email at cteaster@spartanburgchamber.com.*

2011 Economic Forecast Breakfast Friday, February 18th in the Campus Life Center Ballroom at USC Upstate, 8:00am. Each year, the Chamber hosts representatives from 12 industry sectors in our local economy to discuss the trends/overall outlook for the previous year and predictions for the year to come. *The cost to attend is \$20 per person, with reserved tables of 8 available for \$160. Multiple sponsorship opportunities are available-contact Yvonne Harper at 864.594.5032 or email at yharper@spartanburgchamber.com for details. To register, contact Chris Shealy at 864.594.5014 or email at cshealy@spartanburgchamber.com.*

Annual Meeting Monday, February 28th at the Spartanburg Marriott at Renaissance Park, 5:30pm cocktail reception, 6:30pm dinner and meeting. The Chamber's most prestigious event of the year, *presented by Extended Stay Hotels*, is held to celebrate the many accomplishments of the Upstate business community. This year's keynote speaker is **Josef Kerscher, President of BMW Manufacturing Co.** *Tickets are available for \$75 per person, with reserved tables of 10 available for \$750. To register, contact Chris Shealy at 864.594.5014 or email at cshealy@spartanburgchamber.com.*

2011 Economic Forecast

Each week, we will cover a portion of the findings from our 2011 Economic Forecast focus groups

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

MAJOR TRENDS

- Financing tight but available for good business models
- Diversified businesses have advantage over specialty firms
- Healthcare reform impacts are still being defined
- Decrease in state funds continues to slow many projects

WHAT WAS 2010 LIKE?

- Carryover business from prior year eased the decline of new business
- Competition remains keen
- Projects and business ventures delayed or put on hold

FACTORS THAT WILL HAVE GREATEST IMPACT ON 2011

- Business financing issues continue as lenders are more prudent with their loans
- Business and consumers continue to cut discretionary spending
- Shortage of state revenues continue to hold back many public projects
- Global and U.S. economy trends will affect the region

OUTLOOK FOR 2011

- Capital expenditure decisions are pending increased signs of economic recovery
- Business financing available but businesses must meet more prudent requirements
- Project a modest increase in new and expanded business
- Optimism level rises, but cautiously



Legislative Update: A Re-Cap of Last Week at the Statehouse

Angel Investment Update—H.3044, a House bill named the *Bill Wylie Entrepreneurship Act*, in honor of the late Rep. Bill Wylie (Greenville), has recently been considered in a Ways & Means subcommittee. The House bill was added to the 2011 Legislative Agenda for the SC House G.O.P Caucus. This legislation will allow "Angel Investors" to claim an income tax credit for providing funding to small business start-ups in our state.

Commission on Higher Education and USC Expansion of Medical Programs to Greenville—The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) delayed hearings previously scheduled for February 3, 10 and 14th regarding the University of South Carolina's expansion of its Medical School program to Greenville. CHE currently has 10 members with expired terms and one vacancy. Governor Haley is in the process of reviewing all state commissions and appointments and intends to make recommendations to the Senate on filling these seats in the next several weeks. For this reason, the Commission will delay making important decisions about this program until the new Commissioners are appointed. It is anticipated that a delay of approximately 30 days will allow for an effective process.

Healthcare—South Carolina Senior US Senator Lindsey Graham joined Senator John Barrasso (Wyoming) to introduce S.244, *The State Health Care Choice Act*, which will allow states to 'opt-out' of major provisions of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*. Under the legislation, the states could choose to 'opt-out' of the following:

- Individual Mandate—the requirement to buy government-approved health insurance coupled with a financial penalty for not doing so.
- Employer Mandate—the requirement for businesses to provide government-approved health insurance, coupled with financial penalties for not doing so.
- Medicaid Mandate—the forced expansion of state Medicaid programs.
- Benefit Mandates—defines what qualifies as a health plan, as well as new federal requirements for regulating health insurance.

Local Municipalities and Festivals—Governor Haley signed a resolution passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate to give a six-month exemption on a law enacted last year that accidentally prevented cities and towns from obtaining beer and wine permits for local festivals. Lawmakers are working on a permanent fix to this unintended consequence.

Unemployment Insurance—A SC Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry (LCI) subcommittee passed S.478, legislation making additional reforms to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust Fund. A key amendment was added to disqualify people from receiving benefits if they are not hired for work because they failed a drug test.

Upstate Labor and Employment Summit: Friday, March 4th—The Upstate Chamber Coalition is to hold an Upstate Labor and Employment Summit with the Upstate Legislative Caucus on Friday, March 4th. More details will follow soon regarding time and place. Topics discussed at the summit will include new unemployment insurance rates and recent union-related activity in South Carolina.

For more information and updates on state legislative matters, visit www.upstatechamber.org.

Headline News

Article Highlights Success of German-American Industry—According to a recent article in German American Trade Magazine, 91% of the more than 1900 German headquarters on American soil surveyed, expect positive growth for their operations in 2011 and 69% plan to create new jobs over the course of the year. This research comes on the heels of the presentation of the 2010 German American Business Outlook on the trading floor of the New York Exchange. These findings are the result of a joint survey of all German Chambers in the United States and the Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT) was conducted in conjunction with Roland Berger Strategy Consultants.

Save the Date: Speed Networking Returns in April—After the tremendous response to 2010's inaugural Chamber Speed Networking Event, the Spartanburg Area Chamber returns with a Speed Networking Event that is better than ever this April. This event, to be held at the Summit Pointe Conference and Event Center, allows for participants to network with over 85 business representatives from local firms. Only one representative for each company is allowed to register for this event that kicks-off at 1:45pm and wraps up at 5pm. More details to come regarding registration and costs. *For questions or sponsorship opportunities, contact Lee Blair at (864)594-5030 or email at lblair@spartanburgchamber.com.*

Southwest's Spirit Magazine Wants to Hear from Upstate Business—Southwest Airlines Spirit Magazine, Pace Communications and the Cities, Chambers, and Convention & Visitor Bureaus of Spartanburg, Greenville, Anderson and Greer are hosting a special Opening Reception to introduce Meet: The Upstate of South Carolina, a feature on the Upstate area to appear in the May 2011 issue of Southwest Spirit Magazine. This event is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16th from 5:30-7:00pm at the BMW Zentrum. All area businesses and their representatives are invited to attend to learn more about this publication and opportunities for business exposure through this publication that reaches an average of 3.4 million passengers on Southwest Airlines flights throughout the entire United States. *If you are interested in attending or learning more about how you can be involved, contact Heather Buchman at heather.buchman@paceco.com.*

Submit Your Positive News...You Could be Featured in Chamber FOCUS

Email your positive business news stories to focus@spartanburgchamber.com in press release format. Not all submissions are guaranteed inclusion, but your article may be featured in an upcoming issue of **Chamber FOCUS** or our bi-weekly e-newsletter **InFOCUS**.

For more details, contact Jessica Osborne at 864.594.5062 or email at josborne@spartanburgchamber.com.