



The Roane Chamber strives to be a reliable resource for the business community; works to create a stronger Chamber through membership; provide events, workshops and programs that help bring members, as well as non-members, together and help them succeed; and develop policies that create strong Chamber leadership. Plans are re-evaluated throughout the year and may change if new initiatives or issues arise.

FY25 PROGRAM OF WORK

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

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Chamber Membership & Retention:

The Roane Chamber typically has focused on increasing new members, when historically, membership has remained fairly steady. In order to grow the Chamber, membership retention - or engagement, is vital. Having members who are involved and committed to being a part of the business community is important. Providing benefit and added value, while focusing on engaging members and providing ways they can get more involved with other businesses will not only create a strong Chamber but can also be a catalyst for businesses to grow.

- **Implement and Effectively Communicate and Introduce New Membership Tiers beginning January 1, 2025**
- **Develop/Create Opportunities for Member Networking:** This includes but is not limited to Chamber Chat Coffees, Networking Breakfasts, and After Hours.
- **Develop/Create Opportunities to Recognize Members:** This includes but is not limited to Business of the Month, Annual Business Awards, Surprise Patrol, updating online and printed directory, sponsorship opportunities, and member spotlights on social media.
- **Develop and Promote Added Benefits Available to Members:** Provide information and remind members about resources available to them, like job postings and member-to-member sales through ChamberMaster, sponsorship opportunities, etc.
- **Be a Resource for Added Benefits & Opportunities:** Provide details to members as special offers and opportunities are available, like the State Chamber Insurance, grants, etc.
- **Promote Chamber Members:** Use social media and other marketing tools to promote members, through Shop Local/Shop Roane campaigns, special and national holidays/promotions like National Shop Small Day (aka Super Saturday) & Tax Free Weekends, etc. Also, referrals are an important benefit to membership, and the Roane Alliance refers member businesses first.

Be a Reliable Resource for the Business Community:

Help small business owners, support non-member businesses and meet member's needs through advocacy and working on projects and programs that facilitates and/or promotes quality of life, asset development, and leadership.

- **RoaneChamber.com:** keep up-to-date and a valuable resource for Chamber members and the community.
- **Ambassador Program:** the program was created more than 10 years ago to assist in calling on current Chamber members for feedback and input, which has become a vital and significant asset in recruiting new and retaining members, while also helping businesses with resources and tools to succeed and giving back to the community in a variety of ways.
- **Annual Legislative Agenda:** advocate and support initiatives and efforts that help facilitate economic growth and improve business conditions and overall community development. This includes the development and expansion of key economic drivers; support of community and city efforts; and supporting strong education programs for students and the future workforce, while also opposing those efforts that would negatively impact growth.
- **Leadership Programs:** advocate, support, and partner with other organizations and businesses to grow and develop leadership programs to develop Roane's future leaders. Youth Leadership and Engage Roane County are leadership programs of the Roane Chamber. RSCC leads the Leadership Roane County (adult program), while we partner with them and specifically help plan the

Economic Development Days, Tourism Day or as needed. We support the East Tennessee Regional Leadership Association (ETRLA) by participating and helping with Roane County Day as needed.

- **Education & Workforce Development:** Workforce initiatives have become a necessary focus to ensure existing businesses and industries have the skilled workforce they need, which is also necessary for recruiting new industries, businesses, and residents. Some of the initiatives include Highschool and Middle School Combined Career Day, Educators (and also Students) in the Workplace, TN Achieves/TN Promise, 70% by 2025, and TN Scholars. The Roane County Industrial Development Board (RCIDB) also provides support for this program.
- **Professional Development Training (PDT)** opportunities planned and scheduled for businesses, employees, students, etc., giving priority to Chamber members and providing non-dues revenue. In-person PDT opportunities will continue to be offered, with an additional emphasis on scheduling online PDT regularly as well, looking for timely and new workshop subject matter. Virtual training opportunities are also available on the Roane Alliance website at roanealliance.org/PDT.
- **Green Team:** Educate locals on the mission of Green Team and advocate for a green/clean community. In partnership with the Roane County Visitors Bureau and RCIDB, the Chamber advocates and initiates efforts that educate and keep Roane County litter-free.
- **Annual Review of Roane Chamber Documents and Policies:** Roane Chamber documents, policies, and bylaws should be reviewed regularly to stay relevant and efficient.

Specific Projects/Efforts:

- ▽ **Special Recognition of Long-Time Members:** Continue to do Surprise Patrol Visits to recognize long term Chamber Members.
- ▽ **Outreach/Support of Businesses:** Celebrate business anniversaries by sending cards on behalf of the Chamber, to members and non-members and highlight a member on social media after each visit.
- ▽ **Buy Local/QR Code Campaign:** Use retractable banners, door clings and other signs in lodging and other key visitor locations to promote VisitRoane.com/BuyLocal to visitors to encourage shopping local and bringing them into our downtowns; will promote on social media also (contingent on Tourism Marketing Grant funding).
- ▽ **Create a National Holiday Social Calendar:** Recognize members and/or member groups during national & special days through social media.
- ▽ **Promote Sponsorships & Advertising Opportunities:** Create a handout/sales piece to promote sponsorships, website advertising, social media opportunities, etc. to current & potential members.
- ▽ **Document Referrals for Reporting to Members:** Use BCC: archive@ email when corresponding with members, especially if it is a referral or benefit; this will drop it into their member profile for future information on what benefits they have received.
- ▽ **Create Member Benefit Collateral/Handouts:**
 - Best Practice Infographics & How-To's pulled together as a handout & powerpoint that can be sent digitally
 - *"How to Get the Most out of Your Membership"* handout & yearly class
 - *"How To Use ChamberMaster Effectively"* handout & webpage
- ▽ **Ambassador 'Bring a Friend':** Encourage each Ambassador to invite someone to a ribbon-cutting event at least once per year.
- ▽ **Staff member to attend Tennessee Association of Community Leadership Conference**

- ▽ **Youth Leadership Program:** Work with Kathy Parks to create a succession plan for the Youth Leadership program.
- ▽ **Roane County Engage Program:** Lead in planning and ensuring a 4th successful year of this new program as a non-dues revenue generator for the Roane Chamber.
- ▽ **Education Matters Programs:** Hold successful events and programs to increase student success in post-secondary education and ensure workforce needs can be met for area industry. These events include: Highschool and Middle School Combined Career Day, Educators (and also Students) in the Workplace, TN Achieves/TN Promise and TN Scholars.
- ▽ **Offer Professional Development Training (PDT) Opportunities:** continue to plan and schedule in-person PDT that provides training and resources needed in current business climate and for workforce needs. Also provide virtual training opportunities as available for the Roane Alliance website at roanealliance.org/PDT.
- ▽ **Holiday Shop Local Campaign:** Identify and plan a more effective way to promote shopping local at Christmas in place of the shopping Spree Contest. Staff time and declining participation, especially given the lack of retailers who participate, are the primary reasons we feel a different program could be more advantageous to local shops and businesses during Christmas. Promoting their specials and events on social and on a special webpage during the holidays is one of the ideas.
- ▽ **Outsource the Chamber Member Directory to Create Non-Dues Revenue**
- ▽ **Hold Successful Events to Increase Non-Dues Revenue:**
 - Roane Alliance Gala
 - Elected Officials Picnic
 - Legislative Breakfast/Forum
 - Farm to Table Event (T Table Event): The Chamber will consider planning this event as a non-dues revenue generator and to help local restaurants and businesses. The plan would be to make it an annual event that can be held in a different city/town each year to highlight those towns and also their local flavor and businesses.
 - Political Forum / Meet The Candidates
 - National Night Out
 - Jeep Festival
 - Taste of the Holiday