



Central Fort Bend Chamber Alliance members with Gov. Rick Perry

Uniting Fort Bend Businesses

Central Fort Bend Chamber Alliance Supports Community's Well-Being

Written By Heather Lowrie Photos courtesy of the Central Fort Bend Chamber Alliance

Part of the reason residents love the Fulshear, Richmond, and Rosenberg area is the rich diversity of established businesses that have set up shop there over the years. Backed by a dedication to the community and hard work, business owners know it takes much more than what the customer sees when they walk through their doors to make a company thrive. Part of the driving force behind economic development in this area is the Central Fort Bend Chamber Alliance, an organization made up of over 800 businesses in Richmond, Rosenberg, and Fulshear.

Organization of Opportunity

The Chamber's goal is to support the community and create and promote a climate where businesses can operate in a productive and profitable manner. The Chamber helps promote local businesses and serves to protect the interests of those establishments. The organization is more than a working cog in the economic wheel of Fort Bend County, though. It is also a historical feature of the community. Though it has changed names over the years, most recently changing from the Rosenberg-Richmond Area Chamber of Commerce, the CFBCA is the only chamber of commerce that has endured in Fort Bend County for almost 100 years.

The oldest chamber of commerce was born in 1770 in the state of New York. These tradesmen united, organized, and protected the promotion

of commerce. Gail Parker, President and CEO of CFBCA, states, "The emergence of the chamber as a true community organization has been a natural progression as businessmen have realized that their own prosperity depends on the development of a prosperous community." Whether the CFBCA is hosting one of its many monthly luncheons, breakfasts, meetings, Business Blenders networking events, ribbon cuttings, ground-breaking ceremonies, galas, or golf tournaments, no two days are alike for Chamber staff.

Proud Texas Roots

Anyone who talks with Parker will quickly see that this native Texan is proud of her heritage and is dedicated to bettering her community. She grew up both a fifth-generation Texan and Victoria native and began her career in Fort Bend County as the development director at Child Advocates of Fort Bend. When the position of CFBCA president opened up, she was sought after by the search committee and hired in December 2003. "Knowing that there is an opportunity to leave a place better than you found it is very important to me," she says. Faced with the challenge of running such a large-scale operation, Parker's clear vision for the community and her passion and dedication are inspiring.

Offering Business Acumen

In today's economy, business owners or potential business owners might be hesitant to enlarge, franchise,

or even start a new endeavor. With the CFBCA's help, there is a wealth of opportunity and knowledge to make it work. Parker advises those interested in starting a new business to research their location, find a great banker for funding along with a trustworthy accountant, write a solid business plan, zero in on their target audience, and market their service. "It is always better to be safe than sorry," she says. "There is nothing worse than learning too late that you failed to get a required permit. When in doubt about something, feel free to contact the Chamber. Even if we don't know the answer, we will find someone who does."

Not a business owner? No problem. Anyone can join CFBCA, business owners and non-business owners alike. Plus, there are multiple ways to get involved in the community through CFBCA even if you are not a member. Anyone is welcome to participate in monthly luncheons, workshops, and conferences. Additionally, those interested can apply to participate in Leadership Fort Bend, where citizens can get a first-hand look at how the community functions. Visit cfbca.org, call 281-342-5464, or stop by the Chamber's office in Rosenberg at 4120 Ave. H. **SLM**

HEATHER LOWRIE is a kindergarten teacher, mother of two, and is married to her high school sweetheart, James. She is a freelance writer and author of The Inspired Wife.



The CFBCA has served Fort Bend for almost 100 years



Hunton Group Team at the CFBCA's 2009 fundraising golf tournament



A CFBCA ground-breaking ceremony for Memorial Hermann




Sen. Glenn Hegar, Rosenberg Mayor Joe Gurecky, and CFBCA President and CEO Gail Parker


Get Involved!

Upcoming Chamber Events

- April 21** Education Committee Meeting 12 - 1 p.m.
- April 21** Young Professionals Division Meeting 5 - 6 p.m.
- April 22** Member Orientation 8:30 - 10 a.m.
- April 23** Ribbon Cutting Ceremony 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- May 4** Business Development Committee 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- May 7** May Luncheon with U.S. Rep. Pete Olson 11:30 - 1 p.m.
- May 12** Business Excellence Workshop 11:30 - 1 p.m.
- May 19** Young Professionals Division Meeting 5 - 6 p.m.
- May 24** Annual Chamber Golf Classic 12 p.m.
(Houstonian Golf and Country Club)
- May 27** Member Orientation 8:30 - 10 a.m.
- June 1** Business Development Committee Meeting 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- June 9** Business Excellence Workshop 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- June 14** Hispanic Business Division Monthly Meeting 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- June 16** Young Professionals Division Meeting 5 - 6 p.m.
- June 24** Member Orientation 8:30 - 10 a.m.
- July 6** Business Development Committee Meeting 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.



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