



2019
ANNUAL REPORT

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Pillars of Success



**Community
Growth**

**Advocacy
Legislation**



**Educational and
Workforce Development**

**Engagement
Partnerships**



Advocacy and Key Priorities



Enhanced Partnerships

Message from the Chair and President and CEO

Galveston plays an important role in today's economy, not only in Texas but across the nation. This past year, growth in the business community has been strong due to the flourishing economy, committed business and community leaders, and a booming tourism.

For 174 years, the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce has proudly served our members. 2019 brought growth, success, new initiatives and a renewed focus on partnering with the Port of Galveston, Park Board of Trustees, City leaders as well as preparing for our 175th anniversary.

We hosted more than 1,000 attendees and vendors at the 12th Annual Galveston Women's Conference featuring former First Lady Laura Bush, a 62.9 percent increase in attendance from 2018.

Keeping our brand relevant to our members and visitors is also important for success. In the beginning of 2019, we implemented a new marketing strategy to enhance our brand image, increase our social media presence and redesign our website.

With success also comes challenges. This year, Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) attempted to raise insurance rates. We partnered with surrounding coastal chambers of commerce and formed the Coastal Coalition



to create a unified voice to fight and oppose insurance rates hikes. Despite our vigorous opposition campaign, TWIA is once again considering a premium rate increase on coastal residents. We will continue our efforts to defend our position and to protect the business community.

We also continue to tackle an important workforce challenge to provide businesses with access to a quality workforce. With programs such as Lemonade Day Galveston County and Leadership Galveston, we continue to grow and develop future leaders to provide Galveston with a pool of talented workers and future entrepreneurs.

In the pages of this annual report, you will gain better insight into our efforts, initiatives and successes. Each is the result of a strong collaborative effort with our member businesses, leaders and the community we serve. We appreciate your partnership and continually strive to maintain the momentum needed to impact our mutual ongoing success.

Sincerely,

Theresa Elliott
2019 Chair

Gina M. Spagnola, IOM
President and CEO

MEMBERSHIP

The Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce represents more than 700 members comprised of businesses, organizations and individuals from across the region. From the numerous ribbon cuttings to our impactful committees; from our world-class women's conference to our spectacular gala, we aim to create memorable experiences for our existing and more than 140 new members in 2019.

Our priority is to grow and retain members by creating opportunities to strengthen relationships while meeting their specific business needs. We continually analyze the membership base by looking at the levels of membership and benefits and listening to members' requests and requirements.

The Chamber's visitor center, open seven days a week, welcomed over 7,500 visitors over the past year and mailed 439 packets to people from all over the United States inquiring about Galveston. The visitor's center offers member brochures and personalized recommendations to the visitors who stop by. We also produced a multi-award winning Membership Directory and Relocation Guide that we distribute to potential residents as well as to our membership and throughout the community.

**NAVIGATOR
THANK YOU
CAMPAIGN**

315
BUSINESSES
VISITED

14
COMMITTEES

168
MEETINGS

146
NETWORKING
EVENTS

5,382
ATTENDEES

143
NEW
MEMBERS



610
RENEWING
MEMBERS



123
NETWORKING
EVENTS



72
RIBBON
CUTTINGS



7,871
VISITORS
CENTER





1,197

**ATTENDEES AND
VENDORS**

**GALVESTON WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE**

443

ATTENDEES

**174TH
ANNUAL MEETING**

674

ATTENDEES

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
AND SENATOR TED CRUZ
LUNCHEONS**

127

**YP AND BUSINESS
LEADERS**

**C-CREWE'S 10TH ANNUAL
MUDBUGS & BEER ON
THE BAYOU**

330

MEMBERS

**ATTENDED GOOD
MORNING GALVESTON
MONTHLY MEETINGS**

1,125

**YOUNG
ENTREPRENEURS**

**LEMONADE DAY
GALVESTON COUNTY**

programs & events

Programs and events are an integral component of membership. In 2019, members benefited from over 170 face-to-face networking, educational and celebratory events throughout the year.

**JAN 11
LEADERSHIP
GALVESTON
HELPING
HANDS DAY**

The 2019 class participated in speed dating with non-profits and enjoyed lunch provided by Lighthouse Charity.

**JAN 11
174TH ANNUAL
MEETING**

The annual meeting recognizes Chamber members, our mission, work and accomplishments.

**FEB 7
EDUCATION
EXPO AND
LEMONADE
DAY KICK-OFF
EVENT**

Partnered with Odyssey Academy to bring community awareness about the educational opportunities throughout the county and started registering youth for Lemonade Day Galveston County.

**FEB 8
LEGISLATIVE
UPDATE #1**

Luncheon for members and the community to meet with legislators and hear first-hand where they stand on issues affecting the region.

**MAR 6
LEADERSHIP
GALVESTON
YOU NAME IT**

The class visited Texas A&M University at Galveston, attended the Salvation Army fundraising lunch honoring Gina Spagnola and toured Ball High School's STEM Lab.

**MAR 29
GALVESTON
COUNTY
DAY AT THE
CAPITOL**

Over 500 individuals met in Austin to advocate and bring the voice of business to Austin.

**APR 4
GLENN SHEPARD
SEMINAR**

Hosted "How to Supervise People and Lead a Team" seminar for businesses to provide valuable tools for enhancing members' ability to lead their teams.

**APR 18
CONVERSATION
WITH TED CRUZ**

Hosted luncheon to provide a unique opportunity for members and community to interact with Senator Ted Cruz and hear important updates about the current legislative agenda.

**MAY 4
LEMONADE
DAY**

Event geared to engage the business community to train the next generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs.

**MAY 9
GALVESTON
WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE**

All-day conference designed to educate women about health and women's issues, equip them with skills to be successful in life and business, inspire them to be their best and renew their spirit.

**MAY 12
LEADERSHIP
GALVESTON
GRADUATION**

Graduation and wrap-up event hosted onstage at The Grand 1894 Opera House.

**MAY 23
C-CREWE
MUDBUGS &
BEER ON THE
BAYOU**

Young professionals annual recruiting event.

fiscal-year highlights

**SEPT 6 & 7
LEADERSHIP
GALVESTON
KICKOFF**

2019-2020 class kicked off with a weekend retreat at Moody Gardens to bond with each other and begin their 8-month journey.

**SEPT 12
LEGISLATIVE
UPDATE #2**

Update from local congressman and state representatives on how decisions were made during the recent legislative session.

**SEPT 20
COASTAL
STUDY
UPDATE**

Discussion with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Texas General Land Office regarding the coastal study and potential ring levee leading to subsequent community meetings.

**OCT 8
SMALL
BUSINESS
WORKSHOP**

Hosted SBA's "How to Grow Your Business" workshop at the Chamber office.

**OCT 28
30TH ANNUAL
GOLF
TOURNAMENT**

Almost 200 golfers attended this networking event that brings together member businesses, local legislators and other influential professionals from around the region to connect and engage in a relaxed environment.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

We work to increase the Chamber's reach, brand awareness, and business development opportunities for our members. The marketing department supports internal Chamber departments to communicate with numerous audiences including chamber members, prospective members, government officials, the community and media.

We are constantly adapting to digital advancements to better serve our members and provide enhanced exposure opportunities. As part of our 2019 strategic initiatives to improve communication, we implemented a marketing plan to include a new website, increase social media presence and provide a more user-friendly navigational experience for our members and the community. The new website is set to launch in 2020.

FOLLOWERS



16,877



1,907



3,533



66.6%

INCREASED
MESSAGE VOLUME

61.4%

INCREASED
FOLLOWING

44.8%

INCREASED TOTAL
ORGANIC IMPRESSIONS



52,695
WEBSITE
VISITORS



30.94%
OPEN
EMAIL RATE
18.94% INDUSTRY AVG.



679,240
SOCIAL
IMPRESSIONS

PUBLIC POLICY

We coordinate the public policy efforts of the Chamber through the work of the advocacy and legislative affairs committee with the final decision on official positions and communication resting with the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

Below and on the following page, we have provided highlights of the letters of support and resolutions that we supported in 2019.

RESOLUTIONS

SUPPORTING COASTAL
PRESERVATION



SUPPORTING EARLY
VOTING HOURS

CSSB1438 ALTERING EXISTING
LAWS TO THE USE OF
WATERWAYS, WATER BOTTOMS
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



SUPPORTING
LEMONADE STANDS

SUPPORTING TEXAS
MARINE INDUSTRY
COALITION



SUPPORTING POSITION
TO NOT VOTE ON
PROPOSITION 1

SUPPORTING VIABLE
RAILROAD SYSTEMS



LETTERS OF SUPPORT



**CONTINUATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SPACE
STATION**



**PARK BOARD FOUR
(4) CYCLE 11 COASTAL
RESOURCE**



**CONTINUATION OF THE
GRAND PARKWAY**



**LIFT CUSTOMS
CLEARING
REGULATIONS AT
SCHOLES FIELD**



**HB4032 TO SUPPORT
THE MARINE SERVICES
INDUSTRY**



**COUNTY OF
GALVESTON TWO (2)
CYCLE 11 FUNDING**



**RAILROAD MUSEUM
TO HOST THE
POLAR EXPRESS**



**JAMAICA BEACH
COASTAL RESOURCE
FUNDING**



**PARK BOARD CMP CYCLE 25
PROJECT OF SPECIAL MERIT**

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

The advocacy and legislative affairs committee promotes a positive and pro-active business environment in the Galveston area and advocates through the legislature for member businesses, not only at the local level, but at the state and national levels as well.

During the 2017 Legislative Session, the Chamber supported the City's efforts to ensure property tax rollback relief. Senator Taylor championed this effort to provide 5 years -or when property values returned to the pre-event levels, whichever was earlier- of rollback relief when a community is hit by disaster. During the 2019 Session, the House and Senate bills held the 5-year provision, but the Conference Committee reduced it to 3 years - now current law. This effort was part of the discussion points during Galveston County Day.

Further efforts this year included:

1. Hosted meetings with the General Land Office and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Ring Barrier and Coastal Spine Study
2. United with coastal chambers of commerce to oppose a rate hike from Texas Windstorm Insurance Association
3. Supported an interim study of the Galveston County Tax Assessor's Property Appraisal Reform which will include various methods to determine market value
4. Raised awareness about the importance of participation in the 2020 Census
5. Joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce along with other chambers across the country in a letter to the President to take steps to restore full operation of the federal government to prevent further lasting damage to the community
6. Co-hosted Galveston County Day at the Capitol to bring regional awareness to Austin.





Monthly C-Crewe Luncheon



2019-2020 Leadership Galveston Class



C-Crewe Mudbugs & Beer on the Bayou



Lemonade Day Galveston County



Lemonade Day Galveston County

CXCREWE

Leadership GALVESTON

Lemonade Day!



GALVESTON COUNTY



263

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



LEMONADE DAY

1,125

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

EDUCATION & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

As champions of education, we utilize residents, faculty, staff and alumni from area educational institutions to cultivate, initiate, educate and equip young entrepreneurs and the workforce.

LEADERSHIP GALVESTON

We resumed a long standing-education initiative, the Leadership Galveston program, that included 25 participants. Known as a valuable community resource, the newly revamped Leadership Galveston program has become recognized as a valuable community resource for educating business leaders about Galveston's vibrant economy and connecting leaders across the region. The 2019-2020 class kicked off in September 2019 with 30 participants and a waiting list for 2020-2021.

C-CREWE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS (YP)

C-Crewe, the Chamber's award-winning young professionals division of membership, continues to grow with over 250 members. This is another program of the Chamber's education initiatives to help our members develop relationships and engage with other business leaders. With the support of monthly sponsors, the C-Crewe has hosted 12 luncheons, two mixers and the 10th Annual MudBugs and Beer on the Bayou.

LEMONADE DAY GALVESTON COUNTY

We produced the 8th annual Lemonade Day Galveston County, a multi-cultural program that teaches youth valuable goal-setting, decision making, financial literacy and communication skills. Over 1,000 young entrepreneurs set a goal and worked through a business plan to become business owners on May 2, 2019.

72%

**MET THEIR
GOAL**



51%

**PAID BACK
THEIR INVESTOR**



60%

**SAVED
SOME**



47%

**SHARED
SOME**



2019 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



CHAIR

Theresa Elliott
Casa Del Mar
Beachfront Suites



PAST CHAIR

Fred D. Raschke
Mills Shirley L.L.P.



TREASURER

Victor Pierson
Moody Bank



CHAIR-ELECT

Howie Bentley
Classic Auto Group
Galveston



AT-LARGE

Maureen Patton
The Grand 1894
Opera House



PRESIDENT & CEO

Gina M. Spagnola
Galveston Regional
Chamber of Commerce



Kaleb Apffel
Galveston
Wholesale
Building Materials



Kyle Albright
Edward Jones



Dennis Byrd
Island Famous



Dr. Ben Raimer
UTMB Health



Kelly de Schaun
Galveston Island
Park Board of
Trustees



Larry Del Papa
Del Papa
Distributing Co.



**Rosemary
Doolin**
Sea Star Base
Galveston



**Col. Michael
Fossum**
Texas A&M
University at
Galveston



**Dr. Jennifer
Goodman**
Odyssey
Academy



Keith Gray
CenterPoint
Energy



Garry Kaufman
Galveston
Insurance
Associates



Betty Massey
Mary Moody
Nortnen
Endowment



Steve Mataro
DSW Homes



Brian Maxwell
City of Galveston



**Stephen
Maxwell**
Frost Bank



Dr. Kelli Moulton
Galveston ISD



David Norris
Stewart Title Co.



Ben Peterek
Gulfside Cleaning
Services



Rodger Rees
Port of Galveston



**Ruth Rendon-
Duke**
College of the
Mainland



Joe Rozier
Mitchell Historic
Properties



Richard See, III
The San Luis
Resort



Albert Shannon
Retired



**Jeff Sjostrom,
Ex-Officio**
Galveston Econ.
Dev. Partnership



**Captain Christos
Sotirelis**
Galveston-Texas
City Pilots



**John R. "Rocky"
Sullivan**
Sullivan Companies



Todd Sullivan
Evia/Sullivan
Interests



**Terrilyn Tarlton-
Shannon**
Insurance Junction



V.J. Tramonte
Joe Tramonte
Realty, Inc.



**Maria Antonieta
Viso**
BP America



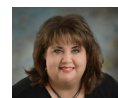
Lindsey White
United Way of
Galveston



**Leonard
Woolsey**
The Daily News

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

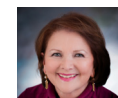
PROFESSIONAL STAFF



Laura Blacksher
Vice President of
Finance and HR



Lindsay Touchy
Vice President of
Marketing and
Communications



Lorraine Grubbs
Director of
Membership



Sara Martin
Director of
Special Events



Maria Romero-Rato
Visitor Center Mgr.
and Membership
Specialist



Robert Evans
Executive
Assistant to the
President and CEO

**PROMOTING AND ADVOCATING
FOR BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT FOR OVER 174 YEARS**

2019 ADMIRAL-LEVEL MEMBERS

Thank you to our sustaining members for their ongoing support which allows us to offer programs and events to help our members grow and prosper.



LOOKING AHEAD

Since 1845, the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce has promoted and advocated for business and community development. We are proud of our long history of constructive work, community impact and the positive influence we have made to help the business community thrive.

Looking ahead, we will focus our efforts to continue to align with our mission statement, commit to engage the next generation of leaders, and continue to challenge the way we do things at the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce. We will remain steadfast in our support of education and workforce and advocating for policy that takes the entire region into account to protect our growing community and serve as a business resource you can trust. We will continue to showcase Galveston's significant contributions to the state and country by inviting Texas Legislators to the 3rd Annual Galveston Coastal Legislative Tour in 2020.

We realize that moving forward, we must seek new ways to stay relevant to the current workforce and become a Chamber of the future. Much of what we do is behind the scenes and in 2020, you can rest assured that we will continue to work hard to keep Galveston business-friendly and also one of the best the places to live in America.

As the Chamber enters its 175th year, we are determined more than ever to serve as the voice for the business community and be the catalyst for business growth and economic development. Galveston is vibrant and strong, and we remain committed to delivering a membership experience that allows businesses to thrive and invites professionals to connect.

We are excited about our future and we thank you all for your support.

— THE GALVESTON REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



1

**PRIORITIZE ADVOCACY
AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
ACROSS KEY CATEGORIES
SUCH AS STORM SURGE
PROTECTION, TWIA RATE
INCREASES, AND PROPERTY
TAX APPRAISAL
REFORM**

2

**INCREASE EFFORTS ON
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO
CONTINUE TO BUILD A PIPELINE
THAT CONNECTS BUSINESSES AND
TOP-TALENT IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**2020
PRIORITIES**

3

**PROMOTE
GALVESTON'S
CONTINUING GROWTH AND
THE TRANSFORMATIVE
CHANGES UNDERWAY IN
OUR COMMUNITY**

4

**BUILD AND FOCUS ON
A STRONG AWARENESS
OF PROGRAM BENEFITS
WITH CHAMBER INVESTORS**

PROMOTING AND ADVOCATING FOR

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1845

Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce

MAIN OFFICE

2228 Mechanic Street, Suite 101
Galveston, Texas 77550

INFORMATION

TEL (409) 763-5326

FAX (409) 763-8271

gcc@galvestonchamber.com

GalvestonChamber.com



facebook.com/galvestonchamber



twitter.com/galvchamber



instagram.com/galvestonchamber

