



**Organization Overview
2019-2021**

Events & Promotions

Chamber Bucks Program

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2019 Strategic Plan Outcomes

Mission: The Ely Chamber of Commerce leads a thriving, sustainable economic community through leadership and advocacy, strategic partnerships, career development of its workforce, business diversity and education.

Vision: Leading a thriving, sustainable economic community.

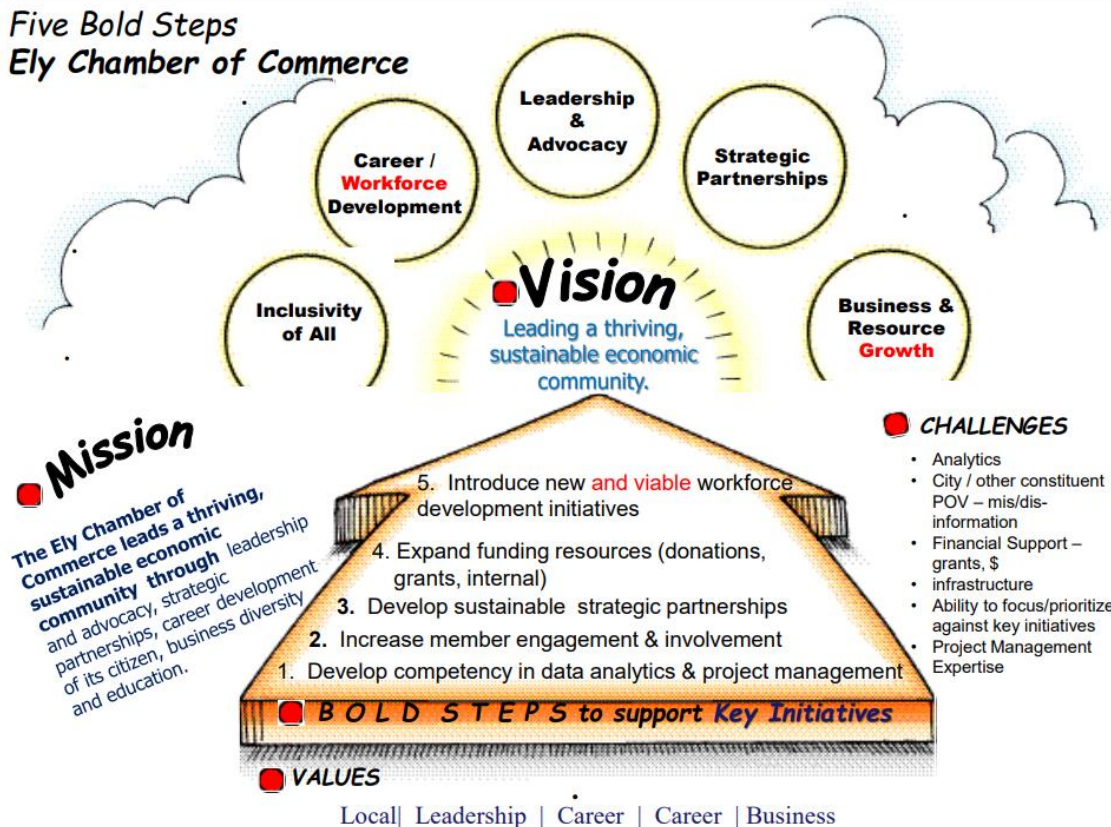
Work & Actions Prioritized by: Business & Resource Growth, Strategic Partnerships, Leadership & Advocacy, Career/Workforce Development, and Inclusivity of All.

Values: Local. Leadership. Career. Relationships. Growth.

Bold Steps to Support Key Initiatives

1. Develop competency in data analytics and project management
2. Increase member engagement and involvement.
3. Develop sustainable and strong strategic partnerships
4. Expand funding resources, e.g., donations, grants, internal
5. Introduce new and viable workforce development initiatives

Five Bold Steps Ely Chamber of Commerce





Implementing the 2020 Goals from Our Strategic Plan

The Ely Chamber of Commerce's focus in 2020 began with two goals; improving communication and member engagement.

Communication

As we started into 2020, a portion of our communication plan included several in-person workshops and one on-demand trainings session. All four were scheduled for March. Within days of the first workshop, we realized the health and safety issues with the onset of the pandemic. Without available guidelines, we opted to postpone those sessions until September. We were feeling optimistic that things would look very differently in six months.

Our Annual Meeting and Business Networking Dinner was scheduled for late April. Again, we opted to postpone the events until October. Our keynote speaker, Liz Uram, was incredibly gracious and supportive as we worked to set the alternate date.

All of our well laid plans were scrapped. In late March, reality set in as Governor Walz enacted *Stay at Home* orders. As emails poured in from a number of our partners, and a few we would later count as partners, we started weekly and bi-weekly business newsletters. Each newsletter was filled with information from local, regional, state, and national agencies and organizations. By September we were able to decrease newsletters to twice a month.

We provided two virtual townhall meetings in April and May. We contacted representatives from Hospitality Minnesota, Ely Police Department, Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, MAS Marketing, and other key organizations. Each representative shared information geared to aid businesses and organizations with preparation to move forward in a very different looking business world.

As visitors headed north, we created a *Business & Service Listing* handout highlighting business and attraction hours, Covid protocols, and other information. The list began in mid-May and is still in use. The list is offered on our Facebook page, website, and Chamber office.

We moved forward with virtual workshops and on-demand training sessions in September. We also hosted several virtual Northwoods Business Incubator meetings. Our virtual annual meeting and business networking meeting followed in October.

Member Engagement Survey

In November 2020 we asked members to provide feedback on their thoughts and perceptions regarding the Ely Chamber of Commerce. The results were tabulated and provided to the board in January. At our February townhall meeting, we shared the results of the Member Engagement Survey.

Survey Overview

Our business consultant emailed 134 survey requests to current Chamber businesses; 42 responded. Thirteen surveys were mailed to Chamber members; 2 businesses responded.

Demographics

Length of Membership:

- 9% of respondents were members for less than a year
- 4% were members from 1-3 years
- 5% between 3-5 years
- 73% over 5 years

Respondents indicated that 57% had never served on a committee or the board.

Reasons:

- Lack of time
- Too new to Chamber or community
- Never asked to serve

Member Engagement

- How would you rate the chamber as a membership organization, compared to other associations that you belong? Responses: 75% favorable; 16% neutral; 9% unfavorable
- I am proud to be a chamber member. Responses: 77% favorable; 20% neutral; 2% unfavorable
- I am planning on renewing my membership when it is next up for renewal. Responses: 84% favorable; 16% neutral; 0% unfavorable
- Overall, the chamber is an efficiently managed, well-run business. Responses: 59% favorable; 20% neutral; 20% unfavorable

Communications & Change Management

- I have sufficient information on what's going on within the chamber. Responses: 61% favorable, 23% neutral, 16% unfavorable
- We regularly use member feedback to improve our chamber. Responses: 61% favorable, 23% neutral, 16% unfavorable
- The Chamber always takes action based on the feedback received from members participating in surveys and focus groups. Responses: 48% favorable, 41% neutral, 11% unfavorable

Operating Discipline

- The chamber implements plans effectively. Responses: 58% favorable, 32% neutral, 14% unfavorable
- Chamber decisions are made without undue delay. Responses: 48% favorable, 34% neutral, 20% unfavorable

Social Responsibility

- The chamber takes actions to protect the environment (e.g., recycling, energy conservation)? Responses: 48% favorable, 48% neutral, 5% unfavorable
- The Chamber cares about the community it serves. Responses: 93% favorable, 2% neutral, 5% unfavorable



Trust & Respect

- The chamber values my contribution. Responses: 73% favorable, 23% neutral, 5% unfavorable
- I trust the chamber's leadership. Responses: 70% favorable, 11% neutral, 18% unfavorable

The Chamber's Net Promoter Score (NPS)

A Net Promoter Score is used to determine a customer's willingness to recommend a business, organization, etc. It is also used to gauge customer experiences. There are three categories within the net promoter scoring including promoters (people who are likely to say positive things), passives (they could respond with positive or negative comment and can be swayed to one side or the other), and detractors (they had a poor experience and are set in their opinion).

NPS Scoring

-100 – 0 = Needs Improvement

0-30 = Good

30-70 = Great

70-100 = Exceptional

Net Promoter Scores are calculated by taking the %Promoter minus the %Detractor. The %Passives are not included in the calculation. **NPS= %Promoter - %Detractor** The Chamber had 15 Promoters (34.1%), 18 Passives (40.9%), and 11 Detractors (25.0%). $NPS = 34.1 - 25.0 = 9.1$ So, the Chamber's NPS is 9.1 which falls in the Good category. Do we have room for improvement, absolutely! We are working on it already.

Member comment overview and points we are working on:

- Improve public relations outreach
 - We did stop business visits during the pandemic. Starting in mid-April, we will resume visits with retail and service businesses. Our lodging visits will occur in the first half of May.
- Resource guide for living options (seasonal and permanent housing).
- Continue the conversation between members about best practices (BP), resources, etc.
 - During the pandemic, we shared Covid BPs for a variety of business settings.
 - We will continue to offer information and educational opportunities for human resource, marketing, social media and other categories of BPs.
- Leader in shopping local – shadow as well as support.
 - The Chamber shops at members first, then the business community, neighboring communities, etc.
 - Our focus in 2021 is on increasing shopping local. More detail in the *Implementing the 2021 Goals from Our Strategic Plan*.
- Find a way to increase member participation in chamber sponsored networking and education events.
 - We will be asking members to share the best times, days, and ways to participate. We recognize the challenge of attending things during the regular work day. We also recognize not everyone is comfortable with virtual meetings. Member feedback will aid



in creating events, meetings, and educational sessions that work for a broader portion of our membership.

- Strengthen focus on existing and new businesses – onboard, education, outreach, communicate, lead.
 - Welcome new businesses or new business owners
 - Increase ribbon cutting ceremonies
 - Onboard packets for Chamber members (current and potential)
 - Relaunch our business networking breakfast in the fall 2021
 - Relaunch our Northwoods Business Incubator monthly meetings starting in January 2022
 - Continue with educational opportunities starting late next fall and winter
- Actively promote Chamber Bucks.

Based on member feedback, here are the areas we are focusing on improving:

- Communication with members, business community, public
 - Regular monthly and bimonthly newsletters to members
 - Special emails on time sensitive information
 - Press releases for events, initiatives, other chamber activities
 - Initiations to members to attend board and committee meetings
- Member feedback methods and use of information
 - Use surveys, emails, phone calls, in-person meetings to share and gather information.
 - Share conversations with committees or board, as appropriate.
 - Invite members to attend board and committee meetings.
 - Members serving on committees or the board.
- Plan implementation
 - Notify members with information and ways they can participate and/or promote
 - Press releases to local and regional media
 - Paid advertising in local media, as needed
 - Social media posts
 - Paid social media boosts, as needed
- Decision response rate
 - Chamber board subcommittees to review information to provide a recommendation to the overall board.
 - Email board vote on time sensitive items.
 - As per Minnesota Council of Nonprofits email votes must be unanimous. Any dissenting votes force the vote to move to a regular board meeting for full discussion and vote.
- Eco-friendly choices for office, events, and promotions
 - We do recycle in the Chamber office and at our festivals
 - We prefer to purchase items made of recycled materials.
 - We adjust the thermostat for evenings and weekends, so less energy is used.
 - We have contacted our vendors to reduce the number of printed materials we receive.



- We are moving from a coupon book to a coupon card that can be reused from year-to-year.
- We will have a virtual business and visitor guide on our new website.
- We offer downloadable PDFs of all the area trails and guides.
- Improve office management and operations
 - We continue to have weekly staff meetings, which allows everyone to share their schedules, work priorities, and deadlines. We adjust projects based on priority and deadlines.
 - Each staff member has assigned tasks; however, most are cross trained in other areas beyond their positions.
 - Based on upcoming projects, events, and initiatives the team will shift focus and provide additional support to its members.
 - Ex: Our business and visitor guide requires two to three weeks of preparation. Two staff will do tear sheets of all ads, line listings, and grid listings by business, create the personalized invoices, and collate the information for mailing.
 - We promote a team atmosphere where we all work together and support one another.

Develop Competency in Data Analytics & Project Management

The final pieces of our 2020 strategic plan activities are data collection and project management. We recognize “doing things” is not enough. Our efforts need to have measurable results. Hence, the member engagement survey we will offer every 18 or so months. We are also tracking data from our website and social media pages. As we compile information, we will share it in newsletters and at our annual meeting. Your membership dollars are an investment and you need to know those dollars are working for your business.

Another aspect of data is it can validate or refute efforts. As we invest in advertising, events, and other initiatives we aren’t going to keep funding those endeavors just because. If an event is not producing revenue; it goes. If a business promotion is more work for our members and does not produce benefits, we won’t continue it. What are your customers or guests telling you? Did your revenue increase during an event? This is where your feedback is vital.

Project management is the final puzzle piece for 2020. We would like to tip our hat to Cecilia Quattromani from CQ Squared Consulting. She led us through our 2019 strategic planning efforts, helped us gain our footing in project management during 2020, and we are already soaring into our 2021 Shop Local Campaign. Discussions are already underway for our 2022 workforce development plan.

Additional 2020 Accomplishments

2020 was a challenging year as we were all faced with making drastic changes to our work environment and personal lives. The Ely Chamber of Commerce assessed our facilities and made some dramatic changes to our flow of visitors into the building. For many years, we had one functioning egress point. A second door existed; however, it was not operational. After a number of floor plans, we determined that if we used the second door, we could provide a designated visitor area and provide a level of protection by placing plexiglass at the new service window areas. As we looked at funding and ADA

compliance, we found a Cultural & Heritage Grant through the IRRR. Rachel Brophy, our new staff member wrote her first grant and it was approved. The funding covered half of the needed funds to build the ramp. We deeply appreciate the generosity of IRRR, which in turn allowed us to address three needed areas: visitor safety, building accessibility, and staff safety.

A second area of focus for 2020 was our Member Involvement promotion. Our Member Engagement Survey feedback highlighted the lack of information members had for participating in Chamber operations and decisions.



First, the board of directors would like to emphasize the Chamber is a member-based organization driven by member feedback. The diagram notes three areas of support members can provide.

Sharing Thoughts: As you are reviewing this document, please note the mention of newsletters, surveys, and other points where member guidance and feedback helped us formulate direction. Whether it is an email, phone call, business visit, or appearance at a board open forum **we are listening**. Whenever possible, we are using your ideas and recommendations to move forward to expand services, fine-tune promotions, and improve member benefits.

Commitment: While commitment can take many forms, here are a few ways you can help support the Ely Chamber of Commerce and its efforts:

- Share with other businesses why you are a Chamber member – and why they should join.
- Share Chamber event and promotion information with your staff, so they are aware of things happening in the business community. Frequently visitors and residents have questions about festivals, shop local events, and other activities. We will supply information in advance.
- Participate in special events and promotions, if appropriate for your business. If the activity isn't a good fit for your business, consider sharing Chamber posts on social media instead.

Action: Looking for ways to utilize your skills and areas of expertise – consider serving on a subcommittee, committee or the board.

- Serve on the board. There are seven board seats and each has a three-year term. We have two to three seats open every year. Our Nominating Committee seeks interested candidates in January, the board votes on their slate of candidates in February, and then the slate is presented to the voting/active membership for their consideration in February/March. If



members do not provide any additional candidates for consideration, the board officially approves the slate at their March meeting.

- Serve on a committee. Committees create, revise and evaluate everything happening within the Chamber organization. Their recommendations go to the Chamber board for consideration and many times approval. Once the board approves an item, then the committee oversees its implementation and execution, followed by evaluating its effectiveness. We have five working committees:
 - Events & Promotions is the most active committee within the Chamber. They meet monthly to oversee Chamber events, promotions, and other activities. This committee is responsible for the festivals, expo, dogsled race, Chamber coupon card, and many other business promotions.
 - Marketing oversees our Business & Visitor Guide, website, and social media and advertising programs. This group was pivotal in creating the Chamber vision for our new website. This committee meets one to three times per year.
 - Membership reviews our membership policies and dues structure. Their input was used during the recent change to the membership dues structure. This committee meets one to three times a year.
 - Facilities meets one to three times per year and makes decisions on current and potential building needs.
 - Nominating meets several times during January and February to secure candidates for board positions opening on July 1.
- Serve on a subcommittee. These tend to be temporary, as needed extensions of our regular committees and board.
 - Grant Subcommittee reviews grant applications the Chamber will submit for a variety of financial needs and activities.
 - Audit Subcommittee meets once per year to do an internal audit of Chamber accounts.

We revised and approved Chamber bylaws to create guidelines that correctly reflect the current organizations operations and structure. We will work on revising our Articles of Incorporation which is our foundational document. Look for information on needed changes in the coming months. Our goal is to have a membership vote by the end of 2023.

Our new Experience Ely Expo is designed to provide an opportunity for nonprofits to participate in Whiteside Park during our festival weekends. We have five categories; art and craft organizations & events, sports and recreation organizations & events, first responders, attractions & museums, and service organizations. Applications open on April 1 with the first round of applications reviewed by our nonprofit judges in mid-May. If spots remain in either expo after the first round of jury selections, then the Chamber will open up applications again and have a second round of jury selections in mid-June. We do not allow political, lobbyist, or advocacy groups in the expo.

We continued to offer business development workshops through a partnership with the City of Ely and a generous grant from the Blandin Foundation. Workshops planned for March were postponed and



rescheduled for September and early October as virtual meetings. We also expanded from workshops to include on-demand training sessions for onboarding and customer service.

Implementing the 2021 Goals from Our Strategic Plan

Shop Local Survey

The pandemic created a shift in shopping habits nationwide. With closures of many businesses, consumers increased their online shopping. Even as many businesses began to reopen, consumers continued to feel uncomfortable about going out and shopping. Many of our area businesses adapted to consumer needs by offering online, curbside, and deliveries. We decided in January 2021 to create a Shop Local survey to capture not only consumer sentiments, but also business owner thoughts about shopping local.

Goals

- Establish Shopper baseline
- Establish Business Stimulator baseline
- Identify initiatives to increase local consumer and business shopping
- Help members establish an easy way to track local participation and revenue

Demographics:

- 249 total participants self-identified as full/part time residents
- 181 (73%) consumers only
- 68 (27%) both consumers & business owners
- 44 net business participants
- 52% of the businesses that responded are chamber members

Location

- 87% are residents of Ely
- 8.4% live in surrounding communities of Winton, Babbitt, and Tower
- Remaining identified as part-time residents of St. Paul/Minneapolis
- Business owners were most likely to live in Ely (93%), compared to overall consumers (86%)

Age

- 50% of participants are between 55-75 years old
- 55-64 years represented 29% of respondents
- 35-44, 45-54, and 65-73 year-old groups each represent less than 20% of the respondents

Spending Habits

- Over 50% of Ely residents spend less than half their income locally
- Age 55 and over spend 50% of their income (58% of respondents)
- 25-54 years old spend less than 50%
- 18-24-year-olds, representing 37% of respondents, spend more than 50% of their income locally
- 75% of business respondents spend more than half their income locally



Why Residents Chose to Shop Local

- **Convenience** *
- **Desire to support local businesses** *
- Businesses support local organizations
- Customer Service

* 90% of respondents identified these as the most important reasons they shop local

Why Businesses Chose to Shop Local: **Support Business Community**

Why Residents Chose to Shop Elsewhere

- **Prices** (77% identified this as a primary reason they shop elsewhere)
- **Selection** (70% identified this as a primary reason they shop elsewhere)
- Product Quality

Why Businesses Chose to Shop Elsewhere:

- Lack of availability of needed items (Selection)
- Bulk purchasing of materials, office, and building supplies (Price)

Additional Things that Would Encourage Shoppers to Spend Locally

- Safe shopper practices (particularly during Covid – make sure everyone is wearing a mask in store, etc.)
- Customer Service
- Product quality
- More convenient hours (closing at 5 p.m. doesn't allow working families the opportunity to shop)
- Expand online ordering
- Expand order pick-up and delivery

Consumers Local Spending Motivations/Incentives

- Loyalty/reward/punch cards
- Local resident discount
- Recurring promotions/specials
- Match (any) competitor prices
- Advertisements
- Bulk Discounts
- Special custom ordering
- Actively promote/share discounts (please don't make the consumer ask)
- Happy Hour discounts
- % of revenue donated to local charity
- Customer appreciation events (post-Covid)

How Can the Chamber Support Shopping Local?

- Continue to ask and share feedback like this (Shop Local Survey)
- Offer Chamber member discounts (coordinate)
- Influence members to adopt and actively promote Business to Consumer and Business to Business discounts
- Messaging that we all need to shop local as we are “in this together”

Business to Business Local Spending Motivations/Incentives

- Coupons/discounts
- Business referral program
- Repeat customer discount
- Support your fellow business discount
- Bulk discount
- Cross promotion
- Shoulder season discounts
- Specials
- Buy so many and receive a certain percent off the order

Next Steps

- Share results and recommendations with Chamber membership
- Introduce new chamber sponsored activities and promotions
- Encourage and share intended Business to Consumer and Business to Business chamber discounts
- Launch chamber sponsored activities as identified
 - Chamber Coupon Card
 - Shop Local Campaign
 - Share Consumer and Business discounts

Additional 2021 Initiatives

Coupon Card & Shop Local Logo and Slogan



Coupon Card

Enjoy savings at participating Chamber businesses, attractions, and museums. Visit Ely.org for coupon list, or stop by the Chamber office.



**Ely Chamber of Commerce
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@ElyChamberOfCommerce
@ElyMNEvents @VisitElyMN





Some of the best ideas come from our members. The previous page has the front and back of our new Chamber coupon card. The coupon card concept was introduced to the Chamber by Nick Wognum of the Ely Echo. We asked members to share their feelings about switching from the traditional Chamber coupon book to a coupon card. The response was overwhelmingly in favor of the new coupon card. In addition to the yes/no response, we received additional ideas about how to use the coupon card. Jess Edburg from the Dorothy Molter Museum recommended that we add a UPC/bar code to the coupon card. The UPC would allow those businesses using a pint-of-sale machine to program their registers with their individual discounts, sales, or offerings. The Chamber did purchase a unique UPC code for the coupon card. A second recommendation was submitted by Paul Ivancich from the Ely DQ Grill and Chill. He recommended a QR Code that takes users to our website. These great ideas influenced the coupon card we are launching on May 22 as part of our Shop Local Campaign.

We would like to highlight the winner of our Shop Local logo and slogan contest – Alision Zaverl. Alision’s logo and slogan is shown on the front of the new Chamber coupon card. Alison is a 2015 graduate of Ely Memorial High School. Though she has no graphic design experience, she enjoyed creating the Shop Local-Ely (pronounced Shop Locally) logo. As the granddaughter of a local business owner, Alison knows how important shopping locally can be. “Money spent locally can make a big difference. I encourage you to go out and support your neighbors!”

Why switch to a coupon card?

- Eco-friendly
- Credit card size allows people to keep it their pockets, wallets, or purses
- They do not expire! Businesses can participate in 2021 and then chose not to participate in 2022. It is up to each business IF they participate.
- Businesses can have seasonal discounts, monthly, or other with the coupon card. The Chamber will work to promote offerings IF businesses keep us updated on changes. The flexibility allows businesses to adjust offers to overstock, clearance sales, seasonal or shoulder season discounts, etc.
- Information on the card keeps residents and visitors connected to our business community, website, and popular social media pages.

Ely Brand initiative

The Ely Area Tourism Bureau created a new Ely Brand campagne and the Ely Chamber of Commerce and City of Ely are pleased to participate in the initiative. On the right is the new Ely Chamber of Commerce logo that is Already appearing our our newsletters and Other forms of communication.





New Website

April 15 marked the launch of our new Ely.org website. We are pleased to partner with the Ely Area Tourism Bureau on the project. The Tourism Bureau has added some great features to the new site including podcasts, a blog, and experience stories – just to name a few. The new website also incorporates the beautiful, crisp new Ely Brand.

On the business side, the Chamber is pleased to offer expanded business listings to their members, along with a Business Resource, Workforce Development, Relocation, and Job Post Board pages.

Drive-thru Job Fair

Scheduled for April 15, the Drive-thru Job Fair marked the start of our Workforce Development initiative that will roll out in 2022. We recognize the challenges a shortage of workforce has on area businesses. The job fair is designed to engage area job seekers by providing a list of job openings in one easy location. We are also including workforce resources and offering support for resume review. One of our local businesses, CQ Squared Consulting, is providing several small group mock interviews.

2021 Events & Promotions

(We will hold all listed events and promotions unless State mandates or guidelines prohibit them.)

May 22

Citywide Rummage, Business Crazy Day, and Used Equipment & Watercraft Sale

How to Participate: Chamber member businesses receive a free listing and window sign. We create an event map with locations for in-town businesses and rummage sales. Those businesses outside of town have directions to your location. The Citywide rummage is for residents and nonprofit rummage sales. The Business Crazy Day is for store front retail businesses. The Used Equipment & Watercraft is for area outfitters and resorts. The combined event is designed to attract individuals from across the Iron Range and as far south as the Twin Cities to head north and take advantage of great sales. For businesses, it's a wonderful time to move last year's merchandise, used camping gear and watercraft, or other items. Sign-up begins May 1 and closes 5 days prior to the event start.

Kick-off of Shop Local Campaign and Shopping Season

Our Shop Local campaign kicks off on May 22. With all the sales and activities going on in town, it's an ideal time to get the Chamber coupon cards in hundreds of shopper hands and start the summer shopping season. The Chamber building will be open and welcoming shoppers with coupon cards and event maps. If your business would like to carry these items at your location, just let us know. We will drop off a supply at your location.



July 23-25

Blueberry/Art Festival

The art & craft applications opened on January 1. We are well on our way to filling the event with art, craft, and food vendors. This event has a capacity for 280 vendors and fills Whiteside Park from end to end. Set-up for the festival starts the week before with us marking the park on Monday and physical set up of booths on Thursday.

NOTE: We do have sponsor opportunities for businesses. If interested, contact us for pricing and details.

Experience Ely Expo

We are excited to introduce this new expo, which is a way for nonprofit organizations to participate in Whiteside Park during the Blueberry/Art Festival. In the past we had 14 nonprofits within the festival. Now there are 20 booth spaces available and the opportunity for new nonprofits to participate. The categories are art & craft organization or event, sports & recreation organization or event, museum or attraction, first responders, and service organizations. The application period opened on April 1. A jury will review the first round of applications in mid-May.

NOTE: We do have sponsorship options for the expo. Call for details.

Operation Blueberry (Business Shopping)

We launched Operation Blueberry during 2020 during the time the Blueberry/Art Festival would have occurred. It was a smashing success and businesses asked us to continue offer the shopping event. Businesses are asked to create something blueberry. Some offered homemade blueberry popsicles, others pick-a-blueberry discount, still others offered all blue colored items at a discount. There are no rules other than creating a fantastic window display or large banner for your storefront. We do offer prizes for the top three window displays or banners. We provide a map and business listing for all participating businesses.

September 10-12

Harvest Moon Festival

Applications for this fall event opened on February 1 and just like the Blueberry/Art Festival, it is filling quickly. This fall festival takes a slightly different direction – a more laid back and relaxed feel compared to our bustling July event. We typically have 120 to 140 art, craft, and food vendors for this 3-day event. Set-up for the festival begins the week before as we mark the park on Tuesday and the physical booth set up begins early Thursday morning.

NOTE: We do have sponsor opportunities for businesses. If interested, contact us for pricing and details.



Experience Ely Expo

We do offer a second expo during the Harvest Moon Festival weekend. This event has the same criteria and space availability as the expo held during the Blueberry/Art Festival. Applications for this expo also opens on April 1.

NOTE: We do have sponsorship options. Call for details.

Harvest Days (Business Shopping)

Harvest Days originated from 2020 as we searched for ways to encourage shoppers to head to Ely. This event is a great opportunity to offer sales, clearance, or other ways to draw shoppers in your door. We will offer three prizes for the best Harvest themed window displays or banners. How can you boost your bottom line in September? Consider making Harvest Days a shopping event for your store. We provide a map and business listing for each participating business.

November 25

Shine Bright Ely

Lights are a beautiful way to brighten any store front and lead shoppers through your door. We had some phenomenal light displays and a Mini-Ely train display that was absolutely amazing in 2020. The bar is set – how can you outshine your neighboring businesses in 2021? Prizes for the top three displays. We will provide a map of all the participating business locations.

November 27

Smalltown Christmas Shop Local Saturday

Smalltown Christmas is Ely's kickoff to the holiday shopping season. Each participating business will receive a listing on our event flyer along with any featured products, sales, or discounts.

December 11

Mrs. Claus Party

Plan for 160 participants. Whatever happens after that is totally unanticipated and filled with extreme fun. Mrs. Claus welcomes all the area youth as they attend an afternoon filled with crafts, dancing, and singing. The afternoon would not be complete until our favorite jolly elf comes through the door. Yes, Santa always makes an appearance and listens to each child's holiday wishes. Each child goes home with handmade craft projects they create and a goodie bag filled with treats, small gifts and other items.

NOTE: We gladly accept small gifts, cash donations, candy, and other items from area businesses and organizations. We provide a sponsor/donor list in each gift bag so the families know which businesses are supporting the party.

We invite you to participate in our Chamber sponsored events. For more details, please contact the Chamber office at 218-365-6123 or director@ely.org.



Chamber Bucks Program

Several decades ago, the Ely Chamber of Commerce started a promotion used at sport & travel shows across the Midwest. Visitors were presented with a card redeemable for \$20.00 in Chamber Bucks. The Chamber “cash” could be redeemed at various Ely businesses. As time went on, the program caught on locally and businesses began to buy Chamber Bucks for their guests and staff. Of course, residents thought it was a snappy idea too, so they became a popular way to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and holidays. The one-size-fits-all concept allowed the receiver to use the Chamber Bucks at dozens of area businesses.

The Chamber Buck program is exclusive to Chamber members. We offer increments of \$5, \$10, and \$20 Chamber Bucks. We keep a list of participating businesses and provide the list with each Chamber Buck purchase. When businesses receive the Chamber Bucks, they treat them just like regular cash. Businesses bring their Chamber Bucks back to our office and we issue a check for the full-face value of each Chamber Buck returned. Businesses can bring them in person or send by mail.

For example, a customer makes a purchase for \$7.50 and provides a \$20.00 Chamber Buck. The cashier will provide \$12.50 in change or issue an in-store credit for the amount. Please collect the Chamber Buck after the transaction as it is no longer valid. The business must return the original Chamber Buck to us.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) For Chamber Members

Revised 04/05/2021

The purpose of this document is to answer the most asked questions of our membership. Our goal is to clearly articulate the value of chamber membership and increase member involvement & engagement through consistent messaging and opportunities. Please let us know if you have any additional questions by contacting us via email or phone at Director@ely.org or 218-365-6123.

1. **Why should I join/maintain a chamber membership?** As a chamber member, you can develop yourself through networking, education and advocacy and directly impact the success of the business community. Full membership enables you to vote on the direction of business and economic development opportunities, participate in those opportunities, enjoy business referrals and advertising opportunities, receive aggregate news and much more.
2. **What are the expectations of me as a member?** We encourage you to share your voice and fully leverage the membership benefits highlighted in question eleven below. Our most engaged members are those who show a passion to the advancement of the Ely business and economic community as modeled by the following:
 - **Voice:** Serve on a committee and/or the board, vote whenever asked and/or, simply share your perspective about an opportunity for you or the chamber to make a difference. Demonstrate a positive leadership shadow by educating others about chamber decisions, operations, and events.



- **Participate:** Take advantage of the member and economic development opportunities.
 - **Endorse/Invest:** Get behind the decisions of the chamber by actively endorsing chamber sponsored member and economic development opportunities and/or the three seasonal festivals. Educate your staff about chamber sponsored events; their lack of awareness of an event reflects your engagement and detracts visitor participation/awareness. Help make Ely events more inviting by acknowledging the activity(ies) and/or asking customers about their awareness regardless of your participation in the event(s).
3. **What can I expect from other chamber members?** Openness to share best practices and networking, often promotional savings for your business, referrals, and participation in business celebrations such as new business ribbon cutting, anniversaries. In addition, you can expect other members to demonstrate a positive leadership shadow and an active voice in chamber/business news.
 4. **Why is the chamber responsible for the visitor's center?** The Ely Chamber of Commerce has long served as both a chamber and visitor center, an approach that has been adopted by approximately 1/3 of chambers across the United States. Combining these functions enables us to connect people with products and services. We serve as an information hub, which supports the Ely ecosystem—all businesses, residents, and visitors. Providing information through one location is both efficient and fiscally responsible for a community of our size.
 5. **How is the Chamber funded?** The chamber is funded through its membership dues and funds raised through the three chamber sponsored events (WolfTrack Classic, Blueberry Fest and Harvest Moon festival). Lodging, Forest Service, City, or other tax dollars are not used to operate or pay staff.
 6. **What do the membership dues support?** The membership dues support the following: a combined chamber of commerce and visitor/information center, building operation/maintenance, 3 full time salary equivalents, business development workshops, Ely.org, and social media pages, resources for new businesses including ribbon cutting ceremonies, facilitation of business ideas and networking events/promotions that support businesses and the greater Ely area community, including the three seasonal events (WolfTrack Classic Sled Dog Race, Blueberry Fest and Harvest Moon Festival) and a number of smaller activities geared toward driving retail traffic (see question16).
 7. **What is the relationship between the Tourism Bureau and the Chamber?** As of 2019, the Ely Tourism Bureau and Chamber of Commerce are separate entities, with separate boards and no shared funds.



8. **Does the Tourism Bureau contribute to the Visitor/Information Center budget?** The Ely Tourism Bureau does not contribute funding for the operation or staffing of the chamber or visitor/information center. They are a separate organization that manages area lodging tax dollars.
9. **May I join a chamber board meeting?** All members are invited to attend meetings—if you are interested in doing so, simply contact Eva Sebesta, Executive Director at Director@ely.org. The board does reserve the right to excuse members in attendance if sensitive topics will be discussed and/or voted on. Also, know that minutes are distributed following every board meeting.
10. **How can I get more involved in the chamber?** Call us at 218-365-6123 to discuss your interests—we'd love to have you join us! There's always an opportunity to share your voice and/or passion, e.g. serve on a committee, event, or board, help us welcome and onboard new businesses, sponsor an event, etc.
11. **What does my membership include?** There are three different types of memberships: Full, Associate and Sponsoring. Full and Associate membership is available to any Ely business while non-Ely in surrounding areas are invited to join as a Sponsoring member.
Full membership includes the following privileges:
 - **Voice.** Vote on board members, chamber By-laws and Articles of Incorporation as well as some of the potential direction of chamber business and economic development opportunities, e.g. educational series, direction of Northwoods Medallion Hunt.
 - **Promotion.** Enjoy business referrals from the chamber, visibility on Ely.org and public events, inclusion in visitor center brochure/flier display as well as the annual Ely Passport Savings Coupon Book, the chamber Membership Directory and an advertising opportunity in the annual Ely Vacation Guide and social media interactions and promotions and, priority in event sponsorships.
 - **News & Resources.** Receive relevant, triaged news and resources from a variety of government/county agencies, law enforcement and other entities in addition to Chamber and community news.
 - **Personal Growth.** Enjoy access to leadership and networking opportunities, e.g. education, networking forums.
 - **Economic Development.** Participate and/or endorse chamber sponsored opportunities that drive traffic and/or support new business, e.g. Ely Chamber Buck Certificate program, new business celebrations, business incubation.

Associate and Sponsoring members receive a basic website listing (business name, address and phone number) on Ely.org and within the annual membership director, an invitation to all Chamber opportunities, e.g. networking and workshops, a subscription to all Chamber member news correspondence and inclusion in the brochure/flier display at the Chamber visitor center.



12. **How much is chamber membership?**

Type	Cost Structure	Cost
Full	Tier I: Sole proprietor retail, wholesale or home-based business, single guide, single cabin, or single vacation home rental Tier II: Retail, wholesale, or home-based business with employees, two guides, two cabins, two vacation home rentals, transportation service, or float plane service Tier III: Guide business, bed & breakfast, 3-4 cabins, or 3-4 vacation home rentals Tier IV: Outfitting service, campground, 5-8 cabins, or 5-8 vacation home rentals Tier V: Motel, hotel, nine or more cabins, or nine or more vacation home rentals	Varies - \$225 to \$675 depending on # and type of businesses
Associate	Non-profit clubs/ organizations that are within the Ely, Babbitt, Winton, Embarrass or Isabella service areas.	\$125
Sponsorin g	A business that is located outside of our service area, but within Minnesota.	\$325

* Regardless of membership type, entities with multiple businesses may add additional businesses to their first membership at just \$225 per business.

13. **I see that Full membership includes the right to vote. What can I expect in this regard?** In addition to voting on board members, chamber By-laws and Articles of Incorporation, we often ask for the member perspective on the direction of chamber business and economic development opportunities.

14. **How does the Chamber advocate on my/local business(es) behalf?** We support and actively pursue federal, state, and local issues that may influence our area’s business environment in partnership with State and Federal representatives, local officials, and area organizations. Examples include COVID-19 pandemic, economic development, small business development, workforce initiatives, and education.

15. **I understand that chamber oversees the Blueberry Fest, the Harvest Moon Festival, and the Wolf Track Classic Sled Dog Race. What other consumer events is the chamber responsible?** In addition to these three seasonal events, the Chamber’s Events & Promotions Committee uses some of the funding generated from the three seasonal events to oversee some smaller initiatives geared at driving local traffic and sales. Most recent activities include the following and rely on chamber member participation/endorsement: City Wide Rummage, Business Crazy Day and Used Gear &



Watercraft Sale, Small Town Christmas Shopping, Music in the Park and more. Check with us at 218-365-3123 for a current listing and/or, to discuss a potential idea.

16. **There are several other events that are promoted on the Chamber and/or other calendar-of-events managed by other nonprofit organizations. Here are a few:** The Snowmobile FunRun, Ely Winter Festival, WolfTrack Classic Sled Dog Race, KCPro Youth Snowmobile Racing, All-Night Graduation Party, Peter Mitchell Days, Washington Elementary PTO, Nordic Ski Club and more!