

Chamber president sees progress in survey results

Written by Mark Jaeger
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Saukville Chamber of Commerce President Russ Lund likes what he sees when he looks at the results of the recent member survey.

“Overall, I think the numbers show we are making progress as a Chamber. And the fact that this is the third year we have done a survey shows we are willing to listen, too,” Lund said.

As with previous surveys, the analysis was provided by Nicole Sidoff, local community resource development educator with the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Comparing results shows the perception that the Chamber “has improved greatly from 2008 to 2011,” Sidoff said.

Lund, whose Cornerstone Professional Services specializes in small-business consulting, drew from Sidoff’s statistical analysis when he presented his State of the Chamber address in late April.

He said the idea for the survey came about when he became Chamber president and wanted to gauge how effective the organization is in meeting its mission — to serve as a value-added advocate for local businesses.

“There seems to be more agreement that we are meeting that mission, with about 85% of those responding having a positive view about mission fulfillment,” Lund said.

That compares very favorably to the 2008 survey in which just 52% of those taking part saw the local Chamber as an effective advocate for business.

Lund said the survey shows a continuing trend of new blood joining the organization, with 40% of those responding having been in the Chamber for three years or less. However, nearly the same number have been members of the organization for 10 years or more.

“It is important that Chamber leadership reach out to this new membership,” Sidoff said in her summary. Conversely, she said the organization must take steps to ensure that long-time members continue to see value in belonging to the group.

The survey also asked business owners to critique programs offered by the Chamber, with a clear theme emerging.

“The highest demand was for educational programs that are business related. That was most gratifying to me because that has been my focus,” Lund said.

“I recently led a program titled ‘Pricing for Profitability,’ which was well-received and directly responded to the request of members.”

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Lund said the survey continues to show strong interest in the Chamber having “a physical presence in the community.”

The organization currently has no office or building.

“That tells me we need to be more than just a phone number to the community,” Lund said.

Lund said the survey showed members support the Chamber’s shifting emphasis from the Family Fun Day event to a fund-raising run/walk in fall.