

If your friend is living with a mental illness
What would you do?



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LAS VEGAS BUSINESS PRESS

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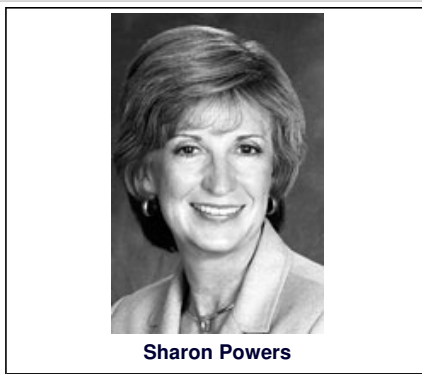
What the chamber does for you in tough economic times

Depending on the day, the media typically report the doom and gloom our local and national economy faces. One day, the clouds above are dark and ominous. The next day, a different set of numbers is released and the outlook is cautiously optimistic. Drive through North Las Vegas and around the Strip and there is evidence of continuing projects and developments that, when complete, will bring thousands of jobs to our valley and thousands of new residents to our city. So what are we to believe and, more importantly, what are we supposed to do?

It is alarming to hear our unemployment numbers surpassing the national average when typically they fall below it. Although previously we may have occasionally heard about someone we knew losing his or her job, now it seems like a daily occurrence. Disconcerting are the number of long-established furniture stores going out of business and, even more so, the escalating price of gasoline. Add to that the growing deficit in our state's budget with no easy solution in sight, and it's easy to understand the fear that surrounds us.

During this time of economic uncertainty, the natural response is to pull back and wait for the recovery to begin. After all, this seems like the right thing to do; cut spending, lay off employees, and hunker down. However, except for adjusting your expenses to offset any significant decline in revenues, this is the last thing we need to be doing. Our economy needs stimulating and the best way to do this is to keep it moving by conducting as much business as possible. Keep your good employees working and lose your nonperformers. This is the time to work harder and smarter. Don't eliminate your marketing and advertising budget; re-examine it and make adjustments as needed. Although it is a common occurrence for companies to pull back on this line item, now is the time to get your service or product out in front.

This is one of the many ways the Chamber of Commerce can help. Chambers provide the vehicle to get your name out and



Sharon Powers

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keep it out in front of potential clients and consumers. Membership has its privileges and with it comes the ability to be seen by the thousands that log onto our Web sites each month looking for specific products or services.

Add to that the phone calls and visitors that come into our offices, and your market outreach just got significantly broader. Now divide your annual chamber

membership dues by 12. Where else can you get that kind of continual exposure for the price? Cutting back on your marketing and advertising budget but want to maintain a presence in the community? Once again, the chamber provides numerous advertising and other opportunities to fit even the small business budget. The North Las Vegas Chamber's Look North newsletter offers affordable advertising and is mailed to the membership, business leaders across the valley, and can be picked up at City Hall as well as in the chamber office. Our soon-to-be released redesigned Web site will feature even more ways to highlight your business.

Would you like to connect with other established and up-and-coming business leaders? The Leadership North Las Vegas Program will provide such opportunities expanding social and professional networks while developing and improving critical leadership skills.

In September, the North Las Vegas Chamber will hold its first Women's Leadership Conference at the Rio with featured keynote speaker Debra Benton. She is a nationally recognized motivational speaker and executive coach whose clients include many Fortune 500 corporations. Having attended one of her talks, I'm certain that attending this event will give you the added boost and motivation to continue through these trying times.

Finally, although our business advocacy efforts continue year-round, with elections around the corner and the next Nevada legislative session convening in February, our committees and volunteer leaders are discussing issues that will be affecting our business community. We are conducting interviews for the lobbyist who will represent and communicate our positions in Carson City.

So, the next time you wonder what your local chamber is doing for you and your business, you'll know that we're working to keep the economy strong, protect your business, and make the community a better place to live, work, and play. We do this for you, so you can concentrate on running your business.

Sharon Powers is president and CEO of the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

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