



GUIDELINES FOR GRAND OPENINGS

Should I have a grand opening?

The Chamber would be delighted to help you celebrate with a grand opening ceremony if your membership is in good standing and your business has made one of the following changes in the past 12 months:

- Opened a new business or new branch/ location
- Changed ownership or is under new management
- Moved to a new location
- Remodeled or expanded at its present location

A grand opening ceremony is an important part of your overall marketing and advertising plan and is a great way to celebrate an opening expansion. It offers an opportunity to meet key leaders in the community and get acquainted with your neighbors and fellow Chamber members.

Scheduling a grand opening with the Chamber should take place a minimum of three weeks prior to the event to allow time for planning, promotion, and other details.

The Chamber can schedule and participate in ribbon cutting ceremonies planned Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. However, other days and times may be accommodated on a case-by-case basis, as staff schedules permit.

What the does the Chamber provide?

Chamber staff will provide the following services for grand openings of member businesses:

- Request proclamations or certificates from the Anne Arundel County Council and County Executive's Office.
- Provide referrals to other Chamber businesses that can provide catering, party rentals, publicity, invitations, and other related services.
- Provide contact information for local elected officials so you may extend a personal invitation to your special event.
- Notify Chamber Board of Directors and Ambassadors Club of your event—but you may still wish to issue a separate invitation.
- Provide a sample press release and a list of local media contacts.
- Media coverage can never be guaranteed. Members are encouraged to send press releases to the entire list of media contacts provided by the Chamber.
- Bring the giant Chamber scissors—you provide the red ribbon.
- List the date, time, location, and contact information for your grand opening in our weekly email update, sent to approximately 1200 representatives from Chamber member businesses.
- Include an acknowledgement of your Grand Opening in a future issue of the Chamber newsletter, with picture if provided.

There is no charge for the Chamber's involvement. It's a value-added benefit of membership!

As a Chamber member, you may also obtain the Chamber's mailing list in electronic format suitable for creating mailing labels for sending invitations or marketing materials to Chamber members.

***For more information, or to schedule your grand opening,
contact Claire Louder at 410-672-3422 or clouder@westcountychamber.org.***



GUIDELINES FOR GRAND OPENINGS

What should I plan?

To take advantage of the Chamber's grand opening services, please contact Claire Louder at 410-672-3422 or clouder@westcountychamber.org at least three weeks before the event.

As soon as you have chosen the date and time, decide who to invite and send invitations. The invitations should include the date, time, ribbon cutting time, location, and a phone number and/ or email for further information.

Wondering who to invite? Here are some suggestions for possible attendees:

- Elected officials (list provided by Chamber)
- Local media (list provided by Chamber)
- Chamber members (electronic list available)
- Neighboring businesses
- Existing customers
- Suppliers to your trade
- Business prospects
- Friends and family

Will the event be outdoors or indoors? If it will be held outside, plan accordingly with tents for bad weather or summer heat. Plans for moving the event to an inside location are also recommended.

Refreshments are usually served, but it's your decision. Hors d'oeuvres and light finger food are fairly standard practice. You have the option of preparing your own food, hiring a caterer, or a combination of both. Decide where you will set up the refreshments and make sure that there are plenty of cups, napkins, and plates.

Consider promoting your business by offering brochures, door prizes, certificates or coupons to those who attend.

Choose the location of the ribbon cutting and official photograph. Decide who will be included in the picture and who will actually cut the ribbon. Make sure you have a camera and assign someone to take photos of the event as a keepsake for your business.

Have fun! This is a time to celebrate!

***For more information, or to schedule your grand opening,
contact Claire Louder at 410-672-3422 or clouder@westcountychamber.org.***