

**SMALL BUSINESS FORUM COMMITTEE
OF THE PROGRAMS SECTION**

1. **Next scheduled meeting of the Committee:** Late April in Grand Rapids with interim planning meetings in the meantime.
2. **Council Approval:** NONE
3. **Membership:** The first West Side event was held in Lansing earlier this month and had 20 attendees. The Southeastern events continue to have about 50 attendees. The events seem to be attracting primarily lawyers from smaller firms, our target. We anticipate that the upcoming Grand Rapids event will significantly increase participation from the Grand Rapids area and that the programs we do at the Institutes will also add new members.
4. **Accomplishments Toward Committee Objectives:** Our primary objectives are:
 - Increase involvement of smaller firms in the Section.
 - Create a bridge between business attorneys and the small business community.
 - Provide resources and networking opportunities between attorneys, CPAs, lenders, investment bankers, financial professionals and related advisors.
 - Provide time-efficient, educational and fun events.
 - Create perception of lawyers as valuable members of a business team.
 - Improve perception of Michigan as a good environment in which to do business.
 - Help attorneys gain new tools and contact to provide quality service to business owners.
 - Develop outreach opportunities to the business community.

Our objectives for this year are:

- To increase participation level to about 50 attorneys from across Michigan who primarily represent closely-held and family businesses with less than \$50 million in annual gross sales.
- Host four useful events each full year, some here and some on the West Side.
- Involve small business owners in at least two of our events. This remains a challenge.
- To get the SBF to a point where it is largely self-sustaining from a budget perspective.

We have held two events so far this year. Both were a Step-by-Step Guide to Selling a Business. The first was held January 31st in Birmingham, had 70 people prepaid and registered and about 50 people show up. It cost the section a little over \$1,000. The

second was held in Lansing and may have produced a small revenue. We expect to increase the charge to \$25 for the next Birmingham event and anticipate that this will bring us close, if not all the way to covering all of our costs. A broad mix of attorneys, CPAs, business owners and other professionals continue to attend, with most of the lawyers coming from smaller firms. The January event drew a larger amount of younger or newer lawyers than the others seemed to.

5. **Meetings and Programs:** The 2 programs already held were described above. Our program topics and event plans are 4 events throughout the rest of 2007 as follows: (1) A Step-By-Step Guide to selling a Business (in Grand Rapids), (2) Valuation Issues (Birmingham and Grand Rapids in May and TBD); (3) Identifying and Assisting Troubled Companies (in the early fall in Grand Rapids and Southeastern Michigan) and (4) Marketing and Client Management (to tie in with ICLE's Closely Held and Family Business Institute in Plymouth). The Program Committee has approved these. I will forward details regarding the upcoming event within the next couple of weeks as Stout Risius and I are working on the details.
6. **Publications:** We do not intend to publish at this time. The SBF and its events continue to be featured in a number of news outlets, however, including Legal News, and the Oakland Business Review.
7. **Legislative/Judicial/Administrative Developments:** Not applicable
8. **Miscellaneous:** If any committees are looking for members, a quick email to me outlining your plans and what you are looking for would be great as I could then announce this at the SBF meetings. This may encourage smaller firms to participate in Bar activities outside of the SBF.