

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

1. **Next scheduled meeting of the Committee:** TBD spring sometime both here and in Grand Rapids, with interim planning meetings in the meantime.
2. **Council Approval:** NONE
3. **Membership:** Our first southeastern MI event had excellent attendance despite really bad weather. However, including our invitations only as part of the e-newsletter and not sending it separately to the entire BLS list serve has cut back a lot on responses. I am afraid that if we continue to send invitations to SBF events only in the e-newsletter, we will get a lot of repeat people who have attended prior SBF events, but not as many across the section as a whole.
4. **Accomplishments Toward Committee Objectives:** Our primary objectives are:
 - Increase involvement of smaller firms in the Section and to add a few new Forum Leaders. -We have added two new attorneys in Southeastern MI as leaders and have the west side Forum well underway.
 - Create a bridge between business attorneys and the small business community.-We continue to struggle to get a lot of interest in attendance from business owners, and have structured some of our events this year to improve this. We did have significantly more business owners at our January Event on marketing than we had at prior events.
 - Provide resources and networking opportunities between attorneys, CPAs, lenders, investment bankers, financial professionals and related advisors. -The Survey results from attendees seem to confirm we are delivering.
 - Provide time-efficient, educational and fun events. - The Survey results from attendees seem to confirm we are delivering.
 - Create perception of lawyers as valuable members of a business team. - Again, we try to structure our topics to achieve this goal.
 - Improve perception of Michigan as a good environment in which to do business. -Hopefully our upcoming programs will assist in this.
 - Help attorneys gain new tools and contact to provide quality service to business owners. - The Survey results from attendees seem to confirm we are delivering.
 - Develop outreach opportunities to the business community. - We continue to struggle to get a lot of interest in attendance from business owners, and have structured some of our events this year to improve this. We did have significantly more business owners at our January Event on marketing than we had at prior events.

Our objectives for this year are:

- To continue to have a diverse range of attorneys from across Michigan who primarily represent closely-held and family businesses with less than \$50 million in annual gross sales. We are trying to get more Macomb County participation.
- 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 are moving toward this goal.

We have held one event so far this year. The first was held January 23 and was on Attracting and Winning New Business. It was held at Columbia Center board room in Troy MI and had about 30 paid attendees (we had a space limit of 40 and Leaders need not pay to attend). We self-catered and our costs for that were about \$800, so we probably came pretty close to breaking even on that event.

Meetings and Programs: The 1 programs already held is described above. Our program topics and event plans are as follows: For Southeastern MI 1. Spring Topic - Finance - Where's the Money? Alternative Financing Options for Businesses What to do when banks, family and friends are not an option. Cynthia Umphrey is coordinating- we will try to make this attractive to business owners as well as advisors and attorneys. 2. early fall (like second week of September or so) Topic- Economic Development Resources - What's out there and to whom is it available? Examples: Automation Alley; Ann Arbor Sparks; Oakland County ADC- Bruce Haffey coordinating. He may try to make this attractive to business owners as well as advisors and attorneys. 3. Late Fall Topic- Practical Tips on Running the Family Business As a Business: use of employment agreements; who controls the company; resolving deadlocks; rules of entry, compensation; other family issues. David Eberhard is coordinating and it will be in Macomb County. He may try to make this attractive to business owners as well as advisors and attorneys.

For Grand Rapids: **TODD et al** plse give us an update here on where you stand plans wise tx

5. **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.
6. **Legislative/Judicial/Administrative Developments:** Not applicable
7. **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.