

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

1. **Next scheduled meeting of the Committee:** Early Fall both here and in Grand Rapids, with interim planning meetings in the meantime.
2. **Council Approval:** NONE
3. **Membership:** Our second event was held in the Birmingham MI area in May and had only about 20 turn out. The topic was excellent, namely, "Finance when banks turn you down" and the response from the attendees was great, attendance was just really low. We got a lot of business owners, probably for the first time, but few attorneys. I wonder if this relates to, including our invitations only as part of the e-newsletter and not sending it separately to the entire BLS list serve. We also tried using the State Bar marketing person as she is free, but she is basically nothing and I had to pull in a freelancer at the last minute to get anything done. Grand Rapids is experiencing some difficulties in getting attendance. Grand Rapids has considered utilizing direct mailings to boost attendance, as the forum scheduled for this past spring was postponed for lack of registrants.
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. I may need to weed out a few of the less participatory Leaders down here as I phase out of running this.
  - Create a bridge between business attorneys and the small business community.-This was actually very successful so far this year with both of our first two events getting a pretty good turn out from actual business owners.
  - 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.

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 and have a Macomb Event scheduled for the fall.
- 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 two events 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. The Second was held at the Community Center and had about 20 paid attendees. We may ask the non-profit committee to work on an event for us for the fall. I am looking for one of my leaders to agree to coordinate this.

Meetings and Programs: The programs already held are described above. Our program topics and event plans are as follows: For Southeastern MI (1) 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. (2) 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: (1) Late Summer: Finance and Economic Development Resources - What's out there and to whom is it available?; (2) Late Fall: A Litigator's Perspective on Business Organization and Transaction Documents.