

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

1. **Next scheduled meeting of the Committee:** The next Southeastern Michigan event is to be held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Birmingham Community Center. The presenters are an investment banker and two CPAs and it concerns identifying and assisting distressed companies before it's too late. The next west side event will be held in conjunction with the Business & Tax Section of the Grand Rapids Bar Association on October 17th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Peninsular Club in Grand Rapids. Its topic is increasing business values.
2. **Council Approval:** NONE
3. **Membership:** We currently have 22 pre-registered for the Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> event. We expect that to increase, of course, as the event is still relatively far away. The announcement for the next West Side event will be sent shortly. Accordingly, we have no current registrants for it. We are working with the rest of the group on some initiatives at the two ICLE Institutes this fall to further increase membership. We have added one new leader to the southeastern Michigan SBF- Bruce Haffey of Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton, P.C. and a new leader for the West Side SBF- Nicholas A. Reister, an associate attorney with John A. Watts, P.C. in Allegan, MI.
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 as leaders since the last event and report.
  - Create a bridge between business attorneys and the small business community. WE hope that our next event on Distressed Companies as well as some of our 2008 events on finance may attract more business owners.
  - Provide resources and networking opportunities between attorneys, CPAs, lenders, investment bankers, financial professionals and related advisors. We have had a good mix of all of these at the events
  - Provide time-efficient, educational and fun events.
  - Create a perception of lawyers as valuable members of a business team.
  - Improve perception of Michigan as a good environment in which to do business.
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  - 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 are moving toward this goal, with some hiccoughs.

We have held four events so far this year. Two were a Step-by-Step Guide to Selling a Business. The first was held January 31<sup>st</sup> 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 produced small revenue. The third was concerning increasing value of manufacturing companies. Attendance was low (we think we got too close to Memorial Day) with about 25 people attending. We increased the charge to \$25 for this event and believe it cost the section about \$500. The Grand Rapids event on a Step-By Step Guide to Selling a Business was held on May 30<sup>th</sup> and had about 14 in attendance (again, too close to the holiday). Its cost to the section is being determined, but is initially estimated to be under \$500 and could be significantly less. A broad mix of attorneys (including some in-house counsel), CPAs, business owners (on a VERY limited basis) and other professionals continue to attend, with most of the lawyers coming from smaller firms.

5. **Meetings and Programs:** The 4 programs already held were described above. Our program topics and event plans are 3 events throughout the rest of 2007 as follows: (1) Valuation Issues (Grand Rapids Oct 13); (2) Identifying and Assisting Troubled Companies (Southeastern Michigan, probably not in Grand Rapids); and (3) Marketing and Client Management (to be held in the later fall). The Program Committee has approved these.

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.