

Scranton Business Alliance Meeting
July 30, 2008

Present: Paige Balitski, *Scranton Reads*; Laurie Cadden, *Scranton Cultural Center*; Karen Clifford, *La Festa Italiana*; Mary Cummings, *City of Scranton OECD*; Chris DiMattio, *La Festa Italiana*; Kristie Dorunda, *Times-Tribune/Electric City*; MJ Dougherty, *Dionysus Downtown*; Matt Drace, *Lavish*; Maureen Duffy, *Duffy Accessories*; Carmon Flynn, *Fast Signs*; Julia Fraustino, *NOW Salon*; Nada & Michael Gilmartin, *Nada & Co.*; Katie Gilmartin, *Nada & Co.*; Brandi Healey, *POWER*; Tim Holmes, *Times-Tribune/Electric City*; Jeff Howells, *INH Media*; Fran Kavulich, *NOW Salon*; Chris Kelly, *NE Regional Cancer Institute & Scranton Jaycees*; Phil Marchese, *AFA Gallery*, Lori Nidoh, *Occasions*; Conor O'Brien, *Vintage Theater*; Lisa Sauder, *First Friday Scranton*; Andrea Talarico, *Anthology New & Used Books*; Noelle Vetrosky, *Scranton Cultural Center*; Mike Volpitta, *Northern Light Espresso Bar*.

Scranton Tomorrow Staff Present: Jennifer Battista, *Director of Communications & Special Projects*; Leslie Collins, *Executive Director*; Margaret Mallonee, *Intern*; Maggie O'Brien, *Director of Planning & Development*.

Leslie Collins welcomed the group and began introductions of new and returning SBA members.

Jeff Howells from INH Media Indoor Billboards announced that they are celebrating their first anniversary of working with the Scranton Parking Authority to display ads in the City garages. Vida Tapas Bar & Grill and Michael's Luxury Eyewear were the first Downtown businesses to advertise with this program, which includes ads on the gate arms and inside elevator doors. The ads are focused on downtown visitors and workers, and there is space available.

Lisa Sauder introduced the Friends of First Friday program to the SBA, which is a way for the general public to support the event by purchasing a card that will offer discounts to participating local restaurants, coffee shops, and cultural venues. The card will sell for \$25 retail and \$20 at First Friday. All SBA businesses will receive a letter asking them to participate in this program. She also encouraged all downtown businesses to remain open, as August is one of the biggest months for the event with the Jazz Festival happening simultaneously.

Paige Balitski updated the group about the Scranton Reads program in October, featuring the book "The Maltese Falcon." The committee is asking the downtown businesses to participate in a scavenger hunt on Saturday, October 4, and to consider donating a gift certificate to the committee for prize baskets. Anyone who is interested should let Jennifer at Scranton Tomorrow know. Other events planned for the Scranton Reads program include:

- October 3 – Speakeasy night at the Scranton Cultural Center following First Friday
- October 4 – Downtown Scavenger Hunt
- October 18 – bus trip to Crime & Punishment Museum in Washington DC
- October 25 – historical murder walk in Downtown Scranton

Chris DiMattio from the La Festa Italiana planning committee updated the group about planning for this year's event. The planning committee was very pleased that downtown businesses stayed open during the festival last year, as it makes a more complete event for visitors. In recognition of this and to encourage businesses to remain open during this year's event as well, the committee has decided to keep the festival tents open to the street/businesses on Spruce and North Washington, and only face the courthouse on Linden and Adams Avenues. He also reported that the La Festa committee has purchased a sound system for the downtown to broadcast announcements and during events, and encouraged the businesses to use this system, as well. He also said the committee would be

happy to link business websites to the La Festa website. If you would like your website linked, please let Jennifer at Scranton Tomorrow know.

Tim Holmes from the Times-Tribune/Electric City distributed information about several advertising opportunities for SBA businesses, including:

- La Festa Italiana
 - Advertising tabloid
- Campus Source
 - New resource guide for local college students
- Holiday Coupon book
 - Distributed to visitors of Nay Aug Light Show

For more information about these opportunities, businesses can contact Kristie Dorunda at the Times.

Leslie Collins reported on behalf of Dolly Woody with the NEPA Komen for a Cure organization that the annual Race for the Cure is on Saturday, September 13. Businesses are encouraged to open early for this event, which draws upwards of 10,000 people into the downtown, and also offer special breast cancer awareness items or healthy meals/snacks on that day and throughout the month of October (breast cancer awareness month).

Brandi Healey, Membership Director for POWER, announced that their September event will be presented in partnership with Scranton Tomorrow and the Scranton Business Alliance. Details for the event, scheduled for Thursday, September 25 from 6-8 p.m., are still in the works. All SBA members are invited to participate in the event. Details will follow.

Jennifer Battista reported that planning is underway for the 10th anniversary of First Night Scranton. As the planning progresses, the committee will be reaching out to the businesses for help with promotion, button sales, and atmosphere for the night of the event.

ROUNDTABLE

- Laurie Cadden reported that the annual Scranton Jazz Festival will be held this weekend (August 1-3). She also announced that this summer's final Cocktails in the City will be held on Friday, August 15.
- Tim Holmes announced a special Yankees/Red Sox event at PNC Field on August 16 that will most likely draw national media attention to the region.
- Andrea Talarico announced that Anthology will be expanding its location to 3,000 square feet, and will also begin offering more new books, as well as used books.
- Mike Volpitta said that Northern Light Espresso Bar will be open late this weekend for the Jazz Festival, and will feature music: the Sw!ms on August 9 and the Minor White on August 16.
- Maureen Duffy is celebrating the 20th anniversary of Duffy Accessories with a street fair on August 8 from 5-8 p.m. All are invited!
- Chris Kelly from the NE Cancer Institute invited all SBA members to the annual "It's all in the game!" fundraiser on October 9. For more info, visit www.cancernepa.org. On behalf of the Scranton Jaycees, he also invited the businesses to remain open for the Santa Parade in November, which draws 10-15,000 people to the Downtown.
- MJ Dougherty announced that Dionysus Downtown will be opening in early August, and will feature a wine bar, chocolate and cheese fondue. They will also be doing a wine tasting during La Festa Italiana.

- Michael Gilmartin reported that he has been in contact with the City and County regarding image issues in the Downtown, including streetlights that are burned out for a long period of time. He encouraged the SBA to make maintenance of the Downtown a priority. Leslie Collins reported that Scranton Tomorrow has applied for the Main Street Manager designation by the state, which would include funding for streetscape and clean-ups for the Downtown.
- Conor O'Brien announced the development of a new non-profit arts venue in Downtown Scranton. The Vintage Theater will offer weekend screenings of classic films and a venue for arts and music. The Theater is currently fundraising for start-up costs, and is selling discount books for the Bon-Ton for \$5. If you are interested in purchasing a discount book or learning more about the Theater, email vintagetheater@yahoo.com or visit www.myspace.com/downtownvintage.

NEXT SBA MEETING – DATE TBD...Stay Tuned!