

American Samoa Chamber of Commerce

Review of 2006 - 2007

I. Objectives and Accomplishments for 2006 - 2007

- A. Formation of the Board into various committees
 - 1. Government Relations
 - a. Quarterly meetings with the Governor
 - b. Discussions on restructuring Immigration laws
 - c. Regular meetings with the Senate president
 - d. Regular meetings with the Department of Commerce
 - e. Regular meetings and communication with the Dept of the Interior
 - f. Frequent communication with our Congressman Faleomavaega
 - 2. Membership
 - a. Set a target of 50 members of the Chamber
 - b. Present membership 56
 - 3. Taxation
 - a. Obtained professional legal and accounting advice on tax reform
 - b. Prepared recommendations and submitted them to the Governor
 - c. Met with the Tax Manager to discuss the tax code reform
 - 4. Beverage Industry
 - a. Commented on the plan to increase tax on bottled water by \$0.10 cents to help fund the SP Arts Festival
 - 5. Tourism
 - a. Submitted a position paper suggesting the Department of Tourism be separated from DOC and become a privately managed entity.
 - b. Concept accepted by the Governor. Now awaiting the completion of draft legislation to present to the Fono for approval
- B. Established a web site
 - a. The site is now active at <http://amsamoachamber.com>
 - b. General comment - Lack of use by members
- C. Produced a draft White Paper for potential new developments in various industry sectors

- D. Addressed the issues and push for changes to the tax regime, immigration policies, business license approval
- E. Produced a monthly newsletter
- F. Establish dialogue with the Samoa Association of Manufacturers and Exporters and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce
 - 1. Joint production of a draft Economic Integration Agreement between the 2 Samoas to negotiate treaties for a common customs union to strengthen our abilities to build our economic activity by improving the size of our markets. For discussion at the 2 Samoas round table talks.
- G. Arranged briefings/meetings with our Congressman
 - 1. Issues 936, future of the canneries, minimum wage, economic development

II. Other Accomplishments for 2006 - 2007

- A. We surveyed all members to solicit their views and input into the proposed Minimum Wage and testified at Senate Hearings on the Minimum Wage Bill and the Guest Worker Bill and provided input into three other Bills
- B. Meetings were held with the New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa, and the New Zealand Trade Commissioner based in Fiji regarding new investments from NZ. The NZ Trade Commission joined the Chamber and several potential new projects have come from the office which we are following up.
- C. The Chamber has provided input into a two DOI funded consultancies to assess the impact of the Canneries leaving, and a consultancy by the University of Hawaii into the labor pool available for projects such as the Call Center.
- D. The Chamber has assembled some new potential investment projects through its connections
 - 1. Meat processing and meat patties production plant ex NZ - status - awaiting more information from NZ Trade Commissioner
 - 2. Bottled water processing plant ex NZ joint venture in place status - the Governor has provided information regarding a tax incentive package for consideration

3. Airport handling equipment ex NZ - status - company carrying out more feasibility work. Joint venture potential
 4. Pago Harbor marina development ex Australia - status - company preparing a capability statement and concept plan for submission to government
 5. Furniture/mattress production ex Fiji - status - company deciding on feasibility. Joint venture potential
 6. Airport Control Tower ex NZ - status - all details passed to the Governor now awaiting his decision to move forward with the construction and fit out
- E. Chamber involvement with Dept of Education in curriculum development at the ASCC and Polytech, and representation on the DOC 2010 Census Committee
 - F. We have joined as associate members the Asia Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce, and we are associated with the Australia Pacific Islands Business Council and the NZ Pacific Business Council
 - G. We have had regular media releases over the past year with an average of 2 press releases a month, 3 appearances on the local TV 411 programme, and regular interviews for reports by the NZ and the Australian Pacific radio and press
 - H. The DOC has appointed a liaison officer to work with the Chamber
 - I. The Chamber is in the process of registering a new corporate entity called The Private Economic Advisory Council of AS - PEACAS - whose main objectives are to promote all forms of economic development within the Territory, and to facilitate and promote public/private partnership opportunities with the ASG

III. Suggested Main Objectives for 2007 – 2008

- J. Establish PEACAS as a functional entity
- K. Identify new investment and development opportunities in the agricultural, fisheries and tourism sectors
- L. Develop increased trade opportunities between 2 Samoas
- M. Increase Chamber membership to 75
- N. Establish Young Professionals Committee

IV. Close

There have been comments during the past year that we are going over the same old ground that the Chamber went over 20 years ago regarding economic development required to stimulate the economy in certain industry sectors. This maybe quite correct as the fundamentals required to strengthen this economy have not changed much over the past 20 years and the government and the canneries continue to be the main contributors to employment and the major supporters of the economy as a result. What has changed has been your Board's approach and attitude to these fundamentals and the proactive approach that it has taken to address these and some of the structural issues involved that are required to develop strategies to improve economic conditions in the Territory.

I would like to thank Directors whose input and contribution during the past twelve months has been constructive and decisive and this in turn has raised the profile of the Chamber and enabled it to be recognized as a relevant and respected organization.

The Chamber moves into the 2007-2008 year in a reasonable financial position and in terms of the platforms that have been built this year one of the strongest positions that it has been in for sometime and this should allow it to raise it's profile even further, achieve it's main objectives and to continue to be held in high regard by both government and the broader commercial community.