

## Blowing Rock Chamber Announces Foundation

Written by Steve Frank

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The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce has a new tool for promotion of business, establishing a 501(c) 3 nonprofit foundation, Blowing Rock Chamber Foundation Inc., conceived as part of the Chamber's long range strategic vision from 2007. As such, the chamber release says the foundation was created under the IRS Code for nonprofits designating the primary purposes of the foundation to be for economic development and business education. The IRS approval was granted November 30, 2012.

Former President of the Blowing Rock Chamber Board of Directors Rita Davis is now President of the Foundation, and she said, "When I was President of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce Board in 2009, I had high hopes and dreams of taking our Chamber to the next level. The establishment of the Foundation is the realization of those hopes and dreams. We are now moving to the next level of full operation as a viable entity for Blowing Rock."

The new foundation board has met, elected officers and charted a course of action for funding, and Chelsea Garrett, Secretary/Treasurer, explained the Foundation's mission, saying "The overall thrust of the Foundation is not to promote business as an end to itself but rather to support and promote the growth of the community as a whole, which includes supporting businesses, individuals, and other non-profits by providing training and further education, and funds for community projects, entrepreneurial ideas, and cultural enrichment."

The Chamber release said that an anonymous donor has pledged a gift of \$10,000 to start the funding process. The donation was issued with a challenge to the Chamber's board of directors to match the gift over three years. We are excited that Chamber board members have made pledges to date to meet over 40% of the challenge.

The specific purposes as outlined by the IRS provide the means for this private funding source to grant funds to the Town of Blowing Rock for projects that could improve or enhance economic development for our business community. This will enable the Chamber to engage in public-private partnerships that can enhance the business environment by reducing the burden of government. Further, the Chamber Foundation is eligible to apply for federal and state grants that have been heretofore unavailable.