

SMALL BUSINESS FORUM COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMS SECTION

1. Next scheduled meeting of the Committee: October 9, 2006
2. **Council Approval:** To increase participation from the west side of the state, we would like to have a Southeastern Michigan and a Western Michigan Chapter that function under the SBF umbrella, and that hold parallel events. The SBF would plan the 4 event programs as a whole, but then each chapter would put on its event at a different location. One of the events would be a combined event where the entire SBF would meet. This would coordinate with an ICLE Institute.
3. **Membership:** We formed the SBF leadership team from firms and with people who had not historically had a great deal of section involvement. We also targeted smaller firms, solo practitioners. We were kindly allowed to say a few words about the SBF at the Business Law Institute and will be doing more in-depth promotion of it at the ICLE Closely Held Business Institute, especially at the Small Business & Solo Practitioner Institute. We anticipate that forming a Western Michigan Chapter will significantly increase participation from the Grand Rapids/Lansing area and that the promotions we do at the Institutes will also add new members.
4. **Accomplishments Toward Committee Objectives:** Our primary objectives are:
 - Increase involvement of smaller firms and of attorneys from a broader geographic area in the Section.
 - Create a bridge between business attorneys and the small business community.
 - Provide resources and networking opportunities between attorneys, CPAs, lenders, investment bankers, financial professionals and related advisors.
 - Provide time efficient, educational and fun events.
 - Create perception of lawyers as valuable members of a business team.
 - Improve perception of Michigan as a good environment in which to do business.
 - Help attorneys gain new tools and contact to provide quality service to business owners.
 - Develop outreach opportunities to the business community.

Our objectives were:

- Obtain participation level of 30 attorneys (in the first year) 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 year.
- Involve small business owners in at least two of our events.

We have held two events, the kick-off party and the first program, which was on raising capital for small businesses. Both had over 50 attendees (about 86 and 55 respectively); a broad mix of attorneys, CPAs, business owners and other professionals attended.

Next year we will implement an event charge of between \$10 and \$20 per event to help defray costs and cut back on no-shows. We will also offer a SBF membership as an alternative with a \$50 (estimated) fee reduced by the Section Membership fee for Business Law Section members. This should encourage section membership and help with the budget issues. We also want to have a one page overview highlighting some of the resources of the Section for distribution at events and programs.

5. **Meetings and Programs:** The 2 programs already held were described above. We will be submitting our 4 2007 program topics and event plans to the Program Committee for approval shortly as our next planning meeting is scheduled in early October. The first program will be in early January
6. **Publications:** We do not intend to publish at this time. The SBF and its events have been featured in a number of news outlets, however, including Legal News, and the Oakland Business Review.
7. **Legislative/Judicial/Administrative Developments:** Not applicable
8. **Budget request:** \$7,500. While our per event costs had been estimated at around \$3,000, we will be implementing cost saving measures such as switching to a cash bar and just cold hors d'oeuvres. We are also exploring alternative venues that do not have room charges and food minimums, although this will likely mean that we will have to limit participation at events to 50 people or under. Also, the event charges and membership fees will offset some of the costs. The \$7,500 will allow the Small Business Forum to offer its programs on the west side and in Southeastern Michigan for a total of 7 or 9 events (7 if we have 3 parallel programs and 1 combined program; 9 if we have 4 parallel programs and 2 combined program).