

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERSHIP

06/22/2020



The purpose of this document is to answer the most asked questions of our membership. Our goal is to clearly articulate the value of chamber membership and increase member involvement & engagement through consistent messaging and opportunities. Please let us know if you have any additional questions by contacting us via email or phone at Director@ely.org or 218-365-6123.

1. **Why should I join/maintain a chamber membership?** As a chamber member, you can develop yourself through networking, education and advocacy and directly impact the success of the business community. Full membership enables you to vote on the direction of business and economic development opportunities, participate in those opportunities, enjoy business referrals and advertising opportunities, receive aggregate news and much more.
2. **What are the expectations of me as a member?** We encourage you to share your voice and fully leverage the membership benefits highlighted in question eleven below. Our most engaged members are those who show a passion to the advancement of the Ely business and economic community as modeled by the following:
 - **Voice:** Serve on a committee and/or the board, vote whenever asked and/or, simply share your perspective about an opportunity for you or the chamber to make a difference. Demonstrate a positive leadership shadow by educating others about chamber decisions, operations, and events.
 - **Participate:** Take advantage of the member and economic development opportunities.
 - **Endorse/Invest:** Get behind the decisions of the chamber by actively endorsing chamber sponsored member and economic development opportunities and/or the three seasonal festivals. Educate your staff about chamber sponsored events; their lack of awareness of an event reflects your engagement and detracts visitor participation/awareness. Help make Ely events more inviting by acknowledging the activity(ies) and/or asking customers about their awareness regardless of your participation in the event(s).

Download a copy of the *Chamber of Commerce Membership* by visiting www.ely.org/membership.

3. **What can I expect from other chamber members?** Openness to share best practices and networking, often promotional savings for your business, referrals, and participation in business celebrations such as new business ribbon cutting, anniversaries. In addition, you can expect other members to demonstrate a positive leadership shadow and an active voice in chamber/business news.
4. **Why is the chamber responsible for the visitor's center?** The Ely Chamber of Commerce has long served as both a chamber and visitor center, an approach that has been adopted by approximately 1/3 of chambers across the United States. Combining these functions enables us to connect people with products and services. We serve as an information hub, which supports the Ely ecosystem—all businesses, residents, and visitors. Providing information through one location is both efficient and fiscally responsible for a community of our size.
5. **How is the Chamber funded?** The chamber is funded through its membership dues and funds raised through the three chamber sponsored events (WolfTrack Classic, Blueberry Fest and Harvest Moon festival). Lodging, Forest Service, City, or other tax dollars are not used to operate or pay staff.
6. **What do the membership dues support?** The membership dues support the following: a combined chamber of commerce, visitor/information center, building operation/maintenance, 2.5 full time salary equivalents, business development workshops, Ely.org and social media pages, resources for new businesses including ribbon cutting ceremonies, facilitation of business ideas and networking events/promotions that support businesses and the greater Ely area community, including the three seasonal events (WolfTrack Classic, Blueberry Fest and Harvest Moon Festival) and a number of smaller activities geared toward driving retail traffic (see question 16).
7. **What is the relationship between the Tourism Bureau and the Chamber?** As of 2019, the Ely Tourism Bureau and Chamber of Commerce are separate entities, with separate boards and no shared funds. Given that the Lodging Taxes collected by Ely lodging businesses are managed by the Bureau, the Chamber plays an active role in tourism promotional activities.
8. **Does the Tourism Bureau contribute to the Visitor/Information Center budget?** The Ely Tourism Bureau does not contribute funding for the operation or staffing of the chamber or visitor/information center.
9. **May I join a chamber board meeting?** All members are invited to attend meetings—if you are interested in doing so, simply contact Eva Sebesta, Executive Director at Director@ely.org. The board does reserve the right to excuse members in attendance if sensitive topics will be discussed and/or voted on. Also, know that minutes are distributed following every board meeting.
10. **How can I get more involved in the chamber?** Call us at 218-365-6123 to discuss your interests—we'd love to have you join us! There's always an opportunity to share your voice and/or passion, e.g. serve on a committee, event, or board, help us welcome and onboard new businesses, sponsor an event, etc.
11. **What does my membership include?** There are three different types of memberships: Full, Associate and Sustaining. Full and Associate membership is available to any Ely business while non-Ely in surrounding areas are invited to join as a Sustaining member.
Full membership includes the following privileges:

- **Voice.** Vote on board members, chamber By-laws and Articles of Incorporation as well as some of the potential direction of chamber business and economic development opportunities, e.g. educational series, direction of Northwoods Medallion Hunt.
- **Promotion.** Enjoy business referrals from the chamber, visibility on Ely.org and public events, inclusion in visitor center brochure/flier display as well as the annual Ely Passport Savings Coupon Book, the chamber Membership Directory and an advertising opportunity in the annual Ely Vacation Guide and social media interactions and promotions and, priority in event sponsorships.
- **News & Resources.** Receive relevant, triaged news and resources from a variety of government/county agencies, law enforcement and other entities in addition to Chamber and community news.
- **Personal Growth.** Enjoy access to leadership and networking opportunities, e.g. education, networking forums.
- **Economic Development.** Participate and/or endorse chamber sponsored opportunities that drive traffic and/or support new business, e.g. Ely Chamber Buck Certificate program, new business celebrations, business incubation.

Associate and Sustaining members receive a basic website listing (business name, address and phone number) on Ely.org and within the annual membership director, an invitation to all Chamber opportunities, e.g. networking and workshops, a subscription to all Chamber member news correspondence and inclusion in the brochure/flier display at the Chamber visitor center.

12. How much is chamber membership?

Type	Cost Structure	Cost
Full	Tier I: Sole proprietor retail, wholesale or home-based business, single guide, single cabin, or single vacation home rental Tier II: Retail, wholesale, or home-based business with employees, two guides, two cabins, two vacation home rentals, transportation service, or float plane service Tier III: Guide business, bed & breakfast, 3-4 cabins, or 3-4 vacation home rentals Tier IV: Outfitting service, campground, 5-8 cabins, or 5-8 vacation home rentals Tier V: Motel, hotel, nine or more cabins, or nine or more vacation home rentals	Varies - \$225 to \$675 depending on # and type of businesses
Associate	Non-profit clubs/ organizations that are within the Ely, Babbitt, Winton, Embarrass or Isabella service areas.	\$125
Sustaining	A business that is located outside of our service area, but within Minnesota.	\$325

* Regardless of membership type, entities with multiple businesses may add additional businesses to their first membership at just \$225 per business.

13. **I see that Full membership includes the right to vote. What can I expect in this regard?** In addition to voting on board members, chamber By-laws and Articles of Incorporation, we often ask for the member perspective on the potential direction of chamber business and economic development opportunities.
14. **How does the Chamber advocate on my/local business(es) behalf?** We support and actively pursue federal, state, and local issues that may influence our area's business environment in partnership with State and Federal representatives, local officials, and area organizations. Examples include COVID-19 pandemic, economic development, small business development, education. These initiatives expand opportunities for both area residents and visitors, while improving our overall quality of life.
15. **I understand that chamber oversees the Blueberry Fest, the Harvest Moon Festival, and the Wolf Track Classic. What other consumer events is the chamber responsible?** In addition to these three seasonal events, the Chamber's Events & Promotions Committee uses some of the funding generated from the three seasonal events to oversee some smaller initiatives geared at driving local traffic and sales. Most recent activities include the following and rely on chamber member participation/endorsement: City Wide Rummage, Business Crazy Day and Used Gear & Watercraft Sale, Chocoholic Frolic, Northwoods Medallion Hunt, Thanksgiving Night Shopping, Small Town Christmas Shopping, Christmas Parade & City Tree Lighting Ceremony and more. Check with us at 218-365-3123 for a current listing and/or, to discuss a potential idea.
16. **There are several other events that are promoted on the Chamber and/or other calendar-of-events – who manages those?** The following events are managed by non-profit organizations: The Snowmobile FunRun, Ely Winter Festival, WolfTrack Classic Sled Dog Race, KCPro Youth Snowmobile Racing, All-Night Graduation Party, Peter Mitchell Days, Washington Elementary PTO, Nordic Ski Club and more!