



## SURVEY RESULT ON **CHAMBERS & CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

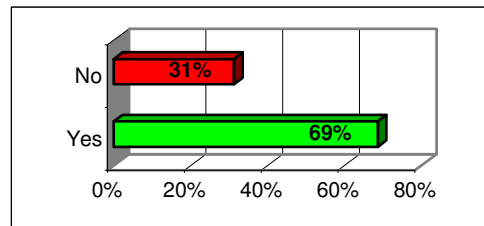
Published: 6/1/05

**Public policies on all levels – local, state and federal – impact the business and free enterprise environment in every community. To determine the degree to which local chambers represent the interest of their business community, a survey on this topic was sent to the CCEO members on 5/20/05. Here is the summary report based on 49 responses representing the following chambers:**

Alliance Area, Ashland Area, Brunswick Area, Chillicothe-Ross, Cincinnati USA Regional, Clintonville Area, Coshocton County, Dublin, East Liverpool Area, Erie County, Gahanna Area, Galion Area, Goshen (IN), Hardin County, Hilliard Area, Holmes County, Kent Area, Lakewood, Lima/Allen County, Madison-Perry Area, Marathon (FL), Marietta Area, Marion Area, Meigs County, Middleburg Heights, Morrow County, Mount Vernon - Knox County, Orville Area, Ottawa Area, Perrysburg Area, Portsmouth Area, Reynoldsburg Area, Solon Area, Springfield-Clark County, St. Marys Area, Strongsville, Sylvania Area, The Chamber (Middletown), Toledo Area, Twin City, Upper Arlington Area, Upper Sandusky Area, West Chester, Westerville Area, Wickliffe Area, Willoughby Area, Willowick, Wooster Area. & one unidentified chamber.

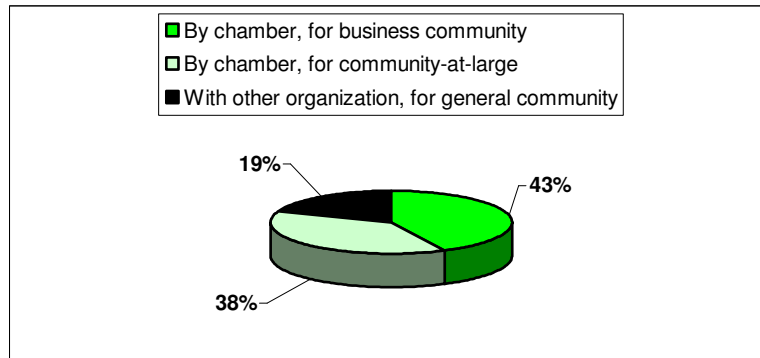
Does your chamber:

**1. Conduct “candidates’ forums” for upcoming elections?**



**2. If “yes”, which of the following applies?**

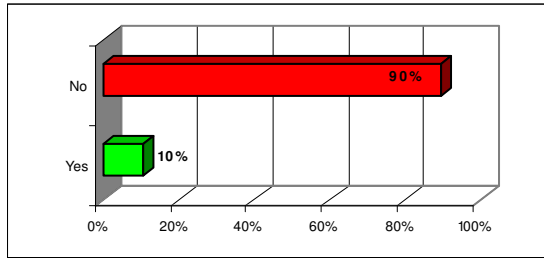
- a. Our chamber organizes and conducts them specifically for our core constituents – the business community;
- b. We organize and conduct them for the community-at-large;
- c. We co-sponsor them with another organization for the general community.



Erie County John Moldovan <a href="mailto:JohnM@ErieCountyOhioCofC.com">JohnM@ErieCountyOhioCofC.com</a>	Our candidate forums are also video-taped by the local cable company, and aired several times prior to an election.
Coshocton County – Scott Thompson <a href="mailto:director@coshoctonchamber.com">director@coshoctonchamber.com</a>	Our chamber did a candidates' forum a few years ago in partnership with the local Rotary Club. We got involved because another organization dropped out. However, prior to that year - and since - our county has had several forums each election for the candidates by other groups and cover all aspects well. Consequently, we have passed on candidate forums as we do not want to duplicate what is already being done well. <u>Policy Statement:</u> The (Coshocton County) Chamber shall not allow any active campaigning by any political candidate or elected official at any Chamber functions or events. At Chamber events where signage is allowed, current office holders may state their name and the office they hold only. No political material can be dispersed and no vote can be solicited in any way.

Does your chamber:

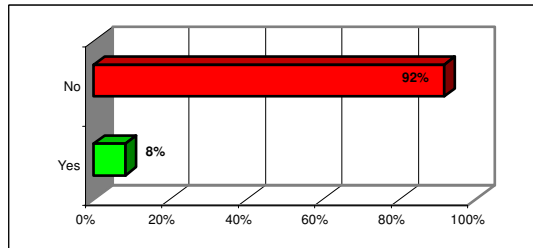
**3. Conduct a program, such as a “Candidates’ Academy” where persons interested in seeking public office can learn about the responsibilities involved in holding public office, and what it takes to run a good, ethical campaign?**



The following indicated they conduct a “Candidates’ Academy” for persons interested in seeking election to public office.	
Westerville Area Janet Davis <a href="mailto:jdavis@westervillechamber.com">jdavis@westervillechamber.com</a>	Ashland Area Marla Akridge <a href="mailto:marla@ashlandoh.com">marla@ashlandoh.com</a>
Toledo Area Mark VSoske <a href="mailto:Mark.MVSOSKE@toledochamber.com">Mark.MVSOSKE@toledochamber.com</a>	Madison-Perry Area Cindy Girdler <a href="mailto:exec@mpacc.org">exec@mpacc.org</a>
Lima-Allen County Jed Metzger <a href="mailto:jmetzger@limachamber.com">jmetzger@limachamber.com</a>	

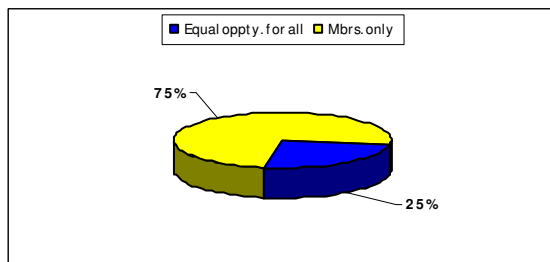
Does your chamber:

**4. Allow candidates to place ads or notices for a fee in your newsletter to promote their candidacy?**



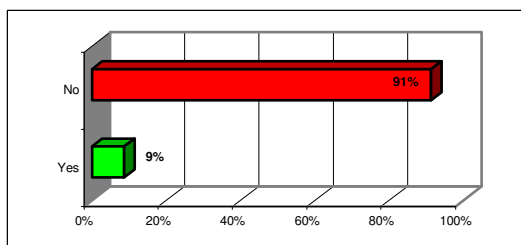
**5. If “yes”, which of the following applies?**

- a. We give all candidates equal opportunities to place paid-for ads;
- b. We allow only dues-paying members of our chamber to do this.



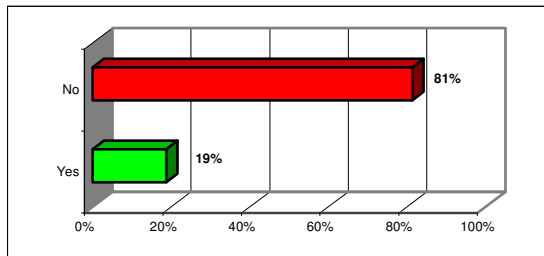
Does your chamber:

**6. Have a written policy that addresses questions 4 & 5?**



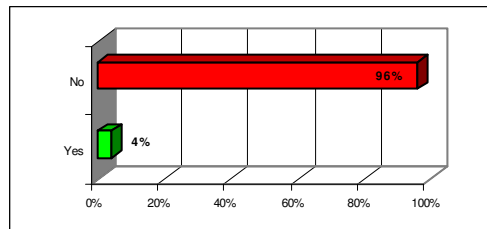
Does your chamber:

**7. Invite candidates to submit written responses to business-issue questions you send them, and then publish their unedited responses in your newsletter, or electronically, to help your core constituents discern the differences between the candidates?**



Does your chamber:

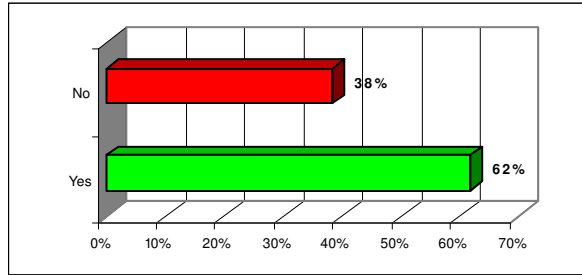
**8. Endorse candidates?**



<p>Marion Area Pam Hall <a href="mailto:phallchamber@marion.net">phallchamber@marion.net</a></p>	<p><b><u>Does your chamber endorse candidates?</u></b> We try very hard not to utilize the term "endorse" but rather to indicate we "identify" candidates who have a pro business philosophy. This is valuable because we want to be able to identify more than one candidate for a position (if their responses to our specific questions are consistent with our initiatives/philosophies). <b><u>What criteria is used for endorsing?</u></b> We develop a questionnaire each year and for each election that pertains to current issues in our community....send to all candidates and upon their return, our committee meets and scores the responses (each member independently)...then discusses together. This committee's recommendations are then taken to the Board of Directors of our PAC for their decision. <b><u>How effective has endorsing candidates been?</u></b> VERY <b><u>Any fall-out, good or bad?</u></b> Only good. Candidates and elected officials who chose to be pro business have become more engaged in the chamber. They have sought the Chamber's opinions/support.</p>
<p>Toledo Area Mark VSoske <a href="mailto:Mark.MVSOSKE@toledochamber.com">Mark.MVSOSKE@toledochamber.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>Does your chamber endorse candidates and what criteria is used for endorsing?</u></b> Varies by race, office and issues. <b><u>How effective has endorsing candidates been?</u></b> Very, or else we wouldn't. <b><u>Any fall-out, good or bad?</u></b> Anytime you jump in to play hardball, there will be good and bad fallout. You need to be prepared for the negative and make sure your reasoning is sound and based on fact and not emotion.</p>
<p>Kent Area Dan Smith <a href="mailto:dsmith@kentbiz.com">dsmith@kentbiz.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>Does your chamber endorse candidates?</u></b> We did this in the 70s and it caused incredible hardship for the Chamber at that time. It caused problems with members and in perception of the Chamber. However, we have been rethinking the entire issue, especially since the most recent primary elections. We have continued to work somewhat behind the scenes. The Chamber's positions over the past five years have dealt with issues, and not candidates. We have been fairly aggressive with policy and issues, but not specific candidates</p>

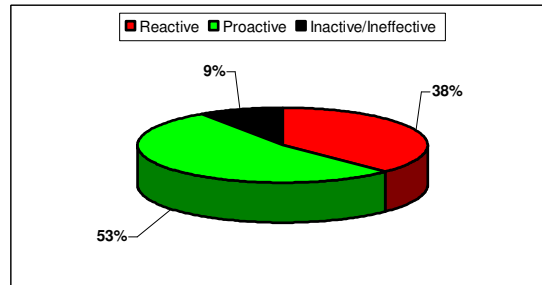
Does your chamber:

**9. Have a standing Public Policy/Legislative/Advocacy Committee?**



**10. If “yes”, what’s the best description for this committee?**

- a. Reactive
- b. Proactive
- c. Inactive or Ineffective



Watch for comments & observations about these findings in the next issue of the *E-briefs* newsletter.

**Thanks for your participation and responses! -BJ**