

Speaker: Real wealth made in tough times



The keynote speaker at Wednesday's Annual State of the Chamber here urged local businesses to take advantage of the economic struggles to grow their business for the future.

"Real wealth is made during times like this," said business consultant Aldonna Ambler. "Why not use this to our advantage?"

Ambler made the remarks during the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce event at Sea Oaks Country Club. Ambler is president of Ambler Growth Strategy Consultants Inc. which is headquartered in Hammonton.

"The recession is giving people the permission to whine," Ambler explained. "Why not listen? People are not expecting much from business right now.

"Expectations right now are so low . . . if you are able to address customers' issues, they will consider you a hero," Ambler added.

The recession is also forcing businesses to eye growth opportunities, Ambler said.

"Right now joint ventures are more possible during a recession," Ambler said. "Businesses are looking at doing their best to grow without money."

Ambler also painted a bleak picture of the state's finances as well.

"It's going to take New Jersey until 2016 to get out of this hole," Ambler said. "There is no money out there from the state."

In addition to Ambler's keynote address, the state Department of Transportation briefed the local business community on the future of the pending Route 72 causeway bridge project.

Pankesh Patel, project manager for the department, said the first phase of repairs to the Route 72 causeway is still on course to be completed by the busy Memorial Day weekend. The project will improve safety on the bridge over the Manahawkin Bay by repairing the concrete bridge deck, reconstructing the roadway curb and repaving Route 72 with a new surface of asphalt, state officials said.

"We are almost complete with the patchwork on the decks and we are expected to start the overlay in mid-March," Patel said. "We have a clause in our contract that says that (the work needs to be completed) by May 1, and we are right on track for that."

NICHOLAS HUBA