



This is indeed an exciting day for me. I am humbled by the trust you've placed in me to serve the Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce as President. It is a position of tremendous importance to each of our lives on so many levels and I am excited to have the chance to share with each of you my plans for making the most of my time as president.

Among the people in this room are some of the most cherished friends I've ever had. And so, it is with enormous gratitude and respect that I address you this evening.

It is my intention to honor Ketchikan's great and storied history by leading the Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce with an energy, focus, and vision that will carry the local economy forward to an abundant future.

The stage has truly been set for a dynamic economic outlook, even since I've been personally observing and participating in this organization.

When I arrived, Doug Ward was the Chamber President. Doug really brought a new level of enthusiasm and made some *powerful* course corrections during his year in office. One *major* example was helping get Ketchikan qualified as a HUB Zone.

The following year with JC Conley at the helm was also "revolutionary" because of the ties that were forged between Ketchikan and other cities in the Southeast, and Alaska as a whole.

Renee Schofield's term had the effect of creating a Chamber with a flair. Not only did we get things done, but also we did them with *style!* She skillfully merged many diverse personalities and points of view and opened the way for the Chamber to *truly* be a resource for the whole community. One of her crowning achievements was the acquisition of Blaine Ashcraft's services on our behalf.

And of course, this past year, under the guidance and direction of Mr. Joe Johnston, we have had several local businesses recognized on a state and national level.

With a foundation like that, it is no surprise that our membership has grown at the rate it has.

It makes my job quite a bit easier as we do have some momentum to carry us forward to our mission. In order to actually make significant progress toward bringing the Chamber's mission to pass, it is going to require all of us on the Board and especially the membership at large to display extraordinary leadership. Folks, what I am proposing, is that we literally, each, appoint ourselves "Ambassadors of Ketchikan."

What that means in action terms is that we must become intimately familiar with the Chamber's mission. We as a board, during this year's forecasting and planning retreat, ratified each and every element of the Chamber's mission statement as not only relevant, but as *vital* to the sustained economic growth of our community, which certainly underpins the quality of life we can expect to enjoy here.

Imagine with me for a moment how life in Ketchikan will be as we begin to reap the harvest from the seeds we're sowing in 2007. Let's envision together what the actual accomplishment of this mission statement will mean to our community.

Within this vision, there are first and foremost, healthy thriving local businesses, which provide ample high-paying, satisfying jobs that fund the vibrant lifestyles of our residents. There is plenty of land on which to build suitable housing because we now have easy access to Gravina Island. We are looked too by cities around the world as a progressive, proactive, and forward-thinking populace because of our excellent stewardship, utilization of our natural resources, and the amazing synergy we derive from our diversity. We enjoy a remarkable retention of the brainpower of our children as they have wonderful opportunities to utilize their skills and talents right here at home.

In order to actually experience this vision, we will need to fully embody the spirit of this mission, live it daily in our businesses, and our civic and charitable enterprises until it is woven so inextricably within the fiber of our being that we become known as a community where the whole truly *is* greater than the sum of its parts.

Already, we are known as a community who bands together in the face adversity and comes out in full force to rally around those in need. My friends, tonight I would like to invite you to join me in talking our game up a notch. Let us take this year to transform ourselves into a community that takes responsibility for our results *in advance* by planning to succeed and preparing to be amazed.

I heard it said that a true leader is the point of light at the end of the tunnel for his team to follow. As we go forward together as a team in 2007, know that I am committed to be that light, illuminating our Chamber's mission and running along, paving the way for Ketchikan's business community to prosper, relentlessly championing the ideals of success, worthwhile work, and abundant reward.

This is your town. This is your time. You deserve the best, so let's go. Let's do this! ...and remember... **PREPARE TO BE AMAZED!**

Rob Skinner