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Happy New Year

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New Year's Resolutions or Rules for Success?

Have you made a New Year's Resolution this year? It seems to get harder and harder each year to keep them doesn't it? I found something a little different this year to replace resolutions. Rules. They are Bob Parson's Rules for Success in Business and Life in General. Bob Parsons is the founder of GoDaddy.com. When I read these I thought that they really fit better in many ways than making resolutions. For one thing, they are achievable! And even if you decide to tackle just a few of them, they have the potential to make a difference in both your personal and business life. So I have posted these on my desk for the New Year and I am sharing with you! I hope you enjoy!

Happy New Year! ~

Patti Jensen

Tourism Director, Mitchell County Chamber

Rules for Success in Business and Life in General

- 1. Get and stay out of your comfort zone.** I believe that not much happens of any significance when we're in our comfort zone. I hear people say, "But I'm concerned about security." My response to that is simple: "Security is for cadavers."
- 2. Never give up.** Almost nothing works the first time it's attempted. Just because what you're doing does not seem to be working, doesn't mean it won't work. It just means that it might not work the way you're doing it. If it was easy, everyone would be doing it, and you wouldn't have an opportunity.
- 3. When you're ready to quit, you're closer than you think.** There's an old Chinese saying that I just love, and I believe it is so true. It goes like this: "The temptation to quit will be greatest just before you are about to succeed."
- 4. With regard to whatever worries you, not only accept the worst thing that could happen, but make it a point to quantify what the worst thing could be.** Very seldom will the worst consequence be anywhere near as bad as a cloud of "undefined consequences." My father would tell me early on, when I was struggling and losing my shirt trying to get Parsons Technology going, "Well, Robert, if it doesn't work, they can't eat you."
- 5. Focus on what you want to have happen.** Remember that old saying, "As you think, so shall you be."
- 6. Take things a day at a time.** No matter how difficult your situation is, you can get through it if you don't look too far into the future, and focus on the present moment. You can get through anything one day at a time.
- 7. Always be moving forward.** Never stop investing. Never stop improving. Never stop doing something new. The moment you stop improving your organization, it starts to die. Make it your goal to be better each and every day, in some small way. Remember the Japanese concept of Kaizen. Small daily improvements eventually result in huge advantages.
- 8. Be quick to decide.** Remember what General George S. Patton said: "A good plan violently executed today is far and away better than a perfect plan tomorrow."
- 9. Measure everything of significance.** I swear this is true. Anything that is measured and watched,

improves.

10. Anything that is not managed will deteriorate. If you want to uncover problems you don't know about, take a few moments and look closely at the areas you haven't examined for a while. I guarantee you problems will be there.

11. Pay attention to your competitors, but pay more attention to what you're doing. When you look at your competitors, remember that everything looks perfect at a distance. Even the planet Earth, if you get far enough into space, looks like a peaceful place.

12. Never let anybody push you around. In our society, with our laws and even playing field, you have just as much right to what you're doing as anyone else, provided that what you're doing is legal.

13. Never expect life to be fair. Life isn't fair. You make your own breaks. You'll be doing good if the only meaning fair has to you, is something that you pay when you get on a bus (i.e., fare).

14. Solve your own problems. You'll find that by coming up with your own solutions, you'll develop a competitive edge. Masura I buka, the co-founder of SONY, said it best: "You never succeed in technology, business, or anything by following the others." There's also an old Asian saying that I remind myself of frequently. It goes like this: "A wise man keeps his own counsel."

15. Don't take yourself too seriously. Lighten up. Often, at least half of what we accomplish is due to luck. None of us are in control as much as we like to think we are.

16. There's always a reason to smile. Find it. After all, you're really lucky just to be alive. Life is short. More and more, I agree with my little brother. He always reminds me: "We're not here for a long time; we're here for a good time."

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What's In Store for 2010?

The Mitchell County Chamber is continuously looking for new ways to help the local business economy and our current businesses. We are always seeking out new partnerships on both the local, state and federal levels to create opportunities and assistance for our local business owners. In addition, the Chamber works to provide opportunities to grow your business by hosting networking events and workshops.

To begin the New Year the Chamber has already scheduled its first member workshop to address the growing questions and concerns surrounding employment laws. The Chamber will welcome Mr. David Smith, attorney and immediate past president of the NC Association of Health Underwriters, for a special workshop on employments laws for small businesses on **January 28**. Look for your invitation with more information in the coming days!

The Government Affairs Committee of the Chamber continues to focus on supporting the needs of the local businesses, especially in regards to local infrastructure. The GAC has been diligent in their support of the new water and sewer lines to Mitchell High School as well as in their investigation and support of local government in their research for a new GIS system for the county. To date, Mitchell County is believed to

be the only county in the State without this important filing and mapping system. In addition, the GAC was the leading organization in bringing together the three county area for a Broadband Initiative to benefit the entire region.

The Membership Committee is developing a new brochure to assist those interested in starting their own business in Mitchell County. The brochure answers questions about license requirements, taxes, etc. and provides a resource for entrepreneurs as they begin the exciting journey of starting their own business. In that same track, the Chamber is also a member of the Entrepreneurial Council whose work over the last year has gained the AdvantageWest's Certified Entrepreneurial Program(SM) certification for Mitchell County.

The Travel and Tourism Committee continues work on the Craft Your Adventure promotion, which has been the Chamber's travel promotion identity for the past six years. The Craft Your Adventure campaign focuses on the two most popular reasons travelers visit our area...Craft and Outdoor Recreation. In particular, we have worked this past year with several film crews and writers focusing on trout fishing in the area and will continue that focus this year by assisting with two televised specials on Fly Rod Chronicles featuring Spruce Pine and Bakersville. But that's not the only areas we focus on...we also target motorcycle groups, car groups, Parkway travelers, Heritage tourists, bus & church groups and more! The Travel and Tourism committee develops ideas for new marketing and advertising outlets as well and will begin the new advertising year with an ad in Blue Ridge Country in March.

These are just highlights of areas each committee is working on. Each month these committees juggle several agenda items and tasks on behalf of the Chamber membership in an effort to seek ways to improve our members' businesses and our community. We invite your input and suggestions at any time!

What's On Your Agenda this Year?

We hope that you will keep the Chamber informed of your events, opportunities, accomplishments and awards as the year progresses. We can only share your news if you tell us! Now is the time to share your scheduled events for 2010! The Chamber distributes a weekly email newsletter each Tuesday with upcoming events and member news. This is a benefit of your membership and an opportunity to share your business with over 500 other businesses on the distribution list. Let us hear from you! The deadline for inclusion in the weekly newsletter is the Monday of each week.

Tourism News

STATE PARKS DECLARE 2010 THE "YEAR OF THE BIRDS"

North Carolina's state parks will pay tribute to its winged residents and visitors in 2010 by celebrating the "Year of the Birds," according to the N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation. Throughout the year, birds and bird-watching will be the focus of special programs and activities in the state parks, many of them in partnership with Audubon North Carolina, which works with the state parks system on research and management projects involving bird habitats. The state parks system is also making available a special bandana of some of the signature birds found in the parks. To find out more, visit <http://www.ncparks.gov/News/releases/release.php?id=169>.

Sports Travel is Scoring Big

Sports travel – following a team on the road to away games or vacationing at major attractions like the college football bowls that proliferate during the holiday season – is scoring big, travel researchers say.

Some aspects of sports travel have even been recession-proof, growing while so many other travel categories slump. Researchers estimate that 10 percent to 15 percent of fans at regular-season professional sports events are visitors from out of town, according to Lisa Delpy Neirotti, associate professor of tourism and sport management at George Washington University's business school. And 27 percent of all travel expenditures are trips that involve some sports – from golf games and skiing to kids' soccer tournaments to major attractions like Super Bowls and Olympics. That makes sports travel a \$182 billion a year business, Neirotti said, and, to cash in on the sports-travel boom, some 300 different U.S. cities have at least one person working for the local government or convention bureau dedicated to sports events. Small cities may not get major conventions, but bringing 500 parents to a soccer tournament can be a big economic boost. To find out more, visit <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703521904574614140936212048.html>

Travel Business Likely to Remain Weak in 2010, New Poll Finds

Americans say they aren't likely to travel much more in 2010 than they have this year, despite optimism that they will from many Wall Street and travel industry analysts and industry leaders. A new USA TODAY/ Gallup Poll finds that only 16 percent plan to fly more or stay more often in hotels next year than they did in 2009. About 30 percent say they actually will fly less frequently and have fewer hotel stays. The primary reason: a still-weak economy. To find out more, visit http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2009-12-28-2010-travel-plans-poll_N.htm

N.C. GREEN BUSINESS FUND GRANTS NOW OPEN

The 2010 N.C. Green Business Fund solicitation (call for proposals) is now open. Eligibility for the grant is limited to small for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, state agencies and local governments to encourage the expansion of small to medium sized businesses with 100 or fewer employees that have innovative commercial technologies, products and services to grow a green economy in the state. Agencies must have their principal base of business in North Carolina. Those interested in applying for the N.C. Green Business Fund should visit <http://www.ncscitech.com/gbf/> to obtain a copy of the Solicitation and to familiarize themselves with the application requirements. Deadline for the receipt of pre-proposals (750 words maximum) is **Jan. 19**. Questions may be sent to Paul Shannon via pshannon@nccommerce.com.

For Travelers, a Personal Concierge on Your Phone

Downloadable applications ("apps") for the iPhone, Blackberry and other smartphones are fast becoming indispensable among business travelers who use their phones to help them organize and navigate trips with little more effort than a few taps on a touch screen. And looking ahead, technology experts envision tools that will be, in effect, personal concierges - handling everything from reservations to reimbursements. In interviews, business travelers indicated that the most popular travel-related apps fell into two categories: organization aids and location-based tools. Despite the challenges, industry analysts predict that smartphones will soon be as important to business travelers as credit cards. To find out more, visit http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/22/business/22apps.html?_r=1&ref=travel.

SUGAR MOUNTAIN CELEBRATES 40 YEARS AS WNC SKI SEASON GEARS UP

North Carolina's ski season is gearing up as all the state's ski and tubing attractions are now open and expecting a busy season, despite the tough economy and lack of cold weather so far. Sugar Mountain is celebrating its 40th anniversary as one of North Carolina's premier ski resorts. "We're excited for the season," Sugar Mountain Resort's Marketing Director Kim Jochl said. "We do whatever we possibly can with the weather we have, like most other ski areas here. We find that skiers and snowboarders are resilient." Ski resorts are offering special programs geared for supervised teens, women or men to appeal to specific groups in addition to families and individual skiers. Hawksnest has all four parks open for snow tubing and now offers one of the only winter zip lines in the nation. Wolf Ridge Ski Area in Mars Hill co-owner Rick Bussey said it should be a busy season, especially with the reopening of the popular Breakaway Ski slope (a ski-through tunnel). To find out more, visit <http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20091210/OUTDOORS/912100319>.

FREEMAN TO PRESENT NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY ISSUES AT GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE; REGISTRATION OPENS JAN. 5

Geoff Freeman, senior vice president of public affairs for the [U.S. Travel Association](#), will discuss national tourism policy issues and how they impact communities across North Carolina at the [N.C. Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism](#) in New Bern. With issues like H1N1, new taxes and the Travel Promotion Act facing the travel industry as the country recovers from the current economic crisis, Freeman offers his front-row perspective as leaders shape national policies that affect the industry everywhere – from the largest visitor destinations to small towns.

Online registration for the March 21-23 conference opens Jan. 5, with a special reduced rate for early registration. Rooms are being held at the newly remodeled [Hilton New Bern Riverside, Comfort Suites Riverfront Park](#), [BridgePoint Hotel & Marina](#) and [Hampton Inn](#), so make your reservation early and be sure to ask for the N.C. Governor's Conference rate.

New information is being added daily to the Web site, so watch www.nccommerce.com/Tourism/GovernorsConference for updates and plan to register online during the early registration period. Watch Newslink for information about other speakers; for sponsorship or other information, contact Heidi Walters at (919) 715-6702 or via hwalters@nccommerce.com.

Missed the Holiday Festival? Check out these photos from the event!



Click the link below for photos from the Holiday Festival in Spruce Pine sponsored by the Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree

http://www.slide.com/r/EMwrkpLUuD8ythg5OwIRCwE8DUebUvUO?previous_view=mscd_embedded_url&view=original

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