

December 20, 2009

Rochester Business Alliance's Holiday Jam attended by 300

The Rochester Business Alliance's Business After Hours Holiday Jam is always one of the regional chamber of commerce's most well-attended events of the year.

Tuesday night was no exception, despite a heavy snowfall that started in the middle of the day and continued through the evening. Three hundred people gathered at the Riverside Convention Center to mingle and talk business.

"Cards are being exchanged, deals are being struck, meetings are being made," said Ellen Rosen, vice president of marketing for RBA. "There's some serious business going on."

Last year, 93 percent of attendees said they made a new business contact at the event, which also featured a mini-trade show, door prizes and plenty of food and drink.

The event's popularity is due to both the proximity to the holidays and the price tag; tickets were just \$10 for RBA members to the last event of the "Business After Hours" series in the calendar year, an appealing offer given the made-to-order pasta, hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine that was on hand.

But some attendees chose to spend a little more by sponsoring a booth at the event, including trucking company RIST Transport Ltd.

"It's a good marketing move for us, because there's a lot of folks in the area that may have a need for transportation that don't know about RIST Transport," said Anthony Compisi, an account manager with the company. "We're a few miles away in Phelps, in Ontario County, so we're making an effort to get a better presence in Monroe County and in the greater Rochester area."

"This one's nice because so far, everybody we've talked to, we can do something for them and they can do something for us," said Cheryl Baldwin, project manager for RIST Transport.

Sedgwick Business Interiors also sponsored a booth, and Sara Rexford and Sue Smith spent the evening talking to curious passers-by about the company, a Rochester-based provider of office furniture.

"It's a little bit easier than just being here with a tag on your shirt," said Rexford, market manager for Sedgwick Business Interiors. "It tells what we do, and we're trying to market and get a little bit more exposure."

An upscale business meet-and-mingle might not seem like the most ideal place to rent apartments, but Rustic Village Apartments also had a booth set up in the trade show. Danielle Roder, rental consultant for the Brighton apartment complex, said that the company was attempting to make partnerships with other area businesses.

"We may speak to another business that has a similar target audience — young professionals and graduate students — and if we were to establish a partnership, it could be mutually beneficial for each party," said Roder. "We could refer them and they could refer us."