



RIBBON CUTTINGS AND GROUNDBREAKINGS

Special Event Planning Guide

...From Simple to Elaborate!

Congratulations on your new business or location! Now is a very busy and exciting time for you, and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce has compiled this Special Events Planning Guide to make executing your event easier and more successful.

Special events can be simple, stress-free celebrations or you can plan a more comprehensive event that might involve a large number of guests and more extensive planning.

In the following pages you'll find a "stress-free" event planner (one page!) as well as a more extensive procedure for special events condensed into seven easy steps...each clearly detailed in this packet. The most important part of your planning an event occurs before you make your first phone call. This packet should help you organize, prioritize and prepare for your event.

The Ambassadors of the Chamber would like to be involved in all of your company's events; however, we must limit our active participation to:

- Ribbon cuttings/groundbreakings for new businesses in our community
- Significant expansions of existing businesses
- Groundbreaking ceremonies for new locations
- Relocation to new location within last three months

If you have questions , please call Marsha Sheahan at the Chamber office, 785.234.2644.

Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce

120 SE Sixth Avenue, Suite 110

Topeka, KS 66603

785.234.2644 Fax 785.234.8656

www.TopekaChamber.org

E-mail: topekainfo@TopekaChamber.org

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Provided as a service of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce

RIBBON CUTTING PRICE SHEET

Ribbon

Effective January 1, 2006

Cuttings/Groundbreakings:

- The Chamber will provide **ribbon and scissors or up to 12 shovels.**
- The Chamber will present a **congratulation or first dollar of profit plaque.**
- A Chamber staff member or Ambassador will **serve as MC** of the ribbon cutting ceremony, recognizing the business owners and other officials present. (optional)
- One or more Chamber **staff members will attend.**
- The Chamber will **invite the Chamber Ambassadors & Diplomats** to attend.
- The **Chamber will inform the media** of the ribbon cutting/groundbreaking. (Business owner needs to contact the business editors to ask for full story.)
- Events will be done between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. (No weekend or after hours events.)

Member cost: \$0 (benefit of membership)
Non-member cost: \$100.00

Additional Services Available	Member Cost	Non-Member Cost
Scissors & Ribbon/Shovel Rental	No cost	Not available
A picture of the ribbon cutting or the business owners in their place of business will be included in the Chamber's monthly newsletter, <i>Topeka Business</i>	No cost	Not available
Purchase of Labels for Entire Membership (approximately 2,100)	\$50.00	\$200.00
Purchase of Labels for Main Firm Contact (approximately 1,400)	\$25.00	\$125.00
Lists: Major employers, business leaders, elected officials, civic organizations, media	Upon request, no cost	Upon request, no cost

For further information, or to arrange for a ribbon cutting/groundbreaking, contact Marsha Sheahan, Chamber vice president public relations, 785.234.2644. ***Ribbon cuttings and groundbreaking events must be scheduled at least 10 business days prior to the event.***

A SIMPLE EVENT

You've just opened your new business, or are planning to commence construction for your new building. You want to celebrate and have the community recognize your businesses' growth. This page details steps to a "stress-free" event.

1. As you get ready to open your business—or as you get ready to start construction—set a date for your celebration. Make sure your business is ready for "show and tell." Ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings must be scheduled at least 10 business days prior to the event.
2. Call Marsha Sheahan at the Chamber office, 785.234.2644, and confirm availability of Chamber Ambassadors and staff.
3. If you'd like the Mayor to attend, call his/her office, 785.368.3895, and talk with the Mayor's scheduling assistant. She'll let you know of his availability.
4. Set the time of your event based on availability of you and your staff, the Chamber Ambassadors and the Mayor (if applicable).
5. The Chamber Ambassadors and the Diplomats will be invited to attend by Chamber staff.
6. You can invite your family, friends, employees, vendors, neighboring businesses and others important to your business.
7. For media coverage:
 - (a) Call the managing editor at the Topeka Capital-Journal, 785.295.1212, and make sure the paper knows about your new business and/or new construction. Invite him/her (or one of the staff) to attend the event.
8. You might want to plan light refreshments for the event based on the event's time of day. This is a nice touch, but certainly not a necessity!
9. A Chamber staff member will serve as master of ceremonies. Be prepared to tell about your business and to introduce your key staff members and others important to your business. Brief remarks are the norm!
10. The Chamber will do the rest! We'll bring the ribbon and scissors (or shovels), a congratulations plaque and if the firm is a member we'll take a picture for the Chamber's newsletter, Topeka Business.

That's it -- stress free and lots of fun!

Read on for details about a larger celebration . . .

Step 1: Setting a Date

Selecting a date is one of the most important decisions you will make as you begin the process of planning and staging a successful special event. It can affect all aspects of the outcome, and is worth very careful thought. Before you make your decision, here are some important things to consider:

- Allow plenty of time for preparation. If possible, give yourself at least two weeks to a month to make all your arrangements. After you've chosen a day/time and expect to have Chamber involvement, please call Marsha Sheahan at the Chamber to confirm availability of Chamber Ambassadors and staff, 785.234.2644. Ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings must be scheduled at least 10 business days prior to the event.
- Be aware of major holidays and avoid planning your event for those days. Also, if you are trying to attract bankers or government officials, take note of any special holidays when their offices may be closed.
- Try to avoid a conflict with major community events and activities. Check out the community calendar at www.TopekaChamber.org.
- The best days of the week to get good attendance are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Mondays tend to be too busy for most people to leave the office and many people take Fridays off (especially in the summer) to start their weekend early.
- And speaking of weekends, try to avoid planning your event on a Saturday or Sunday. Most people have their own recreation or business plans on those days, and our experience tells us your attendance could drop significantly. The Ambassadors are available during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.) If you have an event on the weekend, Chamber members are welcome to borrow the scissors or shovels. Just give us a call.

Notes/Questions/Things To Do:

Step 2: Choosing the Best Time of Day

The time of day you choose to hold your event is also critical to its success. It's an important step in the planning process and helps determine the type of special event that you'll conduct. Morning functions, for example, will have an entirely different atmosphere and style than a late afternoon event or an evening cocktail reception. Luncheon gatherings will naturally require more food and beverages. Consider the following when making your decision:

- Morning events should begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m., and are often held as a business opens for the day (approximately 10:00 a.m.)
- Luncheon events often turn out well, since most everyone eats a mid-day meal. However, luncheons require more advance notice in sending out invitations. Many people schedule luncheon arrangements weeks ahead, and they will need to be notified as early as possible to get your event on their calendars.
- Late afternoon and early evening functions are popular as they allow people to drop by at the end of the day at their convenience. Late afternoon/early evening events generally start at 4:00 p.m. and continue until 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. Unless your event is a major one, few people will want to go home, change clothes and go out again, so avoid late evening functions (after 7:00 p.m.). Be sure to designate a time for a ribbon-cutting or other special ceremonies to lend focus to your event.
- A half-day open house or tours of your company are another option. However, if you decide on a half-day event, be certain to have a designated time for a ribbon-cutting or other special ceremonies to lend focus to your event.
- If media coverage is important to you, give serious consideration to their deadlines before selecting a time for your event. For example, electronic media prefer events no later than 4:00 p.m. so the event can be on the evening news. The newspaper's deadline is generally mid-afternoon for such stories.
- If having the Mayor in attendance is important, you'll want to call and talk with the Mayor's scheduling assistant to confirm his/her availability. Call 785.368.3895.

Notes/Questions/Things To Do:

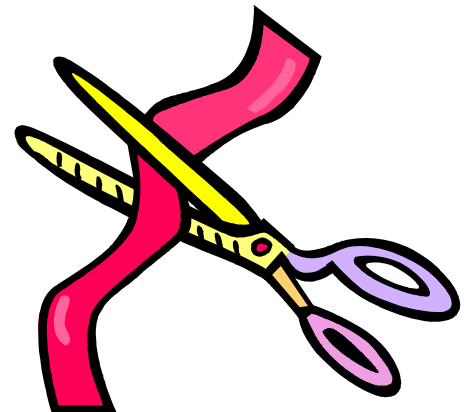
Step 3: Developing an Invitation List

Your event can be considered a complete success if you do nothing more than invite the right people to attend. The "right" people will vary depending on the event, but a guest list might include some of the following:

- Potential and current customers (your most important group)
- Suppliers or vendors
- Friends and family. This is a big day for you and you'll want to share it with them.
- Your employees and their spouses
- Those who helped you get started—your banker, accountant, attorney, and other advisors
- Fellow business men and women in your area or zip code
- Representatives from the Chamber—Ambassadors, Diplomats and staff
- Key government officials—the City Council member and County Commissioner from the district in which your business is located (This list is available from the Chamber; please ask for a copy.)
- The media (This list is available from the Chamber; please ask for a copy.)

Once you've identified your guest list, here are some tips to remember when inviting them:

- Prepare a nice letter or very basic invitation...but always keep it simple and to the point; make sure all basic information is included: who, what, when, where and why.
- Be sure to include an RSVP. An RSVP will give you an idea about how much food and beverage to provide.
- Allow sufficient notice: between a week to ten days is ideal for most events, although two weeks would be preferable if you are planning a luncheon or dinner event.
- Be sure to include a good map or very clear instructions on how to get to your event. A street address alone is sometimes not sufficient.
- If you choose to do a fancy or elaborate invitation, do it right. Get professional help from a graphic artist or designer.
- If spouses are invited, say so. Otherwise, it will be assumed they are not.
- Send your invitation by first-class mail, if at all possible. bulk mail can take a week or longer, which could seriously hurt your attendance.



Step 4: Serving Food and Beverage

Although it's an added expense that you may prefer to avoid, serving food and beverage of some kind adds a nice touch. Here are some hints:

- For morning events, coffee, juices and pastries would be perfect. A full breakfast is not necessary.
- At luncheon functions, serve some kind of sandwich or buffet meal. Remember: it's your guests' lunchtime and they will expect some kind of substantive food.
- During late afternoon events, light hors d'oeuvres or finger foods are appropriate. Chips, dips, cheeses, vegetable plates or cold-cut meat trays are perfect.
- If you choose to have a formal dinner or late evening party, make it exceptionally nice. If you are asking people to spend most of their evening at your event, they deserve something special.
- Serving alcohol: the only times alcoholic beverages are advisable are for late afternoon or evening events. Many people enjoy an after-work cocktail. Remember to provide some non-alcoholic beverages for guests who don't drink. (Check with your insurance agent about host liability.) You cannot serve alcoholic beverages if your event is open to the public—it must be an invitation only affair, unless you have a liquor license in place.
- It would be smart to enlist the help of a professional caterer for medium or large events, or if you haven't the time, manpower or experience to provide your own food and beverage. Caterers can give you good, solid advice and are not as costly as you might think. See page 12 of this booklet for a list of Chamber members that cater.
- If you do decide to provide your own refreshments, be sure to have an ample amount of food and beverage for your guests, as well as sufficient plates, cups, napkins, trash cans and other supply items. Running out of food and drink is a bad way to end an event.

Notes/Questions/Things To Do:

Step 5: Planning a Program

Whether you're staging a groundbreaking or a ribbon cutting for your company, it adds a nice touch to an event to have a brief program of some kind. It provides not only valuable recognition for you and your key people, but it makes the event more purposeful, and allows you to explain more about your business. Consider these suggestions when planning your program or formal ceremony:

- The shorter, the better. People have very brief attention spans at these events, and you might lose an embarrassingly large part of your crowd if the program drags on too long. As a rule of thumb, no program or official ceremony should last longer than 20 to 30 minutes, with 10 to 15 minutes being ideal.
- Your program should be led by a good, effective master of ceremonies. He or she can keep your program moving smoothly, and inject some humor when needed. If you like, a Chamber staff member can serve in this role.
- Limit the number of speakers and the length of their speeches. People get bored easily when speakers ramble on for too long or are repetitive. Set a time limit for all those you ask to take part in the program.
- Speakers taking part in any formal program should include appropriate city or county government representatives, a Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce representative, and you and/or your board chairman or designee if appropriate. Be sure to give each of your speakers a call the day before the event as a reminder.
- Introduce only those who need to be introduced even though the temptation will be to acknowledge nearly everyone in attendance whom you know. You may want to verbally recognize and thank those that have played an active role in your project—banker, contractor, architect, but these people generally don't need to be asked to speak. Often a simple "group" thank you to your friends and family is adequate.
- Conclude your program with the appropriate ceremonial or symbolic activity to commemorate the event: a ribbon cutting for a grand opening or shoveling the first load of dirt for a groundbreaking. These are nice ways to let guests know the formal program is over and they also create good publicity photos. For groundbreaking ceremonies we suggest you ask your contractor to have some shovel-ready dirt brought in or dug in advance. That way your dignitaries can easily "break ground."
- If your event includes an open house or tour of your facilities, be sure friendly and knowledgeable employees conduct group tours. Unguided self-tours are not nearly as valuable as guided tours.
- While not necessary, if you do plan to give a favor to your guests, designate someone to be responsible for giving them to your guests. You as the owner, host/hostess have other responsibilities. Favors might be a specialty item, flower, brochure about your business, sticker, menu, business card, etc.

Step 7: Enlisting the Chamber's Help

As you do your pre-planning, contact the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce at 785.234.2644 to assure availability of the Chamber Ambassadors, Diplomats and staff members. We will need the specifics of your company and special event (i.e. date, time, location, type of event, etc.). We will then notify the Ambassadors and Diplomats of your event.

REMEMBER: the earlier you contact us, the better. These events must be scheduled at least 10 business days prior to the event. The following lists the responsibilities of you and the Chamber.

You:

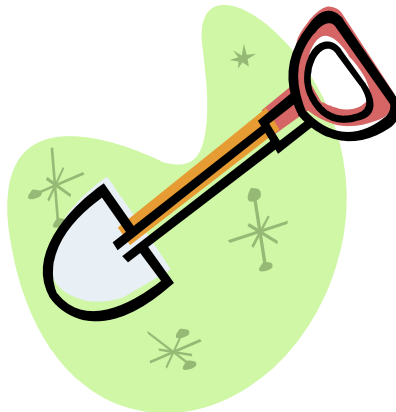
- Pre-plan
- Call Marsha Sheahan at the Chamber to confirm a date, 785.234.2644
- Finish plans
- Execute plans

Chamber Contact:

- Gets specifics of event
- Contacts Ambassadors and Diplomats
- Coordinates specifics of your event with you
- Provides scissors and ribbon for the Ribbon Cutting
- Provides shovels for groundbreaking events (we have 12 gold shovels)
- Provides a framed plaque

Be sure to ask the Chamber for the following if you need them:

- List of elected officials, Chamber members, media, etc.
- Could a staff member serve as master of ceremonies?



OTHER CHAMBER SERVICES

We encourage you to use Chamber Member Firms for your event:

Audio Visual:

Cytek Media Systems: 295.4200
Home Connections: 267.6904
Kansas Audio Video: 232.5966
Smith Audio Visual: 235.3481

Florists:

Flower Gallery: 273.1780
Porterfield's Flowers & Gifts: 354.1707
University Flowers: 232.4012

Caterers:

Aboud's Catering: 478.9290
Annie's Place: 273.0848
Blind Tiger Brewery & Restaurant: 267.BREW
Blue Planet Café: 783.8883
Bosco's Downtown: 232.6726
Boss Hawg's Barbeque: 273.7300
Bradley's Corner Café: 235.0086
Brancato's Catering: 832.2837
Brickyard Barn Catering & Event Planning:
235.0057
Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar: 783.2999
Carlos O'Kelly's Mexican Café: 266.3457
Celtic Fox: 235.2138
Chez Yasu: 357.1003
Cielito Lindo's Mexican Restaurant: 357.8859
Classic Bean-Downtown: 232.1001
Classic Bean-Fairlawn Plaza: 271.5005
Dickey's Barbeque Pit: 215.8215
Eagle's Nest Coffee Shop: 233.0518
Famous Dave's BBQ: 272.2944
Field of Greens/The Break Room: 290.4733
Flint Hills BBQ & Catering: 783.2300
Giovani's Pizzeria & Café: 235.2023
Glory Days Pizza—Fleming Pl.: 271.5402
Hooters: 273.9464
Hy-Vee: 273.3026

Jason's Deli: 478.4144
Jayhawk Corner Café: 357.4410
Johnny Carino's Italian: 215.8400
Jose Peppers: 783.8100
Kansan Grill: 233.0086
Kentucky Fried Chicken: 267.7117
Millennium Café: 580.4400
Mr. Goodcents: 271.9898
New City: 271.8646
Old Chicago: 273.5522
On The Border: 228.0700
Outback Steakhouse: 272.3222
Paisano's Ristorante: 273.0100
Papa John's Pizza: 272.2111
Pepe & Chela's: 357.8332
Perkins: 273.0300
PT's Coffee Co.: 273.4920
Qdoba Mexican Grill: 271.9400
Quizno's: 233.5200
Red Lobster: 271.7302
Red Robin: 271.5400
Rib Crib: 273.4227
Rowhouse Restaurant & Catering: 235.1700
Subway: 272.2255
Texas Roadhouse: 271.7427



Thank you for supporting Chamber members!