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## Putting its best foot forward

*Chamber installs officers and new members*

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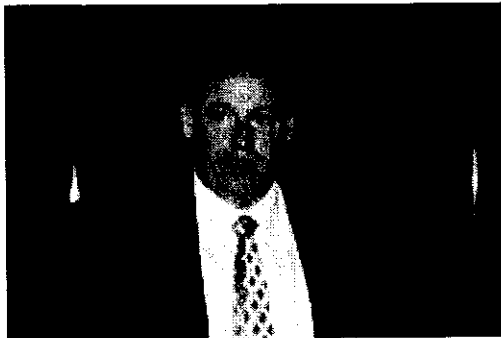
by Al Sullivan

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Set against the backdrop of the stunningly elegant Bayonne Golf Club clubhouse, the Bayonne Chamber of Commerce held its installation of officers and trustees on Oct. 22.



Newly reappointed chamber president Matthew Dorans is credited with bringing the chamber into a new era when he took over three years ago, making changes that include the expanding of the chamber's membership, as well as increasing its networking capability.



The installation of officers is generally seen as the beginning of a new cycle for the chamber, and is accompanied this year with the expected opening of the Bayonne Crossing Mall that may bring new members into the chamber next year.



Ninety eight years old this year, the chamber is currently already in preparations to celebrate its centennial in 2012.

In speaking before the chamber, Bayonne Mayor Mark Smith said the recent successes of the chamber have much to do with Dorans' efforts.

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**“There is always transition, but there are things that stay the same.” – Mayor Mark Smith**

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“He is a man who is working hard every single day,” Smith said. “He said something that struck me. He said this is a city in transition. There is always transition, but there are things that stay the same.”

He said some people make Bayonne what is, working hard to keep it a community worth living in, and that the city always puts its best foot forward.

“I have the pleasure as mayor of assuring that we continue to do that,” he said.

He said the chamber is also about generational relationships, about those who worked hard in the past, and passing on these duties to the next generation. With the influx of new members to the chamber and new businesses to Bayonne, Smith said the city is seeing such an intergenerational movement now.

“It’s about doing what is right for your community,” Smith said. “This city can’t do anything without you folks. You’re the backbone that makes this city work.”

### **Changed since the industrial days**

The chamber was founded in 1912, and according to Dorans in his welcoming statement, has striven since to “stimulate, retain, improve, and expand the role of business life in the community.”

In the past, the chamber represented heavy industry and large manufacturers, but lost focus as these types of businesses left Bayonne. In the heyday of the 1940s and 1950s, the Chamber of Commerce often was seen as a powerful voice in the community, helping City Hall to shape pro-business policies. Now most of the large manufacturers that once made up the economic base of the city are gone, and the world is in the midst of one of the greatest economic downturns in decades.

“The chamber continues to encourage open dialogue on all well-reasoned views to make vetted recommendations to our city, county, state, and federal legislators towards the betterment of our citizens,” Dorans said in his statement.

Dorans, who became president of the Bayonne Chamber of Commerce early in 2007, said reaching out to the community through a variety of “meet and greet” events has allowed the chamber to introduce itself to a new business community and has brought in new members.

Earlier this year, Dorans talked about these changes and how the chamber intended to embrace some of the new businesses and professions such as financial and medical.

The installation of Mary Divock, executive director of the Bayonne Town Center, and Vincent Lombardo of UCP of Hudson County as new trustees fulfilled Dorans’ promise to begin teaming up with other organizations in order to expand the chamber’s reach in the community. Dorans’ goal was to have the chamber seek new trustees, too; people who can help continue the rebirth of the

organization and its move into modern times.

Also newly-named as a trustee to the chamber this year is *Hudson Reporter* Publisher Dave Unger.

Other trustees reinstated include Edward Norton of Muralo Company; Terry Lucania of IMTT; Joyce Luback of Ken's Marine; Mary-Ann Rowland of A Plus Temps; Gail Godesky of the Provident Bank; Former Mayor Len Kiczek, an attorney; Annette Rubin of Exit on the Hudson Realty; and Vincent Virga of Preferred Financial Services.

Renamed as the chamber's officers were Dorans, of In-Line Air-Conditioning, was named as president; Ginger Boele Kemp of Four Seasons Travel, vice president; Patricia Murphy of Gormley, LoRe & Murphy Insurance, secretary; and Catherine Laszkow of BCB Community Bank, treasurer.

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