

Anyone can host a business after hours. Small businesses by joining others have had successful after hours and have kept the cost down. Non-profit groups have hosted after hours displaying information about their charity. Large and medium size organizations as well have sponsored business after hours, showcasing their establishments and commitment to the business community.

There are a few key considerations to remember when sponsoring a Business After Hours.

1. Book a business after hours early in the year, especially if you have an anniversary your organization wishes to celebrate or a specific time of year in mind for your after hours. *The Chamber schedules business after hours up to a year in advance.*
2. The Chamber advertises each business after hours through its monthly newsletter, weekly FAX, Chamber events, press releases and the President's column that appears in the *Northwest Herald*. *We advise the creating of a special invitation to be sent to the Chamber membership as well as any suppliers you wish to invite.* This tends to lend importance to your special event.
3. After Hours start promptly at 5:00 pm and end at 7:00 pm. The Chamber arrives at 4:45 pm. Usually a table and chair is available by the door for the Chamber representatives to set up nametags, information and brochures. Business cards are collected from all attendees to be left with the host.
4. Beverages and hors d'oeuvres are provided by the host. This usually includes soda, wine, beer and hand-held food. We discourage the consumption of hard alcohol. Success menu's include themed food such as backyard barbecue, Hawaiian, Hispanic, Pig Roast. Most popular is a taste of the community featuring many area restaurants.
5. Other suggestions:
 - a. Provide plenty of *parking*. Lack of parking discourages would be attendees.
 - b. *Theme* your after hours, i.e. health expo, office equipment show, strawberry fest, South American, Patriotic etc. Provide theme oriented food. Host a cowboy picnic - create invitations with photos of guests/hosts and write wanted over pictures. Dress in denim, bandanas and boots. Give away as prizes inexpensive cowboy hats. Play country music and serve baked beans, barbecue. Go Italian with red, white and green decorations. Serve Italian food. Play music "That's Amore" and "Arrivederci Roma.". Out of this world - sheets of silver Mylar covering table with star and moon stickers, much on flying saucers, etc. Seashore Picnic - Asks guests to wear sunglasses. Give out a prize of most colorful pair. Sit on barstools, nibbling gold fish crackers. Have beachballs available for prizes.
 - c. *If you belong to other chambers, do after hours jointly.* This maximizes your exposure and members of all chambers enjoy joint mixers.
 - d. Put up signage, balloons to indicate "after hours here."
 - e. Prepare a brief promotional statement regarding your business to be shared during the 6:00 pm plaque ceremony.
 - f. Make certain plenty of brochures, staff to answer questions, and samples of products are around.
6. Please provide the Chamber with the following information: Name and title of Plaque Recipient, and brief history of your organization. See form to follow.

Due to our large member base, in the event that a mixer is scheduled and then cancelled, you may need to wait up to a year to reschedule as mixer hosting is in quite demand.



**McHenry
Area
Chamber of
Commerce**

**How to Host a
Business After Hours**

Please provide the Chamber with the following information. Email to jane@mchenrychamber.com or fax to 815-385-9142.

Name of Plaque Recipient: _____

Title of Plaque Recipient: _____

Brief History of your Organization: _____
