

A Chamber-Catalyst, Convener and Champion for the Community

By Don Long, Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce



When communities face challenges from almost any source, those supported by a local chamber of commerce can expect that most chambers will function as a **CATALYST** of business growth and support, a **CONVENER** of leaders and influencers necessary to guide efforts through the threat, and a **CHAMPION** of its members and the entire community. These functions are part of the missions of chambers that are organizations of businesses and community residents created to lead common interests that promote or protect the community.

Examples of how chambers support the community are most recently evident as many Florida communities work to recover from the impacts of Hurricane Ian that struck the southwest coast of Florida and progressed northeast across the state. Chambers of commerce from Sanibel and Captiva up through Volusia County worked diligently to gather information from government sources and emergency services while marrying the needs of the community with providers of assistance.

The Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce (LNRCC) worked as a **CATALYST** to share numerous governmental notifications that helped provide the impetus for preparations for the storm's arrival and then continued to distribute information of recovery efforts so volunteer sources could connect with those in need. LNRCC also pivoted from local efforts to reach out to its fellow chamber in Sanibel and Captiva to discern the needs of that hard struck community. One partner member business, Nona.media, made two trips to the area to deliver emergency supplies and LNRCC published a link to a GoFundMe account created to aid with the recovery of the Sanibel and Captiva Chamber.

Meanwhile, LNRCC encouraged and supported open communications with all government levels and the Florida Chamber of Commerce as the **CONVENER** of leaders looking to help the community. Local county and city governments respect the ability of the chamber to distribute useful, substantiated, timely, and attributable information to its network.

All the while LNRCC actively sought information from its network allowing it to **CHAMPION** for specific needs. When requesters needed assistance LNRCC reached out to bring back useful information or help.

The above examples provide the opportunity to explain how LNRCC works everyday as a **CATALYST**, **CONVENER** and **CHAMPION** of the community. These three roles allow LNRCC to courageously stand up for its beliefs while fighting to do what is right so that its members can thrive. ■

LNRCC is a membership not-for-profit organization with offices in Lake Nona at 6555 Sanger Rd, Orlando, FL 32827. It is not affiliated with, or sponsored by, Lake Nona Property Holdings, LLC, or its affiliated entities. Comments or requests for information are encouraged at Administration@LakeNonaCC.org.

