



National Folk Festival / 2016

GMA membership opens doors to entire Piedmont Triad

One of the things that makes GMA appealing to members is the organization's broad market footprint.

Commerce knows no boundaries, so GMA does not confine its membership to arbitrary borders. County and city lines don't matter with GMA.

To recognize that fact, networking events are held throughout the Triad. After Work Network events have been held in Kernersville, Archdale and High Point, in addition to Greensboro.

Businesses large and small appreciate the opportunities provided by an organization focused on Triad-wide commerce and economic development.

Cone Health has four employee health and wellness clinics, situated in an area stretching from Mebane to Kernersville. The clinics generally serve the needs of companies that offer a range of healthcare benefits to employees.

Donna Blizard, business liaison for employee health and wellness, says GMA's

ability to bring people together from throughout the Piedmont Triad is a benefit.

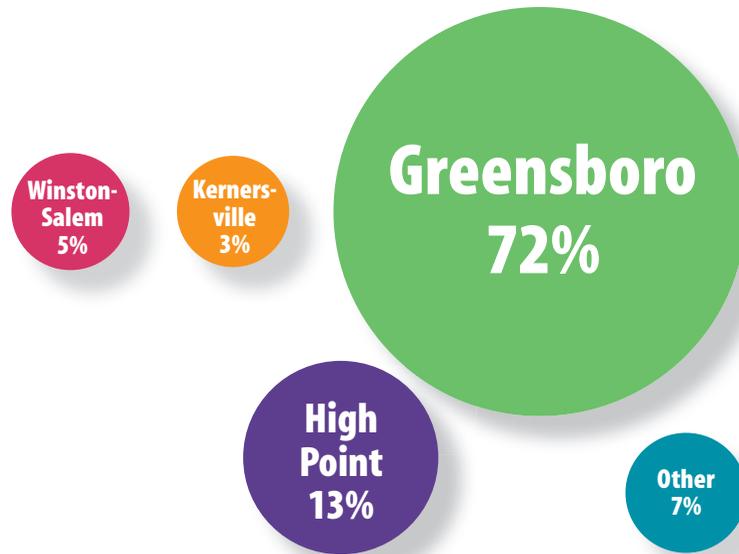
"When I go to a GMA meeting, I see people from throughout the region," she says.

The same situation that makes GMA attractive for Cone Health and its thousands of employees also applies to sole proprietors such as Mark Podolle. His company, Wireless Ventures, provides speech recognition and wireless headsets and accessories.

GMA, Podolle says, "makes it simple and easy" to meet business people from throughout the area.

Podolle, whose business is based in Burlington, says taking part in GMA activities "makes a lot of sense. It affords me the opportunity to meet new people and see existing GMA members as well. There's always something going on with GMA."

The organization has changed significantly since it was founded in 1906 as the Greensboro Merchants Association. Its initial func-



Breakdown of GMA membership by community

tion was as a credit-reporting agency, collecting and maintaining data so that member merchants could better identify creditworthy customers.

In 1948, GMA created a new corporation to manage credit reporting functions as a for-profit business. This allowed GMA to maintain its non-profit status and provide services and benefits to its members.

In 2001, FirstPoint, Inc. was created to better reflect the nature of GMA's for-profit

subsidiaries and the information services they provide.

GMA merged with the High Point Merchants Association in 2008, bringing the business communities of the two cities closer together. A year later, GMA changed its name to the Guilford Merchants Association. While members come from throughout the Piedmont Triad, the name GMA honors the organization's historic roots and acknowledges that the membership base is con-

centrated in Guilford County.

Truliant Federal Credit Union is headquartered in Winston-Salem, with three of its 13 Triad locations in Guilford County. "The relationships we're building through GMA help us network throughout the whole Triad," says Renee Shipko, community engagement liaison. GMA, she says, "is enabling us to know our neighbors in Guilford County a little better."

All businesses can benefit from expanding their client base over a larger area, says Don Allen. He and his wife, Hilda, own Alpine Graphic Apparel, based in High Point. "GMA has a broad reach" Allen says, "and that is very important to us, that we keep our brand as broad as we can get it."

Once in the GMA business community, he says, a company is "not just considered a High Point company or a Greensboro company."

"We are a Triad company. To me, it's really cool to be able to say you handle the Triad."

INSIDE TRENDS

- Volunteer 2
- Riser Greer Bigham 3
- Loyal Member 4
- Participation 5
- Workplace Workshop 7



Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.



All smiles

Denise Preston of Fairfield Inn & Suites (right) waves a \$50 bill, the door prize she won at the August Workplace Workshop. There will be another winner at the next Workplace Workshop, which is free for employees of all GMA member companies. Details, page 7.

Credit union exec says notoriety comes with GMA badge, and that's a good thing

Being a GMA volunteer earned Lindy Fuller a name badge that holds itself in place with magnets. Wearing it, she says, enhances her reputation. And it's a pretty good reputation to start with. Fuller is business development officer for Summit Credit Union.

"I find that when you link yourself to the right people, you become more reputable," she says. "And when I wear my GMA badge, it gives me a little more notoriety."

Fuller volunteers at Noon-time Network events, stuffs the goodie bags handed out at Workplace Workshops, and has served on the speaker selection committee that choose speakers for that popular series.

She's also stepped up to

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

the lectern and introduced speakers.

Fuller says she enjoys pitching in to help make the member-focused organization more successful. And she's well rewarded, personally and professionally, for the investment of her time.

"I'm a 'help' kind of person," she explains. "I enjoy people. I find them fascinating. The more we can do for people, the better we see ourselves doing later."

Fuller manages marketing and business development for four branches of Summit Credit Union, which is headquartered

in Greensboro. Her other branches are in Oxford, north of Durham, and Raleigh. She also works with business partners in Wilmington.

Being active in GMA has helped her do her job, she says. "I've had such good success in finding new business partners and more networking opportunities through GMA" than through other business organizations, she says.

GMA's easy-going atmosphere makes meeting new people easy, she says. Networking, she explains, "takes on a different look, a different feel, that I appreciate. GMA doesn't have a pressure environment with their events."

Fuller says when she



Lindy Fuller wears her GMA name badge with pride.

gets a request to volunteer for a GMA function, "I usually say yes."

She's not likely to forget her first volunteer assignment. Members familiar with the "sticker game" will understand what she's talking about.

"They started me out

as a flasher," she recalls. "I said, 'Oh. You'll have to explain that before I say yes.'"

"It was fine," she says with a smile. "That worked out well."

Summit Credit Union

336-662-6259

www.summitcu.org

Digital Marketing Institute: Stay abreast of social media revolution

Just remember that it's only been 10 years since Steve Jobs introduced the iPhone, the first smartphone.

We're still learning how to cope with it all.

To that end, GMA created a seminar series dedicated to helping business people understand and make better use of social media.

The Digital Marketing Institute (DMI) series, introduced in 2015, grew

out of the well-established Teach Me Tuesday series. Teach Me Tuesday programs continue as well, focusing on other business issues such as human resources, finance, sales, customer service and other topics.

DMI programs are free to employees of GMA member companies. They are held in the recently enlarged and renovated Community Room at GMA headquarters in downtown Greensboro.



Members fill GMA's Community Room for an August DMI program on social media and the law.

Programs are presented by GMA members who are authorities in their fields. Topics have included content development, online reviews, using video, and blogging, to name a few.

One of the best-attended programs took place in August, when Michael Wells of Wells Law, LLC, discussed "Five Legal Mistakes Made on Social Media." More than 50 persons registered in advance.

Kristen Daukas, director of social media and digital marketing for Atlantic Webworks, is a regular DMI presenter.

One of the biggest challenges facing businesses, she says, is the constant churn and innovation within social media.

"The landscape is always



DMI presenter Michael Wells.

pieces that have actionable items. People who attend can walk away with a knowledge base they can act on."

Plus, she says, the information presented comes from "a trusted colleague" in the GMA community.

DMi programs, she says, are perfect for small businesses that do not have dedicated marketing teams.

The person tasked with maintaining a social media presence for a small business usually has other major responsibilities as well.

DMi programs, Daukas says, provide helpful information "in small, bite-size

The next DMI is September 27, when the topic is "Calls to Action: Getting Your Prospect to Actually 'Click Here.'" The presenter is Adrienne Cregar Jandler, Daukas' colleague at Atlantic Webworks.

DMi seminars begin with lunch and check-in at 11:15 a.m. Programs run from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Information on future DMI programs is available at mygma.org, under the Events menu.



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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.



Greer Bigham, client liaison, Graham Personnel Services.



Name: Greer Bigham
Age: 21
Hometown: Greensboro
Residence: Kernersville
Education: UNCG, BA, Business administration (December 2017)
Business: Graham Personnel Services
Position: Client Liaison
Duties: I handle all social media, ensure that our clients are happy by bringing them Graham goodies, and make sure things run smoothly. I assist with planning and implementing all company events. I help our business development team make the small details happen when necessary, which leads to increased success. I attend our company networking opportunities throughout the community and enjoy meeting new people as well as seeing friends again and again.
On GMA: I went to a Risers Lunch & Learn with a friend. I thought it was great and was able to meet a lot of other young professionals. I started going to all the other GMA member events and the Annual Dinner to hear Archie Manning speak, which was really cool. It's a great organization and a niche for young people.
Goals: My biggest goal is to become saturated in Greensboro and the community, and to become a pillar of knowledge for anyone that is looking for staffing, whether a candidate or a client.
Personal: I love to try new foods and be out with friends, just surrounded by laughter. I'm really close to my family, so spending time with them is super important. My fiancé and I have just bought a home. We love to do fixer-upper projects.



GMA member Freddine Crabtree of Workforce Unlimited is among the Fast 50 to be recognized on September 28. With her is Brandon York, Hill Chesson & Woody, a sponsor of the Fast 50 Awards and also a GMA member.

Fast 50 recognizes fastest-growing, privately held companies in Triad

The rankings of the 50 fastest-growing, privately held companies in the Piedmont Triad will be revealed September 28.

The Fast 50 Awards, which include a cocktail reception, awards ceremony, and cocktail buffet at Grandover Resort and Conference Center, is sponsored by Triad Business Journal.

GMA is a cosponsor of the Fast 50 Awards.

Tickets to the gala awards ceremony are \$95 per person or \$950 for a package of 10.

The event is presented theater style, with no tables.

Make reservations online at bit.ly/2wP9Mej. Address questions to gjohnston@bizjournals.com.

Advertise in Trends

Reach business leaders by advertising in Trends. Contact Michelle Bolick at 336-378-6350 for more information.

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Restaurant's primary marketing has been GMA networking

Pastabilities dishes up comfort food and other delicacies from its corner location off Lawndale Avenue in Greensboro. In August, the restaurant observed its 22nd anniversary. Owner Cindy Essa has been a GMA member almost since the very beginning.

LOYAL MEMBER

"If it weren't for GMA, I would never be where I am," she says, "because I don't advertise."

Membership in GMA and staying active is her way of advertising, she explains. "Community projects. Being involved. Networking groups. That's how this business works."

The relentless hours of the restaurant business mean that Essa finds it difficult to get to GMA's evening networking events. But she's a big fan of GMA's Teach Me Tuesday business seminars and other learning opportunities. All such programs are a free

member benefit, open to all employees of GMA member companies.

The value of seminars alone more than covers the cost of GMA membership, she says.

Essa says she likes attending seminars and GMA events because she finds herself among friends. "I always know somebody there," she says, "somebody that I can sit with."

Essa, a member of the restaurateur family that opened Café Pasta in the early 1980s, employs more than 40 people at Pastabilities.

On a busy evening, she says, a dozen people work behind the scenes in the kitchen. Adding servers and a bartender in the front of the house raises the number of employees to about 20 on the busiest nights.

The menu at Pastabilities has evolved over the years to reflect the public's changing tastes, food trends, and "peo-



Owner Cindy Essa in the Pastabilities kitchen.



ple with their crazy eating habits," Essa jokes.

Pastabilities survived the no-carb diet craze of a few

years ago, which was a challenge for an Italian restaurant. For today's diners who want to avoid gluten, Pastabilities offers a chickpea-based pasta and spaghetti squash, another vegetable substitute for noodles.

"You have to make it work," Essa says of the restaurant business. "We have to give customers a reason to come back. In my shopping center alone, there's five other places to eat."

Essa once served on GMA's board of directors, a term that she calls "the shortest three years of my life. It was really amazing to be a part of it and see all that GMA does. I learned so much."

The benefits of GMA are available to any small business owner, she says. "Being a part of GMA is a no-brainer. It's money well-spent."

Pastabilities
1726 Battleground Ave.
Greensboro
(336) 272-7823



Orienting new members

GMA is growing, as evidenced by the large turnout for New Member Orientation in August. New Member Orientation provides information from GMA member volunteers, GMA staff and GMA executives to help newcomers get an understanding of all that GMA has to offer.

Seated, from left, are: Lakisha White, MassMutual; Alisha Wielfaert, Yoke and Abundance; Emily Frazier, Ridge Care; Danelle Pierce, DSC Logistics; Erica Parker, First National Bank; Renee Shipko, Truliant Federal Credit Union; Hilary Goldberg, PostMark, Inc. Standing, first row from left: Jessica McElrath, M&F Bank; Debra Conroy, 1808 Greensboro's Magazine; Andrew Webb, West Elm; Kelly Archer, Farm Bureau Insurance; Leatha Hightower, JobHook; Tim Rogers, GSO360; Matt Owen, DSC Logistics; JJ Elliott, Triad Reef Critters; Kurt Hauser, ActionCOACH; John Bastedo, AdvantaClean; Erich Berger, Secure Designs, Inc.; Felix Forbes, JobHook. Back row, standing from left: Arthur Dick, AdvantaClean; Joe Santora, Transworld Business Advisers; Gil Newson, Rocketprint Software; David Ellis III, MassMutual; Rick Cecil, Piedmont Triad Farmers Market; Brant Yandell, Carolina Digital; William Brooks, Carolina Digital; Dexter Hill, Triad Reef Critters; Bob Cain, Piedmont Home Health; Mark Prince, GMA.

High Point Holiday Festival Parade set for November 19

You may be thinking about Halloween candy and the Thanksgiving feast, but GMA's parade manager, Sharon Smith, is thinking about the High Point Holiday Festival Parade.

2017 marks the 92nd anniversary of what has long been one of the area's largest seasonal parades.

This year's parade begins at 3 p.m. on Sunday, November 19 in downtown High Point. The parade goes on rain or shine.

Smith coordinated the parade when it was sponsored by the High Point Merchants Association and continued when the High Point Merchants Association merged with GMA in 2008. Parade participant registration closes on November 4.

Parade sponsors are High Point Regional UNC Health Care and Ilderton Dodge Chrysler Jeep RAM.

For more information and to register, visit www.highpointparade.com. Or call Sharon Smith at 336-378-6350.



They came to network, but also gained valuable feedback from Triad customers

Candid, sincere customer feedback is some of the most valuable information a business can obtain.

It's information that tells managers what's working and what's not. It allows managers to follow up with associates to reward efforts for a job well done or make adjustments to ensure future success.

Kristin Dailey was looking forward to an enjoyable experience when she attended her first After Work Network event, held in July at the Radisson Hotel in High Point.

But she never expected to come

away with an abundance of unsolicited customer feedback from members of Tru-

**PARTICIPATION
= SUCCESS**

liant Federal Credit Union.

"It was wonderful," says Dailey, who manages Truliant's member financial center on Mendenhall Oaks Parkway in High Point. She attended the After Work Network with Josh Morgan, branch coordinator.

"The reason the event stood out was because of the

liant branch where she now is manager.

The sticker game, she says, "really gets you out of your comfort zone, connecting you to people. You almost felt like you got to talk to everybody in the room."

Dailey recognized familiar faces from the High Point business community at the event. She saw individuals who are Truliant members and who regularly visit her branch office. But she also met people who

are Truliant members who use other branch offices. (Truliant, based in Winston-Salem, has

30 branches in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

The sticker game 'really gets you out of your comfort zone, connecting you to people.'

– Kristin Dailey
Truliant Federal Credit Union

sticker game," says Dailey, who began working more than 11 years ago at the Tru-



Kristin Dailey, manager of Truliant's High Point location.

Upon learning that Dailey is a Truliant associate, three people expressed how much they like being members of that credit union. They offered Dailey specific examples of customer service by Truliant associates, experiences that cemented their relationships with the credit union.

"We were able to take those success stories back to other branches," Dai-

ley says. "We could say, 'You're making a difference for these people with the financial guidance you've provided.'"

Going forward, Dailey says she plans to be "more involved in taking advantage of all the great things GMA offers."

Truliant Federal C.U.
4006 Mendenhall Oaks Pky.
High Point
336-543-7199

Sharpen your skills and build your business with Networking Works!

Networking Works!, created by Greensboro's Abby Donnelly, is a strategic process to build one's personal and professional network.

A new session of the five-part program begins on October 11 and meets each Wednesday through November 8.

The program is for experienced networkers as well as for novices at networking. The aim is to "build an ongoing stream of qualified referrals" using proven techniques.

Donnelly, of The Leadership & Legacy Group, is a long-time GMA member and offers a discount to other GMA members.

The fee for the course is \$299 for employees of GMA member companies.

"If you are in a leads group and go through this process," Donnelly says, "it will take how you use that

leads group and how you use relationships to a completely different level."

The program has been licensed by Sandler Training and has been presented in at least 15 nations worldwide since 2010.

Donnelly developed the program by studying her own networking efforts.

"As I started paying attention to what was working and what was not working, I learned what it would take to build a really good referral system," she says.

In Networking Works!, participants learn:

- how to get connected to the decision-makers you want to know.
- how to become more confident & comfortable in networking situations.
- the strategies & tools to make your networking pay off.

For more information and to enroll in Networking Works!, contact Lisa Daas at GMA: ldaas@mygma.org; 336-378-6350.



Donnelly

Risers have three upcoming events

The Risers have three meetups scheduled for the remainder of 2017. The first is on October 13. Others are November 10 and December 8. Each meetup will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at

Logan's Roadhouse, 1300 Bridford Parkway, Greensboro.

Risers (young professionals, 37 and under) should preregister for each event. For more information, call 336-378-6350.

FirstPoint expands with Texas acquisition

FirstPoint Background Screening Resources has acquired Correct Checks, Inc., of McKinney, Texas.

Correct Checks is a full-service background screening company with clients located throughout the United States.

"This acquisition shows our commitment to growth and finding partners who share the same value of delivering an excellent cli-



Hall

ent experience," said M. Scott Hall, senior vice president and head of FirstPoint's background screening division.

This acquisition expands FirstPoint's footprint westward and

brings accreditation to Correct Checks' clients.

"Delivering an excellent client experience only happens if the proper procedures and processes are in place," Hall said.

"This acquisition brings all of the Correct Checks clients under the accreditation earned by FirstPoint from the National Association of Professional Background Screeners."

Hall pointed out that new jobs were created in FirstPoint's Greensboro home office as a result of the acquisition, in addition to FirstPoint adding the Texas staff.

More information about FirstPoint and Correct Checks is available at www.firstpointresources.com and www.correctchecks.com.

High Point's Downtown Catalyst project is impressive, visionary

The Downtown High Point Catalyst project is gaining traction every week. The plan to build a baseball/multi-purpose stadium and surrounding development in downtown High Point is historic and monumental.



Prince

High Point economic development groups are spearheading this massive undertaking, in partnership with civic and governmental leaders.

The announcement from High Point University's Dr. Nido Qubein of secured funding, commitment for a baseball team, and commercial development ready to build, illustrates the determination of the supporters and a vision for the long-term success of the city of High Point

The 5,000-seat baseball stadium, along with the proposed children's museum, park, and event center, will be an amazing hub of activity for High Point and a rewarding investment for all of us as well as future



Odell Associates

generations. As we continue to promote prosperity in the Triad, Guilford Merchants Association supports efforts to bring this vision to fruition.

G. Mark Prince
President & CEO



Betty Owens, High Point Arts Council; Pamela Green, Radisson Hotel High Point.



David Cooil, MassMutual; Isaiah Ashley, Nxt Gen Leads.



Radisson Hotel,
High Point
July 11, 2017



Amber Joyce and Wayne Joyce, AFineLine Striping Services; Mel Schlesinger, Virtual MD 24/7.



Joe Varipapa, Radisson Hotel High Point; Tommy Reid, High Point Fire Department; Jim Morgan of Morgan, Herring, Morgan, Green, & Rosenblutt; Mark Prince, GMA; Patrick Chapin, Business High Point.



David Parrish, an assistant Greensboro city manager, presides at Center City AM Briefings.



Zack Matheny, president and CEO of Downtown Greensboro, Inc. spoke at the August Center City AM Briefing at GMA.

Learn the buzz on downtown happenings at Center City AM Briefings

Zack Matheny brought maps, graphics, facts, figures and a fresh Downtown Greensboro, Inc.

video preview to the August Center City AM Briefing.

The next AM Briefing is at 8 a.m. October 3 at GMA headquarters.



Some of the GMA members and guests who turned out to hear Zack Matheny's update on activities to promote and build up downtown Greensboro.



Scenes from August's Workplace Workshop



GMA volunteers Mark Podolle and Bill Porter greet member Namyanka Farrelly as she checks in for the August Workplace Workshop.

October 12
Workplace Workshop



Chip Lutz
on
Communication



'Uncommon Sense for Unconventional Leaders: We're All in the Game!'

with
Chip Lutz

Thursday, October 12
Embassy Suites Hotel
204 Centreport Drive
7:30 a.m. refreshments
8–10 a.m. seminar

Free for all employees of GMA member companies!

Registration deadline: October 10

Call 378-6350 or register online at www.mygma.org

Please let us know if you need additional services for employees with disabilities.



Speaker Meridith Elliott Powell and GMA President & CEO Mark Prince chat with a member before Powell's presentation.



Powell spoke on sales.



Rhea Stewart, Celebration Station; Bill Lodzinski, MPG Media Services.



Hilton Garden Inn

August 4, 2017



Cheryl Voss, Triad Job Search Network; Melanie Miller and Michole Miller, both of Sir Speedy Greensboro.



Marcus Sims and Jovee Ramos, both with Liberty Mutual.



GMA members listen to Meridith Elliott Powell's presentation in a ballroom at Embassy Suites, near I-40 and N.C. 68. The location of Workplace Workshops is convenient to High Point, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem. Workplace Workshops are a free member benefit, open to all employees of GMA member companies.



Matt Everhart, VERSA Technologies; Bill Porter, Street Level Media.



Amanda Harris, Hilton Garden Inn; Trish Southard, Springhill Suites Greensboro Airport.

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Thank You for

70
Years

“As we celebrate our 70th anniversary in 2017, we want to thank our valued clients and others in the Guilford area for helping make that possible through the years. We look forward to continuing to provide our clients with services of the utmost quality, as well as continuing to serve in our Guilford community.”

– Wade Pack, Managing Partner

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