

2026

*New Sponsorship Opportunities  
Partnering for Prosperity*



**CATALYST FOR BUSINESS GROWTH,  
CONVENER FOR LEADERS & INFLUENCERS,  
CHAMPION FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY.**

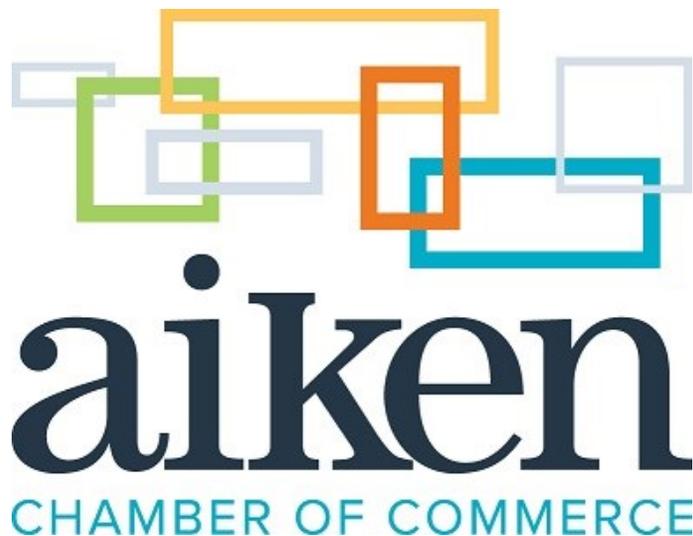
Thank you for your continued investment in the Aiken Chamber of Commerce. Your support makes it possible for us to champion local businesses, strengthen our workforce, and enhance the quality of life in our community.

As we look ahead, 2026 marks a pivotal year for Aiken—a year of innovation, community impact, and celebration. From the 50th anniversary of *Aiken's Makin'* to the launch of the Innovation Corridor and Aiken Chamber Foundation, together we are building momentum that will shape the future of our region.

We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to working alongside you to make 2026 a landmark year for business and community prosperity in Greater Aiken.



Jim Tunison  
President/CEO



## *New Sponsorships — At a Glance*

Program / Initiative	Audience Reach	Sponsorship Levels	Key Benefits	Recognition
<b>Aiken's Makin' – 50th Anniversary</b>	20,000+ attendees (families, visitors, artisans, small businesses)	Masterpiece Sponsor - \$5,000 Gallery Sponsor - \$3,500 Studio Sponsor - \$1,000	Direct access to festival-goers, branding at milestone event	Logo on signage, media mentions, press releases, event-day visibility
<b>National Civics Bee</b>	Students (6th–8th grade), families, educators, civic leaders	\$2,000 Major Sponsor (4 available)	Support youth civic education, on-stage visibility, align with schools	Logo on stage/backdrop, press + social media mentions, award presentation
<b>Mugs and Mentors</b>	Young professionals, Chamber board members, community leaders	Legacy Leader Sponsor - \$2,500	Direct engagement with emerging leaders, align with workforce & leadership development	Recognition at each session, logo on program materials, featured in Chamber communications
<b>Aiken's Innovation Corridor</b>	Entrepreneurs, tech firms, investors, regional partners	Innovation Partner- \$10,000 (10 available)	Align with Aiken's innovation identity, digital presence on aicorridor.net	Featured on Corridor website, promotional campaigns, Chamber media
<b>Aiken Chamber Foundation</b>	Community-wide: startups, workforce, residents	Foundation Sponsor - cost varies by program (bootcamps, placemaking, workforce, pitch contests)	Drive long-term prosperity, support entrepreneurship & quality of life	Branding on Foundation initiatives, donor events, recognition in publications
<b>Aiken Digital</b>	Chamber digital network (18,000+ followers) + newcomers & prospective talent	Contact Philip Chow at Rare Blue Moon for pricing: philip@rarebluemoon.io	Professional video storytelling, visibility online & in recruitment	Video hosted on Chamber website & AI Corridor website, social media
<b>The American Dream Podcast</b>	Small business owners, entrepreneurs, podcast listeners, digital followers (18,000+ reach)	Title Sponsor - \$5,000 (1 available)	Year-round branding on podcast episodes, alignment with small business storytelling, visibility during America's 250th celebration	Logo featured in every podcast episode, tagged in all social media posts, recognition on podcast webpage and Chamber promotions



## Aiken's Makin' 50th Anniversary

In 2026, we'll celebrate the 50th Annual *Aiken's Makin'*, a tradition that draws more than 20,000 visitors to downtown Aiken each year. More than just an arts and crafts festival, *Aiken's Makin'* has become an economic driver and community celebration, showcasing the creativity, culture, and spirit of our region. This milestone year will feature new, out-of-the-box ideas to engage attendees and elevate the experience. Sponsorship of this event is a unique opportunity to align your brand with one of Aiken's most beloved traditions while making a lasting impact on both our economy and community pride.

**Audience Reach:** Regional families, tourists, artisans, and small businesses.

### Sponsorship Levels:

- **Masterpiece sponsor:** \$5,000 - 1 –10x10 display space during festival, 10 t-shirts, 1/4 page ad in Commerce Report, logo on posters.
- **Gallery sponsor:** \$3,500 - 1-10x10 display space, 5 t-shirts, name listed on Aiken's Makin website, logo on posters.
- **Studio sponsor:** \$1,000 - Singage throughout event, 3 t-shirts, name listed on Aiken's Makin' website, logo on posters.





## National Civics Bee

The National Civics Bee is a first-of-its-kind competition that challenges middle school students to demonstrate their knowledge of civics, strengthen their public speaking and writing skills, and imagine how they can make a difference in their communities. Finalists move from local and state rounds to the National Championship, competing for recognition, scholarships, and cash prizes. The Aiken Chamber is proud to host South Carolina's first-ever regional Civics Bee in 2026, bringing together educators, families, and future leaders. With only four major sponsorships available, this initiative provides a unique platform to showcase your support for civic education and youth leadership while building relationships across the education and business community.

**Audience Reach:** Students, families, educators, civic leaders.

**Sponsorship Levels:** \$2,000—Presenting Sponsors (4 Available)

**Recognition:** Logo on stage/backdrop, mentions in press and social media, opportunity to present awards.





## Mugs and Mentors

This is a new program designed to connect Aiken’s emerging professionals with established business and community leaders. Each month, 2–3 Chamber board members, or community leaders will host an informal coffee conversation, providing a safe and welcoming space for young professionals to ask leadership questions, seek career advice, and learn about the community. This initiative helps bridge generations of leaders, fostering mentorship, knowledge-sharing, and stronger connections within Aiken’s business community. Sponsorship of *Mugs and Mentors* positions your brand as a champion of talent development and leadership growth while supporting the next generation of Aiken leaders.

- **Audience Reach:** Young professionals, community leaders, digital audience, community presence
- **Sponsorship Level:** Legacy Leader Sponsor: \$2,500 (1 available)
- **Benefits:** Distribution of company name in emails, included in social media posts and speaking time on behalf of company at Mugs and Mentors events. Ability to distribute company swag or marketing material at each event.



# aiken's innovation corridor

*where ideas take root*

## Aiken's Innovation Corridor

The Aiken Innovation Corridor is a bold vision to position Aiken as a hub for entrepreneurship, advanced technology, and innovation-led growth. Through our website ([aicorridor.net](http://aicorridor.net)), promotional media, and regional partnerships, the Corridor highlights the resources, expertise, and opportunities that make Aiken a powerful place for business. By sponsoring this initiative, your brand will be aligned with the forward-looking spirit of innovation and have visibility across a platform designed to attract talent, investors, and entrepreneurs from across the Southeast.

- **Audience Reach:** Entrepreneurs, tech firms, regional partners, investors.
- **Sponsorship Levels:** Innovation Partners: \$10,000 (10 available)
- **Benefits:** digital placement on website, tied into all marketing/branding for the website and innovation corridor events.
- **Recognition:** Featured on website, digital ads, and Corridor promotional campaigns.

Website: [www.aicorridor.net](http://www.aicorridor.net) (Under Construction)

Find [promo video here](#)





## Aiken Chamber Foundation

The **Aiken Chamber Foundation** is the newly established 501(c)(3) philanthropic arm of the Aiken Chamber of Commerce, created to power innovation, economic development, and community vitality in the Greater Aiken region.

Investment in the Aiken Chamber Foundation comes in a variety of forms, as our funding model is designed to be flexible, mission-driven, and impact-oriented. Rather than fixed sponsorship tiers, we invite visionary partners to co-create transformational programs that address workforce readiness, entrepreneurial growth, placemaking, and regional competitiveness.

Through strategic support from our partners, the Foundation accelerates the **Innovation Corridor vision**—fueling initiatives such as coworking spaces, startup landing pads, business bootcamps, public art installations, façade enhancements, regional branding, and workforce development programs.

Why Invest in the Aiken Chamber Foundation?

- **Community-wide Reach:** Engaging businesses, startups, workforce, residents, and public sector allies.
- **Catalyst for Innovation:** Empowering early-stage ventures, creative placemaking, and talent attraction.
- **Inclusive Prosperity:** Driving equitable economic development and long-term sustainability.
- **High-Impact Visibility:** Recognition across Foundation publications, branding on funded initiatives, and invitations to exclusive donor events.

We seek long-term partners committed to shaping Aiken’s future through shared success. Whether through program sponsorships, major gifts, or capacity-building investments, your support will turn vision into action—and action into lasting community impact.



## 2026 Pitch Contest Sponsorship Levels

- Grand Prize Sponsor: \$10,000**
- Investor Breakfast Sponsor: \$5,000**
- Startup Showcase & Lunch Sponsor: \$5,000**
- Exhibitor: \$1,500 (3 available)**



RARE  
**BLUE MOON**  
MARKETING  
— DARE TO BE RARE —

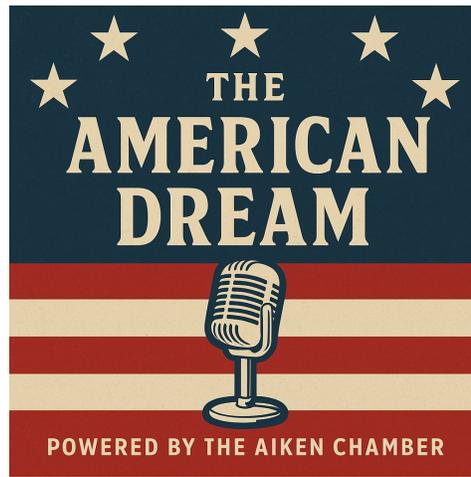
## Aiken Digital

In partnership with Rare Blue Moon Marketing, the Chamber is launching Aiken Digital—a professionally produced video series that tells the stories of our business community and the many reasons Aiken is a great place to live, work, and thrive. Think of it as a digital version of our Welcome Aiken guide, designed to inspire both newcomers and long-time residents. Sponsors receive visibility on a dedicated platform linked to the Chamber website, exposure to more than 18,000 social media followers, and the ability to use high-quality video content for their own marketing. With Rare Blue Moon’s proven track record of amplifying chambers nationwide, this project is a powerful way to showcase your business and our region to the world.

See example of the new platform here: [Home - Stuart Martin -](#)

- **Audience Reach:** Engages a broad digital audience including newcomers, prospective residents, business owners, and talent considering relocation or investment in Aiken. Content is distributed via the Chamber’s online platforms, social media channels (18,000+ followers), and partner networks.
- **Sponsorship Levels/Benefits:** Opportunities include individual business video features, series sponsorships, and exclusive platform sponsorships. All sponsors receive professional video content for their own use, prominent recognition on the Chamber website and social media, and extended visibility through Rare Blue Moon’s national reach.

**To secure your spot**, contact Philip Chow, Sales Manager at Rare Blue Moon Marketing: [philip@rarebluemoon.io](mailto:philip@rarebluemoon.io) | (708) 228-8374.



## The American Dream Podcast

Honoring 250 Years of Opportunity & Enterprise

In celebration of America's 250th birthday, the Aiken Chamber of Commerce is proud to launch "The American Dream" Podcast—a compelling new series that gives small business owners and entrepreneurs a platform to share their personal journey, lessons learned, and what the American Dream means to them.

This inspirational storytelling initiative highlights the grit, innovation, and passion of Aiken's local businesses while reinforcing the Chamber's role as a champion for prosperity and entrepreneurship.

- **Audience Reach:** Local and regional small business community, podcast subscribers, online audiences, and our combined social media following of 18,000+.
- **Sponsorship Level:** Title Sponsor (1 available): \$5,000/year
- **Sponsorship Benefits:**
  - **Brand Visibility:** Logo and name featured in the intro and outro of every podcast episode.
  - **Social Media Promotion:** Tagged in every podcast post and announcement across Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and X.
  - **Podcast Page Recognition:** Title sponsor placement on the Chamber's website and podcast directory.
  - **Thought Leadership Opportunity:** Opportunity to be interviewed in a featured episode as a community business advocate.
  - **Community Alignment:** Position your brand as a proud supporter of small business, local voices, and the American entrepreneurial spirit.

### Why Sponsor?

Position your company as a patriotic community leader while gaining year-round visibility on a professional platform that connects with business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, and civic-minded listeners across the region.

# Coming back for 2026

**Annual Dinner and Awards** – This signature, themed event showcases the previous year's accomplishments; thanks board members and volunteers; introduces the current year's board and goals; and honors the Man, Woman, and Large and Small Business of the Year. Chamber members, community leaders, and guests enjoy an evening of camaraderie while welcoming the coming Chamber year. The event is an opportunity to share the annual report and program of work with to sold-out crowd of over 400 members.

**State of Our Community Luncheon** – Annual event that provides an update to Chamber members and guests on the vision that community leaders have for the next several months. Approximately 400 business, civic, education and governmental leaders attend. Presenters include the Aiken City Mayor, Aiken County Council Chair, Aiken County Public Schools Superintendent and the current Chair of the Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce. The event has been sold out for the past 10 years.

**Buy Aiken Red Ticket Program** - a holiday campaign where we encourage patrons to support local businesses (and get off of Amazon). Starting in November and running through December, for every \$25 spent at a participating business, customers receive one red ticket. Throughout the campaign the Chamber draws weekly cash prizes and three, grand \$1,000 cash prizes from the red tickets. In 4 years the campaign has generated over **\$7.2 million** in sales for local businesses.

**Member Appreciation Trade Show**– A day designated to say thank you to our membership and an opportunity to partake in the Chamber's annual business-to-business, member only trade show, that allows members to promote their goods and services.

**New Educators Welcome** – an initiative designed to warmly welcome first-time K-12 teachers starting their careers in Aiken County. Recognizing the financial challenges new teachers face when setting up their classrooms, the Chamber provides each educator with a thoughtfully curated welcome bag filled with helpful community information, our Chamber member directory, and cash to help cover the cost of school supplies.

**Business After Hours** – An informal, networking opportunity held monthly for members. This program allows the host/sponsor to showcase its business, services and facilities to the business community. It also offers Chamber members the chance to meet one another and network in a casual, relaxed atmosphere. Average attendance is 100-150 members per month. Sponsors pay for all costs associated with the event and an additional sponsorship fee

**First Friday Means Business** – A monthly breakfast meeting for members that delivers timely, informative programs where members can network and learn. The breakfast features a keynote speaker and current business/community information with *City Talk*, *County Talk*, *Sponsor Talk* and *Chamber Talk*. The event is held in the largest banquet facility available in the area that is not an arena. Members pay to attend and the sponsor pays a fee to host the event and speak for 2 min.

**Blastin' for Business** - An annual clay shooting tournament held in September at the Palmetto Shooting Complex. Chamber members and their guests enjoy networking and team building at this state-of-the-art facility. Straight shooters and novices of all skill levels who enjoy the fast pace of shooting sporting clays are welcome. Breakfast, lunch and ammo are provided. Average attendance is 75-100 shooters.

**Women in Business** – a dynamic event series designed to empower and connect women through impactful networking, professional development seminars, workshops, and luncheons. Guided by participant feedback and curated annually by the Women in Business Committee in partnership with Chamber staff, each program delivers timely, relevant content to support women's growth and success in the business community.

**Training and Education** - The Chamber provides opportunities for members to sharpen their skills and secure a competitive edge while staying abreast of current trends, technology, and events that can affect their bottom line. Professionals in various fields share their expertise and deliver timely, innovative, and powerful information to Chamber members.

**Welcome Aiken Community Guide** - An annual publication that provides an overview of the community and a listing of the chamber membership. Members have the opportunity to advertise in the publication. The publication is distributed to 8,000 visitors, newcomers, potential residents, current residents and is used for business and employee recruitment purposes.

## *2026 Sponsorship Opportunities – Partnering for Prosperity*

**Why Sponsorship Matters:** Your investment in these initiatives goes far beyond event visibility—it fuels the growth and prosperity of the Greater Aiken region. Sponsorship helps us strengthen the local workforce, create opportunities for entrepreneurs, and build a thriving community where businesses and residents can succeed together. By aligning your brand with the Chamber, you are directly contributing to regional prosperity, workforce readiness, and the vibrancy that makes Aiken such a special place to live, work, and grow.

**Next Steps:** Contact Sarah Schultz to set up your meeting today:  
[sschultz@aikenchamber.net](mailto:sschultz@aikenchamber.net) or (803) 645-0502

*Let's build Aiken's future together.  
Join the movement – shape the future.*

