YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TOOL KIT

Where roots grow, futures follow.

SOUTHEAST ALBERTA Chamber of COMMERCE

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INTRODUCTION

Youth Skills Mismatch

The youth employment skills mismatch refers to the gap between the skills that young people currently have and the skills that employers are looking for.

- This disconnect makes it more difficult for youth to successfully enter the workforce.
- As a result, many young people face challenges such as unemployment, underemployment, and limited access to meaningful job opportunities, which can impact their long-term career growth.

Why This Toolkit Was Created

This toolkit was created to address these challenges by supporting young people who feel stuck when trying to begin their careers.

- Entering the workforce can often feel confusing and frustrating, especially when expectations are unclear or gaining experience seems difficult.
- This resource provides clear guidance, practical tools, and realistic pathways to help youth build relevant skills, explore their options, and develop the confidence needed to transition successfully from school into the world of work.

The Experience Gap Cycle



SKILLS

In today's job market, both hard skills and soft skills are important, but they serve different purposes. Employers look for a balance of both because it makes employees more effective and adaptable at work.



Hard Skills

Hard skills are specific, measurable abilities learned through education, training, or experience.

They are often required to complete the main tasks of a job.

Soft Skills

Soft skills are personal and interpersonal traits that influence how you work with others and handle challenges.

Unlike hard skills, soft skills can be used in many different jobs and industries, making them useful no matter what career path you choose.

EXAMPLES OF HARD & SOFT SKILLS

Hard Skills

- Adobe/Microsoft Skills
- Programming (e.g. Python)
- Degree/Certificate
- Licenses (Forklift, Class 1)
- Typing Speed

Soft Skills

- Communication
- Time-management
- Problem solving
- Adaptabillity
- Reliability

HOW TO GET SKILLS

Online Learning

Online learning options offer flexible, self-guided opportunities to build skills and explore career options anything, at your own pace.

Skills for Jobs Canada

- Has thousands of short, affordable, and flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities to help you develop job-relevant skills.
- You can also search by job, narrowing down your research and making it less daunting

Up Skills for Work

- Helps learners develop key employability and life skills through free downloadable curriculum materials and online courses.
- Some topics include: Motivation, Attitude, Accountability, Presentation, Time Management, Adaptability, Stress Management, and Confidence

Skills Council of Canada

- Focuses on identifying the skills needed in today's workforce and provides tools, programs, and information programs
- It helps connect education and training with what employers are actually looking for

Medicine Hat Public Library

With a library card, you can get access to 3 online learning resources

- Niche Academy : offers tutorials on the library's electronic resources
- Transparent Language Online: Can learn over 140 languages!
- Udemy: Learn and improve skills across business, tech, and more

HOW TO GET SKILLS

Local Resources

Local programs provide hands-on support, training, and real-world experience to help you build skills and connect with opportunities in your community



Redcliff Youth Center

Has programs focusing on life skill building, such as an employment program, along with homework help and other services



YMCA YouthWorks

Designed to assist youth aged 15 to 30 overcome barriers to employment:

- Participants will develop key employability and personal management skills



MHC Student Career Services

Services include an online job board, career and job fairs, job search assistance, in-class workshops and employer info sessions



McMan Youth Hub

Provides community-based services, including employment, financial aid, and other services, for youth who are homeless or are at risk

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience opportunities help you build real skills, gain confidence, and understand what different jobs are like

Volunteering

Volunteering allows you to gain experience, build valuable skills, and demonstrate responsibility while making a positive impact in your community.

Key Resources:

- Southeast Alberta Chamber Volunteer page
- 211 Alberta
- Medicine Hat Volunteers
- Medicine Hat Directory- Charities

Job Shadowing

Allows you to observe a professional at work to learn what a job is really like before choosing a career

Key Resources:

- ALIS Alberta
- Alberta Health Services
- Covanent Health

Note: Many job shadow opportunities are found by asking employers, teachers, or local businesses directly.



JOB SHADOWING VS. INTERNSHIPS

Understanding the difference helps you choose the right experience, exploring careers through shadowing or building skills through internships.



Job Shadowing

- Involves observing a professional to understand what their daily work is like.
- It is shorter and requires less involvement.



Internships

- Work-based learning experiences where you complete entry-level tasks for a company.
- Many companies use internships to recruit full-time employees.

Category	Job Shadowing	Internships
What it is	Observing someone's daily work	Doing entry-level tasks for a company/organization
Duration	1 day to a few weeks	3-4 months on average
Pay	Unpaid positions	Usually paid
Work Environment	In-person	In-person, hybrid, or remote
Resume/CV Value	Valuable	Valuable

CO-OP & WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING





Why Should I Bother?

- Gain real workplace experience while still in school
- Apply classroom knowledge in real situations
- Complete meaningful, hands-on tasks
- Develop important skills
- Makes your education more relevant to your future career

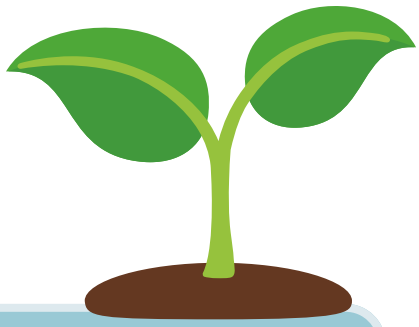
Career Advantages

- Strengthens your position in today's job market
- Builds professional connections
- Helps you explore different career paths
- Many placements are paid
- Makes the transition from school to work smoother
- Provides practical experience employers value

Resources

- Chamber's WIL page
- Government of Canada's Student WIL page
- Indeed
- Summer job board
- Post-Secondary job boards

POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS



Education Planning

Planning your career is about more than choosing a program, it's about understanding your options and building a clear path forward. These resources can help you explore careers, learn required education, and make informed decisions about your next steps.

Useful Resources

- Alberta ALIS – Explore careers, salaries, and required education
- Career Counselling – Get personalized advice based on your interests and goals
- Post-secondary program planning guides – Learn about programs, admission requirements, and career outcomes

Career Pathways

Trades Pathway
High school → RAP program → apprenticeship → journeyperson

- Start working and gaining experience early
- Earn money while learning on the job

College Pathway
High school → college program → practicum → job

- Shorter programs focused on career preparation
- Includes hands-on learning and real work experience

Direct-to-Work Pathway
High school → short training/certification → entry-level job → career growth

- Begin working right away
- Gain experience and move up over time

Key Takeaways:

- You do not need everything figured out, but having a plan helps
- Different careers require different education pathways
- Gaining experience early (part-time work, co-op, WIL) gives you an advantage
- Use available resources to make better, more informed decisions

Employment Skills Quiz

- [ ] Can I clearly explain my ideas, listen and follow instructions?
- [ ] Can I work well with others and handle feedback respectfully?
- [ ] Can I manage my time, meet deadlines, and stay reliable?
- [ ] Am I willing to learn, improve, and take responsibility?
- [ ] Do my hard skills align with my career goals?
- [ ] Do I know what skills I need, which ones I'm missing, and how to build them?

Want more insight?

Take the full Employment Skills Quiz to dive deeper into your strengths

Take the full quiz

HOW TO FIND IN-DEMAND JOBS

You start here!

Research In-Demand Jobs

- Alberta ALIS
- Canada Job Bank

Identity your strengths and interests

- What are you good at?
- What do you enjoy?

Match your skills to job requirments

Look at the job postings and compare what employers want

Build missing skills

Take short courses, certifications or gain experience

Seach strategically

- Online (job boards, company websites)
- In-person
- Networking

Use networking and connections

- Talk to people in your field
- Many jobs are found through connections, not just job postings

Focus on industries that are hiring

- Notice repeated job postings in certain fields
- Pay attention to trends
- Check local hiring patterns



READY FOR AN APPLICATION?

Great work, you've made it this far!

You've explored opportunities, built your understanding, and now you're ready for the next step: creating your job application.

This is where everything comes together.



What to Expect

- Applying for jobs can feel competitive, and that's normal. Employers often receives tens to hundreds of applications for a single positions.
- This doesn't mean you won't succeed; it just means you need to be intentional in how you present yourself.



Your Goal

Your application is not just about submitting documents; it is about standing out above the rest. To do this, focus on:

- Demonstraing effort and professionalism
- Paying close attention to detail
- Clearly showing you are a strong fit for the roll



Common Mistakes

- Avoid sending the same application to every job, even though it may save time. It can reduce your chances of success
- Employers want to see that you understand their job and have put effort into your application
- Tailoring your coverletter and resume will help you stand out

RESUME GUIDE

Creating a strong resume is one of the most important steps in getting a job. It helps employers quickly understand who you are, what skills you have, and why you would be a good fit.

By following these steps, you can build a resume that clearly shows your strengths and helps you stand out from other applicants.



Step 1:
Choose a Template

- Start with a clean, simple template that is easy to read
- Avoid using overly designed or complicated layouts
- Use tools to get started:
  - MHC Career Builder Tool
  - Resume builders (E.g. Indeed)
- A good template helps employers quickly find your skills and experience



Step 2:
Add the Right Info

Your resume should clearly show what you can offer an employer. Make sure to include:

- Contact information
- Skills that match the job
- Work experience, volunteer work, or school projects
- Education and any certifications
- If you do not have job experience, include clubs, school projects, etc.



Step 3:
Tailor Your Resume to the Job

- Adjust your resume for each job you apply to
- Use keywords from the job posting
- Highlight the skills and experience that match the role
- Remove information that is not relevant

Step 4:
Make it Professional

Your resume should sound clear and professional:

- Use simple, clear language
- Avoid slang, emojis, or informal wording
- Keep sentences short and direct
- Keep your resume 1–2 pages max

Step 5:
Stand Out

To improve your chances of getting noticed:

- Show results when possible (for example: “helped serve 50+ customers per shift”)
- Check for spelling and grammar mistakes
- Ask someone to review your resume before sending it



Firstname Lastname

Home or Campus Street Address • City, Province Postal Code • your.email@website.com • (123)-456-7890

Education

Post-Secondary City, Province
Program/Degree, Area of Focus, [GPA: Optional] Graduation Date
Thesis or Major Project [Note: Optional]
Relevant Coursework: [Note: Optional. Awards and honors can also be listed here.]

High school City, Province
Optional: GPA, extracurriculars, or awards Graduation Date

Experience

Organization City, Province
Position Title Month Year – Month Year

- Start with your most recent role and list what you did using bullet points.
- Begin each bullet with an action word (e.g. Assisted, organized, created).
- Add numbers or measurable results when possible.
- Keep each point short (phases, not sentences, and no "I" statements).

Organization City, Province
Position Title Month Year – Month Year

- Start with your previous role and list what you did using bullet points.
- Begin each bullet with an action word (e.g. Assisted, organized, created).
- Add numbers or measurable results when possible.
- Keep each point short (phases, not sentences, and no "I" statements).

Leadership & Activities

Organization City, Province
Role Month Year – Month Year

- You can describe your involvement using bullet points (like Experience)
- Or just list the role if details aren't needed
- If this section is more important for the job, place it above Experience

Skills & Interests [Note: Optional]

Technical: Software, tools, or programs you know and your skill level
Languages: Any languages you speak and how fluent you are
Lab/Research: Any relevant techniques or equipment (if applicable)
Interests: Activities, hobbies, or interests that could come up in an interview

Jane Smith

413 6 Ave SE • Medicine Hat, AB T1A2S7 • info@southeastalbertachamber.ca • (403)-527-5214

Education

Medicine Hat College — Medicine Hat, AB
Business Administration Diploma, Marketing Concentration — April 2027
Relevant Coursework: Introduction to Marketing, Business Communications, Accounting Fundamentals

Medicine Hat High School — Medicine Hat, AB
Clubs/Activities: Student Council, Volleyball Team — June 2023
Awards: Honour Roll (2021-2023)

Experience

Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce — Medicine Hat, AB
Summer Intern — May 2026 – Current

- Assisted in daily administrative tasks to support office operations.
- Responded to client and member inquiries through phone and email communication.
- Helped coordinate community events and track attendance and feedback.
- Organized files and updated records to improve document management

Downtown Coffee Shop — Medicine Hat, AB
Barista — June 2021 – May 2026

- Prepared and served a variety of coffee and beverage orders efficiently, averaging 50+ drinks per shift during peak hours
- Delivered friendly customer service and assisted guests with menu choices
- Operated POS system to process transactions and handle cash accurately

Leadership & Activities

Student Council (Medicine Hat High School) — Medicine Hat, AB
President — Month Year – Month Year

- Led student council initiatives by organizing and overseeing school events and engagement activities
- Represented the student body by communicating ideas and concerns to school administration
- Promoted school spirit and participation through inclusive and engaging programs

Skills & Interests

Technical: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint (intermediate)
Languages: English (fluent), French (intermediate)
Interests: Sports, community events, networking, personal fitness



Not sure where to begin?

Use our resume template to organize your information and get started

To our template

COVER LETTER GUIDE

A cover letter is a short letter you send with your resume. It explains why you want the job and why you're a good fit.

Think of it as your chance to show your personality, effort, and motivation, not just your experience.



Step 1:
Start with a Strong Introduction

- State the job you are applying for
- Briefly introduce yourself and show interest in the company (make sure you know the basics of what they do)



Step 2:
Highlight your value

- Choose 1-2 key skills, experiences or strengths
- Explain how they make you a good fit for the job



Step 3:
Connect to the Job and Company

- Link your skills directly to what the job is asking for in the ad
- Mention why you want to work for that specific company

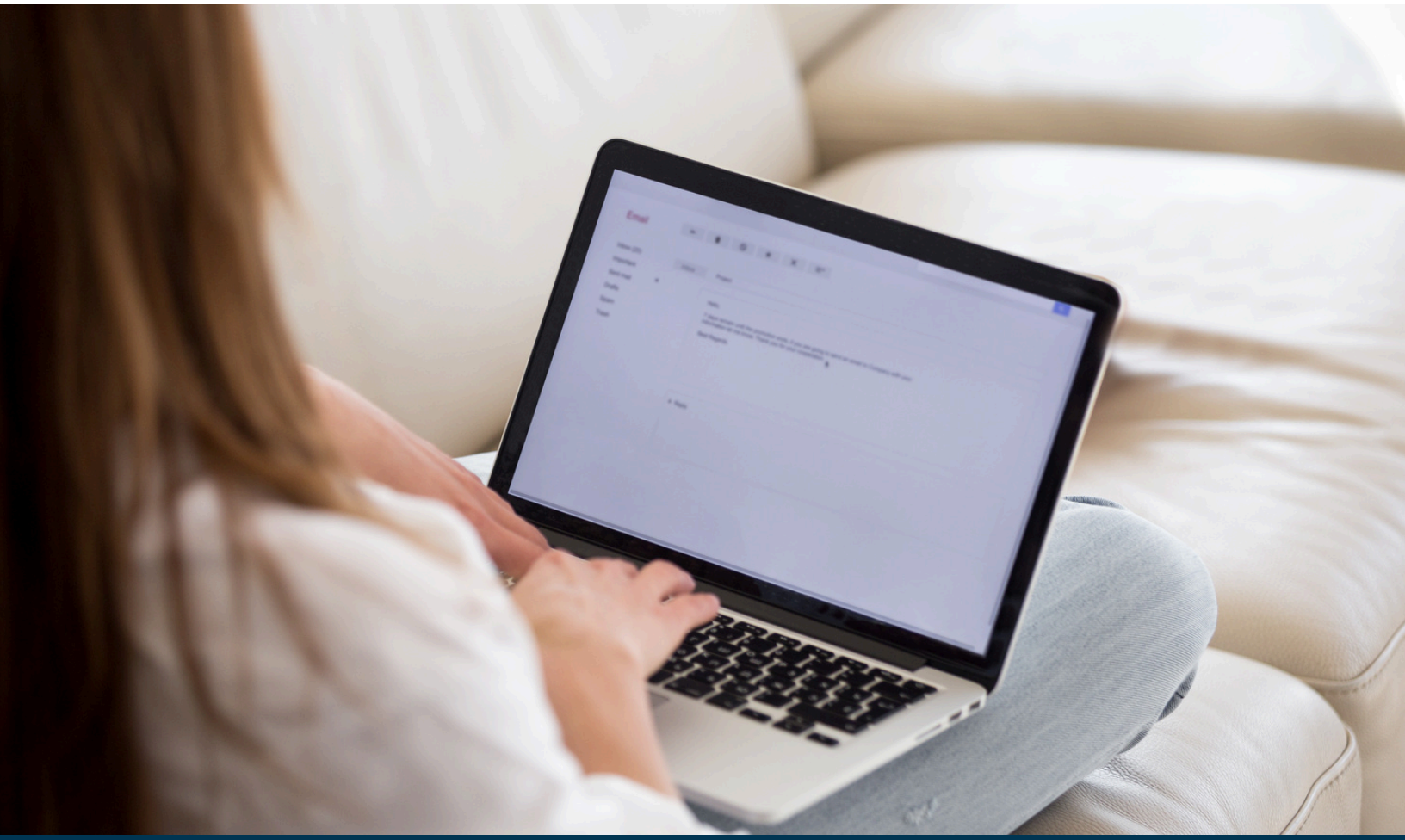
Step 4:
Write a Professional Closing

- Thank the employer
- Show interest in an interview or next steps

Reminder:
A coverletter should explain your strengths, not just repeat your resume

Step 5:
Review and Improve Your Letter

- Keep it short (3-4 paragraphs, 1 page max)
- Use clear, professional language
- Tailor it to each job and include examples
- Check spelling and grammar
- Focus on what you can offer the employer (not just what you want)



March 3, 2026
Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce
Medicine Hat, Alberta

Re: Application for Internship Position

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to apply for an internship with the Medicine Hat Chamber of Commerce. I am currently a Business Administration student at Medicine Hat College with a concentration in marketing, and I am interested in gaining hands-on experience in business support, community engagement, and local economic development.

Through my education and work experience, I have developed strong customer service, communication, and organizational skills. In my role as a barista, I worked in a fast-paced environment where I served a high volume of customers, handled transactions accurately, and maintained a positive and professional attitude. This experience has strengthened my ability to work efficiently, communicate effectively, and provide strong service, skills that I would bring to this internship.

In addition, my involvement in student council has helped me develop leadership and teamwork skills. As president, I organized events, worked with teams to plan activities, and communicated with staff and students. This experience, along with my interest in community events and networking, has increased my interest in working with organizations like the Chamber that support and connect local businesses.

I am particularly interested in this opportunity because of the Chamber's role in supporting business growth and community initiatives in Medicine Hat. I am eager to learn more about event coordination, business services, and member engagement while contributing to your team. I am confident that my work ethic, positive attitude, and willingness to learn would make me a strong candidate for this position.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application further and can be reached at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Jane Smith

Ready for a cover letter?
Use our cover letter template to guide your writing and get started.
Use our template

INTERVIEW TIPS

An interview is your chance to show employers who you are beyond your resume.

It helps them understand your communication skills, attitude, and fit for the role.

Before the Interview

Preperation is key to feeling confident and making a strong impression:

- Research the company (what they do, values, recent work)
- Review the job description and understand the role
- Know your resume and be ready to talk about your experience
- Prepare answers to common questions
- Practice with a friend or family member
- Prepare 2-3 questions to ask the employer

During the Interview

Focus on how you present yourself:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Dress appropriately and professionally
- Make eye contact and listen carefully
- Answer questions clearly and honestly
- Use examples to explain your skills
- Stay positive and show enthusiasm

Note: Employers look at your attitude, communication, and willingness to learn- not just your experience

What to Bring:

Bringing matierials can help you stay organized and professional:

- Copies of your resume
- List of references
- A notebook and pen
- Any required documents or portfolio

Common Interview Questions

Be ready to answer questions like:

- Tell me a little bit about yourself
- What are your biggest strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you know about our company/organization?
- Why do you want this position?

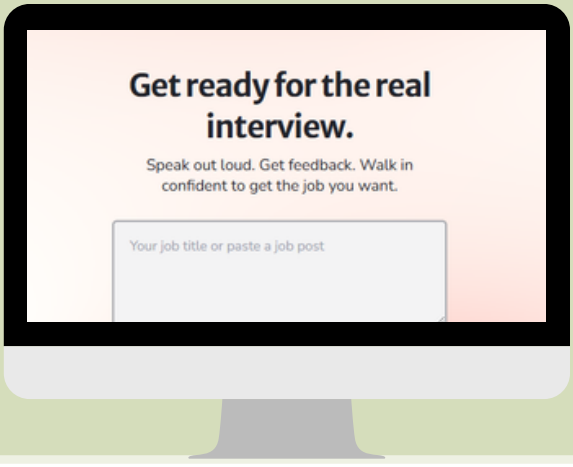
After the Interview

Follow up professionally to leave a strong final impression:

- Send them a thank you email within 24 hours
- Show appreciation and restate your interest
- Follow up if you don't here back

Practice Tool: Online Interview Simulator

You can practice answering real interview questions here:



Try the Interview Simulator

https://welcomecoach.ca/en/practice_interview/intro

Don't forget:
Preperation + Confidence = A Strong Impression!

FIRST JOB GUIDE

Starting your first job can feel new and overwhelming, but that's normal. Most entry-level jobs focus on helping you learn, adjust, and understand how the workplace operates.

What to Expect

Common things you can expect:

- A structured work schedule and routine
- Clear roles and responsibility
- Training and guidance from a supervisor or boss
- Learning workplace rules, policies, and expectations
- Working with a team and adapting to a new environment

Tip:
Communication with your supervisor is important. They will guide your work, give feedback, and help you improve. Asking questions and listening carefully will help you succeed

How to Act at Work

Your behaviour plays a big role in how employers see you, especially in your first job.

Tips:

1. **Be reliable**: complete your tasks, follow instructions, and take responsibility for your work
2. **Be on time**: Arriving on time (or early) shows respect and professionalism
3. **Act professionally**: communicate respectfully, follow workplace rules, and maintain a positive attitude
4. **Show initiative**: Be willing to learn, ask questions, and take on new tasks when appropriate



CONCLUSION

Starting your journey into the workforce is an important step toward your future. This guide is designed to help you build confidence, develop key skills, and understand what to expect.

Along the way, you will learn how to prepare for opportunities and navigate different situations in the workplace. Each section is meant to support you as you grow and gain experience.

From building a resume and preparing for interviews, to understanding workplace expectations, each skill you develop brings you closer to your goals.

Remember that no one expects you to know everything right away; learning, asking questions, and gaining experience are all part of the process

Most importantly, believe in your abilities. Your effort, attitude, and willingness to learn are just as important as your experience. With the right mindset and preperation, you can succeed and contribute to building your future.

Have a Strong Application:
Create a strong application that highlights your skills and experience

Practice, Practice, Practice:
Prepare for interviews and practice your answers with confidence

Study the jobs:
Research what skills the employers of jobs you want

Fill in Skills Gaps:
Use online resources, volunteering, or internships to gain experience

Have a Good Mindset:
Keep learning, stay motivated, and be open to new opportunities



Strong Roots Lead to Steady Growth

The effort you put in now builds the foundation for your future.

With time, patience, and consistency, you will grow!

FEEDBACK FORM



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SPONSORS



Use the "Find a Business" tool on the Chamber's website for a complete business directory

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