

Area a Vital Economic Hub

then-Mayor Irene T. Schmidt from fees collected for wedding ceremonies she performed.

In June of 1995, the SPBPA held the first annual Classic Car Show. Now in its fourth year, the show has become one of the premier events in the township, attracting between 6,000 and 8,000 people.

The SPBPA organizes this event in conjunction with the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, based in Scotch Plains, which holds a Craft Fair on the same day. Proceeds from the show go towards the SPBPA's Beautification Program and its scholarship fund.

This year, the organization has formed a scholarship fund for local high school students. Money raised at the SPBPA's annual dinner, as well as proceeds from the car show, will be set aside for this fund.

The SPBPA additionally organizes the weekly New Jersey Farmers Market held each Saturday during the summer in Towne Centre. The association pays for all expenses to cover permits, insurance and publicity for the event.

This past holiday season, the SPBPA donated \$250 to the Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood for holiday decorations for the 18th-century Cannon Ball House on East Front Street in Scotch Plains.

In addition, the SPBPA pledged another \$250 in matching funds to the Historical Society. Donations were received from individual businesses totaling \$250, which resulted in the Historical Society raising \$750 through its partnership with business association.

The SPBPA has supported the Mayors Gala for the past three years, with the purchase of two tables by its members and an advertisement in the dinner booklet.

The association supports the Scotch Plains Cultural Arts Committee and its Summer Concert Series with an advertisement in the program booklet, and by encouraging its members to advertise in it as well.

The SPBPA has contributed regularly over the last few years to the Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad, DECA, and the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation.

Association members have also donated hundreds of hours of their time over the past four years to many township committees. SPBPA members either have been or are currently represented on the Downtown Business Alliance, the Downtown Development Committee, the Scotch Plains Day Committee, the Holiday Decorating Committee, the Memorial Day Parade Committee, the Clean Communities Committee, and the Downtown Task Force.

According to Mr. Pardon, the SPBPA's efforts to create a more active, involved and

informed business community has at least partially contributed to a number of positive trends within the business district.

These include the fairly low vacancy rate in the township; the investment made by a number of landlords who have either improved their building facades or are discussing prospective improvements or additions to their properties, and the number of businesses which have relocated within the community.

Among these businesses are It's A Dog's World, Nuts N' Plenty, About Faces Graphics, Panther Printing, Rosie's Treasures Boutique, Connections Personnel, Inc., Cozy Corner Creations and Little Shop of Comics.

In addition to the contributions which the SPBPA has made directly to the community, many individual businesses in the township have contributed on their own to specific requests made by the township. For example, between 1996 and 1997, individual business owners and professionals donated more than \$2,000 towards the purchase of additional holiday decorations for the Village Green.

These contributions are in addition to the tens of thousands of dollars worth of products and services that businesses donate on an annual basis to local churches, synagogues, schools and other non-profit organizations for various fund-raising activities in the community.

"The SPBPA looks forward to continuing to work, with our government and the community at large, on positive changes which will make Scotch Plains a stronger and more enjoyable community for its residents and business owners as we move into the new century," Mr. Pardon stated recently.

The SPBPA has set a goal of contributing nearly \$10,000 towards beautifying the Towne Centre through sponsorship of events which are also designed to provide enjoyment for township residents.

Annual membership dues are \$35, and members have the option to contribute more throughout the year for events or promotional activities that they may find of interest or benefit to themselves or their businesses, Mr. Pardon confirmed.



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