



Public Media
Issues & Voices that Matter

**Commentary
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by Paul Sladek, Chairman, Oviedo ~ Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce

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Later this year, in July, the Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce will celebrate its 30th anniversary.

From humble beginnings in 1982 with 10 founders, and a one-room, donated office, to today, with nearly 500 professional members, and space within the UCF Incubator at the heart of SeminoleWay, the Chamber has been here through, and been an integral part of, many changes in east Seminole County.

However, no change better symbolizes the role of the Chamber in our region than when, last fall, the Chamber revised and simplified its Mission Statement, to now provide that the Chamber shall be “an advocate for business and civic interests within our communities”.

It's a simple mission, but full of meaning. The promotion of civic interests has always been at the heart of the Chamber's activities; however, this change makes clear that, together with the promotion of business interests, the promotion of our community is one of only two primary purposes of the Chamber – and a second purpose that is co-equal with the first.

In Dickens' "Christmas Carol", Jacob Marley explained to Scrooge: “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business. Charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

As this year's Chairman, it is my vision that this spirit of service guide every decision of the Chamber's volunteer board of directors, and motivate the numerous volunteer efforts of the Chamber's committees and its members.

On April 14, the Chamber's longest running statement of its commitment to our community enters its 18th year when the Taste of Oviedo moves to its new location at the Oviedo Mall.

With free admission and free parking, this year's Taste will run from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. and feature over 170 booths, 30 restaurants, and 15 performances on the entertainment stage, where you can sample our community's finest in both food and music.

The Taste of Oviedo will also again feature its signature event, the “Citrus & Celery Cook-Off presented by Duda Farm Fresh Foods”, a tribute our community's agricultural roots, and its staple crops, where up to 32 residents will compete in two-divisions -- citrus and celery -- to take home the title of Oviedo's best chef – and in which you, the community, get to help judge.

At the Oviedo-Winter Springs Regional Chamber of Commerce, we understand that a region is a place, but a community is its people.

Because business is a part of our community, and our community matters to local business, this is Paul Sladek.