



Kemble K. Pope
CEO, Davis Chamber of Commerce

Jennifer Nitzkowski
2014 Chairman, Board of Directors
Davis Chamber of Commerce

CC: Board of Directors, Ambassadors & Past Chairs, Davis Chamber of Commerce

RE: Letter of Resignation

10 June 2014

Jennifer,

The last three years of my life, both personal and professional, have been completely transformative. In my role as CEO of the Davis Chamber of Commerce (DCOC), I have been honored to serve the business community and I am grateful for the opportunity to develop working relationships and friendships that will last a lifetime. While I have enjoyed leading this organization and publicly representing the business community, it is now time for me to move on to other opportunities. I offer you my resignation as CEO and my thanks for a mutually beneficial three years of work to improve our community.

As we have discussed with the Board of Directors, I am honored to lead the CEO Search Committee to find my successor. I am confident that we will attract a highly qualified field of candidates. Our period of planned transition should culminate in late-August 2014 when I train the new CEO for several weeks.

I want to reassure you, and the community, that I have no intention of leaving Davis. My wife, Katherine, and I have made our home here in Yolo County and we both look forward to many years of community involvement. My current plan is to work on several entrepreneurial ventures in the private sector.

As we move into this time of transition, I think it is appropriate and important to reflect upon the last three years and ponder the future of the DCOC.

In 2011, the Board asked me to focus on providing more value, a higher return on investment (ROI), to our members. All of our decisions are now based on this essential concept. I am confident that our members are now receiving more value, and often customized for their specific needs, than they did three years ago.

We have increased revenues, reduced operational expenditures, and I'm proud that the DCOC is in a much better financial situation than when I arrived. With the active support of many Board Directors, we have put the Chamber's financial house in order. A modern membership management system that is completely integrated into our accounting system is now in place with internal controls that ensure validity and accuracy of our financial statements.

Additionally, we created a thoughtful and effective Financial Reserve Policy that reflects the organization's need for a long-term reserve, an operating reserve and the ability to annually fund unanticipated special projects that further our mission. The annual budget for the DCOC is now better aligned with our strategic objectives and more accurately reflects fiscal reality than in years past. Our financial statements and chart of accounts, for the first time in decades, have been re-organized to more clearly represent our organization's fiscal status.

At our 2012 Annual & Mid-Year Board Strategy Sessions, we assessed the DCOC's activities, services and events based on four determining factors:

- 1) Do our members receive value?
- 2) Does the community benefit?
- 3) Are staff, volunteer, financial and other resources efficiently utilized?
- 4) Is it profitable?

As a result of this exercise and recognizing that some events would score highly on some factors but low on another, we drastically changed our calendar of events and scope of work for the DCOC. We no longer do things because "we've always done them." The activities, events and services that we continue to offer are of higher quality than in years past and are consistently better utilized/attended.

The programmatic transformations that have improved ROI for our members have been built on a solid foundation of internal changes that are mostly visible only to our staff and leadership. These procedural and cultural innovations have improved our efficiency, organizational transparency and ensure that operational functionality is not dependent upon any one person.

During the past three years, staff has continued the arduous process of documenting how the DCOC's operational activities are completed with a series of detailed protocols. Under my leadership, we have attracted and trained a professional and friendly staff that are cross-trained on daily tasks and understand the importance of ROI for our members.

In 2013, we completed a successful capital campaign to modernize our conference room and we invested in updating all of our computer equipment, office furniture and made tenant improvements that have resulted in a more functional, professional and visible office environment and public welcome center.

In the realm of community relations and advocacy, I am proud to note that DCOC's working relationships with partner organizations such as UC Davis, Davis Downtown, YCVB, Davis Roots, Sac Metro Chamber, SARTA, SACTO, and other local Chambers (to name just a few) have, by all accounts, never been more positive and productive. We successfully organized and led a delegation of ten representatives from Davis businesses, the City of Davis, UC Davis and Yolo County to lobby on our community's behalf in Washington D.C. in advance of the annual Capitol to Capitol program. That work continues to bear fruit for our community and the entire region.

The reinvigoration of the Davis Chamber's Political Action Committee tested our mettle in a potentially sensitive area. Now, after successfully navigating the political waters of two City Council elections with a thoughtful and diligent research process, hard-hitting candidates' debates and public endorsements, DCOC is more active and relevant to local and regional public policy decision-making.

At our 2013 Annual & Mid-Year Board Strategy Sessions, we built upon the foundation of improved operational processes and heightened relevancy in our community with the creation of our *DCOC 2020 Prosperity Plan*, a strategic work plan to guide DCOC for the next six years. As we work over the next two months to fill in the specific action-item and metrics to judge success, I am confident that the *2020 Prosperity Plan* will be the crowning achievement of our work over the past three years to renew and reinvigorate the Davis Chamber of Commerce as a community leader that is focused on cultivating prosperity in Davis.

The *DCOC 2020 Prosperity Plan* is an outcome of our internal assessments and positioning at the nexus of a renewed local and regional focus on economic development. Our scope of work is based upon our community's unique strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and is structured so that many activities are aligned with our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, "Next Economy: Capitol Region Prosperity Plan".

As the DCOC continues to dedicate resources to action-oriented economic development activities, from support of "Shop Davis" to more focused support of industrial sectors that are creating high-paying jobs in Davis e.g. *AgTech and Robotics*, we can expect to gain broader community relevance and an increase in our membership.

All organizations have weaknesses and face external threats, including DCOC. From my perspective, the most notable of these weaknesses and threats are (in no particular order):

- Engagement expectations for Board; *Board development should be a high priority*
- Ability of Board, Ambassadors & Staff to succinctly communicate membership value/ROI; *ongoing trainings should be required*
- Relevant and timely communications to community and membership; *a strategic communications plan should be developed as part of the 2020 Prosperity Plan*
- Protocols to reflect best practices for daily operations; *ongoing updates are necessary*

DCOC's strengths and opportunities are numerous:

- Engaged member businesses from all industries that regularly and publicly support Chamber position statements and activities at public meetings and gatherings could greatly increase the organization's stature, relevance and generate organic membership increases
- Membership in the DCOC has grown over the past three years with no sales strategy. If DCOC can continue to deliver high quality products under the current scope of work and institute a sales program, then there is a huge potential for increased membership
- DCOC is a respected convener, connector, facilitator and advocate; this role could be better utilized to forge community consensus in support of jobs growth and a more sustainable Davis economy that can support our high quality of life without continued increases to tax rates.

I am grateful for the trust, support, wisdom and guidance that you and your predecessors, Cary Arnold, Rose Cholewinski and Gregg Herrington, along with all of the Board Directors, Ambassadors, members of the Government Relations Committee, Economic Development Committee and all of our event committees, have shared with me during my tenure as CEO of the Davis Chamber of Commerce.

I am proud to have been a small part of the Davis Chamber of Commerce's fine 109 year tradition of creating positive benefits for Davis; and I'm confident that our current momentum and quest for excellence will achieve even greater successes for our members and increased prosperity for our entire community... Onward and upward!

Actively yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kemble K. Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kemble K. Pope