

## How Ironic! Tomorrow's "State of the Region" Is Being Sponsored by Transparency-Defying Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce.

What kind of transparency can we expect at this important event when all I see is the Hilton Head Island - Bluffton Chamber of Commerce simultaneously spending thousands of dollars from membership dues on out-of-town attorneys in an effort to hide from taxpayer and media scrutiny. Chamber lawyers are currently

trying to block formal requests presented under the South Carolina Freedom of Information (FOIA) statutes—to uncover how our Chamber executives continue to, in my view, lavishly spend public funds which have been provided from Town of Hilton Head Island's Accommodation Tax revenues.

## Has Anything Changed?

- **Chamber President Bill Miles Still Smiling on the Way to the Bank**

From what I gather, Bill Miles, President & CEO of the Chamber, is still being paid \$351,003 plus receiving other gratis memberships and family trips that come to \$400,000 or more, while our SC Governor Haley has a salary of \$106,000 and our Mayor Drew Laughlin is paid \$30,000.

- **Local Companies Still Being Stuffed**

I believe the Chamber continues to negatively impact our the local economy by brazenly sending major-dollar contracts for consultants, web companies and agencies to New York, Canada and elsewhere when area companies are able to perform the same assignments.

- **"Non-Profit" Chamber Still "Profiteering" at Expense of Members**

Our Chamber claims to be "non-profit" yet I'm seeing it still making "profits" in direct competition to local, tax-paying businesses who are chamber members. I believe this practice not only unfair, but in violation of IRS 501-c6 non-profit tax laws as written. *An IRS whistle-blower case has been filed to seek a ruling on violating 501-c6 non profit tax codes by our Chamber for selling advertising, but paying no corporate taxes.*

- **"Buddy Board" Still Exists**

Right now the only way to get a non "insider" on the Chamber Board is to go through a convoluted process that's nearly impossible for the average chamber member. Don't believe me? Check out the Chamber by-laws yourself, Article IV, Section 2-c.

## What is This Board Hiding? Who's Paying to Hide It?

I have been beating this drum for nearly two years. If I am wrong why haven't they sued me? Instead, they hire out-of-town lawyers to block Freedom of Information Act requests by myself and others. *I would think this smug attitude speaks volumes about these problems and abuses.* Once again, my heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of citizens who understand the importance of fixing our Chamber and support our cause.

Please keep sending emails and letters to Town Council members, state officials and local editors. Ask the Chamber Board members why non-transparency? And please copy me at [SpeakUp@StopChamberAbuse.com](mailto:SpeakUp@StopChamberAbuse.com).

### My Quest Continues:

I will not stop until every rock is turned over . . . every abuse brought to light.

*Skip Hoagland*