Coalition Launched in 2002

By way of background, our current efforts in advocating for resources in support of our economic development agenda essentially originated with a trip to Washington, D.C. in March of 2002. Participants included Mayor Elzie Odom, UT Arlington President Bob Witt (who was also Chair-Elect of the Chamber’s Board at the time), Chamber Board Chairman John Cartusciello, and newly appointed Chamber President Wex Jurey. “It was my pleasure to go on the first Team Arlington trip to Washington,” stated John Cartusciello, Division Manager, JPMorgan Chase.

“As we greeted the various elected and government officials, they were always surprised we were coming to them as a team. This was well received in our national capital and established an image of cooperation and commitment to our great city. This image has continued to be advanced by the teams and, in additional federal funds for the Arlington ISD,” stated Dr. Bend. “Our unity is an important force in getting the things we need for all of our citizens.”

This year (2007) the Arlington Hispanic and African American Chambers of Commerce, the Tarrant County Asian Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Pan American Chamber of Commerce, and the Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau all joined the coalition. “Team Arlington is a perfect model of how representative entities come together to work in the best interest of its citizens to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the present and plan for a positive future,” stated Robert Phanelson, Chair of the Arlington African American Chamber of Commerce.

Conservatively speaking, the efforts of Team Arlington have largely been responsible for securing in excess of $300 million in state and federal funds, primarily in support of our identified economic development initiatives. The program, since inception, has been administered by the Chamber, primarily guided through the Chamber’s Government Relations Council.

The following year (2003) the partnership expanded to include Tarrant County College, Tarrant County, and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County. “Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County is a proud partner of Team Arlington,” a coalition that has proven to be an invaluable catalyst in facilitating collaboration with congressional and agency leaders,” stated Judy McDonald, Executive Director of Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County.

“This has allowed us to expand our efforts in new and innovative new areas as well as ensure a quality workforce that supports economic growth while providing jobs for the citizens of Tarrant County. Team Arlington is a Home Run!”

In 2005 Team Arlington began its current emphasis on state advocacy, launching an annual delegation visit to Austin. This year, a delegation of 49 business and community leaders, City elected officials, Chamber of Commerce and City staff, and educational representatives converged on Austin in late January.

“Team Arlington to Austin represents Team Arlington’s advocacy efforts at the state level, highlighted by an annual delegation visit to Austin. Our purpose is to cultivate relationships with Texas state agencies, to present our public policy agenda to state elected officials, and to meet with state agencies to review support for our economic development agenda,” stated Chamber Board Chair Mary Haddad.

“It has been a privilege to represent Tarrant County College Southeast Campus in Austin as a Team Arlington partner,” stated Dr. Judith Carrier, President of the Southeast Campus. “Building relationships with our legislative representatives and educational entities is vital for the support of Arlington’s initiatives in public and higher education.”

In 2007, Team Arlington was joined by the Arlington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. “It’s always a good thing when community and business leaders come together to be part of something that improves our City as a whole,” stated Elzie Odom, former mayor of the City of Arlington, reflecting, “When the Arlington Chamber first approached me in 2002 regarding the Team Arlington concept, I didn’t realize how far-reaching it could become. It is exciting to experience the results that have followed. Thank you Team Arlington partners for your leadership!”

In order for Team Arlington to maximize visits with key legislators, the delegation was divided into three advocacy groups, focused on Economic Development, Workforce Development, and Public Policy.

Key issues on the agenda included:
- Development and Redevelopment Projects
- Workforce Initiatives
- Transportation & Road Improvements
- Technology & Research Programs and Initiatives
- Public & Higher Education
- Environmental Quality
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Business & the Arts