



Parish's 1st Business Expo – Very Favorably Received

“The Parish Business Expo did bring connectedness to the parish. This event brought parishioners together who didn't know each other – it built a spirit of hospitality and welcome, “ Fr. Pat, Pastor

On the weekend of May 16-17, The Community of the Blessed Sacrament held its 1st Business Expo. Sixty (60) parishioner and bulletin advertiser exhibitor applications were received. With the temperature being over 100 degrees in the parish's courtyard, the Expo was held the Social Hall. Close to 400 raffle tickets were submitted for the over 20 door prizes donated by various exhibitors. Most of the exhibitors received 5-6 new client referrals; there were a few who received as many as ten or more new client leads. A few exhibitors connected with candidates for job opportunities their businesses offered.

Very favorable ratings and comments were received on an exhibitor post-event survey, i.e.: appreciated the opportunity to network with fellow parishioners; the best contacts were made between the exhibitors; well worth while; well organized, especially considering this was a first attempt; demonstrated parish's concern during these tough economic times; great community event; glad we did it; for a first venture, it was enthusiastically received; wonderful event; thanks for setting up and arranging; great refreshments...

Being a first attempt – there were a few lessons learned and/or recommendations for future parish Business Expos, i.e.: have food in same area as exhibitors with more seating; presentation

process needs improvement; if the weather permits, hold the Expo in the courtyard to encourage more traffic after services...

This all started with our Pastoral Council, who at their January, 2009 gathering suggested - in these tough economic times, the parish should do something to help the many parishioner businesses. After some research and planning by the Parish Manager, the application, promotional materials, event program, mailings and parish website were prepared. As the applications quickly came in, Dick Leopold, Parish Life Ministries Coordinator, set about designing the Expo layout and arranging refreshments, including partnering with our parish's Welcome Ministry.

An overwhelming majority of the exhibitors stated – let's do this again and let's form a business-to-business networking ministry. So, tentatively, another Expo will be planned for weekend of February 13-14, 2010. Watch for more info about this new parish ministry. Thank you again to the exhibitors, the attendees and parish staff. As an added note, Jeannette Vernia, Pastoral Council member, as an exhibitor, sold pastry bread – over \$400 was raised our parish's Family Support Fund! The Expo Exhibitor Program can be found on the parish website (from homepage Quicklinks).