

**a few  
minutes  
with...**

## Karen Blackerby



**J**ust three short years ago, we were living in Mobile, our son was in his senior year of High School and life was good! At that point, the thought of moving to Panama City Beach had not crossed our minds. However, Bob would return home nearly every week from his business travels in Northwest Florida and wanted to talk about Panama City Beach...the warm and friendly people, the beautiful beaches, the casual and relaxed lifestyle. Our company, Magnum Capital, had several developments underway in the Southeast, including Panama City.

Our first introduction to the Chamber was at the Annual Awards Dinner, where Charles Hilton was honored as Pioneer of the Year. A few months later, we participated in the Winter Resident Appreciation Day through our restaurant, Calypso Beach Café & Sports Grille. Our partner, Gordon Anderson and Executive Chef, Bernard Malone, prepared 5000 samples of cheesecake for the event. Little did we know how strong the Chamber was and how many people they could bring to an event...we ran out of samples in just a few hours!

As our business was getting established here, it was important to attend as many Chamber functions as possible. As we did, our list of contacts and friends continued to grow. We found that the more we participated, the more that we got out of the events. We found the harder we worked on Chamber activities, the more our business grew and the more fun we had.

We have now been local business owners and active in the Chamber for more than three years. There is no better place for a business owner to meet customers, suppliers, bankers, attorneys, accountants...well, you get the point. Get active, get involved and give as much time and effort as you can. The results will be most rewarding, professionally and personally.