

## Chamber of Commerce: your ally

Traveling to a new area is exhilarating. Suddenly you are presented with several new things to do and see. Generally, you have three months (the standard length of an assignment) to soak it all in. As you know, the internet is a great resource for just about everything.

However, if you are like me, I like to have something tangible to look at and carry around with me. The local Chamber of Commerce can be a great resource. Once I have my new address, I call the Chamber and have them send information to the new address. This way, I can get started on my plans the minute I arrive.

The Chamber of Commerce can provide you maps of the local area as well as information on local attractions. One time I called the Chamber of Commerce of Portland Oregon and told them I wanted to stay at a cute inexpensive place in the area. They quickly suggested a nice youth hostel in the area. It was actually a hotel, but the bottom floor was a youth hostel. The hostel was very nice. It was during their slow season. I had the entire place to myself for only 20 dollars a night.

They can also provide information on where to shop, golf, and ski. You name it; they seem to have information on it. Sometimes, the Chamber of Commerce also has statistical information such the population and history of the area.

Having this information can help you feel more connected and knowledgeable with the area from the beginning. You won't feel like a stranger landing on a weird planet randomly roaming around to find the nearest restaurants. You will be an informed visitor ready to explore the horizons. The Chamber of Commerce may be nothing new to you, but sometimes it's good to have a reminder of what they have to offer.