

Chad Amond receives lifetime achievement award as he prepares to step back as Westmoreland chamber's leader

TRIB LIVE [triblive.com/local/westmoreland/chad-amond-receives-lifetime-achievement-award-as-he-prepares-to-step-back-as-chambers-leader/](https://www.triblive.com/local/westmoreland/chad-amond-receives-lifetime-achievement-award-as-he-prepares-to-step-back-as-chambers-leader/)

Megan Tomasic

September 28, 2021



Email Newsletters

TribLIVE's Daily and Weekly [email newsletters](#) deliver the news you want and information you need, right to your inbox.

Chad Amond, the president and CEO of the Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce, was honored Tuesday evening by leaders from across the county as he prepares to transition out of his longtime position.

During a ceremony at Bella Terra Vineyards near New Stanton, Amond was awarded the first Economic Growth Connection lifetime achievement award for the work he completed as head of the chamber, a position he has held since 2011.

However, Amond, 46, of Unity is preparing to step back from the role after being [diagnosed with primary progressive aphasia](#), a rare form of dementia that eventually will rob him of his ability to speak, write, read or understand anyone. Amond announced the diagnosis last summer. The ailment has no cure.

"I want to work as long as I can, and I want to volunteer," Amond told the Tribune-Review.

According to his wife, Amy Amond, officials with the Economic Growth Connection and chamber are trying to keep him as involved as possible.

“He wants to continue to volunteer for as long as he’s able and make connections while he still can,” Amy said. “Really just be involved and do what he can for as long as he can.”

Amy Amond said there is not an official step-down date.

The chamber in August hired Dan DeBone as executive director. Since he was hired, DeBone has been assisting Amond as he continues to work for a few hours each week. DeBone said he plans to help keep Amond as involved as possible by inviting him to ribbon cutting ceremonies, meetings and more.

“I don’t think Chad’s ever going to be technically stepping down. ... I will always look at Chad as it is his chamber, these are his customers,” DeBone said. “I’m really just stepping in to continue to move the organization based upon what he has built.”

During Tuesday’s event, more than 300 business and organization leaders, as well as government officials, gathered to celebrate Amond’s work over the past decade. Throughout an hourlong cocktail hour, Amond, along with his wife and three of his children, were greeted by guests who offered support and congratulations.

Amond said the award was unexpected.

“It’s fantastic,” Amy Amond said. “I’m living his passion of what he likes to do for the region, so seeing him be recognized for it means a lot. More importantly, it really means a lot to the kids. I think it’s really important they see what their dad did because they won’t be able to see a whole lot moving on.”

During a speech, James Smith, president and CEO of the Westmoreland County Economic Growth Connection, praised Amond for his service over the years, telling the crowd that the disease may take away Amond’s speech but “it could never silence his voice because you speak to us, Chad, from your heart and from the very great example that you’ve set.

“Your selflessness in stepping back and letting others lead and continue the great work at the chamber, your concern not for yourself and how this disease is affecting you but for others around you, most especially your family, your determination to face this disease on your own terms — you’ve taught us all a lesson of service, compassion and courage in the face of adversity,” Smith said. “For that, we thank you.”

Following his speech, Smith presented Amond with a signed Mario Lemieux jersey.

“Although this is a celebration of Chad and what he has done over the past several years, this is by no means a goodbye,” DeBone said. “As long as Chad can continue to get up each and every day, he’s always going to put his family first but the chamber second.

The chamber is what makes him continue to fight and get through his struggles with this disability.”

Megan Tomasic is a Tribune-Review staff writer. You can contact Megan at 724-850-1203, mtomasic@triblive.com or via Twitter .

[Support Local Journalism](#) and help us continue covering the stories that matter to you and your community.

[Support Journalism Now >](#)

Categories: Local | Westmoreland

[Email Newsletters](#)

TribLIVE's Daily and Weekly [email newsletters](#) deliver the news you want and information you need, right to your inbox.