

Accelerating Business Growth

The Chamber's Strategic Plan

Our region needs to ensure the next wave of economic progress. We recognize that our economy will need to rely primarily on existing businesses to fuel growth. Businesses, of all sizes, will need to be bold and entrepreneurial in order to seize growth opportunities. The Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County commits to being a driving force and to reaching out to other partners in our region and state to focus on developing an environment that cultivates business innovation and increased economic opportunities.

Accelerating Business Growth, the strategic plan for The Chamber through 2009, was developed through the efforts of the Board of Directors, both as a whole and through its strategic planning task force, with input from Chamber membership and staff. Implementing this plan will require a long-term commitment, as building an entrepreneurial community will take time and patience. Success will not be easy to gauge and promote. The plan is designed to provide a clear strategic direction for the organization. It is not meant to be static, therefore is flexible to respond to lessons learned and to emerging issues. Each year Chamber staff will develop a business plan with tactics to advance strategies.

Core Strategies

Spur creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial activity

Develop opportunities that feature business resources, cutting-edge topics, innovation, and business success stories

Facilitate access to capital for area businesses

Forge partnerships to link and leverage resources of public and private organizations that work on entrepreneurial development

Work with area colleges and universities to expand offerings that support entrepreneurial development

Identify and address key factors that encourage the start-up, attraction, retention, and expansion of business

Conduct outreach to businesses to better address emerging business issues

Work with local governments to ensure that their business development process maximizes opportunities for business retention, expansion and attraction

Enhance tools/products used to market the area

Assist companies to access global market opportunities and encourage and support the capacity of small business in international trade

Discover new approaches and best practices from regular review of successful initiatives from other communities

Be a catalyst and resource to help businesses tap into the region's total talent pool by increasing opportunities for women, minorities and young adults in the workplace

Create opportunities for businesses to share best practices and help organizations formulate initiatives and a culture for the hiring and advancement of a more diverse staff

Serve as a catalyst to bring together diverse professionals to help develop business connections and provide personal and professional development opportunities

Form an ongoing partnership with area universities, colleges and employers to pursue strategies for identifying, retaining and attracting more college graduates.

Support and where appropriate lead initiatives whose aim is to connect and retain young professionals in the region

Be a powerful advocate for member businesses by influencing public policy to improve the business climate and quality of life in the region

Monitor, advise, provide leadership and advocate on public policy issues affecting St. Joseph County and the regional economy

Encourage and support a regional perspective from business, government, education, and non-profits to address regional issues that are vital for economic growth

Advocate infrastructure investment and coordinated planning of infrastructure expansion and improvements

Support initiatives that improve educational outcomes and enhance the skill level of the workforce

Collaborate with other organizations, assuming leadership when appropriate, to achieve public policy objectives

Adopted September 27, 2004