

The Chamber

A publication of The Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County



W
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the power of

influence & collaboration

A collective voice...to be heard. A collaborative force...to be seen. That's the business community in action.

Rightfully so the daily demands of business operations prevent most individual businesses from monitoring critical legislative issues being determined by elected officials.

That's where the public policy arm of The Chamber comes into play. *more on page 4 ►*

jan
feb

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The Chamber
Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County

www.sjchamber.org

FACT

The average business spends \$350 per employee per year on office supplies.

Maybe your company can afford to overspend on office supplies. But the black and white of it is that now you don't have to. Join the collective buying power of The Chamber and its member businesses today and start saving on 14,000 products, with over 300 deeply discounted items.

FACT

Companies participating in The Chamber's Office Supply Discount Program can save an average of \$150 per employee per year.

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how we see it

accelerating economic vitality begins with advocacy

Some of The Chamber’s public policy positions are proactive, some are more reactive, but all are designed to encourage economic growth for our members and community.

The Chamber receives broad-based input when developing legislative positions. We utilize our Legislative Affairs Council and issue-specific committees to be our eyes, ears and sounding board. These volunteer groups can’t do it alone. They need to hear from you. The feedback we receive from all of our members - large and small - is the type of input we need to create policies and initiatives that promote a vibrant and economically prosperous community.

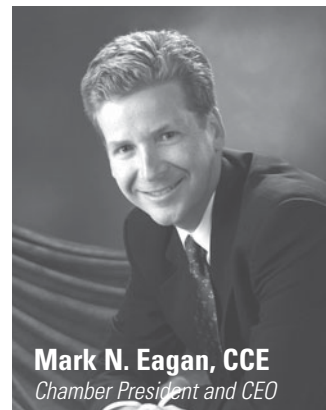
The Chamber forms positions based on what you tell us.

To illustrate, the highly charged time zone debate has been an issue where The Chamber didn’t take a position on the designation. Rather, based on member surveys, there was overwhelming evidence to keep St. Joseph and Elkhart counties in the same time zone—whatever that may be. This position is a direct result of your comments to us.

It is important that the issues The Chamber tackles are not too narrow in scope. Specific industry issues are best addressed by industry trade groups.

Our Director of Public Policy Terry Miller maintains a consistent presence at the State House during the General Assembly. Terry provides timely input and plays a valuable role in the legislative process. He regularly testifies on bills. Our relationships with state

legislators, legislative staffs and other lobbyists provide ample opportunity for insights necessary to keep our business community represented and informed on important business legislation. These relationships also aid in our development of new policy that is in the best interest of our region.



Mark N. Eagan, CCE
Chamber President and CEO

We may not always succeed. But, the voice of business is heard loudly and clearly because of our Chamber’s efforts. During last year’s session of the Indiana General Assembly, we advanced 14 of our priorities, ranging from the extension of tax increment financing to the observance of daylight-saving time.

While the presence of our Director of Public Policy is important during State House debate, your individual phone calls and letters to legislators backing the issues make the real difference.

As we begin the new legislative session, keep us aware of issues that are important to you. I can be reached at eagan@sjchamber.org or 574.234.0051, ext. 331.

PLATINUM TRUSTEES

Chamber Trustees are committed businesses and organizations that take a leadership role in The Chamber’s efforts to accelerate business growth and prosperity in the community.



COLLABORATION *continued from page 1*

The Chamber brings together all sectors of the business community to speak out loudly, clearly and regularly on behalf of member businesses to protect and promote a positive climate for business growth and community prosperity.

Because The Chamber is one of only three chambers in the state of Indiana to have a paid lobbyist in the state capitol, The Chamber has earned respect and a reputation from the state delegation and other organizations as a major driver of regional business issues.

Established relationships make a difference when it comes to effective lobbying as there's truth to the expression that it's often "who you know." Winning in the lobbying world is 90% about access: access to the right people at the right time.

The power of The Chamber through its representation of 1,300 member companies employing more than 96,000 people lends credibility to positions The Chamber advocates.

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"I've always maintained a good relationship with The Chamber's public policy representative and look to him for his recommendations on what the businesses in St. Joseph County are facing," said State Senator John Broden. "In the past, I've worked closely with The Chamber on tax restructuring and participate in many of the elected officials receptions and legislative session

wrap-up meetings hosted by The Chamber. It gives me the opportunity to talk with the members and hear their views."

Adds State Senator Joe Zakas, "Area businesses need to have their viewpoints heard down in Indianapolis. The Chamber effectively represents that collective voice."

Often Chamber victories translate into a bottom-line return on membership investment to the business community. The Chamber was instrumental in pushing legislation to repeal the inventory tax, which was looked upon as a burden to businesses. Through effective lobbying, the bill was passed and takes effect this month.

Through The Chamber's connections and relationships, it is often the convener to bring creative coalitions together to move critical issues forward. This was the case in the formation of the U.S. 31 Coalition, bringing together communities along the U.S. 31 corridor, to create the collective clout to present a solid, unified front to Indiana Department of Transportation and state and federal legislators to push for an upgrade of the highway to interstate quality to spur economic development. Although this initiative continues to be a lengthy "work in progress," someone had to get things moving, and The Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County was the catalyst.

The Chamber actively monitors and is involved in shaping public policy on local issues that impact the economic well being of the area. Members provide the feedback that helps to shape public policy. Businesses need to be heard. The Chamber is committed to acting as the conduit for those voices.

STATE HOUSE PHOTOS *courtesy of The Indiana Chamber of Commerce*



how The Chamber develops policy

Legislative Affairs Council

Its mission is to review, debate and make recommendations to The Chamber's Board or Executive Committee on governmental or public policy issues that affect the economic growth of the region.

Business Climate Committee

Develops policies on health care, human resources, education and workforce, economic development and regulatory issues in areas of environment.

Infrastructure Committee

Creates policy positions for transportation, telecommunications, land use planning, public facilities and public utility expansion projects.

Taxation/Public Finance Committee

Develops policy on tax and budget issues.

For more information on these committees, contact Director of Public Policy Terry Miller at tmiller@sjchamber.org, or 574.234.0051, ext.303.

public policy on the web

Looking for a listing and contact information of area elected officials? Find it under the Public Policy link on The Chamber Web site at www.sjchamber.org.

Looking for a report card on legislative outcomes in recent years? Find it under the Public Policy link on The Chamber Web site at www.sjchamber.org.

communicating with public officials: how to do it

Any elected official's job is to be the voice of the people he/she represents. For the constituents who want the voice of their businesses heard, there are effective ways to communicate with public officials. Here are 10 simple rules for getting the most out of contact with those elected to serve.

- Be brief. A legislator's time is limited. So is yours.
- Be appreciative. Acknowledge previous support and current action.
- Be specific. Don't be general.
- Be informative and factual. Give reasons and provide the supporting materials.
- Be courteous. Always be polite. Treat them, as you would want to be treated. Ask for a specific action without being demanding or threatening.
- Be reasonable. Remember it's all right to have a difference of opinion.
- Be realistic. Issues may need to be resolved through compromise.
- Be understanding. Put yourself in the legislator's position to try and understand his/her concerns and goals.
- Learn to evaluate issues. The introduction of a legislative bill doesn't mean that it will become law. Whether you are for it or against it, don't get excited about it until you've learned the who, what and why of it.
- Don't be a busybody or extremist. Don't pester, and never imply that politicians are dishonest.

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

Office Visits

If you are communicating with legislators with staffs, get to know the staffs. Public officials at the state and federal levels rely heavily on their staffs to set up appointments, research and more, so getting to know them is key.

Prior to the visit, do your homework and make sure you understand the official's position on a particular issue. You may consider inviting other individuals from like companies with similar concerns, and don't be bashful about inviting the official to your place of business.

Telephone Calls

Make sure you have developed a relationship or an acquaintance first before attempting to phone your public officials. Always be concise, and discuss only one issue per telephone call. If the issue is in regard to a particular bill, provide the bill number and state your position. Remember the basic rule of "don't be a busybody." Make phone calls sparingly. Always be friendly.

Email

Email is a great way to communicate with your elected officials when issues are time sensitive and the need for action is critical. Keep your message short and to one screen, so the official doesn't have to scroll his/her way through the text. Always provide complete contact information in your email, including address, phone and fax numbers and email addresses.

Letters

Letters are still the primary means to communicate with public officials. They represent voters, are read and elicit responses. Letters can be informal or formal, typewritten or handwritten. Due to security issues, letters to federal officials, in particular, may take a longer period of time to reach the officials.

looking into the legislative session crystal ball

With the next General Session convening, The Chamber outlines some key issues to be addressed.

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX

Significant statewide efforts in the General Assembly's Commission on State Tax and Financing Policy are being made to change tax policy for Indiana. The Chamber's Taxation and Public Finance Committee studied options to the property tax for local government finance: the most pressing issue before the legislature in the coming session. The House Ways and Means Committee held hearings on this issue in December with a goal of removing county welfare funding from local property tax. The Chamber has a position supporting this proposal.

The Indiana Association of Cities and Towns presented to the state commission a comprehensive proposal for "Solutions to meet Indiana's local finance needs." Mishawaka Mayor Jeff Rea, South Bend Mayor Stephen Luecke, Mayor Leigh Morris of LaPorte and Mayor Allan Kaufman of Goshen have all taken lead roles in making this proposal. The Chamber staff has been meeting with legislative leaders and the mayors to encourage consensus legislation.

Efforts are needed to prevent increases in property tax rates that will be more than twice the inflation rate in each of the next two years. Part of this plan could include incentives for local government cooperative services as proposed in The Chamber's public policy position.

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TOLL ROAD LEASE PROPOSAL

The Chamber is taking a lead role in creating a regional position on the public-private partnership plan to lease the Northern Indiana Toll Road. An increase in toll rates of 80% in April of this year is proposed to catch up with inflation since the last increase in 1985. A long-term lease of the Toll Road creates some significant economic development concerns.

The Indiana Department of Transportation rate study shows that 16% of traffic will shift to local roads. That will create additional economic costs for maintenance and safety on local roads as well as increased travel times. The increased tolls will result in \$80 million in new revenue that could be a major source of funds for new infrastructure improvements on the Toll Road and in the counties of northern Indiana over the next 10 years. Hoosier citizens and businesses pay approximately 34% of the Toll Road revenue.

The Chamber position supports state ownership but would allow for bonding of the new revenue for local projects. The Chamber's view on leasing, if approved by the legislature, is that it needs to provide for mitigation of the economic losses the area will incur and guarantee that northern Indiana will be the beneficiary of all new taxes incurred by residents and a fair share of out-of-state revenue. The plan should also allow for local funding throughout the length of the lease. Early and complete funding of the U.S. 31 limited access highway between South Bend and Indianapolis will also be stressed.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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chamber member news

BKR Studio Inc. announces the opening of their new Web site hosting data center. Constructed over the summer at the company's East Madison St. headquarters, "the data center was built with security, reliability and redundancy in mind, ensuring that our clients' Web sites, Web applications, ecommerce and email systems stay up and running regardless of natural or man-made disasters," said Brian Rideout, president.

Gibson Insurance Group recently announced that Ronald R. Jordan has been named Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. Ron has served as Executive Vice President for Gibson Insurance Group since 1997. In his 28 years in the insurance industry, his experience includes underwriting, marketing, financial management, client services, human resources, insurance operations, and safety and loss prevention services. Jordan has developed group insurance/risk management programs as well as created a business operation dedicated to serving clients having national/regional facilities with complex insurance needs.

The City of South Bend has been awarded the 2007 Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Men's and Women's Major Fast Pitch National Championships. The bid was prepared and submitted by the **South Bend Regional Sports Commission**, an initiative of The Chamber/South Bend/Mishawaka Convention and Visitors Bureau, in conjunction with the South Bend Parks & Recreation Department. The Men's tournament will be held August 2-5 with the Women's tournament scheduled for August 3-5. The South Bend Regional Sports Commission exists to attract and retain international, national, regional, state and local

sports events to St. Joseph County and surrounding communities.

Physicians Health Plan of Northern Indiana, Inc., (PHP), a local managed-care organization, is providing scholarship opportunities for high school seniors planning to pursue a career in a health-related field. PHP will award a one-time scholarship of \$3,000 to the first place winner; a one-time scholarship of \$2,000 to the second place winner; and third place will receive a one-time scholarship of \$1,000. All entries must be postmarked by February 28, 2006, to be eligible. For entry requirements and an application, call 260.432.6690, ext. 463, or email requests to custsvc@phpni.com.

PentaVision Communications, Inc. is releasing a video entitled "Stories of Notre Dame – A Unique Look at Our Lady's Campus." The video will be sold exclusively at the Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore and through their

Web site at www.ndcatalog.com. The DVD and VHS versions are now available. "Stories of Notre Dame" takes viewers on an intimate tour of campus focusing on the history and mystique of some of the university's most-loved landmarks and features, including the log chapel, the main building, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and the grotto. There are also features on residence life at Notre Dame, the numerous chapels, unique behind-the-scenes game day preparation at the stadium, and a beautiful journey through the four seasons at the university.

to submit

To submit your company's press releases for The Chamber@Work's member news section, send an email to Nick Johnson at njohnson@sjchamber.org, or fax at 574.289.0358. The Chamber has the right to refuse or edit any material.



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chamber events

jan - feb 2006

Register using the following methods:

EMAIL: events@sjchamber.org

WEB: www.sjchamber.org

PHONE: 574.234.0051, ext. 301

Thursday, January 12

"Employee Motivation – What does that have to do with our customers?" Business Seminar
Chamber Briefing Center
8 – 9:30 a.m.
\$25 members; \$45 non-members

An effective team needs productive members, spirit and enthusiasm. What do companies need to do and how do they do it? Gain insight and helpful tips. Presenters: Sue Peterson, president of Peterson Media and Mary Behrle, owner of Miss Fit USA.

Monday, January 16

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast
Century Center
7:30 – 9 a.m.
\$25 per person, \$200 for table of eight
Contact Vivian Sallie at 574.282.4350, ext. 3 to register.

Annual breakfast celebrates the diversity of our community. Journalist and author Jonathan Tilove will be the keynote speaker.

Wednesday, January 18

Business After Hours
The Summit Club
5 – 7 p.m.
Complimentary (members); \$10 non-members

Informal light hors d'oeuvres reception allows you to network and make business contacts.

Tuesday, February 7

Organizational Excellence Workshop
Century Center – Hall C
8 – 11:30 a.m.
Members: \$85 per person, or \$75 each for 4 or more from same company
Non-members: \$110 per person, or \$100 each for 4 or more from same company

The workshop, presented by Wally Adamchik, former marine instructor pilot and accomplished motivational speaker and entrepreneur, will focus on effective leadership principles and establish a baseline for improving organizational performance, atmosphere and productivity.

Tuesday, February 7

Salute to Business Luncheon
Century Center
11:30 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Members: \$32 per person, or \$256 for a table of eight
Non-members: \$52 per person, or \$416 for a table of eight

Annual luncheon celebrates business success in our region. Event features award presentations and a keynote address by Wally Adamchik, former marine instructor pilot and accomplished motivational speaker and entrepreneur, titled "Change is Inevitable - Business Growth is Optional."

Friday, February 24

Power Networking
Comfort Suites – South Bend
8 – 11 a.m.
Members: \$30, Non-members: \$55

Business prospecting event gives participants face-to-face contact with many business prospects in a short amount of time.

The Chamber wishes to assure members of our intention to provide physically challenged participants access to all programs. If you or your employees have special needs in this area, please contact The Chamber at 574.234.0051, ext. 311 at least 48 hours in advance.



AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR

Tim Manring (right), account executive with Laven Insurance Agency, Inc., was named the 2005 Ambassador of the Year for his service and commitment to The Chamber. Ambassadors act as liaisons between The Chamber and its membership. The Chamber thanks Wal-Mart Mishawaka for its sponsorship of the 2005 Ambassador program.

Pictured (left to right): Chuck Viater, Chairman of The Chamber Board; Natalie Mast, 2005 Chairperson of the Ambassadors; and Tim Manring.

2006 Salute to Business to focus on growth and reinvention

The annual Salute to Business luncheon, set for Tuesday, February 7 at the Century Center from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., recognizes companies and individuals that have demonstrated economic growth, leadership and capital investment. The event's keynote speaker is

Wally Adamchik, director of 9G Enterprises. His keynote, "Change is Inevitable – Growth is Optional," will focus on reinvention and change management to achieve business growth. Adamchik is a former marine instructor pilot and accomplished motivational speaker and entrepreneur.

presenting sponsors



Invitations are being mailed to all Chamber member companies, and pre-registration is mandatory. RSVPs must be received by January 27. To register by phone, call 574.234.0051, ext. 301, or go to the Events Calendar at www.sjchamber.org. Registration via email is also an option at events@sjchamber.org. Cost is \$32 for members (table of eight for \$256) and \$52 for non-members (table of eight for \$416).

Salute to Business

Tuesday, February 7
Century Center
11:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Keynote Speaker:
Wally Adamchik

Topic:
"Change is Inevitable - Growth in Optional."

Salute to Business, one of The Chamber's signature events, names two individual awards including the W. Scott Miller Distinguished Business Leader and the Athena Award. The Economic Impact Award and Small Business of the Year Award are also presented.

The W. Scott Miller Distinguished Business Leader Award is presented to the professional who has shown entrepreneurial support, made significant contributions to the local business environment and demonstrated active involvement and commitment to the progress of the community. The Athena Award honors an individual for assisting women in developing their leadership potential, community service involvement and exemplary business standing.

workshop to focus on organization, performance

Salute Keynote Speaker

Wally Adamchik will present a workshop "Organizational

Excellence: Lifting Your Performance" on the morning of the Salute luncheon, Tuesday, February 7. The speaker is presented by 1st Source Bank.



The workshop will present effective leadership principles and establish a baseline for improving organizational performance, atmosphere and productivity. Based on the book "LIFT" by 9Gs President Bob Vosburgh, the focus will be on three major areas: Self, Team and Atmosphere.

The workshop will take place in Hall C of the Century Center from 8 - 11:30 a.m. Members pay \$85 per individual, or \$75 per person if 4 or more register from the same company. Non-members pay \$110 per individual, and \$100 per person if 4 or more register from the same company. Contact The Chamber at 574.234.0051, ext. 301 to register.



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Upcoming SBDC Seminars
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NxLevel

Begins January 18 from 6-9pm - \$250
A 12- week business course designed for entrepreneurs who want to expand an existing business and need the skills to make it grow. The course includes lecture/guest speaker in a hands-on format with a focus on the development of a strategic plan. Your business should be past the start-up stage to realize the benefits of this course. Registration deadline is January 11, 2006.

Selling on eBay

January 10 from 10am – 4pm
\$85 (includes material & lunch)
Although many people have chosen to sell on eBay, they may not always do it in a way that will offer the best results. This seminar will teach you the right way to sell on eBay. Training, delivered by an Education Specialist, uses the most up-to-date training and student materials - the same ones used by eBay University.

Call 574.282.4350 x 0 for more information or to enroll.

member milestone anniversaries

Congratulations to the following members celebrating milestone Chamber anniversaries

5 years

- Arborwood Living Center
- JDM Communications
- Logo Boys
- Merrill Lynch Private Client Group
- Mickey's Linen & Towel Supply
- The Music Machine
- Skyline Exhibits by Larry Reitz & Associates
- University Park Family Dentistry
- The Waterford at Edison Lakes

10 years

- Countryside Place
- Francesco's Ristorante Italiano
- Gerard Homes
- Ice Miller
- New Avenues
- Paul Davis Restoration of Michiana
- Pinnacle Athletic Club
- Weigel Broadcasting

15 years

- Heaven & Earth
- La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries
- Servicemaster of Michiana
- Torok Excavating & Demo, Inc.
- Wigfall Barber Shop/The Pat Mini Mart

20 years

- Honkers Restaurant
- Radiology, Inc.

25 years

- East Bank Emporium Restaurant
- Michiana Delivery Service

30 years

- Custom & Moore Tree Experts
- Goodwill Industries of Michiana

economic snapshot

National

CPI:	199.2 – Oct.	0.2% from Sept.
Unemployment:	5.0% - Nov.	unchanged
Payroll Employment:	+215,000(p) Nov.	+34,000 - Oct.
Average Hourly Earnings:	\$16.32(p) – Nov.	+0.03 from Oct.
PPI:	+0.7% - Oct.	
ECI:	+0.8% 3rd qtr	+0.7% 2nd qtr
Productivity:	+4.7% - 3rd qtr	+2.2% - 2nd qtr
U.S. Import Price Index	-0.3% - Oct.	+2.3% - Sept.

Indiana October 2005

Unemployment Rate:	5.0%	unchanged
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St. Joseph County October 2005

Labor Force:	136,260(p)	up 50 from Sept.
Employed:	129,690(p)	up 130 from Sept.
Unemployed:	6,570(p)	down 80 from Sept.
Unemployment Rate:	4.8%(p)	down 0.1% from Sept.

Information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

new chamber members

Acousticom Corporation
28180 Clay Street
Elkhart, IN 46517
574.293.0534
Manufacturing-Electrical/
Electronics
www.acousticom.com

ADZ in MOTION LLC
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Mishawaka, IN 46545
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BURNS RENT-ALLS, INC.
332 West Mishawaka Avenue
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574.259.2833
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Castle Point Apartments
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574.272.8110
Apartments
www.castle-point.com

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574.993.7368
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574.282.2337
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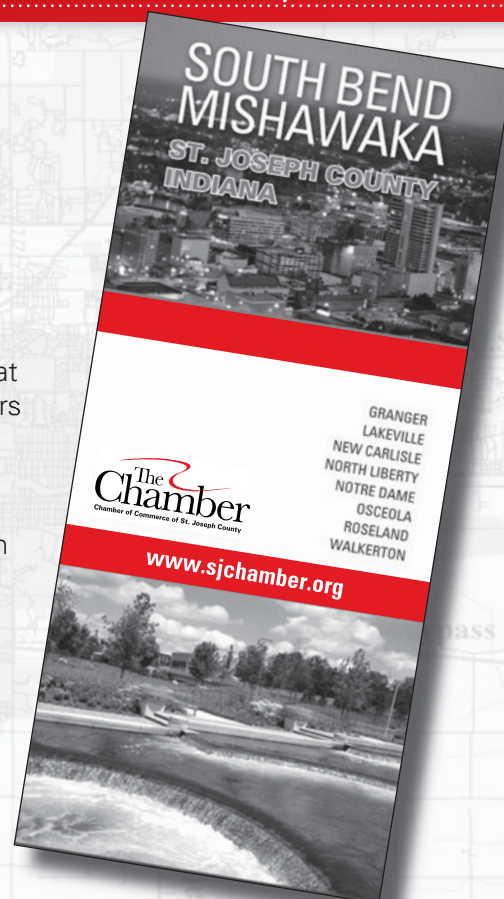
▲ for membership details, contact Lori Vanslager, Membership Representative • 574.234.0051, ext. 312

chamber offers new detailed street map

For every new subdivision and street expansion there is someone that needs to know how to get there. St. Joseph County residents and visitors alike will be pleased to see The Chamber is offering a new detailed street map.

Updated with a thorough listing of streets and accurate views of each of St. Joseph County's townships and cities, the new map is the perfect guide for getting around the area.

The map can be purchased for \$3 individually or in bulk quantity for a discounted price available at The Chamber office, or by calling 574.234.0051, ext. 301.



When a business partners with a school, everybody wins. Through the Partner Up! program, organizations link their employees with local elementary students that need direction and attention. Participating adults take one hour a week paid time away from work to mentor or read to their student.

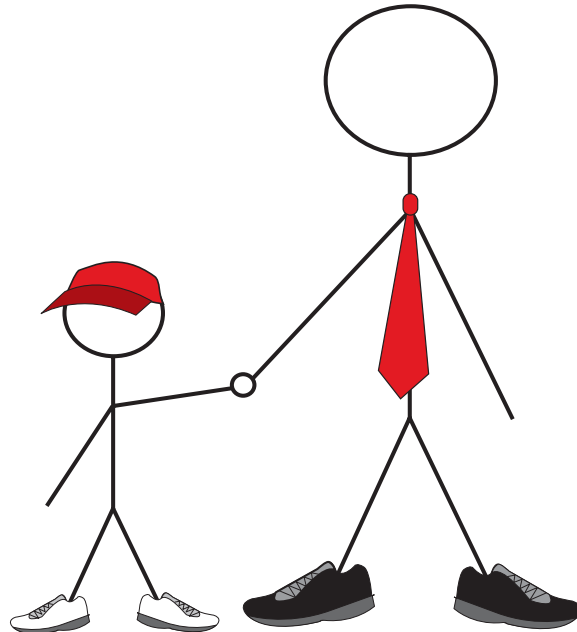
When we help our children, we strengthen our community's future.

Call 574.283.8088, or send an email to: partnerup@sbcsc.k12.in.us to find out more on how your business or organization can get involved. Or visit the following Web sites for more information:

SOUTH BEND SCHOOLS:
www.sbcsc.k12.in.us

CHAMBER:
www.sjchamber.org/affiliates

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