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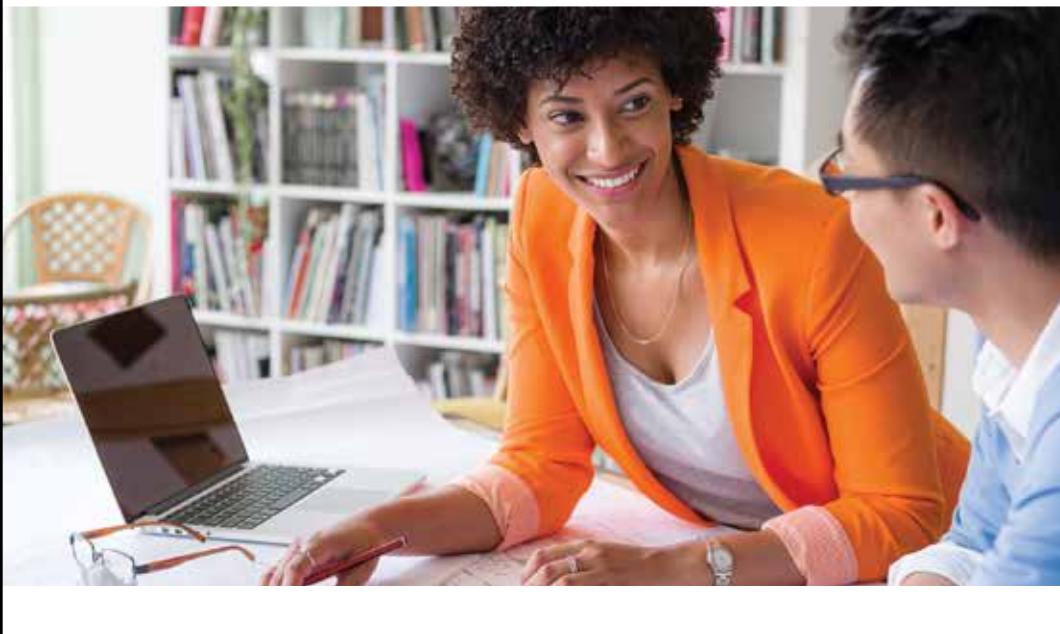
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Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly

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2017
Best of
Northwest
Indiana
Business
As voted by the readers of
Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly

Best Company to Work For

Best Hospital

Among the *Best* Health Care Facilities for Cardiology

Best Health Care Facility for Treating Cancer

Franciscan Health

Best Urgent/Immediate Care Clinic
Franciscan ExpressCare

Best Occupational Health Care Practice
Franciscan WorkingWell

Best Fitness and Wellness Facility
Franciscan Omni Health & Fitness

THANK YOU to the readers of Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly **for voting us BEST!**



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Recognize Excellence



Troy Linker

Take a moment to recognize local businesses

Our lives are busy. We are pulled in many different directions by our family, work, school and health. Hopefully, we save some time to pursue art, music, wellness and some leisure. With all the pulls on our time, we don't often take a moment to recognize the wonderful things going on around us. I am grateful to the readers of *Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly* who are business leaders and customers of local businesses themselves who took time away from their busy schedules to vote for the Best Businesses in our region. Experts say leaders inspire others and by that measure, our readers are truly Northwest Indiana Business leaders as they inspire me with their dedication to our area.

As you read our cover story about the best businesses from around the region, I encourage you to consider the businesses you interact with regularly. How would your life be different if they weren't around? Consider taking a moment to recognize them yourself. Pay them a compliment during a meeting. Comment about them on social media. Write a positive review online or send them an email letting them know you value the job they do for you and your company. You never know when a positive comment will make a big difference to a local business.

We Hoosiers are a humble bunch. Other parts of the country value self-promotion where we value humility and self-deprecating humor. Humility is a good thing, but too much humility hurts us as we try to encourage new business growth and attract new businesses to the region. We have

a strong business climate and some amazing businesses that deserve a pat on the back. Often, we focus our attention on the negative things or the things that have changed, which are important as there is always room for improvement. However, we should also invest time in reinforcing and encouraging the positive things in our lives. We should all be proud of our region and do a little more bragging #NWIproud!

To get you started we have several articles in this issue that talk about good things happening in Northwest Indiana. Jerry Davich talks with local manufacturers who describe how expansion has helped Northwest Indiana businesses grow. Carrie Steinweg profiles local companies who are taking the lead in environmental responsibility. Lesley Bailey details Northwest Indiana's host of resources for entrepreneurs as they start and grow their businesses in our region. Bob Moulesong explores several communities, and the impact small business has on their economy and quality-of-life. Julia Perla Huisman talks with business owners and marketing professionals about how to maximize their marketing investments.

But wait that's not all—if you keep reading deeper in the issue you will learn about people making a difference in Gary, navigating local waterways, things to do and see, a local CEO, making the most of an intern and choosing civility. I hope you enjoy this issue and please contact us with comments or suggestions.

—Troy Linker, Publisher

AROUND THE REGION

Stay current with local people, news and events

BY MICHELLE M. SEARER

BANKING

President and CEO Michael E. Schrage of **Centier Bank** announced the appointment of **Anthony R. Contrucci** as vice president of community and business development. Contrucci, a member of the fifth generation of Schrage family management and leadership, will work closely with Lake and Porter County communities to integrate and align philanthropy, financial wellness, and Community Reinvestment Act initiatives. As a seasoned banker, Contrucci is coordinating strategic marketing initiatives to assist businesses and communities further by unlocking financial needs, goals, and objectives, and facilitating introductions with other key personnel to provide financial solutions in Northwest Indiana. Contrucci joined

Centier Bank in 2011. Since then, he has worked as director of investment services and as a strategic products consultant. In addition, he has shared his passion for financial literacy by developing and hosting "Money\$ense," a public television series designed to educate the public on personal financial issues and financial wellness. The series, produced by Lakeshore Public Media and the Plan Sponsor Council of America, was a pivotal role for Contrucci as a financial literacy ambassador and public figure, and introduced him to the mass outreach potential for financial wellness and Centier Bank. Contrucci, whose office is located at Centier's corporate headquarters in Merrillville, is also a very active member of the community, volunteering to support numerous charitable events and walks throughout the year. He currently serves as a capital campaign cabinet member for

the Boys & Girls Club of Porter County.

BUSINESS

MonoSol, LLC, the Merrillville-based water soluble film division of Kuraray, has promoted **Christian Herrmanns** to serve as senior vice president of marketing and sales. He will report to P. Scott Bening, MonoSol's president and CEO, and will lead the company's global marketing and sales initiatives for water-soluble film technologies. Previously he worked in several global market categories and supported several regions at The Dow Chemical Company.

EDUCATION

Calumet College of St. Joseph Board of Trustees announced the appointment of **Amy McCormack**, who will become its new president



BANKING
Anthony Contrucci



BUSINESS
Christian Herrmanns



EDUCATION
Adam Rengstort



EDUCATION
Amy McCormack



EDUCATION
Chris Holford



EDUCATION
Elaine Carey



EDUCATION
Tara Sullivan



GOVERNMENT
Richard Murphy

effective July 1, 2017, succeeding Daniel Lowery. After an extensive search process involving input from the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty and staff, and the student body, McCormack was selected from among a pool of more than 80 applicants. Currently serving as the senior vice president for finance and administration at Dominican University—a Catholic, Hispanic-serving institution in River Forest,

Illinois—McCormack manages the university's budget and endowment and also oversees facilities, security, risk management, human resources, and auxiliary operations. She is a key member of Dominican University's strategic planning committee and has also chaired the University's master planning process and the enrollment resources task force. In addition to her administrative work, she has taught accounting and auditing courses at

Dominican University. In 2015 McCormack was a Fulbright Scholar and serves on the Development Board for Comer Children's Hospital and the Board of Directors for the Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park ... **Valparaiso University** announced the appointment of **Karen Allen**, RN, Ph.D., FAAN, who will join its faculty as dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, effective July 3, 2017. Most recently,

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Allen served as professor of nursing at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In her role as dean, Allen will be responsible for the strategic leadership, coordination and guidance of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Allen holds a Ph.D. in nursing sciences from the University of Illinois at Chicago, as well as a master's in nursing administration and a bachelor's in nursing from Andrews University. She has also been inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing ... **Purdue University Northwest** (PNW) has appointed two veteran administrators as collegiate deans. **Kenneth (Chris) Holford** has been named dean of PNW's College of Engineering and Sciences. He is a long-time Purdue University North Central administrator and recently was interim dean of the college. **Elaine Carey**, chair of the Department of History at St. John's University, in New York City, will assume responsibilities as dean of PNW's College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences July 1. Carey will bring more than 25 years of higher education experience as an administrator, professor of history and researcher to her new role as head of PNW's largest academic college ... **Tara Sullivan**

has recently been appointed as executive director of Academic Success and Transition at Purdue University Northwest. Sullivan comes to PNW with 15 years of leadership experience in higher education and most recently served as assistant dean of students at Northwestern University. In her new role, Sullivan will direct the operations of the Academic Center for Excellence and Student Academic Support while working closely with academic advisors, athletics, and several other groups on campus. She will have a key role in enhancing academic advising, supplemental instruction, tutoring and other initiatives that will enhance PNW student success. Sullivan holds a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a master's degree and Ph.D from the University of Michigan ... PNW Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy **Adam Rengstorf** has assumed additional responsibilities as



HEALTHCARE
Joseph DeJoan



HEALTHCARE
Joseph DeJoan



HEALTHCARE
Leo Correa



HEALTHCARE
Malek Maatouk

director of the **Northwest Indiana Robotic Observatory (NIRo)**. As appointed head of the optical astronomy research facility, Rengstorf oversees all aspects of the observatory, management and maintenance of its NIRo Telescope and support facilities, and administration of research and education programs at the observatory. The NIRo Telescope is housed at the Calumet Astronomy Center located at Buckley Homestead County Park in Lowell. Rengstorf played a key role in the former Purdue University Calumet's acquisition of a \$150,000 National Science Foundation grant that helped bring the high-powered telescope to Northwest Indiana in 2008.

GOVERNMENT

The **Lake County Council** hired **Stephen E. Scheele** as a new magistrate judge for Lake Circuit Court. Scheele will assist the Circuit Court judge Marissa McDermott in presiding over hearings and recommending decisions for the judge to issue in the court's name. Scheele, who has served for a decade as a Lake Criminal Court public defender, replaces former Magistrate Michael Sarafin ... **Michigan City Mayor Ron Meer** appointed First Ward City Councilman **Richard Murphy** as the city controller. Murphy studied Business and Economics at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He began his financial career working several years for AON Hewitt, Lincolnshire, Illinois, an international financial consulting

firm. During his tenure there, Murphy was a regional manager where he built and managed 401(k) plans for several Fortune 500 companies. Murphy was elected as First Ward Councilman in 2007 and re-elected in 2011 serving two terms on the Michigan City Common Council. As a member of the finance committee, Murphy was responsible for recommending changes and approvals to the city's annual budget. He is currently Mayor Meer's appointment to the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Council (NIRPC), a 53-member council of governments that manages regional transportation and economic development issues ... The **National Park Service (NPS)** has named **Dan Plath** as its chief of resource management at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. He previously served as a principal in the environmental department for NiSource. Plath succeeds Robert Daum, who retired from the position last November. Prior to joining NiSource, Plath spent 10 years with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and is also the founder and president of the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association. He led the effort to designate a portion of the Lake Michigan Water Trail as a National Recreation Trail. Plath also spearheaded an effort that led to the creation of the Kankakee River National Water Trail ... The NPS announced the promotion of **MaryEllen "Mel" Whitenack** as the fire management officer at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Whitenack has been at Indiana Dunes since

2001 and served as the Assistant Fire Management Officer since 2008. A 20-year career veteran with the NPS, Whitenack has been a part of fire programs at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and Grand Teton National Park. Her duties at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore have included managing fire programs at Sleeping Bear Dunes and the Lincoln Boyhood National Monument. She has helped parks use prescribed burns as a management tool across the country. She has also represented the NPS on the ground for disaster relief and wildfires from Florida to Alaska.

HEALTHCARE

Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana Chief Executive Officer Donald P. Fesko announces the appointment of **Leo Correa**, M.B.A., to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **St. Catherine Hospital** in East Chicago. St. Catherine Hospital is a member of the Community Healthcare System, along with Community Hospital in Munster and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart. Correa succeeds Jo Ann Birdzell, who served as CEO for the past 19 years. Correa brings extensive healthcare experience to his new role, including leadership at several university medical centers and most recently serving as Associate Vice President of Clinical Affairs at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Correa earned his Master of Business Administration with a concentration in health services from Keller Graduate School of Management. He holds a

bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Illinois, Chicago. He has more than 20 years of experience in the healthcare field with a background that includes positions in financial planning and analysis, operational leadership and research administration. During this tenure, Correa has held various executive leadership positions at the University of Chicago Medicine, Northwestern University

and Rush University Medical Center ... **St. Mary Medical Center** recently welcomed two new general practitioners, **Dr. Joseph DeJoan** and **Dr. Eduardo Fletes**, to their Community Care Network Inc., which is the physician and health professional group affiliated with St. Mary Medical Center and Community Healthcare System hospitals. DeJoan is board certified in internal medicine, completed

his residency at Indiana University School of Medicine and received his medical degree from Rush Medical College. Fletes is board certified in internal medicine, and completed his residency at Indiana University School of Medicine where he also received his medical degree ... Joining the physicians of **Porter County Primary Care** in Valparaiso is **Dr. Malek Maatouk**, board certified in internal medicine. He completed his residency at McLaren Regional Medical Center and received his medical degree from Ross University. Maatouk's office is located at the Valparaiso Health Center of St. Mary Medical Center ... **Franciscan Health's Northern Indiana** hospitals have welcomed **Dr. Dennis Prohaska**, a vascular and interventional radiologist. Prohaska specializes in minimally invasive procedures done mostly with a needle, which allows for more rapid recovery and healing than traditional procedures. He is an independent physician who chooses to practice with Franciscan Health. Prohaska received his Doctor of Medicine in Osteopathic Medicine/Osteopathy from Midwestern University and a Masters in Physician Assistant from Marquette University ... **400 North Medical Center** has welcomed board-certified family nurse practitioners, **Tracy Novak** and **Rae-Londa Woodard**, to the practice of Dr. Minesh Patel. Novak graduated from the Chamberlain College of Nursing in Downers Grove and holds a certification in family medicine. Woodard is a graduate of Valparaiso University College of Nursing and also has a certification in family medicine ... **NorthShore Health Center** announced the appointment of **Dr. Miljan Stankovic**, who is practicing at the Portage-Scottsdale and Chesterton locations. Before moving to the United States in 1994 during the Yugoslav Wars, Stankovic began his medical career at the University of Belgrade School of Medicine where he studied obstetrics and gynecology. Completing his residency at Weill Medical College of Cornell University in Brooklyn, Stankovic practiced medicine in New York. Stankovic has worked in both

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LEGAL

Law firm **Kopka Pinkus Dolin P.C.**, in Crown Point, has welcomed

Joseph C. Svetanoff as a senior attorney. He is licensed to practice law in both Indiana and Illinois, as well as five U.S. District Courts and the U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit. His primary areas of practice include municipal/local government, real estate, business and commercial transactions, estate planning/probate, criminal law, and employment law ... The Northwest Indiana Business Roundtable recently honored **William**

Satterlee, formerly of **Hoeppner Wagner & Evans LLP**, with special recognition for his decades of service to the organization. Satterlee was a practicing attorney for nearly 50 years in Northwest Indiana and joined the business roundtable at its founding and served as its counsel for many years.

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The **Lubeznik Center for the Arts** (LCA) named longtime Director of Education **Janet Bloch** as its new executive director. Bloch, who has worked at Lubeznik since 2009, replaces outgoing Director Erika Hanner. The Center also recently announced the appointment of **Hannah Hammond-Hagman**, who replaces Janet Bloch, as the director of education. Hammond-Hagman comes to the Center with 20 years in arts education and cultural nonprofits where she has had the privilege of working with students from kindergarten to college age in the classroom and out in the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Indiana State Police Superintendent Douglas Carter recently announced the promotion of **Lieutenant David Kirkham** to the rank of Captain. In his new assignment, Kirkham will serve as the Area I Commander for the Indiana State Police. Area I consists of Indiana State Police posts at Lowell,

Lafayette, and Peru. Kirkham, a 23-year veteran of the department, served 11 years as the lieutenant of Area I Field Investigations ... The **Valparaiso Police Department** has appointed three new police officers, **Thomas Zega, Eric Jezierski** and **Benjamin Teufel**. Zega is a graduate of Lake Central High School and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University; Jezierski is a graduate of Hanover Central High School, holds an associate's degree in Science of Criminal Justice from Ivy Tech Community College, and previously was employed by the Starke County Jail; and Teufel is a graduate of Metamora Township High School (Illinois) and currently an Enforcement Specialist in the Coast Guard Reserve.

RECREATION

Midwest Training and Ice Center, of Dyer, has hired **Rachael Tripp** as their new recreational manager. She will also aid in the center's marketing

and advertising department. She has 21-plus years of experience in coaching and managing recreational gymnastics. She is also currently the assistant coach for the Lake Central High School gymnastics team.

TOURISM

Speros A. Batistatos, president/CEO of the **South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority**, was selected and will serve his first term as an at-large director with the U.S. Travel Association Officers and At-Large Directors for 2017-19. Batistatos was one of 19 board members voted in and brings three decades of industry experience, ranging from convention and visitors bureaus to attractions. The U.S. Travel Association is the national, not-for-profit organization representing all components of the travel industry that generates \$2.1 trillion in economic output and supports 15.1 million American jobs.

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Healthcare partners commit to creating local medical residency program with IUSM-Northwest

Leaders from nine Northwest Indiana health care institutions recently signed a formal letter of intent with the Indiana University School of Medicine-Northwest-Gary (IUSM-NW-G) to create the Northwest Indiana Graduate Medical Education Consortium. The agreement represents a promise from leading health care providers in the region to create and apply for residency positions in their organizations. Also, the consortium can apply for newly created state startup funding for those positions, a milestone that IUSM-NW-G Associate Dean and Director Patrick Bankston, Ph.D., expects to see happen sometime this spring. Residency training for future doctors based at local hospitals, community health centers and mental health agencies will be a first for Northwest Indiana, Bankston says. Partners with IUSM-NW-G in the

consortium include the Community Healthcare System; Methodist Hospitals; Porter Health Care System; and La Porte Hospital; as well as federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and mental health centers, including Community HealthNet Health Centers, HealthLinc, Regional Mental Health Center; Porter-Starke Services, and Edgewater Systems.

Burns Harbor receives AIST 2017 Project Excellence Award

ArcelorMittal Burns Harbor employees were recently recognized by the Association for Iron and Steel Technology with the 2017 Project Excellence Award for the No. 4 ore stacker/reclaimer replacement project. The award recognizes the critical importance of applying best practices and processes to the science of project management, and at the same time, recognizes projects that drive positive results. Entries are evaluated in the areas of business success, safety

program and performance, technical success and project management systems. Accepting the award on behalf of Burns Harbor were about a dozen employees from raw materials and iron producing maintenance, operations, management and engineering.

Centier Bank Named "Lender of the Year" for Community Business Lending

At the recent annual Winner's Circle Awards ceremony, Premier Capital named Centier Bank as "Lender of the Year" for its efforts in community business lending. Centier closed the highest dollar volume in the 2016 fiscal year, totaling \$14.7 million. Additionally, Dan Peter, Vice President of Business Banking, was named "Champion of the Year" for his work in the Greater Lafayette area and throughout the state. As the area's leading bank in commercial real estate lending, Centier offers the SBA 504 Loan program as an instrument to help local communities



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Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor handled 2.6 million tons in 2016

The Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor reported it handled nearly 2.6 million tons of cargo in 2016, completing the highest three-year total in the port's history. Over 8.6 million tons have been handled at the port since 2014. Other 2016 highlights included a major expansion by Ratner Steel, a significant increase in heavy-lift cargoes and the investment of \$2.5 million in port infrastructure improvements. The 2016 shipping total was the port's third highest tonnage in the last 10 years. Major cargoes included steel, limestone, carbon products, grain and iron ore. Grain shipments were up 57 percent from 2015 levels while coal was up 11 percent. Mineral and oil shipments increased 19 percent.

Franciscan Health Opens New Women's Center, Infusion Center

Franciscan Health recently dedicated its new Women's Center in Chesterton at the Franciscan Emergency Center, which houses the new center. This event also marked the opening of a new Infusion Center and Franciscan Physician Network offices at the same location. The Women's Center's services include the latest mammography screening equipment, breast ultrasound and bone mineral density testing. The Infusion Center offers patients an inviting space filled with natural light and private treatment areas that include televisions, Wi-Fi, ergonomic infusion chairs and state-of-the-art infusion equipment.

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Our readers make their picks in dozens of categories.

“The best of the best.” We all think quite highly of our state, and our region within the state. It’s the best, for sure, and no one will persuade us to believe anything different. So who is the best of the best? What businesses and organizations stand out among our area’s impressive crowd?

That’s what we try to reveal each year through Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly’s reader survey ... we’re measuring the high opinions of our readers, who are business leaders but also customers across the business community. To those honored businesses and organizations, we say “congratulations!” And we couldn’t have done this without the countless readers who took time to vote in our online survey. Thank you for your participation in our annual celebration!



Best Company to Work For winners Franciscan Health. Pictured are regional Presidents and CEOs Dean Mazzoni, Michigan City; Barb Anderson, Crown Point and Patrick Maloney, Hammond and Munster. Franciscan was also chosen as Best Hospital, Best Health Care Facility for Cardiology, Best Health Care Facility for Treating Cancer, Best Urgent / Immediate Care Clinic, Best Occupational Health Care Practice, Best Fitness and Wellness Facility.



Best University to Attain an MBA Purdue Northwest, also selected Best University for a Technical Degree. Students studying at the Purdue NW Westville campus library.

COMMUNITY & EDUCATION

Best Companies to Work For

Northwest Indiana

Winners: Centier Bank | Franciscan Health | Horizon Bank | Porter Health Care System | Peoples Bank

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Bank

Best University to Attain an MBA

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Purdue Northwest—Hammond, Westville

Runners-up: Indiana University Northwest—Gary | Valparaiso University—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: University of Notre Dame—South Bend

Runner-up: Indiana University—South Bend

Best University for a Technology Degree

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Purdue Northwest—Hammond, Westville

Runner-up: Ivy Tech Northwest—East Chicago, Gary, Michigan City, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winners: University of Notre Dame—South Bend | Ivy Tech North Central—South Bend, Goshen, Warsaw

Best University Online Degree Program

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Indiana University Northwest—Gary

Runners-up: Purdue Northwest—Hammond, Westville | Ivy Tech Northwest—East Chicago, Gary, Michigan City, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Indiana University—South Bend

Best Chamber of Commerce

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce—Valparaiso

Runners-up: Crossroads Chamber of Commerce—Crown Point, Merrillville | Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce—East Chicago, Hammond

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce—South Bend

Best Location for Opening a New Business

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Valparaiso

Runners-up: Crown Point, Michigan City, Merrillville, Munster, Schererville



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Business Banking Manager
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Jeff Marsee
Business Banking Officer
219.853.3539



Tony Martino
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Best Bank for Business Centier Bank, also recognized as Best Company to Work For, Best Bank for Obtaining a Business Loan, Best Bank for Customer Service. Pictured Milka Bastaic assists a customer in Centier's Dyer branch.

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Mishawaka

Best Minority or Veteran Owned Business

Northwest Indiana

Winner: JM2 Marketing—Valparaiso
Runners-up: Veteran's Cafe—Merrillville, Fiddlehead Restaurant—Michigan City | Digital Graphics Solutions—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Indiana Whiskey—South Bend

BANKING & FINANCIAL

Best Bank for Business

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Centier Bank

Runners-up: Horizon Bank | People's Bank | 1st Source Bank

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Bank
Runner-up: Centier Bank | Horizon Bank

Best Bank for Obtaining a Business Loan

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Centier Bank
Runners-up: Horizon Bank | People's Bank | 1st Source Bank

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Bank
Runner-up: Centier Bank

Best Bank for Customer Service

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Centier Bank

Runners-up: Horizon Bank | People's Bank | 1st Source Bank

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Bank

Runner-up: Centier Bank

Best Credit Union

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Tech Credit Union

Runners-up: Teacher's Credit Union | Regional Federal Credit Union

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Teacher's Credit Union
Runner-up: Notre Dame Federal Credit Union



Best Accounting Firm McMahon and Associates, Munster. Pictured is President / CEO Terry McMahon.

Best Accounting Firm

Northwest Indiana

Winner: McMahon and Associates CPAs—Munster

Runners-up: Swartz Retson—Merrillville | Rowley & Company LLC—Michigan City

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Crowe Horwath—South Bend

Runners-up: Kruggel Lawton CPA—South Bend, Elkhart, St. Joseph MI

Best Wealth Management Advisory Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Centier Bank
Runners-up: Horizon Bank | People's Bank

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Bank

Runner-up: Centier Bank

Best Business Investment Brokerage Firm

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Edward Jones

Runners-up: Harbour Trust—Michigan City | Stifel—Crown Point | Oak Partners—Crown Point, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Edward Jones

LEGAL & INSURANCE

Best Corporate Law Firm

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Burke Costanza & Carberry LLP—Merrillville, Valparaiso
Runners-up: Krieg DeVault—Merrillville | Hoeppner Wagner & Evans LLC—Merrillville, Valparaiso

DeVault—Merrillville | Hoeppner Wagner & Evans LLC—Merrillville, Valparaiso | Newby, Lewis, Kaminski & Jones LLP—LaPorte

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Barnes & Thornburg LLC—South Bend, Elkhart

Best Law Firm for Business Acquisitions and Mergers

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Burke Costanza & Carberry LLP—Merrillville, Valparaiso

Runners-up: Krieg DeVault—Merrillville | Hoeppner Wagner & Evans LLC—Merrillville, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Barnes & Thornburg LLC—South Bend, Elkhart

COSTANZA
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Best Corporate Law Firm, Burke Costanza & Carberry, which was also named **Best Law Firm for Business Acquisitions and Mergers**, **Best Law Firm for Litigation**, **Best Law Firm Specializing in Accident and Injury** and **Best Estate-Planning Practice**. Pictured is Managing Partner George Carberry.

Best Law Firm for Litigation

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Burke Costanza & Carberry LLP—Merrillville, Valparaiso

Runners-up: Eichhorn & Eichhorn, LLP—Hammond | Hoeppner Wagner & Evans LLC—Merrillville, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Barnes & Thornburg LLC—South Bend, Elkhart

Best Law Firm Specializing in Accidents and Injury

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Burke Costanza & Carberry LLP—Merrillville, Valparaiso

Runners-up: Kenneth J. Allen Law Group—Merrillville, Valparaiso | Sarkisian, Sarkisian & Associates—Portage, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Blackburn & Green—South Bend, Elkhart, Valparaiso

Best Estate-Planning Practice

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Burke Costanza & Carberry LLP—Merrillville, Valparaiso

Runners-up: Law offices of Gary Bonk—Schererville | Eichhorn & Eichhorn, LLP—Hammond

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Barnes & Thornburg LLC—South Bend, Elkhart

Best Insurance Agency for Business

Northwest Indiana

Winner: 1st Source Insurance—Merrillville, Michigan City, Valparaiso

Runners-up: General Insurance Services—Michigan City, La Porte, Valparaiso | MacLennan & Bain Insurance—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Insurance—Elkhart, Goshen, Mishawaka, Plymouth

Best Property & Casualty Insurance Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: State Farm

Runners-up: 1st Source Insurance—Merrillville, Michigan City, Valparaiso | General Insurance Services—Michigan City, La Porte, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: 1st Source Insurance—Elkhart, Goshen, Mishawaka, Plymouth

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CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE

Best Commercial Real-Estate Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: McColly Real Estate

Runner-up: Commercial In-Sites LLC

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Bradley Company

Runners-up: Newmark Grubb Cressy & Everett | Holiday Properties

Best Commercial Construction Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Larson Danielson—La Porte

Runners-up: Tonn & Blank—Michigan City | Chester, Inc—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Majority Builders—South Bend

Best Commercial Architectural Design Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Chester, Inc—Valparaiso

Runner-up: Design Organization / Shive-Hattery—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Epoch Architecture + Planning—South Bend

Best Construction Company for Office remodeling and Expansion

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Larson Danielson—La Porte

Runner-up: Tonn & Blank—Michigan City

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Ziolkowski Construction—South Bend

Best Commercial Landscaping Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Lakeshore Landscaping—Valparaiso

Runner-up: Tim's Landscaping—Griffith

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Foegley Landscape—South Bend

Best Residential Real-Estate Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: McColly Real Estate

Runner-up: Century 21

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Cressy & Everett

Best Residential Development Home Builder

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Olthof Homes—St. John

Runner-up: Schneider

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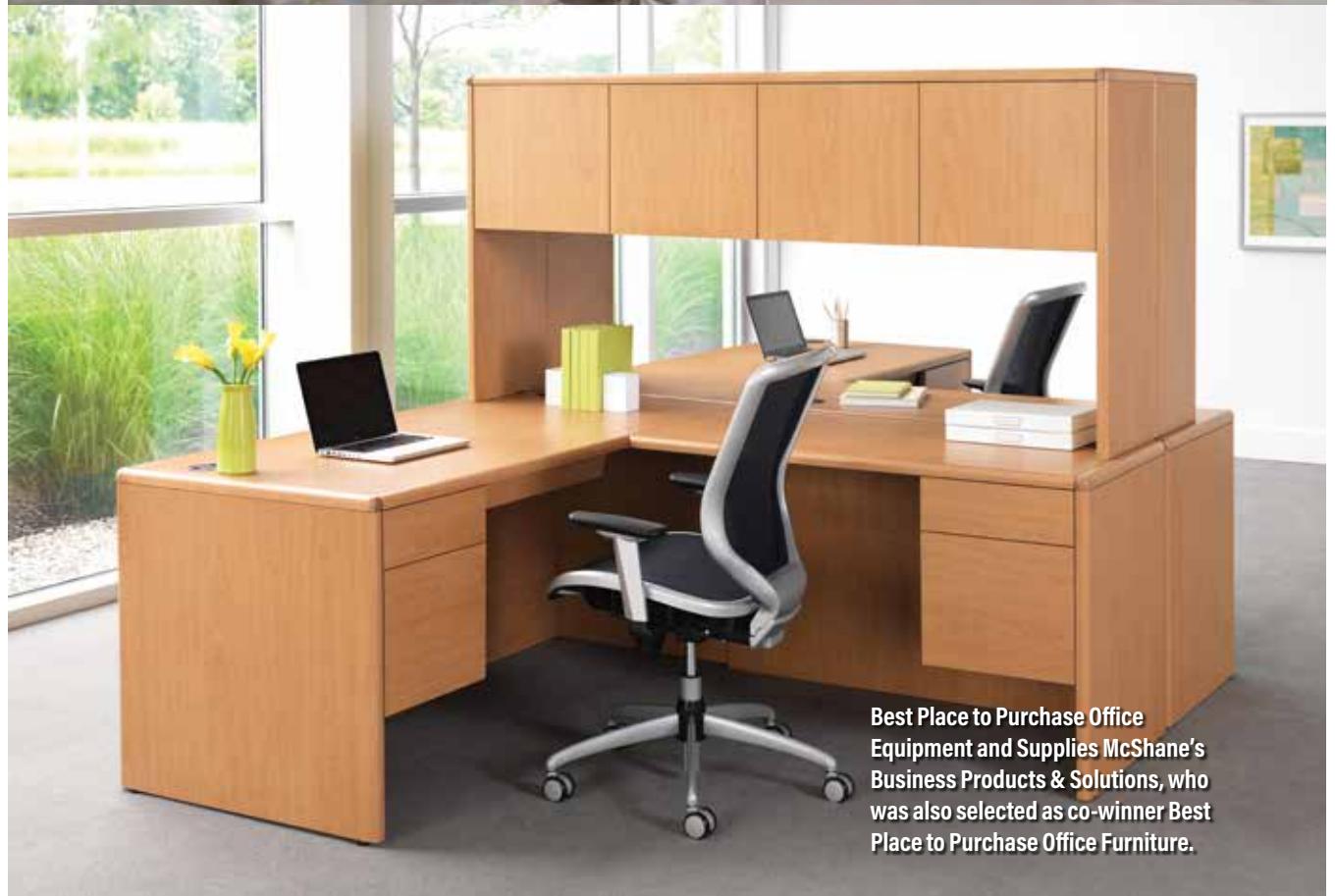
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Best Commercial Architectural Design Company, Chester, Inc., Valparaiso, who is also recognized as Best Information Technology Consulting Company and runner-up for Best Commercial Construction Company.



Best Place to Purchase Office Equipment and Supplies McShane's Business Products & Solutions, who was also selected as co-winner Best Place to Purchase Office Furniture.

Builders—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Century Builders—Mishawaka
Runner-up: Place Builders—South Bend

Best Home Remodeling Construction Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Michiana Construction & Management—Michigan City
Runner-up: Schneider Builders—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Peacock & Company—South Bend

BUSINESS SERVICES

Best Place to Purchase Office Furniture

Northwest Indiana

Winners: McShane's Business Products & Solutions—Munster | Kramer Leonard—Chesterton
Runner-up: HDW—Merrillville

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Office Interiors—Granger

Best Place to Purchase Office Equipment and Supplies

Northwest Indiana

Winners: McShane's Business Products & Solutions—Munster
Runner-up: Kramer Leonard—Chesterton

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: U.S. Business Systems -- Elkhart

Best Information Technology Consulting Company

Northwest Indiana

Winners: Chester, Inc—Valparaiso | Impact Solutions -- Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: U.S. Business Systems -- Elkhart

Best Ad Agency / Marketing Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: JM2 Marketing—Valparaiso
Runner-up: Group 7even—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: J2 Marketing—South Bend

Best Commercial Printer

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Largus Graphix Solutions—Munster

Runners-up: Reprographic Arts—Michigan City | BoyConn—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Zipp Printing—Mishawaka



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Best Ad Agency / Marketing Company, JM2 Marketing, Valparaiso. Pictured is John Marx and his staff.

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All Stages of Business...and Life

2017
Best of
Northwest
Indiana
Business
As voted by the readers of
Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly

- Voted Best Accounting Firm by Readers of the *Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly* Magazine Eleven Consecutive Years and Running
- Health Care Industry Experts
Serving over 100 healthcare related professionals
Practice Management Expertise and
Certified Business Valuation Experts
- Our Commitment to the Integrity of Our Services and Depth of Our Relationships Allow Our Professionals to Individualize the Demand of Each Client

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Best Employment Staffing Agency

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Staff Source -- Hammond
Runner-up: Express Employment Professionals—Schererville, Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Peoplelink Staffing Solutions—South Bend
Runner-up: Specialized Staffing Solutions—South Bend

Best Local Telecommunication Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Midwest Telecom of America—Merrillville
Runners-up: Nitco—Hebron | Comcast

Best Local Internet Provider

Northwest Indiana

Winners: Comcast
Runners-up: Midwest Telecom

of America—Merrillville | Nitco—Hebron

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Comcast

Best Commercial Interior Design Company

Northwest Indiana

Winner: HDW -- Merrillville

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Office Interiors—South bend

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Best Hospital

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Franciscan Health
Runners-up: Porter Health Care System | Community Healthcare System

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Memorial Hospital

Runner-up: St. Joseph Medical Center

Best Health Care Facility for Cardiology

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Porter Health Care System
Runners-up: Franciscan Health | Community Healthcare System

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Memorial Hospital

Best Health Care Facility for treating Cancer

Northwest Indiana

Winners: Franciscan Health | Porter Health Care System
Runners-up: Cancer Health Treatment Centers | Community Healthcare System

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Michiana Hematology Oncology

Michigan City Police Department



2017 Best of Northwest Indiana Business

As voted by the readers of
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²⁰¹⁷
Best of
Greater
South Bend
Michiana Business
As voted by the greater South Bend business readers
of Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly

- Best Corporate Law Firm – South Bend, Elkhart
- Best Law Firm for Litigation – South Bend , Elkhart
- Best Estate Planning Practice – South Bend, Elkhart
- Best Law Firm for Business Acquisitions and Mergers – South Bend, Elkhart

ATLANTA CHICAGO DALLAS DELAWARE INDIANA LOS ANGELES MICHIGAN MINNEAPOLIS OHIO WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Best Urgent / Immediate Care Clinic

Northwest Indiana

Winners: Franciscan Express Care | Porter Care Express

Runner-up: Community Hospital Outpatient Centers

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: MedPoint

Best Occupational Health Care Practice

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Franciscan Working Well

Runner-up: Workforce Health

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: South Bend Clinic

Best Fitness and Wellness Facility

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Franciscan Omni Health & Fitness—Chesterton, Schererville

Runner-up: Community Hospital

Fitness Pointe—Munster

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Beacon Health & Fitness—Mishawaka, South Bend

MEETING & ENTERTAINMENT

Best Restaurant for Business Entertaining

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Gamba

Ristorante—Merrillville

Runners-up: Gino's Steakhouse—Dyer, Merrillville | Patrick's Grille—Michigan City | Teibel's—Schererville

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Café Navarre—South Bend

Runner-up: La Salle Grill—South Bend

Best Caterer for Business

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Comfort's Catering—St. John

Runners-up: Great Lakes Catering—Michigan City | Suzie's Café—Valparaiso

Best Meeting Site for Large Groups

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Avalon Manor—Merrillville

Runners-up: Blue Chip Hotel & Casino—Michigan City | Horseshoe Casino—Hammond

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Century Center—South Bend

Best Meeting Site for Small Groups

Northwest Indiana

Winners: Inn at Aberdeen—Valparaiso | Gamba Ristorante—Merrillville

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Inn at St.

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Best Casino for Business Meetings and Events

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Blue Chip Hotel & Casino—Michigan City

Runner-up: Horseshoe Casino—Hammond

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Four Winds—New Buffalo, MI

Best Hotel for Business Travelers

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Blue Chip Hotel & Casino—Michigan City

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Inn at St. Mary's—South Bend

Best Bed and Breakfast for Business Traveler

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Inn at Aberdeen—Valparaiso

Runner-up: Arbor Hill—La Porte

Best Site for a Corporate Retreat

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Blue Chip Hotel & Casino—Michigan City

Runner-up: Inn at Aberdeen—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Oaks at SouthPaw Farm—Mishawaka

LIFESTYLE

Best Golf Course

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Sand Creek Country Club—Chesterton

Runners-up: White Hawk—Crown Point | Sandy Pines—De Motte

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Blackthorn Golf Club—South Bend

THANK YOU!

2017 *Best of* Northwest Indiana Business

As voted by the readers of
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Best Commercial Architectural Design Company - **Winner**

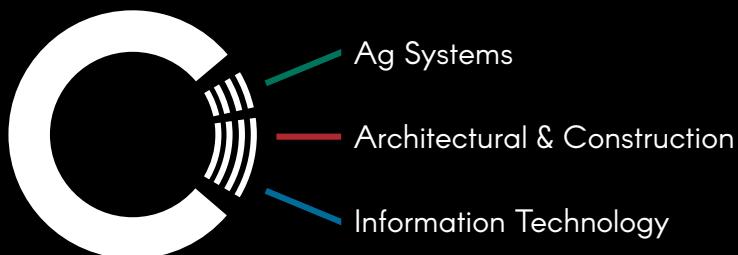
Best Information Technology Consulting Company - **Winner**

Best Commercial Construction Company - **Runner-up**

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We create. And we're here to help you do the same.



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Best Golf Course for Charitable / Business Outings, White Hawk, Crown Point.

A portrait of a smiling man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. He is positioned in front of a background of blue water with white ripples. To the right of the image is a vertical yellow bar with a grid pattern. Overlaid on the left side is large, bold text: "MAKING A SPLASH. WE MADE IT HAPPEN." in black and gold colors.

MAKING
A SPLASH.
WE MADE
IT HAPPEN.

In 2013, when we wanted to expand our business, First Merchants was there to help us make a splash. We planned to build another facility in Valparaiso, but needed extra financial support to realize our vision. First Merchants stepped in, reviewed our finances, and approved a loan large enough to help us finish the project. Thanks to First Merchants, we completed construction and now have a beautiful facility in Valparaiso.

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Best Golf Course for Charitable / Business Outings

Northwest Indiana

Winner: White Hawk—Crown Point

Runner-up: Innsbrook Country Club—Merrillville

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Blackthorn Golf Club—South Bend

Best Automobile Dealer for Business Executives

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Schepel Buick GMC Cadillac—Merrillville

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: Gurley Leep Automotive Group—Mishawaka

Best Place for Corporate Gifts

Northwest Indiana

Winner: Simply Amazing Market / Opportunity Enterprises—Valparaiso

Greater South Bend/Michiana

Winner: South Bend Chocolate Factory—Mishawaka, Michigan City, South Bend, Valparaiso

Congratulations to all of the Companies Selected



A blue and yellow thank you card. At the top is a white box containing the "2017 Best of Northwest Indiana Business" logo. Below it is a large yellow "THANK YOU" with "FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN VOTING US THE BEST HOME BUILDER OF 2017!" underneath. In the center is the Olthof Homes logo, which includes a stylized "H" inside a circle, the word "Olthof" in blue, "Homes" in blue, and "Enjoy Life!" in green. At the bottom is the website address "www.OlthofHomes.com".

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Growth Fosters Growth

How expansion has helped NWI businesses blossom



A worker removes rolls of corrugated paper produced by Pratt's Valparaiso mill which saves 20,000 trees and diverts 3,500 cubic yards of paper from landfills every day.

BY JERRY DAVICH

Growth and expansion in Northwest Indiana's manufacturing sector is so much more than a symbolic ribbon cutting, a few shovels stuck in dirt, and a groundbreaking ceremony.

Manufacturing remains a key economic engine in this region, and in Indiana, producing more than \$90 billion to the state's gross domestic product. In addition, manufacturers in Indiana account for 29.5 percent of the total output in the state, employing 17.1 percent of the workforce, according to the Indiana Manufacturers Association.

"Since growth tends to attract more growth, prospects in our region continue to be strong," says Matt Saltanovitz, Northwest Indiana regional director for the Indiana

Economic Development Corporation.

Indiana a leader in manufacturing

Indiana has the highest concentration of manufacturing jobs in the nation, which has helped our state add nearly 325,200 new private sector jobs (including 93,600 jobs in manufac-

"Since growth tends to attract more growth, prospects in our region continue to be strong," —Matt Saltanovitz

ting) since the lowest point of Hoosier employment during the recession.

"Companies want to be located near a strong network of customers and suppliers. By choosing to grow in Northwest Indiana, manufacturers are

able to save money and reinvest into their operations," Saltanovitz says.

For example, Hoist CEO Marty Flaska cites savings of \$1 million annually in workers' compensation-related costs as one of the primary factors that drove the company from Illinois to Northwest Indiana.

"For more than a decade, we've worked diligently in Indiana to build the optimum climate for doing business. That's especially true for manufacturers," Saltanovitz says.

This includes companies like Polycon Industries in Merrillville, Ratner Steel at the Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor, NB Coatings in Hobart, Pratt Industries in Valparaiso, MonoSol in Portage, and Hoist Liftruck in East Chicago.

"For Northwest Indiana, this kind of growth is helping attract more



Pratt Industries \$260 million corrugated paper mill in Valparaiso is the industries' most efficient mill employing 120 local workers.



MonoSol manufacture of water-soluble files headquartered in Merrillville is expanding their DuneLand facility in Portage to increase their output by 15% and move to 24-hour, seven-days-a-week operations.

great-paying jobs to our region. For example, the average salary at Hoist Liftruck is \$55,000 per year," Saltanovitz says.

By keeping taxes low, slashing red tape, balancing our state budget (with strong reserves) and maintaining a AAA credit rating, Indiana is earning national recognition as the best place in the Midwest—and the fifth

best place in the nation—for doing business.

"That recognition, coupled with Northwest Indiana's world-class location, is helping attract strong manufacturing growth to our region," Saltanovitz adds.

In fact, between 2011 and 2016 more than 100 companies worked with the IEDC to expand their businesses in

Northwest Indiana, making plans to invest \$1.4 billion into the region and create upwards of 6,000 new jobs in this region.

What expansion brings to business

"Expansion is always a good thing for manufacturers in the United States," says P. Scott Bening, president and CEO of MonoSol, LLC. "It means we

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are growing, and it means we can build more facilities, hire more employees, and contribute more to the local community."

For MonoSol, it means the company's recent growth has provided additional resources to test and enhance its product offerings which, in turn, helps officials assist its customers to deliver category-changing innovations to their markets.

"Expansion enables us to partner closely with our customers to co-develop new applications for our films," Bening says. "As we continue to grow, we assure our partners are consistently getting the best quality product, processes and expertise to help them succeed."

Growth also means MonoSol can hire more workers for every position, from scientists to maintenance to production personnel, bringing even more growth to Northwest Indiana.

"Once our second manufacturing line is completed at our DuneLand facility in Portage, we will have more than 150 line operators, maintenance staff, electricians and mechanics to support continuous 24-hour, seven-

"Our consistent growth and long-term relationship in Indiana and this region has allowed our contractors and material suppliers to focus on quality and value delivery," — P. Scott Bening

days-a-week operation," Bening says. "The DuneLand facility will expand our manufacturing capacity by 15 percent to meet the increasing global demand for water-soluble films and unit-dose packaging."

MonoSol, a global leader in the manufacture of water-soluble films, is headquartered in Merrillville and is a division of Japan's Kuraray Group. The MonoSol Division of Kuraray has consistently fueled its global business growth by placing operations in this region—"the best option available," as Bening points out. "In doing so, we have spent just shy of \$1 billion over



Workers assemble a new Hoist Lift Truck in East Chicago. Moving to Indiana from Illinois saved the company \$1 million annually in workers' compensation-related costs according to Hoist CEO, Marty Flaska.

the last seven years," he says.

Roughly \$600 million of that figure was spent on non-infrastructure, and more than 10 percent of it specifically was spent in Northwest Indiana. On infrastructure alone, in the same seven-year period, MonoSol spent \$200 million, of which over \$100 million went to companies in this region.

"We also have contributed to the economy through payroll during this period by adding \$250 million to the wages and benefits in Indiana, hiring over 350 people in this period in the region," Bening says. "Additionally, we will inject an additional \$70 million of spending on fixed assets over the next few years along with corresponding payroll spending."

In the steel manufacturing sector, ArcelorMittal's global research and development continues its focus on the development of new generation high-strength steels and their application in the automotive, energy, and construction markets.

"Our research centers, including the one in East Chicago, have invested heavily in new and unique test equipment and computer models," says David White, director of process

research for ArcelorMittal's Global R&D. "This allows us to measure the physical characteristics of these new steels, and simulate their end-use performance before they are manufactured and shipped to the customer."

The steel giant's global R&D process teams also work closely with its many manufacturing facilities to develop and implement advanced technical solutions that help improve efficiency, reduce waste and cut operating costs, White notes.

Michael O'Regan, public relations director for Pratt Industries, says his company's growth is designed to increase its manufacturing footprint, its capabilities in the Midwest, and to support its many customers in this region. "So building this mill in the heart of the Midwest was a perfect fit for our aggressive growth strategy," he says.

It's the single largest investment—\$260 million—Pratt has made in the United States, and it has increased its annual revenues from roughly \$2.1 billion to \$2.5 billion, he says.

The expansion also allowed Pratt to do things differently and more efficiently. "Before we built the mill we

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had to supply our adjacent box-making factory and others throughout the Midwest with paper from our three other mills in Conyers, Georgia; Shreveport, Louisiana; and New York City," O'Regan says. "Now, freight costs to the neighboring plant are basically zero, and freight to our other factories in the region is also substantially less."

Like every local company flexing its manufacturing expansion muscles, growth also allows Pratt to find new ways to higher production levels or more streamlined developments.

"We're continually looking for ways to improve our recycled paper-making capabilities, and to do so more efficiently," O'Regan says. "Each new mill we build is technically and operationally more productive than the others. We have built three of the industry's last four mills in just the past 20 years."

This newest mill is the industry's most efficient paper mill, O'Regan says, employing 120 workers to produce 370,000 tons a year—twice the productivity of many competitor mills.

"Also, it is the world's most environmentally-friendly paper mill and a showcase for the latest in 21st century paper-making technology," O'Regan says. "It saves some 20,000 trees and diverts up to 3,500 cubic yards of paper from landfills every day. Annually, it prevents more than 700,000 gross tons of Co2 emissions through landfill avoidance. It was also designed to use even less water, electricity and natural gas than its three sister mills."

In LaPorte, Arconic recently underwent a \$100 million, 320,000-square-foot expansion, broadening its reach into the large commercial jet engine market. This growth will also double its workforce by 2019.

The expansion enables Arconic, formerly known as Alcoa Howmet, to manufacture single piece structural parts—components that encase the rotating parts of an engine—that are nearly 60 percent larger than those already produced at that plant.

These new capabilities have

broadened the company's reach into wide- and narrow-body aircraft engines. For example, the new facility will supply structural components for the PurePower and other engines under a 10-year, \$1.1 billion contract with Pratt & Whitney.

"Innovation is at the heart of the LaPorte expansion," Arconic chairman and CEO Klaus Kleinfeld said in a statement. "We combined some of the world's best metallurgists, product engineers and manufacturing experts to broaden our capabilities and deliver the highly advanced components our customers need to build jet engines at high volumes."

The ripple effect of local investment

Bening, from MonoSol, echoed other leading manufacturing firms in this region by noting that investing locally provides incentives, and the means, for contractors and suppliers to invest in people, innovation and infrastructure to feed this wave of growth. "This makes the region our primary focus when we plan expansion," he says. "It has worked, and our growth creates opportunity for more growth."

"Our consistent growth and long-term relationship in Indiana and this region has allowed our contractors and material suppliers to focus on quality and value delivery," Bening says. "When we're growing, we're growing in our target markets, we're growing in markets we want to capture, and we're growing in our existing and new regions."

Growth affords all of these firms the resources, including capital, facilities, equipment and personnel, to expand their offerings while contributing to customers' competitive advantages.

"For example, we recently announced our partnership with Pacific Shaving Company in the creation of their new single-use shaving cream minis," Bening says. "In October, 2016, we announced our new film technology for personal care products and cosmetics. Within just a few months, we've already enabled a partner to launch a brand new innovation in the shaving cream market and begin sales commercially at Target stores."

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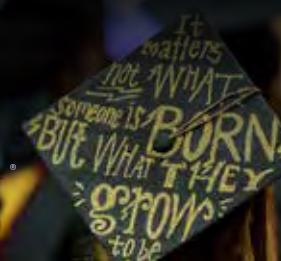
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Going Green

Local companies take the lead in environmental responsibility



Urschel Laboratories' newest facility incorporates energy-efficient features to infringe as little as possible on Chesterton's natural Coffee Creek area.

BY CARRIE STEINWEG

Every business, municipality and school corporation in Northwest Indiana plays a part in the tremendous use of natural resources, and each has the potential to decrease the environmental impact and dependence on products that can have a negative effect on the planet in ways both large and small. Green practices continue to grow in all facets of our lives, and citizens are looking to the business world for examples of how to be mindful of what we will

be leaving for future generations. In Northwest Indiana, steps are continually being taken to find solutions and preventative measures so we can be proactive when it comes to being environmentally conscious.

Building Better

Urschel Laboratories' newest facility was designed to incorporate energy-efficient features and to infringe as little as possible on Chesterton's natural Coffee Creek area.

The century-old manufacturer of

precision food cutting equipment had outgrown its second site in Valparaiso, which was built in the 1950s, and in 2011 began the process of planning for relocation. "We couldn't expand any further and looked for a new site," says director of manufacturing Bill Schott, who served as the company rep in working with builder Tonn and Blank Construction in Michigan City. "It was a wonderful project and we were very pleased with the overall result." The new 370,000 square-foot manufacturing facility opened in 2015 after an



Robert Colangelo's vertical indoor gardening company Green Sense Farms, Portage, uses 24 foot hydroponic tubs to grow pesticide and GMO free produce year-round.

18-month build project.

According to Schott, the creek borders the property and in the planning stages they were cautioned by locals to be kind to the environment. Access to the property necessitated a retention pond and a road extension, and a bridge built over the creek allows access with little impact on the surrounding land.

Building construction included extensive use of windows for natural lighting within the office and the shop. "We wanted to do some best practice things to keep our energy usage low, like a lot of downward lighting and LED lighting inside and outside," Schott says.

In the new building, there's a designated indoor space for scrap. "This wasn't able to be accomplished at our older facility. Scrap metal and shavings were kept outside under an awning so

the trucks could have access to the dumpsters," says Schott. "With the new facility being so close to Coffee Creek, we really wanted to house all of these items under roof. Today we can be confident that none of this manufacturing waste is exposed to the outside, and our environmental health and safety manager, Jennifer Brooks, has even been able to start a composting program that's really become a source of pride."

Greens Going Green

Robert Colangelo has brought futuristic farming to Northwest Indiana through vertical indoor gardening that uses less of everything to produce more. He's the founding farmer and majority shareholder of Green Sense Farms, which supplies leafy greens, microgreens, baby greens, herbs and lettuces to

stores and restaurants in Northwest Indiana and Chicago.

"We have towers that go to 24 foot with hydroponic tubs where we grow produce year round and it's pesticide and GMO free," says Colangelo. The system of hydroponics allows the plants to thrive through the root system without using soil. It results in a much higher density of crop, as artificial lighting can provide light for more hours of the day. The weather and insects become a non-issue and the possibility of contamination through run-off from fertilizer is eliminated. The crops are sold locally to minimize transportation costs.

"The goal is to recycle and have zero waste," says Colangelo. "We don't use pesticides. We re-use water and nutrients. It's very hygienic. We purify our water and our air."



Fair Oaks Farms, Fair Oaks, collects and converts animal manure to biogas that powers their farm and fleet of equipment. In 2016, the farm used 2.5 million gallons less in diesel than in previous years.

Another farm is being built in South Bend, in cooperation with Ivy Tech, to train job-ready graduates for the food service, produce and agriculture industries.

"Our goal is to build a brand that is nationally known and locally grown," says Colangelo. The company is now expanding and building a network of farms in the U.S. and Canada, as well as Scandinavia and Asia Pacific.

"Personally, I feel that water is going to be the issue of the decade," he says. "We're going to come to some critical choices—for industry, drinking or agriculture. I feel our water conservation processes make us the modern farm for the future."

It was in 2013 that Green Sense Farms began, but long before that, Colangelo was thinking green. For the past eight years he has hosted a nationally syndicated radio show that is available on 37 stations, including Lakeshore Public Radio

and WBBM Chicago.

Producing Power

Fair Oaks Farms was recently awarded 2016 Overall Member Business of the Year by South Shore Clean Cities based on their greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline gallon equivalents reduced over the course of the year. In 2016, the farm used 2.5 million gallons less in diesel than in previous years. That decrease comes from the use of animal manure to power the farm and fleet, according to marketing and special events director Leslie Rusk.

"Both cow and pig manure are pumped into digesters and it spends 14 days there. During that time, it produces a biogas that is 63 percent methane and we harvest all of that gas," Rusk says. "The initial use of the gas is to power methane-powered generators, which provide our internal electricity needs. Each 3,000 cow pod can produce enough electricity

to power 750 homes. So, on our total farm we can power a city of roughly 10,000 homes."

Fair Oaks Farms developed a technology that uses water and pressure to create a biogas that is 98 percent methane, which is natural gas. The natural gas is sent to the gas station where it is compressed and becomes compressed natural gas (CNG). The farm runs 42 over-the-road 12-liter tractors with CNG engines. It translates to a 50 percent reduction in the carbon footprint from diesel.

Because it is produced on the farm, the gas is classified as RCNG (renewable compressed natural gas). By comparison, the difference in price versus diesel is upwards of \$1.50 per gallon.

Gary Corbett, CEO of Fair Oaks Farms, notes that less than two percent of the population makes their living from production in agriculture. "The responsibility falls on our

shoulders to meet the challenges of the future," he says. "With increases in population and the need for an increased food supply, we'll have to do it with less land, questionable water in some parts of the world, and weather and temperatures that are always changing. The only way to accomplish that is a lot of innovation, creativity and technology."

As part of Fair Oaks' growing venture that will include a hotel expected to open in spring 2018 and fruit orchards that will be ready for picking that year, the company continues to increase production and utilize what is in their own backyard. The Farmhouse Restaurant, a farm-to-fork concept opened in 2015.

"We're in so many aspects of agriculture that we could embrace farm-to-table because we grow a lot of these products," Corbett says. "We feel we could do 80 to 85 percent sourced on the farm. That's our goal—with dairy, meat and vegetables. It's a popular concept right now and was very easy for us."

Transportation Transformations

Carl Lisek is executive director of South Shore Clean Cities, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to "preserve and revitalize Northern Indiana by promoting the use of clean fuels and clean vehicle technologies," according to their website. The coalition originated in 1999 and since then, Lisek says he has seen huge gains in green technology in Indiana in terms of petroleum reduction. The U.S. Department of Energy's clean cities coalitions are designed to reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector by advancing use of hybrid electric vehicles, alternative fuels and vehicles, idle reduction technologies, fuel blends and fuel economy.

South Shore Clean Cities recently recognized local leading members for their influence in increasing the use of clean fuels and clean fuel vehicles, reducing dependence on petroleum use and imported oil, and improving air quality. Among those recognized were the City of Hobart with the Green Fleet Community of the Year

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Carl Lisek Executive Director of South Shore Clean Cities, says alternate fuel vehicles like this natural gas powered cement mixer are helping to improving our region's air quality.

Award; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 697 in Merrillville with the Sustainability Leadership Award; and Matt Chlebowksi, director of central services for the City of South Bend, for Clean Fuel Visionary of the Year.

In our interview with Lisek, he also lauded Tri-Creek School Corporation in Lowell, who is working to reduce emissions in school buses and is applying for a grant to help with implantation of solar panels. "We see (Tri-Creek superintendent) Dr. Howe as a leader, where she's not only implementing services into schools, but also bringing it into the classroom and

educating students on different green applications," Lisek says.

Likewise, East Chicago schools have recently introduced propane school buses, Lisek says.

While a concern for the environment is a huge factor in green initiatives, Lisek emphasizes the ongoing dependence on foreign fuel. "We still import over 150 billion dollars a year of fuels," he says. "People don't realize how much we're contributing to foreign countries."

Beyond working with businesses, communities and schools, Lisek says that they're working more to reach out to the public to spread awareness

on how individuals can make a difference as well. In March, South Shore Clean Cities partnered with NIPSCO and Nissan to award a Nissan Leaf for just \$10,000 to NIPSCO customers. He says that efforts are also being made to develop uniform signage to direct motorists to stations for fuel alternatives.

Lisek encourages drivers to minimize car idling and be diligent in maintaining vehicles, following manufacturer's guidelines and disposing of oil and filters properly. "It's more the little things than big things," he says. "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

What is LEED?

LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the most widely used third-party verification for green buildings, with around 1.85 million square feet being certified daily.

LEED works for all buildings—from homes to corporate headquarters—at all phases of development. Projects pursuing LEED certification earn points across several areas that

address sustainability issues. Based on the number of points achieved, a project then receives one of four LEED rating levels: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

LEED-certified buildings are resource efficient. They use less water and energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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The Start-up Toolkit

NWI host to multiple resources designed to help entrepreneurs



PNW's Commercialization and Manufacturing Excellence Center assists local entrepreneurs by assigning PNW student to preform manufacturing analysis of their concepts providing the entrepreneur with data to assist them in obtaining funding.

BY LESLY BAILEY

Cultivating communication skills, mentoring, giving sound advice and offering a collaborative environment are among the ways region organizations are fostering the young entrepreneurial community.

"Starting a business isn't easy. There's a lot of risk associated with it," says Lorri Feldt, regional director of the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center. "We work to help get young entrepreneurs off to a good solid, successful start."

Northwest ISBDC

Through the Northwest ISBDC, young entrepreneurs can meet with business advisers, receive access to market data, find connections within the business world and sharpen their

skills with a variety of workshops.

Expert advice: The NW-ISBDC's team of business advisers is available to meet one-on-one with emerging entrepreneurs. The no-cost guidance covers all aspects of business ownership from marketing and business plans to start-up steps and all things financial. The advisers have a range of backgrounds and expertise to support all avenues of business ownership.

"A key area for us is our ability to help entrepreneurs find sources and prepare to apply for financing," Feldt says. "There's no guarantee, but hopefully we can help them find some capital to start or grow their businesses."

One of the office's key measurements is the amount of money SBDC clients are successful in raising. Feldt cites that in 2016, SBDC helped Northwest

Indiana clients obtain more than \$12 million in loans and other capital.

Those interested in meeting with an adviser can visit nwisbdc.org and click on the "Apply to Become a Client" button.

Market data: The SBDC also provides clients with data to aid business owners with strategic decisions, such as location.

"Our market data is an outstanding resource," Feldt says. "We have assisted clients in determining location by providing such data categories as demographic, spending, pet ownership and traffic counts."

"I really think it's a tool that helps people get grounded and understand factually what they are looking at," she says. "It's a hidden gem."

Workshops: Business Start-up 101

SBDC
Business. Smarter.



Lorri Feldt, Regional Director, NW-SBDC
and Jim Hubbard, SCORE District
Director, explain the multitude of local
resources available to business owners
and potential business owners.



1 Million Cups brings together entrepreneurs for networking and discussion over coffee. Hammond chapter meets from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays in Room 115 at CMEC, 7150 Indianapolis Blvd, Hammond.

is a core ISBDC workshop for emerging entrepreneurs that focuses on business idea evaluation, managing expectations, characteristics of a business owner and identifying start-up expenses. The monthly workshop

is led by a business adviser and is offered throughout the region, including at the Purdue Technology Center of NWI in Crown Point, the Regional Development Company in Valparaiso and Purdue University

Northwest's Commercialization and Manufacturing Excellence Center in Hammond.

Additional workshops offer entrepreneurs the opportunity to take their skills to the next level in such



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An advertisement for JM² Digital Talk. On the left, a man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a dark turtleneck, holds a yellow toy gun and points it towards the camera. On the right, a woman with glasses and a striped shirt also holds a toy gun and points it towards the camera. Between them is a large stylized logo for JM² DIGITAL TALK with "with John & Kyle" underneath. A white cursor arrow points towards the logo. At the bottom left is the website address www.jm2.biz. At the bottom right is the tagline "Professional with a dash of fun".

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areas as QuickBooks and marketing. The NW-ISBDC often partners with regional organizations and colleges to present entrepreneurial-based events throughout the year. Through a partnership with Indiana University Northwest, the SBDC team has collaborated with marketing professor Dr. Subir Bandyopadhyay to provide no-cost workshops on mobile marketing and social media.

To view available workshops and register online, visit nwisbdc.org and click on "Workshops and Events."

Important links: The advisers' knowledge of the region's small business community can also benefit young entrepreneurs. "We are connectors," Feldt says. "If it's not something we do, we can find the right contact for that."

NW-ISBDC client Mike Michalak, lead web developer and security specialist at Trail 9, began bidding on government contracts through Indiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) after learning more about the program from Feldt.

"I received feedback on our marketing campaigns and information regarding the different programs used by the ISBDC," says Michalak, 30, who launched his business about four years ago. "Lorri has been great to work with."

For more information on NW-ISBDC's services, call 219-644-3513 or email northwest@isbdc.org.

PNW's Commercialization and Manufacturing Excellence Center

At Purdue University Northwest's CMEC, a platform for boosting communication skills is brewing and innovators are taking their concepts to another level.

1 Million Cups: The nationwide program developed by the Kauffman Foundation brings together entrepreneurs for a morning of networking and discussion over coffee. Featured entrepreneurs highlight their products or services during the event.

"While established businesses have the various chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs in this region often have no established peer network," says Mont Handley, CMEC associate director. The 1 Million Cups

program "provides a network of mentors, ambitious start-ups, established entrepreneurs and various business development professionals to the region's aspiring business developers," Handley says.

"If the people who attend 1MC don't know how to help you, then they usually know someone who does," he adds.

Young entrepreneurs can apply to

present in front of the audience and have the opportunity to hone their communication skills and receive feedback.

"Communicating business ideas effectively is a primary characteristic of successful entrepreneurs, and 1 Million Cups is a perfect place to develop or polish those skills," Handley says. "By attending, you can see presenters effectively present their



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SCORE chapter 0310 volunteers and partner organizations recently celebrated the group's recognition as Chapter of the Year. From left are Greater Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce President Rex Richards, Chapter Chair Jim Hubbard, SCORE District Director Susan Sheahan and Chapter Vice Chair Bill Herring.

vision or you will witness the audience question assumptions or suggest how the presenter might be more effective or improve on his or her idea.

"Regardless of the outcome, the presenter has achieved some level of candid feedback on their presentation and their product or service."

Michalak had the opportunity to spotlight what his company is all about in front of a 1 Million Cups audience. Trail 9 is a web design and development company that builds websites for clients beginning at the lowest level of hosting and then layering performance, security, design and search engine optimization on top.

"Presenting is one of my weak points so it's good to get in front of people and enhance that," Michalak says of his experience at 1 Million Cups.

The Hammond chapter meets from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays in Room 115 at CMEC, 7150 Indianapolis Blvd. For more information, visit 1million-cups.com/hammond.

Concept to Commercialization: CMEC is also working with local entrepreneurs who have a manufacturing component to their venture.

"Helping innovators scale their products to full commercialization is vitally important to our current economy, considering that most net new jobs are created by companies that have one to nine employees," Handley

says. "In Indiana, nearly one-third of our state GDP comes from the manufacturing sector and if one-third of all new companies in Northwest Indiana have a manufacturing component, then CMEC may have a major impact on the region's employment and poverty issues."

Through the program, students assist with prototypes developed from an entrepreneur's concept and the team goes out and acquires customer feedback. From there, decisions on changes can be made and a manufacturing method can be created.

"We're really trying to do a manufacturing analysis so when you go to the bank or investors you have actual numbers. You are often making assumptions, especially if it's manufacturing-related," Handley says. "It's so important to me as I couldn't find help to scale my own proof of concept so I moved PittMoss (a peat moss substitute made of recycled paper) to Pittsburgh."

For more information on CMEC, call 219-989-3251, email cmecc@pnw.edu or visit centers.pnw.edu/cmecc.

SCORE

Volunteer members and specific subject matter experts are mentoring the next generation of entrepreneurs through the Northwest Indiana SCORE chapter 0310.

SCORE provides no-cost advice through its 25 volunteer members, who are either active business owners or professionals, retired or working part-time.

"The very purpose of SCORE is to help small businesses succeed and when SCORE was created in 1964 it was structured so that people with a lot of business experience would be engaging in helping those with much less experience," says Chapter Chair Jim Hubbard. "SCORE has a great deal of experience in working with young entrepreneurs. We help them to develop their own business plan as a way to anticipate and address the myriad of business issues any new business faces, but doing so before property is bought or leased, capital is spent, or any of the other key steps new businesses take when getting started."

"The idea is to help young entrepreneurs think about the problems or decisions needing to be addressed in advance of actually having to make them, thus positioning themselves to be ready for any eventuality before encountering it."

Seth Spencer, 20, started with SCORE in 2014 at the beginning of his journey to launch SERA Solutions, a full-service digital agency specializing in website development and online advertising.

"I originally started working with SCORE to get assistance in creating a business and business plan," Spencer says. "I received assistance on developing a marketing strategy and focusing on how to get our name out. I had follow-ups with a list of goals and to-dos and how to execute those goals."

"Since then, it has now shifted to strategies for expanding, finding office locations, adding employees and processes for sales development."

Spencer, who is studying business management at Purdue University Northwest, says exposure to SCORE's volunteer mentors has prompted him to give back. He volunteers on a weekly basis at Crichfield Elementary School in LaPorte, helping fourth-grade teacher Marty Briggs with STEM projects. He has also given his time to the Junior Achievement program.

"I was definitely inspired by the individuals who have mentored me and I pass that on by giving back to the community," he says. "It's definitely humbling to give back."

"I feel really fortunate as it was extremely intimidating when I started out. Looking back at that first meeting, my mentors did not doubt me on that first day and they never gave up on me. It's been a great journey."

SCORE Chapter 0310 works with entrepreneurs and small businesses from the five counties of Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Jasper and Newton. For more information, call 219-462-1105, email nwinscore@gmail.com or visit northwestindiana.score.org.

Working spaces

Zoseco in Valparaiso and greenCOW coworking in Hammond are region office spaces that offer a collaborative atmosphere for start-ups.

They provide office supplies—with the planet in mind at greenCow—as well as the resources needed for a productive work environment.

"Co-working spaces are great for collaboration and tossing around ideas," says Michalak, who works out of Zoseco. For more information on Zoseco, visit zoseco.com or on greenCow, visit greencow.space.

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Community Comrades

Small business provides a sense of place



Valparaiso's downtown has experienced a renaissance. Small businesses have flocked to the downtown filling it with a mixture of restaurants, retail shops, boutiques and more.

BY BOB MOULESONG

Small business is the lifeblood of every city or town, regardless of size. A 2012 study by Civic Economics, a company that analyzes the impact of buying local, found that local businesses are known to have a "multiplier effect" on their communities; for every dollar spent at a local business an average of 68 cents stays in the community, which helps generate an even greater economic value by its ripple effect.

We talked to several smaller communities about the impact of small, local business, from both an economic and a quality-of-life perspective.

Vibrant and Visionary

Valparaiso's slogan is more than a catchy phrase. It is a philosophy implemented throughout the business community.

"I have been a small business owner in Valparaiso for forty years," says Mayor Jon Costas. "I believe I have a good feel for what the residents want from their town and their downtown."

During Costas' twelve years in office, the Valparaiso downtown has experienced a renaissance centered on the creation of the Central Park Plaza. Valparaiso also garnered national attention, when the American Planning Association recognized the plaza as a Great Public Space in 2016.

"We wanted to recreate the sense of ownership and inclusion that comes with a public square," Costas says. "Our residents have provided very positive feedback about the renovations to downtown."

Small businesses have flocked to Valparaiso and filled the downtown. A stroll down the corridors introduces visitors to a mixture of restaurants with outdoor cafes, retail shops, boutiques, candy makers, a brewery, and the famous Valpo Velvet ice cream shop.

Patrick Lyp, director of economic development in the city, concurred with Costas' view.

"Our downtown businesses are very



Michigan City Mainstreet Association created the Uptown Arts District, a collective of unique shops, dining, recreation events, and an emphasis on the arts.

stable,” Lyp says. “When we get an opening, it is usually filled very quickly. Most of the shop owners are local people, and that adds to the stability.”

When it comes to success, Lyp believes the proof is in the pudding.

“Visitors and residents vote with their dollars,” he says. “Not just a political vote, but a consumer one. If they didn’t like the direction the downtown has taken, businesses would be going under. The exact opposite is true here.”

Both Costas and Lyp credit the town’s welcoming, inclusive attitude as a major reason for their commercial success.

“Valparaiso University is a very diverse school,” Costas says. “It provides us with a constant opportunity to practice what we preach. So far, the response has been very good.”

Create, Play, Repeat

At one point, Michigan City made the commercial mistake of closing off Franklin Street.

Chamber of Commerce President Mary Jo Orlowski says correcting that mistake was instrumental in the revitalization of Michigan City.

“For a while, the vibrancy of our downtown district suffered from the street closing,” Orlowski says.

“Reopening it brought a lot of business back to the north end, and allowed us to grow.”

The chamber serves as an advocate for small business, creating a friendly environment for both commercial and community endeavors.

“We worked with the National Main Street Center to design and develop plans to foster the growth of small business, create a sense of community, and provide local employment opportunities,” Orlowski says.

That effort, organized as the Michigan City Mainstreet Association, resulted in the creation of the Uptown Arts District. The District is a collective of unique shops, dining, recreation events, and an emphasis on the arts. Galleries such as The Nest and Luberznik Center for the Arts have attracted art lovers from near and far.

“We wanted to create something unique in our community,” Orlowski says. “Northwest Indiana has a strong base of art lovers. That includes poets, musicians, painters, photographers, and other forms. We wanted to build a corridor where they can all work, live, and play.”

The Uptown Center is located on Franklin Street. The building is a majestic church built in 1867. The exquisite

architecture is the perfect venue for weddings and numerous events.

“The city has been wonderful to work with,” says Event Coordinator Joy Collins. “The Mayor (Ron Meer) is a frequent visitor and supporter. The city has hosted several events here.”

Contributing to the sense of community, The Uptown Center has hosted several non-profit events, including the American Heart Association’s Go For Red event, which focuses on women’s heart health.

Big Little City

The city of Whiting is more than anyone can imagine. Located on the southern shores of Lake Michigan, the ‘Big Little City’ has become known for spectacular lakefront events such as the Pierogi Fest, the annual Fourth of July Parade, and the Sand Sculpting Competition. This year, they will add the National Mascot Hall of Fame.

“Our downtown business district is flourishing,” says Mayor Joe Stahura. “We want to help the community by adding destination attractions to our city.”

To help facilitate that business initiative, Whiting offers significant grant money to new businesses that qualify as a ‘drive to destination.’

"If your business qualifies as the type of attraction that people will specifically travel to see, we offer much larger grants to help you get your startup off the ground," Stahura says.

"The downtown business district is the soul of a community," he says. "If the market will not drive businesses forward, then government should help. That's what we did with façade grants, building demolition, streetscape, and other initiatives."

Mind Benders is a unique store located on the 119th Street corridor of downtown. They sell games and puzzles that stimulate critical thinking, memory, and problem solving. "Our games and puzzles are a lot of fun," says co-owner Amy Bender. "But while you are enjoying the game, you are also keeping your mind sharp."

Amy and husband Joel went to the city with their business plan that included a detailed explanation of what the store was all about. Their positive experience convinced them Whiting was the right location.

"It was important they understood that we sell brain teasers and thinking games not found in a big box store," Joel says. "They loved the idea and provided wonderful support."

Amy and Joel are Whiting residents, and love the way their city responds to innovative business ideas.

Synergy and Collaboration

Located fifteen miles east of South Bend, Elkhart is built on the banks of the beautiful and scenic St. Joseph and Elkhart rivers. It's a pleasant mix of country and city. Thanks to the synergy of the Downtown Merchant Alliance, it is also booming.

"Elkhart has a very active Alliance which was established to create a safer and more vibrant downtown," says Mayor Tim Neese.

The organization encouraged increased communication between business owners and has facilitated an increased number of downtown events throughout the year. "They have maintained a symbiotic relationship with

the city and help with event promotion. They understand that downtown events lead to increased foot traffic on Main Street," Neese says. "That increases revenue for their businesses. It's a win-win for everyone."

The Alliance is responsible for the city hosting its first Comic Con in March. The main vendors and entertainers were showcased at the city's Lerner Theatre. The involvement of other downtown merchants included the local brewery, Iechyd Da, which brewed a special superhero themed beer that weekend.

That type of collaborative synergy among city business and government has resulted in a downtown that is vibrant and entertaining.

Just to the west, the collaborative synergy of Downtown South Bend has promoted and increased small business in their respective downtown area.

"Small businesses make up the fabric of our downtown," says Jill Scicchitano, executive director of DTSB. "Each business brings such a unique variety and



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Crown Point promotes tourism and destination businesses, like the Sparta Dome, which bring visitors to the city resulting in additional revenue for many local businesses.

quality of products and experiences."

DTSB promotes the diverse base of businesses in downtown South Bend through social media and their newsletter. Initiatives such as Downtown Dignity, a new business incubator,

First Fridays, and architectural walking tours are all promoted.

"Our small businesses are active in providing great services," Scicchitano says. "They create an environment providing memorable moments for

visitors, employees and residents."

Stronger from within

Crown Point is the hub of Northwest Indiana. It is the center of county government, and has a history dating

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back to 1868.

Mayor Dave Uran was proud to share the city's Shop Local campaign. "In our city, upwards of eighty percent of money spent shopping locally stays within the community," Uran says. "These monies go toward hiring local employees, creating top-rated schools, spectacular city parks, public safety and much more."

It is a goal of the city to aid local merchants in every way possible. The City and its Redevelopment Commission plan to promote the Shop Local campaign with all the tools at its disposal.

The campaign is just one way that the city supports their local small businesses. "We don't profess to have a secret formula," Uran says. "We try and get everyone involved at all levels to help put consumers in front of our local merchants. After that, it's up to the business itself."

To expound on that vision, the city pushes tourism at every chance possible. The building of the Crown Point Sports Complex, and the Sparta Dome, are two initiatives geared toward bringing visitors in to the city. These types of destination businesses result in additional revenue for local shops.

"A great example is our nighttime St. Patrick's Day parade," Uran says. "We wanted to do something unique, so we came up with a nighttime parade with lighted floats. It's great family entertainment, and helps the local businesses on the parade route."

The Seward Johnson sculpture exhibits and photo contests also bring in visitors from outside the city. The Courthouse Shops located within the historical court house attract thousands of visitors every year.

Recently, the Indiana Ballet Theater received the deed to a 20,000 square foot building on North Main Street. Engineers and architects are preparing plans for renovation and creation of the Classic Arts Center.

"When we see an opportunity, we try to take advantage of the moment," Uran says. "It's all about creating an environment that makes people want to be there."

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Maximized Marketing

How marketing firms help businesses rise to the top



Every American is exposed to 6,000 marketing messages each day. The team at J2 Marketing in South Bend helps their clients reach customers in today's noisy digital and physical worlds.

BY JULIA PERLA HUISMAN

In our increasingly digital world, the role of marketing looks drastically different than it did a decade ago. It's never been easier for a company to market itself, but at the same time, the number of options to

do so can be overwhelming.

This is why marketing firms still exist and why some local companies have made the investment to hire them. We spoke with these companies, and with the marketing professionals themselves, about their experiences

working together and about what other business leaders can learn from them.

WHY IS MARKETING NECESSARY?

Most business owners know to invest in marketing of some sort but may not realize the vast importance of it,



For Von Tobel's, remodel of their Schererville store Ken Pylipow, president and CEO of Von Tobel, chose an outside team to help them market to the next generation of customers.

now more than ever. "Marketing is especially tricky today because, most of the time, you're getting digital or non-physical results," says Tyler Callahan of J2 Marketing in South Bend. "Because of this, there is often a tendency to underestimate or devalue the worth of something. You have to trust that marketing is, in fact, vital to whether or not your business will actually last longer than a few years."

This is especially true because of the noisy world we live in, Callahan points out. "Every American is exposed to at least 6,000 branded messages each day. Everyone is trying to sell you something," he says. "When you come to grips with that fact, and understand that your company doesn't really differ from anyone else in that regard, the importance of marketing becomes abundantly clear."

Callahan compares running a business to building a house—and marketing, he claims, is the foundation. "Your business will die if

people don't understand what you do in an efficient manner," he says. "Marketing works."

WHY HIRE A MARKETING FIRM?

While it can be agreed that marketing is vital to a company's success, many organizations choose to tackle it on their own rather than employing

"We find small, mid-level and even some larger companies that are still relying on the best guess of internal individuals that were not trained in marketing, brand building, or even social media," —Michaline Tomich

experts to help. This could potentially be to their detriment, professionals say.

"So often, we find small, mid-level and even some larger companies that are still relying on the best guess of internal individuals that were not

trained in marketing, brand building, or even social media," says Michaline Tomich, owner of Mix Design in Schererville. She adds that these internal employees often have good ideas but execute them "without a big picture strategy in mind or a measurable goal that they are setting out to achieve."

A firm also offers the benefit of a whole team of experts. Julie Olthoff, president of VIA Marketing in Merrillville, says, "You most likely can't afford a talented team of seven people on your staff year-round." A firm, on the other hand, offers multiple experts in multiple areas, she says, including "planning, public relations, media experts, copywriting, graphic design, digital expertise and programming."

Much of marketing requires trial and error, which marketing professionals have already tried and tested, Callahan points out. "We're the experts," he says. "We have studied what works



Geminus recently outsourced their marketing to an outside firm who implemented a comprehensive digital strategy for events. Attendance at a recent event increased from 700 in previous years to 1,600 this year.

and what fails. We know what time on which day of the week to post on Facebook in order to get the most sales. We know how to create images that gain your customers' trust, so they're more willing to invest in your product... Marketing firms are full of people who devote their entire working days to doing marketing well so that businesses can thrive."

It's this expertise that led Geminus Corporation to outsource their marketing. Geminus provides support services for the Regional Mental Health Center and runs several programs to assist at-risk families and children throughout the community. After acknowledging

that their in-house marketing efforts were limited, Nicholas Neal, director

"We have been in the local market for over 50 years, but aren't so sure that the younger market knows who we are and everything that we have to offer," —Ken Pylipow

of family services at Geminus, chose to work with VIA Marketing to get the word out about their programs. "This is a five million dollar grant, so our marketing needs to match that," Neal says.

VIA moved Geminus into a more comprehensive digital marketing strategy, particularly for their events. As a result, the organization's Party in the Park event increased from about 700 attendees in previous years to 1,600 attendees this past year. "We had a line of people waiting to come in," Neal says proudly.

Von Tobel, the locally owned retailer of building supplies and home improvement products, chose to use the remodel of their Schererville store (a large building on the well-traveled Highway 30) as an opportunity for rebranding and marketing. "We have been in the local market for over 50 years, but aren't so sure that



Marketing firms offer the benefit of a whole team of experts like the team at VIA Marketing in Merrillville.

the younger market knows who we are and everything that we have to offer," says Ken Pylipow, president and CEO of Von Tobel. "We wanted an outside team that could help us market ourselves to the next generation of customers while simultaneously maintaining our existing customer base."

The team they chose was Mix Design, who assisted them with a brand audit. Mix Design's Tomich says, "After realizing the potential that such a huge building could have on PR and marketing of that location, (Von Tobel) proceeded with an open mind and a fresh outlook on what a rebrand would bring." This process opened up other conversations about

a marketing overhaul for all of their locations. "We're diving deeper into the habits and patterns of their current and future guests, being open-minded and learning how brand look plays a role in the new marketing," Tomich says. "We're helping them discover the strategic way to utilize social media... to shift their goals, build future marketing plans and include the whole team in the brand pride and engagement process."

Pylipow says that his employees receive positive comments about their new look "every day," a sign that their goal of increased awareness is being met. "The process has definitely created excitement with our employees, customers and vendors,"

Pylipow says.

Not all marketing projects need be as large-scale as Von Tobel's, however. A firm can help with just one or two initiatives. The South Bend-based Goodwill Industries of Michiana chose to rebuild their website, and hired J2 Marketing to help them do so. "The old website was a mess," says Guy Fisher, executive vice president for Goodwill Industries of Michiana. "It didn't flow right and was too busy... The website shouldn't give every single detail of what Goodwill is doing; it should get the user to want to know more and reach out to us."

The staff at J2 helped streamline the content on the new site and moved it to a mobile-friendly platform. Fisher



Mix Design team in Schererville working on big picture strategy and measurable goals in marketing, brand building, and social media for one of their clients.

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says that while the new site was rolled out fairly recently, "I expect engagement to increase dramatically."

WHAT MAKES IT WORK?

Once a company decides to partner with a marketing firm, they have a responsibility to see their investment through, according to the businesses and marketing firms interviewed. The relationship between the two entities should be one of mutual respect, effort and expectations.

"Understand when you hire a firm that the onus for success still rests upon you as a business owner," says Fisher. He and the others suggested the following practices to make the most of the marketing experience:

Establish a budget

Neal of Geminus suggests having parameters in place ahead of time, including how much money is

budgeted for each project, and then communicating those parameters. Olthoff says the marketing budget should be within a range of 3 to 10 percent of the company's sales, depending on your industry, name awareness and competition. Once a budget is established and communicated, the firm can accommodate the company's needs accordingly and without any surprises.

Trust the experts

"If you want effective, tangible results with a marketing firm, you have to listen to them," urges Callahan. "If you're working with a good marketing firm, then you have to trust them to do what you hired them to do." Pylipow agrees. "Business owners by nature are going to be defensive of their businesses," he says. "They have to let the marketing team give them their honest feedback from an

objective, outside perspective. Some of the feedback may not always be easy to hear, but you need to remember that you hired them to help you."

Do the work

While the marketing experts are skilled in their industry, only you know the ins and outs of your business. So at some point, they will need you to contribute, whether it's specific information, input or legwork. "You can't hire a firm and say, 'Off you go,' and not spend any time in the process," Fisher says. He recommends identifying someone in the organization who is detail-oriented and can help with the more tedious tasks. "Any firm needs that kind of engagement," he says. "If you don't give them the whole story, you're going to get what you give. You have to be willing to invest the time and resource on the business end to get what you need."

Starting tips for stepping up your marketing

Michaline Tomich of Mix Design in Schererville offers the following tips for taking your marketing efforts to the next level.

Create brand consistency.

Before you roll out your marketing, make sure your brand is solid and your story is real. Everyone in your organization needs to be looking in the same direction and with the same goals. A brand audit, which helps redefine your ideal customer and determines your campaign direction, should be done annually with monthly or quarterly checkpoints. In addition, make sure your brand is handled consistently and creatively by all departments.

Talk about your target customer, even their habits and patterns.

Learn everything you can about your ideal customer. The key is "ideal." Not all businesses can afford to market to every single type of

customer in every age group. Hone in on your *ideal* customer. Then, market to them as much as possible and in as many outlets as possible. If you do that well, their spouses, parents, kids and friends will likely hear about you as well.

No one way of marketing will work solely.

Simply gaining traction in one medium alone will not suffice. Oftentimes social media (or just Facebook) is the means of a small business's marketing. Know that it takes multiple customer touch points not only to hit multiple targets but in different dayparts.

Leave them wanting more.

If you give away the whole story, they have no reason to call. After you create your marketing piece, look at it and ask yourself, "What can I delete?" Take out the details that the user should get from a phone call, a visit,

or when they get to your website. Find a way to engage them first and allow them to seek more. It will be a much more thought-provoking process and opens up the door for a good customer experience.

It's not just a logo.

Your logo really should act as a reminder of the feeling your customer gets when they interact with your brand. Some of the emotional connections your logo should spur are: relief (finally someone that helps me), gratitude (thank goodness they make this product I needed), pride (they help me achieve my goal), and fun (I love the excitement I feel when I represent this brand). If customers have a bad experience that generates a negative emotion such as anger, being ignored, not helped, or neglected, your logo will be the symbol that sparks that feeling again. Make sure there is so much more to the training and operational exercises that create your brand and thus your marketing.

Building Hope

Steel City Salvage initiative addresses blight, creates jobs in Gary

BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

A nonprofit hopes to spur economic development while addressing issues like blight, in hard hit Gary.

The Chicago-based Delta Institute is committed to building both a resilient environment and economy through sustainable solutions. The Steel City Salvage initiative in Gary is a local example of its tangible work in the region. The organization is currently engaged in the project and working with partners such as the City of Gary and University of Chicago Harris School, to establish Steel City Salvage. Plans call for creating a marketplace for reclaimed lumber and building materials from vacant homes in Gary.

So why Gary? It comes down to a high level of potential in terms of growth. Director of Strategic Priorities Eve Pytel, who has worked in economic development for the past 15 years, provided some context. "Gary once had a thriving industrial base and was a major employer in the steel industry," she says. Factors like white flight meant the city has lost a substantial percentage of its population in the last 50 years, she adds. What's more, there are more than 6,000 vacant parcels in the city, which further adds to the problem.

Despite the depressed nature of the city, groups like the Delta Institute are committed to a transformation. It comes down to how to "leverage liabilities into assets," in Pytel's words. The conversation first started in 2014, with dialogue about how other communities were taking homes apart to turn into "value-added products."

The Delta Institute isn't the only organization bullish on Gary. The project has attracted national attention



Workers reclaim lumber and building materials from a vacant home in Gary. The reclaimed materials will be resold or donated to local groups converting local blight into an economic benefit for the community.

for their efforts and was a winner in the 2016 Knight Cities Challenge. The efforts come on the heels of a deconstruction pilot program initiated by the Delta Institute through which about a dozen homes in Gary were demolished.

From here the Steel City Salvage project will assess conditions for establishing a marketplace, establish the physical facility, test different ways to bring reclaimed materials and share findings with other weak market city planners.

This is only the beginning of the process. Pytel says Delta and partners will then develop and test three strategies for bringing these materials to market in Gary, creating long-term, sustainable economic benefit for Gary and its residents. In order to affect the most change, they had to develop the local infrastructure; otherwise salvaged materials would be exported to Chicago, which would be counterproductive, Pytel says.

The economic impact also extends to the demolition contractors, who are required to bid on the work and go through a training course. Pytel is quick to note that this "represents only one way materials can be salvaged." In her words, "a variety of different groups can access these materials." For example, retail, warehouse, pop-ups, festivals and Habitat for Humanity ReStores are among the potential venues. Steel City Salvage is also eyeing a location in Gary for a physical marketplace, where contractors could access reclaimed materials.

While the project is still in its infancy, Pytel says the response from the community has been largely positive. They see the project as a boon to Gary and are on board with the plans. Pytel also invites businesses to get on board through corporate sponsorships. For more information about the Steel City Salvage project, visit delta-institute.org.

Navigating the Waterways

NWI Paddling Association combines community and conservation

BY BEN SMITH

She's the first to admit that the ancestral spirit of the French voyageur likely doesn't breathe within her. Nor does that of the Olympic kayaker.

Instead, Debby Stoit says she's still a novice at this business of paddling canoes and kayaks along the waterways of Northwest Indiana, and the glory of that is it doesn't matter. What matters is the fellowship and camaraderie she's found among her fellow paddlers in the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association.

"I'd paddled once in my life—once or twice, maybe—and I thought, 'Wow, this is fun,'" says Stoit, 62, now a NWIPA board member. "I didn't really know what I was doing, but I happened to read about an event (the NWIPA) had, and I thought, 'Huh. This looks like fun, I think I'm gonna do it.'"

What she discovered was not only great recreation and a connectedness with nature, but a marvelous social circle.

"They were such a welcoming group of people," Stoit recalls. "I didn't know anything. And yet everybody was just extremely helpful and . . . I thought, 'Wow, what a great group of people to be involved with.' And the rest is history."

It is, as these things go, a relatively brief history. The NWIPA was born in January 2009, when a paddling enthusiast named Dan Plath convinced some of his fellow enthusiasts to form a group. Plath had learned to paddle in the summers on family trips to Lake Manitou at Rochester, and his enthusiasm for it proved infectious.

"I met Dan in the fall of 2008," says Ken Stelter, the NWIPA vice-president. "In talking to him, (Plath) said, 'Yeah, it's kind of time to find a club and start it in this area.' He referred to it at the



NWIPA members paddling canoes and kayaks along the waterways of Northwest Indiana.

time as getting boots on the ground of people who wanted to get involved in cleaning up the lakes and streams."

What grew out of that conversation is a nonprofit organization as committed to teaching and conservation as it is to the sheer fun of paddling. Its mission statement says the group is "dedicated to promoting the region's paddling resources and opportunities, providing environmental stewardship of the region's waterways, education, and providing a voice for the region's paddlers."

In keeping with that, among the group's initiatives are canoeing and kayaking classes taught in several cases by instructors certified by the American Canoeing Association, of which the NWIPA is an associated member. The Blueways Stewardship Committee, meanwhile, organizes the group's cleanup efforts.

As Stoit discovered, the NWIPA welcomes all levels of expertise, from kayakers to canoeists to paddleboarders.

"We encourage the public to come out, novices and experts and everybody in between," says Stelter, who canoed with his family as a kid but hadn't been in a boat in 20 years before he met Plath. "We want to bring them to

area waterways to show them what a great resource we have.

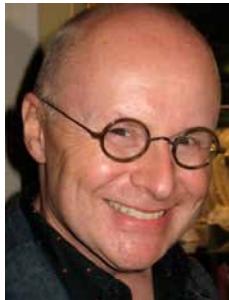
"And then these people who come to our events, they turn around and they become volunteers when we go out for our cleanup events."

Although NWIPA members are mainly kayakers, that's not by design nor is it always so, Stelter says. Plenty of canoeists and paddleboarders show up at events, which range from the Sea Kayak Expedition and Ride the Wave Regatta on Lake Michigan in August to the Trail Creek Fun Float and Torch Relay and hugely popular Kankakee River Sandhill Cranes in October.

There are two types of membership: Full membership that carries a \$15 individual annual fee or a \$25 family fee, and an associate membership. Either way, members join a unique and tight-knit community.

"You know, I'm still learning," Stoit says. "They keep encouraging me and coaching me to go a little further, so last year I finally went on Lake Michigan, which for me was quite an accomplishment."

"The great thing is, everybody's very open here. (There's a lot of) 'You want to try this boat? Try my boat.' And it's just great."



John Cain



Jack Walton

Things to Do and See

An update on arts and entertainment options across the region

NORTHWEST INDIANA

BY JOHN CAIN

Summer entertainment abounds throughout Northwest Indiana. Here is just a sample.

“The Drowsy Chaperone” is a loving send-up of the Jazz Age musical, featuring one show-stopping song and dance number after another. With the houselights down, a man in a chair appears on stage and puts on his favorite record, the cast recording of a fictitious 1928 musical. The recording comes to life as the man looks on. Mix in two lovers on the eve of their wedding, a bumbling best man, a desperate theater producer, a not-so-bright hostess, two gangsters posing as pastry chefs, a misguided Don Juan and an intoxicated chaperone, and you have the ingredients for an evening of madcap delight. Catch this delightful production at Memorial Opera House, Valparaiso, through May 7. More information is available by calling 219-548-9137 or at memorialoperahouse.com.

Footlight Players in Michigan City presents the Lerner & Loewe classic, “Brigadoon,” June 2-18. Two Americans on holiday in Scotland stumble upon a magical village, untouched by the modern world, that rises out of the



Northwest Indiana Symphony presents this year's South Shore Summer Music Festival with free concerts for family, friends and neighbors to enjoy in the great outdoors.

mist once every 100 years, where one of them falls for a beautiful village lass. While “Brigadoon” may at first glance seem locked in a mood of post-war optimism, on deeper inspection, it reveals intriguingly darker undercurrents. The score includes several great

songs from Broadway’s Golden Age of musicals, while revealing ambivalence about the durability of love. Will our smitten hero choose to stay in this enchanted land or return home? Call 219-874-4035 or visit footlightplayers.org for more information.

Musical entertainment comes alive when the Northwest Indiana Symphony presents this year's South Shore Summer Music Festival of free concerts for family, friends and neighbors to enjoy in the great outdoors. There's something for everyone, with the orchestra featuring light classical and patriotic music, as well as music from Broadway and film. This year's concerts, sponsored by Strack & VanTil and Chase, will be performed in Cedar Lake on July 22, Crown Point on July 29, Griffith on August 5, Hammond on August 11 and Schererville on August 12. Additional concerts presented by the Porter County Community Foundation and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore will be presented on August 2 and 4, respectively. The public is invited to come early, bring lawn chairs and blankets, relax and enjoy the music. Learn more at 219-836-0525 or nisorchestra.org.

Visit the South Shore Arts Regional Arts Calendar at SouthShoreArtsOnline.org for more information on current exhibits, concerts, plays, and other arts events. Tune in to Lakeshore Public Radio, 89.1 FM, for "Eye on the Arts" interviews with area artists and arts providers every Monday morning at 8:45am or watch the new expanded "Eye" on Lakeshore PTV, every first Friday at 7pm.

GREATER SOUTH BEND

BY JACK WALTON



A new entertainment promotion is coming to South Bend from May 29-June 4. Titled "Best Week Ever," the project's plan is to blitz South Bend with a variety of non-stop activities for the full week. Several venues will



Annual Wakarusa Bluegrass Festival has become a top draw for area bluegrass enthusiasts. This year's festival is June 9-11. See a full schedule at wakarusabluegrassfestival.com.

take turns hosting sporting events, fireworks displays, footraces, parades and other festivities. Music factors in as well, with a trio of hit makers from the 1990s—Everclear, Fastball and Vertical Horizon—performing June 3 at Four Winds Field. Find out more at bestewekever2017.com.

The annual Wakarusa Bluegrass Festival has become a top draw for area bluegrass enthusiasts, as it brings in some of the top performers in the genre. This year's musicians include Larry Sparks, Larry Efaw and the Bluegrass Mountaineers, and Tony Holt and the Wildwood Valley Boys. There are also spontaneous jam-session opportunities throughout the weekend. This year's festival is June 9-11, and there's a full schedule at wakarusabluegrassfestival.com.

In the 1970s, Vegetable Buddies was South Bend's top club for touring bands, hosting concerts by Muddy Waters, Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band, John Lee Hooker and many others. Now, Vegetable Buddies has returned and it's even at the same address: 129 N. Michigan St. Featuring live bands most nights, the venue is already attracting stars from the

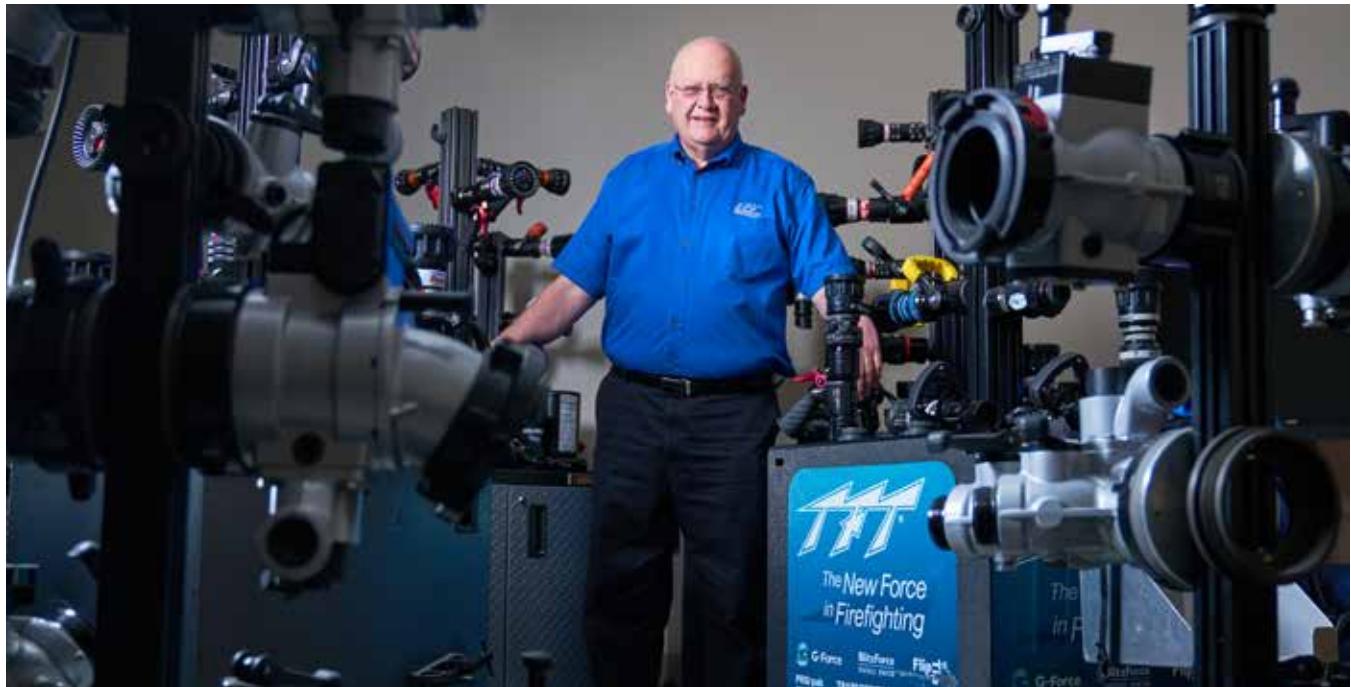
worlds of blues, reggae, folk and rock. See who's in town next at buddies-dtsb.com.

The Lerner Theatre in Elkhart will be quite busy this summer. The venue is the home for local stage company Premier Arts, which has two musicals in a row coming up: "Singin' in the Rain" from May 12-14 and "The Little Mermaid" from July 14-16. Gordon Lightfoot, a living legend with hits like "Sundown" and "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," comes to the Lerner for a concert on May 21. The venue also hosts some of the Elkhart Jazz Festival's gigs as well, from June 23-25. Check out a full roster of Lerner Theatre events at thelerner.com.

South Bend Civic Theatre showcases its versatility with three different types of shows on the horizon. First, Mark Twain's characters come to life in "Big River," the musical adaptation of "Huckleberry Finn," May 5-21. There's also a contemporary play, John Patrick Shanley's "Outside Mullingar," a story about the love lives of Irish farmers, June 9-18. Finally, it's a perennial favorite, "The Wizard of Oz," hitting the stage July 14-30. For more information, visit sbct.org.

Stewart McMillan

Task Force Tips CEO innovates and inspires



Stewart McMillan, CEO of Task Force Tips, Valparaiso, established a regional volunteer firefighting academy to provide training to assist firefighters with meeting state requirements.

By AMANDA WILSON

For Stewart McMillan, CEO of Task Force Tips, the Valparaiso-based, worldwide distributor of firefighting equipment, innovation is a profitable passion that inspires, saves lives, and provides an all-American way to do business and serve the community. McMillan jokes about testing 100 percent positive for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder on a recent Facebook quiz, but says of his perfectionist, attention-to-detail nature, "It's really about being innovative and being able to see things differently." It's also about continually being on the lookout for ways to increase efficiency and quality. After a recent factory visit he observed an assembly worker dabbing oil onto a piece before inserting it into assembly and suggested that the worker instead drop the oil into the bin

of parts. Once implemented, this new assembly operation method improved output and made the job easier. "It's those little things that I get a kick out of," he says. "That's why I think our company has excelled, and that's where we'll continue to excel in making the job safer and more efficient."

That drive to continually improve efficiency, safety, and quality is a legacy McMillan inherited from his father, Chief Clyde McMillan. Task Force Tips began with a daydream in 1968, when Chief McMillan drafted his idea of an automatic nozzle on a paper napkin with a red felt pen. Growing up, McMillan spent weekends with his father and the Gary Fire Task Force maintaining and improving old firefighting equipment, and continued to work full-time in the family business while earning his

interdisciplinary degree in engineering from Purdue University. When his father passed away in 1982, McMillan, at the age of 28, became president of Task Force Tips.

Today, Task Force Tips makes and supplies firefighting equipment from firehose nozzles to hydraulic rescue tools, employs some 230 people, and sells products worldwide, with 30 percent of its sales from exports overseas. On January 12, the company was sold to Madison Industries, a Chicago-based private investment firm, the culmination of what McMillan describes as a 12-year search for the perfect partner. The partnership is a winning arrangement for all involved, he says, as Madison Industries wants to build legacy businesses and they want the founders to stay in place. As part of the deal, Madison Industries insisted that they wouldn't buy Task

Force Tips unless they could buy the real estate. McMillan says, "They wanted to make a statement to the employees that they're not going anywhere, and that they very much believe in American manufacturing." He says that's a prime example that, despite what you may hear and see in the news and on the street, "American manufacturing is not dead."

The sale to Madison Industries has provided a safety net for Task Force Tips to grow in ways not possible before the sale. "The only thing I've received is encouragement to spend money I wouldn't have spent before because of the risk, which they've taken away," he says. "It's quite refreshing." The partnership will allow access to acquisitions of other companies in the fire and rescue service market which, McMillan says, "When we are able to put our productivity increases into their operations, I think we'll be able to make some companies more successful."

It's not all about growth through acquisitions, though; the partnership also provides a foundation for establishing a lasting legacy for the community. The liquidity from the sale provided funding for the McMillan Family Foundation, which will provide seed capital for organizations that otherwise wouldn't exist. An investment of two million dollars has been made in the MAAC Foundation, which was used to establish a regional volunteer firefighting academy located just down the street from Task Force Tips headquarters. The MAAC Foundation, which stands for Multi Agency Academic Cooperative but is pronounced "Mac" like McMillan's father's name (the foundation was dedicated in his honor), provides training for volunteer firefighters so they can meet state requirements. McMillan says that one of his reasons for selling his company was to use the money that he's been fortunate enough to gain for the benefit of the community. "I'm not going to take it with me, and I'd like to see some things happen while I'm still around to enjoy making them happen."

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Young Talent

How to make the most of an intern



"Students today come with a unique set of skills and ideas," says Sandy Alvarez, whose agency works extensively with Indiana INTERNnet to promote internships in Northwest Indiana.

BY JERRY DAVICH

Hiring an intern can be an easy decision but, as any manager knows, how to best utilize one can be tricky business.

"Planning is key when embarking on an internship program in order for it to be successful for the employer and the intern," says Janet Boston, executive director of **Indiana INTERNnet**,

a 501(c)3 organization managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

"Prepare to be amazed. Interns work quickly, so have backup projects on hand," says Sandy Alvarez, senior associate for employer engagement at the Center of Workforce Innovations, Inc.

An internship is defined as a form of structured and supervised experiential learning that provides new or young workers practical experience

in their chosen fields. There are three basic types of internships: traditional, which typically coincides with an academic semester; project based, with its duration determined on a project's scope; and virtual, which is done remotely with periodic checkpoints to eliminate geographic barriers.

A successful internship, regardless of length of time, should be a win-win for both employer and intern. Too



"They're there to learn, to help your company, and maybe become a co-worker very soon"
says Tom Maloney, Vice President of Radio Operations for Lakeshore Public Media.

often, however, companies hire an intern without a plan in place and end up wasting both parties' time, efforts and hopes for future internships.

"The best thing for managing interns is to treat them like employees," says Tom Maloney, vice president of radio

two short years, and a communications company intern created a speech recognition application that attracted world-wide attention for a number of medical innovations, according to **Indiana INTERNnet**.

"Students today come with a unique set of skills and ideas," says Alvarez, whose agency works extensively with Indiana INTERNnet to promote internships in Northwest Indiana. "If the person managing the intern sets up the framework and allows the intern to use their ideas and skill sets to complete tasks, the projects will more than likely move to completion and may even be cutting edge."

Boston says, "It is imperative that the work assigned to the intern is meaningful, or the outcome will not be positive for either party."

"I have my interns in the first week or so write out a list of goals and things they want to accomplish," Maloney says. "I base a lot of my work on that, along with things they wouldn't have thought of."

"If the intern is enjoying their time, and seeing a benefit to being there, they'll keep up the good work," he says. "If you're running them into the ground, and forcing them to work the full shift, then you're likely going to have kids burning out."

"They're not there to be coffee runners, or to pick up your dry cleaning. They're there to learn, to help your company, and maybe become a co-worker very soon." —Tom Maloney

operations for Lakeshore Public Media. "They're not there to be coffee runners, or to pick up your dry cleaning. They're there to learn, to help your company, and maybe become a co-worker very soon."

"For many, it's their first experiences in the real world, so a business climate is something they've never dealt with," he adds. "If you treat them with respect, you'll help them more than you could ever know."

In Indiana, an automotive plant intern saved the company \$66,000 through a self-developed efficiency strategy, an accounting intern worked his way up to senior accountant in

Indiana INTERNnet

a dynamic, searchable database, matching and reporting system coupled with personal assistance—including a hotline to answer questions and provide internship guidance and resource materials. For more information, contact Indiana INTERNnet at 317-264-6852 or visit indianaintern.net.

Tips for best utilizing interns

Preparation:

- Take time to set up a place where they will perform their work.
- Prepare a schedule that is beneficial to both the student and the staff who will manage the intern.
- Have several projects ready to go with set objectives and outcomes.

Onboarding:

- Make sure all staff within the organization is aware an intern is joining them.
- Have an orientation for the intern.
- Review objectives and duration of internship.

During the project:

- Make sure to check in and provide accommodations for various learning styles.
- Evaluate work and allow for adjustments.
- Provide feedback and readjust work as needed.

Closing the internship:

- Determine if the intern benefited from the experience and also if the company benefited from the intern.
- Close out the project—make sure all the work is completed or it is known what is required to have completion.
- Provide a time to give and receive feedback about the entire project.

Choose Civility

Discourse should heal, not divide

BY CHUCK HUGHES

The Gary Chamber of Commerce had just concluded a very spirited meeting and immediately afterward the Chamber office received a contentious call regarding a matter that was clearly out of the authority of the Gary Chamber. That caused me to reflect upon the discord among our elected officials, within our homes, at our places of employment and among our youth. My reaction to those events and countless others of that type was, 'Whew!'

At the next Chamber meeting, chairman Dr. Gordon Bradshaw challenged us to think of a new project, having successfully completed the last one. It had been on my mind to somehow address the way in which we interact and address each other, particularly when we do so in an offensive manner. So I suggested we do something to promote civility. Everyone agreed, and we quickly named the project Community Civility Counts, with the tagline "Together We Win!" Dr. Bradshaw almost immediately suggested that this was something needed everywhere.

Initially Civility Counts was to be distributed throughout our membership as a reminder to treat each other as we would want to be treated, but we then decided to partner with The Times of Northwest Indiana to spread the message throughout our community and eventually the world. Most of our local communities have adopted Civility, as have both houses

of our Indiana legislature, the local universities, and several high schools, businesses and groups. What's more, Ambassador Dr. Clyde Rivers has taken Community Civility Counts to the African nations that he represents.

Here are some ways we can practice

ability to demand civil conduct in the workplace.

Kids should never be subjected to constant or intense bullying. Parents should instruct their children to go progressively up the authority chain until a responsible adult intervenes

Civility Counts was distributed throughout our membership as a reminder to treat each other as we would want to be treated, now the message has spread throughout our community and farther. Most of our local communities have adopted Civility, as have both houses of our Indiana legislature, the local universities, and several high schools, businesses and groups.

and encourage civility in our everyday lives.

Civility begins from within. You cannot teach or preach what you do not practice yourself. You are your best example. If you are in a situation or an environment devoid of civility, appeal to the civil instincts of the other parties. Remind them that their attitude may prevent the other side from even considering their point of view. Often people are not aware of their negative behavior until it is politely pointed out. By all means, never answer negative behavior or uncivil discourse with the same behavior. No one wins. Like a flame, if that behavior is not fueled it will fizzle out.

Incivility in the workplace is a culture that management should control. If you are a superior officer or a manager, your position affords you a position of authority. You have the

and takes appropriate action. Junior or Little Miss should not be asked to take on the bully. Bullies normally have a physical advantage or a group of friends who support that behavior. It would be so unfair to ask any child to deal with those odds.

Political discussions have become a part of our everyday life, particularly today. Most people are either on one side or the other. We are a divided nation. My advice would be not to try to win your point but to simply relish the opportunity to freely express your view. Your point may not be considered immediately but either fair thinking on their part or future events will likely define which individual made the better case.

Chuck Hughes is the executive director of the Gary Chamber of Commerce.



Chuck Hughes

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