



## **GREATER LAPORTE CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE**

### **2009 Program of Action**

#### **Mission Statement**

The Greater LaPorte Chamber of Commerce will champion issues facing business, focus on the improvement of the quality of life in our community; and be a team consisting of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteer members providing a catalyst for prosperity and growth.

#### **Vision Statement**

The Greater LaPorte Chamber of Commerce is a leader and active participant in progressive community development by enhancing the quality of life of the entire community and advocating its member needs.

#### ***General Chamber Administration***

Mission: To support the Chamber's mission and vision statements by providing proactive leadership necessary to achieve maximum use of financial and operational resources.

##### **Finance**

- Review and recommend approval of the annual operating budget which accurately reflects the financial performance of the Chamber
- Review monthly financial statements and reports and communicate the current financial conditions of the Chamber to the Board of Directors
- Set future financial goals that will provide fiscal strength to current and proposed Chamber programs.
- Maintain Technology Fund
- Plan and establish new sources of non-dues revenue
- Maintain LEAF, LMA, LPAC and Chamber Financial Records

##### **Administration**

- Increase net membership by 40 new members and increase non-dues income by an additional \$15,000.
- Increase Chamber volunteers by recruiting new members to each of the committees.
- Prepare for the Chamber's move into the Central Station Plaza, former New York Central train depot, and develop a clear plan for the disposition of the Chamber's 414 Lincolnway office building.
- Collaborate with area Chambers of Commerce to provide workshops/seminars relevant to business needs and concerns.

- Provide educational opportunities for our members by conducting and developing workshops/seminars. (Michigan City)
- Continue to offer staff training opportunities and community involvement, participation in service organizations (LaPorte Futures, Rotary, Kiwanis, United Way, etc.)
- Donate services to the annual Sunflower Fair.
- Host Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon/Dinner
- Operate the Chamber Trustee program and sponsorship levels

### **Marketing/Member Networking**

Mission: To promote the Chamber and its activities to the community and to its members. Determine a marketing strategy to educate the community as to the tangible and intangible benefits of the Chamber. Develop marketing materials with branding consistency.

- Provide publications, lists, and labels of business to members and non-members at a nominal fee.
- Provide relocation/visitor information packets promoting LaPorte
- Publish a Chamber Membership Directory & Buyers Guide (Bi-annually)
- Continue to distribute the LaPorte quality of life community magazine
- Publish quarterly Business Today newsletter
- Provide recognition for our Chamber members through the use of weekly emailed newsletters and various state/local awards, Athena, Business person of the Year Award and Salute to Business Awards. Chamber Chat Emails/Weekly Fax
- Explore various ways to expand the communities tourism base
- Maintain and enhance the Greater LaPorte Chamber of Commerce website marketing our community
- Keep members informed of Chamber Activities and Events
- Continue Community Calendar website link with the LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau and City of LaPorte
- Continue to increase Chamber presence in the media regarding its available information, programs, events, membership benefits and development activity.
- Continue the sale of the existing ceramics and ornaments.
- Continue Hosting and Maintaining Sunflower Fair website
- Maintain link on Chambers website for Commercial Real Estate through the Northwest Indiana Realtors Association.
- Contribute to LaPorte's Winter Fest by giving a donation.
- Maintain link on Chambers website for Industrial Real Estate through the Greater LaPorte Economic Development Corporation.
- Continue Christmas season promotion/buy local campaign
- Expand participation and promotion in the Chamber Buck gift certificate program
- Act as a liaison to the Business Improvement District
- Conduct 6 Chamber Luncheons/Breakfasts
- Conduct 8 Business After Hours & Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies
- Conduct 3 Chamber Summer School Seminars

- Conduct a Salute to Business Luncheon
- Conduct a State of the City Luncheon
- Conduct Crazy 8's Golf Tournament
- Conduct LaPorte Day at the Cove
- Conduct a Spring and Fall Economic Briefing with Purdue North Central.
- Conduct Various Business Seminars in conjunction with Purdue North Central
- Continue co-sponsoring the Santa Parade and operation of Santa Chalet
- List employment openings on web site for Chamber Members (Tentatively)
- Continue to be Chamber liaison to the following City Committees: Downtown Action Committee, New Economic Development Corridor Task Force, Business Improvement District Board, Industrial Development Advisory Commission, and Redevelopment Commission.
- Continue to serve on the GLEDC Board.
- Continue to serve on the NIPSCO Citizen's Advisory Committee, Howmet Citizen's Advisory Committee, and Indiana Toll Road Citizen's Advisory Committee
- Continue to serve on the Northwest Indiana Chamber Executive Legislative Policy Board and the Indiana Federation of Chambers.
- Continue to be a referral source for Chamber Member business to parties interested in doing business locally.
- Manage the Member to Member Discount program to promote local buying. (Tentatively)

### ***Membership Services Division***

Mission: To involve a group of active Chamber members in the development and growth of the Chamber through the use of membership recruitment, retention programs and membership events.

#### **Events Planning Committee/Task Force**

Provide networking opportunities for members by:

- Conduct Chamber/LEAF Annual Meeting
- Conduct ATHENA Reception luncheon
- Plan and Promote the Annual Chamber Play Day Golf Outing
- Crazy 8's Golf Outing
- Coordinate a countywide Chamber Business EXPO (bi-annually)

#### **Ambassadors Committee**

- Deliver Member Appreciation items
- Conduct goodwill calls to existing members
- Develop Ambassador Buddy program
- Continue to be the welcoming arm of the Chamber at events
- John C. Hargrave "Ambassador of the year" Award

## ***Government & Community Development Division***

Mission: To represent the interest of the Greater LaPorte Chamber of Commerce business community regarding legislative and regulatory issues influencing the economic vitality of the area at the local, state and federal levels. Provide support and recommendations on issues affecting the business community.

### **Governmental Affairs Committee:**

- Represent business interest before the Indiana General Assembly, the United States Congress and any State or Federal regulatory bodies, if needed
- Maintain and strengthen the effectiveness of a grass roots network within the Chamber leadership to communicate the Chamber's position to City/County Councils, State or Federal elected officials
- Provide Chamber members the opportunity to meet with local elected officials through the following avenues:
  - Third House Sessions (Michigan City Chamber)
  - Elected Officials Reception
  - Candidate Forums
  - Legislative Review
  - Pre-Legislative Session Caucus
- Support efforts made by the downtown Business Improvement District board of directors.
- Monitor local government issues and pursue specific issues when appropriate.
- Continue to cultivate our relationship with the Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce, Westville, Wanatah and Hanna Chambers of Commerce, adopting joint resolutions and meeting regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern.
- Participate in regional government-related issues, perhaps through the efforts of the Northwest Indiana Forum.
- Maintain open line of communication with area state lawmakers, and influence lawmakers on relevant legislation affecting local and state business entities.
- Enhance relationship with state-based business advocacy groups like the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Indiana Manufacturers Association and the Indiana Federation of Chambers.
- Monitor and participate in position statements adopted by the Indiana Chamber Executives Association.
- Pursue the development of an Ivy Tech campus in LaPorte.
- Develop communications related to public improvement projects in and around the city.
- Work with State and Local Government to secure truck routes around LaPorte developing an Economic Development Corridor.
- Monitor the Indiana General Assembly Legislation in the following Areas:
  - Education
  - Transportation
  - Economic Development
  - Labor relations

Tax Public finance  
Environment and Energy  
Health Care & Workforce Safety

- Monitor US 421 upgrade
- Monitor the Board of Public Works, LaPorte City Council, LaPorte County Commissioners, LaPorte County Council, LaPorte Area Plan Commission, City Traffic Commission.
- Maintain a Political Action Committee representing the voice of business in recruiting and supporting local and state political candidates that support pro business issues.
- Maintain Severs Road delivery routes remain open 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- Broadly represent Chamber interest in transportation issues.
- Continue to monitor our 2009 policy positions that include local government efficiency, basic health insurance plan, Brownfield economic development tax laws, tax abatement and TIFF, EDGE tax credits, highway funding and electric power stability. (subject to change)
- Create a broad band fiber optic network for the City of LaPorte.

### **Education Committee**

Mission: To champion School-to-Work programs and initiatives designed to help prepare our future workforce.

- To serve multiple facilitation roles in the LaPorte community for education/business and human services sectors, for an improving quality of life, for all citizens by providing the tools to be ready for school, work, or life.
- Host annual New Teachers Welcome Luncheon.
- Continue to market the Work Keys Assessment in LaPorte County Schools and business.
- Continue to support the Work Ethic Program
- Examine the possibilities of establishing a Workforce Development/Training Center for Ivy Tech in LaPorte.

### ***Business Retention/Expansion Division***

Mission: To promote the economic growth of the LaPorte area through the retention of our area's existing business and industry base, and through the promotion of small business development.

#### **Retention/Expansion Committee:**

- Conduct a minimum of 130 retention/expansion calls to local manufacturing and service companies, focusing on an education program that promotes local and state incentive programs and financing opportunities.
- Partner with Indiana Economic Department Corporation providing Business Retention & Expansion and providing financial incentive programs.
- In coordination with the Greater LaPorte Economic Development Corporation, develop plan of action for companies seeking assistance, or for those companies that are troubled or in need of community business assistance programming.

- Maintain Retention Survey
- Participate in LaPorte County Revolving loan fund and Business Development Grant loan fund
- Continue relationship with the Small Business Development Center and the Partners In Contracting Corporation
- Support the development/establishment of a broadband/fiber optics system for the Greater LaPorte area.

### ***LaPorte Manufacturer's Association***

Mission: To provide the local manufacturing businesses with programs and services that will enhance their ability to expand and conduct business

- Enhance and develop LMA section within the Chamber Website.

### ***LEAF Affairs Division***

Mission: To plan, promote and provide funding for the enhancement of the economic development of the greater LaPorte area.

- Provide funding for economic development/retention programming delivered by the Greater LaPorte Chamber of Commerce.
- Explore and examine possible future use and investment of LEAF Funds that will enhance the overall economic conditions for the City of LaPorte and its businesses. Such programs may include but are not limited to GAP financing, land acquisition, establishment of the LaPorte Community Development Partnership LLC, etc.
- Participate in the operation of the LaPorte Community Development Corporation.