



Chamber News • Business publication of the LaGrange County (IN) Chamber of Commerce • Phone (260) 463-2443 • Dec. 2023

Board of Directors Election, Members Showcase & State of the Chamber

Mark your calendars for the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce's Annual Luncheon and Meeting on January 11, 2024.

Before the luncheon, the Members Showcase is an opportunity for members to display their business or organization and interact with members and non-members alike in a tradeshow-style showcase. Election of Board Directors, Chamber Legacy Awards, and a State of the Chamber will also take place at the luncheon.

Nominating committee members and current Chamber Board of Directors Andrea Howe, Austin Miller, and Sabrina Miller have announced the slate of nominees for the 2024 Board of Directors Election.

Nominees include:



Lauri Couture, representing Farmers State Bank, is currently up for re-election having served the past three years on the Chamber Board of Directors. Lauri retired from Farmers State Bank in 2022 after 32 years in the banking industry. She is a lifelong LaGrange County resident, having graduated from Westview and residing in Shipshewana for the past 30 years. Lauri serves on the Chamber Board as the Treasurer, as the Finance Chair of her church council, and serves in other community volunteer organizations. She thoroughly enjoys assisting people in the community and within the Chamber and would be honored to serve another three years on the Chamber Board of Directors.



Denise Landers is the Area Director of LaGrange & Noble Counties for Crossroads United Way, serving Elkhart, LaGrange & Noble Counties. Denise has been a resident of LaGrange County on and off since 1978, returning permanently in 2012. A graduate from Prairie Heights, Denise received her bachelors in Business Administration and Marketing from Indiana Institute of Technology and later earned her Masters in Human Services and Gerontology from Kansas State University. She spent over 30 years in administration and business development in long term healthcare and behavioral health, before joining Crossroads United Way in August of 2021. Denise has been a volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association for 26 years. She is also a member of the Kendallville Rotary Club, is involved with several non-profit steering committees and groups, a part of the Chamber Ambassadors, and is on the Board of Directors for St. Martin's Healthcare, which serves patients in LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and Noble Counties.



Ben Martin is the owner of Lake Country Landscaping and Martin's Self Storage. Ben is a lifelong resident of LaGrange County. He graduated from Lakeland in 2008 then went on to graduate from the University of Saint Francis in 2012 with a degree in secondary education. Ben believes in investing time and energy in the youth of our communities so that they are able to thrive, grow, and learn through extracurricular activities. He is excited about the opportunity to show other small businesses the full potential of what the Chamber has to offer them, but also to be a part of an organization that has a greater vision for the entire community in developing the youth and offering them a place to grow and call home for years to come.



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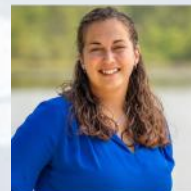
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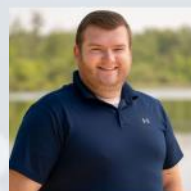
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The Chamber News is a member publication and is distributed free of charge to businesses in LaGrange County and surrounding areas. Advertising is available only to Chamber members who invest in the business community by supporting the Chamber.



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It's Going to Be a BLUE-Gate Christmas

The Chamber's monthly luncheon event allows area business professionals to network, gain invaluable insight into different topics, and enjoy incredible meals from businesses around LaGrange County.

The Annual Christmas Luncheon on December 14 will be located at 105 E Middlebury St. in Shipshewana.

December's luncheon is sponsored by the Blue Gate. This year there will be no musical show following the luncheon. Instead, each luncheon attendee will receive a voucher for a show at the Blue Gate Theatre.

Members can register themselves and their guests for \$20 per person, and non-members for \$25. Please call 260.463.2443, or visit lagrangechamber.org by December 7th.

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Valerie Whitaker is the owner of Radiant Hair Salon in LaGrange. Valerie was born and raised in LaGrange and is a graduate from Lakeland. In addition to being a small business owner, Valerie is also an educator for Sunlights Pro in which she travels to salons, distributor events, and hair shows to educate other stylists about the Sunlights Pro brand and techniques. She and her husband, Shannon, have four children and two grandchildren. Valerie also serves on the local Night to Shine Board. She is excited for the opportunity to help serve other businesses in the community by promoting growth and education in local businesses. Continued education in her own business is something she is very passionate about and believes this pairs well with the Chamber, as it is always working hard to facilitate educational workshops and events for Chamber members.



Brittany Sams is the Marketing and Strategy Manager at LaGrange County REMC. She has deep roots in LaGrange County as she was born, raised, and now works here. Brittany loves the friendly and neighborly culture of our area and is passionate about building connections, promoting local homemakers and businesses, and helping our communities thrive. Brittany has been an avid Chamber Ambassador for several years and is a leader in the LaGrange County Young Professional Network. She is actively involved in the worship team at St. John Lutheran Church, volunteers as a coach at the YMCA, serves as the vice president of the Indiana Electric Cooperatives human resources and administrators' section, and is a committee member of LaGrange County Obesity Collaborative. Brittany states, "I am truly excited for the opportunity to serve on the Chamber Board. Above all, I value my faith and family most. I believe that my experiences, values, and passion align well with the Chamber's mission to foster hometown culture and drive exponential success. I would be honored and thrilled to serve the local businesses and professionals as a Chamber Board Member."



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14th Annual Power of the Purse & Wallet; New Tradition, New Record!

The annual Power of the Purse & Wallet entered its 14th year on November 7th. This year things were shaken up a bit, offering two events: a lunchtime and dinnertime event. Each event offered separate lots during the live auction, but the same raffled packed purses. This year, the events were hosted by the Farmstead Inn & Conference Center. The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce, along with area businesses, organizations, community members, and new attendees alike joined together in a mission to ensure that *No Tummy Goes Hungry* within the county school corporations.

Guests arrived at both events in eager anticipation of what this year's purse and wallet line-up would hold. Gay's Hops-N-Schnapps, Linder's Tavern on Main, and Fireside Craft Burgers & Brews sponsored the bar during the dinnertime auction and Shawna Rae's provided the meals at each event. Guests were greeted with a beautiful array of center pieces, generously donated, by Dutch Blessing Floral, tables decorated by Stephanie Oakley's Applied Skills students from Westview School Corporation, and letters from students who benefit from the backpack programs.

This year's Power of the Purse & Wallet event wouldn't have been possible without our event sponsors. Our Louis Vuitton sponsors were: Parkview LaGrange Hospital, Dutch Blessing Floral, Horizon Bank, and Lakeland Title Company. The Gucci sponsors were: Lake City Bank, Lake Country Landscaping, Beers Malers, Red Door CPA, First State Bank, The Fancy Farm Girl, Lewis & Lambright, Custom Steel Designs, and Farmers State Bank. Finally, our Coach sponsors were: Tire Star of Wolcottville and Vision Source.

A combined total of 30 tables were set for the event. For this 14th Annual event, a record 80 purses, wallets, and accessories were donated! Al DeLaGrange was the auctioneer for both events, filling the air with laughter and bids.



The proceeds from the night will feed county school-aged children who are in need of food over weekends and during their holiday breaks. The money is distributed evenly to LaGrange County's three school corporations to benefit their respective backpack programs. This year's total is on track to be record-breaking! The total amount will be announced later in December. In total the LaGrange County Power of the Purse & Wallet events has raised _____ in the 14 years since its inaugural event in 2011.

Save the date for the 15th Annual Power of the Purse & Wallet event on Tuesday, November 12, 2024!



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Successful culture change management by HR during unpredictable, enterprise-level moves

Adapted from HR Morning

For a CHRO, culture change management during times of growth and acquisition can feel like changing the tires on a moving car. Leadership changes, divestitures and other related challenges can jolt even the most stable companies and have a downstream impact on the employees.

In an episode of HRMorning's "Voices of HR" podcast titled, "When Companies Merge: How HR Can Be Effective Facilitators of Culture Change Management," Corey Berkey, the SVP of People and Talent at recruiting and talent acquisition solutions provider Employ Inc., discussed his unexpected culture change management journey. He transitioned from leading HR at a 100-employee company to overseeing people and talent across an organization of 800 employees after an acquisition.

According to Berkey, HR's top culture change management to-do's when integrating business brands in a merger and acquisition situation are:

- Learning about the incoming business without losing sight of how the current business is running
- Getting to know the existing culture of the incoming business, and understanding and respecting the similarities and differences. Voices of HR host Berta Aldrich commented, "From a business perspective, a lot of (mergers and acquisitions fail) because the purchasing organization doesn't lend enough credibility to the culture of the organization that they're purchasing. And that the culture is made up of the people ... that they had to employ in order to be successful."
- Making a fair assessment of opportunities to improve, and
- Defining and aligning core values, vision and mission across the newly merged organization, which Berkey noted requires patience to get right.

"We did a lot, I think, early on to level set and say, 'Hey, we don't necessarily want to change in big sweeping ways up front, but we want to acknowledge that change must come. We must evolve into a cohesive culture,'" he said of a merger that involved JazzHR and Jobvite.

Berkey added that it's important to take the time to listen to employees during the integration onboarding process and properly decode the feedback.

"Where I think we didn't do such a great job ... is ... translating out some of those messages that we heard, particularly around DEI and employee resource groups. We thought we nailed it. And as we started to send messaging out into the organization about what these critical, critical components of our culture are, the feedback was pretty clear that we weren't completely off, but we weren't close enough yet," Berkey said.

"And so we needed to say ... 'Let's try and understand where we went wrong. Let's try and understand how we prevent that from happening again in the future. And then let's revisit how we want to send this message.'"

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December 21: PostNet
December 28: Dutch Blessing Floral
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How to Battle the Burnout During the Holiday Hustle

Adapted from ESSIUM Labs

Let's face facts: the holiday season is often hectic. On the personal side of the equation, many people spend time buying gifts, planning travel, hosting get-togethers, and caring for children once school breaks begin. On the professional side, wrapping up year-end activities happens right alongside regular duties, putting a lot of people's plates.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to battle burnout during the holiday hustle. Here are some tips that can help you recharge and reclaim the joy of the season.

PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

Self-care is critical all year round, but it's particularly crucial during periods of high stress. While a lot of joy comes with the holidays, it's also one of the busiest seasons. As a result, prioritizing self-care is a must if you're going to remain balanced.

Make sure to carve out time regularly during the week for activities you find refreshing or enjoyable. Precisely what kinds of activities work may vary from person to person. Some may find that a 10-minute meditation each morning works well. Others might want to dedicate 30 minutes before bed to reading a book. What matters is that the activity leaves you feeling refreshed and centered, so feel free to select the ones that best meet your needs.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Many professionals overburden themselves during the holidays, and that can lead to an increased amount of stress. Additionally, managers may incidentally expect too much of their team members, primarily since they aren't accounting for the hustle occurring in their personal lives during the holidays.

If you want to avoid burnout, make sure to set realistic expectations, both when it comes to yourself and as it applies to others. Honestly assess whether you can add a task to your plate before committing to avoid overbooking yourself. When assigning work to employees, speak with them about their current workloads before assuming they can handle more. By doing so, it's a lot easier to maintain balance and avoid situations that could lead to burnout.

LEARN TO DELEGATE

Delegation is often critical if you want to avoid burnout during any time of year, but it's especially vital during busier periods, such as the holiday season. If a personal or professional task doesn't comfortably fit into your schedule, consider whether someone else is well-suited to tackle it instead. If so, connect with them and see if they're open to taking it over.

For work-related delegation by managers, prioritization can also play a role. Make sure that critical tasks are being handled by an appropriate employee, and identify any activities that could safely wait until conditions calm. That ensures essential duties don't fall through the cracks without putting anyone on the path toward burnout.



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This newsletter was prepared by: Brandi Lehr, Joy Abalgore, Lisa Harter, Mary Miller, Ryan Eaton, and Teye Reves,
Chamber Ambassadors from The ARC of LaGrange

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