



South Bend Regional Chamber
2020-2023 Strategic Plan

Adopted, December 2019



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Introduction

Our goal is simple, we want to see *300,000 people living in St. Joseph County by 2030*. If you don't read another word of this plan, we hope you remember that one thing. Of course, we hope you'll read on to better understand the important work the Chamber will undertake to help the community reach that goal.

We hope it's a pretty simple concept for people to understand. More people, more business. Communities that don't grow, die. We plan to be aggressive, and bold as we set out to achieve ambitious milestones the region *must* attain in order to compete and prosper. We have to attract and retain the top talent our businesses need to prosper.

When quality of place is good, it attracts *population*. That population is essential to our workforce. New business investment is attracted to communities with a quality workforce. We believe that new business investment will then bring more jobs and more competition for jobs, which will help grow wages and increase prosperity.

So, you're asking yourself, why focus now, I thought we were growing? We are, but slowly. Most growth can be attributed to more births than deaths, and enough births that help outpace outmigration. As a region, we set the goal to turn a negative net outmigration into a positive in-migration. That certainly will be part of our plan, but only a part.

We believe the business community is well positioned to lead this effort. The goal aligns well with the initiatives currently being undertaken by the Chamber and its affiliates and ties those efforts together in new ways that will help accelerate growth. We believe we're positioned to capitalize on the momentum in our region over the past decade and with an accelerated and focused effort, we can accomplish some great things.

For the effort to be a success, it's critical that all programs of the Chamber incorporate the overall "300 by 30" goal into their programming and this plan and the individual action plans that follow will do just that. In addition, it will be critical for our members, local leaders, elected officials, and other key advocates to also work closely with the Chamber on reaching this goal. Our hope is that you see the "300 by 30" everywhere and many different organizations also embrace the important role they play in helping achieve this important community goal.



About Strategic Plans

This report outlines the Strategic Plan for the South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce and each of its programs and affiliates for the years 2020-2023. It is intended to be roadmap for the organization and will be utilized to help guide the work of the Chamber over the next four years.

While the plan analyzes the critical needs of the community and organization today, it is essential the plan also be adaptable to meet and address changing needs. The key elements of the plan are as follows:

Elements of the Strategic Plan	
ELEMENT	ADDRESSES THE QUESTIONS
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the world be different as a result of our work? • What is our destination? • Vision provides a vivid and clear picture that is a source of inspiration and clear decision making.
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the organization’s unique and fundamental purpose for existing?
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the ideals and deeply held beliefs that guide our organizational culture, our priorities and help us accomplish our mission?
Strategic Imperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is absolutely necessary in order for the organization to fulfill its mission?
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we trying to achieve? • What is the long-term desired impact on the problem? • Goals are usually beyond what one program alone can achieve.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implementation steps to attain the identified goals?
Strategic Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are our major programs, projects and services undertaken to meet identified goals?

The Strategic Plan provides an overall roadmap. In addition, the Chamber annually will develop an operating plan designed to support the strategic plan. That annual operating plan will incorporate things like actions required to help accomplish program objectives, staff member responsible for accomplishing that action, dates for actions to be completed, and expected results, benefits, and report of progress towards overall goals.



Organization Leadership

The Chamber is governed by a Board of Directors representing a broad cross-section of community business interests. Directors are nominated by a Board nominating committee and serve three-year terms. Directors guide the strategic direction and finances of the organization. The Board plays a key role in developing, adopting, and ensuring the execution of the Strategic plan. The current Board is as follows:

Shelli Alexander Vice President Business Banking 1 st Source Bank	Scott Brewer Senior VP of Community Affairs/ Government Relations/ Security, Four Winds Casinos
Erin Bonin Marketing Director, Kruggel Lawton CPA's	Kyle Chamberlin Corporate Counsel, Bradley Company
Debie Coble President & CEO Goodwill Industries of Michiana, Inc.	Mike Daigle Executive Director, South Bend International Airport
Philip Faccenda (Chair) Managing Partner, Barnes & Thornburg LLP	Steve Egan Vice President, Anthony Travel
Chris Fielding CEO, Cressy Commercial Real Estate	Greg Freehauf (Finance Chair) Vice President & CFO, Martin's Super Markets
Amanda Gadacz Client Specialist, Edward Jones	Matt Helmkamp President, Gates Automotive
Ted Lerman CEO, Steel Warehouse	Michael Lugli Market President, Key Bank
Paul Marsh (Past Board Chair) President & CEO, Teachers Credit Union	Ryan Matthys, Managing Partner, RSM US LLP
Mark Minne Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer AM General	AJ Patel President/CEO, JSK Hospitality
Jeff Rea, President & CEO South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce	Timothy Sexton (Chair-Elect) Associate Vice President for Public Affairs University of Notre Dame
Chad Towner CEO, Saint Joseph Health System	Larry Tracy President, Memorial Hospital of South Bend



About the Chamber

The Chamber is a 5-star accredited Chamber by the US Chamber of Commerce. There are more than 7,000 Chambers of Commerce in the United States, only 128 hold the 5-Star honor. Only 2 other Chambers in Indiana are accredited. Accreditation means that the Chamber’s practices, policies, procedures and body of work measure up with the top Chambers in the country. The Chamber has recently completed its application for reaccreditation. The Chamber anticipates reaccreditation in early 2020.



The South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1909 for the purpose of being the voice of the local business community and to be a driver of key activities and initiatives aimed at stimulating the regional economy. The Chamber has staying power, and over the years has adapted and changed to meet the evolving needs of our business members and the community.

The Chamber’s primary business area is in St. Joseph County, IN. However, Chamber leadership recognizes that suppliers, employees, and customers come from a broader geographic footprint and hence the focus should be on the success of the broader region. South Bend is the largest city in a broader region that includes three counties in southwest lower Michigan (Berrien, Cass, and St. Joseph) and four counties in north central Indiana (St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall and Kosciusko). The Chamber works with key partners in each of those communities.

As we mentioned above, there are more than 7,000 Chambers in the United States, very few are alike. The South Bend Regional Chamber model is unique. There is no other like it in the State of Indiana, and only a handful in the United States with a similar setup. The Chamber is a joint Chamber-Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, formerly CVB), and Economic Development Organization. Chamber leadership has recognized the efficiencies and the economies of scale that can be realized through the combination of the three entities and has been a strong advocate for other communities following a similar model. In the past year, the Greater Niles, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, a joint Chamber-Economic Development organization has been added to the organization.



The Chamber aims to be a key convener of community leaders to drive economic growth and prosperity. The Chamber creates powerful partnerships and leverages the talents and resources of member businesses to create an environment for economic prosperity. The Chamber offers leadership, advocacy, economic development, community marketing and promotion, and workforce development programs and resources, all geared to build community vitality.



The Chamber has historically been a problem solver and catalyst for growth. For example, when community leaders worried about future leaders, the Chamber launched a leadership program, now the oldest in the State. When connections to the State Capitol were a concern, the Chamber formed the US 31 Coalition. Now 20+ years later, the trip is about 1 hour shorter, most stoplights have been removed, and it's much easier to move goods, service, and people north-south in the State. When access to and cost of fiber optics was a challenge, the Chamber launched the Metronet (now ChoiceLight). When the community worried about attracting and retaining young professionals, the Chamber launched the Young Professionals network. When leaders recognized the benefit of regional collaboration, the Chamber launched the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership. Those are just a few examples, for 110 years, the Chamber has been launching, supporting, developing programs to spur growth.

The Chamber is a former Indiana Chamber of the year and 2-time finalist for National Chamber of the Year. The Chamber currently has 978 member businesses that employ 61,810 people in the region. The average years of Chamber membership is 22 years.

Businesses historically join the Chamber for a variety of reasons. Some of those include:

- Consumers trust Chamber members more
- Build Business relationships
- Access to Business audience
- Savings programs
- Talent/workforce connections
- Marketing
- Overall support of community
- Advocacy: voice of business
- Availability of resources
- Economic development efforts
- Power of convening

Some of the resources the Chamber offers its members include:

- Member only on-line portal
- Member Event postings
- Workforce events calendar
- Commercial construction activity report
- Wages and benefits report
- Community photos
- Kid friendly brochure
- Visitor vouchers
- Advocacy efforts
- Destination marketing
- Chamber Jobs Board
- INTERN program access
- Economic profile
- Business expansion and new investment report
- Quality of Life/recruitment videos
- Museum guide
- Visitors guide
- County maps
- Development assistance
- Young professionals' network

The Chamber connects regularly with its members through a variety of platforms, including:

- Eblasts
- ChamberWIRE Enews
- South Bend Region ED Enews
- VSBM Enews
- YPN Enews
- South Bend Tribune (monthly)
- Chamber magazine (quarterly)
- Sbrchamber.com
- Visitsouthbend.com
- Southbendregion.com
- Ypnsouthbend.com
- WNIT Economic Outlook



- At events and programming
- Facebook (several handles)
- LinkedIn (several handles)
- 95.3 MNC- Monthly
- Twitter (several handles)
- Annual summary

Vision

To Grow the County to 300,000 people by 2030

Our vision is to grow St. Joseph County. From our founding, we've sought to represent the voices of our member businesses and to create a climate conducive to economic growth. We recognize our business owners, managers, and associates are busy running their business. We appreciate the fact that they've "hired" the Chamber to work on their behalf. During that work, we've influenced the community in a positive way, and we've driven new investment, business growth, and community prosperity. It's critical we make sure this voice continues to be heard, in our community, at City Hall, at the Statehouse, in our nation's capital, wherever the needs of our member businesses exist. We've built a solid reputation with that voice over the past 100+ years, but now more than ever it's critical we be loud, bold, and strong advocates for business interests.

Mission

To promote business growth through relationships, advocacy and access to resources.

Growing our businesses is a simple idea, making it happen can be complicated. But no other organization in our community is positioned like we are to drive business and community growth. The relationships we've developed through our business community, as well as with community and elected officials will assist our advocacy efforts and will ensure alignment across the broader community.

Core Values

The Chamber is committed to providing visionary community leadership built on:

- **Collaboration**

In working together, we and our partners can achieve much more.

- **Innovation**

We will be a leader in offering new ideas and technologies that align and advance the organization's mission and help achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.



Diversity

We are committed to diversity in all staff, volunteers, and audiences, including full participation in programs, policy formulation, and decision-making.

Integrity

We will be open, candid and fair, honor our commitments, and adhere to high ethical standards and objectives.

Leadership

We will be visionary and future oriented, and we'll seek to advance those initiatives that position our organization and our community amongst the nations best

Excellence

We strive for quality and reliable service to our members, stakeholders, partners and community.

Champions

We cannot accomplish our vision and mission without the help of individuals and organizations within the Region. The following champions are integral to our success:

• Members	• Board	• Ambassadors
• Staff	• Volunteers	• Media
• Sponsors	• Young Professionals	• Young Professionals Advisory Group
• Advertisers	• Business Associations	• Local/Regional/State Chambers
• City/County/State Elected Officials	• Colleges & Universities	• South Bend Elkhart Regional Partnership
• Visitors	• Tax Board	• Regional Program & Services Champions

Plan Review

This plan will serve as the basis for all Chamber activities and will be reviewed monthly internally and quarterly with the Chamber Board of Directors.

Individual Action Plans will be developed annually managers/supervisors and reviewed quarterly.



Goal Statements

Overall Strategic Goal: To provide the South Bend Region with a strong, relevant talent base through targeted population growth (300 By 30) which ensures significant economic impact.

Key Areas of Focus

- **Quality of Place**
 - We cannot expect to attract talented individuals to the South Bend Region if we do not recognize the desire for not only employment opportunities but also a vibrant community that offers a variety of options for entertainment, education, and an overall sense of well-being.
- **Advocacy**
 - The South Bend Regional Chamber must play a lead advocacy role as the voice of business but also a supportive role in convening all community members to come together to create the type of region in which people wish to live, work, and play.
- **Retention, Expansion, and Attraction**
 - Regional growth requires not only business retention and attraction but constant attention to ensuring access to a skilled and plentiful talent pool. The South Bend Regional Chamber is positioned to play a pivotal leadership role in both business and talent retention, expansion, and attraction.
- **Chamber Operations**
 - Ensuring quality of place, playing a lead advocacy role, and promoting an environment that targets growth all require singularly focused leadership, staff, and policies and procedures, all of which must be reviewed and adjusted as needed.



Goals, Objectives, and Activities

I. Quality of Place

a. **Identify and champion** regional connectivity between South Bend and key US cities

i. Air

1. Champion Project Propel
2. Work in concert with SBN to increase key city, direct-flight availability

Goal: attain daily flights to two new business destinations by 2023

ii. Rail

1. Actively promote completion of the South Shore double-tracking project and the associated reduced travel time to and from Chicago

Goal: Advocate for location of new station to replace current stop at east side of SBN by 2021

iii. Roads and Trails

1. Advocate for the focus and priority of key road and trail projects to completion

Goal: Advocate for funding to completion of US 31 (North & South), trail connection to Elkhart; Douglas Road, US31/Cleveland Interchange improvements

b. **Inspire** capital investment for quality of place initiatives benefitting residents and visitors alike

- i. Insure effective distribution of Tourism Capital Development Fund (TCDF) through qualified applicants
- ii. Expand and enhance scope of the TCDF based on identification of additional resources and previous successes
- iii. Identify potential projects and encourage targeted applicants to pursue available resources

Goal: Advocate for increase in Innkeepers tax by 2022

c. **Create** a “Why South Bend Region” marketing campaign designed for use by businesses and community members alike to encourage relocation to the South Bend Region

- i. Offer regular community tours for individuals/families new to the area or considering relocation
- ii. Increase social media engagements for the South Bend Region by TBD%
- iii. Hold meetings with area businesses to familiarize them with all the marketing tools that are available (i.e., recruitment packet) to promote their establishments as well as the community as a whole
- iv. Serve as the primary information source for the business community, both within the community and for those wishing to relocate to the Region
- v. Champion area businesses through storytelling and celebrating and communicating their successes



Goal: Implement internal marketing tools necessary to achieve by end of 2020

II. Advocacy

- a. Drive result-focused change in public policy to reflect community needs
- b. Actively engage with elected officials
- c. Facilitate action-oriented business/education partnerships to improve K-12 education and ensure efficient operations
- d. Cultivate partnerships to maintain and grow current funding streams and identify new opportunities

Goal: Identify and implement appropriate lobbying partner by mid-2020

III. Retention, Expansion, and Attraction

- a. Enhance Chamber's role as a resource for area employers' talent acquisition and retention
 - i. Serve as an information source for current trends in employee retention and attraction
 - 1. Evaluate employee retention and attraction programs and resources and connect and inform area businesses of these opportunities
 - ii. Offer customer service/community advocacy training for targeted, front-line businesses and industry
 - iii. Conduct "Why South Bend Region" relocation tours
 - 1. Partner with area businesses to provide tours for applicants and new employees
 - 2. Build a network of tour guides that will allow for further customization in guide/individual match
- b. Engage YPN as retention and attraction agents
 - i. Empower YPN members to become regional ambassadors
 - ii. Identify YP's who have returned or relocated to the South Bend Region and understand their motivations for doing so and incorporate them into our storytelling
- c. Directly market for top 10 positions that offer higher than national paying jobs in other strong Midwest markets
- d. Ensure higher education partners are engaged, informed and are advocating for chamber priorities
 - i. Ensure consistent communications to key higher ed partners relative to mutual needs.
- e. Advance the economic prosperity of St. Joseph County through business retention and attraction
 - i. Offer integrated programming for high-growth clusters in the Region
 - 1. Identify cluster needs and opportunities and partner with regional resources to develop and implement solutions for the following clusters
 - a. Advanced Manufacturing
 - b. Tourism
 - c. Health Care



- d. Information Technology
- e. Building Trade

Goal:

- *Goal: Survey YPN, find out the why they come, stay,*
- **Build on success of Manufacturing Days by adding one sector each year, though**
- **Empower YPN, defined purpose, need, opportunity**
- **Hold series of meetings with larger employers to identify the markets they are pursuing and the issues that impede them from. Best practices, business roundtable.**

IV. Chamber Operations

- a. Review and address staffing needs
 - i. Identify efficiencies, or lack thereof, in current and planned processes
 - ii. Review skills and job descriptions of current personnel and adjust as applicable
 - iii. Ongoing assessment of evolving staffing needs and incentives
- b. Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all programs and initiatives
- c. Develop a consistent process for measuring member satisfaction
 - i. Follow up on those who do not renew their memberships and react accordingly to feedback received
 - ii. Create member-centric, customized communication practices
- d. Develop a professional development program using resources like Lynda.com
- e. Review the current membership model

Goal:

- **Implementation of enFocus fellow to assist with aggregating research**
- **Placement of additional staff based on priorities outlined by this document.**
- **Go public with this program/plan by end of 2020**