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APRIL/MAY 2024

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Cover: Elkhart Leadership Academy Graduates 2002-2023

The mission of the Chamber is to be the leading resource for making connections that foster collaboration which serves and promotes efforts to strengthen the Greater Elkhart business community.

"Leading Business" is the bi-monthly magazine published by:



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Please submit news releases, inquiries, and requests for information on advertising to marketing@elkhart.org or call (574) 293-1531 ext 138.

Leadership Development



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Levon Johnson
President/CEO
ljohnson@elkhart.org

This message is for owners, CEOs, Presidents, Boards of Directors, and anyone who has supervisory responsibilities within the framework of a company's organizational chart.

In recent weeks I have been involved in conversations with numerous organizations about succession planning. We are all aware that effective succession planning is an important component of long-term organizational sustainability and stabilization.

Unfortunately, this is an area that is often overlooked until organizations are forced to do so in the face of a quickly approaching change in internal leadership.

Another common thing with succession planning is that organizations think about it as something focused on the leader of the business, but not on the other levels within the leadership team and leadership structure of daily operations.

This oversight often leads to inefficiencies in processes, lost time on other facets of the business purpose, damage to culture, and missed opportunities building the strength of the organization over time.

The good news is that most businesses and organizations have part of the solution right at their fingertips.

Leadership development with current employees is one way to attack succession planning and let your team members know that you are invested in their professional development.

Your next leader may be right under your nose. They are more likely to be patient and stay with you when they know you see something in them and are preparing them for the opportunity to play a more significant role in the future of your team.

So often I hear, what happens if I spend money on their development and they leave? I counter with, what if you don't invest in their development and they leave and take their knowledge with them?

As President/CEO of the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce, I am honored and obligated to tell you that a great and economical way to invest in your current and future leaders is to have them go through our Elkhart Leadership Academy.

This 10-month program, focused on leadership development, team building, and understanding the Greater Elkhart community, has graduated 791 individuals since the first class in 1988.

The list of graduates reads like a who's who of leadership in our region. You will read about this year's cohort later in this magazine.

There are also numerous organizations that will work with your team to build an internal leadership program that is squarely focused on the needs of your business at all levels.

I very much encourage you to identify your needs, research programs, and choose what is best for your organization.

It has been said many times in the past that leaders are not born – they are made. They are made through both formal and informal development.

How great is it knowing that as leaders you have the opportunity to help guide and shape the next leaders and do so in a way that you can influence?

If you like your business and want it to live on past the leaders you currently have, then a focus on succession, sustainability, and leadership development should be a priority.

If you don't know where to start on this journey, your Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce is here to help you get connected.

Remember your business or organization's sustainability and growth is also part of the sustainability and growth of Greater Elkhart.

Thank you for all you do to invest in the current and future vibrancy of the leaders in our community.



Your Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Team



Front:

Amanda Logsdon, *Executive Administrative Assistant*
 Kathy Cardwell, IOM, *Chief Administration Officer*
 Maria Rojas, *Small Business Advisor*
 Rebecca Rea, *Member Relations Specialist*
 Levon Johnson, *President/CEO*

Middle:

Kris Weimer, *Start Up Moxie Elkhart County Executive Director*
 Kristen Smole, *Strategic Initiatives Officer*
 Lauren Matthews, *Administrative Assistant*
 Merritt Dilts, *Center for Business Excellence Executive Director*

Back:

Kay House-Clark, *Chief Operations Officer*
 Jes Elam, *Member Engagement Specialist*
 Ginger Lyons, *Leadership Academy Coordinator*



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Presenter: Sampson Briggs, Fall Protection Specialist – Indiana

Wednesday, April 17 7:30 am
 Matterhorn Conference Center, 2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

Annual Sponsors



PATRICK



An OSHA Council Training Breakfast Register at www.Elkhart.org Pre-registration required

Member Celebrations



Congratulations **El Rancho Viejo #3 Mexican Restaurant** on the grand opening of your newest location located at 4536 Elkhart Rd, Ste 1100, Elkhart! Come discover the true taste of Mexico! elranchoviejorestaurant.com



For over 75 years, **Runnings** has proudly served customers with a wide selection of trusted brands, and hometown-friendly customer service. Their North store is now open at 3101 Northview Dr, Elkhart! www.runnings.com



Runnings is your home, farm, and outdoor store with quality merchandise and hometown-friendly customer service. Congratulations on the Grand Opening of your South store located at 3501 S Main St, Elkhart! www.runnings.com



W.A. Zimmer Company celebrates the grand opening of their new Elkhart location at 51233 CR 5! Let them transform your indoor or outdoor space to give you the perfect place to relax and entertain. www.wazimmer.com

Thursday, May 16 | 11:30 am - 1 pm
@ Hubbard Hill

PERSONAL BRANDING

Speaker: Jess Koscher, Write Connections

Greater Elkhart CHAMBER
Leading Business...Leading Our Community

Women's Council
Register at elkhart.org

Presenting Sponsor: **Write Connections**
Event Sponsor: **CENTURY CHEMICAL CORPORATION**

Greater Elkhart YPO
network develop serve

First Time Homebuyers Luncheon

May 23 | 11:30am
@Ivy Tech

Register at elkhart.org

Greater Elkhart CHAMBER
Leading Business...Leading Our Community

A Luncheon hosted by the Young Professionals Council - all ages welcome

Annual Meeting Awards

Ambassador of the Year



Mackenzie Clark
Indiana Physical Therapy

Mackenzie works with fellow chamber members to celebrate their successes, and represents the Chamber in a positive, enthusiastic manner.

"Being a Greater Elkhart Chamber Ambassador has allowed me to meet so many community leaders! I have enjoyed learning about

organizations and businesses that improve the lives of people all over the world. I look forward to growing personally and professionally through networking and mentorship."

Each month an Ambassador is recognized for excellence and awarded J2 Marketing Ambassador of the Month. The Ambassador of the Year is voted on by members of the council from the 12 monthly winners.

Woman of the Year

Sandra Bontrager
SPA Women's Ministry Homes

In 1998, Sandra founded SPA Women's Ministry Homes, a 12-month, 24/7 supervised, Christ-centered, residential treatment program. The program brings together women of diverse backgrounds and provides opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally.

Sandra has served as a mentor and has improved conditions for women, and the results of her efforts continue to support the betterment of Elkhart County and beyond.

The Women's Council presents the Woman of the Year Award to recognize a woman who has distinguished herself in her organization, profession, and community.



Business of the Year - Lithotone

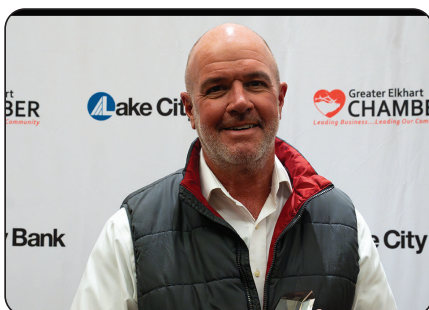
In the heart of Lithotone's success story lies not only their commitment to exceptional printing, but also their deep-rooted dedication to the community they call home. Since its founding in 1962 by Ken Priebe and Jim Powel, Lithotone has always been more than just a printing company; it's a beacon of community support and social responsibility. Their commitment extends far beyond the walls of their facility and team of 36 employees.

The Business Recognition Council recognizes twelve businesses throughout the year for their innovative product/service, growth, community involvement, and impact on the local economy.

Nonprofit of the Year - Ryan's Place

Ryan's Place was founded by Rex and Nancy Gleim and Don and Eunice Munn after losing their son, Ryan. They were able to find a support group for themselves, but not for Ryan's younger brother. Since opening in 2002 they have served more than 14,500 individuals and serve over 1,000 individuals each year. Ryan's Place provides grief support to children, teens, and families. They work with the bereaved to provide support and education as they travel on their journey of grief to find peace, hope, and a new normal as they face life without their deceased loved one.

Each year the Business Recognition Council recognizes one outstanding nonprofit organization that serves our community.



Century Plus Community - Elkhart Bedding

Founded in 1919 by George Fox, Elkhart Bedding was Elkhart's only mattress and box spring manufacturer. In the late 1960's, Jack Darr purchased the company from the Fox family and now Chris, Jack's son, has assumed ownership. Elkhart Bedding has remained a family-owned business and endured through an unwavering commitment to the customer. In addition to retail and wholesale product lines, they produce mattresses for college dormitories, hotels, institutional and medical facilities, and recreational vehicles.

The Century Plus Community Award is presented annually to a Chamber member business or organization who has operated in our region for 100 consecutive years or more.



The Elkhart Leadership Academy, a program of the Chamber, engages participants to strengthen themselves, their organizations, families, and communities through service and leadership. The Academy has had 791 graduates, and the 2023-24 Class is the 36th graduating class.



“Although it pushed my comfort level many times, I never felt reluctant to push forward or to engage.”

“I most appreciated learning the concepts... to ‘practice’ leadership and the importance of building trust thorough vulnerability.”

The ten-month program combines key community issues and enhanced leadership skill development to advance community stewardship. Presentations, hands-on experiences, exclusive tours, DiSC assessments and work on nonprofit impact projects are a part of the monthly sessions. Topics include: Arts and Culture, Education, Diversity, Media, Board Development, Conflict Resolution, Communication, Team Building, Critical Conversations, Economic Development, Placemaking, and Government.

After orientation in August, members embark on an overnight retreat in September. Participants are empowered to access different parts of their minds, create new curiosity and generate good will. They gain new perspectives on team building, personality styles and communication. Subsequent sessions are full-day experiences each month. Members work on small group projects for local nonprofit organizations and serve a one-year board of directors internship. Participation is limited to 30 individuals.

“The opportunity to build connections with others in our cohort at a deeper level was important. It was also meaningful to have time and space away from the everyday to think about my core values, mission statement, and leadership style.”



The nonprofit organizations supported this year include Guidance Ministries, Regality, Stable Grounds, and Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center.

The program culminates with a Graduation and a presentation of the nonprofit impact projects. This year's Graduation will be at 11:30 am on Wednesday, May 8 in the Crystal Ballroom at the Lerner, and is open to the public. Register at www.Elkhart.org/events.

Applications for the 2024-25 Leadership Academy are now being accepted. The application is available online at www.Elkhart.org/Chamber-information/Councils/Leadership.

Elkhart Leadership Academy 2024 Impact Projects

Guidance Ministries

"Light the Path to a Brighter Future" for individuals and families they serve is the mission of Guidance Ministries. The vision is to continue compassionate services, which provide for basic needs, while moving those individuals and families into the Case Management and Training and Equipping services. By transitioning guests to the stability programs, it allows them to become less dependent on the compassion services offered and become more self-sufficient.



Pastor Lori King, CEO
www.GuidanceMinistries.com

Impact Team Focus:

- Fundraising support for critical necessities, including print and digital media and replacing flooring in main hallway and kitchen area

Team Members:

Kristina Cockerham, Kem Krest; Codie Gluchowski, Lake City Bank; Jessica Keaton, Kruggel Lawton; Jon McKeever, RSM US LLP; Tedd Schaffer, Horizon Bank; Brittany Short, Community Foundation of Elkhart County; and Kristen Smole, Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce

Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center

Supporting the community children and parents, by providing high quality affordable early childhood education to help them grow both socially and academically, is the mission of Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center. Providing pathways to full potential is their vision. Children's individual learning style, his/her physical and social strengths, and special interests are primary considerations for facilitating comprehensive school readiness. One of their core values is "Student First Thinking". Walnut Hill looks at each decision through the lens of "does this help the students".

Lee Wheeler, Executive Director
www.WalnutHillecc.org



Walnut Hill
Early Childhood Center

Impact Team Focus:

- Upgrading and redesigning their website by connecting them with a web developer who is doing it at a discounted rate
- Raising funds via a trivia night fundraiser to assist in funding playground upgrades of mulch and new equipment
- Sourcing volunteers to spread mulch at the playgrounds

Team Members:

Terri Dewald, Interra Credit Union; Lindsay Diener-Locke, Ryan's Place; Tony Gaipa, Gibson; Mayra Garcia, Heart City Health; Kalina Hudnall Eichorst, South Bend Orthopaedics; Lois Mason, Tolson Center for Excellence; and Matt Stewart, Kem Krest

Stable Grounds, Inc.

Providing a place for children and families to receive mental health services free of charge and at optimal times for parents is the passion that drove the creation of Stable Grounds. Their mission is to help students learn and grow in school with strategies to help them manage their mental health struggles. Their partnership with the school system allows for all students to be counseled and provided with strategies to assist them in handling their issues such as anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, abuse, etc., which will ultimately improve their ability to be engaged in their learning. Their ultimate goal is to provide a model for other school districts to utilize for mental health services.



Jane Allen, Board of Directors President
www.StableGroundsInc.org

Impact Team Focus:

- Organized a fundraising event supporting sustainability and community awareness. The funds raised will go towards operating costs to hire additional staff to serve more kids in our community.

Team Members:

Karen Echevarria, Humane Society of Elkhart County; Heather Frick, KeyBank; Courtney Kahlenbeck, ADEC, Inc.; TJ Miller, Crowe LLP; Trent Stout, Interra Credit Union; and Kristen Watt, Elkhart Community Schools

Regality Inc.

Providing enrichment programming for young women that strengthens their confidence, self-esteem, and leadership aptitude is the mission of Regality. The vision is that every girl would know her worth and realize her potential. Core values include servant leadership, integrity, excellence, and respect.



DaVonne Kramer, Founder
www.RegalityInc.org

Impact Team Focus:

- Organized and hosted an event to raise awareness and funds to support free programming for teen girls

Team Members:

Jaycee Byers, BABSCO Supply; Lucia Chavez, Welch Packaging; Desiree Culbreath-Rogers, Elkhart County Auditor's Office; Tom DeMeester, Beacon Health System Elkhart General; Emily Irwin, Heritage Acceptance; Kendra Morris, INOVA Federal; and Jamie Richardson, Warrick & Boyn LLP



67th Annual GOLF OUTING

MONDAY, JUNE 24

Tee Times: 8:30 am & 2:15 pm

Elcona Country Club

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Business Recognition Award



Surf Internet, 228 Waterfall Drive, Elkhart, has received a Business of the Month Award from the Greater Elkhart Chamber Business Recognition Council. Founded in 2001, Surf Internet is an innovative fiber-optic internet company that serves as the essential gateway to connectivity across the Great Lakes region of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. The company is building a bridge to the wide-open future by delivering high-speed, reliable internet to homes and businesses in underserved, rural communities. Surf's 200-plus person team is local, giving them an edge when it comes to customer care and advocacy for the region. Headquartered in Elkhart, Ind., Surf also has offices in La Porte, Ind., Byron Center and Fowlerville, Mich., and Coal City and Rock Falls, Ill. The company's Core Values are: Reliability – people, network, customers; Integrity – culture, management, partners, suppliers; Innovation – revolutionary, creative, transformative; and Illumination – lighting up communities. They believe high-speed, reliable internet service is the great equalizer and are on a mission to transform the future of our region by building an unparalleled network and providing world-class customer service in the communities where they live, work, and serve.



Graduation Luncheon

featuring Impact Project Presentations

Wednesday, May 8 11:30 am

Crystal Ballroom at the Lerner
Table Sponsorships and Individual Seats Available
Register at Elkhart.org



Presenting Sponsor



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Dan Schmidt
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Aisling Solarek
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Brian Smith
Plastic: Injection Molding

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The Viruez Team

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www.rocketmortgage.com/local-loan-officers/
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Jose Ortiz
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Kierstin Eifler
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Slick Raven Marketing

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Krystal Morris
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35 YEARS

Northwest Interiors, Inc.

20 YEARS

Culver's
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Horizon Bank

15 YEARS

Avalon Woods Apartment Homes

10 YEARS

Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott
Momentum Marketing Consultants LLC

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Ryan's Place, Inc.
Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics
Westwind Brewery Co.

1 YEAR

Four Winds Casino Resort
Lenox Event Venue
Midwest Automotive Designs LLC
Pizza Hut
Shutter & Brushes

Ambassador of the Month

presented by

J2 Marketing



Samuel Hoover

Leliaert Insurance Agency Inc.

www.realvalueins.com

"Being born and raised in Elkhart. I thought I knew a lot about the history of our city. As a member of the Ambassador council. I have learned so much about our community. Going out to business celebrations gives me the opportunity to see what these amazing businesses do. I have made lifelong friendships through this council. I love the Chamber and our city."

NEWS ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

Colbert Packaging has promoted Account Executive **Ryan Hart** to the role of Vice President, Sales and Marketing.

Scott Hammontree has received the prestigious Founders' Circle Award from **Cressy & Everett**.

Sean Behensky has been appointed President of **Custom Machine Motioneering**.

INOVA Federal recently raised over \$4,500 for Special Olympics Indiana during its "Polar Plunge" campaign.

Interra Credit Union welcomes **Jessica Denton** to the Mortgage Department as Assistant Vice President, Manager Mortgage Sales-Originator.

ITR Concession Co. LLC, the maintainer and operator of the Indiana Toll Road, has successfully completed their project to construct solar energy systems at 14 locations across the Toll Road.

Kruggel Lawton CPA has promoted **Cody Newport, CPA** to Partner in the firm's audit and assurance practice.

Chad P. Douglass has joined **Lake City Bank** as Vice President, Commercial Banking Officer, serving Elkhart and the surrounding areas. **Imelda Herrera** has been promoted to Retail Banking Officer at the Goshen Downtown branch.

Monteith's Best One Tire & Service has acquired Complete Fleet, Inc. in Silver Lake, Indiana.

NIBCO INC. has promoted **Joe Choflet** to Vice President, Sales and Marketing.

Senior1Care announces the opening of their new location in Angola, Indiana.

THOR Industries Inc. has appointed **Michele McDermott** as Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO).

Jason Fink has joined **Valley Screen** as Director of Sales.

Welch Packaging has acquired Innovative Packaging Solutions (IPS) in York, Pennsylvania.

Submit your company's news and information to marketing@elkhart.org

Reducing Workers' Compensation Costs through Accident Prevention and Safety Conscious Supervision

Thursday, April 25 8 am - 1 pm

Greater Elkhart Chamber
Members \$135 Non-Members \$160
Register at Elkhart.org

SPEED NETWORKING
Join us for this fun, fast-paced networking event.

Thursday, April 18
11:30 am - 1 pm
@ Ivy Tech Elkhart

Greater Elkhart CHAMBER
Leading Business...Leading Our Community
Women's Council
Register at elkhart.org

Presenting Sponsor
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Event Sponsor
KRUGGEL LAWTON CPA

Greater Elkhart YP
network develop serve

SERVICE PROJECT
April 25 | LaCasa
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Register at elkhart.org

Greater Elkhart CHAMBER
Leading Business...Leading Our Community

LaCasa
Strong foundations. For everyone.

CHAMBER EVENTS

APRIL

16

Business After Hours -
hosted by Potawatomi Zoo
5 - 7 pm
500 S Greenlawn Ave, South Bend

17

OSHA Breakfast - Fall Protection with 3M Demo Truck
7:30 am
Matterhorn Conference Center
2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

18

Women's Council Luncheon - Speed Networking
11:30 am
Ivy Tech Community College
22531 CR 18, Goshen

25

Accident Prevention and Safety Conscious Supervision
8 am
Greater Elkhart Chamber
418 S Main St, Elkhart

25

Young Professionals Service Project for LaCasa
3 - 5 pm
Downtown Elkhart

MAY

1

Business After Hours - hosted by Economic Development Corporation of Elkhart County
5 - 6:30 pm
Northern Indiana Event Center, 21565 Executive Pkwy, Elkhart

3

New Member Welcome
8:30 am
Greater Elkhart Chamber
418 S Main St, Elkhart

8

Leadership Academy Graduation
11:30 am - 1:30 pm
Crystal Ballroom at the Lerner Theatre
410 S Main St, Elkhart

15

OSHA Breakfast - Local Best Practices & Safety Wins
7:30 am
Matterhorn Conference Center
2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

16

Women's Council Luncheon - Personal Branding
11:30 am
Hubbard Hill
28079 CR 24, Elkhart

21

Business After Hours -
hosted by Villing + Company
4 - 6 pm
130 S Main St, Ste 315, South Bend

23

YP Luncheon - First Time Homebuyers
11:30 am
Ivy Tech Community College
22531 CR 18, Goshen

Please visit Elkhart.org/events for more information.



THE ZOO
After Hours
Register to experience the wild!
April 16. 5 pm
POTAWATOMI ZOO.ORG



presented by
Business After Hours
at the
4.0 Automation EXPO
May 1 5 - 6:30 pm
Northern Indiana Event Center
21565 Executive Pkwy, Elkhart



JOIN US FOR AFTER HOURS
eat drink chat
MAY 21 4-6PM
VILLING + CO
130 S. Main St. Ste 315
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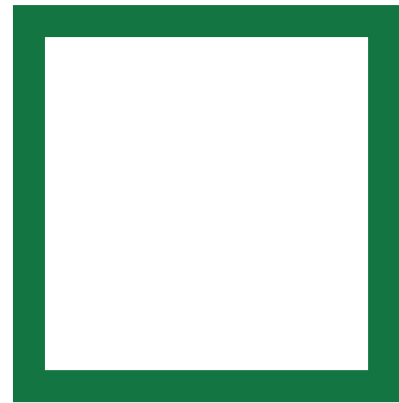
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Automation EXPO

MAY 1 & 2, 2024 | Northern Indiana Event Center
@ the RV Hall of Fame | Elkhart, Indiana

presented by



4.0 Automation Expo

brings the latest manufacturing and logistics technologies to the South Bend-Elkhart region. Join us in this exhibition to learn more about cobots, computer vision, and manufacturing software systems among many other Industry 4.0 topics. Aside from discussing opportunities with vendors, you will have a chance to hear keynote speakers presenting on topics such as real-world digital transformation journeys and emerging manufacturing technologies use cases.

SCHEDULE

May 1: Industry

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Vendor Booths Open

1 - 2 p.m.

Keynote 1: Emerging Manufacturing Technology

4 - 5 p.m.

Keynote 2: Digital Transformation Journey

5 - 6:30 p.m.

Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce

Business After Hours

May 2: Industry & Students

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Vendor Booths Open

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Students Tours

12 - 1 p.m.

Keynote 3: The Future of Integration

Food Trucks will be available throughout the EXPO

For more information and
to register, go to

elkhartcountybiz.com



in cooperation with



INDUSTRY LABS
at Notre Dame



PURDUE
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