

August/September 2025



The Road More Traveled

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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.

The Road More Traveled

Imagine me as a sophomore in college at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, IN. My parents have decided I did well enough my freshman year to warrant having my car on campus.

It's going to be my first time making the drive solo. As I take the back roads from Elkhart to get to US 31, it's not bad.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Levon Johnson President/CEO Ijohnson@elkhart.org

Then I hit US 31 and all its traffic signals (especially in Kokomo which is affectionately called Stoplight City), crossroads, and railroad crossings. I think to myself, "My goodness. There has to be a faster way to make this trip. I wish someone would figure this out."

A year later, the US 20 Bypass was completed, and that made the first leg of that trip faster and smoother and to this day, I am thankful for that. However, there was still the dreaded US 31 drive, and while it didn't change before I graduated from ISU, help was on the way.

Leaders from Elkhart, St. Joseph, Marshall, Fulton, Miami, Howard, Tipton, and Hamilton Counties all came together to generate an action plan to work with the Indiana Department of Transportation.

The US 31 Coalition came together in 2000 with a clear mission—to upgrade US 31 into a modern, limited-access freeway. Why? Because too many parts of the highway were outdated, slow, and, in many cases, unsafe. Dangerous intersections and traffic backups made daily travel frustrating and risky.

The US 31 Coalition is a group of community leaders, local governments, and economic partners all working toward a big, shared goal: making US Highway 31 safer, faster, and better for everyone who uses it.

This key north-south route stretches through Indiana from Michigan to Kentucky, and for many towns in Indiana, it's a lifeline to jobs, schools, and commerce.

Elkhart County is the one US 31 Coalition member that is not directly touched by US 31, but as a founding Board organization, the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce has played a key role in being a voice for the importance of establishing US 31 as a freeway artery connecting North Central Indiana to the core of the state which then connects to US 65, 69, 70 and 74.



By advocating for smart investments and better design, the coalition has helped push important projects forward—reducing crashes, easing congestion, and opening the door for new economic opportunities.

A great deal of the work has been completed, especially in St. Joseph, Howard, and Hamilton Counties but there is still more to do to achieve the words of Governors Daniels, Pence, and Holcomb who all stated, "...finish what you start."

At its core, the US 31 Coalition is about making life better for Hoosiers. Whether it's safer roads for families, quicker routes for commuters, or stronger connections between communities, this work is about progress that people can feel. And thanks to the coalition's leadership, that progress is well underway.

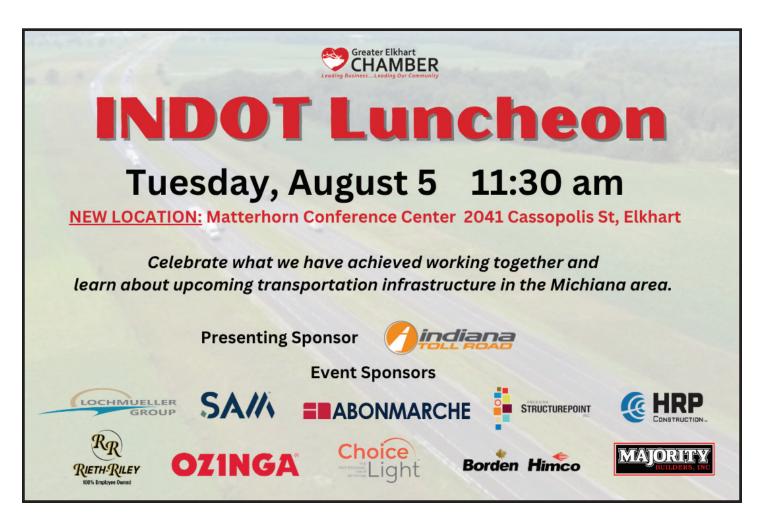
The goals of the US 31 Coalition, other than creating a freeway, are the goals for all local, state, and federal roads and transportation systems. Just as 19-year-old me found out, there are people thinking about and working on this.

US 31 has long been a priority of the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Transportation Council. The council has built valuable relationships with local, regional, and state transportation officials, and advocates for continuous and coordinated improvement in the network which serves transportation needs in Elkhart County and connecting our community to other areas.

Annually, your Chamber Transportation Council holds a luncheon aimed at educating our members and community on the work that is being done on our transportation systems to make them safer and more efficient. We will again be joined by the Indiana Department of Transportation to give updates on their work around the State of Indiana and in our district.

april S. John

Join us on August 5 for the INDOT Luncheon 2025 presented by the Indiana Toll Road at the Matterhorn Conference Center beginning at 11:30 a.m. You can register for this event at elkhart.org.



Chamber requests nominations for 2026 Board of Directors

The Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce will receive applications for its board of directors through September 1, 2025. Community leaders are encouraged to serve and participate in governing the finances and strategic initiatives of the Chamber, which represents roughly 47,000 total employees and nearly 950 member businesses and organizations.

Board terms are three years in length, and selected individuals from this year's nominations will be seated on January 1, 2026.

Any employee of a member business or organization in good standing may submit a Board Application and resumé.

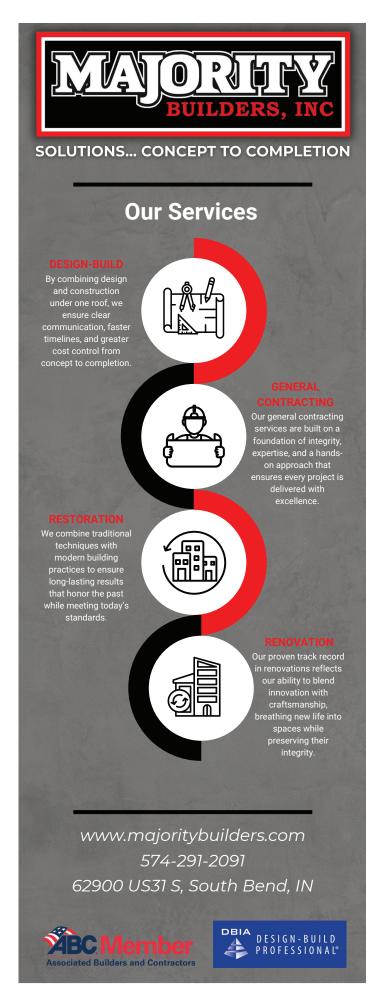
A nominating committee will review candidates and make selections to fill positions based on business category, occupation or profession, memberships in civic and fraternal organizations, achievements, community contributions, and participation in Chamber projects or events.

Business categories include retail, professional, service, manufacturing, technical, wholesale, not-for-profit, and others.

The application is available on the Chamber's website at www.elkhart.org/chamber-information/boardapplication, or by calling Amanda at (574) 293-1531. Applications may be submitted using the online form, mailed to PO Box 428, Elkhart, IN 46515; or delivered to 418 S Main St, Elkhart.

Fairbanks Award

The Early Learning Center at Hubbard Hill has received a Fairbanks Award from the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Business Recognition Council. The award recognizes the new facility on the grounds of Hubbard Hill, located at 28070 CR 24 in Elkhart. This new 31,000 sq ft facility includes a huge indoor playground, an extraordinary library, and the AEP Ingenuity Through Arts Center with a dedicated art instructor.



Congratulations to our winners at the 68th Annual Golf Outing

presented by





Winning AM Foursome Monteith's Best-One Tire & Auto Care

Tim Wolfe, Valerie Ingle, Kenny Whitman, Rob Kolean

Winning PM Foursome LaVanture Products Co., Inc.

Mitch McKamey, Lavern Yoder, Cletus Beechy, Marty Yoder



Contest Winners

#3 Closest to the Pin - Dan Weaver #7 Longest Drive (Men) – Matt Luce #9 Longest Putt - Cory Metzger #13 Closest to the Pin – Jake Stephenson #14 Shortest Drive - Dalton Cook #16 Longest Drive (Women) - Allison Schrock #18 Longest Putt – Alex Holtz

Thank you to all our Golfers, Sponsors, and Volunteers! Plan to join us for next year's Golf Outing on June 22, 2026





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Don't just run your business — grow it. With powerful loans, smart cash management, and dedicated support, we'll help take your business exactly where it's meant to go.

HorizonBank.com/BusinessBanking

US 31 - Crucial North - So

The State of Indiana recognizes the importance of this north-south route, and there has been tremendous progress to improve US 31 in the last fifteen years.

We now have a freeway in St. Joseph and Marshall Counties that opened in 2014. The Howard County portion opened in 2013 and the first half of Hamilton County in 2015. Those portions are incredible to drive on.

INDOT has initiated more improvements - a new SR 28 interchange in Tipton County opened in 2016, a new portion of freeway in Northern Hamilton County will be completed next year, and the railroad crossing in Tipton County has been replaced with an overpass. The deadly railroad crossing in Argos has now been replaced with an overpass. The next scheduled projects are at SR 10 and 110 in Marshall County.

These are exciting projects, but until the entire US 31 corridor from Indianapolis to South Bend is a freeway with fully controlled access, there is much more work to be done. The completed portions of the corridor are incredibly important, but the full benefit for all the connected communities comes when the freeway is finished.

The US 31 Coalition was formed in 2000 to promote the US 31 corridor from Indianapolis to South Bend as a freeway. Its long-established goal has been to accelerate the design and construction of this much needed upgrade.

The Coalition continues its work with the next critical pieces of the corridor in Fulton, Miami and Tipton and parts of Marshall and Hamilton Counties. With the completion of the full freeway, Indiana will realize significant safety and economic benefits!





We're getting closer - but there

uth Connector for Indiana

1,192

Where We Started

In the beginning, there were 1,192 impediments on US 31

- 125 miles of road work to be done
- 38 stop lights
- 922 driveways
- 4 railroad crossings
- 228 intersections

245

Where We Are Now

After current projects are completed, there will be 245 impediments

- 72 miles remaining
- 5 stoplights
- 135 driveways
- 0 railroad crossings
- 105 intersections









is still more work to be done!

NEW MEMBERS

Akins Earthworks & Pools

www.AkinsEarth.com 54095 CR 39 Middlebury, IN 46540 (574) 825-5941 Jessica Arseneau **Excavating Contractors** Referred by PHP Insurance

Bullet Motorsport LLC

www.bulletmotorsportsin.com 28068 Markle Ave Elkhart, IN 46516 (574) 361-1183 Florentina Hankins Automotive Service & Repairs Referred by Business Diversity Initiative

Chick-fil-A Elkhart

www.chick-fil-a.com/locations/in/elkhart-in 2720 Cassopolis St Elkhart, IN 46514 (574) 313-5200 Ellie Male Restaurant

Colonial Life

www.ColonialLife.com 1234 William R Monroe Blvd Three Rivers, MI 49093 (800) 325-4368 Fax: (269) 257-5760 Mitchell Sanderson Insurance Referred by Melissa Marsh

Crown Concrete

concretebycrown.com 55027 CR 3 Elkhart, IN 46514 (574) 302-2622 Kristi Eger Concrete Contractor

Referred by Krystal Morris, Slick Raven Marketing

Dayforce

www.dayforce.com (574) 275-8546 Tom Geairn Human Resources Information System (HRIS) Referred by Emma Jordan, Specialized Staffing

523 at Bent Oak

www.facebook.com/p/523-at-Bent-Oak-61555435809306/ 3610 Bent Oak Trail Elkhart, IN 46517 (574) 522-3787 Nikki Mattix Restaurant Referred by Hugh Johnson, J2 Marketing

GreenMark Equipment

www.greenmarkequipment.com 14501 US-12 Union, MI 49130 (269) 641-5841 Tim Howard Agricultural Equipment: Sales/Service

Ikai Media

www.ikaimedia.com (574) 238-7441 Tanner Pritt Digital Marketing Referred by Tris Gour

Jack Laurie Group

jacklauriegroup.com 2020 E Washington Blvd Fort Wayne, IN 46803 (260) 745-2161 Ramona Mcgown Cleaning Services: Commercial

Kindness to Prevent Blindness

k2pb.org 3112 Lexington Park Dr Elkhart, IN 46514 (574) 293-3545 Maddi Hanes Nonprofit Organizations Referred by Beatrice Phillips, Boling Vision Center

Max Black Fine Art & Custom Framing

www.mbfineart.com 7225 Heritage Square Dr #238 Granger, IN 46530 (574) 204-2385 Del Bloss Picture Framing: Custom Referred by Doug Elder, DOJO Creative

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

50+ YEARS Gaska Tape Inc. Imperial Dade

Manpower, Inc. Morgan Advanced Materials -Thermal Ceramics Zeigler Ford of Elkhart

50 YEARS

Crowe LLP Ivy Tech Community College Oaklawn

40 YEARS

1st Source Bank

35 YEARS

Chem-Dry of Michiana Carpet Cleaning First Federal Savings Bank

25 YEARS

Center for Hospice Care UHI Worldwide

20 YEARS

The Award Factory Elkhart County CVB Formco Inc.

15 YEARS

Elkhart Environmental Processing Corp. **Essenhaus Catering**

10 YEARS

Near North Title Group Robin's School of Dance Wellfield Botanic Gardens

5 YEARS

CARE University Courtyard by Marriott Elkhart Lisa Yoder State Farm Insurance Yolo Vox

1 YEAR

American Structurepoint Inc. Arbor Industries **BMPRO LLC** Coaching with Melanie Cubiletes Mexican Bar & Grill LLC Epic Dance Studio 4 Aces Top & Trim Garrison Frazier Development Corporation Hometown Filter

IN Farm Bureau Insurance

Indiana Electronics & Communications Leadership Tap Legacy Plastics, LLC NPS Wellness OnSite Health Solutions LLC Paapri Cloud Technologies Paycor Rise Above Academy Senior Helpers Success Loves Discipline Summers Plumbing Heating and Cooling - Elkhart

USI Consultants, Inc.

Valmont Industries

NEW MEMBERS

Mission BBQ

www.mission-bbq.com 5230 N Main St, Ste B Mishawaka, IN 46545 (574) 355-3434 Lyndsay Plummer Caterers Restaurant

Panaderia Hernandez

www.panaderiahernandezelkhart.com 319 W Lusher Ave, Ste D Elkhart, IN 46517 (574) 389-1500 Lizabetha Hernandez Bakeries: Retail

Paul Davis of North Central Indiana

north-central-indiana.pauldavis.com 302 S Birkey St Bremen, IN 46506 (574) 306-5910 Stacy Clark Disaster Restoration Contractors Referred by Brian Levan

Paylocity

www.paylocity.com (574) 387-9727 Stacey Moody Human Capital Management Referred by Tony Gaipa, Gibson

Premier Business Solutions LLC

www.premierbus.com 3202 N Kenmore St South Bend, IN 46628 (574) 232-8840 Joyce M. Manthay Loyalty Programs and Fulfillment Services Women Business Enterprise Certification - WBE

PRO Services

www.prosatwork.com 11859 Lincolnway W Osceola, IN 46561 (574) 329-5391 Stan Roe Mechanical Contractors

318 Trained

15490 Spring Meadow Ln Granger, IN 46530 (317) 490-6072 Bryan Weisweaver Coach: Business/Personal

Tuscany Motor Company -Fox Factory PVD

www.tuscanymotorco.com 2811 Tuscany Dr Elkhart, IN 46514 (574) 389-9000 Mike Miller Motorized Vehicle Upfitter

Weigand Construction

www.weigandconstruction.com/south-bend 108 N Main St, Ste 202 South Bend, IN 46617 (574) 339-0968 Kara Kelly Contractors: General Referred by Jennifer Martell, Martell Electric

Breakfast with the **Superintendents**



Greater Elkhart
CHAMBER





September 11 | 8 am | Matterhorn Conference Center Register at elkhart.org







September 18 11:30 am

Ivy Tech Community College 22531 CR 18, Goshen

CHAMBER

Women's Council

Register at elkhart.org













Business Recognition Awards



KMC Controls in New Paris has received a Business of the Month **Award** from the Greater Elkhart Chamber Business Recognition Council. From their beginnings in a small garage in Manitoba in 1968 to a vertically integrated automation powerhouse in New Paris, KMC Controls has grown into one of the most respected names in building automation. KMC specializes in building automation controls that power systems in schools, hospitals, government facilities, and commercial buildings across the U.S. and beyond. They even private label controls for major players like Honeywell. They are launching a patented product that tracks how much outdoor air is entering a building - an innovation that could change the way air quality and efficiency are monitored in public spaces. As a third-generation, family-owned business, KMC remains rooted in community values while leading innovation across the globe.

President Mitch Kehler began at KMC as a sales engineer in 2008. Director of Operations Chad Brew started as a summer helper and never left. With over 180 employees, KMC still does everything in-house - from injection molding to final assembly. Their commitment to vertical integration allows total control over quality and production, something nearly unheard of in their industry. At the core of KMC is a deep sense of purpose and community. The company's biggest community engagement initiative is the hands-on partnership with Habitat for Humanity, where employees who qualify can help build their own homes alongside colleagues.

Valley Screen in Mishawaka has received a Business of the Month Award from the Greater Elkhart Chamber Business Recognition Council. Founded in 1967 by Jerry Bauer in Mishawaka, Valley Screen has grown from a small operation with six employees to a prominent large-format commercial printer with 60 employees. Now led by Jerry's daughter, Karen Barnett, as President and CEO, the company has maintained a strong presence in Elkhart County, where 85% of its business is concentrated. Valley Screen has evolved from traditional screen printing to incorporating digital printing, specializing in self-adhesive graphics for RVs, marine vehicles, fleet graphics, and interior architectural designs like window films and wall murals. The company serves diverse markets, including retail, commercial, and medical sectors, and has recently created art and screening for food trucks. Currently implementing the



Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), Valley Screen is modernizing processes to stay competitive after 60 years in the market. Community engagement is a cornerstone of Valley Screen's ethos, and the company is exploring metrics to formalize its community service efforts. The company emphasizes employee longevity, offering quarterly recognition for tenured staff. With a family-oriented culture and a commitment to quality, Valley Screen continues to uphold Jerry Bauer's legacy while innovating for future growth.



REAL Services Inc. has received a Quarterly Nonprofit Award from the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Business Recognition Council. REAL Services provides programs that promote nutrition, self-sufficiency, education, and protection for 30,000 people in northern Indiana each year and offer services in 12 counties, including Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Newton, Porter, Pulaski, Starke, and St. Joseph. Created in 1966 as part of the planning division of United Way, REAL Services was established to develop a service network to meet the needs of older adults in St. Joseph County. In 1968, REAL Services designed the first program in the US to set up nutrition sites to provide meals and socialization for older adults - a program which has served as a model for nutrition assistance across the country. REAL Services is as a state-wide leader, and a national example, in effectively serving the senior community.

Member Celebrations



Bent Oak Golf Club and 523 at Bent Oak celebrate their new ownership and partnership! Located at 3610 Bent Oak Trail in Elkhart, they are ready to host your next golf outing or event. www.bentoakgolf.com



Spark41 unveils their new location at 128 S Main St in downtown Elkhart. Spark41 is tranforming Elkhart, one organization at a time, through next-gen marketing. www.spark41.com

Minority Business Excellence Award Nominations Requested

Minority Business Excellence Awards honor outstanding minority business leaders who have demonstrated excellence in their respective fields. The awards recognize individuals and organizations across various sectors who have significantly contributed to the success of their businesses and the empowerment of their communities. Each award category celebrates unique achievements, ensuring that the diversity of talent and impact is acknowledged.

This year's categories are:

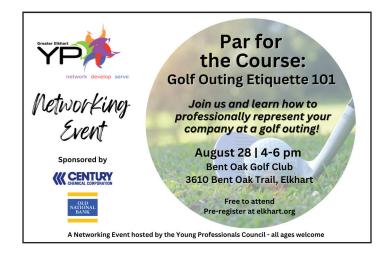
- Communications
- Nonprofit Leadership
- Health
- Retail / Restaurant
- Community Impact / Service
- Emerging Entrepreneurs
- Construction & Trades

The nominees must conduct business or provide service in Elkhart County, be minority owned and operated (at least 51%), and have been in business for at least one year.

Nominations can be submitted at www.elkhart.org/celebratingminority-business-excellence-awards-nominations. Each category has its own nomination form, and all nominations must be received by midnight on Sunday, August 31. A link to the list of previous winners is on the nomination cover page.

Award recipients will be determined by members of the Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Business Diversity Initiative.

Recognition of recipients will take place at the Celebrating Minority Business Excellence Dinner on November 6, in the Crystal Ballroom at the Lerner, starting at 5:30 P.M. Registration is now open at Elkhart.org/events.



Reducing Workers' Compensation Costs Through Accident Prevention and Safety-Conscious Supervision

September 25 8 am - 1 pm

Greater Elkhart Chamber 418 S Main St, Elkhart

This 5-hour Seminar is designed specifically for managers, supervisors, team leaders, safety committees, and anyone with a supervisory or leadership role in the workplace

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

Ambassadors of the Month



Mackenzie Clark Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance Matt Shula Agency

www.infarmbureau.com/agency/owner/ Matt-Shula-LaPorte-MichiganCity-IN

"It's an honor to serve the Greater Elkhart Chamber. I love how our community

comes together to support local businesses. I have learned a lot personally and professionally from leaders in our area and I'm proud to call our community home.



Samuel Hoover Leliaert Insurance Agency Inc.

www.realvalueins.com

"Winning Ambassador of the Month with the Greater Elkhart Chamber is truly humbling. I'm honored to represent such

a passionate community, and grateful for the chance to serve alongside leaders who care deeply about Elkhart's success. It's not about me—it's about all of us."

OSHA TRAINING 10 Hour General Industry Safety & Health Program October 1-2

Matterhorn Conference Center, 2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

Upon successful completion of the 10 and 20 hour classes, participants will receive their 30 hour certification.

The 20 Hour Class will be offered in March 2026

Register at www.elkhart.org Registrations must be made in advance.

Class size limited to 40 attendees.



NEWS ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

APEX Integrated Solutions, Inc. has been certified as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) by the Indiana Department of Administration, Division of Supplier Diversity.

Centier Bank was recently named the Best Retail Bank for Customer Satisfaction in the North Central Region of the U.S. by I.D. Power.

The City of Elkhart has appointed **Carl Thompson** as General Manager and **Robert "Bob" Garcia** as Director of Events and Finance.

Everwise Credit Union has earned Certification[™] as a Great Workplace by Great Place To Work.*

Haley Peery has been named Mortgage Loan Officer at **Horizon Bank**.

Indiana Trust Wealth Management announces the addition of new team members Jennifer Sailor, Karen Nevorski, Hunter Horan, Bernard Cunningham, and Noelle Leszczynski.

Eric Stoneburner has been named to the Agribusiness Lending Department at **Interra Credit Union**.

Brandon Gritton, CPA, has joined **Kruggel Lawton CPAs** as the Director, State and Local Tax Practice Leader.

Momentum Marketing Consultants and Alonzo Fotography have merged, and **Christian Alonzo** has been named Creative Director at Momentum.

Poly Electronics has added a second Surface Mount Technology assembly line to increase manufacturing capabilities.

Andre Gammage has joined **THK Law** as Of Counsel, focusing his legal practice on business law, civil litigation, and mediation.

Seth Woolf has joined **THOR Industries Inc.**, as Head of Corporate Development & Investor Relations.

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



CHAMBER EVENTS



INDOT Luncheon

11:30 am Matterhorn Conference Center 2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

Business After Hours hosted by All Things Snacks - Middlebury 335 N Main St, Middlebury

Economic Update 2025 Luncheon Crystal Ballroom at the Lerner Theatre 410 S Main St, Elkhart

Women's Council Planning Retreat 8 am - 12 pm **Ancon Construction** 2121 W Wilden Ave, Goshen

YP Networking Event - Par for the Course: **Golf Outing Etiquette** 4 - 6 pm Bent Oak Golf Club, 3610 Bent Oak Trail, Elkhart

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

Breakfast with the Superintendents Matterhorn Conference Center 2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

Business After Hours hosted by everwise credit union 5 - 7 pm 201 CR 6, Elkhart

OSHA Council Breakfast - Behind the Claim: Real-World Workers' Comp Scenarios and Expert Insights Matterhorn Conference Center, 2041 Cassopolis St, Elkhart

Women's Council Luncheon -What is your Personality Type? 11:30 am Ivy Tech Community College, 22531 CR 18, Goshen

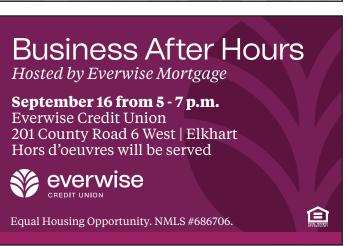
Safety Conscious Supervisor Training Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce 418 S Main St, Elkhart

YP Networking Event - A Bushel of Fun! Kercher Sunrise Orchard 19498 CR 38, Goshen











ECONOMIC UPDATE 2025

August 19 | 11:30 am Crystal Ballroom



Keynote Speaker

TOM JALICS, CFA

Fifth Third Private

The Economic Update Luncheon
features economic expert
Thomas Jalics, Chief Market Strategist at Fifth Third,
who will share valuable information about
current events and the future of the economy.

Presenting Sponsor



Register at elkhart.org/events