



NOV
2025

LEGACY LEDGER

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Welcome Steadfast Auctions to the LaGrange County Chamber!

We are excited to welcome Steadfast Auctions as the newest member of the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce! Founded by Mike Howard, Steadfast Auctions was built on the belief that buying or selling property should feel clear, simple, and fully supported.

Whether it's real estate, personal property, or a complete estate transition, Steadfast combines traditional values with modern marketing strategies to create a smooth, stress-free experience for every client. Mike's approach emphasizes confidence, clarity, and competence, ensuring that each transaction is handled with care and expertise.

Mike earned his real estate license in 2006 and has spent years guiding buyers and sellers through one of life's most important decisions: finding or selling a home. In 2025, he expanded his expertise by becoming a licensed auctioneer and launching Steadfast Auctions, where he now combines his passion for real estate with the art and strategy of

auctions to deliver outstanding results.

Outside of work, Mike enjoys hiking scenic trails, exploring the outdoors, and tending to his plants; bringing the same care, attention, and dedication to his personal passions as he does to helping clients achieve their dreams.

Please join us in welcoming Steadfast Auctions to the Chamber family! We look forward to seeing the positive impact they will make in our community.



Pictured Left-Right: Jamie Fennell, LaGwana; Sara Patrick, LaGrange County Chamber; Mike Howard, Steadfast Auctions; Tony Schneider, LigTel; Jennifer Engle, Polish Girl Collectibles; Denise Landers, Crossroads United Way; and Erin Olinger, Farmers State Bank.

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Your Chance to Recognize Excellence: 2026 Legacy Awards Nominate Today!

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the launch of the 2026 LaGrange County Legacy Awards. These awards are designed to celebrate excellence, leadership, and community impact across LaGrange County.

Nominations will be accepted through November 30 in the following categories: Small Business of the Year, Large Business of the Year, Non-Profit of the Year, Young Professional of the Year, Professional of the Year, and Educator of the Year.

The Legacy Awards give the community an opportunity to recognize local leaders and organizations making a lasting difference. The public is encouraged to submit nominations, but all nominees must be a Chamber Member or an employee of a Chamber Member.

Finalists will be announced in early December, and winners will be revealed at the LaGrange County Chamber Annual Meeting in January 2026.

Power of the Purse: Making an Impact, One Backpack at a Time

This month, the LaGrange County community will come together for one of the year's most meaningful events, the Power of the Purse Auction Fundraiser. Serving as the main fundraiser for the backpack programs across all three county school corporations, this event plays a vital role in the fight against food insecurity among local students.

The backpack programs ensure that children have nutritious meals to take home over weekends and school breaks, helping them stay focused, healthy, and ready to learn.

Guests will enjoy an exciting evening of live and silent auctions featuring beautiful handbags, unique experiences, and exclusive items, all benefiting this impactful cause.

As an alternative to attending, businesses and community members are encouraged to support the effort by donating directly at www.lagrangechamber.org/pop2025. Simply click the "Donate Now" button to make a contribution. You can also mail any donations to the chamber office at 513 W. Central Avenue, LaGrange, IN 46761 with a note designating it towards this cause.

"The Legacy Awards reflect the Chamber's mission of fostering community connections and driving business success," said Chamber Executive Director Sara Patrick. "By highlighting these exceptional individuals and organizations, we shine a light on the innovation, dedication, and service that strengthen LaGrange County."

Nominations can be submitted online at www.lagrangechamber.org/legacyawards or by contacting the Chamber office now through November 30th.

2026 LAGRANGE COUNTY

 **LEGACY
AWARDS**

 **NOMINATE
TODAY!** 

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LAGRANGE COUNTY
POWER OF THE PURSE & WALLET**

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Your gift provides a backpack stocked with food and essentials for one local child.



Pictured Left-Right: Lydia Young, Community Health Clinic; Jennifer Engle, Polish Girl Collectibles; Lucas Platt, Lisa Bender, and Jeff Platt, Max Platt Ford-Lincoln; Mike Howard, Hosler Realty; and Sara Patrick, LaGrange County Chamber.

Welcome Max Platt Ford-Lincoln to the LaGrange County Chamber!

We are thrilled to welcome Max Platt Ford-Lincoln Inc. of Kendallville as the newest member of the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce! Proudly serving drivers from Indiana and beyond, Max Platt Ford-Lincoln is more than just a dealership; it's a destination for personalized, first-rate customer service and a care-free car ownership experience.

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Max Platt offers a full range of services, including new and used Ford models, financing, maintenance, and parts, all

designed to make the car ownership experience as simple and enjoyable as possible.

Please join us in welcoming Max Platt Ford-Lincoln Inc. to the Chamber family. We look forward to supporting their efforts to provide exceptional service and quality vehicles to our community!



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LaGrange County Chamber Launches "Shop Local & Win" Campaign

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the launch of a new initiative designed to highlight the power of shopping local. The Shop Local & Win campaign will run from November 1 through December 21, encouraging residents to support LaGrange County businesses throughout the holiday season.

Here's how it works: anytime you spend \$25 or more at a LaGrange County business, you can submit your receipt to the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce for a chance to win gift cards to local businesses. Every \$25 spent earns you one entry into the drawing, but if you shop at a LaGrange County Chamber Member business, your entry will triple, earning you three entries for every \$25 spent.

"This initiative is all about celebrating our local businesses and reminding residents that every purchase made here in LaGrange County strengthens our community," said Sara Patrick, Executive Director of the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce. "Shopping local keeps dollars in our local economy, supports jobs, and builds a stronger, more connected community."

Weekly prize drawings will take place on November 24, December 1, December 8, December 15, and December 22.

Participants can visit www.lagrangechamber.org/shoplocal to learn more, view official rules and exclusions, and submit receipts.

Join us this holiday season to shop local, support your neighbors, and win local!



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2026 Legislative Priorities Survey

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is preparing to develop its 2026 Legislative Priorities and Advocacy Agenda. Your insights will help us better represent your voice in local, state, and federal matters.

1. What are the biggest policy or government-related challenges your business is currently facing? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce shortage | <input type="checkbox"/> Roadway infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce readiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Local permitting, zoning, regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talent retention | <input type="checkbox"/> State regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing availability for employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare access | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to capital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare affordability | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation access |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade/international business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes/Tax burden | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation/digital logistics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supply chain/logistics | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy access/infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broadband infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

2. Which level(s) of government are you most concerned about when it comes to business-related policies? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Local - Municipalities
- ☐ Local - County
- ☐ State
- ☐ Federal

3. Are there any specific regulations, policies, or government issues that are directly impacting your operations or growth opportunities?

4. Which of the following areas should the Chamber focus its advocacy efforts on in 2026? (Pick up to 3)

- ☐ Workforce development and education alignment
- ☐ Housing development and zoning reform
- ☐ Affordable and accessible childcare
- ☐ Transportation and infrastructure investment
- ☐ Tax policy/business incentives
- ☐ Entrepreneurship/small business support
- ☐ Permitting and regulatory streamlining
- ☐ Broadband and digital access
- ☐ Other (please specify):

5. Would you be willing to participate in future roundtables, forums, or calls-to-action related to these issues?

- ☐ Yes - I'd like to stay informed and participate
- ☐ Maybe - Keep me in the loop
- ☐ No - I prefer to stay out of advocacy work

If YES or MAYBE, please fill in your information below.

Name: _____

Email: _____

6. OPTIONAL: What type of business do you represent?

- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Professional services
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Nonprofit
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Hospitality/Tourism
- ☐ Healthcare
- ☐ Other (please specify):

7. OPTIONAL: How many employees does your business have?

- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-20
- ☐ 21-50
- ☐ 51-100
- ☐ 100+

*Please return to 513 W. Central Avenue, LaGrange, IN 46761
or email completed form to sara@lagrangechamber.org*

Prairie Heights 101: Preparing Students for Life and Work

The LaGrange County Chamber Chat Podcast recently concluded its three-part series on local school corporations with Prairie Heights School Corporation Superintendent Jeff Reed. Jeff shared his journey from elementary teacher to superintendent and the important role the school plays in the community.

Jeff grew up surrounded by educators, both parents and extended family, which inspired his path into education. After teaching 4th and 5th grade, he moved into administrative roles at Prairie Heights, eventually becoming superintendent. Over the years, he's been guided by mentors and experiences that shaped his philosophy: relationships matter, whether with students, staff, or the broader community.

Prairie Heights is more than a school; it's a community hub for the rural area. Jeff highlighted the loyal, tight-knit community and the wrap-around support it provides to both students and staff.

The school is also home to a robust agricultural program with a school farm, cattle raising, and a strong FFA program. Students can explore career pathways in welding, technology, mechanical engineering, culinary arts, broadcasting, education, and more, preparing them for college, careers, or the military.

This year, Prairie Heights is focusing on professional development for teachers and a \$13 million campus improvement project, including new furniture, carpet, lighting, restroom renovations, a press box, and a playground to enhance learning and community spaces.

Jeff emphasized that education at Prairie Heights is a partnership between teachers, parents, and the community. From mental health resources to extracurricular programs, the school supports students in every aspect of their growth.

Prairie Heights' combination of strong academics, hands-on experiences, and community support makes it a standout in LaGrange County. To hear the full conversation and learn more, tune in to the LaGrange County Chamber Chat Podcast, your behind-the-scenes look at the people and initiatives that make our community thrive.

Delivering Hope: Fighting Food Insecurity in LaGrange County

In this inspiring episode of the LaGrange County Chamber Chat Podcast, we sit down with Sonja Giggy, Co-Founder and President of LaGrange County Hope, to share the remarkable story of how one simple idea, delivering food to families in need, has blossomed into a countywide movement of compassion, collaboration, and hope.

Founded in 2020 by Sonja and her sister, LaGrange County Hope began as a small effort to help local students during school breaks when access to school meals wasn't available. What started as a few food bags packed in a kitchen quickly turned into a community-wide mission that now provides more than 475 food bags each week across all three county school corporations during summer break. These bags, filled with food and basic supplies, ensure that children and families in LaGrange County don't have to worry about where their next meal will come from.

During this conversation, Sonja shares stories from the families they've helped, the volunteers who give their time each week, and the partnerships that make it all possible, from local schools and Community Harvest Food Bank to businesses and faith-based organizations. You'll also hear how LaGrange County Hope is working to break down barriers, not only by providing food but also by creating meaningful connections that uplift families and strengthen the entire community.

Sonja discusses the challenges of food insecurity in a rural county, the importance of local collaboration, and the ripple effect that happens when people come together to care for one another. She also highlights opportunities for residents and businesses to get involved, whether by sponsoring a food bag drive, volunteering at a packing event, donating items, or simply spreading awareness about the cause.

This episode reminds us that hope often starts small, but when fueled by community, it grows into something extraordinary.

Listen now to "Feeding Hope: Tackling Food Insecurity in LaGrange County" on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or at www.lagrangechamber.org/podcast. Join us in celebrating the incredible work of LaGrange County Hope and the difference being made, one bag, one meal, and one connection at a time.



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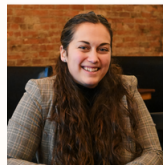
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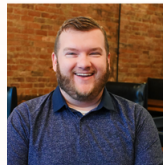


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