

APR
2026

LEGACY LEDGER



Fostering Community Connection. Driving Business Success.

2026 Indiana Legislative Session: What Businesses Need to Know

The 2026 Indiana General Assembly wrapped up its session on Friday, February 27, adjourning "Sine Die," meaning without a set date to reconvene. This year's session brought a number of legislative updates with direct impact on businesses across the state. Here is a snapshot of key outcomes that Chamber members should be aware of.

Tax Conformity Simplified (SB212 & SB243)

Indiana aligned its tax code with recent federal changes, making compliance simpler for both businesses and individuals. The legislation also provides clear guidance on the statewide penny phase-out, helping retailers and consumers navigate sales tax changes more easily.

Housing Access (HB1001)

Addressing the state's housing shortage, this legislation encourages communities to adopt policies that support development while maintaining local control. Communities can opt out of certain provisions, giving local governments flexibility in responding to growth.

Expanding Childcare Access (HB1152, HB1177, SB4)

Workforce participation depends on accessible childcare. Key updates include:

- Expanding the employer childcare tax credit to cover operating and contracted childcare expenses
- Preventing HOAs from banning licensed in-home childcare providers
- Increasing funding sources for childcare voucher programs

Township Government Modernization (SB270)

This law updates township operations to make local government more efficient and predictable, improving services and accountability.

Work-Based Learning Strengthened (HB1098)

Businesses and schools now have clearer guidelines for work-based learning programs, including responsibilities and workers' compensation coverage for students.

Environmental Regulatory Updates (SB277)

Businesses will benefit from more predictable environmental permitting as Indiana regulations are aligned with federal standards, improving clarity and compliance timelines.

Immigration Enforcement & Workforce Protection (SB76)

Employers now have consistent statewide rules for employment verification. The law prohibits knowingly hiring unauthorized workers while protecting businesses that follow standard hiring practices or use E-Verify.

Foreign Influence & National Security Oversight (SB256)

This legislation strengthens protections against foreign influence while maintaining economic competitiveness, safeguarding lawful employment relationships, and providing access to global talent.

Bottom Line for Chamber Members

The 2026 session reflects a continued focus on supporting businesses, strengthening workforce development, and improving local government efficiency. Understanding these updates helps businesses plan for compliance, take advantage of new programs, and stay informed about policies that shape the state's economy.

2026 Session by the Numbers

- Total bills introduced: 742 (290 Senate, 452 House)
- Bills passed: 163 (22 percent of those introduced)
 - 80 Senate bills
 - 83 House bills
- Bipartisan support:
 - 90 percent of passed bills received bipartisan Senate support
 - 51 percent of passed bills received unanimous Senate support

Note: These numbers exclude SJR 1, a joint resolution proposing a constitutional amendment, which passed with bipartisan but not unanimous support.

Building a Better Community: Welcoming Wolcottville Community Initiative

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to welcome Greencroft Middlebury to our Chamber membership family. We are excited to partner with an organization that is deeply committed to service, compassion, and community.

With a vision to provide a continuum of long-term care services in a small-town setting, Greencroft Middlebury plays an important role in supporting seniors and strengthening our regional community.

Greencroft Middlebury is united by its CROFT values, which guide every decision and interaction within the community. These values include Creativity, Respect, Openness, Fairness, and Teamwork. More than words, they represent a daily commitment made by team members to create a culture where residents, staff, and families feel supported and valued.

We are grateful to welcome Greencroft Middlebury to the Chamber and look forward to building connections and celebrating the positive impact they bring to our area. Please join us in extending a warm Chamber welcome!

Their mission reflects a dedication to creating a dynamic living community that embraces the creativity, contributions, and challenges of aging, grounded in service excellence, compassionate care, and Mennonite values.



Pictured Left-Right: Back Row: Mike Howard, Hosler Realty & Steadfast Auction; Joe Walter, Farmers State Bank; Cara Young, Lakeland Jr/Sr High School; Brett Gearhart, First State Bank; Chris Panghorn; and Andrew Coblentz, The Wellness Way. Front Row: Cori Vilardo, First State Bank; Eileen Papas and Anna Kragt, Wolcottville Community Initiative; and Loretta Johnson.



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 LaGrange County Chamber News

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Adapted from Forbes

Whether you're launching a new business or refining your current strategy, building a marketing plan from the ground up can feel daunting. This guide breaks down the essential first steps to help you create a clear, focused and effective strategy tailored to your goals and resources. You'll learn how to better understand your audience, choose the right digital channels and set yourself up for marketing success.

Start With the Basics: Know Your Audience and Your Message

Effective marketing begins with two simple questions: Who are you trying to reach, and what do you want them to remember about your business? Taking the time to answer these before investing in ads, social media, or a website redesign will make every marketing effort more impactful.

1. Define Your Ideal Customer

Go beyond age, gender, and location. Consider your customer's behaviors, needs, frustrations, and values. What problem are they trying to solve? Understanding these details helps you create messaging, content, and offers that feel personal and relevant.

2. Use Buyer Personas

Buyer personas are fictional profiles representing your key customer types. Give each persona a name, job title, and a list of goals or challenges. This helps you focus your marketing on your customers' real needs and keeps your messaging consistent.

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3. Define Your Brand Message and Story

What's the "why" behind your business? A strong brand story builds trust and sets you apart. Decide what your business stands for, what makes it unique, and the tone of voice that fits your brand—whether friendly, authoritative, playful, or sincere.

Top Digital Marketing Channels for Small Businesses

Once your messaging and audience are clear, you can select the channels that best fit your business:

- **Social Media Marketing:** Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, and X help you build brand awareness, engage your audience, and drive traffic. Consistency and clear goals are key.
- **Email Marketing:** A high-ROI channel for nurturing leads, promoting offers, and staying top of mind with customers. Segment your list and personalize content for better results.
- **Content Marketing:** Blogs, videos, podcasts, or infographics educate and engage your audience, build trust, and support other marketing efforts like SEO and social media.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Ensure your website is found when customers search for your products or services through keyword optimization, meta descriptions, and backlinks.
- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising:** Platforms like Google Ads and Meta Ads allow you to target specific demographics and interests, giving your business visibility quickly.

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Marketing is a long-term game—patience, consistency, and adaptation are key.

Create a Marketing Plan That Works

- Focus on a few channels that align with your goals and resources. You don't need to be everywhere at once.
- Treat marketing as a series of small experiments. Start with one or two channels, track performance, and adjust based on results.
- Decide whether to start with organic efforts, like social media posts, or paid campaigns, depending on your goals, budget, and tested messaging.

Common Marketing Mistakes to Avoid

- Spreading yourself too thin across too many channels
- Failing to define a clear target audience
- Not sharing your message often enough
- Ignoring analytics or customer feedback
- Expecting immediate results

Track What Works

Analytics are your best friend. Monitor metrics like:

- Website traffic
- Email open and click rates
- Engagement on social media posts
- Lead generation and conversions

Bottom Line

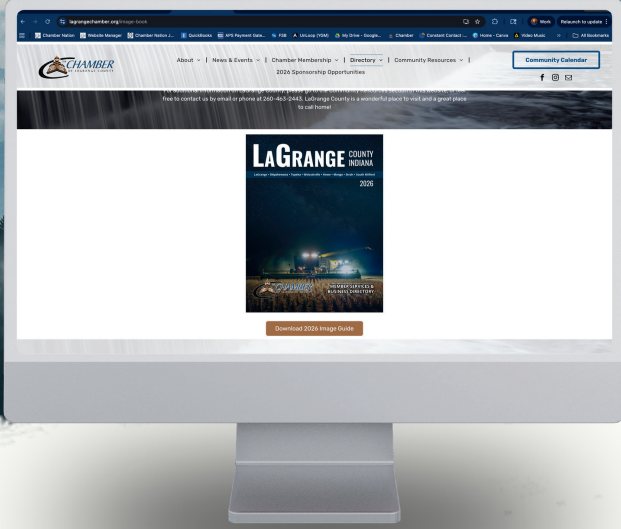
Marketing success comes from clarity, consistency, and continuous learning. Understand your audience, define your message, focus on a few channels, and let your efforts grow over time. Even with a small budget or team, a strategic approach will make a big impact.

Regularly reviewing data helps you identify successes, adjust strategies, and continually improve

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EARLY BIRD SPECIAL
BY MAY 1ST

Step Up. Grow. Lead: Applications Open for Leadership LaGrange County 2026

Are you ready to strengthen your leadership skills and make a bigger impact in LaGrange County? Now's your chance! Leadership LaGrange County is officially accepting applications for the 2026 cohort.

extend far beyond the classroom.

This premier leadership development program is open to residents and employees of local businesses and organizations who want to grow their leadership abilities, build meaningful community connections, and gain a deeper understanding of the issues shaping our county.

Leadership LaGrange County is a joint initiative of the LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation and the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce, working together to strengthen leadership, support workforce development, and invest in the long-term success of our community.

The 2026 program runs May through December, meeting once a month on the third Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It kicks off in May with a full-day leadership experience, including CliftonStrengths training to help participants identify and leverage their unique strengths.

Ready to take the next step? Contact the Chamber or the EDC to express your interest and receive the official application when it launches. (Submitting interest does not register you for the program.)

Through interactive sessions, community-focused discussions, and cross-sector collaboration, participants gain tools, insights, and relationships that

Invest in yourself. Lead local. Be part of shaping LaGrange County's future.



Pictured the 2025 Leadership LaGrange Graduates: Back Row - Left-to-right: Brandon Altimus, LaGrange County REMC; David Mullet, Wana Acres Fencing; Ashya Klopfenstein; Jackie Feller, LaGrange County Health Department; and Tylor Lichtenberger, Hostetler & Young Insurance. Front Row: Jamie Cunningham, Community Health Clinic; Stephanie Blake, Farmers State Bank; Sonya Nash, LaGrange County CVB; Bridget Sage, Precision Financial; Mareen Barton and Kourtney Jackson, Lake City Bank; and Samantha Davis Kana, Interra Credit Union. Not pictured: Taylor McClish, DutchCrafters.



A Tradition of Learning and Leadership: Welcome LaGrange County 4-H

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to welcome the LaGrange County 4H Fair Association into our Chamber membership family! We are excited to partner with an organization that has a long-standing tradition of promoting youth development, community engagement, and agricultural education throughout our county.

The 4H Fair Association plays a vital role in connecting young people with opportunities to learn, grow, and showcase their talents in agriculture, livestock, and a variety of creative and educational projects. Their dedication to fostering leadership, responsibility, and community spirit perfectly aligns with the Chamber's mission of Fostering Community Connections. Driving Business Success.

We look forward to collaborating with the 4H Fair Association on initiatives that celebrate local youth, support our agricultural community, and strengthen the bonds that make LaGrange County a vibrant place to live and work.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to the LaGrange County 4H Fair Association as our newest Chamber member!



Our Chamber Ambassadors were out in full force, representing First State Bank, Polish Girl Collectibles, Hosler Realty, Steadfast Auctions, Farmers State Bank, The Wellness Way, LigTel, and LaGrange County Arts, as they warmly welcomed the LaGrange County 4H Fair Association Board of Directors into the Chamber family!

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Chamber Benefits You Might Be Forgetting

Being a member of the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce comes with more than just networking opportunities. There are some powerful benefits that many members forget to take advantage of:

1. Weekly Eblast Promotions

Did you know your Chamber membership gives you a platform to promote your events, specials, or business updates? Our weekly eblast reaches hundreds of local businesses and residents—making it an easy way to increase awareness and drive traffic to your business. Don't miss this free and effective marketing tool.

2. CHAMP Plan™

The CHAMP Plan is designed to lower healthcare and claim expenses while addressing high-risk areas for employees. This innovative program promotes better health and well-being, boosts most employees' take-home pay, and delivers exceptional benefits. If you haven't explored the CHAMP Plan for your business yet, now is the perfect time.

3. Member2Member Discounts

Chamber membership is a two-way street. Through Member2Member discounts, you can save on products and services offered by fellow Chamber members. From office supplies to marketing services, the savings add up quickly.


- To see available discounts, visit: www.lagrangechamber.org/membertomember.
- You can also offer your own discount to other members by following the link on the page, help your fellow businesses while promoting your products or services.

4. Explore More Benefits

These are just a few of the advantages of Chamber membership. There's a whole host of ways your membership can support your business growth and bottom line. To explore all the opportunities available, visit: www.lagrangechamber.org/membership-value

2026 PRIMARY ELECTIONS
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May 5, 2026

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Strengthen Your Business by Connecting with Your Community

Adapted from Business.com

Being a visible part of your local community isn't just good for relationships—it's good for business. When you engage with your neighbors, you build trust, loyalty, and awareness for your brand. "Strong community ties are essential to long-term success for small businesses," says Wilcox of Business.com. "By investing locally, businesses fuel economic growth, build brand loyalty, and strengthen relationships with customers and employees."

Here are some meaningful ways your business can get involved and make a difference in your community:

1. Offer Local Sponsorships

Sponsor a local event, charity drive, or school sports team. Your brand will gain exposure while supporting community initiatives. For example, sponsoring a local high school soccer or baseball team connects you directly with families in your area.

2. Encourage Employee Volunteerism

Support your employees by giving them paid time to volunteer for local causes. Ask your customers and staff which charities matter most and focus on organizations that align with your business values. Benefits include:

- Engaged and motivated employees
- Positive recognition from the community
- Potential media coverage that highlights your business

3. Share Your Expertise in Schools

Help inspire the next generation by giving presentations or workshops at local schools. From entrepreneurial advice to practical skills like budgeting or upcycling, sharing your knowledge positions your business as a trusted community resource.

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE..



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4. Host Student Internships

Provide summer, after-school, or weekend internships to local students. This not only develops future leaders but also demonstrates your commitment to the community's growth. With mentorship, interns often carry forward the lessons and values they learn from your business.

Investing in your community strengthens your business while making a positive impact where it matters most. From volunteering and sponsorships to internships and Chamber engagement, there are many ways to make meaningful connections that benefit everyone.

5. Get Involved with the Chamber

Membership in the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce helps build strong ties with your community and fellow small businesses. Chamber involvement promotes both economic and personal growth. Studies show:

- Consumers are 49% more likely to view Chamber members favorably
- Consumers are 80% more likely to shop with Chamber-member businesses in the future



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Upcoming Events:

APRIL:

- 16TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON
- 22ND - WOMAN2WOMAN ROUNDTABLE
- 30TH - LEGACY LAUNCHPAD

MAY:

- 14TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON
- 15TH - LEADERSHIP LAGRANGE COUNTY
- 19TH - TABLE FOR 10
- 22ND - COFFEE WITH THE COUNTY
- 27TH - CONNECTHER CONFERENCE

JUNE:

- 9TH - YP LUNCH & CONNECT
- 18TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON

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