



MAY
2026

LEGACY LEDGER



Fostering Community Connection. Driving Business Success.

From Content Chaos to Clarity: Welcome Content by Request to the Chamber

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is proud to welcome Content by Request to our growing network of local businesses!

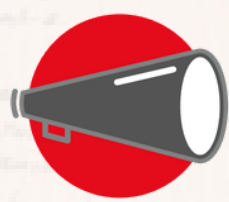
We are excited to have them as part of the Chamber and can't wait to see how they help local businesses level up their marketing.

Content by Request makes marketing simpler, clearer, and more effective. They help businesses move from "what do we even post?" to consistent, professional content that actually works. From writing and design to practical marketing strategy, they deliver real solutions for real businesses that are trying to stay visible and grow.

To learn more or connect with Content by Request, you can reach them at info@contentbyrequest.com, by phone at (260) 212-0254, or visit their website at www.contentbyrequest.com.

Please join us in giving Content by Request a warm Chamber welcome!

With experience launching and supporting small businesses, Content by Request understands what it takes to build momentum and keep it going. Their work is focused on helping organizations communicate better, attract customers, and stay top of mind without the overwhelm



content by request



Pictured Left-Right: Liana Taylor, Liana Wellness; Emilee Buller, LaGrange County EDC; Jamie Fennell, LaGwana; Brett Hahn, Indian Lakes Marketing; Cori Vilardo, First State Bank; Jessika Ellett, The Arc of LaGrange County; Jennifer Engle, Polish Girl Collectibles; Ed, The Arc of LaGrange County; Christie Browning, Content by Request; Rachel Baczynski, Baczynski Health Insurance; Sara Patrick, LaGrange County Chamber; Joe Walter, Farmers State Bank; Loretta Johnson; Tony Schneider, LigTel; and Grace Spero, LaGrange County Arts.

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 - CONNECT WITH LOCAL LEADERS
 - EXPLORE WOMEN-FOCUSED VENDOR FAIR

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ARE YOU READY TO CONNECT?**

REGISTER TODAY! 260-463-2443

Christie Browning

Amber Selking

PARTNERS



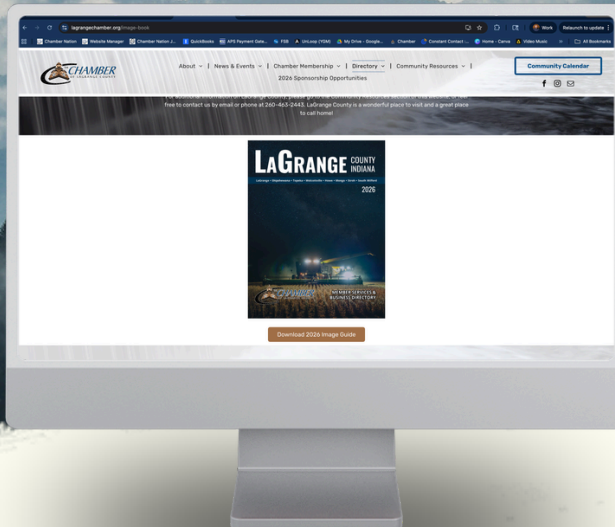
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The Entry-Level Squeeze: Why Protecting Junior Roles is a High-Stakes Strategy

Adapted from HR Morning

As Artificial Intelligence rapidly automates the routine tasks typically reserved for new hires—like data entry, basic research, and preliminary analysis—a structural crisis has emerged: the "entry-level squeeze." Recent data reveals that 76% of HR professionals expect a reduction in early-career hiring as AI takes over "junior" tasks. For a business owner, cutting these roles offers an immediate boost to the bottom line. However, it creates a long-term "leadership vacuum." If you don't hire the juniors of today, you won't have the experienced managers, directors, or owners of tomorrow.

To future-proof your organization, you must move from replacing humans with AI to redesigning roles for high-level performance. Here is how to turn this challenge into a competitive advantage:

1. Elevate Juniors to "AI Orchestrators"

In the past, a junior employee spent their first year "doing the work" to learn the ropes. Today, the "work" is done in seconds by an LLM. Business owners should shift the job description from execution to oversight.

- **The Strategy:** Task entry-level staff with auditing AI outputs, verifying accuracy, and troubleshooting the "hallucinations" of the software.
- **The Benefit:** This forces new hires to develop critical thinking and professional judgment immediately, rather than after years of repetitive labor.

2. Implement "Business Literacy" Rotations

Because AI eliminates the "on-the-job osmosis" that used to happen when juniors sat in on meetings or

handled paperwork, they often lack a bird's-eye view of how a company makes money.

- **The Strategy:** Break the traditional department silos. Move new hires through cross-functional rotations—from sales to operations to customer service.
- **The Goal:** You are building a workforce that understands the entire value chain, making them far more valuable than a specialist who only knows how to prompt a specific AI tool.

3. Prioritize "Human-Centric" Apprenticeships

For professionals and owners, the most valuable skills in an AI world are those the machine cannot replicate: empathy, negotiation, and ethics.

- **The Strategy:** Move away from "shadowing" and toward "collaborative decision-making." Invite junior staff to high-stakes meetings not just to take notes, but to offer a "digital-native" perspective on the problems being discussed.
- **The Payoff:** You accelerate the maturity of your staff, transforming a "new hire" into a "strategic contributor" in half the traditional time.

The Bottom Line for Business Owners

AI can handle the "what," but it cannot understand the "why." If you stop hiring at the entry level, you stop the flow of new ideas and future leadership. By intentionally redesigning these roles today, you aren't just filling a seat—you are securing the intellectual capital your business will need to survive the next decade of disruption.

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From House Plans to Home Dreams: Welcome Schrock Homes to the Chamber

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce is excited to welcome Schrock Homes to our Chamber membership!

memories. Their work continues to contribute to the strength and character of communities across the region.

Schrock Homes is a trusted local builder known for creating high-quality custom and semi-custom homes designed with both craftsmanship and everyday living in mind. With a strong reputation for integrity, attention to detail, and customer care, they guide families through every step of the building process from initial design to the final walkthrough, making the experience as seamless as possible.

We are proud to have Schrock Homes join the Chamber network and look forward to the positive impact they will continue to make in LaGrange County and beyond.

To learn more or connect with Schrock Homes, you can reach them at 574-534-2706, by email at info@schrockhomes.com, or visit their website at www.schrockhomes.com.

Rooted in the values of quality construction and long-term relationships, Schrock Homes takes pride in building more than just houses. They build spaces where families can grow, gather, and create lasting

Please join us in giving Schrock Homes a warm Chamber welcome!



Pictured Left-Right: Back row: Tony Schneider, LigTel; Denise Landers, Crossroads United Way; Grace Spero, LaGrange County Arts; Liana Taylor, Liana Wellness; Jamie Fennell, LaGwana; Brett Gearheart, First State Bank; Brett Hahn, Indian Lakes Marketing; and Mike Howard, Hosler Realty & Steadfast Auctions. Front Row: Loretta Johnson; Lauri Couture, Farmers State Bank; Denny Miller, Schrock Homes; Jenny Landez, LaGrange County Government; and Jennifer Engle, Polish Girl Collectibles.

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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.)

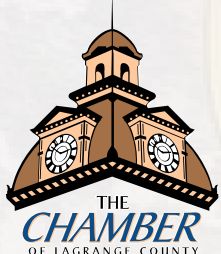
For more information:
Ian Mullen | ian@lagrangechamber.org | 260-463-2443
Emilee Buller | ebuller@lagrangecountyedc.com | 260-499-4994

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.



LaGrange County Chamber & CVB Launch "Tourism Month" Initiative to Encourage Locals to Explore Their Own Backyard

The LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the LaGrange County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), is proud to announce a joint initiative celebrating National Tourism Week by extending the excitement throughout the entire month of May.

This county-wide campaign invites residents to become tourists in their own backyard. The goal is simple: encourage locals to rediscover LaGrange County by visiting attractions, supporting businesses, and experiencing the community from a fresh perspective.

LaGrange County welcomes more than 3.5 million visitors each year, making tourism a vital part of our local economy. This initiative is designed to help residents better understand what draws so many people here, while also rediscovering the experiences available right at home.

At the heart of this initiative is a "Love Local, LaGrange County" message. We want residents to not only support local businesses, but to truly see what makes our community worth the visit. From unique shops and restaurants to local attractions and hidden gems, this campaign is about reminding our own residents of everything that makes LaGrange County special.

"Tourism isn't just about bringing visitors into our community. It's about recognizing and appreciating what we have right here," said representatives from the Chamber and CVB. "We want residents to slow down, explore, and maybe even visit places they've never been before."

Throughout the month, participating businesses across LaGrange County will offer exclusive discounts and experiences specifically for local residents and employees. By simply showing proof of residency or employment within the county, participants can unlock special offers at a variety of locations, from restaurants and retail shops to lodging and attractions.

The initiative not only highlights the unique experiences available throughout LaGrange County, but also reinforces the importance of supporting local

businesses. By driving foot traffic and encouraging exploration, the campaign aims to strengthen connections between residents and the local economy.

This partnership between the Chamber and CVB reflects a shared commitment to community pride, economic vitality, and collaboration. By working together, both organizations hope to create a lasting impact that extends well beyond the month of May.

Residents are encouraged to visit participating locations, take advantage of exclusive offers, and share their experiences throughout the month.

For a full list of participating businesses and offers, visit www.lagrangechamber.org/tourismweek or www.visitshipsewana.org/tourismweek, or follow the LaGrange County Chamber of Commerce and CVB on social media for updates.

Join us this May and experience LaGrange County in a whole new way.

We are celebrating YOU!

LOVE LOCAL LAGRANGE COUNTY

May 1 - 31

Celebrate Tourism all month long with **8** participating businesses that are offering special deals for you to explore as a local.

Experience why **3.5 million** visitors choose our unique destination!

#LOVELOCALLAGCO

LAGRANGECHAMBER.ORG/TOURISMWEEK

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

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May 5, 2026

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Tourism in LaGrange County: Big Impact, Small-Town Advantage

When summer arrives in LaGrange County, something remarkable happens.

Our population doesn't just grow; it multiplies.

On any given summer day, Shipshewana can swell from just a few hundred residents to tens of thousands of visitors exploring shops, restaurants, and experiences across the county. And that's just a glimpse of a much bigger story.

The Numbers Tell the Story

Tourism is more than a seasonal boost; it's one of LaGrange County's strongest economic drivers.

- More than 2 million visitors come to LaGrange County each year
- Visitor spending exceeds \$280 million annually
- Tourism generates nearly \$250 million in total economic impact
- More than 1,900 local jobs are supported by tourism
- Over \$60 million in tax revenue is generated

With a population of just over 41,000 residents, that means we welcome dozens of visitors for every one resident each year.

Why Visitors Choose LaGrange County

Travelers are drawn here for experiences they can't find anywhere else:

- Authentic Amish and Mennonite culture
- Unique local shops and handcrafted goods
- One-of-a-kind destinations like the Shipshewana Flea Market
- Outdoor recreation, including 60+ natural lakes and campgrounds

It's a blend of simplicity, craftsmanship, and connection; and it's exactly what today's traveler is looking for.

Turning Visitors into Customers: A Summer Opportunity

Tourism brings people here, but it's up to local businesses to capture that opportunity. (CONTINUED)



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TOURISM CONTINUED...

Here are a few simple ways to make the most of peak season:

Make It Easy to Find You

Ensure your hours are updated, signage is clear, and your online presence is active so visitors can easily discover your business.

Think Like a Visitor

Offer simple promotions, bundles, or "first-time visitor" deals that make it easy for someone new to walk through your door.

Create an Experience

Today's visitors are looking for more than products; they want something memorable. Consider demos, tastings, or photo-worthy moments in your space.

Encourage Longer Stays

Partner with other local businesses, offer bounce-back discounts, and cross-promote to keep visitors in the community longer.

Lead with Hospitality

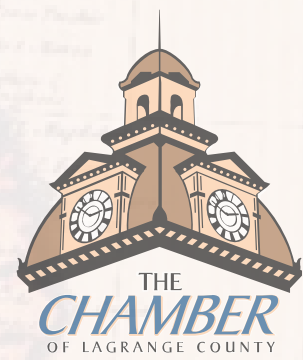
A friendly interaction goes a long way. Be ready to offer recommendations and help visitors experience the best of LaGrange County.

The Big Picture

Tourism brings outside dollars into our local economy: supporting jobs, strengthening small businesses, and enhancing our quality of life.

Every purchase, every visit, every experience matters. As we move into the height of the summer season, the opportunity is here.

Let's make the most of it.



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Upcoming Events:

MAY:

14TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON

15TH - LEADERSHIP LAGRANGE COUNTY KICK-OFF

19TH - TABLE FOR 10

22ND - COFFEE WITH THE COUNTY

27TH - CONNECTHER CONFERENCE

JUNE:

9TH - YP LUNCH & CONNECT

18TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON

JULY:

9TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON

22ND - WOMAN2WOMAN ROUNDTABLE

28TH - TABLE FOR 10

AUGUST:

6TH - GOLF CLASSIC

13TH - MONTHLY LUNCHEON

28TH - COFFEE WITH THE COUNTY

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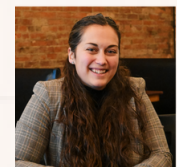
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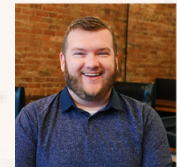
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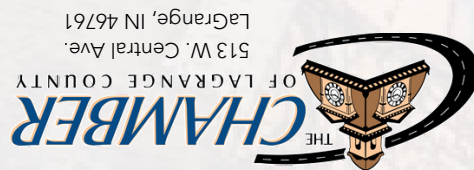
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