

JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER



President's Message

Kyle Karsten

Alright. Let's Go!! As we are starting a new fiscal year, I am honored to serve as your new Chamber Board President for the year ahead. I want to thank Ashley Batchelder for her service this past year as our President. It was an honor to serve beside her as vice president. Ashley will remain with us as a board member for one more year as she finishes out her current term.

I want to also thank Jay Woodrum, Chad Hatayama, and Jim Wilkerson for their past year of service on the Board as they roll off the Board and welcome to Tim Robertson, Crystal Hernandez, and Laura Cullison as they begin as new Board Members. In this newsletter, you can see the full list of our Board Members for this year on [page 2](#). They have already shown themselves to be a great group. We are all excited to serve you and make your membership in this Chamber a continued positive experience. Please also let us know how you think we can do this in the year ahead.

I have spent the last 18 years in this Decatur / Mt. Zion Macon County Area and have come to truly call it home. The past 10 years I have been honored to serve as the Development Director for The Salvation Army. I love family and have been blessed with my amazing wife Jeanne

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15+ Inexpensive Ways to Advertise Your Business

You know the old adage, "It takes money to make money"? While that may be true, marketing and advertising don't have to cost a fortune. In fact, some of the most effective ways to get your business noticed are either free or surprisingly affordable (especially with the technology available). Whether you're just getting started or trying to grow on a tight budget, here are 15 creative and cost-effective ideas to boost your visibility and draw in customers:

1. Partner with Your Chamber of Commerce

Your local Chamber is a marketing gem hiding in plain sight. Many chambers offer affordable sponsorships, advertising in their newsletters, banner placement on their website, and opportunities to speak at or host events. Chamber membership also often includes social media

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UPCOMING

JUNE 11

Luncheon

12:00-1:00

Location

Mt. Zion Fletcher Park
Recreation Center

Topic

2025 Laws Affecting Business
Jordan Klein & Adam Peters

Member cost \$15

RSVP by Tuesday, June 10th

JUNE 6

Chamber on the Rocks

4:30-6:30 p.m.

Charro Mexican Restaurant
& Bar

JUNE 11

Business After Hours

The Glenwood Supportive
Living Mt. Zion
5-7 p.m.

JULY 3

MTZ Blue Ribbon Night

JULY 9

Luncheon

Mt. Zion Convention Center
*AI Advantages, Disadvantages,
and Challenges*



2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kyle Karsten
President
Salvation Army



Jimmy Rade
Vice President
Mossy Oak Properties



Kayla Marsh
Treasurer
Hickory Point Bank & Trust



Laura Cullison
Secretary
Evergreen Senior Living



Ashley Batchelder
Mt. Zion District Library



Trisha Beck
Beck Realtors, Inc.



Ashley Hawkins
Prairie State Bank & Trust



Crystal Hernandez
HDZ Roofing Co.



Tim Robertson
Heartland Bank
and Trust



Linda Harper
Executive Director
Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce



Shelly Coslow
Outgoing Officer Advisor
Decatur Earthmover Credit
Union



June 2025 Luncheon

The luncheon on June 11, 2025, will be held at the Mt. Zion Fletcher Park Recreation Center. Our speaker will be Jordan Klein and Adam Peters with Kiley Klein, Ltd. They will present "2025 New Illinois Laws Affecting Business". Join us for an insightful presentation that delves into the latest state laws impacting businesses. This presentation is designed to equip business owners, managers, and legal professionals with the knowledge they need to stay compliant and thrive in a rapidly changing legal landscape.

Jordan has a general civil practice and advises small business clients in a wide range of industries on formation, maintenance, acquisition, and winding up. Adam has a varied practice from civil litigation, probate and estate planning and litigation, and assists in the firm's representation of a number of governmental bodies and corporations.

Diamonds Family Restaurant will be our caterer. The cost of the luncheon is \$15. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. The buffet opens at 11:45 a.m.; and the program begins at 12 noon. Bring your business cards and network. If you have any information fliers you want to put on the luncheon tables before the luncheon begins, please do so but be sure to pick up any remaining fliers at the end of the luncheon.

Please send your RSVP to mtzionchamber@gmail.com by Tuesday, June 10th or submit your reservation on our website at <https://www.mtzionchamber.org/meetings>. Be sure to send me your RSVP information with all the names of those attending from your business or organization so they can be included on the Attendee List. You can pay in advance at [Event Registration - Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce \(chamberorganizer.com\)](#); or optionally, you can still be invoiced or pay at the door. The cost of the luncheon is \$15.



Fri., June 6, 2025, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Chamber on the Rocks

Charro Mexican Bar & Restaurant
2350 S. Mt. Zion Rd., Decatur, IL 62521

RSVP at:

[Chamber on the Rocks](#)



President's Message continued from page 1:

of 30 years and counting, 3 great adult kids, a now growing family as they meet their forever partners and even have become a Grandpa in the past 2 years – our granddaughter Nora calls me “Pappy”. I feel blessed.

I want to share that this year we want to focus on a few key items:

First, we really want to get to know all our members. We want to get to know you, know you better, and create even better ways to grow your business and serve our community and each other. We look forward to strengthening the current relationships we have and creating new ones with our current and new members.

Second, we are taking time to review and update our Bylaws and Policy & Procedure Manuals. Part of this exercise will be confirming or improving how we do things in the most effective and efficient ways possible for this Chamber, your business, and this community.

Third, we want to invite our members to really get involved. Our invitation is for attendance & participation. Watch for the emphasis we place on Committees and growing our Ambassadors group.

And you might just see a few other new things that we have instore to make this year positive, fun, and different. I am honored to serve our Chamber and this community as your next Chamber President and look forward to what we might do together in the year ahead.

Kyle Karsten





Welcome New Members



Matt Beaver is the owner of Bevo's. It is located at 205 W. Debby Drive, Mt. Zion. Bevo's is "Where Rustic Charm Meets Urban Chic". They have cold beverages, can and bucket specials, dogs, specialty pizza, sandwiches, salads, and apps & sides. Bevo's blends upscale sophistication and urban vibes. Enjoy their live music schedule and patio. Visit them soon or call 217-864-1066 for more information.



PawPrint Ministries is located at 2555 Federal Drive, Decatur, IL 62526. PawPrint Ministries Comfort Dog Teams serve the community at nursing homes, cancer care centers, memory centers, hospitals, schools, and libraries. They also provide comfort during tragedies, emergencies, and disasters. Visit www.pawprintministries.org. Call 217-855-6340 to schedule a visit, donate, sponsor, volunteer, and more.

Announcements



Ambassador Applications

To help our events run even better, we want to increase the number of Ambassadors we currently have. Take a look at our Ambassador Program on our website at [Chamber Ambassador Qualifications](#). The Ambassador program consists of volunteers from the Chamber membership who donate their time to assist the Chamber in various activities. If it sounds like something you would be interested in doing, email Linda Harper at mtzionilchamber@gmail.com.



2025 MZCC Golf Outing—August 25, 2025

It is a scramble with a shot gun start and games & prizes. Be sure to sponsor and/or register for the Annual MZCC Golf Outing, which will be on Monday, August 25, 2025 at the South Side Country Club. Teams had a lot of fun last year. The Registration Form and sponsorship information is on [pages 8 & 9](#) and PDF on our website.

2026 MZCC Collette Tour—Spotlight on New York City

This would be a great graduation or summer vacation trip. Experience the best of "the Big Apple" in this spectacular tour. From Rockefeller Center to Greenwich Village, New York City is a destination that will dazzle even the most seasoned traveler. Spend four nights in the heart of Midtown close to Central Park and Times Square. Take your seat and watch the curtain rise for two exciting Broadway shows. Ferry to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. See the Empire State Building and Central Park. Visit the poignant 9/11 Museum and 9/11 Memorial. Enjoy plenty of free time to shop and explore this fabulous city on your own. Get ready to "start spreading the news!"



The trip is from June 4-8, 2026. More details and prices are at [Spotlight on New York City with Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce](#). The down payment to hold your reservation is due by December 4, 2025. See [page 9](#) for more information.



15+ Inexpensive Ways to Advertise Your Business continued from [page 1](#):

shoutouts, ribbon cuttings, and business directory listings—all built-in exposure for your brand.

Chambers have excellent reputations in their communities as well as good relationships. Many tourists and new residents rely on referrals from the chamber when they come to town. Plus, the rates chamber's charge for this type of high-quality exposure is very reasonable.

2. Get Active on Social Media

You don't need to be on every platform—just the ones where your customers spend their time. Create short videos, behind-the-scenes posts, tutorials, or even humorous content to show off your brand's personality. Authenticity performs better than high-budget polish. Be consistent with your posting too. The more people see you, the more they notice and recognize you. Soon you will be on their mind.

3. Run a Giveaway or Contest

People love free stuff. Give away a product or service in exchange for likes, shares, or email signups. It's an inexpensive way to create buzz and grow your audience fast. Or run a contest when you host a pop-up or sponsor a table at an outdoor event (if it fits for your business). You'll get to talk to a variety of people.

A fun contest that also gets you more visibility is encouraging people to check-in when they're at your business. Then provide a quarterly prize to the person with the most check-ins.

4. Create Google Business Profile Posts

Google Business Profiles (formerly Google My Business) are free and powerful. Use posts to highlight new products, offers, events, or blog content. Bonus: It helps with your SEO.

5. Use Customer Testimonials and Reviews

Happy customers are your best marketers. Share their testimonials on social media, your website, and even printed materials. Ask loyal customers to leave reviews on Google, Yelp, or Facebook. Many people will write them when asked and when you make it easy for them to do so. Use links to get them where they need to be.

6. Get Involved in Community Events

Sponsor a little league team, host a booth at a local fair, or donate a prize to a nonprofit raffle. Community involvement builds trust and visibility with your target audience.

7. Start a Referral Program

Reward your current customers for referring new ones. A simple discount, freebie, or exclusive perk can motivate people to spread the word about your business.

8. Offer Free Workshops or Classes

If you're an expert at something, share your knowledge. Hosting a free online or in-person workshop can position you as an authority while attracting new leads. Share hashtags at your event to remind people to share on social.

9. Pitch Local Media

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Independence Day 50/50 Raffle

\$1 / Ticket

Ticket Outlet:

Kenney's Ace Hardware

Do NOT have to be present to win. Drawing
July 3, 2025 at Mt. Zion Blue Ribbon Night at
Fletcher Park before fireworks.

Winning number posted on Facebook &
www.mtzionchamber.org.



South Side Country Club

11 am Registration/Lunch

AUGUST 25, 2025

12 pm Shotgun Start

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

- ☐ **Title Sponsor- \$2500**
Includes (2) Groups of 4 Golfers
 - ☐ **Gold Sponsor- \$1000**
Includes (1) Group of 4 Golfers
 - ☐ **Silver Sponsor- \$400**
 - ☐ **Bronze Sponsor- \$250**
 - ☐ **Hole Sponsor- \$150**
-
- ☐ **Hole-In-One Sponsor - \$500**
 - ☐ **Lunch Sponsor - \$1200**
Includes (1) Group of 4 Golfers
 - ☐ **Practice Green Sponsor - \$250**
 - ☐ **Driving Range Sponsor - \$250**

See Back for Descriptions

Sponsor Total \$ _____

Come tee off with us at the annual Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing, this event brings our local business community together! This year, we invite you to demonstrate your company's community spirit and commitment to growth by sponsoring this esteemed event or registering a foursome to compete on the greens.

This event is more than a leisurely day on the links; it's a vital investment in the initiatives that propel our business community forward. Engage with fellow business leaders, gain invaluable exposure, and help us drive positive change in our community.

Reserve your spot today and swing into action for a better business community! Visit our website for more information on how you can make the most impact.

GOLFERS

Please register me/us for _____ Golfers @ \$150 each. (\$600/Team) Golf Total \$ _____

Name

Email

Phone

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please make Checks Payable to: **Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 84, Mt. Zion, IL 62549**. If you would rather be invoiced, or would like to donate a gift certificate/basket/item, please provide the following:

Name / Business / Address / Email / Phone

-
- ☐ I would like to donate a gift certificate/basket/item from our business for prizes.

For more information visit: mtzionchamber.org, email Chad Hatayama at chatayama@apexnetworkpt.com or call/text 217-791-0660

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:



TITLE SPONSORSHIP: \$2,500

- Includes (2) Groups of 4 Golfers
- Large Signage at the Course
- Recognition along with social media mentions
- Email mentions/spotlighting your business
- Company is allowed to provide promotional items for each player

GOLD SPONSORSHIP: \$1,000

- Includes (1) Group of 4 Golfers
- Signage at the event in large print and recognitions on social media and email.
- Company flag or promo item allowed to be placed in every cart
- First 5 gets naming sponsorship for the proximities "Men's Long Drive brought to you by your company name"

SILVER SPONSORSHIP: \$400

- Name listed on signage at the event
- Mentions on social media and email
- Promo items allowed to be placed in carts
- Company may place table/tent at a tee box (provide mini game/drink hole)

HOLE SPONSORSHIP: \$150

- Small yard sign at a hole

HOLE-IN-ONE SPONSORSHIP: \$500

- Signage at a hole-in-one hole
- Mentions on social media & email

BRONZE SPONSORSHIP: \$250

- Name listed on signage at the event
- Mentions on social media and email
- Promo items allowed to be placed in carts
- Company may place table/tent at a tee box (provide mini game/drink hole)

LUNCH SPONSORSHIP: \$1200

- (1) Group of 4 Golfers
- Signage at the lunch area
- Mentions on social media & email

PRACTICE GREEN (1) & DRIVING RANGE (1) SPONSORSHIP: \$250 EA

- Signage at Practice Green or Driving Range
 - Mentions on social media & email

Please make Checks Payable to: **Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 84, Mt. Zion, IL 62549.**

For more information visit: mtzionchamber.org, email Chad Hatayama at chatayama@apexnetworkpt.com or call/text 217-791-0660

Spitler Woods State Natural Area

705 Spitler Park Drive
Mt. Zion, IL 62549
217-864-3121

Their enclosed building is available for \$50 for an all-day rental for meetings, parties, reunions, etc.

They have:

- New windows
- Air conditioning
- Regular tables
- 63 chairs
- Refrigerator
- Sink

[ABOUT](#) [ACCESSIBILITY](#) [ACTIVITIES](#) [EVENTS](#) [PICNICKING](#)

Park Activities

[Hiking Trails](#)

[Shelter
Reservations](#)

[Park Brochure](#)

[Spitler Woods
State Natural Area
brochure](#)



[Park Closures](#)

Park Information:

East Central Illinois
705 Spitler Park
Drive
Mt. Zion, IL 62549
[217-864-3121](tel:217-864-3121)

N: 39.779
W: -88.862



Linda Roberts
✉ lindarobertsbest@comcast.net
☎ (217) 864-4666

Spotlight on New York City

June 4 – June 8, 2026 * 5 Days * 5 Meals

From Lady Liberty to Greenwich Village, New York City never sleeps. The Apple is big; enjoy every bite. Double \$3699 per person including tour, airfare and transportation to/from the airport. Save \$50 per person if you make your deposit by 12/5/2025.



About This Tour

Experience the best of "the Big Apple" in this spectacular tour. From Rockefeller Center to Greenwich Village, New York City is a destination that will dazzle even the most seasoned traveler. Spend four nights in the heart of Midtown close to Central Park and Times Square. Take your seat and watch the curtain rise for two exciting Broadway shows. Ferry to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. See the Empire State Building and Central Park. Visit the poignant 9/11 Museum and 9/11 Memorial. Enjoy plenty of free time to shop and explore this fabulous city on your own. Get ready to "start spreading the news!"

Must-See Inclusions

- Embark on a voyage to experience "Lady Liberty" up-close.
- Join a local guide for a tour of New York City's time-honored landmarks.
- In the cultural treasure trove that is New York City, experience two Broadway shows of your choice.

Cultural Connections

- Pay tribute to the lives lost during a visit to the 9/11 Memorial and the 9/11 Museum.
- Get around like a local – on your feet! The lights and energy of the Big Apple captivate as you walk NYC's bustling streets to dinner and Broadway shows.

Culinary Inclusions

- Experience breakfast and a taste of NYC diner culture in the city's staple eateries.

More information: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1344893>.



15+ Inexpensive Ways to Advertise Your Business continued from [page 6](#):

Send story ideas or press releases to your local newspaper, TV station, or community blog. Journalists are always looking for local angles—your business could be the next feature.

10. Use Window or Sidewalk Signs Creatively

A clever chalkboard sign or window display can stop foot traffic in its tracks. Make people smile, laugh, or think—and they'll remember your business.

11. Create a Loyalty or Punch Card Program

Encourage repeat business by rewarding customers who come back. Whether digital or old-school punch cards, loyalty programs keep your brand top-of-mind. It can also sway people to choose you more often. For instance, if they know they'll get points from buying with you, they may go out of their way to do so knowing that they will benefit from it.

12. Offer a Limited-Time Promotion

Scarcity sells. Use urgency—"for 3 days only," "first 10 people," or "today only"—to create buzz and spike short-term interest.

13. Join (or Start) a Local Business Collaboration

Team up with complementary businesses for cross-promotions. For example, a coffee shop and a bookstore might do a "Read & Recharge" special. You both win.

14. Start an Email Newsletter

Email is still one of the highest-ROI marketing tools. A simple monthly email with updates, deals, or helpful tips can keep customers engaged and coming back.

15. Use Your Vehicle as a Moving Billboard

A magnetic car sign or vinyl decal can turn your commute into an advertising campaign. It's a one-time investment that works 24/7.

Bonus

Watch your favorite brands. What makes you stop what you're doing or stops you from scrolling. Even if they're in a completely different industry, ask yourself how you might use what they do to improve your marketing.

You don't need a big budget to make a big impact. With some creativity and a willingness to show up where your audience is, you can get your business noticed without breaking the bank. And this isn't a "choose one and you're done" idea. These ideas are designed to get you thinking about what your audience will respond to. Then give it to them consistently so they get used to seeing you around.

And remember—your Chamber of Commerce is here to help. Reach out and ask about marketing opportunities available to members. You might be surprised by how many resources are already at your fingertips.

Article by Christina Metcalf

Visit our website:
www.mtzionchamber.org