The Chamber Scene

HUNTINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

40 E. Franklin Street • Huntington, Indiana 46750 • (260) 356-5300 • www.huntington-chamber.com • December 2024

Heritage Days 2025: "A Heritage of Caring"

Heritage Days 2025 will celebrate the people of Huntington, and how they care for one another with the theme, "A Heritage of Caring." The events of Heritage Days will take place in various locations from Wednesday, June 11 through Sunday, June 15. The Chamber is also looking for a sponsor for Heritage Days 2025.

When you walk down a Huntington street, you can count on a smile from the people you meet. Over the years many individuals, businesses and organizations have united the community in caring for one another. The Community Chest began in 1947 through the efforts of the Huntington Chamber of Commerce, eventually becoming today's United Way.

Following World War II, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Huntington Chamber of Commerce sought ways to help veterans of the war acclimate into the Huntington community. It became the administrative office for veterans housing as part of this effort. Today the Veterans Service Office, 1350 South Jefferson Street, assists veterans, their widows, spouses and dependents in receiving benefits.

The Community Foundation of Huntington County partners with community members to fund initiatives that support needs in the community, and had its beginnings in 1980 when a group of Huntington County citizens, chaired by Steve Piekarski, then president of First National Bank, began meeting to investigate the creation of a community foundation through utilizing a Lilly endowment. The first name was "Huntington Civic Foundation," which later became the "Heritage Fund of Huntington County" in 1991. In February 2002, the name was changed to the Huntington County Community Foundation. It became the Community Foundation of Huntington County in 2023, and continues the legacy of enhancing the quality of life in Huntington County through funding, support and helping to ensure everyone in our community can grow and thrive through grants, scholarships and bringing people together.



Churches, businesses, individuals, Huntington County Community Schools, Huntington University and various other organizations also step up to meet the needs of those in our community. The City of Huntington, the County of Huntington, By the Book Program, Huntington County Council on Aging, Habitat for Humanity, Harmony Home, Huntington County Humane Society, Indiana Family Care Center, McKenzie's Hope, New Life Ministries and the meal ministry, Parkview Boys and Girls Club, Place of Grace, The Salvation Army, United With Love, Youth Services Bureau, nursing facilities, groups homes, police and fire personnel, emergency management personnel, disaster team individuals, healthcare workers and facilities plus those unrecognized individuals are thanked and recognized as part of the Heritage Days 2025 celebration.

Heritage Days activities include the parade that will take place Saturday, June 14 beginning at 10 a.m. Huntington's way of caring can be carried through on parade entries, and float building is encouraged to bring our "A Heritage of Caring" to life!

Activities that will also be a part of this year's Heritage Days festivities include the Little Miss and Junior Miss Heritage Days on Wednesday evening, the traditional Chief of the Flint Springs Tribe breakfast Thursday morning and the annual Rotary Strawberry Feed on Thursday evening. A

car, truck, bike and motorcycle show will take place on Friday evening in downtown Huntington. The Brat Tent, sponsored by Wise Guys Downtown, will return on Friday and Saturday evening also to the downtown area.

Saturday afternoon following the parade will bring the Fun Zone, full of children's activities, which will include bounce houses, free pony rides, games provided by the library and more. A car show and hot air balloon festival at Huntington North High School will begin mid-day on Saturday and a balloon glow will take place on Saturday evening.

JeFFFest will take place on Sunday evening, June 15, on Franklin Street across from the Courthouse completing the Heritage Days festivities.

Poor Jack Amusements will provide the midway and carnival rides for 2025. Rides and activities will be located in the Cherry Street area from Wednesday, June 11 through Sunday, June 15. Streets involved with the carnival will close on Monday, June 9 at 3 p.m. to allow for set-up.

Steve Kimmel is the current executive director of the Chamber and Angie Garcia is the office administrator. Information about or those interested in Heritage Days 2025 can contact the Huntington County Chamber of Commerce at (260) 356-5300 or email skimmel@huntington-chamber.com.

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First Merchants Bank donates

Shown in the photo above is Alisha Anderson, second from left, and Jess Hopkins, second from right, First Merchants Bank, handing a check for \$2,000 to Bob Burnsworth, left, director of the Meal Ministry, and Brittney Shoemaker, donor development director for New Life Ministries. The donation will be used for those in the community needing help during this holiday season. New Life Ministries and the Meal Ministry would like to thank Alisha, Jess and First Merchants Bank for their generous donation.



Virginia Miller Award

The Huntington County Historical Society proudly recognizes Barb and Brooks Fetters with its highest honor: the Virginia R. Miller Award. This award is presented annually to recognize significant contributions to preserving Huntington County's history. The establishment of The Purviance House Bed and Breakfast and the Drover Town Arms Apartments have exhibited a durable commitment to the history of Huntington. Historical Society board member Mike Perkins, right, offers congratulations to the owners of the two establishments, Barb and Brooks Fetters.

YSB's Jan Williams to retire in December

Jan Williams, the longtime executive director of the Youth Services Bureau of Huntington County, has announced her retirement in December.

Jan was first hired in January 1995 as the part-time executive director due to a lack of funding. At the time, the agency had two full time social workers and a part-time financial staffer and was located on the third floor of the old UB Build-



Jan Williams

ing near the Huntington County Courthouse. Under Jan's leadership, the agency has grown exponentially and offers programming in multiple counties in the region.

"We moved to our Warren Street location in late 1995, across from the gym entrance of what was then known as Central School," Jan recalls. "The agency had several programs, including Safe Place/Host Home and Tools for School at that time. Based on the community's needs, the agency quickly started adding programs, such as Teen Court, Students Out of School, Mentoring Moms and more."

In 1997, Jon and Shelly Schenkel gifted the building that YSB is located in today, near the Huntington City Fire Station No. 3 and Drover Park.

"I think, looking back on my time with YSB - besides the great staff and board members I have had the pleasure to work with – I would have to say my biggest accomplishments have been through community partnerships," Jan says. "Whether it was the implementation of the Transition Center in 1996, which was a partnership with DCS and HCCSC to start Huntington's first alternative school, or the long history of helping maintain and guide the Empowering Humanities group, it all required teamwork. Furthermore, the agency has been instrumental in the implementation of the Teen Suicide Prevention Task Force, which is now known as H.O.P.E (Huntington Outreach for Prevention and Empowerment). The agency remains the leader in suicide prevention in Huntington County."

Not only is Jan a leader in Huntington County, but her efforts have impacted countless others across the state.

In 2022, YSB received a large Strengthening Youth Programming in Indiana grant for capital improvements and some program enhancements. In October, Jan received a Community Hero Award from Bowen Health for her decades of mental health advocacy on behalf of Hoosier youth.

"As I look forward to the next chapter of my life, I want to focus on enhancing partnerships, especially with the focus of suicide prevention," Jan says. "I also plan to spend more time with my family, spoil the grandkids a little more and enjoy life."

A retirement open house in Jan's honor will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, December 18, at the Youth Services Bureau office, 1344 Maple Drive, Huntington.







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Reber stepping down at Boys & Girls Club

After 19 years, Mandy Reber, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Huntington County, is stepping down from her role on December 31, 2024.

Reber began her service with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Huntington County in 2005, when she accepted the position of executive director. Through Mandy's transformational leadership the organization has grown from operat-



Mandy Reber

ing one after school site, serving 35 youth per day, to providing before and after school care for more than 900 youth across three locations in Huntington County.

"Mandy has been the driving force behind the Club's growth and success. It has been a privilege to serve with Mandy for nearly 15 years," said Brittanie Scheiber, vice president, board of directors Boys & Girls Clubs of Huntington County.

During her tenure, Mandy has successfully overseen two multi-million-dollar capital campaigns, including the most recent addition of a 16,000 square-foot Career Prep Center at the Parkview Boys & Girls Club. She is recognized as a leader amongst her peers in the state and has received numerous awards for her leadership including being named 2016 executive director by Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Reber's resignation comes as she is taking on a full-time role in her family's businesses. Mandy and her husband, Cory Reber, are owners of local businesses Reber's Repair Complete Auto Care shops and Lillsun Manufacturing Company. The Rebers have recently expanded their business portfolio to include real estate investing.

Stepping into the position of CEO will be Boys & Girls Clubs of Huntington County director of operations, Ashley Allen. With over 21 years of service with the organization, she has served in numerous roles including 10 years as director of operations and three years as program director.

Under Allen's leadership the organization has received numerous state, regional and national awards including their first national award in 2010. During her tenure as program director, the organization received the highest recognition given by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Honor Award for Best Club Experience. Ashley's most recent feat was the successful opening of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Huntington County, Andrews site.

"Ashley has been part of every step of the Boys & Girls Club of Huntington County's growth the past 22 years, beginning as the part-time front desk staff as a freshman in college, and moving up taking on several roles throughout the years, excelling beyond expectations in each of her previous roles," said Reber. "Passing the torch onto Ashley is such an honor and privilege, all the Club's success over my tenure has been in partnership with Ashley's assistance.



Several students from Huntington University and leaders of the community gathered Tuesday, November 12 for the first Student-Leadership Luncheon of the fall semester. Shown on the front row from left, are Sophia Salway, Cole Thomas, both Huntington University students; Jennifer Jordan, Duke Energy; Kelly Stuber, Beacon Credit Union and Dr. Brock Zehr, Huntington University. Back row from left, include Travis Penrod, First Federal Savings Bank; Brady Smekens, Smekens Education Solutions; David Lian, Huntington University student; Jeremy Rufener, Rufener Financial and Franco Minoldo Garcia, MBA student, Huntington University. Students not shown include Isabelle Herrera, Katie Hooley and Julian Tantera.

Student-Leadership Lunch held November 12

The Huntington County Chamber of Commerce held a Student-Leadership Luncheon to introduce Huntington University students to community leaders. The luncheon was held on Tuesday, November 12 in the community conference room inside the Huntington Arts & Entrepreneurial Center.

Students attending the event were interested in economics/finance, small business management, marketing and public relations, accounting and entrepreneurship.

Students attending the luncheon included David Lian, Franco Minoldo Garcia, Sophia Salway and Cole Thomas. Students not able to attend because of illness include Isabelle Herrera, Katie Hooley and Julian Tantera. The community leaders that attended and mentored the students were Travis Penrod, chief financial officer, First Federal Savings Bank; Jeremy Rufener, financial advisor, Rufener Financial; Brady Smekens, owner, Smekens Education Solutions Inc.; Jennifer Jordan, government and community relations manager, Duke Energy and Kelly Stuber, manager, Beacon Credit Union. Also attending were Dr. Brock Zehr, Huntington University associate professor of business & economics and MBA program director and Steve Kimmel, executive director, Huntington County Chamber of Commerce.

After lunch the group broke into smaller and more focused groups where the students asked questions of the leaders. Leaders answered the questions and then asked questions of their own. Everyone felt the time together was well spent, and all would like to be a part of the conversation in the future. The Chamber grateful to our sponsor, Duke Energy.









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Shown in the photo above are a few of twelve flavors of fudge that the Little Sweets Spot will serve out of their store. They began selling fudge at Huntington's Christmas in the City on Saturday, November 30.

Little Sweets Spot now making homemade fudge

Little Sweets Spot in downtown Huntington is now making homemade fudge. The fudge is made fresh at the store located at 315 N. Jefferson Street, and it is the only candy store to offer fresh made fudge in Huntington. The store is owned by Ashton and Betty Pinkerton.

According to Betty, "We will make our own fudge with our own label attached. We can create our own recipes and produce our own flavors of fudge because what we purchased was not franchised equipment."

"We plan to focus on 12 different flavors. The fudge will be made fresh daily at the store," said Pinkerton. "Flavors include peanut butter, peanut butter chocolate, chocolate, birthday cake, strawberry swirl, chewy praline, cookies 'n cream, peanut butter crunch, maple walnut, chocolate nut, chocolate M&M and candy bar. The special launch deal is when you buy one pound you will get a half pound free. Fudge makes a perfect holiday gift item."

Asked why they decided to invest in making fudge, Betty replied, "Over the time we have owned the store people have asked if we sell fudge. We listen to our customers and if they are wanting fudge, then Ashton and I felt we need to give the customers what they want. Plans are to have a 'Flavor of the Month,' for our customers."

You can contact Little Sweets Spot by calling (260) 200-1015, email littlesweetsspot@gmail.com or visit them on their Facebook page.



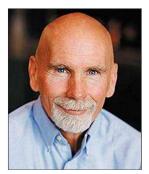
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Jack Barlow named Area Manager for Habitat

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Fort Wayne (Habitat GFW) has appointed Jack Barlow, right, as the organization's new full-time Huntington Area Manager.

"At its core, Habitat is a grassroots community effort. As we continue to grow and serve more families, we recognized the need to build upon and strengthen our efforts in Huntington County," shared Jeremy McClish, Habitat



Jack Barlow

GFW CEO. "We're excited to welcome Jack to our team - his local connections, extensive experience and passion for our mission make him a perfect fit."

In this role, Barlow will oversee development initiatives in Huntington County, foster business and community relationships and collaborate with Mayor Strick and his team to address the affordable housing crisis in Huntington County.

Barlow brings over 15 years of experience in community engagement and relationship building. A graduate of Huntington North High School, he holds degrees in Philosophy and Business & Economics from Huntington University. He and his wife, Samantha, raised their daughter in Huntington and are proud Huntington residents. Barlow is an active member of Central Christian Church.

"This position gives me a chance to give back to my hometown and help Habitat make a greater impact in our community," explained Barlow. "Together, we can fulfill God's desire for us to 'love our neighbor."



David Ball

Director of Marketing and Admissions

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Executive Director

356 W Park Dr, PO Box 5037 Huntington, IN 46750

> Phone: 260.356.8878 Fax: 260.356.0921

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Chamber brings business, community together

The Huntington County Chamber of Commerce has worked for 100 years plus to bring the community and businesses together. Many activities are planned, coordinated and worked by the Chamber throughout the year to bring education, enjoyment and necessary services to the citizens of



Huntington and the surrounding areas.

The Chamber's year begins with the Annual Dinner in March, and continual activities include Huntington County Coffee Connections on the first Wednesday of each month, Leaders EDGE, Entrepreneurial Leadership Council and entrepreneurial gatherings, Chamber After Hours, educational luncheons and more. New to this list of valuable gatherings is 'Chamber Chat' where the Chamber has begun to focus on small businesses and business owners.

The Farmers Market was begun by the Chamber in 2014 and continues under the Chamber's direction. Heritage Days, Music in the City, Constitution Day, Veterans Day Parade and Christmas in the City are also coordinated by the Chamber. The Bicentennial celebration of the State of Indiana in 2016 in Huntington was organized by the Chamber, and it was recently part of the 175th anniversary celebration of the City of Huntington. As we conclude the 100th year of the Huntington County Chamber of Commerce, we appreciate our ongoing support from our members and the community of Huntington.





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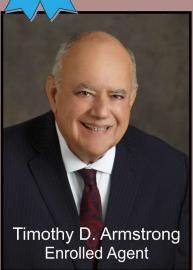
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Merillat Centre for the Arts, Huntington University On Display through December 8

Huntington Lions Christmas Trees

1103 W. Park Drive, Across from Sunken Gardens Christmas Trees on Sale through December 15

Lake City Bank Open House

Wednesday, December 4, 3 to 7 p.m. Lake City Bank, 1501 North Jefferson Street

Santa & Mrs. Claus at the 'Y'

Thursday, December 5, 5 to 6:30 p.m. Parkview Huntington Family YMCA, 1160 W 500 N

Denver & the Mile High Orchestra

Friday, December 6, 7 p.m. Zurcher Auditorium, Merillat Centre for the Arts

For A Complete Calendar of Events

Visit our website at www.huntington-chamber.com



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