

THINGS ARE HAPPENING HERE

Often because we live in St. Joseph we do not always realize or appreciate all the things that are happening in our community. At the Chiefs Camp this summer I had the opportunity to talk with some out of town visitors who remarked that "there sure are a lot of things going on in St. Joseph." As I reflected on their comments, I realized they were correct, there are a lot of things happening in St. Joseph!

As I reflect on 2016, I cannot help but think about the transformation of downtown. Mosaic Life Care's investment in the German American Building, along with other public/private investment in downtown amenities is doing much to revitalize the area and stimulate new business growth in this important area of the community. It is great to see the years of anticipation and promise coming to fruition.

Speaking of transformation, have you seen the Stockyards area lately? With the opening this year of Daily's Premium Meats and BHJ, the area looks completely different. Add to this new investment by Sealed Air and High Plains Bio-Diesel, which has brought additional new jobs to this area of the community. And to top it off, Illinois Avenue was reconstructed, providing better access for both businesses and residents of south St. Joseph. Who would have guessed a decade ago that the Stockyards area would be the fastest growing area in our community?

While the St. Joseph economy remained strong in 2016, with job growth and new investment by both industrial and retail businesses, some employers did experience a shortage in skilled labor. Several years ago the Chamber brought together business and education to form the St. Joseph Workforce Development Alliance, as a way to begin addressing the challenge of providing local employers with a skilled workforce. As a result of these efforts, we saw our first graduates in May of the Manufacturing Technology Program now being offered at Hillyard Technical School. Many of the graduates went on to work with local companies. We also saw our first Manufacturing Day event in St. Joseph, highlighting local manufacturers and providing an opportunity for high school students to learn first-hand of the careers at our local manufacturers. There is more to come from the Workforce Development Alliance in 2017.

Of course it would be hard to forget voters' support of improvements and repairs to the Missouri River levees. More than 77 percent of voters cast their ballots in favor of the sales tax to provide the local share of funding to prevent the type of destruction that occurred during the Flood of 1993. Voters wanted to make sure that jobs were saved by the improvements, but no doubt the opportunity to support the continued growth of the 139th Airlift Wing of the Missouri Air National Guard was an important factor. The long planned for work on the levees got underway in November.

Yes indeed there are things happening in St. Joseph -- good things, things that will make a positive difference in the community and for those of us who live here. While like every city we have our challenges, it is nice to take a minute and appreciate that St. Joseph is a great place to live and do business. You can be sure that the Chamber and business community will be here to do our part to make sure that good things continue to happen in St. Joseph.

Administration

Since its inception, the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce has been the catalyst for economic growth and development in Northwest Missouri. The Chamber's mission is "to create an environment that allows business to succeed and the community to prosper."

Chamber membership is an investment that not only can help better your business, but supports initiatives that sustain and improve the quality of life in St. Joseph. Thank you for your support.



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ST. JOSEPH
Chamber of Commerce

2016 ANNUAL
REPORT



YEAR IN REVIEW

Workforce development continued to be a main priority for the Chamber in 2016. Educating current and future employees about available jobs and the training necessary to get those jobs will continue to be on the economic development forefront as baby boomers retire. In 2016, the Chamber participated in its first **Manufacturing Day** event. Three hundred students learned from seven companies as they opened their doors and discussed careers in manufacturing.

The Chamber worked with Northwest Missouri State University to continue the **Womens Leadership Luncheons**. These monthly events introduce local female leaders and start discussions on topics important to women leaders in all phases of their careers.

LEAD, the Chamber's young professionals group, launched a new program in 2016 called **Know St. Joe**. This program for summer interns in St. Joseph, showcased our city's highlights, things to do and places to be. This program proved beneficial to the interns as well as to the companies that were trying to recruit and retain talent.

The Chamber led members and local government officials to Washington, D.C. and Jefferson City to meet with legislative office holders and staff. These trips are performed annually as a part of other advocacy efforts for local business.

1,200 CHAMBER MEMBERS



In an effort to make St. Joseph a healthier city, the Chamber launched a health and wellness initiative called **Healthy St. Joseph**. It is designed to bring leaders from area businesses, health care organizations, government, nonprofits and foundations together to plan, research and dialogue about how to create a healthy workplace and community. It includes a certification process in which companies can attain different levels.



The **St. Joseph Regional Port Authority**, which operates with Chamber leadership, added equipment to unload bulk product from barges to trucks, making it more important in the area of agricultural logistics.

HELD 34 EDUCATION SESSIONS
LUNCH & LEARNS, BUSINESS SUMMITS, ETC.



Buchanan County was named a **Missouri Workready Community**. This highlights the desire of community partners to meet the needs of employers.



Shop St. Joseph completed its 10th year with 110 merchants participating and more than 1.2 million tickets distributed. This program helps keep local holiday spending in the St. Joseph community.

St. Joseph hit the \$1 billion mark in exports in 2015, which was reported in 2016. This was an increase of 10 percent and further cemented St. Joseph's No. 3 spot in exports in the state, only behind St. Louis and Kansas City.

Businesses volunteered and donated to the **Total Resource Campaign** and the **Partnership for Success Campaign**, ensuring vital Chamber programs can continue.

The Chamber was a motivating factor in the passage of the **Vote Yes to Save Jobs** campaign. Seventy-seven percent of voters were in favor of a quarter-cent sales tax to repair and improve Missouri River levees, protecting 6,000 industrial and military jobs from potential flood waters.

A report came out naming **St. Joseph as the fifth fastest-growing metro area for new start-ups**. Four Missouri cities were in the top 12, showing that Missouri is very entrepreneur friendly.

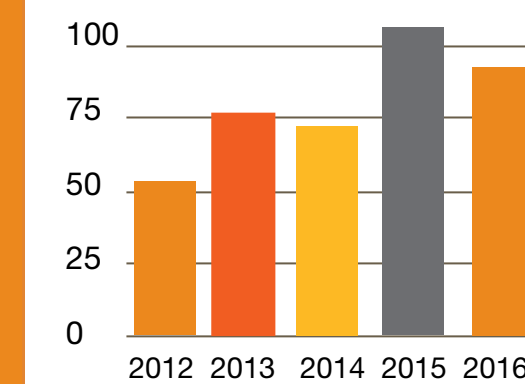
POSTED 24 ARTICLES FROM LOCAL EXPERTS ON **STJOSEPHSMALLBUSINESS.COM** **HELD 50** RIBBON CUTTINGS

Photo credit: Pixels Photography

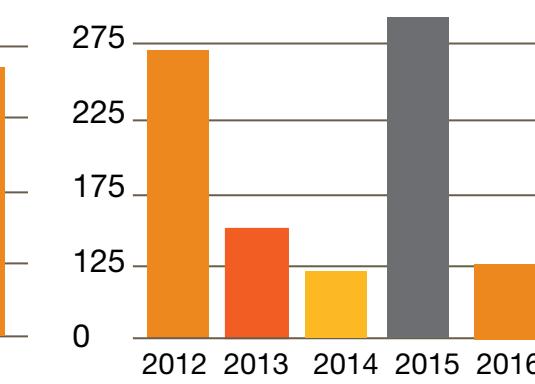


ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

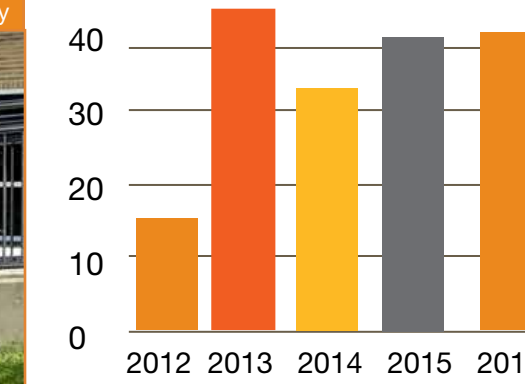
Business Retention Calls



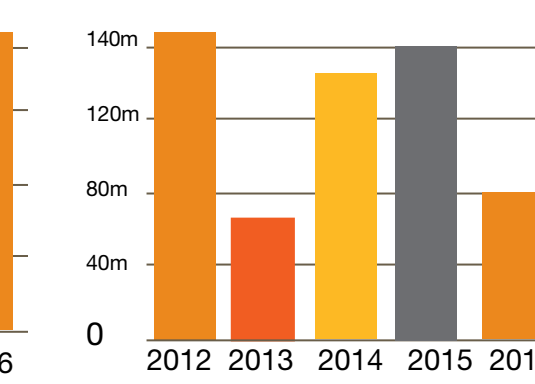
New Jobs



New Prospects



Investment



Hillyard Companies, St. Joseph-based chemical company, will demolish the former WireCo complex downtown, spending more than \$50 million in demolition and capital investment. This will retain 200 jobs with an average annual salary of \$65,000 and remove blight downtown.

Daily's Premium Meats, a meat processing company, held its grand opening ceremony on Sept. 9. It will hire 212 employees during its first five years of operation. This is a capital investment of \$41.5 million to \$46.5 million.

HPB-St. Joe BioDiesel a subsidiary of Seaboard, purchased the former Blue Sun BioDiesel facility located in the Stockyards Industrial Park. HPB milestones are \$6.5 million in capital improvements to the existing plant and officials have agreed to create 43 new jobs with an average annual wage of \$51,600 plus benefits. The plant has already exceeded its goal and is at 50 employees.

Tonistry Px is a company with origins and investor ties in Ireland and Israel. The company has selected St. Joseph for its administrative U.S. headquarters. The focus at this time is U.S. sales of its new isotonic protein drink for pigs, that from day two, helps pigs cope with stress, decreases pre-weaning mortality, increases weights and improves gut health. The product is currently manufactured in Ireland and the company hopes to begin manufacturing in the U.S. by 2018.

Sealed Air invested more than \$9 million in the former Smurfit Stone facility, which raised its St. Joseph capital investment to \$74 million in 2015 and 2016.

Chamber Mission: to create an environment that allows business to succeed and the community to prosper.