

# NEWS RELEASE



Jan. 13, 2018

CONTACT: Kristi Bailey, Director of Communications & Marketing  
St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce  
816-364-4108 or bailey@saintjoseph.com

**ST. JOSEPH**  
Chamber of Commerce

3003 Frederick Ave. | St. Joseph, MO 64506  
(816) 232-4461 | [saintjoseph.com](http://saintjoseph.com)

HOLD FOR RELEASE ON JAN. 13 AFTER 7 P.M.

## **ANNUAL BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS CHAMBER YEAR**

(St. Joseph, MO) -- The St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet was held Saturday, Jan. 13, 2018. The 98th Annual Banquet, which serves as an annual meeting for Chamber members, was held at the St. Joseph Civic Arena and was presented by Commerce Bank. More than 800 attended the event, which had a masquerade ball theme.

The Civic Arena was decorated to fit the theme. Howl at the Moon dueling pianos, and local musicians Simon Fink and Jason Riley provided entertainment. Dinner was catered by Luna's Fine Dining.

The program included a year in review video, which noted highlights from 2017, as well as a brief preview of plans for 2018. An annual report was also distributed, some of the main points both include:

- It was a record-breaking year for membership. Thanks to the 200 volunteers who worked tirelessly at the new member event – the St. Joseph Chamber is now the third-largest Chamber of Commerce in the state. The Chamber added more than 260 during that two-day period and 360 overall for the year.
- St. Joseph again hit the \$1 billion mark in exports, setting in stone the city's No. 3 spot in exports in the state, only behind St. Louis and Kansas City.
- The Chamber continued to lead progress in the fields of workforce development and entrepreneurship. In workforce development, the number of students in the Manufacturing Technician Certification (MT1) program grew, as did the number of students who participated in Manufacturing Day. Both of these efforts, and many others, help employers find qualified applicants for positions, as well as help more residents find good jobs. In entrepreneurship, the Chamber worked with community partners like the Missouri Western State University Craig School of Business and Innovation Stockyard to launch St. Joe Sandbox, a contest that provides start-up funds to qualifying businesses. It also worked on CoJoe, a co-working space that will officially open this month in downtown St. Joseph.

Highlights from the Economic Development Division include:

- **Altec Industries** will invest a significant amount of capital in personal property improvements, manufacturing and nonmanufacturing machinery and equipment, as well as real property improvements and will add a minimum of 105 new jobs in three years. In November it announced it would more than double its original projected investment.
- **Johnson Controls** is expected to create 51 manufacturing jobs with an average annual income of \$48,000, plus benefits and make about \$35.7 million of capital investment in building construction and machinery and equipment.
- **Purina Mills** will completely demolish its mill and build a new facility. It will invest about \$32 million -- \$22 million in machinery and equipment and about \$9.8 million in new real estate improvements. The company created two new jobs and has agreed to maintain its total employment
- **Kindred Bioscience, Inc.** is a biopharmaceutical company focused on saving and improving the lives of pets. It purchased a 180,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Elwood, Kan., and projects to create 60 new jobs with an average annual wage of \$60,000, plus benefits, and invest \$9.8 million in capital investment.level at 50 full-time positions.

Details of all of these projects and more were highlighted in the 2017 Annual Report, which was provided to all attendees and is on the Chamber's website, [www.saintjoseph.com](http://www.saintjoseph.com)

The meeting was the ceremonial changing of the guard for officers. Stet Schanze, of Gray Manufacturing Co. Inc., was honored as the Chairman of the Board for 2016. Corky Marquart, of Commerce Bank, is the 2017 Chairman.

###

