

NEWS RELEASE



ST. JOSEPH
Chamber of Commerce

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHAMBER LAUNCHES YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

Group aims to connect, give resources to young professionals while helping companies with employee retention

(St. Joseph, MO) -- The St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce is launching a new group, St. Joseph Young Professionals, and is inviting professionals ages 20-40 to come to their events.

Establishing a Young Professionals (YP) group is a strategic move to ensure the long-term vitality of the Chamber and the business community, said Natalie Hawn, President and CEO of the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce.

"We continue to cultivate all professionals in St. Joseph, but want to particularly focus on young professionals this year," Hawn said.

The Chamber has had success with hosting tours and events for company interns during the summer and for students with the St. Joseph campus of the UMKC School of Medicine and staff wanted to build on that with the new young professionals group.

Communities across the country are struggling to keep young talent from moving away. A YP group provides a clear signal that St. Joseph is invested in the next generation. It creates social and professional roots for emerging leaders, giving them a reason to stay, grow, and contribute locally.

YP groups also serve as a training ground for future board members, civic leaders, and business owners. Through networking, skill-building events, and community service, participants develop the confidence, connections, and capacity needed to take on leadership roles—both within the Chamber and the broader community.

Many employers are looking for ways to engage and reward their young talent. A YP group offers professional development and networking opportunities that employers don't have to create on their own. It's a retention tool that boosts morale and makes the region more competitive.

"We want to foster young professionals and show them they can grow their career here," Hawn said.

So far, four events are planned for the group in 2025:

Wednesday, July 16: Network on Tap, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Parkway Distillery, 415 N. 13th St. Enjoy light appetizers and purchase drinks from the bar. This event is free to attend, and no registration is required. Just come and meet other young professionals in St. Joseph in the kickoff for the St. Joseph Young Professionals group. The first 20 attendees receive a ticket for a complimentary drink!

Wednesday, Aug. 20: Networking 101, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Room 108, 722 Felix St. The event will begin with a Q & A panel discussion. Attendees will then transition to implement what they have learned by connecting with one another over different topics. The first 20 attendees will receive a free drink ticket. Light appetizers will be provided. Cash bar will be available.

Wednesday, Nov. 19: Keynote Lunch, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, 1201 N. Woodbine Road. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Kasi Lacey who will speak on the topic: "You Don't Need Permission: Confidence, Connection, and Career Growth for Young Professionals." Lunch provided, \$20, includes lunch. Don't miss it!

Thursday, Dec. 11: Music Bingo, Holiday Edition, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Hi-Ho Bar & Grill, 1817 Frederick Ave. We're turning up the cheer with Music Bingo, light appetizers, & a cozy (yet hideous) sweater contest. The first 20 attendees in a sweater will score a COMPLIMENTARY drink ticket—because your sweater deserves a reward. Free to attend.

About the Chamber: Since its inception in 1862 as the Board of Trade of St. Joseph, the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce has been the catalyst for economic growth and development in Northwest Missouri. The Chamber strives to be the unified voice of business that advocates, promotes and inspires the St. Joseph area. The Chamber's mission, supported by more than 1,200 members, is to create an environment that allows business to

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thrive and the community to prosper.

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