



THANK YOU



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



WHAT'S NEXT?

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2024 was another successful year for the Chamber. One of the tangible measurements is Membership, which was up 24% over 2023. While increasing our membership is certainly a goal that we strive to achieve annually, maintaining these relationships through the good and hard times is really the measurement of the health of the Chamber. Thank you for all of your support throughout 2024 and previous years. The role and function of the Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce is to support and advocate for YOU, the members. I am told that this question is asked quite frequently, “Why does Jeff always send out information from *business X*?” The simple answer is: those businesses send me information and ask me to share on Facebook or with our membership. If you have something that you would like help advertising, please reach out to me—that is one of the primary roles of the Chamber. Please, help us help you. Again, thank you for your continued support.

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With the change of elected administrations, we are never certain what changes in policies will be enacted, as well as, what will try to be enforced or modified before the outgoing administration is out of power. I bring this up not as a political fight or discussion, rather to highlight the plight of one of our members—Lafayette County Enterprises. This sheltered workshop provides a safe workplace for the developmentally disabled and is one of thousands of workshops across the nation that has been targeted for “non-renewal” of certification, which will force these organizations to close. If you have not taken the time to voice your support, please reach out to our elected federal representatives and senators.

Over the past 10 years, the state of Missouri’s minimum wage has risen annually from \$7.65 in 2016 to \$13.75 in 2025. Employers engaged in retail or service businesses whose annual gross income is less than \$500,000 are not required to pay the state minimum wage rate. Employers not subject to the minimum wage law can pay employees wages of their choosing.

In a concerted effort to keep our money as local as possible, the Chamber has focused on shopping member businesses first, locally second and then others. Along those lines, the Chamber sponsored our first Holiday Drawings to help drive customers to our member businesses. We gave away \$50 Chamber Gift Certificates for 4 weeks and a \$250 Chamber Gift Certificate during the week of Christmas. The winners have spent their certificates in our local business. Now, I know that we tire of the same slogans like “Shop Local,” but there are valid economic reasons behind those slogans. The multiplier effect of the dollar in a community can be very impactful. In fact, several studies show as much as 48% of money spent in local businesses is recirculated back into the community, as opposed to only 14% of the money spent with chain retailers will be reinvested in the local economy. I know that our community does not offer everything that is available in Kansas City or on Amazon, but try to be mindful of how you can invest in our local community.

WHAT'S NEXT?

2025 will be busy and here are some of the events. Keep up to date with all of the Chamber activities by visiting our [Events](#) page:

- ◆ **St. Patrick’s Day Parade—March 15**
- ◆ **Sounds of the Heart Concert—March 29**
- ◆ **Spring Cleaning Garage Sale—May 2-3**
- ◆ **Back-to-School Garage Sale—August 22-23**
- ◆ **Freedom Walk—September 11**
- ◆ **Second Sundays—May through October**
- ◆ **Trolley Wine Tours—TBD**
- ◆ **Community Fair Car Show—TBD**
- ◆ **Halloween Parade—October 27**
- ◆ **Festival of Lights Parade—December 6**